



COLCHESTER

2015 PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

Effective – June 21, 2015



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INTRODUCTION

1

1.1 Overview

A Plan of Conservation and Development is a tool for guiding the future of a community. It involves:

- looking at where the community has been,
- looking at where the community is today and how things are going,
- evaluating alternative future outcomes,
- selecting the preferred outcome(s), and
- recommending policies and programs which can help accomplish the preferred vision.

The goals and recommendations of this Plan reflect the overall consensus of what is considered best for Colchester and its residents in the future. This Plan was prepared by the Colchester Planning and Zoning 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.



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. Some of the requirements for the Plan are presented in the shaded box on this page.

Plans In Colchester

- Plan of Development (1972)
- Plan of Development (1990)
- Plan of Conservation and Development (2001)

A number of other plans have also been prepared for Colchester over the years for special areas or special topics.

1.2 Use of the Plan of Conservation and Development

A Plan of Conservation and Development is an advisory document. It is intended 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 Planning and Zoning 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

Preparation / Implications:

- A planning commission shall prepare or amend and adopt a plan of conservation and development at least once every ten years.
- Following adoption, a planning commission shall regularly review and maintain such plan.
- If a plan is not amended decennially, ... a municipality shall be ineligible for discretionary state funding.

Mandatory Considerations:

A plan shall:

- Be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality
- Provide for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets, sidewalks, multipurpose trails and other public ways
- Be designed to promote ... the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people
- Identify areas where it is feasible and prudent to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns
- Recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality ... and include a map showing such proposed land uses
- Recommend the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality
- Note any inconsistencies with the [statewide] growth management principles
- Make provision for the development of housing opportunities ... consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity

A plan shall consider:

- The need for affordable housing
- The need for protection of existing and potential public surface and ground drinking water supplies
- The use of cluster development and other development patterns to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity
- The state plan of conservation and development and the regional plan of conservation and development
- Physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends
- The needs of the municipality including ... human resources, education, health, housing, recreation, social services, public utilities, public protection, transportation and circulation and cultural and interpersonal communications
- the objectives of energy-efficient patterns of development, the use of solar and other renewable forms of energy and energy conservation
- Protection and preservation of agriculture

ISSUES AND OUTLOOKS

2

2.1 Overview

In preparing a Plan for the future, it is often important to:

- learn about the history of the community and the issues it has faced in the past,
- understand the issues of concern to residents of the community today, and
- investigate the issues which may affect the community in the future.

History



Colchester Historical Society website

Town Green



Planimetrics

Town Hall

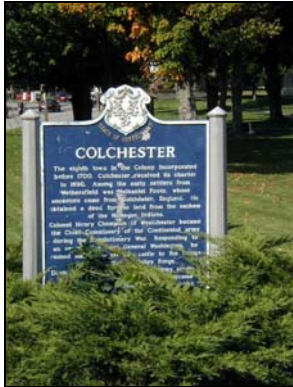


Food For Thought

Throughout the Plan, the following icon is used to suggest an idea for further consideration or to provide an alternative viewpoint on an issue which may face Colchester in the future.



Historical Marker



2.2 History Of Colchester

Prior to the early 1600s, what is now called Connecticut had been inhabited by Native Americans for about 10,000 years or so. European discovery of New England occurred in 1614 when Dutch explorer Adriaen Block sailed into Long Island Sound and up the Connecticut River. Trade between Europeans and Native Americans expanded to the point that permanent settlement began around Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield around 1634. However, it was not until 1662 that the first European settler came to the Colchester area to winter cattle along the Salmon River. Other settlers followed and by 1698 creation of a separate municipality, called Colchester, was authorized by the legislature. As population grew and became more dispersed, the communities of Marlborough (1803) and Salem (1819) were split off.

While most of Colchester was agriculturally based, the establishment of the Hayward Rubber Company in 1847 and subsequent growth of the company brought new residents to Colchester and spurred community improvements such as a railroad spur, a volunteer fire department, a library, a bank, sidewalks, gas lamps, and other amenities. However, the rubber plant closed in 1893 and Colchester's population shrunk from about 3,000 people in 1890 to about 2,000 people by 1900.

The economic focus in the community returned to agriculture and new residents moved in to reinvigorate farms which had been vacated after the demise of the Hayward Rubber Company. In the 1920s, Colchester also developed a hospitality focus and attracted visitors to visit and experience the rural ambience of the area. Unfortunately, the "depression" in the 1930s brought a decline to the resort industry in Colchester.

Following World War II, increasing mobility provided by the automobile and expansion of the road network (especially the construction of Routes 2 and 11) made Colchester more accessible to people working in other areas. In fact, because Colchester is within easy commuting distance of employment centers in Hartford, Norwich, New London and Middletown, population grew significantly as people sought out convenient locations and affordable places to live, especially with the character and amenities that can be found in Colchester. For several decades, Colchester was the fastest growing community in Connecticut.

Over the past 50 years, Colchester has evolved into serving two regional roles:

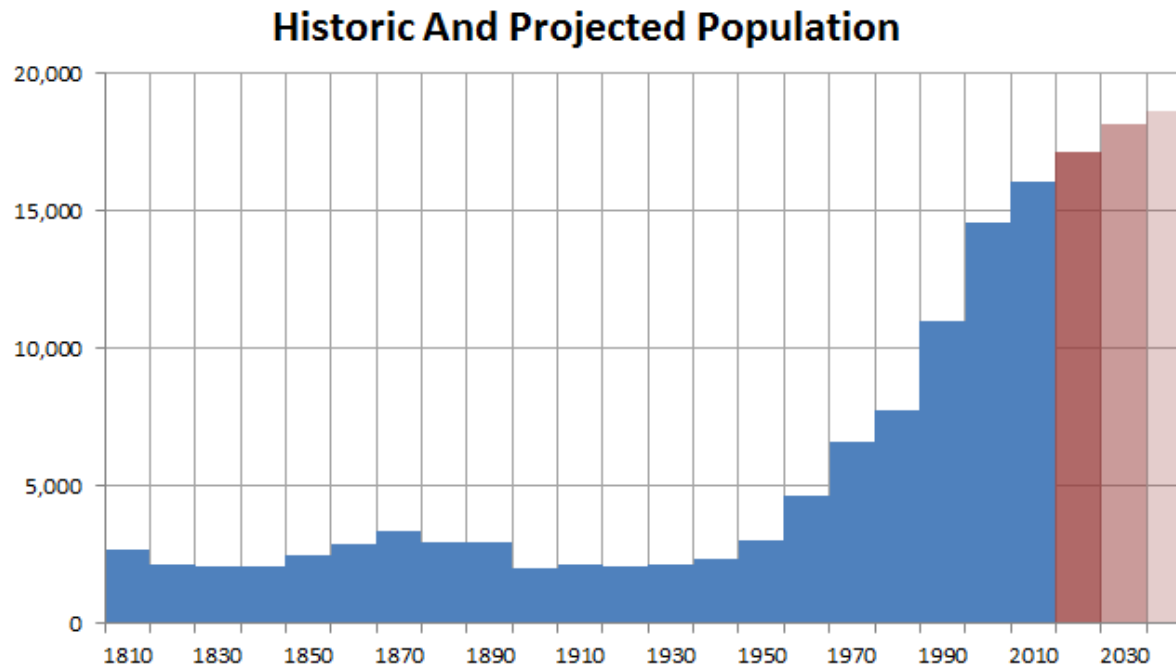
- As a residential suburb for the Hartford, Norwich, New London, and Middletown metropolitan areas, and
- As a sub-regional center offering goods / services and jobs for the residents of Colchester and surrounding communities.

2.3 People Of Colchester

According to the Census, Colchester had a population of 16,068 people in the year 2010. This represents an increase of 1,517 people (10.4 percent) since the 2000 Census.

As can be seen from the following chart, Colchester was essentially a rural community until the trend towards suburbanization which followed World War II (i.e. – after 1945). Population growth accelerated for the next several decades and between 1980 and 2000, Colchester was the fastest growing town in Connecticut.

Due to overall economic conditions, growth slowed in Connecticut and the nation after 2005. If the 2000-10 trends continue, population growth in Colchester will be modest in the future.



Colchester Population

Population	
1800	3,163
1810	2,697
1820	2,152
1830	2,073
1840	2,101
1850	2,468
1860	2,862
1870	3,383
1880	2,974
1890	2,988
1900	1,991
1910	2,140
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	14,551
2010	16,068
Projections	
	Low High
2020	16,923 17,113
2030	17,565 18,176
2040	18,207 18,611

US Census, 1800 to 2010. Low projections by the Connecticut State Data Center (extrapolated to 2040). High projections by Planimetrics.

Generational Names

- The “baby boom” generally refers to people born between about 1945 and about 1965
- The “baby bust” generally refers to people born between about 1965 and about 1985 (this generation has also been referred to as “Generation X”)
- The “baby boom echo” generally refers to people born between about 1985 and about 2005 (this generation has also been referred to as “Generation Y” and “Millennials”)
- People born between about 2005 and about 2025 will likely be referred to as “Generation Z” and/or the “i-Generation”)

Engines Of Population Growth

Population growth in a community can occur due to natural increase (more births than deaths) and/or net migration (more people moving in than moving out). Since the Census information reveals the total population change in a decade and since the number of births and deaths are recorded, it is possible to estimate the population change due to net migration.

Since the 1950s, Colchester has grown from both natural increase (more births than deaths) and net in-migration. During the decades of the most rapid growth in Colchester (the 1980s and 1990s), growth was dominated by net in-migration of “baby boomers” (people born between 1945 and 1965) as they formed families and sought housing.

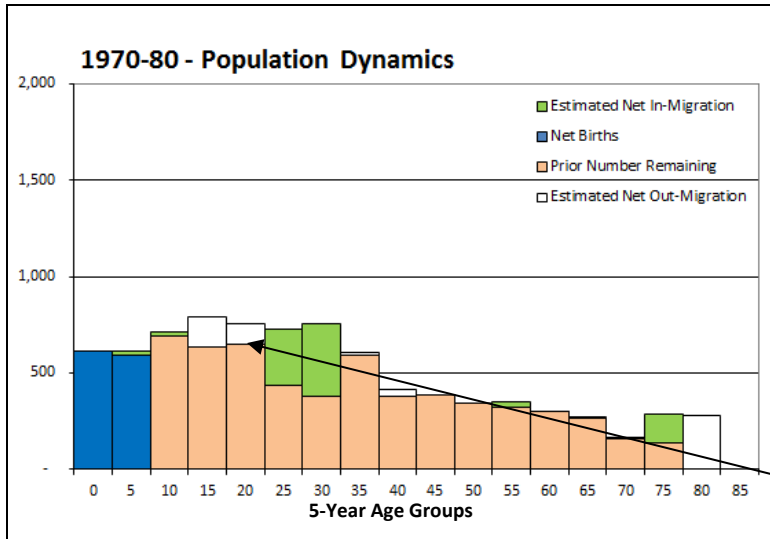
		Components of Population Change					
		1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
If the Census indicates that the population of Colchester changed by this much ...	Total Change	+ 1,641	+1,955	+ 1,158	+ 3,219	+ 3,571	+ 1,517
... and there were this many births and deaths recorded for Colchester ...	Births	825	1,281	1,215	1,687	2,277	1,856
	Deaths	360	374	514	701	801	967
	Natural Increase	+ 465	+ 907	+ 701	+ 986	+1,476	+ 889
... then, overall, this many residents must have moved into Colchester.	Net Migration	+ 1,176	+ 1,048	+ 457	+ 2,233	+ 2,095	+ 628

US Census, Connecticut State Department of Health, Planimetrics

While the amount of net migration is interesting, it may be more informative to understand the age composition of people moving into (and out of) Colchester. The charts on the facing page show whether people in different age groups tended to move into (or out of) Colchester between 1970 and 2010. In these charts, the height of the column represents the number of people in the following categories:

- Blue Columns = the number of people in that age group who were born to Colchester residents in the decade.
- Tan Columns = the number of people in that age group that are estimated to have stayed in Colchester in the decade.
- Green “Caps” = the number of people in that age group that are estimated to have moved to Colchester in the decade.
- White “Caps” = the number of people in that age group that are estimated to have moved out of Colchester in the decade.

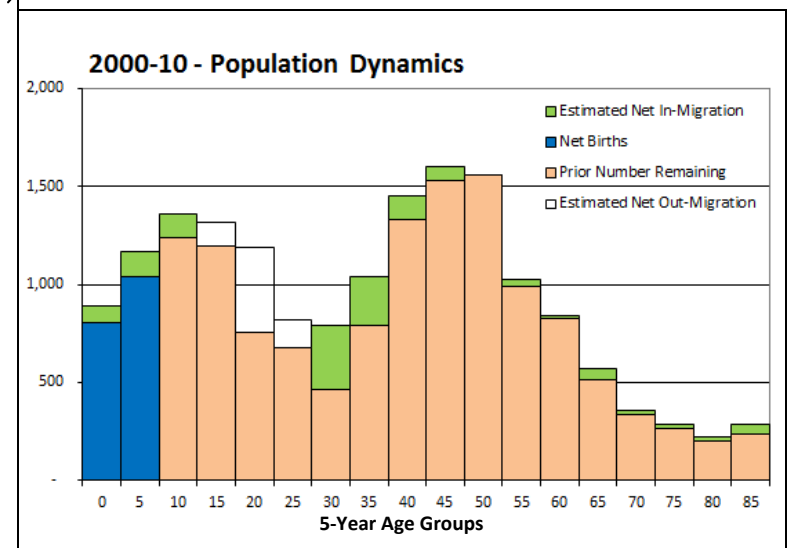
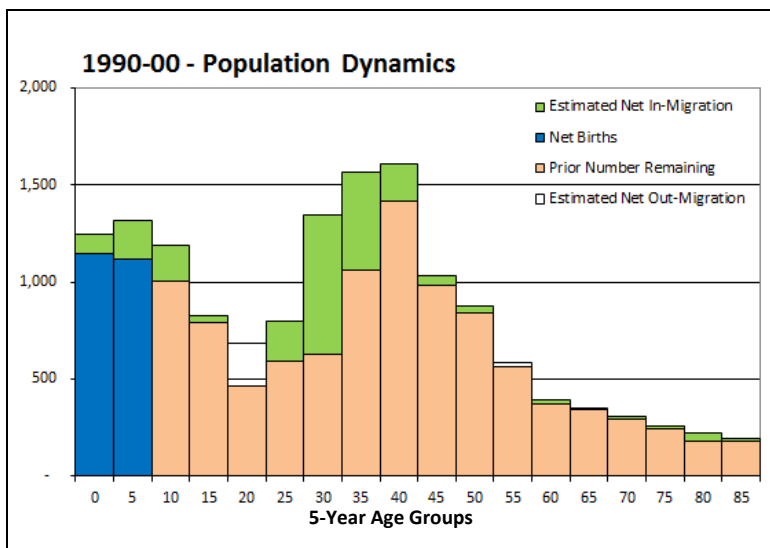
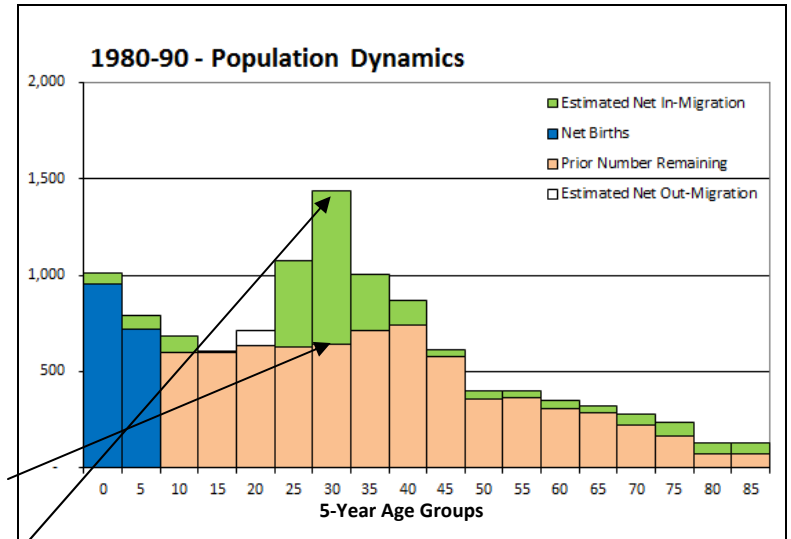
Looking at the last four decades, it can be seen that Colchester has had a history of attracting young families (people aged 25 to 45) that either bring children with them or that have children once they live here. Part of the reason that Colchester grew more slowly between 2000 and 2010 was that it attracted fewer young families (parents aged 30 to 50) than it had previously. It is unclear whether this trend will continue. Nevertheless, the aging of the “baby boomers” already here will be a major demographic trend in Colchester as well.



A “green cap” reflects that there were more people in that age group at the end of the decade than expected based on simple aging of people from the prior census. This reflects people in that age group moving into Colchester during the decade.

For example, there were 650 residents aged 20-24 in 1980. However, there were 1,439 residents aged 30-34 in 1990. In other words, 789 people moved to Colchester in that age group between 1980 and 1990.

Since 1970, population growth in Colchester has essentially been the result of net in-migration of younger persons and families (ages 25-45) and their children.



Demographic Changes

The overall composition of a community changes as a result of demographic changes in:

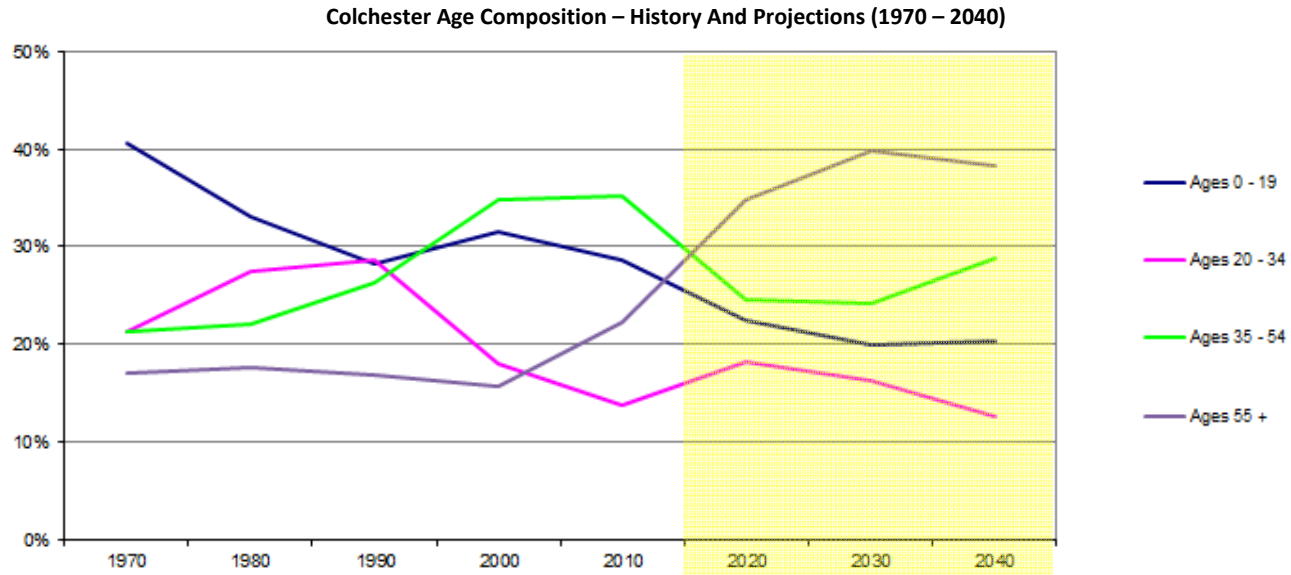
- new housing units (where new residents move in),
- sales of existing units (where new households moving in may be different than those moving out), and
- stable units (where existing residents may age, have children, move out, divorce, separate, marry, adopt, or die).



How might Colchester’s mix of services change with an older population?

Changing Age Composition

The following chart illustrates historic and anticipated trends in Colchester’s age composition. Note that Colchester’s age composition is anticipated to change from one where children (aged 0-19) were the dominant age group (pre-1990) to one where mature adults (aged 55+) will be the dominant age group (2020 and later). These are the same people (the “baby boomers”) as they flow through different age groups.



Description	Needs	Projection to 2040
Children (Ages 0 to 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care / School facilities • Recreation facilities/programs 	Share is anticipated to decrease after 2010 due to fewer women of child bearing age
Young Adults (Ages 20 to 34)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental housing / Starter homes • Social destinations 	Possible uptick to 2020 due to “baby boom echo”
Middle Age Adults (Ages 35 to 54)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family programs • Trade-up homes 	Uptick anticipated after 2020 due to “baby boom echo”
Mature Adults (Ages 55+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing options / smaller homes • Tax relief / Elderly programs 	Increase expected to 2030 as “baby boom” ages

2.4 Community Input / Plan Themes

A number of meetings and exercises were conducted during the process of preparing this Plan in order to get community input. Some of the comments made by residents during these meetings are summarized below:

HONORING COLCHESTER'S HERITAGE - Things To Protect Or Preserve

Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting water quality needs to be a priority, especially in the Salmon River and in the Eight Mile River • Green infrastructure and “low impact development” are things Colchester should implement
Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve more open space • Do more for greenways and linear open space • Open space has environmental benefits, character benefits, and fiscal benefits • Have an open space fund and put money in it to be ready for open space opportunities
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devote more attention to preserving farmland and farming • Agriculture is part of Colchester’s heritage and provides character benefits and fiscal benefits
Community Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to maintain and enhance the unique “Town and Country” balance in the future • Remain rural but with some of the amenities enjoyed by other communities • Colchester needs a design review process to ensure it keeps its character – not somebody else’s • Property maintenance needs to be encouraged or required
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek ways to become more efficient, more frugal, more sustainable in the future • Seek to transform the community to be more sustainable
Resiliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storm response – what can Colchester do / what should it do?

GUIDING COLCHESTER’S FUTURE - How To Guide Growth Or Change

Overall Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past plans focused on managing and controlling growth • This plan should focus on ensuring Colchester remains a desirable and attractive community
Villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revitalization of the Town center area is key for us • The Town Green is a local treasure • Westchester may be limited by what soil types might support
Residential Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colchester needs to consider future housing needs and be sure it has the tools to manage this well • Multi-family housing may be something to look at
Business Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize on Colchester’s location and be more of a business focus for surrounding towns • Attract businesses to provide goods and services and provide tax revenue to support the community – not someone else’s community • Have the right zoning to attract business development and keep local dollars here • Balance small businesses in the Center with larger businesses outside the center

ADDRESSING COLCHESTER’S FUTURE NEEDS - Services And Facilities That Are Wanted Or Needed

Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services and facilities contribute to the overall character of the community (schools, library, etc.) • Good facilities enhance the quality of life and sense of community • Many facilities are at or near capacity – park and recreation especially • Be sure school facilities are adequate for anticipated needs • Be sure recreation facilities are adequate for anticipated needs
Vehicular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colchester needs another entrance/exit ramp on Route 2
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking and biking need to be considered in the POCD
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a good cellular system in place

HONORING COLCHESTER'S HERITAGE

3

3.1 Overview

Colchester has been blessed with an abundance of natural resources and other unique and special assets. Preserving these resources is important to the future of the community.

Natural Resources



Farms



Open Space / Trails



3.2 Protect Natural Resources

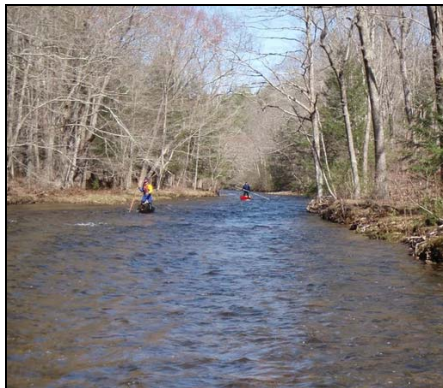
Protect Water Resources

Protection of water quality is the most important natural resource protection issue in Colchester. Most Colchester residents obtain their drinking water from wells and there are several public water supply sources which serve residents of Colchester and Norwich.

