

Plan of Conservation and Development



Middletown Planning and Zoning Commission

Prepared by
Department of Planning, Conservation and Development
City of Middletown

Section I

Public Hearing July 9th, 2008

Approved July 9th, 2008

Section II

Public Hearings September 24, 2008, October 8th, 2008,

November 12, 2008, January 14th, 2009

Approved March 10th, 2010

Guiding Principles

Public Hearing April 28th and May 12th, 2010

Approved May 12th, 2010

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ENVIRONMENT

- Preserve open space, farmland, and critical environmental areas and connect them to one another.
- Acquire open space
- Protect our natural resources, our green infrastructure.
- Encourage sustainable development.
- Implement low-impact development standards (reducing area of impervious surface, rural road standards, etc).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Increase the commercial tax base by attracting light industry, retail, office, entertainment.
- Build upon educational institutions and encourage their partnerships with industry.
- Expand and build upon the medical sector as a regional draw.
- Offer incentives for recycling brownfields and rehabbing historic structures.
- Reinforce downtown as our economic and cultural center.

TRANSPORTATION

- Create walkable neighborhoods.
- Encourage biking, walking, bus use by investing in sidewalks, road connections, bike paths, street trees, etc.
- Increase rail freight by investing in rail infrastructure.
- Locate jobs near housing, transit and services.
- Connect to our regional neighbors.

DEVELOPMENT

- Mix uses to ensure neighborhood vitality: civic, commercial, residential, recreation.
- Encourage compact development.
- Recycle existing degraded land before developing greenfields.
- Concentrate development along major transportation corridors.
- Create a range of housing choices.
- Limit development to areas already services by sewer and city water.

URBAN DESIGN

- Protect the unique character of our neighborhoods and improve the quality of development by adopting form-based design standards.
- Encourage compact building design

Prologue

The **1990 Plan of Conservation and Development** begins with a discussion about the need to coordinate planning efforts and strive for consistency among state, regional and local plans of development. This remains a valid objective for the City of Middletown and it will help coordinate development within the State of Connecticut.

In 2008 there is now a need to recognize that Middletown contributes to global climate change and the need for responsible and sustainable planning and development are even higher.

After a long period of denial, there is now almost universal agreement among the world's scientists that the impacts of global warming will be significant and in some areas devastating. In Massachusetts vs. EPA the United States Supreme Court recognized the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions as "serious and well recognized". If greenhouse gas emissions are not controlled and eventually reduced the effects will be devastating.

In the absence of leadership at the federal level, many states are independently working to address the lowering of greenhouse gas emissions. California, Washington and Massachusetts have done the most. Connecticut's legislature has just passed a landmark emissions bill, which requires the state to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 10 % below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% below 2001 levels by 2050.

Understanding that global warming and greenhouse gas emissions are issues that transcend state boundaries, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (REGGI) was established. This regional initiative, which includes Connecticut, has the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the region's electric power plants, a significant source of greenhouse gases.

The federal government has just begun to accept global warming and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Congress approved and the President signed into law the "Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. This bill increases fuel economy standards, encourages alternate sources of energy and energy efficiency.

In the most recent 110th Congress there were twenty-seven (27) Senate bills and twenty-five (25) House bills introduced and forty-five (45) hearings were held. There are currently sixty-two cases in state and federal courts relating to greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of global warming. These cases have been brought to the courts under many federal acts including the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act and the Energy Policy Act, to name a few.

While these state, regional and federal efforts can deal with power plants and other large stationary emitters of greenhouse gases, more can and should be done at the local level. The City of Middletown needs to integrate the concept of sustainability into its future planning and development. More stringent building and energy codes, requiring LEED certification for public buildings, energy efficiency in the municipal automobile fleet, promotion of local agriculture, grants and loans to support investments in alternate energy sources, tying economic development grants and tax abatements to LEED certification and even planting trees will have a gradual and cumulative positive impact on the community, quality of life and the environment.

As the State of Connecticut Plan of Conservation and Development indicates - the transportation sector is the greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Transportation is related to land use, which in Connecticut, is clearly a local issue. Never before has the term "Think globally, Act locally" been more relevant.

So what can the Planning and Zoning Commission do to promote less greenhouse gas emissions?

Regulations that allow for a development pattern that encourages driving results in increases in the per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) this in turn increases greenhouse gas emissions. Connecticut's Climate Action Plan indirectly documents the existence of sprawl with the evidence that, "since 1970 Connecticut's population has increased by a modest 12 percent, but vehicle miles to travel has increased by 78 percent".

It is widely accepted that residents in higher density cities have per capita vehicle miles traveled counts of up to 90% less than their suburban counterparts.

The Plan of Conservation and Development determines where and to what extent future growth will occur. By developing plans and regulations which contain growth within the area of existing infrastructure, reduce vehicle miles traveled and preserve land as open space, the Planning and Zoning Commission can ensure that Middletown is encouraging responsible and sustainable development and doing its part to address global warming.

The Planning Principals found in ^{this plan} ~~Chapter 14~~ clearly promote a pattern of development, which would preserve and enhance the quality of life in Middletown and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Figure A is a map of Middletown which displays the city's urban, suburban and rural areas and lists the various planning tools which can be used to promote sustainable development and smart growth.

Other recommendations include:

Encourage LEED neighborhood standards. Neighborhood design standards, patterned after the LEED system, are also being developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, in partnership with the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Congress for the New Urbanism. In this approach site design strategies encourage new development to take better advantage of solar orientation, wind direction, topography, established vegetation, and other factors that can lower energy usage.

Municipal codes and ordinance revisions that take into account energy efficiency standards will become increasingly important to communities and should be developed now.

Require a carbon footprint analysis. Applicants of large developments should be required to provide an estimate of the greenhouse gas emissions for various site plan configurations as part of an alternatives analysis.

Alternative analyses are already employed to evaluate different options for developing a property. The carbon footprint analysis has been recently mandated in Massachusetts through their state EPA regulations.

Better control of outdoor lighting. Communities can gain significant energy savings through more efficient outdoor lighting. Key features include the use of new technology (i.e., LED, Mesopic lighting) and requirement that municipal street lighting use full cutoff fixtures thereby preventing light from being emitted above the 90-degree plane. Shining shielded light straight down onto the target that needs lighting can often reduce lamp wattage [of lamp] by 30 to 40 percent. The budget for street lighting in Middletown is approaching \$1 million, annually.

Encourage and allow mixed land uses. A very important factor affecting in the relationship between development and energy consumption is the physical separation of activities. This is determined by both density and the degree to which mixing of land uses are permitted.

In other words, the density allowed by local land use regulations, coupled with the degree to which the intermixing of selected land uses is permitted, are prime determinants of how much energy their community uses.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Located in central Connecticut, Middletown is a mid-sized city that has tremendous potential. Its central location, access to the Interstate highway system, available undeveloped land, vibrant downtown, a well diversified economic base, choice in residential housing, and almost 9 miles of frontage on the Connecticut River combine to make Middletown's future bright.

A decade ago, few felt Middletown's future was so bright. In the last decade, Middletown's Common Council, boards and commissions have followed the 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development and have made many wise decisions. These decisions have defined Middletown as a model for city planning. For instance:

- Middletown has spent almost \$10 million acquiring and permanently preserving over 2,000 acres of open space;
- In 1996 Middletown invested \$10 million in its dying downtown by constructing a new Police Station on Main Street. The design and location of the Police Station was in accordance with the downtown section of the Plan of Conservation and Development.
- This public investment in the downtown created the confidence for private investment. In the last eight years Middletown's downtown has experienced unprecedented reinvestment and revitalization, including a 12 screen movie theater, over 40 new restaurants, new historic street lights, a \$1.4 million rehabilitation of the Metro Square block, a \$2 million investment in the Green Street School arts center, a \$1 million artist cooperative, over \$5 million invested in Kid City Children's Museum over \$25 million in new downtown housing and a new \$10 million downtown hotel, The Inn at Middletown.
- Middletown now has a downtown to be proud of. It is looked to as a model for downtown revitalization.
- Middletown spent almost \$5 million preserving and rehabilitating the Cenacle property into the Long Hill Estate Conference Center.
- Middletown has regulated residential growth in a manner that has resulted in increased property values and much higher quality design in residential developments. Demand for single-family homes is high and supply is low. Homes now regularly sell for \$400,000-\$600,000.

- Middletown is investing in its education system with the construction of a new \$100+ million high school which at the same time also allows for a new and larger middle school at the former high school.
- Middletown acquired and effectively manages a 184,000 sq. ft. industrial building, which has increased in value from \$830,000 to over \$ 2 million and now contributes in excess of \$100,000 to its Economic Development Fund.
- Middletown has used its Economic Development Fund and created and used its Tax Abatement Ordinance to invest in new companies interested in moving to the city. This short-term investment in growing companies has resulted in over one million square feet of new industrial development, significant growth in the grand list, and over one thousand (1,000) new jobs in the last decade.
- The Planning and Zoning Commission has been instrumental in promoting this new growth by fast tracking applications for commercial and industrial growth in commercial and industrial zones.

While much has been done and Middletown is well positioned for the future, Middletown still has many opportunities to take advantage of and many challenges to confront. The need for effective planning in Middletown has never been so great.

The last Plan of Conservation and Development was prepared and adopted in 1990, the plan includes the ***Lamentation Mountain Tri-Town Plan*** and ***Downtown Visions: 2000 and Beyond***. Also on file in the Department of Planning, Conservation and Development is a comprehensive study prepared between 1998-2002 by planning consultant Buckhurst, Fish and Jacquemart, which provides much of the data included in this update.

This document is intended to be an update of the 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development. It is the intent of the Planning and Zoning Commission to keep the 1990 Plan of Development in effect and to adopt this document as an "Action Supplement" to the 1990 plan. This document will identify specific actions, which Middletown must take now to confront the myriad of challenges that face mid-sized cities in Connecticut.

Consistency with Growth Principles

In accordance with State Statutes, the Middletown Plan of Conservation and Development has been evaluated for consistency and compliance with the state's growth management principles.

Principle 1 – Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.

Over the years, Middletown has undergone an extensive revitalization of its downtown area. The additions to this mixed-use area have turned the downtown area into a busy and appealing place to work, shop, and live.

Middletown's downtown is a regional center on the State Plan of Conservation and Development and this plan update is completely consistent with this principal.

Principle 2 – Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.

From homeless shelters, transitional housing, supportive housing, affordable housing and market rate apartments, condos and single-family homes, Middletown has and will always provide the full range of housing opportunities. Truly anyone can live in Middletown and this plan update is completely consistent with this principal.

Principle 3 - Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.

Historically commercial and mixed-use development has been concentrated along major transportation corridors. This plan continues this concept but also encourages a higher density of development and a greater mix of uses including residential. Therefore this plan update is completely consistent with this principal.

Principle 4 – Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural, and historic resources, and traditional rural lands.

The Plan addresses this principle in chapters 7 and 9, which detail how to protect natural resources and preserve Middletown's rural character. These plans include:

- The continued acquisition of open space, with a total protected open space goal of 30%
- Conservation of farmland and Middletown's rural character
- Investment in the City's park system to create more recreational areas
- Conservation of open space and rural character in the Maromas section of Middletown

This plan update is completely consistent with this principal.

Principle 5 – Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.

The plan contains sections regarding the protection of water and air quality, open spaces, farmland and historic resources and therefore this plan update is completely consistent with this principal.

Principle 6 – Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.

The 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development, which will remain in effect, begins with a section discussing the need for consistency among state, regional and local planning efforts. This plan update is completely consistent with this principal.

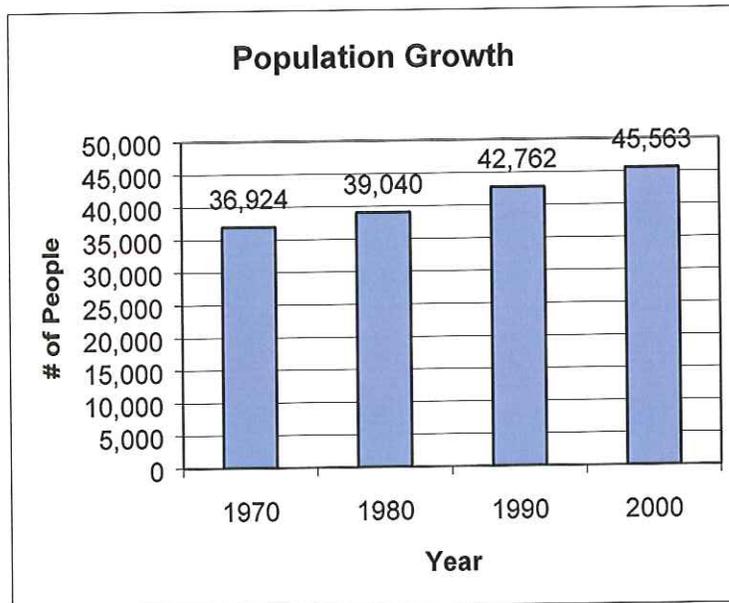
CHAPTER TWO

Population

2.1 Population Growth

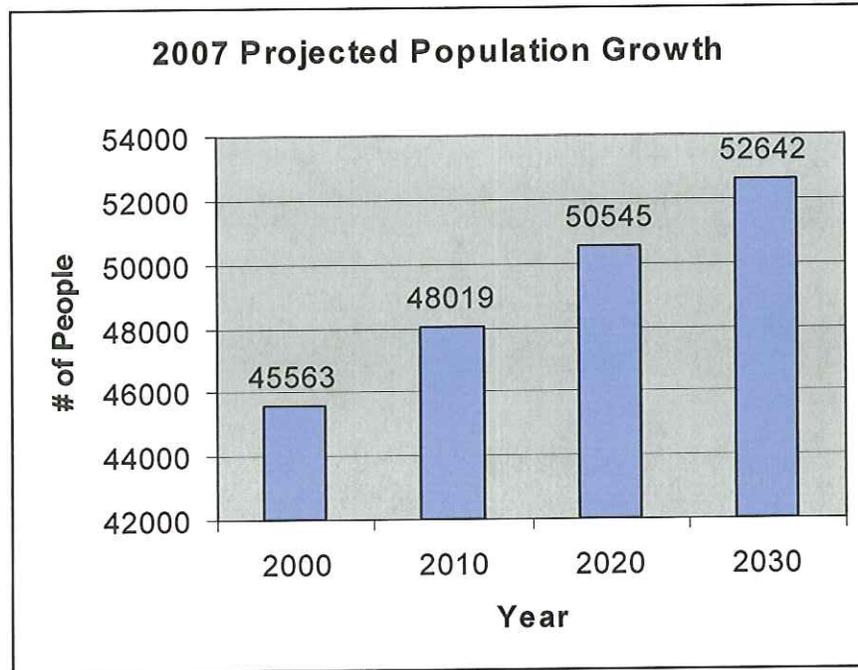
The change in population is an excellent indicator of the health of a community. The majority of mid to large cities in Connecticut experienced very little growth or actually declined in population between 1990-2000. Middletown was an exception to this rule. The year 2000 census indicates that Middletown has grown significantly in the past decade. Middletown grew by 6.5 % with an increase in population from 42,762 in 1990 to 45,563 in the year 2000.

Middletown's growth between 1990 and 2000 was below that of Middlesex County (8.3%) but greater than Connecticut's, which increased 3.6% as a whole.



In 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated Middletown's population to be 46,918. This reflects a 3% increase since the 2000 Census. The state Office of Policy and Management projects that Middletown's population will grow by 1.2% per year or 6% over the next five years. This would bring Middletown's population to 49,733 in 2010. The State of Connecticut as a whole is predicted to grow at a much slower rate of just 0.7% per year or 3.5% over the next five years.

In 2007, the Connecticut Data Center released an updated projected population growth. From 2000 to 2010 population is projected to grow 5.39%, 5.26% from 2010 to 2020, and 4.15% from 2020 to 2030.



These estimates are consistent with a more practical population projection.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|
| Building Permits Issued between 2000-06/2007 | 1,734 |
| Vacant Units | - 102 |
| Occupied Units | 1632 |
| Persons per Household | * 2.3 |
| Population Increase 2000 to 2007 | 3,754 |

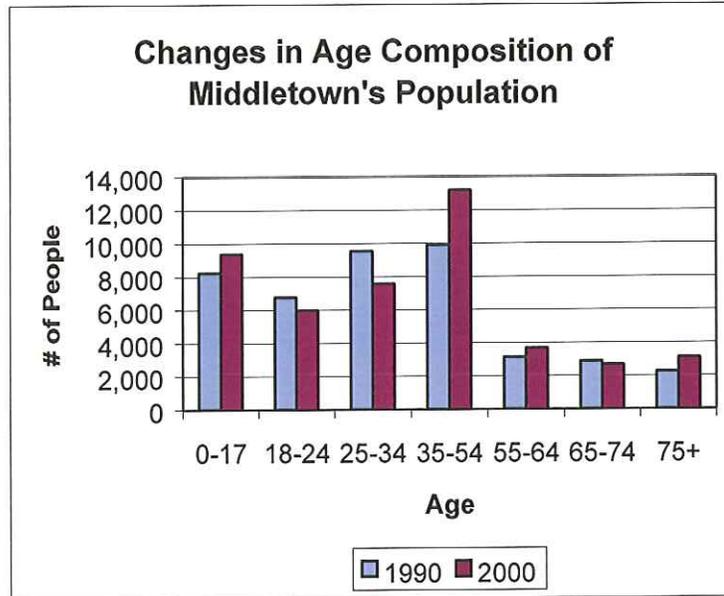
June 30, 2007 Population Estimate 49,317

2.2 Composition by Age

Middletown has a relatively young median age of population, 36.3 years in 2000. Nearly one-third of all inhabitants are under 25 years of age, 56 percent are in the prime working ages of 25 through 64 years, and approximately 13 percent are in retirement ages of 65 and over.

Middletown's age distribution remained similar between 1990 and the year 2000. Compared to the city's age structure in 1990, the elderly population has not changed significantly, while the youth and college-age population has declined slightly in share. By contrast, the working age population (25-64) has grown considerably. The most notable difference was the increase in the 35 to 54 age category.

More recent projections from the Connecticut Data Center continue to verify Middletown's aging population.



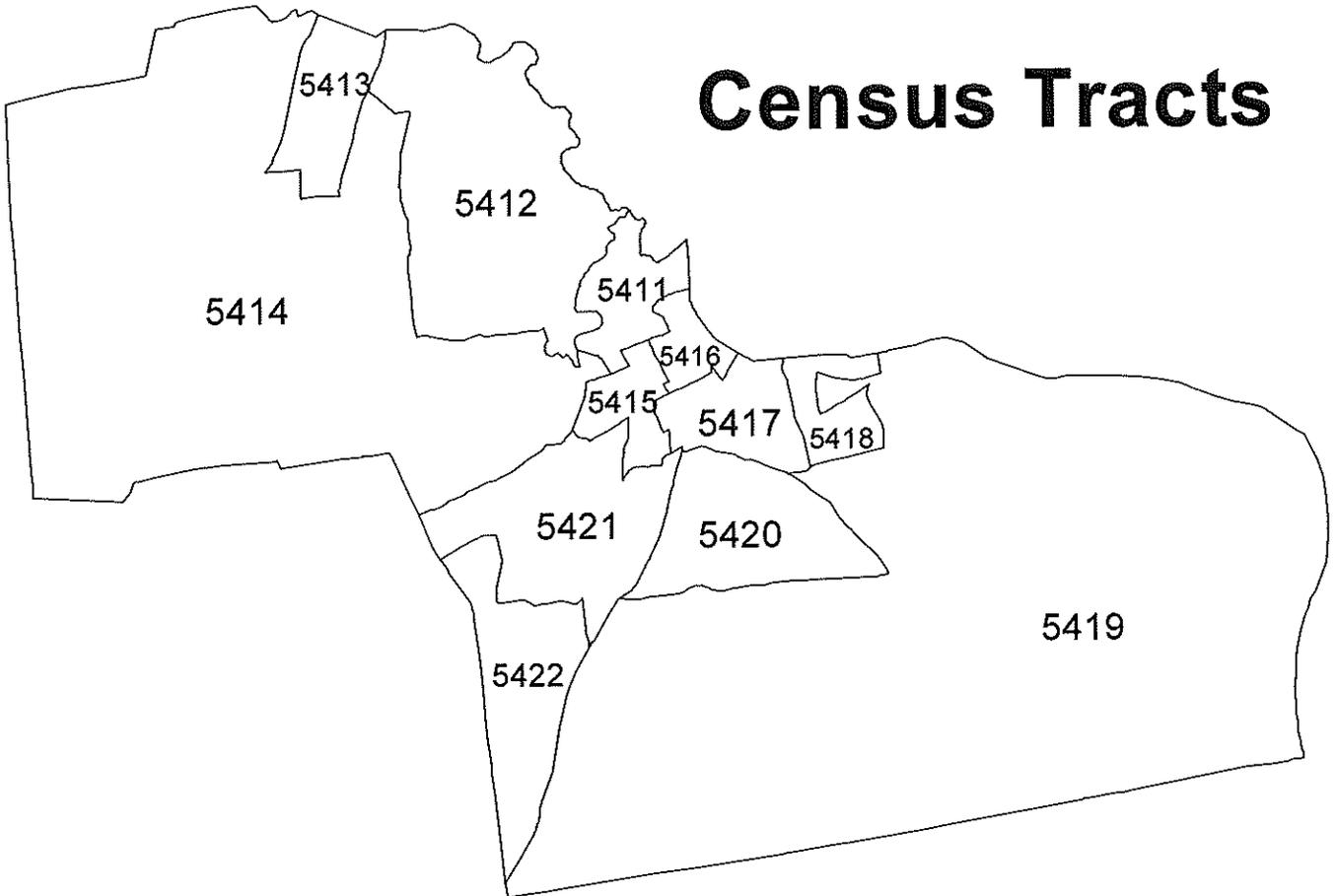
In just a few years, the baby boomers will be reaching 65+ and new measures will have to be met in order to cater to this growing population. Communities are beginning to experience the need for elderly services and facilities. It has been projected nationwide that by 2030, one in every five people will be over the age of 65. In the 2000 census, 13.4% of Middletown was populated with people over 65+. Those 50 to 64 years of age made up 14.4%. Those 50 to 64 years old will be the future of Middletown's growing population. The numbers only increase further down the age brackets. Middletown needs to plan for this aging population.

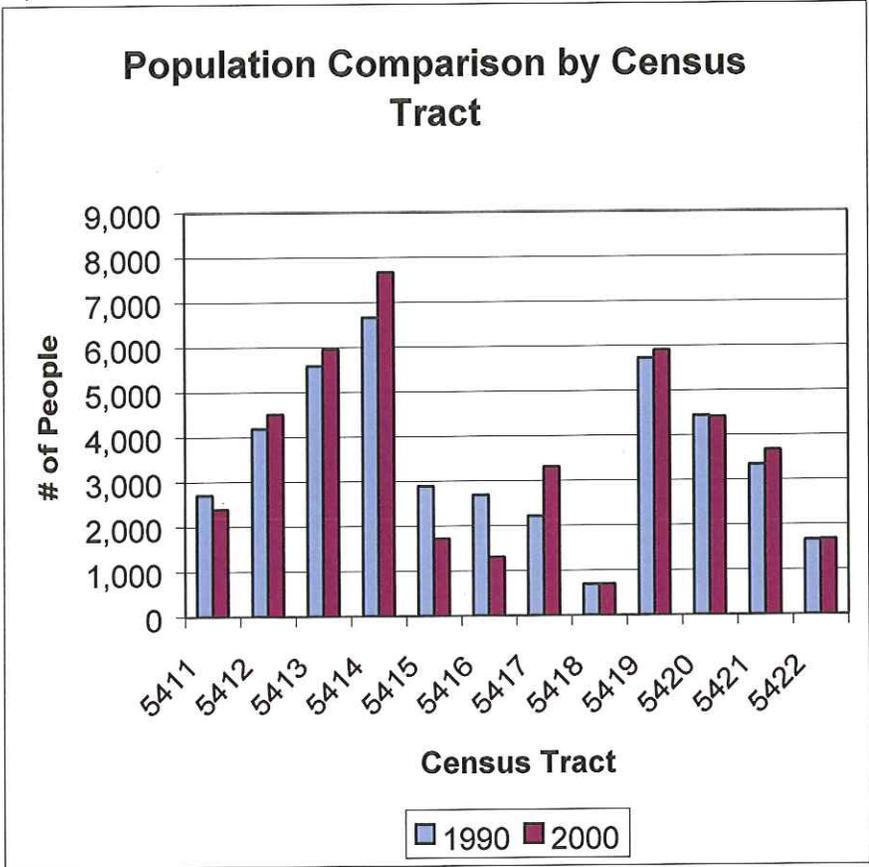
2.3 Population by Census Tract

While the population of Middletown grew 6.5% as a whole between 1990 and 2000, the downtown neighborhoods have actually all drastically declined in their numbers. Census tracts 5411, 5415 and 5416 have lost an average 35% of their populations. This is indicative of the social problems that exist in the downtown area.

