

# Town of Plainville



2009

Plan of Conservation & Development





## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Acknowledgements

#### Plainville Residents:

We are pleased to submit to you the 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development. This newest Plan is presented in a format that is easy to follow and includes a series of goals, policies and recommendations intended to address such important community issues as housing, public facilities, transportation, economic development and the environment.

The Plan is the result of numerous public meetings by the Plainville Planning Commission, discussions with municipal employees and many residents over the past year-and-a-half, as well as countless hours of research, review and discussion by the Commission, its staff and its consultant.

The 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development brings together in a thoughtful, comprehensive manner the various elements that contribute to the quality of life of the Town. We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and groups for their contribution of time and commitment to the development of this Plan.

#### The residents of Plainville

#### The Planning and Zoning Commission

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# TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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# TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

## Introduction

### The Community

Plainville is a picturesque suburban New England community situated upon an extremely flat plain that borders a series of ridges and mountains that run from New Haven harbor to Vermont. Plainville is located in the southwest corner of Hartford County and is located approximately 15 miles southwest of the City of Hartford. Bordering the town of Plainville is the City of New Britain to the east, Farmington to the north, the City of Bristol to the West, and the Town of Southington to the south. The primary transportation routes through the Town include Interstate 84 and State Route 72. Both are divided highway systems. State Route 372, and State Route 10 are both secondary highways capable of handling substantial traffic volume.

Plainville is a member of the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency, one of 7 member towns. The region, like the Town of Plainville has urban, rural and small town elements that weave a varied pattern. Plainville is characterized by its small town feel, traditional downtown, commercial centers, adjacent major thoroughfares, and protected open space. While Plainville is only 9.6 square miles in size, the fact that a two major highways traverse the Town, two prominent rivers flow through the Town, a prominent ridgeline is situated on the eastern edge of the Town and its proximity to major employment centers make Plainville an exciting and diverse community.

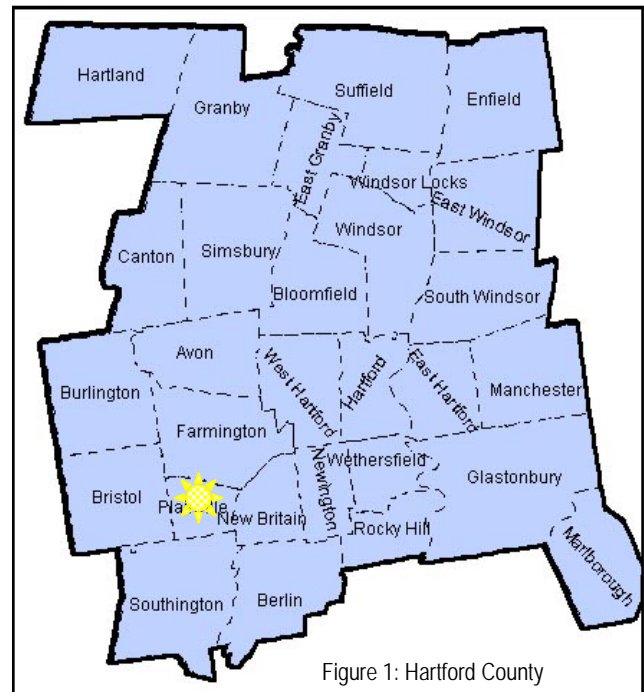


Figure 1: Hartford County

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Plan of Conservation and Development (Plan) is to document ideas concerns and goals espoused by the citizens and local leaders that will guide the community in its efforts to continually improve the quality of life and to provide direction on how to achieve public and private change. Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that a planning and zoning commission shall, at least once every ten years, prepare or amend and shall adopt a plan of conservation and development for the municipality. The last Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted by the Plainville Planning and Zoning Commission in 1997.



Like the 1997 Plan, the 2008 Plan of Conservation and Development must conform to the requirements of a Plan articulated by the Connecticut General Statutes. Figure 2 summarizes the particular considerations that must be included in the Plan. Plainville's Plan of Conservation and Development serves as an advisory document that expresses a vision that the community aspires to while providing guidance for municipal decision making. Planning provides the opportunity to review past activities, understand the implications of current trends and policies, suggest strategies for the future and identify priorities and assign responsibility to implement recommended strategies.

#### Connecticut Plans of Conservation and Development Must:

- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the town;
- show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable land use within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes;
- show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable density of population;
- promote...the coordinated development... and the general welfare and prosperity of its people;
- promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing...and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified in the regional housing plan and the State's Plan of Conservation and Development;
- provide for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets, sidewalks, multipurpose trails and other public way;
- be designed to promote the coordinated development of the municipality and identify areas where it is wise to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and land reuse;
- Take into account the State's Plan of Conservation and Development and note any inconsistencies...with said State Plan.

The plan is crafted to provide evidence and support for physical and policy oriented goals that will improve the quality of life for residents. The process of updating the POCD enables public participation in shaping the future of the Town and provides an opportunity to prioritize goals and implementation strategies and to set the course to achieve Plainville's goals.

The adoption and subsequent implementation of a municipal Plan of Conservation and Development is a continuous process of documenting a community's land use characteristics and establishing a consistent and coordinated land use philosophy and regulatory framework for managing the Town's future physical, economic and social environment. This plan specifies policy goals and provides strategies and land use recommendations designed to protect and improve the quality of life of existing and future residents. It is primarily an advisory document and, to a significant degree, must be implemented through organized and involved citizenry, municipal employees and the creation or refinement of policies, regulations and organizational approaches.

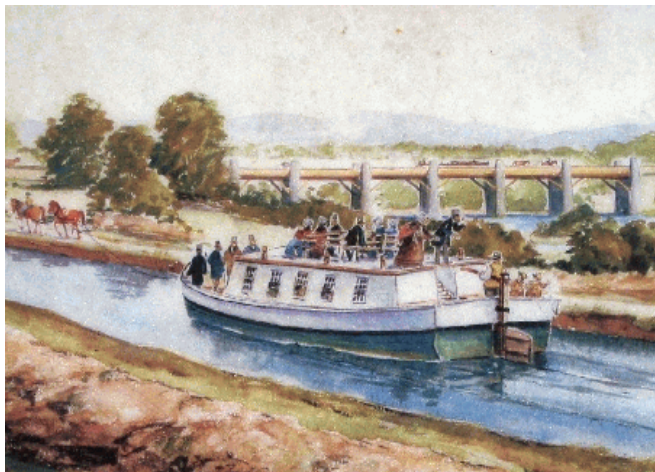


Figure 3

## Updating Plainville's POCD

### What is Legally Required?

The Connecticut General Statutes require that the preparation of the POCD shall consider the following:

- The need for affordable housing;
- The need for protection of existing and potential public surface and ground drinking water supplies;
- The use of cluster development and other development patterns to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity of the municipality;
- The State and Regional Plans of Conservation and Development;
- Physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends;
- Energy efficient patterns of development, renewable energy and energy conservation;
- The needs of the municipality including: human resources, education, health, housing, recreation, social services, public utilities, public protection, transportation and circulation, and cultural and interpersonal communications.

### The Future

The town now stands at the beginning of the 21st Century at a critical juncture in its long history. Plainville's land area is nearing "build out"; the town is fast approaching having no unconstrained land on which to expand. Many parcels are already being redeveloped. Plainville has a rich and varied resource base that contributes to its high quality of life, but it also has shortcomings, especially in the area of a declining downtown, access to open space and a lack of focus along its major corridors. Concentrating appropriate mixed use development in the Town Center area can help reinforce its role as the focal point for the Town.

The guiding principles for community growth in the next decade are:

- Robust neighborhoods served by nearby commercial districts;
- Preservation and access to the natural environment;
- Economic vitality;
- A vibrant livable downtown;
- Transportation that serves the community.

### How This Plan Is Organized

Over the past decade or so, there has been considerable discussion around the country about how to best manage the growth of communities in order to produce the best results. It is recognized that strict separation of uses is still important in single-family residential areas. But there is growing interest in allowing or encouraging mixed uses and encouraging development patterns that will create or reinforce a "sense of place."

This discussion has produced a set of principles which can be used to organize land use strategies at the municipal level as well as regional and larger levels. For Plainville, those principles have been distilled to the following basic themes:

- Preserve Critical Environmental Areas
- Preserve Open Space and Natural Beauty
- Protect and Manage Residential Neighborhoods
- Create A Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
- Maintain Distinctive Centers with a Strong Sense of Place
- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
- Address Community Facility Needs
- Address Infrastructure Needs
- Promote Sustainable Initiatives

The plan is developed and organized around three major themes:

- Conditions and Trends
- Community Character
- Development

### **Conditions and Trends**

The process of developing this plan included using Federal, State and local data to determine the existing conditions in Plainville. Identification of current trends and issues established the baseline of what has been successful over the past ten years, what trends and issues require attention and what trends and issues need additional analysis. Once the issues and trends are identified, efforts to bring change can be prioritized and an implementation schedule developed.

### **Community Character**

Community character is what defines a town. The community character element of the plan identifies and assesses the natural and built elements of the town that cumulatively create the community's character. This element identifies community character elements that require conservation planning, such as natural resources, important neighborhoods and historic resources, to make sure that these areas and features are properly protected, preserved and managed in the future. Similarly, community elements that create character can improve a community's sense of place such as improved building and site design and improved recreational access are identified and strategies are provided.

### **Development**

Development can have a profound impact on a community. It is important that the community understand where housing and commercial development is likely to occur, for example. Residential and commercial development also has impacts on infrastructure and services. These issues are addressed in this section. Once a community understands how existing policies and recent trends can impact the future of the community, only then can a community prepare new development objectives that respect history and cultivate Plainville's vision for the future.



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Conditions Trends and Issues

## OVERVIEW

This booklet examines and outlines significant demographic, economic, and development trends from both a historical and contemporary perspective. These conditions and trends have a direct relationship with the current economic climate of the community and indicate how the community is changing. The implications of demographic conditions and trends, as well as the land use policies and the patterns of development, affect housing needs, community facilities, and the services that residents require. The booklet concludes with a discussion of issues and ideas identified by key Plainville stakeholders at six focus groups conducted in April of 2008. These observations provide a framework for the policies and plans that the Town of Plainville should pursue in order to meet the community's future needs.

## PLAINVILLE IN THE PAST

In 1869, an area that was known as the Great Plain was separated from Farmington, and incorporated as the Town of Plainville. According to local historian, Simon Tomlinson, Plainville is probably the most level township in the State. Nearly all of its area is in the broad open plain lying between the mountain ranges which run north from New Haven harbor to Vermont. Waterbodies flowing through Plainville played a significant role in its industrial past, while providing rich natural beauty and important ecological habitat today. The Pequabuck River flows northward from Plainville into the Farmington River. A series of small streams feed into Hamlin's pond, known historically as Big Pond; this is considered the source of the Quinnipiac River which flows into New Haven Bay. The Farmington Canal, in operation from 1828 throughout 1848, spawned new manufacturing industries and the distribution of wholesale goods. Locals' anticipated that the canal would allow the basin to rival Hartford as a business center. These hopes were never realized as the canal suffered from the porous nature of the soil and frequent washouts. The arrival of the passenger rail line in Plainville in 1848 factored in the abandonment of the canal as an industrial trade corridor.

Plainville is bordered by Farmington to the north, to the east by New Britain, to the south by Southington and to the west by the City of Bristol. The Town boundaries encompass about ten square miles. The Town is located in the southwest sector of Hartford County and is also a member of the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. Plainville is four miles west of the City of New Britain, approximately 15 miles southwest of Hartford and about 90 miles northeast of New York. Plainville plays a strong role within the region, with a labor force of over 10,000 people, according to 2007 Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) publications. The community employs over 9,000 people according to CERC, indicating that Plainville "exports" workers to the region as a whole. These figures are indicative of the relative strength of the economy in Plainville and Plainville's role in the economic strength of the region.



## CHANGES IN POPULATION

As shown in *Figure 1: Town of Plainville Population* and listed in *Table 1*, Plainville's population steadily trended upwards from 1870 until 1990 before declining slightly from 1990 through 2000. According to the U.S. Census, Plainville experienced its greatest growth from 1920-1930. Population increased by 53 percent in this ten year period, with the Town experiencing significant growth up until 1970. Growth then came to a relative halt with the number of residents increasing by 595 people from 1970- 2000.

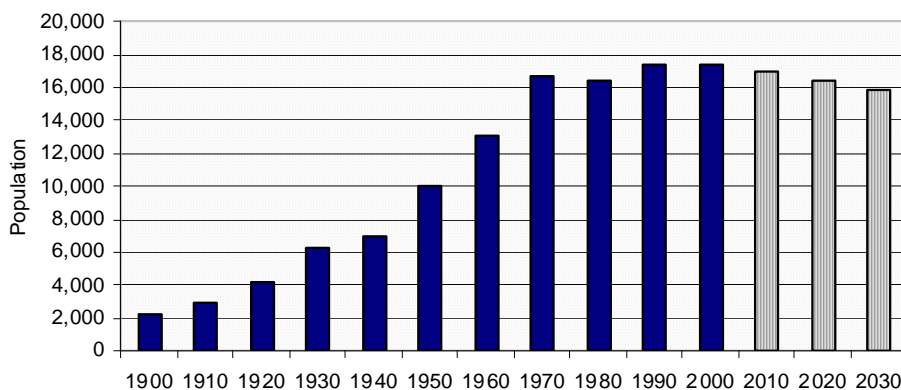
According to CERC, the population in Plainville was estimated to be **17,711** in **2007**. The increase of 383 people from the actual census count in 2000 is equivalent to a 2% increase. The 64 person decrease from 1990 to 2000 is equivalent to less than one-half of a percent change, which is not significantly different than the region's one percent population growth over the same time period, shown in *Table 2: Percent Population Change 1970 to 2000*.

The slight decrease in population in Plainville is akin to some of the other towns in the region such as Newington, yet dissimilar to adjacent towns as Farmington and Canton that experienced 15 percent and 7 percent population increases respectively. The source of these variations in population growth may lie in the availability of a specific housing type, housing affordability, community services, and migration trends among certain age segments of the population.

Table: 1	
Year	Population
1870	1,433
1880	1,930
1890	1,993
1900	2,189
1910	2,882
1920	4,114
1930	6,301
1940	6,935
1950	9,994
1960	13,149
1970	16,733
1980	16,401
1990	17,392
2000	17,328
2010	16,956
2020	16,463
2030	15,934

Source: 1870-2000 U.S. Census,  
Projections: CT State Data Center

**Figure 1: Town of Plainville Population  
1900-2030**



As show in *Table 2: Percent Population Change 1970 to 2000*, the UConn State Data Center projects that the population of Plainville will decrease by 9 percent from 2000 to 2030, to 15,934 residents. Most other adjacent towns, Hartford County and the State are projected to experience population growth during the same time period. Population decrease in spite of projected growth in other adjacent communities is significant. Housing availability, housing affordability, and quality of community services are typical explanations for population decreases. Yet, housing data indicates that relative to other communities housing is affordable in Plainville.

<b>Table: 2</b>				
<b>Percent Population Change 1970 to 2000/ Projected to 2030</b>				
	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000-30 Projected
<b>Plainville</b>	<b>-2%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>-9%</b>
Farmington	14%	26%	15%	6%
Newington	11%	1%	0%	-9%
Southington	19%	4%	3%	7%
Canton	11%	8%	7%	7%
Region	-1%	5%	1%	3%
State	2%	6%	4%	9%
Source: U.S. Census				

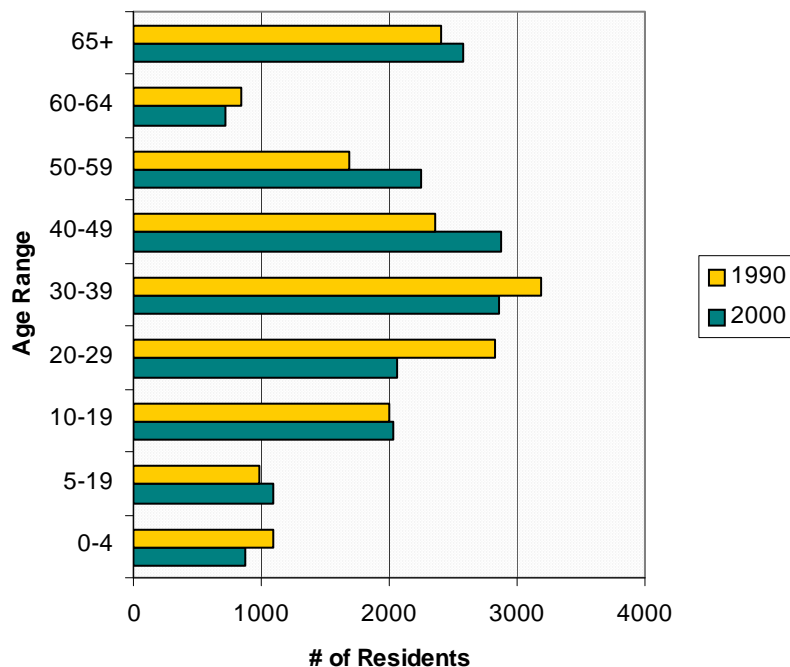
## COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

The components of population change in Plainville have been largely inconsistent from decade to decade, as show in *Table 3*. The number of births has decreased for three decades before increasing slightly in the 1980's and 1990's. Deaths in Plainville have risen steadily since the 1950s but this is to be expected as the total size of the population increases. In the

<b>Table: 3</b>					
<b>Components of Population Change</b>					
	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
<b>Total Change</b>	3,155	3,584	-332	991	-64
Births	2,936	2,870	2,010	2,116	2,173
Deaths	888	1,181	1,236	1,451	1,509
<b>Natural Change</b>	2,048	1,689	774	665	664
<b>Net Migration</b>	1,107	1,895	-1,106	326	-728
Source: CT State Department of Health					

1950's and 1960's Plainville's growth was fuelled most significantly by existing residents giving birth. In the 1970s the population decrease in Plainville would have been more significant if births did not out number deaths by nearly 75 percent. Since as far back as 1970, Plainville had had a net outmigration of population. The outmigration of the 1970's is significant given that the total population was under 17,000 people. The reason that population decrease was not more significant in the 1970's and 1990's is that the number of births exceed the death rate, allowing natural increase from births to add to the population and generally offset the outmigration pattern.

**Figure 2: Age Composition of Population 1990 & 2000**



## AGE CHARACTERISTICS

While the change in total population is important to community dynamics, changes in the age composition of the community may be more significant. Analysis of the population by age group is critical for projecting municipal services, as different age groups represent different lifestyle needs. The general trend across adjacent towns, Hartford County, the State, and even the United States is that the population is aging.

*Figure 2: Age Composition of Population*, shows that between the 1990 and 2000 Census in Plainville there was an increase in the number of people aged 40 - 49. Increases in the number of people aged, 50 - 59 and in those over age 65 also occurred, which points to evidence of an aging population.

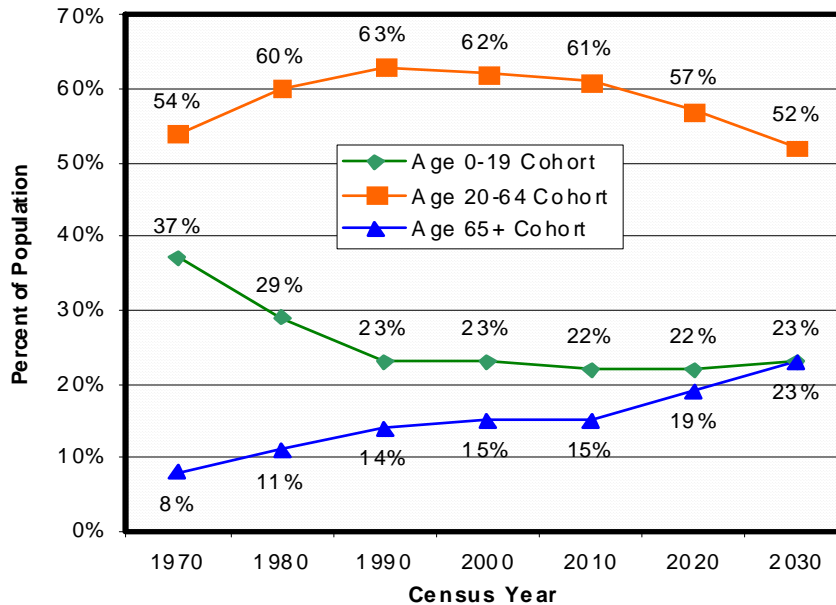
During the same time period the number of residents aged 10-19 remained about the same, while there was a slight increase in school age children and a decrease in children under 4. The most significant change in age composition was the loss of residents between the ages of 20 to 29. Clearly, college age and young professionals are leaving the community for opportunities elsewhere. This trend is typical in suburban communities where housing that is affordable for this age group is in short supply. However given the median sales price of homes in Plainville, there should be an ample supply of starter home housing for this demographic. In Plainville, it may be the case that while housing is available and affordable for this demographic, it may not be the type that appeals to young adults. Plainville also experienced a loss of residents aged 30-39, yet this is still the largest segment of the overall population, with slightly more residents in the age group than the number of people in the 65 and over age group.

<b>Table 4: Projected Age Cohort % of Population</b>				
	2000	2010	2020	2030
<b>Plainville</b>				
0-19	23%	22%	22%	23%
20-64	62%	61%	57%	52%
65+	15%	15%	19%	23%
<b>Farmington</b>				
0-19	15%	25%	25%	25%
20-64	29%	60%	57%	49%
65+	16%	14%	19%	27%
<b>Newington</b>				
0-19	23%	24%	25%	24%
20-64	59%	58%	54%	50%
65+	18%	18%	20%	23%
<b>Southington</b>				
0-19	26%	16%	25%	24%
20-64	60%	58%	55%	50%
65+	14%	16%	20%	25%
<b>Region</b>				
0-19	27%	28%	27%	27%
20-64	59%	58%	56%	52%
65+	14%	14%	17%	21%
<b>State</b>				
0-19	27%	25%	23%	23%
20-64	59%	61%	59%	55%
65+	14%	16%	18%	22%
Source: UConn State Data Center				

As shown in *Table 4*, according to the 2000 Census, greater than 60% of the Town's population is in the working age cohort 20 - 64, while the share of the population over 65 is the smallest at 15%. This age composition is similar to the Region and the State. The UConn State Data Center projects that the share of residents over 64 will increase significantly over the next decade. The ramification of this projection is that there will be increased demand for the housing requirements necessary for that segment of the population. Low maintenance homes, special need living facilities and in some cases tax relief are some examples of the lifestyle needs that may have to be met for this segment of the population.

The percentage of working age citizens, 20 - 64, as a function of the total population is decreasing and that trend is projected to continue. While the percentage of citizens under 20 significantly decreased up until 1990, this trend has leveled off and the percentage of the population under 20 is projected to remain approximately the same, as indicated by *Figure 3*. The relatively drastic projected decrease of working age people is significant because an increase in people under 20 is not projected. This is indicative of a projected shrinking workforce.

**Figure 3: Plainville Age Composition 1970 to 2030**



The trends discussed above are similar throughout the State, Hartford County and for adjacent towns. The percentage of the population under 20 is projected to slightly decrease or stay the same. The percentage of the working age population is projected to decrease to about 50 percent of the population. The over 64 age group will increase as a function of the total population. The Town of Farmington, because of unparalleled investment in its education system, is projected to have significant growth in school age

children, which does not conform to the projected trends of the adjacent towns, the State, or Hartford County.

Additional data provided by the U.S. Census and the UConn State Data Center indicates that the median age of the Plainville population increased from 1990 to 2000, and that the median age is projected to continue to increase until the end of this decade before beginning a slow decline. Yet, even as the median age is projected to decline after 2010, it is notable that the median age will still be nearly five years higher than the median age in 2000 as reported by the U.S. Census.

**Table 5: Median Age Projected to 2030**

	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
<b>Plainville</b>	<b>35.2</b>	<b>37.7</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>42.1</b>	<b>41.6</b>
Farmington	37.1	42.1	<b>43.4</b>	41.9	40.9
Newington	38.9	41.6	<b>43.2</b>	42.4	41.2
Southington	35.7	37.5	43.1	<b>48.5</b>	46.1
Canton	35.7	38.2	43.7	<b>50.3</b>	41.1
Region	34.5	37.7	<b>38</b>	36	36.9
State	34.4	37.6	<b>43.1</b>	41.6	41.5

Source: U.S. Census, UConn CT Data Center

Note: 2000 median age uses 2005 Census estimates provided by CT Data Center

Projections supplied by the UConn State Data Center indicate that most communities will reach the highest median age around 2010 and then the median age will begin to decrease. While Plainville's median age is comparable to adjacent towns, it is markedly higher than the region as a whole.



## HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Safe, habitable and affordable housing is a basic human need. Therefore, housing that meets the needs of Plainville's residents is essential to the core strength of the community. The current and future quality of life, economic strength, and social characteristics are strongly tied to the quality and balance of housing types that exist in the community. The challenge for any community is to maintain a balance of housing choices. Households and neighborhoods are often the backbone to a strong community.

Providing a mix of housing types is important to any community that wants to be responsive to the present and future need of its residents.

### Housing Types As Defined by the US Census

**1 unit-detached:** A single-family structure, which may be attached to a garage or shed, and with open space on all four sides.

**1 unit-attached:** A single-family unit with one or more walls extending from roof to the ground separating it from adjoining structures. Row houses and townhouses are counted in this category. Each unit has its own heating element.

**2-4 family dwellings:** These are structures containing between 2 and 4 housing units sharing attics, cellars, furnaces, and/or boilers.

**Multi-family and Other:** This category includes all other housing units including multi-family units with five or more units in the structure as well as mobile homes, boats, RVs, vans, and campers.

Source: U.S. Census

Plainville has a diversity of housing types with more than one-third of the housing stock made up of non single-family housing units.

Relative to other communities in the region, shown in *Table 6*, the housing stock is more diverse and is similar to the housing diversity of the region as a whole and the state. This similarity is significant due to the fact that cities are included in the regional and state calculations, where housing other than single-family detached is typically found in higher concentrations.

Balanced housing opportunities allow families with changing housing needs the ability to find homes within the community rather than be forced to relocate to another municipality.

Housing affordability for all income levels is an essential factor for a balanced community. Emphasizing one housing option at the expense of another is a shortsighted approach because no specific type of housing works for an individual at every point in their life. A study completed in 2007 by the HomeConnecticut Program analyzed the affordability of homes in Connecticut based on the median sales price of single family homes and the

**Table 6: Housing Tenure Types (2000)**  
Percent of Housing Units

	Single-Family Housing	Other Than Single-Family Housing		
	One-family detached	One-family attached	2-4 family dwellings	Multi-family & other
<b>Plainville</b>	60%	5%	18%	15%
Farmington	62%	11%	13%	14%
Newington	66%	12%	7%	15%
Southington	71%	5%	11%	13%
Canton	69%	10%	12%	9%
Region	55%	6%	19%	21%
State	59%	5%	18%	18%

Source: U.S. Census

**Table 7:**  
Year Housing Units Built

Total	7,707
1999- March 2000	30
1990-1998	423
1980-1989	1,136
1970-1979	1,127
1960-1969	1,498
1950-1959	1,224
1940-1949	765
Before 1940	1,504

Source: U.S. Census

median income of residents in the state's 169 towns. The goal of the project was to determine whether, in a given town, a home at median sales price for that town was affordable to a household earning the town's statistical median income.

This analysis shows that in spite of a downturn in the national housing market, the median sales price for a single family home in Connecticut continues to remain high and unaffordable for most. Data show that the median house price in Connecticut rose by 69.7% from 2000 to 2007 while personal income rose by 33.7% over that same period of time. The median sales price for a single family home in Connecticut continued to remain high throughout the year with a statewide increase of 1.45% over 2006. Median household income also remained high in Connecticut in 2007, posting a statewide gain of 6.4% over the previous year. The effects of the enormous increases in median sales prices from 2000 to 2005 continue to be felt by many households seeking a safe and affordable place to live. Plainville ranked 131 in terms of affordability out of Connecticut's 169 towns. Median income in Plainville in 2007 was \$58,099 while the median home sales price was \$197,000. The qualifying income to afford a home of that value, with a 10 percent down payment is \$60,772, a gap of about \$2,700.

Housing age can be an important indicator of the quality of housing stock in a community while housing age data may also provide support for certain housing policies. For example, if a significant percentage of a community's housing stock is more than 50 years old, policies that encourage and provide incentives for rehab may be appropriate. The 2000 U.S. Census reported 7,707 total housing units in Plainville, with 1,504 of the units being built prior to 1939. This figure represents 20 percent of the total housing stock and also the largest percentage of any age category as shown in Table 7.

