

COLCHESTER



2001 PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

2001 Colchester Plan of Conservation & Development

Acknowledgments

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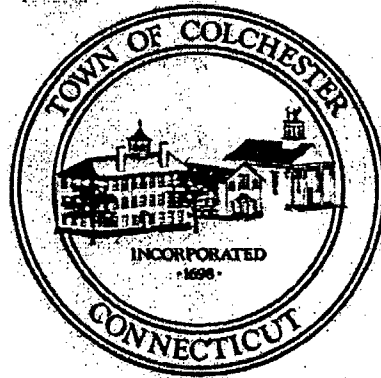
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January 3, 2001

To Colchester Residents,

This document is the 2001 Plan of Conservation and Development for Colchester, Connecticut. The effective date is February 1, 2001.

The Plan is the product of many meetings and discussions among Colchester residents, a Plan of Conservation & Development Subcommittee and the Zoning & Planning Commission. As we have all worked together to develop the Plan, many recommendations have been included that are designed to:

- improve and maintain the overall quality of life in Colchester, and
- preserve and promote the rural character of Colchester.

It is the Commission's belief that this Plan of Conservation & Development establishes a working blueprint for the future of Colchester.

Sincerely,

ZONING & PLANNING COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Weeks", is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, extending to the right with a long horizontal stroke.

Robert Weeks, Ph.D., Chairman

2001 Colchester Plan of Conservation & Development

Photographs

Photographs in the Plan of Conservation & Development
were submitted by Colchester residents and by Planimetrics.

The cover pictures on the Plan are:

Gazebo on the Town Green

Farming On McDonald Road

Fishing in the Salmon River

“Welcome to Colchester” Sign

2001 Colchester Plan of Conservation & Development

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

1	Introduction	1
2	Executive Summary	5
3	Conditions & Trends	7

CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

4	Community Character	23
5	Natural Resources	27
6	Open Space	33
7	Historic Resources	41

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

8	Community Structure	47
9	Housing & Residential Areas	53
10	Business & Economic Development	69
11	Community Facilities & Services	79

INFRASTRUCTURE & OTHER STRATEGIES

12	Transportation	91
13	Utilities	101
14	Special Issues	105

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

15	Future Land Use Plan	106
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IMPLEMENTATION

16	Implementation Tools & Priorities	111
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CONCLUSION

17	Conclusion	130
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Street Map

Colchester, CT



INTRODUCTION

1

INTRODUCTION TO COLCHESTER

Colchester is located in New London County in southeast Connecticut. The town is bounded by Marlborough and Hebron to the north, Lebanon and Bozrah to the east, East Haddam and Salem to the south, and East Hampton to the west. Colchester is located about 25 miles southeast of Hartford, the State capital.

According to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, Colchester had a 1998 population of 12,709 people within its land area of about 49.6 square miles (31,758 acres). This is an increase of 1,729 people (16 percent) from the 1990 Census.

Since 1980, Colchester has been the fastest growing municipality in Connecticut. In addition, the surrounding towns have also been growing faster than the State average.

Town Green



Statutory Reference

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that the Planning Commission prepare, adopt, and amend a Plan of Conservation and Development for Colchester. The requirements for the Plan are presented on the facing page.

Plans In Colchester

- Historical and Architectural Survey (1991)
- Colchester Town Center Cultural Resource Development and Heritage Tourism Plan (1995)
- Town Center Neighborhood Strategic Plan (1998)
- Colchester Public Schools Facilities Studies (1990, 1996, 1997)

ABOUT PLANS OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A Plan of Conservation and Development is a tool for guiding the future of a community. The goals and recommendations of this Plan reflect the overall consensus of what is best for Colchester and its residents in the future. This Plan was prepared by the Colchester Plan of Conservation & Development Subcommittee and the Zoning & Planning Commission with input from Colchester residents.

While it is primarily a statement of recommendations addressing the conservation and development of Colchester (the physical layout), this Plan is also intended to address the social and economic development of the community.

History of Planning in Colchester

Colchester has prepared other Plans of Conservation & Development. The first comprehensive Plan of Development was adopted in 1972 and that Plan was updated in 1990. These plans influenced the current land use regulations and development patterns in Colchester and helped guide the overall conservation and development of the community. Other plans, identified in the sidebar, have also been prepared to address important issues in the community.

Thus, it can be seen that Colchester has a history of preparing, adopting, and amending Plans to address the appropriate conservation and development of the community. It is in that spirit that this Plan has been prepared.

Use of the Plan of Conservation and Development

This Plan of Conservation and Development is an advisory document, not only to the Zoning & Planning Commission, but to all other Town boards and commissions and Colchester residents as well. It is intended to guide local residents and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities in Colchester over the next decade or so.

While the statutory responsibility to adopt the Plan rests with the Zoning & Planning Commission, implementation will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and officials of the Town of Colchester.

**EXCERPTS FROM CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES
8-23 - PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

The Commission shall:

- prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development ...
- review the plan of conservation and development at least once every ten years ...
- adopt such amendments to the plan or parts of the plan ... as the commission deems necessary to update the plan.

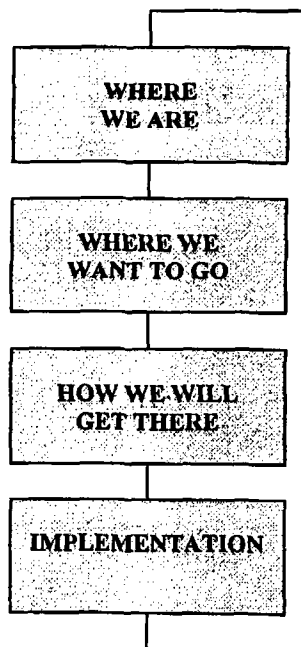
The Plan shall:

- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality, ...
- show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality.
- be designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people.
- be made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long Island Sound ...
- make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region ...
- promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs ...
- take into account the state plan of conservation and development ... and note any inconsistencies it may have with said state plan.
- consider the use of cluster development to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity.

The Plan may:

- show the commission's recommendation for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets and other public ways; for airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; for general location, relocation and improvement of public buildings; for the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes; and for the extent and location of public housing projects.
- include recommended programs for the implementation of the plan ...
- (include) such other recommendations ... in the plan as will ... be beneficial to the municipality.

The Planning Process



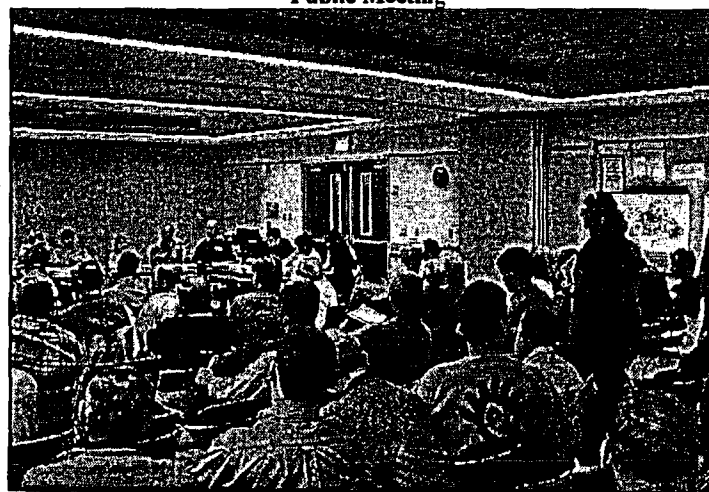
The Planning Process

The process used to prepare the Plan is illustrated by the adjacent flowchart. Following a comprehensive inventory and assessment of Colchester, a consensus was established on important issues through a number of public meetings, surveys and other exercises. Various recommendations were discussed and refined as the Plan was finalized. Implementation takes place after the Plan is adopted and the various recommendations are put into action and evaluated.

Committee Meeting



Public Meeting



Other Relevant Information

In addition to this Plan, other relevant information has included workbooks (booklets on different topical issues) prepared during the process for participants, previously adopted plans, and materials such as resident surveys. The workbooks were placed at Town Hall and the Cragin Memorial Library for residents to review during the process.

In the case of conflict between this Plan and such other information, the recommendations of the adopted Plan take precedence.

Many people were involved in the preparation of the Plan over a two-year period. While it is not possible to name them all, the major participants are listed on the inside front cover of the Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2

OVERALL PLAN PHILOSOPHY

During the process of preparing the Plan, the following philosophy emerged as the foundation for this Plan of Conservation and Development:

- Promote an appropriate balance of conservation and development in Colchester in order to:**
- **meet community needs,**
 - **preserve community character, and**
 - **enhance the overall quality of life.**

While there may be refinements in the goals and strategies of this Plan over time, it is anticipated that this philosophy will remain relevant during the anticipated ten-year life of this Plan of Conservation and Development.

PRIORITY ISSUES

Many issues that are important to Colchester and its future are addressed in the Plan. However, the following recommendations are considered the most significant:

CONSERVATION	Reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protect natural resources	Chapter 5 - Natural Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve water quality	Chapter 5 - Natural Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve open space	Chapter 6 - Open Space
<hr/>	
DEVELOPMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage residential growth by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• adopting a buildable land regulation,• adopting a residential density regulation, and• promoting open space development patterns	Chapter 9 - Housing & Residential Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage appropriate economic development in accordance with the Plan	Chapter 10 - Business & Economic Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire sites for schools, recreation facilities, and other community facility needs	Chapter 11 - Community Facilities & Services
<hr/>	
INFRASTRUCTURE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop additional public water supply sources	Chapter 13 - Utilities

CONDITIONS & TRENDS

3

HISTORY OF COLCHESTER

The landscape of the area we know as Colchester was formed over millions of years by massive geological forces and processes. While human settlement is believed to have occurred within the past 10,000 years, written history is only available for the past 350 years or so.

No permanent Native American settlements are known to have been located in what is now Colchester. However, temporary or seasonal settlements may have occurred in the area and trails connecting settlements near the Thames River (east) to those near the Connecticut River (west) may have passed through the area. A Golden Hill Paugussett reservation is now located in southeastern Colchester.

Settlement of Colchester

While European settlement of Connecticut began about 1630, trading disagreements and skirmishes between Dutch and English settlers and the Mohegan or Pequot natives made many areas unsafe for settlement until after the Pequot War in 1637. It was not until 1662 that Jeremiah Adams, a Hartford innkeeper, became the first settler known to locate in the Colchester area. Adams obtained permission from Mohegan leaders to winter cattle along the Salmon River and the General Court of Connecticut later formalized the agreement.

Other settlers followed and, in 1698, the General Court granted plantation rights to a group of Hartford County investors. The area was to be bounded by Lyme on the south, Middletown and Haddam on the west, Norwich on the east, and Glastonbury and Lebanon on the north. The area was formally named Colchester in 1699 and was designated as part of New London County.

The original proprietors quickly set out lots and encouraged settlers, especially those with needed skills, to move to the area. Availability of large tracts of land attracted people from more populated areas such as Hartford and Wethersfield.

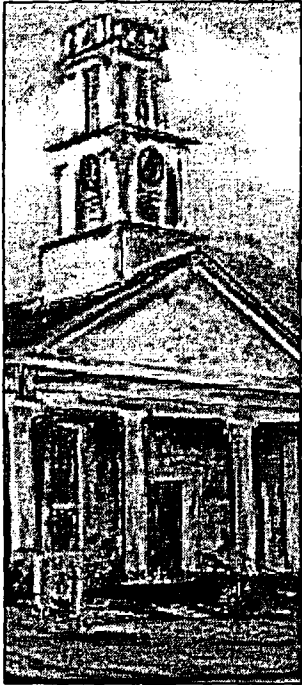
Colchester Facts

Colchester was named in 1699. The name is believed to come from the ancestral home in England of the County Magistrate.

Colchester celebrated its 300th anniversary in 1998 with a variety of events.



Congregational Church



Tina Lyman

As population grew, efforts were devoted to establishing a church and securing a minister. In 1703, the General Court authorized the organization of a church and, by 1706, the early settlers had built the Town's first meetinghouse at the upper end of modern day Old Hebron Road. By 1716, a decision was made to build a new meetinghouse more central to the expanding village and closer to a better water supply.

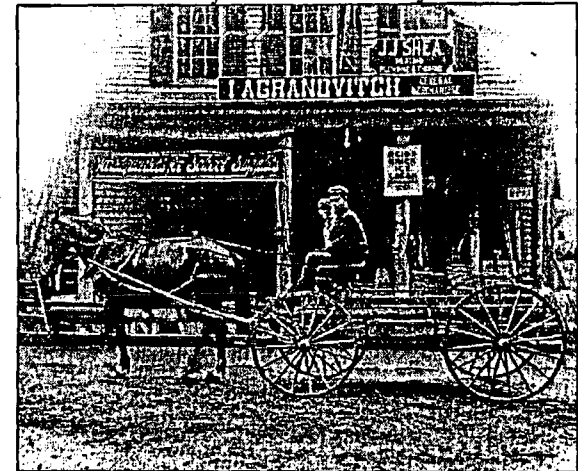
As settlement grew and dispersed throughout Colchester, outlying areas established their own parishes or ecclesiastical societies in order to avoid the lengthy trip to the central meetinghouse, especially in the winter. The New Salem Society was formed in 1725 and the Marlborough Society was formed in 1747. Eventually, the Salem and Marlborough societies formally split off and were officially organized as separate Towns.

Industrial Growth & Decline

Colchester was at the center of a well-established road network and, by the mid-18th century, a thriving agricultural community and the center of regional trade. Small shops, local mills and other enterprises served Colchester and the surrounding areas and made Colchester the social and economic center in the region.

In 1847, the Hayward Rubber Company was established. The success of the rubber plant spurred overall economic prosperity in Colchester. The demand for employees brought a more diverse population to Colchester, caused rapid growth, and resulted in the founding of local banks, a railroad, and the volunteer fire department. The company constructed boarding houses and tenements for its employees, sidewalks were built, a Town park was laid out, a library association was formed, and the streets were fitted with gas lamps.

Early Mercantile Activity



Colchester Historical Society

Railroad Service

In 1877, a group of local investors created the Colchester Railroad Company. Passenger and freight service was provided on a rail spur from the New York and Boston Air Line Railroad to the Hayward Rubber Factory and the village.

However, the rubber plant was taken over in 1890 and closed in 1893. During the economic decline that followed, Colchester's population shrunk from about 3,000 people in 1890 to about 2,000 people by 1900.

Many of the farms in Colchester were vacated after the closing of the rubber mill. Some farms were purchased by the Hirsch Foundation as places for Jewish immigrants to settle. As a result, by 1915, about 50% of the local population was Jewish. The "resettlement" of Colchester prompted a return to agriculture supported by Jewish and then Slavic immigrants.

Resort Period

While agriculture was the dominant economic activity in Colchester in the early 1900's, it was not a viable way of life for some of the immigrants. Instead, they opened businesses in the central village, worked in the few remaining small factories, went into the hotel business, or operated rooming houses in the village.

The hospitality opportunities resulted in a resort trade that attracted vacationers, many of them Jewish, to Colchester. During the 1920s, seven major hotels or resorts operated in town and some farmers opened their homes to summer boarders. At its peak, local resorts attracted about 4,000 people annually. The resort trade was a major component of the local economy during this period.

The Depression of 1930's brought a decline to the resort industry. Many hotels closed during this time or became private homes or apartments. After the Depression, the resort business moved to lake areas in other towns.

Suburbanization

Colchester has experienced explosive growth since 1950. There are three reasons for this.

1. Strategic Location

While Colchester has always been strategically located in relation to other parts of Connecticut, this location has become even more convenient with the development of state and federal highways in the past 50 years. Today, Colchester is within easy commuting distance of major employment centers in Hartford, Norwich, New London and Middletown by Routes 2, 11, and 16. With the post-war "baby boom" and the trend toward suburbanization, it should come as no surprise that Colchester experienced growth as did many other communities.

2. Land Availability

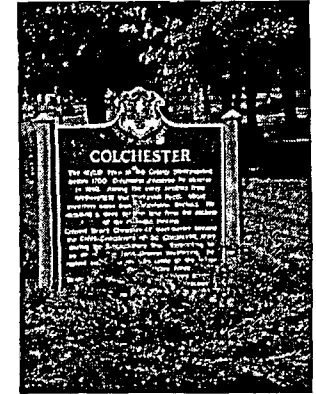
The availability of residential land in Colchester, coupled with a convenient location and affordable prices, has made it a focal point for growth. New homes have been built at a brisk rate to accommodate the demand.

3. Community Character

Finally, the community character and amenities that are available to residents have attracted new home buyers.

For these reasons, Colchester will be increasingly sought out by new residents, both for its rural character and its proximity to employment sources.

Historical Marker



Locational Considerations

Factors that can affect locational decisions of new residents include:

- job location,
- population density,
- housing prices,
- socio-economic status,
- educational quality,
- tax rates, and
- other factors (amenities, resale values, etc.).

Reasons For Moving To Colchester

At several public informational meetings, Colchester residents gave the following reasons for moving to Colchester.

Affordable home	42%
Convenient location	34%
Nice neighborhood	32%
Low crime rate	29%
Educational quality	26%
Community feeling	24%
Reasonable taxes	18%
Close to family	16%
Available land	13%
Community status	5%
Recreation facilities	3%
Local shopping	3%

Up to three responses were permitted

REGIONAL ROLES & IMPLICATIONS

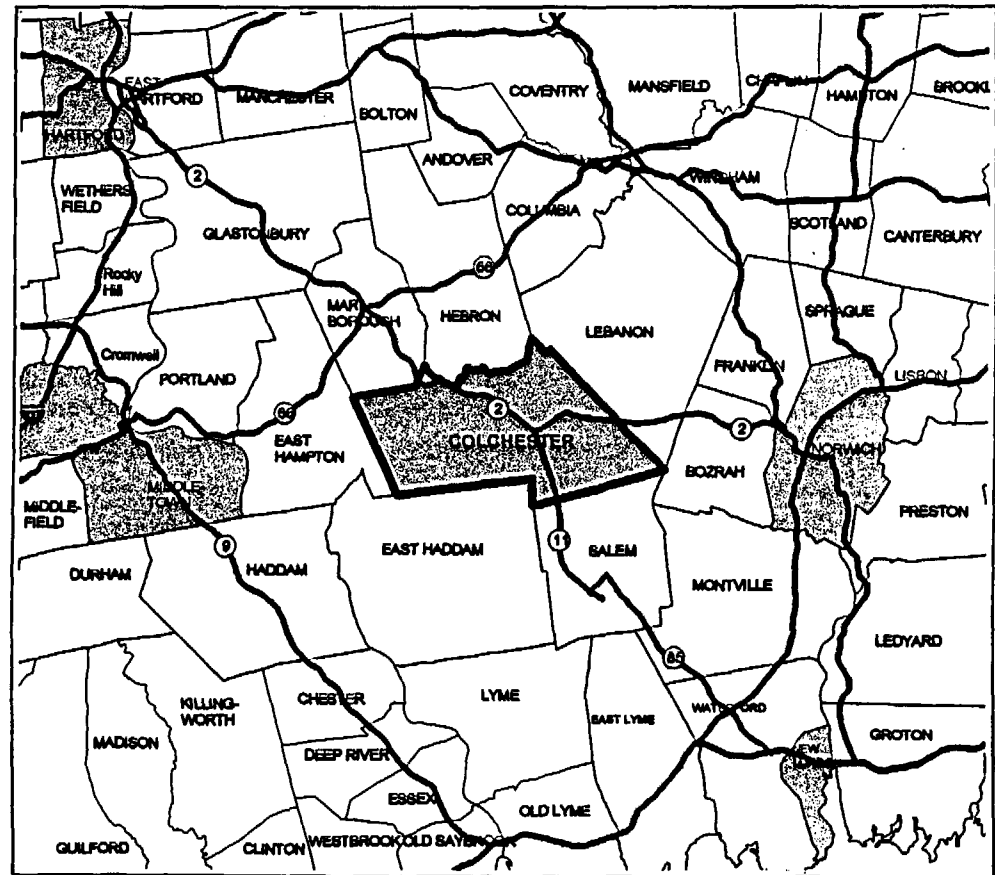
Colchester has two regional roles:

- a residential suburb for the Hartford, Norwich, New London, and Middletown metropolitan areas, and
- a sub-regional center offering businesses and employment for the residents of surrounding communities.

These roles are supported by Colchester's strategic location at the confluence of several major in-state travel routes. Downtown Hartford is located about 25 miles to the northwest along Route 2 (a limited access highway), Norwich is located about 15 miles east along Route 2, and New London is located about 20 miles southeast along Route 11 (a limited access highway) and Route 85.

Future growth is expected to continue and it is anticipated that this growth will reinforce Colchester's regional roles. Since housing prices in Colchester are more affordable than in communities located closer to Hartford, people are expected to continue to move to Colchester and residential growth will continue.

As population grows in Colchester and surrounding communities, Colchester's role as a sub-regional "hub" will continue to expand.



PEOPLE OF COLCHESTER

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated Colchester's 1998 population to be 12,709 persons. This represents an increase of 1,729 persons from the 10,980 persons reported in the 1990 Census. The following chart shows population growth in Colchester since the 1800 Census with a range of population projections through to the year 2020.

Over the last thirty years, Colchester has experienced significant population growth. In fact, Colchester was the fastest growing town in Connecticut between 1980 and 1998. If recent growth continues, Colchester may have a population of 13,140 people in the year 2000.

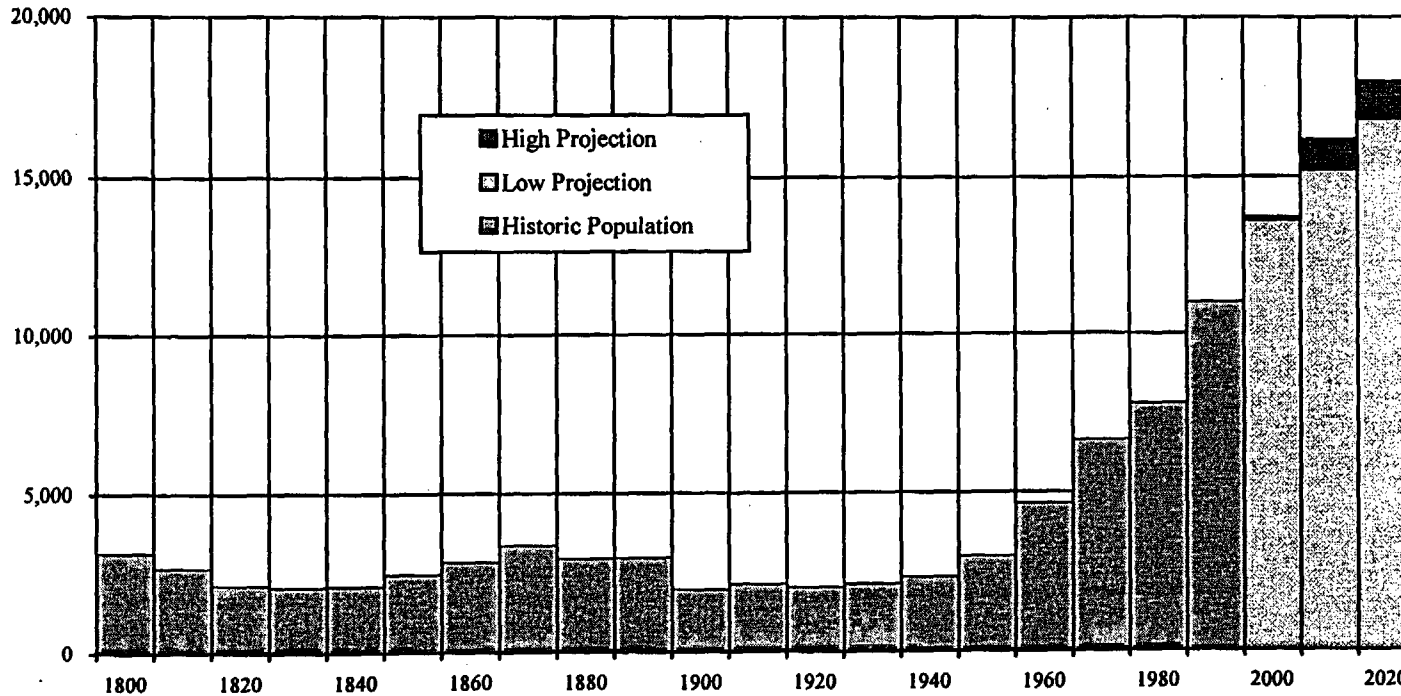
Still, due to the large land area (48 square miles), Colchester has a low overall population density and this has helped the community retain its rural character.

Colchester Population

	Population
1920	2,050
1930	2,134
1940	2,338
1950	3,007
1960	4,648
1970	6,603
1980	7,761
1990	10,980
2000	<i>13,140</i>
2010	<i>15,201</i>
2020	<i>16,801</i>

US Census with year 2000 projections based on 1990-96 trends in italics.

Colchester's Population (1800 - 2020)



Growth Comparison

	1980-90
Colchester	42%
Salem	42%
Hebron	30%
Lebanon	27%
East Hampton	22%
East Haddam	19%
Marlborough	17%
State of CT.	6%

1980-90 US Census

Growth Comparison

	1990-98
Colchester	16%
Hebron	14%
East Haddam	12%
East Hampton	6%
Salem	6%
Marlborough	4%
Lebanon	4%
State of CT.	-0.5%

US Bureau of the Census

Migration Statistics

Year	Town	State
1985-90	56%	46%
1980-84	15	14
1970-79	16	18
1960-69	7	11
Pre 1960	6	12
Total	100%	100%

Dynamics of Population Change

Most growth that occurred in Colchester in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1980s was due to in-migration. On the other hand, most growth in the 1970s and 1990s was due to natural increase. With an affordable housing stock, Colchester will continue to attract young families who will have children.

Components of Population Change

	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	Trend 1990s
Total Change	+1,641	+1,955	+1,158	+3,219	+2,160
Change Due To Natural Increase	+465	+907	+701	+986	+1,566
Births	825	1,281	1,215	1,687	2,250
Deaths	360	374	514	701	684
Change Due To Net Migration	+1,176	+1,048	+457	+2,233	+594

US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports, 1990s trend is 1990 to 1996 data extrapolated to a ten-year period.

Overall, the effects of migration are difficult to estimate in Colchester since there are no procedures to determine the composition of those who move out versus those who move in. The potential impact from migration may best be appreciated by considering the following:

- while an average of about 125 new homes were built annually in town from 1977 to 1996, as many as 200 homes sell each year,
- 56 percent of all households in Colchester in 1990 had moved to their home since 1985,
- about 71 percent of all households in Colchester in 1990 had moved to their 1990 home since 1980, and
- only 13 percent of all 1990 households had lived in Colchester since 1970.

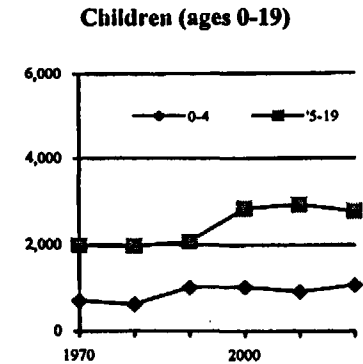
New residents are also changing the socio-economic composition of Colchester. In Colchester, the net in-migration probably reflects young families moving to a community that they like and can afford. Recent growth has attracted young families who typically commute to executive and professional jobs in the Hartford area. A declining percentage of residents work in manufacturing occupations or industries or commute to jobs in the New London area.

Changing Age Composition

Changes are also occurring due to the changing age distribution of residents. Population projections prepared by the Connecticut Census Data Center estimate age grouping and these estimates can help assess the implications of demographic changes on municipal services and housing types. Of course, it must be remembered that these are projections and variations can occur, especially further into the future.

Children (ages 0-19)

Available data suggest that younger people are moving to Colchester to raise families and that families with school age children are also moving to Colchester. As a result, school enrollments are expected to increase until the year 2010.

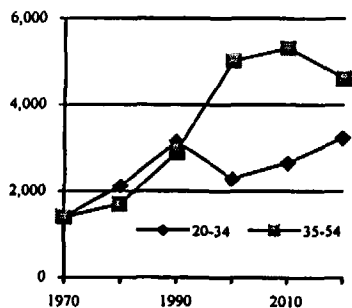


Description	Age Range	Population Projection	Percent Projection	Needs
Infants	0 to 4	Stay fairly constant through to the year 2020	Slight decline as percent of population	Child care
School-Age	5 to 19	Peak near 2010 at about 850 more people than in 1990	Share of population will decline after year 2000	School facilities and recreation programs

Ages	Population							Percent						
	Actual			Projected				Actual			Projected			
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
0-4	654	692	605	1,009	1,013	914	1,071	14%	10%	8%	9%	7%	6%	6%
5-19	1,160	1,988	1,962	2,082	2,851	2,934	2,781	25%	30%	25%	19%	21%	19%	17%

Source: 1970-90 Census, Projections by Connecticut Census Data Center (1995.1)

Adults (ages 20-54)



Adults (ages 20-54)

While the number of young adults (ages 20 to 34) is expected to decline during the 1990s, the number of middle-aged residents (ages 35 to 54) is expected to grow until the year 2010. Since these are the typical families with school-age children, this helps explain the increase in school enrollments being experienced in Colchester.

Participating in Public Policy



Participating in Recreation



Description	Age Range	Population Projection	Percent Projection	Needs
Young Adults	20 to 34	Decline during the 1990s and increase thereafter	Share of population expected to be much lower due to "baby bust"	Rental housing and starter homes
Middle Age	35 to 54	Peak around the year 2010 and then decline	Major increase as percent of population due to the aging of the "baby boom"	Family programs and trade-up homes

Ages	Population						Percent							
	Actual				Projected			Actual				Projected		
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
20-34	930	1,404	2,127	3,148	2,301	2,665	3,235	20%	21%	27%	29%	17%	18%	19%
35-54	1,053	1,399	1,707	2,889	5,008	5,321	4,601	23%	21%	22%	26%	37%	35%	27%

Source: 1970-90 Census, Projections by Connecticut Census Data Center (1995.1)

Residents Aged 55 and over

The number of residents aged 55 and over is expected to continue to increase in Colchester as the “baby boom” ages and people live longer. In the year 2020, these residents are expected to represent over 30 percent of Colchester’s population (roughly double the population share in 1990).

Generations at Play

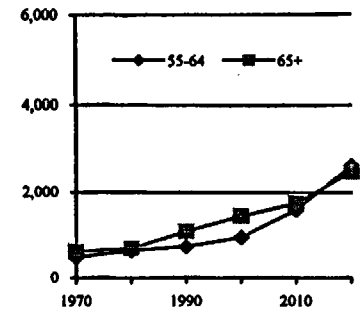


Colchester Park & Recreation Department

Senior Center Activities



Older Adults (ages 55+)



Description	Age Range	Population Projection			Percent Projection			Needs							
		Residents Aged 55 and Over			Share of population expected to increase significantly										
	55 and over	Grow significantly through the planning period			Share of population expected to increase significantly			Smaller homes and elderly programs							
		Population						Percent							
		Actual			Projected			Actual			Projected				
Ages		1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
55-64		293	489	651	752	962	1,611	2,625	6%	7%	8%	7%	7%	11%	16%
65+		558	631	709	1,100	1,463	1,756	2,488	12%	10%	9%	10%	11%	12%	15%

Source: 1970-90 Census, Projections by Connecticut Census Data Center (1995.1)

Use Versus Zoning

The table on this page and the map on the facing page show land uses within Colchester, not zoning. In other words, the map shows which properties were being used for which purposes in 1998 when the land use survey was done.

1970 Land Use Data

For comparison, the 1972 Plan estimated that about 6,500 acres of land were occupied for or dedicated to the following uses in 1970:

Use	Acres
Residential	1,291
Open Space	3,754
Business	186
Pub/Inst.	110
Transp/Other	1,174
Total	6,515

In other words, about 8,000 acres of land have been developed or committed in 28 years.

LAND USE IN COLCHESTER

Colchester contains approximately 31,500 acres. The 1998 land use survey found that about 46 percent of the community (14,507 acres) is occupied for residential, commercial, or institutional use or is dedicated to a specific purpose such as public land or protected open space.

Conversely, about 54 percent of the land in town (16,975 acres) is vacant or uncommitted to a specific use. The amount of uncommitted land helps explain the rural character that people perceive in Colchester.

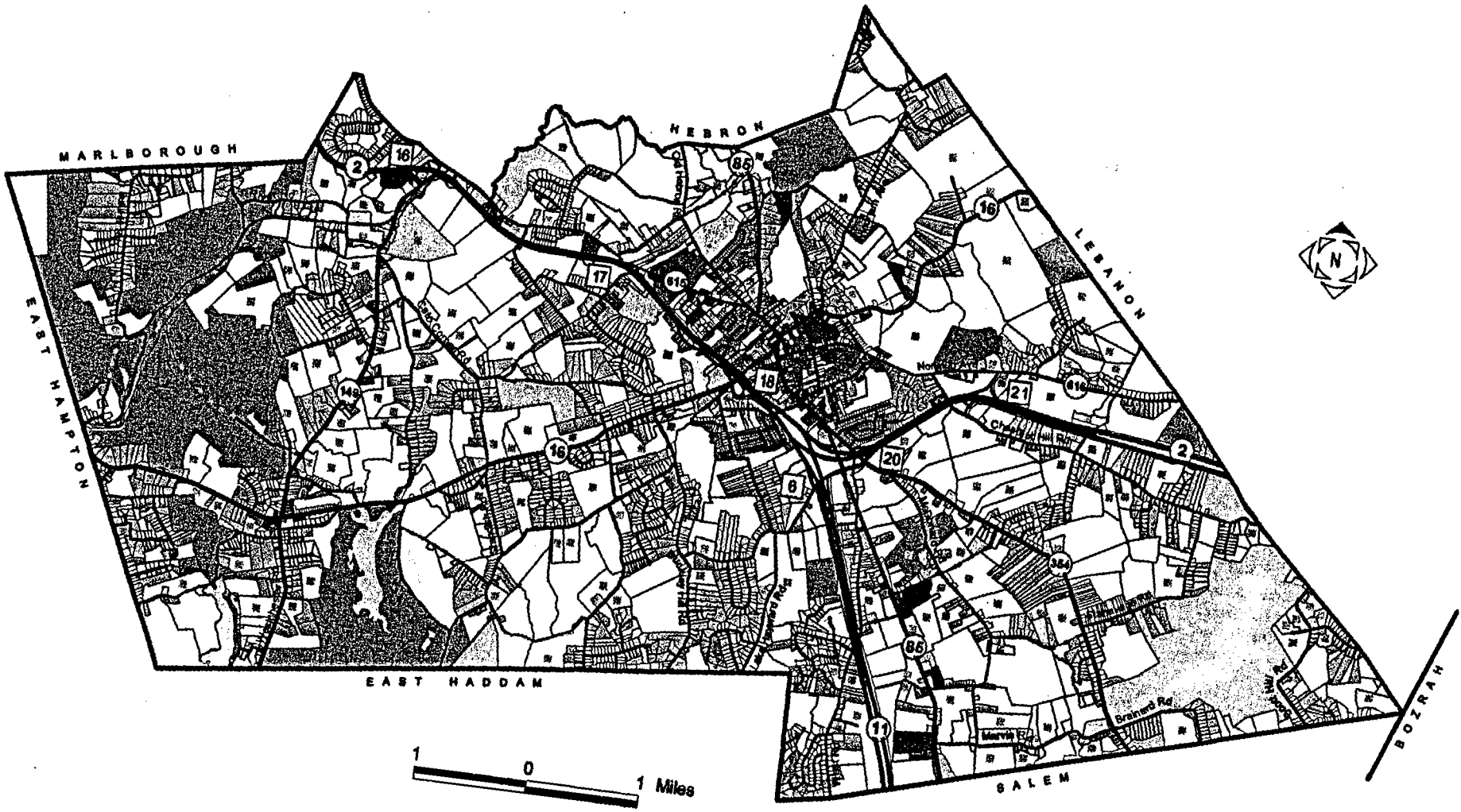
1998 COLCHESTER LAND USE SUMMARY

Use	Acres	Percent of Developed Land	Percent of Total Land
Residential	7,011	48%	22%
Single-family	6,669		
Multi-family	342		
Open Space	4,801	33%	15%
Land Dedicated For Open Space Uses	3,541		
Land Managed For Open Space Purposes	1,280		
Business	407	3%	1%
Commercial	312		
Industrial	53		
Mixed Use	42		
Public & Institutional Uses	482	3%	2%
Transportation / Other	1,806	12%	6%
Transportation	1,750		
Public Utility	56		
Developed / Committed	14,507	100%	46%
Vacant/Potentially Developable	16,975		54%
Total Land Area	31,482		100%




Source: Planimetrics. Totals may not add due to rounding.

1998 Existing Land Use

Colchester, CT




Residential

-  Single Family
-  Multi-Family
-  Mobile Homes



Business

-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Mixed Use

Institutional

-  Community Facilities, Churches & Other Institutional Uses




Open Space

-  Dedicated Open Space
-  Managed Open Space

Vacant

-  Vacant Land

Other

-  Roads
-  Public Utility
-  Water

Definitions

Developed Land - land that has buildings or improvements used for a particular economic or social purpose (such as residential or institutional).

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

Vacant Land - land that is not developed or committed.

Under-Developed Land - developed land that is not used to its full potential (such as a 50-acre parcel with one house in a one-acre residential zone).

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The 1998 land use survey found that there are about 16,975 acres of land in Colchester that are currently vacant or under-developed and may be capable of supporting additional development in the future. The Plan estimates the future development potential of Colchester, given environmental constraints and current regulatory standards, in order to evaluate whether:

- this amount of development is appropriate,
- adequate facilities exist or can be provided to support this level of development, and
- to help guide future conservation and development programs.

One of the major purposes of the Plan of Conservation and Development is to manage the conservation and development of the 16,975 acres of potentially developable property and the redevelopment of any existing properties.

Residential Development Potential

After considering physical and environmental constraints on the vacant and under-developed land, it is estimated that Colchester could eventually contain as many as 15,000 total housing units if fully developed under existing zoning. Thus, based on typical 1990 household sizes, Colchester could eventually be a community of about 40,000 people.

Interestingly, the 1972 Colchester Plan estimated the future development potential at up to 60,000 people. Regulatory changes, development patterns, and better knowledge of environmental and other constraints has refined the estimate since that time. The estimate of about 40,000 people is also consistent with the findings of the 1990 Plan.

Business Development Potential

Based on appropriate yield factors and the land constraints, it is estimated that the business zones (B, C) in Colchester could result in an additional 1,100,000 square feet of commercial floor space under existing zoning. This is in addition to the existing business development in Colchester.