In comparison, neighborhoods that reach into the Westfield and South Farms sections of town have experienced increases during the same period. Most evidently, census tract 5414 (Westfield) grew by over 15%.

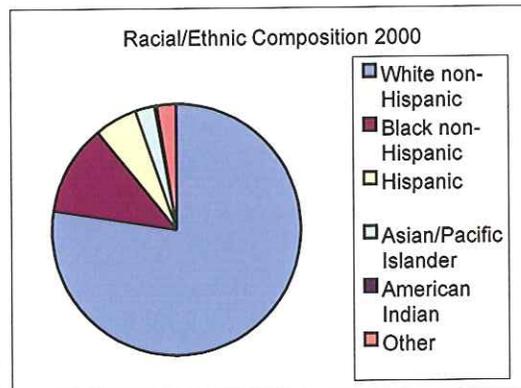
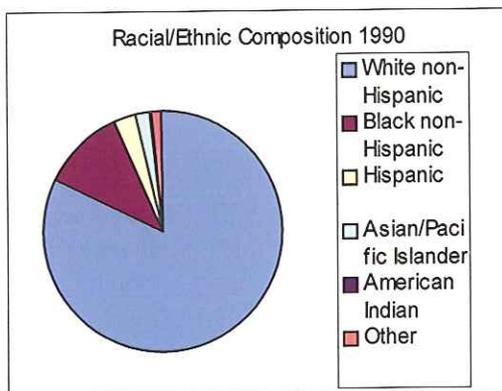
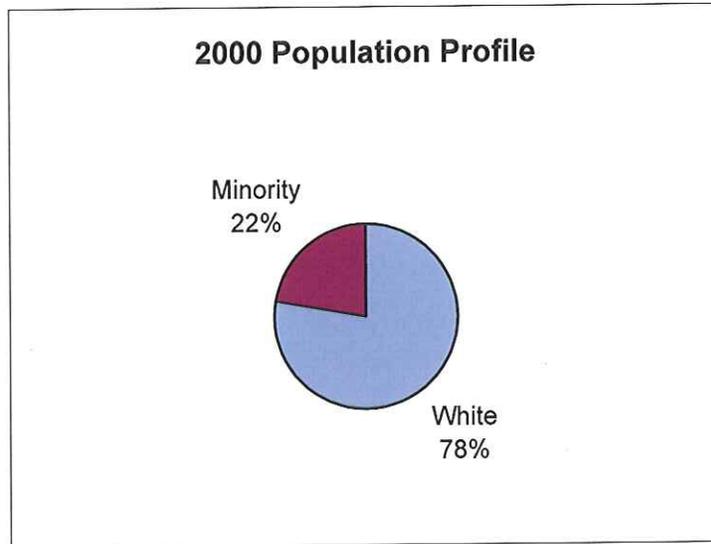
Census Tracts





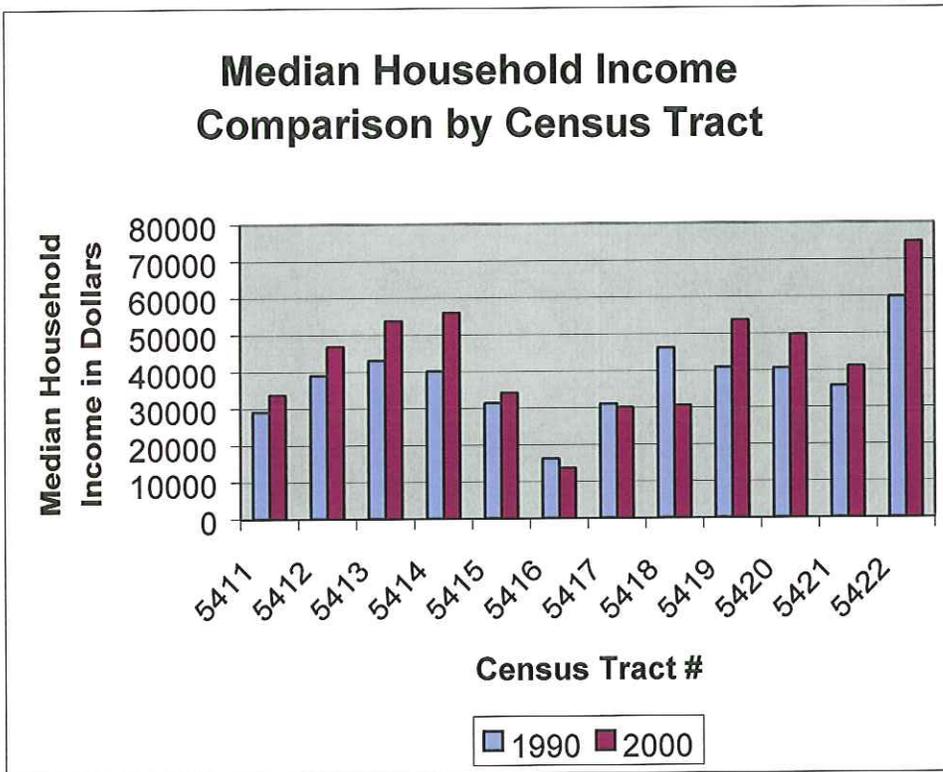
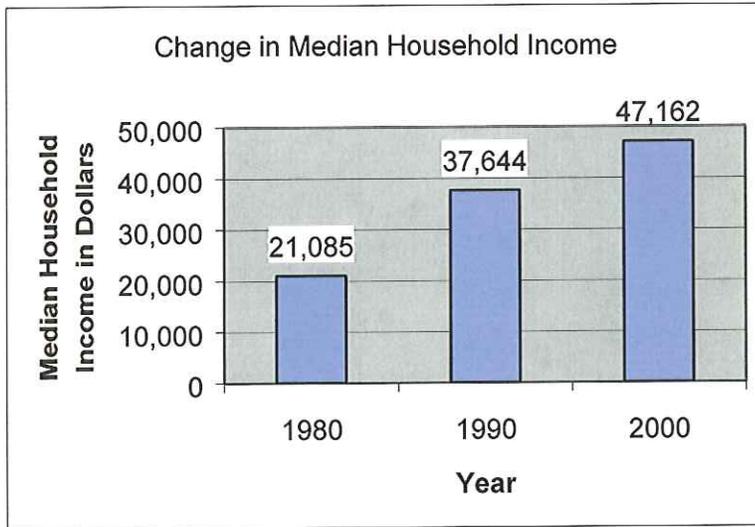
2.4 Race and Ethnicity

In the 1990's, Middletown became more diverse in racial/ethnic terms, as the white non-Hispanic population marginally declined and growth occurred in the black non-Hispanic, Asian/other and Hispanic communities. Asian/others (comprised of Asians, Pacific Islanders and American Indians) is the fastest growing minority group followed by Hispanics. Middletown's minority population of 9,732, which accounted for 22.5% of the overall population, was the largest in the entire region. Middlesex County has a minority population of 10.7%, with the vast majority residing in Middletown.

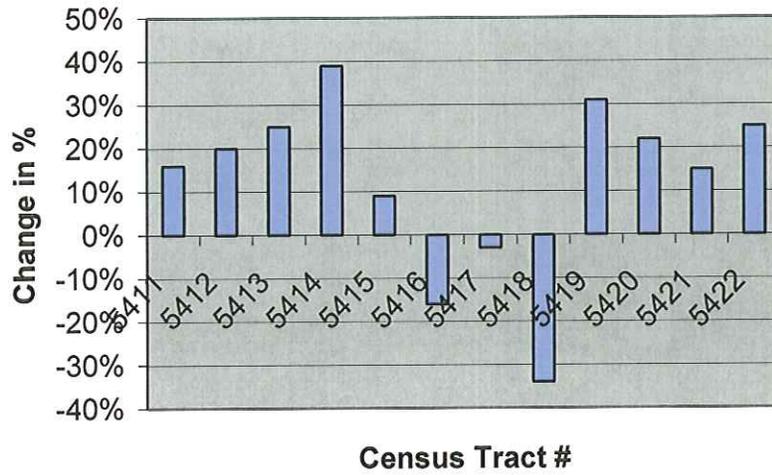


2.5 Income

The median household income of Middletown has risen by 25% between 1990 and 2000 from 37,644 to 47,162. Despite substantial increases in the city as a whole, there is also persistent evidence of poverty. In comparing the median household income data between 1990 and 2000 by census tract, the most dramatic observation was the significant decrease that occurred in the downtown census tracts. Most notably, census tract 5416 dropped from \$16,228 in 1990 to \$13,699 in 2000, at total decrease of 16%. It is also important to note how much poorer census tract 5416 is than all of the other tracts.



**Change in Median Household Income by
Census Tract Between 1990 & 2000**

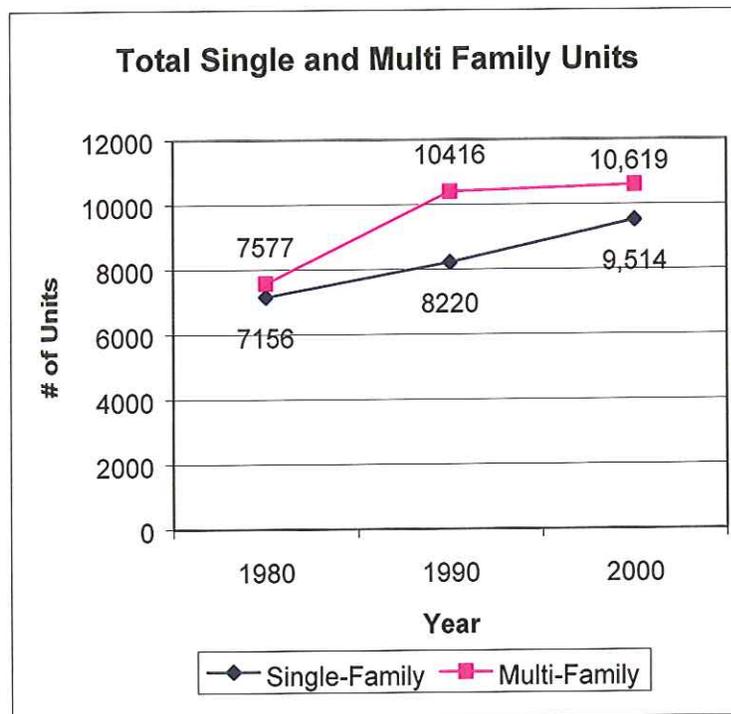


CHAPTER THREE

Housing

3.1 Existing Housing Stock

According to the 2000 census, Middletown had a total of 20,133 housing units of which 6% (1,208) were vacant. Approximately 9,514 housing units were single-family detached while multi-family units accounted for 9,502 units. In 1990 56% of the housing stock was made multi-family and 44% was single-family. The 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development sought to correct this imbalance and gradually shift to a housing stock with the majority of units being single-family residential. The city is achieving this goal as the percentage of single-family homes grew to 48% and multi-family fell to 52%. This trend will continue into 2010 due to the lack of land zoned for multi-family.

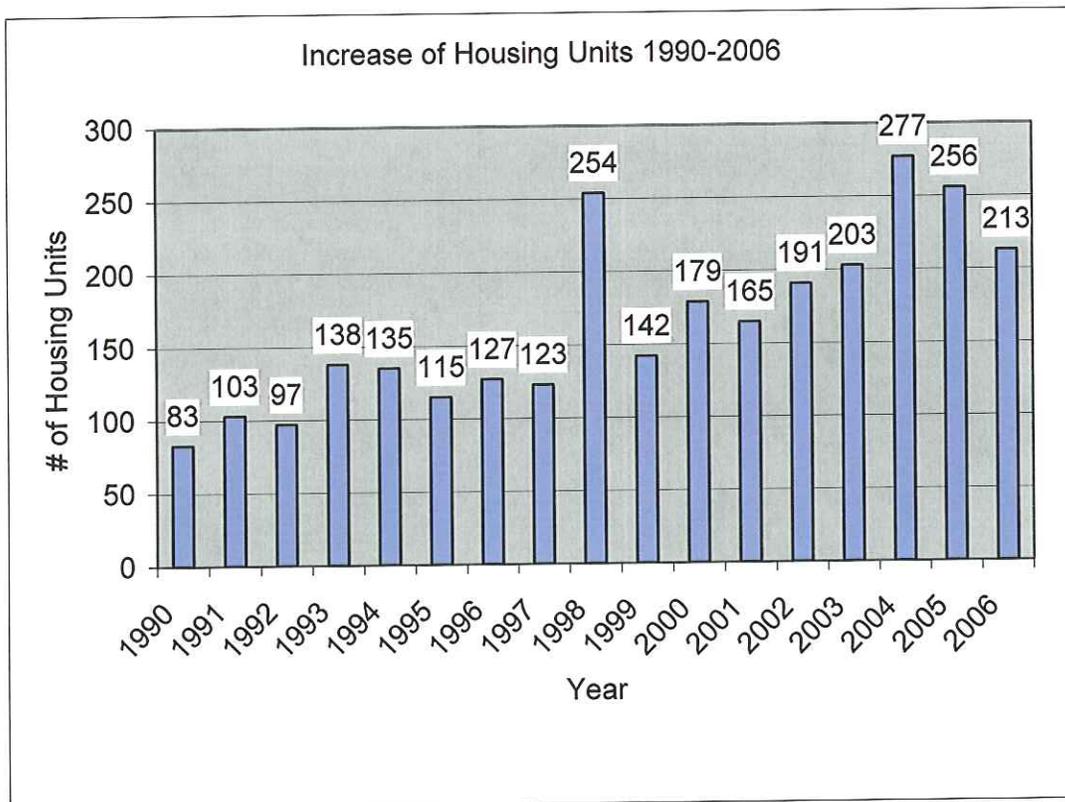


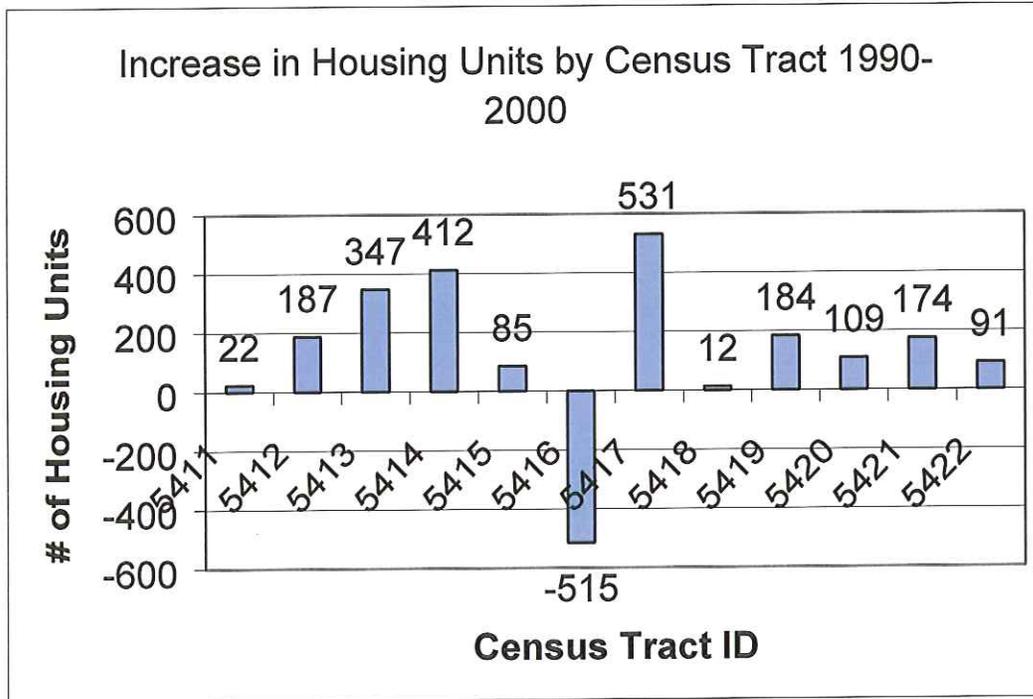
Homeowners accounted for 51.3% of the occupied housing stock in 2000. In comparison, the average ownership rate for Middlesex County was 72.1% and for Connecticut, 66.8%. Homeowners tend to invest more money in their houses and are more likely to take care of their property. A higher number of homeowners brings stability to neighborhoods. Homeownership grew steadily in Middletown from 49.1% in 1980 to 50.7% in 1990 and finally 51.3% in 2000, certainly a positive trend.

The Downtown census tracts (5411, 5415, 5416, & 5417) have an average vacancy rate of 8.3%, exceeding the citywide rate, and a higher percentage of renter households (73.5% compared to 49% in Middletown as a whole). Conversely, census tracts 5412, 5414, 5419, 5420, 5421 and 5422 have higher owner occupancy and lower vacancy than the citywide rates.

According to the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), there were 2,332 housing units constructed in Middletown between 1990 and 2004 bringing the total number of housing units to 20,434, an increase of 12.9%. In 2004, there was a high rate of 277 housing units produced while 1990 housing construction produced only 83 units.

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units in Middletown grew by 8.8% as a whole. The census tracts in and around the downtown (5411, 5415, 5416 and 5417) had previously been almost completely built-out and therefore the rate of new housing development was very low as virtually no new housing units were constructed. By comparison, areas northeast and southeast of the downtown experienced a much higher rate of development. Most notably, the number of housing units in census tracts 5414 and 5422 grew by 14.7% and 14.9% respectively.





3.2 Housing Affordability

Unlike surrounding towns, Middletown has always provided a full range of housing options that include homeless shelters, transitional housing, low cost downtown rooms and apartments, apartments in two and three family homes, larger apartment complexes, condominiums, starter single-family homes, mid-priced homes and high end homes selling for as much as \$600,000.

In Connecticut, as the demand for housing outpaced the supply, housing prices have risen steadily and created an affordability crisis. As a more urban setting, Middletown has the most affordable housing in the region. Middletown has done more than its fair share, and this is reflected in the fact that Middletown is exempt from the Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals Act. Middletown is officially exempt from this act because a full 18.7% of the housing stock is defined as affordable. However, there are areas in the city where affordable housing could be used to stabilize neighborhoods and actually raise the incomes in the area.

CHAPTER FOUR

Current Land Use and Zoning

The most important function of a Plan of Conservation and Development is to determine the ideal future land use and future population in the community. Proper planning will help to ensure a correct balance between residential, commercial, industrial and open space and will ensure that the population does not overburden the infrastructure. Zoning is the legal tool to implement the recommendations in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Middletown has existed as a City for over 350 years. Much of the land has been developed, but there is also a surprising amount of underdeveloped land. The City has been planning its growth since the 1940's. Previous plans of development have defined Middletown's landscape. In recent surveys, many residents identify Middletown's mix of urban, suburban, and rural landscapes as the City's most attractive characteristic.

Table 4.1 displays the land use distribution within the City of Middletown.

Table 4.1
Land Uses by Acreage, 2000

| Land Use | Acres | % |
|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Undeveloped | | |
| Agriculture | 2,135 | 7.7% |
| Woodland/Vacant | 9,765 | 35.2% |
| Parks/Open Space | 4,001 | 14.4% |
| Total Undeveloped: | 15,901 | 57.3% |
| Developed | | |
| Residential | 6,080 | 21.9% |
| High-Density | 875 | |
| Medium-Density | 2,445 | |
| Low-Density | 2,075 | |
| Multi-Family | 685 | |
| Commercial | 340 | 1.2% |
| Industrial | 1,030 | 3.7% |
| Public/Institutional | 920 | 3.3% |
| Roads/Water Bodies | 3,505 | 12.6% |
| Total Developed: | 11,875 | 42.8% |
| Total Acreage | 27,776 | 100.0% |

Figure 4.1 is the Current Land Use Map for Middletown.

Over 56% of the City's land area remains undeveloped. Figure 4.2 below is a photograph of undeveloped land in the city.



Guida Farm – Kelsey Street

While 15,315 acres remains undeveloped, there are both legal and physical constraints on some of this land, which will deter or prevent future development.

Figure 4.3 displays the developed land and those areas classified as open space, inland wetlands, and 100 year-flood plain. These areas are undevelopable.

Existing Open Space

Open space areas in Middletown are owned by the City, State, or by private conservation organizations. Below, Table 4.2 divides the open space areas of Middletown into publicly owned, privately owned, and park areas. As can be noted, Middletown pursued open space acquisition very aggressively in the 1990's.

Figure 4.4 is a map that shows the existing open spaces in Middletown as of 2003.

2000 Land Use
 City of Middletown
 Plan of Conservation and Development
 Summer 2007

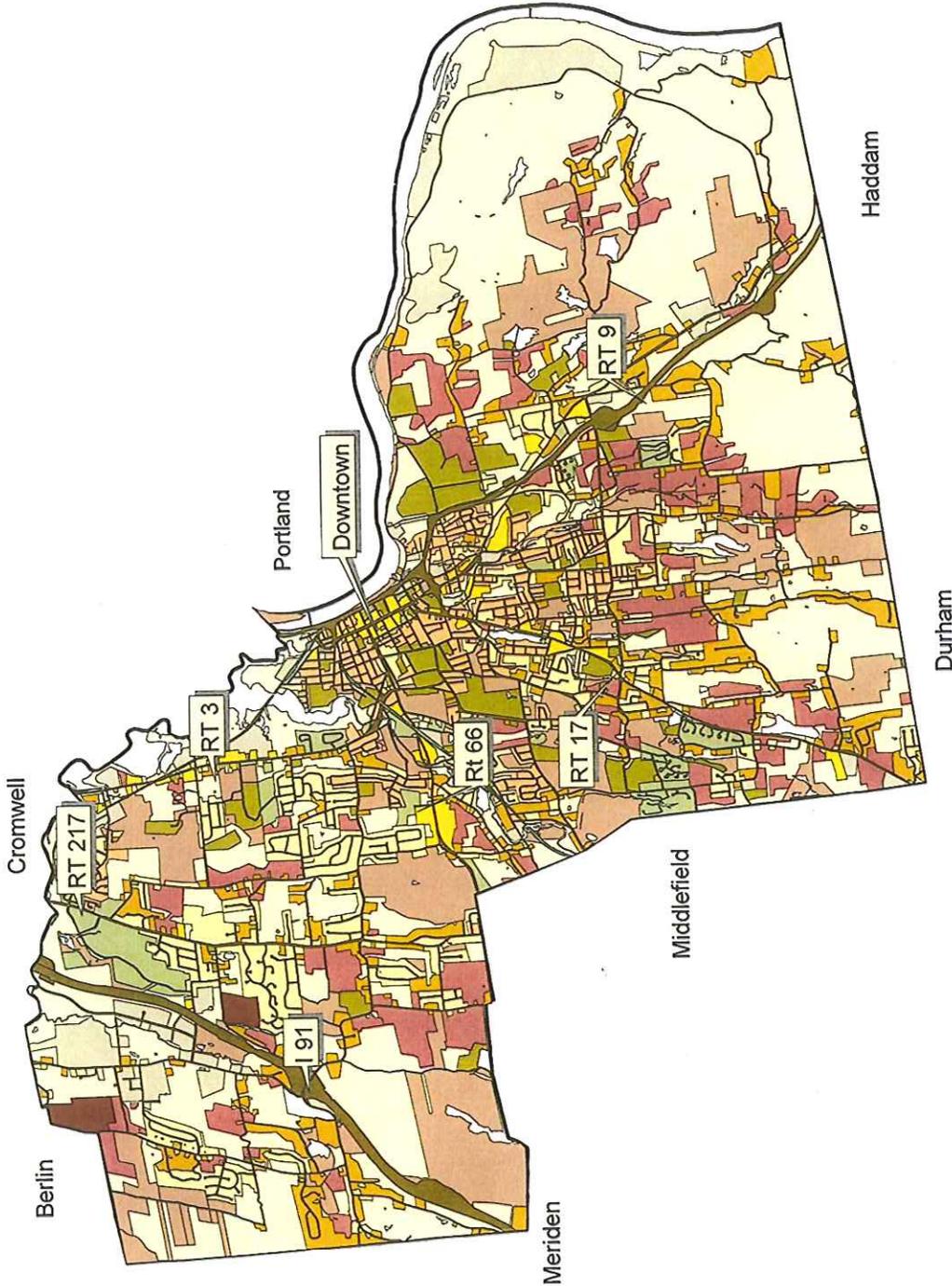
| Land Use | |
|----------|--------------|
| | Agriculture |
| | Commercial |
| | Dirt Road |
| | High Density |
| | Ind/Office |
| | Low Density |
| | Med Density |
| | Multi-Family |
| | Parks/OS |
| | Private Rec |
| | Public/Inst |
| | Railroad |
| | Road |
| | Water |
| | Wood/Undev |



3000 0 3000 6000 Feet



Figure 4.1



Constraints on Development
 City of Middletown
 Plan of Conservation and Development
 Summer 2007