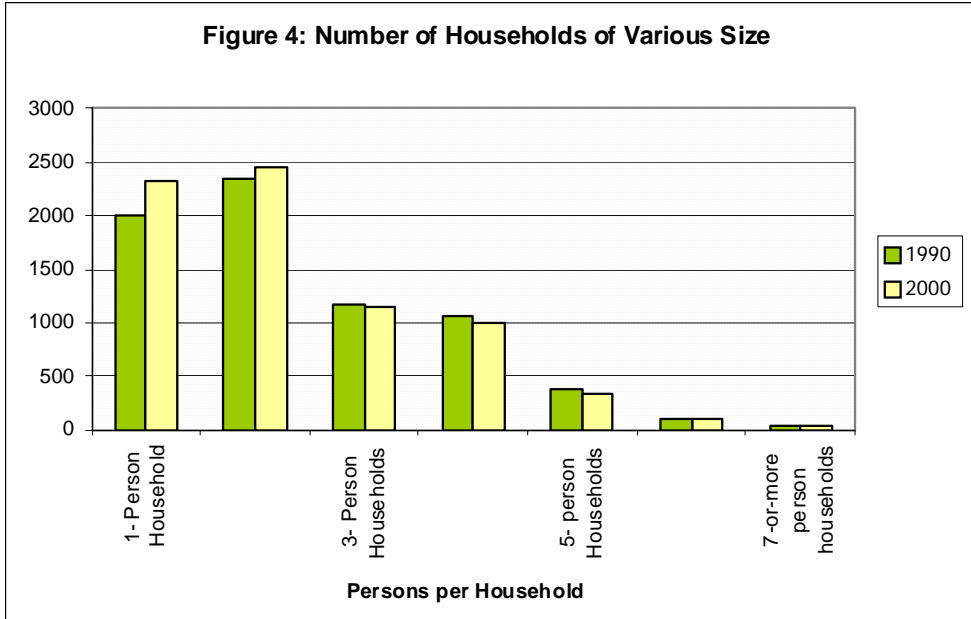


Figure 4: Number of Household of Various Size indicates that the number of households with one or two people increased, while households with 3 or more people in them remained approximately the same. Those changes in Plainville are similar to what occurred across the State, Hartford County and in adjacent towns. An aging population and increasing "empty nesters" are potential explanations for this trend.

While lower than the State and Hartford County, vacancy rates in Plainville, as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census and shown in Table 8, are higher than in adjacent towns. The rate in Plainville is similar to the vacancy rate in some cites, such as Bristol, which had a vacancy rate of 4.45 percent in 2000. Further investigation is required to reveal if the decrease in

population led to an increased vacancy rate or if there were other factors that may have contributed to the rate, such as a historically higher vacancy rate or an over abundance of housing units on the market.

Table 8: Vacancy Rates	
	2000
<b>Plainville</b>	<b>4.20%</b>
Farmington	3.60%
Newington	1.10%
Southington	3%
Canton	2.80%
Region	5.10%
State	6.10%
Source: U.S. Census	

Data on housing units provided by the U.S. Census, shown in *Table 9*, demonstrates that the percentage of new housing units in Plainville lagged during the 1970's when compared to adjacent towns. The growth in the housing market in Plainville outpaced Hartford County and was on par with the State of Connecticut. During the 1980's

Table 9: Housing Unit % Change			
	1970s	1980s	1990s
<b>Plainville</b>	17%	21%	3%
Farmington	41%	38%	14%
Newington	36%	11%	6%
Southington	37%	15%	9%
Canton	37%	16%	9%
Region	14%	14%	3%
State	18%	14%	5%
Source: U.S. Census			

Plainville outpaced housing unit growth rates in the State, County and adjacent towns, except for Farmington which experienced uncharacteristically high housing unit growth rates for two decades. Factors such as the completion of Interstate 84 in the late 1960's and early 70's may have affected these growth rates. Housing unit growth in Plainville was again lower in the 1990's. This may be a function of the size of the town, its proximity to employment centers, and availability of land and zoning/subdivision policies.

Table 10: %Population Change/ Housing Unit % Change				
	1970s	1980s	1990s	
<b>Plainville</b>	<b>-2%/ 17%</b>	<b>6%/ 21%</b>	<b>0%/ 3%</b>	
Farmington	14%/ 41%	26%/ 38%	15%/ 14%	
Newington	11%/ 36%	1%/ 15%	0%/ 6%	
Southington	19%/ 37%	4%/ 15%	3%/ 9%	
Canton	11%/ 37%	8%/ 16%	7%/ 9%	
Region	-1%/ 14%	5%/ 14%	1%/ 3%	
State	2%/ 18%	6%/ 14%	4%/ 5%	
Source: U.S. Census				

When the percentage of population growth is compared to the percentage of housing unit growth in Plainville, as shown in *Table 10*, the data is striking. U.S. Census data reveals that housing unit growth in the 1970's and 80's significantly exceeds population growth or decrease as is the case in the 1970's. When these rates are compared to the State, Hartford County and adjacent towns, the data shows that what occurred in Plainville was typical elsewhere. For example, in the 1980's the population in Plainville grew by 6 percent while the housing stock increased by 21 percent. In Canton during the same time period the population grew by 8 percent and the housing stock grew by 16 percent. While Plainville lagged in both population growth and housing unit growth in the 70's it nearly outpaced growth in both

categories in the 1980's when compared to adjacent towns. The growth in Farmington during the 1970's and 1980's was exceptionally high. Housing or land use policies may have allowed this growth and may explain why the age cohort projections in Farmington are significantly different than other adjacent towns, Hartford County or the State.

## LAND USE & ZONING

Given the relatively small size of Plainville, less than 10 square miles, it is not surprising that the community is significantly built out. Yet, given the community's size it is striking that the population density is not higher, especially when its proximity to Hartford, about 15 miles away, is considered. The population density was calculated by the Central Connecticut Regional Planning agency to be 1,797 people per square mile in Plainville. While this is much higher than the rural community of Plymouth at 563 people per square mile, it is only 33 percent as dense as the City of New Britain, which has a density of 5,443 people per square mile. Southington, Plainville's neighbor to the south, has a population density similar to Plainville at 1,152 persons per square mile.

### LAND USE

Land use describes how the land is actually used. Land use classifications are organized in generalized categories and are used to understand the different type of development that exists in the community.

The land use map below, produced from data collected from the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency in 2006 shows the current land uses in Plainville. *Table 11: Land Use by Acres* shows the percentage of each of the land uses within Plainville.

Land Use Map provided in Appendix

Table 11: Land Use by Acres	
Land Use	Acres
Central Business District	31.51
Commercial	396.07
High Density Residential	46.17
Industrial	543.15
Institutional	99.50
Low Density Residential	47.13
Medium Density Residential	2,201.24
Open Space	126.99
Quarry	298.05
Recreation	140.59
State Owned Land	14.79
Technology Park	0.07
Town Owned Land	85.45
Transportation	645.47
Vacant Land	1,629.05
Valley Watersupply	17.08
Source: CCRPA, Plainville, Urbitran	

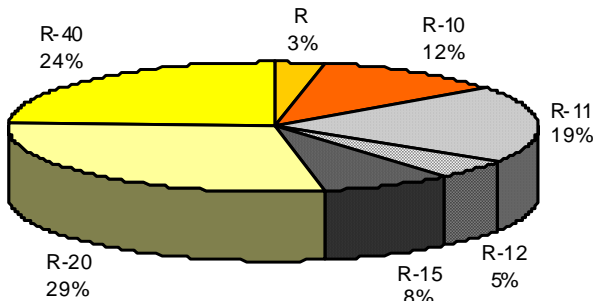
## ZONING

Zoning districts represent areas where certain land uses are generally considered appropriate and are permitted with varying degrees of approval required by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Plainville utilizes a typical mix of residential, commercial and industrial districts. At the present time, Plainville utilizes a “use-based” (see side bar) zoning scheme. The zoning structure in Plainville generally directs the highest density uses near the Downtown and lower density zones in outlying areas. The Zoning Map on the following page illustrates the location of the various Zoning Districts in Plainville.

### **Euclidean or “Use Based” Zoning:**

Euclidean zoning is characterized by the segregation of land uses into specified geographic districts and dimensional standards limiting the magnitude of development that is allowed to occur on lots within each district.

**Figure 6**  
**Distribution of Residential Zoning Districts**



Plainville has two primary commercial zones, Central Commercial retail and service oriented zone and General Commercial, a zone permissive of most commercial activities. Properties zoned Central Commercial are concentrated in Plainville's downtown, primarily at the intersection of East Main Street and Whiting Street. Properties zoned General Commercial are located along the Route 10 corridor, the southern portion of Whiting Street and along the eastern portion of New Britain Avenue (RT 372) and centralized around the Connecticut Commons development. Less than 450 acres total are zoned for commercial use, roughly 8 percent of the total land area, not inclusive of roads and rights-of-way.

Single-Family residential zones exist on the extreme east and west ends of Plainville. Properties zoned R-40, with a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet, are situated on the extreme east end of town, both to the north and south of properties zoned for quarrying. The R-40 zone requires the largest minimum lot size of all zoning districts. Residential districts with smaller minimum lots size requirements (12,000 square feet to 8,750 square feet) are generally concentrated in the center of Plainville along primary transportation routes. *Figure 6* shows the percentage of each residential zoning district relative to the total amount of property zoned for residential use in Plainville. Of the roughly 5,800 acres, not inclusive of roads and rights-of-way, 61percent is zoned for residential purposes. Detached single-family homes are permitted in all residential zones. Multi-family developments and “Common Interest Communities” are permitted in the R-12, R-11, R-10 and R zones. Also, single-family detached units in common interest communities, market as age restricted, allow increased density in the R-15 and R-20 zones.



## Zoning Map provided in Appendix

*Table 12: Zoning Categories*, shows the number of acres in each Plainville zoning district. The largest percentage of property is zoned for residential use. Other important districts include Flood Plain Zoning; this zone roughly parallels the 100 year flood plain of the Paquabuck and Quinnipiac Rivers. Industrial zones, including the Quarry Zone occupy 23 percent of all properties. An area zoned Technology Park is located at the extreme east end of Plainville. Finally, a “Non-profit and/or Governmentally Assisted Housing Zone” exists as an overlay zone and may be designated with the community upon meeting certain criteria listed in the zoning ordinance.

<b>Table 12: Zoning Categories</b>	
<b>Zone</b>	<b>Acres</b>
R	113
R-10	428
R-11	672
R-12	160
R-15	276
R-20	1,033
R-40	843
Central Commercial	63
General Commercial	379
Restricted Industrial	443
General Industrial	384
Quarry Industrial	475
Technology Park	22
Flood Plain	462
<b>Total</b>	<b>5753</b>
* Approx 557 Acres Roads and R.O.W not included	
<b>Overlay Zones</b>	
Non- Profit Housing	
Airport Approach	
Source: Town of Plainville	



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Conservation Themes



2009

TOWN OF PLAINVILLE  
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Open Space and Natural Resources

#### Introduction

Based on discussion from the focus groups, it is clear that Plainville residents value the open space and natural resources that shape the outstanding beauty and the ecological integrity of their community. For these reasons Plainville strives to improve the protection of these valued resources. Protecting open space is more than preserving scenic beauty and creating recreational opportunities. The protection of natural lands provides flood storage capacity, wildlife habitat and corridors, helps maintain natural diversity, and helps filter pollutants from the air and water. Preserving and enhancing the quality of the environment in order to provide long term uses of the resources for recreation, scenic beauty and continued ecological benefit should guide Plainville's open space and natural resource protection efforts.

The views of open land, forested landscape, river corridors and scenic ridgelines lead to a public perception that large areas of the Town are "open space," without consideration of the ownership or protection status of the open space. Open space planning can ensure a community secures protected open space permanently. Given the limited size of the Town, new development of greenfields reduces potential for open space protection and may eliminate the possibility of developing connections between existing open space. This fact, again, underscores the importance of comprehensive open space planning. Residential land development pressure may have subsided recently, but the number of new housing units approved over the previous two decades further deteriorated the stock of undeveloped land. There are tools and techniques that will enable the town to continue commercial and residential development without sacrificing important open spaces. It is important that impacts to natural lands permitted by current development patterns be identified and addressed by public education campaigns and changes in land use and zoning policies to allow Plainville to achieve its protection goals.

Protection of natural resources and the environment continues to be an important issue to residents. The quality of ground and surface water supplies, wetlands, prime agricultural soils, wildlife habitats, and unfragmented forest land are necessary for the health of Plainville's ecosystem as well as its role in the greater region. It is in Plainville's long-term interest to work toward preserving and protecting their natural resources.

Plainville is fortunate to have varied topography, a mix of woodlands and river corridors and upland areas provide opportunities for passive recreation. The Pequabuck River flows from west to east through Plainville and slightly northward before joining the Farmington River. The river corridor provides rich natural habitat and natural beauty. This low lying river corridor is dramatically contrasted by the Metacomet Ridge, a narrow and steep fault-block mountain ridge known for its extensive cliff faces, scenic vistas, microclimate ecosystems, and communities of plants considered rare or endangered.

These natural features along with other parcels of both protected and unprotected open space influence the broad based support for continued open space protection in Plainville. Public input gathered by the POCD focus group meetings further indicated the sustained interest in maintaining and expanding open space protection. The financial resources available to the Town to preserve open space are limited and there is not an active land trust that focuses on land protection within

Plainville. Therefore, it is important to develop a clear and accurate assessment of current open space conditions, define goals and policies related to open space and natural resource protection, and put forward strategies to accomplish policy recommendations. It is not the intent of this document to recommend specific parcels for open space protection but to provide strategies for coordinated open space acquisition and guidelines for responsible development strategies that maintain the diversity and health of natural resources as well as the natural beauty in Plainville.

## **Natural Resources**

To minimize the human impact on natural resources is the ultimate natural resource protection goal. With that goal in mind, finding a balance that satisfies community needs with resource protection is a complex and continuing challenge. Natural resource preservation and conservation are two equally important values that must be adhered to for a complete resource protection strategy. Particular resources are more appropriately preserved, to protect and to maintain intact, such as steep slopes and ridgelines, watercourses and inland wetlands. Other resources such as the 100 year floodplain, special habitat areas, aquifers and wellhead recharge areas can be conserved. These conservation areas can be actively managed so that activities might occur within them but controls are in place such that the overall environmental function and value are not lost.

### **Protect Land Based Natural Resources**

Plainville is fortunate to still have significant forest land, ridgelines, and other undeveloped natural lands. While some of these areas are protected, many acres with valuable natural resources are vulnerable. There are a number of strategies and tools that can be pursued by the Planning and Zoning Commission and other entities that will further protect natural resources. These issues are addressed below.

#### **Steep slopes**

One of the most fundamental issues to consider for new development is the ground upon which the proposed development will be built. A major concern is the practice of blasting hillsides and steep slopes in order to accommodate development in inappropriate locations. In addition, the concerns about drainage, erosion, and sedimentation issues are inherent to development on steep slopes.

Under the existing Zoning Regulations, development is exempt from requirements to address the consequences of development on hillsides and steep slopes. The Commission should consider adopting maximum limits for development on steep slopes to ensure that there is adequate review of the inherent engineering challenges of hillside development.

Since the majority of future development is likely to be proposed on lands with environmental constraints, including steep slopes, the Commission should adopt a practice of requiring two-foot contours for any development proposal.

#### **Adopt Buildable Land Provisions**

Buildable land regulations, typically applicable only to residential development, relate the number of housing units on a property to the natural carrying capacity and the character of the land. This is accomplished by excluding certain areas that are essentially unbuildable when considering the amount of "buildable" land on a piece of property. Unbuildable land refers to lands within the road right-of way, wetland, steep land, or lands with other constraints.

To ensure the natural carrying capacity of land is not exceeded, the Commission should adopt a buildable land regulation to ensure that each building parcel has sufficient buildable land. This will include provisions that exclude slopes steeper than 25 percent from counting towards the minimum amount of buildable land on a parcel. Floodplains and floodways, streams, wetlands, and rights-of-way will similarly be excluded from consideration of the buildable land area of any parcel.

### **Protect Important Habitat Resources**





There are several areas in Plainville which contain important habitat resources for rare, endangered, and threatened species. These areas include forested areas, floodways, intact wetland ecosystems, and migratory corridors. In Plainville the State DEP has identified several areas within the Town containing lands with these qualities as indicated in the State's Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB).

As part of the land use application process, applicants should be required to identify NDDB sites on their applications and to consult with DEP if proposing development on lands identified as an area of concern in the NDDB. The Planning and Zoning Commission should also require the DEP to review and comment if any part of a development project lies within an area identified in the NDDB. The Commission should then adopt a practice of considering the DEP's comments when reviewing applications on lands in the NDDB and include the comments as conditional requirements of approval.

### **Use Native Species in Landscaping**

A simple measure for protecting native species habitat, used in several Towns in Connecticut, is a requirement to only allow the introduction of plant species listed on the Connecticut Native Tree and Shrub List. This list provides not only a complete list of those plants which are native and compatible with our region, but also provides information on the availability and location of suppliers of these plants. A copy of this list can be placed in the Land Use office and a link can be maintained on the Town's web site. The Commission should require that applicants only make use of the species identified on the Connecticut Native Tree and Shrub list.

#### **Actions to protect of Land Based Resources:**

-  Develop special permit standards for development on slopes greater than 10% and disallow development on slopes greater than 17%
-  Develop a buildable land definition and develop a minimum buildable area based on minimum lot size in each zoning district
-  Recommend all commercial and residential landscaping be only species listed on the Connecticut Native Tree and shrub list
-  Recommend all development applications to disclose any activity within areas designated by the State Department of Environmental Protection on their "Natural Diversity Database."



- Recommend biological studies to accompany development proposals on lands identified as a "Natural Diversity Database Areas"
- Explore funding opportunities to complete a town wide biological study to identify wildlife corridors, breeding grounds and habitats of State and Federal Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern species and locally significant species
- Complete town wide natural diversity study
- Develop a working relationship with local and state conservation organizations to provide mutual support for actions that preserve habitat needed for the survival of indigenous plant and wildlife species

## Protect Water Based Resources

### Protect Water Resources and Water Quality

Water resources provide drinkable water, contribute to biological diversity, and add to the overall quality of life. Both surface and groundwater are fragile resources, which once contaminated can be lost forever as a source of potable water. Therefore, the best strategy is to protect all water resources from contamination to the maximum amount practical.

Since 1990, water quality has been regulated, in part through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. Phase I of the NPDES involved permits issued by the CT DEP to large municipal stormwater systems and for construction activities equal to or in excess of five acres of land.

Since 2003 Phase II of the NPDES has required regulation of even small discharges from municipal storm water systems and permits for construction activities that disturb as little as one acre of land. There are six program elements of the NPDES Phase II program. The Commission along with the IWWC, the Health Department, and the Planning and Zoning Commission, should continue participation in all of these program elements. The following table identifies the various program elements and provides examples of Best Management Practices that should be encouraged and promoted through all available avenues and through a coordinated effort of all appropriate Town agencies.

Table 1: Best Management Practices

Program Element	Description	Examples of Best Management Practices
Public Information and Outreach	Programs to help make the public aware and concerned about the impact of their behavior on pollution and water quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an outreach program</li> <li>• Prepare information materials</li> <li>• Implement the outreach program</li> </ul>
Public Participation and Involvement	Joining forces with other groups to work toward the same goal with complementary programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community meetings</li> <li>• Clean-up days</li> <li>• School programs and field trips</li> </ul>
Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination	Preparing pro-active and reactive approaches to finding and eliminating untreated discharges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop detection program</li> <li>• Develop avoidance program</li> <li>• Develop response plan</li> <li>• Implement programs</li> </ul>
Construction Run-off Controls	Programs to control erosion and sedimentation (E&S) for sites disturbing one or more acres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update erosion and sedimentation regulations</li> <li>• Review all development plans</li> <li>• Require use of prevention / management techniques</li> <li>• Regularly inspect construction sites</li> </ul>
Post-construction Run-off Controls	Reducing the amount of run-off occurring as a result of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require infiltration</li> <li>• Minimize impervious surfaces</li> <li>• Buffer sensitive resources</li> </ul>
Pollution Prevention	Preventing pollution by municipal organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize street sanding</li> <li>• Clean up street sweepings</li> <li>• Contain possible pollution sources</li> </ul>

### Protect Aquifers, Reservoirs and Groundwater

Wellhead areas are well sites that produce a source of public water. These are the areas that the CT DEP refers to as aquifers. Areas of high groundwater availability are areas where geologic conditions may be appropriate for the development of future public water supplies. Areas where groundwater can yield large volumes of water for public consumption are referred to as aquifers. Aquifer Protection mapping by the State should be completed by late 2008 and Aquifer Protection Areas (APA) are now being established at the local level. The Town is engaged in the adoption of new aquifer protection regulations to regulate uses within the APA according to the potential risk each use poses. The Planning and Zoning Commission has been appointed as the Aquifer Protection Agency and the Town should be fully regulated by June of 2009. Additionally, the Planning and Zoning Commission should ensure that regulations addressing sedimentation and erosion control are consistent with the practices recommended and required by the 2002 Connecticut Guidelines for Erosion and Sedimentation Control.

### Develop a Septic Management Program

While Plainville's sewage disposal is provided primarily via a modern waste treatment facility, what septic systems Plainville does have pose a threat to ground and surface water resources. Septic system failure can lead to contamination of stormwater runoff, which can contaminate drinking water supplies. Steps that Plainville can take to prevent water contamination problems include Septic Management Programs that encourage or require residents to monitor and regularly

maintain septic systems. The Health Department, should consider evaluating the threat of septic systems on drinking water resources, and if warranted, develop a Septic Management Program which would require the periodic inspection and maintenance (pumping) of septic systems. Numerous Connecticut towns have already implemented these programs with much success.

### **Manage Impervious Coverage**

Impervious coverage refers to areas of land which are paved or developed and which do not allow water to percolate through the soils and into ground water resources. There are no restrictions on impervious coverage in Plainville. The Town's Zoning Regulations address lot coverage, but this only applies to roofed buildings, and does not include driveways, patios, pools and other types of land development that prevent infiltration or increase stormwater runoff.

As the Commission revises the Zoning Regulations, it should encourage site designs that minimize impervious surfaces, promote infiltration and reduce runoff. The Zoning Regulations should also include impervious coverage performance objectives including the use of roof leaders, rain gardens, a minimum amount of landscaped and/or natural areas, and the use of porous paving materials to allow clean water from building roofs to infiltrate the ground. The coverage requirements should include stronger standards in environmentally sensitive areas (aquifer protection zones) and more relaxed standards in historically dense developed areas such as the Downtown. Site designs that minimize impervious surfaces, promote infiltration, and reduce runoff should be encouraged.

### **Protect Wetlands and Watercourses**

Wetlands, which in Connecticut are defined as poorly drained, alluvial, and floodplain area areas or areas containing floodplain, are the links between water and land. Wetlands are essential to the adequate supply and quality of surface and underground water; to the stability and control of flooding and erosion; to the recharging and purification of groundwater; and are vital for the existence of many forms of life. Plainville has an Inland Wetlands Commission and Watercourses (IWWC) which regulates activities" within wetlands, and adjacent uplands within 100 feet of wetlands.

It is recommended that the IWWC establish a policy of no net loss of wetlands and adopt regulations that will allow for the evaluation of direct impacts to wetlands that occur outside upland review areas. The Planning and Zoning Commission should work with the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, in order to ensure that all wetlands and the adjacent upland areas are protected from development impacts to the maximum amount practicable.

### **Protect Vernal Pools**

Vernal pools are seasonal pools of water, found in depressions in the soil with no above ground outlet. Many species of salamanders, frogs, invertebrates and insects require vernal pools for breeding and reproduction. Vernal pools support fauna specifically adapted to breed in the seasonal and cyclical nature of these unique water resources. While it is decidedly likely that there are vernal pools in Plainville, there is limited data on locations. Vernal pools are not protected under any State or Federal program, although some species, such as the state-listed Jefferson salamander, which is a species of special concern, is dependent upon vernal pools for habitat conditions. As discussed in the section on habitat protection, requiring applicants to confer with the DEP when impacts to sensitive habitat areas are proposed and prior to submission of an application to the Commission, can provide some protection for these valuable natural resources.











The Commission should endorse a policy of no net loss of vernal pools and should pursue a contract with a certified wetlands scientist or herpetologist to prepare a town-wide vernal pool study, identifying the probable location of existing vernal pools.

### **Manage Floodplains and Floodways**

Floodplains and floodways are typically low-lying lands adjacent to rivers subject to periodic flooding. These areas should be managed to prevent water from entering the roadways from adjacent streams and brooks. The Town's Zoning Regulations currently prohibit some development in the floodway or the floodplains but allow for some land uses, which can impact the Town's ability to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The permitted uses should be further analyzed by the Planning and Zoning Commission as it carefully considers how best to manage development in these flood-prone areas. Areas within the floodplain should be excluded from the buildable land area and the Flood Plain Regulations amended to limit additional development in areas subject to flooding.

#### **Action to Protect Water Based Resources:**

##### **Surface and Groundwater Protection (Water Quality)**

-  Protect Plainville's Stratified Drift Aquifer as its is the primary drinking water source within the Town of Plainville
-  Continue process of adopting Aquifer Protection Area land use regulations.
-  Update Aquifer protection regulations and mapping as level "A" mapping is concluded by the State of Connecticut
-  Continue to protect existing and potential water supply aquifers and water supply watershed lands from land uses and development methods that pose a risk to maintaining high water quality.
-  Provide incentives for the use of storm water management techniques that limit impervious surface and on-site water retention/infiltration
-  Identify existing threats and responsive mitigation plans for key groundwater and surface water resources in Plainville
-  Support improved pollution discharge standards
-  Update local zoning and wetlands regulations in order to reduce runoff and sedimentation.
-  Severely limit development other than temporary or passive recreation in 100 year flood plan
-  Develop public outreach materials to educate the community about the existence and purpose of an aquifer protection area and the role that they play

### **Actions to protect Wetlands, Watercourses and Floodways**

- Enhance regulations that will preserve and protect watercourses, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplains, and conserve fringe floodplain area, well head areas, areas of high groundwater availability, and special habitat areas.
- Adopt a policy of no net loss of wetlands.
- Provide incentive within the zoning code for the use of pervious materials for parking areas and walkways on commercial and industrial development.
- Encourage the use of Low Impact Development techniques through zoning and subdivision regulations
- Continue to strengthen and coordinate municipal regulation of flood hazard areas to protect life and property, and natural function of flood management systems.
- Maintain flood hazard controls that ensure compliance with national Flood Insurance program and Community Rating System.
- Provide incentives for on-site stormwater retention and use of grey water for landscaping.
- Establish a practice of creating a deed restricted “no disturbance area” to buffer wetlands, watercourses, and sensitive habitat areas as part of any development approval.
- Organize outreach and education concerning best management practices

## Open Space

Open Space in a community, when appropriately coordinated plays a role in creating and protecting community character, shaping development patterns, protecting natural resources and providing recreational opportunities.

### Open Space Inventory

The Open Space Sub-committee championed the "Plainville Open Space Report" in October 2004. That document inventoried virtually all undeveloped and underdeveloped parcels within Plainville's 9.6 square miles.

One component of the Open Space Report focused on inventorying all of the dedicated open space in Plainville. Most of these properties are subject to deed restrictions that prevent future development. The Sub-committee reported that there are 182 acres of protected open space in Plainville, or 2.9% of the total land area. The open space map on the following page shows dedicated open space parcels as well as other park and open space parcels that contribute to the open space feel and provide recreational opportunities.

The Open Space Sub-committee also identified all properties owned by the Town of Plainville and the State of Connecticut, inventoried all privately owned properties and actively farmed properties, and examined what properties conform to the definition of open space in Plainville. It should be noted that the definition does not provide distinction between properties that are protected against development and those that are not. Following the determination of which properties embody the spirit of the open space definition, an acquisition priority was assigned to each of the parcels. The acquisition priority assigned to each parcel meeting the open space definition was based on four criteria. These criteria include; whether the open space property already borders dedicated open space; whether streams, rivers, wetlands, wildlife corridors or greenways can be established and preserved; and whether the property is needed to benefit other conservation programs such as a trail network or other initiatives such as rails to trails. Properties owned by the State of Connecticut or by the United States Government are likely not available for acquisition but they play a significant role in connecting other pieces of deeded open space helping to establish greenways and preserve wildlife corridors.