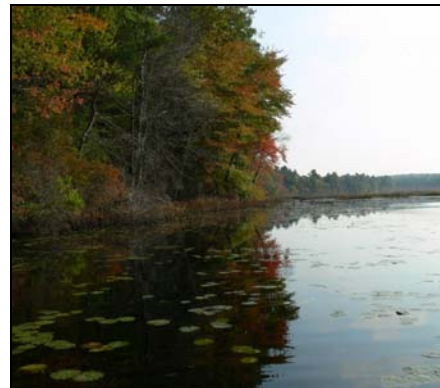
Protection of water quality can be furthered by the following types of strategies:

- Continue to protect wetlands and watercourses from pollution and erratic flow levels
 - Implement “low impact development” practices which use vegetation and infiltration to better manage storm-water quality and quantity
 - Conserve vegetated buffers along streams and rivers
 - Protect public water supply watersheds
- Continue to protect groundwater resources and regulate activities in aquifer areas
 - Maintain the State-mandated “aquifer protection area” regulations for areas that contribute to pumping well-fields
 - Evaluate the locally adopted aquifer regulations to ensure they continue to be appropriate
- Seek to minimize the impact of impervious surfaces which accelerate runoff and pollutants
 - Consider reducing road widths in new developments
 - Consider reducing parking requirements where feasible

Salmon River



Babcock Pond

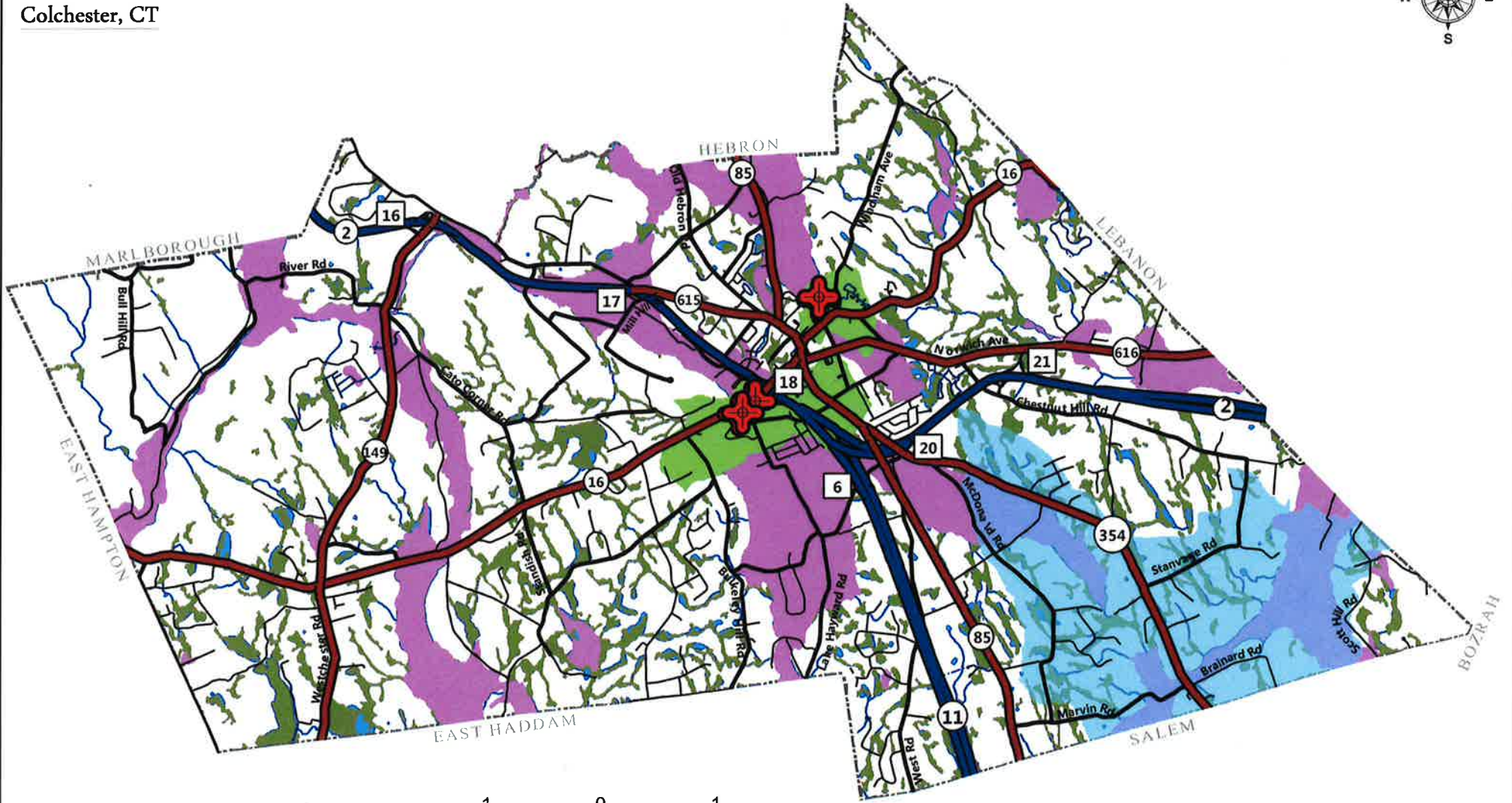


Deep River Reservoir







Water Resources

Colchester, CT



Legend

-  Water Supply Wellfield
-  Public Water Supply Watershed
-  State Defined Aquifer Protection Area
-  Town Defined Aquifer Protection Zone



Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.

Natural Diversity Database

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection maintains a Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) 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 NDDB sites in Colchester are identified on the overlay on the map on the facing page.

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

Protect Other Natural Resources

Colchester should also protect other important natural resources:

- Steep slopes
- Farmland soils
- Floodplain areas
- Natural diversity areas (sensitive habitats and unique resource areas)

Wood Turtle



Vernal Pool

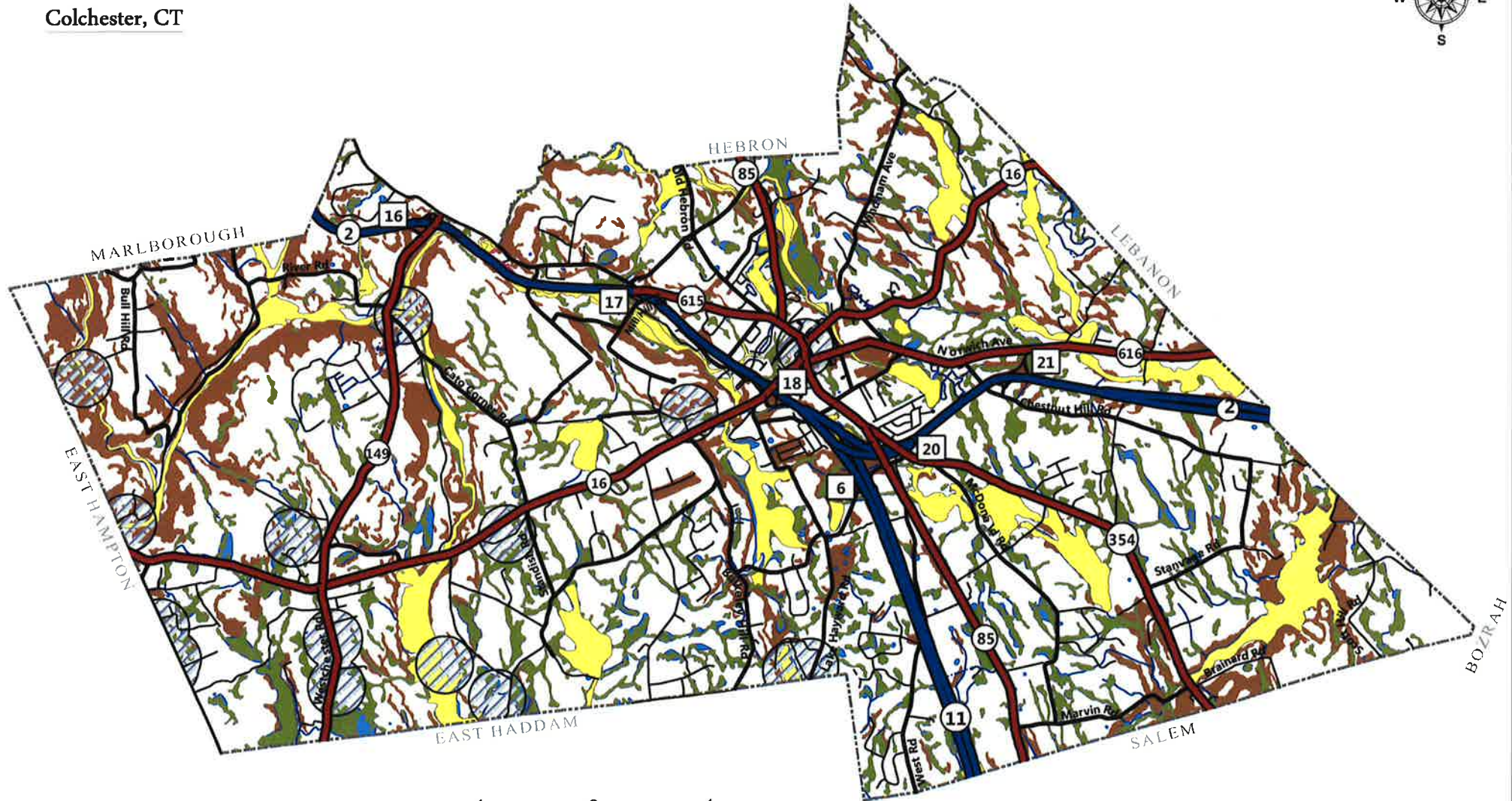
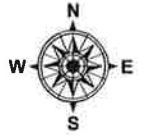


Spotted Salamander










Natural Resources

Colchester, CT



Legend

-  Natural Diversity Databases Sites
-  100-Yr. Flood Zone, 1.0% Probability
-  500-Yr. Flood Zone, 0.2% Probability
-  Wetlands
-  Waterbodies
-  Watercourses
-  Slopes 25% or Greater



Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.

CASE STUDY

Salmon River Watershed

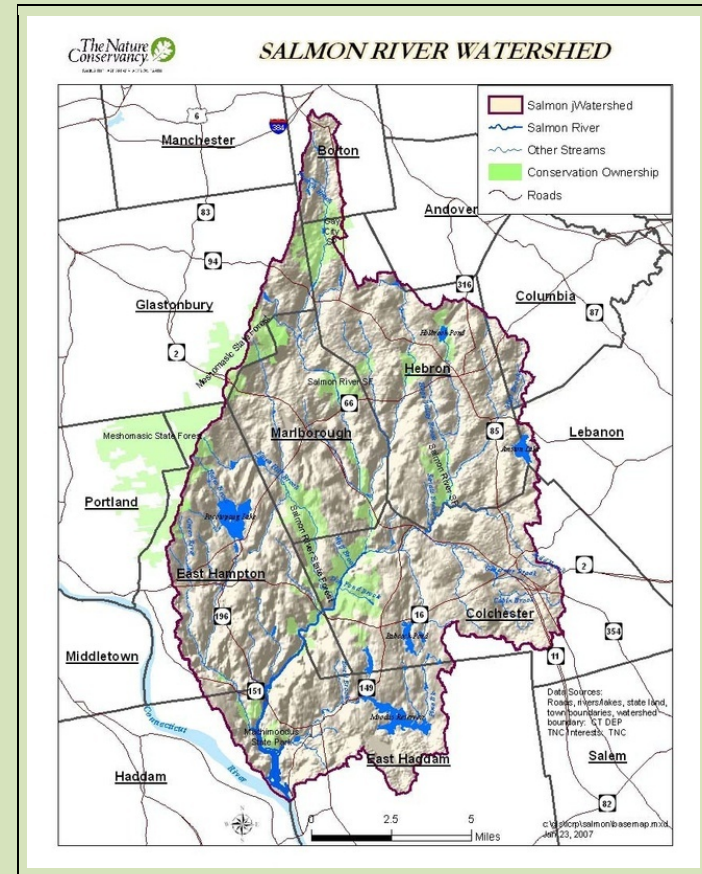
In 2007, The Nature Conservancy brought together the towns in the Salmon River watershed to help better understand the overall extent of the watershed and coordinate efforts to protect it. This resulted in the signing of a “conservation compact” by all of the communities and the establishment of the Salmon River Watershed Partnership (SRWP).

With the assistance of Horsley-Witten Group of Rhode Island, the SRWP evaluated municipal land use practices in the watershed towns and helped assemble an action plan.

The report provided guidance and recommendations to Colchester and other watershed towns in terms of riparian setbacks, stormwater management, road design options, forest management, open space acquisition and development review standards.

As a result of this project, Colchester reviewed its procedures and standards and implemented changes to help protect the Salmon River. The findings of this work have also guided conservation efforts which will benefit other watershed in Colchester. The Town will continue to implement desirable change as time and circumstances allow.

The town planners continue to meet periodically to share updates and set new goals to protect the Salmon River watershed.



The Nature Conservancy

3.2 Protect Natural Resources
A. Policies
1. Continue to protect water quality in Colchester, especially in the Salmon River and in the Eight Mile River watersheds.
2. Continue to protect wetlands and watercourses from pollution.
3. Conserve vegetated buffers along streams and rivers.
4. Protect public water supply watersheds.
5. Continue to protect groundwater resources and regulate activities in aquifer areas.
6. Continue to protect steep slopes.
7. Continue to protect floodplain areas.
8. Continue to protect areas identified in the State’s Natural Diversity Database.
B. Initial Action Items
1. Implement “low impact development” practices which use vegetation and infiltration to better manage stormwater quality and quantity.
2. Evaluate the locally adopted aquifer regulations to ensure they continue to be appropriate.
3. Modify land use regulations to remove impediments to “low impact development” practices by narrowing road widths in new developments, eliminating curbing along roadways and parking areas, and/or reducing parking requirements, where feasible.

Agriculture

“The words “agriculture” and “farming” include:

- cultivation of the soil,
- dairying,
- forestry,
- raising or harvesting any agricultural or horticultural commodity,
- raising, shearing, feeding, caring for, training and management of livestock, including horses, bees, poultry, fur-bearing animals and wildlife,
- the raising or harvesting of oysters, clams, mussels, other molluscan shellfish or fish;
- the production or harvesting of maple syrup or maple sugar, or any agricultural commodity,
- the harvesting of mushrooms,
- the hatching of poultry.”

Excerpted From CGS Section 1-1

3.3 Preserve Farms and Farming

The farming of land in Colchester is as old as the recorded history of the community. It is the express desire of this Plan that the tradition of farming continue in Colchester.

Preservation of farmland helps to:

- ensure survival of farmlands for agricultural use,
- provide for farms which support the local economy,
- provide positive tax benefits—working farms can generate more in local tax revenue than they cost in municipal services,
- help limit residential sprawl, which burdens town services and schools,
- provide a local source of fresh, healthy produce that is not mass-produced, shipped at added expense from great distances or blended from different sources or unidentified origins ,
- offer opportunities for agro-tourism, a fast-growing Connecticut travel industry segment,
- preserve barns and silos, farmhouses, meadows, stone walls and rural viewsheds,
- afford survival of wildlife corridors for birds and animals, and
- strengthen the link with Colchester’s rich agricultural heritage.

Support of agricultural activities is an important aspect of encouraging a more livable community and a sustainable future. An increase in agricultural activities can promote jobs, provide more opportunities for fresh, healthy and seasonable food, and reduce reliance on distant suppliers. Local agricultural activities help residents re-connect with their culture, their food, their environment and each other.

Dairy Farm



Planimetrics

Cheese Production



Cato Corner Farm

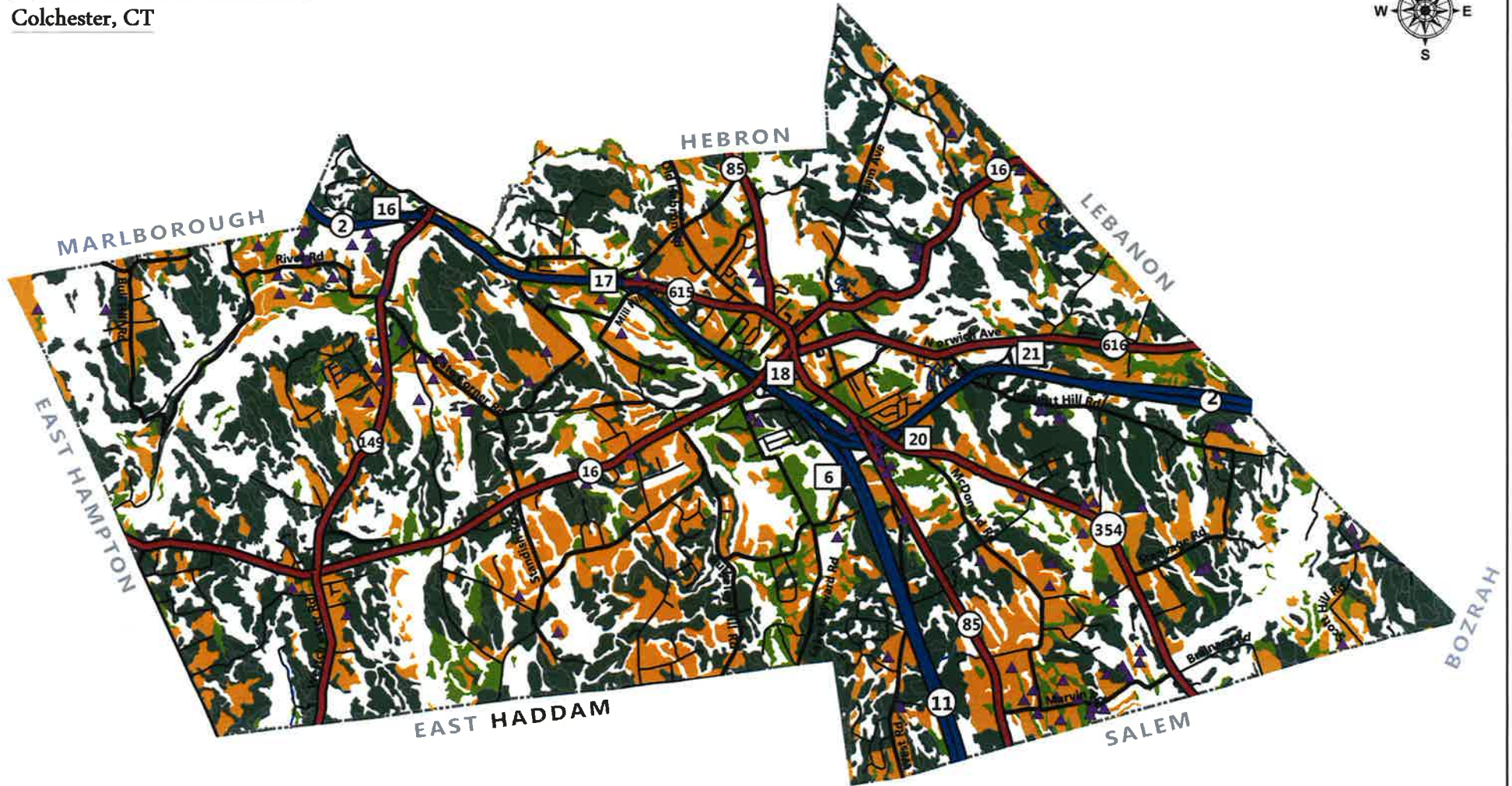
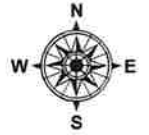
Vineyard



Priam Vineyards

Agricultural Resources

Colchester, CT



Legend

- ▲ Active Farms- 490A Tax Assessment
- Orange Prime Farmland Soils
- Green Statewide Important Farmland Soils
- Dark Green Locally Important Soils



Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.



Even though some uses are not “fiscal positives,” they can enhance the overall quality of life in the community.

For example, religious institutions are tax exempt yet benefit from some municipal services.

CASE STUDY

Cost of Community Services

In 2012, Colchester undertook a Cost of Community Services Study to help better understand the fiscal contribution of some of the land uses within the community. The study was prepared by Stahl & Associates of Willimantic, CT.

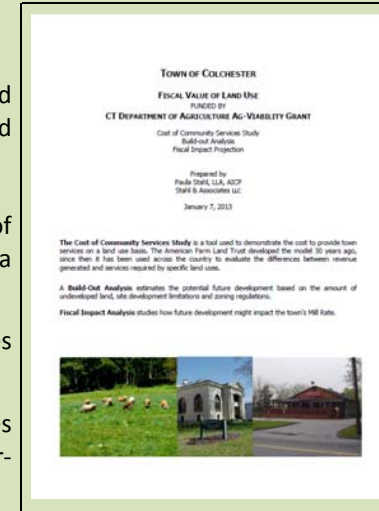
A cost of community services study allocates revenues and expenditures to different types of land use in a community and then compares the revenues and expenditures to determine if a use category has:

- a “fiscally positive” effect on a community (the taxes generated exceed the cost of services provided and so revenue is available to offset the costs of providing services to others, or
- a “fiscally negative” effect on a community (the cost of services provided exceed the taxes generated and so revenue is required from other uses to offset the costs of providing services.

In a “cost of community services” study, the results are typically expressed as a ratio in terms of the cost of services in relation to a dollar of revenue. The findings were:

- Residential uses – For each dollar of revenue, the Town provides \$1.14 of services
- Business uses - For each dollar of revenue, the Town provides \$0.18 of services
- Open space uses (including farms) - For each dollar of revenue, the Town provides \$0.18 of services

Since these types of studies have been conducted across Connecticut and the country, the results can be compared to other towns. The results for Colchester are similar to what has been found in other communities.



Overall, farms are considered to be a net benefit to Colchester for a number of reasons:

- They pay more in taxes than they require in services (based on the Cost of Community Services Study),
- They produce products of benefit to the community,
- They hire people, and
- They help preserve the character and heritage of the community.

3.3 Preserve Farms and Farming
A. Policies
1. Continue and expand efforts to preserve farmland soils for future generations to farm.
2. Continue efforts to support and expand existing farms.
3. Maintain a local agricultural council as authorized by CGS 7-131v.
4. Use the state definition of agriculture as provided in CGS 1-1(q).
5. Maintain and support the farmers market.
6. Maintain the right to farm ordinance.
7. Recognize and promote a “farm trail” with a variety of agricultural activities (Xmas trees, wine/grapes, cheese, chickens, flowers, horses, eggs, etc.).
8. Consider allowing the use of Town land or open space for farming, when and where appropriate.
B. Initial Action Items
1. Seek regulatory changes to reduce regulatory impediments to agriculture.
2. Seek regulatory changes to allow “value added” activities (such as farm stores).
3. Seek to provide the lowest possible land values as part of the PA-490 assessment program.
4. Install and maintain signs that Colchester is a farm friendly community.
5. Install signs promoting a “farm trail” and identify it as such on the Town webpage.
6. Develop and install roadside signage that raises awareness of working farms.

More Information

See POCD Section 3.5 (pages 28 to 37) for additional discussion of farm assessment policies and PA-490.

Open Space

Open space is land which:

- protects natural resources
- provides for outdoor recreation
- provides for natural resource management
- protects public health and safety
- contributes to community character

Open space land may include lands that are:

- dedicated and restricted to open space uses;
- managed open space, which is land that is used or preserved for some purpose other than open space but that provides open space characteristics ...

The term “greenways” is defined as “predominantly natural corridors that contain and/or link open space and natural and cultural resources.”

3.4 Preserve Open Space

For many years, 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 in the past few decades and the Town is much more interested in preserving open space. Following adoption of the 2001 Plan of Conservation and Development, Colchester established a Land Trust, created an Open Space Advisory Committee, adopted an Open Space Plan (2006), implemented a fee-in-lieu of open space provision, and established a Land Acquisition Fund.

The 2006 Open Space Plan is a comprehensive document which addresses a wide variety of issues related to the preservation of open space in Colchester. The Open Space Advisory Committee should continue to maintain and implement the 2006 Open Space Plan with the help of other organizations within Colchester.

Key goals from the 2006 Open Space Plan include:

- **Preserve Open Space** - Acquire, protect, conserve and manage open space for sustainability of resources, biodiversity, and yield of renewable resources. Work cooperatively with the Colchester Land Trust and private landowners such as public utilities and fish and game clubs to implement the goals and objectives of the Open Space Plan.
- **Acquire And Fund** - Encourage and facilitate the acquisition and protection of open space consistent with the 2006 Open Space Plan, identify innovative techniques for funding such acquisitions, and develop incentives for the protection of open space.
- **Promote Connections** - Encourage and facilitate the acquisition of open space parcels which will provide connectivity between protected areas, and contribute to the development of greenways.
- **Provide Recreation** - Provide a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities so that the citizens of Colchester may maintain active, healthy lifestyles, appreciate the community’s natural resources, and strengthen community image and sense of place.
- **Preserve Rural Landscapes** - Preserve and enhance the cultural and historical features and rural landscapes which contribute to and shape community character.

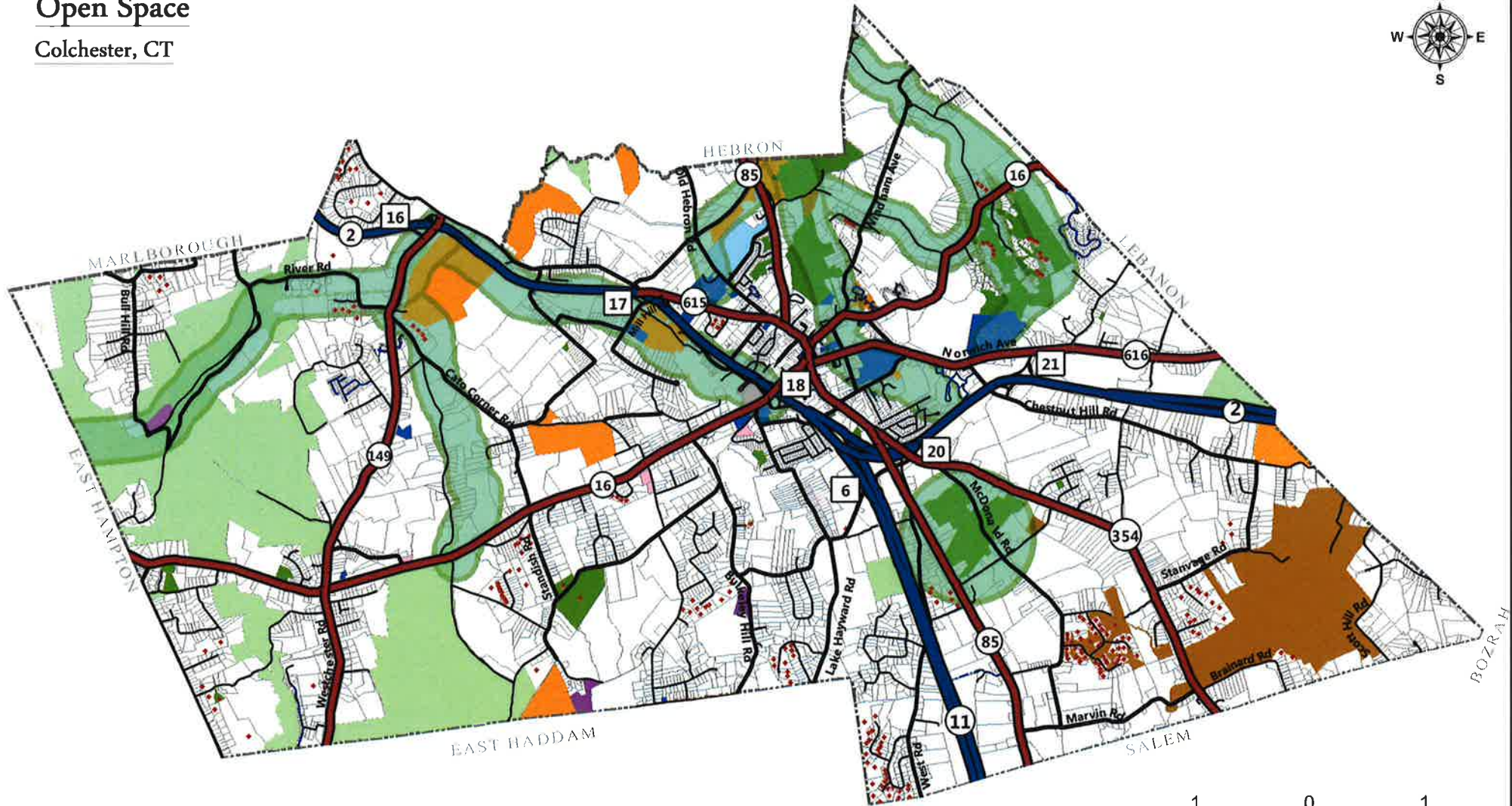
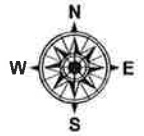
Preserved and protected open space, in adequate quantities and appropriate locations, will help:

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

These open space preservation efforts should continue and be enhanced.