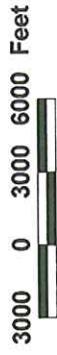
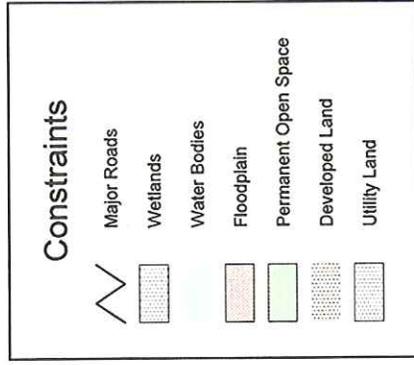
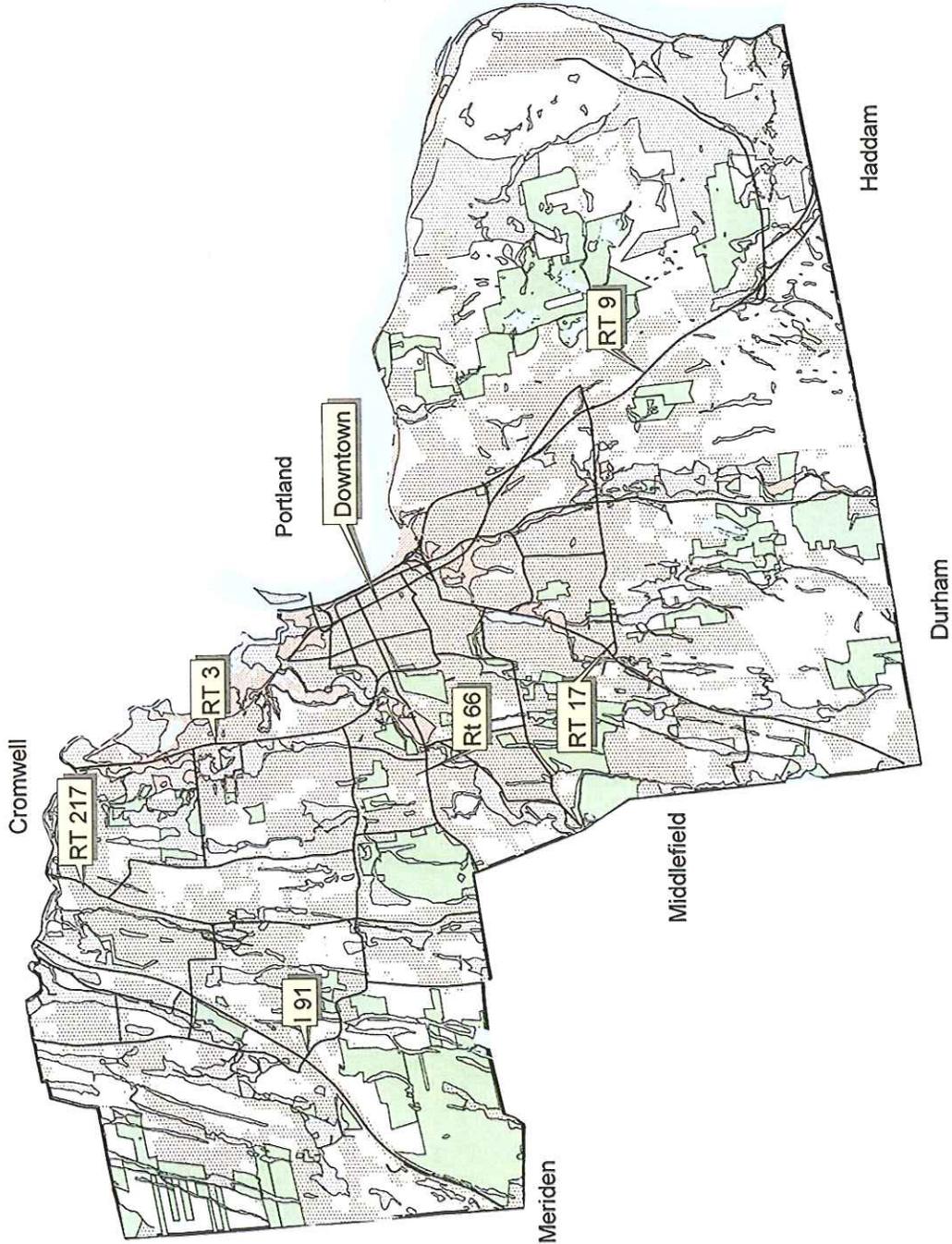


Figure 4.3



Existing City Open Space
 City of Middletown
 Plan of Conservation and Development
 Summer 2007

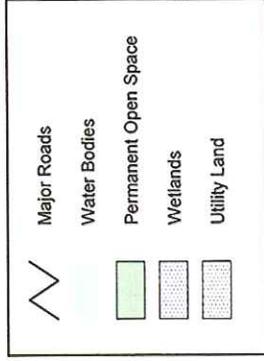
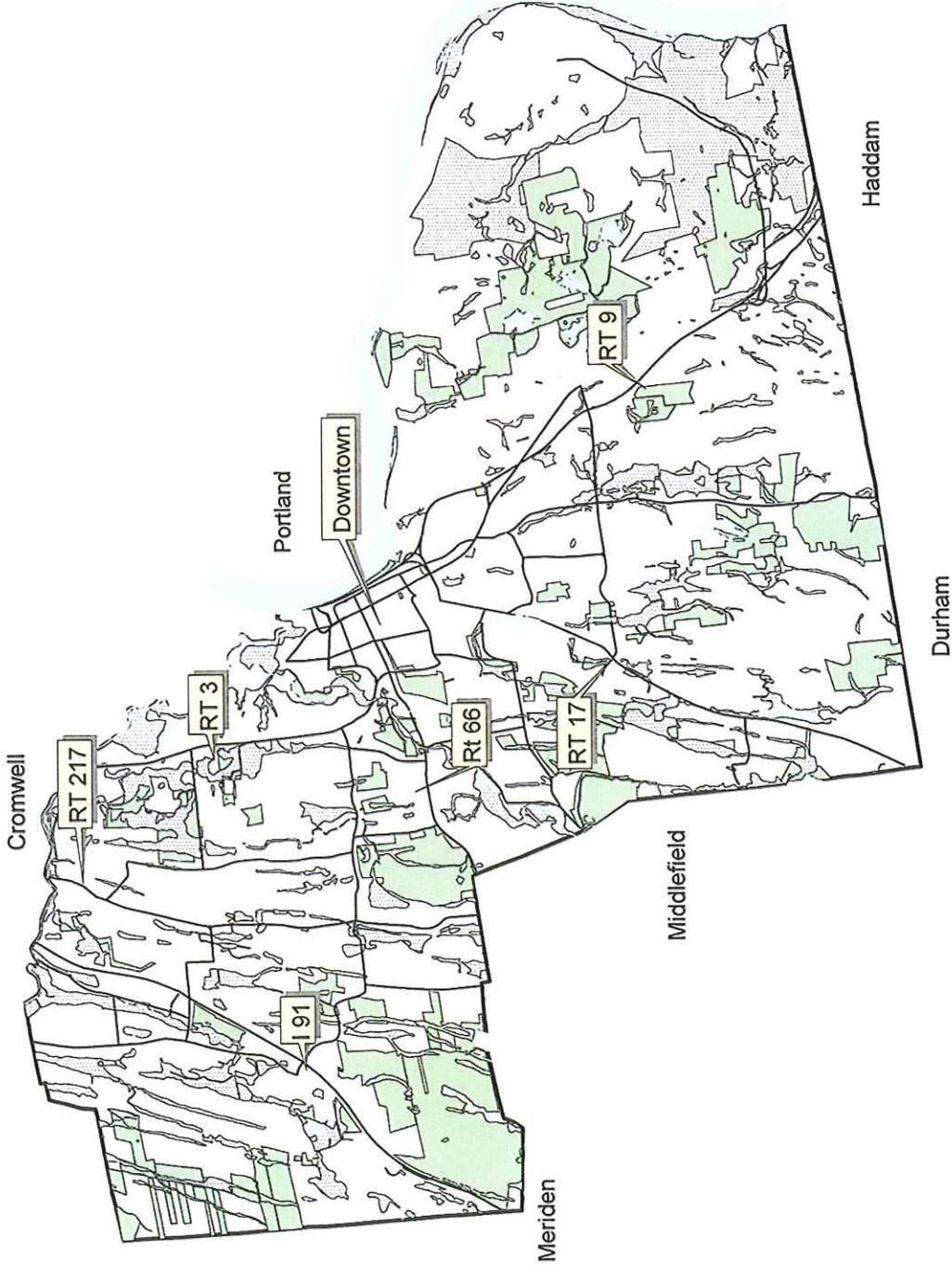


Figure 4.4



Connecticut's Goal of Open Space Acquisition:

Connecticut's goal is to acquire 21 percent of the state's land area for open space, according to an amendment to Public Act 99-235. In order to achieve 21 percent open space, the state sets annual targets. The state's goal in the years 2000 and 2001 was to acquire 4,000 acres each year while increasing to 5,000 acres in 2002.

In order to assist municipal funding of open space acquisitions, a fund called the Charter Oak Open Space Trust Account was created by the state. Middletown has taken full advantage of state matching funds. State funding provided \$1,160,108 to Middletown for the acquisition of eight parcels, comprising 335 acres. These acquisitions were all consistent with the Open Space Plan found in the 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development.

City Open Space Plan of 1993:

Since 1991, both the City and land conservation organizations have acquired a number of open space parcels. In 1990, City residents approved a referendum to create a \$5 million Open Space Trust Fund. Again in 2003, City residents approved an additional \$3 million to replenish the fund. This funding was recommended during the preparation of the 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development and identified as a high priority in the 1989 and the 1999 Survey of Citizens. In 1993, the current Open Space Plan was adopted. The ideas behind this plan were to create a corridor system of interconnected open space connecting areas of forests, brooks, steep slopes, and wetlands. The plan also concentrates on avoiding the acquisition of individual unconnected properties not characterized by unique features. The total number of acres proposed in the Open Space Plan is 9,441 acres, 35 percent of the City. As displayed approximately 4,000 acres out of the 9,441 acres have been permanently preserved. This accounts for 42 percent of the total acres displayed on the Open Space Plan.

Zoning

The city has twenty-eight different zoning classifications. The bulk of these are residential, followed by industrial and then business. Industrial zones line the railroad tracks and portions of I-91 and Route 9. Zones for commercial enterprises lie along the major arterials into town as well as the central business district. Residential and mixed zones make up most of the rest of the land within the city. Table 4.4 shows the zoning classifications and acreages dedicated to each zone. The table indicates that fully 72% of the land in town is zoned residential; 16% industrial; and less than 2% is zone for commercial uses.

| Table 4.4 | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Zoning Reference, by Acreage | | | |
| | Zone Name | Acreage | % Total |
| RPZ | Residential Rezoning | 1225 | |
| R-15 | Residential 15,000 sq. ft. / lot | 4920 | |
| R-30 | " 30,000 sq. ft. / lot | 3460 | |
| R-45 | " 45,000 sq. ft. / lot | 2135 | |
| R-60 | 60,000 sq. ft. / lot | 5720 | |
| R-1 | Restricted Residence | 480 | |
| M | Multi-family | 480 | |
| MX | Mixed Use | 385 | |
| PRD | Planned Residential Development | 785 | |
| DVD | Downtown Village District | 70 | |
| | Total Residential | 19660 | 74.9% |
| B-1 | Central Business | 120 | |
| B-2 | General Business | 225 | |
| NPC | Newfield Planned Commercial | 355 | |
| | Total Business | 700 | 2.7% |
| I-1 | Service Industrial | 170 | |
| I-2 | Restricted Industrial | 150 | |
| I-3 | Special Industrial | 1995 | |
| I-4 | Limited Industrial Zone | 260 | |
| IOP | Interstate Office Park | 98 | |
| IM | Interstate Mixed-Use Zone | 80 | |
| IT | Interstate Trade | 110 | |
| IRA | Industrial Redevelopment Area | 1105 | |
| | Total Industrial | 3968 | 15.1% |
| TD | Transitional Development | 150 | |
| ID | Institutional Development | 1460 | |
| RF | Riverfront Recreation | 306 | |
| | Total Other | 1916 | 7.3% |
| | TOTAL | 26244 | 100.0% |

Development Potential

The development potential for existing undeveloped land was examined by superimposing the zoning map over existing developed and undeveloped land uses in Middletown. Table 4.5 quantifies the developable acreage and presents

the development potential for each major zone, making allowances for site constraints such as wetlands and steep slopes.

The first column in Table 4.5 shows the number of vacant acres that each zone contains. The second column shows the net developable acreage. This is calculated by first subtracting the environmentally sensitive lands (slopes over 25% and water bodies) from the vacant land, then subtracting 10% of the remaining acres to account for roads and utilities. The third column, potential development, reflects the net developable acres multiplied by the lot requirements and building standards found within the zoning code. This results in the amount of additional floor space that could be built in the commercial/industrial sectors and the number of new dwelling units possible in residential sectors.

| Table 4.5 Developable Land | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Zones | Vacant Acres | Net Developable Acres | Potential Development | Additional Population *** |
| Commercial B2 | 100 | 55 | 794,000 sq. ft. | |
| Industrial | | | | |
| I-1 / IRA | 145 | 115 | 2,500,00 sq. ft. | |
| I-2 / I-4 / IT | 765 | 700 | 12,225,000 sq. ft. | |
| I-3 | 1,555 | 1,174* | 8,000,000 sq. ft.* | |
| IOP | 65 | 55 | 470,000 sq. ft. | |
| NPC | 135 | 65 | 849,000 sq. ft. | |
| | 2,765 | 2,164 | 24,838,000 sq. ft. | |
| Residential | | | | |
| Multi Family | 65 | 50 | 300 units | 690 |
| R1/ RPZ /R15 | 1,530 | 1,250 | 3,625 units | 8,335 |
| R30 | 1,730 | 1,420 | 2,055 units | 4,725 |
| R45 | 1,120 | 820 | 795 units | 1,830 |
| R60 | 3,960 | 2,870 | 2,085 units | 4,795 |
| TD | 15 | 13 | 52 units | 120 |
| Mixed Uses | | | | |
| MX | 45 | 30 | 180 units | 415 |
| IM | 60 | 55 | 250 units** | 575 |
| | 8,525 | 6,508 | 9,342 units | 21,485 |

* Connecticut River Interceptor Sewer Project, Middletown Department of Planning, Conservation, and Development.

** Prior to building 250 units, a minimum of 700,000 square feet of office space must be under construction.

*** The 1998 average household size of 2.3 persons was multiplied against the dwelling unit count to arrive at the additional population count. As the trend is toward smaller households, we expect this future population estimate to be overly generous.

Commercial and Industrial Potential

The table indicates that another 650,000 square feet of commercial space could be built and nearly 23,200,000 square feet of industrial floor space. Figure 4.5 shows the location of undeveloped commercial and industrial land in Middletown. Although slopes over 25% were excluded from the acreage calculation, it is possible that the industrial figure remains overly optimistic. For instance, the I-3 section in the Maromas area has a great deal of topographic variety. Even though slopes may not exceed 25% in certain places, parts of the remaining terrain will require substantial preparation for construction and thus may not be truly usable. As Figure 4.5 illustrates, most of the remaining undeveloped business and commercial areas are concentrated in four areas: 1) west of I-91, 2) along the railroad tracks in the northeast corner of town, 3) the Maromas area, and 4) off of Route 17 adjacent to Middlefield. (However, this area does not have access to city sewer)

Housing Potential

Table 4.5 indicates that under current zoning, the majority of new residential construction could take place within the R-15, R-1, and RPZ zones, which have a minimum lot size of 15,000 square feet per residence. The second highest number of new units that could be constructed is in the R-60 zone, those areas on the outskirts of town that are predominantly in use for agriculture and woodlands. Figure 4.6 illustrates the land that is zoned for residential uses but has not been developed. Most of the vacant residential areas are west of the downtown area, east of Route 9 and in the south central portion of the city. Only 26% of the land zoned for residential uses has been developed.

Mixed-Use Areas. It should also be noted that Middletown has mixed-use zones that allow both residential as well as commercial uses. The MX zone can be found along major corridors while the IM zone is limited to a site near the interstate. The IM zone has a maximum cap of 250 dwelling units. Table 3.3 only lists the residential possibilities in these two zones, though additional commercial space is possible in the MX zone, and office space is required in the IM zone, as indicated in the table.

Majority of Undeveloped
Commercial / Industrial Property

City of Middletown
Plan of Conservation and Development
Summer 2007

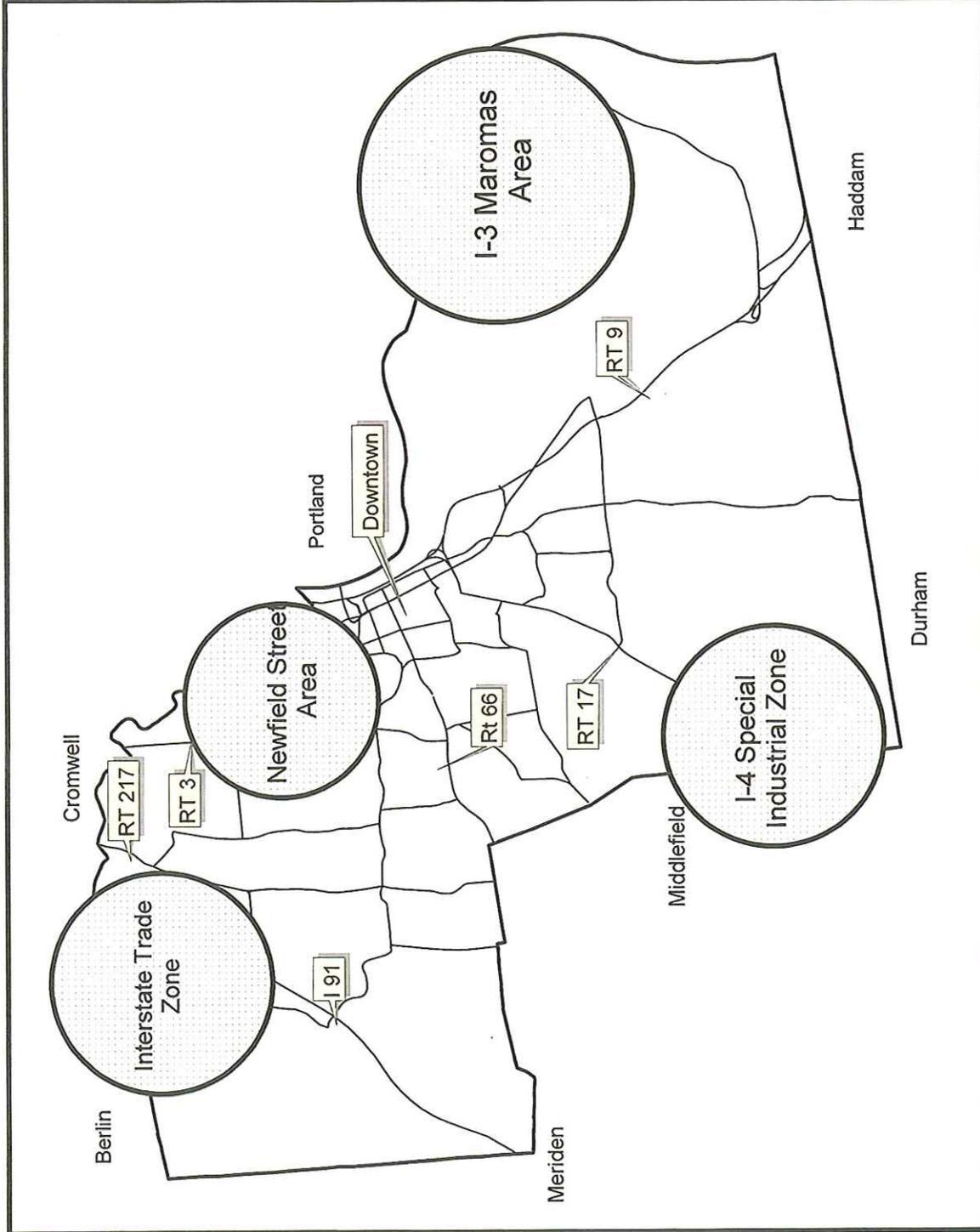
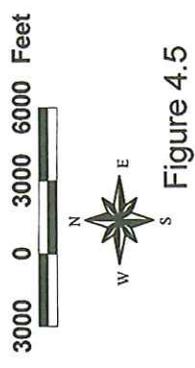


Figure 4.5

Undeveloped Residential Land
 City of Middletown
 Plan of Conservation and Development
 Summer 2007

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|  | Undeveloped Residential Land |
|  | Major Roads |

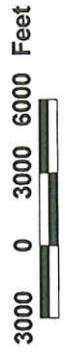
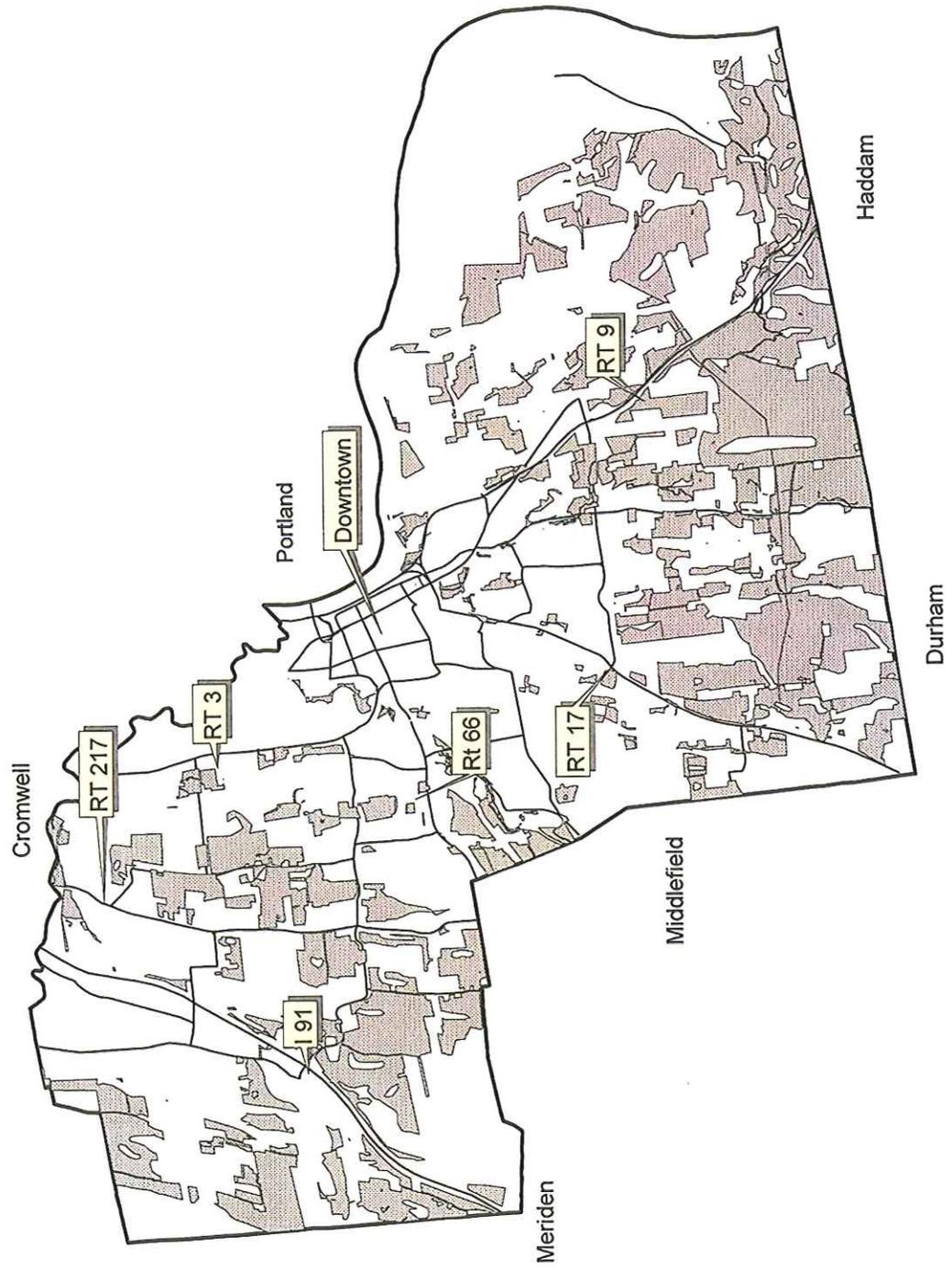


Figure 4.6



Summary

Over the past decade, the City has acquired a very significant amount of open space, added to its housing stock and increased its commercial and industrial tax base. Development during this time has been fully consistent with the 1990 Plan of Development, which sought:

“to encourage the appropriate, coordinated, and economic use of land in a manner which is consistent with the goals articulated in this plan, facilitates conservation of energy, and enables the efficient supply of public utilities and services.”