According to the summary of findings produced by the open space report there are:

- 67 properties owned by the Town of Plainville totaling 563 acres, 17 of those properties were identified as high priority acquisition properties and total 26 acres.
- Off all of the State and federally owned properties in Plainville there are 14 properties identified by the Sub-Committee that could contribute to overall open space objectives with a combined total of 49 acres.
- 228 private owned properties were identified by sub-committee, totaling 1,382 acres, as fitting the open space definition and were worthy of permanent protection. 144 of the parcels were considered to be a high priority protection goal.
- Six privately owned farm land properties were identified by the sub-committee, totaling 137 acres, as meeting the criteria for protection. Five of these properties were given high priority protection status.

There are currently nine protected open space parcels. Some of this land is accessible to the public, but little contains trails or is used for passive recreation. In addition to the town's on-going efforts to identify parcels worthy of permanent protection and fitting into an overall open space scheme, it is recommended that Plainville prepare a management plan for existing dedicated open space. This management plan may include an analysis of site conditions, including a natural resource inventory and identification of easements and rights of way. The management plan should include recommendations for future use including development of and linkage to a trail system if appropriate

Particular types of open space or themes were identified by Focus group attendees as the most important elements that should be protected. Protecting open space along river corridors including the 100 year floodplain was seen as the highest priority. Scenic views of the Metacomet ridge as well as viewshed along Pequabuck River were also deemed essential pieces of the open space system that Plainville continues to develop.

### **Creating Connections**

In recent years Plainville's open space protection efforts have increasingly focused on linking existing open space and acquiring additional open space that will further an open space network, including expansion into the greater region. This approach corresponds with State of Connecticut efforts towards Greenway Planning. The Connecticut Greenways Council, a part of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is focused on developing greenway networks throughout the State. The greenways approach, which Plainville has rightly embraced, allows greenspace networks to function at a regional level, allowing for greater connection while providing local recreational opportunities, maintaining community character and embracing natural ecological process.

Connecting open space with greenways is the most effective way for Plainville to establish an open space "system." The total amount of open space is important, but how it is configured and used is likely to be more important in the long term. Efforts to connect tracts of open space can capitalize on linking key open spaces with other areas of town such as Downtown, schools and other key community facilities. Plainville has been and should continue to pursue a trail system that would link with existing Rail Lane on the southern and northern border of Plainville.

### **Open Space Mapping**

While outside of the purview of the Open Space Report, Plainville enjoys other lands that affect the visual open space appearance of the community. These spaces may be protected but are not protected by standard open space protection measures and many are not open to the public but contribute to the character of the community. These lands also shown on the open space map include, major utility land holdings, and Town and State parks. The map which includes permanently preserved open space will serve as a valuable tool for Plainville into the future. The map should be developed to include an underlying database containing information relative to the properties including, ownership data, use, acreage, and links to studies that may have been conducted, such as soils or biodiversity studies. The map can be an influential tool in assisting in the visualization of open space goals by describing the location of open space resources within the community and the physical relationship of open space land to one another.



### Current Open Space Planning

As the plan is being written, the Town of Plainville had submitted a grant application to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection seeking funding for the acquisition of four parcels in Plainville along the Pequabuck River. If acquired the land would be permanently protected and become part of the Open Space network in Plainville. The parcels are highlighted on the open space map and total approximately 80 acres. The acquisition of these parcels would fulfill a goal stated repeatedly and passionately during focus group meetings, to protect floodplain and upland areas along the rivers in Plainville and to establish connections between parcels whenever possible.

During focus group discussions on Open Space and Natural Resources, participants felt that while there was a significant amount of open space within the Town, many long-term residents were not aware of the location of the protected open spaces and if the public had access to the property for recreational purposes. Furthermore, participants indicated that access to existing open space was severely limited and that there was a need for increased passive recreational opportunities such as a trail system, and locations for the public to fish and participate in nature walks. The attendant parking required for these uses should also be considered.

### Inventory of Potential Open Space Funding Sources

- *Fee Simple Acquisition/ Outright Land Purchase by the Town.*
- *Gift of Land either directly to the Town or local land trust, when one is established. This option provides potential tax benefits to the grantor.*
- *Life Estates, where the Town purchases land with the provision that the owner can continue living on the land until his or her death, after which the Town acquires all rights. This approach is usually less expensive to purchase since it allows continual use of the property by owners and may spread the costs over a period of several years.*
- *Purchase and Leaseback, where the Town acquires the property and leases the land back to the owner or another party for a certain type of use or development subject to restrictions.*
- *Transfer of land from one government entity to another.*
- *Mandatory Dedications of Open Space as part of subdivision approval. Plainville currently requires that a portion of new subdivisions be set aside as open space.*
- *Fees in Lieu of Open Space Dedication or Impact Fees, Instead of requiring the dedication of open space within particular subdivisions, fees in lieu of land dedication can be required as part of subdivision approval. Fees in Lieu of open space dedication should become part of a special Open Space Acquisition and Protection Account that Plainville can use to purchase priority open space land in other areas of Town. This approach is useful in instances where the land being subdivided has a minimal amount of natural features worth protecting or when the land to be dedicated would not meet the Town's long-term open space objective of a network of interconnected open space areas. Payment of fees in lieu of providing open space should be allowed only as the less preferable alternative to the provision of open space in developments.*

- *Condemnation. Condemnation is the legal right of government to take private land for public purpose with just compensation provided to the owner. This approach is only recommended in extreme circumstances.*
- *Conservation Easements, Under a Conservation Easement, the property owner retains private ownership but conveys the right to enforce the easement's restrictions to a qualified conservation recipient such as the Town or an approved non-profit entity such as the Land Trust.*
- *Purchase of Development Rights, The purchase of development rights allows a landowner to retain ownership of the property, but the owner receives a payment for the "development rights" to that property. The property remains on the tax role but at a lower rate because of the restricted use. As ownership changes, restriction on the land remains with the parcel.*

### **Actions to protect and acquire Open Space:**

#### **Open Space Planning**

- Using the Open Space Inventory as a baseline, Develop an Open Space Plan that outlines long term objectives, criteria for lands to be acquired, strategies to be used, and funding sources
- The Open Space plan should take into consideration the seven elements of open space defined by Connecticut General Statutes Section 12-107b
- Identify and preserve Plainville's most ecologically diverse and community revered open spaces, and ecologically rich land areas
- Inventory easements in favor of Town of Plainville and identify easements that may serve as key pieces of land to connect open space parcels
- Utilize criteria defined in Open Space plan to identify and prioritize protection of lands that embody spirit of defined criteria.
- Work with Rails to Trails Organization and Railroad to explore methods to establish bike trail and allow continuation of active rail line
- Continue to pursue continuation of bike trail that currently ends at Plainville's border with Southington and Farmington

### Regulatory Strategies for Open Space protection

- Require special studies as part of development applications when proposed development are within defined State of Connecticut Natural Diversity Database Area
- Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to allow P&Z Commission to select open space set-aside when land is subdivided. Land chosen will be based on characteristics outlined in open space plan (e.g. home to special species, unique geological features, and soil conditions)
- As part of subdivision process, require that a trail system be designed within open space to be deeded, and require connections to existing system when possible.
- Consider requiring conservation style development
- Modify zoning regulations to require open space "set aside" (or fee-in-lieu-of) when any subdivision of land is approved
- Allow for off-site dedication of open space as part of development of proposed land if it contributes to the overall open space plan

## Open Space Acquisition & Management

- Explore grant opportunities to conduct a wildlife corridor study to determine wildlife movement through town and use results to help prioritize property acquisition
- Pursue establishment of a working relationship with a land trust and/ or other resource protection agency active in the area or support the creation of a local land trust.
- Formalize relationship with land trust or other agencies with similar goals to allow pooling of resources
- Develop working knowledge of various land protection tools and generate literature that may be disseminated to local land owners to educate them about preservation techniques available and potential tax benefits
- Identify who or which Town department has stewardship responsibilities over deeded open space
- Develop a GIS database that is a repository for information linked to parcels of land. Inventorying information concerning known wetland areas, steep slopes, special species habitat areas, and watercourses, ensures land use decision and land protection efforts are formed by accurate analysis
- Make all passive and active recreation areas accessible and available for public use with adequate signage, parking areas, trail maps, and appropriate facilities for their designated use
- Initiate a public outreach campaign articulating Plainville's greenways plan and educate land owners about the value of conservation easements, and the important role they play in achieving a greenway
- Develop and market materials and maps to the public that show the location of the open space, access points for active recreation and interpretive description of the land



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Historic & Cultural Resources

#### Introduction

This chapter highlights Plainville's existing historic and cultural resources, describes current protection efforts and recommends techniques and tools that will help preserve, enhance and support these valued resources.

The historic and cultural resources of a community are in many ways the foundation of a Community; they are the roots of a community's character. Plainville has a unique industrial past with a strong connection to the Farmington Canal. These features, along with important buildings, unique sites and events, contribute to the quality of life in a variety of ways. The elements also serve as a reminder of and a link to the social, economic and architectural past of Plainville while contributing to the civic pride and uniqueness of the community.

The recognition and preservation of the historic and cultural resources in Plainville maintains an important link to the past and helps protect its heritage. The preservation of these historic areas and structures help maintain important design features that tell the story of Plainville's past and in many ways have become the heart of the community and can be an economic asset to the community.

#### Identification of Historic Resources

The sources of information utilized to inventory historic and cultural resources consisted of coordinating a focus group discussion that targeted identification of historic resources, the effectiveness of current protection efforts and promotion and capitalization of existing resources. Also, discussions with the Town Historian, Ruth Hummel, an expert on Plainville's important figures and structures, provided insight into the location of historic structures, the stories behind important individuals and a listing of opportunities that have been missed. Finally, a comprehensive inventory of buildings with particular historical or architectural significance was completed in 1981- 1982. This inventory or historical survey looked at over five hundred homes in Plainville for the purpose of identifying structures that have the potential to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, to examine the possibility of creating a local historic district and to help increase public awareness and appreciation of the historic structures.

If a building is architecturally or historically significant on the national, state or local level, there is a strong likelihood that it will be approved for and ultimately listed on the National Register. The listing of a structure on the National Register has multiple benefits that can help preserve the historic structure. First, a listing on the National Register is an honor that in itself creates public awareness and appreciation for the building. Second, buildings on the register are afforded protection from adverse impacts from federally funded or regulated projects. Lastly, if a building is on the register, owners of the structure can receive significant tax advantages for rehabilitating the structure.

In Plainville, there are three federally recognized historic resources identified in the pictures below, which include the restored section of the Farmington Canal, the Charles S. Norton Home, and the Methodist Campground. Other historic resources

exist and were identified by the survey as potentially eligible of the Nation Register but no action was taken to pursue a National Register Listing. These sites include the William Brayton House on Broad Street, the John Root House located at the corner of West Main and Washington Streets and Cooks Tavern at the corner of New Britain Avenue and Cooke Street, not only for its architectural significant but also its historical associations, now known as J. Timothy's restaurant.

Other historic resources, with no official historic status, include Queen Ann, flat-roofed Italianate Villas Greek Revival and Victorian style residences and other homes situated near the center of Plainville. While there are a few historic resources that are formally recognized, many are not including those identified in the inventory as "probably" eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. More importantly, there is not an established and publicized mechanism to protect historic resources in Plainville. If not protected, there is not a formal procedure to prevent the resources from being lost forever; such is the case with multiple historic homes that have been demolished even after they were identified as potential candidates for the National Register of Historic Places. The remainder of this chapter offers a number of strategies to provide education and protection of Plainville's important historic resources.

### **Moving Forward to Preserve History**

While an extensive historical resources inventory was completed in the early 1980s little formal action has been undertaken that built off of the resource inventory. The resource inventory should be updated to reflect changes that may have occurred to homes inventoried nearly 30 years ago and to identify homes that were not originally identified. There are some funds available from the State of Connecticut that can be used towards completing the inventory. The Town, thorough action by the Town Council, should apply for State assistance to update the resource inventory.

#### **Actions to Identify Historic Resources:**

- Review 1982 inventory and identify buildings that have been altered and compromise historical/architectural significance
- Inventory areas not included in the 1981/ 1982 historic resource inventory
- Seek funding from the State of Connecticut and other private organizations focused on historic preservation such as Historic New England
- Consider creating a local registry of historic places
- Consider establishing a cultural heritage board that can evaluate the merits of individual structures and sites for inclusion on a local registry of historic places based generally on the following criteria:
  - a. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Plainville's history and cultural heritage;
  - b. It is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
  - c. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
  - d. It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

## Increase Local Historic Preservation Efforts

Plainville has an active local Historical Society which provides information and education concerning the history of the community, including important people places and events. The Society also manages the Plainville Historical Center, where important historical documents, interpretive displays and the Society's offices are located. The Center building itself is a historic structure that once served as the Town Hall, originally constructed in 1890. The building retains some of its original architecture and interior finishing, yet the building has been altered significantly, making it ineligible for listing on the National Register.

The Historical Society, while active in the community, has no authority over historic structures and has extremely limited financial resources. The Historic Society should seek approval from the Town Council to develop and maintain a local listing for historic structures. Education and awareness are essential preservation techniques. They are efforts that are complementary to regulatory measures.

Local Historic Districts are one of the most effective regulatory means to protect and preserve historic structures. The establishment of a district allows for regulatory control of new development and redevelopment of structures within the district and ensures all construction activity including aesthetic elements are compatible and consistent with the historical character of the district. A Local Historic District is not to be confused with National Register Districts. A Local district is established and administered by a local Historic District Commission, similar in many respects to a Planning and Zoning Commission, who is responsible for making formal decisions on proposed activities within the district.

Under Connecticut State Statutes any interested group of residents may request the town government to appoint a local historic district study committee to investigate the possibility for a district and prepare a report. The report should include an analysis of the historic and architectural significant properties in the proposed district and the significance of the district as a whole. Once the study committee has completed its report it is submitted to the town Planning and Zoning Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office for review and comment. A public hearing is also scheduled to give interested citizens an opportunity to comment. A Local Historic District cannot be established without a referendum among its property owners. Two thirds of the all the property owners within the proposed district must support the designation. Once a Local Historic District is established, the study committee ceases to exist and a new Commission is established to regulate the Local Historic District. The primary function of the LHD Commission is to review any physical alterations to the exterior of a structure, construction of a new structure or demolition of an existing structure that is visible from a public way. Typical work which requires review would be replacement of windows or doors, siding, the erection of additions, decks, garages, fences or outbuildings. When a property owner does propose an alteration, which requires review, the owner submits an application to the Historic District Commission and a hearing is scheduled. The Commission, when reviewing the project, will consider the impact of the proposed change and the appropriateness of the alteration to the character of the district. When the hearing is complete the Commission will render its decision. If the change is found to be appropriate, the Commission will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Plainville initiated the process of establishing a Local Historic district in the Maple and Whiting Street area in the early 1980s but ultimately two-thirds of the property owners in the proposed district did not support the designation. Given the time that has passed since the last efforts to establish a district, nearly 30 years ago, it is worth evaluating whether or not conditions have changed such that support for establishment of a local district exists.



Historic Overlay Zoning is another avenue Plainville can use to protect historic areas and structures rather than establishing a Local Historic District. In 1977 Connecticut General Statute 8-2 was amended to allow zoning commissions to consider historic factors when rendering a zoning decision.

It may be more beneficial for Plainville to use zoning regulations for historic preservation than establishing a local historic district/property. A zoning change (overlay) does not require the two-thirds approval of property owners in order to establish it or approval of an ordinance by the municipal legislative body.

Another benefit is that the Planning and Zoning Commission can regulate the use of a building, whereas a Local Historic District Commission cannot. The Planning and Zoning Commission can implement a similar control over individual projects through a special permit that a LHD Commission can exercise through a "Certificate of Appropriateness". Using a historic overlay zone may be a good alternative to establishing a local historic district when certain required criteria cannot be met, such as obtaining the required two-thirds property owner vote. Some of the special permit criteria that may be include as part of the Historic Overlay Zoning include completing a study of the historic value of the structure, explanation of how the structure will be incorporated into the proposed project, explanation as to why the structure can not be retained provided by an engineer/ architect specializing in historic structures and evidence that efforts to relocate the structure were fully explored.

Yet another way to protect historic resources is to establish Village Districts. It is an aggressive tool to help municipalities protect and preserve their community character and historic development patterns. The law allows towns to designate village districts as a way of protecting sections of towns that have distinctive character, landscape and historic structures. Within these areas, the town zoning commission may adopt regulations governing such matters as the design and placement of buildings and maintenance of public views. These regulations also "encourage conversion and preservation of existing buildings and sites in a manner that maintains the historic, natural and community character of the district." They provide "that proposed buildings or modifications to existing buildings be harmoniously related their surroundings, to the terrain and to the use, scale and architecture of existing buildings in the vicinity that have a functional or visual relationship to the proposed building or modification." Village districts are discussed further in the Downtown Revitalization Development Scenario.

Another alternative to an owner of an historic property can ensure that the property will be protected in the future is through the gift of a preservation easement. A preservation easement is a legal agreement that grants a limited right to qualified nonprofit organization to protect the property from changes which are not in keeping with its historic, architectural or natural character. The easement allows the owner of an historic property to retain title and use of the property and, at the same time, to ensure its long-term preservation. The owner does not give up title, use or control of the property or the right to sell, donate or will the property. Easements are usually given in perpetuity, and filed in the land records. The easement runs with the property and is binding on both the owner who grants it as well as on all subsequent owners during its term. The owner retains the major interest in the property and can sell it or will it to whomever he or she wishes.

A preservation easement may perform three functions:

1. Limit the kinds of alterations and additions that may be made to the property's historic structures;
2. Require proper maintenance of the structures to preserve their historic character and structural integrity;
3. Control the owner's right to develop the property by prohibiting subdivision of the land or development of open space.

The benefits of a preservation easement include knowing that your historic property will be protected for generations to come. Another benefit is that a federal income tax deduction is available to a qualified donor of an easement in the amount equal to the reduction in value of the property resulting from the granting of the easement. In addition, such reductions in market value should reduce estate taxes and local property taxes. A preservation easement can be donated to the qualifying nonprofit organization to preserve a historic structure or historically important land area

Other tax incentives or tax credits may be obtained by property owners through the following Connecticut legislation:

- CT Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit
- CT Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program
- Expanded CT Historic Structures Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program

Public Act 99-173 established a Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied historic residential buildings containing 1-4 units. The General Assembly also established the Public Act 99-173 the Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit in 1999. This Act allows for tax credit for the rehabilitation of owner-occupied historic residential buildings containing 1-4 units, also encourages new homeownership and assists existing homeowners to maintain or renovate their property. Public Act 06-186 section 82 establishes a tax credit for the conversion of historic commercial and industrial buildings to residential use, including rental or condominium units. Partial tax credits are available for buildings converted to mixed residential and commercial uses. In 2007 a new law was passed by the State making mixed-use projects also eligible for rehabilitation tax credits. It also allows a higher credit for affordable housing projects in historic buildings, 30 percent instead of 25 percent.

One regulatory tool that Plainville currently makes use of is a demolition delay ordinance. This ordinance requires as much as a 90-day waiting period before historic buildings can be demolished. While not preventing demolition, the waiting period allows the opportunity to seek alternatives such as purchasing the property, relocating the structure(s), or at a minimum, salvaging architectural components. This tool has been successful in protecting some historic resources. Working collaboratively with other governmental and non-profit organizations to publicize each Demolition Delay Permit may allow for additional assistance in the preservation of threatened historic properties.

#### Regulatory Actions to Protect Historic Resources:

- Consider establishing Local Historic districts
- Consider establishing a Historic Overlay Zoning District
- Consider Village District Zoning for historic preservation
- Conduct outreach informing citizens about preservation easements and tax credits available
- Act as party to preservation easements
- Continue to use the Demolition Delay provisions with increased public notice
- Develop Special Permit Criteria for projects involving historic structures

As part of the local registry mentioned earlier, placards should be made available for placement on all structures listed on the National, State and suggested local historic registry. The placement of placards on historic structures was initiated by the Plainville Historical Society in the early 1980s but this practice has not been sustained. The sale of placards by the Historical society could be an effective fundraising technique and public awareness venture.

A citizenry and especially property owners who are emotionally invested in maintaining a historic resource are the most effective approach for protecting and preserving historic resources. Regulatory approaches can only go so far in protecting resources, most regulatory tools and listings on various registers can not prevent property owners from neglecting or demolishing a historic structure. Education and stewardship should be encouraged and supported by the Town Council and the Historical society. Offering seminars on preservation techniques and opportunities and recognizing property owners who improve their historic structures may be an effective way to increase awareness and stimulate support for preservation of historic resources.

**Actions to Improve Public Awareness and Education:**

- Publicize events and programs for historic preservation in collaboration with the Plainville Library, the Historical Society, and the Town Council.
- Place plaques at structures and sites on the National, State and local Registry of Historic Places
- Create a GIS map and inventory of Historic Places
- Develop an interpretative map of historic sites and structures to be given out at the library, Town Hall and Historical Society building
- Organize walking tours of historic homes in and near downtown Plainville
- Sponsor awards given to property owners who improve historic structures



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Community Character

## The Community

Community character is the distinguishing physical and social quality of a community, these qualities often are intangible, but they give the community its identity. This character is shaped by natural, cultural, societal, and economic forces over many years. While community character is subjective and may mean something different to each resident of Plainville, ultimately it is about the “sense of place” and how one feels when they are in Plainville.

Certain characteristics or features of communities that contribute to their character include:

- Development patterns,
- Good design,
- Historic Resources,
- Scenic Resources,
- Attractive gateways
- Undeveloped land and
- Community Events.



The goal to improve community character is accomplished by enhancing the elements that create the “sense of place.” In order to sustain and strengthen its sense of place, Plainville should strive to address the following community characteristics.

- Develop design review standards
- Protect Historic Resources
- Promote reuse of industrial buildings and development standards
- Improve signage
- Protect scenic views and ridgelines
- Organize and promote community events

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## Implement Design Review

Good design plays an instrumental role in helping to establish and further community character. Every time a building is built it affects the community in a positive or negative way. Plainville is fortunate to have some examples of well designed buildings primarily in the downtown, which add to its character. The community would be the beneficiary of design review, ensuring that any new building, or rehabilitation of existing building, exemplifies thoughtful design.






Since good design enhances community character, Plainville should explore methods to promote or require quality design in as many areas of the community as possible. The goal of design review is to strengthen the unique character of the community and ensure that new buildings fit within the existing framework. In general, design review has the potential to encourage buildings that have the appropriate human scale, minimize the impact of stark, branded architecture that does not reflect the unique character and conditions of Plainville.

While the intent of some design standards are oriented towards reinforcing a particular style; that is not necessarily the appropriate goal for all communities. Plainville may be better served by developing a design review process that is not prescriptive, requiring buildings to look a certain way or be of a certain style. Instead, building design standards can provide a set of options to insure that buildings contain functional elements such as a set amount of glazing, articulation and other elements that improve the pedestrian experience.

There are a number of ways to encourage or require good design. The community must decide which methods best meets their needs and is appropriate given the dynamics of the community. A design review board is one example. Typically, the Planning and Zoning Commission authorize the board, an advisory body only, to review proposed developments. The evaluation by the design review board is based on a set of design standards. Another way to require specific design elements is to implement "Village District Zoning". The regulatory approach is discussed in more detail in the Downtown Development Scenario chapter. Simply, the "district" is a type of zoning where due to the unique character of an area, zoning review can consider aesthetic issues such as the design of buildings and the site. Both of these methods require the development of design recommendations or standards.

Given the profound impact that building and site design can have on the character to the community, Plainville will benefit from the development of design standards. Additionally, quality design can give the community something to rally around and create recognition from outside the community. Recognition by a community organization of good design and extra effort by property owners will increase public awareness and increase community pride.

### Actions to encourage quality building design:

-  Determine areas of the community where design review is appropriate
-  Evaluate the cost/benefits of implementing "Village District Zoning"
-  Evaluate the costs/benefits of establish a design review board
-  Initiate process of developing a building design manual
-  Recognize owners who construct/rehab buildings with quality design

## Protect Historic Resources

Historic resources play an instrumental role in the fabric of community character. They represent the history of the community and help make Plainville unique. The protection and promotion of historic resources are a key ingredient in the character of Plainville as well as a source of community pride.

Strategies to protect and promote historic resources are listed in great specificity in the Historic Resources chapter.

## Reuse of Industrial Buildings

Older industrial buildings are not often recognized as historic structures, but many have significantly contributed to the community. While these underutilized or abandoned buildings influence the character of the community, though not always in a positive way, they represent real opportunity for adaptive reuse. Plainville has a number of industrial buildings of varying ages and designs throughout the town. These buildings have great potential for reuse or redevelopment and for increasing the vitality of the areas surrounding the industrial buildings.

Some of these buildings have become functionally obsolete, or inefficient in terms of their original use. Some are at least partially unoccupied. However, the history or role the buildings represent in the history of the community is significant. Equally important is that many are well located relative to nodes of activity and have untapped potential to help meet some of the housing and other needs anticipated in Plainville.

For industrial building reuse to be successful and genuinely add to the character of the community, flexibility in permitted uses is essential. Some of the buildings may provide a unique and attractive environment for small-scale business uses, business incubator space, offices, boutiques, art studio/ gallery space and antique markets. These buildings also represent an opportunity to address many of Plainville's housing needs. Some buildings may be suitable for combinations of affordable, luxury, active-adult and elderly housing for both rent and sale. Due to the unique configuration of many of these buildings and sites, residential densities may be higher than is typical in new construction but still appropriate in particular areas, such as downtown Plainville. The higher density may provide support for business and activity in the downtown. This subject is discussed further in the chapter on downtown development.

Some industrial buildings that have outlived their utility are not suitable for reuse. These buildings are equally important; they should be identified and considered as potential redevelopment sites.

### **Actions to encourage industrial building reuse:**

- Identify location of underutilized/ abandoned industrial buildings and assess their potential for reuse/ redevelopment
- Initiate conversation with owners of industrial buildings to discuss reuse potential;
- Consider an "Industrial Heritage Overlay Zone" to afford flexibility in redevelopment/ uses
- Consider incentives to foster more interest in redevelopment of distressed or underutilized properties.

Improve Signage

Signs play a significant part of overall community character and play an equally important role for the business community. Reaching an appropriate balance between signs that exhibit quality design, reflect the character of the community and fulfill the needs of businesses is important.

Plainville should consider ways to improve two different types of signage, well designed business signs that guide customers to businesses and wayfinding signage to guide visitors and residents to different areas of community and community attractions.

Commercial Signs

Signs deliver a message beyond the graphics physically on the sign; sign design conveys a message about what type of community Plainville is. Businesses rely on signs to advertise their location and services they provide. However, well designed and attractive signs convey a strong positive impression about the quality and characteristics of the community. Quality signs suggest a certain feeling and low quality unattractive signs have the opposite affect. Without limiting creativity, sign guidelines for business owners can assist business owners in the design of their sign. Like design guidelines for buildings, sign guidelines do not need to be prescriptive of a certain style but rather may suggest design objectives and certain features, such as raised lettering and acceptable materials. Providing business owners with design guidelines may help to support the overall community character objectives, without limiting creativity.

A sense of place and feeling of cohesiveness are qualities that are key to the strength of downtown Plainville. Plainville should consider developing sign regulations specific to the downtown that helps to further a theme and evoke a sense of place. The area where the regulations would apply would need to be geographically defined but could correspond with the village district zone or area where the suggested Downtown Design Review Board could have purview. The benefits of downtown specific sign guidelines include:

- Encourage creative and innovative approaches to signage within an established framework,
- Promote economic vitality in the downtown,
- Enhance the visual environment in the Town discouraging signs which contribute to the visual clutter of the streetscape,
- Ensure that commercial signs are designed for the purpose of identifying a business in an attractive and functional manner, and
- Ensure signs on the façade of buildings reinforce the existing character and are integrated into the architectural design of the building.
- Consider a design standard and regulatory scheme for temporary advertising signage in the downtown district.



## Wayfinding Signage

Business owners and residents indicated that guiding customers and residents to business areas, including downtown and other areas of town and helping them find parking is important but also challenging in Plainville.

Clear and uniform signage to direct visitors and customers to business areas and other community features is lacking in Plainville. In downtown in particular, while ample parking is typically available the location of off-street parking lots are not well marked. Wayfinding signage is a systematic series of signs that organizes information to enable visitors to comfortably and successfully access a place. The signs are typically placed at key interest points and primary intersections. Wayfinding uses consistent images, scripts and overall designs to create a comfortable environment where information is easily readable.