Open Space

Colchester, CT





Legend

Existing Open Space Areas

-  Colchester Land Trust
-  Cemetery - Public and Private
-  Public Facilities - Town and State Owned Facilities
-  Golf Course - Public Golf Course/ Driving Range
-  State of CT - State Forest and Wildlife Management Areas
-  Utility Companies - Norwich DPU & Northeast Utilities
-  Town of Colchester - Town Owned Open Space
-  Other - Fish & Game, Historical Society, Fire Department...etc.
-  Properties Containing a Conservation Easement

Open Space Focus Areas

-  Official Designated Greenways
-  Adopted Open Space Focus Areas



Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.

CASE STUDY

“Perceived” Versus “Preserved” Open Space

Agreeing on a definition of “open space” can be a challenging issue for some communities.

Experience over the years has shown that most residents consider any land which is not developed to be “open space.” However, some of this land may not be preserved as open space and might be proposed for development at some point in the future. In other words, “perceived open space” is not protected in any way and so development can happen unless steps are taken to preserve it. Once the development process has started, it can be difficult to stop.

This is the challenge which comes from calling land open space if it is not “preserved open space.” Had the community realized that the property was potentially developable, they might have worked to preserve it or as much of it as they could. By converting the “perceived open space” to “preserved open space”, their overall vision for the future of their community could have been guided in terms of an open space system they wanted to create rather than one which reacted to development proposals.

Land Which Is Not Developed Is Often Perceived As Open Space



Land Which Is Preserved As Open Space Will Be Protected From Development



Cost Of Services

See Section 3.3 (page 22) in the POCD for information on the possible implications to cost of services if land is developed.

3.4 Preserve Open Space
A. Policies
1. Maintain the Land Acquisition Fund and supplement it in order to preserve open space.
2. Create an open space <u>system</u> where different open spaces are interconnected with trails within Colchester and to surrounding communities.
3. Maintain the Open Space Advisory Committee.
4. Use fee-in-lieu of open space provisions when open space opportunities will not contribute to the overall open space <u>system</u> or other open space objectives (i.e. – when a dedication of land would result in a small parcel of open space that does not connect to other open spaces in a meaningful way).
5. Seek additional funding to acquire open space through bonding.
6. Budget money to acquire open space through annual appropriations in the budget.
7. Improve and promote the Airline Trail and other trails.
8. Support the Colchester Land Trust and other organizations working to preserve open space.
9. Coordinate with open space organizations in surrounding towns and the region.
10. Continue to work with the State of Connecticut and the Norwich Public Utilities Department to develop public trails on their lands in Colchester.
B. Initial Action Items
1. Increase the open space set-aside requirement in the subdivision regulations.
2. Update the Open Space Map and then maintain it over time to reflect Colchester’s open space inventory and strategies.
3. Install signage to identify preserved open spaces in Colchester.

3.5 Enhance Community Character

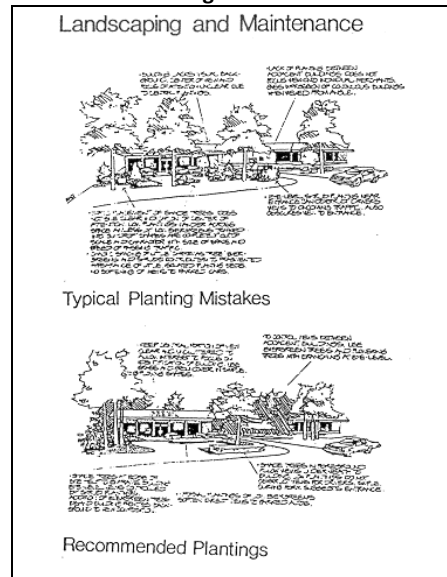
The importance of preserving and enhancing the “character” of Colchester is something mentioned by just about every resident. As a result, it is an important consideration in planning for Colchester’s future. Considerations include:

- Preserving and protecting things that are unique to Colchester (scenic resources, ruralness, historic resources, etc.)
- Not becoming like every other place

Strategies to enhance the physical character of Colchester include:

- Establishing a Design Review Process
- Establishing a “village district” in the Town Center area
- Preserving the ruralness of the community
- Preserving natural resources
- Preserving open space
- Preserving scenic views, scenic roads and other scenic resources

Design Review



Ruralness



Historic Resources



Establish A Design Review Process

Colchester is unique. Yet, some buildings and developments have occurred in a way which does not recognize this. In fact, developments have occurred in ways that introduce “franchise architecture” symbolic of other places to the quaint, New England community that residents know and love.

If Colchester is to preserve and enhance its character and retain and enhance its sense of place, it has to make sure that buildings and developments are appropriate for Colchester and not simply a “cut and paste” from somewhere else. Colchester needs a design review process.

If developers know up front that Colchester wants attractive buildings that reflect its New England character, experience in other communities has shown they will propose developments that reflect that character. If Colchester has no standards for architectural design, experience in other communities has demonstrated that developers will provide standardized designs that are not reflective of the character of Colchester.

Other communities have established design review procedures that integrate seamlessly into the approval process so that no time is lost and well-designed projects are approved quickly. Colchester should do the same.

Possible Options

In terms of implementing design review, some options might include:

- A design review board with design guidelines
- A design review board without design guidelines
- Mandatory design guidelines in a “village district”
- Design guidelines in the zoning regulations and requiring more uses and activities to get special permit approval
- Advisory design guidelines in the zoning regulations

Some Connecticut communities with design review programs include:

- Simsbury
- Madison
- Litchfield
- Greenwich
- Southbury

Common Architecture



Possible Alternative (Freeport, ME)



Common Architecture



Possible Alternative (Glastonbury, CT)



Westchester

A “village district” should also be considered for the Westchester area in order to protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic value of this area.

Establish A Village District In The Town Center

Colchester’s Town Center is a unique and distinctive area with a variety of uses and a concentration of activities and functions in a historic setting. This includes a wide variety of uses and activities including the Town Green, the historic Bacon Academy building, the variety of buildings in the historic district, and other resources. In addition to this collection of individual resources, the overall ambience and character of the Town Center are important to establishing the overall distinctive character, landscape and historic character. The character of the Center is treasured by residents and appreciated by visitors. Maintaining and enhancing this character is vital to the long term health and vitality of Colchester and the Town Center area.

Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes specifically provides for the establishment of a “village district” specifically for the purpose of protecting and enhancing the “distinctive character, landscape or historic value” in places like Colchester’s Town Center. By establishing a “village district” in accordance with statutory requirements, the Planning and Zoning Commission obtains the ability to regulate new construction, substantial reconstruction and rehabilitation of properties within such districts and in view from public roadways, including, but not limited to:

- the design and placement of buildings,
- the maintenance of public views,
- the design, paving materials and placement of public roadways, and
- other elements that the commission deems appropriate to maintain and protect the character of the village district.

As stated in the enabling legislation, the regulations shall provide:

- that proposed buildings or modifications to existing buildings be harmoniously related to their surroundings, and the terrain in the district and to the use, scale and architecture of existing buildings in the district that have a functional or visual relationship to a proposed building or modification,
- that all spaces, structures and related site improvements visible from public roadways be designed to be compatible with the elements of the area of the village district in and around the proposed building or modification,
- that the color, size, height, location, proportion of openings, roof treatments, building materials and landscaping of commercial or residential property and any proposed signs and lighting be evaluated for compatibility with the local architectural motif and the maintenance of views, historic buildings, monuments and landscaping, and
- that the removal or disruption of historic traditional or significant structures or architectural elements shall be minimized.

By establishing a “village district”, the Commission has the ability to more closely evaluate building and site design to ensure that it is in keeping with the overall character of Colchester. In addition, the Commission gains the ability to condition the approval of a development on certain aesthetic considerations which will make it more compatible with the overall character of the Town Center.

Preserve "Ruralness"

Many people are attracted to Colchester as a place to live and raise a family because of its blend of ruralness and availability of programs and services.

So that this ruralness is preserved as Colchester attracts more people in the future and grows, the following approaches are recommended:

- Allow for growth at appropriate densities within the Town Center and surrounding residential neighborhoods which are served by public water and public sewer
- Preserve the "ruralness" of outlying areas by maintaining low density zoning and by changing regulations to require conservation development in rural areas and/or increasing the open space set-aside required at the time of development.

Possible Conventional Development Pattern



- 32 lots on 82 acre parcel
- Average lot size = 2.5 acres
- No open space preserved
- Scenic features converted into lots

Possible Conservation Development Pattern



- 32 lots on 82 acre parcel
- 32 acres in lot areas / average lot size = 1.0 acre
- 50 acres preserved as open space (60% of parcel area)
- 50 acres of publicly accessible open space
- Scenic features preserved

PA-490 Program

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 land from development, it lessens the local property tax burden as a reason that property might be developed and, in that way, it can spread development out over time (or defer it altogether) and maintain the perception of ruralness in Colchester.

The program can also provide additional time to find ways to preserve the property as dedicated open space.

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

- Encourage the retention of undeveloped land ("perceived open space") by making it less expensive to own
 - Maintain the PA-490 Farm program (available for properties with farm-related income) and PA-490 Forest program (only available for properties of 25+ acres)
 - Establish and implement a PA-490 Open Space program where any residentially-zoned parcel of land which is more than twice the minimum lot size required for the zoning district will be eligible for a reduced assessment for land above the minimum lot area requirement
 - Seek to provide the lowest possible land values as part of the PA-490 assessment program
- Retain vegetation and buffers along streets and roads to maintain and enhance the rural feeling
- Seek to retain stone walls, barns, significant trees, and other unique features
- Reduce the overall levels of illumination and seeking to maintain "dark skies" as recommended by the International Dark Sky Association
- Preserve scenic views, scenic roads, and other scenic features
- Identify scenic resources and amend local regulations to protect them

Ruralness



Ruralness



Ruralness



Protect Historic Resources

Local historical and archeological resources contribute to community character and sense of place. The community has recognized this and a number of programs have been established over the years to address this (see sidebar). All of these activities and efforts are evidence of Colchester’s continuing commitment to historic preservation.

However, there are a number of organizations dealing with similar issues and it may make more sense in the future for Colchester to streamline its operations to ensure that the goal of preserving and enhancing community character is met effectively and efficiently.

A key issue in the future may be determining the best tools to use to protect historic resources and character in Colchester. Some approaches in use today establish a very high standard for “authenticity” and some people believe this discourages or prevents renovation and maintenance of historic buildings. Other approaches focus more on “character” and allow for the use of modern construction materials that look historic (such as energy efficient windows).

A “village district” is one tool which is available now (but was not available when the local historic district or the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone was established) and this may provide an opportunity for Colchester to preserve and enhance community character with the most flexible tool.

Collections of Historic Resources

1. **Colchester Village** – a district listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places (most activities not regulated – primarily for recognitions)
2. **Colchester Historic District** – a local historic district where exterior activities are typically regulated by a Historic District Commission
3. **Local Historic Preservation Overlay Zone** – a zoning district overseen by the Planning and Zoning Commission

Individual Historic Resources

4. Bacon Academy - Historic school (1803) and Day Hall (1858)
5. Hayward House – (1775)
6. Wheeler Block - The Old Town Hall (1872)
7. Lyman Viaduct - Bridge (1873)over Dickinson Creek
8. Stone Arch Railroad Bridge - Bridge (1887)over River Road
9. Blackledge River Railroad Bridge - Bridge (1912)over the Blackledge River
10. Henry Champion House -

Accomplishments

- Established the Colchester Historical Society
- Established the Colchester Historic District and Historic District Commission (1984)
- Completed a Historic Resources Study (1991)
- Been recognized as a Certified Local Government (1992)
- Had an area listed on the National Register Of Historic Places
- Adopted a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (1996)
- Received the first ever-issued “Connecticut Local Government Achievement Award for Historic Preservation” (1998)



Expanding Colchester's "brand" may enhance the ability to retain and attract people of all ages.

Expand Colchester's "Brand"

According to Wikipedia, a brand is a "name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies [something] distinct from those of other [things]." Brands are often thought of in terms of businesses, marketing, and advertising but they can also be thought of as identifying a place or an experience. Similar to commercial brands, a "concept brand" (like that for a municipality) is an intangible asset that can often be an extremely valuable asset. The notion of putting a value on a "brand" encourages municipal leaders to consider long term stewardship of the brand and managing for value.

For many years, Colchester has been perceived as a community which is focused on younger families (an emphasis on schools, test scores, enrollments, active sports, etc.). In fact, Colchester has excelled at this.

In the future though, the age demographics will be different than in the past and Colchester might want to look at ways it can expand its horizons to be a community which is perceived as providing for the quality of life for all generations. This might include:

- Services for all ages - Walkable and bike-able places, active and passive recreational / entertainment amenities, etc.
- Senior-friendly services - Social services for people aging in their homes, elderly tax relief, etc.

Promote Property Maintenance

Lack of property maintenance can negatively affect public health, safety and welfare. While any such situation certainly involves working with property owners to identify unique circumstances and solutions, there comes a time when it negatively affects adjacent properties, entire streets, whole neighborhoods and impacts overall community character. Efforts to address the maintenance of buildings and properties should continue. This includes the enforcement of existing regulations as well as the adoption of new approaches (such as those that may be recommended by the Legislative Task Force on Blight).

Dilapidated House

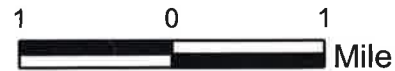


Dilapidated House



Community Character

Colchester, CT



Legend

- Protected & Managed Open Space
- HPOZ Historic Preservation Overlay Zone
- Historic District
- Scenic Views



Town Center

Historic District & Historic District Preservation Overlay Zone

Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.



More Information

See POCD Section 3.3 (pages 28 to 37) for additional discussion of preserving farms and farming.

3.5 Enhance Community Character
A. Policies
1. Implement programs and policies to preserve and enhance community character in Colchester.
2. Seek to maintain and enhance the ruralness of outlying areas in Colchester.
3. Encourage the retention of undeveloped land by making it less expensive to own.
4. Maintain the PA-490 Farm program and PA-490 Forest program.
5. Seek to provide the lowest possible land values as part of the PA-490 assessment program.
6. Manage tree trimming in ways that seek an appropriate balance between electrical reliability and community character.
7. Retaining vegetation and buffers along streets and roads to maintain and enhance the rural feeling.
8. Seek to retain stone walls, barns, significant trees, and other unique features in new development.
9. Reducing the overall levels of illumination and seeking to maintain “dark skies” as recommended by the International Dark Sky Association.
10. Preserve scenic views, scenic roads, and other scenic features.
11. Continue to protect historic resources and historic character.
12. Encourage maintenance of buildings, properties, and streetscapes.

(continued on following page)

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3.5 Enhance Community Character (continued)	
B. Initial Action Items	
1.	Establish a design review process in Colchester.
2.	Establish a “village district” (as authorized by CGS 8-2j) in the Town center area.
3.	Evaluate whether the “village district” in the Town center area might be a better tool to manage development activities and preserve community character than the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and/or the local historic district.
4.	Establish a “village district” (as authorized by CGS 8-2j) in the Westchester center area.
5.	Preserve the ruralness of outlying areas through regulations that require conservation development.
6.	Change the Subdivision Regulations to increase the open space set-aside required at the time of development.
7.	Establish and implement a PA-490 open space policy.
8.	Identify scenic resources and amend local regulations to protect them.

Local Destination



Covered Bridge



Salmon River



3.6 Enhance Quality Of Life

Colchester was recognized by Money Magazine in 2005 as one of the best places to live in America. This recognition confirms what Colchester residents already knew – this is a great place to live and raise a family.

Colchester should continue to maintain and enhance those things that contribute to the overall quality of life in the community. This includes tangible or visible things (such as rural character and scenic views) but it also includes the overall spirit and sense of belonging which ties the community together. It also includes:

- local programs and events (such as community festivals and concerts)
- local organizations (such as religious institutions, charitable organizations, sports leagues, and other organizations)
- volunteer contributions
- local recognition.

3.6 Enhance Quality Of Life
A. Policies
1. Continue to maintain and enhance things that contribute to the overall quality of life in Colchester.
2. Maintain and enhance the physical character of the community.
3. Maintain and enhance community spirit.
4. Support local organizations, individuals, activities and events that contribute to the overall character and spirit of the community.

3.7 Promote Sustainability And Resiliency

For the purposes of this Plan, “sustainability” refers to the philosophy of encouraging activities that allow present generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The term “resiliency” refers to the community’s ability to readily recover from sudden changes or adversity.

Sustainability

Energy availability and cost will continue to be significant issues in the future with economic implications for residents, businesses, and the Town. The Town should evaluate alternative energy approaches (space heating, electrical consumption, electrical generation, vehicles) for its facilities and implement recommendations to reduce energy usage, increase reliability, and save money.

Water usage and conservation are also important sustainability considerations. Colchester has made progress in this areas and should continue to encourage water conservation especially since many areas of the community rely on groundwater for domestic use.

The overall waste stream and recycling is another potential area for promoting greater sustainability in Colchester. While curb-side collection of solid waste and recyclables is provided by private providers, the Town should continue to encourage residents and businesses to reduce the waste stream and recycle.

Efforts should be devoted towards educating residents and school children about sustainability concepts.

Water Conservation



Single Stream Recycling



Electric Vehicle



Resiliency

Colchester and other communities in Connecticut have experienced some unusual weather events over the past few years. One of the lessons for Colchester from Hurricane Irene in 2011, an unusual October 2011 snowstorm, Storm Sandy in 2012, and winter storm Charlotte in 2013 was the value of emergency preparedness planning.

Colchester should continue to review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events, such as flooding. Colchester should also continue to review and improve emergency preparedness plans (single events) in order to be able to respond to these events in the future.

3.7 Promote Sustainability And Resiliency
A. Policies
1. Continue to evaluate alternative energy approaches for Town facilities and implement recommendations that reduce energy usage, increase reliability, and/or save money.
2. Encourage water conservation especially since many areas of the community rely on groundwater for domestic use.
3. Seek to reduce the waste stream and promote recycling.
4. Educate residents and school children about sustainability concepts.
5. Continue to review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events.
6. Continue to review and improve emergency preparedness plans for non-recurring events.

GUIDING COLCHESTER'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

4

4.1 Overview

Growth and change will happen in Colchester in the future. How that growth and change is guided and managed is important to the future of the community.

Town Center



Business Development



Residential Development



Hamlet

According to Wikipedia, a hamlet is a type of settlement, generally a small settlement with a small population:

- in a rural area, or
- a component of a larger settlement or municipality.

Hamlets are usually not legal entities and have no local government or official boundaries.

A hamlet could be described as the rural or suburban equivalent of a neighborhood in a city or village. The area of a hamlet may not be exactly defined.

4.2 Overall Organizational Concept

As shown on the map on the facing page, Colchester's intended future settlement pattern is predicated on the historic organization of the community with:

- a strong, vibrant mixed-use village center around the junction of historic roads named by the places they connect to –Hartford, Hebron, Windham, Lebanon, Norwich, New London, and Middletown,
- a secondary mixed-use center (hamlet) in Westchester around the intersection of Middletown Road and Westchester Road.
- residential neighborhoods adjacent to the village center where the infrastructure exists to support residential neighborhoods at moderate densities,
- economic areas with the location (highway access) and/or infrastructure (public water and sewer) to support business development and economic growth, and
- the remainder of Colchester remaining as rural-type areas with scattered homesteads and future residential development configured in a "conservation" type pattern to preserve as much agriculture, forest, open space uses as possible.

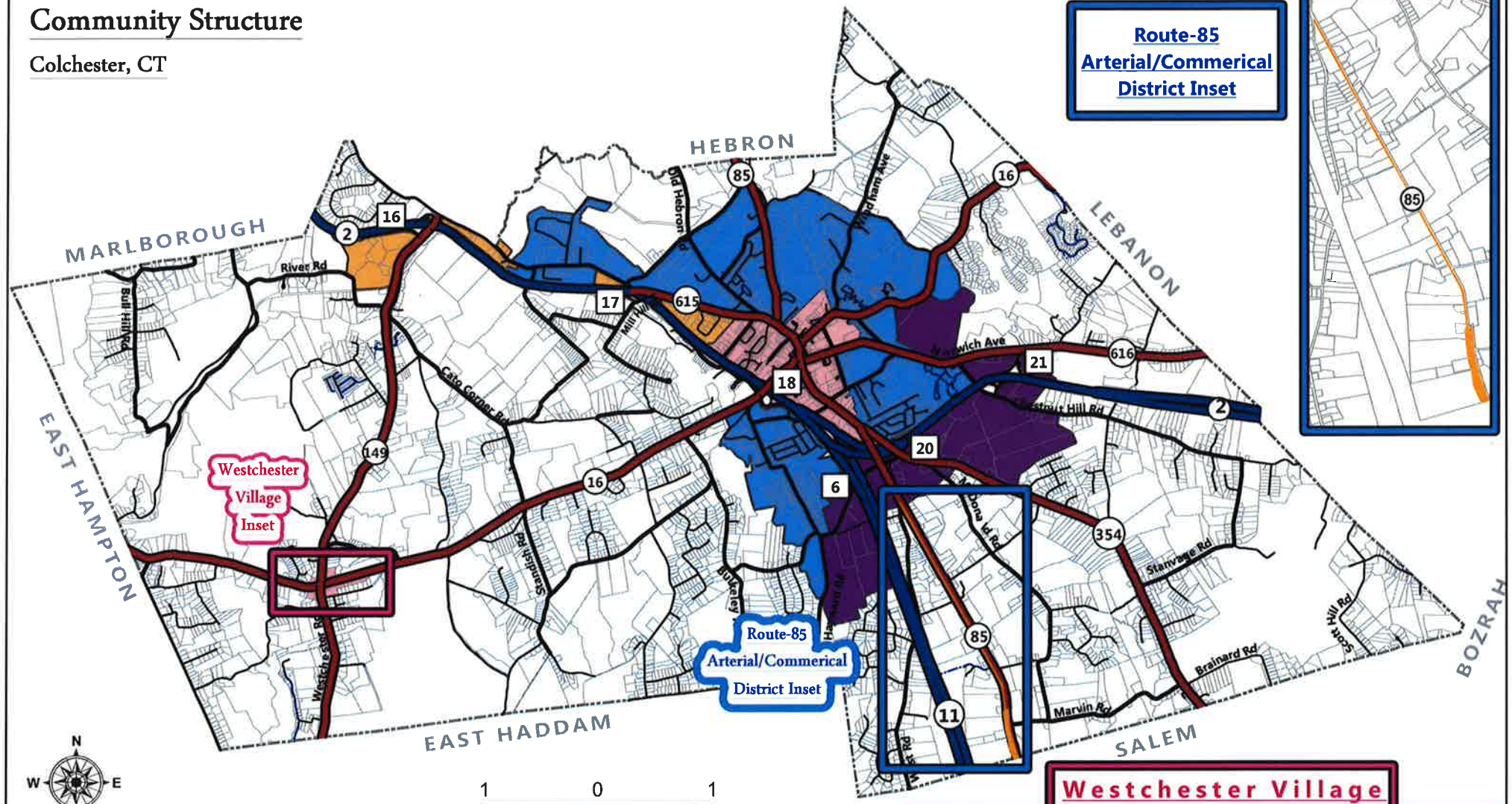
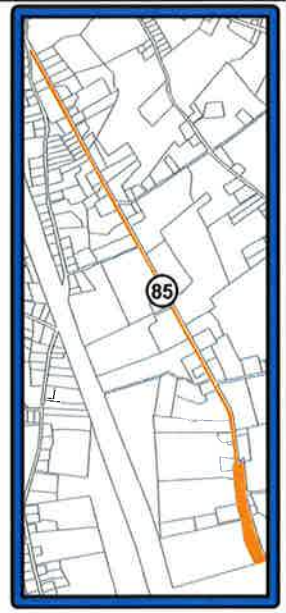
Preserving this strong organizational pattern will help guide Colchester's future in a logical and efficient way.

4.2 Overall Organizational Concept
A. Policies
1. Maintain the overall organizational concept for community development areas as depicted in the POCD.

