

Town of Winchester
Plan of Conservation and Development
 Adopted January 10, 2011
 Effective January 28, 2011



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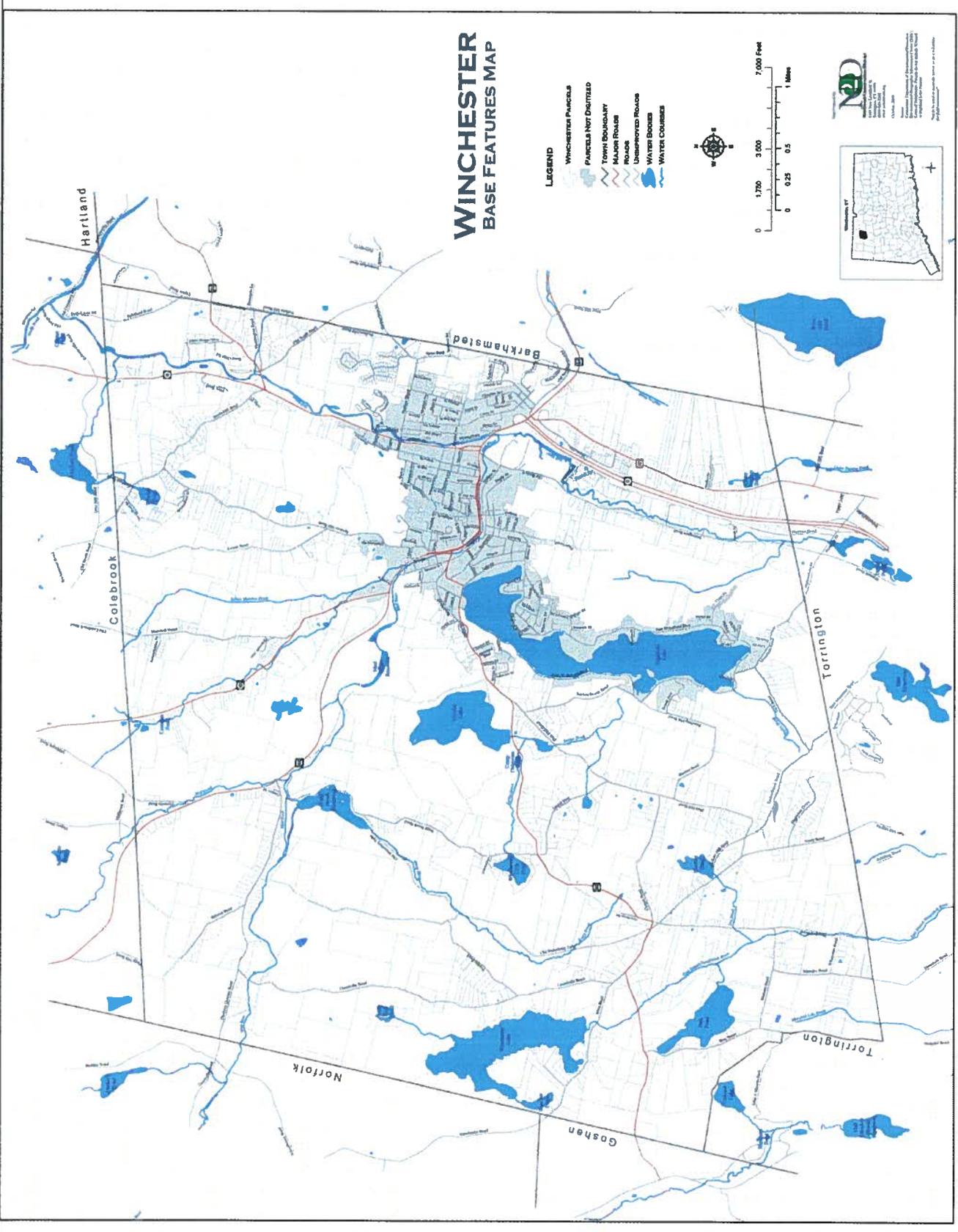
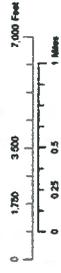
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FULL SIZE MAPS ON FILE IN PLANNING OFFICE

WINCHESTER BASE FEATURES MAP

- LEGEND**
- Winchester Parcels
 - Parcels Not Delineated
 - Town Boundary
 - Major Road
 - Road
 - Unimproved Road
 - Water Bodies
 - Water Courses



1 – INTRODUCTION

Winchester is located in Litchfield County in northwest Connecticut. Winsted is the name of the City within the Town of Winchester. The name Winsted derives its name from Winchester and Barkhamsted. Winsted and Winchester have both been used to refer to the Town. The Town is bounded by Goshen and Norfolk on the west, Colebrook on the north, Barkhamsted on the east, and Torrington on the south. In 2008, Winchester had an estimated population of 10,716 people within its land area of about 32 square miles. This estimate represents a decrease of 826 people (7 percent) from the 1990 Census.

ABOUT PLANS OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A Plan of Conservation and Development (“Plan” or “POCD”) is a tool for guiding the future of a community. The goals and recommendations of this Plan reflect a consensus built from the work of the Winchester Planning and Zoning Commission POCD Subcommittee and the Winchester Planning and Zoning Commission, with input from other boards and commissions and from residents.

A Plan of Conservation and Development is an advisory document for the community. Winchester’s last Plan, which was adopted in 1994, helped guide conservation and development in the community and influenced current land use regulations. This 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development provides a framework for guiding land use decisions in Winchester over the next decade.

The POCD also demonstrates Winchester’s commitment to achieving Connecticut’s objectives for land use planning, which include:

- Promoting principles of Smart Growth such as the re-use of existing, obsolete or underemployed assets, limiting sprawl, focusing development around existing infrastructure, and maximizing the environmental and quality of life contributions of non-developed lands.
- Maintaining the long term financial viability of Connecticut towns through promotion of local livability, employment opportunities, and the identification, promotion and protection of assets that provide long term fiscal sustainability.
- Providing of a range of housing including affordable housing, and ensuring that affordable housing is of appropriate quality, in appropriate locations, and

- appropriately served by and accessible to municipal services and amenities in the central area neighborhoods.
- Supporting the State in furtherance of its open space goals, providing protection for state assets such as DEP owned/managed water bodies and forest resources, and encouraging our citizens to further those goals in their own land management practices.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Subcommittee began the planning effort by identifying local issues and preparing an inventory and assessment of conditions and trends in Winchester. Based on these findings, the Subcommittee discussed alternative policies and desirable future outcomes.

Public input played an important role in preparing this Plan. The Subcommittee sought input by:

- Holding public meetings to collect input and discuss issues
- Holding public forums with residents to discuss the future of Winchester
- Encouraging the participation of local commissions and boards

The goals and strategies in this Plan are a reflection of the research and analysis conducted by the Subcommittee and public input and guidance.

The Planning and Zoning Commission has the statutory responsibility to adopt the Plan and a lead role in overseeing the Plan's implementation. However, implementation will occur only with the diligent efforts of the residents and officials of the Town. As a result, responsibility for implementation rests with all boards, commissions, agencies, and individuals in Winchester.

OTHER PLANS AND SPECIAL STUDIES

In addition to our previous Plan of Development, the Town has prepared a number of other plans and studies which aided in preparing this Plan.

These include:

- Natural Resources Inventory, 2009, prepared by the Conservation Commission
- Corridor Study, Rowley Street / Torrington Road, 2008, prepared by TPA Design Group
- Watershed Protection Study by LHCEO, 1990
- Traffic Study ConnDot

2 – CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

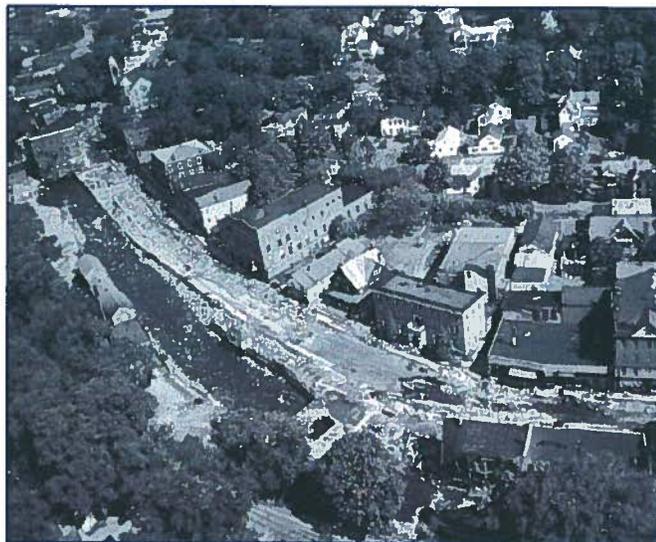
A BRIEF HISTORY OF WINCHESTER

In the mid-1600s the first English settlers came to the land which is now Winchester. Their patterns of settlement and overall well-being were dictated by the nature of the land, as it still is today. Favorable land conditions, which determined development potential, resulted in Winchester Center being settled before what is today called Winsted.

During the nineteenth century industrial growth took place along Winchester's rivers to take advantage of water power. During the twentieth century this industrial base dwindled leaving Winchester, like so many other New England towns, reviewing their growth potential and re-evaluating the vision for the community.

Two other factors played a critical role in shaping Winchester's development patterns – the 1955 Flood and the Route 8 Expressway. The 1955 flood destroyed 170 retail stores and 90% of the Town's industries and permanently changed the Downtown. Downtown was rebuilt with buildings on only one side of Main Street which provides the opportunity for river access and utilization.

The 1955 Flood



The opening of the Route 8 Expressway improved access to jobs to the south. As a result, more residents began working outside the community. Conversely, Winchester was now more accessible to the region. Winchester was also impacted by the loss of passenger rail service to points south in 1958. *Photo from CT State Library.*

Winchester's land conditions continue to play an important role today by influencing how the land is, can, or should be used.

THE PEOPLE OF WINCHESTER

POPULATION CHANGE

Winchester was home to 10,716 in 2008, according to Census data. The Town's population has fluctuated over the past 60 years, reaching a peak of 11,500 people in 1990, then decreased slightly. Some of this decrease is a reflection of changing family structures.

Non-resident weekenders add to Winchester's population, but they are not accounted for in the Census. According to town property records, about 15% of single family home owners have a principle residence outside of Connecticut. This data may indicate that Winchester has a fairly large influx of seasonal / weekender residents whose effects on the town should be further assessed.

Population Change, Winchester

Year	Pop.	Change
1950	10,535	
1960	10,496	-0.4%
1970	11,106	5.8%
1980	10,841	-2.4%
1990	11,542	6.5%
2000	10,706	-7.2%
2008	10,716	0.1%

Population Projections,
Winchester

Year	Estimate	Change
2010	10,833	1.2%
2020	10,964	1.2%
2030	11,015	0.5%

Overall, Winchester's population is projected to grow slowly - about 1% per decade. Both the Winchester Board of Education and the State have projected a continuation of modestly declining school enrollment.

DYNAMICS OF POPULATION CHANGE

While the total population is expected to remain relatively stable over the next 20 years, age composition might change substantially. Such projected changes in the age composition may have planning implications in terms of allocating resources to address future needs and demands.

For planning purposes, age composition can be divided into three major age groups based upon their differing needs or concerns: children (ages 0-19), adults (ages 20-54), and mature residents (ages 55 and up). The following percentage distribution provides a sense of the expected changes in age composition in Winchester.

Age Composition, 1980 to 2030, Winchester

Ages	ACTUAL			PROJECTED		
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
0-19	29.6%	26.2%	25.7%	24.7%	24.1%	24.2%
20-54	45.2%	50.9%	49.9%	46.5%	41.3%	39.7%
55+	25.2%	22.9%	24.4%	28.8%	34.6%	36.1%

The following table summarizes projected changes to Winchester’s age composition and possible implications.

Summary of Age Composition Projections, Winchester

Description	Age Range	Needs	Projection
Infants	0 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care 	Slight decline
School-Age	5 to 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School facilities • Recreation facilities • Recreation programs 	Slight decline
Young Adults	20 to 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental housing • Starter homes • Social destinations 	Continue to decline to 2020 and beyond
Middle Adults	35 to 54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family programs • Trade-up homes 	Continue to decline to 2020 and beyond
Mature Adults	55 to 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller homes • Second homes 	Continue to grow to 2020 and beyond
Retirement Age	65 and over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax relief • Housing options • Elderly programs 	Continue to grow to 2020 and beyond

It should be noted that these projections do not account for approved developments in this community. For example, the Wallens Hill and Aurora Estates developments, if completed, could add several hundred households including many new residents over age 55. Additionally, a subsidized senior housing facility, Carriage Maker Place has been approved for the Downtown area.

HOUSING

HOUSING UNITS AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE

The number of housing units in Winchester has generally increased since the 1960s except for a slight decline from 1990 to 2000. By 2008, there were 5,169 housing units in the Town.

Household sizes have been shrinking in Winchester and the State, due to changing lifestyles and an aging population. As a result, despite an overall decrease in population, Winchester saw an increase of more than 400 housing units since 1980. Single-person households likely play a large role in this trend whose effects should be further assessed. According to the 2000 Census, there were approximately 1,220 single-person households in Winchester; this represents an increase of 15% since 1990.

Housing Units, Winchester

Year	Housing Units
1960	3,769
1970	4,015
1980	4,511
1990	5,093
2000	4,922
2008	5,169

Source: 1960-2000 Census

Household Sizes, Winchester

Year	Persons Per Household
1960	2.78
1970	2.77
1980	2.40
1990	2.27
2000	2.18

Source: 1960-2000 Census

HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS

Winchester's housing stock is very diverse, ranging from older mixed use and multi-family homes in the Downtown to newer, more expensive homes in the rural sections and on the shores of Highland Lake.

More than 40% of the housing units are in two-family or multi-family buildings and one third of housing units are renter occupied. The majority of the rental units are located in or near the Downtown. While rental units add to diversity

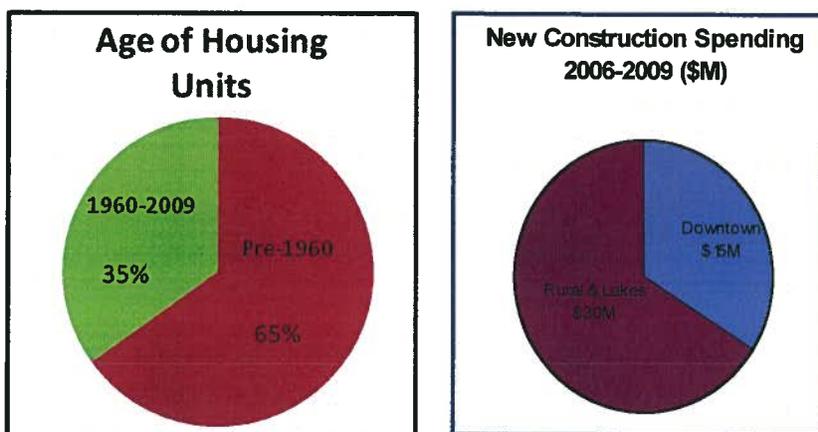
of available housing options, Winchester, like neighboring Torrington, has inherited a legacy of housing structures from our 150 year industrial period.

Types of Housing Units

Type of Structure Unit is Located In	Town	County	State
Mobile Home	<1%	1%	1%
Structure w/ 5+ Units	25%	8%	17%
Structure w/ 3- 4 Units	6%	6%	9%
Structure w/ 2 - Units	13%	8%	8%
1 - Unit Structure	56%	78%	65%

Source: Census

Sixty five percent of Winchester’s housing units were built before 1960 and many of these older units are badly in need of updates and repairs. This is of particular concern in the Downtown. Although 60% of Winchester’s housing is located Downtown, only \$15 million of the \$45 million in construction spending from 2006 to 2009 was for Downtown units (according to local data).



HOUSING PRICES AND AFFORDABILITY

Like most of Connecticut, Winchester housing prices continued to climb until 2007. The rate of price increase from 2002 to 2007 far outpaced the increase in median income. According to the 2007 town-wide revaluation, the average Winchester single family house price rose 40% between 2002 and 2007, while the Town’s median income rose by 20%.

Despite this rapid increase, the average house in Winchester is still more affordable than the average house in Litchfield County or the State. A 2005 Warren Group study identified Winchester as having the lowest median housing value in Litchfield County. Data from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) indicates that nearly 60% of houses sold in Winchester were sold for less than \$200,000. Using standard measures of affordability, more than half of the houses in 2007 sold at prices affordable to a household earning the Town’s median income of \$57,700. Having an affordably-priced housing stock provides an asset in the region.

	Winchester	County	State
\$400K	15%	22%	32%
\$300-400K	7%	19%	17%
\$200-300K	21%	30%	31%
\$100-200K	52%	26%	18%
Under \$100K	5%	3%	2%

Source: CERC, 2007.

Rentals appear to be fairly affordable also. Based on the 2000 Census, more than 80% of Winchester's apartments rent for less than \$750 per month. These rents likely address the needs for low and moderate income families, but there appears to be a gap in meeting the needs for median and upper income household.

Compared to towns with similar housing market characteristics, a relatively high number of homes (15%) did sell for over \$400,000. These higher priced units likely reflect the attraction of Winchester's lakes and rural regions to more affluent second-homeowners.

Median Housing Value for Single Family Units, 2005

Winchester	\$170,000
Torrington	\$173,649
Barkhamsted	\$254,000
New Hartford	\$258,000
Colebrook	\$280,000
Norfolk	\$287,000
Litchfield	\$315,000

Warren Group.

Connecticut General Statute, Section 8-30g requires that a minimum of 10% of a community's housing units be affordable to households earning 80% or less of the Region's or State's median household income (whichever median is lower). The statute defines "recognized affordable housing" as:

- subsidized housing,
- financed by CHFA or other mortgage assistance programs, or
- deed-restricted to affordable prices.

According to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), 12.05% of Winchester's housing meets this requirement. This means that Winchester is exempt from an affordable housing appeals process in which developers can override local zoning if the need to build such housing outweighs public health or safety concerns.

State-Recognized Affordable Housing in Winchester

Year	Units	% of Housing
2004	513	10.42%
2005	609	12.37%
2006	612	12.43%
2007	614	12.47%
2008	593	12.05%

Source: DECD.

The Winchester Housing Authority (WHA) manages the Town's affordable housing units. They have built 164 units of subsidized senior housing and they also manage the HUD rental assistance program. Another 20 units of low income housing have been built by the Winsted Health Center and WHA has received approval to add another 32 units of subsidized active adult (55+) housing.

Winchester has met its needs for affordable housing. Going forward, priorities should focus on providing a more balanced housing stock.

HOUSING FOR THE SEASONAL POPULATION

The 2000 Census indicated that six percent of Winchester’s housing units are “occasional or seasonal” compared to a state average of two percent. As noted earlier, a review of the Town’s property records would suggest a much higher and growing number of weekend/vacation homes, possibly in the 12 to 15% range. Many of the larger, newer and higher value homes are owned by families with principle residences in other parts of the State or Country. Of the ten highest valued homes, six are owned by non-Winchester residents. There is clearly an attraction to Winchester’s lakes and scenic rural areas for more affluent families who are looking for getaways.

Seasonal or occasional homes are a form of economic development in Winchester. They generate need for contractors and caretakers and provide a fiscal benefit to the Town because the tax revenues generated by these properties tend to exceed the costs for the services (e.g., education costs). Moreover, people who can afford second homes likely spend money in local establishments.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

JOBS

In 2008, there were 3,746 jobs in Winchester, according to the Connecticut Department of Labor. This represents a loss of approximately 350 jobs since 2000. The Wholesale and Retail Trade and Service sectors comprise the majority of business establishments and provide just over half of the jobs in Winchester. Most of the recent job losses have been from these sectors.

Types of Jobs in Winchester

Business Sector	% of Establishments in Town	% of Jobs in Town
Agriculture	3.0%	0.8%
Construction and Mining	15.1%	4.3%
Manufacturing	9.4%	29.1%
Transportation and Utilities	3.6%	3.3%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	23.2%	19.7%
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	5.9%	3.0%
Services	36.3%	33.3%
Government	3.6%	6.5%

CERC, 2008.

LABOR FORCE

According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, Winchester had a labor force of 6,109 in 2009, about the same level as 2000. About 9.2% of Winchester's labor force is currently unemployed. This is the highest unemployment rate in over 20 years, yet it is lower than other towns in the Litchfield Hills. Only Torrington has a lower rate of unemployment.

With a total of 3,746 jobs and 5,548 workers it is clear Winchester exports workers to other communities. In 2000, only 25% of the jobs in Winchester were filled by Winchester residences, representing a sharp drop from the 40+% recorded in 1980. Winchester's labor force commutes to nearby communities for jobs, including Torrington and New Hartford.

Commuting Patterns, 2000

<i>From Winchester to....</i>		<i>Into Winchester from...</i>	
Winchester	1,369	Winchester	1,369
Torrington	1,069	Torrington	608
New Hartford	455	New Hartford	136
Hartford	232	Barkhamsted	132
Barkhamsted	200	Colebrook	85
Avon	139	Canton	74
Simsbury	137	Harwinton	70
Watertown	117	Norfolk	57
Farmington	114	Burlington	49
Waterbury	113	Waterbury	46

TAX BASE

Historically, Winchester's prosperity and economic momentum have been centered on the industrial, commercial and residential core of the Downtown. More recently, Downtown and the High Density Downtown Neighborhoods have faced many of the challenges also faced by other older New England urban centers i.e. declining tax contributions, a larger rental community, a smaller owner occupier population, older and smaller units, obsolete industrial capacity, and a disproportionately smaller share of investment dollars.

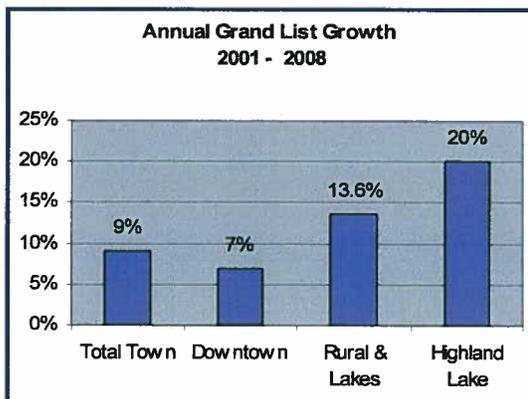
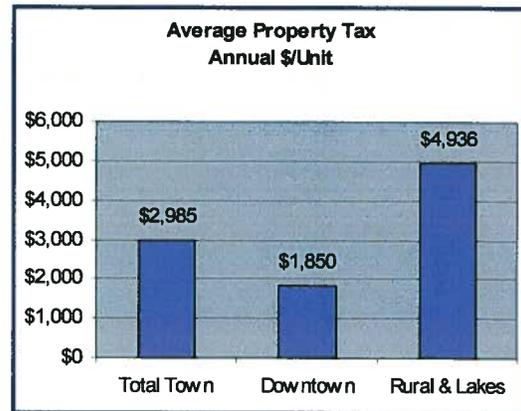
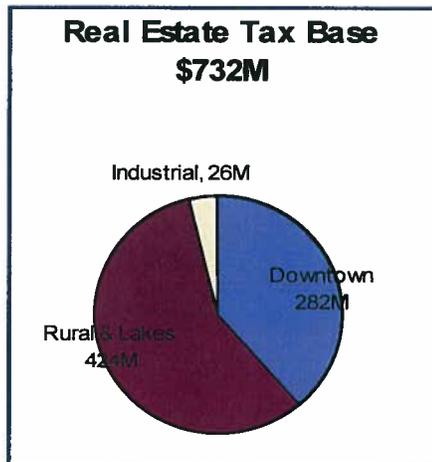
The housing stock (in terms of condition and use) may play an important role in these issues. Older units that are not well-maintained are of less value and, with a concentration of lower-income households, rents may not financially justify updates and upgrades.