Wayfinding signage has the added benefit of adding to the visual interest in parts of Town, while highlighting the character of the community and strengthening the sense of place at the same time. The signage typically reflects some elements of the community, such as a historical theme or representative image of the community. With unified signage one will know they are in Plainville and wayfinding will help the public find parking and other points of interest.



### Actions to improve signage:

- Develop design standards for commercial signs
- Develop sign regulations specific to Downtown Plainville
- Create a unified wayfinding signage program for community facilities and areas of interests

## Protect Scenic Views & Ridgelines

Ridgelines, panoramic views and other scenic resources (stone walls, fences, barns, wetlands, and river corridors) are important cultural assets in Plainville. These natural and manmade features contribute significantly to the character of the community and can strengthen the sense of open space in Plainville. However, there is no comprehensive inventory of scenic resources that exist in Plainville.

To protect these resources, the first step must be to inventory them. Plainville should engage in a comprehensive program to identify the location of these important cultural resources. Once the number and location of these resources is identified, additional steps can be taken to protect them. A key element of identifying scenic views is specifically identifying what elements make them scenic (tree line, meandering river corridor, unique stone wall, etc) It can be much more effective to protect particular elements that cumulatively create a scenic view, rather than just generally protecting a view.

#### **Actions to protect scenic views and ridgelines:**

- Identify and inventory Plainville's scenic-views, including ridgelines and other scenic resources
- Draft zoning text to prevent degradation of scenic views and ridgelines
- Utilize deed restrictions to prevent disturbance and clearing of ridgelines, hilltops, and scenic views.
- Enforce existing Ridgeline Protection Regulations
- Protect tree canopies from unreasonable destruction during utility pruning
- Consider amending land use regulations to include protection of scenic roads, and other scenic resources
- Preserve or relocate scenic resources such as stone walls, barns, fences, and other scenic resources that are visible from public streets
- Consider zoning or subdivision text amendments that preserve scenic streetscapes where new development is proposed

#### **Organize Community Events**

Community events can be an effective way to bring residents together and a byproduct is that they are then engaged in community building activities, fostering pride in the community. Pride in the community is an often intangible but essential component of strong community character. Community events allow community groups and organizations to showcase their unique activities or mission and provide exposure to what is happening in Plainville. Plainville already helps organize well recognized events such as the Hot Air Balloon Festival. Events such as carnivals, art exhibits and other less formal events are strong opportunities for residents to come together and participate in events together.

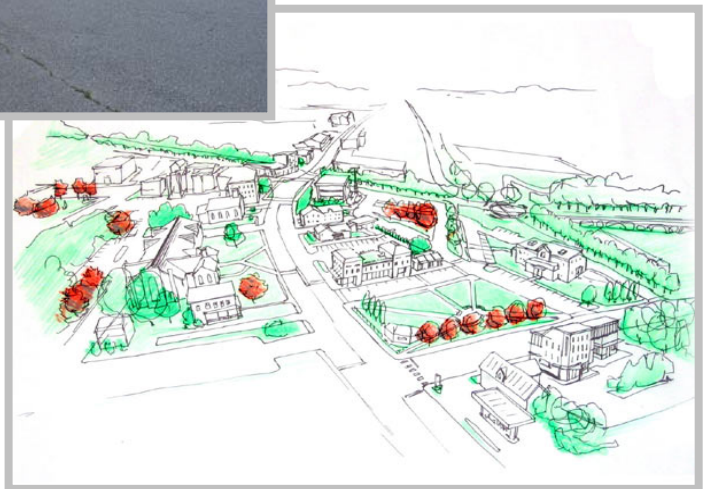
#### **Actions to organize community events:**

- Organize volunteer groups to develop, improve and coordinate community events
- Work with existing community event organizers to improve community involvement and publicity
- Organize event for community groups to exhibit their mission and activities
- Streamline permitting process for groups wishing to organize community events



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# Development Themes





## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Housing

#### Introduction

The type, condition, layout and cost of housing in a community are important factors to the quality of life within a community. These housing characteristics also impact who decides to reside there. This section of the Plainville Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) examines the status of Plainville's current housing stock in order to understand what future housing needs will be and to suggest actions designed to address those needs over the next ten years.

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes establish the requirements for the housing portion of a POCD as follows: "Such plan shall make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multi-family dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity, for all residents and the planning region in which the municipality is located.... Such plan shall also promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate-income households...."

The residents are the backbone of a community. Housing is one of the most if not the most important life style consideration for people. Therefore, housing opportunity directly controls who the residents of a community may be. A diverse community is a strong community, and a multitude of housing choices is essential to establish and maintain diversity. This chapter of The Plan examines the existing housing conditions in Plainville, paying particular attention to the types of housing available and identification of housing types not available, housing unit growth, affordability of housing, residential layout and future housing needs and opportunities.

#### Housing Inventory Characteristics

The 2000 Census recorded 7,707 housing units in Plainville. In 2005 the Connecticut Economic Resource Council (CERC) identified 7,830 units in Plainville, the addition of nearly 25 units per year over a five period. That growth rate of housing units from 2000 through 2005 is consistent with the housing unit growth rate in the 1990s in Plainville, roughly 25 units per year. These rates are a stark contrast to the growth rate average of 127 units per year in the 1980s that amounted to a 21% increase in housing stock in Plainville over a ten year period. Table 1: Housing Unit Percent Change displays housing unit percentage growth over the past three decades in neighboring communities, Hartford County and the State. The growth rates in Farmington are exceptionally high

<b>Table 1: Housing Unit % Change</b>			
	1970s	1980s	1990s
<b>Plainville</b>	17%	21%	3%
Farmington	41%	38%	14%
Newington	36%	11%	6%
Southington	37%	15%	9%
Canton	37%	16%	9%
Region	14%	14%	3%
State	18%	14%	5%
Source: U.S. Census			

in the 1970s and 1980, while the other communities experienced housing growth at rates similar to Plainville's growth rates. In the 1990s housing growth in adjacent communities significantly outpaced the region and the State while Plainville was on par with growth patterns in the Region and State. Housing growth in Plainville during the 1980s occurred at an accelerated rate compared to most communities, the Region and State as a whole. It is not surprising then that the growth slowed in Plainville during the next decade as constructed homes were absorbed into the market.

Of the 7,707 housing units recorded by the 2000 Census, greater than 95% were identified as occupied. A four percent vacancy rate indicates that housing units are available. The vacancy rate in adjacent communities is lower than what it is in Plainville; still the vacancy rate in Plainville is lower than the average for the Region as show in Table 2.

Table 3: Housing Tenure describes the occupancy characteristics of Plainville's housing stock compared to neighboring communities, Hartford County and the State. According to the 2000 Census, 31% of all occupied housing units are rented units. Table 3 shows that mix of rental units and units occupied by homeowners. Plainville has a more balanced mixed of rental and owner occupied units than other adjacent communities.

<b>Table 3: Housing Tenure</b>		
	<b>% Owner Occupied</b>	<b>% Renter Occupied</b>
Plainville	69%	31%
Farmington	75%	25%
Newington	81%	19%
Southington	81%	19%
Canton	81%	19%
Region	64%	36%
State	66%	33%
Source: U.S. Census		

<b>Table 2: Vacancy Rates</b>	
	<b>2000</b>
<b>Plainville</b>	<b>4.20%</b>
Farmington	3.60%
Newington	1.10%
Southington	3%
Canton	2.80%
Region	5.10%
State	6.10%
Source: U.S. Census	

The mix or distribution of housing type is a significant determinant of housing opportunity within a community. Varied housing needs of citizens require different housing choices. No one housing type is appropriate for all people, similarly housing needs for an individual or families changes over time. 2000 U.S. Census data indicates that in Plainville, 60% of the housing units are one-family detached style units. Other adjacent communities have a higher percentage of single-family detached units. In Plainville, the percentage of one-family attached style housing is slightly lower relative to most adjacent communities. This figure is indicative of the small number of condominium

<b>Table 4: Housing Tenure Types (2000)</b>				
<b>Percent of Housing Units</b>				
	<b>Single-Family Housing</b>	<b>Other Than Single-Family Housing</b>		
	<b>One-family detached</b>	<b>One-family attached</b>	<b>2-4 family dwellings</b>	<b>Multi-family &amp; other</b>
<b>Plainville</b>	60%	4%	16%	14%
Farmington	62%	11%	13%	14%
Newington	66%	12%	7%	15%
Southington	71%	5%	11%	13%
Canton	69%	10%	12%	9%
Region	55%	6%	19%	21%
State	59%	5%	18%	18%
Source: U.S. Census				

style housing units in Plainville. Adjacent communities have a higher percentage of single-family detached housing than Plainville; in Newington one-family detached housing comprises 66% of the housing stock, 71% in Southington and 69% in Canton. The average in the State and Region which are 55% and 59% respectively, are similar to Plainville. The suburban landscape in Plainville has a strong correlation to the high percentage of one-family detached housing units. The suburban pattern also represents opportunity for infill development and increasing the number of housing units in the more urban areas of Plainville.

## Housing Growth and Age

The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) reported that between 2000 and 2007 there were a total of 229 housing units constructed in Plainville. More recent data from the DECD identified the number and type of housing units constructed from 2003 to 2007. Table 5, 2004- 2007 Housing Permits, shows only nine percent of the new housing units constructed in Plainville since the beginning of 2003 have been anything other than single family style housing. With the issuance of permits for the construction of 44 new units, Plainville ranked 64 out of Connecticut's 169 towns in terms of total new units in 2007. It is worth noting that the number of new housing permits cannot simply be added to the Census records to obtain the exact number of housing units. Each year existing housing units are demolished. Plainville has averaged approximately 9 permits per year since 2003 to demolish existing housing units.

**Table 5: 2004 - 2007 Housing Permits  
New Construction**

	1 Unit	2-4 Units	5 Units +
2003	44	0	0
2004	37	6	0
2005	19	0	0
2006	19	0	0
2007	30	14	0

Source: CT DECD

One indicator of housing condition in a community is the age of the existing housing stock. 21% of Plainville's housing stock was constructed before 1940 while only six percent of the housing stock in Plainville was constructed from 1990 until March 2000 as shown in Table 6: Year Housing Units Built. The rate of new housing production was relatively constant up until 1990, when it slowed significantly. The economic climate of the early 1990s was not as supportive of housing development as other periods of economic growth.

<b>Table 6: Year Housing Units Built</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,707</b>
1999- March 2000	30
1990-1998	423
1980-1989	1,136
1970-1979	1,127
1960-1969	1,498
1950-1959	1,224
1940-1949	765
Before 1940	1,504

Source: U.S. Census

Even though the number of housing units developed from 1990 until 2007 is significantly less than in the previous years the public perception of the amount of new housing does not match the construction rate. This is likely due in part to the "large lot" style development of newer homes, in addition to the fact that Plainville has relatively little undeveloped land left for residential development.

## Affordability of Housing

Now more than ever, the affordability of housing is a primary concern. Section 8-23g of the Connecticut General statutes requires that a municipality "shall consider" the need for affordable housing in the preparation of a plan of conservation and development. Housing affordability is a complex issue, influenced by a number of factors. While most factors that influence the cost of housing are outside the control of a local municipality, municipalities' regulatory practices and land use policies do have some influence. In addition, while a community is limited in their ability to control the cost of housing they can be actively involved in creating affordable housing units.

The quantity and characteristics of the demand for housing occur on a larger than local level and are rooted in the market areas economic conditions including income levels, job growth, employment sectors and job security. The region that Plainville is a part of is increasingly more connected as people work and purchase goods and services in areas outside their own municipality. As regional connections grow the housing market is less responsive to the control of local municipalities. The cost of housing is most significantly based on the following: the demand for housing relative to the supply available at the same point in time, the location of housing as a function of time and distance relative to the source of demand, the

availability and cost of buildable land, labor and materials cost, the age, the quality and supply of the existing inventory, and costs such as mortgage interest rates, utilities and taxes. Local land use policies such as minimum lot size requirements, open space set aside requirements, and infrastructure standards do play a limited role in the ultimate cost of housing but have less influence than regional demand factors.

Direct efforts to encourage the construction of affordable housing are the most effective way to provide for affordable housing. Public and non-profit collaborations among local, state and federal and non-profit organizations have established a variety of housing programs to reduce housing costs. Most of these programs employ a form of a financial subsidy to defray the cost if the units are being produced, renovated or occupied. These programs do work and do provide affordable units, but they do not address underlying economic factors that affect housing cost.

However, according to the Home Connecticut Program, a campaign run by the Partnership for Strong Communities, the gap between what families make and the median sales price of a home continues to be significant in most of Connecticut's towns and cities. Data provided by Home Connecticut shows that the median house price in Connecticut rose by 69.7% from 2000 to 2007 while personal income rose by 33.7% over that same period of time. This continued disparity is largely the result of the enormous increases in median sales prices from 2000 to

2005 and the effects continue to be felt by many households seeking a safe and affordable place to live. As a result, even a dramatic decline in home sales prices in 2008 will be unlikely to make housing more affordable for many Connecticut households, especially if obtaining a mortgage becomes more difficult due to tightening credit standards. According to Home Connecticut, Connecticut residents will also find little relief in the rental market. The housing wage — the hourly wage required to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent in Connecticut — remained high at \$21.11 in 2007, making it difficult for renters. In addition, the median sales price for a single family home in Connecticut continued to remain high throughout the year with a statewide increase of 1.45% over 2006. Median household income also remained high in Connecticut in 2007, posting a statewide gain of 6.4% over the previous year.

A study completed in 2007 by the Home Connecticut Program analyzed the affordability of homes in Connecticut based on the median sales price of single family homes and the median income of residents in the state's 169 towns. The goal of the

**Table 7:  
Median Sales Price of all Homes**

Year	Months	Median Sales Price	Number of Sales
2008	Jan - Mar	179,500	18
2007	Jan - Dec	199,000	19
2006	Jan - Dec	190,000	35
2005	Jan - Dec	175,000	29
2004	Jan - Dec	160,000	27
2003	Jan - Dec	145,500	32
2002	Jan - Dec	129,950	24
2001	Jan - Dec	119,500	15
2000	Jan - Dec	109,950	23
1999	Jan - Dec	109,000	20
1998	Jan - Dec	101,900	15
1997	Jan - Dec	98,250	14
1996	Jan - Dec	100,000	8
1995	Jan - Dec	100,000	11
1994	Jan - Dec	110,250	12
1993	Jan - Dec	102,000	12
1992	Jan - Dec	114,950	6
1991	Jan - Dec	121,850	15
1990	Jan - Dec	123,000	16

Source: The Warren Group



project was to determine whether, in a given town, a home at median sales price for that town was affordable to a household earning the town's statistical median income.

Plainville ranked 131<sup>st</sup> in terms of affordability out of Connecticut's 169 towns. Simply, Plainville was more affordable than 130 of Connecticut's towns and less affordable than 38 towns. Median income in Plainville in 2007 was \$58,099 while the median home sales price was \$197,000 according to Home Connecticut statistics. The qualifying income to afford a home of that value, with a 10% down payment is \$60,772, a gap of about \$2,700. In 2006, Plainville ranked 137<sup>th</sup> in terms of affordability, so housing in Plainville was more affordable relative to other towns in 2006. However, the gap between median income and the salary required with 10% down to afford a home priced at the median sales price was larger, a difference of \$5,259. Therefore, the gap between median salary and median home sales price decreased from 2006 to 2007, a positive step. However, in other communities the gap shrank more significantly and therefore Plainville ranks less affordable in 2007

Given these statistics Plainville is relatively affordable, yet the fact that there is a gap between median income and an ability to afford a home priced at the median sales price is a statistic that needs to be monitored. Beyond monitoring, implementation of housing policy changes or other means to ensure the stock of affordable housing based on contemporary incomes may be appropriate. The demand for housing drives market prices within a regional housing context and management in this market is largely out of the control of the local municipality.

According to recent real estate market statistics, home sales in Plainville during the past 17 years averaged 20 units per year. Statistics for the first quarter of 2008 indicate that the current year sales will be in the range of 70 to 75 units. While the number of home sold has remained relatively consistent median sales prices have not. As, shown in Table 8 median sales for home sales prices in Plainville have risen and fallen slightly from year to year but generally have increased over the past 15 years. Table 8 shows the median sales prices of single-family homes in Plainville and adjacent communities from 2000 through March 2008.

Table 8: Median Sales Prices of Single-Family Homes: 2000 - 2008 (March) Plainville and Adjacent Communities									
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Plainville</b>	108,450	161,000	144,900	155,500	148,900	185,000	200,000	197,750	188,000
Farmington	211,750	289,900	263,000	361,450	240,000	350,000	346,250	347,500	372,075
Newington	130,450	146,000	139,900	169,900	201,500	202,500	235,700	254,250	228,000
Southington	158,000	180,000	170,000	257,500	203,500	247,500	300,000	278,750	260,700
Canton	167,450	N/A	228,000	357,500	259,500	249,000	260,000	410,000	345,000

Source: The Warren Group

Affordable Housing Appeals Law: The State of Connecticut has established an Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (AHAP) to provide developers with assistance building housing that contains a minimum percent of affordable housing. The AHAP does not apply where at least 10% of the dwelling units in the municipality are either:

- (i) Governmentally assisted housing,
- (ii) Currently financed by Connecticut Housing Finance Authority or Farmer's Home Administration mortgages, or
- (iii) Subject to deeds containing covenants or restrictions that require sale or rental at affordable levels.

Under the AHAP law, “affordable levels” mean housing for which persons and families pay 30% or less of adjusted gross income, where such income is less than or equal to 80% of the areas median family income.

Where municipalities do not reach the 10% level required for exclusion from the AHAP, developers of proposed projects containing a defined percentage of government assisted housing or affordable housing set-aside, may appeal denial of municipal zoning approvals to the court. Assisted housing developments are those that receive financial assistance from a government program or non-profit organization for construction or rehabilitation of low or moderate-income housing or “Section 8” supported housing. Affordable housing “set-aside” projects must reserve 30% of the total units proposed to be developed for affordable housing. One half of those set-aside units must be rented or sold to persons or families whose income is less than or equal to 80% of the lesser of the state or area median income; the remaining half of the set-aside units must be reserved at 60% of the lesser of the state or area median income. The median family income level for the Plainville area as reported by the 2000 Census is \$60,586. The most recent data from the Affordable Housing Appeals Program, as administered by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development puts the number of affordable housing units in Plainville in 2007 at 589 units. That constitutes 7.64% of the estimated number of housing units in the Town based on 7,707 housing units reported by the 2000 Census. This level does not exempt the Town from the over-ride provisions of the AHAP. Affordable housing in Plainville, as defined by these State regulations, is currently distributed as follows:

Number of Governmentally Assisted Units:	241 units
Number of CHFA/FmHA Mortgages	316 units
Deed Restricted	<u>32 units</u>
Total	589 units

**Affordable Housing Opportunity**

Housing affordability is a crucial element in Connecticut's efforts to remain economically competitive and preserve the quality of life that has drawn population and businesses to the state. The ability of the state to attract the workers, young professionals and investment necessary to provide jobs and revenues is clearly dependent on its ability to provide the range of housing opportunities and choices needed by a full spectrum of citizens. In light of these facts the State of Connecticut in June of 2007 passed into legislation the Connecticut Housing program for Economic Growth.

This program provides incentives to municipalities that voluntarily create Incentive Housing Zones (IHZs) at sizes and locations of their choosing. The zones must accommodate higher densities and the municipalities must agree to ensure that 20% of the housing units in each development will be affordable to residents earning 80% of the area median income or less.

Incentive Housing Zones are enacted by a municipality's zoning commission, and then approved by the State Office of Policy and Management (OPM). The Town's zoning commission must establish the IHZ as an overlay zone. At least 20% of the units in each development within the zone must be affordable to people earning no more than 80% of the area's median household income, using no more than 30% of their annual income. These affordable units must remain that way for at least 30 years, by imposing deeds, covenants, or other restrictions.

The IHZ's regulations may include design standards to insure that a proposed new development complements existing buildings and structures and the zone's housing plan. These design standards must be submitted to the OPM secretary for approval.

The Act also authorizes the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management to "make grants to municipalities for the purpose of providing technical assistance in the planning of incentive housing zones, the adoption of incentive housing regulations and design standards, the review and revision as needed of applicable subdivision regulations and applications to the Secretary for preliminary or final approval." If additional requirements are met municipalities are also eligible to receive \$2,000 for each unit that can be built on developable land in the zone based on the bill's minimum as-of-right densities. Additionally, for each building permit issued for housing within the IHZ a municipality is eligible for \$2,000 for each multifamily, duplex or townhouse unit, and \$5,000 for each single-family detached unit.

The Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency applied on behalf of the Town of Plainville for IHZ Planning Grant. The grant application was approved by OPM, an important step for Plainville to continue the process of incorporating an IHZ into their zoning regulations and housing policies.

### **Special Needs Housing**

Housing for the elderly and special needs citizens is a critical concern for most communities. As the population of the Town ages, as indicated by demographic data, it is important that the community provide alternative living arrangements from standard single- family detached and multi-family living situations. This gives the elderly population an often desired opportunity to remain in the community that they have spent a major portion of their life. The community has some responsibility to help these long term residents from being driven from the community because of escalating housing costs. The housing type needed by the elderly varies significantly as do the supporting services they may require.

Various types of elderly housing facilities include:

Age restricted communities are housing developments with either detached or attached units that must meet specific criteria defined by local zoning regulations. If the age restricted project meets certain requirements of the U.S. Code and Code of Federal Regulations, the age restriction may be reduced to 55 years or older. Plainville zoning criteria establish parameters that allow the development to allow residents age 55 or older. These communities are designed for individuals who are in reasonably good health and can live completely independently. These communities can be rented or owned. The type of services and amenities they provide vary, but most include some recreational and leisure activities to help attract a particular segment of the market. There are two age restricted developments in Plainville currently. The first development is on Forshaw Avenue and has 14 units and the second is off Bradley Street, with 23 units.

Assisted living facilities are managed residential communities that provide support services to the residents of the community. In these developments, residents typically live in an apartment style unit and pay monthly fees for services. Assisted living facilities, governed by Connecticut Statutes must provide services that include laundry, transportation and housekeeping services, meals, recreational activities and maintenance. Assistance with daily activities, nursing services, assistance with routine domestic tasks and medication supervision are to be provided as needed. Also required is a resident services coordinator as well as emergency call services in each unit, 24 hour security and on-call nursing services.

This type of facility is intended to assist residents while maintaining a maximum level of independence. The Bellamaire Assisted living facility is located in Plainville at 122 East Main Street. The facility has 24 units.

Nursing Homes can be long or short term care facilities with nursing supervision. Typically these facilities provide residents with nursing care, meals, recreational activities, help with daily living tasks, and protective supervision. Residents often have mental impairments that prevent them from living independently. The Plainville Health Care Facility is located at 269 Farmington Avenue. The facility has 173 beds.

Some other types of special needs housing that may be needed in Plainville as the population continues to age include:

Congregate living facilities provide residents with private living arrangements, some support services and common areas for dining and social interaction. These facilities provide one meal per day, housekeeping and a variety of social and recreational activities. Congregate facilities are meant for individuals who are basically self-sufficient but need few services to help them live independently.

Continuing Care or life-care communities are designed and operated to assure residents lifetime living accommodations and a variety of services including long-term health and nursing services. These facilities allow residents to remain at location and move from one level of care to another as their need change.

Government Assisted Living facilities include rental housing complexes with age and income restrictions. This housing type provides independent living opportunities for senior citizens and younger persons with disabilities. Facilities of this sort are meant for individuals whose physical mobility and health enable them to live independently with minimal or no assistance.

Residential Care Homes are similar to nursing homes but are suited for residents who are no longer able to live independently but do not require the level of medical care offered in a nursing home, rest home or convalescent environments. These Homes generally provide a communal living environment. Connecticut State law requires that Residential Care Homes provide three meals a day, housekeeping and laundry services, recreational activities, and 24 hour supervision.

Plainville does not have each of the special needs living facilities described above and those that do exist are noted. The gaps in special needs housing have been identified and Plainville should be aware that there may be a need to fill this gap to provide a more complete array of special needs housing.

### **Other Care Facilities**

Group Homes provide an environment that fosters the maximization of individual outcomes in areas of education, vocation, employability, independent living skills, health, mental health, community connections and permanent connections. These homes typically provide care to adolescents and have a working relationship with the Connecticut Department of Child Services. There are two group homes in Plainville, each providing care to a maximum of 16 individuals.

## Housing Goals and Strategies

The following section identifies Plainville's key housing issues as identified by technical research and public input, and community planning goals related to housing. This section also recommends strategies to address identified issues, achieve community goals and equitable housing opportunities.

Primary issues affecting housing in Plainville include:

- Plainville lacks a complete supply of housing for a spectrum of ages and income levels
- Housing choice with different density levels and layouts is in short supply
- Housing supply in the downtown area within a walkable setting is a missed opportunity.
- The current elderly housing supply is not large enough to meet future demand.
- Housing is affordable relative to other communities, yet a goal of 10% affordable housing defined by State criteria is not met.
- Housing that offers amenities such as walking access to downtown and small units and unique architectural style is in short supply.
- Older residential communities are threatened by the potential to be converted to commercial use as incompatible industrial or commercial uses are allowed to encroach.
- Many housing units were built prior to 1940 and are in need of rehabilitation.

## Strategies

Goal: Broaden the range of housing types to meet varied housing needs. Demographic changes within Plainville and the region warrant particular attention to providing increased affordable housing opportunities including housing for the elderly and special needs housing. Housing opportunities designed to retain younger the demographic cohort currently leaving the community should be emphasized.

#### Actions to improve Housing Opportunity:

- A variety of housing types (with respect to both lot size and homes versus apartments) should be available to reflect the needs and desires of all Plainville residents
- Complete a detailed assessment of approximate number of units needed for elderly housing based on census information
- Promote housing rehabilitation efforts that seek to preserve the supply of housing units in the Town, in a manner that maintains the architectural integrity of existing structures
- Support programs that assist homeowners in rehabilitating and maintaining their homes
- Meet the needs of current residents through the provision of housing stock that allows for upward mobility and the retention of younger households
- Promote historic preservation and housing stock variety by preserving and adapting historic buildings for residential uses
- Develop upscale/luxury single-family housing and townhouse/rental units in an effort to attract new residents and businesses
- Explore alternative housing options for seniors to encourage their continued residence in the Town
- Develop an infill strategy for the Town with new housing and neighborhood commercial centers and other support services which will stabilize neighborhoods
- Develop guidelines that promote infill residential development in a manner consistent with the scale and character of surrounding neighborhoods

Continued:

- Provide well designed housing with features desired by specific demographic groups (20-35 demographic and over 65) that provides walkable access to downtown services and social gathering points
- Review the Town's zoning regulations to determine the overall effectiveness of the regulations in mitigating land use conflicts between residential and commercial/industrial uses, paying particular attention to setbacks and buffer areas. These regulations should be updated as necessary to provide maximum effectiveness
- Encourage the development of neighborhood center streetscape improvement plans and support the equitable distribution of funds if they are specifically allocated from the general fund
- Base residential density of greenfield development upon limitations and opportunities afforded by topographic, soil, and watershed protection characteristics and limit multifamily and planned residential developments to areas served by public sewer and water and access to collector and arterials roadways and alternative transportation modes
- Encourage alternative housing options for mature families ("empty-nesters") and senior citizens who no longer desire single-family housing, but who wish to remain in the town, in planned developments that offer a wide range of residential amenities or in other alternate living arrangements more appropriate for their stage of life (e.g., in-law apartments, congregate housing, life-care facilities). Encourage such housing in locations where services and mass transit are readily available
- Recognize, as one segment of the city's housing demand, the desire for large single-family lots
- Recognize as a public responsibility the encouragement of affordable housing opportunities for the elderly and for families and individuals that cannot afford current housing costs. Explore available programs of the local, state and federal governments that offer assistance in such housing, including opportunities for first-time homeownership
- Expand opportunities for young families to purchase "starter" housing within the city.
- Encourage housing options such as group homes, emergency shelters, transitional housing and single-room-occupancy hotels for those individuals with special housing needs.
- Require that government-funded or subsidized housing developments be held to the same design standards as privately developed housing
- Continue efforts to establish an Incentive Housing Zone and use any needs assessment prepared as part of the study supporting this effort to identify additional areas of concern



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Economic Development

#### Introduction

The economic health of most communities largely depends upon their ability to attract, “grow” and retain business and industry. Among the factors that typically influence the location of business and industry are housing and transportation costs, the availability of a suitable labor force, land prices, taxes and even local quality of life (e.g., the quality of a community’s schools and the availability of cultural and recreational resources).