Goals laid out in the 1990 Plan, such as acquiring more open space, encouraging the vitality of the Central Business District, scrutinizing expansion of the water and sewer service areas, and encouraging a diverse mix of single-family residential dwellings set the tone for open space preservation and development over the past decade.

Looking to the future, residents have strongly voiced their concern to limit Middletown's growth to approximately 50,000 people. At the same time, 65% of respondents also want the City to pursue commercial and industrial expansion and continue open space preservation.

The quality of the new growth is going to be a significant factor in the future. Already, residents are speaking out about the design of their community – 74% of those surveyed said they want greater design review of all projects. The City needs to ensure that growth is visually compatible with and enhances the existing built fabric.

Section 1 Conclusions

- The city's population grew by a healthy 6.5% between 1990 and 2000.
- Current projections predict that growth will continue and the City's population will exceed 50,000 by 2010.
- Middletown has a relatively young population with a median age of 36.
- The baby boomers comprise a significant portion of the population. As that generation ages, the City will need to begin planning for this aging population. For instance:
 - Zoning- Currently all of Middletown's residential zones allow for accessory apartments but not for many mixed use neighborhoods. Scholars believe that the elderly will either continue to live in their existing homes or move in with relatives. Mixed-use zones will allow for elderly services in neighborhoods that are densely populated by the elderly.
 - Better accessibility- One of the major concerns is that of transportation and walkways. Larger street signs, well-maintained walkways, and better transportation services will increase the quality of life for the elderly.
 - At home commodities- Business that can cater to in-home commodities such as grab bars and wider doorways will become a demand in an aging city.
- There are significant and troubling disparities within the City. The downtown census tracts are losing population at alarming rates and the areas on the outskirts of town are growing faster than the City as a whole.
- The median income in the census tracts in and around the downtown is significantly lower than the areas on the outskirts.
- Downtown census tracts experienced virtually no growth in median income between 1990 and 2000 while the areas on the outskirts increased significantly.
- The downtown census tract 5416 has a level of poverty similar to that found in the poorest neighborhoods in Connecticut's largest cities.
- To be truly successful, Middletown needs to reverse the decline in its urban core and raise the incomes in census tract 5416.

SECTION II

Setting the Course Planning issues facing Middletown

With the goal of identifying the major land use issues facing the city in the next 10 years, the Planning and Zoning Commission spent the majority of the summer of 2006 reviewing technical memorandum related to various areas of town during public workshops.

These memorandum discussed the natural resources, open spaces, the remaining undeveloped land and the primary issues facing each area.

These workshops were very informative as to the amount of open space preservation that has occurred, where undeveloped land remained and where future growth would occur. It became quite clear that Middletown is a mature community, which will see limited growth in the next decade.

Middletown is clearly a town of varying landscapes, including rural, suburban and urban. This is Middletown's most unique feature and most valuable characteristic. Understanding that the differentiated product demands a premium as well as understanding that Middletown's diverse landscape is its most unique feature, it is imperative that Middletown preserves its rural character, maintain a healthy suburban market and continuously strive for a vibrant downtown.

The conclusion can be drawn that the suburban market is very healthy, the rural landscape is threatened by suburban expansion and the urban, while appearing healthy, is very threatened by negative forces.

The following chapters will discuss the major land use issues facing the City of Middletown. The chapters will also offer very specific recommendations designed to implement this plan.

CHAPTER SIX

Managing Future Residential Growth

Population growth and suburban sprawl has been a major concern for the City of Middletown. Previous Plans of Development have indicated that the population has the potential, based on current zoning, to increase to 65,000 residents at total residential build out.

Between 1990 and 2007, the City has averaged an increase of well over one hundred houses per year. From 1990 to 2000, the City grew by 7 percent. According to a resident survey in 2002, residents felt that a population of 65,000 is too high and that it is very important to maintain the City's rural character. According to the Survey, 60 percent of residents also want to increase the amount of open space in the City.

Pressure on Community Services:

Communities with rapidly increasing populations face many issues. These issues include school system capacity, public health concerns, adequate infrastructure, and the amount of funds needed to provide essential City services. Increasing school costs, the demand for new roads, water/sewer lines, garbage pickup, park and recreational programs, and police and fire services increase as the population continues to rise. There will be additional revenue from these homes, but the costs associated with growth often exceed the revenues received.

What Should Be Done About Growth in Middletown?

Geographically, at 42 square miles, Middletown is very large. The costs associated with suburban development are significant. These costs include city services such as, streetlights, snowplowing, public roads, leaf pickup, police patrols, etc. to 42 square miles. Therefore, it is essential that Middletown carefully analyze its undeveloped land to better understand what remains and its susceptibility to change.

Middletown's Developable Land:

In order to predict and maintain the future population, this plan looks at Middletown's land characteristics then calculates the actual amount of developable acres in Middletown for the potential future population.

Previous plans have assumed all vacant land would be developed at the highest density allowed in the zoning. With this assumption, these plans concluded that the population at total residential build out would exceed 65,000.

Understanding that some parcels will have soils which can not support a septic system and that the City has been purchasing open space at a rate of over 100 acres per year for the past 15 years, and the plain fact that some landowners will choose not to develop their land and others will want a larger lot than what is required by zoning, the City conducted a study to get a better handle on the future population.

Previous studies have concluded that an increase of approximately 11,153 additional residents and 2,165 units could be developed in Middletown based upon the actual number of net developable acres. This is a much lower population increase than the estimated increase concluded in Middletown's previous Plans of Conservation and Development. **This estimate yields a total population at residential build out of approximately 56,000 residents.**

This estimate is a snap shot in time. It assumes the City will not buy any additional open space, large utility land holdings will be developed and all current farmers and other owners of large tracts of land develop their land.

It also assumes there will be no zone changes to increase or decrease densities and no expansion of the approved sewer service area mandated by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Two recent subdivisions indicate that this conservative process for determining how many lots an undeveloped parcel of land can yield may have overestimated the number of houses that could be built.

The Pistol Creek subdivision encompasses a 66-acre piece of land in the western section of the City off of Atkins Street. The Fawn Meadow subdivision encompasses a 61-acre piece of land in the eastern section of the City off of Chamberlain Road. Both are characterized by steep slopes, inland wetlands and an absence of city water and sewer. These characteristics are similar to much of the remaining undeveloped land in Middletown.

Using the formula employed to estimate the number of lots at total residential build out, Pistol Creek and Fawn Meadow would have yielded 25 and 38 lots, respectively. The actual approved subdivision plan resulted in 10 and 13 lots respectively.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

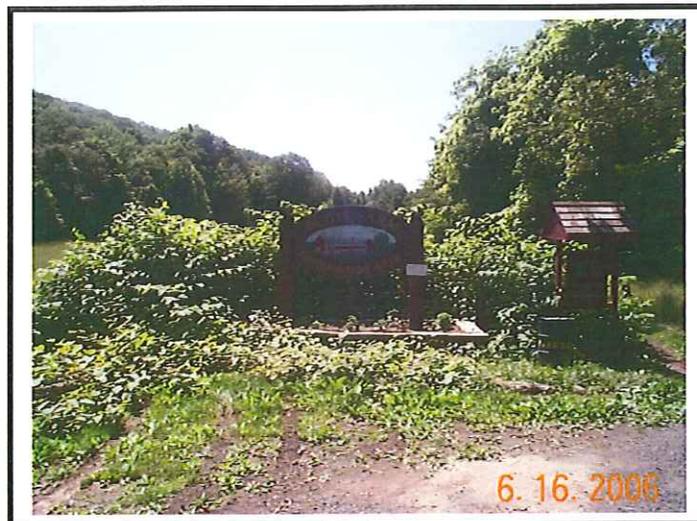
- The Commission is comfortable with the current residential zoning classifications and a target population of approximately 50,000 - 55,000.
- To achieve this goal, the Commission must not authorize any zone changes, outside of the downtown core, which increases the density beyond what is currently allowed and promotes sprawl.
- The Commission must not allow the expansion of the currently mandated Department of Environmental Protection sewer service area.
- To promote more viable and unique neighborhoods, the city should design and construct a multi use trail system which links 80 % of all residential units in the higher density zones to shopping areas and the downtown core.

CHAPTER 7

Protecting Natural Resources and Preserving Rural Character

The best way to protect critical natural resources is to acquire the land as open space. The current Plan of Conservation and Development discusses the natural resources that make Middletown unique. The plan includes an open space plan, which identifies proposed open space corridors. Open space acquisition efforts over the past 15 years have focused on acquiring these unique natural resources within these identified corridors. Figure 7.1 is the City's official open space plan.

In 1990 the City owned 967 acres of parks and open space. This represented 3.5 % of the city's total land area. As a result of recommendations encompassed in the 1990 Plan of Development, the City acquired 1,317 acres of land as permanent city-owned open space between 1990 and 2006. The City's aggressive open space policies have resulted in 2,284 acres of publicly owned parks and open space. An additional 851 acres were donated to land trusts and homeowners associations. The City's investment of \$8 million in bond funds leveraged millions in State funds and private donations resulting in a 224 % increase in the amount open space in the City of Middletown. Figure 7.2 displays the open space acquisitions since 1990.



Guida Conservation Area

The University of Connecticut studied the increase in developed land for all Connecticut towns from 1985 to 2002. The study revealed that in 1985, 21.8 % of Middletown's land was developed. The article stated that the figure increased to 25.2 % developed land in 2002. This translates into 885 acres being developed during the 17-year period from 1985 to 2002.

Open Space Plan
City of Middletown
Plan of Conservation and Development
Summer 2007

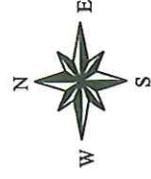
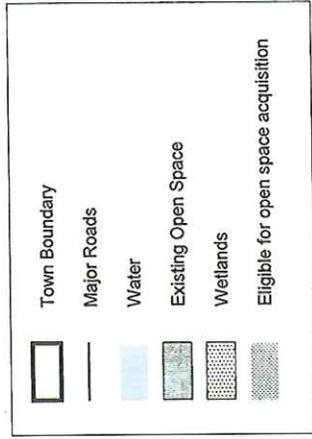
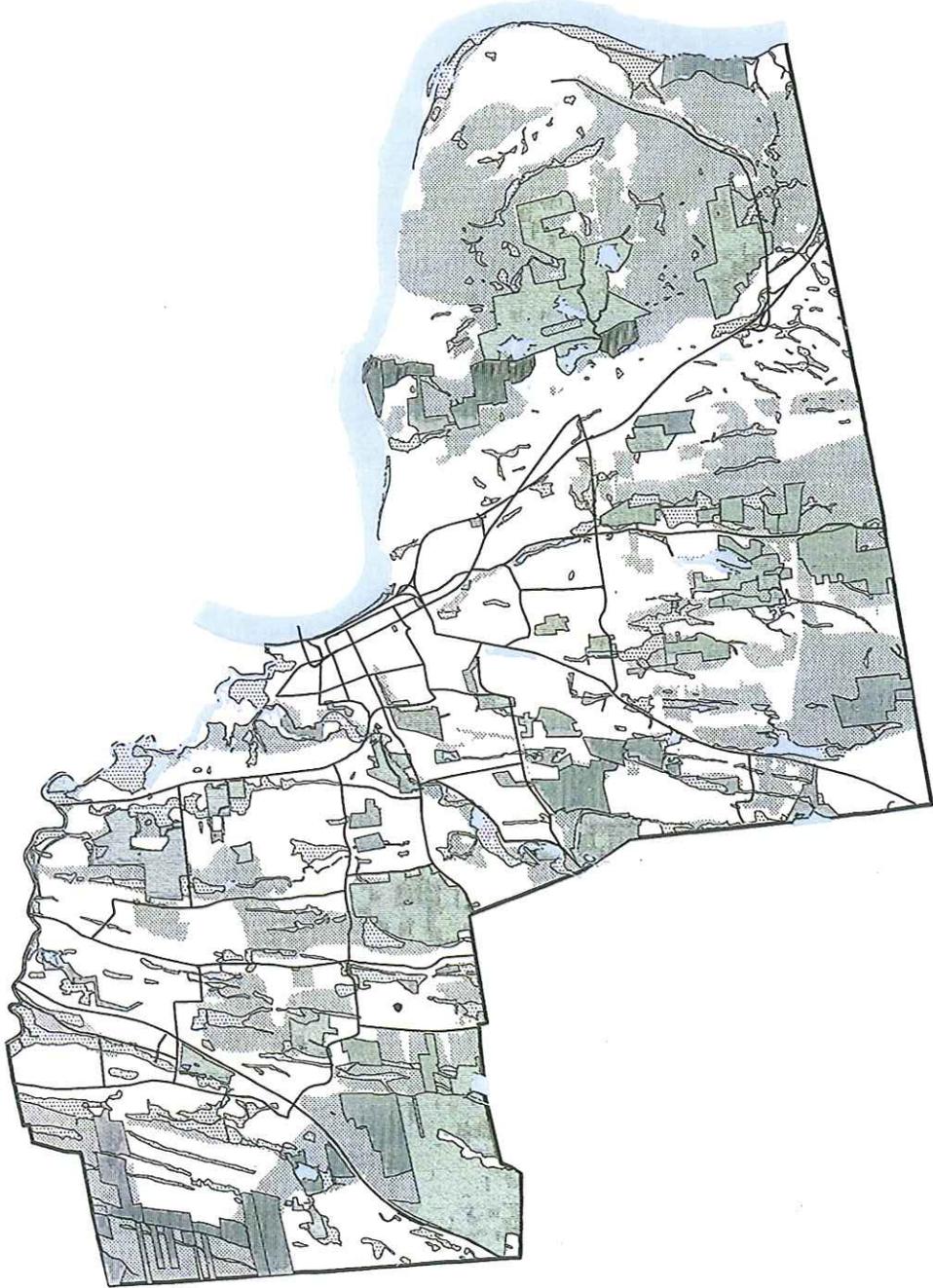


Figure 7.1



Open Space Acquisitions
City of Middletown
Plan of Conservation and Development
Summer 2007

Legend:

- Open Space acquired after 1990 (represented by a green square)
- Major Roads (represented by a black line with a double-dash pattern)

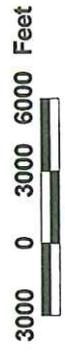
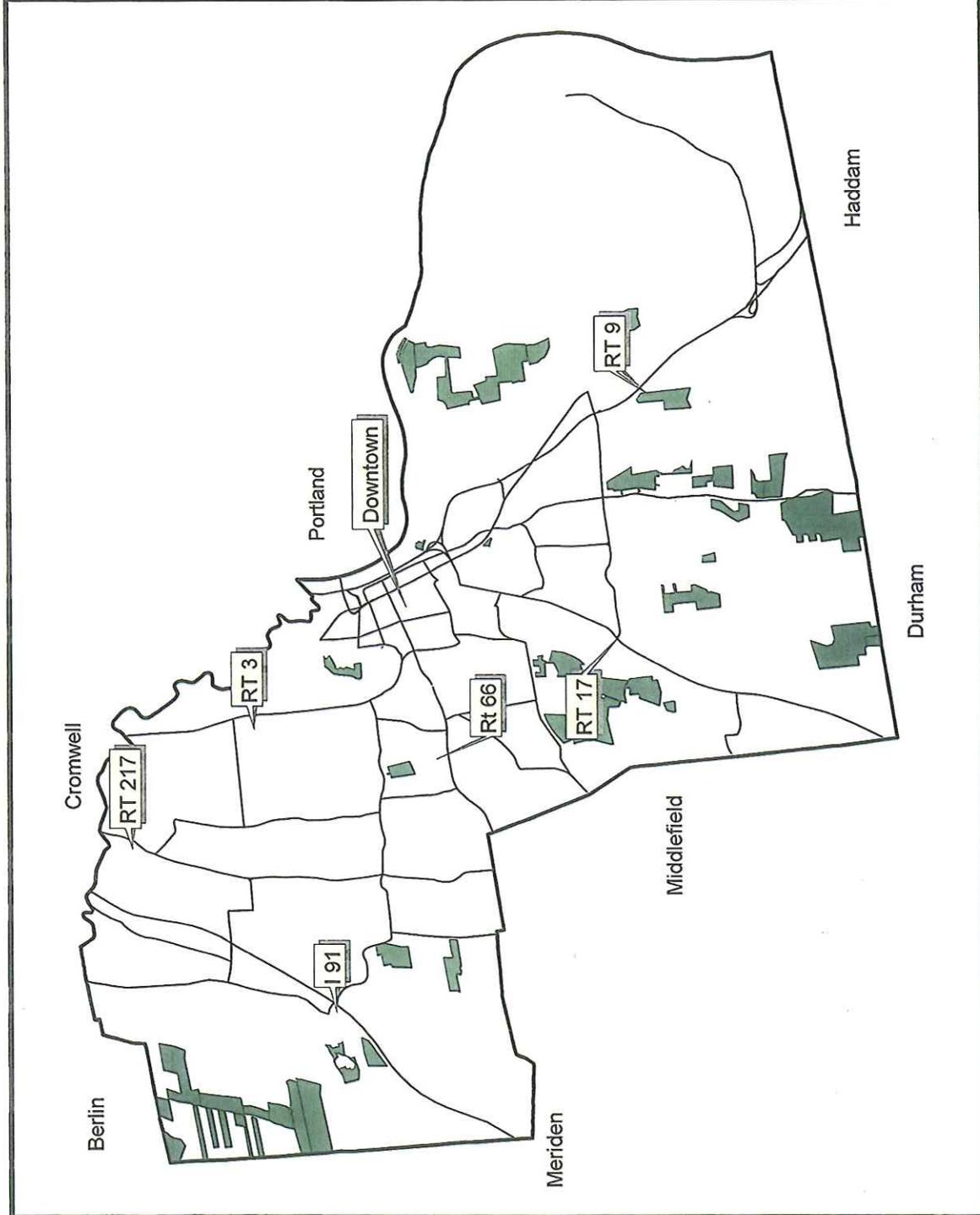


Figure 7.2



Middletown has established itself as one of the leaders in open space preservation in Connecticut. Middletown has permanently preserved 2,186 acres of land from 1990 to 2006. The amount of permanently preserved open space (2,186 acres) was more than twice the increase in developed land during similar periods of time!

For the past 16 years, the City focused on land acquisition to accomplish both environmental protection and growth control. As shown on Figure 7.3, these open spaces are scattered throughout the community and there is a large (>50 acres) undeveloped and publicly accessible open space area within one mile of every home in Middletown!

Table 7.1 Protected Land Status as of 2007

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Total Permanently Protected Open Space | 3,134 acres |
| Inland Wetlands | <u>2,933 acres</u> |
| Total | 6,067 acres |

Percentage of land in town classified as Open Space/Wetlands 22%.

****Does not include schools, Wesleyan / Long Lane Utility land, CVH watershed land.**

A.) Preserving Rural Character

While there has been significant investment in open space in the last 16 years, the vast majority of the properties purchased have been woodlands. As the Commission reviewed each area of town, it became apparent that there are farms and “farm corridors” which face significant development pressure. These prime agricultural soils, with gentle slopes and well-drained soils, are also ideal for development. Figure 7.4 displays those farms taking advantage of the State’s Chapter 490 preferential tax program.

Understanding that Middletown’s farm corridors contribute greatly to the City’s diversity, the City should begin a dialogue with local farmers to better understand their current situation and their willingness to sell the development rights. The City has received a Farm Viability Grant from the State Department of Agriculture to begin that dialogue and develop a comprehensive farmland preservation strategy.

The acquisition of development rights is certainly the best way to preserve working farms. In this way, farmers can continue to own and farm their properties and the City can be assured the farms are permanently protected. Once the farm viability study is complete, the City should pursue a referendum authorizing the issuance of bonds for farmland preservation. The State of Connecticut is also very interested in farmland preservation. The State program can be used to leverage additional funding. The Department of Environmental Protection’s

Proximity of Homes to
Open Space (radius 1 mi.)
City of Middletown
Plan of Conservation and Development
Summer 2007

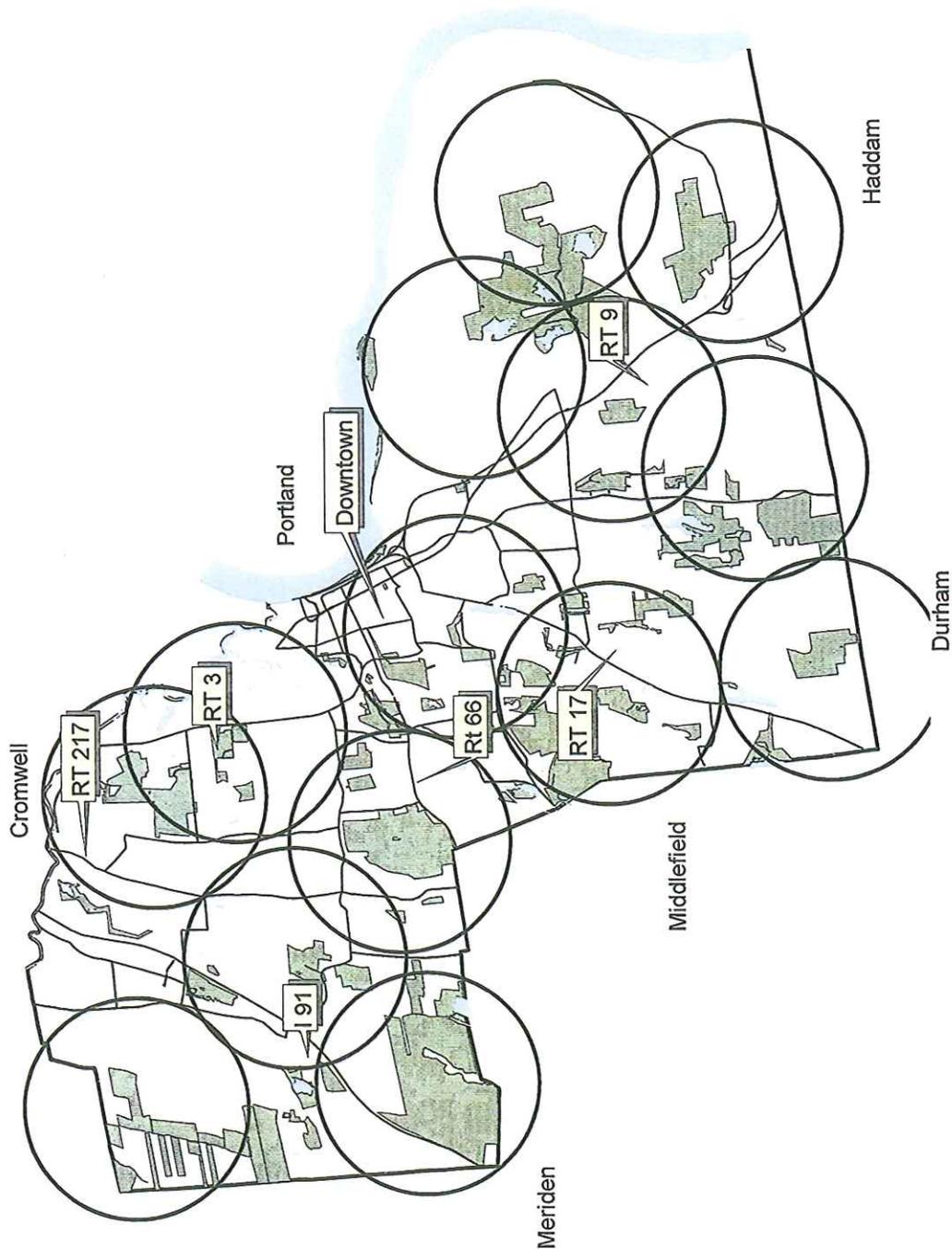
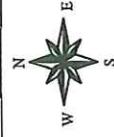
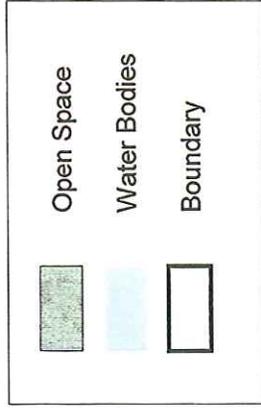


Figure 7.3

Chapter 490 Farms
 City of Middletown
 Plan of Conservation and Development
 Summer 2007