Examples of economic disparities between Downtown and the remainder of the Town include:

- With over 60% of the population and housing units, Downtown represents just 38% of the real estate tax base.

- The average taxpayer Downtown pays approximately \$1,850 per housing unit in annual property taxes, while the average taxpayer in the Lakes District and other rural areas pays over \$4,900 per year.
- Grand list growth in the Downtown lags other parts of Town. From 2001 to 2008, growth averaged 7% Downtown while the growth in the outlying Lakes District and other rural areas was nearly double (13.6%) and growth in the Highland Lake District was even higher (20%).
- Since the 2007 town-wide revaluation, real estate prices Downtown have continued to decline (down 7%) while outlying region values have continued to increase (up 6%).
- More than 80% of the recent residential construction spending took place in the Rural and Lakes regions.

The following charts summarize these issues.



Note: "Highland Lake" is a subset of the "Rural & Lakes" category

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The Town is divided into 21 zoning districts to regulate land uses. About 5% (1,060 acres) is zoned for business uses, while 95% (18,460 acres) is zoned for residential uses. Ultimately, the Town may wish to review the number of districts and determine if there are opportunities for consolidation.

Existing Zoning

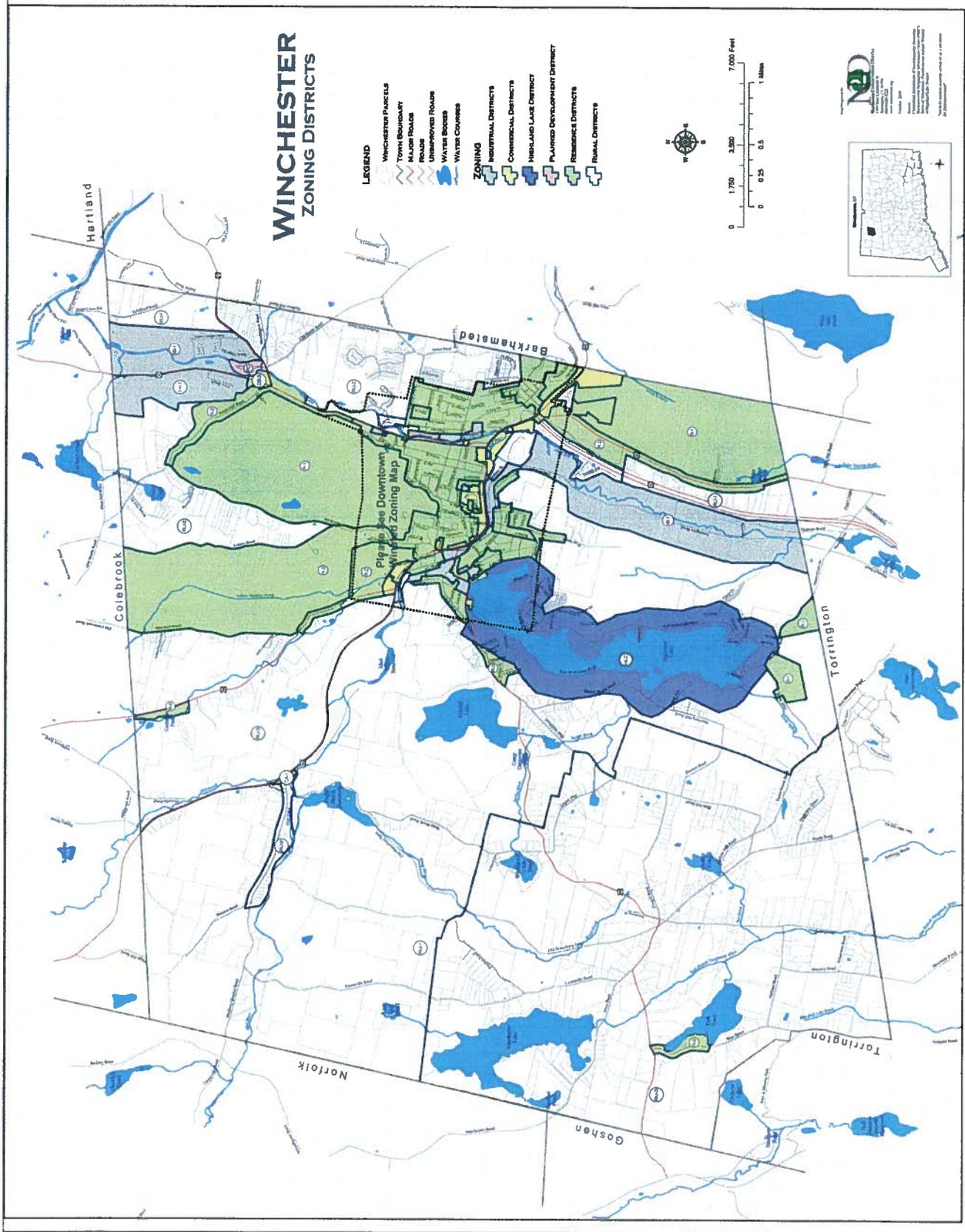
Business Zones		Acres	Residential Zones		Acres
CA-1		3.35	HLD		899.7
CA-2		4.24	R-1		808.63
CA-3		0.49	R-2		1289.72
CB-1		54.55	R-3		702.11
CB-2		37.82	R-4		142.86
CB-3		28.06	RU-1		5629.6
CX		57.11	RU-2		2841.48
IA-1		161.69	RU-3		6143.94
IA-2		3.79			
IA-3		1.77			
IB-1		637.8			
IB-2		36.73			
IB-3		32.13			
Total Business		1,059	Total Residential		18,458

As discussed earlier, little population growth is anticipated in Winchester during the next few decades. Nevertheless, there is considerable available land to support further development and there is potential for additional investment in developed properties, similar to that occurring around Highland Lake. There is little vacant land in Downtown, but there is significant redevelopment potential (e.g., unused mill space). Such redevelopment could add residents, commercial uses, or a combination.

In the outlying areas, significant raw developable land exists even when accounting for environmental constraints such as steep slopes and wetlands. A rough analysis of development potential indicates that there are approximately 3,000 developable acres in total, distributed as follows (acreages are approximate):

- Route 8 corridor – 500 acres
- North of Route 44 and west of Route 8 – 1,000 acres
- South of Route 44 and west of Route 800 -- 1,500 acres.

Based on current zoning, this net developable land could theoretically support up to 2,500 additional households or an increase of almost 50% over today's population. This calculation does not account for residential redevelopment in the Downtown.



3 – COMMUNITY VIEWS AND VISION

COMMUNITY VIEWS

In preparing this Plan, it has been the goal of the POCD Subcommittee to reflect the sentiments and values of the community garnered from public meetings, the efforts of numerous boards, commissions, and committees, and from the many personal comments and conversations that have contributed to the Subcommittee's considerations.

Local boards and commissions provided input at a March 9, 2009 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting and the Subcommittee held a public workshop on September 26, 2009.

A number of key issues and topics emerged at the meetings, including:

- The character and quality of Winchester is defined by its natural resources – they must be preserved
- Features such as ridgelines, stonewalls, and open space should be preserved
- Water features and protecting critical watersheds are important
- Rural areas should be preserved
- In Downtown, rehabbing mill buildings, enhancing and improving the Mad River, retaining historic architecture, and emphasizing mixed use development and market rate housing are important
- The Route 800 corridor presents opportunities for economic growth
- Implementation of the POCD is important
- Our downtown neighborhoods should be revitalized

VISION

A vision for Winchester's future also emerged during the planning process. This vision sets the framework for developing a set of challenging, yet achievable, goals. In the subsequent chapters of this Plan, these goals will be defined along with strategies to achieve the goals.

A POCD is a work in progress. While the Planning and Zoning Commission has charted a course, the community must make sure that course is followed in order to realize this vision.

Vision for Winchester

In Winchester, we will:

- Cultivate the self-reliant spirit of our historic New England town;
- Serve as a tourism, cultural and higher education hub;
- Achieve a demographically-balanced commercial center;
- Nurture our neighborhoods surrounding the city center;
- Respect the rural charm and natural beauty of the countryside;
- Enhance our recreation opportunities; and
- Encourage green practices and be a leader in the region.

To achieve our vision for viability and prosperity, we must strive to:

- Provide the highest possible level of protection to our water and forest resources;
- Emphasize open space preservation;
- Revitalize our mixed use Downtown, and anchor it with expanded retail and office space and a range of housing;
- Attract middle and upper income households to the Downtown and high density downtown neighborhoods in order to promote and maintain a balanced and diverse residential base and to increase the customer base and activity level in the Downtown;
- Promote a pattern of low density residences in our rural areas; and,
- Anchor future development around existing patterns of development and infrastructure.

4 – PLANNING AREAS

For planning purposes, Winchester can be categorized into five geographic planning areas (see map on page 4-2). While many strategies in this Plan are applicable town-wide, some strategies respond to a particular challenge or opportunity in one of these planning areas.

The following pages identify each area and summarize its key characteristics and primary planning objectives. Specific strategies for these areas are found in the chapters that follow.

Lakes District

This area is comprised of low-density single family residential development with a rural, wooded and agrarian feel. This area is home to many natural assets that add significant value to the Town.

Key Characteristics:

- Open space and recreational amenities (Highland Lake, Winchester Lake, Park Pond)
- Drinking water supplies (Crystal Lake, Rugg Brook Reservoir)
- Agricultural land
- Remarkable diversity of topographical features, biodiversity, animal habitat
- Cultural amenities such as historic Winchester Center Green and other historic resources, structures and landscapes

Planning Objectives:

- Maintain as a low density residential area.
- Enhanced protection of environmental and recreational assets and ensuring their appropriate use.
- Maintenance and continue growth of the tax base by attracting and retaining residents and tourists to this area. This population will help support Winchester's commercial and fiscal needs and stability.

Northern & Eastern Winchester

This area contains low-density single family residential development, and has generally retained its overwhelmingly rural, wooded and agrarian feel. It is expected that natural resource constraints will ultimately decide development patterns and intensities.

Key Characteristics:

- Small scale farming
- Beautiful views
- Elevated terrain, punctuated by north-south oriented stream valleys

Planning Objectives:

- Preserve the natural features.
- Maintain as a low density residential area.
- In limited cases, areas of higher density residential development might be appropriate if it fits in with the visual and topographical landscape, preserve significant amounts of open space, and attracts residents that will support Downtown.

Downtown

Downtown is an “industrial age” Main Street, with commercial uses, civic uses and apartments. It is in need of significant redevelopment since many buildings are outdated, functionally unusable and aesthetically inappropriate.

Key Characteristics:

- Mixed uses, civic hub
- The Mad River runs parallel to Main Street
- Old manufacturing and mill buildings
- Beautiful architecture (particularly churches)
- Open spaces (East End Park, West End park, river)
- Route 44
- Abundance of rental units

Planning Objectives:

- Promote and sustain a financially viable, revitalized, mixed use, high density Downtown that will serve as a commercial, governmental, religious, educational and cultural destination for residents of the Town, surrounding towns and tourists.
- Integrate open space and environmental safeguards in redevelopment

High Density Downtown Neighborhoods

While this Plan does not intend to delineate exact boundaries of the Downtown Neighborhoods, it is an area clearly centered on Downtown and is currently served by public water and sewer. This area is predominantly residential, with some municipal and commercial uses.

Key Characteristics:

- Predominantly nineteenth and first half twentieth century residential architecture
- Conversions of single-family houses to multi-family
- Strong presence of renters and transient population
- Little municipal green space
- Spectacular views

Planning Objectives:

- Retain as a moderate to high density residential core, with a range of housing types, which will provide a customer base to Downtown businesses.
- Increase homeownership to attract a range of income groups
- Integrate market and subsidized senior housing throughout the district; avoid concentrations.
- Develop neighborhood open spaces to create a sense of community

Route 8/800 Corridor

This area is a narrow corridor running from south to north on the eastern extremity of the Town. This area is home to longstanding industrial uses.

Key Characteristics:

- Environmental challenges include: flood plain along the Still and Mad rivers; steep slopes and ridgelines along the western and eastern boundaries; possible soil and groundwater impairment due to history of industrial use.
- The northern part has additional space and is served by public water and sewer service
- Existing land uses in the southern part, which does not have water and sewer, includes low density residential, vacant and / or obsolete industrial and commercial properties, small-scale commercial and quarrying/processing operations.

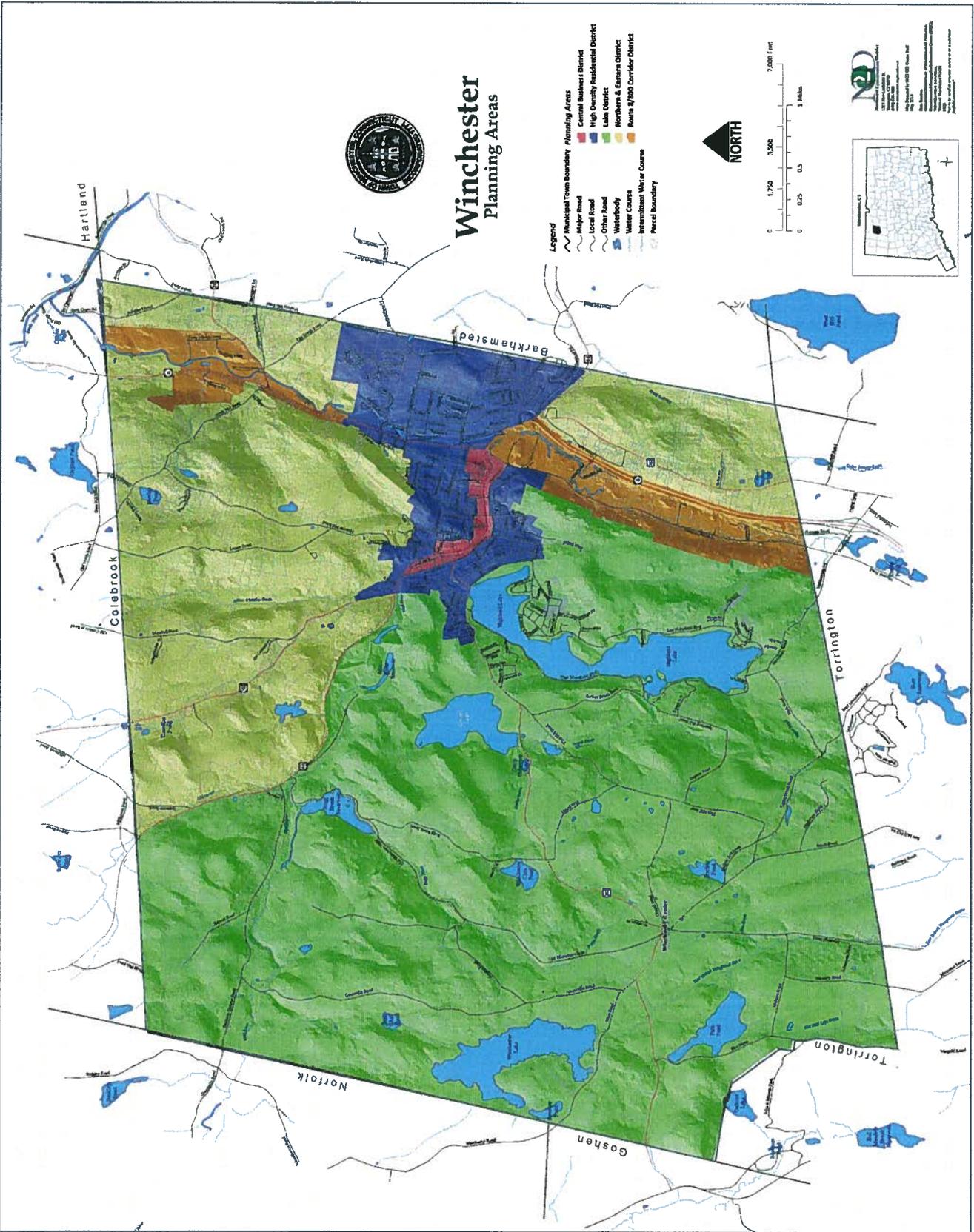
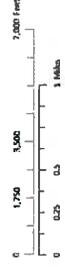
Planning Objectives:

- In the northern portion, encourage additional industrial and commercial development.
- In the southern portion, in the absence of sewer and water, encourage recreational use. If utilities are provided, determine opportunities.
- Improve aesthetics since the area serves as a gateway to Downtown.
- Balance economic development goals with protecting the natural character of this area and the rivers.



Winchester Planning Areas

- Legend**
- Municipal Town Boundary
 - Major Road
 - Local Road
 - Other Road
 - Waterbody
 - Water Course
 - Intermittent Water Course
 - Parcel Boundary
 - Planning Areas
 - Central Business District
 - High Density Residential District
 - Medium Density Residential District
 - Neighborhood
 - Historic & Scenic District
 - Special Use District



5 – GREEN PRINT FOR WINCHESTER

OVERVIEW

The Green Print is an all-encompassing term for Winchester’s creative land use planning and a road map to a more environmentally and socially respectful method of development. From the most pristine natural ecosystems to the most highly developed areas and everywhere along the spectrum, the Green Print can play an important role in enhancing the image, identity and quality of life in the town.

The Green Print is an approach to overcome challenges such as:

- Having zoning regulations that may not be meeting today’s needs for conservation, development and neighborhood stabilization
- Difficulty in thinking long term
- A passive approach to conservation in which conservation is mainly a function of a lack of development

The Green Print intends to capitalize on assets. Assets include having progressive and mindful land use commissions and property owners that have initiated conservation measures.

The Green Print overarches the chapters in this POCD, which are organized around three main themes:

- Conservation – those things that we must protect (natural resources, open space, community character, historic resources)
- Development – guiding future growth (community structure, residential development, business development)
- Infrastructure – supporting our community (community facilities, transportation, utilities)

The Green Print approach applies to what we want to protect, influences how and where we develop and its principles affect how we think about our infrastructure. Therefore, it is important to introduce Green Print strategies related to conservation, development and infrastructure.

GREEN PRINT STRATEGIES

The Green Print is simply an all-encompassing term for Winchester's creative overall land use planning, a road map to a more environmentally and socially respectful method of development. The intent of the Green Print is to be a symbiotic integration of conservation and development where both are seen as the black or white of a black and white photo, neither being visible except in the presence of the other.

The Green Print provides a proactive approach that focuses on development in response to clearly stated conservation and development goals as well as the town planning areas. Land use boards will actively review development applications regarding their appropriateness and synchronicity with conservation goals for the particular planning area. Land use boards will condition permits based on the basis of the Green Print concept. Therefore, the Green Print will play an Integral role in enhancing the image, identity and quality of life in the Town of Winchester.



The Green Print approach entails:

- Encouraging a change in mindset to one that values the environment and respects the interconnectedness of human activities and quality of life for citizens as well as the ecosystems of Winchester. The Town could organize a Green Print committee to guide land use boards and commissions. Education of the community, developers and the Town will play a central role in success.
- Creating a Green Print brand and identity for the Town to distinguish it from others in North West Connecticut and attract new residents who are interested in Green Print approaches.
- Becoming a successful demonstration community for voluntary acceptance and implementation of progressive green practices (e.g., LID, BMP, RoHS, LEED, Eco-, Green, Sustainable and Permaculture – see Glossary in Appendix A). These practices should be implemented throughout the entire development process, from planning and design through construction and maintenance.
- Balancing very long term thinking for all conservation and development activities with experimentation and innovation. For example, attention must be paid to how development activities might impact opportunities on different sites or future development of the same site.
- Maintaining and expanding on the State’s principles of Smart Growth, which entail redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers, expanding housing opportunities, concentrating development around transportation nodes and corridors, conservation and environmental protection, and integrating planning efforts with all levels of government.
- Ensuring that all development is minimally invasive, from the varied perspectives of functional, visual and environmental impact on our natural and cultural resources, including but not limited to resources such as energy, night skies, quiet and air, soil and water quality. The Town should develop an appropriate check list of Green Print parameters to be considered for all conservation and development activities.
- Preparing implementation guidelines to assist politicians and land use commissioners, citizens and developers in raising the social and ecological bar by assimilating the Green Print into a user-friendly document.

Many additional actions to implement the Green Print (e.g., walkability, energy conservation, etc.) are found in the following chapters of this POCD.

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6 – CONSERVATION

Identifying natural and cultural resources to protect is an important component of a Plan of Conservation and Development. Determining which features are important from an ecological perspective, for preserving character, and for enhancing overall quality of life sets the framework for discussions about future growth in Winchester. Chapter 5, Green Print, provided overarching themes that also relate to conservation.

NATURAL RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

The Natural Resource Inventory Report identifies in detail the natural resources and functions that should be preserved or conserved. These resources can be summarized as:

Resources for Preservation:

Resources so important to environmental quality or community character that alterations to these areas should be avoided to the extent feasible and prudent.

- Watercourses and Water Bodies (water quantity and quality)
- Inland Wetlands
- Steep slopes (>25%)
- Flood Plain (100 year)

Resources for Conservation:

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

- Sensitive watershed areas (such as Highland Lake or public water supply watersheds)
- Streambelt buffer areas
- Stratified drift aquifers and areas of high groundwater availability
- Unique or special habitat areas
- Flood Plain (500 year)

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN EACH PLANNING AREA

Lakes District

While water bodies are located throughout Town, the preponderance is within the Lakes District. Topographically, this area has significant limitations on development due to steep slopes, wetlands and other poorly drained soils and shallow soil to bedrock characteristics. The current density of housing and use of these water bodies has created serious environmental and public safety risks. There is a negative impact on water quality with tree cutting for residential development and roads that create impervious surfaces and consequent storm water runoff and management problems. Both Highland Lake and Park Pond have invasive aquatic plants that require costly intervention to control and mitigate.

The 1990 Regional Watershed Protection Study, conducted by the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials, offered a number of recommendations for the Lakes District. Recommendations included increasing minimum lot sizes, incorporating a "net lot size structure" (excluding from minimum lot sizes undevelopable land), limiting impervious coverage, and limiting timber cutting practices to "sustainable timber farming."