The economic base, in Plainville and across the state has changed from its earlier independence on mills and manufacturing to a much more diversified economy based on retail sales, the service industry and niche industries like specialized manufacturing. The resource extraction industry, primarily the mining of trap rock has and continues to play a significant role in Plainville’s economy.

Business and commercial zoning in Plainville, in conjunction with interstate development and automobile dominated transportation fostered business development outside of downtown Plainville. Primarily retail development along Route 10 and Route 372 as well as the development of industrial parks created near Town line Road and Northwest Drive created significant business opportunities. While downtown should be marketed as the heart of the community, infill development along Route 10 and vacant parcels along New Britain Avenue near the Connecticut Commons development represent business opportunity areas.

Business retention and development is key to the strength of Plainville’s economy for a number of reasons. Most importantly, Plainville businesses provide jobs to Plainville residents. Nearly 20 percent of the employed citizens who live in Plainville also work in Plainville. Plainville businesses provide goods and services support citizens, families and organizations. Plainville businesses provide tax revenue to support municipal operations and are often the first asked to contribute to community related causes and activities.

While the traditional manufacturing industry has decreased in size overall it still employs the greatest number of workers as an industry in Plainville. According to a 2005 business profile from the Connecticut Economic Resource Council (CERC) over 30 percent of individuals working in Plainville are employed in the manufacturing industry. The service industry employs another 30 percent of all individuals who work in Plainville. 10 percent of all those employed in Plainville work in the construction and mining industry.

While 10 percent work in the construction and mining industry, Tilcon, a mining and material sales company, is the largest employer in Plainville according to CERC data from 2006. Other major employers include the Plainville Board of Education, Manafort Brothers, a construction company and Gems Sensors, a specialized manufacturing company.



If Plainville is to maintain its economic and spatial integrity, it must promote well-balanced development that buffers the Town's residents and tax base from the unpredictability of economic cycles. Plainville's economic development goal is to establish a business and service mix that meets the needs of the community and maintains a sustainable revenue stream for the community. In order to achieve this goal Plainville should focus on the following economic development issues.

- Develop business retention program
- Provide tax incentives
- Identify appropriate business mix
- Encourage "Green" buildings and site development
- Promote Business/ Job Skill Training & Business Assistance
- Develop Business Incubator Space/ Home Business Regulations
- Update Industrial/ Business Park Regulations

## Develop Business Retention Program

Towns can make efficient and effective use of their resources by focusing on retaining existing businesses rather than focusing exclusively on attracting new businesses. Often the best chance of creating new jobs for a community comes from existing businesses. Existing businesses are also great indicators of the business climate of the community and have valuable insight into the hurdles of doing business in the community.

As this plan is being written the Plainville Economic Development Agency (EDA) is sponsoring an on-line business survey, developed with assistance from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, to assess the needs and priorities of Plainville's business community and corporate citizens. The results will be used by the EDA to develop economic strategies that promote business retention and growth and will provide an indication of the overall local business attitude and help the EDA identify the needs and concerns of the business community.

Outreach from the Town, such as the business survey and genuine interest in finding solutions to problems that affect business in Plainville is an important tool to show the business community that the town has their interests in mind. Strong businesses, working relationships between the business community and town leaders, and a Town known for finding solutions to business community problems is one of the best marketing tools for attracting new businesses.

#### **Actions to Develop a Business Retention Program:**

- Complete ongoing business survey and tabulate and analyze the results
- Prioritize solutions to business and industry issues
- Appoint specific individual as the point of contact within Town government for business community
- Generate suggestions for local action from economic development experts
- Enhance communication with the business community regarding areas of interest and concern

## **Provide Tax Incentives**

Attracting businesses is an extremely competitive environment, particularly in Connecticut given communities' reliance on property tax to fund operating budgets. Attracting new businesses that are needed to create a balanced business mix and attracting business that complement the community characteristics such as available workforce, infrastructure, and operate under green principals for example is important. Incentive policies are often needed to attract these businesses

Plainville should develop an incentive policy to support the types of business the community seeks to recruit. Incentives should be focused and directly help Plainville target the types of business that would complement the community. Incentive should not be offered to companies that would locate in Plainville anyway. Tax incentives can also be used to assist existing businesses. Tax abatement for example can be offered to business willing to reinvest or renovate their existing facility in Plainville. Also, any incentive program should include a "pay back" provision to ensure that tax incentives are properly used.

#### **Action to provide tax incentives:**

- Create an incentive program targeting desired types of new businesses and assists existing businesses
- Develop a spectrum of tax incentives that complement varied business needs

## **Identify Appropriate Business Mix**

A proactive approach to attracting new business and targeting specific business types is to identify the "ideal" mix of businesses. The identification process is typically achieved by completing a "targeted industry study"



This type of analysis is typically undertaken by communities that wish to learn more about the local economy and add focus to local economic development efforts. Specifically, these analyses provide the community information about the local

industry groups (or clusters) that are the foundation of the local economy. Local industry groups that are thriving and growing faster than would be seen typically, based on job creation and other measures, are identified as competitively advantaged.

Once the study is completed, more focused economic development efforts that build upon existing industries by attracting companies that would complement them and aid in the development of similar new companies within an economic region could be pursued.

Using the results of the study, Plainville should ensure that areas identified in the study are zoned not only to encourage desired types of business but to minimize the likelihood that the land is used to serve another purpose. Plainville has several suitable locations for business development; including undeveloped lots in exiting industrial parks as well land zoned for a "technology park" but is currently undeveloped.

#### **Actions to identify appropriate business mix:**





-  Conduct a "targeted industry study"
-  Refine zoning regulations and map to encourage businesses that are identified in study and desired

## **Encourage "Green" buildings and site development**

Development that is environmentally and socially responsible is seen as high priority among community members. Contemporary methods to building construction, site preparation and design and land use planning allow for green development without significant additional cost. In fact, some energy saving and site preparation methods can save on both up front and long terms cost for businesses

A primary component of green development is where-a building is located. These siting considerations include access to multiple modes of transportation, proximity to existing nodes of development, and access to existing infrastructure. In addition to siting considerations, low impact development and energy efficient design can be considered. Zoning regulations can be revised to provide incentives for the use of low impact site design and energy efficient building design.

The approach to sustainable/ green business development in Plainville includes,

-  encouraging development in existing nodes of activity,
-  encouraging low impact development and energy efficient building design,
-  encouraging existing businesses to operate in an environmentally friendly manner and;
-  minimizing short and long-term environmental impact s caused by new development.

### **Support development in existing nodes of activity**





Traditional commercial centers of the Town, such as downtown and nearby commercial development are focal points of interaction and business activity. New businesses that locate there can take advantage of an existing potential customer base, increase the variety of goods and services offered and potentially add to the vitality of the area. More importantly, these areas have the infrastructure (sewer and water) and transportation (sidewalks) in place to create a more “green” environment. There is the potential of significant savings in using existing infrastructure when compared to providing new infrastructure.

### **Environmentally friendly business operation**

Businesses that have adopted environmentally responsible business practices are realizing the benefits of doing so. In addition to long term cost savings, for many companies being green is good for public relations. Consumers are increasingly deciding in favor of environmentally-friendly companies and products when making partnering and purchasing decisions.

Developing recognition programs for businesses that have incorporated low impact site development strategies and green building design, or improved their environmental friendliness in their business practices shows that responsible decisions are recognized and that the community appreciates their responsible business decisions. Also, recognizing businesses for their decisions and providing a forum for these businesses to explain the benefits they have realized is a way to encourage other business to do the same.

#### **Actions to encourage environmentally responsible businesses:**

-  Create programs to encourage existing businesses to improve environmental responsibility
-  Provide support to the downtown and other nodes of activity
-  Develop an inventory of “low impact” land use techniques that could be included within the zoning regulations
-  Develop an inventory of “green building” techniques and sustainable business practices and make information available to the business community

### **Promoting Business Training, Job Training and Business Assistance**

Developing and supporting public and private partnership approaches that combine education and job skill training hold vast amounts of promise for providing workers with the tools they need to progress beyond entry-level. Additionally, as an economic development strategy, a skilled workforce is attractive to prospective businesses. An educated workforce is critical to increasing productivity and fostering innovation.

A community supported job training program that focuses on developing skills for businesses likely to locate in Plainville or business sectors Plainville may target is one way to structure a job training program. Existing businesses could offer their expertise to the program and offer additional training programs and internship opportunities. Also, Plainville can develop a relationship with local trade schools. The working relationship can bring business owners and the school together to coordinate programs such as internships, advanced training and graduate placement.

Higher education institutions continue to provide positive influences on communities throughout the region. There is great value and opportunity in communities creating links with higher education institutions. Such relationships encourage and enhance the economic development possibilities that colleges and universities institutes bring to an area. Many local community colleges routinely offer training and workshops with their faculty for managers and owners of local companies who seek business management training.

In much the same way that start up business and existing business need skilled and educated employees to prosper they also need access to resources that are vital to the growth of their business. The State of Connecticut has a number of programs that offer financial and technical assistance to Connecticut businesses. Some of the programs/ offices that offer support to Connecticut businesses include:

- The Connecticut Development Authority, a quasi-public organization whose purpose is to help Connecticut businesses access capital necessary to help businesses grow; create and retain jobs;
- The CT Department of Labor can provide the business community with job-related consulting services, apprenticeship programs, customized job training programs, OSHA regulations, wage and workplace standards, rapid response to company downsizing or closure, shared work programs, and labor market information. The Department of Labor also serves job seekers, students, and individuals who are underemployed, providing workshops, career guidance, current labor market information and a job bank of available jobs in Connecticut
- The Connecticut Small Business Development Center encourages the creation and growth of small business by providing sound business advice through professional no cost counseling, seminars, technical assistance and education for business owners and entrepreneurs in one-on-one or group training environments through out the state of Connecticut.
- The Economic Development Director should help organize materials that make small business owners and prospective owners fully aware of business assistance opportunities. This information should also be made available on the Town's website with links directly to the organizations listed. (further discussion of creating a full time Economic Development Director is provided in the Downtown Development Scenario chapter)
- The Institute of Technology and Business Development at Central Connecticut offers training, technology assistance, conferencing services, procurement services and business incubation.

#### **Actions to provide job skill training and business assistance:**

- Inventory business management training and courses available through higher education institutions and disseminate to local business community
- Develop a job skill training program in conjunction with local trade schools that target skills for industries likely to locate in Plainville
- Inventory State and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) programs that provide assistance to local businesses
- Develop marketing program to educate business owners about assistance programs

## Develop Incubator Space/Support Homes Based Business Regulations

While small business assistance programs have existed for quite some time, business incubators represent an effort to provide an encouraging environment as well as shared services to start-up companies. Understanding that small businesses are a significant factor in job creation, economic diversity and tax base expansion, economic programs that would support and nurture entrepreneurs and their start-up companies and can play a vital role in Plainville's economic development plans.

Most incubator space makes use of an existing building (few are newly built) which has been renovated to accommodate multiple tenants as well as varying types of industry.

In general, the incubator provides shared services such as telephone answering, access to a fax machine and copier, the use of a conference room or library, and the on-site management consulting/business assistance of the incubator manager. Additionally, the incubator manager can serve as a liaison to contacts within the local community and assist tenants with networking for financing or technology. These tenants are often offered below-market rent and flexible lease arrangements, including the opportunity to expand within the incubator.

The Town can play an active role in developing and managing the incubator space or could serve a supporting role, providing assistance to a private investor who would develop and manage the space.

Typically, when communities consider expansion of existing businesses or development of new businesses, they think in terms of the "traditional" business – those that operate from a store front or in a commercial location. An often-overlooked idea is to help the local entrepreneurs who want to start or expand their home-based business.

A person considering a home-based business needs to gather a variety of information about starting a business. He or she will need valid information about the product/service chosen, about marketing opportunities, the economic environment, existing trends, and about the competition. The Community can assist with many of these important considerations. Local government officials and community leaders can help home-based businesses start or expand in a number of ways. Communities that express support for new business formation through public resolution and policy statements can encourage people to begin new businesses.

Of particular importance to prospective home-based businesses are local zoning regulations that govern the operation of home based businesses. Zoning regulations can either help or hinder home-based business start-ups. Zoning codes that allow home-based businesses in residential areas mean there is one less barrier for potential entrepreneurs to overcome in starting a business. The character and quality of life in residential neighborhoods should not be compromised in exchange of home-based business operations. Plainville should consider developing detailed home based business regulations that clearly articulate the types of home-based business that are permitted and how they must operate in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of residential communities.

#### **Actions steps to Develop Incubator Space and Support Homes Based Businesses:**

- Consider the role the town will play in the development of incubator space
- Evaluate the type of technology, building layout, and business requirements to meet start-up business needs
- Develop a campaign to market incubator space
- Develop clear regulations on what type of home-based businesses are permitted, under what circumstances and the process for receiving town approval to conduct the business
- Encourage the Chamber of Commerce to support home based business and the role they play in the overall economy of Plainville

## **Updating Industrial/Business Park Regulations**

Given the relatively benign industrial activities that occur in modern industrial parks, the strict separation of industrial uses from other uses is typically not necessary and more often doing so is antithetical of smart growth and sustainable land use practices. Zoning regulations governing industrial business and technology parks should be revised to reflect a more sustainable and efficient approach to how these developments operate.

The overall goal of these important land uses is to preserve and enhance the natural landscape while ensuring that buildings, outdoor commercial uses, parking and other aspects of the project are well designed and properly constructed, and that driveways and other elements which interface with the park infrastructure are considered for their potential impact on the entire park. However, there are other important land uses and service provisions that should be considered. These other business uses reflect the needs of the businesses and employees that work at the business within the park. Creating a more community like setting within these developments is possible by allowing ancillary business services and lifestyle services to locate within the parks.

Personal services, restaurants and retail sales or rental services provided that such uses that are included in a structure or integrated into the businesses complex can benefit not only individuals who work in the "park" but also the overall attractiveness, as a marketing scheme, of the "park."

Additionally, business support services, business or trade school, day care services, financial services, and hotels are appropriate uses when properly integrated. Allowing these uses can provide for services that employees truly need and use in one central location, a much more sustainable approach. While some of these services are allowed by Special Exception within existing buildings, the Zoning Regulations could be revised to allow a percentage of the overall area development to be comprised of restaurant, retail or personal services.

#### **Actions to update industrial/business park regulations**

- Review "park" regulations from other Connecticut communities
- Determine what type of uses would complement the business and employee needs of the primary "park" tenants
- Encourage prospective businesses to include "accessory" service uses as part of their development plan







## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE

### PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

#### Downtown Development Scenario

## Historical Background

Fifty years ago, downtown Plainville was the civic, commercial and economic center of the community. It contained a range of retail services that served the community's regular needs, such as food and clothing. Plainville residents would visit downtown Plainville on a regular basis to obtain the necessities of everyday life. Downtown Plainville has also served as the civic center of the community. The town hall has been and continues to be located at the center of downtown. Downtown has also been and continues to be the location of the public library, the police station, fire station post office and several churches. There were also industrial uses within or very close to downtown Plainville. The General Electric Complex is within one-half mile of downtown Plainville, and has long been an important fixture of the community's economic base, employing large numbers of workers from Plainville and surrounding communities. Other, smaller industrial uses have been located at the periphery of downtown Plainville, along the railroad tracks. The role of downtown Plainville has changed over the past several decades. Larger scale retail development in the surrounding communities and along Route 10 has drawn shoppers away from downtown Plainville during the past several decades. These newer areas offered convenience, parking and spaces big enough to accommodate the retail "chains" that were in the process of dominating the retail industry. This pattern has continued during the past decade, with the development of the Connecticut Commons Shopping Center on Route 372, with its "big box" retailers. As new residential development moved farther away from the center of the city in the 1950's, the downtown was no longer within convenient walking distance for many residents. This land use change may have had the most significant impact on the downtown. Business and social activity within the downtown now is severely limited after standard business hours. More recently, the community has branded together in an effort to restore downtown Plainville as the focal point of the community. There are many keys to the success of this effort however; the interest, involvement, and commitment of community members are essential for any successful revitalization program.

## Purpose

The focus of this development scenario is to utilize the traditional development pattern of Plainville's downtown and suggest approaches to build upon them, to again make downtown the focal point of the community. The framework for an economically strong and socially vital downtown exists. Traditional characteristics such as buildings that front the street, on-street parking, wide sidewalks, a street network that provides efficient access and varied architectural styles in conjunction with efforts to increase housing opportunities in the downtown and improve the business climate are key to revitalizing Plainville's downtown. The overall goal of this scenario is to build upon previous revitalization investments such as Plainville's Downtown Beautification Program and provide additional strategies to make downtown Plainville a place that people find pleasant for living, spending time and doing business.

The strength of this development scenario rests upon three key factors.

1. *The results of the public outreach completed as part of the Plan of Conservation and Development identified overwhelming interest and support from the community towards revitalizing the downtown.*
2. *Analysis of Plainville and State demographic data indicates significant outmigration of individuals in the 25-35 age cohort.*
3. *The community has already invested significant time and financial resources in diagnosing issues affecting downtown, developing design solutions and implementing streetscape improvements.*

## Existing Conditions

Empirical evidence indicates that the style and setting of housing desired by the 25-35 year old age cohort within a price range that they can afford is not available. Many retirees are also in search of housing outside of the suburbs. Individuals from these demographic groups are interested in housing in a walkable, socially and service rich setting. Individuals are leaving Connecticut communities and the State in general in search of these housing opportunities.

Within downtown Plainville, significant redevelopment opportunities suitable for mixed use development that could meet the needs and wants of multiple demographic groups exist. Filling this void by providing housing opportunities to meet the needs of groups that are currently unmet will aid in the goal of reinvigorating downtown Plainville.

Economic activity in downtown has also diminished. Competition with auto oriented development such as the "Connecticut Commons" development has had a direct impact on retail businesses. Service oriented businesses and restaurants have also suffered in part due to the decline in retail traffic.

A program for downtown improvement was completed in 2005 by the Connecticut Economic Resource Council, titled "Downtown Action Strategy." This document took an in depth look at broad level issues facing the downtown. The "Strategy" consists of four specific components; a summary of issues identified through outreach to downtown stakeholders, a technical assessment of economic and demographic conditions in Plainville and the surrounding region, potential streetscape and other public space improvements and policy and regulatory recommendations that can contribute to the revitalization of downtown Plainville.

This suggested redevelopment scenario builds upon the information and recommendations provided by the "Downtown Action Strategy," and also focuses on an additional element of downtown revitalization not focused on in the Action Strategy, housing. The goal of this scenario is to bring the focus of the community back to downtown, to reestablish the core as a center for commerce and social interaction. Since the 1950's, downtown Plainville has undergone a series of sweeping changes that have dramatically altered and diminished economic viability. Strong sentiment exists among residents Town officials and business owners to see the downtown recapture its status as the focal point of the Town. Based upon an inventory and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Plainville present-day downtown, in conjunction with an

assessment completed by the Connecticut Economic Resource Council (CERC) in 2005 this development scenario sets forth a broad range of planning, economic, transportation and design objectives and recommendations that can begin to fulfill the vision of Downtown Plainville as seen by the residents, community officials and business owners. The "Downtown Action Strategy" provided relevant strategies that are valuable and hold great opportunity for creating change in downtown Plainville. Those strategies should not be overlooked and will be reiterated in this chapter. However, the focus of the strategies in this chapter will be on downtown housing issues. In general the goal of this development scenario is to build upon the Downtown's strengths and reestablish the traditional elements of the Downtown that made it a strong economic and cultural center. The recommendations that came out of the "Downtown Action Strategy," are relevant and recommendations provide herein are not intended to replace those strategies, but to support them and to concentrate on elements not focused on in the "Strategy."

### **Strengths**

Despite its dramatic alteration, downtown Plainville still possesses a number of strengths that provide the framework that revitalization efforts can be based off of. These include:

- A mix of land uses
- Existing Government and civic facilities
- Historically and architecturally significant buildings and areas
- Adjacent residential neighborhoods
- On-street parking
- Gridded street network
- Buildings suitable for adaptive reuse

### **Weaknesses**

Downtown Plainville exhibits a number of weaknesses that limit its role as the center of commercial and social activity:

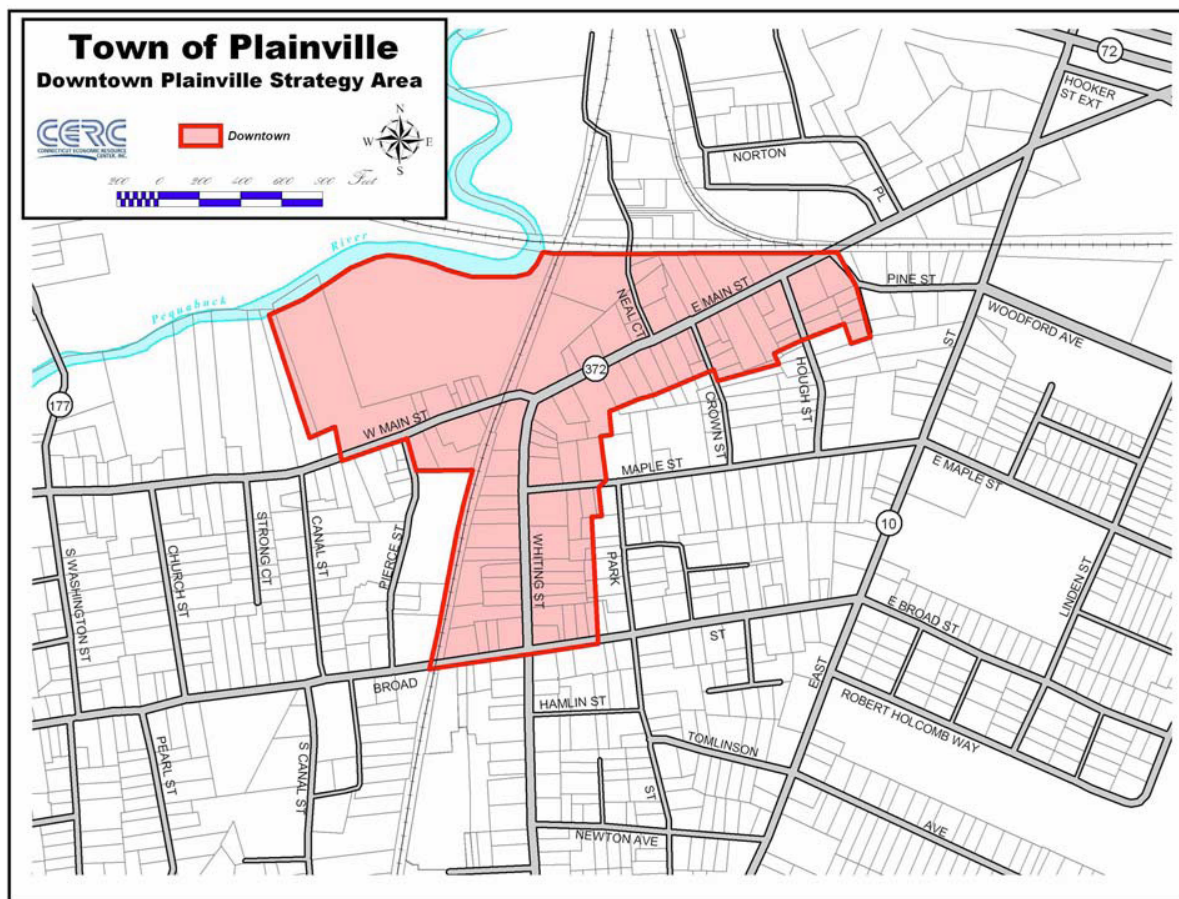
- Low intensity of development
- Underutilized industrial property
- Few unique attractions
- Unfriendly pedestrian environment
- Automobile orientation
- Housing variety
- Parking management
- Lack of wayfinding Signage
- Lack of a unified theme/Sense of cohesiveness
- Lack of public gathering Space

Simply stated, building off existing strengths of downtown and providing solutions to weaknesses provides a clear path to restoring the vitality of downtown.

## Keys to a Revitalized Downtown Plainville

### Defining the Downtown

The area that was defined as Downtown Plainville by the CERC Downtown Action Strategy is shown in the map below outlined in red. One of the most important factors for physical, policy or regulatory effort to revitalize downtown Plainville, is to geographically define downtown Plainville. The red outlined area on the map below is the geographic extent of downtown Plainville as defined by the CERC Downtown Action strategy. Physical improvements, regulation changes and character issues discussed in the context of downtown must be defined geographically. The discussion and recommendations provided in this section of the plan apply to the area defined in the map below. It will be particularly important to define the downtown area if the community decides to adopt specific land use, design, signage and parking regulations for the downtown.



2009

TOWN OF PLAINVILLE

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

## Housing

An economically healthy, vibrant downtown has a high-quality, pedestrian friendly environment, as well as a diverse mix of uses and activities. With those elements a sense of place can develop organically. The key to establishing these features in downtown Plainville is people. People must live, work and visit downtown for it to be successful. A local residential population is necessary for a dynamic, economically-strong downtown. A substantial residential base near and in the downtown has a positive effect on the retail climate, local transportation systems, and quality of life. A densely inhabited downtown creates an exciting place to live, and promotes a positive pedestrian atmosphere. In turn, downtown residents enjoy the convenient availability of community services, retail goods, cultural activities, and nearby employment. A critical mass of residents that live downtown is essential to breathe life back into the downtown Plainville.

Great opportunity exists to create high quality well designed housing in downtown that appeals to a spectrum of citizens at all income levels. The highest demand for downtown housing comes from young singles, couples without children, empty nesters and retirees, and a range of non-traditional families. The need for well appointed market rate housing is equal to the need for work- force housing and equal to the need for affordable housing in order to establish a true mix of downtown residents.

To get mixed use development downtown that includes a residential component Plainville will need to attract visionary developers who see opportunity, but who also expect a reasonable return on their investment. The Town must first determine the number of housing units necessary to achieve a critical mass able to support the desired retail and service establishment downtown. Also, the density allowed in the downtown should be reconsidered. Thriving downtowns of similar size in towns with roughly the same population as Plainville allow higher density residential development. 1,000 to 1,300 square feet of lot area for each dwelling unit is common, while Plainville requires greater than 2,000 square feet, except for efficiency units. In Plainville, this requirement calculates to roughly 14 units per acre. However, increasing the permitted density may not be necessary, rather, requiring housing/mixed use development be built to the maximum of approximately 14 units per acre may be a better approach.

If Plainville chooses not to increase allowed densities, the community should consider requiring mixed used developments to be built to currently allowed maximum densities. Make the current maximum density the required density. Alternatively, zoning incentives such as density bonuses or *transfer of development rights* as well as waivers or reductions of certain zoning requirements should be considered. Also, tax incentives offered to developers willing to build to Town specified densities should be considered. Further analysis of existing residential projects in the downtown should be completed before policy decisions are made.

### Transfer of Development Rights

TDR regulation is a zoning strategy designed to direct development from one site to another in order to preserve a publicly valued resource. While most TDR programs pertain to the preservation of farmland or natural resources, the method can be used to preserve open space and redirect development to more appropriate locations

The basic TDR premise is that the excess development rights that would otherwise encourage the destruction or redevelopment of the resource at the "sending" site constitute a marketable commodity that can be sold to a "receiving" site that places a value on additional development density. Within this regulatory framework the public benefits derived by the preservation of the resource work in concert with private goals of greater return on investment generated by increased development opportunity at the receiving site.

### Key Downtown Housing Issues:

- Encourage housing styles, lifestyle amenities to appeal to individuals in the 25- 35 age range
- Consider increasing density
- Consider required residential development be built to maximum allowed density
- Encouraging mixed-use development that requires retail uses at street level, and offices and dwelling units above
- Review current parking requirements and allow for increased reduction for mixed use developments
- Consider prohibiting single-family homes in the Central Commercial and General Commercial Zones
- Consider prohibiting gas stations and automotive uses in the Central Commercial zones

### Redevelopment Parcels

The key element is that Plainville must ensure that the density is sufficient so as to be attractive to the development community and provide for the concentration needed to achieve a vital downtown. There are a number of sites within the downtown that are underutilized or are used for purposes that are inconsistent with Plainville's goals for downtown. As discussed in the Downtown Action Strategy" the White Oak Property, on the north side of West Main Street immediately west of the railroad tracks is the largest redevelopment property within downtown. The property is currently zoned General Industrial. This zoning designation allows for a number of uses that are not appropriate for downtown Plainville. The Planning and Zoning Commission should explore the possibility of rezoning this parcel so that currently permitted heavy industrial uses will impact the broader goals for downtown Plainville. The logical use of the property, to achieve the vision for downtown Plainville, is a mixed use development that includes:

- Retail uses along West Main Street, at the current setback line.
- Buildings and uses that are oriented towards and enhance the potential canal greenway on the east side of the site.
- Preservation of open space with public access along Pequabuck River.
- Parking areas not prominently visible from street or canal path.
- Residential use as part of a mixed use development.