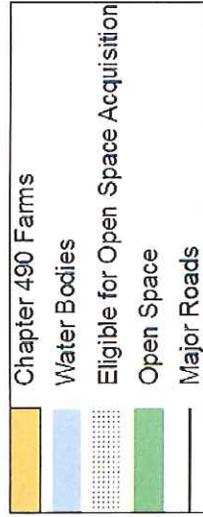
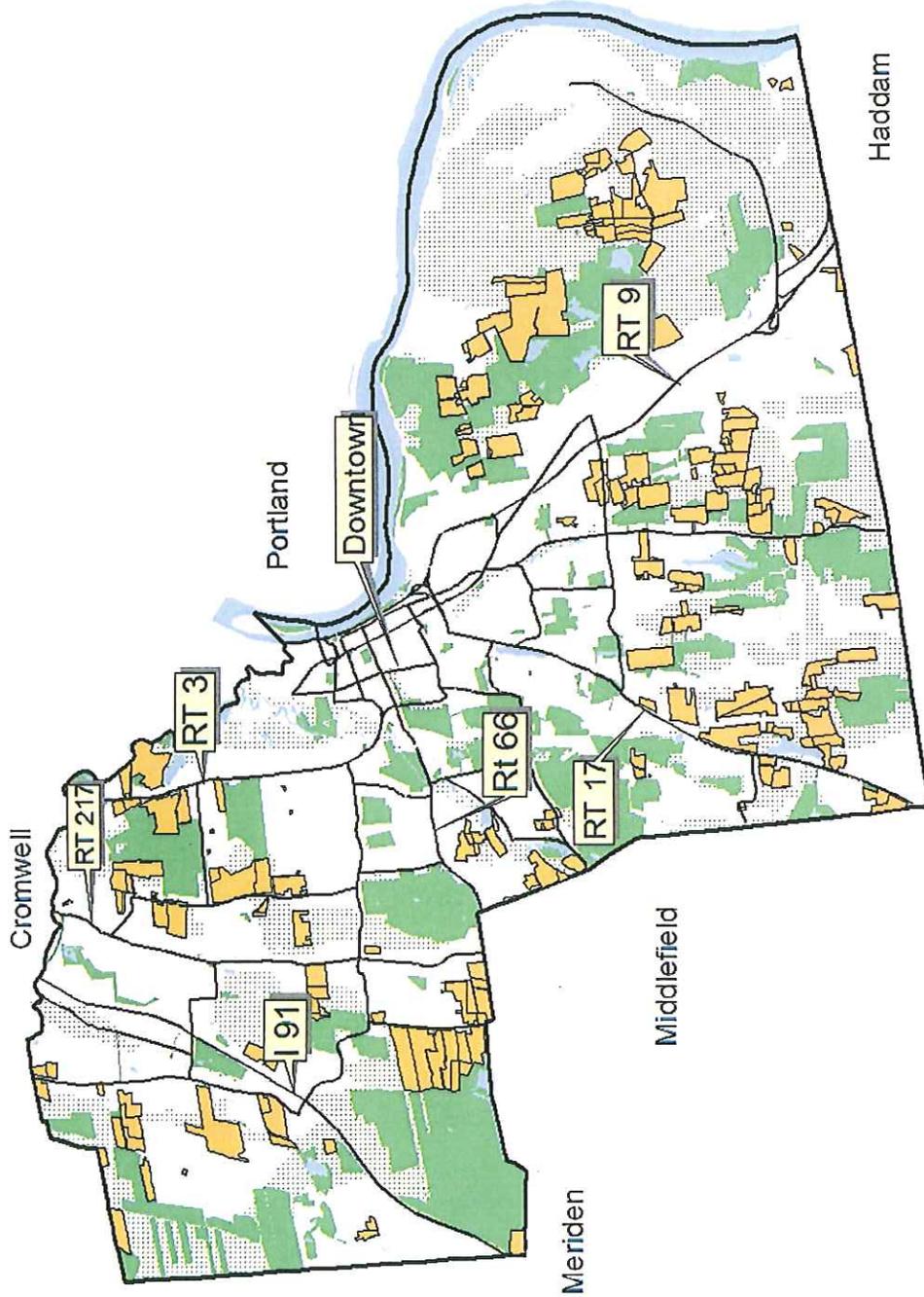
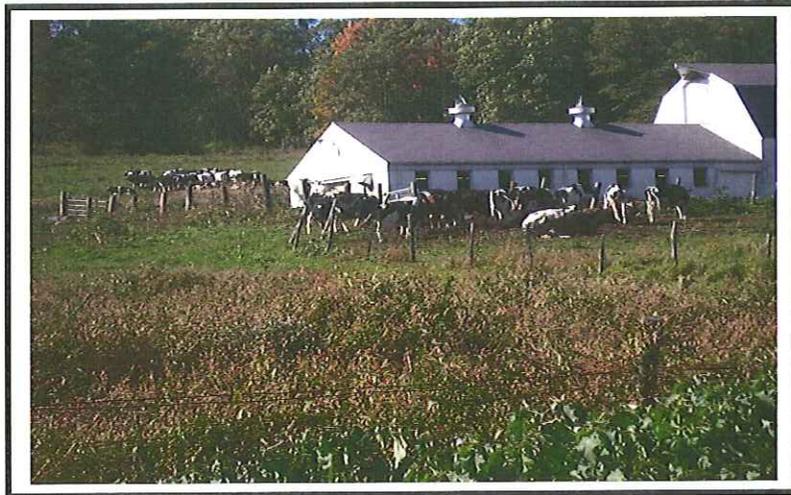


Figure 7.4



program provides a 65% matching grant for the purchase of open space or development rights.



Higgins Farm

Middletown benefits from its rural character and therefore needs to retain it. The rural areas of Middletown are threatened by suburban development. Farmers have an absolute right to develop their land in accordance with underlying zoning, and there is no fiscally responsible way that Middletown could preserve all of these areas.

However, we recognize the value that farms and farmland contribute to the quality of life in a community. Some of the values of farmland preservation result in open space, watershed protection, the reduced burden on town services as compared to residential development, the availability of locally grown products, agri-tourism, the educational component of having farms intermingled in an urban environment.

As rural areas are developed, it is absolutely essential that the development be in harmony with the existing rural landscape. Middletown's existing regulations are a recipe for suburban development. Wide roads, with 110-foot diameter cul-de-sacs, complete drainage systems, concrete sidewalks, street lights and concrete curbs do not help preserve rural character. It is well accepted that wide roads and suburban type developments:

- Increase vehicular speed and the amount of impervious area;
- Decrease infiltration into the groundwater which cleanses the runoff;
- Directly inject urban pollutants, oils, gas, litter and pet waste directly into nearby water bodies;
- Increase the costs associated with land development and decrease housing affordability;
- Require elaborate drainage systems, including large detention ponds;
- Are often out of character with surroundings; and
- Unnecessarily increase maintenance costs for snow plowing, streetlights

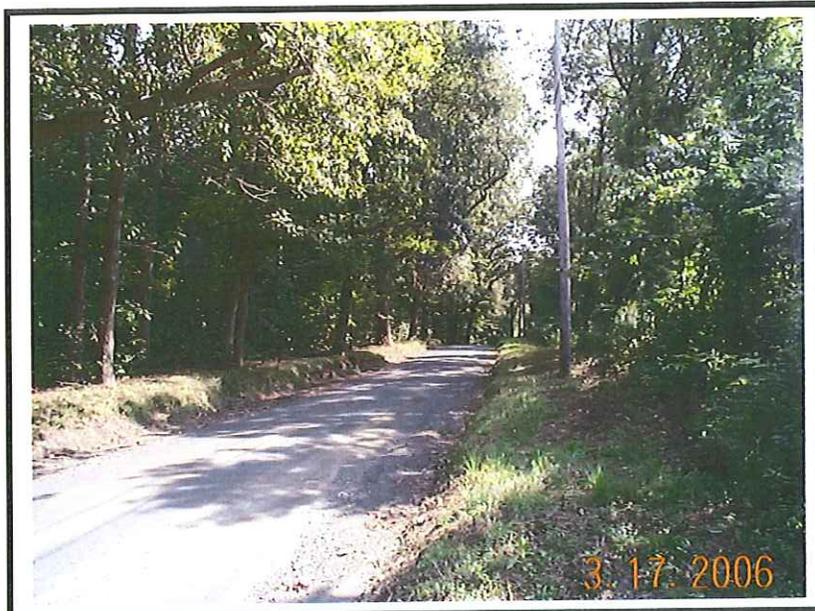
and repaving.

In areas of low-density, developing such road designs do not make sense environmentally or economically. It makes no sense to require 200 feet of paved road, concrete curbs and concrete sidewalks along every lot in the city's rural and undeveloped areas. This is true particularly when new roads come off of 18 to 20 foot existing roads with no sidewalks, curbs or drainage systems.

Existing Collector Roads

Atkins Street. – 18 to 20 feet
Ballfall Road – 20 feet
East Street - 22 feet
Margarite Road – 18 feet
Arbutus Street – 18 to 20 feet
Maromas Road – 18 to 20 feet
Bear Hill Road – 18 feet

A rural road standard with narrower, curbless roads with drainage swales along the side, which also encourages the preservation of stone walls, and the placement of homes into the tree lines rather than in the middle of fields will go a long way towards preserving rural character. A rural road standard would also reduce the amount of impervious area; slow traffic; increase infiltration into the groundwater; require urban pollutants, oils, gas, litter, pet waste to be filtered through the grass and soil before reaching nearby water bodies; require a relatively simple drainage systems, eliminating the reliance on unsightly detention ponds with standing water and mosquito concerns; and it will greatly reduce maintenance costs which will save taxpayers money.



A rural road in Maromas

Because of Middletown's diverse landscape, Middletown needs two (2) sets of development regulations: the existing suburban-style subdivision regulations for the RPZ, and R-15 zones, and in the R-30, R-45 and R-60 zones, a new rural subdivision regulation.

It is a common misconception that larger lots will preserve rural character. This plan does not advocate an increase in minimum lot size. It is well accepted that larger lots result in a less efficient pattern of development, including a greater fragmentation of the landscape, a requirement for more road frontage and longer runs of utility lines. To avoid the negative effects of large lot development, this plan strongly advocates for regulations which provide for a higher density more appropriate pattern of development, which at the same time preserves more land as open space.

Regulations need to be developed which allow the type of development that will preserve the City's rural character. It is important that the development using the rural design standards be an outright permitted use in rural areas. This will send a strong message to the development community by promoting the desired pattern of development and discouraging the standard cookie cutter type subdivision.

B.) Protecting Water Quality

The city currently has strong regulations to protect its public drinking water supplies as discussed in the 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

There is now a need to provide further protection for all its water resources, beyond those which serve as a source of public drinking water.

Since the adoption of the 1990 POCD, the elimination of non point source pollution (NPSP) has become a significant issue.

NPSP is the runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roads and parking lots, into adjacent wetlands and water bodies. For Middletown, the most notable of these are the Connecticut River, the Coginchaug River, the Mattabasset River, Sumner Brook and their associated wetlands and tributaries.

The goal is to reduce the amount of harmful nutrients, road salt and sand, construction sediment, organic matter, pesticides and other pollutants that reach the water bodies and harm aquatic life or make the watercourse unsuitable for recreation.

The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency (IWWA) has put a great deal of focus on storm water quality when reviewing development applications. These diligent reviews should continue and should be focused on requiring best management practices to protect the water resources, including but not limited to bio-filters, grass swales and detention ponds with plant uptake in a treatment

train approach, where applicable. Additionally, measures should be taken to improve infiltration and to encourage sheet flow by reducing the amount of impervious surfaces and increasing the use of pervious concrete and asphalt.

While it is within the IWWA purview to regulate new development, by far the largest amount of degraded storm water reaching the city's water bodies comes from existing roads and parking areas which have been built with absolutely no consideration of storm water quality and watercourse preservation.

The State has adopted detailed regulations, which require municipalities to address NPSP concerns. The State's Phase 2 Non Point Source Regulations required the city's Public Works Department to develop a Storm water Management Plan in 2004 and update the plan annually. The city should do all that is possible to implement this plan by identifying and eliminating non-point source pollution coming from the city's drainage outfalls. New drainage systems should include best management practices for storm water quality and, as economically feasible, existing drainage systems should be regularly maintained and retrofitted to include best management practices.

Enforcement is also critical. The IWWA regulations allow municipalities to strictly enforce soil erosion and sediment controls and identify locations of extreme and documented sources of non-point source pollution and seek corrective measures.

C.) Protecting the Coginchaug Greenway Corridor Amendment

The Coginchaug River in Middletown begins at Wadsworth Falls State Park at the Middlefield town line, passes through Veterans Memorial Park, winds its way around the North End peninsula where it merges with the Mattabesset River, and then extends all the way to the mouth of the Mattabesset River where it joins the Connecticut River. This greenway corridor deserves special attention by the Middletown Planning and Zoning Commission and by other city agencies because of its important biological resources, its unique ecological services in the floating meadows at the Middletown/Cromwell border, connection to Wilcox Island, and opportunities for providing public access to green space in the heart of Middletown's urban areas.

As discussed in the Amendment of Protecting Water Quality, elimination of runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roads and parking lots, is a primary step for protecting water quality and biological resources in the Coginchaug River. Increased development and paved areas along the Washington Street corridor and around Palmer Field Stadium pose a significant risk to water quality in the Coginchaug River. Construction of bridges of any type across the river, including pedestrian bridges, also pose a risk to water quality because the placement of bridge supports destabilizes stream banks and leads to increased erosion. The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency should pay close attention to potential impacts of any proposed development projects, including bridges, on

the Coginchaug River.

Runoff and seepage from the North End peninsula, including the transfer station and the closed landfill, also have the potential to impact water quality in the Coginchaug and Mattabesset Rivers and the floating meadows. The floating meadows play a critical role in improving the water quality that enters the Connecticut River; they act as a filter that filters out contaminants coming from the Coginchaug and Mattabesset Rivers. The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency should pay close attention to proposed development projects on the North End peninsula to make sure that runoff that could harm the habitat or functional value of the floating meadows is minimized. Construction projects that could impact the Mattabesset River, such as a possible extension of a sewage pipeline, should be carefully designed to minimize harm to sensitive habitats.

A further need is to avoid the dumping of snow, road salt, and sand in any location where the runoff from the melting snow can enter a sensitive waterway such as the Coginchaug River. The addition of large amounts of salt and sand into the River permanently changes the stream bottom habitat and create conditions unsuitable for invertebrates and fishes. The City should designate a location for dumping snow that avoids degrading aquatic resources, such as the current location in Veterans Park.

Creation of a Green Corridor

The City has the opportunity to facilitate creation of a green corridor along the Coginchaug River between Veterans Memorial park and the North End peninsula. This green corridor could be created through acquisition of conservation easements or open space land from willing property owners along the river. Establishing this corridor would protect water quality and riparian habitat from development in perpetuity, thus protecting the Coginchaug River for future generations of Middletown residents. The corridor could be anchored by maintaining the closed landfill at the North End peninsula in a manner that promotes environmental and human health and safety, while protecting the landfill's value to wildlife.

The Jonah Center for Earth and Art has worked with the City of Middletown to begin realizing the vision of a protected green corridor along the Coginchaug River. Acquisition of the Salafia Property by the City of Middletown in 2006 was a key step in creating this corridor. Future acquisitions of property or easements would provide permanent protection for the wide variety of wildlife, including deer, bear, beaver and herons that use the corridor.

Development of the corridor for passive recreation, including facilitating canoe/kayak access along the river and possible creation of a footpath, would provide important outdoor recreational opportunities for citizens of Middletown in the heart of Middletown's urban area. Opportunities may exist to connect new hiking trails in Veterans Memorial Park with recreational opportunities along the

Coginchaug River. Any recreational development such as trail construction should be done in a manner that does not impair water quality or the value of the corridor for wildlife habitat.

D.) Air Pollution

Air quality is a complex issue to address – air pollution comes from many sources, is difficult to measure, has numerous indirect effects and requires combinations of different types of programs to reduce. Many air pollutants fall as precipitation and contribute to ground water and surface water degradation. Thus, air pollution causes and/or exacerbates environmental damage as well as human illness.

Middletown has air quality issues that need to be addressed. For example, the Greater Hartford Area, including Middletown, has been labeled a serious ozone nonattainment area by the EPA. Ozone is a byproduct of the chemical reaction between heat and sunlight and air pollutants such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x). Motor vehicles, paints, solvents, chemical plants, and gasoline stations all produce VOCs, while motor vehicles, power plants, and burning fossil fuels create NO_x. Ozone is a prime ingredient in smog, which, when inhaled, can aggravate a number of health problems including acute respiratory problems and asthma. In fact, the incidence of asthma hospital stays and visits are greater for Middletown residents than for those of any other contiguous town except for Meriden.

In Middletown, the main source of air pollutants is from the combustion of fossil fuels from motor vehicles; it also is generated by heating and cooling systems in homes and businesses. Characteristics and patterns of development (“urban form”) can influence transportation choices and therefore air quality. The problem of air pollution is greatly exacerbated by traffic congestion and by idling, which not only increases emissions but reduces gas mileage as well. Vehicles idling 10 seconds or more create more emissions than those that have been turned off and restarted. CT State law now regulates idling of buses and other vehicles.

Air pollution is also generated by yard maintenance activities such as mowing with a gas engine lawn mower. Running a gas mower for one hour emits the same quantity of air pollutants as eight new cars driving 55 mph for one hour. In addition, air pollution from mowing is generated on the ground level, where it will have the most impact on public health, especially for sensitive individuals such as those with asthma. Electric mowers reduce emissions from gasoline combustion, oil use, spills of oil and gas, and unburned emissions, and depending on the source of electricity, can have a smaller carbon footprint (EPA). Air pollution generated by the power plant is subject to regulation and control, while mower emissions have no controls. Application of lawn care chemicals is another source of yard-generated air pollution since pesticides can significantly volatilize for up to 72 hours after application.

The air pollution generated by Middletown is not contained within our borders. Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are associated with global warming and associated impacts such as sea level rise, loss of habitat and biodiversity, spread of various diseases (both in humans and other organisms) and significant

changes to weather patterns.

There is no central authority within the City of Middletown with a focused mandate to reduce air pollution in the City or to limit new sources. The Health Department is empowered to pass on resident complaints about air pollution to the State Department of Health for investigation. However, the Health Department does not typically comment on development proposals. Some City activities— such as those of the City’s Clean Energy Task Force, and Project Green Lawn (an educational campaign aimed at reducing the use of lawn care chemicals) may result in reductions of air pollution, but these activities are not part of a broader coordinated effort to improve air quality.

Generally speaking, air quality can be improved through a combination of reducing vehicle and stationary emissions, increasing efficiency of heating and cooling, and using alternative energy sources. Improvements to local air quality will come from a combination of local actions that can be facilitated by the Planning and Zoning Commission. As the last agency to review development applications, the Planning and Zoning Commission can play a powerful role in improving air quality by applying air quality standards and goals. However, there are numerous other agencies – such as the Health Department, and the Departments of Public Works and Planning, Conservation and Development – that should take appropriate action. Ultimately, Executive branch endorsement of air quality goals and measures is critical to implementing changes that will improve air quality.

Regarding monitoring

It will be difficult to determine whether or not actions taken to reduce new sources of air pollution and to improve air quality have been successful without period monitoring of air quality and human health. This requires establishing a “baseline” against which future sampling is compared. This is also important in determining whether air quality is worsening.

- Baseline measurements of air quality should be taken with the assistance of appropriate local and state agencies (e.g. DPH) at “hotspots” (e.g. City Hall, Newfield Street, Washington Street, River Road) as well as other sites less proximate to vehicle or power plant emissions.
- The local Health Department should have an understanding of the extent of respiratory disease in Middletown by keeping informed of hospital statistics regarding asthma and other respiratory illness, and perhaps statistics by area practitioners. Particularly helpful would be a study to determine whether or not there are clusters of asthma/respiratory occurrences in certain areas of the City. The City should seek assistance from outside sources to accomplish this assessment, which should also include information from current findings in the literature.
- Periodic monitoring of identified “hotspots” should be conducted to monitor effects of activities such as further development, or changes to traffic patterns.

- Baseline and subsequent air quality monitoring for common vehicle pollutants should be required of developers for projects of significant size or type to impact air quality (drive-through, large residential complex).

Regarding New Development, Public Projects and Building Code

A comprehensive plan for addressing air quality issues in the City is outside the scope of these recommendations. We therefore first recommend that:

- Appropriate City Departments (e.g. Planning, Conservation and Development, Health) should work together to conduct (or contract an individual or private firm to conduct) a study to:
 - o Assess what actions have been recommended or taken by other municipalities to address air quality and energy conservation/efficiency issues and decide which would be appropriate for Middletown to adopt
 - o Generate novel approaches to reducing air pollution in Middletown
 - o Create a plan for adopting changes that includes a timeline and an assessment of priorities
 - o Codify language for appropriate departments and commissions (e.g., code changes, ordinances, regulations, etc.)
 - o Train city staff and commissioners to apply new requirements; educate commissioners about their power to request and make changes that will serve air quality needs
 - o Educate developers and related businesses (e.g. contractors) about air quality requirements
 - o Monitor the success of air quality requirements

With or without this comprehensive plan the following recommendations can be acted on:

- Applications to the Planning and Zoning Commission should include an assessment of the proposed project's impact on local air quality (through direct emissions, energy use, and transportation needs) and measures taken to reduce that impact. The Commission should be empowered and required to consider this assessment when rendering a decision.
 - o Proposed activities should adhere to "air friendly" development

patterns that encourage shorter travel times from residences to businesses, work and recreation – these may include higher residential densities (preferably within a matrix of undeveloped buffers) and mixed land use. Applications to the Planning Department and P&Z , as well as publicly funded projects, should include an assessment of how well the proposed activity meets these goals, and/or what actions (inclusion of bus stop shelter, sidewalks, bike path, etc.) will be taken to make the activity more “air friendly”.

- Applications and public projects should be required to assess their energy efficiency; guidelines on energy efficiency should be produced and distributed to developers, businesses and institutions; a workshop on energy conservation measures for existing buildings and new construction for municipal departments, developers and building managers should be held to “kick-off” new requirements.
- Action should be taken on the current Plan's recommendation that “The Commission should strengthen “Performance Standards” in the Zoning Code in order to limit the number of point source emissions of air pollution. Additionally, the Commission should amend the Zoning Code to allow for the incorporation of air quality impact criteria for proposed uses in order to better understand and mitigate the potential air pollution from the proposed development.”
- Publicly funded building or renovation activities should be viewed as demonstration projects for our business, institutional and residential communities and should pursue the highest goals for energy efficiency and air quality.
- Only clean industries should be welcomed because of Middletown's poor air quality. The City should inform itself about large emission sources, such as power plants, and help ensure compliance with all air emission standards.

Regarding Transportation

- City staff should conduct a review of and changes to transportation policy and practices (e.g. traffic and development patterns, public and alternative transportation) and develop a timeline for implementation of

specific goals.

- Stoplights along Route 9 require cars to idle, which in turn creates a local and steady source of air pollution. It is thought that this situation alone significantly contributes to the City's high ozone levels. While there has been discussion in the community about reducing the number of stoplights on the segment of Rte. 9 within city limits, no action has been taken. There is potentially no greater single source of air pollution mitigation than addressing this issue. The City should take immediate steps to assess and negotiate stoplight reduction on Route 9.

Regarding Alternative Modes of Transportation (Under Planning Principles)

- Alternative modes such as walking and cycling should be enabled and promoted by providing the necessary infrastructure. The Planning and Zoning Code should be amended, for example, to require new development to incorporate a standard suite of actions that address alternative transportation needs, including but not limited to: safe road crossings for pedestrians and bikes, sidewalks, bike racks and bus stop shelters.
- These standards should also apply to all publicly funded road, and building, and improvement projects
- In some cases that safe access or other actions, such as designated lanes, may require actions by the State DOT or local Public Works Department or Traffic Bureau. In these cases, the City should work to ensure interagency communication and action.

Regarding air pollution generated by residents

- Appropriate City Departments should encouragement voluntary actions that will reduce local air pollution, such as organic lawn care practices, and reduced idling.
- Manual push reel mowers are gaining in popularity and generate no air pollution and no carbon emissions; the use of electric mowers can reduce local air pollution. City steps could include incentive programs for trading in gas powered mowers. The EPA has information on model programs around the country.
- Regulations should be enacted to prohibit school bus parking facilities from being located adjacent to residential neighborhoods or school

buildings.

- The City should continue educational efforts aimed at reducing the application of lawn care chemicals, and should phase out entirely the use of synthetic pesticides from City properties.

Idling

- "No Idling" signs should be required at all public facilities and with sufficient placement to inform drivers at all application locations within a facility. Private businesses should be encouraged (or if law permits, required) to post signs requesting that vehicles limit idling to under 3 minutes.
- In a process that includes public input, the presence of drive-through businesses in the city should be evaluated, and short and long term goals and decisions regarding new and existing drive through facilities – including a ban - should be established.
- The City should comply in full with State Statutes regarding idling, and should educate all appropriate personnel and commissioners about the laws' requirements, regulations and enforcement.

Beyond our boundaries

- The City should support legislative efforts to reduce state, regional, national and global production of air pollution including greenhouse gasses.