The Industrial zone (I) could result in an additional 7,500,000 square feet of industrial floor space under existing zoning, based on the yield factor and the land constraints. Again, this is in addition to existing industrial development in Colchester.

RESIDENT SURVEYS

Public Meeting Surveys

Several informational meetings were held as part of the planning process in order to inform Colchester residents about the update of the Plan, encourage public input and participation, and involve Colchester residents in the formulation of the Plan of Conservation & Development. This information helped guide the planning process.

“Planning Points” - One exercise asked residents to vote with coupons of different values to identify the issues that were most important to them as part of the planning process. The following priorities were identified:

<u>Topic</u>		<u>Topic</u>	
Conservation of Natural Resources	15%	Improvement of Utilities	8%
Expansion of Business and Industry	15%	Preservation of Open Space	6%
Improvement of Community Facilities	12%	Improvement of Community Centers	6%
Protection of Community Character	11%	Housing and Residential Areas	6%
Preservation of Historic Resources	9%	Improvement of Transportation	4%
Improvement of Land Use Regulation	8%	Other Issues	0%

“Prouds & Sorrys” - Another exercise asked residents to identify areas of the community they were particularly proud of or particularly sorry about. Major prouds and sorrys are listed below.

<u>Prouds</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Sorrys</u>	<u>Total</u>
Town Green	24	Asphalt plant	20
Bacon Academy High School	11	McDonald’s Restaurant	7
Town Recreation Area	11	Sand pit	5
Town Hall	7	Merchants Row	3
Old Bacon Academy	6	Jack Jackter School	3

Public Discussion - At each public meeting, a public discussion was organized around the topics that received the most planning points. The major points raised by residents are presented in the appropriate following chapters.

Survey Results

As with most any survey, the results are indicative of issues that existed in the community at the time the survey was done.

While some responses reflect long-term and continuing perspectives in Colchester, some other issues (such as the proposed asphalt plant) were temporary and have been resolved.

Sampling & Variation

The sample size was 400 residents. Telephone numbers were generated through random-digit dialing to ensure that each residential telephone number had an equal probability of selection. Within each household one adult was randomly selected to complete the interview.

The sampling error for the 400 interviews in Colchester is ± 4.5 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. The sampling error is larger for sub-groups.

This means that there is less than one chance in twenty that the results of a survey of this size and methodology differs by more than five percentage points in either direction from the results which would be obtained if all adults in Colchester had been interviewed.

Telephone Survey

As part of the process of preparing the Plan of Conservation and Development, a random sample telephone survey of Colchester residents was conducted. The questions were designed to address issues identified as part of the planning process and to generate responses that would help guide policy makers, both now and in the future.

- **Residents Generally Satisfied** - A majority of Colchester residents felt that the overall quality of life in town was excellent (18%) or good (68%) and felt that the quality of life in Colchester had remained about the same (44%) or had gotten better (36%) in the past few years.
- **Want To Protect Character** - Town residents said that Colchester's rural setting (23%) and small town atmosphere (21%) make it a special place to live. Most residents (53%) wanted the Town to do more to protect the rural setting, small town setting, and other special characteristics.
- **Education and Growth Are Main Issues** - Residents felt that the most important issues facing Colchester were education (34%), town growth (17%), taxes (6%), and the lack of business and industry in town (7%).
- **Preserve Natural Features and Open Space** - Colchester residents wanted the town's natural resources and open space protected and felt that the Town was doing enough (41%) or needed to do more (48%) in this area. Only a few town residents (6%) felt the Town had done enough to acquire more land for parks and open space and most residents (66%) were willing to see their taxes raised to pay for it.
- **Attract More Business** - Most residents (56%) thought that attracting more business and industry to town would make Colchester a better place to live. Most residents (53%) also wanted the town to do more to expand tax revenues from business and industry. While there was no clear consensus on whether the town should encourage business growth in and near the town center and discourage it in outlying areas, a majority of town residents (72%) wanted more retail development in Westchester.
- **Community Facilities** - Most Colchester residents gave the public schools high grades and were supportive of education programs. A majority of residents favored building a community center (68%) and developing more recreation fields (62%).
- **Taxes Are Reasonable** - Most Colchester residents (56%) believed that the amount they paid in taxes was about right considering the level and quality of services they received from the town.

FISCAL ISSUES

Rationale

Expenditures

Colchester spends about \$30 million in order to provide services to residents and property. Expenditures in Colchester are slightly lower than the state average on a per capita basis. Local expenditures are clearly focused on education and about six of every ten dollars spent by the Town of Colchester goes to education.

Fiscal issues are an important consideration as part of the Plan since implementation of Plan recommendations may involve the expenditure of municipal funds.

1997-98 Per Capita Expenditures

	Colchester		Connecticut	
Education	\$1,379	64%	\$1,245	56%
Public Works	135	6%	186	8%
Debt Service	339	17%	156	7%
Police	37	2%	148	7%
Fire	31	1%	85	4%
Other	241	10%	420	18%
Total	\$2,162	100%0	\$2,240	100%

Other includes general government, finance, recreation, library, land use, building, and other programs.

Connecticut Policy & Economic Council

1997-98 Per Capita Expenditure Comparison

	Population	Expenditure	Per Capita
Salem	3,557	\$ 8.4M	\$2,372
Lebanon	6,392	\$14.0M	\$2,185
Hebron	7,789	\$17.0M	\$2,180
Colchester	12,732	\$27.5M	\$2,162
East Haddam	7,347	\$15.7M	\$2,132
Bozrah	2,356	\$ 4.9M	\$2,080
Marlborough	5,623	\$11.5M	\$2,042
East Hampton	10,994	\$20.0M	\$2,021

Connecticut Policy & Economic Council

Revenues

While the Town generates most of its revenue from local property taxes, Colchester is fortunate to receive a larger than average amount of state aid and other intergovernmental revenue. As a result, the amount of money to be raised from current taxes is less than the state average.

1997-98 Per Capita Revenues

	Colchester		Connecticut	
Current Taxes	\$1,189	55%	\$1,449	65%
State Aid	807	37%	573	26%
Surplus	29	1%	37	2%
Fines & Fees	48	2%	77	3%
Other	89	4%	104	5%
Total Revenue	\$2,162	100%	\$2,240	100%

Other revenue includes reimbursements, payments in lieu of taxes, grants, and other sources.

Connecticut Policy & Economic Council

1997-98 Per Capita Revenue Comparison

	Taxes	State Aid	Total
East Haddam	\$1,427	\$532	\$2,132
Marlborough	\$1,377	\$552	\$2,042
Salem	\$1,355	\$866	\$2,372
Hebron	\$1,337	\$716	\$2,180
East Hampton	\$1,227	\$723	\$2,159
Colchester	\$1,189	\$807	\$2,162
Bozrah	\$1,174	\$847	\$2,080
Lebanon	\$1,001	\$910	\$2,185

Connecticut Policy & Economic Council

Tax Base Composition

	Percent Business
State of CT.	20%
Bozrah	15%
Colchester	12%
East Haddam	9%
Marlborough	9%
East Hampton	7%
Salem	7%
Hebron	5%
Lebanon	3%

Tax Base

Colchester is not considered to have a wealthy tax base since it has less property wealth (measured by Equalized Net Grand List) than the state average. This makes Colchester eligible for more state aid under current state formulas. While Colchester has a higher business tax base than many surrounding communities, it is still lower than the state average.

Taxation

In the telephone survey, more than half of Colchester residents felt that the amount they pay in taxes is about right for the level and quality of the services they receive. In addition, almost half of Colchester residents think that taxes in Colchester are about the same as they are in other towns.

Taxes Relative to the Level and Quality of Services

Too High	40%
About Right	56%
Too Low	2%
Don't Know	3%

Colchester Taxes Compared to Other Towns in the Area

Higher	28%
About the Same	45%
Lower	9%
Don't Know	18%

SUMMARY OF CONDITIONS & TRENDS

Colchester has attracted new residents due to the rural character and the perception of the overall quality of life in the community. Continued residential and business growth is expected during the planning period due to Colchester's strategic location, affordable housing, potentially available land, and overall quality of life.

The challenge of this Plan is to carefully manage Colchester's future conservation and development in order to:

- protect the essential elements of the character that residents most cherish,
- establish appropriate development patterns, and
- conserve the resources and areas that are most important to residents.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

4

OVERVIEW

Colchester's population grew substantially from approximately 3,000 residents in 1950 to over 12,000 residents by the year 2000. While Colchester has managed to retain much of its rural character, this character is threatened by future activities. In order to retain Colchester's special characteristics, efforts to preserve community character must continue.

*Protect and preserve
physical character . . .*

*Promote community
spirit . . .*

INVENTORY

While the elements of what comprises community character are different for each person, there are some common elements. In surveys conducted as part of the process of preparing the Plan, residents indicated that the rural setting and small town atmosphere make the town a special place to live.

Rural Character on River Road



Community Character on Bull Hill Road



Telephone Survey

What Makes Colchester Special?

Rural Setting	23%
Small Town Atmosphere	21%
Nice Town	8%
Quiet Place to Live	6%
Convenient Location	6%
Other	36%

Scenic Road Designation

State statutes (CGS Section 13b-31) allow the Department of Transportation to designate State Scenic Roads if they meet certain criteria.

Towns can also adopt an ordinance and designate local roads as scenic if they meet statutory criteria (CGS 7-149a).

ASSESSMENT

Physical attributes and community spirit are important issues in terms of defining community character. In surveys and meetings for the Plan, residents consistently indicated that the Town should continue to be concerned about the issue of community character.

PROGRAM

Physical Character

Elements that contribute to the physical character of Colchester include:

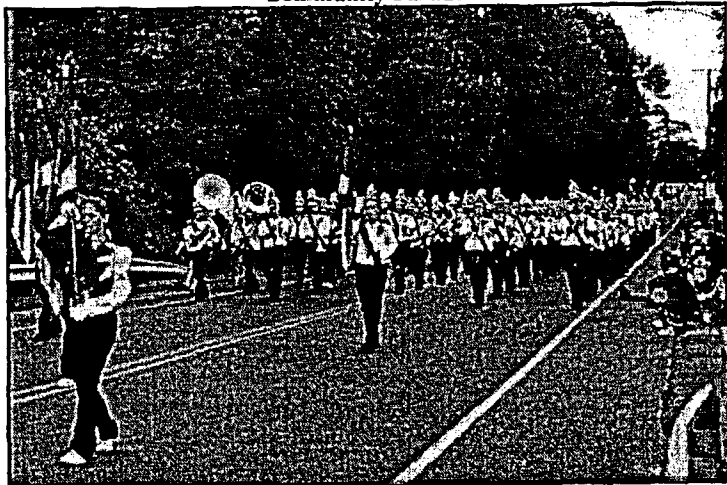
- **The Town Center / Town Green** - the Town Center and the Town Green are a source of pride for local residents. The local stores and village setting attract people and create community pride and spirit.
- **Local Facilities** - Community character is also enhanced by local facilities such as the Town Hall, the Recreation Complex, and the Library.
- **State Facilities** – Such as Day Pond State Park, Salmon Brook State Forest, and other State facilities.
- **Agricultural and Rural Features** - Colchester contains numerous stone walls, barns, significant trees, and other features that contribute to community character.
- **Natural Resources & Open Space** - Natural features and open space contribute to community character and strategies related to preservation of these resources are identified in chapters of the Plan.
- **Ridgelines and Scenic Views** - Ridgelines and panoramic views enhance the rural and scenic character of Colchester and development in these areas could threaten these resources.
- **Vegetation** – Vegetation is another important aspect of community character.
- **Scenic Roads** - Scenic roads are another element that significantly contribute to Colchester's character. Designation of scenic roads is intended to ensure that any alteration maintains the essential character of the road.
- **Architectural Characteristics** - The architecture of buildings in Colchester, especially in the Town Center, significantly contribute to overall community character.
- **Historic Resources** - Local historical and archeological features contribute to community character and strategies related to the preservation of these resources are identified in a special chapter of the Plan.

Community Spirit

Elements that contribute to community spirit in Colchester include:

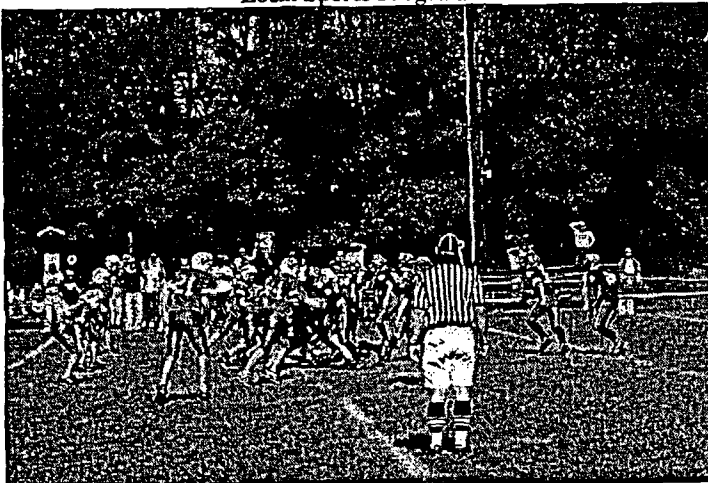
- **Local Programs Or Events** - Events (such as community festivals, art or antique shows, fireworks displays, and community concerts) raise a community's visibility as a special place and add to community spirit and character.
- **Local Organizations** - Local organizations also build community spirit. These include religious institutions, charitable organizations, sports leagues, and other organizations where people help each other and their community accomplish important priorities.
- **Volunteer Contributions** - Volunteer contributions have a lot to do with what makes Colchester special. Over the years, it is the tireless devotion of residents to making Colchester a better place that has helped preserve community character, built community spirit and made Colchester the place that it is today. It is simply not possible here to recognize everyone that has contributed to Colchester's evolution over the years.
- **Local Recognition** - Community spirit and pride is enhanced by positive publicity of local events and activities. This includes those things important to residents such as educational quality, community appearance, local excellence, and other factors.

Community Parade



Lisa M. Smith

Local Sports Programs



Local Organizations

Local organizations that contribute to community activities and community spirit include:

- Colchester-Hayward Volunteer Fire Department,
- Colchester Lions Club,
- Colchester Rotary Club,
- Colchester Fish & Game Club,
- Colchester Business Association,
- Colchester Arts Commission,
- Historical Society.

Local Events

Local events that contribute to community character, pride, and spirit include:

- Ice cream socials,
- Golf tournaments,
- Cruise nights,
- Memorial Day Parade,
- Carnival on the Town Green,
- Craft sales,
- Community dances,
- Community concerts,
- Country fairs,
- Dinner auctions,
- Halloween parties,
- Haunted House,
- Music concerts,
- Awards dinners,
- Candle-Walk.

Implementation

See the implementation chart on page 114 for the priority and the assignment of responsibility for implementation of these community character strategies.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER STRATEGIES

Protect and Preserve Physical Character

1. Identify scenic views and scenic areas and amend local regulations to protect them.
2. Identify important ridgelines, steeply sloping hillsides, and rock outcrops and amend local regulations to protect them.
3. When appropriate, retain stone walls, barns, significant trees, and other buildings and features in new development.
4. Encourage the Department of Transportation to designate State highways in Colchester as scenic roads.
5. Adopt a local scenic road ordinance and designate scenic roads while retaining the ability to make emergency repairs and public safety improvements.
6. Continue to ensure that new buildings (except single-family dwellings) are compatible in scale and materials with neighboring buildings, especially in the Town Center, by:
 - establishing additional design review criteria or guidelines,
 - enhancing and streamlining current design review procedures, or
 - possibly establishing a Design Review Committee.
7. Protect and enhance other natural resources, open space, historic resources, the Town Center, and local facilities in order to promote community character.
8. Investigate ways to bury utility cables in the Town Center and strive to accomplish this strategy over the long term.
9. Continue to encourage businesses, especially in the Town Center, to maintain the streetscape around their facilities and provide facilities for litter.
10. Continue to encourage property maintenance, especially in the Town Center.

Promote Community Spirit

11. Continue to encourage local recognition, volunteer contributions, and local organizations, programs, and events in order to promote community spirit.
12. Continue using the Park and Recreation Department to coordinate and schedule community social events, especially on the Town Green, in order to build and maintain community pride and spirit.
13. Consider a program of recognizing:
 - volunteers through an annual picnic, and
 - other “hometown heroes” through a plaque at the Town Hall.
14. Encourage increased coordination among community groups to coordinate local events and enhance community spirit.

NATURAL RESOURCES

5

OVERVIEW

Conservation of natural resources is important in terms of preserving environmental functions and protecting community character. Environmentally sound planning helps to find an appropriate balance between conservation and development and to improve the quality of life for existing and future generations.

Colchester's development pattern has always been strongly influenced by natural resources. From the first settlement over 300 years ago to more recent activities, natural resources have been, and should remain, one of the formative elements of Colchester's character. A primary objective of current and future residents should be to preserve those natural features that contribute to Colchester's character and quality of life.

*Preserve Water
Quality...*

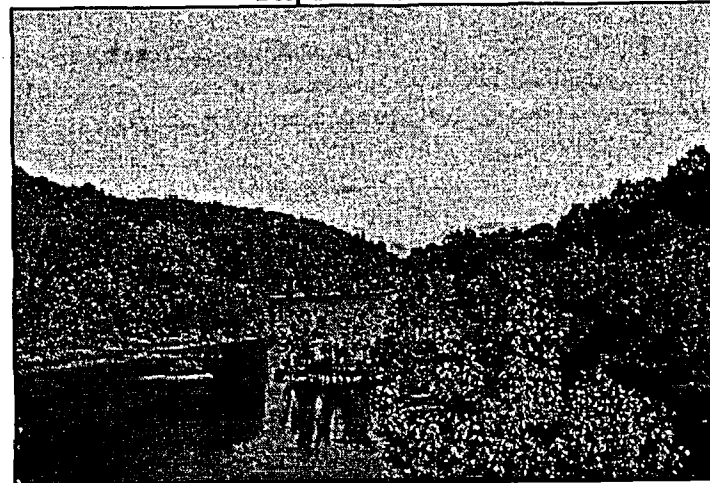
*Protect Water
Resources...*

*Protect Other Natural
Resources...*

Blackledge River



Deep River Reservoir



Town Efforts At Protecting Natural Resources?

Telephone Survey

Should Do More	48%
Done Enough	41%
Done Too Much	2%
Don't Know	9%

Public Meeting Survey

Too Little	59%
Just Right	35%
Too Much	5%

INVENTORY

Significant natural resources in Colchester and the rationale for their consideration in the Plan include:

Summary of Resources Affecting Conservation and Development

Category	Resource	Category	Rationale for Conservation
Land	Steep Slopes	• 15 % or more	• Potential for erosion, structural concerns
	Soils	• Wetlands	• Habitat, water quality, and flood storage
		• Hardpan	• Hinders septic functions and buildings
		• Shallow/ Rocky	• Hinders septic function and construction
Water	Watercourses	• Excessively Drained	• Susceptible to contamination
		• Watercourses and waterbodies	• Habitat, water quality, and flood storage
		• Floodplains	• Periodic flooding, threat to life and property
Water	Water Quality	• Surface/Ground	• Protect supply sources, prevent pollution
		• Air	• Provides healthy environment
Biology	Flora / Fauna	• Diversity	• Plant and animal habitat

ASSESSMENT

Colchester residents want the town's natural resources protected and feel that the Town could and should be doing more to protect them. Resources considered to be a priority for conservation are discussed below.

The most important issue with regard to natural resource protection in Colchester is the protection of water quality. Since most of the Town's residents obtain their potable water from local groundwater sources, maintaining the quality of this supply will be the most precious legacy that current residents can leave for future generations.

Appreciation of Water Resources



Lisa M. Smith

PROGRAM

The most important natural resources in Colchester are water related. These areas are the principal elements in any effort to maintain an ecological balance because of the essential role and function they play in:

- maintaining and improving water quality and maintaining the water supply,
- providing extraordinary scenic value,
- supporting wildlife, and
- controlling drainage and flooding.

Water Features

Water features in Colchester include rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, swamps, vernal pools, and floodplains. Activities in these areas are generally regulated by the Inland Wetlands Commission and/or the Zoning & Planning Commission. The Town should continue to assure that these areas within Colchester are maintained in their natural state.

Water Quality / Water Supply Sources

Water quality is the most important natural resource issue in Colchester since most residents rely on groundwater from private or public supply wells. Public water supply sources in Colchester include the Deep River Reservoir (that supplies water to Norwich) and areas of high groundwater availability (aquifers) that supply water to local residents.

To help protect water quality in these areas, it is recommended that the current aquifer protection zone regulations be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the highest degree of water quality protection for designated aquifers, areas of high groundwater availability, and areas within public water supply watersheds. These areas should continue to be protected from land uses that could hinder their use as public water supply sources. Zoning designations should be evaluated (especially in the Deep River watershed) to protect water supply sources. In addition, Colchester should adopt a residential fuel tank ordinance requiring the replacement of underground fuel storage tanks which are more than 20 years old.

Flood Plains

There are many places in Colchester where the land is subject to flooding. Land use in these areas should continue to be strictly controlled in order to minimize potential flood hazards and the damage which can occur, maximize water storage, maintain normal flood channels, and protect wildlife habitat.

Aquifer Protection

Stratified drift aquifers are geologic formations or deposits (generally sands and gravels) which store large quantities of groundwater and through which groundwater may be retrieved in quantities sufficient for public drinking supplies.

Bedrock aquifers include fractures or faults in underlying rock formations that typically yield small amounts of groundwater.

Aquifer protection can be enhanced by regulating land uses and activities that may threaten water quality. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is in the process of developing aquifer protection regulations and these should be consulted for guidelines on how to address aquifer protection in Colchester.

Natural Diversity Database

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection maintains a Natural Diversity Database (NDD) which includes information on:

- rare and endangered species,
- species of special concern, and
- sites with unique natural areas and other non-biologic resources (such as scenic resources).

The NDD sites in Colchester are identified on the overlay on the map on the facing page.

For more information on NDD resources, contact the Natural Diversity Database office at the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

Plant & Animal Habitat

Colchester contains habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal species. Efforts should continue to protect local plants and animals and their habitats and to diminish the presence of invasive species in order to encourage biological diversity.

Agricultural Uses and Soils

While Colchester has a rich agricultural heritage, farming operations are less commercially viable than before and farms have been converted to residential development. Colchester should, to the extent feasible, strive to preserve agricultural uses and prime agricultural soils.

Steep Slopes

The terrain in Colchester includes steeply sloping hillsides and rock outcrops. Development should continue to be limited in areas of steep slopes (25 percent or greater), especially in areas with erodible soils. Such areas may best be preserved as open space in new developments.

Summary

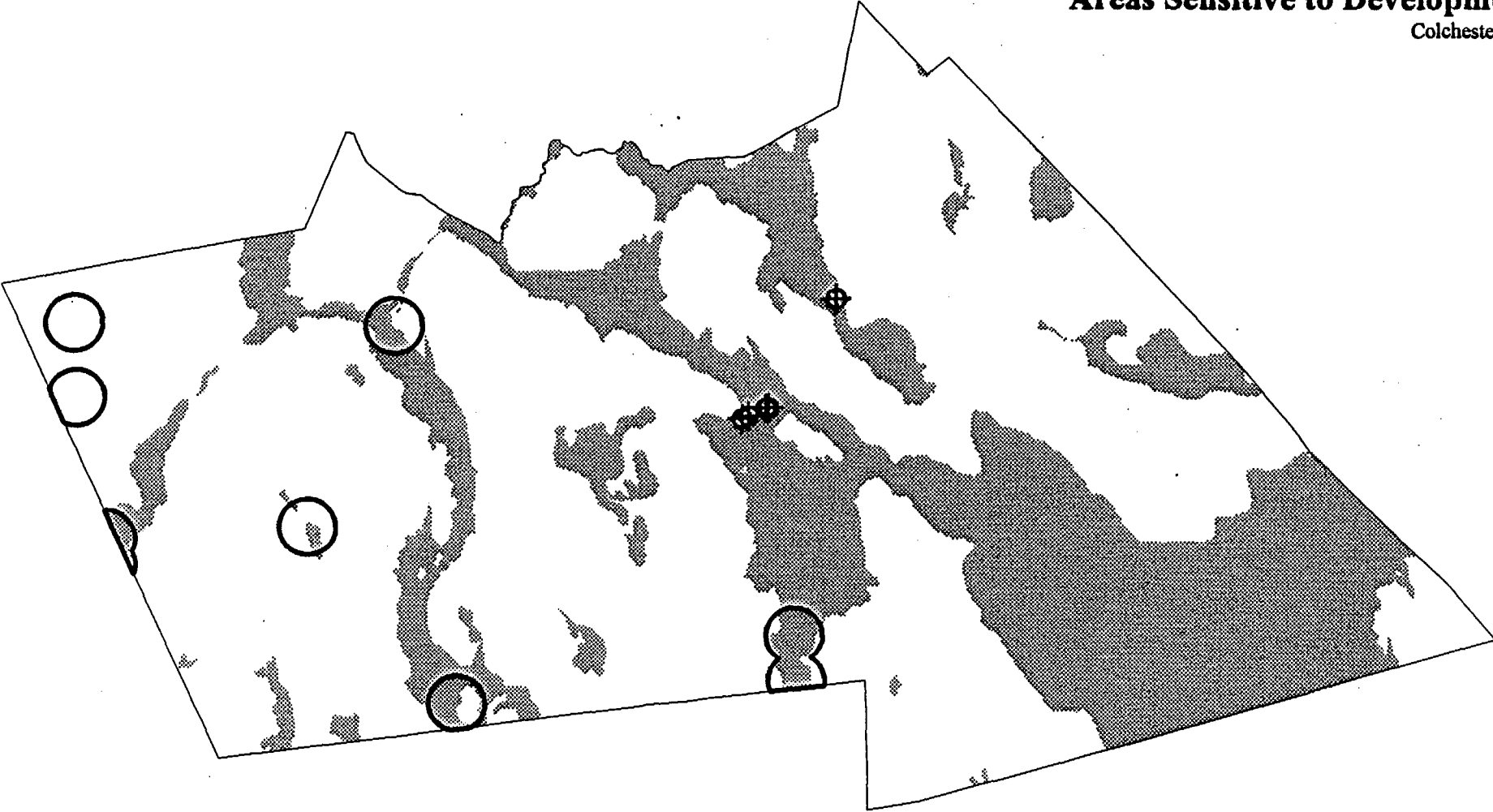
The following table and the map on the facing page identify the environmental resources where conservation efforts should be focused in order to sustain Colchester's environmental quality and help contribute to the overall quality of life.






Conservation Summary Table

Category	Definition	Proposed Criteria
Significant Conservation Areas	Very sensitive lands worthy of preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Watercourses and waterbodies• Poorly drained soils (wetlands)• Floodplain (100-year, 1.0% probability)
Important Conservation Areas	Sensitive lands worthy of conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public water supply watershed areas• Areas of high groundwater availability• Identified aquifers and recharge areas• Unique or special habitat areas• Any slope in excess of 25%• Floodplain (500-year, 0.2% probability)

Areas Sensitive to Development

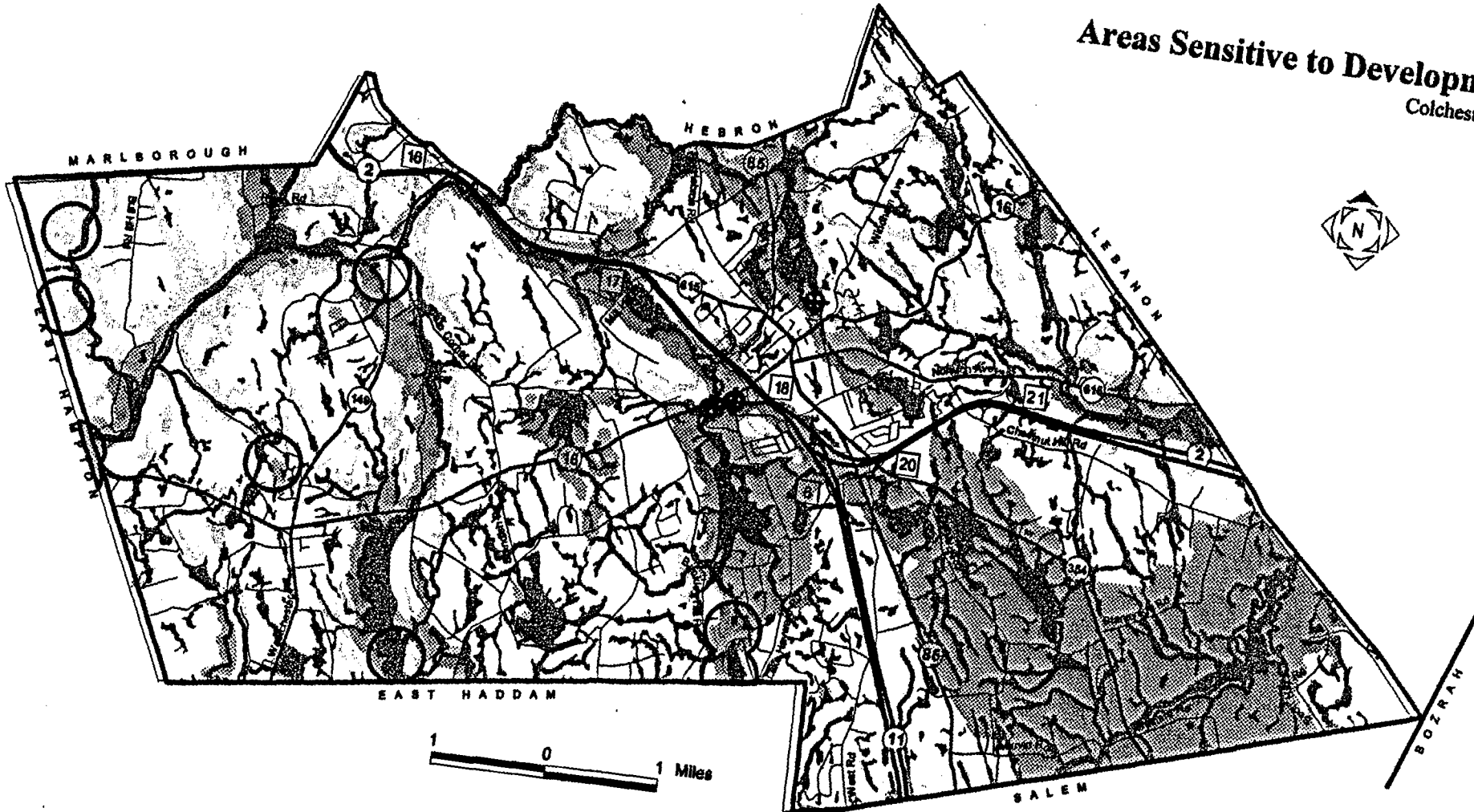
Colchester, CT



-  > Areas of high groundwater availability
-  > Public water supply watershed
-  > Existing aquifer protection districts
-  Water supply wellfield
-  Unique or special habitat areas

Natural Resource Conservation Plan
Colchester, CT

Areas Sensitive to Development
Colchester, CT



Significant Conservation Areas

- > Poorly drained soils (wetlands)
- > Watercourses
- > Floodplain (100-year, 1.0% probability)

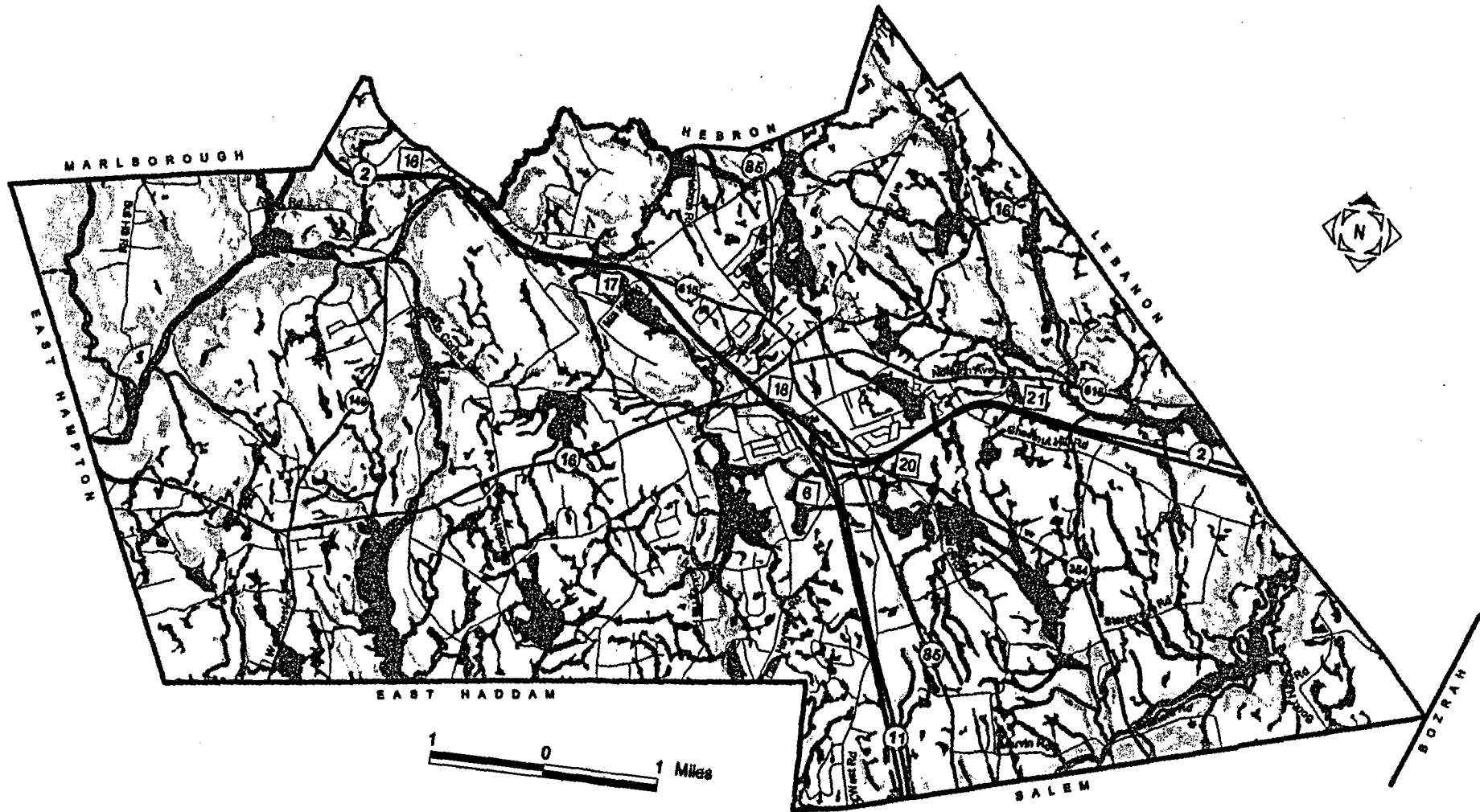
Important Conservation Areas

- > Any slope in excess of 25%
- > Floodplain (500-year, 0.2% probability)

- > Areas of high groundwater availability
- > Public water supply watershed
- > Existing aquifer protection districts
- ⊕ Water supply wellfield
- Unique or special habitat areas

Natural Resource Conservation Plan

Colchester, CT



Significant Conservation Areas

- > Poorly drained soils (wetlands)
- > Watercourses
- > Floodplain (100-year, 1.0% probability)

Important Conservation Areas

- > Any slope in excess of 25%
- > Floodplain (500-year, 0.2% probability)

Implementation

See the implementation chart on page 115 for the priority and the assignment of responsibility for implementation of these natural resource conservation strategies.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Preserve Water Quality

1. Continue to protect the major aquifers and public water supply watershed areas in Colchester from impacts of development.
2. Review the current aquifer protection zone regulations on a regular basis to ensure the highest degree of water quality protection for aquifers, areas of high groundwater availability, and areas within public water supply watersheds.
3. Continue to protect water supply areas from land uses that could hinder their use as public water supply sources.
4. Adopt a residential fuel tank ordinance requiring the replacement of underground fuel storage tanks which are more than 20 years old.
5. Continue to acquire land around aquifers and in public water supply watersheds in order to aid in their protection.
6. Continue to study local aquifers and adopt specific land development controls, as appropriate.

Protect Water Resources

7. Continue to protect watercourses, waterbodies, wetlands, floodplains, vernal pools, and other important water resources in order to maintain water quality, wildlife habitat, water supply, and ecological balance.
8. Continue to require appropriate buffer zones for important water resources.

Protect Other Natural Resources

9. Protect local plants and animals and their habitats.
10. Strive to preserve agricultural uses and prime agricultural soils.
11. Continue to fully consider natural resource issues at the time of development.
12. Continue to discourage building and road development on steep slopes.

OPEN SPACE

6

OVERVIEW

Open space, in adequate quantities and appropriate locations, can help:

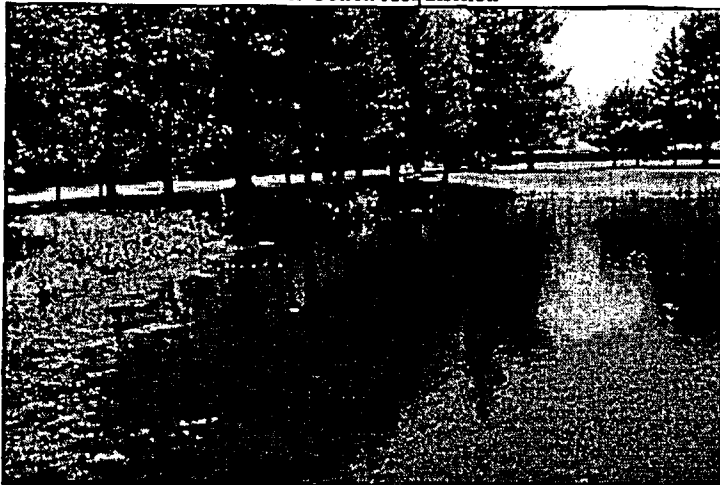
- conserve important natural resources,
- protect community character,
- provide fiscal and economic benefits,
- enhance the quality of life, and
- shape development patterns.