In addition, an analysis of underutilized properties in the proximity to the Town Center should be undertaken.

### Actions to Improve Downtown Plainville

In order to better compete and add character to the downtown the downtown district in Plainville must be differentiated. Offering unique niche services and products dissimilar to what is available elsewhere in the community is one way to do that. A market niche is a collection of stores, services, restaurants and attractions that follow a theme and appeal to a segment of a potential customer base. Additionally, improvements, some of which are already underway, must be made to make downtown vital and the focal point of the community. Refer to the Community Facilities Chapter for information for ongoing improvement to the downtown infrastructure and streetscape.

The "Downtown Action Strategy" addresses a multitude of areas that must be addressed to improve the form and function of downtown Plainville. While there is a sizable list of changes necessary to improve the vitality of downtown Plainville, many of these objectives are not discrete tasks, but part of an overall program for improvement to the downtown. Many of these suggested actions are proven revitalization strategies that are tailored to more closely match the characteristics and needs of Plainville. The specific list of needed improvements is based on the following general principals:

- Sustainability
- Compact Development
- Mix of Uses
- Accessibility and Transportation
- Cultural Context
- Pedestrian Orientation

The CERC Action Strategy identified particular elements of the downtown that with improvement, would contribute to increased vitality of the downtown. There are design, regulatory and policy changes that cumulatively can improve the economic and cultural strength of Downtown Plainville. The following is a summary of those topical areas contained in the CERC Action Strategy. Each of these strategies are discussed in greater detail in the "Downtown Action Strategy. Again, these strategies are in addition to creating additional housing downtown and the greater mixing of uses that will be an essential part of continued revitalization efforts.

- Improving pedestrian circulation, and safety
- Improved control of vehicular circulation
- Developing safe accessible public spaces
- Establish connections to and expose beauty of the Pequabuck River
- Improve bicycle access to downtown and establish connections
- Develop consistent visual interesting signage for wayfinding
- Develop strong commercial signage regulations
- Encourage multi-modal transportation routes through downtown
- Utilize strength of the heritage of the Farmington Canal as a theme for downtown
- Coordinate Special events in the downtown
- Develop a revolving loan fund for façade improvements
- Develop parking standards that create minimum of spaces needed, safe and provide efficient access
- Develop a business attraction campaign

Planning work for each of these items needs to be conducted and where appropriate visual aids showing how these elements can be incorporated into the downtown should be provided. While much work has been done to date to improve downtown Plainville, additional planning may need to be done during the planning period in order to promote compact and "pedestrian scale" development consistent with the character and history of downtown Plainville. These efforts may include:

- Completing additional design work that furthers the public space design work completed in conjunction with the Downtown Action Strategy, potentially including a model massing study of a mixed use development concentrated on one of the potential redevelopment parcels in downtown,
- Developing programs to provide financial assistance to property owners who will upgrade their properties and implement designs that are orientated toward pedestrians,
- Creating strategies to help establish shared parking areas as a means of increasing density and diversity of uses (since studies of parking needs in mixed-use areas has found that fewer parking spaces are needed for the floor area that exists), and
- Initiating programs to improve public spaces that may include sponsoring opportunities for the public to display art and sponsor the purchase of street furniture and other features that provide visual interest and create a sense of place.
- Developing a façade improvement program
- Reviewing potential uses of surplus Town owned property in front of the Police Station and Fire House.

### **Leadership**

However, successful revitalization will depend on more than even the most well thought out goals and strategies to achieve them. Any revitalization effort is built around people. Individuals, organized groups, government officials and the development community must share the following responsibilities:

- Committed leadership
- Broad based participation
- A shared vision of the future
- Realistic goals and plan of action
- Effective communication
- Management of implementation
- Recognition of efforts
- Use of outside resources

Creating partnerships that work towards the same objectives is essential for downtown improvement. One of the most important but also difficult aspects of any revitalization effort is to create the organizational framework that brings together various interest groups and individuals. Each group comes to the table with its own agenda and sphere of interest. Without coordination, these efforts may not be supportive of each other, and in some cases may be at odds.

Arguably the most important element of implementing downtown revitalization strategies is organization, having an individual or small team that serves as a primary contact person and a guide for the process, one who can bridge similar but disparate interest is key in most revitalization efforts. Plainville should establish a means to create a downtown manager position that may also share some of the duties of the Economic Development Director. The individual does not have to be a municipal employee, but that is one option. The key is that this individual has the time and ability to dedicate themselves to downtown



Plainville issues and provides outreach and communication with the community at large. That step of would be a clear indication that Plainville is committed to bring various groups together and reorganize them under an umbrella organization and further the redevelopment of downtown Plainville in general. The appointment of a downtown manager has been instrumental in guiding changes in downtowns across Connecticut.

This individual should have strong organizational skills, be a consensus builder, show a commitment to fund-raising and be able to delegate responsibilities. Motivational skills are an important attribute, and the program leader must have genuine excitement and commitment to the project. A downtown manger can provide the following:

- Implementing business recruitment and retention efforts
- Coordinating communication programs and efforts
- Coordinating special events promoting Downtown
- Mediating difficult issues diving the Town, residents and business owners
- Supervising maintenance and beautification projects
- Coordinating Downtown marketing and promotion efforts

### **Village District Zoning**

Since overall configuration and design is so important to creating a pedestrian- friendly area, Plainville should consider establishing a new zoning district the downtown. This could include a design-focused regulation: a "village district". Village District zoning will allow Plainville to accomplish many of the suggested physical improvements listed above, strengthen the cohesiveness of the downtown and therefore support the sense of place of downtown Plainville.

The Village Districts Act, passed by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1998, is an aggressive tool to help municipalities protect and preserve their community character and historic development patterns. The law allows towns to designate village districts as a way of protecting sections of towns that have distinctive character, landscape and historic structures. Within these areas, the town zoning commission may adopt regulations governing such matters as the design and placement of buildings and maintenance of public views.

Under a village district zoning designation specific regulations are drafted that require:

- Proposed building and building modifications are a harmonious with their surroundings and to the use scale, and architecture of nearby related buildings;
- Spaces and structures visible from the road are designed to enhance the visual amenities in the area around the proposed building or modification
- The characteristics of residential or community property are evaluated for compatibility with the local architecture motif, and the maintenance of views, historic structures, and landscaping; and
- The disruption to historic and other significant structures are minimized.

Individual development proposals must be designed to be compatible with other uses in the immediate neighborhood. They must meet various objectives, which include:

- Reinforcing existing building and streetscape patterns;
- Complementing existing patterns of landscape design;
- Supporting a uniform architectural theme through such features as exterior signs, lighting, and accessory structures; and
- Reinforcing the scale, proportions, and architectural features of existing buildings.

Village District Zoning provides Plainville the statutory framework to strive for the development patterns, designs and organization of public and private space needed to respect existing character and the history of the downtown. All applications, according to State law, for new construction or substantial construction within the district that are visible from the road must undergo architectural review. An architect chosen by the Commission or a town Design Review Board, including at least one member who is a registered architect in the State of Connecticut must submit their recommendations to the Commission. Village District regulations will allow a defined, compact, walkable, mixed use design rich environment that together has the capability to restore the vitality of downtown Plainville.



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Town Wide Development Scenario

The purpose of the following town wide development scenario is to provide analysis and suggest strategies to improve land use and development patterns. The scenario is an outgrowth of existing strengths of the community, concerns as voiced by community members, sustainable planning practices and opportunities to redirect existing development land use patterns and policies toward articulated goals while addressing demographic and economic realities.

The town wide development scenario offers broad development objectives as well as specific actions that could be used guide land use and policy decisions within the community. The development issues considered include build-out of vacant land, location of residential development, building design, the mix of land/building uses, arrangement of zoning districts, and impact development techniques among other things. There is also consideration for unique issues identified by the public and analysis of current conditions as well as some objectives articulated in the 1998 Plainville POCD but not yet completed. The strategies offered are primarily policy-based but also include some regulatory and geographically based suggestions.

### Buildout

The Town of Plainville has a total area of approximately 9.8 square miles or about 6,150 acres. The Town includes a variety of land uses including industrial, commercial, residential, resource extraction and open space. The predominant land use in Town is low density, single family residential on relatively large lots. Portions of Route 10 in the central corridor of the community and Route 372 in the Connecticut Commons area leading to the New Britain town line continue to function as auto-oriented commercial districts. The western end of the Town consists primarily of residential development. The eastern section of Plainville is comprised of residential development; land owned by the quarrying industry as well as important aquifer recharge lands. Much of the Town's industrial development is located in small developments off of Route 10 as well as larger industrial parks adjacent to the rail line and Robertson Airport in the north central section of Plainville. The community has also taken an active role in acquiring valued open space that is protected from development while also devoting resources to maintaining its parks and the recreation programs they support.

The recent growth rate in Plainville dating back to 2000 indicates that there have been about 25 new residential units per year. While this rate is not considered high, there is sufficient vacant land in each of the residential zoning categories that the current rate of residential development rate could be sustained for an extended period of time. Generally speaking the town has the capacity to sustain additional development. However, the potential to impact the character of the community by continuing contemporary development patterns exists. As development encroaches on undeveloped areas, wildlife corridors, stretches of scenic beauty, the health and natural function of waterbodies may be compromised. Similarly, strains on infrastructure and the road network may arise. Of the approximately 1,629 acres of vacant land in Plainville roughly 1003 acres are zoned residential. Residential development represents the biggest opportunity for growth within the community if zoning districts remain unchanged and permitted commercial and mixed use densities are not altered.

Using a straight line method to complete a buildout analysis for residential development allows an estimate of the number of new residential lots that could be created in Plainville. This calculation, while not exact due to data limitations, provides a calculated approximation of the number of new residential lots that could be created under current zoning regulations. The

straight line method considers the gross vacant land in a particular zoning district and then 25 percent of the gross acreage is subtracted to reflect space needs for roads, infrastructure, and other unbuildable areas such as wetlands and steep slopes. The net acreage is then divided by the minimum lot size. For example in the R-15 zoning district there are roughly 50 acres of vacant land. After a 25 percent reduction, the remaining value is divided by 15,000 square foot, the minimum lot size in the R-15 zoning district, indicating that approximately 89 new lots could be created in the R-15 zoning district. Table 1 shows the number of vacant acres in each residential zoning district and the approximate number of lots that could be established.

**Figure 1:**  
**Potential New Residential Lots**

Zone	Vacant Acres	Lots
R	0	0
R-10	1.64	5
R-11	58.5	173
R-12	13.39	36
R-15	49.76	108
R-20	137.93	225
R-40	742.1	606
	<b>1003</b>	<b>1,153</b>

Source: CCRPA, Urbitran

Under this development scenario we can assume that the potential for the creation of 1,153 new lots exist. However, there is no time frame for the potential development of these lots. First, the recent development patterns of residential land should be described and its strengths and weaknesses identified. 843 acres in Plainville are zoned R-40 and 742 of them are vacant. Much of the residential development that has taken place has not been in this zone. If these vacant lands were developed it is likely that the neighborhoods that resulted would be different than many of the existing neighborhoods where the lots are roughly one half of an acre or less. One acre lots, basically the minimum size of R-40 zones, typically do not have a neighborhood feel. In order to preserve open space, protect natural resource and community character, Plainville should consider encouraging or requiring that new residential development be built in a "conservation-type" development pattern rather than the conventional suburban type pattern. The current zoning regulations allow "Open Space Residential Development" subdivisions by special exception. The community has the ability to make this type of development mandatory.

The purpose of providing a vacant land calculation and the potential number of residential lots is not necessarily to encourage new development patterns but rather to establish a baseline of how much development potential exists in Plainville. From this baseline the community can reasonably predict what changes in services may be needed and how changes in zoning regulations may impact build out of the community.

Considerations related to buildout potential:

- Document existing development patterns and assess how they could be affected by buildout
- Consider requiring open space subdivisions in certain residential zones
- Consider rezoning some residential vacant lands to a higher or lower density to advance a particular development pattern

### General Development Issues

The area zoned as Technology Park along the New Britain City Line has potential access, topography and perceived environmental issues that have hindered development. The Town should consider commissioning an environmental assessment of the area and review and potentially revise zoning standards that may have discouraged development of the area.

Park Street Neighborhood- Properties between Whiting Street and Park Street are used for both residential and commercial purposes. Much of the area was originally used and zoned for residential purposes. However, many of the residentially used properties were made non-conforming when properties were rezoned to commercial. Since that time a number of commercial establishments have populated the properties fronting Whiting Street. Most of the properties off of the street front were not converted to commercial use and still have homes on them. This area, historically, is one of Plainville's strongest and most cohesive neighborhoods. The Town should consider rezoning those properties that are zoned commercial but still have residential uses back to a residential district. Community members voiced their concern about further deterioration of this important neighborhood and about potential conflicts between businesses and residents. This neighborhood will play an important role in the continual resurgence of downtown Plainville.

The Plainville Planning and Zoning Commission and Economic Development Agency should consider conducting a focused land use and opportunities study for undeveloped properties near the intersection of Northwest Drive and Unionville Avenue. Infill development and new development opportunities exist here that should be considered. This area of town may be appropriate for a development node that serves the neighborhoods in this area of town. Development including special needs housing such as age restricted multi-family housing may also be appropriate.

### General Development Issues:

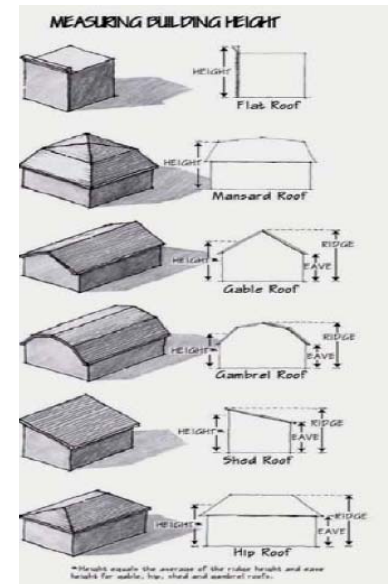
- Consider rezoning residential properties zoned commercial back to commercial for properties between Whiting Street and Park Street
- Conduct a focused land use study for North West Drive and Unionville Avenue Area
- Consider rezoning Technology Park zoned land along New Britain City line to Restricted or General Industrial

## Zoning Ordinance Considerations

Buffer requirements between quarrying activities and residential development should be revisited. An assessment of current buffer requirements and their ability to satisfactorily protect residents from impacts that may be caused by quarrying activities should be considered.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider revising the zoning ordinance to provide a matrix that detail zoning categories and permitted uses in each of the districts. The current format that utilizes a combination of permitted and non-permitted uses is not as user friendly and can be confusing to readers. Categorizing uses under Use Types, such as "Agricultural", "Residential", "Civic", etc., simplifies finding a particular use readers are interested in. Uses permitted in each district, as well as the applicable review "Type" can be easily determined on a matrix.

Diagrams and pictures that supplement definitions or development patterns should be provided within the zoning ordinance to make them more easily understood. The diagram to the right is an example of a diagram that helps to explain how building height is measured.



### Zoning Ordinance Considerations:

- Asses current buffer requirement between resource extraction activities and residential uses and evaluate it ability to prevent land use conflicts
- Consider reorganizing the zoning ordinance to focusing on user friendliness and readability
- Consider using diagrams and figures to improve functionality of zoning ordinance
- Develop clear regulations on what type of home-based businesses are permitted, under what circumstances and the process for receiving town approval to conduct the business
- Other suggested revisions to the zoning ordinance described elsewhere within the Plan include: Sign Regulations, Commercial Landscaping Standards, Village District Zoning Regulations, Home Based Business, Low-Impact Development Techniques, Environmental Review Standards and residential density requirements in General and Central Commercial Zones and Reorganization of the Regulations

## Sustainability Issues

As identified in the Open Space and Natural Resource chapter of this plan, a number of policy and regulatory tools are available to Plainville that would support a more proactive approach to natural resource protection in addition to current efforts such as the adoption of aquifer protection regulations. Additionally, there are a substantial number of development polices and characteristics that can be encouraged and/or required of developers that assist in making a development more

sustainable and decreasing the impact on the natural environment when compared to more traditional development techniques.

Low Impact Development (LID) strategies use careful site design and decentralized stormwater management to reduce the environmental footprint of new growth. Conventional development strategies treat stormwater as a secondary component of site design, usually managed with “pipe-and-pond” systems that collect rainwater and discharge it off site. In contrast, Low Impact Development embraces hydrology as an integrating framework for site design, not a secondary consideration. Existing conditions influence the location of roadways, buildings, and parking areas, as well as the nature of the stormwater management system.

Low-impact development techniques can be encouraged, incentivized, or required through zoning ordinance development regulations. Some important low impact development techniques that are cost effective and can be implemented in almost any development from large commercial developments to single-family homes include the following:

- *Vegetated swales filter strips and infiltration trenches* are an important Low Impact Development technique used to convey stormwater runoff. These open, shallow channels slow runoff, filter it, and promote infiltration into the ground; as a result, runoff volumes are smaller, peak discharge rates are lower, and runoff is cleaner. This approach contrasts with conventional stormwater strategies that rely on gutters and pipes that increase the velocity of runoff and do nothing for water quality



- *Bioretention* areas function as soil and plant-based filtration devices that remove pollutants through a variety of physical, biological, and chemical treatment processes. Studies have found that properly designed and constructed bioretention cells are able to achieve excellent removal of **heavy metals**. Impervious surface water runoff should be directed directly to permeable landscapes or bioretention areas also know as rain gardens whenever possible. The use of this technique further minimizes the need for traditional inefficient and expensive stormwater structures and minimizes impact on down stream water quality.





- *Permeable pavers* offer an alternative to traditional concrete and asphalt surfaces. Most of the 'paving over' in developed areas is due to common roads and parking lots, which play a major role in transporting increased stormwater runoff and contaminant loads to receiving waters. Alternative paving materials can be used to locally infiltrate rainwater and reduce the runoff leaving a site. Use of these materials can also eliminate problems with standing water, provide for groundwater recharge, control erosion of streambeds and riverbanks, facilitate pollutant removal, and provide for a more aesthetically pleasing site. The effective imperviousness of any given project is reduced while land use is maximized. Alternative pavers can even eliminate the requirement for underground storm sewer pipes and conventional stormwater retention / detention systems. The drainage of paved areas and traffic surfaces by means of permeable systems is an important building block within an overall Low Impact Development scheme that seeks to achieve a stormwater management system that closely mimicks natural conditions. A way to encourage the use of these materials is to develop a relatively low maximum impervious surface limitation on development sites but then offer lot coverage bonuses if permeable surfaces are used on parking and walkway surfaces

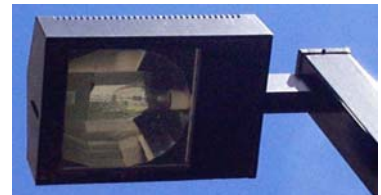


- Light pollution is the scattering of light into the sky or on locations where it is not wanted or needed. It is caused by unshielded lights, spotlights, and ornamental lights that are directed toward the sky or at wide angles rather than straight down.

There are three types of light pollution:

- glare (light striking your eye directly from the source),
- sky glow (the garish hue seen overhead from artificial light scattering in the atmosphere), and
- spillover (light that extends beyond the targeted object, including light trespass).

Lights that don't direct light where it is intended waste energy, create glare and light pollution, and cause light trespass. Full cut-off outdoor light fixtures reduce all of these by directing light only where it is supposed to go. Plainville should take strong steps to address the cause of light pollution within the community. Regulations should be developed that address the types of light fixtures that can be used and the direction that light can shine. Requiring a lighting plan that indicates the fixtures proposed, the maximum and average light intensity levels throughout a site, is the most effective way to ensure that a property is properly lit without unnecessary light spillover and pollution.






## Commercial/ Industrial landscaping

The current landscaping standards should be improved to require a landscape plan completed by a registered landscape architect. Standards, calling for the amount of landscaping based on the size of the lot should be established and the purpose of the landscaping should be not only aesthetic but also to minimize the impact of development. Properly executed landscaping provides a variety of ecological, community, and visual benefits including an aesthetically appealing environment, creating a balance between hard streetscapes and soft landscapes, establishing or enhancing vegetative buffers, creating rain gardens to abate stormwater impacts, promoting native and water efficient plantings, and protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat. Revised landscaping regulations should place a strong emphasis on using native species

## Access Management

Access management focuses on ways to improve traffic flow by reducing reasons why people may get held up in traffic, such as the number of driveways and left turns. Strategies to improve access management include using shared driveways and interconnected parking lots. Plainville should evaluate land use activities along major routes to find opportunities to employ access management, either at the time new development is proposed or as part of a town initiative. Shared driveways and locating points of ingress and egress off of main roads are important access management issues. Plainville should consider developing an access management plan that is referenced in the zoning regulations.

### Access management improvement strategies:

-  Develop an access management plan that applies to public and private projects and is referenced in the zoning regulations

## Commercial Infill

Infill refers to new development on vacant, bypassed, and underutilized land within built up areas of existing communities, where infrastructure is already in place. Infill development fills gaps in existing communities and plays a critical role towards achieving community revitalization, resource and land conservation, and offers alternatives to sprawl development. Infill development conserves a community's financial resources by taking advantage of existing infrastructure, increases walkability by contributing to safe and attractive pedestrian environments, and creates new opportunities for mixed-use neighborhoods that recapture the "sense of place." Infill can contribute to unmet commercial, economic, social, housing, or civic needs in the existing community.

Plainville should consider developing infill development regulation, potentially through a floating zone, to ensure that infill development adds to the character of the area and does not detract from it. Numerous opportunities along Route 10 exist to add to existing commercial development. Many buildings could accommodate a second story which would provide additional commercial and office space and add to the visual quality of building along Route 10. Sites that have unnecessarily large parking lots could also provide space for outparcels that accommodate additional small buildings for accessory businesses.

#### **Actions to improve infill development:**

- Create an incentive for turning non-conforming residential property into conforming commercial development in designated areas
- Develop building design recommendations for commercial corridors and establish incentives for fulfillment
- Introduce access management strategies
- Improve landscaping standards
- Develop a requirement that street trees, of specifications decided upon by the town, are planted as part of any development or redevelopment project in a commercial corridor
- Complete a corridor study along major commercial arterials to see exactly what infill opportunities exist based on actual land availability and other constraints
- Establish incentives that reward developments that implement low impact development strategies

#### **Safe Routes to School**

Safe Routes to School is both a planning and educational program designed to make the neighborhoods around schools safer for walking and cycling.

This goal is accomplished:

- o by promoting awareness of hazards on local roads, and
- o by making improvements to roadways and sidewalks through the use of: traffic calming elements, signage and roadway marking improvements, and
- o installing or improvement of sidewalks and crosswalks.

Federal legislation and funding currently exist to support SRTS efforts, but these funds alone cannot meet all the needs of communities across the United States. Most programs can benefit from a mixture of local, state, federal, and private funding.

Plainville should consider implementing the program and coordinating it with other efforts already mentioned in this plan such as a sidewalk maintenance plan, improving pedestrian connections and establishing bikeways to important community facilities. The program website (<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/index.cfm>) provides detailed information about program development, marketing and promotion and program evaluation.

## Outstanding Recommendations

The following is a summary of recommendation that were identified in the 1997 Plan of Conservation and Development. The issues to be addressed by the listed recommendations still exist and warrant additional attention.

- The town should consider seeking grants to fund an assessment of the old quarry area along North Mountain Road including a concept plan for the development of this area. Included in the study should be consideration of Exit 36 off of I-84 to provide access to land on the west side of the highway and an in-depth review of site constraints including man-made and fill areas
- A targeted economic development effort should be developed for properties on the north side of Route 372
- Update sign regulations to: develop specific standards for varying development districts, taking into consideration, scale massing and setback appropriate for each development type
- Review existing permitted uses and determine which uses should require a Special Permit based on characteristics such as creation of peak hour trips over a certain threshold. For instance, any use generating over 100 peak-hour trips may warrant the consideration of a Special Permit anywhere within Plainville

## Development of the Geographic Information System (GIS)

It has been estimated that as much as 90% of the information that local municipalities deal with is geographic in nature: Tax parcels, addresses, roads, zoning, land use, and many other data that is managed by government all share a common thread: reference to geographic location. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) have the unique ability to tie information together in a common system that can be shared not only throughout each town department, but also readily distributed to businesses and private citizens who rely on these data.

Geography and GIS offer a very powerful way of both storing and searching through information, combining text search and geographic search to allow analysts and decision-makers to find and see relevant information faster. Geography along with GIS offer a new and much improved framework for storing, identifying and analyzing the overwhelming volume of databases, maps, text documents, web sites, and other information available today.

A number of other benefits are generally attributed to GIS. They include:

- Improved productivity in providing public information.
- Improved efficiency in updating maps.

- The ability to track and monitor growth and development over time.
- Improved ability to aggregate data for specific subareas.
- Ability to perform and display different types of professional analysis that are too cumbersome or time consuming using manual methods, and
- Improved policy formulation

Plainville should invest in acquiring and updating GIS data, while also developing protocol that will guide the long term maintenance and upgrading of the data. Similarly, in order to ensure that the community receives maximum benefit from their investment in a GIS system, efforts to staff persons trained in how to use and maintain the GIS system must be made.

**Actions to Improve GIS capability:**

- Pursue creation of updateable parcel data
- Link parcel data with tax assessor parcel data
- Research grant opportunities to assist with costs associated with data collection
- Designate funding for GIS training for town staff and for continued professional development
- Make GIS data available to various town departments
- Develop a protocol for updating and saving GIS information



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Community Facilities

#### Introduction

Plainville has a wide array of publicly owned community facilities that contribute significantly to the community's character and quality of life. The services provided by the facilities as well as the municipal infrastructure are one of the primary functions of town government. The availability of services, condition of buildings and quality of service and capacity for change affect Plainville's land use patterns, density of development and quality of life in the community in general.

The Plan of Conservation and Development and this chapter of the POCD specifically provide an opportunity to review the entire array of municipal community facilities, identify needs and opportunities and establish priorities.

Community facilities in Plainville include general government buildings, the educational system, public safety, social services, recreation space and programs and public works. As a community Plainville owns numerous buildings and recreational lands including four parks, five schools, and a library among others.

Community facilities must be adequate to meet the needs of the community, maintained and managed to extend their utility, provide the most efficient service possible and designed to adapt to changing needs. Community facilities must be continually evaluated to ensure they set an example of what Plainville strives to be, are efficiently run and maintained to provide the highest level of services in a sustainable manner.

The provision of municipal infrastructure and community facilities is one of the most important town government functions. Most of the standard government functions are provided out of Town Hall in Downtown Plainville. Equally important services are provided from the police station and fire station and other town offices located at 50 Whiting Street.

Responding to present and future space needs for government services, Plainville has embarked on a number of expansion and rehabilitation projects relative to government facilities. These projects include reorganization of space within Town Hall and expansion of the library and the senior center. Most of Plainville's town facilities are new enough so that they were constructed or could be retrofitted to accommodate handicapped access. However, as needs continuously change, even if the overall population remains static, Plainville must engage in programs to evaluate the needs of the community and respond by making the corresponding change in community facilities. For example, the aging population in Plainville, as evidenced by demographic data will require changes in services. Other factors such as regulatory requirements, increasing energy costs and sustainable building practices must be considered in short-term and long-term planning.

The overall goal of community facilities is to provide the community with facilities and services that meet the needs of the community but in the most efficient and sustainable way while being prepared to meet changing needs.

**Goal: Provide Facilities/ Programs to Meet Community Needs**

Complete: Fire Station Upgrades  
School Improvements  
Wastewater Treatment Facilities Upgrades  
Proposed Downtown Improvements

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Address: Senior Center Space Needs  
Changing Senior Needs  
Management Plans for Municipal Facilities  
Municipal Meeting Space Needs  
Recreation Space/ Programming Needs

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Monitor: Social Service Needs  
Senior Service Needs  
General Facility Needs  
Library Space Needs

### **Complete Fire Station Upgrades**

The Fire Station is centrally located within the Town on West Main Street and can service all locations within the town via State Route 372 (West Main Street.) The facility has 10 overhead doors including five drive-through bays. The building is sufficiently sized, effectively housing the entire fleet of fire apparatus.