Northern and Eastern Winchester

There are significant limitations to development in this area due to steep slopes, shallow soil to bedrock characteristics, and high seasonal ground water levels. While there are no areas of significant wetlands or significant water bodies, this area does drain to the Mad River and Still River.

Downtown and High Density Downtown Neighborhoods

Challenges in these areas relate to storm runoff. More developed areas have a greater proportion of impervious surfaces. Storm water generally runs directly into drainage pipes or directly into water bodies, carrying pollutants.

Route 8 / 800 Corridor

The Mad and Still Rivers, and their associated floodplains, run through this area. The western and eastern boundaries are characterized by steep slopes. Historic industrial activity also may have impaired groundwater here.

STRATEGIES TO PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

A primary goal of this Plan is to protect our natural systems in order to preserve community character, preserve environmental functions, and enhance the quality of life for residents. Of utmost importance is the protection of our water bodies. Our lakes, rivers, ponds, streams, and springs are valuable natural resources that contribute significantly to the financial, recreational and aesthetic viability of the Town.

When discussing natural resource protection strategies, it is important to note that many existing parcel boundaries are the result of history. The right to use land is the economic and legal right of property owners.

Where Feasible, Preserve Sensitive Areas as Open Space

Permanent protection of land as open space affords the strongest protection for many natural resources. Where feasible, Winchester should continue to encourage the permanent protection of sensitive natural resource areas through conservation easements, private donations of land to land trusts, open space set asides in new developments, and by other appropriate means (see Open Space chapter for detailed strategies).

Update Density and Minimum Lot Size Requirements

Many communities find that the overall zoning framework, adopted many decades ago, may not adequately address today's needs. The Town has recently amended sections of the zoning regulations to address emerging challenges. However, it might be time to overhaul the regulations and incorporate modern tools in order to better protect the land, environment and overall quality of life. Such updates should ensure that development is appropriate in form, function and impact with the underlying land.

Winchester should enact soil-based residential density zoning regulations. Soil-based zoning can better relate development intensity to the natural capacity of the land to handle septic infiltration and stormwater run-off, thereby minimizing potential water quality impacts and other impacts. The approach should include a "net acreage" provision, requiring that a lot has minimum area of contiguous land that is sufficiently flat, well drained and without shallow soil-to-bedrock features (i.e., it can support a house and septic system).

In addition, within the Lakes District and the Northern and Eastern Area, the Town should revise current lot size requirements in accordance with current environmental protection theories and practices. Recommended lot sizes are:

- Lakes District: minimum lot size of 5 acres with 2 acres that meet the "net acreage" provision. This is consistent with the lowest density requirements of other rural Connecticut towns and consistent with the Winchester Water Company's stated goals for privately held watershed lands.
- Northern and Eastern Area: minimum lot size of 2 acre gross with 1.25 "net acres"

Address Storm Water Runoff

A key environmental goal of all development should be to minimize the amount of run-off and improve its quality (e.g., sedimentation, acidity, temperature, etc.). There are a number of steps that can be taken to address run-off issues. From a regulatory approach,

the Town could require run-off volumes after development to be no greater than the volume before development. This approach could apply only in sensitive areas (such as near wetlands) or only for certain types of developments (e.g., for new subdivisions). Elsewhere, regulations could set limits on the increase in run-off.

Reducing impervious surfaces increases on-site infiltration of stormwater, thereby reducing run-off. Additional drainage strategies might include requiring pervious material for driveways within the setback or limiting impervious cover of all types. Limitations might be most relevant in two planning areas:

- In the Lakes District, a limit of 10% of the net area or proportionate limit in large parcels is recommended per current protective theory.
- In the Northern and Eastern Area, subdivisions should be limited to a maximum of 7.5% impervious coverage unless it can be demonstrated that a larger coverage will be designed so as to result in zero incremental run-off.

Vegetated areas reduce the flow of runoff and help filter out pollutants. Expanding the width of riparian buffers, adopting more restrictive limits on clear-cutting and requiring that buffers are appropriately planted can help reduce impacts to wetlands from runoff.

Drainage from unpaved town roads onto private properties has been an issue in Town. The Town should create maintenance plans for its unpaved roads to help solve drainage issues.

Finally, most of these strategies can be achieved by implementing Low Impact Design / Development (LID), which provides alternative storm water control methods. Land Use Commissions could require applicants to use LID techniques. LID can also be employed in more developed areas where impervious surfaces are predominant, such as Downtown. Examples that could be employed Downtown include using pavers rather than asphalt or concrete and aligning tree basins with storm drains. An analysis of steep slopes and storm drains Downtown can help determine appropriate LID measures.

Reduce Water Pollution

In recent years, water quality protection efforts throughout the nation have focused on reducing “non-point” pollution (pollution that does not originate from a specific point). This includes storm drainage discharges, lawn fertilizer, septic systems, agricultural runoff, and similar sources. Implementing and updating recommendations made in the Crystal Lake-Rugg Brook Reservoirs Watershed Protection Study (prepared by LHCEO in 1990) to help the Town assess water pollution risks and develop specific approaches to minimize risks.

Although there has been no indication of widespread septic failures or problems in Winchester, improperly operating septic systems are a potential threat to water quality and public health. Winchester should encourage programs to educate property owners about proper septic operation and maintenance. Within the Lakes District, the Town could adopt an ordinance requiring regular septic pumping. Such a program should take differences in system design, soil types, and usage into consideration.

Reducing runoff, as discussed above, will also help minimize the amount of pollution that reaches the Town's water bodies.

The Town should continue to support a regular water quality testing program for key water bodies. Testing provides advance warning of potential contamination threats to surface water and aquifers and provides benchmarks for measuring progress. Monitoring is important for the Mad and Still Rivers; a plan for remedial action and long term management plan should be developed.

Continue to Address Erosion and Sediment Control

Erosion and sediment controls are required in all new developments in Winchester. However, adequate inspection and maintenance is necessary to ensure appropriate protection of water resources. Careful inspection and maintenance should be continued until areas are completely stabilized.

In the Lakes District, unpaved driveways and roads leading to Highland Lake and Park Pond perimeter roads are subject to erosion. Methods of controlling erosion should be explored and implemented as soon as possible. Reducing runoff can also help reduce erosion, particularly in areas with steep slopes.

Provide Public Education

The Town should undertake an educational program so that Winchester's residents will:

- appreciate the value of the Town's natural resources (including benefits related to quality of life, property values, pride),
- understand how their own individual actions can impact natural resources and how they can minimize their impact, and
- Provide information on various measures that the Town could employ to protect natural resources, thereby building support for if /when the Town adopts such measures.

Public education and involvement is particularly important for protecting water quality in the Lakes District. Specific topics that could be addressed include: reducing or eliminating sediment runoff, septic maintenance, hazardous materials, lawn and garden fertilizers/chemicals, yard composting, clear-cutting and clearing of understory, wetlands

protection and similar issues. The Conservation Commission could take the lead on implementing these programs.

Reaching out to youth and existing civic groups can be an effective way of educating residents. The Town could encourage development of age appropriate curriculum in Winchester's schools (kindergarten through community college) that will enhance knowledge of and appreciation for our natural resources.

Continue to Identify Natural Resources and Priority Protection Areas

The Natural Resources Inventory provides a wealth of information about natural resources in Winchester. Maintaining and expanding the inventory should be an ongoing effort. Specific additions to the inventory should include:

- ecosystems within the Lakes District and trans-boundary systems
- additional natural resources such as vernal pools
- wildlife and vegetation including Federal, State and local endangered and threatened species
- within the Downtown, significant environmental features that need greater protection (e.g., Mad and Still Rivers, Highland Lake outflow, etc.)

The Natural Resources Inventory can be a valuable tool for town boards and commissions. The IWWC, P&Z and ZBA could be required to make specific reference to the Natural Resource Inventory when deciding on land use applications involving any water body. To facilitate this process, the application form could include a statement that addresses water body protection.

The Conservation Commission should be encouraged to undertake landscape-scale ecosystem planning by creating conservation overlays. The overlays would identify priority areas for protection such as ridgelines or significant tracts of large, unfragmented forest.

Work Regionally to Protect Natural Resources

Natural resources do not respect town boundaries; continued regional cooperation will be important. The Town should promote collaboration with surrounding towns on studies of trans-boundary ecosystems and create an inter-municipal agreement that states the values of the resources and includes a formal commitment to work together to achieve planning and protection goals.

Coordination with abutting towns is particularly important for any activity in the Lakes District watershed to ensure protection and enhancement of the mutual watershed. (see LHCEO 1990 Watershed Protection Study).

Address Invasive Species

Actions to address invasive species might include developing an invasive species plan, developing a process for eradicating invasive plantings, and discouraging the introduction and storage of non-local organic material (wood piles, etc.) that may harbor invasive flora and fauna.

Invasive species can cause tremendous harm to water bodies. The Town should examine the process, financial and legal implications of steam cleaning watercraft prior to launching them in the Town's water bodies to curb the spread of invasive aquatic plants and wildlife such as zebra mussels.

Additional Regulatory Strategies

- In the Lakes District, adopt watershed zoning that will expand the area of protection (e.g., wider streamside buffers and greater distance from water body perimeter under IWWC regulation). The zoning should incorporate Best Management Practices particularly for impervious surface, soil erosion prevention and potential phosphate loading. Create a Watershed Protection Ordinance that would address all aspects of watershed protection including allowable uses of shoreline, shoreline buffers, extent of the protected area, construction parameters, lot requirements, alteration of vegetation; storm water and phosphate loading impacts and enforcement.
- The enforcement of existing and any new regulations is important.
- Ensure that variances are granted in very few instances and not based on past precedent, financial hardship or legal threats.
- In the Lakes District require restoration of indigenous, native comparable foliage coverage prior to rebuilding or alteration of existing structures.

Additional Strategies

The following additional strategies can help protect natural resources in Winchester:

- Create and adopt standards of techniques to assess biodiversity when land-use commissions request natural resource information from an applicant; e.g. time of the year to conduct studies and sampling requirements on stream beds and vernal pools.
- Provide for monitoring and intervention where conservation easements or restrictions are used (e.g. selective harvesting under the direction of a State licensed forester).
- Create incentives for property owners to maintain undeveloped land in an unfragmented state.
- Develop an Aquifer Protection Plan based on CT DEP standards;

OPEN SPACE

OVERVIEW

Open space preservation is widely regarded as the most effective tool to manage growth, maintain community character, protect our physical health, protect valued natural resources and scenery, and enhance the quality of life. Winchester residents have identified preserving open space as a planning priority. Open Space also has an enormous financial value because it draws conservation-minded residents, visitors and employers to our Town. Finally, a focus on increasing Open Space acreage brands our Town as a forward-looking community that is an active and responsible steward of our natural, cultural and recreational heritage.

Just over 16% of Winchester’s 19,499 acres is “Dedicated Open Space”. This means that the land is considered to be permanently protected from development. It includes land owned by the State and land trusts, since they rarely sell land they have acquired. The majority of the Town-owned dedicated open space land surrounds Crystal Lake and Rugg Brook reservoir.

Dedicated Open Space in Winchester

Owner	Acres	% of Town
Town of Winchester	1,475	7.6
State of Connecticut	1,343	6.9
Land Trusts	360	1.8
Total	3,178	16.3

Another 42% of land in Winchester is considered “Managed Open Space.” This is land that provides open space benefits today, but they can be developed at any time in the future. In other words, they are not permanently protected as open space. Most of the Town’s Managed Open Space is land enrolled in the Public Act 490 Forest or Farmland program. Owners receive a tax reduction when they agree to maintain their land as forest or farm, but they can develop the land at any time (subject to a penalty). Other Managed Open Space includes cemeteries, religious properties, non-profit institutions, utility lands and private clubs.

Managed Open Space in Winchester

Owner	Acres	% of Town
PA 490 Forest	7,103	36.4
PA490 Farmland	808	4.1
Other	281	1.4
Total	8,192	41.9

At first glance, the percentage of Open Space seems large - 58% of the Town consists of forest, farmland or watershed around our drinking water reservoirs. Yet, only about 16% is “dedicated.” Furthermore, town-owned holdings (mostly water company land that surrounds our drinking water reservoirs) need an added layer of protection to ensure they cannot be sold in the future.

In 1997, the Connecticut General Assembly set a statutory goal of protecting 21% of the land area in Connecticut as open space for public recreation and natural resource conservation and preservation by 2023. The goal entailed that 10% of open space would be acquired by the State and 11% would be acquired by others, such as Towns. Winchester is on target to reach the conservation goals by 2023. However the Winchester Natural Resource Inventory recognizes that rural communities such as ours should strive to preserve a higher percentage in order for the State as a whole to meet the 21% goal. In fact, scientists at the Harvard Forest, who have initiated the “Wildlands and Woodlands” partnership with conservation groups, propose that 50% of forests in New England be preserved. Since most urban areas in the State have limited forest, rural areas can make up the difference. For example, neighboring Norfolk recommends protecting 75% of land in their rural residential area.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN EACH PLANNING AREA

Lakes District

Existing open space here includes the Algonquin State Forest, Paugnut State Forest, Taylor Brook State Park, Platt Hill State Park, and various CT DEP owned lands and water bodies. The Town also has permanently protected water company land in this area. There may be opportunities to connect to open space in neighboring towns (e.g., Grant Swamp area and Norfolk Land Trust lands in Norfolk and Burr Pond State Park and Hall Meadow State Park in Torrington). There are also numerous, small town-owned parcels here. These parcels are a primary protective buffer for the lakes and their water quality due to the ability of forested land to absorb nutrient, storm water and soil run-off before reaching the lake.

Northern and Eastern Winchester

There are many opportunities for linking land in Winsted with existing Open Space. For example, People’s State Forest and the American Legion State Forest are just to the east of Winsted in the town of Barkhamsted. Additionally, there is a Farmington River Water Access area where the Still River joins the Farmington River just over the boundary of Winsted’s northeast corner. Finally, an additional part of the Algonquin State Forest lies in Colebrook, to the north

Downtown

The Still River and the Mad River present a tremendous opportunity to create an open space system / greenway. Providing a riverwalk can make the Downtown more attractive to live in and draw residents from elsewhere in town and the region to the Downtown. Smaller parks and community gardens will also be important to enhance the livability of Downtown.

High Density Downtown Neighborhoods

Viewsheds to surrounding natural areas is an important feature of this area. Similar to the Downtown, opportunities focus on smaller parks and community gardens. Providing parks in each neighborhood can create gathering places for picnics, games, etc., thereby enhancing neighborhood identity.

Route 8/800 Corridor

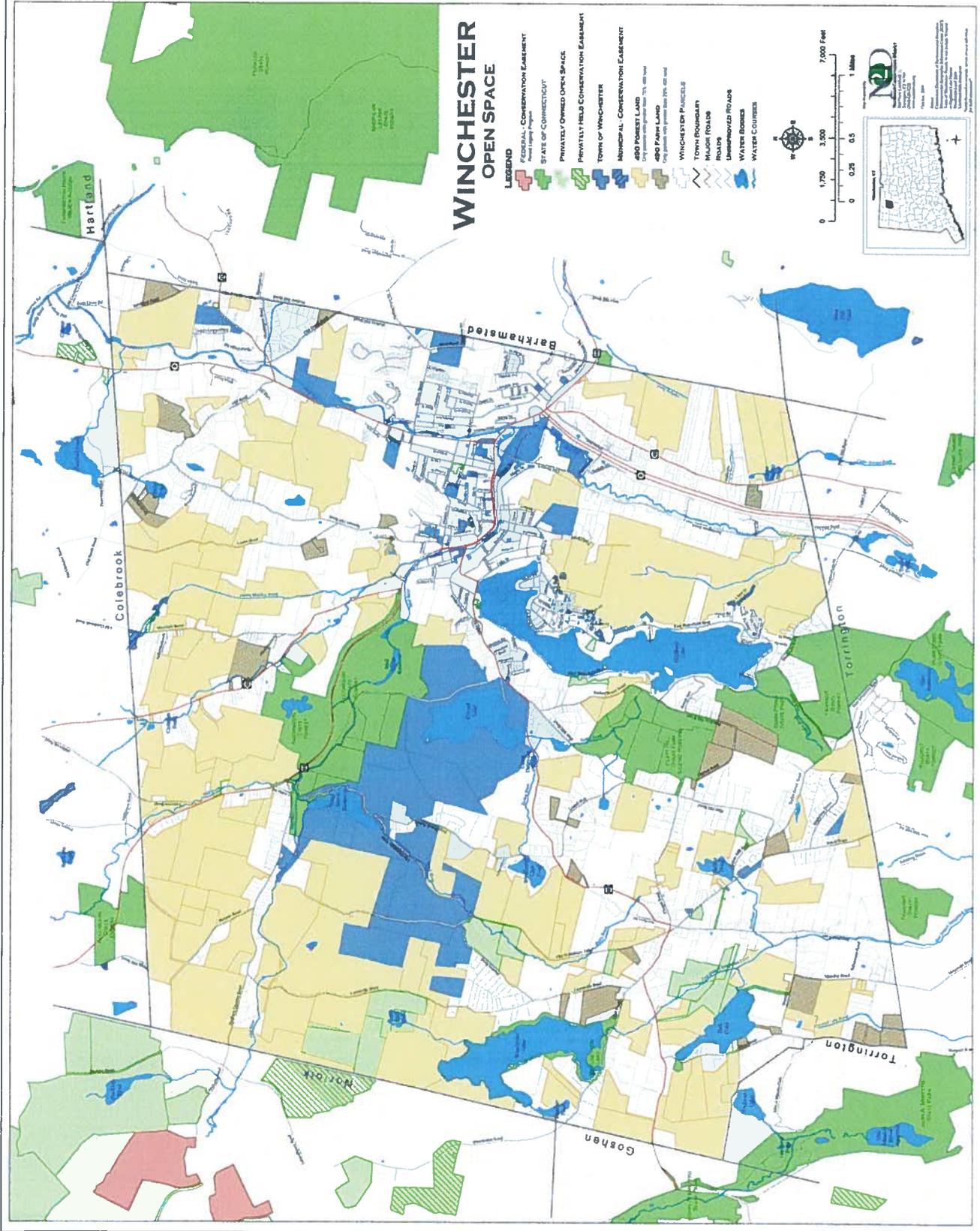
In those areas without public water and sewer, this area may present an opportunity for recreational uses and extending the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway from Torrington.

STRATEGIES FOR OPEN SPACE

Create an Open Space Committee and Open Space Plan

Winchester should establish a municipal open space program to build upon open space preservation accomplishments and to complement the work of the Winchester Land Trust and other conservation groups and the State. The move forward, the Town should assign this task to the Conservation Commission or create a separate entity composed of diverse interests and expertise. A clear mission statement should guide the work of the Committee and one of its first tasks should be to complete an Open Space Inventory.

The Open Space Committee should adopt the priorities listed in this POCD and create a more detailed open space plan that addresses the acquisition and management of new and existing holdings. The open space plan should focus on preserving green space corridors, connecting open space in abutting towns, and protecting watersheds.



Acquire Additional Open Space

Open Space acquisition and expansion should focus on preserving land with:

- major water bodies and their watersheds
- areas of diverse and healthy forest
- rare or endangered species of flora or fauna
- agricultural lands
- viewsheds, ridgelines, and other topographical features
- particular cultural or way-of-life characteristics, with historical or archeological significance, stone walls, or other features that reflect Winchester's community character
- potential to expand upon or connect to existing open space, within and across town lines
- regional corridors for wildlife and pedestrian trails

Area-specific priorities should include:

- Preserve Town-owned parcels in the Highland Lake watershed.
- Explore the possibility of purchasing abutting properties for additional protection of Highland Lake.
- In Downtown and the High Density Residential area, provide parks in each neighborhood would create a gathering place for picnics, games, snow and ice sculptures, thereby enhancing neighborhood identity.
- Extend the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway in the Route 8 / 800 Corridor.
- Expand the Greenway along with rail line Downtown.

The Open Space Committee should cultivate donations of vacant land. Through education, owners of large open space tracts should consider the full suite of legacy programs such as donation of the land or conservation easements. The Committee might also work with developers to ensure that the open space in an Open Space Subdivision process provides meaningful open space or allows developers to purchase and donate land in another part of Winchester.

Private land preservation organizations will continue to play an important role in preserving open space in Winchester.

Create a Downtown Riverwalk

A riverwalk, with seating and viewing areas, could be created along the Mad River. Such a riverwalk along with a small park with an entertainment venue could draw residents to the River and attract a mix of restaurants and shops. The riverwalk could be part of a larger greenway system linking Downtown with attractions such as Soldiers' Monument, NWCC, playing fields, Rockwell House, museum, etc. The Town should work with the

CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to raise the river level to make its presence more obvious and also better design the river edge.

Expand Funding for Open Space

While land donations can play an important role in acquiring open space (as discussed above), funding for purchases might be needed to achieve Winchester's vision. The newly formed Open Space Committee could establish a fund for purchasing property. Funds could be raised in a variety of ways: developers may contribute under the "fee in lieu" program, the public could make donations, and a dedicated property tax might be established (0.25 mil in some nearby towns). Many towns bond monies to purchase a specific property in town. Matching funds and grants from the State, the Federal government and private entities can also be pursued.

Update Open Space Provisions in Subdivision Regulations

For conventional and open space subdivisions, consideration should be given to increasing the current 20% and 30% set-asides for open space. The option of paying a fee-in-lieu of open space should be allowed, with such fees going toward the purchase of open space elsewhere in accordance with the open space priorities outlined in this POCD.

Encourage Open Space Subdivision Design

Open Space Subdivisions allow flexibility in lot design in return for preserving greater open space than for a conventional subdivision. Without necessarily reducing the number of developed lots, such designs are far more sensitive to the local environment and the open space goals of the community. In addition to preserving open space, Open Space Subdivision design can preserve rural streetscapes and scenic views along with important resources (wetlands, existing trees).

To ensure that these standards are appropriately applied, the Commission should review the regulations and procedures, including the pre-application process, and adopt revisions if determined appropriate. Similarly, the Commission should determine if the Open Space Subdivision regulations provide adequate incentive (e.g., lot size reductions) so that developers will chose this option rather than a conventional subdivision.

The Town could require that all subdivisions of land into five or more parcels be Open Space Subdivisions. Under such a requirement, the amount of open space requirement might vary from planning area to planning area as follows:

- In the Lake District, require that at least 70% of the developable land would be set aside as open space.
- In the Northern and Eastern Area, require that at least 50% of the developable land would be set aside as open space.

These requirements could exclude subdivisions where the smallest lot is five times the minimize lot size. The overall density of Open Space Subdivisions could be capped at no more than allowed under a conventional subdivision.

Promote Enjoyment of Open Space

Open space land should be visible and exciting to all citizens. The Town should explore the possibility of allowing volunteer-lead hikes of town-owned watershed lands (other than those surrounding reservoirs) to introduce residents to the beauty and diversity of the Town's watershed resources and to instill an appreciation for open space.