Community Structure

Colchester, CT

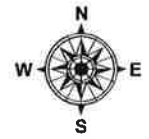
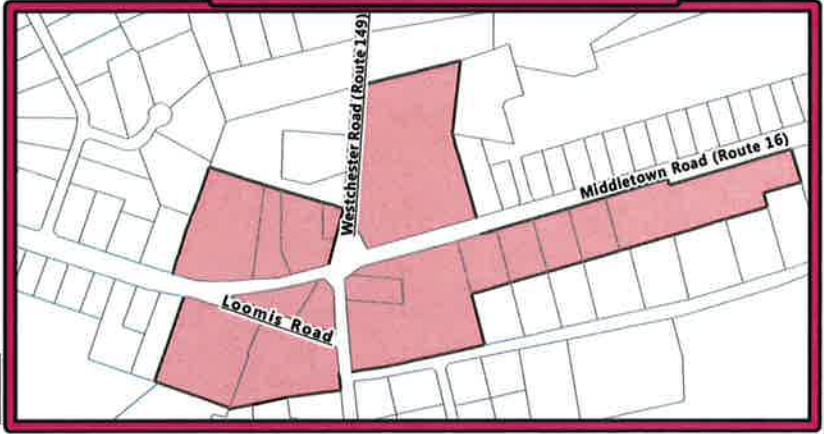
Route-85
Arterial/Commercial
District Inset








Westchester
Village
Inset

Route-85
Arterial/Commercial
District Inset

Westchester Village



Legend	
	Arterial/Commercial District
	Future Growth District
	Rural District
	Suburban District
	Village District



Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.

More Information

See POCD Section 4.5 (pages 51 to 57) for additional discussion of economic development areas which includes the Town Center.

See Section 3.5 (pages 28 to 37) for a recommendation to establish a “village district” (as per CGS Section 8-2j) in order to help protect the unique character, landscape, and historic value in the Town Center area.

4.3 Enhance The Town Center

Colchester residents are very supportive and protective of the Town Center and want to preserve and enhance it:

- economically, and
- physically.

Strengthen The Town Center Economically

A Town Center which is strong economically helps ensure that it is also a vibrant and engaging place. There are several ways that Colchester can do this.

First, Colchester should maintain and enhance the Town Center as the government, civic, institutional, and cultural center of the community. Uses and activities which support or enhance the desired role for the Town Center should be located in the Town Center area and discouraged in outlying areas. If such uses are located outside of the Town Center area, they may dilute the overall focus and attractiveness of the Town Center and not create as strong a Town Center as the community wants. Colchester should seek to create a critical mass of activities and focal points to drive interest and draw people to the Town Center.

As shown in the chart on the facing page, there are a number of roles that Colchester’s Town Center can play and Colchester should strive to encourage uses and activities which will make the Town Center and active and inviting place:

- More businesses (shops, restaurants, outdoor dining, etc.)
- More attractions / more events
- Seek to attract / keep more local spending (i.e. - “buy local”) and create synergies where activities support each other and generate additional spending at nearby venues (i.e. – people attending a car show on the Town Green and eating at a local restaurant)
- More housing (residents) and more housing choices, including in mixed use buildings
- On-street and off-street parking (where appropriate) with shared parking and lower parking requirements than in a “sub-urban strip” type location since pedestrian activity should be encouraged and people often visit multiple destinations from one parking spot.

Potential Roles For a Town Center

	Role	Description	Colchester's Potential
Business – Retail / Service	Convenience Goods	Goods readily available and purchased primarily on the basis of location (convenience), visibility, or immediate need (gasoline, milk, bread, cigarettes, and occasional groceries)	Good
	Comparison Goods	Goods purchased at infrequent intervals and typically compared before purchase on cost, brand, style, comfort (clothes, shoes, electronics, appliances, etc.)	Low
	Specialty Goods	Goods which are rare, unique or unusual in nature so that the consumer might be motivated by personal preference, desire, or exert unusual effort to obtain them.	Good
	Service Business	Businesses offering personal services (can include nail salons, travel agencies, etc.)	Good
	Hospitality	Restaurants, clubs, bars, taverns, etc. that offer an eating and/or drinking opportunity.	Very Good
Business – Office	Business Office	Business offices and facilities	Good
	Medical Office	Medical offices and facilities	Good
Business – Industry	Industry	Manufacturing, warehousing, and similar operations	Low
Entertainment / Recreation	Arts / Entertainment	Movies, music, theater, galleries, studios, and other artistic performances or displays	Good
	Sports Venue	Sports facilities such as arenas, sports venues, etc.	Low
	Active Recreation	Active recreation facilities such as indoor gyms, fitness places, fields, etc.	Fair
	Passive Recreation	Passive recreation opportunities such as parks, trails, bird watching, etc.	Fair
	Special Events Venue	Town Green, concerts, art fairs, etc.	Very Good
Civic	Government	Government, schools, etc.	Very Good
	Institutions	Places of worship, post offices, libraries, etc.	Good
	Transportation	Transit, train stations, etc.	Fair
Housing	Housing	Places of residence (apartments, condominiums, houses, etc.)	Good
	Mixed Use	Apartments above stores, etc.	Good

CASE STUDY

Opportunity Sites

There are a number of sites in the Town Center area which provide development opportunities and which will enhance and strengthen the Town Center economically:

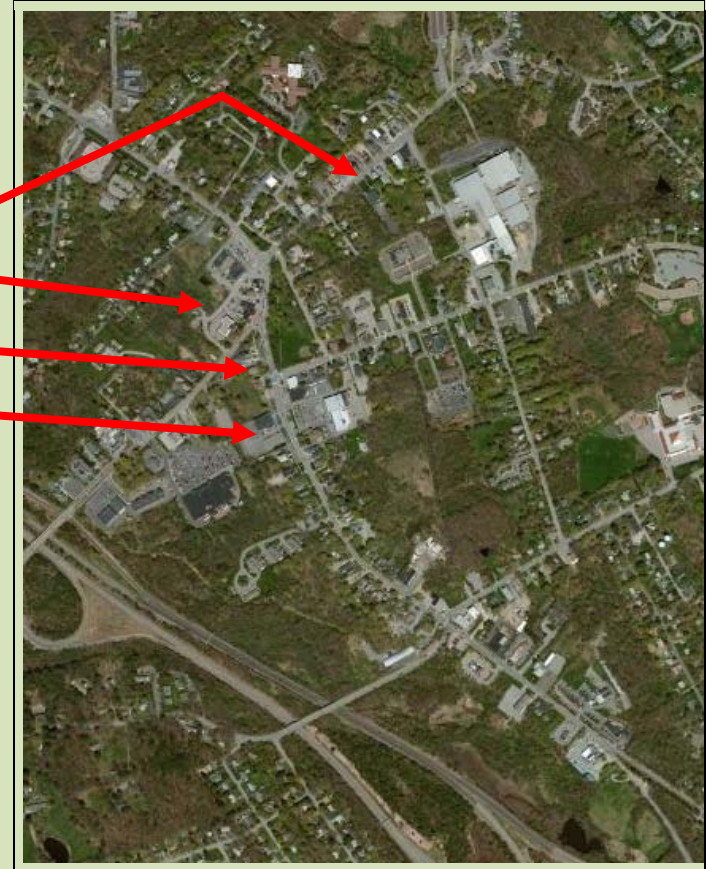
- Lebanon Avenue
- Cragin Court / Linwood Avenue area
- Old Bacon Academy
- Jacks Chevrolet

Similar opportunities exist elsewhere in the Town center area as well.

Some “blocks” in the Town Center area are large and this can:

- Limit overall development potential,
- Encourage automobile-oriented development patterns,
- Discourage pedestrian-friendly environments, and
- Limit the utility of rear land to contribute to the overall economic activity in the Town Center area.

Public or private “street” connections within blocks might be used to create additional development opportunities and create “blocks” which are more pedestrian friendly. Studies of Town Center areas have shown that smaller blocks and street interconnections enhance pedestrian interest and activity.



Strengthen The Town Center Physically

In addition to having appropriate development on individual sites in the Town Center, Colchester will benefit from having an overall system that ties all of these sites together into a cohesive whole. In the Town Center, the most important elements to tying disparate areas together are the overall streetscape (appearance and function) and its pedestrian-friendly nature. Experience in other Town Center areas indicates that these types of improvements will enhance pedestrian interest and activity and this can enhance overall business activity as well.

The Case Study on the following page suggests an overall program to prioritize a streetscape improvement program to tie the areas of the Town Center together. In addition, Colchester should continue and expand the façade improvement program to help maintain and enhance the character of buildings in the Town Center area.

The Town Green should be the main focal point to help people focus on the Town center area. The following strategies are recommended help accomplish this:

- Consolidate ownership of the Town Green with the Town (ownership is currently shared with Bacon Academy Trustees) so that programming, maintenance and improvement can be efficiently coordinated
- Establish an organization to coordinate activities on the Green and schedule more special events
- Arrange for additional on-street and off-street parking around and near the Green (the lack of an overall parking approach results in significant disruption to uses around the Green)
- Enhance buildings around the Green (including façade and other improvements)
- Enhance streets around the Green (including sidewalks)
- Create more economic activity around the Green including activities on the Green (such as the car shows and the farmers market) and on adjacent and nearby properties

In addition, any traffic issues within the Town center area (volumes, congestion, speed, lanes, etc.) should be identified and addressed. In the event of a conflict between maintaining the character of the Town Center and increasing the capacity of the roadway system, the general approach should be to favor maintaining and enhancing the character although there are approaches which will accomplish both objectives. To the extent possible, road connections and bypass roads around the Center may help to accommodate traffic volumes while allowing for traffic flow and emergency response.

Opportunities to connect sidewalks to outlying neighborhoods, schools, and recreation areas should be promoted.

Streetscape Improvements

The appearance of the streetscape (the street itself, how buildings present themselves to the street, and the areas between the building and the street) may be the most important element for establishing the character of an area and giving it a “sense of place.”

Some elements which enhance this overall impression include:

- wide sidewalks
- streetscape elements (lighting, benches, planters, etc.)
- attractive buildings
- converting overhead electrical service to underground

CASE STUDY

Streetscape Guidelines and Priorities

The desired streetscape for the Town Center area includes consideration of the following elements:

- two-way streets with travel lanes of adequate width
- on-street parking where possible and appropriate since it provides visible parking close to local uses (diagonal parking is preferred over parallel parking if space permits)
- very wide sidewalks in business and mixed use areas (perhaps up to 8' to 12' in width) with a tree band along the curb
- narrower sidewalks in purely residential areas
- Appropriate street "furniture" including lighting, benches, planters, bike racks, trash baskets, etc.)

Brick sidewalks are very attractive and expandable/adaptable and are preferred in business areas. Concrete sidewalks may be appropriate in certain situations. Asphalt or stone walkways are not considered appropriate except for the Airline Trail or other greenway trails.

While the appearance and function of the streetscape is important in all parts of the Town Center, it is simply not possible to bring all areas into compliance at once. Some areas are more important than others and should be addressed first.

The areas around the Town Green (shown in yellow) are the highest priority for improvement. Connecting "arterial" corridors (shown in blue) are the second priority. Other areas along public streets and within private developments should follow similar principles. Improvements should be prioritized as suggested and carried out as complete projects in order to demonstrate progress and create excitement. If improvement efforts are fractured or diluted, this overall impression may be lost.



4.3 Enhance The Town Center
A. Policies
1. Preserve and enhance the Town Center, physically and economically and promote the appropriate development of sites in the Town Center area.
2. Ensure that the Town Center has a strong pedestrian focus and that driveways and parking areas do not adversely affect the pedestrian realm.
3. Seek to supplement parking (on-street or off-street) in areas where there may be a parking shortage, such as the Town Green, Merchants Row, and/or Cragin Court area.
4. Encourage shared access and public or private street interconnections to and through rear land to create more manageable block sizes, open up additional land for development, and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
5. Continue and expand the façade improvement program to help maintain and enhance the character of buildings in the Town Center area.
6. Encourage additional improvements around the Town Green (sidewalks, parking, streets, etc.).
7. Address traffic issues within the Town center area while maintaining and enhancing character.
B. Initial Action Items
1. Undertake a parking study of the Town Center area (comparing demand and supply) to revisit the parking requirements, help quantify any parking issues, and provide guidance on how to manage the parking situation better.
2. Explore options to synchronize activities on the Green, schedule more special events, coordinate improvements, and consolidate ownership.
3. Connect sidewalks in the Town Center to outlying neighborhoods, schools, and recreation areas.

More Information

See Section 3.5 (pages 28 to 37) for a recommendation to establish a “village district” (as per CGS Section 8-2j) in order to help protect the unique character, landscape, and historic value in the Westchester area.

4.4 Strengthen Westchester Center

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 character as a rural “hamlet.” As part of this strategy, efforts should be made to encourage and enhance pedestrian-oriented patterns and prevent automobile-oriented development patterns.

The vision for Westchester includes:

- strengthening the village characteristics of the area,
- maintaining an appropriate balance among different uses, and
- avoiding “strip” type development.

While the availability of public water and public sewer would help crystallize this vision for Westchester by creating additional opportunities for small-scale development, a “hamlet” can still be created with wells and septic systems.

4.4 Strengthen Westchester Center
A. Policies
1. Promote the evolution of Westchester as a rural “hamlet” with a pedestrian-friendly flavor.
2. Strengthen the village characteristics of the Westchester area and avoid a suburban-strip type development pattern.
3. Seek to increase investment in Westchester.
4. Seek to establish a “village green” in Westchester.
5. Encourage and support events that promote Westchester as a unique place.
B. Initial Action Items
1. Establish a façade improvement program to help maintain and enhance the character of buildings in Westchester center.
2. Undertake a special study of Westchester in order to promote mixed uses, identify ways to enhance its “hamlet” character, and ways to make it more pedestrian-friendly.
3. Provide for adequate buffering to residential properties from business and mixed-use development.

4.5 Facilitate And Support Economic Growth

Due to overall economic conditions, business development in Colchester has been modest over the past few years. Nevertheless, Colchester has an opportunity to become a regional center for other types of business operations because of its strategic location. Further, with the availability of public water and public sewer, the infrastructure and highway access is in place to support such development. Over the past decade, Colchester invested in extending water service to encourage economic development.

Colchester should continue to seek to attract new business development including:

- Local and regional business offices and professional offices,
- A regional center for medical operations,
- Industrial, manufacturing and warehouse businesses (including “flex space” with an office component), and
- Service businesses (hospitality, recreation, education, etc.).

Goods And Services



Employment



Tax Base



Roadway Connections

Roadway connections and improvements may also be a way to foster growth in desired places. Strategic road connections around the Town Center area might allow people to more easily get to destinations and reduce congestion in the Town Center.

The possibility of alternate routes in and near the Town Center has been discussed in every Plan in Colchester over the past 40+ years.

Strive To Become A Regional Center

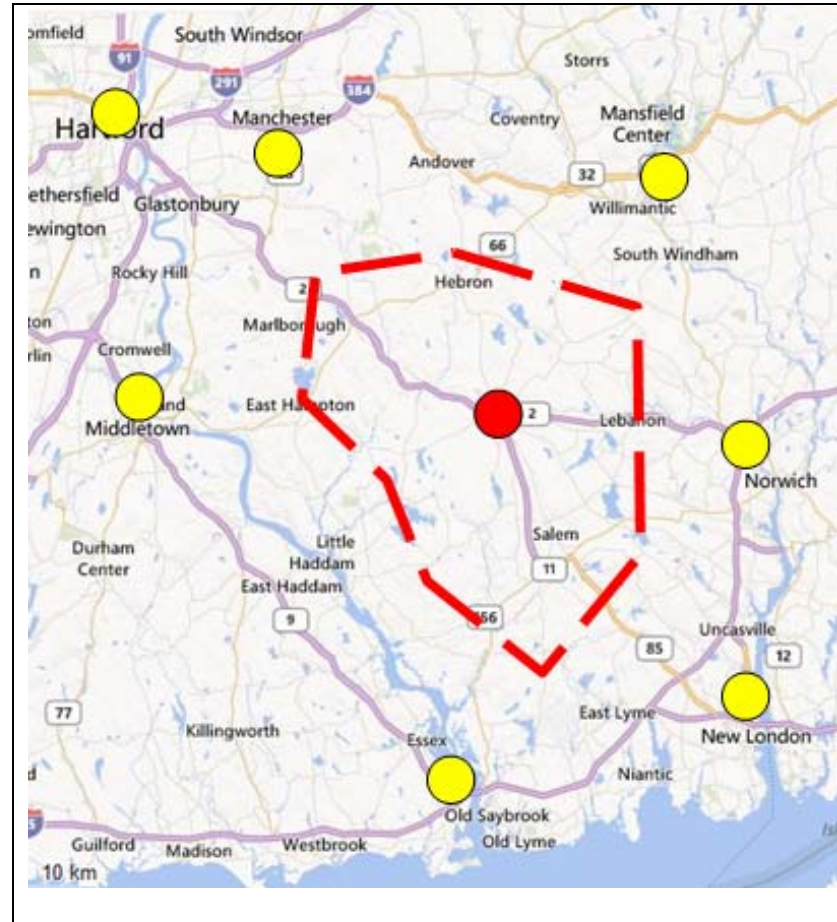
Colchester should seek to capitalize on its strategic location. As the map shows, Colchester sits in the middle of a “trade area” where a facility in Colchester would be closer for many people than a similar facility in Norwich, Waterford/New London, Old Saybrook, Middletown, Hartford/Glastonbury, Manchester, or Willimantic.

Based on the 2010 Census, this “trade area” may contain a population of about 50,000 people. This population is about three times the size of Colchester’s population alone. In other words, Colchester is at the epicenter of a more robust trade area that is larger than just its population.

This is not to say that Colchester could attract the same facilities as these other places (some facilities require a larger support population), but this strategic locational advantage should not be overlooked.

Specific opportunities which may be available for Colchester to fill may include the following:

- Convenience retail / Specialty retail / Personal services
- Medical office
- Hospitality
- Arts / Entertainment
- Special Events



As more uses are established, the critical mass gets larger and this increases Colchester’s ability to attract even more uses.

CASE STUDY

Spending Power And Retail Gap Analysis

Based on reports of retail sales in 2007 (the most recent data available at the municipality level), the typical retail spending in Connecticut was about \$15,000 per resident (this includes automobiles and other large items). Colchester captured retail sales of about \$18,000 per resident. In other words, Colchester was performing as a regional center since it attracted 20 percent more spending than would be expected based on population alone. Since it is known that residents make purchases elsewhere, Colchester’s role as a regional center in certain categories may be even more pronounced.

Colchester should strive to retain more of the spending potential of its residents and attract more of the spending potential of residents of other communities. This can be achieved through better selection, more convenience, better prices, better experience, and other factors. When businesses in Colchester capture more of the retail sales potential and businesses grow, this will attract more shoppers and more spending. This can also increase the tax base since, on average, every \$400 in retail sales might support an additional square foot of building space added to the tax rolls.

Comparing retail sales by category in Colchester to other areas helps identify potential “gaps” in the retail profile of Colchester.

**Categories Where Colchester Had
Fewer Establishments Or Lower Sales Than Average
(May Be An Opportunity)**

**Furniture And Home Furnishings
Electronics And Appliances
Health and Personal Care
Clothing and Clothing Accessories
Leisure Goods (Sports, Hobby, Books, Etc.)**

**Categories Where Colchester Had
More Establishments Or Higher Sales Than Average
(May Already Serve A Regional Role)**

**Motor Vehicle Dealers
Building Material And Garden Equipment / Supplies
Food And Beverage Stores
Gasoline Stations
General Merchandise Stores
Miscellaneous (Florists, Office Supply, Gifts, Pet, Etc.)
Non-Store (Wholesalers, Heating Oil, Etc.)**

Possible Opportunities

Even though Colchester is already serving a regional role in certain categories, additional opportunities may exist to attract additional businesses and provide an even better selection, greater convenience, better pricing, and/or a better experience.

Residents have expressed interest in the following:

- Another food market or supermarket
- A large general merchandiser
- Additional restaurants

Encourage Uses In Appropriate Areas

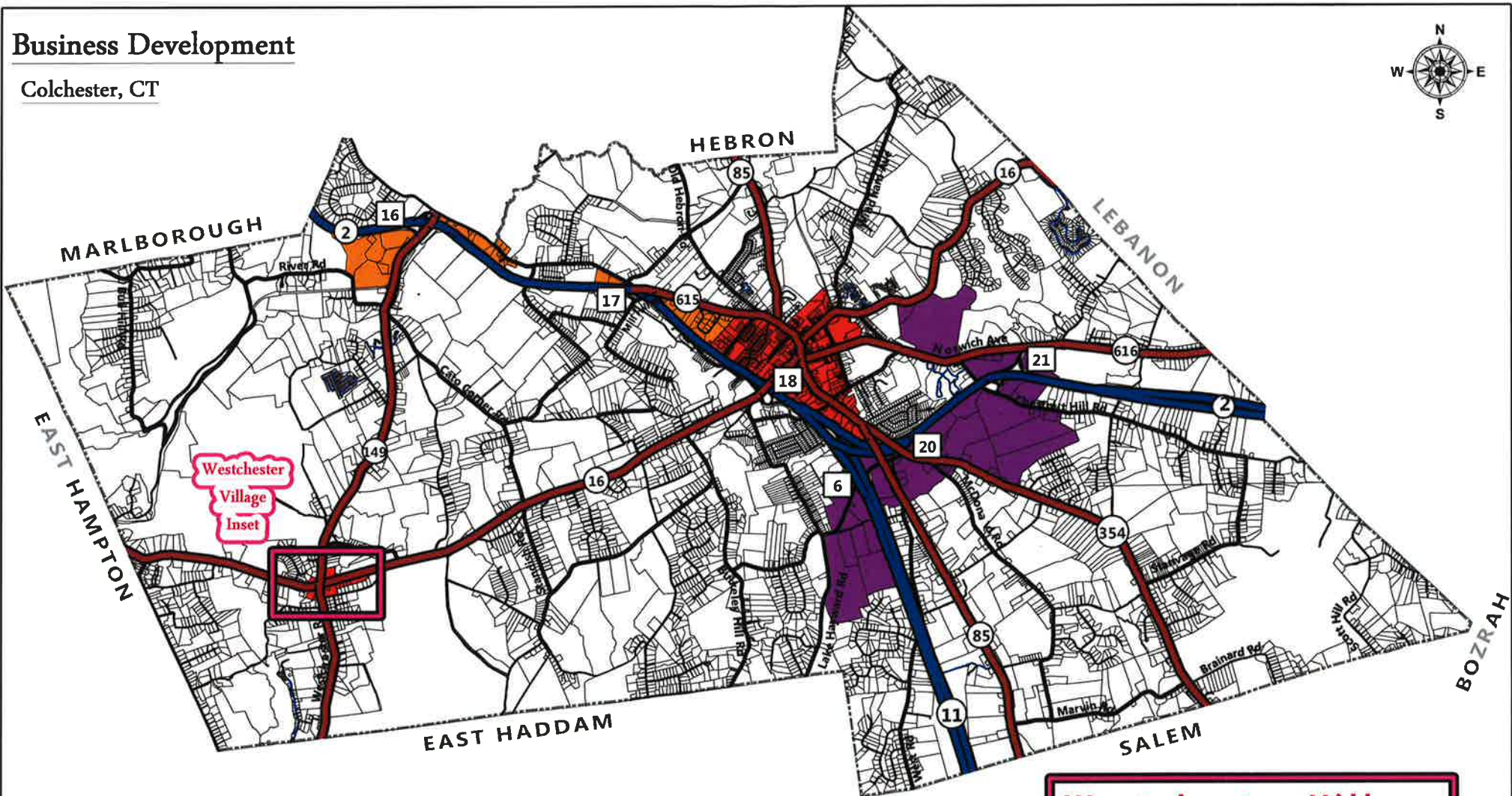
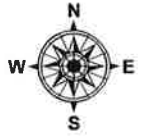
There are multiple types of business areas in Colchester and some uses are more appropriate in some areas than in others. For example, “big box retail” may be less appropriate in a village-type setting and more appropriate in an “economic area” where it can be better served by the roadway infrastructure.

The overall goal would be to identify appropriate “niches” for each area so that the uses in each area complement each other and the different areas do not unduly compete with each or cannibalize sales from each other. The following table suggests some possible associations but the final determination should be to build a stronger overall economy in Colchester.

	Town Center	Westchester	Economic Areas	Commercial Corridors
<p>Pedestrian focus / ambience with an active streetscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small shops / businesses • Display windows oriented to pedestrians • Outside dining • On-street parking / shared parking • Mixed use buildings • Housing 	Strongly Encouraged	Encouraged	Allowable	Allowable
<p>Automobile focus / ambience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping mall / lifestyle center • Big box” retailers • Multiple driveways interrupting the streetscape • Large parking lots in front of businesses • Drive-through uses 	Strongly Discouraged	May Be Allowable If Appropriately Designed	Allowable	Allowable

Business Development

Colchester, CT



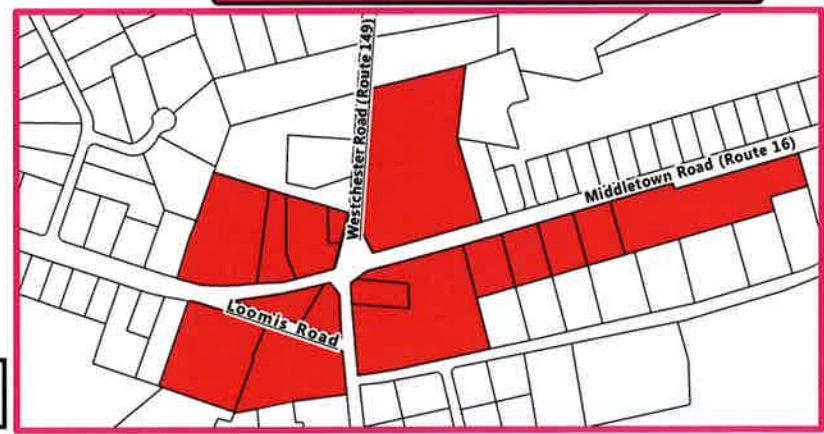
Legend

- Village Business Area
- Arterial Commercial
- Future Growth Area
- Residential Area



Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.