Current Fire Apparatus include:  
3- Class A Pumper Trucks  
1- Aerial Apparatus Trucks  
1- Heavy Rescue Truck  
1- Mini Pumper truck  
2- Utility Apparatus Trucks  
1- Water Rescue Trailer  
1- Fire Safety Trailer

As apparatus sizes have not changed in several years because of highway limits, this area should serve the community for 25+ additional years.

Office areas within the fire station include an administrative office, training office, Fire Company office, an all purpose area including a full commercial kitchen, and a firefighter lounge area. Unless conditions warrant adding full time firefighters, which is not planned, these areas should serve the fire company adequately for the next 15-20 years.

An independent review of the fire station, fire station equipment and staff identified future needs that will need to be addressed to maintain the current level of fire protection services. The fire station building itself has several deficiencies. The deficiencies are a result of design flaws in the building.

The first station need has to do with heating of the building. The heating system used in the building is appropriate for the size and shape of the building but due to design errors in the ceiling significant heat loss and outside air infiltration occur overtaxing the heating system. The system can not fulfill winter heating needs because of the ceiling design errors. Plainville has budgeted \$125,000 for the next fiscal year for redesign and repair of the ceiling.

The second building flaw has to do with the roof. The roof was originally designed for a metal roof. Due to budget constraints during construction of the station an asphalt shingle roof was installed. Since the building opened in 1988 the building has leaked and continues to do so. The roof has been earmarked for replacement, though funding has not been specifically allocated for the repairs.

Currently, fire services are staffed entirely by volunteers including a part-time office assistant. Over the next 5-8 years there will be a significant need for apparatus drivers and firefighters during the standards working hours. Current policy requires that firefighters must retire by the age 65. Over the next 5-8 years the maximum age policy will reduce the number of daytime drivers and firefighters by one-half of the current levels.

#### **Actions to Fulfill Fire Station Upgrades:**

- Complete ceiling repairs with already budgeted funds
- Budget funds to complete roof repairs
- Evaluate need to hire full-time personal to address staffing gaps and maintain response time and ISO rating
- Organize campaign to recruit additional volunteers
- Develop a procedure to evaluate equipment needs on a standardized schedule
- Develop an improvement plan to be incorporated into a 2-4 year capitol improvement plan

#### **Complete School Improvements and Monitor Future Needs**

The Plainville Community School system currently consists of 5 facilities, three elementary schools, the Linden Street School, located in the geographic center of town, the Toffolon School, located in the northwest quadrant, and the Wheeler School; located in the north central section of town. The Middle School of Plainville is located directly across Northwest Drive from the Toffolon School and the Plainville High School is in the geographic center of town two blocks south of the Linden Street School.

According to the Plainville Board of Education these five schools have served the town well until the past few years. Current enrollments have the schools operating at or above their respective capacities (based on target class sizes determined by the Board of Education). In addition, most of the facilities are 30 to 50 years old, and the original part of Linden, which is still in use as an elementary school is close to 100 years old. With today's educational environment relying in a large part on technology and distance learning techniques, some of the facilities are outdated. Many of the facilities are no longer in compliance with codes and regulations now in place to provide accessibility for the handicapped and physically impaired individuals, assuring life safety measures in case of emergencies, and requiring the structural integrity of the buildings





themselves. Additionally, these buildings, except the Middle School, were built in a time when fossil fuels were inexpensive by today's standards and energy efficiency was not a priority. Today the town is paying the price for thermally inefficient buildings.

Given the issues with the school buildings the Plainville Board of Education engaged the expertise of an education facilities consultant in 2002 to layout an effective plan for future construction projects for improvements in those building most in need of upgrades. The Long Range Schools plan, available on the Plainville Board of Education website (<http://www.plainvilleschools.org/>), recommended a series of four steps to modernize the school facilities and accommodate future programmatic needs and school enrollment expectations. Specific details of the upgrades as well as a schedule for the school upgrades are also available on the Board of Education website.

Currently, the \$44 million renovation to the Plainville High School is in its final phase and completion is expected at the end of August of 2008. A \$21 million renovation to the Toffolon School is scheduled to be completed in December of 2008. When the facility upgrades are complete, facility space will meet or exceed school enrollment projections. However, the current space used by the Board of Education, the former police station is insufficient; there is not enough office or meeting space to meet the needs of the Central Office.

School enrollment projections were completed in 2007 and are available from the Board of Education. Total enrollment is not projected to change significantly through 2011. Still, the Board of Education must continue to monitor future needs considering changing demographics, technology, educational needs as well as State and Federal mandates.

#### **Actions to Complete School Improvements and Monitor Needs:**

-  Follow the 2002 Long Range Plan
-  Ensure scheduled renovations are completed
-  Continually update school enrollment projections
-  Conduct an assessment of B.O.E space needs and develop recommendations to meet space needs including renovation the old Linden Street School Building

#### **Complete Wastewater Treatment Facilities Upgrades**

The Department of Technical and Physical services is responsible for public sewer plans and policies and connections to the sewer system. Public sewers service approximately 85 percent of Plainville. Of those areas not currently served by public sewer it is estimated that 75 percent of the currently unsewered area will not be connected to the public sewer system. Financial considerations, topography and other environmental features are the limiting factors for those areas that are not likely to be served by public sewers.

There are four areas of Town that may be sewerred in the next ten years. These four areas include the Honor Height and Bonnie Village neighborhood of State Route 177, also known as Unionville Avenue, a small undeveloped industrial area of off Northwest Drive and undeveloped land in the northeast corner of Town adjacent to Interstate 84. With the exception of







these four localized areas, expansion of the Plainville sewer system is not expected. No major sewer extension projects are expected during the next ten years.

Currently, as this plan is begin completed, the Town's wastewater treatment facility is undergoing major upgrades to replace an outdated and inefficient facility. In addition to the age of the facility, required compliance with contemporary nitrogen level standards were a major impetus for the upgrading of the treatment facility. The work on the wastewater treatment facility will be completed in 2009. The new state of the art facility will not need upgrades during the next ten years unless new regulations or permit requirements that are not currently adopted are instituted. Also, all of the towns pump stations have been recently upgraded and can service the Town's needs effectively over the next 10 years.

One area that does need attention is the conveyance component of the public sewer system. Upgrades to the aging piping system will prevent future problems. Currently, the piping and manholes allow infiltration and inflow significantly increasing peak flow during wet periods. The concern is that upgrades are not made and infiltration continues causing surcharging of the system. Surcharging or overflow of the system has the potential to cause serious public health, safety and environmental risks.

#### **Actions to Complete Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrades and Future Needs:**

-  Allow upgrading work to continue and be completed by late 2009 target date
-  Conduct needs analysis and financial implications of sewer expansion in 4 specific areas of Town
-  Complete assessment and action plan to address aging piping and manhole system
-  Develop emergency action plan to deal with overflow conditions

#### **Continue to Implement Downtown Improvements**

Downtown Plainville was the heart and soul of the community for decades and will be again. A safe, secure pedestrian friendly environment that is visually interesting and a place for social gathering is key to restoring the vitality of Downtown.

Over the years building facades have deteriorated, sidewalks and curbing have begun to breakdown, street crossing markers have disappeared. As part of the plan to combat the deteriorating downtown Plainville commissioned the Connecticut Economic Resource Center and the Yale Urban Design Workshop in 2005 to prepare a Downtown Action strategy to enhance the downtown from design, organization and economic development perspectives. Design suggestions such as raised street crossing, bump-outs and other pedestrian oriented design elements as well as the creation of a town green were suggested. The Strategy was completed in 2005 and was broken into three work phases.

Phase I of the public space improvements began in 2008 and is nearly complete. The projected budget for work is \$580,000.00. The geographic extent of Phase I work includes both sides of Whiting Street, from Maple Street north to the intersection of East and West Main Street.

Improvements for Phase I include:

- Removal of the old trolley bed underneath Whiting Street, reconstruct base and repave including “stamped pavers” at crosswalks.
- Removal of old curbing, redesign including “bump outs” for traffic calming, replace with granite curbs.
- Remove and replace sidewalks with combination concrete slab and “stamped and stained” pavers.
- Install period lighting along length of project area.
- Install planters at select locations within project area.
- Install benches and trash receptacles within project area.

Phase II has been bid and a contract award was granted for a base bid cost of \$618,401.00. The improvement area of Phase II includes the South sides of East Main Street and West Main Street from the termination of Phase I improvements on Whiting Street, west, to the train tracks that cross West Main Street and east, to termination of the “Neri Building” property line. On the north side of East and West Main Streets, the improvement area proceeds from the railroad tracks, east, to the termination of the Municipal Center property.




Some of the improvements associated with Phase II may be undertaken by the Town of Plainville as an “in-kind” donation to the project. Specifically, some the pavement removal and landscaping rehabilitation in conjunction with the closure of the easterly entrance to the Municipal Center may be done by the Town. There are several alternate design schemes that may be installed that may further affect the scope of work.

Improvements for Phase II include:

- Removal of the traffic light in front of the Municipal Center entrance on the east side of the building. Closure of that entrance and addition of walkways and landscaping.
- Reconfiguration of the remaining traffic light in front of the municipal center; signalize traffic from Whiting Street, East and West Main Streets, and the Municipal Center.
- Realign and widen for new Municipal Center entrance and exit to the west of the building to align with relocated traffic signal.
- Provide new sidewalks, curbing, traffic calming measures and street furniture as described in Phase I of the project.

Phase III improvements include similar sidewalk treatments east along East Main Street and west along West Main Street. An additional work alternative that may be part of the third phase includes important design and place making elements such as “way finding” and “gateway” features. These improvements currently lack funding and the Town has not yet identified any potential sources.

**Action to Continue Downtown Improvements:**

-  Monitor installation of Phase I improvements currently in progress
-  Ensure administrative details are executed in preparation of Phase II work
-  Research and identify funding sources for Phase III

## Address Senior Center Space Needs

The role of a municipal senior center has changed over the years to keep pace with the needs of the aging population. At one time senior centers were predominantly social and recreational facilities. While continuing to serve those functions, senior centers have evolved to become a base for the provision of a variety of informational and social services to seniors.

The Plainville Senior Citizens Center located at 200 East Street, serves as the "hub" in the Plainville Community for activities, programs and services for individuals over the age of 60 and their family members. The Plainville Senior Citizens Center has been selected by the North Central Area Agency on Aging as a "Designated Focal Point" in the North Central Connecticut's Aging Services Network.

The current facility is inadequate in terms of size. A one million dollar facility expansion project has begun that will add 3,300 square feet to the existing 10,000 square foot facility. When the expansion project is completed the additional space should satisfy programming and service needs for the next 10 years.

Parking at the Center has been and continues to be a significant problem. The Senior Center has initiated a fundraising campaign to solicit donations for a new parking lot. It is anticipated that by the end of 2009 the parking lot will be completed adding 22 parking spaces to the existing lot.

### Actions to Address Senior Center Space Needs:

- Monitor Expansion project through completion
- Continue to solicit donations for new parking lot
- Develop space and equipment needs capitol plan for 10 year horizon
- Increase fundraising and grant solicitation campaign to secure funds for space and equipment needs

## Address Changing Senior Needs:

The Plainville Senior Citizens Center offers numerous activities ranging from health and wellness classes, education, outreach, financial assistance, caregivers and family support,, insurance assistance, transportation, volunteerism, trips, leisure services and intergenerational programming. Historically, Plainville has been on the cutting edge of providing quality services and unique programming to accommodate modern senior activities. The 3,300 square foot addition mentioned earlier provided space for a computer lab, fitness room, and health and wellness activities. Also, an Outdoor Adventure program was established, which offers activities such as horseback riding, kayaking, and hiking among others. This is an example of the exemplary services designed to meet the needs of an active elderly population.

The Department also offers social services and homebound services for individuals over age 60. Increases in programming and services have increased exponentially over the past 30 years, yet the number of full-time staff has not. The Department consistently supplements staffing needs with grants but programming needs continually exceed available staffing. The

Senior Center relies heavily on volunteer services but is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain qualified individuals who are willing to commit their time.

Another need of the senior population is affordable senior housing. For example, the waiting list of the Plainville Housing Authority has been closed over for the last three years, and the waiting period for housing is 2 years at a minimum. As demographic data indicates, the population over 60 is steadily increasing, yet the number of affordable senior housing has not. This housing issue is addressed further in the housing section of the Plan.

**Actions to Address Senior Needs:**

- Evaluate senior program needs to determine the type and amount of space and staff needs to provide these service sand programs
- Continually evaluate the type of services desired by the senior population
- Continue fundraising efforts to increase programming capabilities
- Develop documentation that evidences need for additional staff
- Develop Capitol Plan to asses and articulate additional space and staffing needs over the next 10 years

**Address Management Plans for Municipal Facilities and Equipment**

Municipal buildings are an important investment and long-term responsibility of the community. Because of the different community needs the facilities are managed and operated by different agencies. While this approach may provide the individual agencies with the maximum control and flexibility they desire, it can be a challenge to understand and inventory what the overall maintenance and upgrade demands will be from year to year.

Establishing a town-wide municipal facility management plan will identify deficiencies, such as properties that are deteriorated, insufficient for current needs, have high maintenance costs or lack adequate for parking for example. Organizing this information will bring greater attention to each facilities needs and allow for prioritizing and scheduling of the upgrades.

The community facilities management plan should include existing and future needs (space and equipment) and identify codes that existing facilities do not meet. Similarly, each department has changing equipment needs. By organizing and describing what the equipment needs of each department will be to meet changing demands, efforts to prioritize the acquisition of equipment will be improved.

#### **Actions to Address Management Plans for Municipal Facilities and Equipment:**

- Conduct a comprehensive community facilities study with a focus on department space needs
- Develop management plans for town facilities
- Establish coordination and cooperation among departments in planning for future Town facilities
- Group similar facilities when possible to take advantage of symbiotic relationships and increased efficiency by eliminating duplication of efforts

#### **Address Municipal Meeting Space Needs**

Currently the Plainville Town Hall is undergoing reorganization of interior space with the intent of creating a more efficient and modern work environment. The old Assessor's Office in Town Hall is schedule to be remodeled for the Registrar of Voters. The current location of the Registrar of Voters will then be utilized as a conference room. Still, meeting space within Town Hall will be limited. Meeting space at other town facilities such as the library is available periodically but is not sufficient to meet the needs of the Town's numerous organizations and volunteer groups. The largest meeting room in Town Hall is suitable for town-wide assembly such as the land use commission and Town Council meetings, but small meeting room space is limited. The increase in the number of civic organizations and activities taking place in Plainville has elevated the need for more dedicated community meeting space and increased the need for a comprehensive coordination program to reserve meeting space.

#### **Actions to Address Municipal Meeting Space Needs:**

- Accurately asses space needs for all Commissions, Organizations and Groups that utilize municipal meeting space
- Inventory all available municipal meeting space
- Develop town-wide system to reserve meeting space
- Asses options for creating additional meeting space
- Review/Revise scheduling system

#### **Address Recreation Space & Programming Needs**

The number, type, location and quality of a community's recreational opportunities contribute immeasurably to the quality of life for its residents and to the attractiveness of the community to new residents, business and industry. Plainville has a wealth of recreational facilities spread across the community. The Recreation Department has 6 full time employees and numerous part-time and/or seasonal employees. The level of service provided by the department is exemplary, particularly when the size of the community is considered. The recreation department manages Plainville's three primary parks, Norton Park, Tumble Park and Paderewski Park adjacent to the Wheeler School. The department offers a broad variety of

recreational programs for children and adults throughout the year and assists in organizing recreational trips and other special events such as concerts and the well recognized hot air balloon festival

Even with the sizeable amount of recreation lands and buildings and the variety of programmatic offerings by the department, a consistent theme heard in public meetings held during the public outreach phase of this Plan is a desire for additional recreational facilities, programs, and opportunities, including more parks for passive recreational activities, more ball fields, basketball courts, and a community recreational facility.

In 2000 a Plan for Park Development was developed by the recreation department to inventory and prioritize park needs specifically. Some of the needs identified that plan have been implemented while others have yet to be addressed primarily for financial reasons. Comments from the public and recreation department employees identified the following outstanding recreation needs.

- *A need to update the 2000 Plan for Park Development including reassessment of needs and recommendations*
- *Preparation of a Master Recreation Plan, to serve as a guide for recreational space and programmatic improvements including cost estimates for improvements*
- *Space/ facility needs include:*
  - *Indoor gym space*
  - *Additional parking at recreational facilities*
  - *A skateboard park*
  - *A pavilion for summer concerts at Norton Park*
- *Examine demographic data to compare existing facilities with the current profile of residents.*
- *Conduct user surveys, to find out if community needs are being met.*
- *Develop consistent signage plan for parks*
- *Initiate planning process for a dog park*
- *Secure funding for park rehabilitation*

#### **Action Steps to Meet Recreational Space & Program Needs:**

- Review 2000 Plan for Park Development and reassess priorities
- Explore State and Private funding sources for facility rehabilitation and facility construction
- Develop a Master Recreation Plan with a focus on additional recreational fields and programming needs
- Inventory potential lands/ existing buildings available for construction of indoor recreation space
- Conduct a resident survey on recreational wants/needs
- Coordinate activities with the Greenway Alliance and other local groups supportive of the trail systems in the region

## Monitor Police Department Needs

The Plainville Police Department is a full-service police department consisting of 38 full-time employees. The functional units of the Department include Administrative, Patrol, Criminal Investigation, Traffic, Records and Youth Services. In addition to traditional patrol functions, the Department also has bicycle patrols and an all-terrain vehicle patrol covering the more remote areas of town.

The Plainville Public Safety facility was built only five years ago. The building serves the needs of the department well. However, there is a shortage of storage space which will only become more problematic. The department does have the capability to build a detached storage building on site when storage space needs completely fill available storage space.

### Actions to Monitor Police Department needs:

- Complete storage space needs assessment that looks at least 10 years into future
- Develop a capitol plan that assesses staffing and equipment needs with consideration for energy costs



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Transportation

#### Introduction

One of the main components of maintaining a high quality of life in Plainville is a safe, efficient, and effective transportation system. This system also plays an important factor in the growth and development of the community.

The Plan of Conservation and Development and this chapter of the POCD specifically provide an opportunity to review the existing transportation system, identify needs and opportunities, and establish priorities.

Plainville's existing transportation system is primarily comprised of a network of town roads, state highways, limited mass transit service and rail freight service, all of which combine to provide for intra-town and inter-town travel needs. A detailed description of the Town's existing transportation system is provided below.

#### Existing Road Network

Plainville's roadways consist of a mix of interstate and state highways, as well as multitude of smaller roads that provide access throughout the town and into surrounding communities. The town's primary east-west and north-south roadways include:

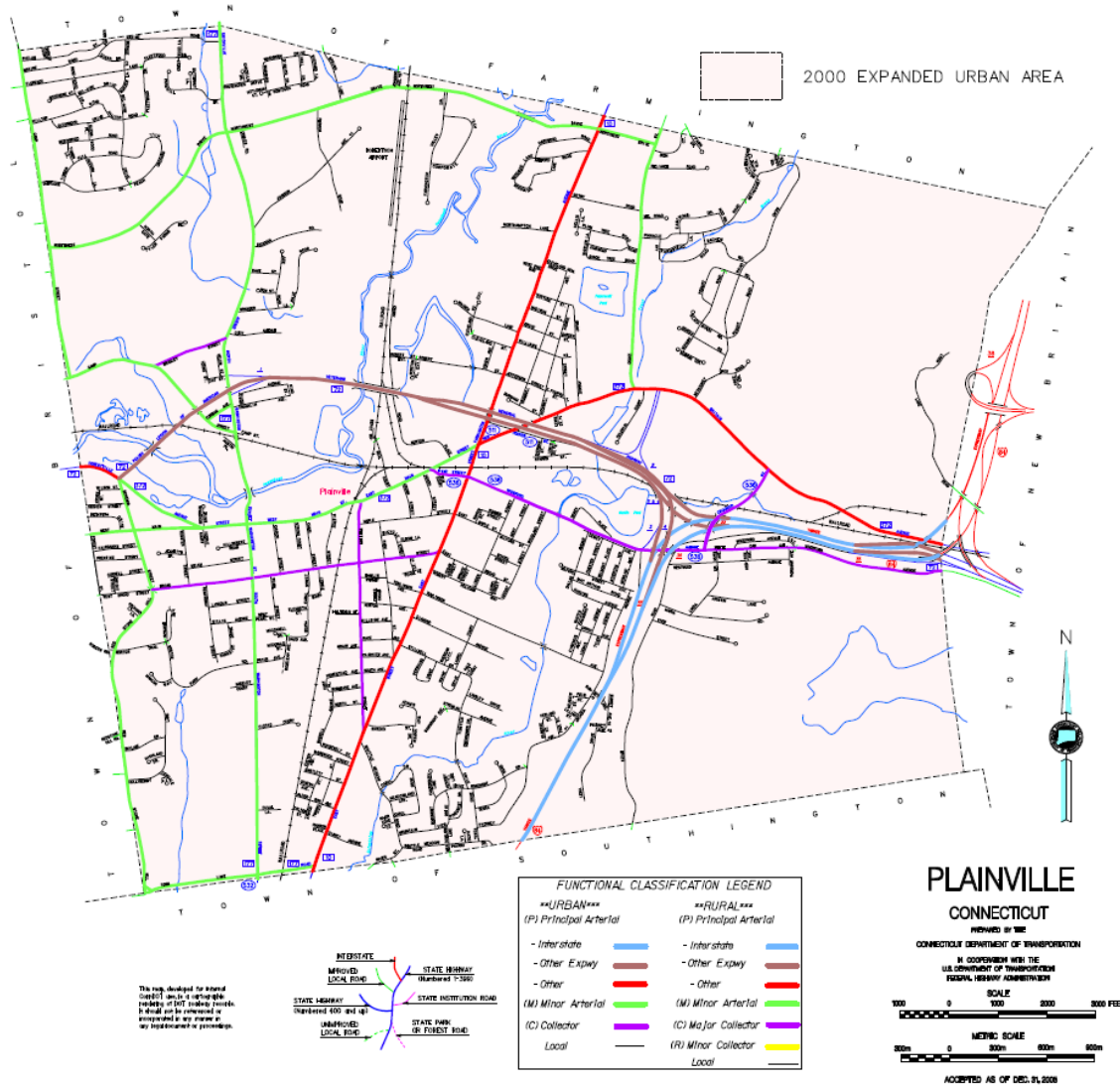
- Interstate 84, which runs from New York to Massachusetts, connecting to Hartford and the Massachusetts Turnpike to the east, and to the west connecting to Waterbury, Danbury, and in New York I-684 and ending at I-380 in Scranton, PA.
- Connecticut Route 72 which intersects I-84 in Plainville and provides quick access to Bristol to the west and to Route 9 to the east, which runs from Hartford to Old Saybrook on the shore.
- Route 10, which is a multi-state north-south state highway in the New England region of the United States, running from New Haven, Connecticut through Massachusetts to the village of Woodsville in Haverhill, New Hampshire. Route 10 in Plainville provides direct access to the communities of Farmington to the north, and Southington to the South.
- Route 372, which begins at an intersection with Route 72 in western Plainville, near the Plainville-Bristol town line, and heads east through New Britain and Berlin to Cromwell.

The map below details the road network<sup>1</sup>, highlighting the functional classification of all the roadways. The map indicates that local roads comprise the largest percentage of roadways in the Town followed by minor arterials, principal arterials,

<sup>1</sup> A zoomable version of the map can be found at the following web-site  
<http://www.ct.gov/dot/LIB/dot/Documents/dpolicy/policymaps/fcl/pdf/109fcl.pdf>



Figure 1: Road Classification



collector roads and the interstate highway. ConnDOT's Public Mileage Report (December 2006) indicates that 79% of the Town's roads are maintained by the town, while 21% are maintained by the State of Connecticut.

In terms of average daily traffic, the map<sup>2</sup> below indicates that the highest level of traffic occurs at the following locations:

<sup>2</sup> A zoomable version of the map can be found at <http://www.ct.gov/dot/lib/dot/documents/dpolicy/policymaps/adt/pdf/109adt.pdf>

- North Washington (north of Day Street)
- Route 372 between Cooke and Colonial
- Route 372 near Connecticut Commons
- Route 372 between Route 10 and Hooker

In general the map shows that there is a high level of traffic along Routes 10 and 372, which is to be expected given that these roadways represent the town's main commercial corridors.

### Traffic Accidents

Connecticut accident data from 2007 indicates that the following locations within Plainville were identified as having high accident rates. Detailed information for each of these locations, which includes the number of collisions, deaths, and severe injuries, can be obtained from the Traffic Accident Viewing System published by ConnDOT.

Rte.	Location	Table 1: Accident Locations
10	At Shuttle Meadow Rd & Whiting	
10	Between Broad St & Maple St	
10	Between Maple St & SR 536	
10	At SR 536 & Railroad X-ing	
10	@ Rt 372 (New Britain Ave & E Main)	
10	Between Rte 372 & SR 511 (Hooker St)	
72	At Rt 177 (N Washington St) Int	
72	At Rt 372 (Forestville) & Bohemia	
177	At Bradley St	
177	At Northwest Dr	
372	Between Whiting St & Neal Ct	
372	At Rt 10 (East St & Farmington)	
372	At SR 511 (Hooker St)	
536	At White Oak Ave	

### Condition of Local Bridges

Connecticut DOT bridge rating reports indicate that within Plainville only one bridge has a poor condition rating, the Stillwell Drive Bridge over the Quinnipiac River, which is currently in the process of being replaced.

Journey-to-Work

Journey-to-work data summarized by the Central Regional Council of Governments (and shown in the figure below) as part of their Long Range Transportation Plan (2007 – 2037), indicates that the large majority of work trips made by Plainville residents are to Hartford, and neighboring New Britain and Bristol.

As shown in the table presented below, almost 95% of all residents commute to work using private vehicles, while only .8% use public transit. Each of these numbers are below the statewide averages of 89.5% and 4%, respectively.