Continue Current PA 490 Policies

Winchester has implemented the tax assessment authority of Public Act 490 to reduce tax assessments on farm and forest land. The statutes also authorize towns to apply reduced assessments to open space land as defined by the Town. Extension of tax abatement to a defined open space category may have broad consequences and such additional tax abatement would be counterproductive unless it was conditioned on permanent protection.

Work with Private and Regional Entities

The Town should coordinate with the State, regional entities and the private sector to ensure that open space planning will join contiguous areas of protected space and broader watershed systems.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

OVERVIEW

Winchester is defined and distinguished by its rural character. Preservation of this encompassing but vulnerable attribute has been the dominant planning theme of the Town of Winchester for years. Grand list growth in the outlying rural areas of the Town indicates the attractiveness of rural character.

Defining elements of Winchester's character include:

- A quintessential New England Downtown with rich architecture, historic buildings and established neighborhoods.
- Winchester Center Village Green, with an array of historic home styles with open fields in the background and outlined by dry stone walls and wooded hills.
- Narrow-winding roads throughout town.
- The lakes, rivers, ridgelines and forests.
- Winchester is the second largest town in Litchfield County

The next ten years may prove crucial for the longer term preservation of Winchester's rural character. Many of the strategies identified in this POCD will lay the foundation for community actions to help retain the qualities that today's residents clearly value and future residents will cherish.

Winchester is fortunate that other entities help to preserve the rural character. These entities include the Winchester Land Trust, and the Highland Lake Watershed Association, among others.

Components of Winchester's character discussed in this section include scenic assets, farmland, historic features, and architecture. Character is intertwined with other topics in this POCD, including open space, natural resources and community structure (e.g., Downtown). Additional strategies related to those features are found in those individual sections.



Dedication of the Soldiers' Monument

Scenic Assets

Ridgelines are an important and sensitive scenic asset. They provide dramatic views, which entice residents to live in and visit Winchester. The Planning and Zoning Commission has recognized the importance of protecting ridgelines in development reviews. Other scenic assets include rural features, such as stone walls, barns and rustic fences. Regulations can encourage the preservation or relocation of such scenic resources.

The Natural Resources Inventory identified threats to scenic resources. Threats include insensitive siting of development, installation of privacy fences (especially around Highland Lake), indiscriminate tree cutting, cell tower installation and placement of windmills.

Narrow, winding and tree-lined roads are an important facet of rural character. Yet modern road standards often encourage widening and clearing of such scenic features. Recent development practices, particularly in the Lakes District and Northern and Eastern Area, have cleared setbacks of vegetation and subdivisions have been laid out to be visible from the road, rather than setting houses further back with screening. These development practices detract from the character of the roadways. Modern roadway standards sometimes require road widths and other features that are not consistent with existing rural roads. Shade trees play an important role in the character of Downtown (in addition to providing environmental benefits).

Agricultural Land and Farming

Agricultural lands are important economic and lifestyle assets and the preservation of such farm lands must be a priority. The value of having agricultural land must be as important a consideration as other components such as views, historic resources, and natural resource protection.

Agriculture in the Town is threatened by farm economics and other factors. The loss of farmland would also result in the loss of many rural landscape features such as hayfields, dairy farms and cornfields.

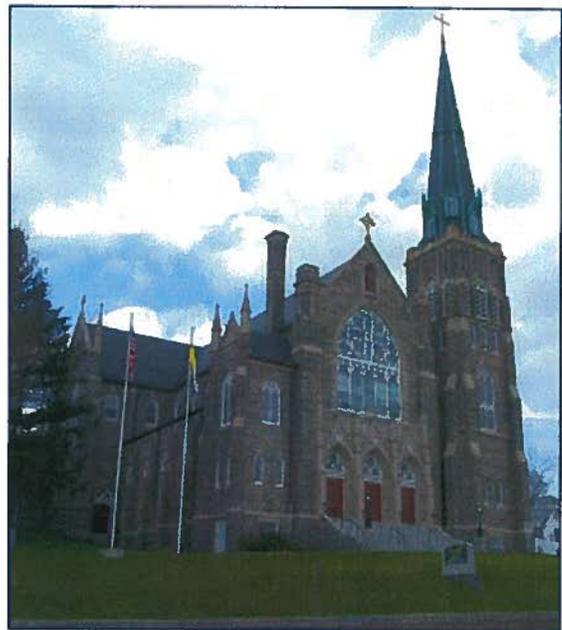
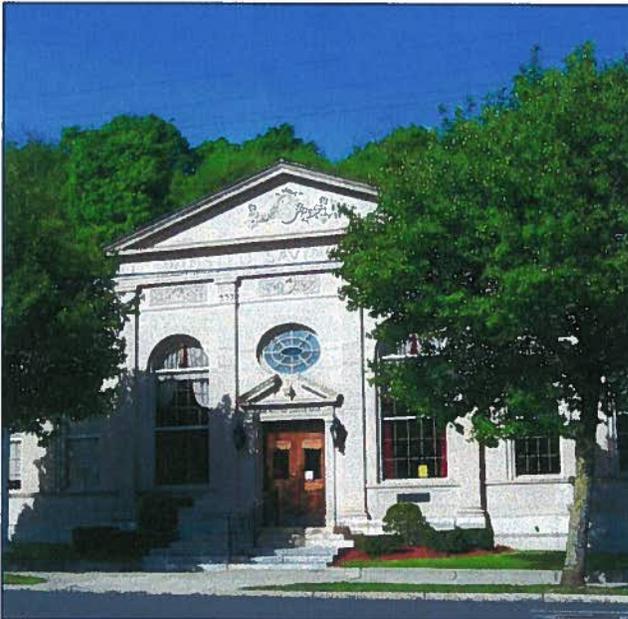
Architecture and Design

In addition to the historic structures and features, much of Winchester's character is derived from the New England architectural styles that still prevail. Winchester is very fortunate to have these attractive buildings, especially in the Downtown.

Visually, the Downtown is comprised of a wide range of structures from historical churches and mill buildings to current structures such as the CVS pharmacy and NWCC library. There are variations in upkeep and physical condition with instances of empty buildings with unattractive facades. It is evident that the upkeep of existing buildings and appearance of new buildings or additions plays a critical role in Winchester's overall character. It is recommended that the Town establishes architectural guidelines or review procedures to ensure that future buildings contribute to the rural and historic character that is revered by residents and visitors.

In recent years the Friends of Main Street (FOMS), a designated Connecticut Main Street organization has been working to promote the revitalization of the Downtown and promote civic beautification projects. Recent sidewalk improvements also help improve the appearance of the Downtown Streetscape.

However, Winchester does not have any architectural guidelines or review procedures to ensure that future buildings contribute to (and do not detract from) the rural and historic character that is revered by residents and visitors.



Historic Resources

Winchester's history, and the physical presence of many historic, architectural, and archeological assets, is another key component of the rural character that defines the community. Preservation of historic buildings, sites, and artifacts, as well as archeological resources, is an important way for Winchester to provide a sense of identity and stability, preserve community character, and enhance the Town's historical heritage.

To give a sense of the depth and breadth of recognized historic resources in the Town, the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP) has documented in text and photographs the following properties and historic districts (see <http://www.nps.gov/nr/research/index.htm>):

- Gilbert Clock Factory, Wallens Street, nominated 1984
- Winchester Soldiers' Monument, Crown Street, nominated 1983
- Moses Camp House, 682 Main Street, nominated 1984
- Solomon Rockwell House, 226 Prospect Street, nominated 1977
- West End Commercial District, North Side of Main Street between Union & Elm Streets, nominated 1990
- Winsted Green Historic District, listed 1977, US Route 44 & CT Route 8
- Winsted Green National Register Historic District Boundary Increase, 1982
- Winsted Hosiery Mill, nominated 1985, Whiting at Holabird Street

Resources listed in the Library of Congress' Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS/HAER), the Federal government's oldest preservation program, administered by the Heritage Documentation Programs are listed below. The documentation produced by these programs constitutes the nation's largest archive of historical architectural, engineering and landscape documentation. (see http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer):

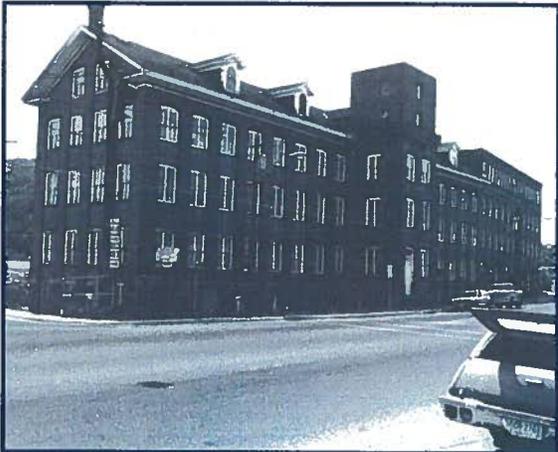
- Solomon Rockwell House (also Martin Rockwell House in Colebrook), 225 Prospect Street
- Winsted Post Office, 328 Main Street
- Bronson House (alternate title George Sherwood House), Winchester Center Green
- Winchester Center Congregational Church (alternate title Greek Doric Church), Winchester Center Green

It has been 20 years since any documentation or recognition of the Town's historic resources. Winchester needs an organization to help coordinate the preservation of historic resources. This Plan recommends establishing a Winchester Historic Preservation Commission.

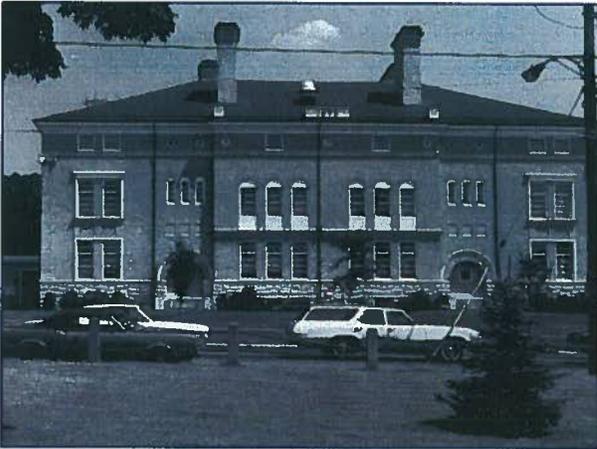
Historic Resources in Winchester



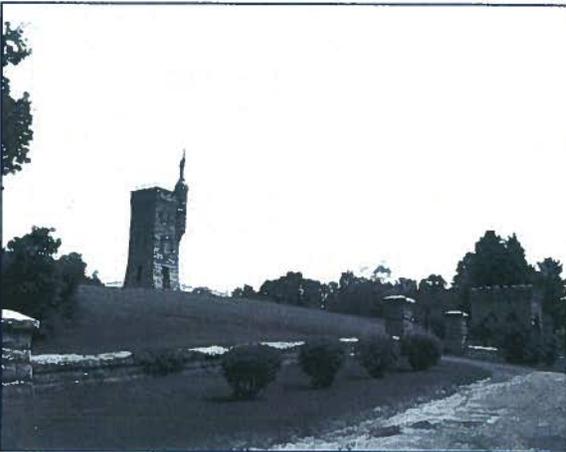
Winsted Green, Kieran Quinn, 1976.



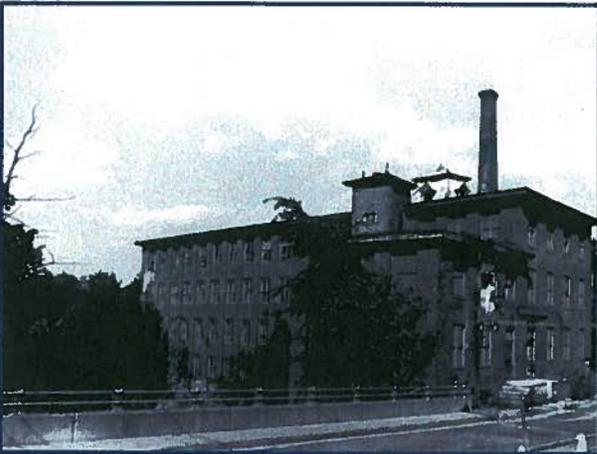
Strong Manufacturing Company, Kieran Quinn, 1976.



Old Gilbert High School, 1976



Winchester Soldier's Monument, D. Ransom, 1983.



Gilbert Clock Factory, HRC, 1983.

Soloman Rockwell House, HABS, c1940.

STRATEGIES TO PRESERVE CHARACTER

Preserve Ridgelines

Strategies to preserve the scenic character of ridgelines may include:

- Discouraging or preventing activities with negative visual impacts (such as communication towers or indiscriminate tree clearing),
- Adopting a special application review process to consider subdivision designs and proposed improvements (including fences) in sensitive scenic areas, and
- Discouraging or preventing unnecessary lighting on or near ridgelines.

Preserve the Character of Roads

Road design standards should be reviewed to ensure that when new subdivisions are built, there is a balance between safety and preserving character.

In addition, subdivision entrances can be laid out to minimize the clearing of vegetation along the front setback so that houses are less visible from the road. The regulations should be updated to require this.

Other strategies to reduce the clearing of vegetation and thereby impacting character include:

- Expand setbacks, limit clear cutting of trees and removal of stone walls with setbacks, require vegetative or topographical buffers and require offset or curved driveways in order to limit visibility of the developed land from abutting roadways.
- Limit land clearing within the parcel to the minimum net requirement (except for very large parcels where the cleared to total ratio should remain consistent with or better than this requirement).
- Limit clearing of forestland for selective harvesting using Best Forest Management Practices implemented by a state licensed forester.
- Develop an application review process to evaluate the visual impact of all development for consistency with the surrounding area (trees should be the visible feature in a wooded area).

To preserve the Downtown streetscape, the Shade Tree subcommittee of the Conservation Commission should be reinstated. The subcommittee could inventory shade trees location, species and condition and identify maintenance and replacement needs.

Preserve Farmland and Farms

Winchester should continue to seek ways to support local agriculture, such as by promoting local farmers' markets and other "farmland infrastructure" resources. The Town should also encourage sustainable farming practices and educate owners/lessees of active farmlands as to the environmental impacts of their land management practices.

The Town should continue to encourage participation in the PA-490 farm assessment program. Property owners who rent their farmland to others for agricultural purposes should also be encouraged to participate in the program.

Regulations could be updated to preserve farmland. For example, soil-based density regulations (see discussion under Natural Resources) could conserve agricultural land by allowing smaller lots in exchange for preserving a large portion of the site for agricultural use.

The Town should encourage the use of agricultural easements and continue to urge the State to acquire agricultural easements (including purchase of development rights) in Winchester.

Adopt Design Review

Winchester should consider establishing a design review process with accompanying standards to help ensure that new and existing architectural styles are compatible. The Town could establish a design review board with members, having appropriate skills, appointed from the community at large. This board would review plans for uses in the Downtown and for special permit uses in residential zones. The design review board would provide to the Commission recommendations for improving the design of buildings and sites.

Since the design review comments would occur during the time period between receipt of an application and action by the Planning and Zoning Commission, it would not extend the decision timetable for an applicant. In addition, the design review board's comments are advisory so the Commission could choose to not impose conditions that it considered impractical or unrealistic.

The Town should also investigate the need for standards to apply to lighting and noise pollution.

Encourage Preservation of Historic Resources

Having an organization charged with promoting and preserving historic resources can be a tremendous asset. The Town would benefit from the establishment of a local Historic Preservation Commission. If established, it should be encouraged to contact the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) about participating in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program.

The CLG program in Connecticut promotes preservation of historic resources by establishing a partnership between local governments and the SHPO. In accordance with federal law, a minimum of 10 percent of Connecticut's annual federal appropriation for historic preservation is earmarked for grants to municipalities under the CLG program. The program is a model and cost-effective local, state and federal partnership that promotes historic preservation at the grassroots level. As of September 2009, 40 municipalities had applied for and received CLG status in Connecticut. This program provides grants for partial funding for historic resource inventories and other projects.

The Historic Preservation and Museum Division of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT) functions as Connecticut's SHPO. It supports programs that recognize the importance of the State's heritage and its role in enhancing the quality of life for all citizens. Supplemental Certified Local Government Grants (SCLG) may be used by municipalities that are approved by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior as Certified Local Governments. With federal funds provided by the Historic Preservation Fund of the National Park Service, CCT annually awards Historic Preservation Enhancement Grants (HPEG), small non-matching grants of up to \$2,800, to Certified Local Governments.

"Sensitive stewardship" can be the most effective strategy to preserve historic resources. This entails ownership of historic resources by people or organizations that are sensitive to the significance of the resource and are financially and emotionally committed to maintaining that resource. Sensitive stewardship should continue to be encouraged and supported. In particular, the Town should investigate ways to provide educational programs and technical assistance to owners of historic resources. A local historical society could play the lead role in this effort.

The strongest protection for historic buildings is the designation of local historic districts. These districts are established by local ordinance after recognition of their historic significance and ratification by the affected property owners. Any potential new districts that are identified and that are endorsed by property owners should be considered favorably by the Board of Selectmen.

Demolition Delay Ordinances are another regulatory tool that can aid in protecting historic resources that are slated to be torn down. A demolition delay ordinance allows up to 180 days to evaluate alternatives if a building or structure slated for demolition is found to be historically significant. Winchester may wish to consider adopting a demolition delay ordinance.

The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation (CTTRUST) can be used as a resource to reach preservation goals. They offer assistance, guidance and programs to those seeking to promote historic preservation and protect our cultural and architectural heritage. The CTTRUST has assembled an extensive list of resources including technical advice and financial sources.

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7 – DEVELOPMENT

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

COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

OVERVIEW

The physical organization of a community enhances community character and quality of life. People identify most strongly with areas that have a “sense of place.” “Villages,” “Nodes” and “Gateways” are examples of elements of a community’s structure that can contribute to a sense of place. Winchester has a very distinct node – Downtown.

Winchester’s community structure should be maintained and enhanced. Goals that will enhance the community structure are:

- A revitalized, mixed use, high density Downtown, anchored by an expanded retail and service presence and a broad range of multi-family housing (Downtown Planning Area). Residents throughout the Town depend upon the businesses and the municipal and cultural amenities provided Downtown, including Town Hall, churches, the post office, etc.
- A pattern of moderate to high density residential development in the urban core dominated by a diverse range of single family owner occupied properties (the High Density Neighborhood Planning Area).
- A low density residential rural area characterized by green/open space preservation.

This pattern is consistent with “smart growth” principles and the Green Print approach. Maintaining this community structure enables Winchester to attract a population looking for privacy, rural historical feel, green open space, outdoor recreation that is all within immediate reach of a viable downtown.

STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

Update Zoning to Promote a Traditional Mixed Use Downtown

Updates to zoning can help reinforce community structure (updates in the rural residential areas were discussed in the natural resources section). Many communities find that zoning in their downtowns are more reflective of suburban style strip patterns rather than a traditional, mixed use downtown. Zoning should be updated to ensure that provisions facilitate redevelopment, infill and mixed uses.

Winsted's zoning establishes a height limit of 30 feet (two to three stories) for commercial and residential uses. The heart of the real downtown has four-story buildings which effectively frame the wide street and allow a density of population that helps bring vitality to the area. The lower height limit in the zoning is characteristic of suburban development densities and patterns, not traditional downtowns.

Enhance Livability of the Downtown and Surrounding High Density Neighborhoods

Successful downtowns have a broad range of housing units and residents, who can patronize businesses and add vibrancy to the Downtown. Winchester is fortunate to have a large supply of housing in and near Downtown. There is an overconcentration of lower income housing and rental units and there are concerns about the upkeep of housing units. Looking at the numbers – based on 2000 census data 44% of the housing units in Winchester are located in multi-unit structures. For the “downtown” area 65% are in such buildings. All 600+ “affordable housing” units are in the downtown area. Town-wide we exceed the state affordable guideline by 20% and considering that downtown represents 60% of the housing units, downtown exceeds the guideline by 100%. It will be important to diversify the housing stock and attract middle and upper income residents.

To attract residents, features that contribute to livability could be enhanced. Enhancements have been made, including the recent replacement of sidewalks and the addition of bricks, pavers and vintage streetlights. Additional enhancements could include:

- Providing small parks, community gardens and other gathering areas.
- Improving sidewalks and overall walkability.
- Improving building facades and overall upkeep.
- Providing adequate parking.

Encourage Redevelopment of the Vacant Mills

Old mill buildings can be a tremendous opportunity to bring new life to a Downtown. Vacant space is a challenge in that it impacts the physical appearance of the immediate area and if there are too many vacancies, of the Downtown. The mill buildings can be redeveloped for residential, professional and commercial mixed use. If renovation is not financially and structurally viable, demolition would open up a waterfront site for possible new development (residential, professional, commercial, hotel, restaurant, municipal, cultural or educational) or the creation of riverfront open space.

Enhance Gateways

Gateways provide the primary entrance and first visual impression of a community. Key gateways into Winchester include Route 800, Route 8, and Route 44. Within town, there are numerous gateways to the Downtown. Such gateways should be attractive and welcoming. Similarly, the town’s websites and media presence should complement the physical gateways.

Determine Overall Redevelopment Approach

Some Downtowns see redevelopment occur on a property-by-property basis (incremental approach). In other cases, wholesale redevelopment occurs for a larger area that extends over multiple properties. There are advantages and disadvantages to each approach. The Town should determine which approach would work best in Winchester.

Redeveloping Downtown - Incremental or Comprehensive Approach?		
	Incremental	Comprehensive
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be partially self-financing - enhancement in property values justifies further investment • Might reduce upfront capital needs • Does not necessarily require cooperation between property owners • May be less risky than large-scale development • May avoid monotony because not designed / developed by one entity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent design • Coherent implementation • Easier to ensure compatibility with nearby properties and larger area • Facilitates planning and installing infrastructure • Can create its own momentum
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress might seem slow • May take years to see substantial progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires enormous political will • Requires support of community • Property owners must cooperate and work together • Can require large investments

RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS AND HOUSING

OVERVIEW

Overall, it is anticipated that Winchester will remain a community with low density residential patterns throughout much of the Town and a core of higher density housing in and near the Downtown area. This overall pattern can help protect the many natural resources in the Town while also providing a customer base for the Downtown.

Diversity in the housing stock is an important theme in this Plan. While single-family houses will still remain attractive to many buyers, an aging population may drive demand for smaller, centrally located units. Winchester currently provides options for older residents at the Winchester Housing Authority properties, the Willow Street Apartments and the Spencer Hill Apartments. Other options are available throughout the region. Winchester's housing stock in the Downtown and High Density neighborhoods can continue to meet needs and demands of the senior population and also attract a more balanced demographic.

STRATEGIES FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Maintain Lower Densities in the Lakes District

Present development is sparse except for the shoreline around Highland Lake and part of Park Pond. It is primarily composed of single family residences with a wide variety of vintages, sizes and styles. Property owners are a mix of long time year-round residents and out-of-town weekenders/seasonal homeowners for whom Winchester is a second home.