Leadership

- The City should identify a staff person or Department that is responsible for monitoring air quality, guiding changes, communicating with Middletown's citizens and implementing policy to ensure that air quality is a priority and that measurable improvements are made.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Middletown has made great strides in its open space preservation and natural resource protection efforts. As detailed above, 25% of Middletown's landscape is permanently preserved. If the CVH watershed land and utility lands are included, over 30% of Middletown will remain permanently protected and undeveloped.
- The City should strive to permanently preserve the Connecticut Valley Hospital watershed lands (512 acres) and the utility lands (1,465 acres) in the Maromas section of the city.
- With a few exceptions, the existing open spaces are tremendously underutilized. The City needs to improve these open spaces with signage, trails and parking. The City should then promote these open spaces to the public. The improvement, management and promotion of the existing open spaces is a top priority and there should be a line item established in the city operating budget for open space management.
- Now that a healthy percentage of the city is permanently preserved, open space acquisition efforts should be much more selective. Acquisitions should focus on the prime natural resources which are identified in the 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development and revised maps of this current plan. Areas include Lamentation Mountain, Mount Higby, Sumner Brook Valley and other stream corridors and areas of prime agricultural soils. Linear corridors should be encouraged, and properties surrounding existing open spaces should also receive special attention.
- Also recommended in the 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development was the creation of larger active recreation areas as opposed to small-scattered parks. The City made major investments in Thomas J. Smith Memorial Park and McCutcheon/Crystal Lake Park to service the Westfield area and South Farms area, respectively.
- The city also needs more Urban Vest Pocket Parks as well.
- Veterans Memorial Park has tremendous potential for passive recreation. While the park once existed as the City's premier recreation area, it is now sorely underutilized. The park is in the center of the City and within walking distance of a large residential population. The City should make a major investment in Veterans Park.
- A major investment in Veterans Park would result in three large active recreation areas. As Figure 7.5 displays, this strategy would place a large active recreation area within 2 miles of every home in Middletown.

Proximity of Homes to
Active Recreation Areas (radius 2 mi.)
City of Middletown
Plan of Conservation and Development
Summer 2007

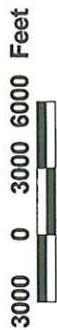
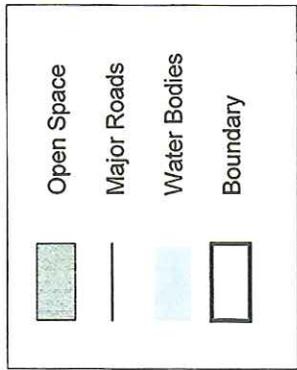
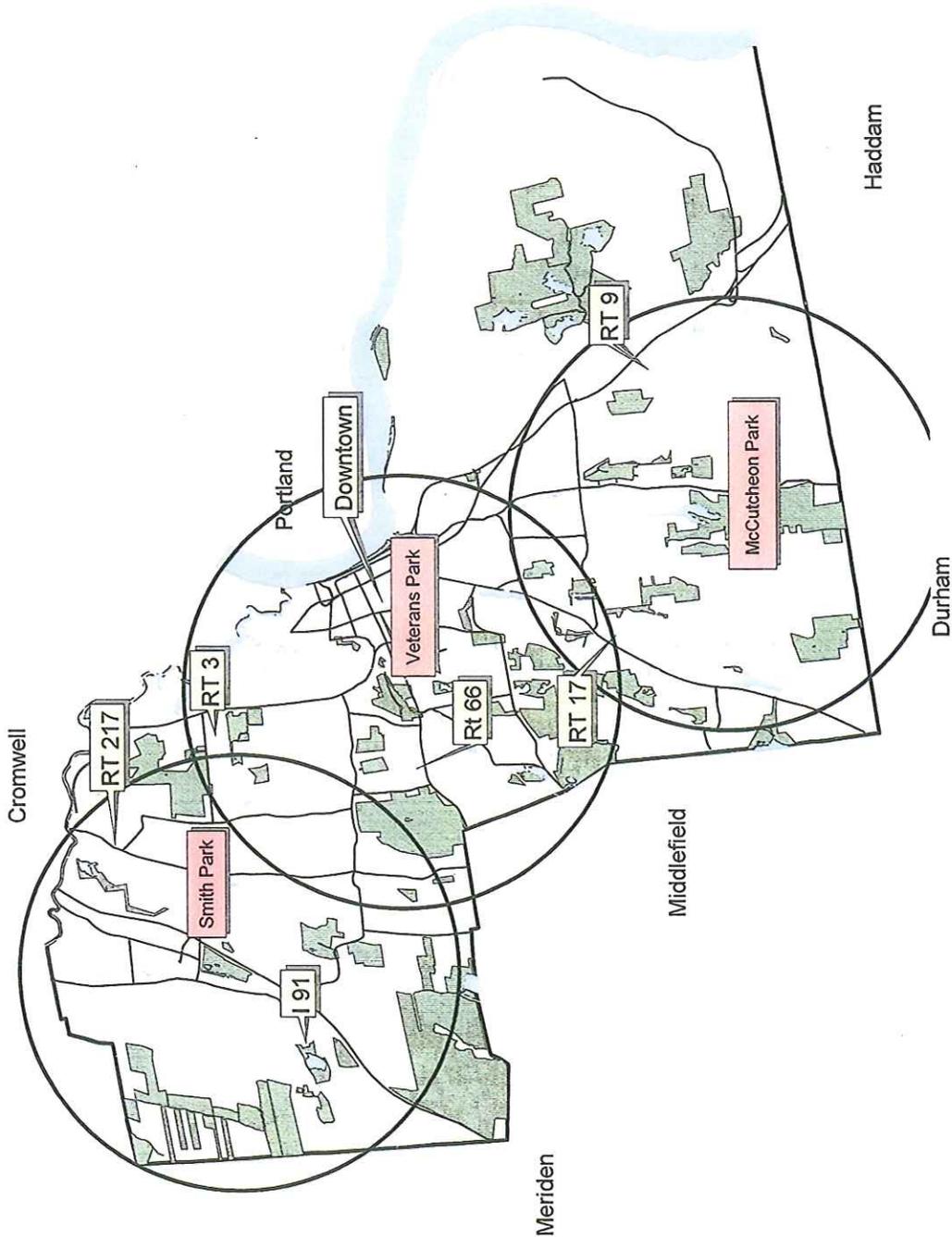


Figure 7.5



- The City should begin a dialogue with local farmers and develop a comprehensive farmland preservation strategy. We must recognize the diversity of family operations in Connecticut and the farms to change and adapt their operations as market demands change.
- The City will support farm businesses to contribute its economic development.
- As part of this endeavor, the city will explore opportunities to lease some of those open space lands which were not acquired with federal or state restricted grants.
- The City should pursue a referendum authorizing the issuance of bonds for farmland preservation. Every city dollar spent can leverage \$2 in state financing and the bond language should provide for this leveraging.
- The Public Works Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission need to adopt rural road standards and rural subdivision regulations.
- The new rural road standard and rural subdivision regulations need to calculate the density based on the underlying zoning and then wherever possible, based on on-site septic requirements, group the homes on half of the land area and require that the other half remain as open space.
- Open spaces should abut other open spaces. The required road width should be 22 feet, curbs, sidewalks and cul-de-sacs should be discouraged, open drainage systems should be required, and lot areas and setback requirements should be flexible to allow creative placement of home sites.
- Efforts should be made to encourage more trees to be planted along Middletown streets. When street trees are cut down, there should be automatic replacement of these trees.
- The city should pursue possibilities for inter-municipal planning with adjacent towns relative-to connectivity of possible future open space and potential trail linkages and identification of important ecological areas on or near the border.
- The Planning and Zoning Commission should propose a Scenic Road Ordinance. Maromas has several roads for which this designation would be appropriate.

- The Conservation Commission should be encouraged to follow the precedent of Conservation Commissions in other towns to designate under the State of Connecticut Greenways Program suitable Middletown corridors as greenways. For example: Lamentation Mountain, the Blue Trail, the CT River Corridor, Sumner Brook and Coginchaug.
- Consideration should be given to adopting CT Gateway regulations and possibly pursuing a legislative change so that Middletown will be a part of the Gateway.
- Cell towers should be located so as not to compromise scenic vistas or interrupt avial flight patterns.

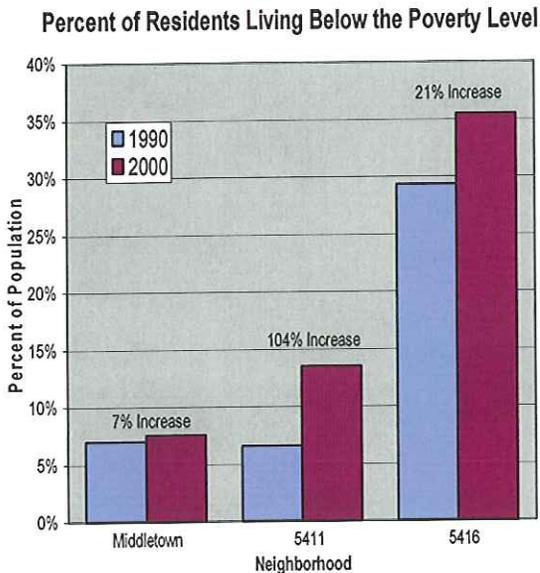
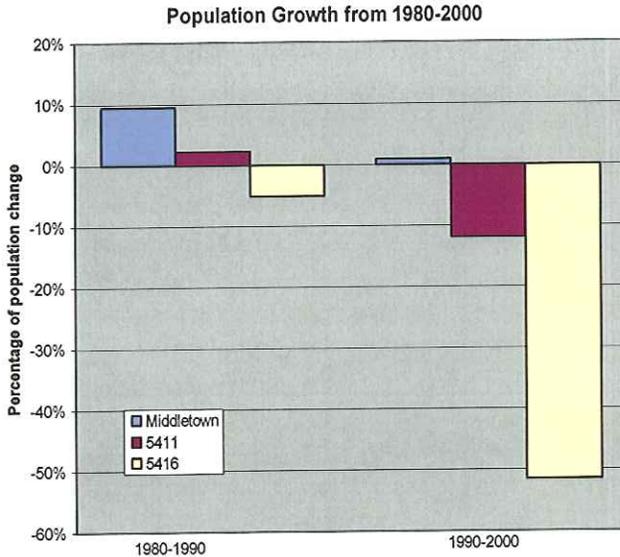
Air Quality Sources

- City of Middletown Plan of Conservation and Development, 1990 POCD and 2002 support documents; <http://www.middletownplanning.com>
- South Western Regional Planning Agency. Regional Plan of Conservation and Development, 2006-2015. Stamford, CT. Adopted February 6, 2006. Dr. Floyd Lapp, Executive Director, South Western Regional Planning Agency.
- Nancy Alderman, Environmental and Human Health, Inc., Personal Communication, April 2008.
- Natural Resources Canada; http://www.oshawa.ca/mun_res/Anti-ldling.pdf
- Factors Influencing Watershed Scale Pesticide Volatilization; USDA, http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/publications.htm?SEQ_NO_115=167085
- CT Department of Health, 2005 Report on Asthma.
- Information documents created in 2002 regarding a POCD revision; <http://www.middletownplanning.com/documents/environment.pdf>
- *Improving Air Quality Through Land Use Activities*, published by Transportation and Regional Programs Division, Office of Transportation and Air Quality, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, document EPA-R-01-001, January 2001.
- The Harmful Effects of Vehicle Exhaust, Environmental and Human Health, <http://www.ehhi.org/reports/exhaust/exhaust06.pdf>
- Lawn mower emissions information; <http://www.peoplepoweredmachines.com/faq-environment.htm>
- Lawn mower information www.epa.gov/air/community/mowerexchange_calculator.html and <http://www.raqc.org/newsletters/lqcam2002/lqcam0402.PDF>

CHAPTER 8 Addressing the Urban Opportunities

Citywide median income and population have increased at a healthy pace from 1980 to 1990 to 2000. Median income and population in and around the downtown have decreased from 1980 to 1990 to 2000. The average percentage of homeownership citywide is 51%, and the homeownership rate in the downtown neighborhoods is often less than 30%. The median income for the City is \$54,000. The median income in the downtown area is as low as \$13,699. The downtown neighborhoods are now as poor as the poorest neighborhoods in the cities of Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. Census tracts 5411 and 5416 comprise the downtown/urban neighborhoods. (See page 13 for a map)

Population Growth in Middletown and Poverty Levels



| | Middletown | 5411 | 5416 |
|------|------------|-------|-------|
| 1980 | 39,040 | 2,644 | 2,834 |
| 1990 | 42,762 | 2,704 | 2,689 |
| 2000 | 43,167 | 2,383 | 1,304 |

Housing in these neighborhoods is the oldest in the city. Parking is very often non-existent and housing conditions are often substandard, including zoning, housing and fire code violations and serious problems with lead paint. Quality property management and maintenance are lacking on many properties.

These are the areas that have significantly lower incomes, greater criminal activity, and more zoning, housing and fire code violations. Homeownership rates in these areas are lower than more stable neighborhoods and property values for comparable properties are lower in these areas than in more stable neighborhoods.

Table 8.1: Comparison of ownership in downtown area versus city averages.

| | Total (units) | Ownership | Rental |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| Middletown | 18,554 | 51% | 49% |
| Miller and Bridge St. | 26 | 15% | 85% |
| Portland St. | 31 | 16% | 84% |
| Baer and Dunham St. | 12 | 0% | 100% |
| Main St. extension- E.Main St. | 29 | 31% | 69% |
| <u>Grand and Liberty St.</u> | <u>168</u> | <u>14%</u> | <u>86%</u> |
| Source: U.S. Census Bureau | | | |

As long as this level of poverty and sub-standard living conditions continue to exist, the downtown and the entire city will have to deal with quality of life issues, the blight, the crime and all of the other negative consequences that are attracted to and emanate from these areas.



Ferry Street

Dramatic changes and significant investment are necessary. The city needs to reverse the negative stigma associated with these neighborhoods and where appropriate, foster a sense of pride in these neighborhoods. The downtown neighborhoods have these social problems due, in large part, to the city's lack of investment and reinvestment in the infrastructure and amenities in the core over the course of many years.

The best way to turn these neighborhoods around is to allow market forces to revitalize these areas. This occurred in the Silver Street corridor and the area defined as the "Village District" between downtown and Wesleyan University. The Silver Street corridors revitalization was largely due to proximity to a major employer, Connecticut Valley Hospital, and easy access to the highway. The Village District was the result of proactive zoning that created an area limited to single and two-family homes and very strong architectural standards. Perhaps more importantly, there is a committed group of existing and new residents who have formed a neighborhood organization. These actions created stability in the area that fostered a willingness to invest.

As evidenced by the success of the Village District, there is a segment of the population that wants to live in a more urban setting. However, most will only invest in areas that have potential, have stabilized and are on the upswing.

Identifying what segment of the population will invest in various neighborhoods is the first challenge. Promoting these neighborhoods and making them attractive to that niche market would then follow. Unlike the Silver Street corridor and the Village District, more government involvement will be necessary to address the key problem areas and organizing the existing residents in these neighborhoods.

Failure to move forward with a plan to stabilize these neighborhoods will result in more and more investment from absentee landlords, a decline in the rate of homeownership and more neglect and less maintenance of the rental properties.

This plan will now discuss each neighborhood in detail and begin to define a strategy to begin to stabilize these areas. The neighborhoods that will be discussed are displayed on Figure 8.1.

Miller and Bridge Street Neighborhood

This neighborhood has been extensively studied by the Redevelopment Agency. The current Redevelopment plan for the area concludes that the neighborhood is not a safe or healthy living environment. The area's inaccessibility combined with several other factors resulted in a determination in 1998 by the Redevelopment Agency that the only prudent course of action was to acquire all the properties, relocate the residents and demolish the structures. The agency acquired and demolished twelve (12) buildings. A lack of funding has delayed the project and the decrease in density has improved the area significantly.

Distressed Neighborhoods
 Plan of Conservation and Development
 City of Middletown, CT
 Summer 2007

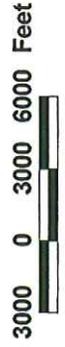
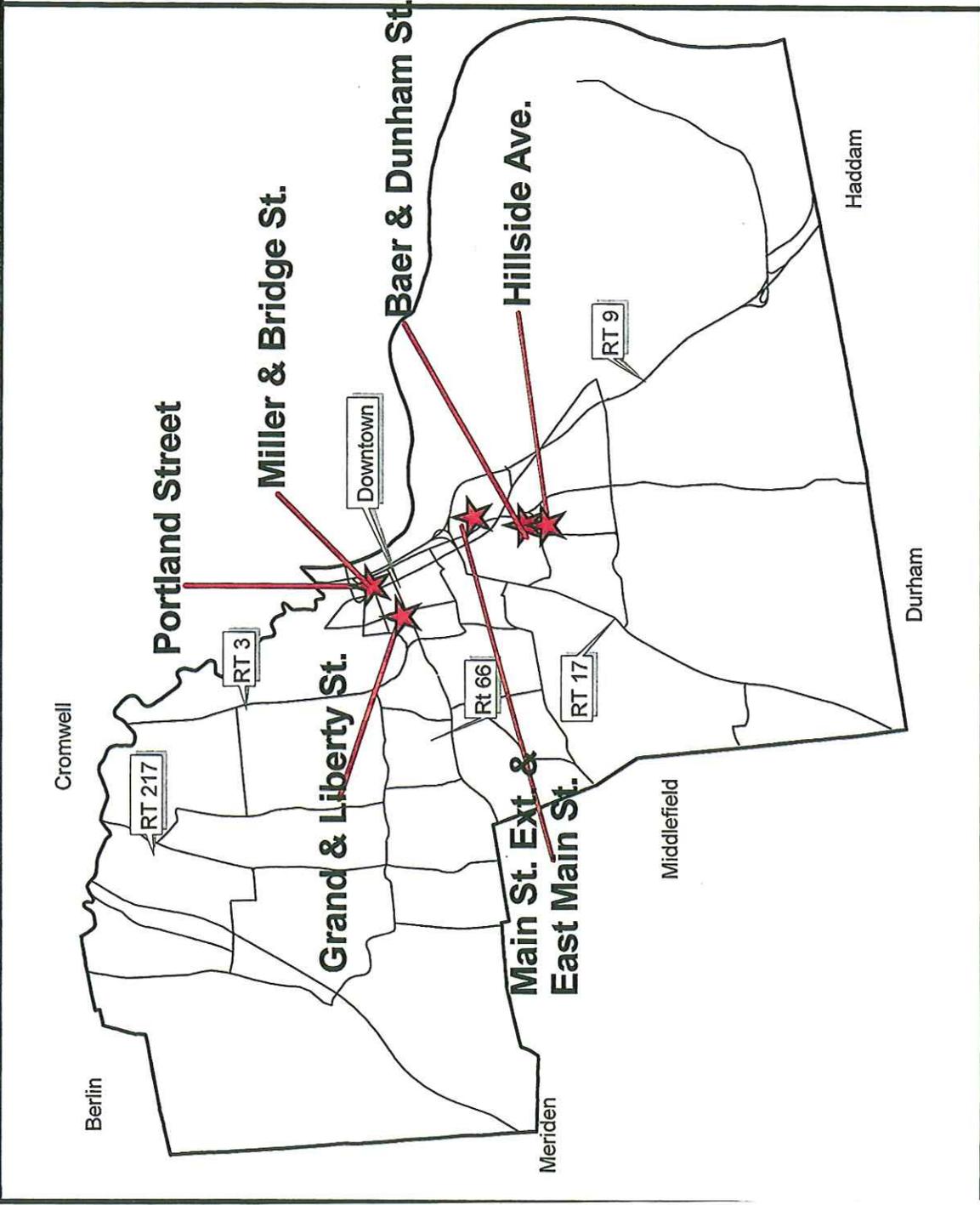


Figure 8.1



State and federal funds are not available and therefore, the city needs to pursue local funding to continue implementation of the Redevelopment Plan. In the short term, a way to greatly improve public safety would be to close the center median between Route 9 North and South bound.

Portland Street Neighborhood

This neighborhood is located at the northern end of the downtown and is almost as inaccessible as the adjacent Miller and Bridge Street neighborhood.

It is bounded on the east by the railroad tracks on the north by the railroad tracks and the Arrigoni Bridge and on the north and west by Saint John's cemetery and church property. The only access into the property is from a very busy Hartford Ave. and from North Main St. under the bridge to St John St. The housing is old and displays serious signs of decay. Crime has increased significantly in the area. Recent discussions about connecting this neighborhood to the Miller and Bridge Street neighborhood and closing Route 9 access could create emergency access concerns.

Baer Street and Dunham Street Neighborhood

This small neighborhood is bounded on the south and west by commercial development, on the north by East Main Street and on the east by Saybrook Road. Both East Main and Saybrook Road are major commercial collector roads.

The area is identified as mixed use on the future land use plan in the 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development and the property is zoned Transitional Development (TD). The entire neighborhood is made up of 8 residential buildings and 15 housing units. The entire area encompasses less than 3 acres of land.

Previous Planning and Zoning Commissions have recognized the commercialization of this entire area and have created zoning to encourage the same. Retail and commercial uses are permitted in the TD zone. The age of the housing, the surrounding commercial development, the heavy traffic volumes at the signalized intersection at Saybrook Road and East Main Street and impending commercial development on the north side of East Main Street clearly suggest that the highest and best use for this neighborhood is commercial development. Any future development will abandon Baer and Dunham Streets and incorporate the entire area into the existing Stop and Shop Plaza. In this way traffic from any future development will be directed to the signalized entrances and exits on East Main and Saybrook Road.

Due to very strong market demand and the existence of owner occupied single-family homes this plan does not recommend the involvement of the Redevelopment Agency or the use of eminent domain to speed this conversion.

Hillside Avenue - East Main Street Neighborhood

This small enclave of homes at the intersection of Hillside Avenue and East Main Street is very close but very different than the Baer Street and Dunham Street neighborhood. This area is made up of residential structures dating back to the late 1800's. The area is bounded on the north by Sumner Brook, on the west by Rubber Mill Pond, and on the east by the Stop and Shop Plaza. The eleven (11) parcels are located on very small lots ranging in size from 5000 – 10,000 sq.ft. The consolidation of these parcels would not yield a sufficient land mass for any type of commercially viable development. Due to the limited potential for commercial redevelopment, high traffic volumes, adjacent commercial uses and the lack of cohesion within this neighborhood, the City must focus its efforts on code enforcement and wherever possible residential rehabilitation. It is very unlikely that this neighborhood can be transformed into an area of homeownership and it is much more likely that the residential units will remain rental units for lower income populations.

Main Street Ext – East Main Street Neighborhood

Like the Baer and Dunham Street Neighborhood this area is designated as mixed use on the future land use plan and is zoned Transitional Development (TD). The area is made up of a mixture of commercial, industrial, office, retail and residential uses. The area is located in the South Cove Riverfront Area and has been targeted for commercial uses once the Route 9/Route 17 Intersection project is underway. The commercialization of the area should include a mandatory residential component such as new upper story residential uses along with the ground level commercial/retail development.

In the short term, the City needs to focus on the blighted structures ordinance to deal with the vacant and poorly maintained Formatron property. Law and code enforcement will also be essential to maintain stability in this area until commercial development moves forward.

Grand & Liberty Neighborhood

This neighborhood is on the west side of Main Street in the north end of the downtown area. This is the most intact neighborhood of those that have been discussed. There are examples of well-maintained properties as well as examples of poorly maintained properties. There are a number of historic properties and streetscapes, and these features add a very desirable character to the neighborhood.

Currently, only 14% of the homes in the neighborhood are owner occupied. Elderly residents, who have a long history of pride in their homes and property maintenance, are selling to investors who are converting from homeownership to rental units with absentee landlords. It is well accepted that this conversion in ownership results in reduced property maintenance and appearance, which then makes people less likely to make an investment in homeownership.

The current zoning is Residential Pre-Zoning (RPZ). This zoning is restricted to single and two family homes, like the Village District, but there are no design controls on additions and new construction. Those interested in investing in a neighborhood such as this are interested in the historic fabric of the neighborhood. Currently there are no protections from a neighbor enclosing an entire front porch with cinder blocks or making any other change completely incompatible with the streetscape. This uncertainty in what could happen with neighboring properties has a negative impact on an individual's willingness to make an investment in homeownership.

Street crime is quite apparent in the neighborhood. This activity also has a negative impact on an individual's willingness to make an investment in homeownership.

Supportive housing, sober houses and other types of group homes are certainly necessary in today's society. Whether the fear of dangerous people living there is real or perceived, very few people would want to raise a family next door to one of these facilities. An over concentration of such uses in any particular neighborhood could tip the delicate balance from a working affordable neighborhood to one in serious decline.

Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-3e was specifically designed to strip municipalities of the right to regulate these uses. A large portion of Middletown's supportive housing is located within this neighborhood. The recent changes to state statutes have opened the door to the establishment of group homes and sober houses throughout Connecticut. State agencies have focused their resources on establishing such residences in cities such as Middletown. The establishment of these facilities in residential settings can have a chilling effect on property values and an individual's willingness to make an investment in homeownership.