*Preserve More
Open Space...*

*Create A Greenbelt
System With Trails...*

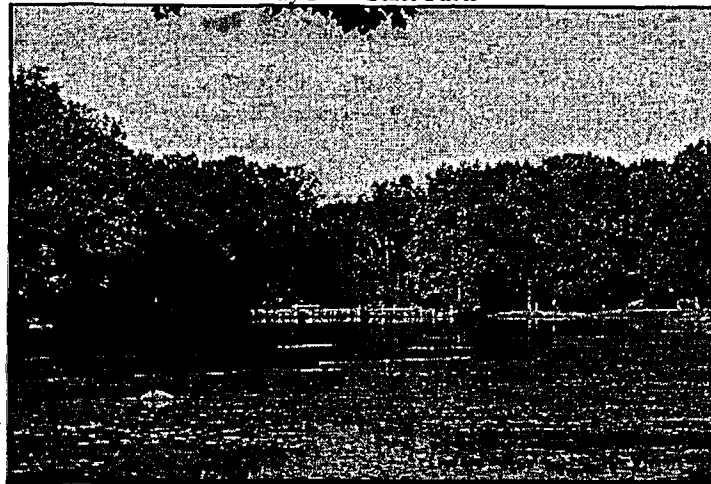
*Retain Perceived Open
Space...*

Recent Cohen Acquisition



Lisa M. Smith

Day Pond State Park



Open Space in Colchester

Perceived
16,317 acres
 (52 percent of Colchester)

Type	Area
State of Connecticut	3,497
City of Norwich	1,052
Town of Colchester	44
Golf Course	90
Cemetery	51
Public Facility	399
Other	66
Vacant and Uncommitted Land	11,118
Total	16,317 acres

Preserved
3,592 acres
 (11 percent of Colchester)

Type	Area
State of Connecticut	3,497
Town of Colchester	44
Other Properties	51
Total	3,592 acres

INVENTORY

Most people tend to think of “open space” as land that is not built upon. However, this definition includes land that is in private ownership and may be developed in the future. In fact, while over 16,000 acres of land in Colchester is *perceived* as “open space” at the present time, about 75 percent of this is privately-owned vacant and under-developed land that could be developed at some time in the future.

For purposes of the Plan of Conservation & Development, open space is defined as land that is preserved or dedicated to open space uses (about 4,800 acres in 1998). Open space in Colchester can be further classified as dedicated open space and managed open space.

Dedicated open space includes all land that is permanently preserved as open space either for public access, such as parks, recreation areas, or for natural or scenic values. The bulk of the *dedicated* open space is State of Connecticut lands (about 3,500 acres) located in western Colchester at Salmon River State Forest, Day Pond State Park, and Babcock Pond Wildlife Management Area. It also includes land owned by the Town of Colchester.

Managed open space includes land that is used or preserved for some purpose other than open space but that provides open space characteristics. In Colchester, this includes City of Norwich water supply land, cemeteries, and golf courses.

Existing Colchester Open Space	Preserved?	Total Area (acres)
Dedicated Open Space		3,540
Town of Colchester	Yes	44
State of Connecticut	Yes	3,497
Managed Open Space		1,260
City of Norwich	Probably	1,052
Golf Courses	Probably	90
Hayward VFD	Possibly	66
Other	Yes	51
TOTAL		4,800

Sources: Town of Colchester, Tax Assessor Records, Planimetrics

Parcels classified as open space typically allow for passive recreation activities (walking, bicycling, sight-seeing). More active recreational activities (organized field sports, recreation fields, and supervised recreation activities) are also considered under the Community Facilities element of this Plan.

ASSESSMENT

According to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), due to the amount of State-owned open space lands in town, Colchester has slightly more total open space than other towns in Connecticut. However, Colchester has much less Town-owned open space than the state average. Thus, Colchester compares favorably with other areas in relation to the total amount of open space, but not in terms of town-owned open space.

Until recently, the Town of Colchester did not acquire or accept much open space. This was due to concerns about liability, an unwillingness to be responsible for a number of small pieces in different locations, lack of acquisition funds, or the lack of an overall open space plan. However, this philosophy has changed and the Town is presently more interested in preserving open space.

Surveys during the planning process revealed that Colchester residents want to protect and acquire open space. In fact, about three of five residents believe that more parks and open space would make Colchester a better place to live and more than two-thirds of town residents think that the Town should acquire more land for parks and open space. According to the telephone survey, a majority of those who agree with acquiring more parks and open space are willing to see their taxes increase in order to pay for it.

<i>Colchester Should Acquire More Parks and Open Space . . .</i>			<i>. . . Even If Taxes Are Raised To Pay For It</i>	
Strongly Agree	41%	→	Strongly Agree	43%
Mildly Agree	26%	→	Mildly Agree	43%
			Mildly Disagree	17%
			Strongly Disagree	15%
			Don't Know	2%
Mildly Disagree	23%			
Strongly Disagree	8%			
Don't Know	2%			

Open space preservation efforts must be targeted towards protecting important resources and maximizing open space benefits to the community. In particular, efforts should be directed towards:

- providing for contiguous open space in order to enhance the overall open space system,
- protecting important natural resources,
- protecting open space that is either not publicly owned or not permanently committed to open space use, and
- providing greater public access to open space, where appropriate.

Telephone Survey

How Are Town Efforts At Protecting Open Space?

Should Do More	51%
Done Enough	36%
Done Too Much	6%
Don't Know	8%

Would More Parks and Open Space Make Colchester . . . ?

A Better Place	60%
No Difference	37%
A Worse Place	2%
Don't Know	1%

Meeting Surveys

Town Efforts At Increasing The Amount Of Open Space?

Too Little	62%
Just Right	32%
Too Much	5%

Efforts At Protecting Important Open Space (Location)?

Too Little	46%
Just Right	41%
Too Much	5%

Land Acquisition Fund

Section 7-131r of the Connecticut General Statutes allows a municipality to establish a Land Acquisition Fund, funded up to two mills annually, to be used for the acquisition of land for open space, recreation, or housing.

Greenbelts and Greenways

A greenbelt is another word for a greenway. A greenway is a corridor of open space that:

- may protect natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources or offer opportunities for recreation or non-motorized transportation,
- may connect existing protected areas and provide access to the outdoors,
- may be located along a defining natural feature, such as a waterway, along a man-made corridor, including an unused right-of-way, traditional trail routes or historic barge canals, or
- may be a green space along a highway or around a village.

Connecticut General Assembly
Public Act 95-335

PROGRAM

Preserve More Open Space

Dedicated open space can be preserved in a number of ways. Some basic tools that are used by most towns in Connecticut and are available to permanently preserve open space in Colchester (ranked in order of public cost) are:

1. Donations by property owners.
2. Land purchases by a Colchester Land Trust or other conservation organizations.
3. Land use regulations or approvals that require open space as part of development approvals.
4. Land purchases by the Town of Colchester.

Whatever means are chosen, the preservation of open space will be the most significant means of preserving the rural character of Colchester.

Greenbelts & Greenways

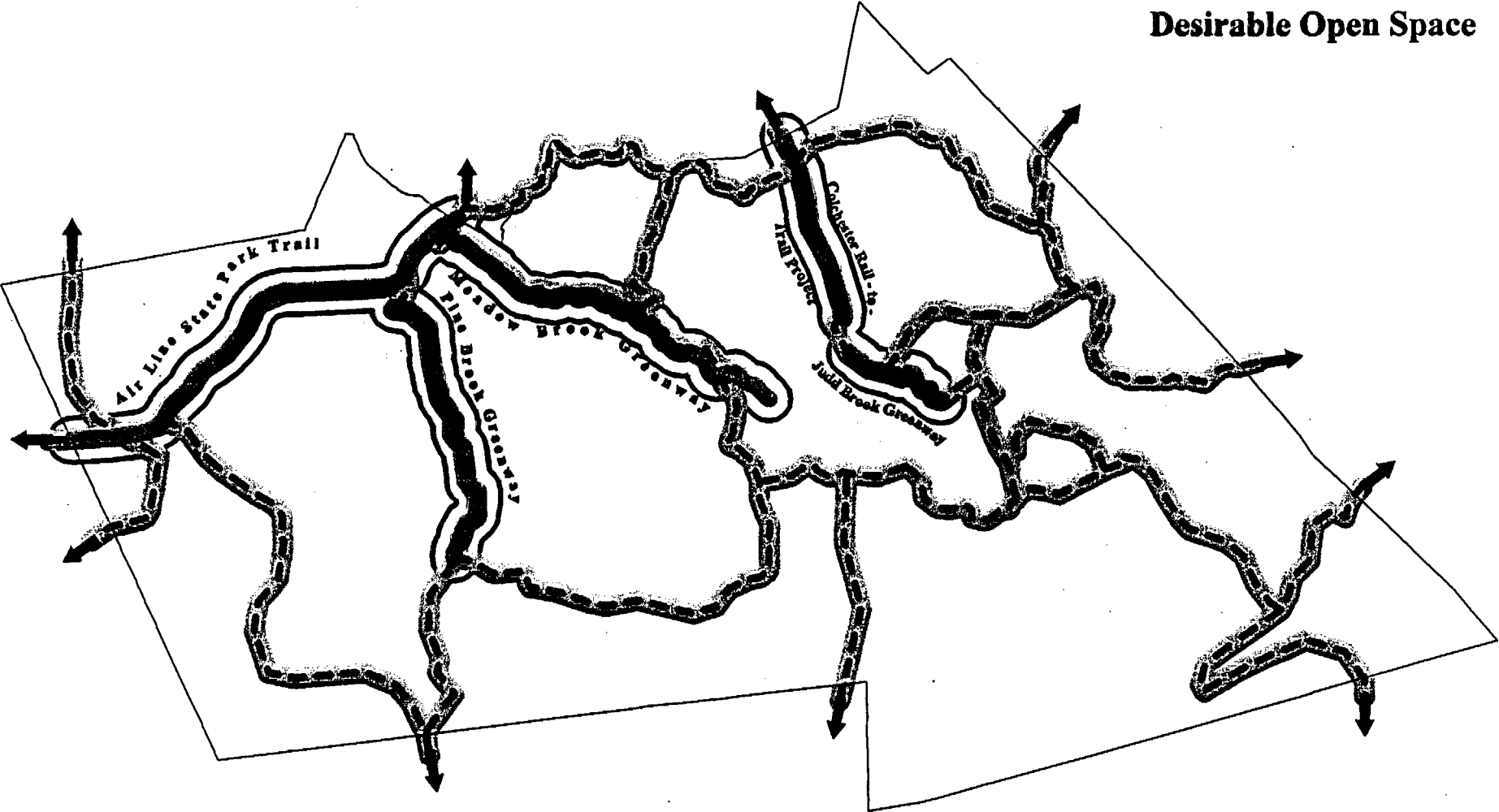
The configuration of the open space system in Colchester is as important as the amount of open space. If parcels of open space can be interconnected into a cohesive overall system, the value of the open space to residents and the impact on community character grows exponentially.

The major coordinating element in the future conservation and development of Colchester should be a comprehensive greenbelt system which interconnects conservation, open space and recreation areas. Such system should follow the town's major streams and brooks to serve to protect these sensitive areas from future development pressures and provide a linkage between important resources. In addition to protecting Colchester's character, such an open space system will:




- protect important natural, scenic, or other resources,
- enhance the value of existing open space areas,
- provide new opportunities for recreational use,
- allow for a trail system that interconnects different areas,
- contribute to the enjoyment and quality of life for residents, and
- provide for contiguous wildlife habitat.

Greenbelts can use existing recreation facilities, institutional uses, and other facilities to create connections. The overall goal is to create opportunities for interconnection for trails, wildlife, and community character.

Desirable Open Space

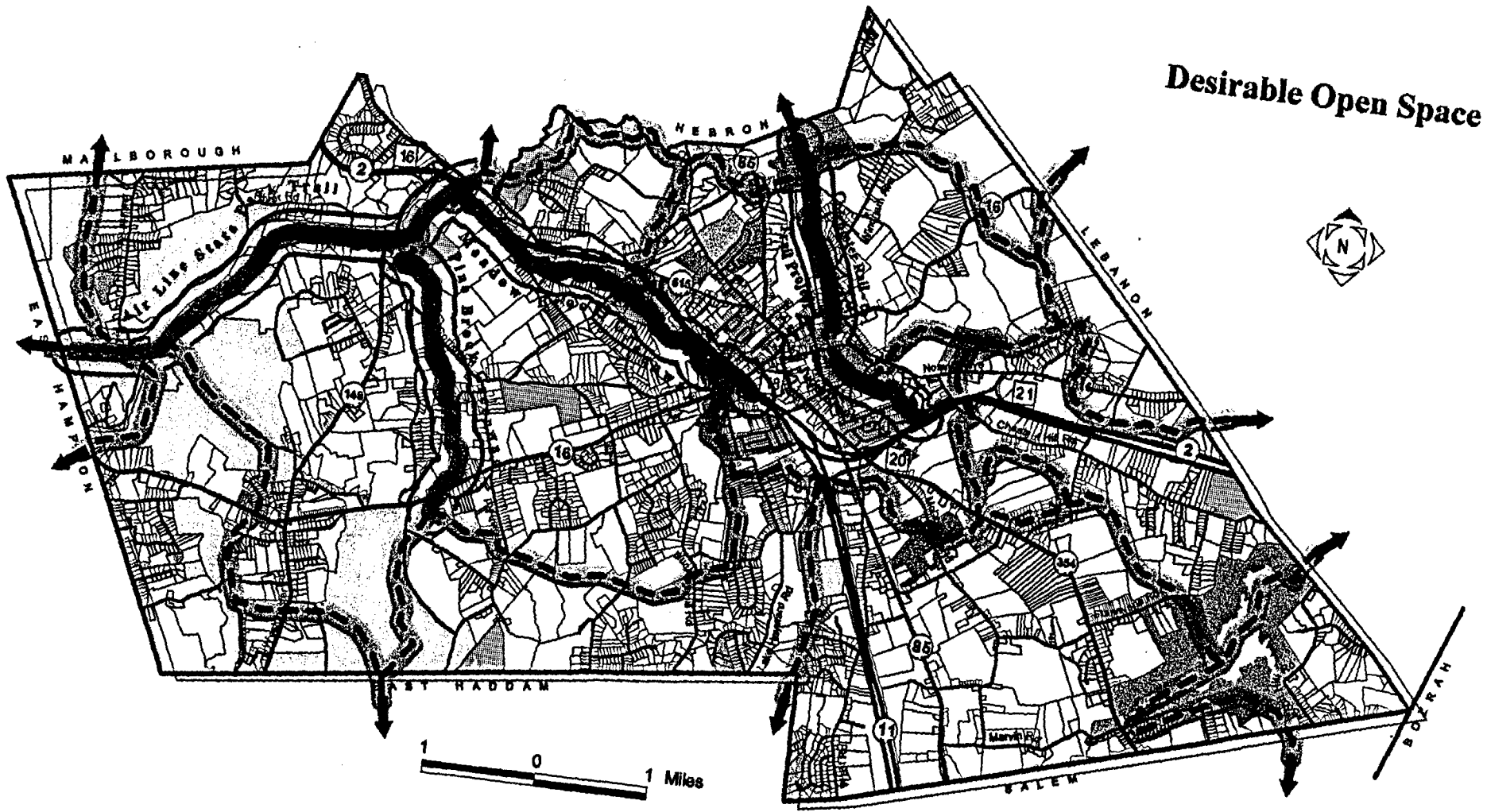


Legend

-  Priority Greenway Corridors
-  General Greenway Corridors
-  Possible Trails

Open Space Plan

Colchester, CT



Desirable Open Space

- Dedicated Open Space**
- Town Owned Land
 - State Owned Land

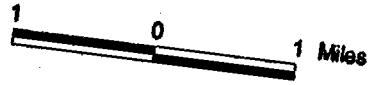
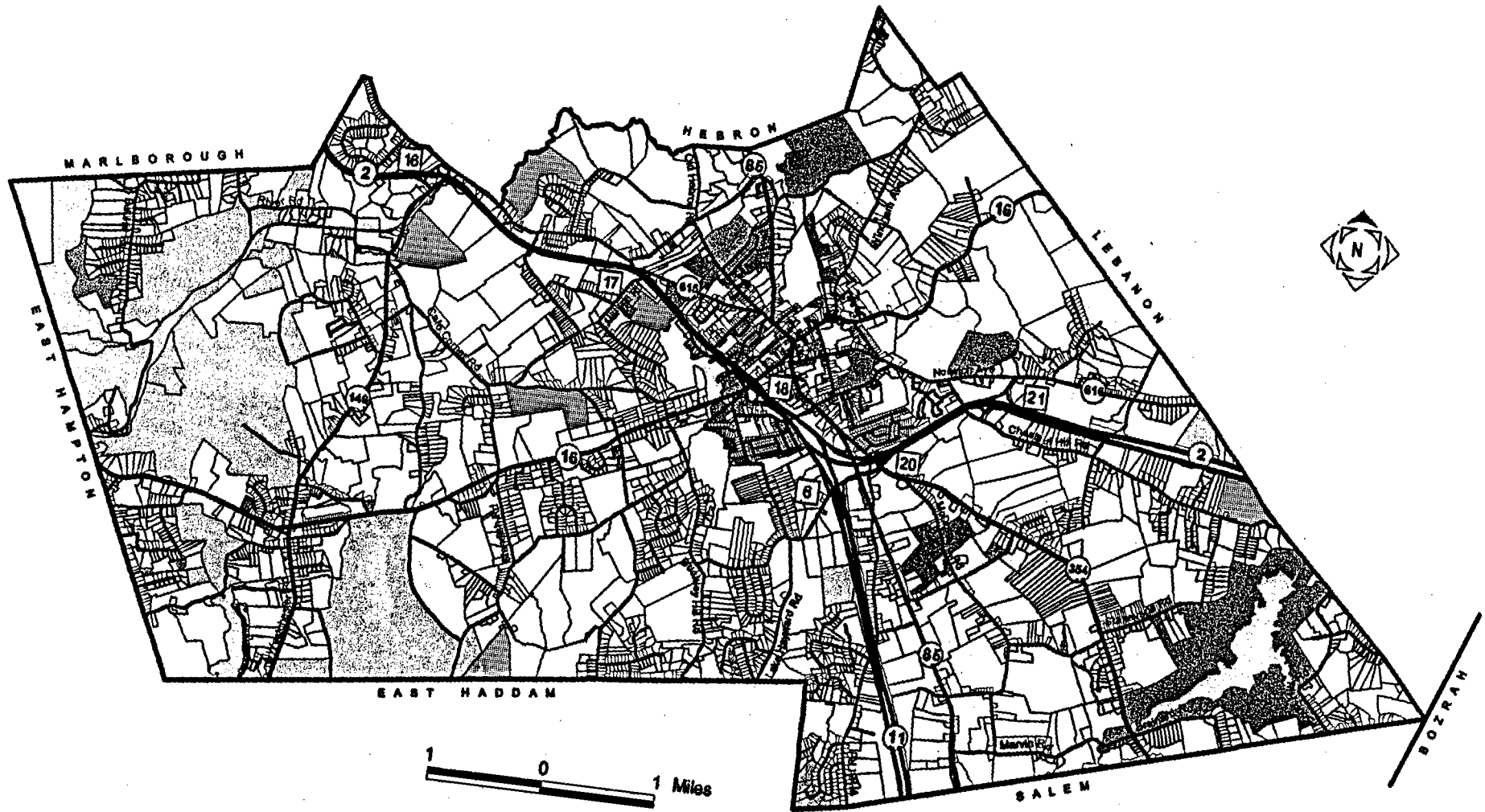
- Managed Open Space**
- Norwich Water Company
 - Cemetery
 - Public Facility
 - Golf Course
 - Other

- Other**
- Conservation Easements
 - Water

- Legend**
- Priority Greenway Corridors
 - General Greenway Corridors
 - Possible Trails

Open Space Plan

Colchester, CT



- Dedicated Open Space**
- Town Owned Land
 - State Owned Land

- Managed Open Space**
- Norwich Water Company
 - Cemetery
 - Public Facility
 - Golf Course
 - Other

- Other**
- Conservation Easements
 - Water

Trails

The Open Space Plan on page 37 shows how trails could be laid out to create an overall system interconnecting areas of Colchester.

These might be considered major trails with smaller trails (not shown) connecting to individual neighborhoods and areas.

The conceptual trail locations shown on the map on page 37 are for schematic planning purposes only and are subject to considerable modification based on additional review.

Trails & Bikeways

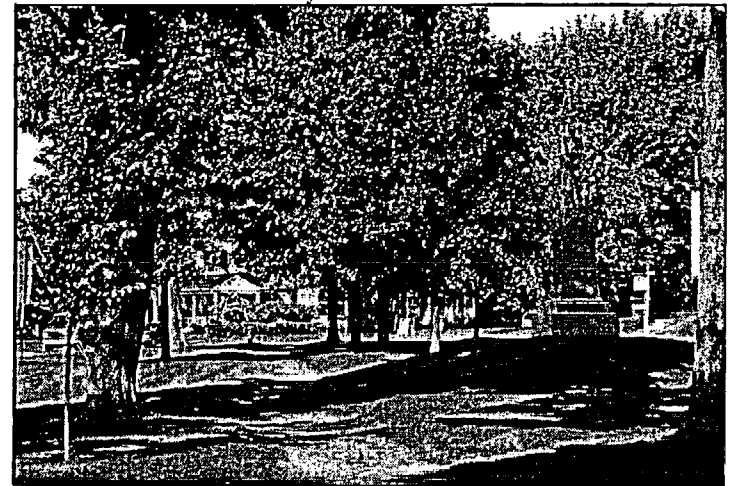
Connecting open space areas with trails will greatly enhance the value of the open space to all Colchester residents. In addition, connections to open space lands in adjacent communities will create opportunities to establish a greenbelt of regional or even state-wide significance.

A key element in tying open space and recreation areas into an integrated system is the establishment of a series of trails which connect open space areas. These paths (for walking, cycling, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding, where appropriate) increase the accessibility of the entire open space system to the town's residents and greatly add to its potential recreation use. Improving the Air Line Railroad spur as a trail to connect with other trails is a good example of such a project. The development of a trail network should receive high priority since the amount of land which needs to be reserved is relatively small compared to the benefits that will be gained.

Airline Trail



Pathway at the Town Green



Perceived Open Space

The PA-490 program (CGS 12-107) allows a Town to assess land as farm, forest, or open space, reducing the tax burden on those parcels. While the program does not permanently preserve open space, the program removes the local property tax burden as a reason that property might be developed and, in that way, it can spread development out over time and maintain the perception of open space in Colchester. The program can also provide additional time to find ways to preserve the property as dedicated open space.

About 45 percent of all land in Colchester currently participates in the farm and forest components of the PA-490 program. While farm or forest land is designated by the assessor, only land holdings that exceed 25 acres in size are eligible. On the other hand, the open space component of PA-490 can be applied to parcels of any size provided:

- the eligible land is identified in the Plan of Conservation & Development, and
- an Open Space Plan has been adopted by the legislative body (Town Meeting in Colchester).

Properties that are converted out of the PA-490 program within ten years of designation pay a “recapture” fee for the reduced assessment.

Some communities recommend that any portion of a residential parcel that exceeds the minimum lot size for the zone is eligible for the open space assessment provided that the area that receives the assessment is greater than the minimum lot size for the zone. Land that is used for business or utility purposes is typically excluded. Some communities require re-application for PA-490 designation as part of any revaluation (thereby restarting the ten-year recapture provision) while other communities allow the designation to continue once granted.

Implementation

See the implementation chart on page 116 for the priority and the assignment of responsibility for implementation of these open space strategies.

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

Preserve More Open Space

1. Encourage the Board of Selectmen to establish an Open Space Committee for (or charge the Conservation Commission with) developing an open space action plan.
2. Assist in efforts to establish a Colchester Land Trust and encourage:
 - open space donations to the Land Trust (or other conservation organizations), and
 - actions of the Land Trust to raise funds and purchase open space.
3. Increase the percentage of open space preserved as part of new residential developments.
4. Continue to budget municipal funds to acquire open space.
5. Establish a Land Acquisition Fund as authorized by Section 7-131r of the Connecticut General Statutes.
6. Consider adopting a “fee-in-lieu-of open space” provision in the subdivision regulations as authorized by CGS 8-25 in order to generate revenue to acquire the most meaningful open space.
7. Continue to pursue other open space preservation techniques such as “rights of first refusal” for significant parcels, purchase of development rights (especially for agricultural uses), and cooperative efforts with other organizations.

Create A Greenbelt System with Trails

8. Tie both existing and new open space and recreation areas together into an integrated greenbelt or buffer system which:
 - breaks up a continuous pattern of development, and
 - provides a greater variety of active and passive use opportunities for the Town's residents.
9. Consider allowing open space dedication elsewhere in Colchester to meet the open space requirements of a development if the offered open space makes an important contribution to the overall open space greenbelt or trail system.
10. Establish a series of trails as a key element in connecting open space and recreation areas into an integrated system.
11. Continue to work with the State of Connecticut to develop public trails on their lands in Colchester.
12. Continue to work with the Norwich Water Department to develop public trails on their lands in Colchester.

Retain Perceived Open Space

13. Establish and implement a PA-490 open space policy in order to maintain and enhance the amount of “perceived” open space in Colchester.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

7

HISTORIC RESOURCES OVERVIEW

Since historic resources significantly contribute to community character and quality of life, their identification and preservation is an important component of the Plan.

INVENTORY

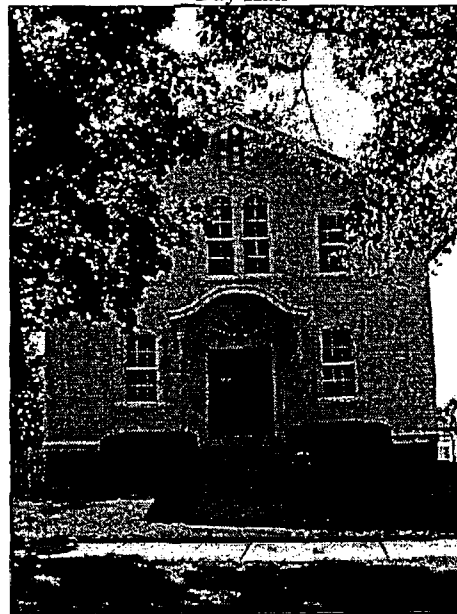
For many years, Colchester has had a historical society that has been very active in preservation activities. The Society has been a pioneer in historic preservation efforts, both locally and state-wide.

At a Town Meeting in 1984, residents of Colchester enacted an ordinance establishing the Colchester Historic District and the Historic District Commission. The purpose of the ordinance was to “promote the ... preservation and protection of distinctive characteristics of buildings and places associated with the history of the Town of Colchester.”

Historic District Sign



Day Hall



Protect Historic Resources . . .

Maintain Appropriate Regulations . . .

Promote Historic Preservation Efforts . .

Much has happened since that time. The Town funded an Historic Resources Study in 1991 to identify important historic resources. Colchester was recognized by the United States Department of the Interior in 1992 as a Certified Local Government engaged in historic preservation, thus becoming eligible for funding assistance for local programs. In 1994, much of the Town Center area was designated a National Historic District and was listed on the National Register Of Historic Places. A Colchester Town Center Plan (1995) identified processes to preserve and enhance historic resources in the Town Center. The Zoning & Planning Commission adopted an Historic Preservation Overlay Zone in 1996. In 1998, the Connecticut Historical Commission awarded the Town of Colchester the first "Connecticut Local Government Achievement Award for Historic Preservation." Also in 1998, a Town Center Neighborhood Strategic Plan was prepared by a Neighborhood Revitalization Committee with the assistance of Town staff.

All of these activities and efforts are evidence of Colchester's continuing commitment to historic preservation.

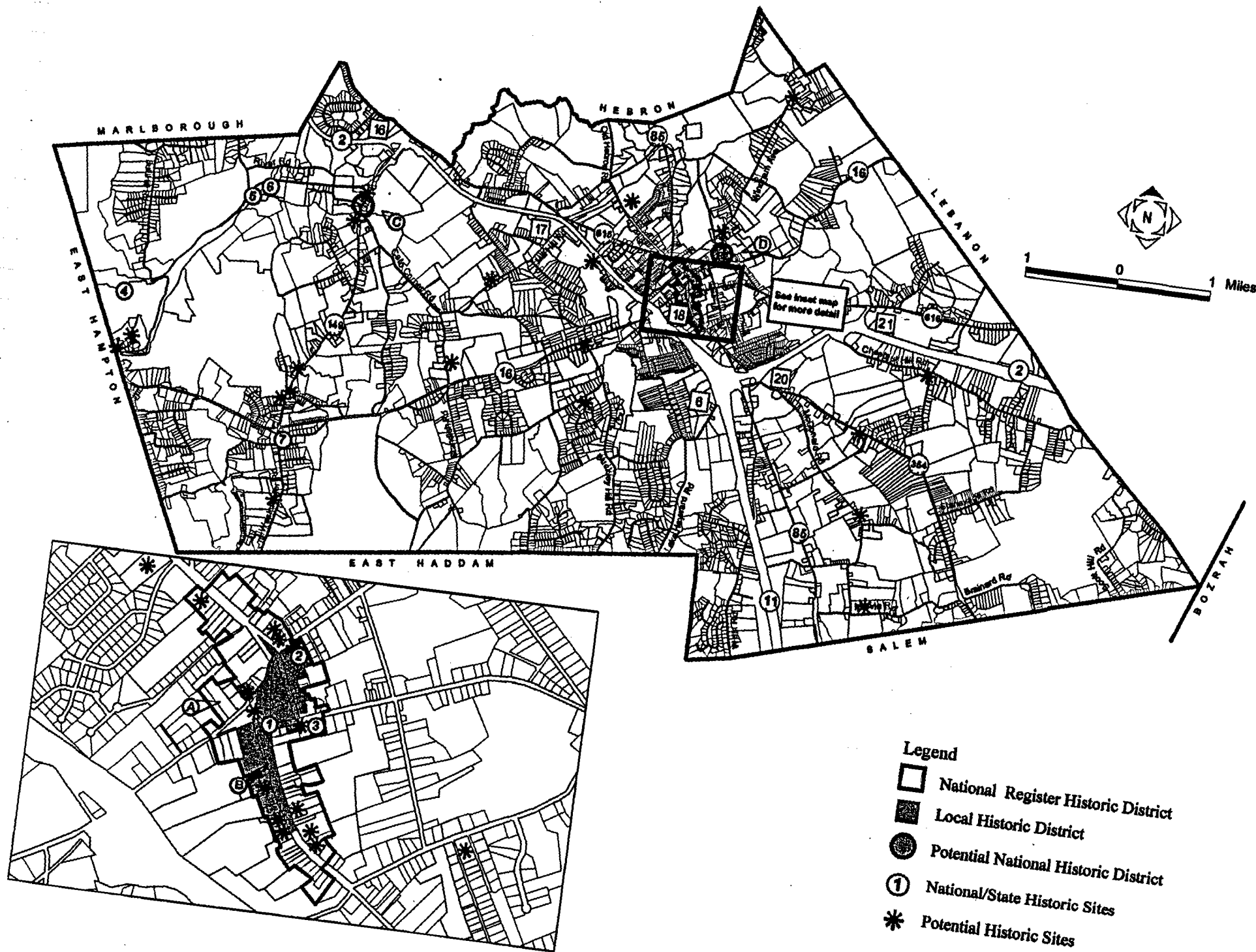
At this time, Colchester has two historic districts (one national and one local) and seven State-recognized historic places. The Town also has the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone in the Town Center area to protect the number of resources that exist in this vicinity.

EXISTING HISTORIC DISTRICTS		Description	SRHP	NRHP
A.	Colchester Village National Historic District and Local Historic Preservation Overlay Zone	National Register Historic District around the Town Green and adjacent areas and coterminous with a local zoning overlay district	1967	1994
B.	Colchester Historic District	Local Historic District overseen by the Colchester Historic District Commission.		
EXISTING HISTORIC PLACES				
1.	Bacon Academy	South Main Street	Historic school built in 1803 and Day Hall, built in 1858	1975 1982
2.	Hayward House	9 Hayward Avenue	Built in 1775	1975 1972
3.	Wheeler Block	40 Norwich Avenue	Built in 1872. Wheeler Block was the Old Town Hall.	1992 1992
4.	Lyman Viaduct		Bridge over Dickinson Creek. Built in 1873	1986 1986
5.	Stone Arch Railroad Bridge	River Road	Bridge over River Road. Built in 1887.	1986 1986
6.	Blackledge River Railroad Bridge		Bridge over the Blackledge River. Built in 1912.	1986 1986
7.	Henry Champion House	Westchester Road		1972 1972

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) recognizes places that have national significance in architecture, archaeology, culture, and American history. The State Register of Historic Places (SRHP) recognizes places significant to the history of Connecticut. Properties on the National Register are now automatically listed on the State Register.

Historic Preservation Plan

Colchester, CT



In terms of historic districts, it is important to realize that National and State historic districts are established by federal and state agencies based only on historic significance and such designation provides little regulation or protection. In fact, such designation has the most influence on state or federal projects proposed in that district.

On the other hand, local historic districts are established by municipal ordinance to protect designated areas. A local district is established by a the legislative body (such as a Town Meeting) after a public hearing and a two-thirds affirmative vote by affected property owners. The local ordinance also establishes a local Historic District Commission to implement regulations. Regulations for the Colchester Historic District (which became effective on June 15, 1999) regulate activities in the local historic district.

Prior to commencing a regulated activity (such as exterior renovations), a Certificate of Appropriateness must be obtained from the Historic District Commission. Colchester is in the process of preparing a Historic District Handbook to provide guidelines and other pertinent information for reference when an owner or resident is considering a change to a property in the local historic district.

In addition, the 1991 Historical and Architectural Survey of Colchester identified the following additional districts and properties as being "potentially eligible" for listing on the National Register of Historic Places:

POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE HISTORIC AREAS	SRHP NRHP
C. North Westchester	Small concentration of mill-related structures
D. Lebanon / Windham Avenues	Worker-housing area along Lebanon and Windham Avenues and including the railroad depot area

POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE HISTORIC SITES					
Street	Address	Street	Address	Street	Address
Broadway	12, 24, 119, 191	Levy Road	5	Prospect Hill Road	192
Buckley Hill Road	12	Linwood Avenue	8	School Road	43
Cato Corner Road	8	McDonald Road	235	South Main Street	60, 156, 187, 196, 208, 219, & 239
Chestnut Hill Road	220	Marvin Road	91	Westchester Road	118, 148, 416, 449, 462, & 612
Comstock Bridge Rd.	8	Norwich Avenue	48	Windham Avenue	165
Dickinson Road	17	Oberg Road	16		
Halls Hill Road	156	Old Hebron Road	288		
Hayward Avenue	11	Parum Road	398		

ASSESSMENT

For many years, Colchester residents have recognized the value and importance of historic resources and much has already been accomplished in terms of identifying and protecting historic resources in Colchester. Residents have indicated support for continuing these efforts:

- **Identification** - Historic resource surveys have been completed for Colchester and several properties have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Colchester has good and recent information on which to base historic preservation efforts.
- **Resources** - Local individuals and organizations are important resources involved in historic preservation. Colchester has a local Historical Society and a local Historic District Commission to govern activities in local historic districts and a Municipal Historian to coordinate historical documentation efforts.
- **Programs** - Colchester has a Cultural Resource Preservation Plan that identifies specific actions for preserving identified historic resources and the community is in the process of implementing its recommendations.

Colchester is doing a good job of protecting historic resources in the community. These efforts should continue and, where appropriate, be enhanced.

PROGRAM

Colchester has a rich variety of historic resources that are worthy of preservation. In addition, these resources contribute to the overall character of Colchester. While much has been done already, the next step is to maintain appropriate regulations to assist in the preservation of these resources. In addition, the community should work towards encouraging cooperative efforts on the part of many people to preserve historic resources.

Three options are available to help preserve historic resources:

1. keep the existing Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ) and enhance it as necessary,
2. readopt the HPOZ as a village district with additional provisions as authorized by Public Act 00-145, or
3. adopt new village districts (such as a Village Residential and a Village Business zone) as authorized by Public Act 00-145.

These options should be evaluated and the selected method implemented in the near future.

Implementation

See the implementation chart on page 117 for the priority and the assignment of responsibility for implementation of these cultural resource preservation strategies.

HISTORIC RESOURCE PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

Protect Historic Resources

1. Continue to implement the 1995 and 1998 Plans for the Colchester Village Historic District (Town Center).
2. Continue to nominate districts, buildings, and sites to the National Register of Historic Places.
3. Establish additional local historic districts that protect community character and are supported by residents.
4. Maintain the demolition delay ordinance to allow time for the identification and preservation of historical structures.

Maintain Appropriate Regulations

5. Evaluate the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and consider replacing it with Village Residential and Village Business zones, taking advantage of the Village District provisions authorized by Public Act 00-145.
6. In the new village residential zone, continue to allow adaptive reuse of historic buildings (such as for low-intensity office or institutional use) when the proposed use will aid in the preservation of the historic structure and provided the proposed use is appropriate given the location of the site.
7. In the new village zones, adopt revised parking requirements that allow the Zoning & Planning Commission to waive up to 25 percent of the required parking spaces provided that documentation can be provided that such spaces will not be needed and provided that there is excellence in site and building design.
8. Review the zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure:
 - preservation, renovation, and reuse of historically significant structures is encouraged,
 - there is flexibility and incentive to preserve historic properties, and
 - historical factors will be a consideration in land use decisions.
9. Consider the adoption of an assessment deferral ordinances (CGS 12-65c-f) for the preservation of historic structures.

Promote Historic Preservation Efforts

10. Encourage property owners to preserve cultural, archaeological and historical resources.
11. Establish educational programs to promote awareness of historical and cultural resources.
12. Encourage awareness of historic buildings and districts through the use of appropriate signage and displays.
13. Promote awareness of state and federal programs which provide tax credits and incentives for the rehabilitation of historic buildings and provide code relief for historically significant buildings.

COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

8

OVERVIEW

Community structure addresses the overall organization of Colchester. Structure is an important consideration in the Plan since it addresses how people, both residents and visitors, perceive and understand the community. As a result, it is also strongly correlated with community character. The establishment and maintenance of community structure can be an important legacy of the planning process. For these reasons, overall structure is an important consideration in the Plan.

INVENTORY

Colchester's community structure consists of:

- a major community focal point in the Town Center, and
- a secondary focal point in Westchester.

These major elements can be traced back to Colchester's early roots. The town was first settled in and near the area we now know as the Town Center. Westchester evolved later as Colchester grew.

ASSESSMENT

Due to the location of business, institutional, community, and cultural facilities, the Town Center is clearly the major community focal point. However, due to the geographic size of Colchester and its ultimate development potential, a secondary center is warranted. While Westchester contains some business and institutional facilities, its role can be strengthened to be a secondary focal point in Colchester. The fact that both areas are surrounded by lower intensity areas and open space also helps to define their location and role in Colchester. These determining elements of Colchester's community structure should be enhanced in order to help define the community and enhance community character.