The intent in this area is to generally maintain low densities that are consistent with the conservation goals. As discussed in Chapter 6, the Town should develop soil-based density regulations for residential zones. This approach would relate densities to the capacity of the land. Specific recommendations regarding minimum lot sizes and net acreage are discussed earlier.

This area would not be appropriate for higher density and / or multi-family due to natural resource constraints, lack of public water and sewer and the overall desired land use patterns for the Town.

Enhance the Shoreline Neighborhoods

The residential land use patterns around the developed shoreline area around Highland Lake and a portion of Park Pond are different from the Lakes District. These areas are densely developed on small lots that were platted many years ago as single family lots. Preserving vacant town-owned lots as open space (see Chapter 6) and addressing parking (see Chapter 8) can help enhance these areas.

Determine Appropriate Densities and Patterns for the Northern and Eastern Winchester

Residential development in this area has largely been unplanned. It has followed Route 44 northward and westward from Colebrook to Norfolk. Development is limited and composed almost exclusively of single family residences with a wide variety of vintages, size and style predominantly in better than average condition with isolated instances of neglect. The planning area attracts both to long standing year-round residents and an increased number of out-of-town weekenders.

While major residential developments have not been contemplated in this area, development pressure in Litchfield County has increased; the Town should take a proactive approach in determining appropriate patterns and densities. Since residents here provide a customer base to Downtown, this area creates an excellent opportunity to reinforce and revitalize Downtown. It is not anticipated that public water or sewer would be extended to this area. Development should be sensitive to conserving natural resources, as outlined in Chapter 6. Specific recommendations regarding minimum lot sizes and net acreage are discussed earlier.

When the opportunity arises to provide for an isolated area of higher density development, it should be considered only to the extent that it fits with the visual character and topographical landscape.

Enhance the Housing Stock Downtown and Attract Median and Higher Income Households

As discussed earlier, housing Downtown is characterized by many small rental units that are predominantly of poor quality. As a result of these housing patterns, there is a concentration of transient and socio-economically disadvantaged residents here. Conversely, there is a gap in larger and more upscale housing, which could provide a customer base for Downtown businesses. There is also a lack in housing for NWCC students in the Downtown. Having a range of housing types and sizes in the Downtown is a key element of a smart growth approach and will help revitalize the area.

The goals for housing in the Downtown are to attract median and upper income residents and a mixture of younger and older residents; to improve the appearance of residential

areas; to address parking issues; improve public transit; and to provide neighborhood amenities such as parks and green space. Redevelopment of industrial sites in the Downtown (and Downtown neighborhoods) could help to achieve these goals. Other improvements proposed for the Downtown, as discussed elsewhere, are also critical to making the Downtown a more attractive and livable community.

As discussed under "Community Structure", the Town will need to examine whether an incremental approach or wholesale redevelopment is the most appropriate strategy for achieving the goals for Downtown.

Possible actions to revitalize the housing stock in Downtown could include:

- Provide incentives for developers and property owners through zoning regulations, tax abatements, loan programs and / or public policy.
- Encourage the conversion of rental, multi-family structures to owner-occupied, single-family houses.

Actions to provide student units in the proximity of the community college, upscale units aimed at young professionals, and units designed for the older residents include:

- Redeveloping vacant buildings and mill buildings.
- Allowing more diverse housing options such as apartments in mixed use buildings.
- Permitting condominiums or congregate housing developments, assisted living facilities, or skilled nursing facilities in appropriate locations through the special permit process. Such developments should be compatible with the character of the area and in appropriate locations such as on an arterial or collector road in or near the Downtown.

The Zoning Regulations should be revised to promote and support these goals.

Enhance the High Density Downtown Neighborhoods

The housing stock in the High Density Downtown Neighborhoods tends to increase in size and quality compared to the Downtown. This area is also home to much of the Town's affordable housing. However, access to services and amenities in the Downtown may not be optimal. The goals for this area are to retain a moderate to high density residential core that can provide an active and loyal civic and customer base; to maintain a broad range of housing types for all stages in life; to attract single-family owner occupancy; and to ensure that market and subsidized housing are integrated.

Strategies to achieve these goals include:

- Create fiscal incentives to upgrade properties
- Create disincentives for additional conversions of single family houses to multifamily units
- Preserve the varied characteristics and feel of the individual neighborhoods
- Enhance open space (see Chapter 6)
- Improve parking so that cars do not park in front and side yards
- Encourage the dispersal of affordable and senior housing and ensure that any expansion of subsidized housing coincides with the expansion in market housing (The housing stock is currently unbalanced, with an overemphasis on lower income and subsidized housing. The Town should strive to have a mixture of income levels.)
- Improve walkability and transit, as discussed in Chapter 8
- Update zoning to allow limited higher density and multi-family on a case by case basis

Additional higher density residential development or the expansion of the mixed use pattern of development should occur only to the extent that Downtown is fully built-out and occupied, or in conjunction with related development in the Downtown. In any case, it should occur only in those areas closest to Downtown amenities and where access to green space and parking is available.

Strengthen Neighborhood Identity Downtown and in the High Density Downtown Neighborhoods

Having distinct and definable neighborhoods can attract homeowners and instill pride. Small improvements such as creating landscape neighborhood gateways with signage that identifies the neighborhood are small steps that can help build identity.

A second way to strengthen neighborhood pride is to identify neighborhood leaders who can organize gatherings and other events to build neighborhood camaraderie.

Maintain Residential Areas in Route 8 / 800 Corridor

This area contains some residential development. It is expected that current residential zoning will be maintained but with the adoption of additional natural resource protection measures (e.g., soil based zoning as discussed in Chapter 6).

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

Business development contributes to the tax base, provides jobs, and provides goods and services.

Downtown is the hub of business activity in Winchester. Commercial establishments there include restaurants, grocery stores, a pharmacy, hardware stores, antique shops, a marine storage/repair business, construction businesses, a movie theater, and a jewelry store. Professional services include legal, insurance, accounting and banks. There are vacant buildings, some of which are in older buildings that may not be feasible to renovate. Vacant storefronts are also of concern. Retail, professional and service businesses have a high vacancy and turnover rate due to inability to effectively compete with offerings in surrounding towns. The major Downtown artery runs alongside an uninterrupted stretch of empty obsolete and visibly decaying mill buildings. It has been challenging to attract investors and median or upper income residents to Downtown. These issues may be fueled by a growing physical and perceived disconnect between the commercial center and residential neighborhoods of both the Downtown and outlying areas.

However, there are many assets in or near Downtown that can be capitalized upon. Assets include a grocery store within walking distance from apartments and amenities that draw visitors (the Gilson Theater and Café, a health food store, etc.). The prospect of the American Mural Project and Tort Law Museum hold promise for enhanced tourist attraction.



The Northwestern Connecticut Community College expansion of its Main Street campus is also a tremendous asset to both Downtown and the Town as a whole.

Downtown should be anchored by an expanded and stable retail, professional and service presence that is characteristic of Litchfield County's small, rural towns and serves both the daily and occasional needs of Winchester, the Northwest corner and tourists. Its revitalization is critical to achieving the Town's economic development goals.

STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

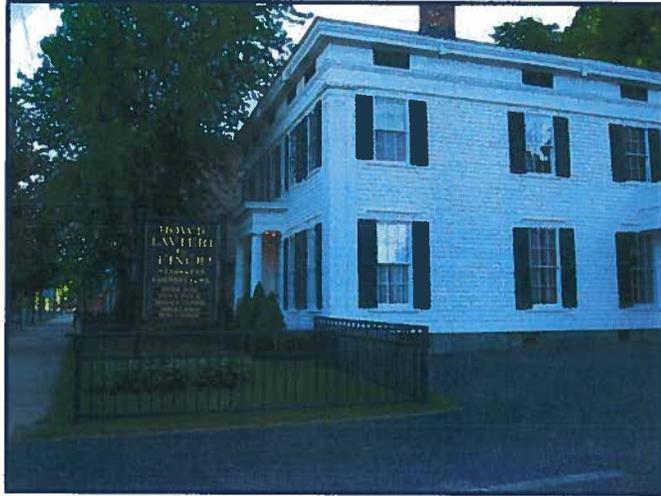
Recreate a Retail, Commercial and Professional Hub Downtown

Financial incentives (such as tax abatements and loan programs) can help entice desirable businesses to locate Downtown. Such incentives should be reserved for those retail, commercial and professional businesses that will not compete with businesses at Ledgebrook and will:

- broaden the range of retail, cultural, and professional offerings,
- satisfy the practical daily needs of residents, or
- attract visitors and tourists.

Some communities provide space for businesses. The Town could consider providing starter-space (incubator space) for offices and commercial and professional businesses. This approach is analogous to the industrial parks Winchester has historically invested in.

The Town of Winchester supports active participation in the Northwestern Connecticut Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Process.



The Town of Winchester also supports the establishment of a state-recognized Economic Development District for the 20-town service area of the Northwestern Connecticut Economic Development Corporation.

Use Green Print Brand to Attract Niche Businesses

The Town's Green Print philosophy can be a powerful marketing tool. Both green professionals (consultants, architects, engineers, builders etc.) and individual business owners with an interest in green issues could create a viable niche to attract a green clientele.

Draw Residents Downtown

Bringing more residents downtown can benefit businesses. Promotion can entail physical improvements such as providing clear, attractive signage visible to both pedestrians and motorists to holding and publicizing events that draw residents to the Downtown.

Ways to publicize events and activities include: updating web-sites for Town, Friends of Main Street and schools; increasing circulation of the Winsted Journal; publicizing local access cable TV; developing municipal public relations media; and other methods.

Allow Small Scale Retail in the High Density Downtown Neighborhoods

Small scale retail opportunities should be considered in the High Density Downtown Neighborhoods provided such uses do not impact traffic nor compete with Downtown businesses. Allowing small scale retail can re-introduce the corner store or coffee shop, promote a neighborhood feel, and reduce reliance on vehicles for basic errands (thereby easing traffic issues on connectors between here and Downtown).

Continue to Explore Opportunities for Industrial Expansion in the Route 8 / 800 Corridor

There is a 40 acre parcel of town-owned land in the northern portion of the Route 8/800 corridor that has the potential to support a small industrial park. As discussed above, this area is served by water and sewer. In addition to the tax advantages created by the Enterprise Zone the town should consider additional tax incentives to further encourage industrial and commercial development in that area.

GREEN/ SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS

OVERVIEW

The built environment has a profound impact on our natural environment, economy, health and productivity. More and more businesses and homeowners are employing energy conservation measures as a cost savings measure and, often, to do their part in reducing energy consumption. Communities can take steps to encourage the private sector to reduce energy consumption and to facilitate the use of alternative energy sources. Other practices that reduce the overall environmental impact of new development are also becoming more commonplace.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GREEN DEVELOPMENT

Facilitate the Use of Alternative Energy Sources

Alternative energy sources can include non-structural approaches (such as passive solar or passive shade tree cooling) or structural approaches (solar panels, small scale wind, hydro power, etc.).

Encourage Developers to Meet Green Building Standards

The Town should encourage new development to use sustainable materials, energy and water conservation methods to reduce environmental impacts, but also to help achieve Winchester's Green Print vision. The Town could also adopt sustainable land/energy/resource management practices for new construction and renovation of existing housing. In addition to the energy conservation measures discussed above, practices could include water recycling, grey water systems, and the use of recycled or energy efficient building materials.

The Town also should look into requiring that all subdivisions of five or more parcels be designed, constructed and managed to LEED standards. Through its Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) certification programs, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is transforming the built environment. The green building movement offers an unprecedented opportunity to respond to challenges of our time, including global climate change, dependence on unsustainable and expensive sources of energy and threats to human health. The work of innovative building and planning professionals is a fundamental driving force in the green development movement. Such leadership is a critical component to achieving USGBC's mission of sustainable built environment for all within a generation.

LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND) is the latest LEED certification to be released (2010). Since 1998, as LEED has evolved and matured, the program has taken on new initiatives. In addition to a rating system specifically devoted to building operational and maintenance issues (LEED for Existing Buildings), LEED addresses the different project development and delivery processes that exist in the U.S. building design and construction market, through rating systems for specific building typologies, sectors and project scopes, including LEED for:

- Existing Buildings
- Core & Shell
- New Construction
- Schools
- Retail
- Healthcare
- Homes
- Commercial Interiors

Land use and neighborhood design patterns create a particular physical reality and compel behaviors that have a significant effect on the environmental performance of a given place. Green neighborhood developments are beneficial to the community and the individuals as well as the environment. The character of a neighborhood, including its streets, homes, workplaces, shops and public spaces, significantly affects the quality of life. Green neighborhood developments enable a wide variety of residents to be part of a community by including housing of varying types and price ranges. Green developments respect historical resources and the existing community fabric; they preserve open space and encourage access to parks.

The USGBC, the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) have come together to develop a rating system for neighborhood planning and development, based on the combined principles of smart growth, New Urbanism, and green infrastructure and building. The goal of this partnership is to establish a national leadership standard for assessing and rewarding environmentally superior green neighborhood development practices within the framework of the LEED Green Building Rating System.

The NWCC might be a resource for educating the public on cutting edge green building systems.

8 – INFRASTRUCTURE

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

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

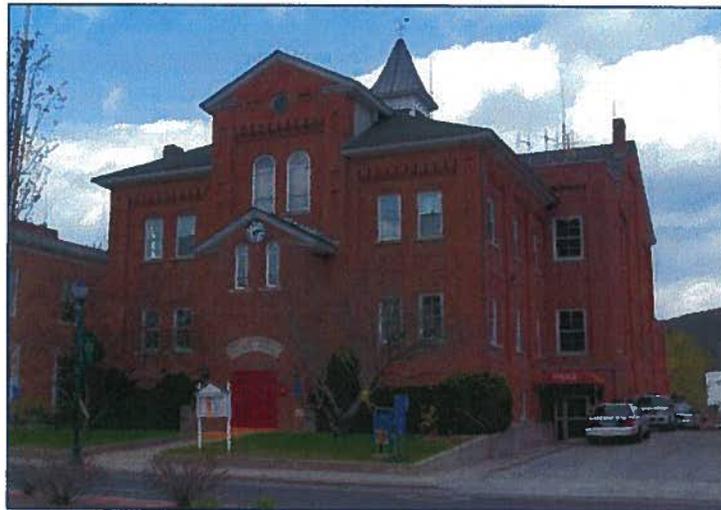
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

OVERVIEW

Town Administration, Services and Public Safety

The Downtown functions as the center of town government with Town Hall, Police Department and municipal services of Fire Department, Ambulance Service and Post Office located on this 2 mile long corridor.

Green practices can also be introduced into municipal facilities and operations from facility management to waste operations.



Public Schools

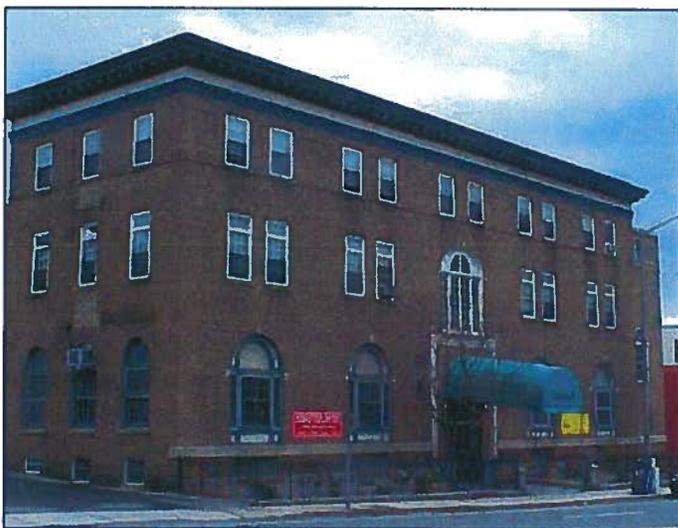
The Winchester Board of Education oversees programs in three school buildings. Secondary education (grades 9 to 12) is provided through a contractual agreement with the Gilbert School. The Town provides more than 97% of the Gilbert School's operating capital. The Winchester public school system recently reconfigured the schools from neighborhood-based schools to a community-based system. As with many communities in the State, Winchester's school population has been decreasing, producing excess capacity in some buildings. Future needs anticipated by the Board of Education include addressing delayed capital improvements. Other facility needs have not been identified.

Having a high quality public school system is critical for attracting businesses to Winchester and enhancing overall quality of life.

A strategic process is imperative in order to provide our town with a new municipal and educational infrastructure that will efficiently serve our students and people of the town..

Non-Municipal Community Facilities

In addition to town facilities, there are many cultural and social amenities in Winchester. Many are located Downtown, including the YMCA, the Elks Club, IORM, the Northwestern Connecticut Community College (NWCC), Beardsley Library, Winchester Historical Society (Rockwell House), and the Winsted Day Care Center.



A longstanding community facility has been the Winsted Memorial Hospital. This community facility is a crucial anchor to the Downtown and residents of the Town and Region (see box).

Winsted Memorial Hospital

On May 25, 1895, the Connecticut General enacted special legislation to permit a group of citizens to organize for the purpose of "establishing and maintaining a hospital" in the Town of Winchester. Winsted Memorial Hospital opened seven years later in 1902 and served the people of Northwestern Connecticut and Southwestern Massachusetts for nearly a century until it was closed on October 25, 1996, despite widespread public opposition.

The Winsted Health Center Foundation, Inc, a not-for-profit, tax exempt corporation was organized by citizens to focus on the restoration of health care services and facilities in the service area. The goal of the Foundation became the incremental rebuilding of hospital-level health services, under local control.

In March 1997, the Foundation and Charlotte Hungerford Hospital partnered to provide health services for the area. The State approved the unique arrangement that provided a 12 hour per day emergency room staffed by board certified emergency medicine physicians, a Paramedic Intercept Program that works with the volunteer emergency medical service, ambulatory surgery capability, on-site diagnostic capabilities, physician offices, cardiac rehabilitation, physical and respiratory therapies, occupational medicine services, and health education and wellness programs.

Committed to utilizing the familiar and central location of the former hospital, the Foundation purchased the real estate and buildings of the former Winsted Memorial Hospital (within a year, the Foundation raised \$200,000.00 to pay off the mortgage with donations from citizens from \$5 to \$5,000.) Charlotte Hungerford and Saint Francis hospitals completed extensive renovations.

In October 1999, the Veterans Administration opened the Veterans Primary Care center to provide comprehensive health screenings, routine doctor visits and annual physicals for veterans in this area. In November 2004, the federal government awarded the Foundation a \$2.5 million grant to build a 20 unit senior housing facility on the property of the Winsted Health Center. In February, 2006, the Superior Court granted the Foundation the bulk of the approximately 2.2 million dollars of the charitable assets of the former hospital, including the entire Susan B. Perry Fund. Additional charitable funds await distribution to the Foundation.

In view of the turmoil in the healthcare industry, where, despite the rhetoric, concern for the patient is so easily dismissed, we have a duty to maintain a community capacity to provide comprehensive, competent, accessible and compassionate healthcare to the people. The communities served by Winsted Memorial Hospital for 100 years can continue to have pride in their self-reliance. The challenge for the future is to maintain this crucial anchor in the West End of Winsted, under local control.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Seek to Upgrade and Improve Community Facilities.

The Town should continue to address capital needs as they arise and as funding permits.

Integrate Green Practices into Town Facilities and Operations

Actions to integrate green practices include developing a municipal energy use and conservation plan and developing a waste management plan.

Support Non-Municipal Community Facilities in Winchester.

The many non-municipal facilities provide invaluable benefits to residents. The Town should encourage their continued presence and operation in the community. The Town should continue to support the provision of health services at the Winsted Health Center Site.

TRANSPORTATION

OVERVIEW

A community's transportation system should support the mobility of residents and workers and also support the desired land use patterns. A transportation system includes roads and parking facilities, public transit, and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The Northwest CT Transit District provides services to the Town of Winchester. Exploring the feasibility of enhancing the existing services is a recommendation of this plan.

Route 44 is a major regional roadway which crosses through Downtown Winchester. The road plays an important role in connecting the Town to the region but is also Winchester's "Main Street". This four-lane highway is not conducive for residents or tourists to stop and patronize the businesses, restaurants and cultural venues. Instead, it divides the Town and has made Winchester a "pass through" town for people other than residents. Also, there is limited on-street and off-street parking Downtown, no covered parking and inadequate signage to locate parking areas. Addressing speeds and overall Downtown circulation, including parking, will be important components in revitalizing Downtown.

Walking should be a viable way of getting around within Downtown and between Downtown and nearby neighborhoods. Addressing issues related to Route 44 can help improve real and perceived safety issues for pedestrians. Finally, public transit could play an important role in strengthening the Downtown.

The High Density Downtown Neighborhoods suffer from inadequate parking, especially in context of steep slopes and a number of narrow winding streets. Parking is also an issue at Highland Lake. There is insufficient parking around the Lake, due to the narrow perimeter road and lack of parking space available on small lots. The situation is especially a problem with increased seasonal traffic. Also, there are many undocumented paper and unpaved roads and a lack of accurate survey monumentation for parcels around Highland Lake.

Chapter 6 discussed the importance of retaining the character of rural roads in the Town. In addition to the strategies discussed in that chapter, it is important to recognize that many of these rural roads are not well suited for a significant increase in traffic. Future land use patterns should reflect that limitation. Furthermore, future subdivisions must provide roadways of sufficient quality to meet safety requirements while still respecting the character of the area.

STRATEGIES FOR TRANSPORTATION

Capital Improvement Plan

The Town of Winchester should develop and implement a Capital Improvement Plan for Town roads such as arterial, collector and local roads (others as established by ConnDot).

Address Parking, Circulation and the Dual Role of Route 44 as State Highway and Main Street.

Traffic must be more effectively regulated for efficient flow and safe speed. The Town should work with the State to determine options to meet the State's needs for this regional roadway while also meeting the needs of the Downtown.

Parking should be redesigned to provide ample parking for residents who live Downtown as well as patrons to businesses, religious institutions, government services, professional services and tourism destinations. Options include a covered parking facility in a central location and scattered smaller sites near the various points of interest which should be properly identified and signed.

Improve the Pedestrian-Friendliness of Downtown.

Pedestrian-friendliness should be improved so that Downtown is more convenient, safe and attractive to residents and tourists. The Town should explore the possibility of creating pedestrian friendly zones, potentially converting town roads to pedestrian/bike access, eliminating street parking to widen sidewalks and using landscaping and architectural features (varied height and façade style, varied path width, landscape type, paver type) to improve the pedestrian-friendliness of the built environment. Improvements to Route 44 should keep the pedestrian in mind (e.g., provision of crosswalks).

Explore the Potential for Improved Public Transportation

The Town should explore the feasibility of providing public transportation above and beyond that provided by the Northwestern CT Transit District.

Ensure that New Subdivision Roadways Respect Character and Meet Safety Requirements.

See Chapter 6 for specific strategies. The Town's road specifications should be updated to reflect these goals.