As traffic congestion continues to increase in the downtown, more and more traffic is using this neighborhood to bypass the traffic lights and congestion on Washington and Main Streets. The continual flow of traffic through these high-density neighborhoods gradually degrades the roads and impacts the buildings. Significant cut-through traffic is also very unattractive to individuals looking for a home and a place to raise a family. Also, the number of very narrow dead end streets off of the main roads creates congestion and densities less conducive to homeownership.

Neighborhood recommendations:

- The Grand and Liberty neighborhood is a logical expansion of the Village District zoning. This type of zoning will not only prevent conversions to non-residential uses and higher densities, but also institute stringent design guidelines and mandatory reviews by the Design Review and Preservation Board.
- The city administers a down payment and closing cost assistance program with Community Development Block Grant funds. While this is a good program, it is available citywide which dilutes its effectiveness. In 2006, sixty nine (69) families went through the mandatory homeownership training program and purchased homes in Middletown. The most recent homeownership class has sixty eight (68) families enrolled. The city needs to restrict this program's availability to specific target neighborhoods and provide additional assistance to those buying multi-family dwellings and converting them to single-family homes or owner occupied two-family homes.
- The city also administers a residential rehabilitation program with Community Development Block Grant funds. While this is a good program, it is also available citywide which dilutes its effectiveness. The program can be extremely helpful in renovating some of the neglected properties in these neighborhoods. It is offered to homeowners and landlords. The city needs to restrict the program to homeowners and its availability to specific target neighborhoods. Additionally, more favorable terms should be offered to those homeowners willing to convert multi-family dwellings to single-family homes or owner occupied two-family homes.
- Specific and targeted code enforcement is necessary. As allowed in Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-23, this plan calls for concentrated housing, zoning, building and fire code enforcement, and law enforcement.
- The use of the Grand and Liberty street neighborhood as a bypass to avoid the lights and congestion on Route 66 / Main Street has and will continue to degrade the neighborhood. The Planning and Zoning Commission and the Police Traffic Division need to investigate methods which will make this cut-through less attractive to people simply looking to get over the Arigoni Bridge. The use of one-way streets, traffic calming, and street closures should be seriously considered.

- In all the neighborhoods the city must make it clear to absentee landlords that poor property management will not be accepted. A city ordinance needs to be established which requires annual licensing and inspection of units that are not located in owner occupied buildings. The ordinance should also require a re-inspection and new license prior to any sale.
- Group homes –The Mayor, the Common Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission should lobby and demand that the city's legislative delegation recognize the disproportionate share of what many would consider "negative" state facilities in towns such as Middletown and provide safeguards to avoid an over concentration of such facilities in any one municipality. Legislation might include language that exempts cities and towns from CGS 8-3e and consideration for new facilities if some established benchmark is met (ie. number of state facilities, square footage of state facilities, number of state operated or sponsored group homes.)
- Currently, state sponsored and privately operated sober houses can locate in any residential zone with no separating distances. A private operator of a state sponsored sober house can purchase a two-family and run both units as sober houses. Various operators or the same sober house operator could purchase 2 or 3 homes on the same street and run 2-3 sober houses. This is wrong and will have devastating effects on neighborhoods. Section 8.3e requires a 1,000 foot separating distance for group homes, however the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) does not require any separating distance for the private sober houses it sponsors.
- Historically, all cities and towns have had a definition of a family in their Zoning Codes. These definitions included related family members and a defined number of unrelated individuals living together as a family. In Middletown, the definition of family includes no more than 5 unrelated persons living together in one housekeeping unit. Private landlords and DMHAS have taken advantage of that definition to establish sober houses consisting of 5 individuals in any residential area. Being fully cognizant of federal fair housing laws and the Americans with Disabilities Act, the city needs to revisit its definition of family and ensure that the city is getting what it intended.
- Well run special needs housing is recognized as an effective solution to a number of important individual and social needs, and the City should work cooperatively with providers, funding sources, and leaders from surrounding towns to promote high quality settings that are equitably distributed throughout city neighborhoods, Middlesex County and other Connecticut communities.

- The city should take the lead in a regional coalition to promote regional solutions and dispersed sites for special needs housing. This should involve working with state and municipal officials, providers and consumer groups to ensure that no one municipality or neighborhood is the sole focus for the development of this kind of housing, and that many communities do their part in providing these valuable solutions. Incentives should be pursued to encourage development of this housing in towns or neighborhoods which have not done their fair share.
- Problematic, poor quality operation of special needs housing should be aggressively addressed through existing code compliance capability and through work with the funding sources which are responsible for assuring quality of care in those settings.
- The above changes should be followed by specific neighborhood organizing efforts. The North End Action Team and Nehemiah Housing have proven themselves as leaders in the north end and they should be encouraged to continue their efforts. The community garden on Erin Street is an excellent start, and these efforts should be encouraged and supported by the city.
- Once a core organization has been formed for the Grand and Liberty Street neighborhood, the group needs to market itself to the people that are interested in living in this historic north end neighborhood. These target populations could include artists, young families looking for affordable homeownership, non-traditional families and active adults/empty nesters looking for small yards, historic homes and a walkable downtown setting in close proximity to a major liberal arts university.
- Marketing efforts should highlight the specific benefits of the neighborhood, the sense of community in the neighborhood, the city's commitment to increasing homeownership and providing stability, the targeted down payment assistance program, the targeted residential rehabilitation program and the existing, but never utilized, tax deferral program that exists in Section 272-7 of the Middletown Code of Ordinances.
- Tow cars that are parked across sidewalks.
- Enforce the right of pedestrians in crosswalks.
- Enforce speed limits. Ticket those that run lights.
- Install bike racks throughout the downtown.

- Make it part of city policy to ensure that sidewalks on state bridges are plowed in a timely fashion.
- Reverse the trend of making tree lawn smaller: Tree lawns have been made even smaller, not larger, after storm sewer separation, to allow for excessively wide asphalt streets. Not only does this decrease the amount of protection the pedestrian has from traffic, it also encourages excessive speeds and welcomes an ever increasing number of parked cars in the downtown area. Easy parking discourages the development of an alternative transportation network. And, smaller tree lawns make it harder for trees to catch the water they need and develop their root systems, and to do the work of shading the streets that would help to keep the city cooler in the summertime
- Restore tree lawns to streets like Church St. and William St. to discourage speeding and to differentiate the streetscape from the commercial.
- Provide Urban forestry with a meaningful budget --tree replacement should be a minimum requirement.
- Encourage the police to respond more quickly and professionally to downtown crime and public disturbances and to be familiar with the downtown geography.
- Replace unnecessary traffic lights with stop signs. This is friendlier to pedestrians and cyclists, and reduces the visual pollution of wires, stop lights and boxes.
- Carefully evaluate the installation of the hideous massive boxes attached to the base of telephone poles that provide the next generation of cable connectivity. ?
- Bury wires underground whenever a street is being torn up.
- Smooth out streets (manholes, bumps etc.) to make them more bicycle friendly and to reduce noise on residential streets.
- Clamp down on noise pollution from car radios and motorcycles.
- Be vigilant about graffiti—erase it on a daily basis.
- Disallow through truck traffic on residential streets that have become connectors. This has been done on Grand St. and should be implemented on High St., Loveland, etc...

- Restore two way traffic to one way streets to slow down traffic. Do not disallow parking on these streets.
- Reduce the size of emergency vehicles so that road radii can be reduced and more effective traffic calming measures can be employed.
- Move against landlords and homeowners and businesses and other institutions that use the tree lawn for parking or for the storage of their garbage cans.
- Invest in McCarthy Park. It has been neglected for years, while other parks have been undergoing upgrades over many years
- Restore Sumner Brook to increase core amenities and outdoor activities in the downtown, and to create an unobstructed connection to the river.
- Implement traffic calming across the city.
- Differentiate commercial from residential by painting yellow stripes on roads and curbs only in commercial and industrial areas.
- Invest in downtown gateways.
- The approach from the Arrigoni should welcome the newcomer with handsome signage and a well maintained garden/trees within the median strip all the way to Rapallo.

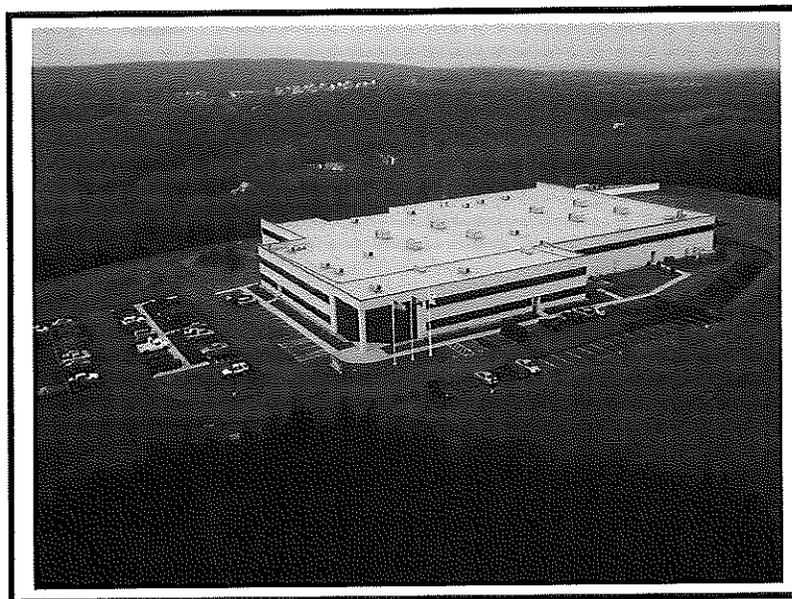
CHAPTER 9

Promoting Commercial and Industrial Growth

Middletown has a significant commercial and industrial grand list. Over 15% of the city's grand list is commercial/industrial. This portion of the grand list pays approximately \$15 million in taxes to the city. There are many businesses in the city and these businesses all contribute to the vitality of the town. They offer essential goods and services, they provide employment opportunities and they pay significant taxes. At the same time businesses do not demand a high level of public services. (i.e. education, recreation etc.)

The expansion of a city's commercial and industrial grand list is a well-accepted method to bring revenue to the community without the associated public service requirements. Commercial and industrial land uses are generally of higher value and they do not produce school children. Education is the most expensive public service municipalities are required to provide. Studies have repeatedly shown that for every \$1.00 a community receives in tax revenue from commercial and industrial land uses, the town spends approximately .40 to .50 cents on public services to support the land use. Contrast this with residential land uses that can demand as much as \$1.20 to \$1.30 in services for every \$1.00 the community receives in taxes, and it is easy to understand the drive for economic development in most towns in Connecticut. This drive all too often turns into an "economic development at any cost" mentality that in the end turns out to be counterproductive and divisive.

Economic development will never solve the looming financial problems the City will need to confront. With over 80% of its land area zoned residential, there is simply no way Middletown can attract enough non-residential space.



Aerospace Techniques

For instance, Middletown's current budget is over \$130 million. A 1% increase in the budget is \$1.3 million. The 100,000 sq.ft. Aerospace building on Middle Street pays \$110,000 in taxes annually. The town would essentially have to attract, approve and build twelve (12) buildings like Aerospace annually if it were to rely on economic development to cover the cost of a 1% increase in the city budget. Increases in city budgets over the last several years have ranged between 5% - 8% annually!

Meaningful economic development does provide expansion in the grand list, local jobs for local people, more local shopping and a sense of pride in the community. For these reasons, an aggressive and well-funded economic development program should be pursued.

Across Connecticut one of the biggest impediments to economic development is a cumbersome and lengthy permit approval process. After years of reform Middletown now stands out among its peers as a business friendly community.

In the last several years, commercial and industrial development projects have enjoyed quick approvals and a friendly environment in which to build.

Future economic development will depend on the availability of land that has been planned and zoned for commercial and industrial land uses. Such land requires favorable topography, good access to major thoroughfares and the required infrastructure. While there are many business zones in Middletown, the amount of remaining land that is suitable for development is very limited.

Future Commercial and Industrial Development

Existing industry is dispersed within eight (8) industrial zones. The zone boundaries are defined by the zoning code, and their locations are identified on Figure 9.1, which shows both developed and undeveloped properties.

(1) Interstate Trade (IT) Zone: I-91/Industrial Park Road

The Interstate Trade zone contains the largest developed area in the City for light industrial and office uses. By far the largest user in the zone is Aetna's headquarters. The IT zone covers a total of approximately 1,015 acres. Of this, an estimated 235 acres remain available for development. The undeveloped parcels have good road access via Industrial Park Road, Middle Street and Bradley Street; utilities in close proximity and land characteristics conducive to industrial development. Two recent industrial subdivisions have created 19 lots for future development. When the roads and infrastructure are complete these lots can be marketed to future users. These lots should satisfy the city's needs for the next 5 years.

Aetna, the City's largest employer and taxpayer, has announced that it will be relocating its operations to Hartford effective 2011. Fortunately, the company's

**Industrial Zones
City of Middletown
Plan of Conservation and Development
Summer 2007**

Industrial Zones

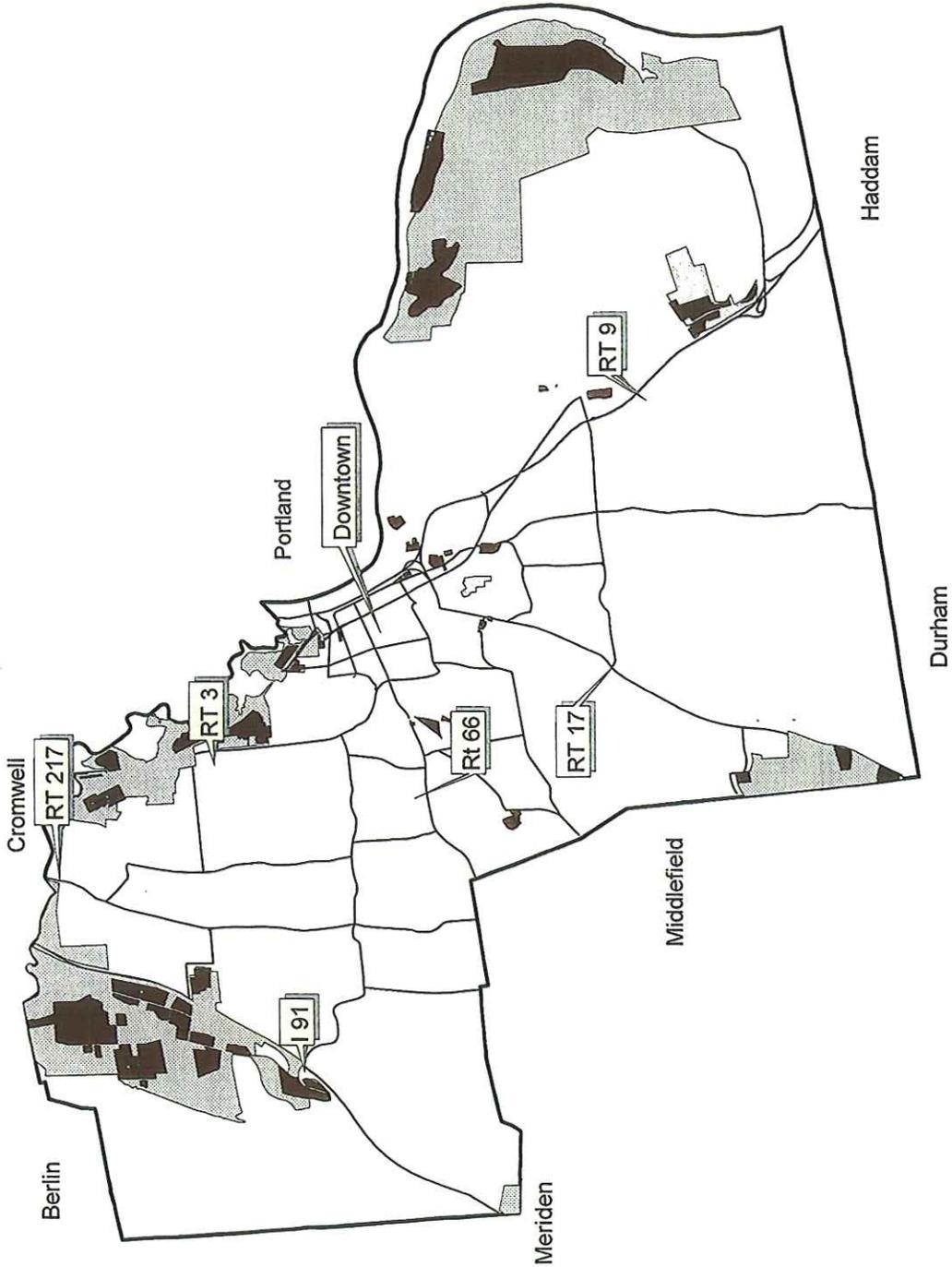
Developed Industrial Land



3000 0 3000 6000 Feet



Figure 9.1



huge computer/data center will remain in Middletown, which accounts for approximately 40% of the taxes paid. The remaining building is owned by GE Capital. The building was built in the early 1980's and is tremendously inefficient and has outlived its useful life.

Aetna's departure represents tremendous opportunity for the City of Middletown. The site encompasses 263 acres of prime land with all attributes required for intensive office and industrial development. The City should work closely with the state and the current landowner to devise the optimal plan for the property's reuse. The commission's long standing policy not to allow single use retail in the IT zone should remain. The city cannot give into quick fix retail proposals which generate less tax revenue and creates jobs which are inferior to those created by office / industrial land uses. A high quality, transit oriented mixed-use development would be ideal.

In 2008 the United States Army conducted an extensive site search for a new National Guard / Army Reserve Training facility in Middletown, CT. The Army selected the Cucia Park site, at the intersection of Industrial Park Road and Smith Street, for their new facility.

(2) IM Zone

The Interstate Mixed Use (IM) zone is located immediately east of I-91 and south of Route 372. This site, originally planned for a corporate headquarter use in the early 1990s, could accommodate up to 1.6 million square feet of office space within high-rise office towers. The site benefits from substantial highway frontage and good visibility from I-91. However, access to I-91 is somewhat restricted due to the need to construct a bridge over the Mattabasset River to access the site. Once constructed, the site would have ideal access to I-91 and offers approximately 40 acres prime land for development. The zoning for the property is very restrictive and should be modified to encourage more realistic development scenarios in concert with the reuse of the Aetna property.

(3) Interstate Office Park (IOP) Zone

This zone, designated for business and professional office use, is located to the south of the IT Zone with I-91 access and visibility from Exit 20. The site is adjacent to the I-91 interchange. Approximately one-half of the zone has been developed, leaving approximately 45 acres for new development.

(4) I-2 Zone

The I-2 zone is located north of Mile Lane and west of Newfield Street. Much of the existing zone is vacant, though it contains some environmentally sensitive lands due to its location near the Mattabasset River. Existing industrial parcels are approximately 2 acres in size and are located on Tuttle Place.

(5) Industrial Redevelopment Area (IRA) Zone

The IRA Zone encompasses approximately 40 acres located along the North Main Street corridor. The focus of this zone concerns the re-use of the 184,000 square foot Remington Rand building as a business incubator. Over 10 tenants are already located in the facility and utilize approximately 60,000 square feet of space. The City acquired the building through tax foreclosure. It is currently undergoing environmental remediation and general renovation.

Recently the Jonah Center for Earth and Art began investigating the reuse of the former landfill property adjacent to the Remington Rand complex. Their investigation has expanded to the Remington Rand facility. Their vision and efforts to create an environmentally friendly business complex should be supported and encouraged.

This industrial zone is located in the Enterprise Zone and has rail access but poor highway access. Vacant land is very limited. Uses appropriate for the IRA zone along North Main Street include artisan workshops, craft studios, customized consumer product manufacturing (e.g., furniture restoration or reproduction), environmental services and related small businesses and manufacturing. Space at the Remington Rand facility will be ideal for these uses. Remington Rand has access to fiber optic cable and this fact could make the building attractive to small information-technology and other businesses in need of high-speed Internet access. The zone's proximity to the north end of Main Street, with its potential "urban village" character, also supports these potential businesses and a pool of employees within walking distance.

(6) Special Industrial (I-3) Zone

The I-3 zone, covering 4,460 acres, is the largest industrial zone in the City. This zone includes four (4) large tracts of land. These include: Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, lands owned by Northeast Utilities or its subsidiaries, and the former Feldspar property. As shown in Figure 9.1, much of the I-3 Zone is undeveloped due to steep topography and the lack of sanitary sewer. Road access is provided by River Road from the north and by Aircraft Road from the south. Freight rail service is available from the north with the possibility of rail access to the south. The state provided funding for an extension of sanitary sewer from the existing treatment plant down River Road to Pratt and Whitney Aircraft. That extension is now complete. With improved road access to the higher plateau of the zone, some acreage would become attractive sites for high profile light industrial/office uses in a low-density, campus-type setting. A \$250 million, 720 megawatt, gas-fired power plant has been fully approved and is under construction on the former Feldspar property. This development provides the necessary access and opportunities for future development on the balance of the Feldspar property and the formerly mined and now reclaimed portions of the adjacent Northeast Utilities property.

(7) Service Industry (I-1) Zone

This zone is located at the southern end of Saybrook Road. It contains small-scale industrial sites including self-storage, contractor yards and a national auto salvage company. The limited acreage, lack of public water and sewers and the existence of very shallow bedrock limits the value of the undeveloped land in this zone. The only large parcel of land (>10 acres) is owned by Adessa Impact and there has been no interest in giving up this highly sought after salvage yard license.

(8) Limited Industrial (I-4) Zone

The I-4 Zone, located in the southwestern portion of the City, is bordered by the city boundary on the west and Route 17 on the east. Most of the site falls within the watershed area for the Laurel Brook reservoir. City sewer does not service this land. Approximately 140 acres of developable land remains vacant within this zone. The zone is seriously constrained by its adjacency to the Laurel Brook Reservoir and City and State watershed protection regulations. Future development of the zone will be limited to warehouse and other low water users unless sanitary sewers are extended into the area.

Industrial Market Indicators

Middletown is well positioned with respect to attraction of industrial development in the I-91/Connecticut River Valley corridor, including expansion of the biotech cluster northward from New Haven and New London, both centers of research and development. However, existing industrial floor space is very limited and much of the available space is located in several older mill-style buildings, including the former Remington Rand facility.

The two recent industrial subdivisions in the IT zone, the reuse of the Aetna property, the development of the IOP and the IM zone and the acquisition of other large parcels in the IT zone by developers specializing in industrial development place the City in a favorable position for the next 10 years.

Beyond that, the City will have to look closely at the I-3 zone for its future industrial development. The I-3 zone already contains the City's second and third largest taxpayers and the City's second largest employer. The new power plant will become the City's largest taxpayer. In addition to the approved power plant, other developments will occur on the former Feldspar property. The development of the power plant will open approximately 50 acres of former mining area on the utility land to the east. Additionally, Pratt and Whitney Aircraft has significant land holdings above and to the west of its current facility. This land could accommodate future large-scale industrial development. The remainder of the I-3 zone should remain undeveloped as buffer areas and open space.

Existing Retail / Commercial Areas

Due primarily to planning policies that have discouraged retail expansion along the main arterials leading into Middletown, the Central Business District (CBD) has maintained its role as the major retail / commercial area of the City.

Only the plazas along Washington St. and Saybrook Rd. and the smaller-scale business areas on Newfield St. and South Main St. provide other opportunities for shopping and commercial activity.

Other than the downtown area, the retail/commercial areas, and the regulations, which have allowed for them, are classic suburban strip developments and regulations. These regulations encourage single story buildings, parking in the front yard, setbacks of over 50 feet from the street and abundant and distracting signage.

Regulations, which allow for more urban type development, multiple stories, parking in the rear and maximum setbacks from the street would add value, the ability to develop parcels more intensely and curb appeal.

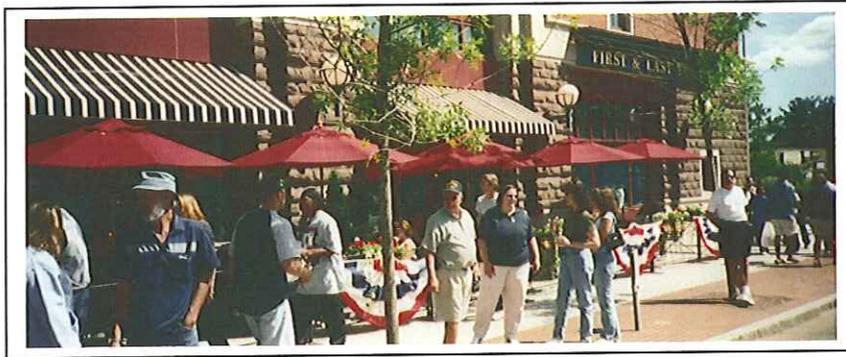
The Commission should conduct special area studies, involving architects and town planners, to devise detailed plans of development/redevelopment for the commercial corridors and minimum site development standards, which allow for the development/redevelopment of these suburban strips into more productive and appealing entries into the downtown.