*Reinforce Colchester's
Overall Structure . . .*

*Protect and Enhance
the Town Center . . .*

*Promote Westchester
As A Secondary Focal
Point . . .*

Center Definitions

The Plan talks about three different community centers. These areas are generally defined as follows:

Village Center

A compact area bounded by the Town Green, Lebanon Avenue, Mill Street, and Norwich Avenue and extending:

- northerly along Broadway to Jaffe Terrace,
- southerly along South Main Street to Tavern Lane, and
- westerly along Linwood Avenue to Stop & Shop.

Town Center

A larger area on the north and east side of Route 2 extending from:

- Exit 17 easterly to include the recreation area,
- over to Windham Avenue to the west of Highwood Drive,
- continuing southerly to the east of Elm Street and Westerly Terrace to Route 2.

Westchester Center

The area within about a one-quarter mile radius of the intersection of Route 16 and Route 149.

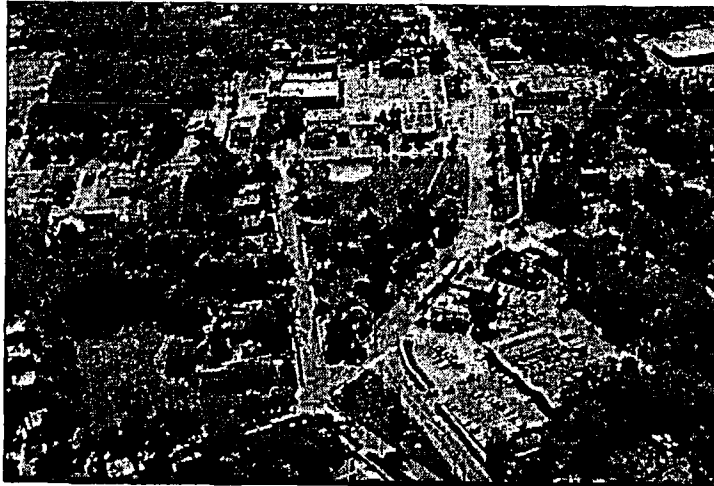
Structure is also an important guide for land use regulations and decisions. Regulations can be designed and implemented to reinforce the community structure and enhance community character. One only need look at communities with no discernible structure to realize that community character has been adversely affected.

At meetings conducted during the planning process, residents indicated that they were very supportive and protective of these "centers". In the Town Center, residents were strident about:

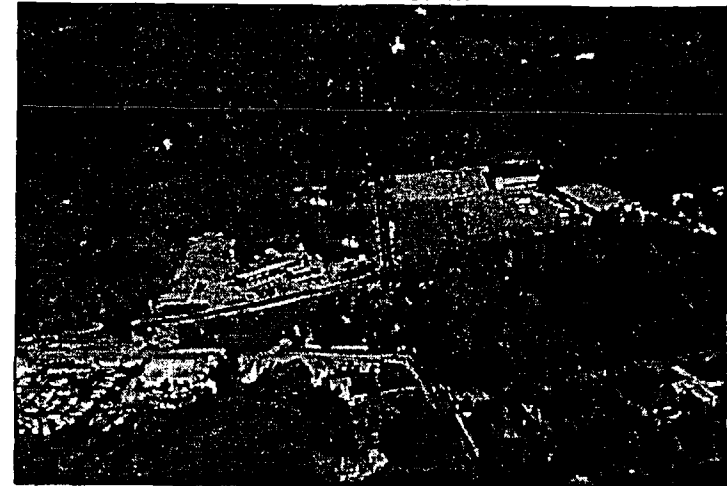
- preserving "the Town Green" since it is the character of Colchester, even though the Town does not own the entire Green (the southern part is owned by the Bacon Academy Trustees),
- improving the character of the area through new sidewalks, façade improvements, reducing pavement (at Old Bacon Academy),
- making the Town Center more pedestrian friendly and encouraging pedestrian use and activity, and
- re-using existing structures for new uses and maintaining the scale of buildings.

For Westchester, residents were concerned that this area was being adversely affected, possibly by inadequate demand, too much competition, poor economics, absentee owners, or some combination of factors. Residents were concerned that Westchester had changed over last 25 years and that the area needed attention.

Town Center

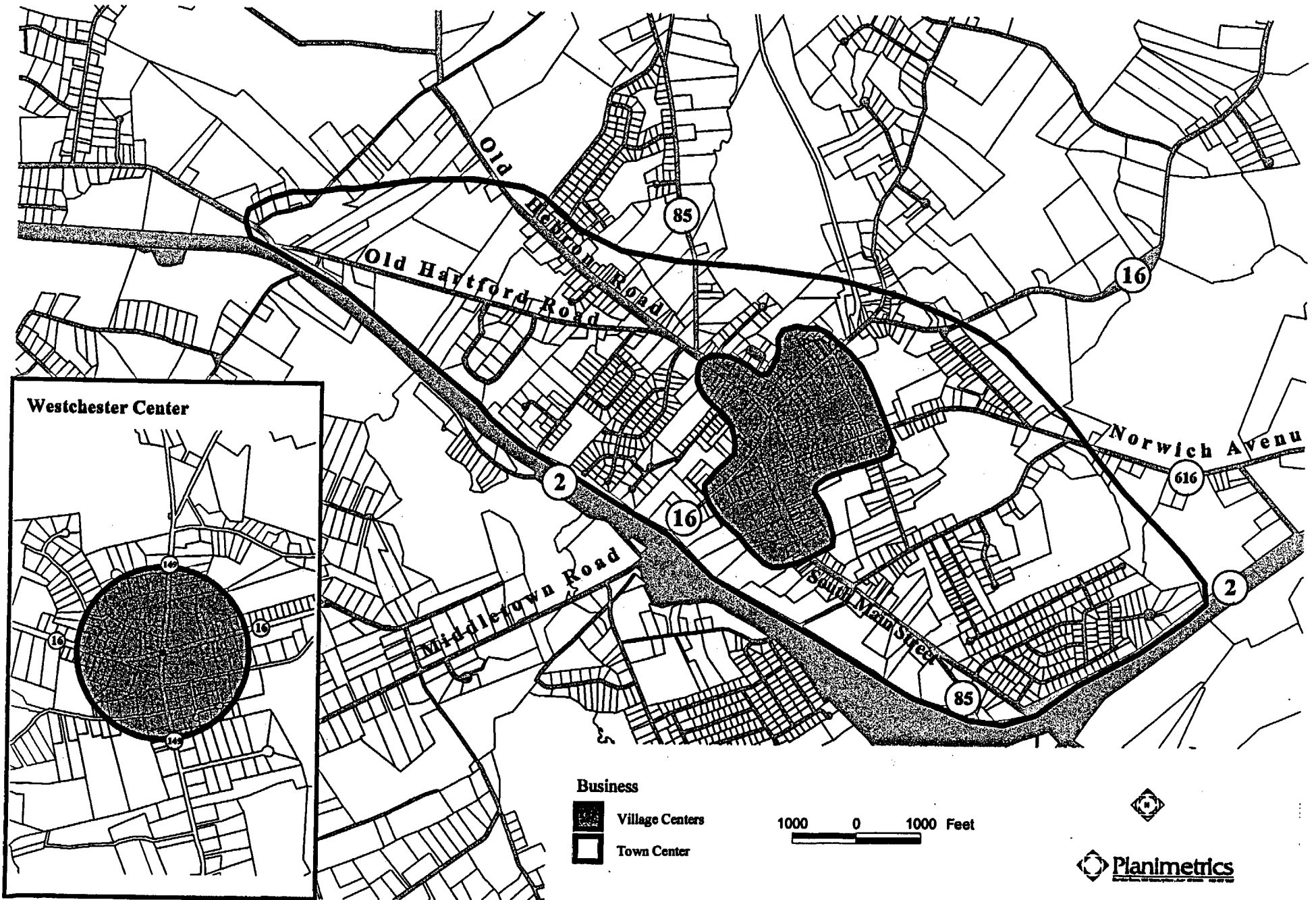


Westchester Center



Town and Village Centers

Colchester, CT

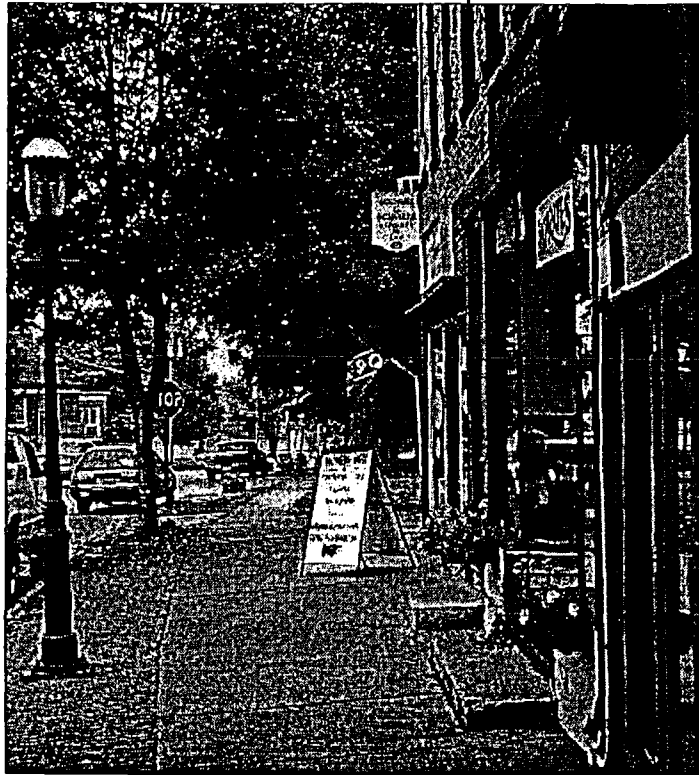


PROGRAM

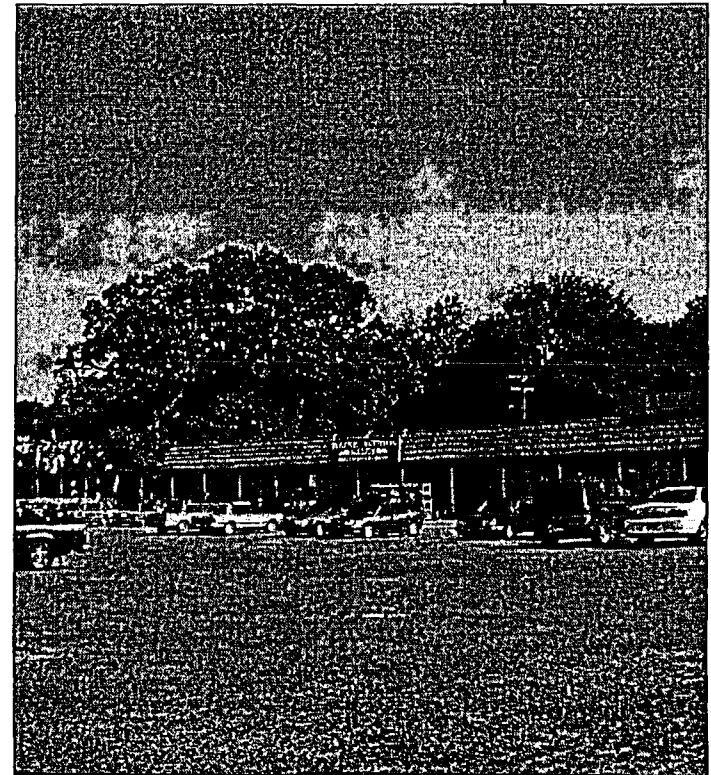
Over the years, the Town Center has always been the focal point of the community and it is the business, government, civic, institutional, and cultural center of the town. While this has helped enhance community character, it has also created issues. In Colchester, "all roads lead to the Center" and there can be traffic congestion and bypass traffic on adjacent local streets due to traffic volumes, signalized intersections, pedestrian activity, on-street parking, and curb cuts.

While the Westchester area, located at the intersection of Routes 16 and 149, has not developed as a village to the same extent that the Town Center has, Westchester has the potential to have a stronger village character.

Town Center Streetscape



Westchester Center Streetscape



During the planning period, detailed study of the Town Center, Westchester, and the surrounding areas should be undertaken in order to:

- reinforce the village center characteristics unique to each area,
- maintain an appropriate balance among different uses,
- avoid “strip” type development,
- enhance the overall pedestrian and vehicular circulation pattern,
- address parking and circulation issues, and
- promote the compatible development of these areas.

The studies should evaluate the residential and business zoning and consider alternative zoning patterns. Certain areas might be considered for rezoning based on the prevailing lot sizes and adjustments to some zoning designations and/or boundaries could be considered so that zoning boundaries follow property lines wherever possible. A detailed sidewalk inventory and Plan should be included. The studies should also review and take appropriate advantage of P.A. 00-145 authorizing the creation of village districts.

These recommendations are consistent with the 1995 Town Center Cultural Resource Development and Heritage Plan which recommended, in part;

1. Adopt a town center growth policy to better enhance the town center area and preserve the historic character.
2. Develop a dynamic town center with the appropriate use of historic buildings as the center piece of these efforts.
3. Improve the town centers appearance by better integrating parking and developing a streetscape plan.
4. Provide incentives for property owners to preserve and maintain their properties (such as tax, loan/grant, and code incentives).
5. Increase marketing and tourism for the town center area through public awareness, education, and the creation of tourism amenities.

Overall, it is important to stress that the level of future development in Westchester is anticipated to be much less intense than that expected in the Town Center. Westchester is intended to be more of a rural center with a village flavor. As a result, it is considered unlikely that water service or sewer service will be necessary or desirable in the foreseeable future.

Strip-Type Development

Strip-type development typically refers to non-residential development that occurs along major roads in a linear fashion and is generally characterized as:

- having wide and shallow lots,
- individual or strips of stores that orient towards parking areas between the building(s) and the street,
- having one-story buildings with very simple architectural features,
- multiple curb cuts,
- limited pedestrian interconnections between sites, and
- uncoordinated signage.

Implementation

See the implementation chart on page 118 for the priority and the assignment of responsibility for implementation of these community structure strategies.

COMMUNITY STRUCTURE STRATEGIES

Reinforce Colchester's Overall Structure

1. Reinforce the defining elements of Colchester's community structure:
 - the Town Center as the major community focal point, and
 - a secondary focal point in Westchester, and
 - low intensity areas that provide a greenbelt around developed areas.
2. Maintain the prevailing pattern of higher density residential uses near the Town Center with a density reduction away from the Center.

Protect and Enhance the Town Center

3. To protect the Town Center, convert the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone to village residential and village business districts, taking advantage of P.A. 00-145 authorizing the creation of village districts.
4. Maintain and enhance the Town Center as the business, government, civic, institutional, and cultural center of the Town.
5. Undertake a detailed study of the Town Center during the planning period to address land use, circulation, parking, and pedestrian issues and, as part of the study, consider zoning changes that may be desirable to implement the study recommendations.
6. Allow a variety of residential types and densities in the Town Center and encourage mixed uses that complement community character and add activity and stability to the Town Center.
7. Adjust zone boundaries in the Town Center so that, to the extent practical, individual parcels are located in one zone (or zone boundaries follow property lines).

Promote Westchester As A Secondary Focal Point

8. Pursue efforts to establish a "village green" in Westchester.
9. Undertake a Westchester Area Study to address zoning, land use, transition, circulation, and parking issues and, as part of the study, consider zoning changes that may be desirable to implement the study recommendations.
10. To the extent feasible, avoid "strip" type development in Westchester and encourage creation of a village center.

HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL AREAS

9

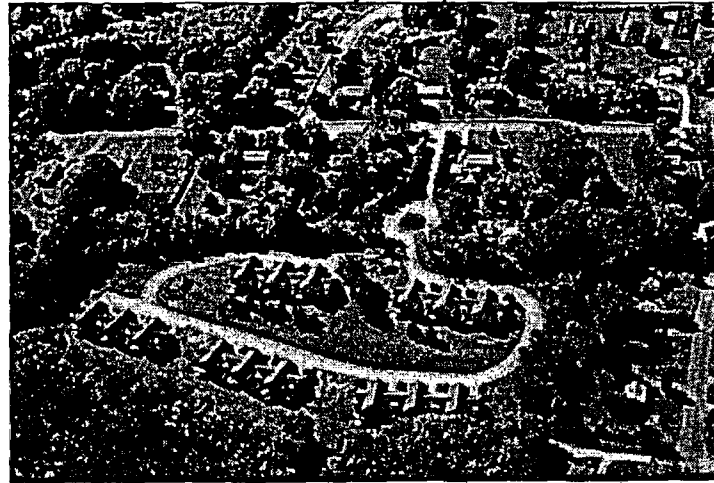
OVERVIEW

About 89 percent of Colchester is zoned for residential purposes. As a result, housing and residential areas are important topics in the Plan since residential development patterns have the greatest potential impact on community character and people's overall perception of Colchester and its quality of life. In addition, identified housing needs must be considered.

Single-Family Subdivision



Multi-Family Development



Support community structure . . .

Carefully manage residential development . . .

Promote open space development patterns . . .

Encourage housing diversity . . .

Median Sales Prices

1997	
Hebron	\$157,000
Marlborough	\$156,000
Salem	\$146,000
State	\$140,000
East Haddam	\$139,950
Bozrah	\$134,750
E. Hampton	\$130,000
Colchester	\$128,000
Lebanon	\$117,500

CT Policy & Economic Council

'Affordable Housing'

	Percent
Colchester	11%
State	11%

Source: CT Department of Economic & Community Development

INVENTORY

Colchester is one of the fastest growing communities in Connecticut at the present time. During the 1980s, Colchester added 1,421 housing units. To put this in perspective, the 1,421 units added in the 1980s was more than was added in the 1960s (521 units) and 1970s (783 units) combined. By 1990, over two-thirds of Colchester's housing stock had been constructed since 1960. In the 1990s, housing growth continued at a pace that will equal or exceed that experienced during the 1980s.

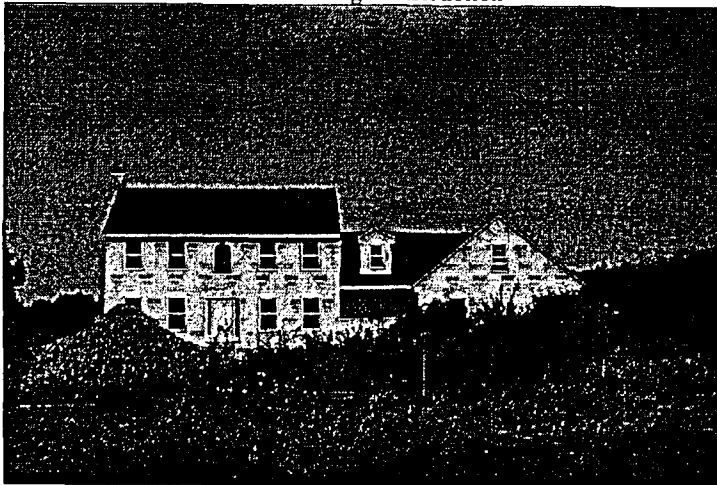
Colchester Housing		Growth Comparison	
	Units		1980s
1960	1,425	Colchester	52%
1970	1,946	Salem	42%
1980	2,729	Hebron	37%
1990	4,150	East Hampton	28%
2000 proj.	5,530	Lebanon	27%
Source: U.S. Census, Planimetrics		East Haddam	24%
Projections in italics.		Marlborough	23%
		Bozrah	18%
		State of CT.	14%
		Source: U.S. Census	

Compared to some other areas closer to Hartford, housing in Colchester would be considered more affordable. As a result, it has become a location desired by young families.

Since over 11 percent of the housing units in Colchester are assisted housing, financed by CHFA mortgages, or sale price restricted by deed, Colchester:

- has a higher proportion of "affordable housing" units than do surrounding towns or the state as a whole, and
- is currently exempt from the "affordable housing appeals statute" (CGS 8-30g).

New Housing Construction



Two-Family House



ASSESSMENT

Issues related to residential development were regular topics of discussion during the process of preparing the Plan. In the telephone survey, Colchester residents indicated that town growth was one of the most important issues at the present time. At public meetings, residents indicated that the Town was doing too little to limit the amount of development.

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Too Little</i>	<i>Just Right</i>	<i>Too Much</i>
Limiting the <u>amount</u> of residential development	51%	43%	5%
Controlling the <u>pace</u> of residential development	49%	49%	3%
Expanding the variety of housing types available	30%	65%	3%
Providing for affordable housing	12%	56%	32%

Some residents favored slowing the rate of growth or stopping development altogether. There are several reasons why these policy options are difficult or impossible to accomplish. First, our form of government and system of constitutional rights guarantee people a reasonable right to use (and develop) property. The Town has an ability to regulate (but not prohibit) land use and development activities in order to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Second, we need to recognize that resistance to change reflects that people may not be happy with what is happening when development occurs. Either they did not anticipate development occurring at all on a particular property or development patterns are not preserving Colchester's character or protecting important features. The challenge of the Plan is to identify the appropriate amount and patterns of residential development in Colchester to help address these issues.

In terms of housing types, Colchester residents generally indicated that the current mix of housing types was about right. Some people were inclined to indicate that there were too few elderly housing units and apartments and too many condominiums.

	Elderly Housing Units	Rental Apartments	Single Family Homes	Condominiums
Too Few	42%	26%	14%	13%
About Right	41%	44%	68%	56%
Too Many	3%	16%	11%	25%
Don't Know	15%	15%	7%	7%

Overall, the issues related to residential development in Colchester are primarily associated with the patterns of development. Due to the desire to conserve important natural resources and preserve open space, changes are recommended in land use regulations in order to protect these resources and improve residential development patterns.

Multi-Family Locational Criteria

1. Multi-family developments should:
 - be located in or near the Town Center.
 - be served by Town water and sewer.
 - be located to provide a gradual transition in density or use to adjoining areas.
 - be designed to be compatible with the area proposed.
 - use appropriate topographic, vegetative, or other transitions to provide a buffer to adjacent uses and streets.
2. Roadways serving the site should be capable of safely and conveniently handling traffic generated by the development as well as provide easy and direct access to major thoroughfares serving Colchester.
3. The site should be of suitable size and terrain to establish an attractive and functional layout of buildings and site improvements.

PROGRAM

Support Community Structure

Although Colchester is not fully developed, the residential character of the community has clearly been established. Colchester's residential zoning scheme should continue to recognize the prevailing development pattern of:

- higher densities and diverse housing types in and near the Town Center where water and sewer are available,
- predominantly single-family development in outlying areas, and
- a reduction of density as the distance from the Town Center increases.

For the most part, boundaries of the residential zoning districts appear generally reasonable given the soil types, terrain, infrastructure availability, and patterns of development. However, some changes are recommended in the watershed of the Deep River Reservoir, a water supply source for Norwich and in the area of the outlying R-40 zones.

Guide Multi-Family Development

In terms of multi-family development, the Plan suggests that sites in and near the Town Center and serviced by public water and public sewer system are the best sites for multi-family development. However, not all multi-family developments are appropriate in Colchester and the Plan suggests that the most appropriate types of multi-family units for Colchester are moderate density developments in smaller scale projects.

Apartments on Norwich Avenue



Country Place



Such developments can:

- help maintain Colchester's single-family appearance and character,
- blend more effectively with nearby single-family residential areas,
- be more consistent with the level of services available in town, and
- be preferred by those seeking multi-family housing in the area.

Overall, it will be in Colchester's best interests to strongly guide multi-family developments to appropriate sites where they can serve as a transition between business and industrial uses (or major travel routes) and adjacent single-family neighborhoods.

Carefully Manage Residential Development

The Plan also recommends possible changes related to managing residential development in Colchester. First, the Zoning & Planning Commission has indicated some interest in reviewing "divisions" of property (also known as the "first cut") in order to ensure that regulations are complied with and future conservation and development occurs with reasonable efficiency and economy. In addition, the Commission has indicated an interest in considering a requirements that any soil testing be done on the basis of the indigenous soil (not using fill or underdrains).

New Housing Construction



Housing in the Town Center



Single Family Development Patterns

Conventional

A parcel of land is divided into residential lots with little or no dedicated open space.

Open Space

A parcel of land is divided into roughly the same number of residential lots that are smaller in area than in a conventional development and the remaining area is preserved or dedicated as open space.

Promote Open Space Development Patterns

Colchester's current zoning and subdivision regulations promote a pattern of residential development that, in the long run, will likely detract from the rural character that residents of the community have indicated is important to them. In other words, current regulations are creating the types of development patterns that residents see elsewhere and have indicated they do not want in Colchester.

For example, many subdivisions result in homes strung out along existing roads or in conventional subdivisions with very little preserved open space or with undeveloped lands isolated away from the road. This pattern results from a "cookie cutter" approach to subdivision design that is determined more by the dimensional standards in the regulations than by the natural capabilities of the parcel being developed.

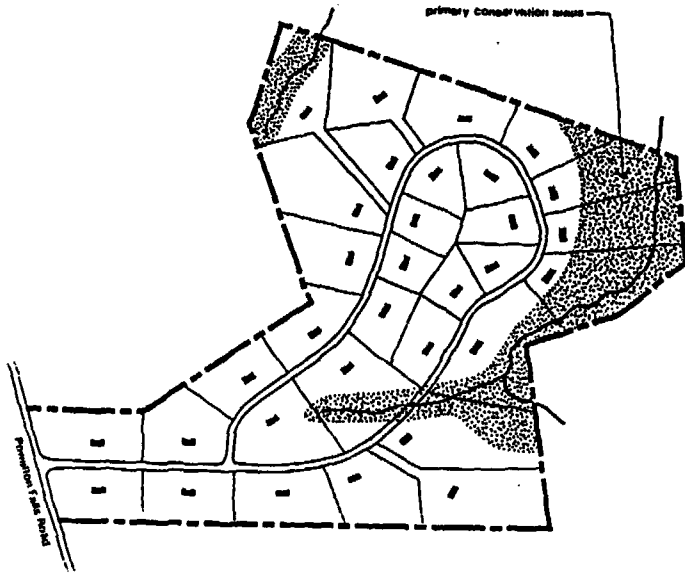
There are several reasons for this. Colchester defines buildable land in the zoning regulations as "contiguous land exclusive of wetlands, watercourses, waterbodies, ledge outcrops, and slopes greater than 25 percent." Each zoning district requires that each lot have a minimum lot area, each lot have a minimum buildable area, and that a square of a certain dimension in the lot contain the building site. For example, the R-60 District requires a minimum of 60,000 square feet of total lot area, a minimum of 45,000 square feet of buildable area, a 150 foot square building site, and a minimum of 200 feet of frontage on collector or arterial roads or 150 feet of frontage on local roads. While these regulations are designed to ensure that building lots contain adequate areas for the provision of septic systems and usable areas for home sites, they result in a mechanical approach to subdivision design.

In addition, a corollary effect of this requirement has been for developers to "lot off" sites along existing roads in Colchester since it may not be cost-effective to build a new road to serve only a few lots in the interior of a parcel. In fact, examination of the land use map will reveal several locations where this type of development pattern has emerged.

Colchester can do better. The Plan recommends that Colchester consider modifying local regulations to encourage what are known as open space development patterns. The graphic on the facing page illustrates the difference between "conventional" development patterns and "open space" development patterns.

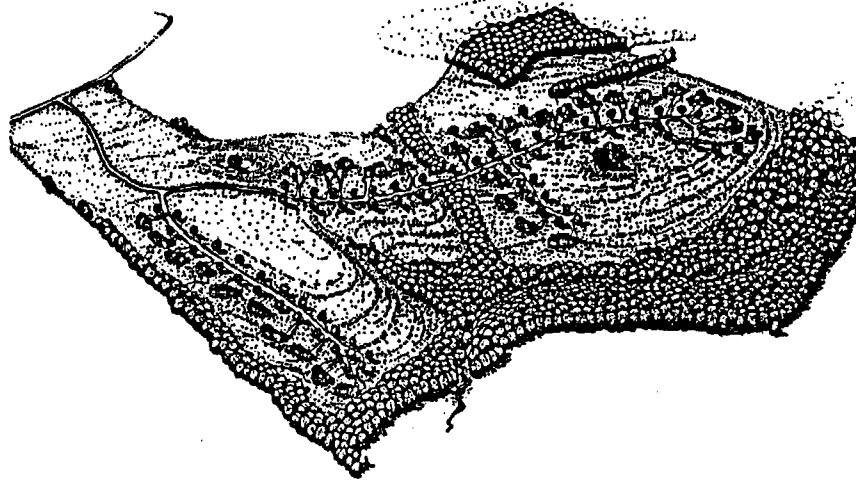
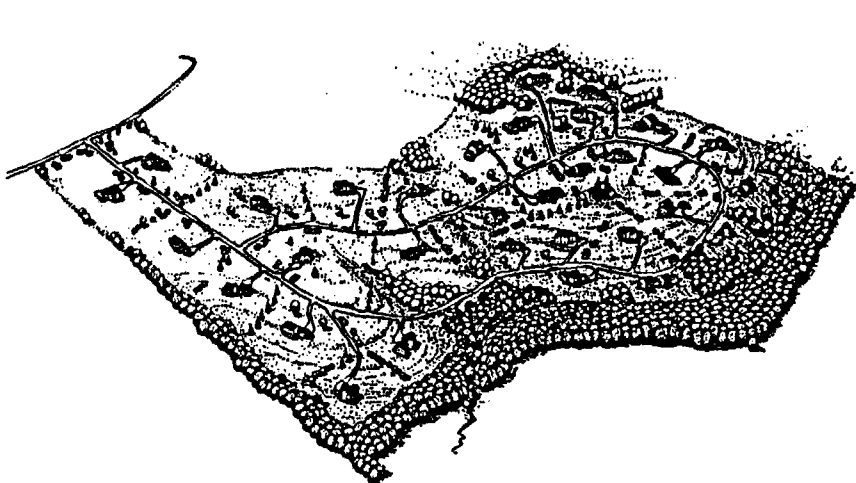
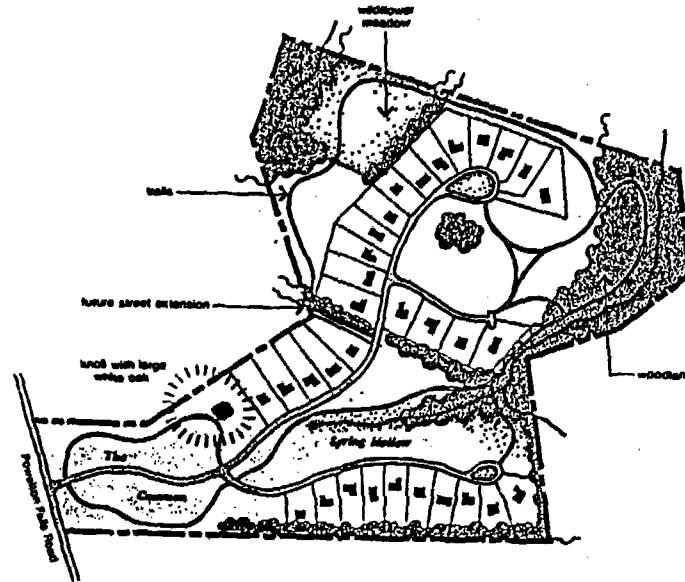
Conventional Subdivision Design

32 lots on 82 acre parcel (77 acres in lot areas) with 10% preserved open space (8 acre conservation easement)



Open Space Subdivision Design

32 lots on 82 acre parcel (29 acres in lot areas) with 65% preserved open space (50 acres preserved)



Colchester residents surely realize that additional residential development will occur in the future.

If “conventional” development patterns continue, Colchester will have more houses and subdivisions along existing roads with lot configurations that pay little attention to protecting natural resources, preserving open space, or protecting community character. This will happen since existing regulations encourage a layout of lots based on geometric standards rather than the natural capability of each parcel. In other words, residential development will occur in ways that provide few benefits to existing residents.

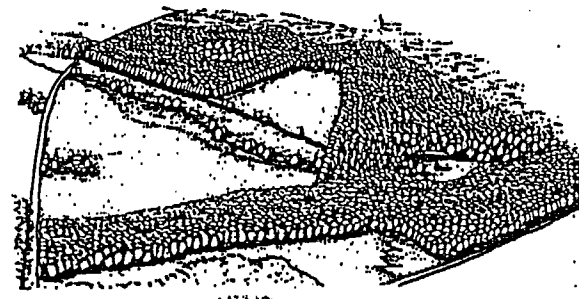
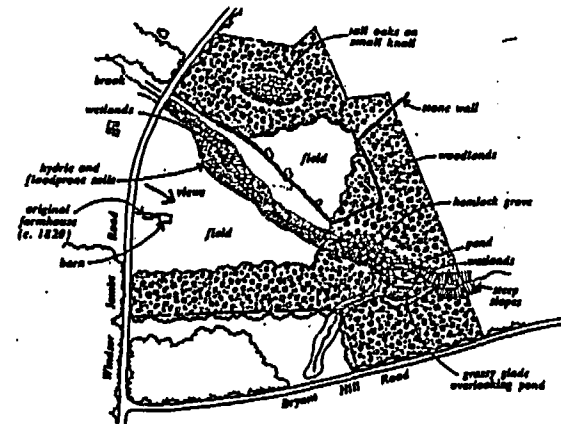
On the other hand, open space development patterns can help ensure that important natural resources and features are protected, open spaces are preserved for public use and enjoyment, and community character is preserved. As a result, important objectives of the Plan can be realized even though parcels are being developed for residential use.

The graphics on this and the facing page illustrate how a conceptual site might be developed with a conventional subdivision and with an open space subdivision.

The major advantages of the open space development are:

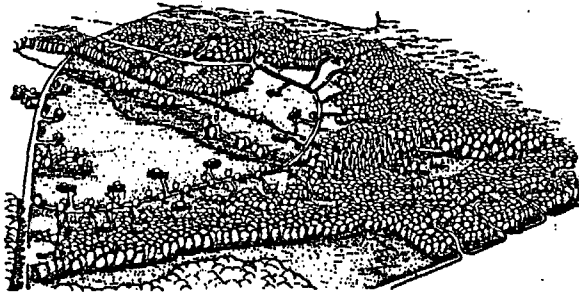
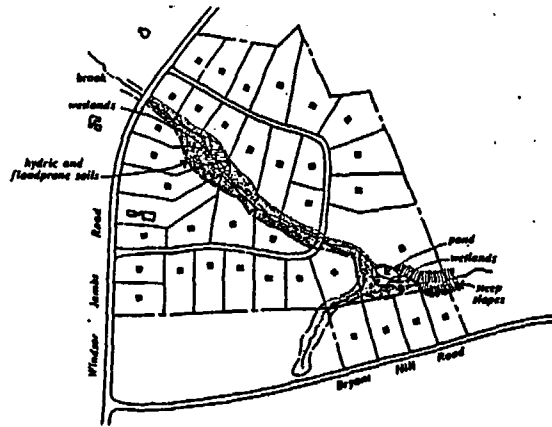
- Significant public open space with potential for trails and greenbelt establishment,
- Preservation of the open field and rural character along the roads,
- New homes nestled in the trees,
- Preservation of stone walls and significant vegetation,
- Fewer wetland crossings and impacts, and
- Less pavement (roads and driveways).

Conceptual Site



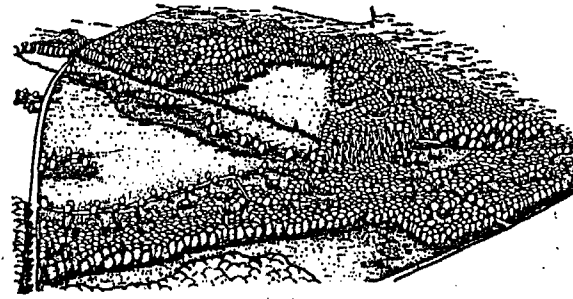
Source: Randall Arendt

Conventional Subdivision



Source: Randall Arendt

Open Space Subdivision



Source: Randall Arendt

Density Definition

Residential density is simply another way of looking at development yield. For example, seven lots on a 20-acre parcel is the same as a density of 0.35 units per acre.

Density is used to regulate development yield from a piece of property.

Density Standards

Prior to adoption, density standards should be:

- compared to actual development experience in Colchester, and
- be reviewed to ensure design flexibility.

It will be important to:

- place a note on approved subdivisions that certain oversized lots cannot be further subdivided if the maximum density for the parcel has been reached, and
- preserve a set of assessor maps that show the configuration of property at the time the residential density regulation was adopted.

The recommended program for encouraging open space development patterns includes:

- modifying the definition of buildable land to delete the word “contiguous” but to include floodplain areas,
- using a density regulation rather than a minimum lot area requirement to regulate development yield (limit the total number of lots on a parcel being subdivided),
- maintaining the requirement for a certain shape and minimum area of contiguous buildable land on a lot but reducing the minimum lot area requirements,
- requiring a specific percentage of the parcel area be preserved as open space, and
- providing flexibility in minimum lot size requirements within acceptable Health Code standards.

Since the maximum yield (number of lots) is determined by the density regulation, the regulatory review process then focuses on determining the *best overall plan* for the development and conservation of the parcel. The resulting development pattern will help preserve natural resources, be compatible with the neighborhood, promote an open space system, and protect the character of the community.

By using residential density to regulate the number of lots and by allowing smaller lot sizes, more of a parcel can be preserved as open space. This open space can be located on a parcel to conserve sensitive natural resources, buffer adjacent uses, protect scenic views, and contribute to the overall open space pattern in Colchester.

In addition, the residential density regulation can be used to “tune” the amount of future residential development in Colchester.

An open space development program will not result in any additional lots being built on a particular parcel, but it will encourage development patterns that are more in keeping with people’s perception of, and desires for, Colchester. The Commission should also consider allowing other flexible development types that preserve meaningful open space.

Possible regulatory language could be as indicated on the facing page.

POSSIBLE REGULATORY LANGUAGE – OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Buildable Area – Land exclusive of wetlands, watercourses or waterbodies, 100-year floodplain, ledge outcrops, and slopes greater than 25%.