Westchester Village



Growth Incentives

Some of the incentives which are may be used to attract desired growth to the Town Center area might include:

- local tax abatements,
- local tax incentives,
- state tax incentives,
- “brownfield” remediation funds,
- tax increment financing, and
- special taxing districts.

Economic Development Tools

Colchester needs to have appropriate tools in place to support economic growth:

- An active Economic Development Commission (perhaps supported by an economic development staff person),
- A “Chamber of Commerce” or other organization supporting the expansion of the local economy,
- A reputation as a “pro-growth” community for projects consistent with Colchester’s overall vision,
- Programs to make infrastructure available where growth is desired,
- Enhance signage on Routes 2 and 11 regarding Colchester exits, and
- Promote inter-connectivity among local businesses so as to increase the appeal of Colchester as a business location and make businesses more efficient.

In addition, Colchester should continue to use economic incentives to attract additional businesses to Colchester:

- Tax abatements - As per CGS Section 12-65b, Colchester has the ability to offer local tax abatements for certain types of real estate developments and/or manufacturing machinery and equipment. The abatement program fixes the assessment of the property and/or improvements for a period which varies depending on the amount of the assessment.
- Abatement of permit fees – In order to promote economic growth and build the grand list, communities may reduce building permit fees and/or other fees for certain types of development. This tool is typically used for larger-scale development which has more of an impact on the grand list.
- Utility extensions – In the past, Colchester has extended utility services (such as public water and/or public sewer) to address community needs and facilitate development where it is desired. This strategy could also be used to attract additional business development to Colchester.
- Other incentives - Some communities provide loans or grants for specific economic development improvements including grants/loans for façade improvements and even forgivable loans for public infrastructure improvements associated with major facility improvements. Some communities provide technical assistance to businesses and developers. Some communities assemble properties to create unified development sites or business parks. Some communities have remediated contaminated properties for economic development purposes.

4.5 Facilitate And Support Economic Growth

A. Policies

1. Strive to grow Colchester’s tax base by becoming more of a regional center.
2. Guide uses to appropriate locations.
3. Create, maintain, and enhance a pedestrian-friendly development pattern in village areas.
4. Allow an automobile-oriented development pattern in outlying business areas.
5. Continue infrastructure improvements to support economic growth.
6. Consider roadway connections to support economic growth.
7. Support establishment of a “Chamber of Commerce” or other organization that will help promote the expansion of the Colchester economy.
8. Strive to develop a reputation as a “pro-growth” community for projects consistent with Colchester’s overall vision.
9. Promote inter-connectivity among local businesses so as to increase the appeal of Colchester as a business location and make businesses more efficient.
10. Explore the potential for economic incentives to attract businesses to Colchester.

B. Initial Action Items

1. Reinvigorate the Economic Development Commission.
2. Enhance signage on Routes 2 and 11 regarding Colchester exits.



At this time, it is not clear how the changing age composition of Colchester and Connecticut will influence housing dynamics in the future. Still, Colchester will strive to provide housing choices for people of different ages, interests, and circumstances.

4.6 Guide Residential Development

Since most of Colchester is zoned for residential purposes, housing and residential development are important issues in the Plan.

Changing Issues

Recent Plans of Conservation and Development for Colchester have focused on controlling and guiding the rapid residential growth which was happening in Colchester. While these issues are still important, additional issues have surfaced which warrant discussion and consideration in the Plan.

First, the construction of residential housing has slowed to a level not seen in the 70 years or so since the end of World War II. Consider the following. In the 20-year period between 1980 and 2000, Colchester averaged more than 100 new residential units *each* year. In the 5-year period from 2010 through the end of 2014, a *total* of 98 residential units were constructed in Colchester.

This slower housing growth is certainly a reflection of economic conditions but it may also be an indication of larger changes in housing choices and preferences. Moreover, since about half of the units built in Colchester in recent years were for persons aged 55-and-over, it raises the issue of whether the single family housing market in Colchester is simply resting due to economic conditions or whether the single family housing market is saturated with fewer lots and houses being created.

	Approximate Number of Units Built In That Time Period	Percent	Approximate Number of Units Built Each Year
1939 or earlier	544	8.9%	-
1940 to 1949	185	3.0%	19
1950 to 1959	443	7.3%	44
1960 to 1969	675	11.1%	68
1970 to 1979	890	14.6%	89
1980 to 1989	1267	20.8%	127
1990 to 1999	1251	20.5%	125
2000 to 2009	749	12.3%	75
2010 to 2014	98	1.6%	20
Total	6102	100.0%	

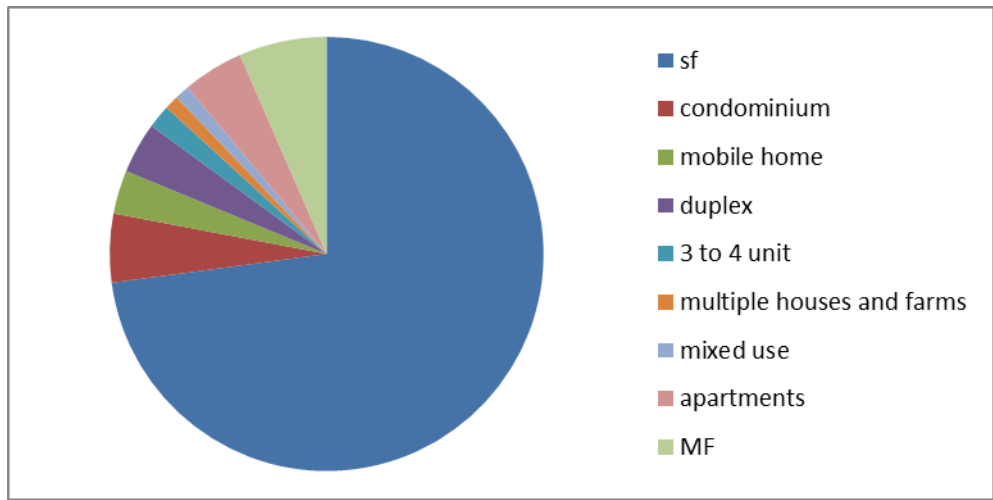
Strong Neighborhoods

The Plan recommends that residential neighborhoods be established and supported in areas in and near the Town Center where services are available to support this level of development. Overall, the zoning regulations seem appropriate for protecting these residential neighborhoods and managing development on individual parcels (permitted uses and dimensional standards). Colchester will continue to ensure that the regulations require effective buffers / transitions between residential and non-residential uses.

Multi-Family Housing

The multi-family housing inventory is also worthy of consideration. Due to the density and other limitations, the multi-family stock in Colchester has not grown much or it has been focused on occupancy by persons aged 55-and-over. In the future, there is anticipated to be a greater demand for multi-family housing to help meet the housing needs of an aging population and younger people who do not want (or cannot yet afford) a single-family home.

The Town Center and other locations could greatly benefit from increased housing and mixed-use buildings and the Plan recommends that multi-family and mixed use development be encouraged in the Town Center and other locations with water and sewer.



Housing Condition

The age and condition of some housing units is also a concern in Colchester. There are some housing units which have become unoccupied due to economic conditions. If left unoccupied and unmaintained, “blighted conditions” can arise. With about 70 or so units currently unoccupied, this could be a significant issue. A number of units will need to be rehabilitated and some units are in danger of becoming inhabitable without significant rehabilitation. Since these units are already losing value, the rehabilitation investment is far from certain.

Maintenance of residential dwellings should continue to be encouraged or required. In addition, the Town should continue to inspect all unoccupied dwellings to determine their condition.

Rural Character

Residents of Colchester also want to preserve and enhance the rural character of the community and the pattern of residential development can have a significant influence on this. In outlying rural areas, the Plan recommends that residential development occur in a conservation-type pattern (see Section 3.5 and page 31 of the POCD for additional discussion of this recommendation). Conservation design of a subdivision can help:

- Preserve more open space,
- Protect community character by retaining farm land, scenic views, scenic streetscapes, and
- Preserve important resource areas (wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, existing trees, etc.).

So that the number of homes is similar to what might result from a conventional approach, the Commission may consider limiting the total number of units on a parcel to a maximum number of units per acre of developable land (total acreage minus wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, floodplain, or easements which limit development).

Single-Family House



Single-Family House

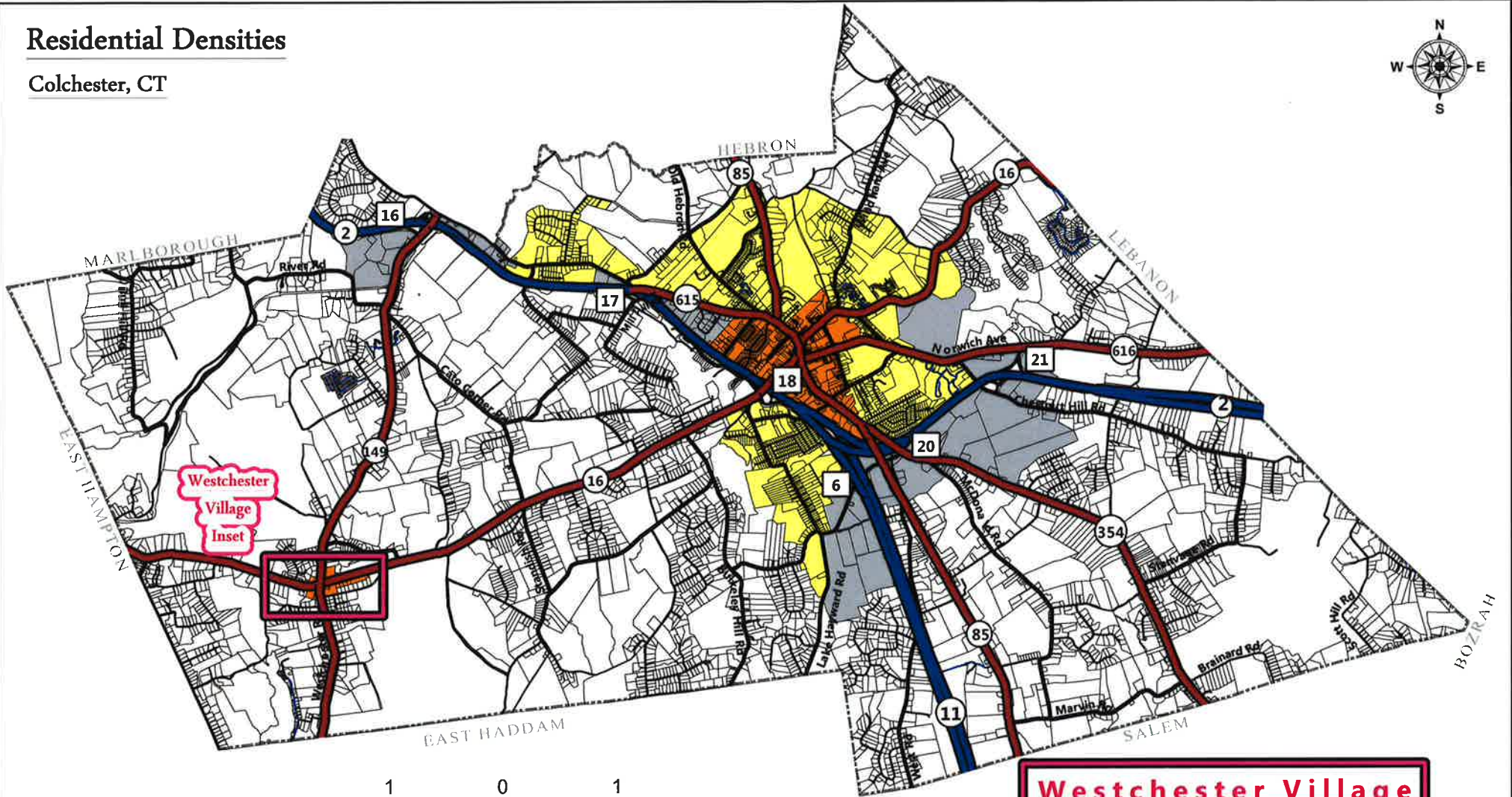


Single-Family House



Residential Densities

Colchester, CT

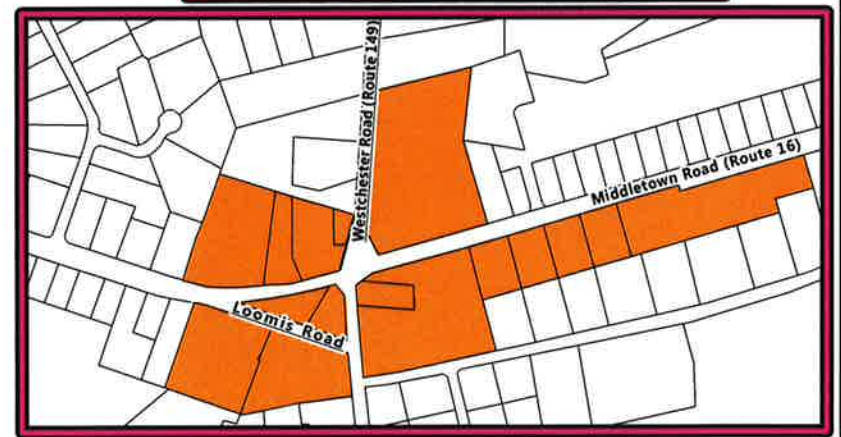


Westchester Village

Legend

- Rural Density
- Suburban Density
- Village Density
- Non-Residential Area

Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.



4.6 Guide Residential Development

A. Policies

1. Continue to maintain the quality, livability and character of the residential areas in Colchester.
2. Maintain regulations requiring effective buffers / transitions between residential and non-residential uses.
3. Encourage conservation design of future subdivisions as a way to help preserve open space and important features when development occurs.
4. Encourage multi-family and mixed use development in the Town Center and other locations with water and sewer.
5. Encourage or require maintenance of residential dwellings.
6. Continue to inspect all unoccupied dwellings to determine their condition.

Active Adult Development



Multi-Family



Multi-Family



4.7 Diversify Colchester’s Housing Portfolio

Suburban expansion over the past 50 years or so resulted in a housing “portfolio” in Colchester and similarly situated communities which is dominated by single family homes on individual lots. While this type of housing is attractive to many people, it is not the only type of housing that Colchester needs.

Housing For An Aging Population - Over the next several decades, Colchester’s population is expected to contain an increasing number of older households due to the aging of the “baby boom” (people born between 1945 and 1965) and the fact that people are living longer. As people age, their household size gets smaller and they may seek housing opportunities which are less expensive and/or involve less maintenance. While some people may choose to remain in their current home or a similar dwelling, there is likely to be increased interest in smaller housing units with maintenance provide or available, especially at appropriate price points. The principles of “universal design” (see sidebar) can help make housing appropriate for a broad range of age groups.

Housing That Is More Affordable – Many people are interested in housing that is less expensive and more affordable than many single family homes on individual lots. Younger persons and households may lack the resources to purchase a home or condominium and may seek affordable rental housing so they can save money to buy a home. Divorced or separated couples may prefer to remain in Colchester where their children go to school and seek less expensive housing while they balance their finances. Families may have gone through some economic troubles in recent years may need housing choices to allow them to get back on their feet. Older households may become concerned they do not have adequate resources set aside for their life expectancy and will seek more affordable housing options.

Universal Design

Universal design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

Universal design principles include the following:

1. Equitable use
2. Flexibility in use
3. Simple and intuitive use
4. Perceptible information
5. Tolerance for error
6. Low physical effort
7. Size and space for approach and use

<http://universaldesign.ie/>

Apartment



Condominium



Ponemah Elderly Housing





Since people are expected to live longer, some of them may outlive the assets or resources they have available to them in retirement. While some may choose to live with family, there may be increased demand for elderly housing in the future.

For people who choose to “age in place” in their current housing, the Town should anticipate or consider the need to maintain or augment elderly tax relief, dial-a-ride, meals-on-wheels, senior activities, and home health services.

Colchester should strive to provide opportunities for housing that is affordable for a diverse range of ages, incomes, and lifestyles. Locations in and near the Town Center would be the most appropriate. Housing units which reflect the principles of “universal design” are favored.

In addition to construction of new housing units for an aging population or to provide housing options which are more affordable, accessory dwellings within or attached to existing homes may also help meet the housing needs or lifestyle needs of residents or their family members.

In addition, Colchester should seek to expand the number of elderly housing units provided by the Housing Authority at Ponemah Village and Dublin Village. There was a waiting list of 39 people recently and this makes the time frame for occupancy (for people that may need housing immediately) longer than it should reasonably be.

There are several tools which are available to help the Town accomplish its housing objectives:

- Section 8-2i of the Connecticut General Statutes allows any municipality to implement inclusionary zoning regulations, requirements or conditions which promotes the development of housing affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income.
- Section 8-13m *et seq* of the Connecticut General Statutes allows communities to establish incentive housing zones to promote the development of housing affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income and encourages locations which is an area:
 - near a transit station, including rapid transit, commuter rail, bus terminal, or ferry terminal,
 - of concentrated development such as a commercial center, existing residential or commercial district, or village district established pursuant to CGS Section 8-2j, or
 - that, because of existing, planned or proposed infrastructure, transportation access or underutilized facilities or location, is suitable for development as an incentive housing zone.

The Town should consider using these approaches if, as, and where appropriate.

CASE STUDY

Affordable Housing Evaluation

In 2010, the Town of Colchester commissioned an evaluation of affordable housing in Colchester. The term “affordable housing” typically refers to housing affordable to persons or families earning 80 percent or less of the area median income provided that such persons or households do not pay more than 30 percent of their income for such housing. The report was prepared by RKG Associates of New Hampshire.

The study found that there were approximately 1,500 households in Colchester that had income characteristics to qualify for affordable housing. On the other hand, the study found there were only about 500 units in Colchester that were in compliance with the state criteria. The 1,000 or so households likely fall into one of the following categories:

- they are spending more than the recommended 30 percent of their income on housing,
- they are living in a “naturally occurring affordable housing” unit (such as an apartment which rents at a market rate which is affordable to people meeting the income guideline), and/or
- they purchased their housing unit at a time that the unit was affordable to them and their income has declined over time or the unit has appreciated over time such that it is no longer affordable to them if they were to purchase it today.

The study estimated that Colchester needed about 130 units of housing to be exempt under Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes (see sidebar). To address local housing needs and be exempt from the affordable housing procedure (CGS 8-30g), the study recommended that Colchester construct affordable housing as follows:

- at least 100 units of housing for people aged 55 and older (or disabled) – mostly one-bedroom units
- at least 50 units of housing for persons and families – mostly two-bedroom units with some one-bedroom and some three-bedroom units

CGS 8-30g

Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes provides that any community where at least 10 percent of the housing stock is not affordable to people earning 80 percent or less of the area median income is subject to the “affordable housing procedure.”

If a developer proposes an affordable housing development in a community subject to the procedure, the burden of proof falls to the Town to demonstrate why such a development is not feasible.

For a number of years, Colchester was exempt from the affordable housing appeals procedure because more than 10 percent of the housing stock met affordability criteria. However, the construction of market-rate housing in the past decade or more has pushed Colchester’s percentage to 7.89 percent.

4.7 Diversify Colchester’s Housing Portfolio
A. Policies
1. Seek to provide for housing choices and options for an aging population.
2. For people who choose to “age in place” in their current housing, consider maintaining or augmenting elderly tax relief, dial-a-ride, meals-on-wheels, senior activities, and home health services.
3. Seek to provide opportunities for housing that is affordable for a diverse range of ages, incomes, and lifestyles.
4. Recognize that locations in and near the Town Center would be the most appropriate for multi-family and/or higher density housing.
5. Encourage the use of universal design concepts in new housing construction.
6. Maintain accessory apartment regulations to help meet the housing needs or lifestyle needs of residents or their family members.
7. Consider implementing inclusionary zoning regulations, requirements or conditions.
B. Initial Action Items
1. Expand the number of elderly housing units provided by the Housing Authority at Ponemah Village and Dublin Village.
2. Consider other strategies to help create housing for people aged 55 and older.
3. Investigate ways to create housing for persons and families with moderate incomes.

ADDRESSING COLCHESTER'S FUTURE NEEDS

5

5.1 Overview

As Colchester grows and changes in the future, there will likely be a number of needs within the community. Identifying these needs so that they can be studied, prioritized, and addressed is one of the purposes of preparing a Plan of conservation and Development.

Community Facilities and Services



Sidewalks



Drainage



Potential Facility Needs

- Community meeting rooms
- Senior center / community center
- Recreation fields / facilities
- Pavement maintenance / management
- Southeast area fire station
- Library
- Town hall (3rd floor)
- School renovations
- Public works maintenance facility
- Elderly housing
- Greenway trails
- Sidewalks / bikeways



Changing age demographics may change the mix of services provided by the Town of Colchester.

5.2 Identify And Prioritize Community Facility Needs

Colchester has a number of community facilities which support local services to residents. These facilities range from the Town Hall and schools to the Senior Center, the Highway Garage, and park and recreation facilities.

Some of these facilities are in need of repair or upgrade or preventative maintenance due to age, utilization, program needs, or other factors. However, there is no comprehensive evaluation of all of municipal facilities and so there is no overall program of which needs are most important in the short term, how the overall financial implications will be managed over time, or other approaches.

During the planning period, Colchester should undertake a comprehensive analysis of community facility needs.

<p>5.2 Identify And Prioritize Community Facility Needs</p>
<p>A. Policies</p>
<p>1. Continue to identify and prioritize community facility needs.</p>
<p>2. Continue to address community facility needs as resources permit.</p>
<p>B. Initial Action Items</p>
<p>1. Maintain a comprehensive analysis of community facility needs.</p>

Town Hall



Highway Garage

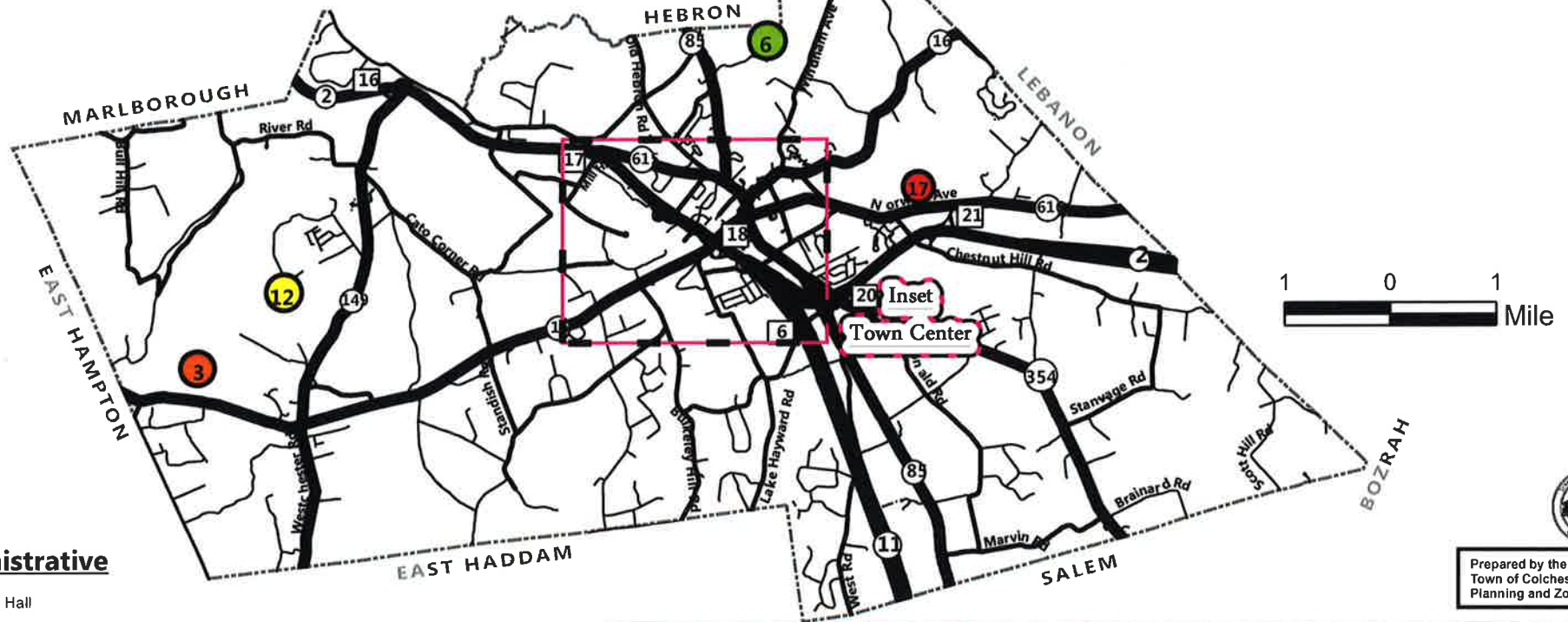


Bacon Academy



Community Facilities & Services

Colchester, CT



Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.