The design of the buildings is also critical. The Commission should formalize the currently informal process of referring all commercial development to the Design Review and Preservation Board for an advisory opinion.

Central Business (B-1) Zone - Downtown Area

Middletown has a classic downtown encompassing governmental, institutional, educational, commercial, and retail uses. The retail component has struggled over the years due to competition from suburban locations. The downtown remains a pedestrian-friendly area with a diverse architectural environment that has been instrumental in retaining the city's history, quality of life, and community character.

Figure 9.2



First and Last Tavern on Main Street

In accordance with the 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development, the City embarked on an ambitious downtown revitalization program in 1994. The downtown revitalization included a number of actions that have reinforced the role and importance of the downtown area. These actions included:

- Preparation of *Downtown Visions 2000 and Beyond*, by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the first-ever downtown plan.
- A detailed downtown market analysis.
- Establishment of the *CT Main Street* program.
- Attraction and construction of a new police station with retail frontage.
- Attraction and construction of a 12-screen stadium seating movie theater.
- Establishment and expansion of Kid City Children's Museum.
- Renovation of the historic armory building along Main Street into a hotel.
- Creation of a Downtown Business Taxing District (DBD). This taxing district provides a reliable source of funds for improvements in the downtown.
- Establishment of a business friendly environment that helped foster the many restaurants in the downtown core.

These actions, as recommended in the 1994 "*Downtown Visions 2000 and Beyond*" plan have created the success Middletown enjoys today.

Going forward, the City needs to recognize the tremendous opportunity that exists in the downtown. Taken cumulatively the downtown is the second largest taxpayer and the largest employer in the city. The revitalization over the last 10 years has significantly increased the quality of life in the City and brought about significant appreciation in property values, which will be realized in the next revaluation.

Due to the density and size of the buildings that can be built in the downtown, new development in this area can add significantly to the grand list. To preserve the unique character of the downtown the Commission and the City need to plan new development very carefully.

The City is extremely fortunate to have access to \$19 million in federal funds to be used to address parking and transportation issues in the downtown. The City is now developing a plan to spend the \$19 million. The plan must address existing needs but also identify areas for future development and use these funds to create parking facilities strategically placed to attract additional investment.

Now that the parking plan is complete, the Commission needs to evaluate its regulations so that it is prepared to allow new mixed-use development, which is truly compatible with the downtowns scale and character. This would entail hiring a consultant to develop regulations consistent with new urbanism principals of development. The Commission should also carefully consider and promote the creation of programs to encourage the conversion of upper story Main Street buildings to residential and a mandatory residential component in all new development. If the downtown is to truly succeed, it has to be repopulated with middle and upper income residents. These residents will use the downtown during off peak hours, in the evenings and weekends throughout the year.

(b) Washington Street (Route 66) Corridor

Two retail/commercial areas, less than one-quarter mile apart, are located along Route 66 leading into Downtown. Both areas provide a mix of retail and service uses, including fast food outlets and automotive services. The district further west includes two retail plazas, the Washington Plaza and the Middletown Plaza. The commercial area nearer Downtown includes smaller-scale business uses that are typically found in strip commercial districts. Both areas are characteristic of strip retail corridors found along urban highways. Unrestricted signage, multiple curb cuts, the lack of pedestrian amenities and minimum landscape treatment has combined to produce a poor quality image for this major entry into the City, an issue that was addressed in the 1990 Plan of Development.

In 2007 there were many new developments planned for this corridor. The City has developed detailed design guidelines, which will ensure more attractive buildings and signage and better traffic management.

The lease on the vacant Shop Rite building expired in the fall of 2008. There is tremendous demand to develop this property for most likely a grocery store. The property is not large enough to support a large national retailer such as Target, Wal-Mart or one of the wholesale clubs.

(c) Saybrook Road Medical Corridor

This corridor begins at the main Middlesex Hospital campus. The campus has been undergoing significant renovation and improvement over the past several years including the recent construction of a new \$39 million emergency care unit. The medical corridor concept began with the development of an assisted living facility at the southern end of the corridor and continuous expansion at the surgical/outpatient center. Between 2005 - 2007, 80,000 square feet of new medical office was developed, and in 2007 an additional 75,000 sq.ft. was

approved. This corridor adds tremendous value to the City of Middletown. The buildings and the personal property within them are of high taxable value, the jobs created are high quality, well paying jobs, and the services offered attract people with high disposable income from the entire region to Middletown. Those attracted to Middletown not only receive medical services but also shop in city stores and eat in city restaurants. The west side of the Saybrook Road Medical corridor is currently zoned General Business (B-2). The B-2 zone is very permissive and the commission should tighten up these regulations for this area to make sure future development doesn't detract from the professional medical office environment that has emerged.

(d) Newfield Street Planned Retail / Commercial

This area has approximately 220 developed acres and 137 undeveloped acres. A number of commercial establishments have been built in this corridor, many auto-related. There is considerable vacant land in this zone. However, much of the land is located within the 100-year flood plain and has inland wetland constraints. The existing roadway is narrow and congested and the 1934 2-lane bridge at the Cromwell town line is a major constraint to future development. The former Town and Country Auto location could support larger scale businesses. The property on the eastern side of Newfield Street at the Mile Lane intersection holds the most potential for development. This area could be assembled to accommodate potentially two (2) large national retailers if traffic issues on the state highway can be addressed. The Newfield Planned Commercial regulations are very permissive. The zoning allows uses ranging from office to retail to manufacturing to warehousing. The Commission needs to review the NPC regulations and ensure that new development is in keeping with the already overburdened Newfield Street (CT Route 3).

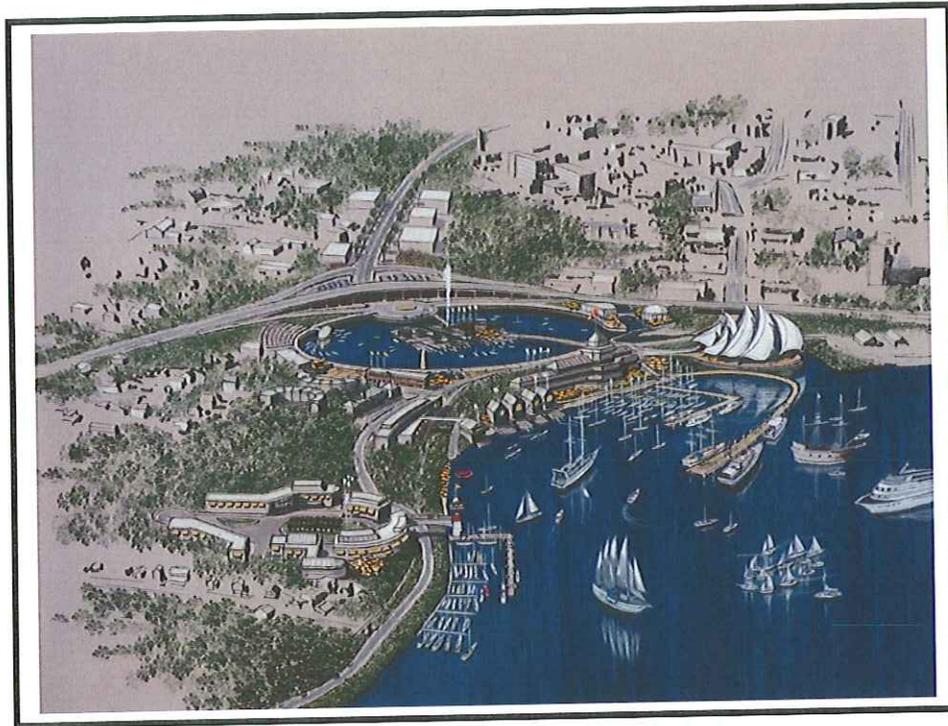
(e) Route 17 South Main Street Corridor

Another business zone is located to the south of Downtown. Mixed retail and commercial service uses occur within the B-2 Zone located along the South Main Street (Route 17). There is very little room for future development; however, national trends towards the two large national hardware stores suggest a change at the Ace Hardware Plaza.

(f) South Cove Riverfront Development Area

This area has the potential to bring national retailers, a marina and high-end riverfront housing adjacent to Middletown's downtown. The development is being planned in conjunction with the relocation of the city's sewage treatment plant and the reconfiguration of the Rt. 9/Rt. 17 highway interchange. Once these two projects are complete, the area holds tremendous potential. It represents eighty-five (85) acres of land in the center of the richest state in the nation and it is located in the 2nd wealthiest county in the state. The area has direct highway access and over 3,000 feet of frontage on the Connecticut River. The challenge with this development will be the need to create a pedestrian friendly environment

which links to the downtown and to ensure that this project complements and does not compete with the historic downtown. The Planning and Zoning Commission has the power and will need to develop regulations that will accomplish this goal.



Proposed South Cove

While the South Cove area holds tremendous potential for the City of Middletown, the Connecticut River is a resource of regional significance. The Planning and Zoning Commission along with the Harbor Improvement Agency should facilitate a regional discussion with the towns' of Portland and Cromwell to identify common goals and ideas, which could lead to a very unique tri-town plan for the development of the waterfront in the three towns.

Retail / Commercial Market Indicators

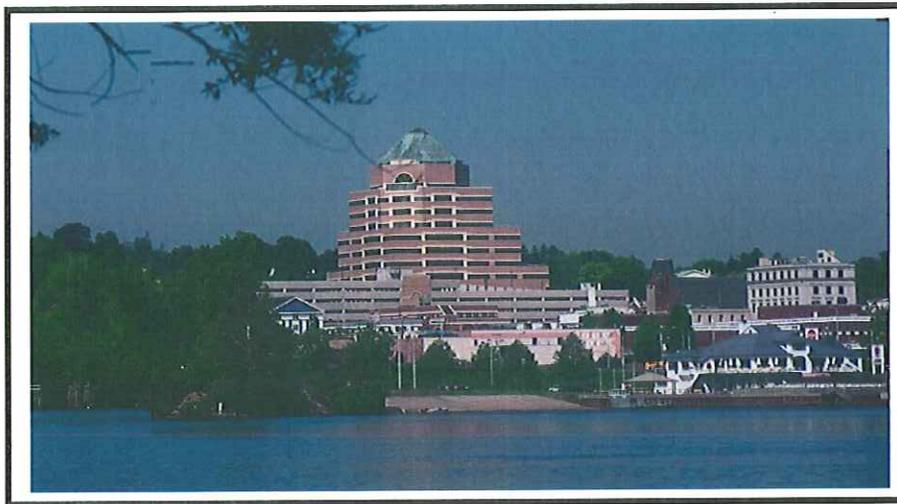
For many decades the City has articulated a clear policy to restrict retail growth outside of the downtown core. This restriction has served the City well and currently exists in the 1990 Plan of Conservation and Development. However, it is also recognized that large "box" type retailers and many of the small national retailers cannot fit within the downtown, and the downtown cannot provide the amount of dedicated parking such retailers demand.

Middletown is well positioned to support and see continued growth and revitalization in its downtown core, and can also accommodate national big box retailers in the Newfield Street corridor and smaller nationals within the Washington Street corridor including a new grocery store.

The South Cove Riverfront area and the Medical Corridor will bring uniqueness to Middletown's commercial and retail base and attract people from the entire region.

5.5 Summary

In furthering its economic development objectives, Middletown has seen measurable job growth and expansion of the grand list. This growth results in a higher quality of life for Middletown residents, who will benefit from quality employment opportunities, increased tax revenues and enhanced public services.



A view of downtown from the River

CHAPTER 10

Maromas, Middletown's Last Frontier

The area of Maromas is in southeastern Middletown. On the east, it borders the Connecticut River. It is loosely bound to the north by the Connecticut River and Portland, to the west by Route 9, to the south by the Higganum section of Haddam. Maromas represents a large portion of Middletown's Connecticut River frontage; it is home to the City's 2nd and 3rd largest tax payers, Pratt & Whitney and NRG Power. Pratt & Whitney is also one of the City's largest employers. Soon, these large entities will be joined by KLEEN Energy, currently under construction. Maromas pays a significant fraction of the city's tax base but only requires a small fraction of the City's services on account of the sparse population. The area is 16 square miles or 10,240 acres. This represents almost 38% of the City's land area but only 5% of the City's population resides in Maromas.



A view from Maromas

Maromas is a unique area. Its large uninhabited, unfragmented forestland is also of environmental value to the State, the Nation and the World. It represents tremendous passive recreation and conservation opportunities. It has thousands of acres of privately held undeveloped land, much of which is held by only a few owners....Pratt & Whitney, Northeast Utilities and the State of Connecticut.

Both geology and history have contributed to this unique situation. The steep and rocky topography make much of the area inhospitable to agriculture or residential development. However, the CT River frontage, frequently marshy and flood prone, is home to abundant wildlife as are the uplands. In the past, the large landowners purchased the vertiginous rocky ranges of Maromas in order to have

sufficient buffers for concentrated industrial development. United Aircraft's secret development lab for the nuclear airplane and a possible nuclear power plant site for NU required many acres of surrounding land.

Planning is about achieving a balance between conservation and development. It is the Planning and Zoning Commission's responsibility to ensure good planning for the future of this unique area.

A group of concerned residents created an organization known as Advocates for a Maromas Plan (AMP). This organization secured grant funds to develop a detailed natural resource inventory of the area and recommendations for future uses. This information is available in the Department of Planning, Conservation and Development.

The Conservation Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission concludes that industrial development in an I-3 zone and natural resource protection can be achieved with careful land use planning and open space preservation.

The AMP study introduced the concept of a city's "green infrastructure". This plan certainly recognizes Mount Higby and Lamentation Mountain in the western section of the City and the unfragmented forestlands of Maromas in the eastern section of the City as major components of the City's "green infrastructure".

Open Space Preservation

The I-3 Industrial Zone, referred to in Chapter 9 of this document, has received considerable attention in recent years. Maromas also includes an expansive Open Space Corridor. This corridor includes the Cockponsett State Forest, the Spiderweed Nature Conservancy land, the watershed land owned by the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and very significant land holdings owned by CL&P and its affiliates.

These lands have varying degrees of protection and public access. The Planning and Zoning Commission has identified these lands as a priority for open space acquisition on its approved open space plan.

The Commission recommends that the City step up its efforts to permanently protect this land as open space and ensure full public access. Specifically, the City should pressure the state to transfer the CVH watershed lands to the DEP. The DEP would then incorporate these lands into Cockponsett State Forest. Additionally, the City and the DEP should pursue the acquisition of the utility lands not planned for industrial use as permanent open space.

This strategy will lead to the creation of a publicly accessible open space corridor in excess of 2,000 acres.

Future Commercial and Industrial Development

Understanding the need to balance conservation and development, the Commission recognizes that the I-3 zone is Middletown's largest industrial zone. In the future, the zone will represent the city's largest tax and employment base. Clearly, due to topographic and environmental constraints, the majority of the I-3 zone will remain undeveloped. Future development within the I-3 zone needs to be carefully planned and consistent, in concept, with the discussion in Chapter 9 of this document:

"The I-3 zone, covering 4,460 acres, is the largest industrial zone in the City. This zone includes four (4) large tracts of land. These include: Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, lands owned by Northeast Utilities or its subsidiaries, and the former Feldspar property. As shown in Figure 9.1, much of the I-3 Zone is undeveloped due to steep topography and the lack of sanitary sewer. Road access is provided by River Road from the north and by Aircraft Road from the south. Freight rail service is available from the north, with the possibility of rail access to the south. The state provided funding for an extension of sanitary sewer from the existing treatment plant down River Road to Pratt and Whitney Aircraft. That extension is now complete. With improved road access to the higher plateau of the zone, some acreage would become attractive sites for high profile light industrial/office uses in a low-density, campus-type setting. A \$250 million, 720 megawatt, gas-fired power plant has been fully approved on the former Feldspar property. This development provides the necessary access and opportunities for future development on the Feldspar property and the formally mined and now reclaimed portions of the adjacent Northeast Utilities property."

Issues of concern in the I-3 zone are as follows:

- **Significant Wetland Systems**

There are two (2) extremely significant and interrelated wetland systems in the I-3 zone. The first system straddles the zones western boundary. This system leads to the second wetland system at the mouth of Hubbard Brook adjacent to the Connecticut River. These large, biologically and ecologically diverse wetlands deserve permanent protection and preservation.

- **Blue Trail**

The blue trail was identified as a very significant recreation resource in the zone. This trail runs the entire length of Maromas and is located in the I-3 zone on the northern utility property. The trail was established by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association with landowners' permission.

At this moment there is no legally binding agreement to ensure that this trail remains. However, the Department of the Interior has legislation before Congress

which creates the 1st National Scenic Trail of which this Blue Trail would be a part. This trail deserves preservation including a significant buffer along the trail.

- **Undisturbed Ridgeline along River Road**

There is a significant block of continuous undisturbed slopes in excess of 25 % along River Road. The public has identified views from the river and adjacent communities as a major concern. Preserving these steeply sloping areas will protect the view from the Connecticut River and from towns across the river. Therefore, these areas are identified as worthy of protection.

- **Traffic**

There have been concerns over industrial traffic feeding into residential zones. The Planning and Zoning Commission should exercise its authority to prevent future industrial land uses from using streets in residential zones. The Commission also recognized Planning and Zoning's and the State Traffic Commission's authority to require transportation improvements when development occurs, including terminating the connection between residential and industrial roads. A through road from Exit 10 on Route 9 to Aircraft Road to River Road Connecticut Valley Hospital should be established. Because Aircraft Road is a state highway and Silver Street services Connecticut Valley Hospital, the Commission feels the city should consider asking the State take over the entire road network.

- **Habitat Preservation**

Recognizing that there could be significant, multiple and diverse habitats that are sensitive in some of the areas that are designated as potentially developable, these habitats need to be taken into consideration during the site development process. Detailed environmental impact evaluations for large projects are warranted.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should also amend the I-3 section of the Zoning Code to add uses that are more desirable and eliminate the undesirable uses, which are currently allowed. For instance, corporate offices, research and development facilities, emerging high technology and telecommunications-type uses should be allowed and the more heavy industrial uses currently allowed such as junkyards and solid waste facilities should be prohibited.

Other issues the Planning and Zoning Commission should consider for the I-3 zone regulations are mandatory buffers, ridgeline protection, required environmental impact evaluations and traffic impacts.

Recommendations

Middletown can be a leader in promoting public access to its Connecticut River Frontage and undeveloped forestlands. By promoting unrestricted access for passive recreation, Middletown will help to avoid a repeat of the highly restricted Connecticut coastline. By fostering interest in one of its greatest assets, the unique lands of Maromas, and forging relationships with the State and Federal government, Middletown will improve the quality of life for citizens.

- The Planning and Zoning Commission should change zoning regulations to prohibit inappropriate uses of I-3 lands.
- Lands within the Open Space corridor as shown on Figure 10.2 should be preserved. This is especially true of the Blue Trail and lands adjacent to it. Various means i.e. partnerships, grant and outright transfer of easements and purchases should be employed. Use of state and federal funding should be encouraged.
- Promote access to the Connecticut River.
- The Planning and Zoning Commission should require for the I-3 zone and other zones in Maromas, zone regulations which reflect the need for mandatory buffers, ridgeline protection, wetland and vernal pool protection, environmental impact evaluations when required, as well as traffic impact studies. This will insure that responsible development can occur while diversity in the area will be sustainable. Wherever possible, linkages should be explored with other towns.
- The Conservation Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission should seriously consider adopting a Conservation Overlay Zone for this area.

Conclusion

Figure 10 is a concept plan that incorporates a number of the concerns identified. The purpose of the concept plan is to graphically identify those areas worthy of protection and those areas available for future development.

The tremendous potential and importance of the Maromas area to the City's long-term environmental and financial health is clearly recognized and cannot be overstated.

After reviewing the natural characteristics and the areas with development potential in Maromas, the Commission concludes that a balance between

Maromas Concept Plan
 City of Middletown
 Plan of Conservation and Development
 Summer 2007

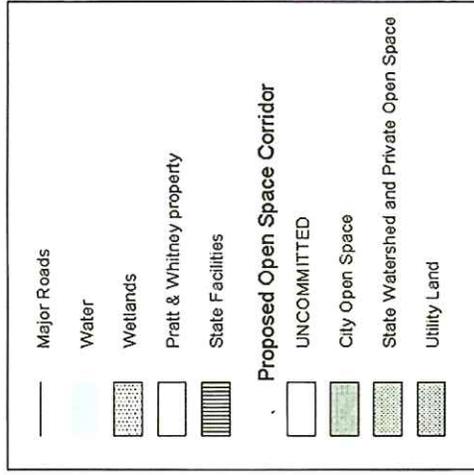
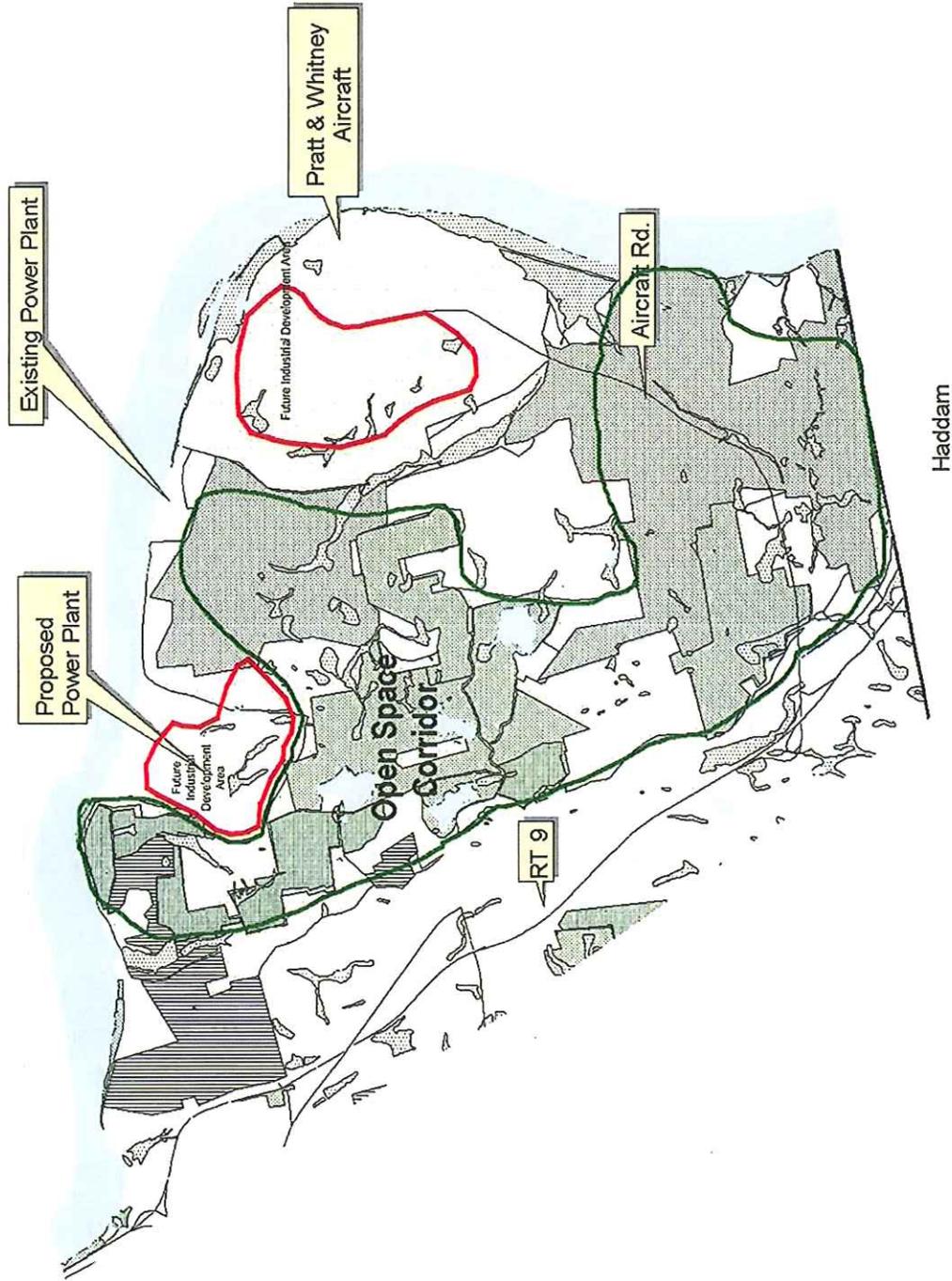


Figure 10



industrial development and natural resource protection can and should be achieved with careful land planning and regulation.

Equally important, the owners of the land in the I-3 zone must understand the concept plan and those areas worthy of protection. In this way, as proposals for private development are submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission, they will be consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development.