- a. Land not classified as buildable area shall not be used to calculate density for any residential use.
- b. Any parcel developed for single-family residential use shall observe the following regulations:

Single-Family Zone	Maximum Density (units/acre of buildable land)	Buildable Square (feet)	Minimum Contiguous Buildable Area Per Lot	Minimum Frontage	
				Arterial/Collector Roads	On Local Streets
R-80	0.35 - 0.40	150	50,000 square feet	400	200
R-60	0.50 - 0.60	150	40,000 square feet	300	150
R-40	0.70 - 0.80	150	30,000 square feet	250	125
R-30	1.10 - 1.20	100	22,500 square feet	250	125
R-30A	1.10 - 1.20	100	22,500 square feet	200	100
R-15	2.20 - 2.30	100	15,000 square feet	150	100

- c. In residential subdivisions of four lots or less, the Zoning & Planning Commission may modify the density requirements by rounding up fractions greater than 0.50 to the next integer. This provision shall not apply to resubdivisions.
- d. Any lot developed for any use shall obtain a certification by the Town Health Officer that the proposed use will be connected to a public sewer or that a functioning septic system can be provided in accordance with the requirements of the State Health Code, as amended.
- e. Every subdivision shall preserve a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of the parcel areas as open space that is deeded to the Town of Colchester, a recognized Land Trust, or a homeowner’s association.
- f. The Zoning & Planning Commission may reduce the minimum lot area and/or minimum lot frontage requirements for lots in a subdivision in proportion to the amount of open space that is preserved in perpetuity on the parcel in excess of the minimum requirement. (For example, if 30 percent of the parcel is preserved as open space, the minimum contiguous buildable area per lot may be reduced by up to 20 percent). Prior to modifying any such requirement, the Commission shall make findings on the record that:
 - there will be a significant or community benefit resulting from the open space that is being preserved in perpetuity, such as:
 - protection of important natural resources,
 - protection of scenic resources,
 - preservation of a sizable area of open space,
 - preservation of areas along Town or State roads that will protect rural appearance or character,
 - establishment of an open space corridor or greenway or interconnection of existing open spaces, and/or
 - provision for public access.
 - that the open space will not result in small or fragmented open space parcels that do not provide community benefits.

Maximizing Open Space

A subdivision regulation allowing the Commission to require that any area over the minimum lot size requirement for the zone be deeded to the Town or a land trust for open space would maximize the open space preserved as part of a subdivision. It could be required of any individual lot or of multiple lots in a subdivision.

This option could be considered in the future if Colchester desires to maximize the amount of open space provided in a subdivision.

Elderly Housing Options

1. Remain in current home.
2. Move to smaller home.
3. Move to condominium with exterior maintenance provided.
4. Retain day-time help.
5. Remain in home with an accessory apartment for caretaker, caregiver, and/or income.
6. Move in with family in their home or accessory apartment.
7. Move to congregate or assisted living complex.
8. Move to subsidized elderly housing development.
9. Move to nursing or convalescent home.

Encourage Housing Diversity

In addition to development densities and patterns, provisions also need to be made for housing needs. About ten percent of the housing units in Colchester are non-single-family housing types. These housing types can help meet the diverse housing needs of the elderly, the disabled, moderate income families, 'empty-nesters', and people relocating to this area.

While Colchester already has a reasonable share of "affordable housing", appropriate opportunities to enhance housing diversity should be considered. Opportunities to be explored include:

- requiring a certain percentage of all developments (subdivision lots or multi-family units) to meet affordability criteria,
- creation of affordable rental units by churches or other local organizations, and
- development of housing opportunities with state and federal grants or subsidies.

In addition, the zoning regulations should continue to allow residential units in non-residential buildings in the village areas.

In addition, there is expected to be a need during the planning period for additional housing units in Colchester that are suitable for the elderly and/or the disabled. Some senior and disabled persons will want to remain in their own homes as long as possible. This can be facilitated through such local policies as tax "circuit breakers" and the availability of local assistance such as dial-a-ride, meals-on-wheels, senior activities, and home health services.

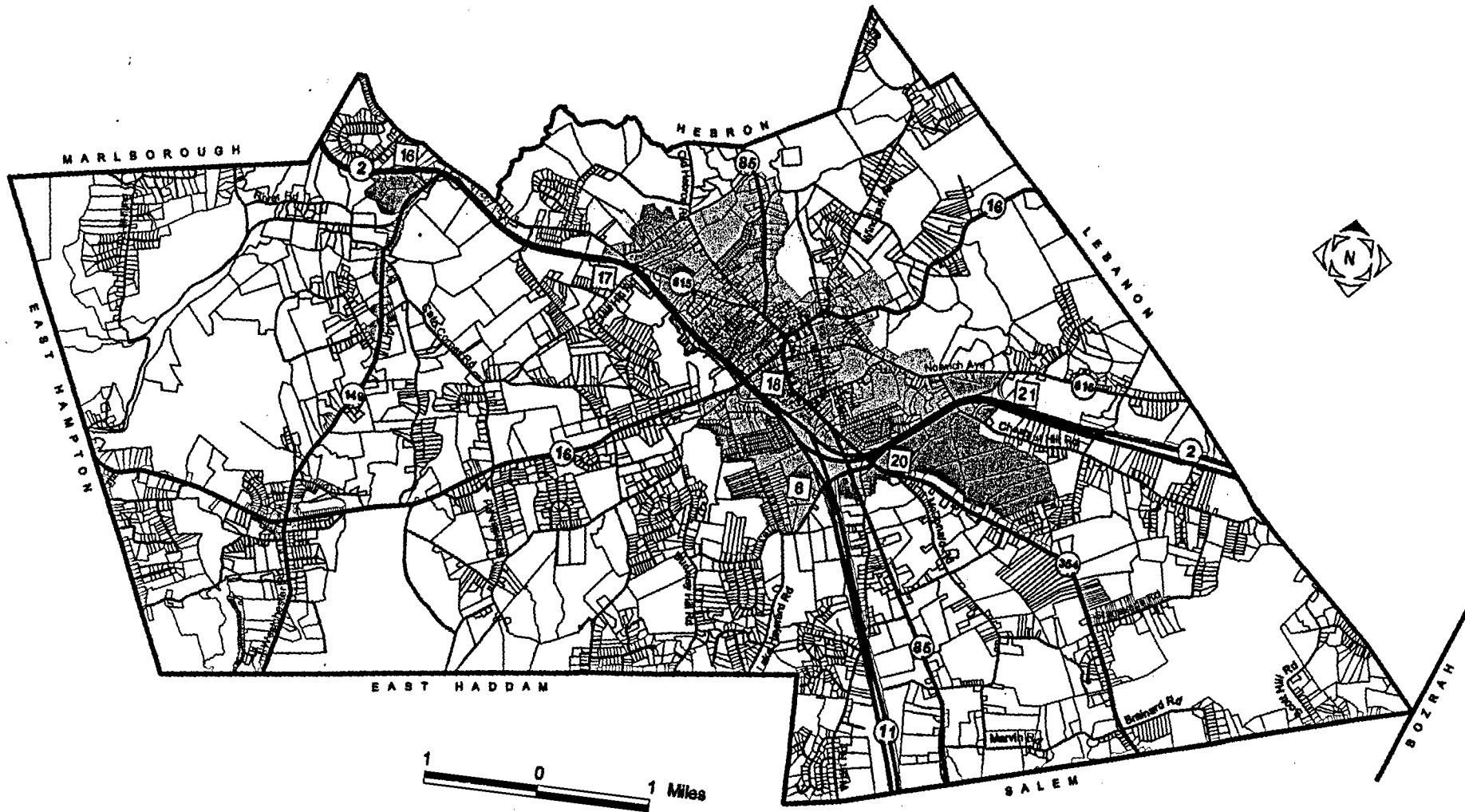
In a single-family home, an accessory apartment (a secondary dwelling unit located in the home) may be established by a homeowner in order to accommodate an elderly or disabled family member, allow an on-premises caretaker or caregiver for an elderly or disabled person, or to generate additional rental income. Colchester allows accessory apartments in residential zones with Special Exception approval. These provisions should be maintained, with appropriate controls, to help meet the housing needs of Colchester residents and provide housing opportunities with minimal community impact.






Other senior or disabled persons will look forward to moving to congregate and assisted living developments that provide some services (such as meals, recreation, and minor assistance with daily living). While some of these types of developments are being undertaken by the private sector, there is still a need for housing developments for elderly and disabled persons of limited means.

Nursing and convalescent homes provide services for the elderly and disabled who need significant assistance with daily living. At this time, these types of developments are also being undertaken by the private sector.

Residential Densities Plan

Colchester, CT



- Residential Densities**
-  Rural Density (<0.5 units/acre)
 -  Low Density (<1.0 units/acre)
 -  Moderate Density (>1.0 units/acre)
 -  Village Residential (>2 units/acre)
 -  Non-Residential Area

Implementation

See the implementation chart on pages 119-20 for the priority and the assignment of responsibility for implementation of these housing and residential areas strategies.

Statutory Reference

“The Plan shall show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential ... purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality.”

“The Plan shall make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings consistent with soil types, terrain and infra-structure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region.”

“The Plan shall promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs.”

CGS 8-23

HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL AREAS STRATEGIES

Support Community Structure

1. Continue to recognize the prevailing development pattern of:
 - higher densities and diverse housing types in and near the Town Center where water and sewer are available,
 - predominantly single-family development in outlying areas, and
 - a reduction of density as the distance from the Town Center increases.
2. To protect water quality and water supplies:
 - reduce the residential density permitted in the Deep River watershed, and
 - rezone certain outlying areas from the R-40 designation.

Guide Multi-Family Development

3. For proposed multi-family developments, utilize the criteria discussed in the Plan to:
 - evaluate the proposed location,
 - guide the proposed design, and
 - review the proposed density.
4. Discourage multi-family developments that:
 - are large-scale in terms of the number of units, have a high density, or are not consistent with the level of services available in town,
 - do not meet local housing needs,
 - are not compatible with town character or do not help maintain Colchester's single-family appearance,
 - do not blend effectively with nearby single-family residential areas,
 - are **not** located on sites in or near the Town Center, or
 - are **not** serviced by public water and public sewer system.

Carefully Manage Residential Development

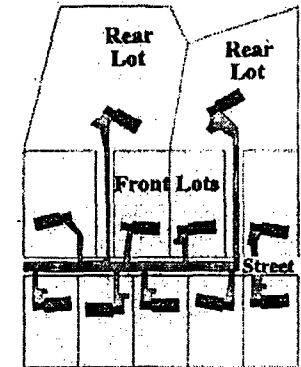
5. Consider adopting regulations to review “divisions” of property (also known as the “first cut” of a subdivision) in order to ensure that regulations are complied with and future conservation and development occurs with reasonable efficiency and economy.
6. Consider adopting new regulations requiring that any soil testing be done on the basis of the indigenous soil (not using fill or underdrains).

Promote Open Space Development Patterns

7. Modify local regulations to provide for open space development patterns by:
 - using a density regulation rather than a minimum area requirement to regulate development yield,
 - modifying the definition of buildable land to delete the word contiguous and include floodplain areas,
 - requiring a specific percentage of the parcel area be preserved as open space, and
 - providing flexibility in minimum lot size requirements.
8. Consider increasing the lot area and frontage requirements on existing streets, especially arterial and collector streets, in order to maintain community character by encouraging lots to be developed on new roads.
9. To minimize curb cuts, consider prohibiting rear lots (also called interior lots or flag lots) on arterial roads and requiring a special permit for rear lots on other roads.
10. Allow other flexible residential developments that enhance the preservation of large areas of meaningful open space while maintaining a similar density to that currently permitted.

Interior Lots

An interior lot is a lot without the required frontage on a public street. It is also called a rear lot or a flag lot due to its typical location and shape.



Such lots can inhibit overall road circulation patterns, increase the number of curb cuts (an important issue on collector and arterial roads), and detract from other lots around them.

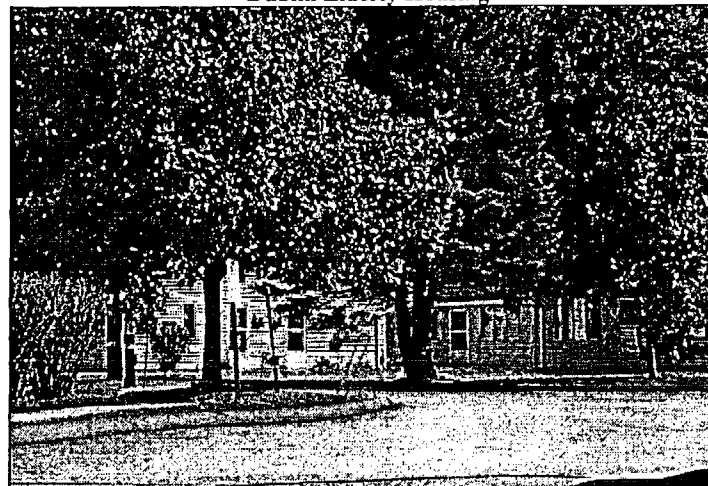
Encourage Housing Diversity

11. Continue to explore appropriate opportunities to enhance housing diversity.
12. Consider requiring that a certain percentage of all housing developments meet affordability criteria.
13. Continue to allow residential units in non-residential buildings.
14. Maintain programs that allow elderly and disabled persons to remain in their own homes as long as possible.
15. Continue to permit accessory apartments.
16. Continue to allow for the development of congregate and assisted living development for the elderly and/or disabled.
17. Provide additional elderly housing units, such as at “Dublin” and “Ponemah”, to meet local needs.

Ga-Na-Den



Dublin Elderly Housing



BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

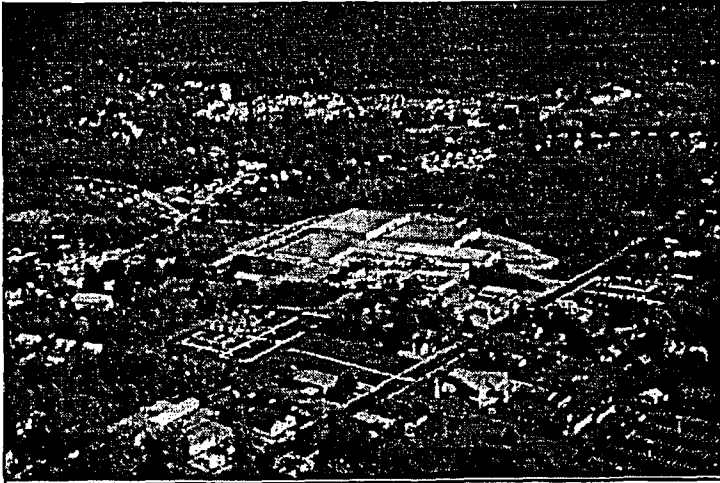
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OVERVIEW

This section of the Plan looks at the location and type of retail, office, and industrial development and other activities in the Town of Colchester that provide:

- goods and services for residents,
- job opportunities, and/or
- a balanced tax base.

S&S Worldwide



Colchester Bakery



Establish economic development focal points . . .

Provide for existing uses in areas to be re-zoned . . .

Consider other areas for future business development . . .

Promote appropriate site design . . .

Allow adaptive reuse . . .

Continue to allow home occupations . . .

Employment Trends

	Employment
1960	963
1970	1,520
1980	1,700
1990	3,050
2000	3,450
2010	4,150
2020	4,850

Source: CT Labor Department, projections by Department of Transportation in italics.

INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT

Colchester is a sub-regional center as evidenced by the fact that Colchester has more jobs than any of the surrounding towns and higher retail sales and economic output than any of the surrounding towns. While most business uses are concentrated in the Town Center and in the Westchester area, some uses are also spread out along major arterial roads where business or industrial zones have existed.

In the telephone survey, Colchester residents generally agreed that:

- attracting more business and industry would make the town a better place to live,
- the town should do more to attract business and industry to town, and
- the town should be doing more to expand tax revenues from business and industry.

Would More Business Make Colchester a Better Place?

A Better Place	56%
Depends	7%
No Difference	18%
A Worse Place	18%
Don't Know	1%

Should Colchester Attract New Business and Industry?

Should Do More	59%
Done Enough	32%
Done Too Much	8%
Don't Know	2%

Should Colchester Expand Tax Revenue from Business and Industry?

Should Do More	53%
Done Enough	29%
Done Too Much	5%
Don't Know	13%

Should Colchester Encourage Business Growth Only Near The Town Center?

Strongly Agree	26%
Mildly Agree	23%
Mildly Disagree	20%
Strongly Disagree	29%
Don't Know	3%

Should Colchester Encourage More Retail Development in Westchester?

Strongly Agree	41%
Mildly Agree	31%
Mildly Disagree	13%
Strongly Disagree	10%
Don't Know	6%

Overall, there appears to be a demand in the Colchester area for additional retail and service businesses to serve the needs of residents of Colchester and surrounding communities. In addition, Colchester, due to its strategic location and well qualified labor force, has the potential to establish a high-quality business park for office, research, and light industrial uses.

Thus, Colchester has an opportunity to promote appropriate economic development through:

- development of business parks, and
- appropriate siting of retail and service uses to meet local and regional needs.

While many comments during the planning process advocated economic growth in order to reduce taxes, other comments were directed towards carefully managing such development and preserving community character (minimize strip development, protecting the Town Center). With careful planning and regulation, it should be possible to have both.

In terms of the locations for business growth, Town residents were divided about encouraging business growth in and near the Town Center while discouraging it in outlying areas. However, residents were very supportive of encouraging more retail development in Westchester.

The main issue in Colchester is the unorganized distribution of commercial and industrial zones in the community. In order to promote economic development and provide appropriate locations and services (water, sewer, and roads), the location of business and industrial zones needs to be modified.

PROGRAM

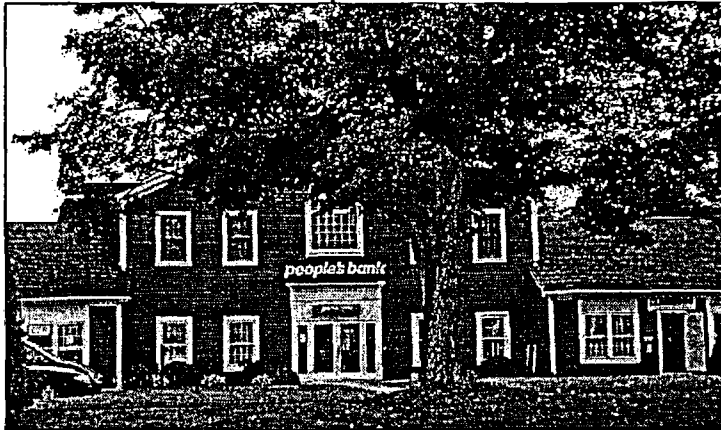
Establish Economic Development Focal Points in Village Centers

Business uses should continue to be located in the Town Center and Westchester Village Center in order to most efficiently meet the needs of residents. The role of the Town Center as the business, government, and cultural center of the Town should be maintained and enhanced. Westchester is a secondary focal point in Colchester that has potential for creation and enhancement of a village center. In order to maintain and enhance community character, village district zoning (as allowed in Public Act 00-145) could be considered for one or both of these areas.

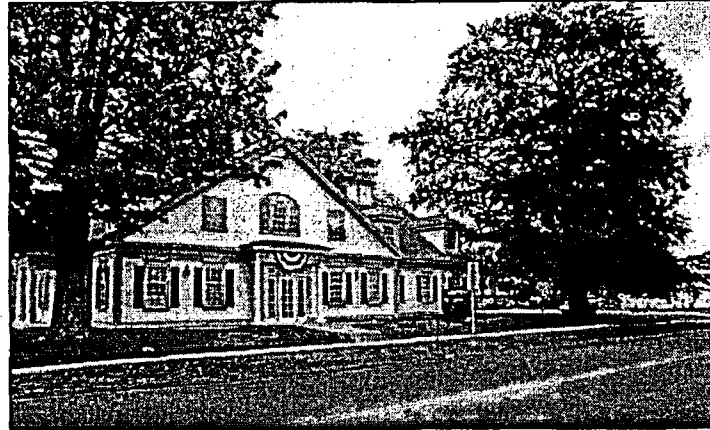
Village Centers

Since the village centers are such an important component of Colchester's community structure and character, these areas need to be kept healthy and vital by focusing economic development in these areas.

People's Bank



Town Center Businesses



Establish Economic Development Focal Points in Other Appropriate Locations

Due to the roadway and utility infrastructure, Colchester has several areas where economic development focal points could be established to meet community needs for employment, goods and services, and tax base.

The area near the confluence of Routes 2 and 11 would appear to hold a lot of potential for the development of some commercial uses and a business park containing office, warehouse, light industry, assembly, distribution, research, development, and other functions. Adjacent areas could also provide for lower intensity or transitional uses (such as lodging facilities, small offices, institutions, or other uses) that would provide for transition to adjacent residential areas. Since the park type arrangement for the business park area is a key component, overall planning for this area should be coordinated with other appropriate agencies (such as the Economic Development and Conservation Commissions).

Another area with potential for development of an economic focal point is located at Exit 17 of Route 2. While land along Old Hartford Road may be appropriate for retail or commercial development, areas to the east (extending up to the wetlands area near Old Hebron Road) will be more appropriate for business park and similar uses.

Both of these areas would provide for community needs while being efficiently served by road, water, sewer, and other utility infrastructure.

Consider Eliminating Some Other Business & Industrial Zones

At the present time, Colchester has a disorganized arrangement of business and industrial zones. For example, there are too many industrial zones encompassing too much area in too many locations to bear any reasonable relationship to Colchester's present or future needs. In addition, some areas are poorly located to offer much prospect for meaningful economic development or are likely to have adverse impacts on surrounding areas.

Many of these industrial zones were established when Colchester first adopted zoning and have never been used for industrial purposes. Some areas have little prospect for desired economic development since they are far removed from centers of activity or main roads (typically important considerations for business uses). In fact, some areas have been proposed for uses (like an asphalt plant) that caused considerable community opposition.

There is little doubt that Colchester would not identify these areas as being the most appropriate for economic development if zoning were being established today. In the long run, Colchester will benefit from an overall business and industrial zoning pattern that meets community needs and responds to the overall community structure. In addition to establishing the desired economic development focal points, Colchester should eliminate unnecessary or redundant business and industrial zones.

During the planning period, business and industrial zones outside of the desired economic development focal points in village centers and business parks should be considered for rezoning to other uses. This will help avoid situations in the future where uses are proposed in the industrial zones that are incompatible with the adjacent areas or that will have a negative impact on community character.

Provide For Existing Uses In Areas To Be Rezoned

If and when existing business and industrial zones are being considered for a change to another zone, there is the possibility that some existing uses in those areas may become non-conforming (meaning they may no longer comply with the new regulations). Although one of the historic concepts in zoning is to eliminate non-conforming uses over time, there was a sentiment in the community to take a gentler approach.

This sentiment reflects that some of these businesses have been in Colchester for some time and that the present owners have made investment decisions on the basis of current zoning and the perception that non-conforming status may affect property sales and financing of these businesses.

<u>Option</u>	<u>Business Impacts</u>	<u>Community Impacts</u>
1. Leave existing zones intact.	Existing businesses not affected.	May get expansion of business or industrial uses in inappropriate areas.
2. Leave zoning on properties with existing businesses intact. Only eliminate those areas of business and industrial zones that are not presently used for business or industrial purposes.	Existing uses can remain without restrictions associated with becoming non-conforming.	Reduce inappropriate locations. New uses may locate in areas that may not be appropriate.
3. Leave zoning on properties with existing businesses intact and limit the uses allowed in these zones to present uses only.	Existing uses can remain without restrictions associated with becoming non-conforming.	Limit extent and type of use to those presently existing.
4. Eliminating all of the zone except that portion defined by the existing foundations of current buildings and allowing accessory uses on the site.	Use of existing buildings is continued with some restrictions on use of the site.	Reduce inappropriate locations. New uses may be located in existing buildings.
5. Change zone and allow expansion of existing non-conforming uses or change between non-conforming uses by Special Permit under certain conditions (such as architectural enhancement, economic development, adequate buffering).	Allows for expansion under certain conditions.	Can closely monitor and manage existing uses.
6. Eliminate existing zones.	Uses become non-conforming.	May lead to elimination of existing uses over time.

Development Types

Village Business – small scale businesses (such as retail shops, small restaurant, office, and personal service uses) in buildings that enhance the village centers.

General Business – larger scale business uses (such as shopping center, retail, restaurant, office, light industrial, and similar uses) intended to serve community and regional needs.

Business Park – larger scale business uses (such as office, warehouse, light manufacturing, assembly, research and development, and similar uses). Such uses could be organized in a park-type setting or occur in areas of pre-existing uses. Retail or other commercial uses could be considered on and near major roads by special permit.

Transitional Area – areas adjacent to business parks or other commercial areas where lower intensity uses (such as lodging facilities, small scale offices, day care centers, institutional uses) would provide for an orderly transition to less intensive residential uses.

Consider Other Areas For Future Business Development

As Colchester grows in the future, there may be additional demand for commercial uses. While this Plan anticipates that the areas identified will be adequate to meet community needs for the potential buildout of the community, it also recognizes that changes in office, retail, service, and industrial business trends may result in other needs that this Plan cannot anticipate.

The primary locational determinants used in this Plan for business and industrial uses include:

- proximity to the Town Center or Westchester Center,
- adjacency to major regional and local travel routes, especially interchanges,
- availability of water and sewer utilities,
- reasonable transitions to adjacent residential uses,
- consolidated areas to meet community needs while avoiding “strip development”, and
- contribution to community character.

Other business zoning regulations or business zone locations may become desirable in the future and this Plan believes that they could be appropriate if they are located in accordance with the above criteria.

Promote Appropriate Site Design

Efforts need to continue to ensure adequate transitions from businesses to adjacent residential uses. While Colchester has already done a great deal in terms of promoting consolidated development (fewer curb cuts, more cross-connections), these efforts need to be continued and expanded.

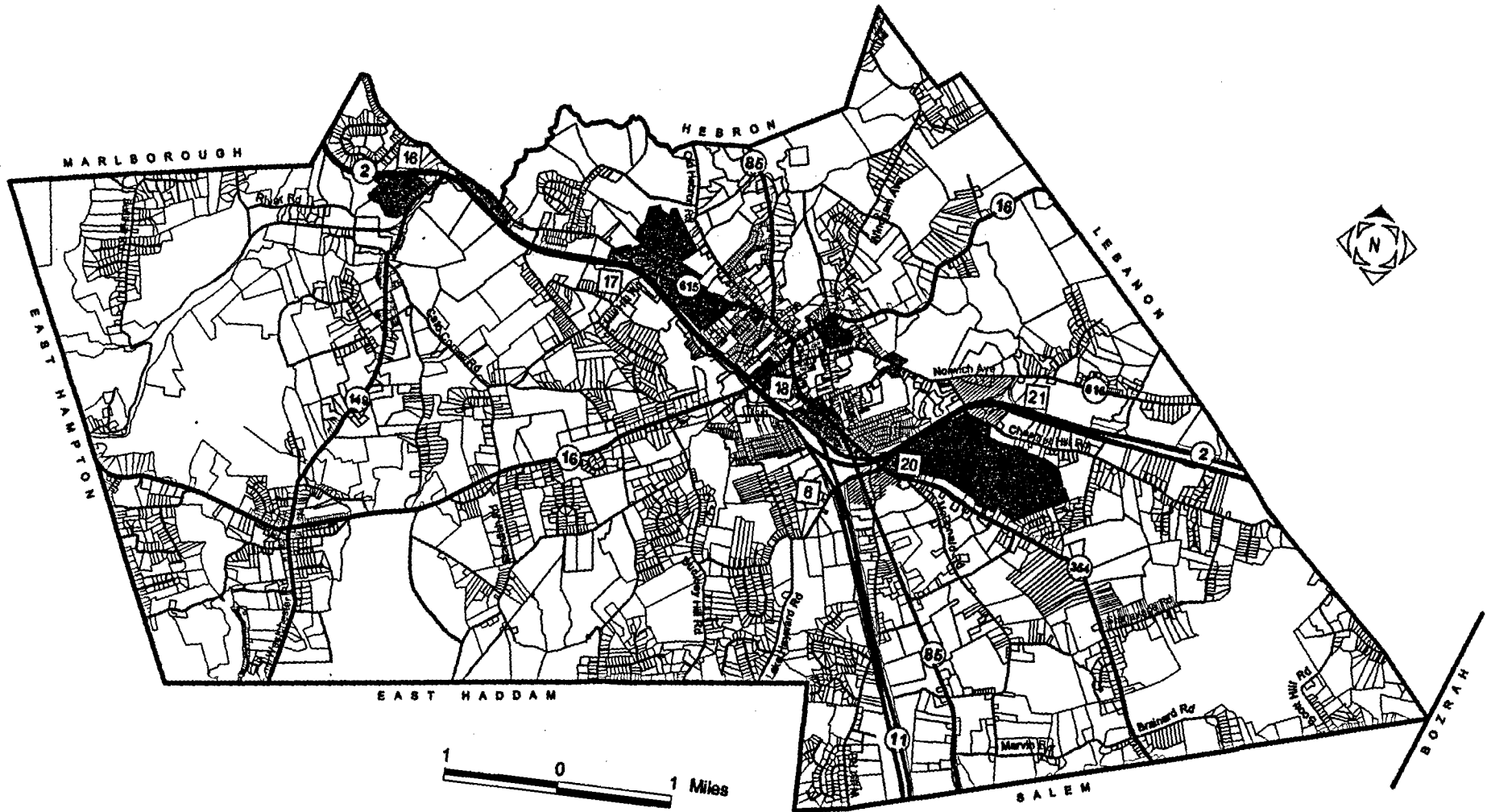
The Commission should continue to explore ways to provide for more flexible parking requirements in the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone when sites are interconnected and/or parking is available nearby. This will help to promote compatible development in the Center, recognize the multi-purpose nature of trips to the Center, and promote community character. Shared parking like that behind Merchants Row could be a good example, although such parking could be publicly or privately developed.

Continue to Allow Home Occupations

Home occupations (persons who work at home) are a growing trend in Colchester and elsewhere. Some such uses are permitted at the present time in residential zones provided that approval is obtained from Planning & Zoning Staff. As home occupations continue to evolve, additional provisions should be considered.

Economic Development Plan

Colchester, CT



- Type of Future Economic Development Area**
- Village Business
 - General Business
 - Business Parks
 - Transitional Areas

Implementation

See the implementation chart on pages 121-2 for the priority and the assignment of responsibility for implementation of these business and economic development strategies.

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Establish Economic Development Focal Points in Village Centers

1. Maintain and enhance the role of the Town Center as the business, government, and cultural center of the Town.
2. Establish Westchester as a village center and a secondary focal point in Colchester.
3. Continue to encourage mixed uses that complement community character and add activity and stability to each village center.
4. Consider village district zoning (as allowed in Public Act 00-145) for one or both of these areas.

Establish Economic Development Focal Points in Other Appropriate Locations

5. Establish an economic development focal point near the confluence of Routes 2 and 11 for the development of some commercial uses and a business park containing office, warehouse, light industry, assembly, distribution, research, development, and other functions.
6. Consider establishing an economic development focal point at Exit 17 of Route 2.
7. Create a Business Park zone to encourage development of high quality campus-style developments that will help diversify the Town's economic base.
8. Establish a Business Park zone:
 - near the junction of Routes 2 and 11, and
 - near exit 17 of Route 2.
9. For each zoning district, consider requiring a Special Exception for larger developments to ensure community impacts are adequately considered.

Consider Eliminating Some Other Business & Industrial Zones

- 10. Modify the business and industrial zoning pattern to meet community needs and be compatible with the desired overall community structure.
- 11. During the planning period, consider rezoning business and industrial zones outside of the desired economic development focal points in village centers and business parks to other uses.

Provide For Existing Uses In Areas To Be Rezoned

- 12. If and when existing business and industrial zones are rezoned to other zones, consider ways to address the unique situations created for existing businesses in these areas.

Consider Other Areas For Future Business Development

- 13. If necessary, consider establishing appropriate new business zoning regulations or business zone locations that are in accordance with the criteria indicated in the Plan.

Upton Road Business



North Westchester Area



Promote Appropriate Site Design

14. Consider requiring a Special Exception permit for large buildings or uses that may have an adverse impact on community character.
15. Continue to provide for adequate transitions between business or industrial uses and adjacent residential uses.
16. Continue to encourage site design that minimizes curb cuts, creates cross-connections, shares parking, and encourages pedestrian use.
17. Continue to explore ways to provide for more flexible parking requirements in the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone when sites are interconnected and/or parking is available nearby.

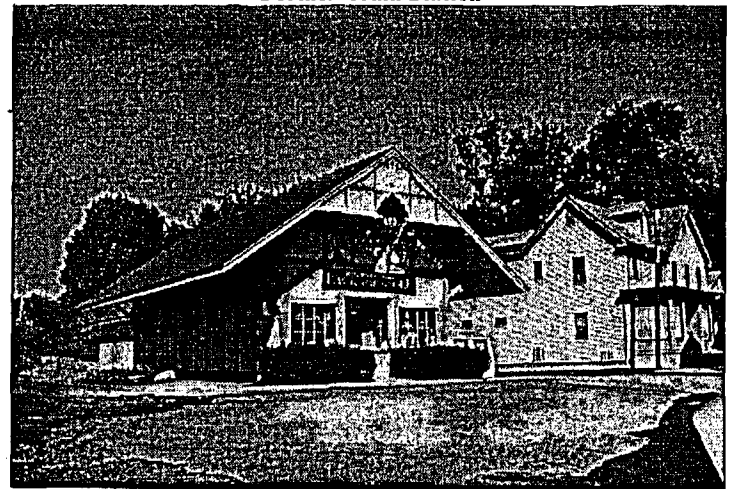
Continue to Allow Appropriate Home Occupations

18. Continue to allow reasonable home occupation uses in Colchester.
19. Modify home occupation regulations to adapt to changing circumstances.

Adaptive Re-Use of Historic Building



Former Train Station



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

11

OVERVIEW

Community services and facilities include such governmental functions as education, public works, public safety, and recreational services. Such services contribute significantly to the character of a community and its quality of life.

The Plan of Conservation & Development reviews the physical aspects of such services and facilities to ensure they are appropriately located and sized to meet community needs during the planning period and beyond. The Plan is not intended to address the management, operations, or programs of individual departments or facilities.

Address current needs . . .

Prepare for future needs . . .

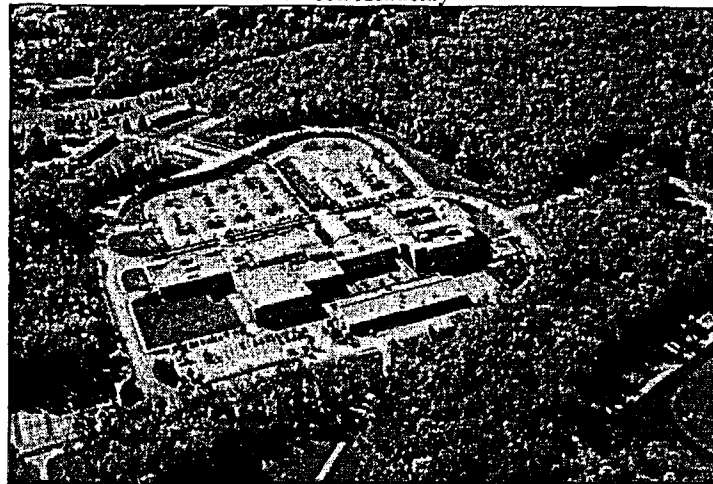
Aim for efficiency and economy . .

Undertake other important programs . . .

Colchester Town Green



Bacon Academy



INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT

Town Hall

Most of Colchester's general government functions are located in the Town Hall at 127 Norwich Avenue. This building was built in 1990 to meet the growing needs of the town and it is the location of most municipal departments. This concentration of services is a benefit to residents and allows for close communication and coordination between departments due to their close proximity.

Due to community growth, the Town Hall is already showing space constraints and additional space will be needed to address the space needs of various departments. Fortunately, the building was designed to accommodate expansion and the currently unfinished third floor can provide for future space.

In the short term, this space could be configured to accommodate the Board of Education and provide storage space. In the more distant future, the Board of Education or the Police Department could be relocated to another facility elsewhere with minimal impact due to their more limited interaction with some other departments. Eventually, future additions to the Town Hall for office space or records storage might be desirable to allow department consolidation.

Colchester Town Hall



Public Safety

Colchester participates in the Resident State Trooper Program where Towns utilize state police (from the Troop K barracks in Colchester) for local law enforcement. In addition, Colchester has six full-time officers with another currently in training. This arrangement appears capable of meeting Colchester's needs during the planning period and the office and administrative space at the Town Hall is expected to be adequate.

Fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) in Colchester are provided by the Colchester-Hayward Volunteer Fire Department. Colchester has two stations, the main station in the village and a satellite station in Westchester. Services are provided by a combination of paid and volunteer staff with paid staff on duty at the main station during the day when volunteer response is most difficult. Attracting and retaining volunteer staff is becoming more difficult due to increased training requirements. Colchester has already started the transition to paid staffing and programs to encourage volunteer participation or improve daytime response should be considered. Traffic congestion is likely to always be an issue unless additional road connections are made.

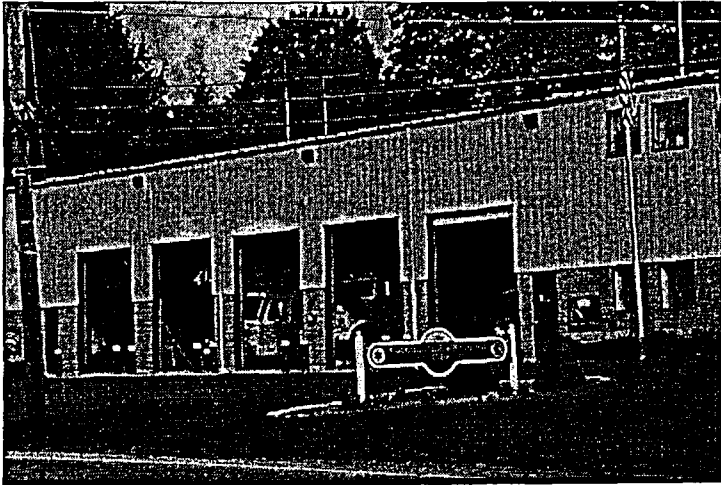
While current public safety facilities appear adequate, the need for more public safety personnel and equipment will become apparent as the community grows. At some time during the planning period, it may make sense to investigate the establishment of a public safety complex at an appropriate location.