Administrative

- 1 Town Hall

Public Safety

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

Public Works

- 5 Public Works Garage
- 6 Transfer Station

Recreational/ Social

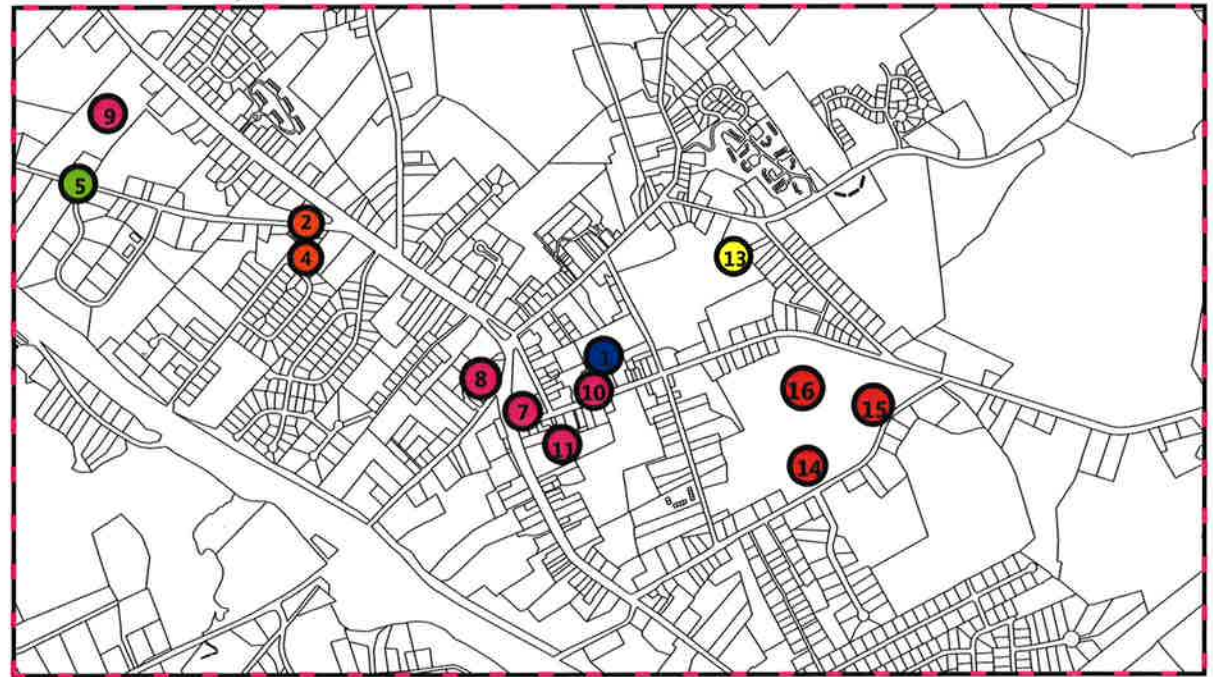
- 7 Town Green
- 8 Cragin Memorial Library
- 9 Recreation Complex
- 10 Senior Center
- 11 Youth Center

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



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).

When future development is proposed, the Planning and Zoning Commission should strive to find the right balance between overall circulation needs and property interests for each location.

5.3 Maintain And Enhance The Roadway System

In terms of the overall roadway system within Colchester, there are several important policy considerations for the Town:

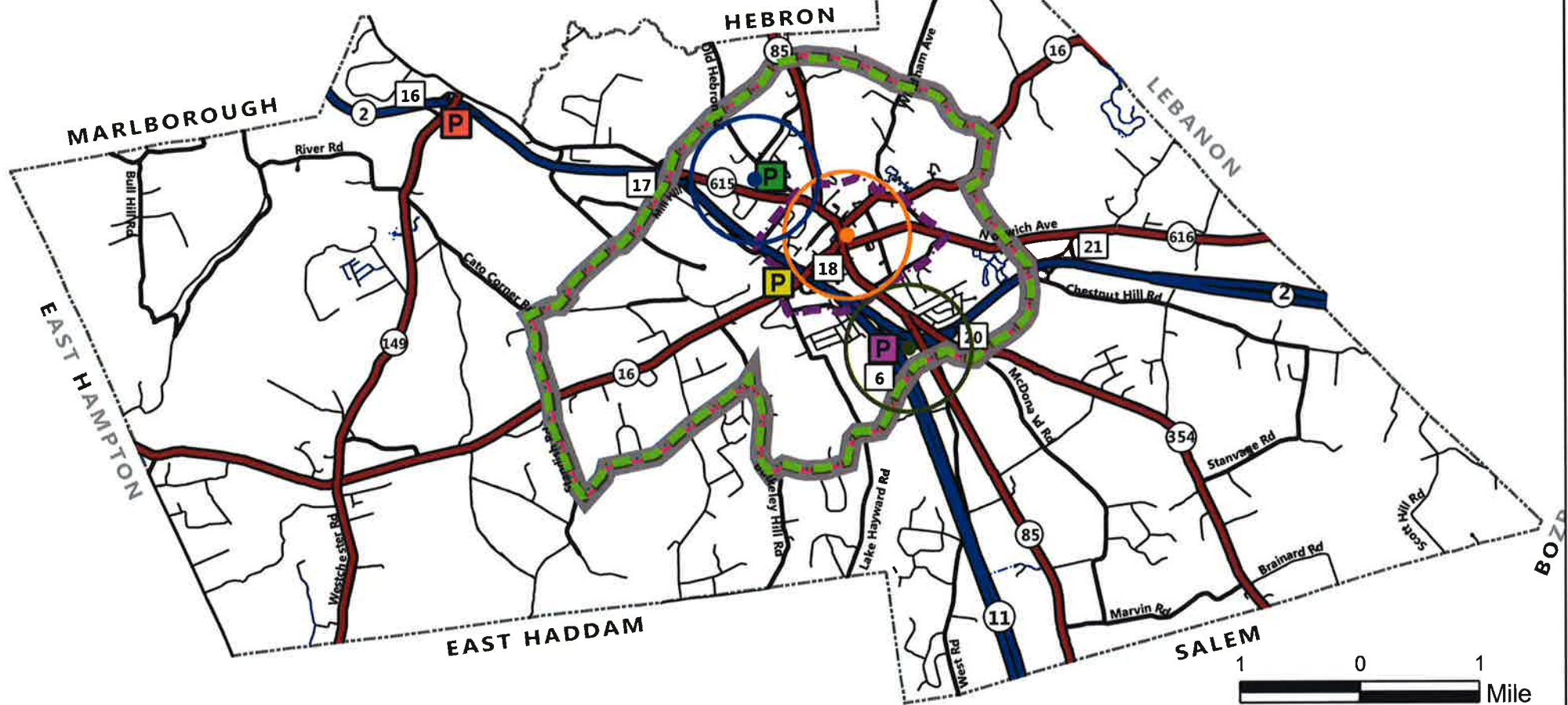
- Problem resolution – addressing drainage, alignment, safety, or capacity issues
- Access management - maintaining the capacity of roads to maintain public safety and minimize congestion (primarily in commercial areas)
- Pavement management – making prudent investments to maintain roads as cost effectively as possible

In terms of road functions, arterial roads are considered to be major thoroughfares which provide for through traffic as well as access to commercial properties. Collector roads collect traffic from local roads and abutting properties and direct it to arterial roads. Local roads are intended primarily for property access:

<p>Arterial Roads (State Highways)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 16 - Middletown Rd., Linwood Ave., Lebanon Ave. • Route 85 - New London Rd., Main St., Broadway, and Amston Rd. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 149 - Westchester Road • Route 354 - Parum Rd., Deep River Rd. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 615 - Old Hartford Road to exit 17 of Route 2 • Route 616 - Norwich Avenue
<p>Collector Roads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Road • South Road (part) • Stanavage Road • Standish Road • Stollman Road • Wall Street • Waterhole Road • West Road • Williams Road • Windham Avenue
<p>Local Roads (including unpaved roads)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other local roads 		

Vehicular Circulation Plan

Colchester, CT



SEAT Bus

Public Bus Stop Locations with 1/2 Mile Walking Radius

- Bus Stop Location
- 1/2 Mile Walking Radius
- ⊙ Lake Hayward Rd Commuter Lot
- ⊙ Route 85 Town Green
- ⊙ Old Hartford Rd at Commuter Lot

Connecticut Dept. of Transportation Commuter Parking Areas

- P Route 149
- P Old Hartford Road
- P Route 16
- P Lake Hayward Rd

Road, Street and Highway Classifications

- Limited Access Highway
- Arterial
- Collector
- Local Road
- Local Road (Dirt)
- Private Roads & ROWs

Road Labels

- ## State Numbered Routes
- ## Exit Numbers

Transportation Planning

- Conceptual Outer Ring Road
- Conceptual Inner Ring Road



Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.

5.3 Maintain The Roadway System

A. Policies

1. Maintain the roadway system in terms of drainage, alignment, safety, and capacity issues.
2. Use access management techniques to maintain road capacity along arterial roads (primarily in commercial areas) such as reducing curb cuts, interconnecting parking areas, and implementing other access management strategies.
3. Continue to use pavement management strategies to maintain roads as cost effectively as possible.
4. Seek to facilitate traffic flow in and around the Town Center.
5. Adequately fund pavement maintenance and roadway improvements.

B. Initial Action Items

1. Evaluate unpaved roads in Colchester especially with regard to identifying any roadways which should be abandoned or discontinued by the Town in order to avoid future liabilities.

State Highway
(Broadway)



Collector Street
(Miller Road)



Local Street
(Jaffee Terrace)



5.4 Enhance Bicycle And Pedestrian Travel

In recent years, interest in walking and bicycling has grown significantly.

Colchester should seek to support and enhance pedestrians by maintaining and extending sidewalks for pedestrians in the Town Center and adjacent areas (such as to Bacon Academy and to the Recreation Complex. All new developments within the “village”, “suburban”, and “arterial/commercial” areas should be required to install sidewalks so that a meaningful overall sidewalk system is created.

Although rural areas may not be appropriate for sidewalks, all areas of the community are appropriate for establishment of pedestrian trails and greenways, especially in and between open space areas. Colchester is very fortunate to have portions of the Airline Trail (and the Airline Trail Spur) in the community and these trails can provide the “backbone” for an overall trail and greenway system throughout Colchester. Colchester should seize every opportunity to develop a trail / greenway master plan and create more pedestrian trails and greenways in the community.

A number of people in Colchester ride horses for recreation and people travel to Colchester to ride on private property and on some of the off-road trails and open space areas. This should also be considered as part of the overall trail system in Colchester.



Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle facilities could help improve the overall quality of life for residents and make Colchester more attractive to visitors.

Sidewalk



Airline Spur Trail



Bicycling



CASE STUDY

Airline Rail Trail

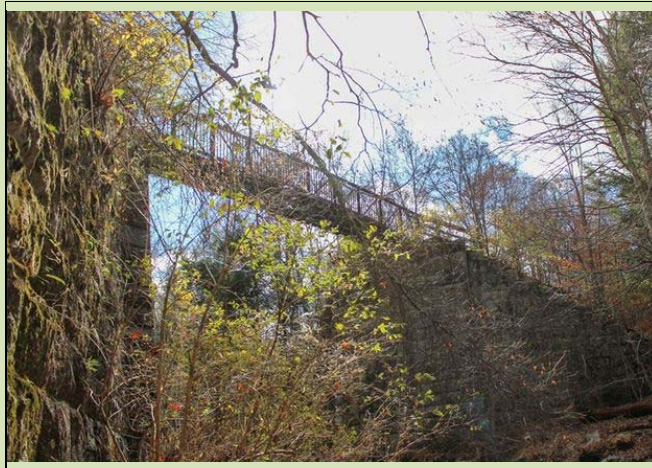
The Airline Trail is a major hiking/biking/pedestrian trail that stretches from Eastern Connecticut highlands to the Connecticut River in Portland. The trail exists in two sections:

- South - from East Hampton to Windham, and
- North - from Windham to Pomfret with the Thompson addition out beyond.

A major portion of the trail runs through northern Colchester including a spur that connects to the Town Center.

In 1996, the then Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) proposed the rehabilitation of an abandoned train railbed as a multi-purpose trail and linear state park. Towns in this region (East Hampton, Colchester, Hebron and Lebanon) worked together to link and improve their sections of the Trail which was originally developed through funding from the National Recreational Trails Act with the Towns providing the labor and services.

The Trail has been improved and maintained and is a significant recreational facility for visitors and residents. The Town is constantly working on upgrading the trail further including a major parking and entrance project.



CASE STUDY

Airline Rail Trail

The following images show parts of the brochure which describes the Airline Trail in Colchester.

3) RAPALLO VIADUCT
Built in 1872 (as was its sister, the Lyman Viaduct, 1-1/2 miles east in Colchester), the Rapallo bears the name of a railroad director and was built for two train tracks. Originally a 1,380 ft. long bridge 60 ft. high above Flat Brook, the increasing weight of freight trains necessitated filling underneath it in 1913. The spectacular views of the marsh to the north and other natural surroundings make this a rare treat.

4) COMSTOCK BRIDGE
The Comstock Bridge was built in 1791 and rebuilt in 1860. It is one of only three remaining covered bridges in Connecticut. The Comstock Bridge links East Hampton and Colchester and is approximately 1-1/4 miles south of the intersection of Colchester's Bull Hill Road and the Air Line Trail. The bridge is open to pedestrian traffic and has a picnic area nearby.

PARKING & TRAIL HEAD
Cranberry Meadow on Smith Street - Handicapped Accessible. A large Air Line Railroad sign highlights the trailhead.
Main Street - Handicapped Accessible. Trail access from Memorial Garden Village Parking lot.

5) LYMAN VIADUCT
Towering 137 feet high over Dickinson's Creek, this is one of the biggest thrills of the Trail. Built in 1873 and named after David Lyman, the Air Line's first president, the Lyman was once a 1,108 foot long bridge. The increasing weight of freight trains necessitated filling the bridge to the top with gravel in 1912-13 (a culvert allows Dickinson's Creek to flow through).

6) SALMON RIVER STATE FOREST
This 6,115 acre forest offers miles of hiking, provides several picnic areas, and borders Day Pond State Park. Salmon River is a key river in the D.E.P.'s Atlantic Salmon restoration project, and provides water recreation activities such as fishing and spring kayaking, and has a handicap accessible fly fishing area.

7) RIVER ROAD BRIDGE
This 22 foot long brownstone arch bridge was built in 1887 and carries trains 18' above the unpaved section of River Road, which follows the beautiful Salmon River.

8) COLCHESTER STATION, TOWN CENTER & HISTORIC DISTRICT
At Colchester Railroad's terminus lie the historic station and freight depot that once served passengers and the Hayward Rubber Complex (owned by Nathaniel Hayward, inventor of vulcanized rubber). Turning north (south) onto Lebanon Avenue leads to the Town Center, lovely Town Green, and a wide sampling of historic architecture, recognized in the National Register of Historic Places.

PARKING & TRAIL HEAD
Bull Hill Road - Handicapped Accessible
River Road - Handicapped Accessible and can accommodate **Horse Trailers**. To reach the Trail, take the path through the woods south of the parking area. Or, take a detour along the unpaved portion of River Rd. following Salmon River to Bull Hill Road and access the Trail a short distance north.

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.

Colchester should also seek to provide appropriate accommodations for bicycles for transportation and recreation. To start, Colchester should begin the process of being recognized as a “bicycle-friendly community.” This can happen informally as Colchester adds signage and/or pavement markings to promote awareness of bicycling. If Colchester is interested, there is also a formal program, coordinated by the League of American Bicyclists, which provides objective criteria to help Colchester identify issues and opportunities to encourage and support cycling in the community. Simsbury and South Windsor have received such designations.

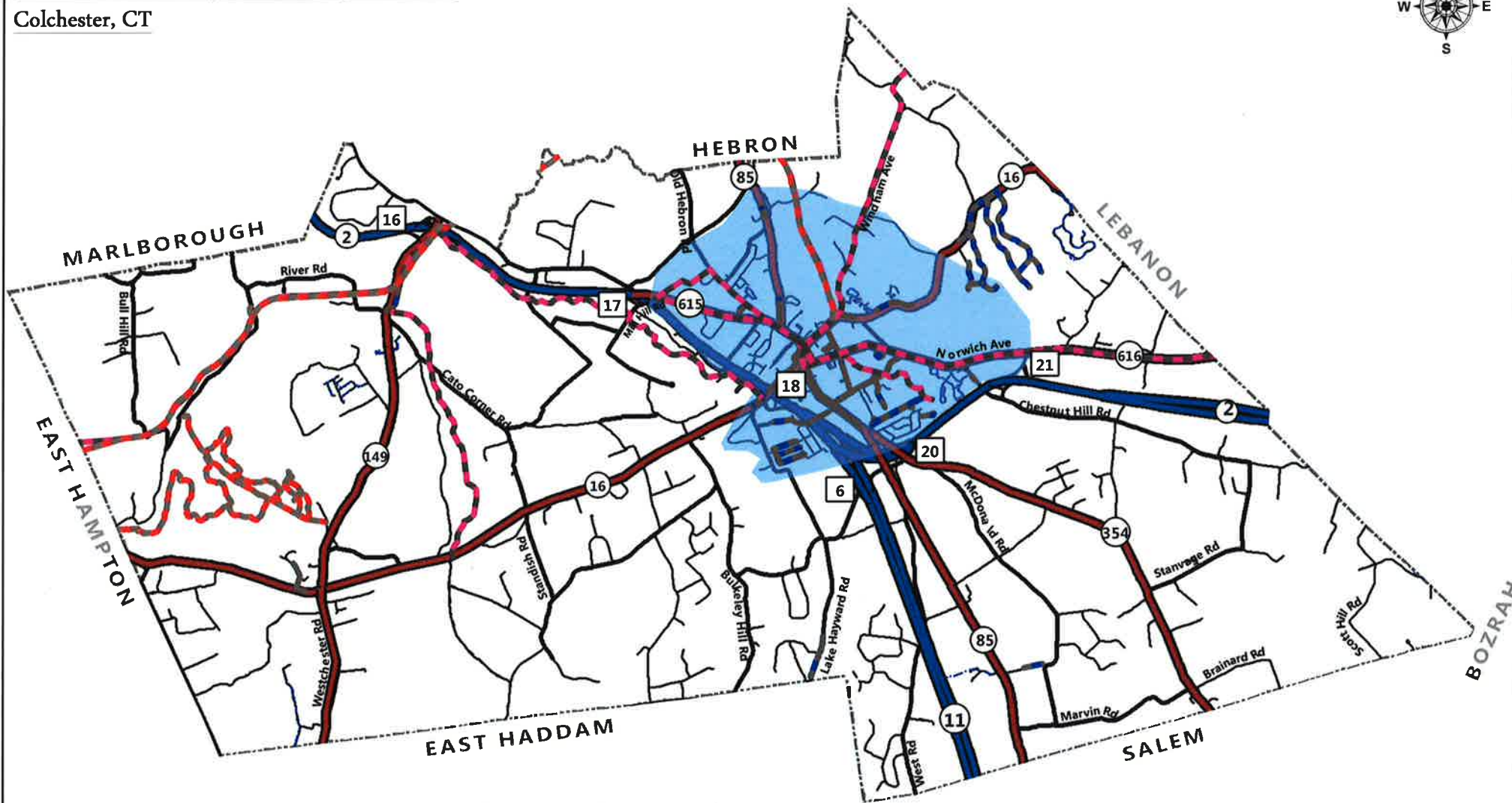
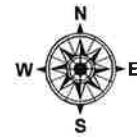
Establishing a system of bicycle routes with signage and/or pavement markings will also help people become more aware of cycling and the overall possibilities in Colchester. The Connecticut Department of Transportation has already helped start this effort by releasing a map showing bicycle suitability for state highways. Some local communities have expanded this type of effort out to local streets by enlisting local bicycle shops and/or cyclists to ride roads and categorize them in terms of bicycle suitability. Colchester may wish to consider a similar program.

Since not all areas of Colchester have access to pedestrian or bicycle facilities, the usage of trails and roads by pedestrians and bicycles has increased the need for parking by residents and visitors. The need for parking should be evaluated as part of an overall trail/greenway master plan.

5.4 Enhance Bicycle And Pedestrian Travel
A. Policies
1. Seek to and extend sidewalks for pedestrians in the Town Center, Westchester center, and adjacent areas.
2. Where appropriate, require new developments to install sidewalks.
3. Create more pedestrian trails and greenways in the community.
4. Establish a system of bicycle routes in Colchester.
5. Consider bicycle travel whenever road work is undertaken.
6. Educate people on bicycling.
B. Initial Action Items
1. Develop a trail / greenway master plan.
2. Create a local bicycle route map and install signs and pavement markings to identify routes.
3. Become recognized as a “bicycle-friendly community.”

Pedestrian/ Bicycle Transportation

Colchester, CT



Legend

- State Trails
- Bike Paths
- Existing Sidewalks
- Desirable Sidewalk Area



Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.





Changing age demographics may increase the need for dial-a-ride and other transit services in Colchester.

5.5 Improve Transit Services

As the percentage of older residents in Colchester increases, there may be a greater need for dial-a-ride and other transit services. Colchester should continue to monitor this situation in order to be able to respond in a timely manner should demand increase.

If opportunities arise to establish or enhance transit services, Colchester should support such efforts. This might include commuter buses or scheduled transit service.

Parking for commuter buses should be located in places with adequate parking. The current commuter bus stop at the Town Green results in parking which can detract from activities on the Green or nearby businesses.

5.5 Improve Transit Services
A. Policies
1. Enhance dial-a-ride services.
2. Support efforts to establish or enhance transit services.
B. Initial Action Items
1. Ensure appropriate locations and adequate parking for commuter bus stops.

5.6 Maintain And Enhance Utility Systems

The utility system in Colchester is key to supporting desired development patterns and overall quality of life. Utility infrastructure includes public water, public sewer, storm drainage, natural gas, wired utilities (electric, telephone, and cable television), and cellular communications.

Public Water/Sewer Service - The Colchester Sewer and Water Commission and the Public Works Department manage the public water system and the public sewer system in Colchester. Colchester also participates with other communities as appropriate (such as the shared sewage treatment plant which accepts waste from Colchester, East Hampton, and Lebanon). Key issues to address during the planning horizon include:

- Continue to identify and develop water supply sources
- Continue to protect water quality
- Monitor and address sewer inflow and infiltration issues
- Extend water and sewer services to support desired development patterns and intensities
- Recognize the “rural” areas as “sewer avoidance areas”

CASE STUDY

Utility Infrastructure Study / Implementation

In 2010, the Town of Colchester undertook a study to investigate the capabilities of the water and sewer systems within the community and identify ways to provide water and sewer service to properties in the future development area. Based on this study, over \$3 million was invested in service extensions and improvements to encourage and support future development in this area.

The analysis of the water system found that the system would benefit from:

- Additional water sources (i.e. – more supply),
- Increased storage (i.e. – more reserve capacity), and/or
- Improved system hydraulics (such as system interconnections).

The analysis of the sewer system found that the system would benefit from investigating and addressing the sources of:

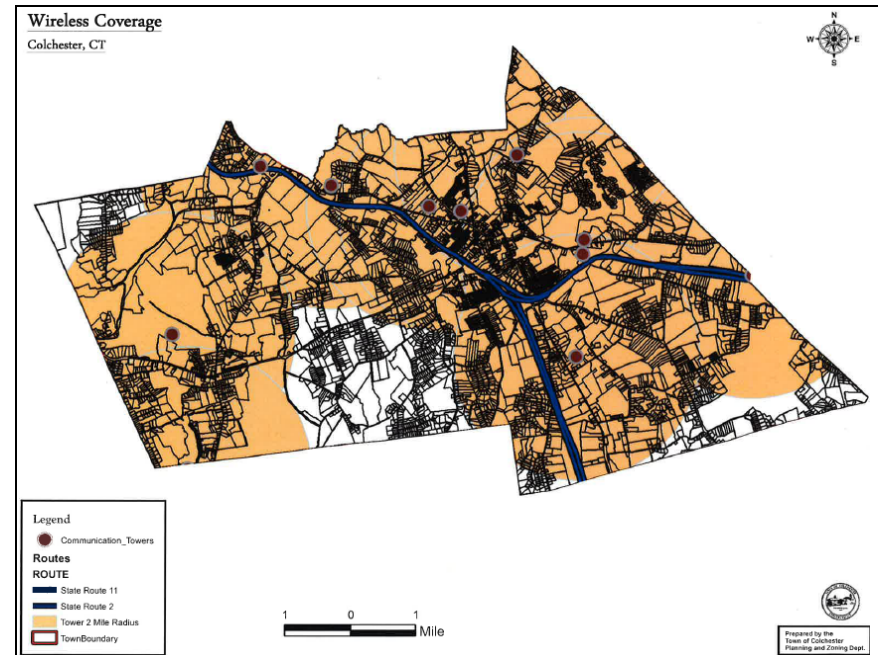
- Inflow – the connection of roof leaders, underdrains, and other water flows to the sewage system , and
- Infiltrations – the seepage of water into the sewage system at pipe joints, manholes, or other locations.

Storm Drainage – Storm drainage is an important consideration because of the potential impacts on water quality and water quantity. During the planning horizon, Colchester should implement “low impact development” and other drainage strategies to help manage the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff. This will be especially important due to increasing concerns about storm frequency and severity.

Natural Gas Service – Colchester does not have natural gas service within the community at the present time. Many people have expressed interest in having natural gas service and opportunities to establish such service should be explored if opportunities arise.

Wired Utilities – Electric, telephone, and cable television services are provided throughout Colchester. The vulnerability of these services to disruption by weather events has become apparent in recent years and efforts are underway by the utility providers to bolster system reliability. Although wired utilities are required to be placed underground in new subdivisions, most wires in Colchester are located on poles along existing streets. In some cases, the removal of trees and vegetation will provide a greater degree of protection from outages but will adversely affect the character of the community. Finding the right balance between service reliability and character will take some time. It is not considered cost-effective to place all overhead utilities underground except in smaller areas (such as the Town Center).

Wireless Services– More and more people are relying on wireless devices to communicate and access information. In fact, some households have totally given up “land line” phones to use wireless devices. If this trend continues, having a good wireless system in place will be important – both for residents and for local businesses.