Address Parking in the High Density Residential Area.

Vacant lots might provide opportunities for parking (along with open space, as discussed in Chapter 6). The Town should make a commitment to improving parking resources in this neighborhood to reduce the need to park cars in front yards.

UTILITIES

OVERVIEW

Sewer service is currently provided in the Downtown and in parts of the Route 8 / 800 corridor and Highland Lake. There are no plans to extend water and sewer services to rural areas of the Town.

According to information provided by the Sewer and Water Commission, there appears to be adequate water and sewer capacity:

	Capacity (gallons / day)	Actual Use (gallons / day)
Water System	3 million	1 million
Sewer System	3.2 million	1 million

Issues related to other utilities, such as wireless communications, natural gas and electrical service have not been identified.

STRATEGIES FOR UTILITIES

Maintain Adequate Water and Sewer Service in Service Areas.

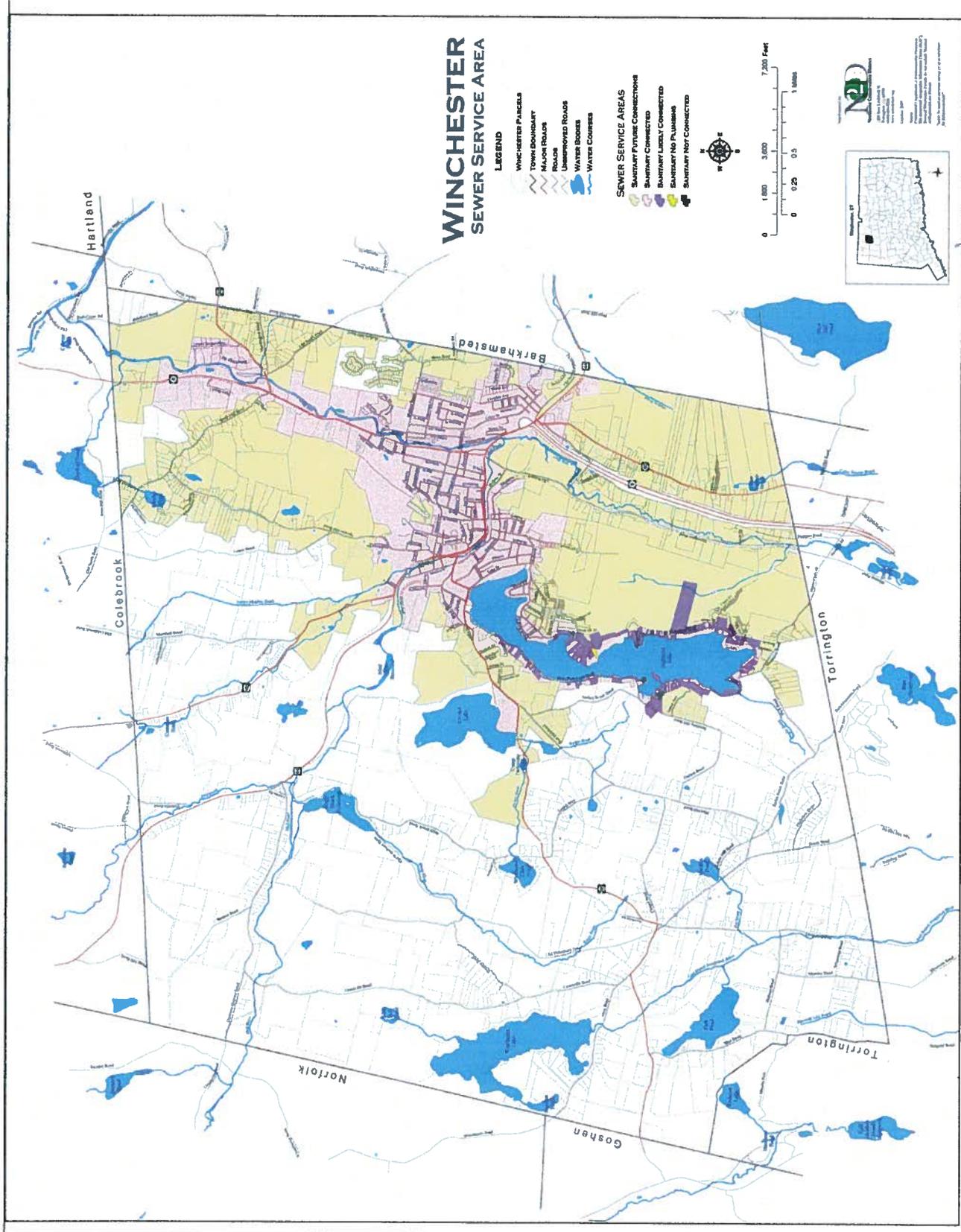
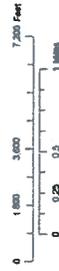
The Town should continue to ensure adequate service in these areas. It is not expected sewer or water service will be extended to rural areas.

WINCHESTER SEWER SERVICE AREA

LEGEND

- WINCHESTER PARCELS
- TOWN BOUNDARY
- MAJOR ROADS
- ROADS
- UNEMPLOYED ROADS
- WATER BODIES
- WATER COURSES

- ### SEWER SERVICE AREAS
- SEWER SERVICE CONNECTED
 - SEWER SERVICE LIKELY CONNECTED
 - SEWER SERVICE NOT PLANNING
 - SEWER SERVICE NOT CONNECTED



9 – FUTURE LAND USE AND STATE AND REGIONAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

This Chapter summarizes the future land uses for each planning area and then discusses consistency with State Plan and Regional Plan.

FUTURE LAND USE SUMMARY

- **Lakes District** – Maintain as a low density residential area with enhanced protection of environmental features and continued open space preservation.
- **Northern and Eastern Winchester** – Maintain as a low density residential area with enhanced protection of environmental features and continued open space preservation. In limited cases, areas of higher density residential development might be appropriate
- **Downtown** – Higher density, mixed use Downtown with open space integrated throughout.
- **High Density Downtown Neighborhoods** – Moderate to high density core with neighborhood scale open spaces and limited neighborhood retail.
- **Route 8 / 800 Corridor** – Industrial and commercial uses in the northern portion, recreation and open space in southern portion, with residential uses.

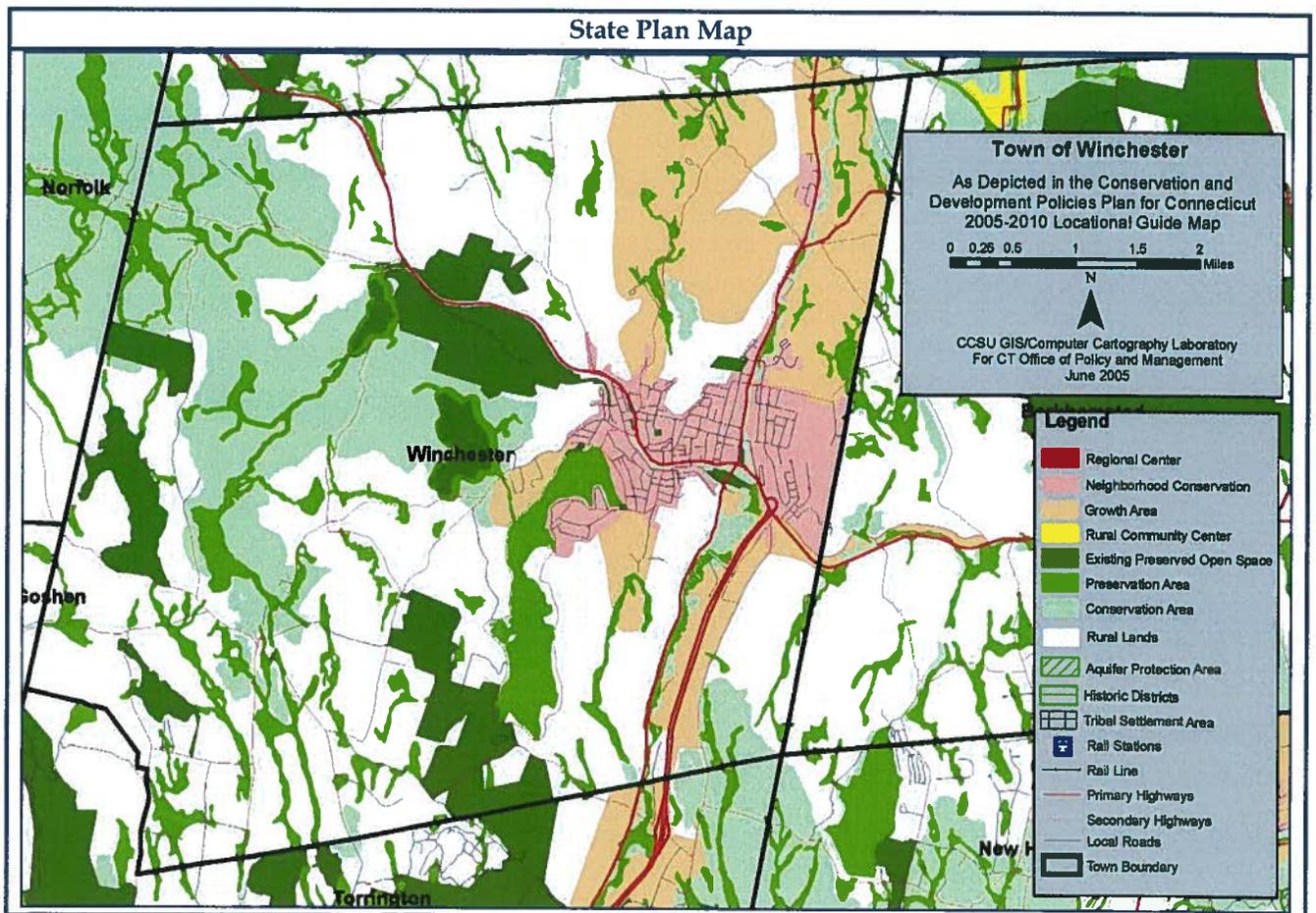
CONSISTENCY WITH STATE AND REGIONAL PLANS AND POLICIES

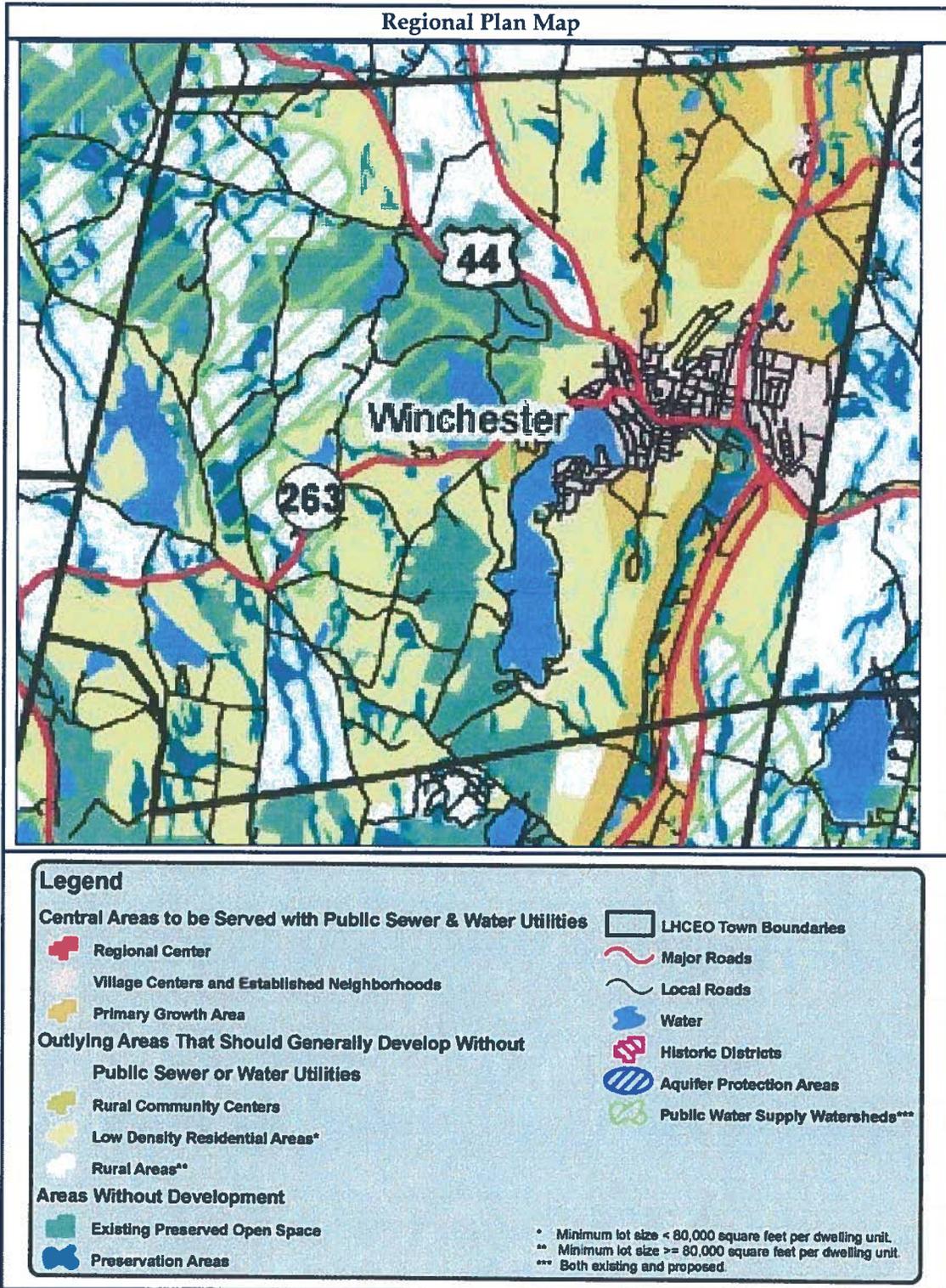
In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-23, the Winchester POCD was compared to:

- 2005-2010 Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut;
- Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (prepared by the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials); and,
- State Growth Principles.

REGIONAL AND STATE PLAN MAPS

The Winchester POCD is generally consistent with the state and regional plan maps in that POCD encourages that future growth is targeted to the Downtown and that outlying rural areas remain at lower densities in order to protect natural resources and preserve character (Please note that the map legend applies to the entire state; not all area in legend are found in Winchester).





STATE GROWTH PRINCIPLES

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

State Growth Principle	Winchester POCD
Principle 1 - Redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.	FINDING - Consistent The Winchester POCD supports the continuation of Downtown as a hub of activity. Growth is guided to areas with existing water, sewer and transportation infrastructure.
Principle 2 - Expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.	FINDING - Consistent The POCD promotes housing options and choices particularly through upgrades and redevelopment in Downtown and surrounding higher-density neighborhoods.
Principle 3 - Concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.	FINDING - Consistent The POCD encourages business development in appropriate areas such as Downtown, which is along the Route 44 corridor.
Principle 4 - Conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and existing farmlands.	FINDING - Consistent The POCD provides strategies to protect natural resources, preserve open space, protect farms, and preserve community character, including historical resources.
Principle 5 - Protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety.	FINDING - Consistent The POCD provides strategies for protecting natural resources, particularly water resources, in addition to other environmental assets.
Principle 6 - Integration of planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional and state-wide basis.	FINDING - Consistent The POCD stresses the importance of working regionally and with the state on issues such as watershed protection.

10 – IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

A plan can work only if it is put into action. If we are to preserve and protect those assets and qualities that make Winchester a special place, then the community must not just adopt the Plan, but must implement it.

Implementation of a Plan of Conservation and Development typically occurs in two main phases:

- Implementation of high priority recommendations should be initiated in a relatively short period of time if action has not already begun
- Other recommendations are implemented over the ten year planning period as determined by additional study, coordination with (or implementation by) others, or the commitment of financial resources.

The Planning and Zoning Commission has the general responsibility for monitoring and overseeing Plan implementation. The Commission also has responsibility for implementing certain strategies through regulation amendments, application reviews, and other means.

Other recommendations require the cooperation of and actions by other local boards, commissions, and municipal agencies. These other entities include the Board of Selectmen, Inland Wetlands Commission, Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, emergency services, and other agencies.

If the Plan is to be successfully realized, it must serve as a guide to all residents, businesses, builders, developers, applicants, owners, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly growth of Winchester.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

USING THE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Using the Plan of Conservation and Development as a basis for land use and other decisions will help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan. All land use applications before the Planning and Zoning Commission are evaluated in terms of the Plan and its various elements. Other Commissions should do the same.

UPDATING ZONING REGULATIONS

Many of the strategies contained in this POCD entail specific updates to the Zoning Regulations. It is recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission make zoning regulation overhaul their first order of business after adoption of this POCD. Winchester's zoning regulations, originally adopted in 1956, have evolved in response to specific needs but are considered complex and not user-friendly. The overhaul should promote consistency between this POCD and the regulations, incorporate the specific recommendations outlined in this POCD, and make the regulations more user-friendly.

UPDATING SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Subdivision Regulations also provide specific criteria for land development associated with subdivisions. In the near future, the Planning and Zoning Commission should review them and consider changes necessary to implement Plan recommendations and promote consistency between the Plan and the regulations.

ENFORCEMENT OF REGULATIONS

Enforcement of regulations is critical to successfully implementing a POCD. Efforts should be made to provide for transparent and consistent zoning enforcement.

MAINTAINING THE PLAN

The Plan should be updated on a regular basis rather than waiting 10 years to update it. More frequent updating will ensure that the Plan is relevant and tuned into the needs of the community. A possible process for maintaining the Plan is to do the following on an annual basis:

- Hold a public informational meeting to summarize the Plan recommendations and receive feedback from the community
- Hold a workshop session for local boards and other interested persons to discuss Plan strategies and suggest alternative language
- Based on input revise Plan sections and re-adopt the Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

It is important to recognize that the following strategies are the main policy statements and planning objectives of the Town of Winchester. The actions associated with each strategy identify specific initiatives intended to help implement the strategy.

Issues will arise in the future that are not identified specifically in the Plan. In such situations, the overall strategies of the Plan will be the benchmarks used in evaluating whether a proposed activity or proposal is consistent with the Plan.

It should also be recognized that policies and strategies will evolve over time as implementation or new situations provides insight into desirable policy directions. In other words, the Plan is not a static document and will continue to be reviewed and refined over time. In addition, a community may find that priorities change over time.

The priorities outlined on the following pages may be adjusted due to resource constraints (fiscal or staff) or changing policy issues.

GREEN PRINT

	PRIMARY	OTHERS	TIME FRAME
1. Organize a Green Print Committee (GPC)	BOS, Town	CC, EC	1-3 yrs
2. Create a Green Print brand	Town	EDC, P&Z	Ongoing
3. Become a demonstration community for voluntary use of green practices	ALL		Ongoing
4. Balance long term thinking for all conservation and development activities with experimentation and innovation	ALL		Ongoing
5. Maintain and expand upon the State's principles of Smart Growth	ALL		Ongoing
6. Ensure that all development is minimally invasive	ALL		Ongoing
7. Prepare Green Print implementation guidelines	Town	GPC	1-3 yrs

CONSERVATION

STRATEGIES TO PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES			
	PRIMARY	OTHERS	TIME FRAME
Preserve Sensitive Areas as Open Space			
8. Where feasible, preserve sensitive natural resources as open space	CC, OSC	HLWA Land Trusts	Ongoing
Update Density and Minimum Lot Size Requirements			
9. Adopt soil based density and net acreage requirements	P&Z	IWWC, CC	1-3 yrs
Address Storm Water Runoff			
10. Determine approach for limiting amount of runoff	P&Z	IWWC, CC	1-3 yrs
11. Adopt limits on impervious surfaces	P&Z	IWWC, CC	2-5 yrs
12. Update buffer regulations	IWWC	CC	2-5 yrs
13. Determine appropriate LID approaches for Downtown and Town as a whole	P&Z	IWWC, CC	1-3 yrs
Reduce Water Pollution			
14. Develop and implement a watershed management and protection plan	BOS, Town	HLWA	2-5 yrs
15. Educate property owners on proper septic system maintenance	Town	CC TAHD	Ongoing
16. Expand regular water quality monitoring program	Town	HLWA	Ongoing
17. Develop and implement a plan for remedial and long term action for Mad and Still Rivers	Town	IWWC CC	5-10 yrs
Continue to Address Erosion and Sediment Control			
18. Improve inspections of E&S control installations	Town	IWWC	Ongoing
19. Enforce ongoing maintenance of E&S controls	Town	IWWC	Ongoing
20. Address erosion from unpaved driveways and roads near lakes	Town	IWWC HLWA	Ongoing
Provide Public Education on Importance of Protecting Natural Resources			
21. Undertake a public education program	Town, BOE	CC, HLWA	1-3 yrs
22. Reach out to youth and civic groups	Town, BOE	CC, HLWA	2-5 yrs
Continue to Identify Natural Resources and Priority Protection Areas			
23. Update the Natural Resources Inventory	CC		Ongoing
24. Use the NRI when making land use decisions	P&Z, IWWC, ZBA		Ongoing
25. Update application forms to refer to NRI	P&Z, IWWC, ZBA		Ongoing
26. Create conservation overlays	Town	CC, NCD	Ongoing

STRATEGIES TO PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES			
	PRIMARY	OTHERS	TIME FRAME
Work Regionally to Protect Natural Resources			
27. Collaborate with neighboring towns.	CC, OSC	Land Trusts	1-3 yrs
28. Create an inter-municipal agreement and formal commitment to work together	CC, OSC	Land Trusts	2-5 yrs
Address Invasive Species			
29. Develop an invasive species plan	Town, CC	IWWC, HLWA	1-3 yrs
30. Expand programs for eradicating invasive species	Town, CC	IWWC, HLWA	2-5 yrs
31. Discourage introduction and storage of non-local organic materials	Town, CC		Ongoing
Additional Regulatory Strategies			
32. Adopt watershed protection zones	P&Z		2-5 yrs
33. Enforce existing regulations	All		1-3 yrs
34. Limit granting of variances to situations properly meeting hardship standards	ZBA		1-3 yrs
35. Require restoration of foliage for development in the Lakes District	P&Z IWWC		5-10 yrs
Additional Strategies			
36. Create and adopt standards for assessing biodiversity	CC		5-10 yrs
37. Monitor conservation easements	CC		5-10 yrs
38. Create incentives to maintain undeveloped land in an un-fragmented state	CC OSC		5-10 yrs
39. Develop an Aquifer Protection Plan	Town	IWWC	5-10 yrs