Meeting Survey

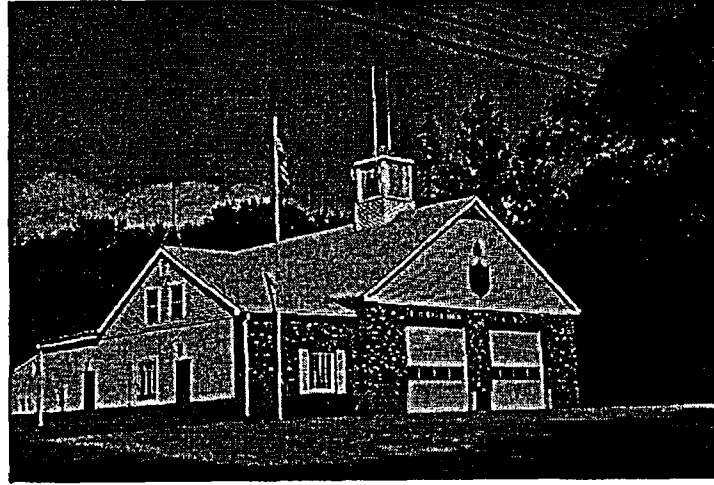
How are Town efforts at providing public safety services?

Too Little	17%
Just Right	83%
Too Much	0%

Main Fire Station



Westchester Fire Station



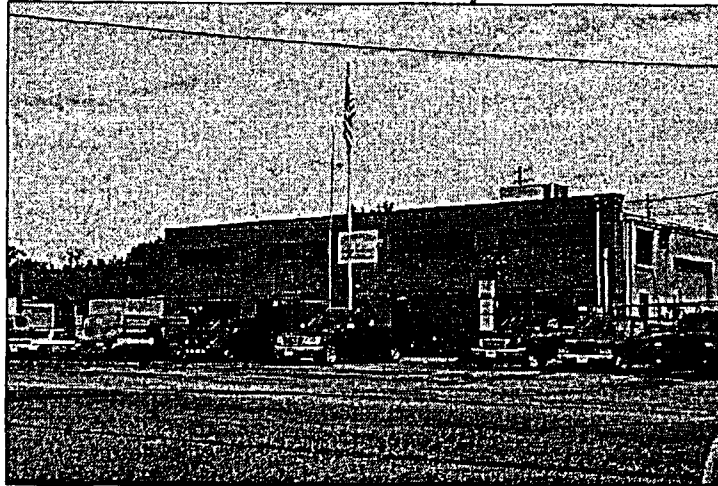
Public Works

Public Works Garage - The Garage on Old Hartford Road is used to store public works equipment and materials and maintain public works, parks and recreation, police, fire, senior services vehicles and equipment. Due to site and building constraints, a larger facility is needed during the planning period. While expansion at the existing site would be the preferred option, the Town could acquire a site elsewhere for development of a new facility served by public water and public sewer. In addition, a satellite salt/sand and fuel storage facility should be considered for the Westchester area.

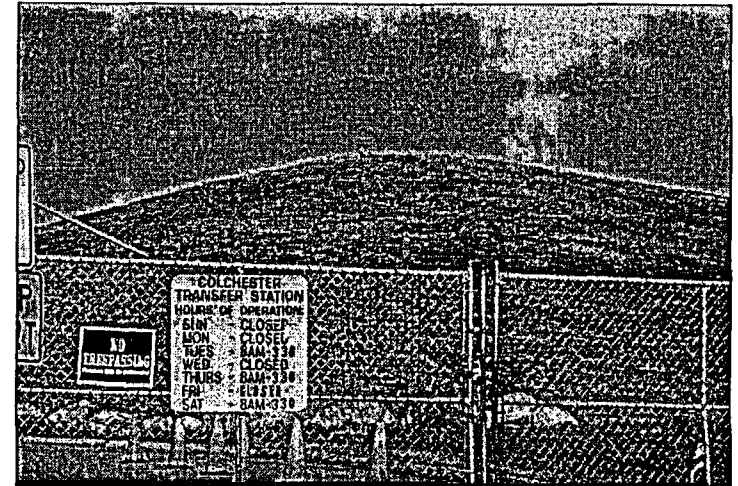
Solid Waste - Solid waste collection is provided by private vendors who contract directly with residents and businesses. Some residents elect to dispose of the solid waste themselves at the transfer station. Solid waste is presently transported to the resource recovery facility in Lisbon and bulky waste is taken to Manchester. Recyclable materials are collected at the transfer station and then sold to recyclers. These arrangements are expected to be adequate for the planning period.

Road Maintenance - Road maintenance is undertaken by Public Works staff and/or private contractors as conditions and priorities warrant. While a pavement management system would help the department prioritize improvement projects, additional inspectors are also desired for inspection of new road construction.

Public Works Facility



Colchester Transfer Station



Recreation Facilities

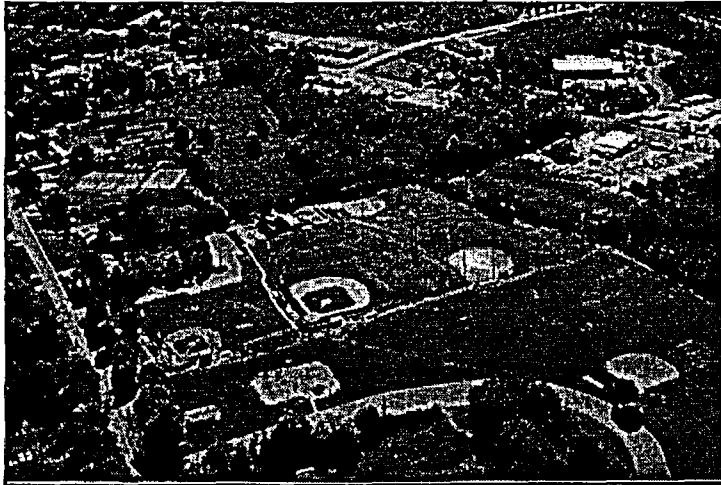
The main Parks and Recreation complex, containing 54 acres, is located on Old Hebron Road. Except for the school sites and the Town Green, this facility is the only site used for active recreation in Colchester. While residents feel that the Town has done a good job at providing for Park and Recreation facilities and programs, they feel that additional facilities are needed. In the near future and as the community grows, additional facilities will be required.

The 1998 Park & Recreation Master Plan identified the need for a field house, field lighting, relocation of playing courts, and a parking redesign at the main facility. Other identified recreation needs include soccer fields, indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities, bikeways, picnic areas, and playgrounds. Interest has also been expressed in a nature center. Residents especially seem to be supportive of a pool and a community center (possibly combined in one facility).

While some expansion has taken place at the existing recreation facility, adjacent land area will need to be added or another facility will need to be established. At some time in the future, it may also be beneficial to locate recreation facilities at other locations, such as west of Route 2 or in the in Westchester area.

During the planning period, consideration should be given to the desirable location of other recreation sites. Since Colchester may eventually be a community of about 40,000 people, consideration must be given for the configuration of Park and Recreation facilities for this future population. Desirable sites should be acquired as soon as possible.

Main Recreation Facility



Recreation Activities



Colchester Park & Recreation Department

Meeting Surveys

How are Town efforts at providing recreational facilities?

Too Little	33%
Just Right	67%
Too Much	0%

How are Town efforts at providing recreational programs?

Too Little	22%
Just Right	78%
Too Much	0%

Telephone Survey

Should the Town develop more recreation fields?

Favor	62%
Oppose	33%
Need More Info	4%
Don't Know	1%

Telephone Survey

Should the Town Build a Community Center?

Favor	68%
Oppose	28%
Need More Info	4%
Don't Know	1%

Community Center

There is strong interest in Colchester for establishing a community center. In addition to being a top priority for the Parks and Recreation Department, Senior Services, and Youth Services, over two-thirds of Colchester residents supported the idea of the Town building a community center for Colchester residents of all ages. Specific amenities could include community rooms, indoor pool, stage, meeting space, and a dining/banquet area. This facility could also serve as a community shelter or accommodate compatible municipal departments.

Library

The Cragin Memorial Library is located at 8 Linwood Avenue in the Town Center. For many years, the existing library was inadequate in terms of space and programs. The Town and the library trustees are currently expanding the library to address this deficiency.

With a larger library, additional staff will be required to provide programs and services. At some time, it may make sense to revisit the relationship between the Town and the Board of Trustees. With these improvements, the library should meet community needs through the planning period.

Cragin Memorial Library



Youth Services

The old Town Hall building on Norwich Avenue was recently renovated for use as a Youth Center. While this space will help to meet the needs of Colchester's youth population in the short term, additional space will be needed in the future as such programs grow. Program usage should be monitored to anticipate future needs, including possible youth transportation services after school and vacation periods (possibly through sharing of senior citizens buses).

Senior Citizens Programs

The Colchester Senior Center is located at 95 Norwich Avenue. The building, which is leased from Bacon Academy Trustees, has been adapted to provide many services for the senior population. Attendance is high and there is inadequate activity and storage space in the facility. The current senior center is lacking space to accommodate the growing senior population and their needs. This situation is expected to get worse over time due to the anticipated increase in Colchester's senior population. During the planning period, expansion or relocation of this facility should be considered. Construction of the community center with special facilities for senior citizens would be the most efficient solution.

The staff also coordinate the use of the Senior buses which provide about 17,000 trips a year for the elderly. While they are able to meet the demand for trips within town, there is an unmet need for medical trips to nearby communities. This is considered to be a major issue by the Senior Services staff.

Housing Facilities

The Colchester Housing Authority currently operates and maintains 70 units of elderly housing in Colchester in two projects. Both projects are fully occupied at the present time. While there is turnover in the units, tenants are readily available. In fact, the 16 units that were recently completed at Dublin have proven to be very popular and have about a two year waiting period to enter. As the elderly population in Colchester continues to grow, additional elderly units will be necessary in the future.

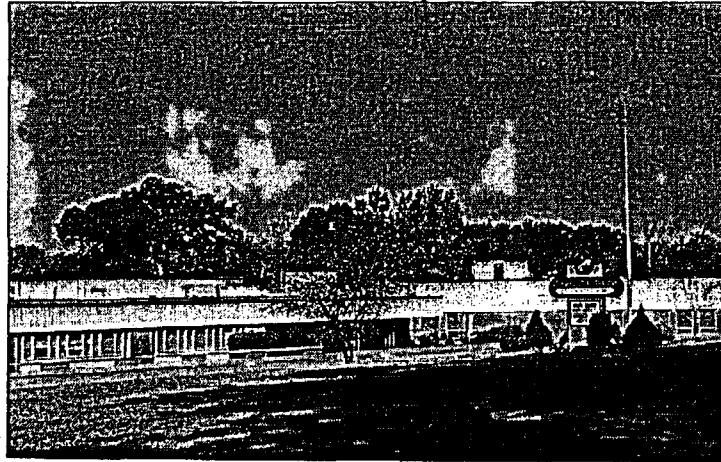
Ponemah Village Elderly Housing



Education Facilities

Colchester has four school facilities and uses a combination of buildings and modular classrooms to accommodate current enrollments. Schools enrollments are increasing and this is expected to continue through the planning period. In fact, the current capacity of the existing facilities may be exceeded by the 2001-02 school year.

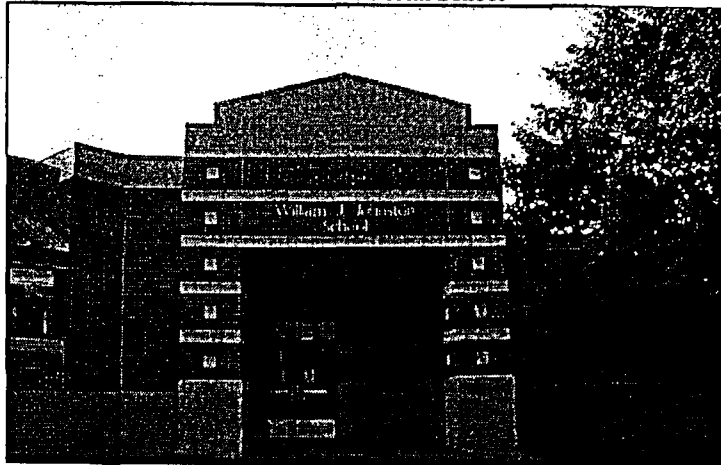
Jackter Elementary School



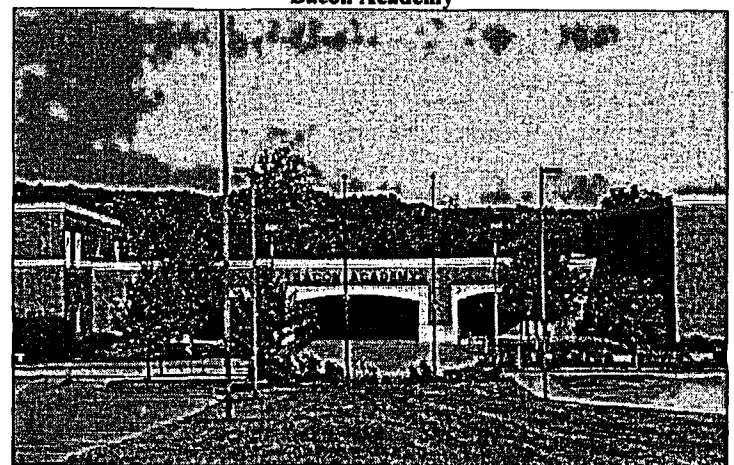
Colchester Intermediate School



Johnston Memorial School



Bacon Academy



Colchester School Facilities

Type	School	Grades	99-00 Enrolled	Building	Module	Capacity	Ratio
Elementary	Jack Jackter	PK - 3	1,042	885	176	1,061	98%
	315 Hall Hill Road						
Intermediate	Colchester Intermediate	4 - 5	499	410	88	498	100%
	380 Norwich Avenue						
Middle	W. J. Johnston Memorial	6 - 8	658	570	132	702	94%
	360 Norwich Avenue						
High School	Bacon Academy	9 - 12	692	824	0	824	84%
	611 Norwich Avenue						
Subtotal				2,689	396		
Total PK-12			2,891			3,085	94%

Note: The capacity estimates presented in this table estimate full capacity of school classrooms and modular classrooms. In practice, maximum operational capacity is about 85 percent of full capacity. Modular capacity includes eight modular rooms expected to be added to the system for the 1998-99 school year (one at Jack Jackter, four at Colchester Intermediate, and three at W.J. Johnston). The capacity of a classroom (building or modular) is 20 to 22 students.

Meeting Surveys

How are Town efforts at providing local educational facilities?

Too Little	49%
Just Right	49%
Too Much	2%

How are Town efforts at providing local educational quality?

Too Little	35%
Just Right	65%
Too Much	0%

Telephone Survey

In the telephone survey, Colchester residents surveyed indicate that education was one of the most important issues facing the community.

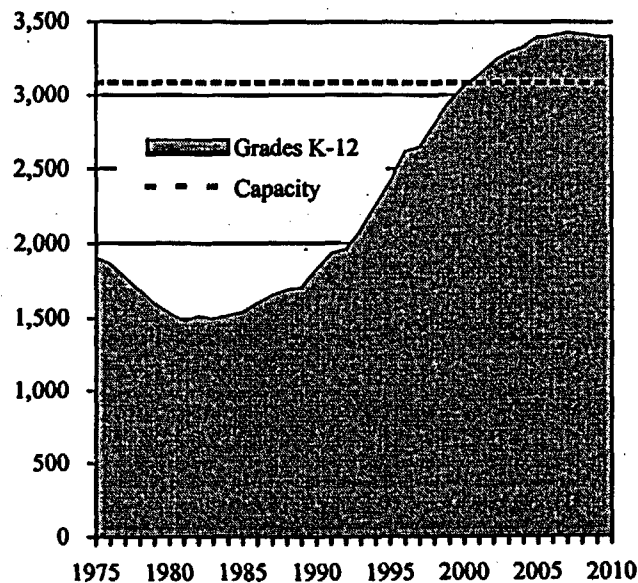
What Grade Would You Give Colchester Public Schools?

A	13%
B	44%
C	20%
D	6%
F	3%
Don't Know	15%

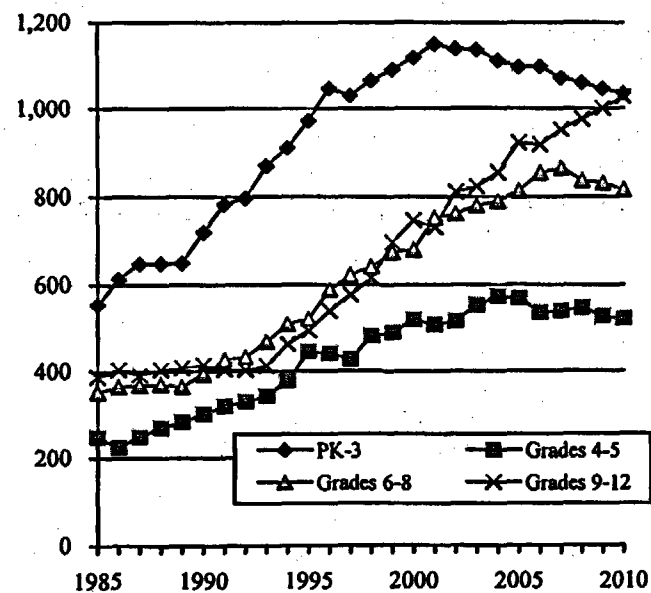
Spending on Education?

Increased	57%
About the Same	34%
Decreased	6%
Don't Know	3%

Historic & Projected Total School Enrollments (Grades PK-12)



Historic & Projected School Enrollments by Grade



School Enrollment Ratios

Year	Town	State
1970	27%	22%
1980	20%	17%
1990	17%	14%
2000	22%	16%
2010	25%	n/a
2020	22%	n/a

Projections in italics

School Sites

While the Plan recognizes that Colchester will need additional school facilities in the near future, it does not make recommendations with regard to specific sites.

Such a decision will need to be made by the community once overall school organization and configuration issues (such as community versus neighborhood schools or such as different grade groupings) are decided.

However, since enrollments will soon exceed capacity, the time for making those decisions is imminent.

Implementation

See the implementation chart on pages 123-4 for the priority and the assignment of responsibility for implementation of these community facility strategies.

Projections indicate that additional classroom space will be needed at most grade levels in the very near future. Discussions have centered around a new K-2 school with Jackter becoming a grade 3-5 school. While modular classrooms may be able to accommodate some of the enrollment increase, the projected increase is expected to persist for some time.

Colchester's enrollment ratio (pupils/population) declined from 1970 to 1990 and is now increasing again due to the "baby boom echo." If the enrollment ratio peaks around the year 2010 at 25 percent, Colchester's school system may need enrollment capacity for about 3,800 students. The enrollment peak in this scenario is 50 percent higher than current enrollments and cannot be accommodated by existing buildings. Such enrollments will best be met by physical construction of permanent classrooms or addition of another school facility.

In the longer term, additional school capacity will be required. If Colchester becomes a community of about 40,000 people, the school system may need to educate between 7,000 and 10,000 students. Desirable future school sites should be identified and acquired as soon as possible.

PROGRAM

There are a number of issues related to community facilities that can be directly related to the growth of the community. It is reasonable to expect that community growth will increase the need for community facilities and the challenge will be to prioritize and phase these improvements over time.

An issue that the community will need to address is the concentration of community facilities in Colchester. While the historic concentration of facilities in the Town Center is appropriate due to the availability of water and sewer, it contributes to traffic congestion and leaves large areas of Colchester remotely located relative to these facilities.

COMMUNITY FACILITY STRATEGIES

Address Current Needs

1. Plan for school expansion or new construction during the planning period.
2. Acquire adequate sites for the school expansion or construction to accommodate future enrollment increases.
3. Expand the library.
4. Establish a Planning Committee for a community/aquatics center (recreation, senior center, teen center).
5. Expand the finished floor space in the Town Hall by completing the third floor.
6. Consider expanding dial-a-ride and other transportation services for community needs.
7. Consider the possible future need for another fire station in the southeast part of town.

Community Facilities Plan

Colchester, CT

Administrative

- ① Town Hall

Public Safety

- ② Colchester Volunteer Fire CO #1 / EMS
- ③ Colchester Volunteer Fire CO #2
- ④ State Police Barracks

Public Works

- ⑤ Public Works Department
- ⑥ Land Fill and Transfer Station

Recreational / Social

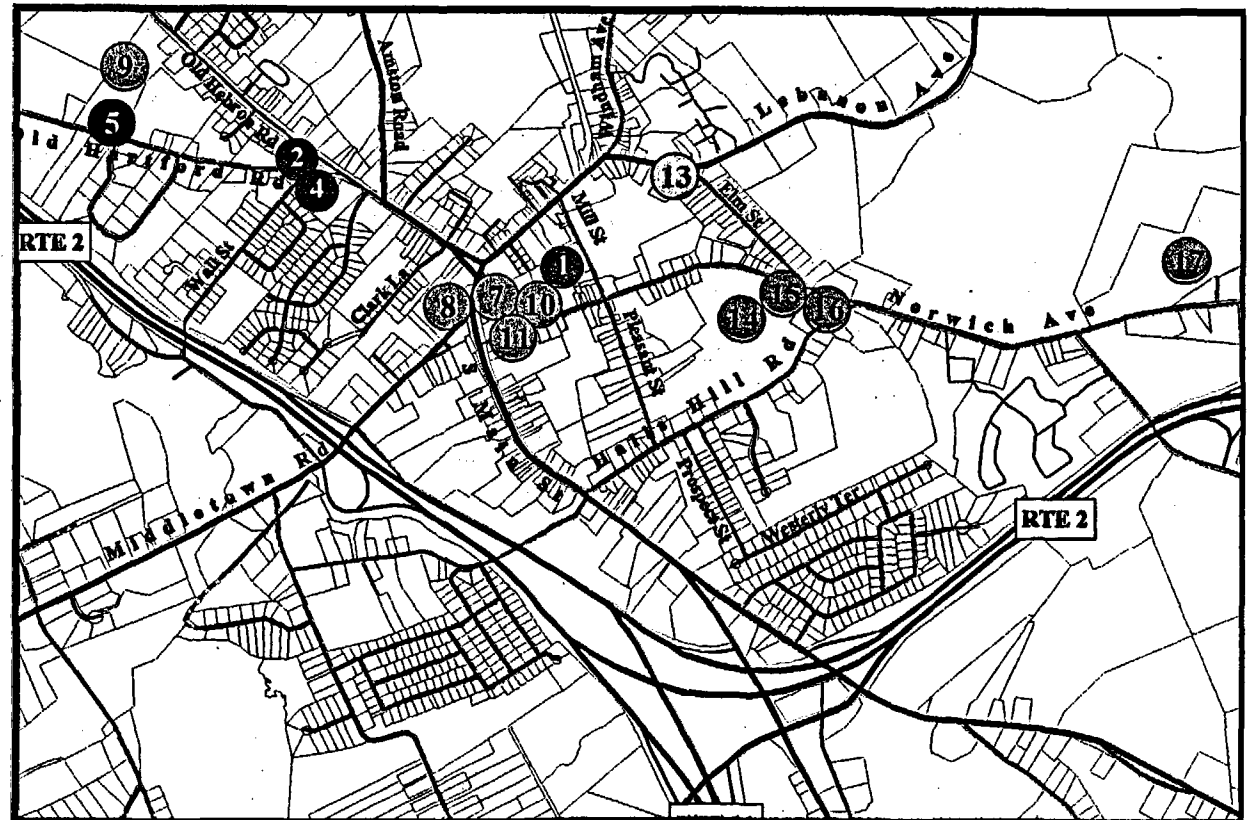
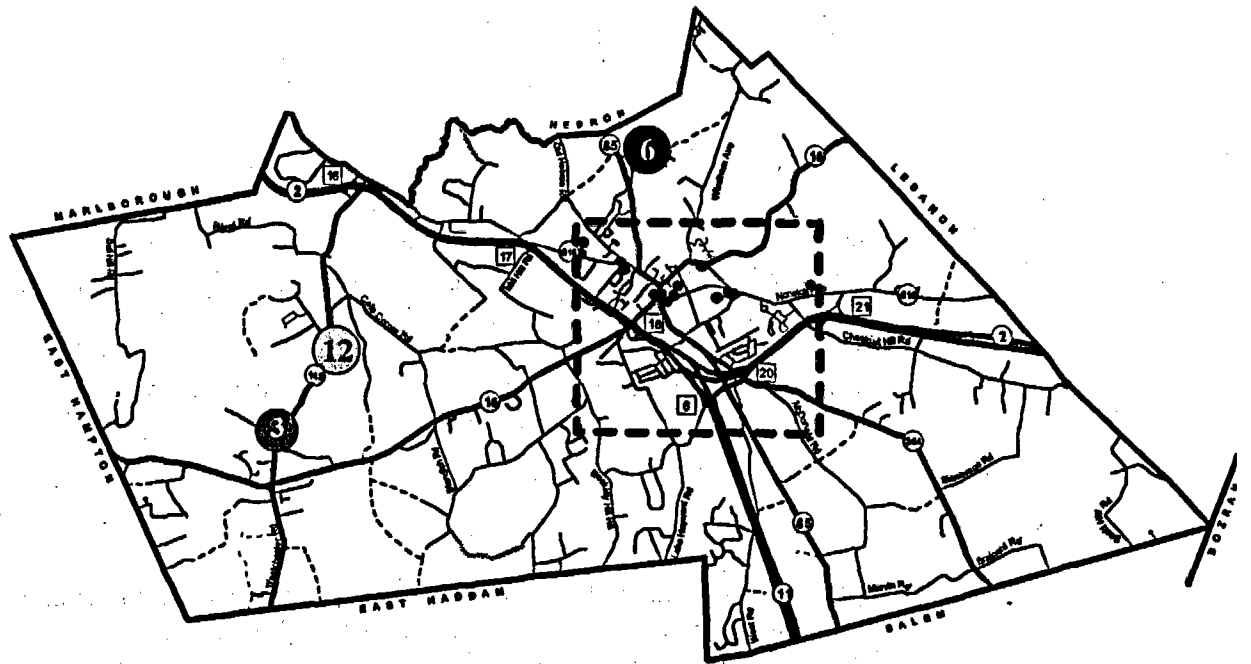
- ⑦ Town Green
- ⑧ Cragin Memorial Library
- ⑨ Park and Recreation
- ⑩ Senior Center
- ⑪ Youth Center

Housing

- ⑫ Ponemah Village Senior Housing
- ⑬ Dublin Village Senior Housing

Educational Facilities

- ⑭ Jack Jackter Elementary School
- ⑮ Colchester Intermediate School
- ⑯ William J. Johnston Memorial School
- ⑰ Bacon Academy High School



Prepare For Future Needs

8. Consider how demographic changes will affect future school enrollments.
9. Expand the public works garage site or acquire a new site.
10. Provide additional fields and outdoor recreation facilities as needs dictate and evaluate the distribution of recreation facilities in the community.
11. Study the need for a satellite public works storage facility in the Westchester area.
12. Monitor the need for elderly housing developments to meet community needs.
13. Monitor solid waste arrangements during the planning period to ensure that Colchester residents and businesses receive the most cost-effective services.

Aim For Efficiency & Economy

14. Plan and maintain flexibility in school facilities in order to accommodate enrollment "waves."
15. Continue arrangements between the School Department and the Recreation Department for use of facilities (such as gymnasiums) at existing schools and encourage inclusion of recreational facilities in new school projects.
16. Continue to maintain facilities in good condition.

Undertake Other Important Strategies

17. Provide programs to attract and retain the volunteer component of the Fire/EMS department.
18. Encourage the creation of fire ponds, dry hydrants, and storage tank installations where needed in the community.
19. Study ways to improve traffic circulation in the Town Center for emergency response (such as emergency signal pre-emption that would stop eastbound traffic on Route 16 and northbound traffic on Route 85 while providing a green signal for southbound traffic on Route 85).
20. Consider the need for additional bypass roads around the center to help emergency access and provide for traffic circulation needs.
21. Consider automating the pavement management system in the Public Works Department for road and sidewalk maintenance.
22. Undertake a master drainage study.
23. Identify and pursue water-based recreation sites.

TRANSPORTATION

12

OVERVIEW

The transportation system in a community is an important factor in its growth and development. This element of the Plan of Conservation and Development is concerned with the means by which people and goods are moved from one place to another. It is designed to encourage, support, and serve the current and desired future land use pattern for Colchester.

INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT

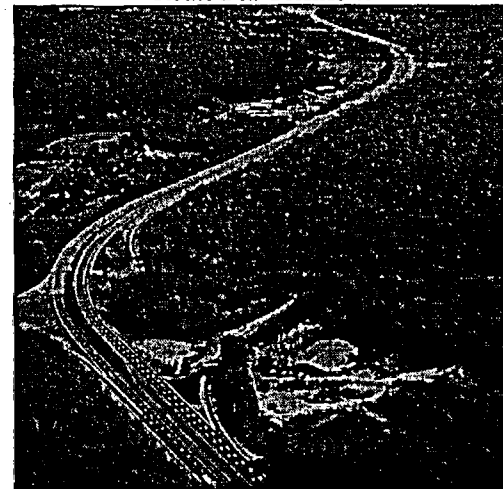
Colchester's transportation system includes roadway circulation on a variety of road types, transit services, pedestrian sidewalks and trails and bicycle routes.

Limited Access Highways

Colchester is served by Routes 2 and 11, limited access highways that connect Hartford to the New London and Norwich areas. Limited access highways are intended to move large volumes of traffic between major regional activity centers and such roads are maintained by the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). Colchester is served by six exits on Route 2 (exits 16 through 21) and one exit on Route 11 (exit 6).

These limited access highways improve Colchester's accessibility to and from other areas. However, there are only a few locations where people can travel from one side of the highway to the other. In addition, the configuration of entrance and exit ramps limits the utility of the road for local trips.

Route 2 in Colchester



*Improve Roadway
Circulation . . .*

*Improve Transit
Services . . .*

*Enhance Pedestrian
And Bicycle Travel . . .*

*Pursue Transportation
Coordination . . .*

Colchester Road Classes

Class	Through Traffic/ Property Access	
	100%	0%
Lim. Acc. Hwy	100%	0%
Arterial	75%	25%
Collector	50%	50%
Local	25%	75%
Limited Local	0%	100%

Cul-De-Sacs

It is apparent from the road map of Colchester that there are a number of dead-end streets in the community.

While some people favor cul-de-sacs, these dead end streets are sometimes criticized for increasing traffic and congestion on arterial and collector streets, delaying emergency access and response, and complicating the provision of municipal services (snow plowing and school bus routes).

Arterial Roads (State Highways)

Arterial roads, also maintained by the CTDOT, are intended to move a large number of vehicles from town to town and provide good accessibility to surrounding communities. In Colchester, this includes:

- Route 16 Middletown Rd., Linwood Ave., Lebanon Ave.
- Route 85 New London Rd., Main St., Broadway, and Amston Rd.
- Route 615 Old Hartford Road to exit 17 of Route 2
- Route 149 Westchester Road
- Route 354 Parum Rd., Deep River Rd.
- Route 616 Norwich Avenue

However, congestion results from the fact that "all roads lead to the Center." With the increase in traffic volumes, this radial road pattern is ill-equipped to accommodate traffic demands and congestion is apparent. As Colchester and surrounding communities continue to grow, it can be expected that congestion will continue to increase.

Collector Roads

The Colchester circulation system also includes a network of collector roads that are intended to collect traffic from local streets and abutting properties and direct it to arterial roads. These Town maintained roads include:

- Buckley Hill Road
- Bull Hill Road
- Cabin Road (part)
- Cato Corner Road
- Cemetery Road
- Chestnut Hill Road
- Clark Road
- Doctor Foote Road
- Elm Street
- Halls Hill Road
- Hayward Avenue
- Lake Hayward Road
- Linwood Cemetery Rd.
- Marvin Road
- McDonald Road
- Mill Hill Road
- Mill Street
- Miller Road
- Nelkin Road
- Old Hebron Road
- Old Hartford Rd. (part)
- Pleasant Street
- Prospect Hill Road
- River Road (part)
- School Road
- South Road (part)
- Stanavage Road
- Standish Road
- Stollman Road
- Wall Street
- Waterhole Road
- West Road
- Williams Road
- Windham Avenue

Local Roads

All of the other streets in Colchester would essentially fall into the classification of local roads and limited local roads. Local roads are intended to provide access to abutting properties with minor through traffic and limited local roads (dead end streets) are essentially dedicated to property access.

In Colchester, these designations also include some unpaved roads. Unpaved roads can be a long-term maintenance issue and the Town should review each of these roads in terms of its contribution to overall circulation. While some roads may warrant improvement, other roads may be recommended for abandonment or discontinuance.

Transit Services

Except for commuter buses to Hartford, Colchester is not served by regularly scheduled bus services. Weekday dial-a-ride service for the elderly and disabled is provided by a Senior Services bus which provides door-to-door service. This service is flexible helps meet the needs of those who use it.

Sidewalks & Trails

The greatest concentration of sidewalks in Colchester is in the Town Center. Due to the dispersed development and low density, there are few sidewalks in outlying areas of Colchester at the present time. Zoning and subdivision regulations require sidewalks be provided in the following situations:

- within one mile of a public school, and
- where pedestrian and/or vehicular traffic from a specific use is expected to be high.

Colchester has two trails established within the community, the Salmon River hiking trail (part of the 55-mile Blue-Blazed hiking trail system) and the Air Line trail (a rail-to-trail project).

Pedestrian trails and bikeways should be considered in other areas of Colchester to provide alternative means of travel and exercise. During the planning period, it will be desirable to evaluate the possibility of establishing trails on open space "greenways" in Colchester. Where such trails have been established, they have proven to be very popular with residents and provide an important recreation and transportation amenity.

Bicycles

Bicycle routes in Colchester at the present time rely predominantly on roads and streets. With increasing traffic volumes and narrow or irregular road shoulders, conflicts will arise between bicycle and vehicular use. This Plan aims to:

- encourage safe, convenient, comfortable, and secure bicycle-riding environments, and
- create a series of interconnected bicycle routes in the community, especially near centers of local activity (business areas, schools, parks, etc.).

The eventual development of a system of bicycle routes appropriately designed, signed and marked to ensure the safety and enjoyment of Colchester residents will be facilitated by the preparation of an overall concept plan as soon as possible.

Meeting Surveys

How are Town efforts at meeting commuter needs

Too Little	43%
Just Right	54%
Too Much	3%

How are Town efforts at providing trails, bikeways, and sidewalks

Too Little	49%
Just Right	49%
Too Much	3%

Sidewalks in the Center



Telephone Survey

The Town Should Build Connecting Roads, Especially Around The Town Center

Strongly Agree	22%
Mildly Agree	16%
Mildly Disagree	26%
Strongly Disagree	36%
Don't Know	1%

Conceptual Ring Roads

The conceptual ring road locations shown on the map on this page and the Transportation Plan map are schematic only and are for conceptual planning purposes.

At the appropriate time, more detailed planning of routes and alignments can be conducted.

PROGRAM

Improve Roadway Circulation

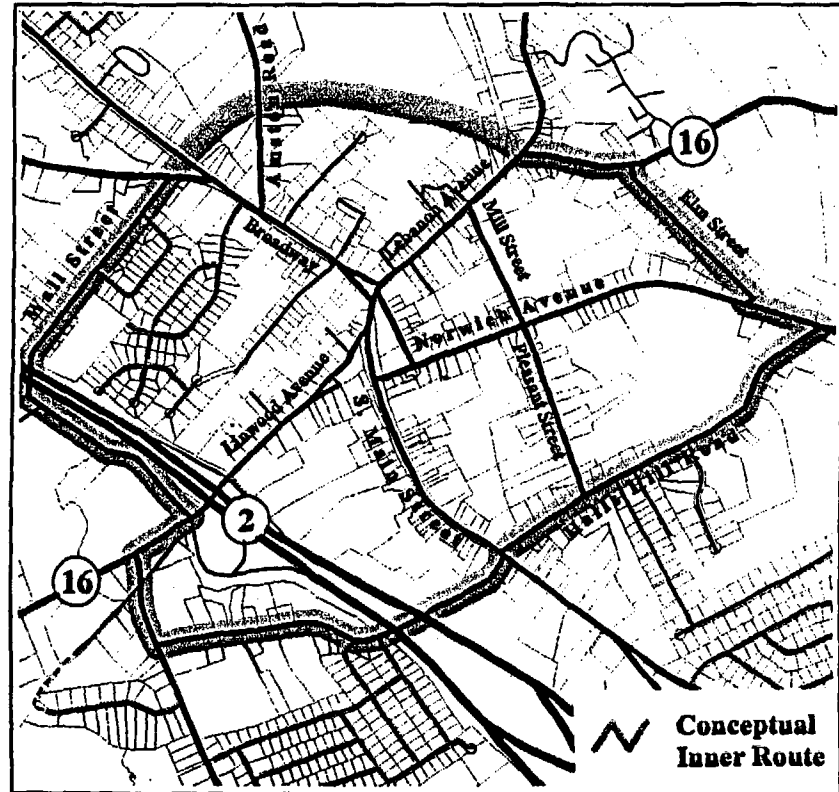
Traffic volumes in Colchester are growing faster than the population of the town, the region, or the state. In fact, research as part of the Plan found that traffic volumes on some major roads had increased by almost 40 percent between 1985 and 1996. As a result, road capacity, congestion, and safety issues have become more prominent.

The most vexing problem with the current road system in Colchester is that "all roads lead to the Center." The resulting traffic volumes create congestion and this creates additional issues such as driver frustration and difficulty in emergency fire and ambulance response. Since the character and vitality of the Town Center make it a special place in the community, finding an appropriate balance between traffic circulation needs and the character of the Town Center will not be easy.

The Plan recommends the consideration, during the planning period, of creating two alternate routes around the Town Center. An "inner route" is shown on the map on this page. An "outer route" is shown on the Transportation Plan map. The "inner route" should be initiated first. These alternate routes have been discussed in every Plan in Colchester over the past 30 years.

While the telephone survey indicated that a number of Colchester residents are not enthused by the idea of road construction in and around town, there are few other options for addressing increasing congestion in the Town Center.

Even if these routes are not built during the planning period, the Town should ensure that the right-of-way that may be needed for the different routes is preserved and dedicated to the Town so that the routes can be implemented at the appropriate time in the future.



In addition, the Town will need to carefully review new development plans in order to provide for appropriate connecting roads in Colchester. While developers and home-owners prefer cul-de-sacs for privacy, such roads can also increase congestion on major roads that must carry a higher burden of through traffic. Some possible desirable connections to be implemented as part of development plans in specific areas are shown on the Transportation Plan map.