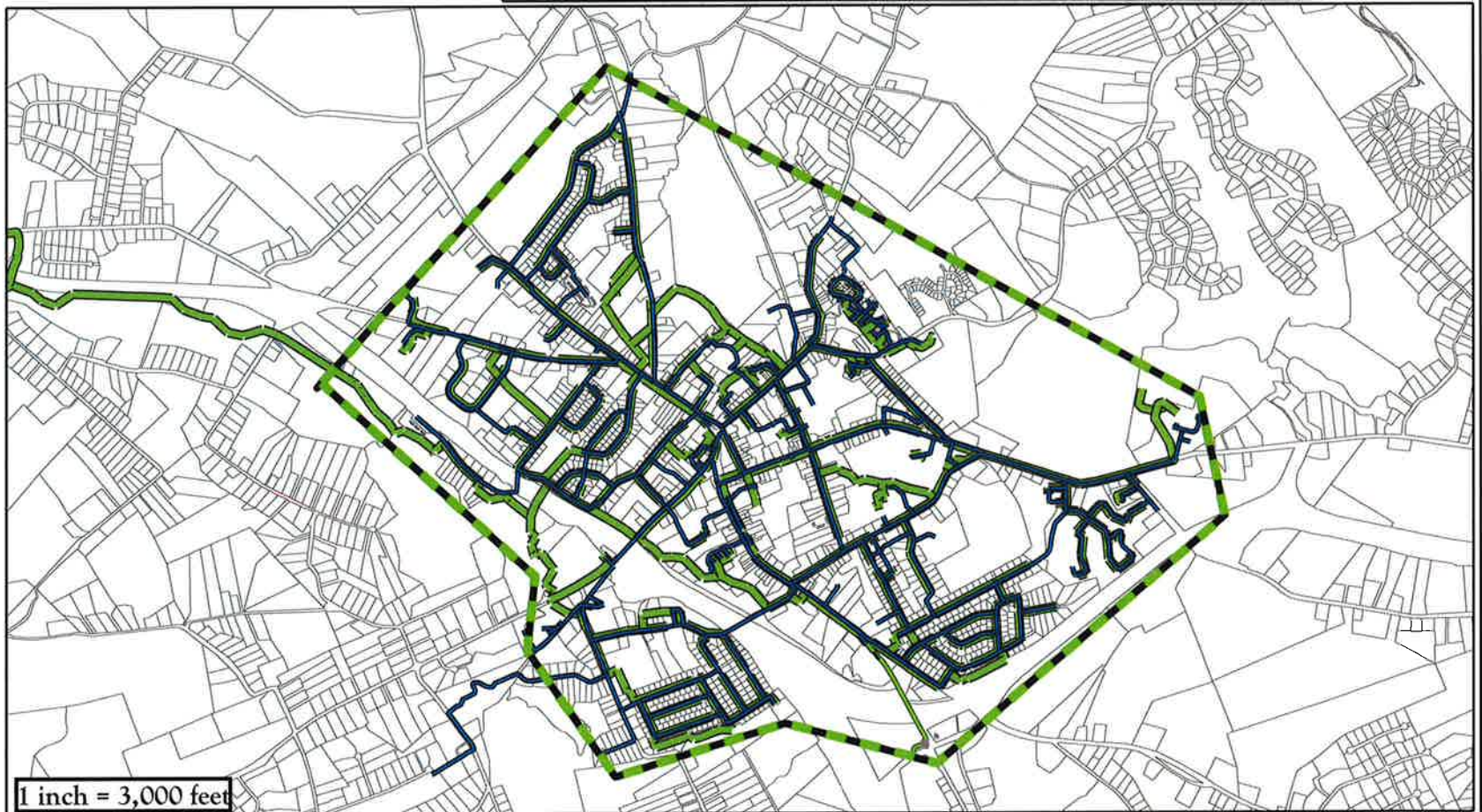
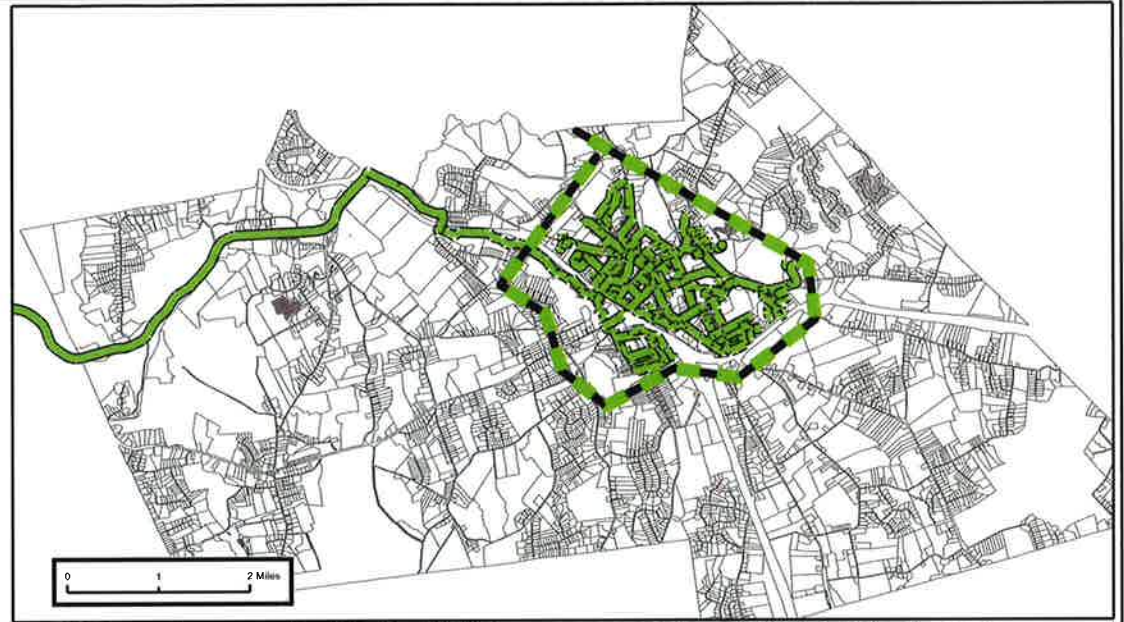
Utility Infrastructure

Colchester, CT

Limits of
Sewer Main

Legend

- WaterMain
- SewerMain
- Water & Sewer Service District



Water & Sewer Mains
in the Service District

Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.



1 inch = 3,000 feet

5.6 Maintain And Enhance Utility Systems

A. Policies

1. Continue to develop water supply sources.
2. Address and monitor sewer inflow and infiltration issues.
3. Extend water and sewer services to support desired development patterns and intensities.
4. Recognize the “rural” areas as “sewer avoidance areas”.
5. Explore opportunities to establish natural gas service if opportunities arise.
6. In terms of tree trimming along utility lines, strive to find the right balance between service reliability and character.
7. Investigate ways to bury utility wires in the Town Center over the long term.
8. Evaluate ways to expand the coverage and capacity of wireless communication services.

6.1 Overview

The Plan of Conservation & Development has been prepared to meet the challenges that will confront the Town of Colchester in the future. The Plan is intended as a guide to be followed in order to enhance the quality of life and community character. 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. Still, the most important step of the planning process is implementation of the recommendations.

During the next few years, some of the goals will be achieved, some circumstances will undoubtedly change, and some conditions may arise that will suggest that it is time to reconsider some of the Plan recommendations. Such situations are to be expected. 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.

Conservation



Development



Infrastructure



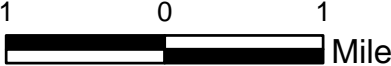
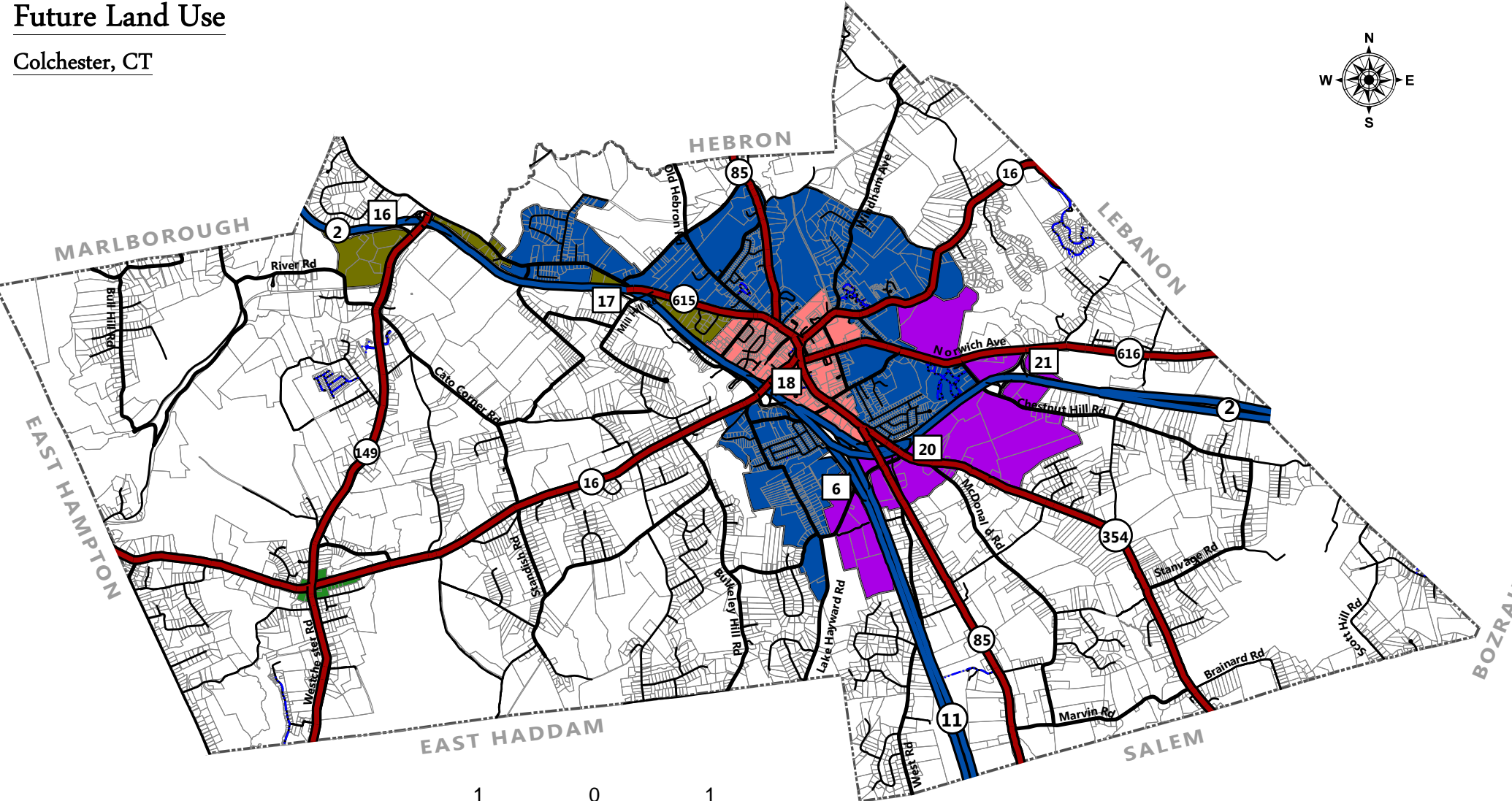
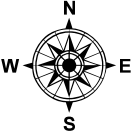
6.2 Future Land Use Plan

The recommendations of the various sections of the Plan of Conservation and Development 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.

Town Center	The Town Center is intended to be a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area that integrates residential development in with business, commercial, office, service, civic, institutional and entertainment uses for workers, visitors, and residents. The Town Center is also intended to reflect the historic character of Colchester and be the focal point of community development.
Westchester Village	Westchester is intended to be a secondary village within Colchester which will meet many needs for basic retail shopping, tourism, and local services, especially for those residents of western Colchester.
Mixed Commercial	Mixed Commercial areas are intended to provide for commercial and industrial development along arterial roads where such development has existed previously or will be appropriate in the future. Development in such areas should be in well-designed buildings and attractively landscaped sites.
Future Growth	Future Growth areas are intended to provide for commercial and industrial development in locations well served by transportation and utility infrastructure. Mixed use development may be appropriate when it will contribute to the creation of diverse and pedestrian friendly areas with a mix of housing, shopping, workplace and entertainment uses within a short walk of one another.
Suburban	The Suburban areas are intended to be primarily single-family residential neighborhoods near the Town Center where water and sewer infrastructure and other services will support this type of development and the Town Center.
Rural	The Rural area, which includes most of the land area of Colchester, is intended to encourage or require the preservation and enhancement of rural character. This includes the preservation and enhancement of existing farms, homesteads, natural resources, vistas, and open spaces.

Future Land Use

Colchester, CT



Legend






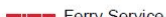










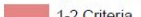





Future Land Use

- Town Center
- Westchester Village
- Mixed Commercial
- Future Growth
- Suburban
- Rural



Prepared by the
Town of Colchester
Planning and Zoning Dept.

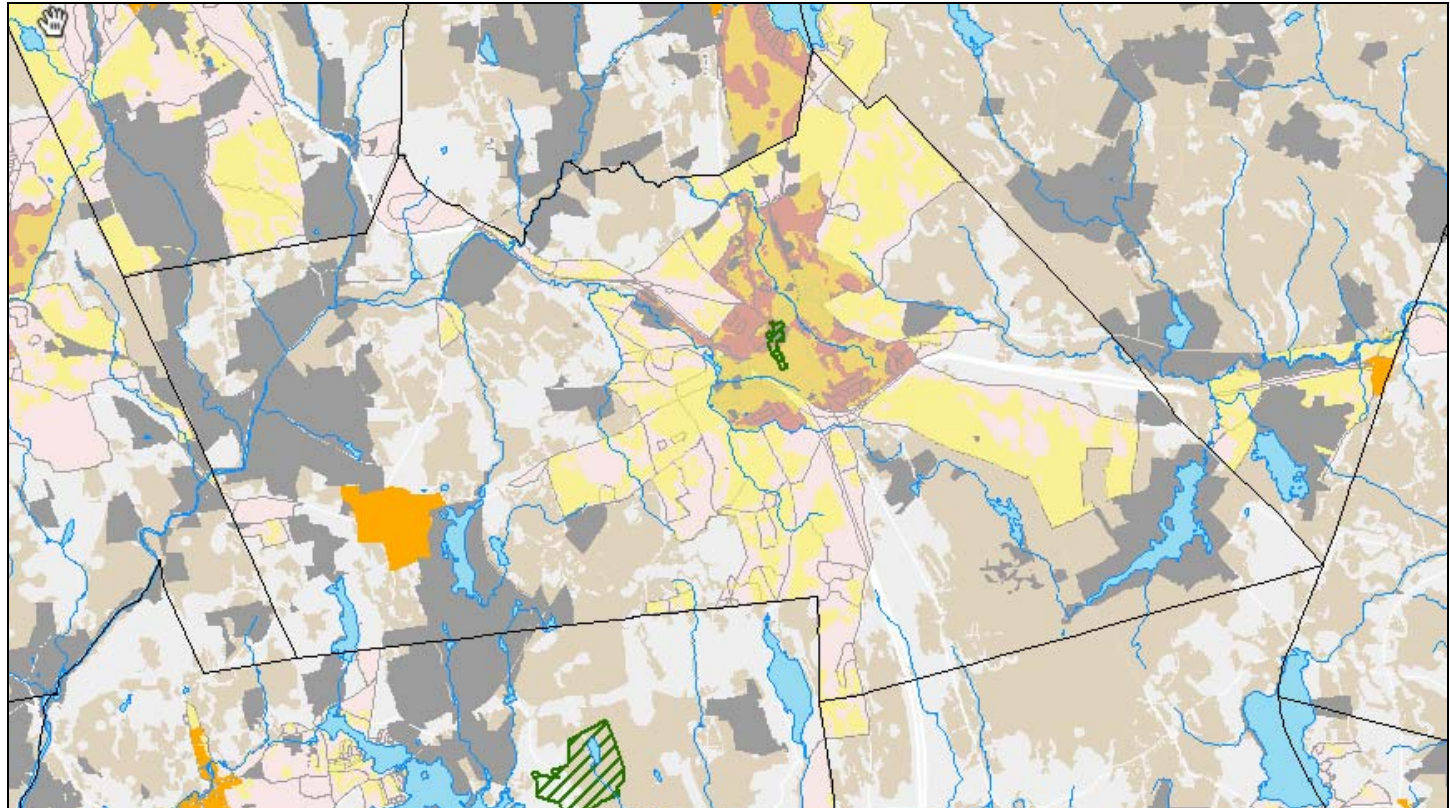
State Plan Categories

-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Busway Stations
-  Rail Stations
-  Ferry
-  Sea Ports
-  Rail Lines
-  Ferry Service
- Airports**
-  Commercial Service
-  General Aviation
-  Reliever
- Primary Highways**
-  Interstate
-  U.S. Route
-  State Route
-  Regional Centers
-  Water
-  Protected Lands
-  Local Historic Districts
-  Village Priority Funding Area
-  Balanced Priority Funding Area
-  Undesignated Lands
- Priority Funding Areas**
-  1-2 Criteria
-  3-4 Criteria
-  5 Criteria
- Conservation Areas**
-  1-3 Conservation Factors
-  4-5 Conservation Factors
-  6-7 Conservation Factors

6.3 Plan Consistency

In accordance with CGS Section 8-23, this Plan of Conservation and Development was compared with the 2013-18 State Conservation & Development Policies Plan and found to be generally consistent with that Plan and its Locational Guide Map.

State Locational Guide Map (2013-18)



Connecticut Conservation and Development Plan – State Growth Principles

In accordance with CGS Section 8-23, the Plan of Conservation and Development has been evaluated for consistency with statewide growth management principles.

<p>Principle 1 – Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan encourages growth in and near the Town Center where mixed land uses are already permitted and are encouraged. Colchester does not have a designated “regional center”.</p>
<p>Principle 2 – Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.</p>	<p>FINDING –Consistent</p> <p>The Plan recommends that Colchester seek to diversify its housing “portfolio” and address recognized housing needs – housing that is more affordable and housing for an aging population.</p>
<p>Principle 3 – Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan continues with the overall zoning framework of more intensive development in and around the Town Center which is well-served by arterial roads.</p>
<p>Principle 4 – Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan identifies the importance of protecting important community resources such as the natural environment, farm land, open spaces, and historical resources.</p>
<p>Principle 5 – Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan contains recommendations to protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety. In particular, the Plan stresses the importance of protecting water quality and public water supply watershed lands.</p>
<p>Principle 6 – Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan is part of the process of integrating planning with other levels of government and with other agencies. The Plan will be used to coordinate efforts with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjacent communities, • regional organizations, and • state agencies.

Regional Plan Categories

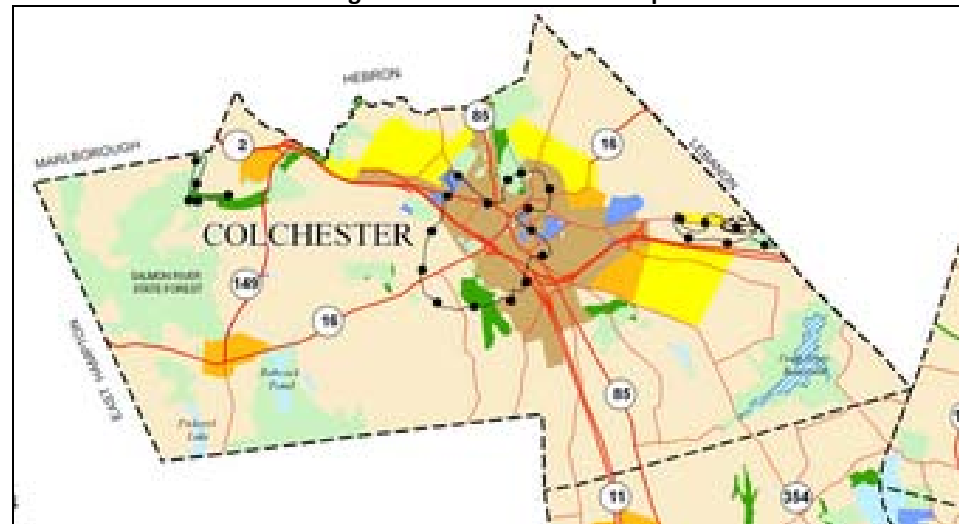
Legend

-  Existing and Proposed Urban Uses
-  Existing and Proposed Suburban Uses - Medium
-  Existing and Proposed Suburban Uses - Low
-  Existing and Proposed Rural Uses
-  Existing Institutional Uses
-  Existing Recreation and Open Space Uses
-  Proposed Conservation Areas
-  Federally Recognized Native American Tribal Reservation
-  Waterbodies and Watercourses
-  Existing Reservoir Areas
-  Level B Aquifers
-  Potential High Yield Aquifers
-  Primary Road
-  Secondary Road
-  Proposed Arterial Road
-  Railroad
-  Town Boundary

Regional Plan Of Conservation and Development

In addition, this Plan was compared with the Regional Conservation and Development Plan adopted by the Southeastern Regional Planning Agency and found to be generally consistent with that Plan.

Regional Locational Guide Map



IMPLEMENTATION

7

7.1 Overview

Implementation is the main purpose of the planning process. While identification of desirable strategies is important, that effort will only bear fruit if policies are implemented and if action items or actions are completed.



7.2 Implementation Tools

Plan Implementation Committee

The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) has primary responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Plan's recommendations. However, some communities have found that a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) can be effective at coordinating implementation of the Plan. The PIC includes representatives of various Town boards and commissions meets monthly or quarterly to discuss ways to facilitate or accelerate Plan implementation, assess the status of specific recommendations, evaluate the priorities, and even suggest new implementation techniques. A Plan Implementation Committee will also allow the Town to adapt to changing situations -- be innovative when pursuing opportunities and be resilient in facing adversity. Colchester may wish to consider establishing a Plan Implementation Committee to coordinate implementation of the Plan.

As A Reference For Proposed Actions Or Activities

Using the Plan of Conservation and Development as a basis for land use and other decisions within the Town will help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan. All land use proposals will be evaluated in terms of the Plan and its various elements. This includes referrals under CGS Section 8-24 where municipal improvements are referred to the Planning & Zoning Commission for a report before any local action is taken.

Land Use Regulations

The Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations are key tools for guiding the development of Colchester and for implementing the recommendations of the Plan. The Town should continue to review and revise the zoning regulations and the subdivision regulations on a regular basis in order to implement Plan recommendations and ensure the regulations accomplish the overall goals of the community.

Annual Work Programs

The Plan of Conservation and Development can be used by almost all local boards and commissions to organize annual work programs (including operating budget requests, capital planning and work efforts). If the activities of all municipal organizations can be coordinated, there can be significant benefits in efficiency, economy, and results.

Annual Operating Budget

Communities that use the recommendations of their Plan of Conservation and Development to guide municipal spending in the annual operating budget achieve the most benefit from plan preparation. Colchester should strive to achieve similar results.

Capital Improvement Programming

Spending on capital projects is an important part of Colchester's approach to the future and deserves additional discussion. When Colchester invests in projects and programs which are closely aligned with the policies and action items identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development, the community moves closer to achieving its overall goals and objectives. This includes maintaining the facilities Colchester already has.

Capital projects can be of three general types:

- Spending to maintain a capital asset and maintain or extend its useful life or level of service
- Spending to physically expand an existing capital asset (such as a school building)
- Spending to provide a new facility to meet present or future community needs

Creating a multi-year financial plan with estimations of capital funding needs and how to pay for them (based on assumptions about operating expenditures, revenues, assessed value, reserves, and known debt service commitments) is an important way for a community to efficiently and cost-effectively address the maintenance of its capital assets and address the needs and desires of residents.

In fact, if Colchester did not invest towards meeting its capital needs:

- Infrastructure (such as roads or utility systems) may deteriorate or fail affecting the basic health and safety of residents.
- Building systems (such as roofs or mechanical systems) may deteriorate affecting the usability of the facility.
- Operating costs and/or future replacement costs may be higher and reduce funds available to provide other services.
- It runs the risk of having to respond to emergencies in response to failures and pay higher costs rather than anticipate and plan for capital needs in a cost-effective way.
- The community may not be in a position to maximize its economic potential.
- The visual attractiveness of the community may suffer.
- The Town may not be able to take advantage of state or federal grants to offset the cost to local property owners.
- The quality of life may be reduced.

Just as car owners change their oil on a regular basis and replace their vehicle when needed, Colchester must do the same thing.

Developing and funding a multi-year financial and capital plan has clear benefits to Colchester:

- allowing for better project ranking and affordability measures,
- clearing up uncertainty about current levels of investment,
- resolving the problem of dealing with the same issues repeatedly, and
- improving the annual budget and budget process since the amount of funding required for debt service and capital spending can be balanced in current and future years.