STRATEGIES TO PRESERVE OPEN SPACE			
	PRIMARY	OTHERS	TIME FRAME
Create an Open Space Committee and Open Space Plan			
40. Establish the Open Space Committee (OSC)	BOS, CC		1-3 yrs
41. Create an Open Space Plan	OSC		2-5 yrs
Acquire Additional Open Space			
42. Focus on priorities and criteria in POCD and Open Space Plan	OSC	CC	2-5 yrs
43. Encourage land donations	OSC	HLWA Land Trusts	Ongoing
44. Ensure subdivisions provide meaningful open space	P&Z	CC, OSC	Ongoing
Create a Downtown Riverwalk			
45. Explore options, feasibility of creating a riverwalk	Town	EDC, DEP DOT	2-5 yrs
Expand Funding			
46. Establish an open space fund	Town	OSC, HLWA Land Trusts	1-3 yrs
47. Consider bonding for acquisitions	Town	OSC	2-5 yrs
48. Pursue grants	OSC	Town	Ongoing
Update Open Space Provisions in Subdivision Regulations			
49. Update subdivision regulations	P&Z		1-3 yrs
Encourage Open Space Subdivision Design			
50. Review and update Open Space Subdivision regulations	P&Z		1-3 yrs
51. Consider requiring Open Space Subdivisions in target areas	P&Z		2-5 yrs
Promote Enjoyment of Open Space			
52. Explore allowing organized hikes on watershed lands.	CC, OSC	EDC	5-10 yrs
Continue Current PA 490 Policies			
53. Continue to encourage participation in the farm and forest component of PA 490	CC		Ongoing
Work with Private and Regional Entities			
54. Coordinate with regional and state entities to preserve open space and greenways	CC, OSC		Ongoing

STRATEGIES TO PRESERVE CHARACTER			
	PRIMARY	OTHER	TIME FRAME
Preserve Ridgelines			
55. Discourage activities with negative visual impact	P&Z		Ongoing
56. Adopt a review process for subdivision design in scenic areas	P&Z		1-3 yrs
57. Discourage unnecessary lighting on or near ridgelines	P&Z		Ongoing
58. Investigate need for lighting and noise standards	P&Z		1-3 yrs
Preserve the Character of Roads			
59. Update road design standards	Town, P&Z		1-3 yrs
60. Ensure subdivision entrances are designed to reflect character	P&Z		1-3 yrs
61. Update subdivision regulations to discourage clearing of frontage	P&Z		1-3 yrs
62. Consider additional measures to reduce the clearing of vegetation.	P&Z		1-3 yrs
63. Re-establish the Shade Tree Committee (STC)	CC		5-10 yrs
64. Inventory Downtown shade trees and identify maintenance and replacement needs	CC	STC	5-10 yrs
Preserve Farmland and Farms			
65. Promote local farming and farmers markets	EDC	FOMS	2-5 yrs
66. Encourage sustainable farming practices	CC		5-10 yrs
67. Update zoning regulations to preserve farmland	P&Z		5-10 yrs
68. Encourage preservation of farms with easements and the purchase of development rights by the State	OSC	Land Trusts	Ongoing
Encourage Preservation of Historic Resources			
69. Establish a local Historical Preservation Commission (WHPC)	BOS	WHS	5-10 yrs
70. Participate in the Certified Local Government Program	BOS, CCT SHPO, NPS	CTTRUST	
71. Provide educational programs and technical assistance to owners of historic buildings.	WHPC WHS		Ongoing
72. Consider designating local historic districts.	BOS	WHPC, WHS	5-10 yrs
73. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance	Town		5-10 yrs
Adopt Design Review			
74. Incorporate architectural design review into Regulations	P&Z		1-3 yrs

DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

	PRIMARY	OTHERS	TIME FRAME
Update Zoning to Promote a Traditional Mixed Use Downtown			
75. Review and update zoning regulations	P&Z		1-3 yrs
Enhance Livability of the Downtown and Surrounding High Density Neighborhoods			
76. Encourage diversification of housing types.	Town, EDC	FOMS, WHA	Ongoing
77. Provide small parks, community gardens, gathering areas	Town	FOMS, WHA	Ongoing
78. Improve sidewalks and overall walkability	Town		Ongoing
79. Encourage improvement of building facades and upkeep	Town	FOMS, EDC	Ongoing
80. Address parking issues (see Transportation)	Town	FOMS, EDC	Ongoing
Encourage Redevelopment of Vacant Mills			
81. Work with owners to determine options	Town, EDC		Ongoing
Enhance Gateways			
82. Ensure physical and electronic (websites and media) gateways are attractive and welcoming	Town, EDC		Ongoing
Determine Overall Redevelopment Approach			
83. Work with landowners to determine best redevelopment approach	Town, EDC	RA	Ongoing

STRATEGIES FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT			
	WHO	OTHERS	TIME FRAME
Maintain Lower Densities in the Lakes District			
See strategy #9.			
Enhance the Shoreline Neighborhoods			
84. Preserve town-owned parcels as open space	BOS, Town		1-3 yrs
Determine Appropriate Densities and Patterns for Northern and Eastern Planning Area			
85. Determine appropriate patterns and densities and update zoning	P&Z		1-3 yrs
86. Consider higher density developments only where it fits character and landscape.	P&Z		Ongoing
Enhance the Housing Stock Downtown and Attract Median and Higher Income Households			
Also see strategies 78-82 and 127.			
87. Consider zoning incentives for developers in Downtown	P&Z		1-3 yrs
88. Consider tax incentives for developers in Downtown	BOS		1-3 yrs
89. Encourage redevelopment of vacant buildings to include housing units	Town	WHA	Ongoing
90. Amend zoning to allow more diverse housing options	P&Z	WHA	1-3 yrs
91. Allow condominiums, congregate housing, assisted living and skilled nursing by special permit as appropriate.	P&Z		1-3 yrs
Enhance the High Density Downtown Neighborhoods			
Also see strategies 78-82 and 127.			
92. Provide fiscal incentives to upgrade properties	BOS, Town		1-3 yrs
93. Create disincentives for additional conversions from single-family to multi-family units	P&Z		1-3 yrs
94. Preserve the varied characteristics and feel of neighborhoods	P&Z Review Board		Ongoing
95. Encourage the dispersal of affordable units	BOS, P&Z		Ongoing
96. Update zoning to allow limited higher density, mixed use and multi-family on a case by case basis	P&Z		1-3 yrs
Strengthen Neighborhood Identity Downtown and in Downtown Neighborhoods			
See various strategies related to neighborhood enhancements			
97. Create landscape gateways with signs	Town, EDC		2-5 yrs
98. Identify neighborhood leaders	EDC		2-5 yrs
Maintain Residential Areas in Route 8/ 800 Corridor			
See strategy #9.			

STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT			
Recreate a Retail, Commercial and Professional Hub Downtown			
99. Create financial incentives to entice desirable businesses	BOS, Town	EDC	2-5 yrs
100. Consider providing incubator space for new businesses	BOS, Town	EDC	5-10 yrs
Use Green Print Brand to Attract Niche Businesses			
101. Market the Green Print concept to entice businesses	Town, EDC		Ongoing
Draw Residents Downtown			
102. Provide clear, attractive signs	P&Z, EDC	FOMS	Ongoing
103. Continue to hold events Downtown	EDC	FOMS	Ongoing
104. Publicize Downtown events	EDC	FOMS	Ongoing
Allow Small Scale Retail in the High Density Downtown Neighborhoods			
105. Consider amending zoning to allow small scale retail under certain circumstances	P&Z		1-3 yrs
Explore Opportunities for Industrial Expansion in Route 8 / 800 Corridor			
106. Explore potential for new industrial park in northern portion	Town	EDC	1-3 yrs
107. Consider additional tax incentives to draw new businesses to this area.	BOS, Town	EDC	1-3 yrs

STRATEGIES FOR GREEN / SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS			
	PRIMARY	OTHERS	TIME FRAME
Facilitate the Use of Alternative Energy Sources			
108. Review zoning to identify barriers to alternative energy sources.	P&Z	EC	1-3 yrs
109. Encourage use of alternative energy sources.	EC		Ongoing
Encourage Developers to Meet Green Building Standards			
110. Encourage green practices in new development and redevelopment.	P&Z IWWC		Ongoing
111. Encourage developers to meet standards, such as LEED.	P&Z EC		Ongoing
112. Explore opportunities with NWCC to educate public.	EC		Ongoing

INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

	PRIMARY	OTHERS	TIME FRAME
Seek to Upgrade and Improve Community Facilities			
113. Continue to address capital needs.	Town	BOE	Ongoing
Integrate Green Practices into Town Facilities and Operations			
114. Develop a municipal Energy Use and Conservation Plan	Town, EC		1-3 yrs
115. Develop a Waste Management Plan	Town, GPC	RRDD1, BOE	2-5 yrs
Support Non-Municipal Community Facilities in Winchester			
116. Encourage continued presence of non-municipal community facilities.	Town, BOS		Ongoing
117. Support the continued provision of health services at the Winsted Health Center.	Town, BOS, WHC		Ongoing

STRATEGIES FOR TRANSPORTATION

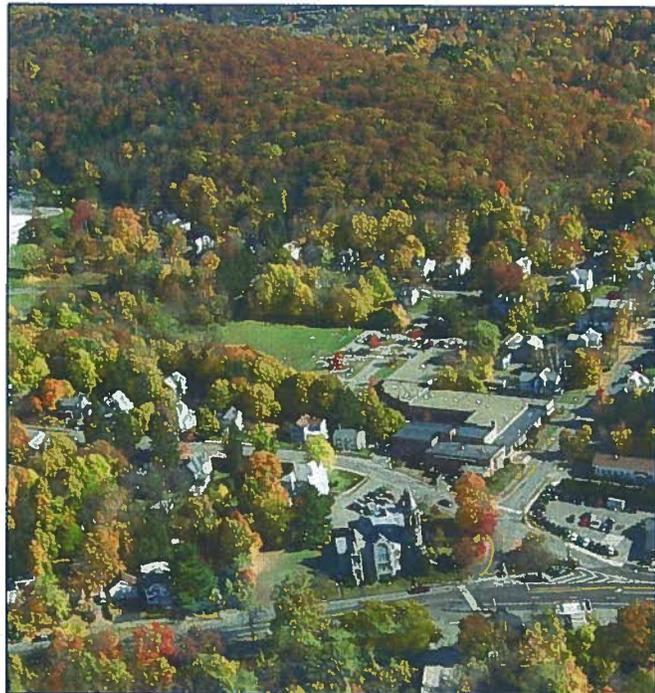
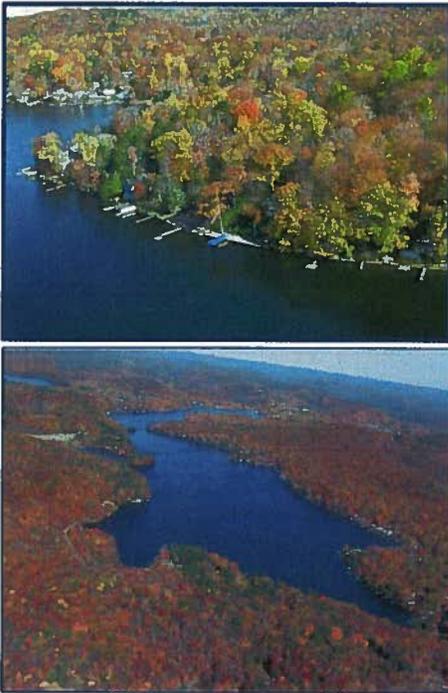
	PRIMARY	OTHERS	TIME FRAME
Address Parking, Circulation and the Dual Role of Route 44 as State Highway and Main Street			
118. Work with State to determine options for Route 44	Town, EDC	DOT	1-3 yrs
119. Address parking issues	Town, EDC		Ongoing
120. Consider a covered parking facility.	Town		5-10 yrs
Improve the Pedestrian-Friendliness of Downtown			
121. Explore options for improving pedestrian facilities Downtown.	Town	DOT	Ongoing
122. Ensure that improvements to Route 44 include pedestrian facilities.	Town	DOT	Ongoing
Explore the Potential for Public Transportation			
123. Explore feasibility of public transit service.	Town		Ongoing
Address Parking in the High Density Downtown Neighborhoods			
124. As appropriate, use vacant lots for parking.	Town		Ongoing

STRATEGIES FOR UTILITIES

	PRIMARY	OTHERS	TIME FRAME
Maintain Adequate Water and Sewer Service in Service Areas			
125. Continue to provide adequate water and sewer service.	Town		Ongoing

11 – CONCLUSION

The intent of this POCD was to update the 1994 plan of development as required by Connecticut State statute and to weave conservation into the fabric of this new plan. Additionally the Subcommittee wanted to create a user-friendly document that is consistent with the POCD vision statement and would be embraced by the Town's citizenry. It is hoped that this POCD will be continuously updated to meet the ever changing conditions of an evolving town and to address the inevitable unintended consequences of our best intentions.



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APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY

Notes:	Winchester = Town of Winchester/City of Winsted Connecticut = State of Connecticut
BMP	Best Management Practices
BOE	Winchester Board of Education
BOS	Winchester Board of Selectmen
CC	Winchester Conservation Commission
CCT	Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism
CERC	Connecticut Economic Resource Center
CHFA	Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, a mortgage assistance program
CLG	Certified Local Government, a program that allows local governments to strengthen their local preservation efforts.
CNU	Congress for the New Urbanism
CTTRUST	Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation offers assistance, guidance and programs to those seeking to promote historic preservation and protect our cultural and architectural heritage.
DECD	Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
DEP, CT DEP	Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
DOT	Connecticut Department of Transportation
DPW	Winchester Department of Public Works
EC	Winchester Environmental Commission

EDC	Winchester Economic Development Commission
E&S	Erosion and Sedimentation
FOMS	Friends of Main Street, a designated Connecticut Main Street organization
GPC	Green Print Committee
HABS/HAER	Library of Congress' Historic American Buildings Survey
HLWA	Highland Lake Watershed Association
HPEG	Historic Preservation Enhancement Grants
HUD	U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development
IWCC	Winchester Inland Wetlands Conservation Commission
LEED	Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design, a certification program administered by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).
LEED ND	LEED for Neighborhood Development
LID	Low Impact Design/Development
NCD	Connecticut Northwest Conservation District
NRDC	Natural Resources Defense Council
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NRI	Natural Resources Inventory, prepared by the Town of Winchester Conservation Commission, 2009.
NWCC	Northwestern Connecticut Community College
OSC	Winchester Open Space Committee
PA 490	Public Act 490, reduces tax assessments on farm and forest land

POCD	Plan of Conservation and Development (aka "Plan").
P&Z	Winchester Planning & Zoning Commission
RA	Redevelopment Authority
RoHS	Restriction of Hazardous Substances
RRDD1	Regional Refuse Disposal District One
SCLG	Supplemental Certified Local Government Grants
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office, Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism's (CCT) Historic Preservation & Museum Division functions under state and federal law as Connecticut's SHPO
TAHD	Torrington Area Health District
USGBC	U.S. Green Building Council, a balanced consensus-based nonprofit with more than 20,000 member companies and organizations representing the entire building industry.
WHA	Winchester Housing Authority
WHC	Winsted Health Center
WHPC	Winchester Historic Preservation Commission
WHS	Winchester Historical Society
WLT	Winchester Land Trust
ZBA	Winchester Zoning Board of Appeals

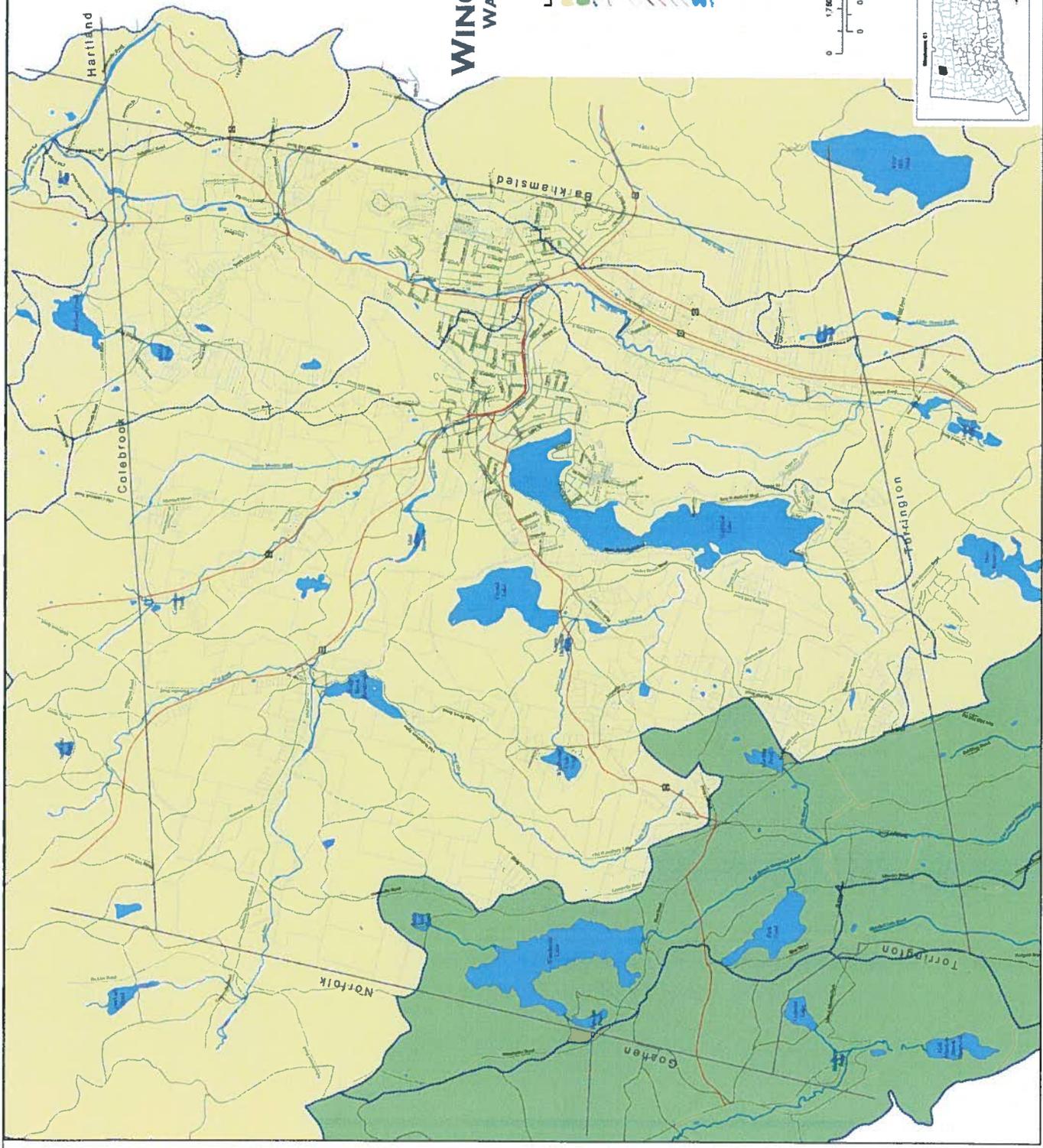
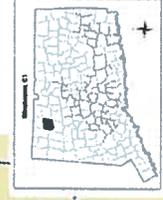
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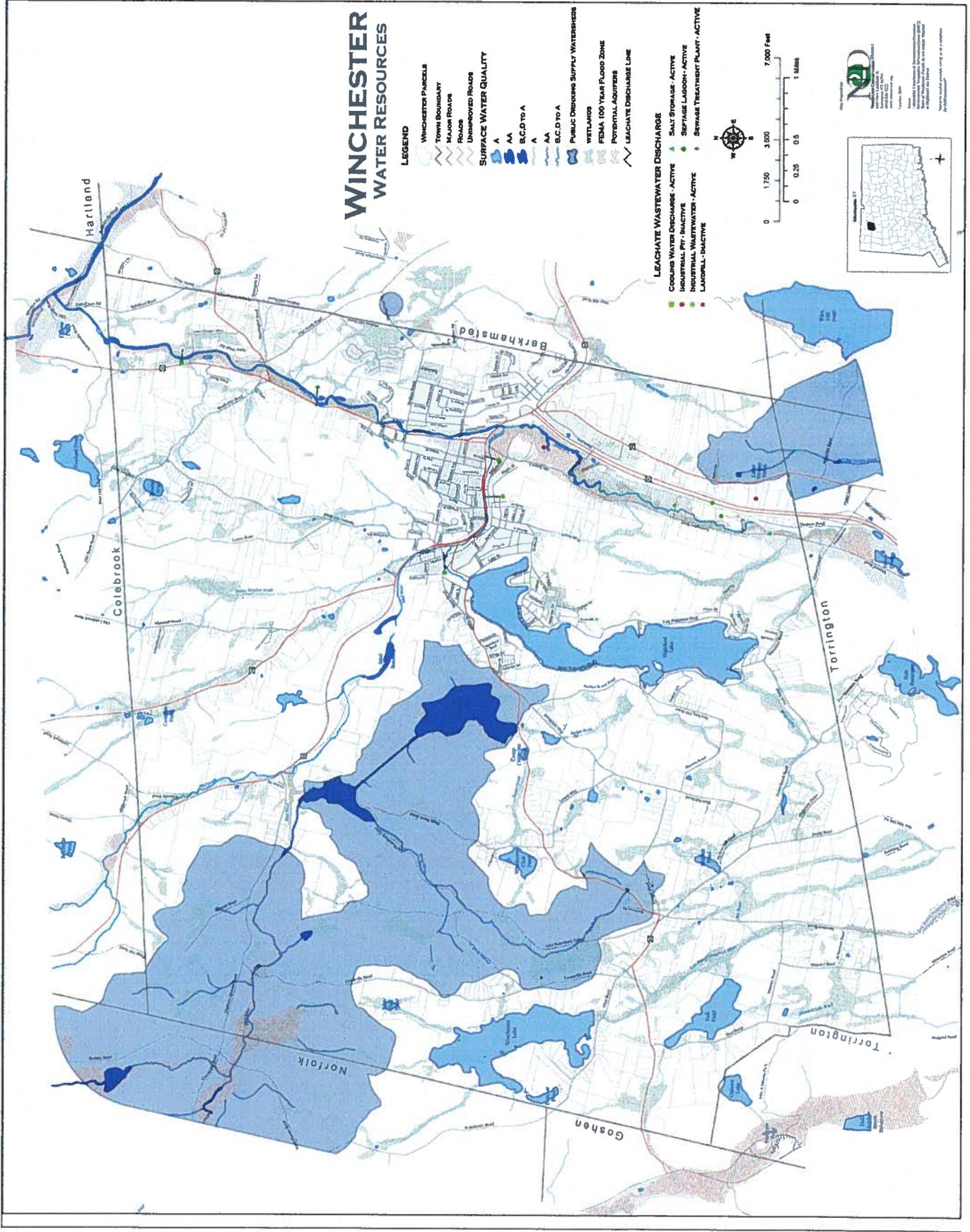
APPENDIX B – MAPS

- Watersheds
- Water Resources
- Wetland Soils
- USGS Topographic Map
- Bedrock Geology
- Surficial Materials
- Soils
- Slopes
- Roads
- Future Land Use
- ConnDot Road Classifications