During public meetings on the Plan, residents expressed a desire to expand Exit 17 on Route 2 to a full interchange. However, when this question was asked in the telephone survey, residents were nearly evenly divided about whether this strategy should be pursued. Creating a full interchange (installing an east-bound on ramp and a west-bound off ramp) at Exit 17 will provide an opportunity to relieve congestion in the Town Center and better serve development on Old Hartford Road. The Plan recommends that this interchange improvement be pursued. It is also a long-term goal of the Town to align Mill Hill Road and Miller Road in this area.

In order to maximize the capacity and the efficiency of the existing circulation system, the Town should continue to implement access management techniques along arterial and collector roads. Such strategies include minimizing curb cuts, spacing road and driveway intersections, interconnecting commercial developments, and other techniques that minimize access locations on major roads.

In addition, the Town should make intersection improvements along the proposed inner and outer routes in order to improve traffic flow. The need for these alternate routes is expected to increase as Colchester grows. While such improvements may not be required in the near future, any opportunity to acquire the necessary right-of-way should be taken advantage of.

Locations with accident concentrations in Colchester should be addressed. While CTDOT monitors accident concentrations on State highways, there is no corresponding information available for Town roads. Locations with noticeable accident concentrations or occurrences should be reviewed for desirable improvements.

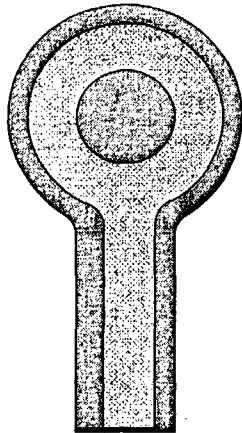
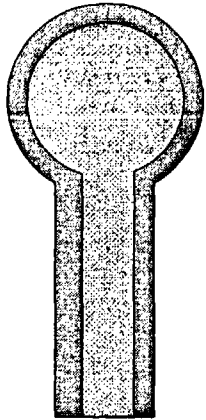
During the planning period, the Town should continue to review unpaved roads and improve, abandon, or discontinue each road segment, as appropriate.

Telephone Survey

Colchester should have more ramps from Route 2, especially at Exit 17?

Strongly Agree	33%
Mildly Agree	14%
Mildly Disagree	25%
Strongly Disagree	25%
Don't Know	3%

Landscape Center Islands



While road standards in Colchester are fairly reasonable, some changes are recommended (additional classifications, reduced paved width). Since some existing roads do not comply with these criteria yet exhibit high scenic value, the need for roadway improvements should always be balanced with scenic character. The intent should be to provide for safe roads that are the scenic roads of the future.

Proposed Road Design Criteria

Criteria	Limited Access Highway	Major Arterial	Collector	Local	Limited Local	Village Street (R-30 / R-15)
Design speed (mph)	In accordance with CTDOT criteria	In accordance with CTDOT criteria	30 mph	25 mph	20 mph	20 mph
ROW width			60'	50'	50'	50'
Pavement width			28'	24'	22'	24'
Max. street grade			8%	10%	10%	8%
Min. street grade			1%	1%	1%	1%

The Town may also wish to consider allowing landscaped center islands in cul-de-sacs in order to minimize the amount of paved areas, provide additional snow storage area, and provide an amenity in the roadway. Design standards for landscaped islands should be coordinated with the public works and public safety departments in Colchester.

In addition, the Town should continue to investigate the potential for “traffic calming” and “character enhancing” transportation improvements. Such techniques can include narrower roads, offsetting intersections, curvilinear streets, and amenities (sidewalks, street trees, and street furniture) closer to the travel way.

Improve Transit Service

The demand for transit services (especially dial-a-ride) is expected to increase as the population ages. Utilization of such services should be monitored so that needs can be effectively met. An increase in regional mass transit should be seriously considered in cooperation with other nearby communities, especially since transit services can help achieve Colchester’s housing, employment, and economic development objectives.

There are some deficiencies in the current dial-a-ride service and improvements are needed. This need will become even more pronounced as the age composition in Colchester changes during the planning period.

Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel

The sidewalks in the Town Center add to the character and charm of Colchester and this network should be maintained and expanded. Sidewalks should be extended throughout the Town Center and certain outlying areas (including Westchester Village) in order to emphasize pedestrian scale, provide for transportation and recreation, help meet the needs of the disabled, and enhance Colchester's character. Rather than defining by a certain distance, the requirements for sidewalk installation should be based on an overall map that designates desirable sidewalk areas (such as proposed in this Plan). A detailed sidewalk inventory and Plan should be prepared to monitor sidewalk installation and maintenance.

Pedestrian trails should be considered in other areas of Colchester to provide alternative means of travel and exercise. During the planning period, it will be desirable to evaluate the possibility of establishing trails on open space "greenways" that exist (or will be established) in Colchester. Where such trails have been established, they have proven to be very popular with residents and provide an important recreation and transportation amenity.

Bikeways should also be established throughout the Town Center and certain outlying areas for transportation and recreation. A bikeway inventory and Plan should be prepared to guide bikeway installation and maintenance. It is the aim of this Plan to encourage safe, convenient, comfortable, and secure bicycle-riding environments and encourage bicycle transportation as an important transportation mode and recreation activity.

Each and every time road improvement work is undertaken or a new road is built, bicycle use and needs should be considered and the suitable type of bicycle facility (as indicated in the sidebar) provided, where appropriate, in order to create a series of interconnected bicycle routes in the community. Priority consideration should be given to establishing bike trails along roads which connect higher density residential areas with centers of local activity (business areas, schools, parks, etc.).

Better signage and marking of bicycle routes is another important step towards reducing conflicts and encouraging more bicycle use throughout Colchester. In addition, greenways can provide another alternative for bicycle use and interconnect different parts of town. The eventual development of a system of bicycle routes appropriately designed, signed and marked to ensure the safety and enjoyment of Colchester residents will be facilitated by the preparation of an overall concept plan as soon as possible.

Bicycle Routes

The types of bicycle facilities that may be appropriate in Colchester include:

- shared roadway,
- wide curb lane,
- shoulder bikeway,
- bike lanes, or
- multi-use path.

Implementation

See the implementation chart on pages 125-6 for the priority and the assignment of responsibility for implementation of these transportation strategies.

Conceptual Ring Road

The route for the conceptual ring road shown on the map on the facing page is illustrative only and is subject to change.

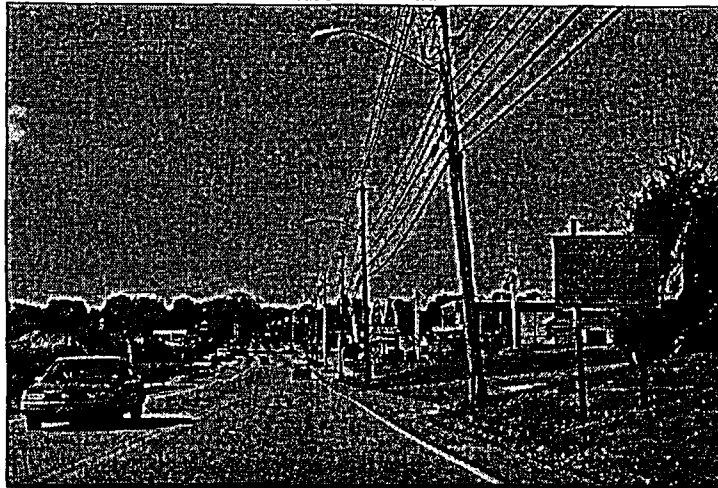
The intent of the map is to show general routes rather than specific locations.

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

Improve Roadway Circulation

1. Implement circulation alternatives that will help serve the Town Center area and relieve some of the traffic issues on major roads, such as possible "ring roads" around the Center.
2. Update road standards in local regulations to provide for vehicular circulation while preserving community character.
3. Continue to reduce curb cuts, interconnect parking areas, and implement other access management strategies along arterial roads.
4. Require road connections in new developments to provide for overall traffic circulation in the community, while recognizing that cul-de-sac streets are desired by developers and homeowners.
5. Evaluate unpaved roads for improvement, abandonment, or discontinuance.
6. Consider allowing landscaped center islands in permanent cul-de-sacs with appropriate design standards.
7. Encourage creation and enhancement of scenic roads.
8. Consider reclassifying roads, when appropriate.
9. Continue to maintain and upgrade local roads.
10. Implement the recommendations from the study of the Town Center and continue to make improvements in the Town Center such as driveway and parking interconnections.
11. Pursue interchange improvements at exit 17 of Route 2.
12. Request that ConnDOT review traffic signal sequencing annually to avoid creating undue traffic congestion.

Arterial Road

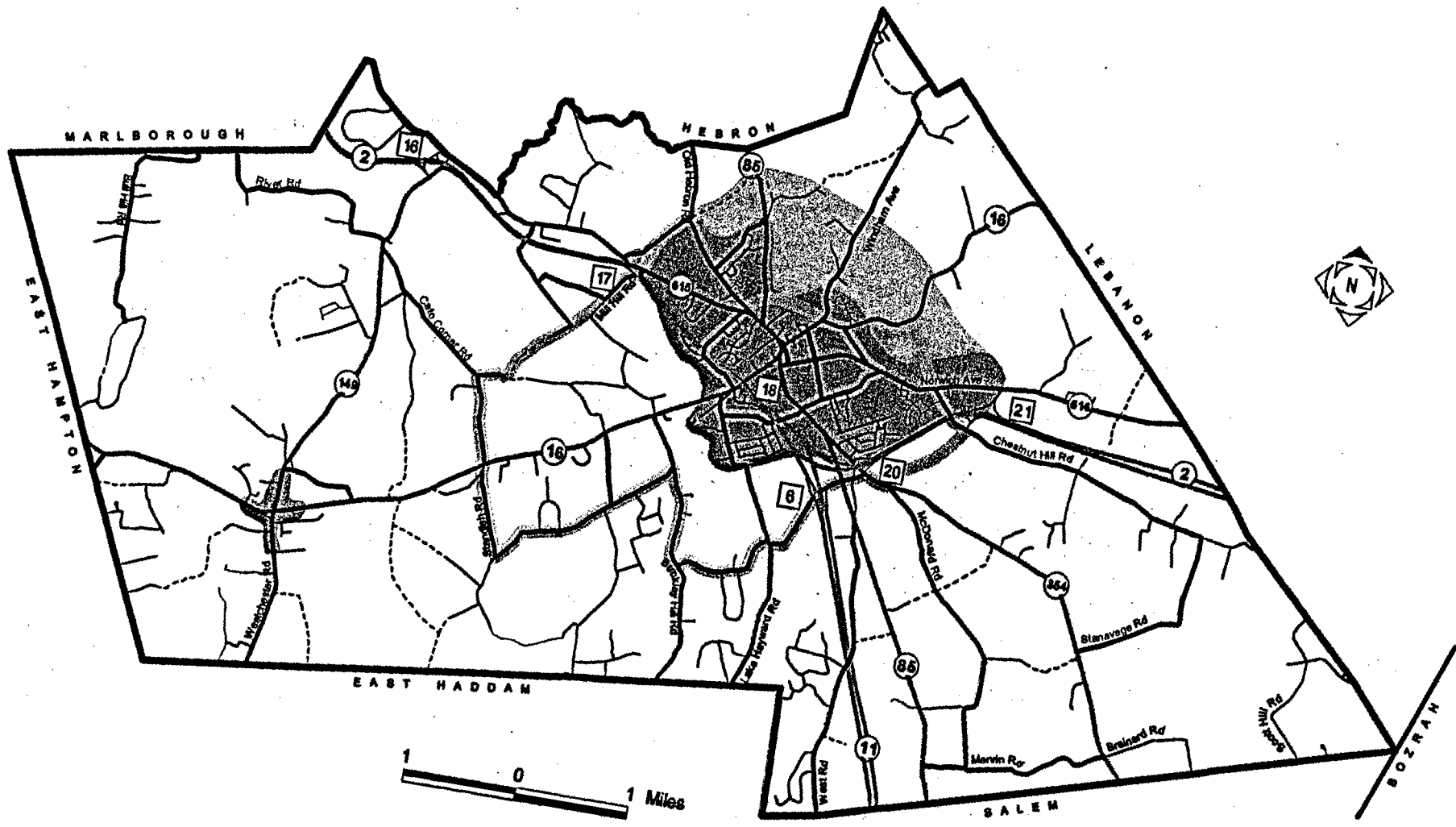


Sidewalk



Transportation Plan

Colchester, CT



- Classification**
- Limited Access Highway
 - Arterial
 - Collector

- Other**
- Local Road
 - Local Road (Dirt)
 - Private Roads and Right of Ways

- Labels**
- State Numbered Routes
 - Exit Numbers

- Future Transportation Improvements**
- Conceptual Ring Road
 - Priority Sidewalks
 - Desirable Sidewalks

Improve Transit Services

13. Increase regional mass transit services in cooperation with other nearby communities.
14. Expand dial-a-ride service to meet the needs of elderly, disabled, and other Colchester residents.

Enhance Pedestrian & Bicycle Travel

15. Expand and maintain sidewalks in the Town Center and adjacent areas.
16. Establish pedestrian trails (and bicycle trails) in open space areas of Colchester and on open space "greenways."
17. Encourage safe, convenient, comfortable, and secure pedestrian and bicycle-riding environments.
18. Encourage pedestrian and bicycle transportation as important transportation modes and recreation activities.
19. Consider bicycle and pedestrian use and needs whenever road improvement work is undertaken in Colchester.
20. Provide the suitable type of pedestrian and bicycle facility as part of road improvements, when appropriate, in order to create a series of interconnected pedestrian and bicycle routes.

Pursue Transportation Coordination

21. Work closely with SCCOG and ConnDOT regarding transportation issues and proposed improvements in Colchester.
22. Encourage DOT to undertake spot improvements on State highways in Colchester where there are specific needs that can be addressed.

UTILITIES

13

OVERVIEW

Utility infrastructure includes piped utilities (public water, public sewer, natural gas), wired utilities (electric, telephone, and cable television), and other utilities (cellular communications). The location and capacity of infrastructure is important to the future growth and development of Colchester since it can direct growth towards or away from certain areas.

INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT

Public Water Service

The Colchester Sewer and Water Commission and the Public Works Department manage the public water system in Colchester. Public water is derived exclusively from public wells and service is essentially limited to the center of Colchester where the majority of the commercial and community facilities (schools, Town Hall) in town are located.

While Colchester has adequate water supply sources to meet current demand, water consumption is expected to increase and additional water supplies will be needed during the planning period. A number of groundwater options are under consideration. In addition, the possibility for an emergency or permanent interconnection with the Norwich Water Department (who use the Deep River Reservoir in Colchester) is being explored. In the meantime, efforts are continuing to minimize water loss from the system and to encourage water conservation.

Protection of water quality is a continuing concern due to the well locations and such efforts will continue. Colchester should identify and develop new water supply sources to provide an adequate supply of potable water for future residents and businesses.

Improve public water supply and sewer service . . .

Encourage improvements to other utility services . . .

Address other infrastructure issues . . .

Wired Utilities

Wired utilities in new developments are placed underground. In addition to improving overall reliability of service, this enhances overall community character.

However, this typically occurs in the most rural parts of the community while the most visible wires and the most visited area of Colchester is the Town Center area.

Whenever opportunities present themselves, existing above-ground utilities should be relocated underground. This should be a high priority in the downtown area. Communities like New Milford are obtaining grants and appropriating funds to bury overhead wires in their downtown area.

Over the next several decades, attention and efforts should be directed towards relocating utilities underground, especially in the Town Center.

Public Sewer Service

Public sewer service in Colchester is also managed by the Sewer and Water Commission and the Public Works Department. Sewer service is essentially limited to the center of Colchester where the majority of the commercial and community facilities are located.

For sewage treatment, Colchester and East Hampton jointly own and operate a sewage treatment facility that is located in East Hampton. That facility is approved to accept about 4.0 million gallons per day (MGD) of sewage split about equally between Colchester and East Hampton. Current sewage flows from Colchester are about 0.45 MGD, including some sewage flows from Hebron. As a result, the facility is expected to have adequate sewage treatment capacity for Colchester's needs during the planning period.

The major sewer issue during the planning period will be addressing unauthorized flows from roof leaders or drainage pipes (inflow) or infiltration to the system from manhole covers, pipe joints, or other areas.

Cable Infrastructure

Electric service in Colchester is provided by Connecticut Light & Power. Their service network consists of all or part of eight different circuits. Reliability issues (frequency and duration of outages) are being monitored and addressed.

Telephone service is available to serve new development as it is proposed and developed in Colchester. Service is being updated as needed with fiber optic cabling being installed along major roads and digital switching equipment being provided at central hubs.

Cable communication (television) service is available to serve new development as it is proposed and developed in Colchester.

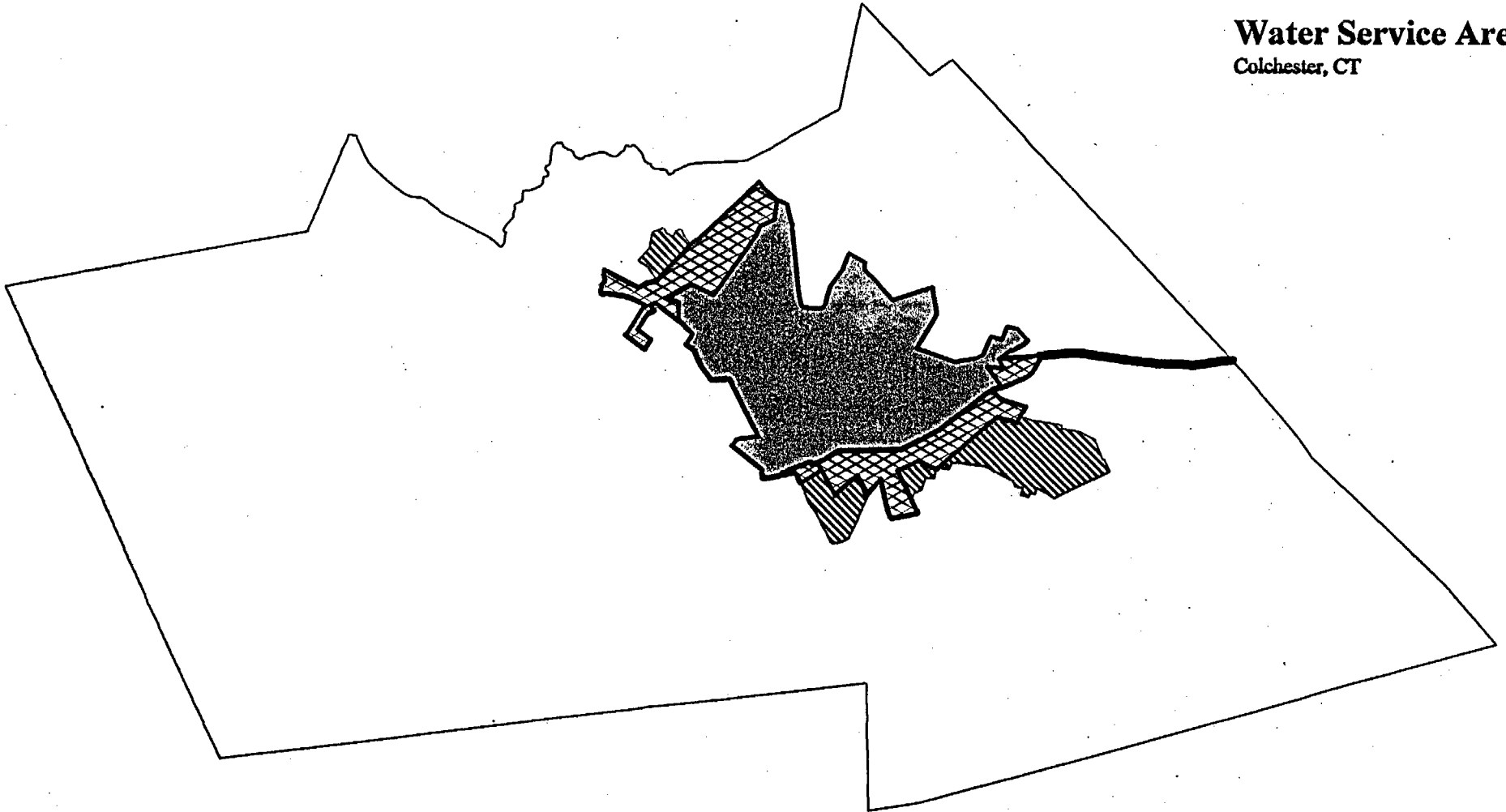
Other Infrastructure

The management of storm drainage is important in Colchester in order to address the quantity of runoff and the quality of runoff. During the planning period, a storm drainage facility inventory and plan should be undertaken in order to help prioritize existing improvement needs and guide the design of new drainage structures in specific watersheds.





Wireless communication services are expanding in the region and additional facilities can be expected in Colchester as the technology evolves and the demand increases.

Water Service Area

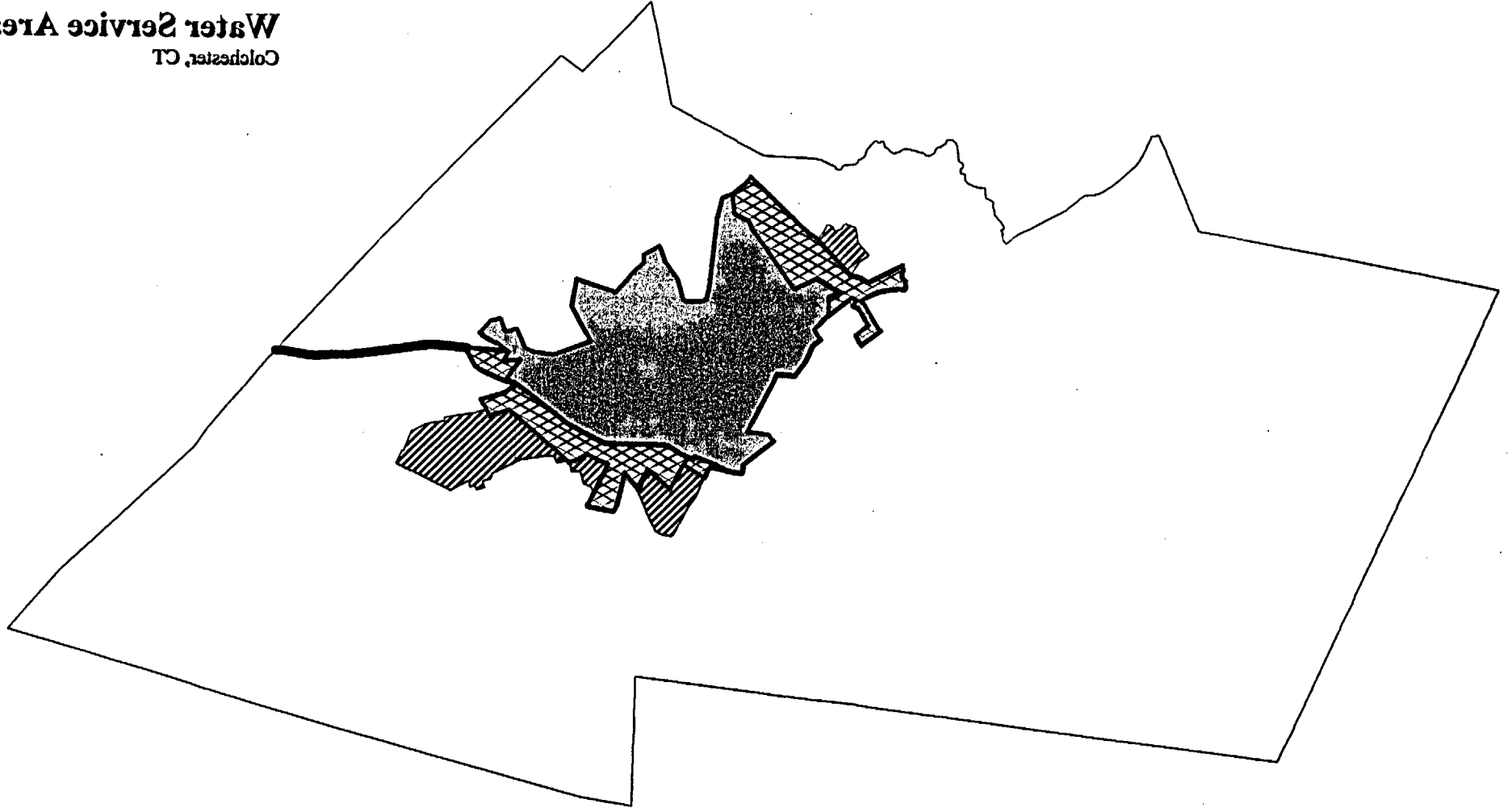
Colchester, CT







Legend

-  Existing Service Area
-  Anticipated Service Area (Developer Initiated)
-  Potential Service Area (Developer Initiated)
-  Potential Future Water Transmission Line

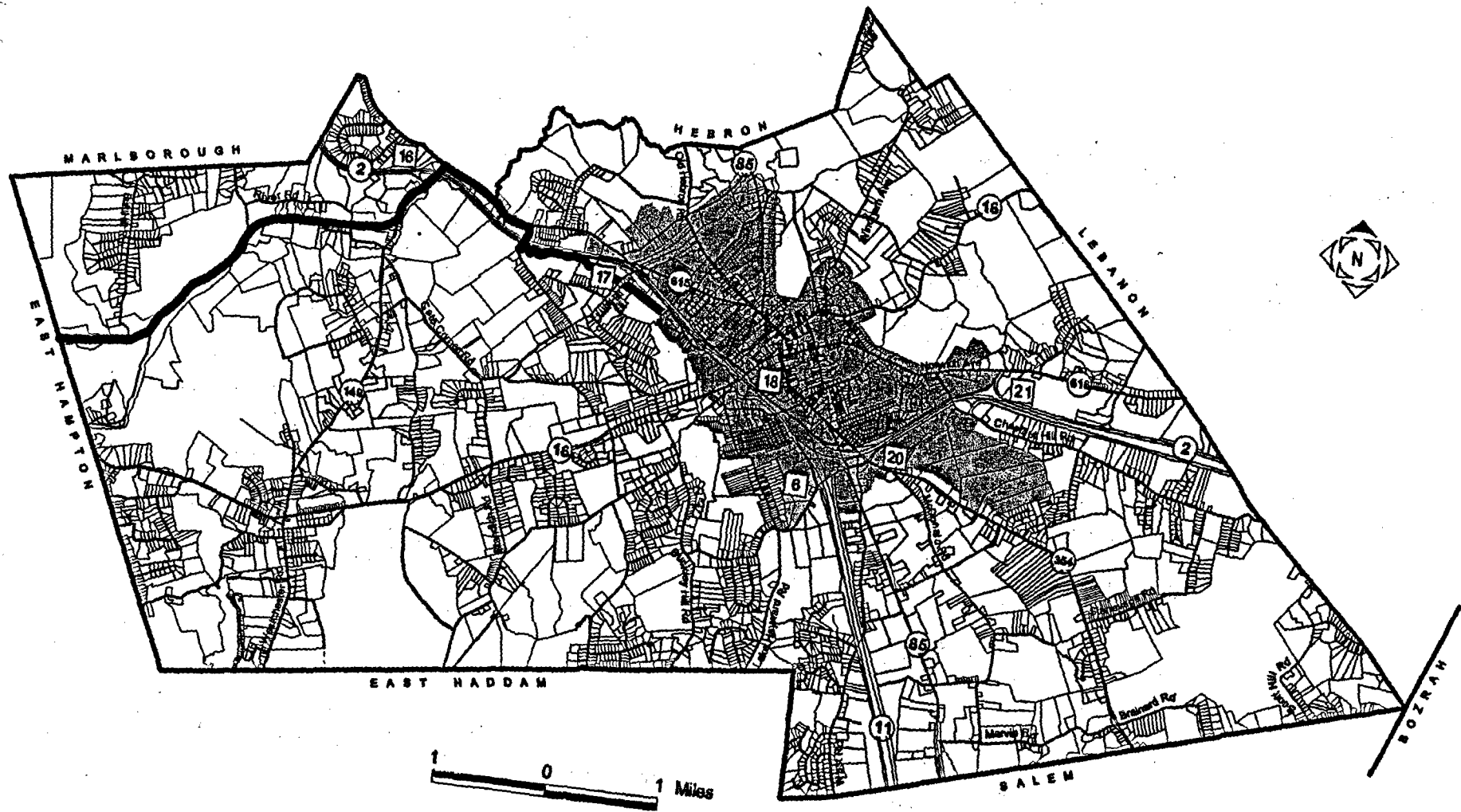
Water Service Area
Colchester, CT



- Legend**
-  Existing Service Area
 -  Anticipated Service Area (Developer Initiated)
 -  Potential Service Area (Developer Initiated)
 -  Potential Future Water Transmission Line

Sewer Service Area

Colchester, CT



- Legend**
- Existing Service Area
 - Anticipated Service Area (Developer Initiated)
 - Potential Service Area (Developer Initiated)
 - Sewer Trunk Line / Force Main

Implementation

See the implementation chart on page 127 for the priority and the assignment of responsibility for implementation of these infrastructure strategies.

INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES

Improve Public Water Supply And Sewer Service

1. Continue efforts to identify and develop water supply sources in a timely fashion.
2. Continue efforts to protect water quality in the system.
3. Pursue an emergency water supply interconnection with the City of Norwich from the Deep River Reservoir.
4. Address and monitor sewer inflow and infiltration issues in order to preserve treatment capacity for local needs.

Encourage Improvements To Other Utility Services

5. Work with electricity providers in their efforts to improve electrical service in Colchester.
6. Consider converting overhead to underground service where the costs of such conversion will be shared by adjacent property owners and others.
7. Develop a Town policy on the location and frequency of street lights, especially in the Town Center.
8. Work with SNET and other communication service providers in their efforts to expand and improve their service (quality and reliability) in Colchester.
9. Encourage expanded telephone services to meet the needs of residents and businesses.
10. Encourage expanded cable services in order to meet the needs of residents and businesses in Colchester.
11. Direct efforts towards relocating above-ground wired utilities underground, especially in the Town Center.

Address Other Infrastructure Issues

12. Conduct a Town-wide drainage study in order to provide a comprehensive evaluation of drainage needs and issues.
13. Monitor state and federal legislation and regulations that influence the provision and/or regulation of wireless services.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Local land use regulations (particularly zoning and subdivision regulations) are the primary tool for implementing the recommendations of the Plan. If the many recommendations of the Plan are to be implemented, then these regulations must be updated and maintained.

Recommendations

1. Maintain a combined Zoning & Planning Commission in order to most efficiently administer land use policies of the Town.
2. Update local regulations to implement the Plan of Conservation & Development.
3. Maintain regulations that are easy to understand and use, yet are effective in guiding development.

REGIONAL COORDINATION

Colchester should continue to work with other towns in the region and with the State of Connecticut and other agencies to explore opportunities where common interests coincide.

Recommendations

1. Continue to work cooperatively with other municipalities in areas of common interest (such as water supply, sewage disposal, watershed protection, and open space).
2. Coordinate with programs and efforts of regional planning agencies.

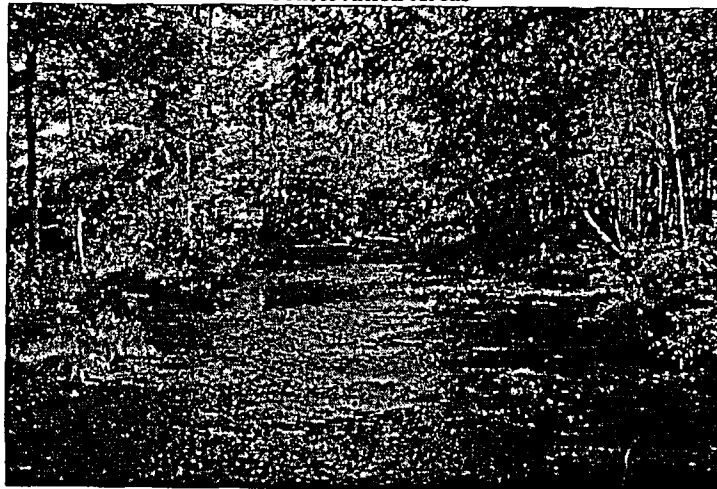
15

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

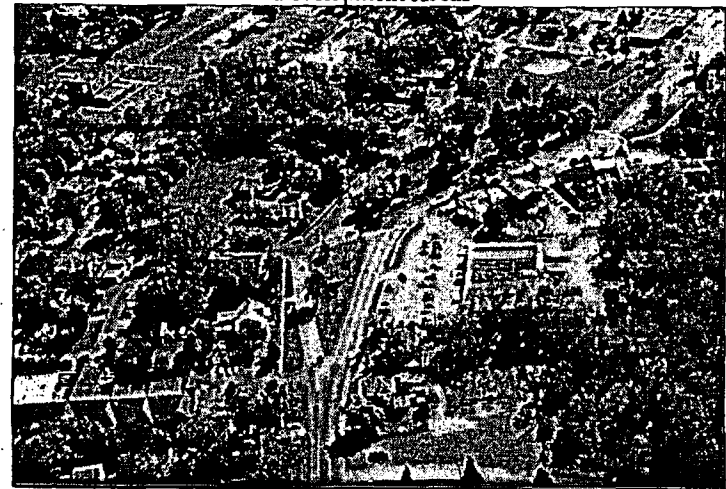
OVERVIEW

The recommendations of each of the preceding chapters can be combined to present an overall Future Land Use Plan for Colchester. The Future Land Use Plan is a reflection of the stated goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Plan as well as an integration of the preceding elements of the Plan of Conservation & Development. In essence, the Future Land Use Plan is a statement of what the Colchester of tomorrow should look like.

Conservation Areas



Development Areas



DESCRIPTIONS OF FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Open Space

Existing Open Space	Areas that are currently preserved or used for open space purposes.
Desirable Open Space	Areas that would make a significant contribution to Colchester's open space network and greenbelt system.
Natural Resources	Areas with significant environmental constraints that represent the highest priorities for conservation.

Residential Areas

Rural Density	Areas where density less than one unit per two acres would be expected due to sensitive natural resources, infrastructure limitations, or desirable patterns of development.
Low Density	Areas where density less than one unit per acre would be expected due to sensitive natural resources, infrastructure limitations, or desirable patterns of development.
Medium Density	Areas in and near the Town Center with adequate infrastructure where residential development is expected to occur at a density near one unit per acre.
Village Residential	Areas in the Town Center where the density of development may exceed two units per acre.

Business Areas

Village Business	Areas in the Town Center and Westchester that are intended to develop with small scale business uses that help meet the needs of residents and the community and promote and enhance community character.
General Business	Areas that have developed with small-scale business facilities along major roads.
Business Park	Areas that have developed or are intended to be developed with larger scale business uses (such as office, warehouse, light manufacturing, assembly, research and development, and similar uses). Such uses could be organized in a park-type setting or occur in areas of pre-existing uses. Retail or other commercial uses could be considered on and near major roads by special permit.
Transitional Areas	Areas adjacent to Business Parks that may be suitable for the development of lodging and other low intensity facilities that meet the needs of residents and businesses in the community.