Key Definitions

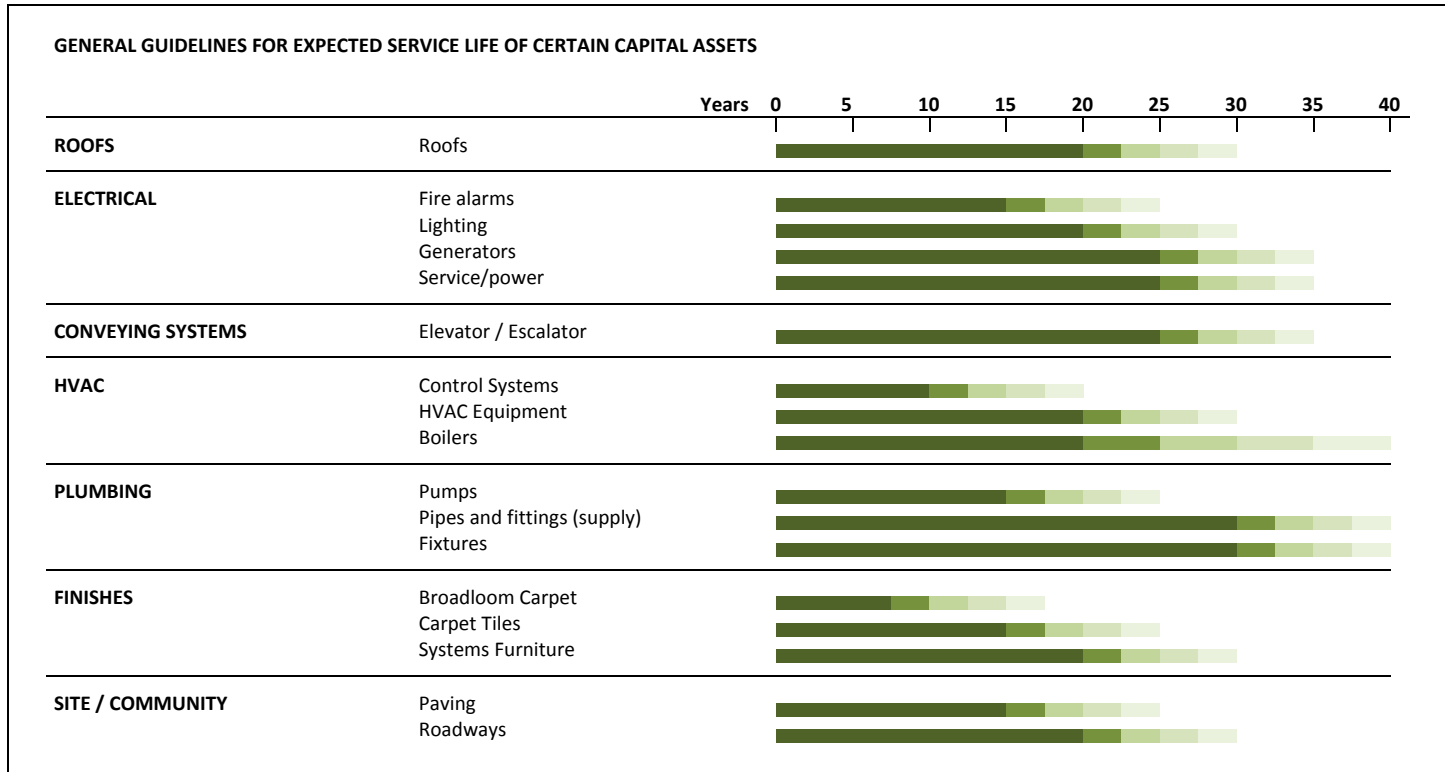
Capital Asset - Land, land improvements, infrastructure, equipment, or other assets that have a long-term lifespan.

Capital Project - A project which results in the acquisition or increased value or lengthened lifespan of a capital asset.

Capital Budget - The amount of money to be spent in the current fiscal year for capital projects.

Capital Improvements Plan - A multi-year financial plan that:

- Lists and describes capital projects a local government plans to undertake,
- Indicates how projects will be funded, and
- Projects the effects of the plan on key financial variables, such as the real property tax rate.



Adapted From "Facility Management and Capital Renewal", Fairfax County, Virginia

A multi-year financial and capital plan is also a useful budgeting and managing tool since it allows the Town to:

- balance needed or desired capital investments with available financing, thereby receiving the optimum benefits for the available public revenue.
- align the capital improvement program with its planning activity, programs, and operating resources and facilitate coordination between Town departments.
- take advantage of government, foundation, and other grant programs and leverage project-specific funding resources.
- Undertake a logical process of assigning priorities to projects based on their overall importance to the Town.
- coordinate activities with federal, state and regional organizations, utility companies, and the private sector to anticipate when the Town will undertake public improvements, and make decisions and plan investments accordingly.

Capital spending to maintain or achieve a certain level of service is an important consideration. A regular planning process (such as preparing the capital improvement plan) should:

- inventory and assess particular types of physical infrastructure,
- identify deficiencies,
- establish a desired “level of service” or other metric for facilities, and
- prioritize needed investments.

This analysis should also include consideration of the desired level of service. How to measure level of service for each of the various types of capital assets maintained by the Town will be an on-going endeavor ((public water, public sewer, roadway pavement, sidewalks, trails, recreation facilities, fire / police / emergency medical, open space, public works, education, etc.).

If the demands placed on a capital asset exceed its capacity, the level of service might be expected to decline. Thus, it will be important for Colchester to monitor the qualitative aspects of the community’s capital assets LOS in order to:

- Assure that development occurs in concert with the capacity of local facilities,
- Enable adequate public facilities to be provided in a timely manner
- Help achieve the growth objectives of the POCD, and
- Correct deficiencies in providing adequate levels of service as opportunities arise.

Sources of Revenue

Revenue to fund capital spending can come from:

- Property taxes that directly fund capital projects (pay cash)
- Property taxes that fund debt service expenses for projects that were bonded
- Special assessments
- User fees
- State grants
- Federal grants

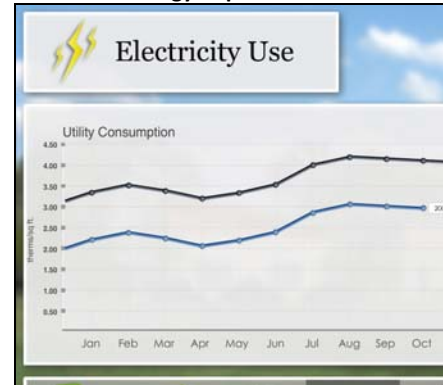
Sealing Roadway Cracks



Roof Replacement



Energy Improvements



In some communities, capital projects are scored as to their overall priority based on such considerations as:

Criteria	Description	Weight
1. Health, Safety & Welfare	An assessment of the degree to which the project improves health and safety factors associated with the infrastructure asset. For example, projects that result in the reduction of accidents, improved structural integrity, and mitigation of health hazards would score higher	25%
2. Regulatory or legal mandates	An assessment of the degree to which the project is under a regulatory order or other legal mandate, or meets a federal, State or local safety requirement. For example, projects that are required by consent decrees, court orders, and other legal mandates would score higher.	25%
3. Operational Necessity	An assessment of the degree to which the project sustains (5 points max.) or improves (10 points max.) operational efficiency and effective delivery of services.	10%
4. Implication of Deferring the Project (opportunity costs)	An assessment of costs associated with deferring the project, such as inflationary construction costs or additional annual operating / maintenance costs for each year the project is not funded. For example, projects that would have significantly higher future costs, negative community aspects, or negative public perception, should they be deferred, would score higher.	10%
5. Budget Impact	An assessment of the project's budget impact, ie. the degree to which it affects operations and maintenance costs positively or negatively. For example, a roof replacement project that reduces both maintenance requirements and energy consumption or a storm drain that reduces the need for periodic cleaning would score higher. On the other hand, a new facility that increases maintenance, energy and staffing costs would score lower.	5%
6. Strategic Goals	An assessment of the degree to which the project furthers the strategic goals as adopted in the POCD.	6%
7. Grant Funding Opportunity	An assessment of the amount of funding in the project compared to the amount of funding provided by grant funds from outside agencies. This should include an assessment of the amount of funding needed to complete the current project phase and the entire project. For example, a project that would bring grant funds from an outside agency into the Town would score higher, while a project that relies only on Town funds would score lower.	7%
8. Community Demand	An assessment of the degree to which the project meets a community need or responds to community demand. How need/demand was assessed, measured, or recorded will be noted.	7%
9. Implementation readiness	An assessment of the time required for a project to begin. This should include an assessment of: project complexity; internal decisions/commitments that are required; review requirements by boards/commissions; agreements or approvals required by non-Town entities; timing considerations with other capital projects (if applicable); the degree to which the project is in compliance with the POCD or other Town-adopted plans; and level of public support. Whether a public information strategy is recommended will be noted.	5%

Adapted from City of Annapolis, Maryland

7.3 Implementation Approach

Many of the policy recommendations in the Plan of Conservation and Development will be implemented by the Planning and Zoning Commission through zoning amendments, application reviews, and other means. Some policy recommendations will require the cooperation of 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, the policy recommendations must serve as a guide to all residents, applicants, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly growth of Colchester.

Many sections of the Plan also identify specific action items which can be itemized, scheduled, managed and completed. Action items lend themselves to monitoring implementation and measuring progress although they may not be more important than a strategy or a policy. It is hoped that, over time, Colchester will continue to identify and undertake new action items to help implement the Plan.

This type of process (reviewing the Plan and adding new policies and action items) will help the Plan (and Plan strategies) be relevant over a long timeframe.

It is understood that implementation of the Plan will be a gradual and continual process. While some recommendations should (and will) be carried out in a relatively short period of time, others may be long-term in nature. Further, since some recommendations will involve additional study or a commitment of fiscal resources, their implementation will take place over several years or occur in stages.

7.3 Implementation Approach
A. Policies
1. Implement the Plan of Conservation and Development.
2. Use the POCD to guide decisions on proposed zone changes, text changes, special permits, and CGS 8-24 referrals.
3. Use the POCD to guide decisions on the operating budget and capital budget.
B. Initial Action Items
1. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee.
2. Regularly review and maintain the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Policies and Tasks

The Plan of Conservation and Development contains two types of recommendations:

- Policies** – policies are intended to guide local actions and be on-going strategies of the Town. Policies are not discrete activities and do not lend themselves to measurement or recognition as being complete.
- Initial Action Items** – initial action items are discrete activities which can be undertaken to accomplish Plan recommendations and policies. These can be measured and recognized as being complete. Over time, it is envisioned that additional action items will be identified by the Town to help implement recommended policies.

It is intended that the Plan of Conservation and Development be a working document used to implement policies and complete action items.

7.4 Implementation Tables

3 HONORING COLCHESTER’S HERITAGE

3.2 Protect Natural Resources		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to protect water quality in Colchester, especially in the Salmon River and in the Eight Mile River watersheds.	CIWC	SWC, All
2. Continue to protect wetlands and watercourses from pollution.	CIWC	All
3. Conserve vegetated buffers along streams and rivers.	CIWC	All
4. Protect public water supply watersheds.	CIWC	SWC, All
5. Continue to protect groundwater resources and regulate activities in aquifer areas.	PZC	SWC, All
6. Continue to protect steep slopes.	PZC	Staff
7. Continue to protect floodplain areas.	PZC	Staff
8. Continue to protect areas identified in the State’s Natural Diversity Database.	PZC	Staff
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Implement “low impact development” practices which use vegetation and infiltration to better manage stormwater quality and quantity.	PZC	Staff, PW
2. Evaluate the locally adopted aquifer regulations to ensure they continue to be appropriate.	PZC	Staff
3. Modify land use regulations to remove impediments to “low impact development” practices by narrowing road widths in new developments, eliminating curbing along roadways and parking areas, and/or reducing parking requirements, where feasible.	PZC	Staff, PW

3.3 Preserve Farms and Farming		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Continue and expand efforts to preserve farmland soils for future generations to farm.	AC	PZC
2. Continue efforts to support and expand existing farms.	AC	All
3. Maintain a local agricultural council as authorized by CGS 7-131v.	BOS	AC
4. Use the state definition of agriculture as provided in CGS 1-1(q).	PZC	AC, BOS
5. Maintain and support the farmers market.	BOS	AC, All
6. Maintain the right to farm ordinance.	BOS	AC, All
7. Recognize and promote a “farm trail” with a variety of agricultural activities (Xmas trees, wine/grapes, cheese, chickens, flowers, horses, eggs, etc.).	AC	PW
8. Consider allowing the use of Town land or open space for farming, when and where appropriate.	BOS	AC
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Seek regulatory changes to reduce regulatory impediments to agriculture.	AC	PZC
2. Seek regulatory changes to allow “value added” activities (such as farm stores).	AC	PZC
3. Seek to provide the lowest possible land values as part of the PA-490 assessment program.	AC	Staff
4. Install and maintain signs that Colchester is a farm friendly community.	AC	PW
5. Install signs promoting a “farm trail” and identify it as such on the Town webpage.	AC	PW
6. Develop and install roadside signage that raises awareness of working farms.	AC	PW

3.4 Preserve Open Space		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Maintain the Land Acquisition Fund and supplement it in order to preserve open space.	BOF	BOS, OSAC
2. Create an open space <i>system</i> where different open spaces are interconnected with trails within Colchester and to surrounding communities.	CIWC	OSAC, CLT
3. Maintain the Open Space Advisory Committee.	BOS	All
4. Use fee-in-lieu of open space provisions when open space opportunities will not contribute to the overall open space <i>system</i> or other open space objectives (i.e. – when a dedication of land would result in a small parcel of open space that does not connect to other open spaces in a meaningful way).	PZC	Staff
5. Seek additional funding to acquire open space through bonding.	OSAC	BOS, BOF
6. Budget money to acquire open space through annual appropriations in the budget.	BOS	BOD, OSAC
7. Improve and promote the Airline Trail and other trails.	PRC	OSAC, PW
8. Support the Colchester Land Trust and other organizations working to preserve open space.	All	
9. Coordinate with open space organizations in surrounding towns and the region.	All	
10. Continue to work with the State of Connecticut and the Norwich Public Utilities Department to develop public trails on their lands in Colchester.	OSAC	
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Increase the open space set-aside requirement in the subdivision regulations.	PZC	Staff
2. Update the Open Space Map and then maintain it over time to reflect Colchester’s open space inventory and strategies.	OSAC	CLT
3. Install signage to identify preserved open spaces in Colchester.	OSAC	CLT

3.5 Enhance Community Character		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Implement programs and policies to preserve and enhance community character in Colchester.	Town	All
2. Seek to maintain and enhance the ruralness of outlying areas in Colchester.	PZC	AC, OSAC, CLT
3. Encourage the retention of undeveloped land by making it less expensive to own.	Town	Staff
4. Maintain the PA-490 Farm program and PA-490 Forest program.	Town	Staff
5. Seek to provide the lowest possible land values as part of the PA-490 assessment program.	Town	Staff
6. Manage tree trimming in ways that seek an appropriate balance between electrical reliability and community character.	Town	Staff
7. Retaining vegetation and buffers along streets and roads to maintain and enhance the rural feeling.	PZC	PW
8. Seek to retain stone walls, barns, significant trees, and other unique features in new development.	PZC	Staff
9. Reducing the overall levels of illumination and seeking to maintain “dark skies” as recommended by the International Dark Sky Association.	PZC	Staff
10. Preserve scenic views, scenic roads, and other scenic features.	Town	Staff
11. Continue to protect historic resources and historic character.	Town	HDC, Staff
12. Encourage maintenance of buildings, properties, and streetscapes.	Town	BTF, Staff

3.5 Enhance Community Character (continued)		
B. Initial Action Items	Leader	Partners
1. Establish a design review process in Colchester.	PZC	Staff
2. Establish a “village district” (as authorized by CGS 8-2j) in the Town center area.	PZC	Staff
3. Evaluate whether the “village district” in the Town center area might be a better tool to manage development activities and preserve community character than the Historic Preservation Overlay Zone and/or the local historic district.	PZC	Staff
4. Establish a “village district” (as authorized by CGS 8-2j) in the Westchester center area.	PZC	Staff
5. Preserve the ruralness of outlying areas through regulations that require conservation development.	PZC	Staff
6. Change the Subdivision Regulations to increase the open space set-aside required at the time of development.	PZC	Staff
7. Establish and implement a PA-490 open space policy.	BOS	Staff
8. Identify scenic resources and amend local regulations to protect them.	PZC	OSAC, CLT, CIWC

3.6 Enhance Quality Of Life		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to maintain and enhance things that contribute to the overall quality of life in Colchester.	Town	All
2. Maintain and enhance the physical character of the community.	Town	All
3. Maintain and enhance community spirit.	Town	All
4. Support local organizations, individuals, activities and events that contribute to the overall character and spirit of the community.	Town	All

3.7 Promote Sustainability And Resiliency		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to evaluate alternative energy approaches for Town facilities and implement recommendations that reduce energy usage, increase reliability, and/or save money.	PW	BOF
2. Encourage water conservation especially since many areas of the community rely on groundwater for domestic use.	SWC	PW
3. Seek to reduce the waste stream and promote recycling.	PW	All
4. Educate residents and school children about sustainability concepts.	BOE	All
5. Continue to review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events.	Town	Staff
6. Continue to review and improve emergency preparedness plans for non-recurring events.	Town	Staff

4 GUIDING COLCHESTER'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

4.2 Overall Organizational Concept		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Maintain the overall organizational concept for community development areas.	PZC	Staff

4.3 Enhance The Town Center		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Preserve and enhance the Town Center, physically and economically and promote the appropriate development of sites in the Town Center area.	PZC	Staff, EDC, COC
2. Ensure that the Town Center has a strong pedestrian focus and that driveways and parking areas do not adversely affect the pedestrian realm.	PZC	Staff
3. Seek to supplement parking (on-street or off-street) in areas where there may be a parking shortage, such as the Town Green, Merchants Row, and/or Cragin Court area.	PZC	Staff, PW
4. Encourage shared access and public or private street interconnections to and through rear land to create more manageable block sizes, open up additional land for development, and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.	PZC	Staff, EDC
5. Continue and expand the façade improvement program to help maintain and enhance the character of buildings in the Town Center area.	PZC	Staff
6. Encourage additional improvements around the Town Green (sidewalks, parking, streets, etc.).	PZC	Staff, PW
7. Address traffic issues within the Town center area while maintaining and enhancing character.	PZC	Staff
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Undertake a parking study of the Town Center area (comparing demand and supply) to revisit the parking requirements, help quantify any parking issues, and provide guidance on how to manage the parking situation better.	PZC	Staff
2. Explore options to synchronize activities on the Green, schedule more special events, coordinate improvements, and consolidate ownership.	BOS	All
3. Connect sidewalks in the Town Center to outlying neighborhoods, schools, and recreation areas.	BOS	PW

4.4 Strengthen Westchester Center		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Promote the evolution of Westchester as a rural “hamlet” with a pedestrian-friendly flavor.	PZC	Staff
2. Strengthen the village characteristics of the Westchester area and avoid a suburban-strip type development pattern.	PZC	Staff
3. Seek to increase investment in Westchester .	PZC	Staff
4. Seek to establish a “village green” in Westchester.	BOS	PZC, Staff
5. Encourage and support events that promote Westchester as a unique place.	Town	All
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Establish a façade improvement program to help maintain and enhance the character of buildings in Westchester center.	Town	Staff
2. Undertake a special study of Westchester in order to promote mixed uses, identify ways to enhance its “hamlet” character, and ways to make it more pedestrian-friendly.	PZC	Staff
3. Provide for adequate buffering to residential properties from business and mixed-use development.	PZC	Staff

4.5 Facilitate And Support Economic Growth		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Strive to grow Colchester’s tax base by becoming more of a regional center.	EDC	COC, Staff
2. Guide uses to appropriate locations.	PZC	Staff
3. Create, maintain, and enhance a pedestrian-friendly development pattern in village areas.	PZC	Staff
4. Allow an automobile-oriented development pattern in outlying business areas.	PZC	Staff
5. Continue infrastructure improvements to support economic growth.	SWC	EDC, BOS, BOF
6. Consider roadway connections to support economic growth.	Town	Staff
7. Support establishment of a “Chamber of Commerce” or other organization that will help promote the expansion of the Colchester economy.	EDC	Town
8. Strive to develop a reputation as a “pro-growth” community for projects consistent with Colchester’s overall vision.	EDC	PZC, Staff
9. Promote inter-connectivity among local businesses so as to increase the appeal of Colchester as a business location and make businesses more efficient.	EDC	COC, Town
10. Explore the potential for economic incentives to attract businesses to Colchester.	EDC	BOS, BOD
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Reinvigorate the Economic Development Commission.	BOS	EDC
2. Enhance signage on Routes 2 and 11 regarding Colchester exits.	BOS	PW

4.6 Guide Residential Development		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to maintain the quality, livability and character of the residential areas in Colchester.	Town	Staff
2. Maintain regulations requiring effective buffers / transitions between residential and non-residential uses.	PZC	Staff
3. Encourage conservation design of future subdivisions as a way to help preserve open space and important features when development occurs.	PZC	Staff
4. Encourage multi-family and mixed use development in the Town Center and other locations with water and sewer.	PZC	Staff
5. Encourage or require maintenance of residential dwellings.	BOS	Staff
6. Continue to inspect all unoccupied dwellings to determine their condition.	Town	Staff

4.7 Diversify Colchester’s Housing Portfolio		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Seek to provide for housing choices and options for an aging population.	PZC	COA, Staff
2. For people who choose to “age in place” in their current housing, consider maintaining or augmenting elderly tax relief, dial-a-ride, meals-on-wheels, senior activities, and home health services.	COA	Town, Staff
3. Seek to provide opportunities for housing that is affordable for a diverse range of ages, incomes, and lifestyles.	CHA	PZC, Staff
4. Recognize that locations in and near the Town Center would be the most appropriate for multi-family and/or higher density housing.	PZC	Staff
5. Encourage the use of universal design concepts in new housing construction.	Staff	
6. Maintain accessory apartment regulations to help meet the housing needs or lifestyle needs of residents or their family members.	PZC	Staff
7. Consider implementing inclusionary zoning regulations, requirements or conditions.	PZC	Staff
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Expand the number of elderly housing units provided by the Housing Authority at Ponemah Village and Dublin Village.	CHA	Town
2. Consider other strategies to help create housing for people aged 55 and older.	COA	Staff
3. Investigate ways to create housing for persons and families with moderate incomes.	CHA	Town

5 ADDRESSING COLCHESTER'S FUTURE NEEDS

5.2 Identify And Prioritize Community Facility Needs		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to identify and prioritize community facility needs.	BOS	Town
2. Continue to address community facility needs as resources permit.	BOS	Town
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Maintain a comprehensive analysis of community facility needs.	BOS	Town

5.3 Maintain The Roadway System		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Maintain the roadway system in terms of drainage, alignment, safety, and capacity issues.	PW	BOS, BOF
2. Use access management techniques to maintain road capacity along arterial roads (primarily in commercial areas) such as reducing curb cuts, interconnecting parking areas, and implementing other access management strategies.	PZC	Staff
3. Continue to use pavement management strategies to maintain roads as cost effectively as possible.	PW	BOS, BOF
4. Seek to facilitate traffic flow in and around the Town Center.	Town	Staff
5. Adequately fund pavement maintenance and roadway improvements.	BOS	BOF, PW
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Evaluate unpaved roads in Colchester especially with regard to identifying any roadways which should be abandoned or discontinued by the Town in order to avoid future liabilities.	BOS	PW

5.4 Enhance Bicycle And Pedestrian Travel		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Seek to extend sidewalks for pedestrians in the Town Center, Westchester center, and adjacent areas.	Town	Staff
2. Where appropriate, require new developments to install sidewalks.	PZC	Staff
3. Create more pedestrian trails and greenways in the community.	Town	Staff
4. Establish a system of bicycle routes in Colchester.	Town	Staff
5. Consider bicycle travel whenever road work is undertaken.	PW	Staff
6. Educate people on bicycling.	Town	Staff
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Develop a trail / greenway master plan.	Town	Staff
2. Create a local bicycle route map and install signs and pavement markings to identify routes.	Town	Staff
3. Become recognized as a “bicycle-friendly community.”	BOS	Staff

5.5 Improve Transit Services		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Enhance dial-a-ride services.	Town	Staff
2. Support efforts to establish or enhance transit services.	Town	Staff
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Ensure appropriate locations and adequate parking for commuter bus stops.	Town	Staff

5.6 Maintain And Enhance Utility Systems		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to develop water supply sources.	SWC	PW
2. Address and monitor sewer inflow and infiltration issues.	SWC	PW
3. Extend water and sewer services to support desired development patterns and intensities.	SWC	PW
4. Recognize the “rural” areas as “sewer avoidance areas”.	SWC	PW
5. Explore opportunities to establish natural gas service if opportunities arise.	Town	Staff
6. In terms of tree trimming along utility lines, strive to find the right balance between service reliability and character.	Town	Staff
7. Investigate ways to bury utility wires in the Town Center over the long term.	Town	Staff
8. Evaluate ways to expand the coverage and capacity of wireless communication services.	Town	Staff

7 IMPLEMENTATION

7.3 Implementation Approach		
A. Policies	Leader	Partners
1. Implement the Plan of Conservation and Development.	PIC	PZC, BOS, BOF, Staff
2. Use the POCD to guide decisions on proposed zone changes, text changes, special permits, and CGS 8-24 referrals.	PZC	Staff
3. Use the POCD to guide decisions on the operating budget and capital budget.	BOS	BOF
B. Initial Action Items		
1. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee.	PZC	BOS, BOF
2. Regularly review and maintain the Plan of Conservation and Development.	PZC	PIC



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC)

Joseph Mathieu	<i>Chair</i>
John R. Novak	<i>Vice-Chair</i>
Mark Noniewicz	<i>Secretary</i>
Stacey Brown	
David Gesiak	
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Planimetrics

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IMPLEMENTATION LEGEND



AC	Agriculture Commission
All	Everyone in Colchester
BC	Building Committee
BOE	Board of Education
BOF	Board of Finance
BOS	Board of Selectmen
BTF	Blight Ordinance Task Force
CHA	Colchester Housing Authority
CIWC	Conservation / Inland Wetlands Commission
CLT	Colchester Land Trust
COA	Commission On Aging
COC	Chamber of Commerce (NEW)
EDC	Economic Development Commission

FS	First Selectman
HDC	Historic District Commission
OSAC	Open Space Advisory Committee
PIC	Plan Implementation Committee (NEW)
PRC	Parks and Recreation Commission
PZC	Planning and Zoning Commission
PW	Public Works
Staff	Town Staff
SWC	Sewer and Water Commission
Town	Town Boards, Commissions, and Agencies
VFD	Volunteer Fire Department
YSAC	Youth Services Advisory Committee