WINCHESTER WATERSHEDS

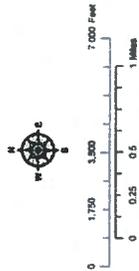
- LEGEND**
- CONNECTICUT RIVER WATERSHED
 - HOUSATONIC RIVER WATERSHED
 - SURROUNDAING WATERSHED BOUNDARY
 - LOCAL WATERSHED BOUNDARY
 - WINCHESTER PARCELS
 - TOWN BOUNDARY
 - MAJOR ROAD
 - ROAD
 - UNIMPROVED ROAD
 - WATER BODIES
 - WATER COURSES



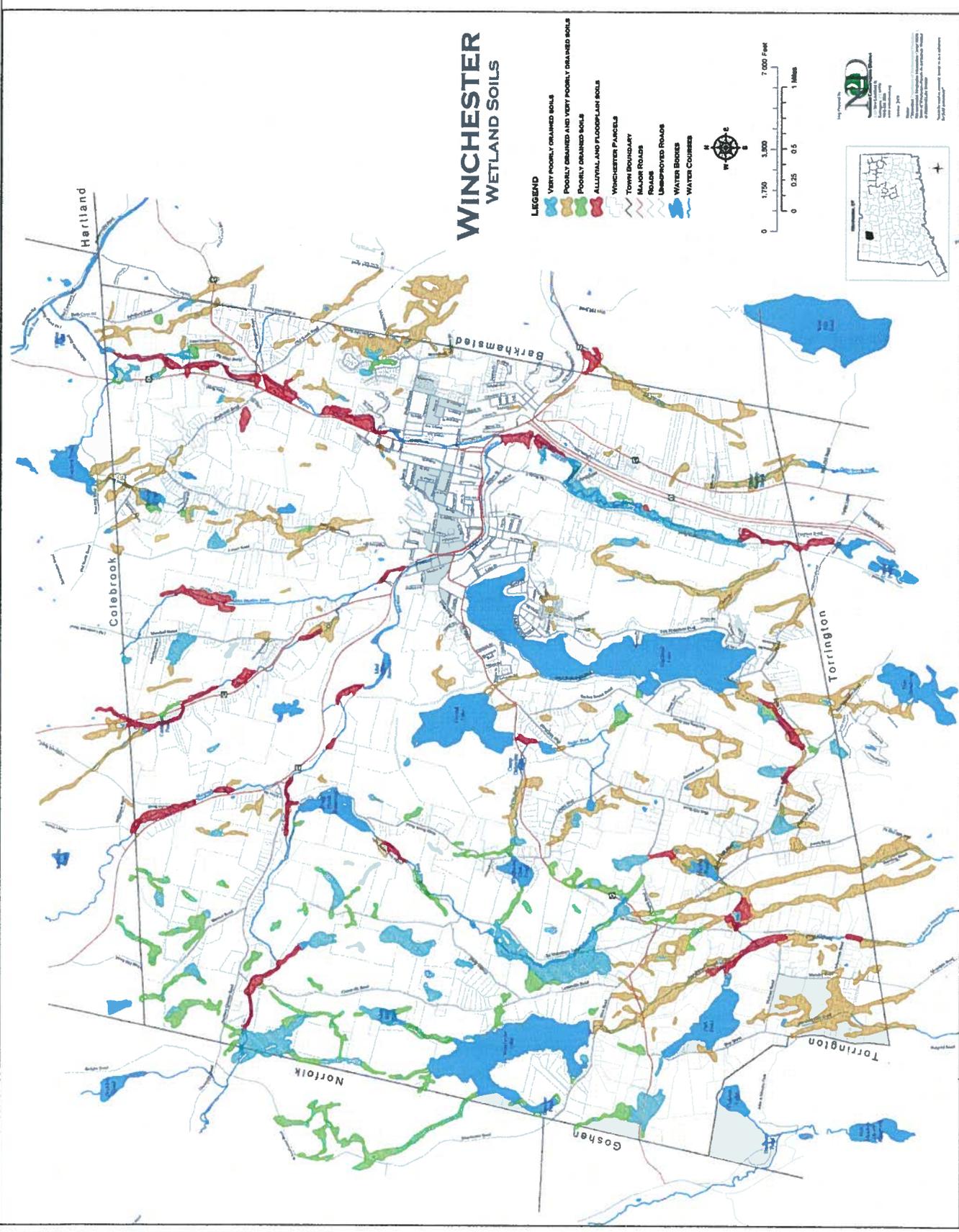


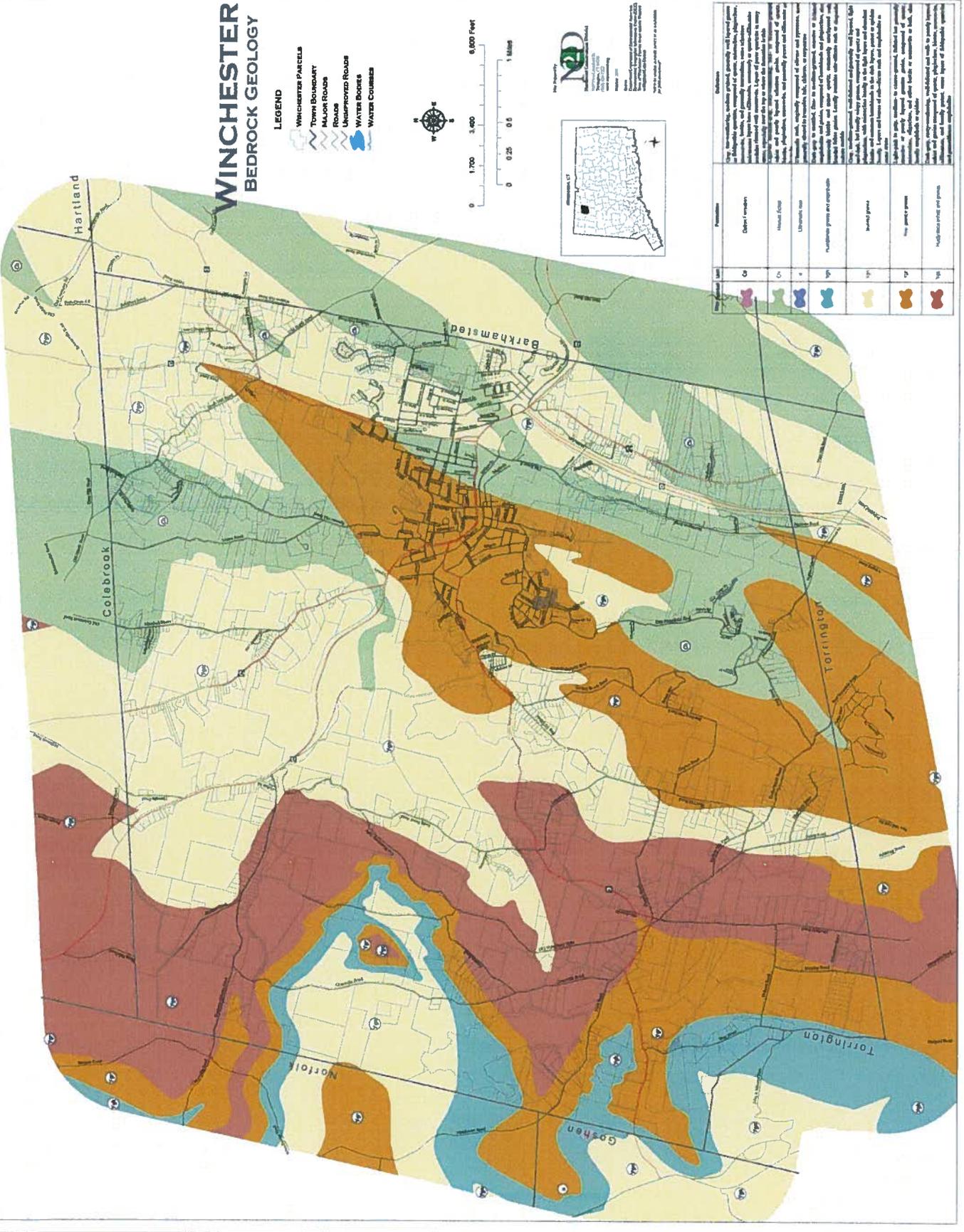
WINCHESTER WETLAND SOILS

- LEGEND**
- VERY POORLY DRAINED SOILS
 - POORLY DRAINED AND VERY POORLY DRAINED SOILS
 - POORLY DRAINED SOILS
 - ALLUVIAL AND FLOODPLAIN SOILS
 - WINCHESTER PARCELS
 - TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
 - MAJOR ROADS
 - ROADS
 - UNIMPROVED ROADS
 - WATER BODIES
 - WATER COURSES



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 Date: 1/11/01
 Project: Winchester Wetland Soils
 Project Number: 01-001





WINCHESTER SURFICIAL MATERIALS

LEGEND

QUATERNARY GEOLOGY

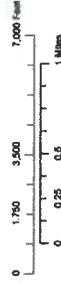
- ALLUVIUM OVERLYING SAND AND GRAVEL
- ARTIFICIAL FILL
- GRAVEL
- GRAVEL OVERLYING SAND AND GRAVEL
- SAND
- SAND AND GRAVEL
- SANDY TILL SAND AND GRAVEL
- SOME AREAS OF DENSE SURFACE BOLLERS
- SWAMP
- THICK TILL
- TILL
- WATER

QUATERNARY POINTS

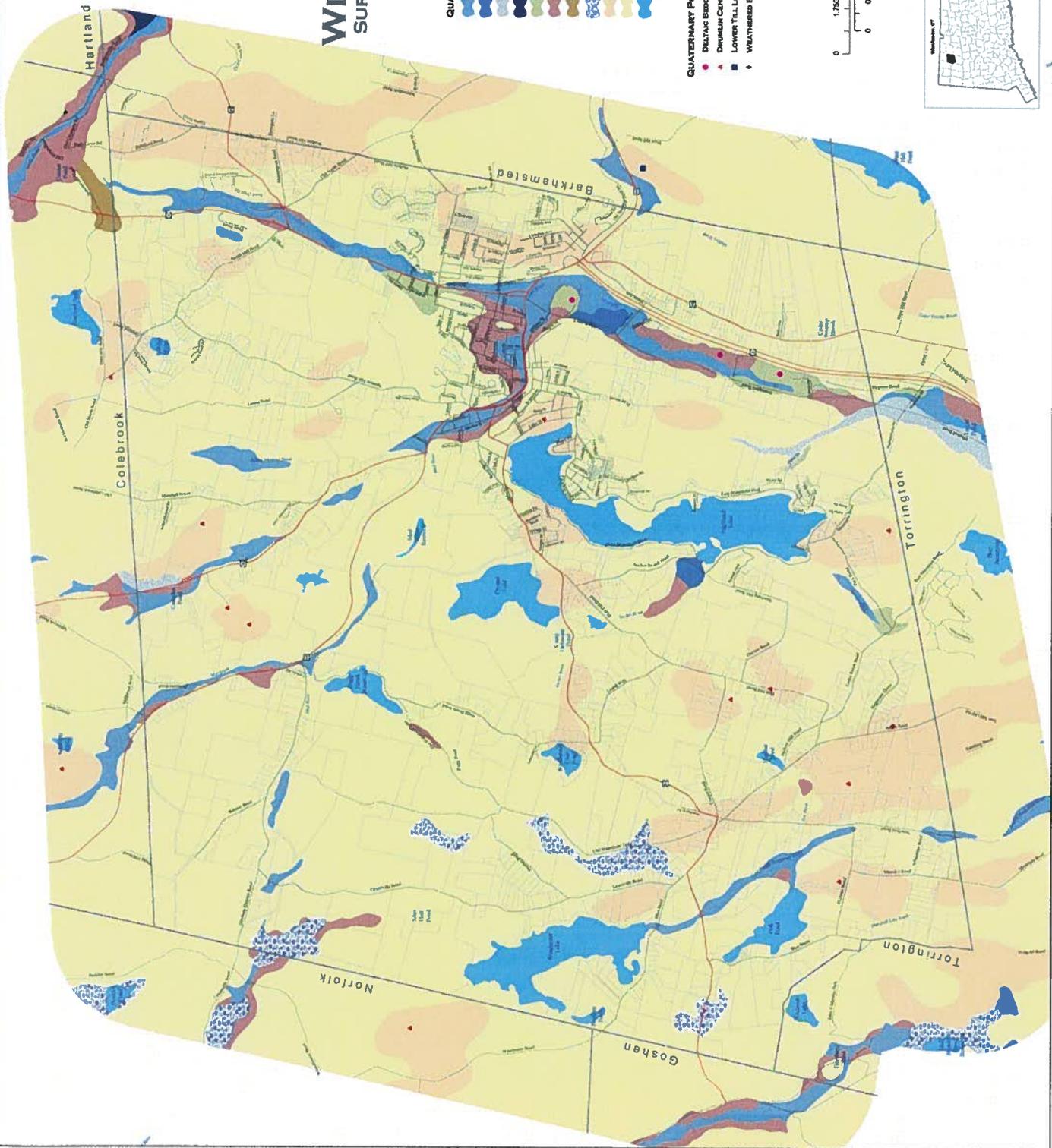
- DULTON BEDROCK
- DUNBAR CENTER
- LOWER TILL LOCALITY
- WATKINSON BEDROCK

WINCHESTER PARCELS

- TOWN BOUNDARY
- MAJOR ROADS
- ROADS
- UNAPPROVED ROADS



ND
 New Hampshire Department of
 Transportation
 100 North Main Street
 Concord, NH 03301
 October 2014
 This map was prepared by the
 New Hampshire Department of
 Transportation, Office of
 Planning and Research
 Project Number: 2014-01-001



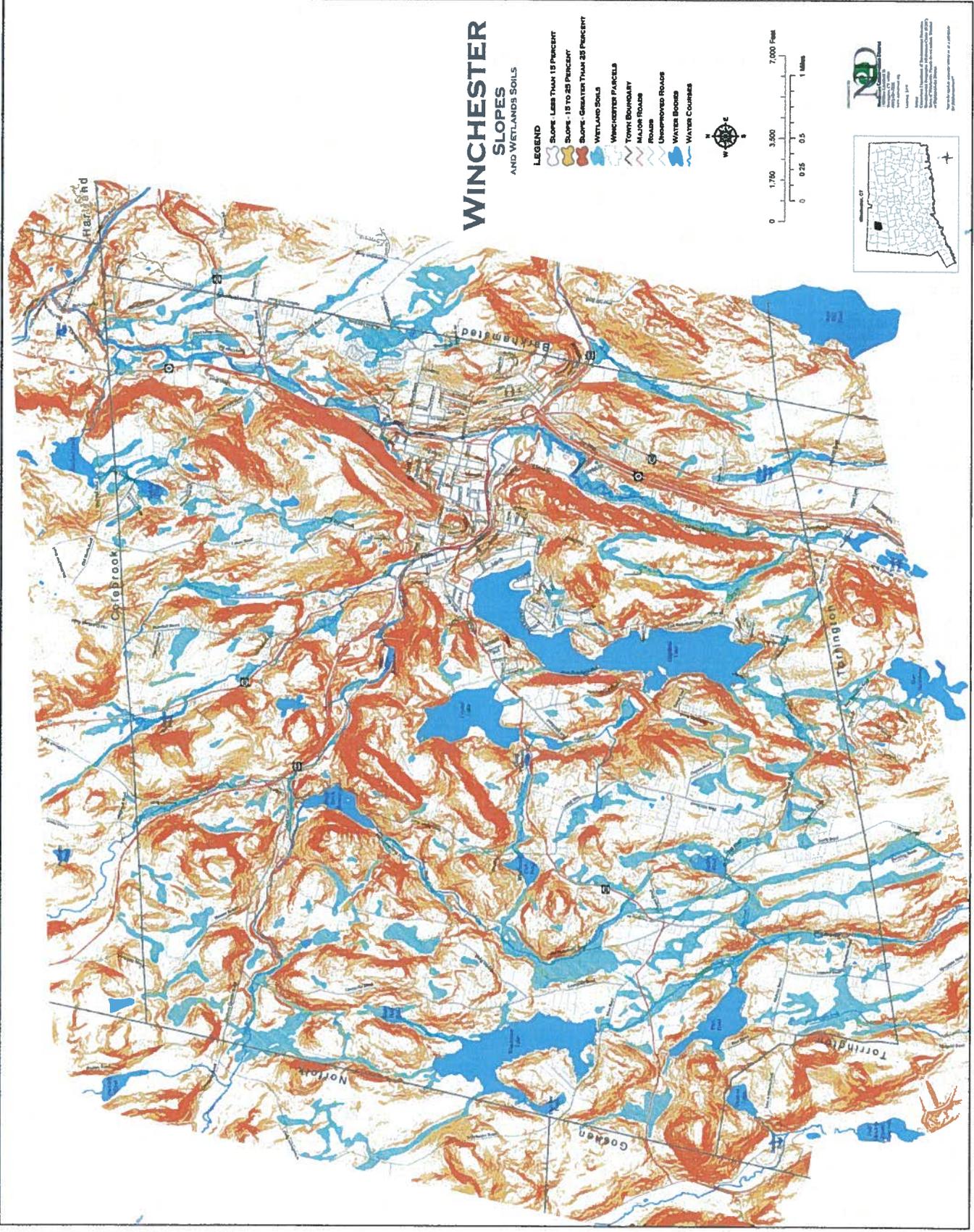
WINCHESTER SOILS

- LEGEND**
- SOILS
 - FARMLAND SOILS
 - WETLAND SOILS
 - WINCHESTER PARCELS
 - TOWN BOUNDARY
 - MAJOR ROADS
 - UNIMPROVED ROADS
 - WATER BODIES
 - WATER COURSES

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1000000011	1000000011	1000000011	1000000011
1000000012	1000000012	1000000012	1000000012
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Scale: 0 1.750 3.500 7.000 Feet
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

NO
NORTH DAKOTA
NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1000 EAST BOULEVARD
GRAND FORK, ND 58202
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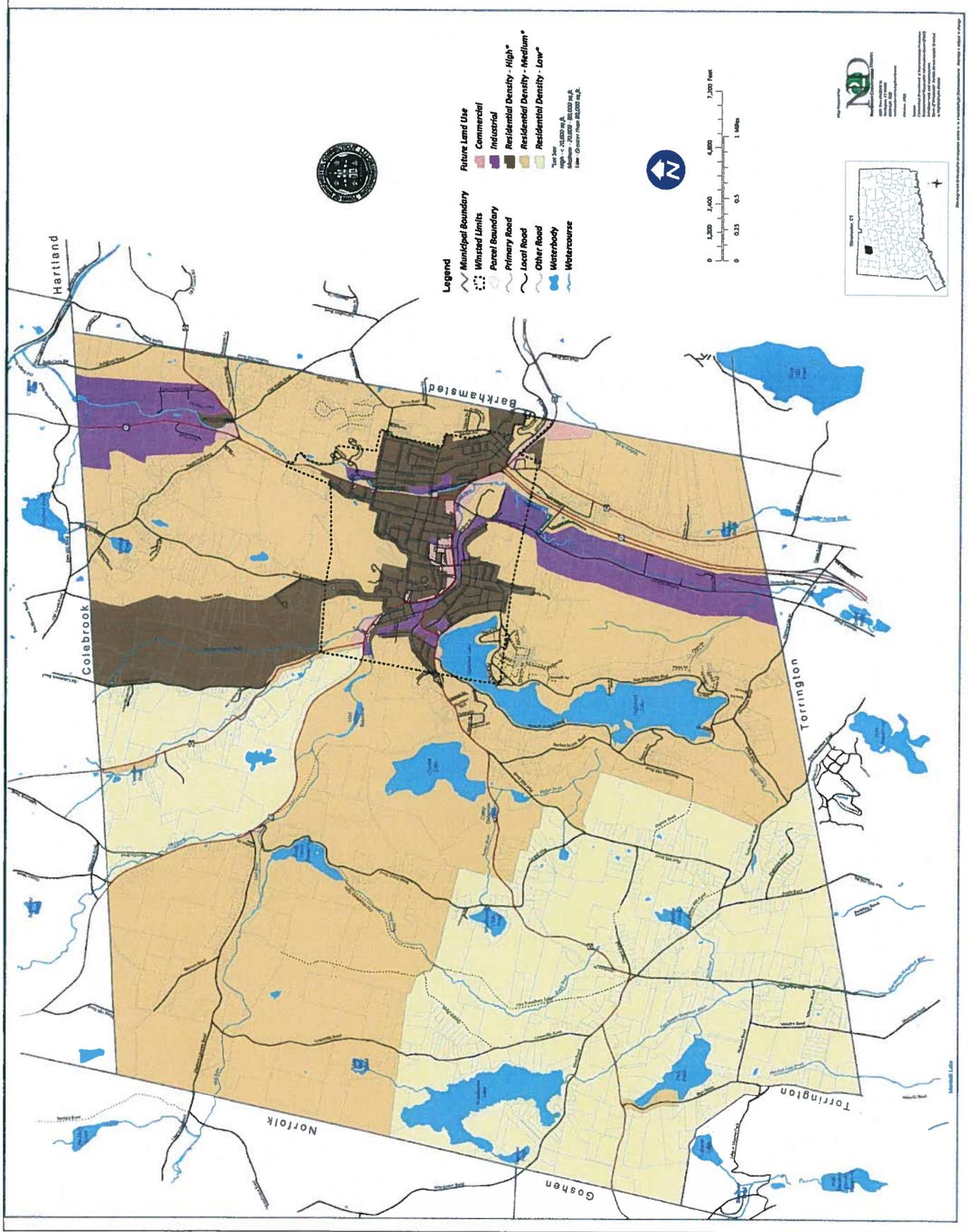
WINCHESTER SLOPES AND WETLANDS SOILS

- LEGEND**
- Slope - Less Than 15 Percent
 - Slope - 15 to 25 Percent
 - Slope - Greater Than 25 Percent
 - Wetland Soils
 - Winchester Parcels
 - Town Boundary
 - Major Road
 - Road
 - Unimproved Road
 - Water Bodies
 - Water Courses



Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
 100 State Street, Room 200
 Montpelier, VT 05602
 Phone: 802-241-3000
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 Website: www.vermont.gov



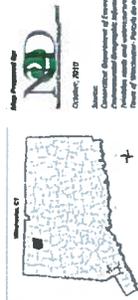


Winsted Future Land-Use Map



- Future Land Use**
- Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Residential Density - High*
 - Residential Density - Medium*
 - Residential Density - Low*
- *Lot Size
 High - < 20,000 sq. ft.
 Medium - 20,000 - 80,000 sq. ft.
 Low - Greater than 80,000 sq. ft.

- Legend**
- Municipal Boundary
 - Winsted Limits
 - Panel Boundary
 - Primary Road
 - Local Road
 - Other Road
 - Waterbody
 - Watercourse



Map Prepared for:
 October, 2010
 Author:
 Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
 Planning and Design Division
 Planning and Design Division
 This map was prepared for the use of the town and is not intended to be a substitute for a professional survey. The map is subject to change.