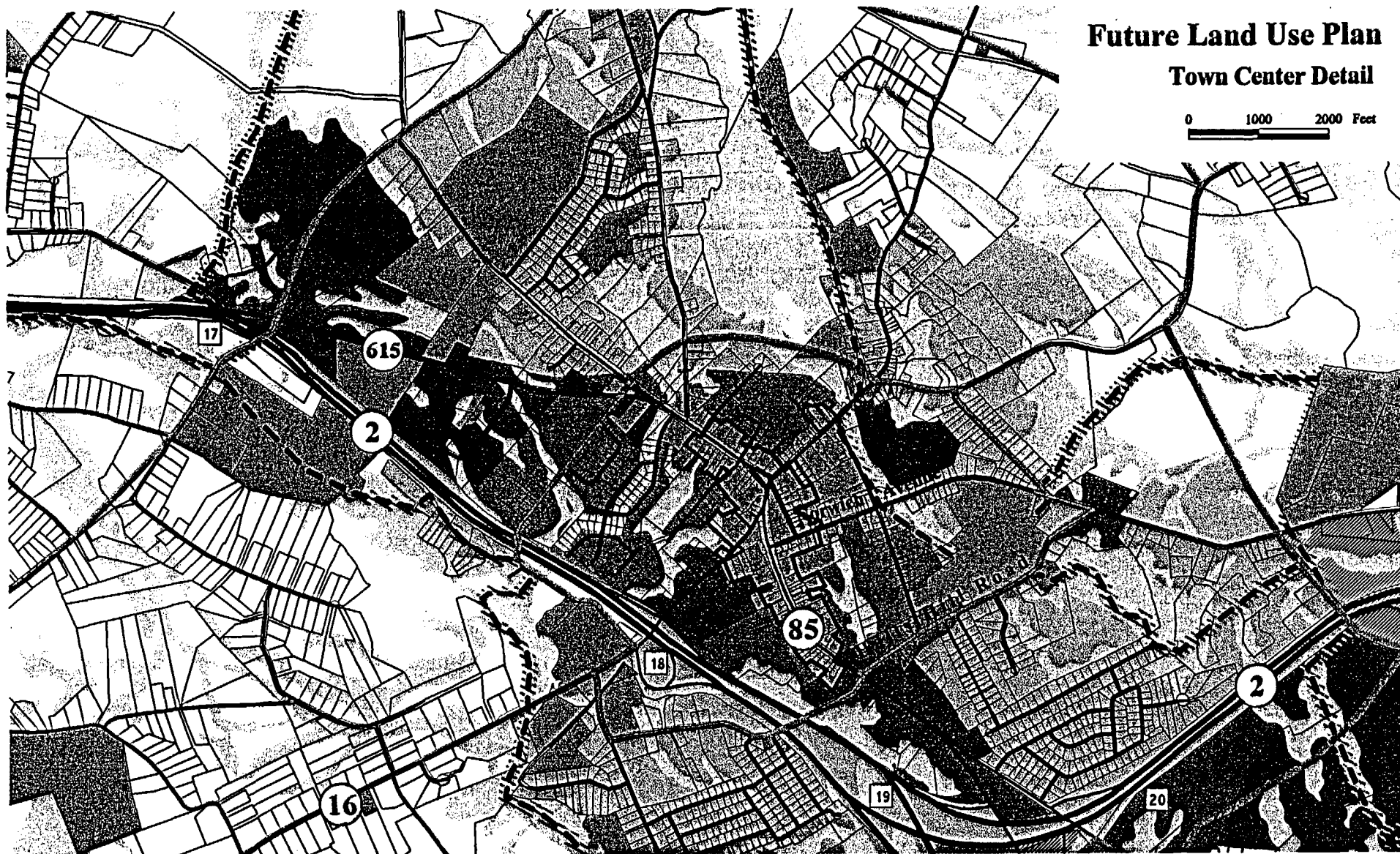
Other Areas

Community Facilities	Areas that have developed or are intended to develop with community facilities.
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Future Land Use Plan

Town Center Detail





0 1000 2000 Feet







Open Space and Conservation

-  Existing Open Space
-  Desirable Open Space
-  Natural Resources
-  Water





Residential Areas

-  Rural Density (<0.5 units/acre)
-  Low Density (<1.0 units/acre)
-  Moderate Density (>1.0 units/acre)
-  Village Residential (>2 units/acre)



Business Areas

-  Village Business
-  General Business
-  Business Park Areas
-  Transitional Areas

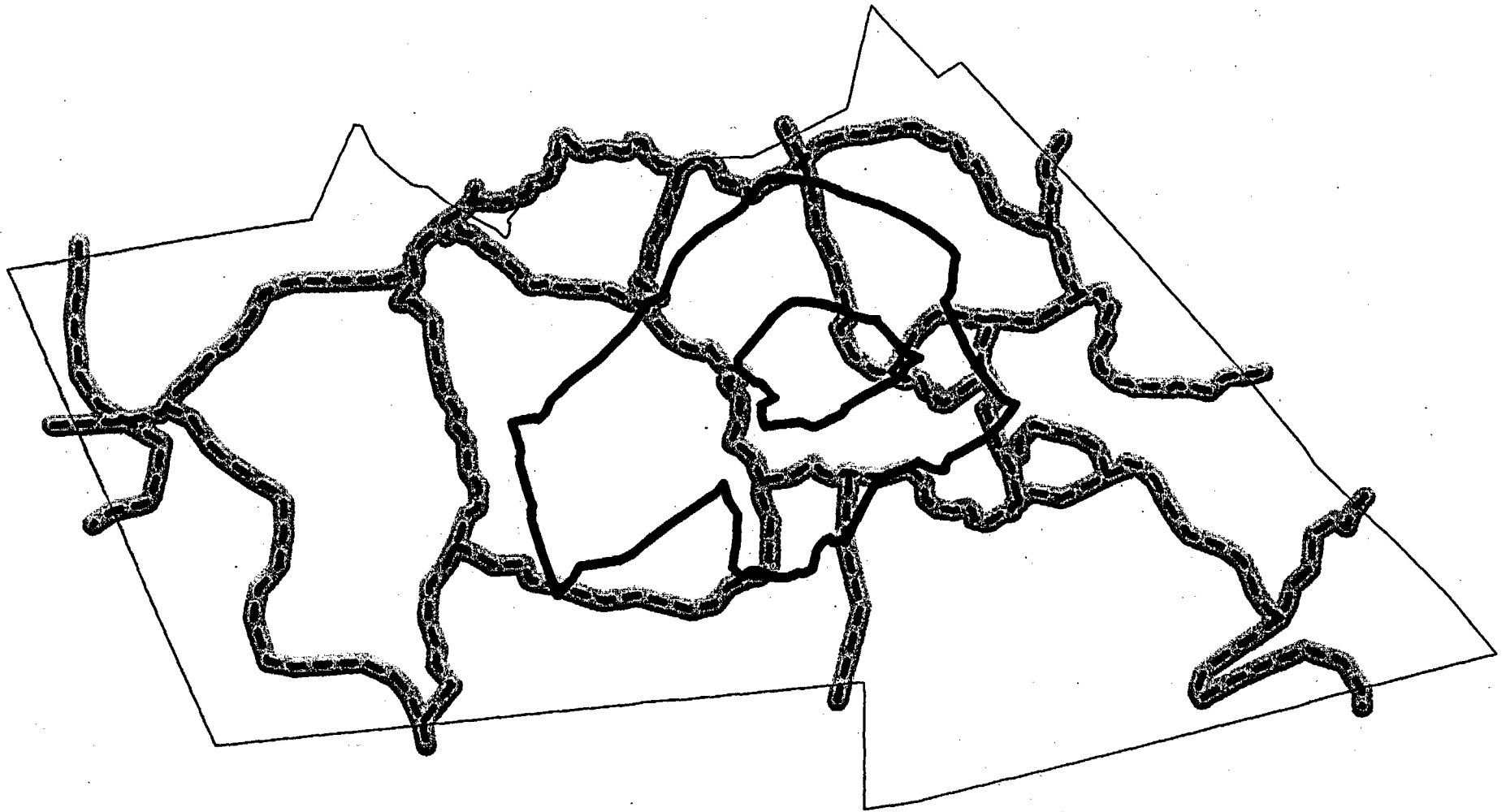
Transportation

-  Major Roads
-  Minor Roads
-  Possible Future Ring Roads
-  Possible Future Trails



Other

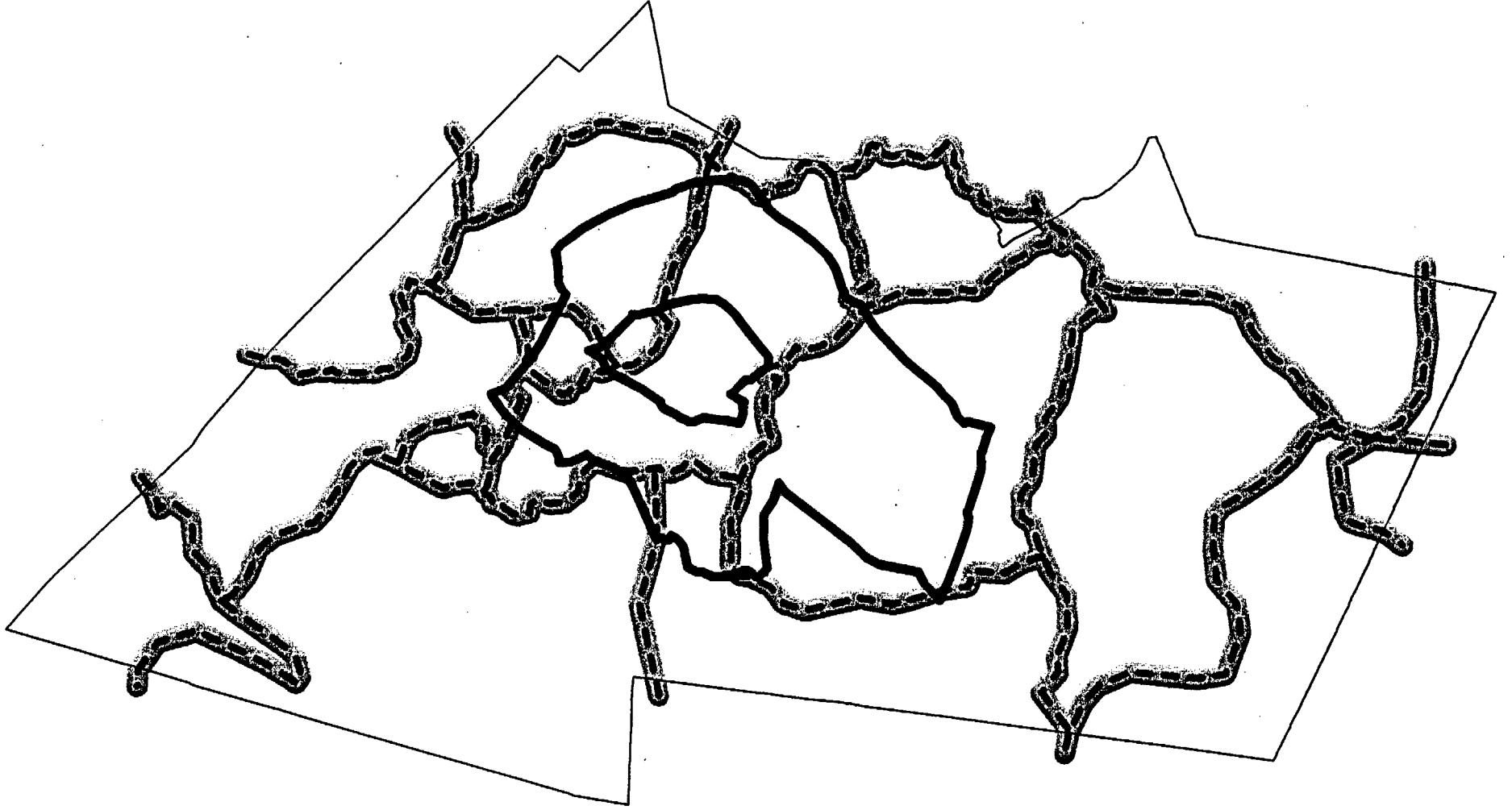
-  Existing Community Facilities
-  NR Historic District

Future community facility needs (such as school sites, recreation fields, and a community center) have not been mapped.



 Desirable Open Space

 Possible Future Ring Roads
 Possible Future Trails

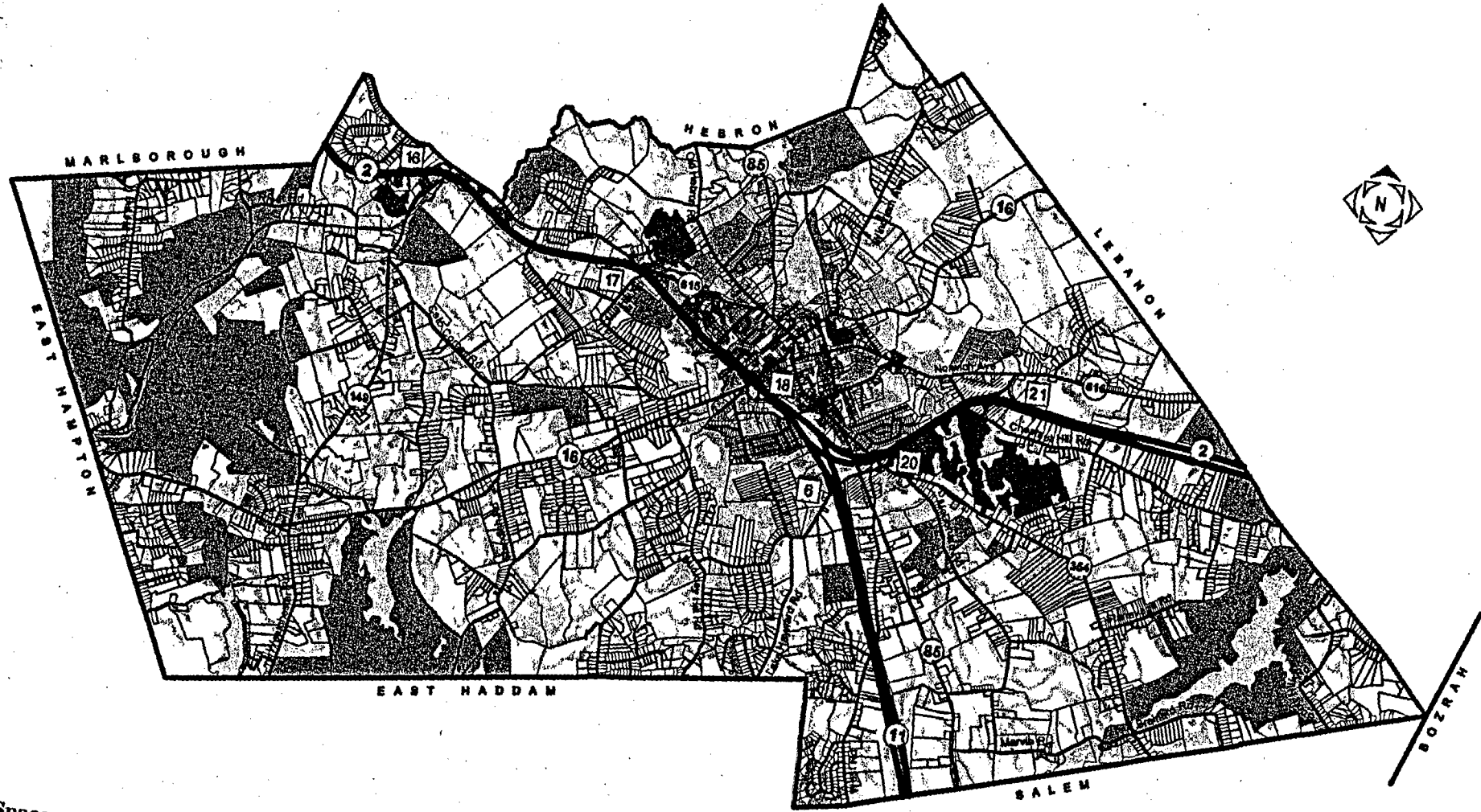


Possible Future Trails
Possible Future Ring Roads




Desirable Open Space

Generalized Future Land Use Plan





Colchester, CT







Open Space and Conservation

-  Existing Open Space
-  Natural Resources
-  Water



Residential Areas

-  Rural Density (<0.5 units/acre)
-  Low Density (<1.0 units/acre)
-  Moderate Density (>1.0 units/acre)
-  Village Residential (>2 units/acre)



Business Areas

-  Village Business
-  General Business
-  Business Park Areas
-  Transitional Areas

Transportation

-  Major Roads
-  Minor Roads

Other

-  Existing Community Facilities
-  NR Historic District

Future community facility needs (such as school sites, recreation fields, and a community center) have not been mapped.

PLAN CONSISTENCY

This Plan was compared with the Locational Guide Map in the 1998-2003 State Plan of Conservation & Development and found to be generally consistent with that Plan. In addition, this Plan was compared with the 1997 Regional Plan of Development for the Southeast Connecticut Council of Governments and found to be generally consistent with that Plan.

Any inconsistencies can be generally attributed to:

- differences in definitions of desirable uses or development densities,
- local (as opposed to State or regional) desires about how Colchester should grow and change in the coming years, or
- the fact that the State Plan and the Regional Plan make policy recommendations for relative intensity and environmental sensitivity while this Plan suggests specific land use types.

Liverant & Son Antique Shop



"Shop at Twilight" by Gigi Horr Liverant

Blackledge River



"Trestle Over the Blackledge" by Lynn Brylone

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS & PRIORITIES

16

OVERVIEW

Many of the recommendations in the Plan of Conservation and Development can be implemented by the Zoning & Planning Commission through zoning amendments, application reviews, and other means. The Commission has the primary responsibility of implementing the Plan's recommendations.

Other recommendations require the cooperation of, and actions by, other local boards and commissions such as the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and similar agencies. However, if the Plan is to be successfully realized, it must serve as a guide to all residents, applicants, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly growth of Colchester.

TOOLS

There are several tools that are available to implement the Plan's recommendations. These tools can influence the pattern, character, and timing of future development in Colchester - either public or private - so that it is consistent with and promotes the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development. The tools available to the Commission include:

- an annual work program,
- the Plan of Conservation and Development,
- Zoning and Subdivision Regulations,
- Capital Improvements Program, and
- Referral of Municipal Improvements (CGS 8-24).

Annual Work Program

The implementation schedules that follow can be used by the Zoning & Planning Commission to develop an annual work program, both for itself and other boards and commissions.

Plan of Conservation & Development

Using the Plan of Conservation & Development as a basis for land use decisions by the Zoning & Planning Commission will help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan. All land use proposals should be measured and evaluated in terms of the Plan and its various elements.

Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

The Zoning and the Subdivision Regulations provide specific criteria for land development at the time of applications. As a result, these regulations are important tools to implement the recommendations of the Plan. However, this is only true if the regulations reflect the recommendations of the Plan.

In the near future, the Zoning & Planning Commission should undertake a comprehensive review of the zoning regulations, zoning map, and subdivision regulations and make whatever revisions are necessary to:

- make the regulations more user-friendly,
- implement Plan recommendations, and
- promote consistency between the Plan and the regulations.

Capital Budget

The Capital Budget (or Capital Improvement Program) is a tool for planning major capital expenditures of a municipality so that local needs can be identified and prioritized within local fiscal constraints that may exist.

The Plan contains several proposals (such as land acquisition or community facility development) whose implementation may require the expenditure of town funds. The Plan recommends that these (and other) items be included in the town's Capital Improvements Program and that funding for them be included as part of the Capital Budget.

Referral of Municipal Improvements

Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that municipal improvements (defined in the statute) be referred to the Planning & Zoning Commission for a report before any local action is taken. A proposal disapproved by the Commission can only be implemented after a two-thirds vote by Town Meeting. All local boards and agencies should be notified of Section 8-24 and its mandatory nature so that proposals can be considered and prepared in compliance with its requirements.

IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Implementation of the Plan is a gradual and continual process. While some recommendations can be carried out in a relatively short period of time, others may only be realized towards the end of the planning period, and some may be even more long-term in nature. Further, since some recommendations may involve additional study or a commitment of fiscal resources, their implementation may take place over several years or occur in stages.

The charts on the following pages assign primary responsibilities and preliminary priorities to the Plan recommendations. In many instances, the responsibilities are shared by a number of entities.

In addition, the charts identify both strategies and tasks. Strategies are long-term and continuing policies that do not readily lend themselves to a specific schedule or measurement. A shaded box indicates those entities that share responsibility for implementation. Tasks, on the other hand, are specific actions that can typically be scheduled and measured and their implementation can be readily identified. The numbers represent the overall priority.

	Page	ZPC	IWC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Strategy		1					
* Task					2		

Legend

ID	Reference
ZPC	Zoning & Planning Commission
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Other	Other Boards, Agencies, or Persons
BOE	Board of Education
BOF	Board of Finance
BWC	Water Commission
EDC	Economic Devel.
HDC	Historic District
PRC	Parks & Recreation
Res.	Residents
VFD	Volunteer Fire Dept.

	Definition
1	Highest Priority
2	Important Priority
3	Important

COMMUNITY CHARACTER STRATEGIES							
		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Protect and Preserve Physical Character							
*	1. Identify scenic views and scenic areas and amend local regulations to protect them.	26	2	2			
*	2. Identify important ridgelines, steeply sloping hillsides, and rock outcrops and amend local regulations to protect them.	26	2	2			
	3. When appropriate, retain stone walls, barns, significant trees, and other buildings and features in new development.	26					
*	4. Encourage the Department of Transportation to designate State highways in Colchester as scenic roads.	26			3		
*	5. Adopt a local scenic road ordinance and designate scenic roads.	26			2		Res.
	6. Continue to ensure that new buildings are compatible in scale and materials with neighboring buildings, especially in the Town Center.	26					
	7. Protect and enhance other natural resources and cultural resources that promote community character.	26					
*	8. Investigate ways to bury utility cables in the Town Center and strive to accomplish this strategy over the long term.	26			2		
	9. Continue to encourage businesses, especially in the Town Center, to maintain the streetscape around their facilities and provide facilities for litter.	26					
	10. Continue to encourage property maintenance, especially in the Town Center.	26					
Promote Community Spirit							
	11. Continue to encourage local recognition, volunteer contributions, and local organizations, programs, and events in order to promote community spirit.	26					
	12. Continue using the Park and Recreation Department to coordinate and schedule community social events.	26					PRC
*	13. Consider a program of recognizing volunteers through an annual picnic, and other "hometown heroes" through a plaque at the Town Hall.	26			1		
	14. Encourage increased coordination among community groups to coordinate local events and enhance community spirit.	26					

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Preserve Water Quality							
	1. Continue to protect the major aquifers and public water supply watershed areas in Colchester from impacts of development.	32					
*	2. Review the current aquifer protection zone regulations on a regular basis to ensure the highest degree of water quality protection.	32	1				
	3. Continue to protect water supply areas from land uses that could hinder their use as public water supply sources.	32					
*	4. Adopt a residential fuel tank ordinance requiring the replacement of underground fuel storage tanks which are more than 20 years old.	32			1		
	5. Continue to acquire land around aquifers and in public water supply watersheds in order to aid in their protection.	32					
	6. Continue to study local aquifers and adopt specific land development controls, as appropriate.	32					
Protect Water Resources							
	7. Continue to protect important water resources in order to maintain water quality, wildlife habitat, water supply, and ecological balance.	32					
	8. Continue to require appropriate buffer zones for important water resources.	32					
Protect Other Natural Resources							
	9. Protect local plants and animals and their habitats.	32					
	10. Strive to preserve agricultural uses and prime agricultural soils.	32					
	11. Continue to fully consider natural resource issues at the time of development.	32					
	12. Continue to discourage building and road development on steep slopes.	32					

Legend

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	Definition
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3	Important

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Preserve More Open Space							
*	1. Encourage the Board of Selectmen to establish an Open Space Committee for developing an open space action plan.	40			1		
*	2. Assist in efforts to establish a Colchester Land Trust.	40			2		
*	3. Increase the percentage of open space preserved as part of new residential developments.	40	1				
	4. Continue to budget municipal funds to acquire open space.	40					
*	5. Establish a Land Acquisition Fund as authorized by Section 7-131r of the Connecticut General Statutes.	40			1		
*	6. Consider adopting a "fee-in-lieu-of open space" provision in the subdivision regulations to generate revenue to acquire the most meaningful open space.	40	1				
	7. Continue to pursue other open space preservation techniques.	40					
Create A Greenbelt System with Trails							
*	8. Tie both existing and new open space and recreation areas together into an integrated greenbelt or buffer system.	40	1		1		
	9. Consider allowing open space dedication elsewhere in Colchester to meet the open space requirements of a development.	40					
*	10. Establish a series of trails as a key element in connecting open space and recreation areas into an integrated system.	40	2		2		
	11. Continue to work with the State of Connecticut to develop public trails on their lands in Colchester.	40					
	12. Continue to work with the Norwich Water Department to develop public trails on their lands in Colchester.	40					
Retain Perceived Open Space							
*	13. Establish and implement a PA-490 open space policy in order to maintain and enhance the amount of "perceived" open space in Colchester.	40			2		

HISTORIC RESOURCE PRESERVATION STRATEGIES							
		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Protect Historic Resources							
	1. Continue to implement the 1995 and 1998 Plans for the Colchester Village Historic District (Town Center).	46					HDC
	2. Continue to nominate districts, buildings, and sites to the National Register of Historic Places.	46					HDC
	3. Establish additional local historic districts that protect community character and are supported by residents.	46					HDC
	4. Maintain the demolition delay ordinance to allow time for the identification and preservation of historical structures.	46					
Maintain Appropriate Regulations							
*	5. Evaluate the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and consider taking advantage of the Village District provisions authorized by Public Act 00-145.	46	2				
	6. In the new Village Residential zone, continue to allow adaptive reuse of historic buildings to aid in the preservation of the historic structure.	46					
*	7. In the new village zones, allow parking waivers provided that such spaces will not be needed and there is excellence in site and building design.	46	2				
*	8. Review the zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure preservation, renovation, and reuse of historically significant structures is encouraged.	46	2				
*	9. Consider the adoption of an assessment deferral ordinances (CGS 12-65c-f) for the preservation of historic structures.	46			3		
Promote Historic Preservation Efforts							
	10. Encourage property owners to preserve cultural, archaeological and historical resources.	46					HDC
*	11. Establish educational programs to promote awareness of historical and cultural resources.	46			3		HDC
	12. Encourage awareness of historic buildings and districts through the use of appropriate signage and displays.	46					HDC
	13. Promote awareness of state and federal programs which provide incentives and relief for the rehabilitation of historic buildings.	46					HDC

Legend

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COMMUNITY STRUCTURE STRATEGIES							
		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Reinforce Colchester's Overall Structure							
	1. Reinforce the defining elements of Colchester's community structure with strong focal points surrounded by greenbelts.	52					
	2. Maintain the prevailing pattern of higher density residential uses near the Town Center with a density reduction away from the Center.	52					
Protect and Enhance the Town Center							
*	3. Convert the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone to village residential and village business districts, using the provisions of P.A. 00-145.	52	2				
	4. Maintain and enhance the Town Center as the business, government, civic, institutional, and cultural center of the Town.	52					
*	5. Undertake a detailed study of the Town Center during the planning period to address issues and consider desirable zoning changes.	52	1				
	6. Allow a variety of residential and mixed uses in the Town Center that complement community character and add activity and stability to the area.	52					
*	7. Adjust zone boundaries in the Town Center so that, to the extent practical, zone boundaries follow property lines.	52	2				
Promote Westchester As A Secondary Focal Point							
	8. Pursue efforts to establish a "village green" in Westchester.	52					
*	9. Undertake a Westchester Area Study to address issues and consider desirable zoning changes.	52	1				
	10. To the extent feasible, avoid "strip" type development in Westchester and encourage creation of a village center.	52					

HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL AREA STRATEGIES

		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Support Community Structure							
	1. Continue to recognize and support the prevailing development pattern in Colchester.	66					
*	2. Modify residential zones, where desirable, to protect water quality and water supplies.	66	1				
Guide Multi-Family Development							
	3. Use the criteria discussed in the Plan to guide proposed multi-family developments.	66					
	4. Discourage multi-family developments that are not consistent with locational and design guidelines discussed in the Plan.	66					
Carefully Manage Residential Development							
*	5. Consider adopting regulations to review "divisions" of property.	67	2				
*	6. Consider adopting new regulations requiring that any soil testing be done on the basis of the indigenous soil (not using fill or underdrains).	67	2				
Promote Open Space Development Patterns							
*	7. Modify local regulations to provide for open space development patterns.	67	1				
*	8. Consider increasing the lot area and frontage requirements, especially arterial and collector streets, in order to maintain community character.	67	2				
*	9. Discourage interior lots (also called rear lots or flag lots) by making them a Special Exception request.	67	2				
	10. Allow other flexible residential developments that preserve large areas of open space while maintaining a similar density to that currently permitted.	67					

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HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL AREA STRATEGIES (cont.)							
		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Encourage Housing Diversity							
	11. Continue to explore appropriate opportunities to enhance housing diversity.	68					
*	12. Consider requiring that a certain percentage of all housing developments meet affordability criteria.	68	3				
	13. Continue to allow residential units in non-residential buildings.	68					
	14. Maintain programs that allow elderly and disabled persons to remain in their own homes as long as possible.	68					
	15. Continue to permit accessory apartments.	68					
	16. Continue to allow for the development of congregate and assisted living development for the elderly and/or disabled.	68					
*	17. Provide additional elderly housing units, such as at "Dublin" and "Ponemah", to meet local needs.	68			3		

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES							
		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Establish Economic Development Focal Points in Village Centers							
	1. Maintain and enhance the role of the Town Center as the business, government, and cultural center of the Town.	76					EDC
	2. Establish Westchester as a village center and a secondary focal point in Colchester.	76					
	3. Continue to encourage mixed uses that complement community character and add activity and stability to each village center.	76					
*	4. Consider village district zoning (as allowed in Public Act 00-145) for one or both of these areas.	76	2				
Establish Economic Development Focal Points in Other Appropriate Locations							
	5. Establish an economic development focal point near the confluence of Routes 2 and 11.	76					
	6. Consider establishing an economic development focal point at Exit 17 of Route 2.	76					
*	7. Create a Business Park zone to encourage development of high quality campus-style developments that will help diversify the Town's economic base.	76	1				
*	8. Establish a Business Park zone near the junction of Routes 2 and 11, and at exit 17 of Route 2.	76	1				
*	9. For each zoning district, consider requiring a Special Exception for larger developments to ensure community impacts are adequately considered.	76	1				
Consider Eliminating Some Other Business & Industrial Zones							
*	10. Modify the business and industrial zoning pattern to meet community needs and be compatible with the desired overall community structure.	77	2				
*	11. Consider rezoning business and industrial zones outside of the areas recommended in the Plan to other uses.	77	2				

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BUSINESS / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES (cont.)							
		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Provide For Existing Uses In Areas To Be Rezoned							
*	12. Consider ways to address the unique situations created for existing businesses in areas rezoned from business and industrial zones.	77	2				EDC
Consider Other Areas For Future Business Development							
	13. If necessary, consider establishing appropriate new business regulations or zone locations that are in accordance with the criteria indicated in the Plan.	77					EDC
Promote Appropriate Site Design							
*	14. Consider requiring a Special Exception permit for large buildings or uses that may have an adverse impact on community character.	78	1				
	15. Continue to provide for adequate transitions between business or industrial uses and adjacent residential uses.	78					
	16. Continue to encourage site design that minimizes curb cuts, creates cross-connections, shares parking, and encourages pedestrian use.	78					
	17. Continue to explore ways to provide for more flexible parking requirements in the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.	78					
Continue to Allow Appropriate Home Occupations							
	18. Continue to allow reasonable home occupation uses in Colchester.	78					
*	19. Modify home occupation regulations to adapt to changing circumstances.	78	3				

COMMUNITY FACILITY STRATEGIES

		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Address Current Community Facility Needs							
	1. Plan for school expansion or new construction during the planning period.	88					BOE
*	2. Acquire adequate sites for the school expansion or construction to accommodate future enrollment increases.	88			2		BOE
*	3. Expand the library.	88					
*	4. Establish a Planning Committee for a community/aquatics center (recreation, senior center, teen center).	88			2		
*	5. Expand the finished floor space in the Town Hall by completing the third floor.	88			3		
	6. Consider expanding dial-a-ride and other transportation services for community needs.	88					
	7. Consider the possible future need for another fire station in the southeast part of town.	88					VFD
Prepare For Future Needs							
	8. Consider how demographic changes will affect future school enrollments.	90					*BOE
*	9. Expand the public works garage site or acquire a new site.	90			2		
*	10. Provide additional fields and outdoor recreation facilities as needs dictate and evaluate the distribution of recreation facilities in the community.	90			2		PRC
*	11. Study the need for a satellite public works storage facility in the Westchester area.	90			3		
	12. Monitor the need for elderly housing developments to meet community needs.	90					
	13. Monitor solid waste arrangements during the planning period to ensure that Colchester residents and businesses receive the most cost-effective services.	90					

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COMMUNITY FACILITY STRATEGIES (cont.)							
		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Aim For Efficiency & Economy							
	14. Plan and maintain flexibility in school facilities in order to accommodate enrollment "waves."	90					BOE
	15. Continue arrangements between the School Department and the Recreation Department for use of facilities at existing and possible future schools.	90					BOE PRC
	16. Continue to maintain facilities in good condition.	90					
Undertake Other Important Strategies							
*	17. Provide programs to attract and retain the volunteer component of the Fire/EMS department.	90			1		VFD
	18. Encourage the creation of fire ponds, dry hydrants, and storage tank installations where needed in the community.	90					VFD
*	19. Study ways to improve traffic circulation in the Town Center for emergency response.	90			2		VFD
	20. Consider the need for additional bypass roads around the center to help emergency access and provide for traffic circulation needs.	90					
*	21. Consider automating the pavement management system in the Public Works Department for road and sidewalk maintenance.	90				3	
*	22. Undertake a master drainage study.	90				3	
*	23. Identify and pursue water-based recreation sites.	90			3		PRC

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

	Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Improve Roadway Circulation						
* 1. Implement circulation alternatives that serve the Town Center area and relieve traffic on major roads, such as possible "ring roads" around the Center.	98			2		
* 2. Update road standards in local regulations to provide for vehicular circulation while preserving community character.	98	2				
3. Continue to reduce curb cuts, interconnect parking areas, and implement other access management strategies along arterial roads.	98					
* 4. Require road connections in new developments while recognizing that cul-de-sac streets are desired by developers and homeowners.	98	2				
* 5. Evaluate unpaved roads for improvement, abandonment, or discontinuance.	98			3		
6. Consider allowing landscaped center islands in permanent cul-de-sacs with appropriate design standards.	98					
7. Encourage creation and enhancement of scenic roads.	98					
8. Consider reclassifying roads, when appropriate.	98					
9. Continue to maintain and upgrade local roads.	98			1		
* 10. Implement the recommendations from the study of the Town Center and continue to make improvements in the Town Center.	98	2				
* 11. Pursue interchange improvements at exit 17 of Route 2.	98			2		
* 12. Request that ConnDOT review traffic signal sequencing annually at a minimum to avoid creating undue traffic congestion.	98			2		
Improve Transit Services						
13. Increase regional mass transit services in cooperation with other nearby communities.	100					
* 14. Expand dial-a-ride service to meet the needs of elderly, disabled, and other Colchester residents.	100			2		

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TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES (cont.)							
		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	TowD	Other
Enhance Pedestrian & Bicycle Travel							
*	15. Expand and maintain sidewalks in the Town Center and adjacent areas.	100			2		
*	16. Establish pedestrian trails (and bicycle trails) in open space areas of Colchester and on open space "greenways."	100			2		
	17. Encourage safe, convenient, comfortable, and secure pedestrian and bicycle-riding environments.	100					
	18. Encourage pedestrian and bicycle transportation as important transportation modes and recreation activities.	100					
	19. Consider bicycle and pedestrian use and needs whenever road improvement work is undertaken in Colchester.	100					
	20. Provide the suitable type of pedestrian and bicycle facility as part of road improvements, when appropriate.	100					
Pursue Transportation Coordination							
	21. Work closely with SCCOG and ConnDOT regarding transportation issues and proposed improvements in Colchester.	100					
	22. Encourage DOT to undertake spot improvements on State highways in Colchester where there are specific needs that can be addressed.	100					

INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES							
		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Improve Public Water Supply And Sewer Service							
*	1. Continue efforts to identify and develop water supply sources in a timely fashion.	104			2		BWC
	2. Continue efforts to protect water quality in the system.	104					BWC
*	3. Pursue an emergency water supply interconnection with the City of Norwich from the Deep River Reservoir.	104			2		BWC
*	4. Address and monitor sewer inflow and infiltration issues in order to preserve treatment capacity for local needs.	104				2	
Encourage Improvements To Other Utility Services							
	5. Work with electricity providers in their efforts to improve electrical service in Colchester.	104					
*	6. Consider converting overhead to underground service where the costs of such conversion will be shared by adjacent property owners and others.	104			3		
*	7. Develop a Town policy on the location and frequency of street lights, especially in the Town Center.	104			3		
	8. Work with SNET and other communication service providers in their efforts to expand and improve their service (quality and reliability) in Colchester.	104					
	9. Encourage expanded telephone services to meet the needs of residents and businesses.	104					
	10. Encourage expanded cable services in order to meet the needs of residents and businesses in Colchester.	104					
*	11. Direct efforts towards relocating above-ground wired utilities underground, especially in the Town Center.	104			3		
Address Other Infrastructure Issues							
*	12. Conduct a Town-wide drainage study in order to provide a comprehensive evaluation of drainage needs and issues.	104				2	
	13. Monitor state and federal legislation and regulations that influence the provision and/or regulation of wireless services.	104					

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SPECIAL ISSUE STRATEGIES							
		Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Regulatory Framework							
	1. Maintain a combined Zoning & Planning Commission in order to most efficiently administer land use policies of the Town.	105					
*	2. Update local regulations to implement the Plan of Conservation & Development.	105	1	2			
	3. Maintain regulations that are easy to understand and use, yet are effective in guiding development.	105					
Regional Coordination							
	4. Continue to work cooperatively with other municipalities in areas of common interest	105					
	5. Coordinate with programs and efforts of regional planning agencies.	105					

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES						
	Page	ZPC	CC	BOS	Town	Other
Annual Work Program						
* 1. Develop and implement an annual work program.	111	1				
Plan of Conservation & Development						
* 2. Use the Plan of Conservation & Development as a basis for land use decisions by the Zoning & Planning Commission.	112	1				
Zoning and Subdivision Regulations						
* 3. Undertake a comprehensive review of the zoning regulations, zoning map, and subdivision regulations.	112	1				
* 4. Update land use regulations and maps to implement recommendations of the Plan.	112	1				
Capital Budget						
* 5. Include important projects identified in the Plan in the town's Capital Improvements Program.	112			1		
* 6. Fund important projects identified in the Plan as part of the town's Capital Improvements Budget.	112			1		
Referral of Municipal Improvements						
* 7. Notify all local boards and agencies of CGS Section 8-24 so that proposals can be considered and prepared in compliance with its requirements.	112	2				
Implementation Priorities						
* 8. Use the implementation schedules contained in the Plan to organize and prioritize the recommendations	113	1	1	1	1	

17

CONCLUSION

The Plan of Conservation & Development has been prepared to meet the challenges that will confront the Town of Colchester in the future.

The first step in the planning process was to find out where we are. A great deal of information was collected, presented, reviewed, and discussed as part of the process of assembling this Plan. The second step was to determine where we want to go. Many meetings were held to assess issues in Colchester and discuss alternative strategies. Through this work, general goals and policies were developed and a vision for the future of Colchester was confirmed. The third step was to lay out specific actions that will help us remember how we will get there. These specific strategies are detailed throughout the Plan and summarized in the implementation tables.

However, the most important step of the planning process will be implementation of the recommendations. While the task of implementation rests with all Colchester residents, the realization of the Plan is orchestrated by the Zoning and Planning Commission and other Town agencies and officials.

The Plan is intended as a guide to be followed in order to enhance the quality of life and the community character of Colchester. It is intended to be flexible in order to allow adjustments in the manner that specific goals and objectives are achieved while maintaining stability in the long-term goals of the community.

During the next few years, some of the goals will hopefully be achieved, some circumstances will undoubtedly change, and some conditions will certainly arise that will suggest that it is time to reconsider the Plan or some of its elements. Such situations are to be welcomed since it will mean that the Plan is being used as a beacon by residents. Programs that help achieve community consensus, establish community goals, and promote community welfare will all turn out to be positive steps in the history of Colchester.

By preparing this Plan of Conservation & Development, that process has already begun.

2001 Colchester Plan of Conservation & Development

References

While many documents were reviewed in the preparation of this Plan of Conservation & Development, the following documents are considered the most significant and should be consulted for additional information:

Booklets

- 1 Planning Primer / Prior Plan Review
- 2 History of Colchester
- 3 Regional Factors
- 4 Natural Resources of Colchester
- 5 People of Colchester
- 6 Housing in Colchester
- 7 Colchester's Economy
- 8 Fiscal Considerations
- 9 Transportation & Circulation
- 10 Regulatory Review
- 11 Community Services & Facilities
- 12 Infrastructure
- 13 Land Use & Development Potential
- 14 Open Space
- 15 Public Meeting #2
- 16 Community Survey

Other Information

- Colchester Recreation Master Plan, 1997
- Sidewalk Inventory, 1997
- Educational Facility Studies, 1996 - 1997
- Water Supply Plan, 1994
- Colchester Town Center, 1995
- Town Center Neighborhood Strategic Plan, 1998

- Plan of Development, 1972
- Town Plan Update, 1990
- Plan of Development, 1990

- Zoning Regulations
- Subdivision Regulations
- Inland Wetland & Watercourses Regulations
- Colchester Ordinances
- Colchester Annual Reports

These documents can be found at the Colchester Town Hall and/or the Cragin Memorial Library. In addition, each of these reference materials has other reference materials that may provide relevant information with regard to a particular topic.