Figure 2: Journey to Work

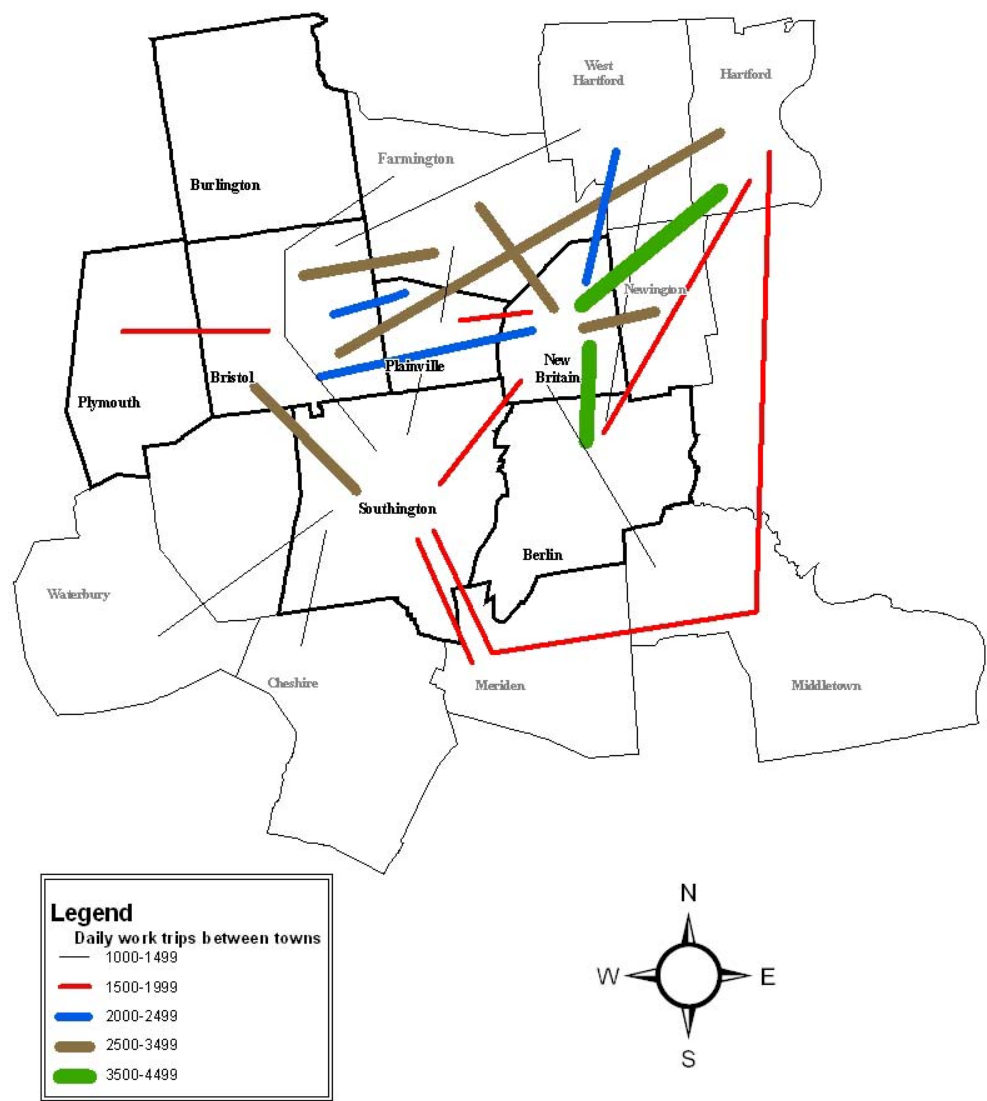


Table 2: Transportation to Work

PLAINVILLE CT US								
TRANSPORTATION TO WORK								
		Number				Number		Number
Workers 16 and over		9,287						
		Number		Pct		Pct		Pct
Public transportation		70		0.8		4		4.7
Car, truck, van or motorcycle		8,821		95		89.5		88
Walk		174		1.9		2.7		2.9
Work at home		162		1.7		3.1		3.3
COMMUTING TIME								
		Number				Number		Number
Average travel time to work (minutes)		20				24		26
Average travel time to work using public transportation		39				55		48
Average travel time to work using other transportation		20				23		24
Source: 2000 Census								

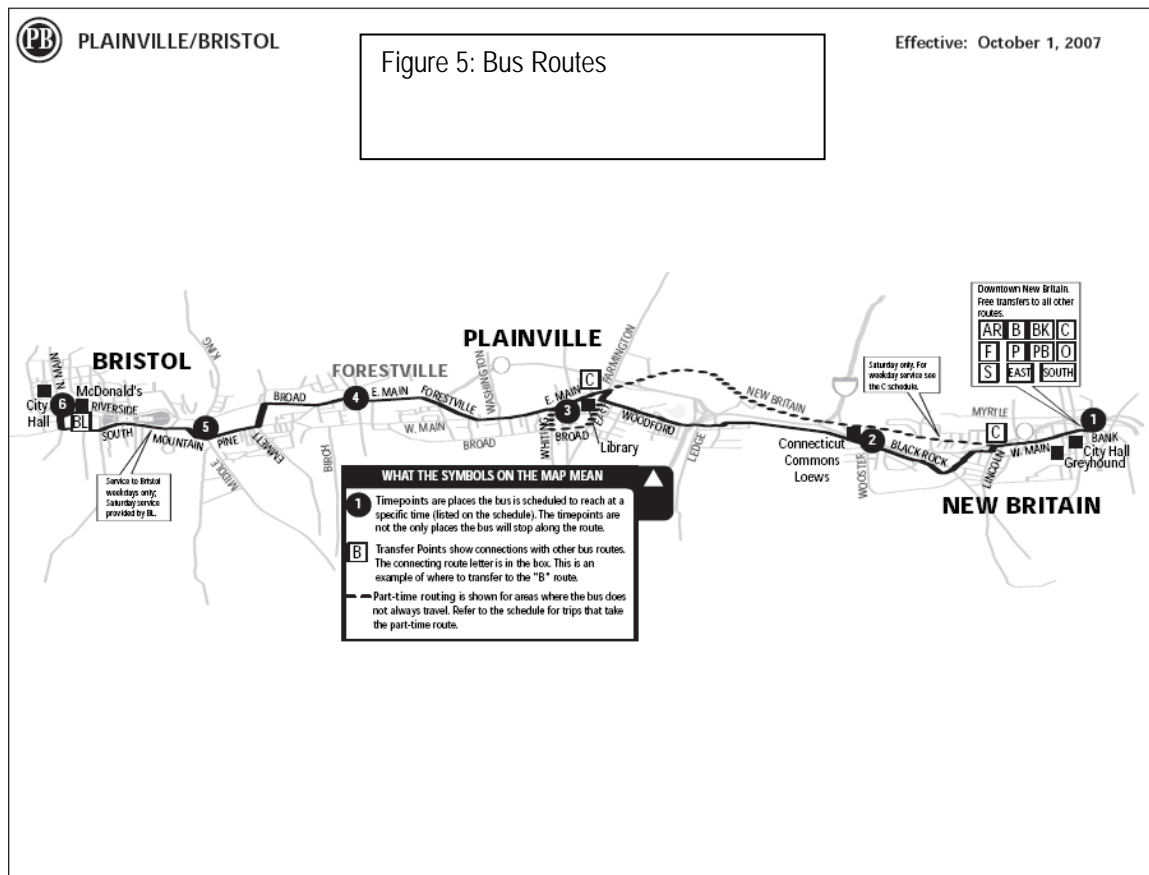
Connecticut DOT Average Daily Traffic Counts Map in Appendix

## Transit Network

The New Britain Transportation Company, which is a division of CT Transit provides local public bus transit service in Plainville, as summarized in the table below and graphically represented in the following bus route maps. The routes typically run from early morning until early-to-mid evening with 30 minute to one hour headways. Most routes run shorter Saturday hours. There is no Sunday service. Detailed schedules and fare information is posted at their website at <http://www.nbt.bz/>.

Commuter express bus service into Hartford, which is operated by DATTCO, also serves Plainville. The Bristol/Plainville express route starts in Plainville at Grace Lutheran Church on Route 10. It then moves on to Todd Street in Bristol before going to downtown Hartford. It also stops twice a day at Tunxis Community College in Farmington.

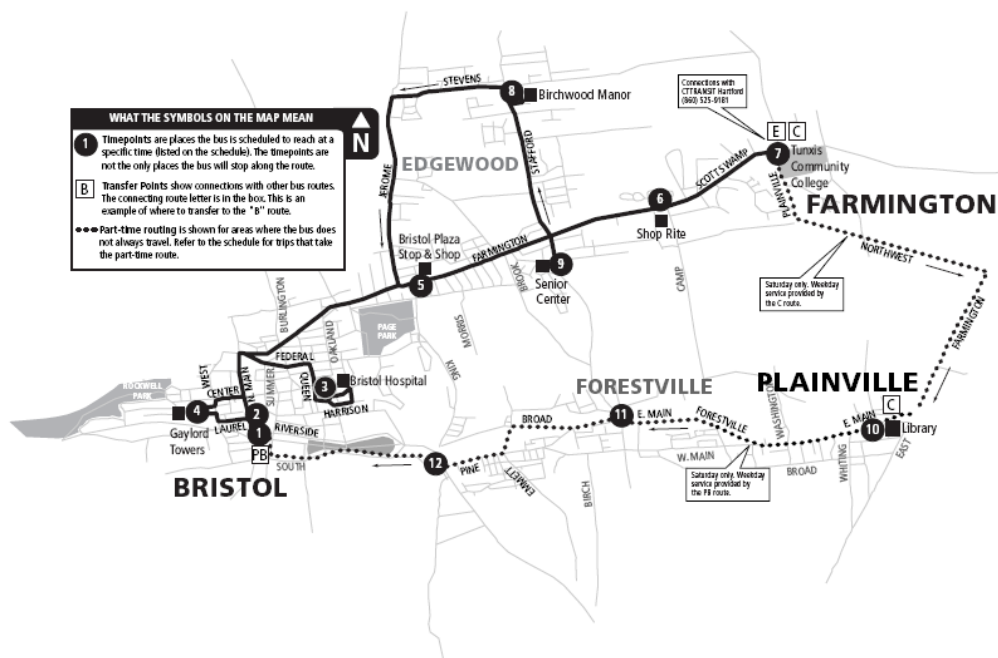
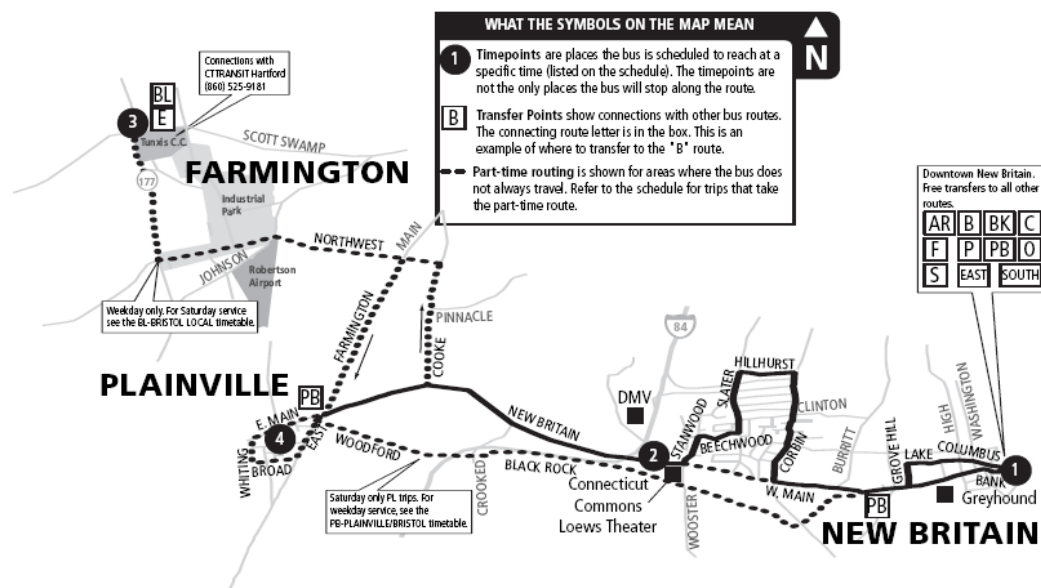
Route	Weekday Service Description	Saturday Service Description
PB	Downtown New Britain – Plainville – Forestville – Bristol- Downtown New Britain	Downtown New Britain – Plainville – Downtown New Britain
C	Downtown New Britain – Plainville – Tunxis - Downtown New Britain	Downtown New Britain – Plainville – Downtown New Britain
BL	No Service in Plainville (replaced by PB route)	Downtown Bristol – Bristol Hospital – Tunxis College – Plainville Center – Forestville Center – Downtown Bristol



2009

TOWN OF PLAINVILLE

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT



## Rail Network

Two active freight rail lines run through Plainville, the Boston and Maine owned east-west branch, operated by the Springfield Terminal Company, , which provides freight service through Plymouth, Bristol, Plainville, New Britain, and Berlin, and a short north-south branch with the same owner and operator which provides freight service between Southington and Plainville. Plainville also contains a cargo train depot, operated by the Boston & Maine Corporation, which is located along the Southington-Plainville line at 70 Neal Court.

## Park and Ride Facilities

There is one designated park and ride facility within the Town of Plainville, which is located at the Grace Lutheran Church. The lot has a capacity of 25 spaces and is served by the Bristol/Plainville commuter express bus route.

## Air Transportation

Plainville is home to the privately owned Robertson Field (FAA ID# 4B8), which has the distinction of being the first air field operating in the State of Connecticut. Located at 62 Johnson Avenue Robertson is a much-used general access airport with an excellent 75 x 3,612-foot paved runway and home to 110 aircraft, ranging from Cessna 150's to small Citation jets. The airport is designated as a reliever airport, which as defined by the FAA, is a metropolitan general aviation airport that serves to reduce air carrier congestion by providing facilities and service for attracting and diverting general aviation away from major air carrier airports.

## Trail Network

Plainville has one active bicycle trailway, which is located in the northwest corner of the Town. The 8-foot wide trail begins at Wheeler Elementary School. After exiting school grounds, the trail crosses Route 10/Farmington Avenue and parallels Route 10 in a north direction to Northwest Drive, where it turns west toward its Route 177/Unionville Avenue terminus. At its east end, the travelway provides easy access to nearby Paderewski Park. A map of the trail is shown below.

Figure 6: Trail Network



2009

TOWN OF PLAINVILLE

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

## Central Regional Planning Agency's Transportation Initiatives

The CCRPA is responsible for regional transportation planning activities and for the programming of area transportation projects that will receive federal transportation monies. A review of CCRPA's Long Range Transportation Plan 2007-2037 and the 2007 List of Obligated Transportation Projects reveals several transportation projects as well as recommendations that will affect Plainville during the next ten years. These projects/recommendations include:

- Completing the Route 72 Extension—Bristol Due to financial issues, the extension of the Route 72 Expressway from the Plainville/Bristol town line to Route 8 in Thomaston has been reduced in scope to the addition of a limited access boulevard between the Plainville/Bristol town line and Route 229 in Bristol. The extension consists of a four-lane urban arterial highway and the widening of a Pine Street. This project is scheduled to cost \$29.099 million.
- Improvements to New Britain Ave (Cooke to Hooker) - Improvements would eliminate lane drops associated with traffic signals located at Cooke and Hooker Streets. Currently the approaches to these intersections have two through lanes that merge into one through lane as a vehicle travels away from the intersections. These lane drops cause congestion, driver confusion and safety concerns. The Town of Plainville proposes to extend two through lanes in each direction between these two intersections. This would link and eliminate the existing merges and diverges, creating a smooth transition between intersections. The Town believes that congestion and driver confusion will be alleviated as a result of the proposed improvements. The cost of these improvements is estimated at \$550k.
- Preliminary Engineering on the Tomlinson Bridge over the Quinnipiac River. Total cost of \$225K.
- Discussing and determining the need for corridor study with local leaders and other interested parties on Route 10 in Plainville and Southington
- Publishing bus route maps in weekly newspapers such as Plainville Citizen to help increase bus service.
- Working with Plainville and other interested parties to preserve and enhance the operations at Robertson Airport.
- Discouraging development of automobile-oriented retail through establishment of Pedestrian Districts in zoning regulations in places such as downtown New Britain, downtown Bristol and Downtown Plainville, Terryville, Kensington and along with the New Britain-to-Hartford Busway corridor.
- Central Connecticut ADA Paratransit Service provides paratransit service for persons with disabilities in Bristol, Kensington, New Britain and Plainville, the communities that have fixed bus routes. DATTCO Bus Company has provided the service under contract to CCRPA. At present there are approximately 2,000 clients on record. Budget constraints limit the service to 6 buses. There may be a need for additional ConnDOT funding to support paratransit service in the coming years as the age of the population increases.
- Neal Ct./W. Main/Municipal Ctr. Intersection adjustments: Relocation of motor vehicle traffic signal and main Municipal Center driveway westerly to Neal Ct. This is currently an unfunded project.
- Reconstruction of W. Main St. bus shelter. This is currently an unfunded project.



- Construction of CT Commons bus shelter. This is currently an unfunded project.
- Rt. 10/Townline Rd. Intersection adjustments. This is currently an unfunded project.
- Rt. 177/Townline Rd. Intersection adjustments. This is currently an unfunded project.
- Town Ctr. Road adjustments. Whiting St.: W Main St. to Whiting St. This is currently an unfunded project.
- Creation of downtown municipal parking. This is currently an unfunded project.
- Downtown: motor vehicle traffic calming. This is currently an unfunded project.
- Complete the Southington and Plainville portions of the Farmington Canal Heritage Rail Trail. This is currently an unfunded project.

### Transportation Goals & Recommendations

The following identifies a comprehensive program of roadway improvements recommended to mitigate traffic congestion, improve traffic circulation, improve vehicular and pedestrian safety, calm traffic flows in commercial districts and residential neighborhoods and encourage multi-modal travel. The goals, and recommendations were developed based on an analysis of the data presented above, a review of the previous POCD, and issues identified during the focus group sessions.

*GOAL: Maintain the existing transportation system – Any system expansion within the Town should not occur until the existing system is well maintained. This is especially important given the lack of financial resources.*

#### Strategies to maintain the current transportation system:

- Promote policies that maintain the existing system rather than call for the expansion of roadways
- Continue to improve and maintain the Town's road to ensure the efficient and effective movement of both people and goods.
- Work with the State and Regional agencies to identify and prioritize highway projects that highlight preservation activity
- Utilize the State's functional roadway classification (as shown earlier) to be used as standards for improvements to roads in Town.

*GOAL: Promote system efficiency - Work towards the efficient movement of people and goods through the use of multiple modes*

**Strategies to improve current transportation network and transit alternatives:**

- Encourage the use of alternative transportation systems, such as mass transit, bicycling, and vanpooling to reduce single occupant vehicles.
- Continue operation of specialized services for the elderly and disabled.
- Provide for increased circulation within and between all sections of the Town.
- Provide facilities for non-motorized transportation including walking and bicycling
- Overall expressway access to the downtown (from Route 72) needs to be improved, particularly from the Tinty Site. While access to the downtown was changed as part of improvements made to the site, it was not necessarily improved. A separate study that addresses access issues from this site needs to be conducted.
- The Exit 36 interchange of I-84, Slater Road, should be reconstructed to provide access to the land on the west side of the highway. This project was recommended as part of the 1997 Plan and never undertaken. This project should be included as part of any study of the North Mountain Road area for future development.
- The Towns should continue to implement Phase II and III of its downtown transportation improvements which are part of a plan to combat Plainville's deteriorating downtown. With Phase I almost complete, the two remaining phases include the following improvements:

Phase II

- Removal of the traffic light in front of the Municipal Center entrance on the east side of the building. Closure of that entrance and addition of walkways and landscaping.
- Reconfiguration of the remaining traffic light in front of the municipal center; signalize traffic from Whiting Street, East and West Main Streets, and the Municipal Center.
- Realign and widen for new Municipal Center entrance and exit to the west of the building to align with relocated traffic signal.
- Provide new sidewalks, curbing, traffic calming measures and street furniture as described in Phase I of the project.

Phase III

- Similar sidewalk treatments east along East Main Street and west along West Main Street. Additional work alternatives that may be part of the third phase includes important design and place making elements such as "way finding" and "gateway" features. These improvements currently lack funding and the Town has not yet identified any potential sources.

**Continued:**

- Ad identified in the CCRPA's Long Range Transportation, a Route 10 corridor study should be undertaken which examines the function of key intersections, safety, and land use impacts.
- An access management strategy should be developed that looks at methods to reduce multiple access/egress points, and promote shared parking. Reducing access/egress points and creating shared parking lots can help improve traffic flow along commercial corridors such as Routes 10 and 372, as well as improve safety.
- The Town should explore widening Camp Street.
- The Town should continue to promote the continued operation of Robertson Airport; as well as study the feasibility of purchasing the airport.
- The Towns should propose to ConnDOT to conduct a new feasibility study to investigate passenger rail service between Waterbury and Hartford along existing infrastructure. The stations along the line, which should include a stop in Plainville's central business district, could serve as a focus for transit oriented development.
- Additional bikeways should be constructed in conjunction with recreational facilities, as well as to link existing town facilities together (including Town Hall, the library, and schools). In addition, the Town working with the CCRPA should continue efforts to connect to the Farmington and Southington bike trail. A system of bicycle lanes and routes should also be designated within the Town utilizing public streets that are wide enough to accommodate vehicles and bikes, such as Broad Street, or through streets with low traffic volumes, such as Pickney Avenue, and Acadia Avenue.
- As the percentage of residents who utilize mass transit is well below the State average, The Town should work with CCRPA to promote local bus service and rideshare efforts, as well as with employers to develop alternative commuting programs.

*GOAL: Promote improved safety*

**Strategies to improve safety:**

- Increase the safety of the Town's roads and intersections
- The Town should continue to improve Town Line Road to the standards of a collector road, especially at the intersection with Route 10.
- As identified in CCRPA's Long Range Plan, the Town should make improvements to New Britain Ave (Cooke to Hooker). Currently the approaches to these intersections have two through lanes that merge into one through lane as a vehicle travels away from the intersections. These lane drops cause congestion, driver confusion and safety concerns. The Town of Plainville proposes to extend two through lanes in each direction between these two intersections. This would link and eliminate the existing merges and diverges, creating a smooth transition between intersections. The Town believes that congestion and driver confusion will be alleviated as a result of the proposed improvements.

*Continued:*

- The following locations should be evaluated and improved based on the accident information provided earlier in the chapter:

Rte	Location
10	At Shuttle Meadow Rd & Whiting
10	Between Broad St & Maple St
10	Between Maple St & SR 536
10	At SR 536 & Railroad X-ing
10	@ Rt 372 (New Britain Ave & E Main)
10	Between Rte 372 & SR 511 (Hooker St)
72	At Rt 177 (N Washington St) Int
72	At Rt 372 (Forestville) & Bohemia
177	At Bradley St
177	At Northwest Dr
372	Between Whiting St & Neal Ct
372	At Rt 10 (East St & Farmington)
372	At SR 511 (Hooker St)
536	At White Oak Ave

- The Town should develop a pavement/ sidewalk management plan that calls for sidewalks to be installed along both sides of collector and arterial streets (including New Britain Avenue and Camp Street), if feasible. The installations should occur in conjunction with major improvements on the road. New sidewalks will help to increase pedestrian access and safety within the Town.
- The Town should explore the development of a "Safe Routes to Schools" program.

GOAL: Protect Neighborhoods and Encourage Good Design

**Strategies to protect neighborhoods and encourage good design:**

- Establish transportation systems that are in scale with neighborhoods
- Develop policies that encourage transportation and land use to be compatible
- As part of a zoning regulation overhaul, a traffic Impact studies should be required for major development projects that reach a certain “tipping point”, perhaps by Special Exception, to ensure appropriate development patterns. The Commission should not rely on “requesting a study because they feel there is a need for one”. Technical assistance should be listed as Commission option under “General Standards for Special Exception”.
- Developers should be required to comply with any road proposal recommendations that are included in the POCD, if the proposed road segment is located within the developer’s land.
- Cul-de-sacs and dead end streets in new developments should be kept at a minimum to ensure that traffic flow is not impeded though the overall neighborhood. In addition, developers should review roadway width requirements with the fire department to ensure that emergency service is not impaired.
- Bicycle accommodations should be considered in all road improvement and large scale site development projects.



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE

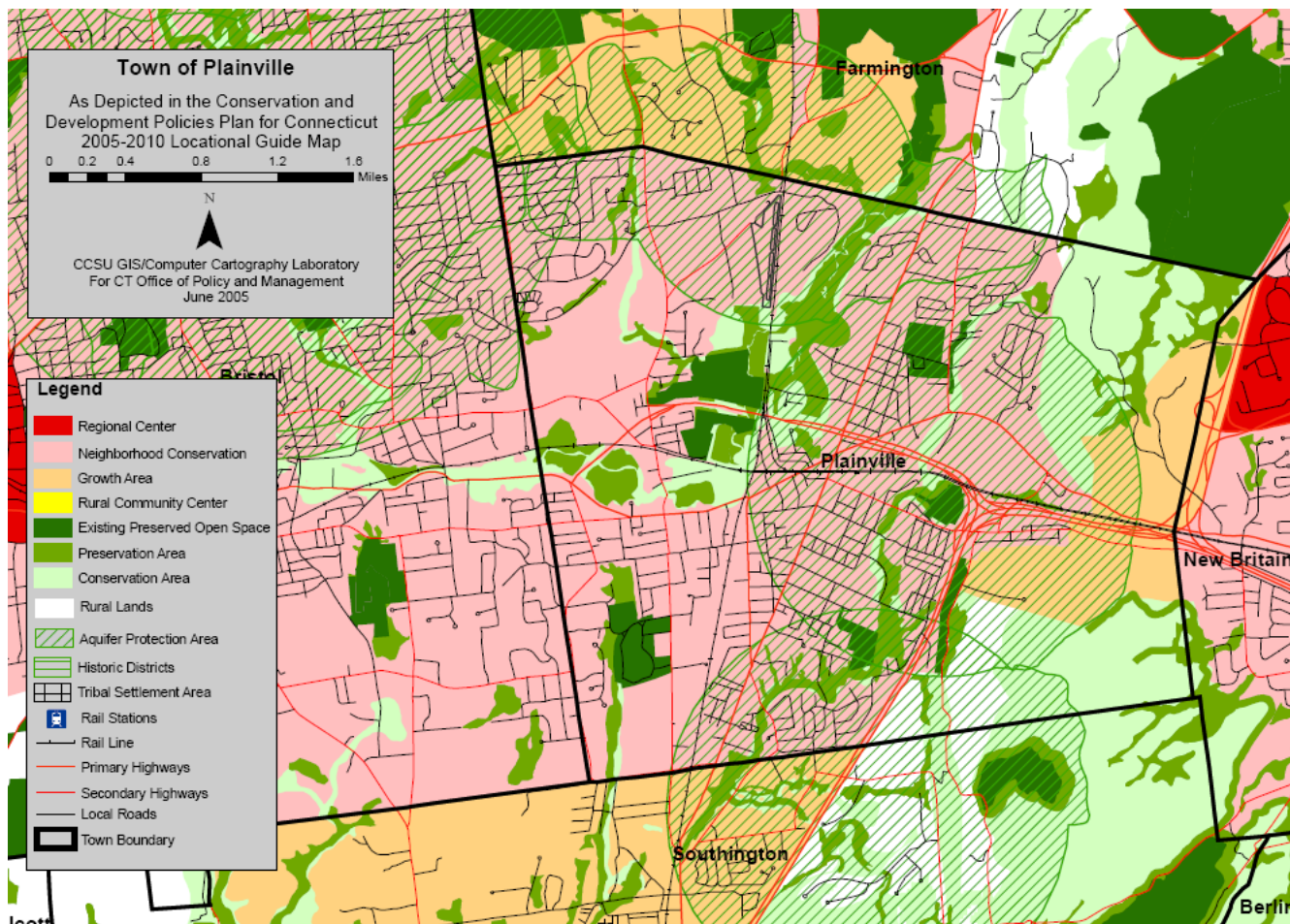
### PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

#### Consistency with State & Regional Plans

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that each municipal plan of conservation and development “take into account the state plan of conservation and development...and...note any inconsistencies it may have with said state plan.” In addition, the State plan serves as a document of reference for certain types of municipal projects for which state funding is sought; such projects must be reviewed by OPM to determine the extent of their conformance to the State plan. In general, a municipal project which is in (greater) conformance with the State plan is more likely to receive state funds than one that is less so. As such, it is in the city’s best interest that, to the maximum extent possible, this Plan of Conservation and Development be consistent with the State plan.

In accordance with CGS 8-23 the future land use plan was compared to the State’s *Plan of Conservation and Development Policies Plan* Locational Guide Map for 2005-2010 and the Central Connecticut Regional Future Land Use Pattern 2007-2017 adopted by the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. While the land use categories used in three plans have some variation, the land use objectives were found to be generally consistent.

All three Plans identify natural resource, open space and historic areas for conservation, focus on concentrating development where existing infrastructure exists, supporting mixed use town centers and identify appropriate development density based on environmental conditions and community character. Any inconsistencies are attributable to difference in definitions rather than quantifiable differences about how Plainville should grow in addition to the fact that the State and Regional Plans makes recommendations for relative intensities and environmental factors, while this plan suggests specific land use types.



## Consistency With Growth Principles of the State Plan of Conservation and Development

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

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

Although the State Plan does not contain any areas designated as a regional center, the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development designates an area in the central part of Plainville as a “Town Center Enhancement Area”. In accordance with this designation and the State goal, this Plan recommends a number of strategies to redevelop, revitalize, and further mixed-use development within the downtown. (Which has existing physical infrastructure).



In particular, the Plan supports the development of a pedestrian-oriented mixed use infill development in Downtown Plainville. Some examples of specific regulatory/policy recommendations include:

- Adopting Village district regulations for the downtown
- Revising zoning regulations to require a greater mix of uses within buildings, including housing units.

Overall, the concept of revitalizing mixed use centers which have adequate infrastructure is a key element of the Plan.

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

The Town of Plainville currently has limited diversity in its housing stock. However, the Plan recommends a number of strategies to expand housing opportunities and types to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.

In particular, the Plan recommends that Plainville:

- Implement policies that diversify the variety of housing types available in Plainville that address the needs of changing demographics, including an aging population and decreasing household size.
- Implement a variety of strategies to promote workforce housing

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

The Plan of Conservation and Development recommends more intensive mixed-use development in downtown Plainville and along transportation corridors, such as State Route 10 where bus service is available. This will help to support overall community structure as well as transportation options and land reuse within the recommended areas. The Plan also recommends considering higher density residential development in areas with access to transit, while also recommending continuing efforts to establish bikeways and bike lanes throughout town, linking important community facilities.

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

The Plan of Conservation and Development contains specific chapters which identify strategies to:

- protect natural resources
- preserve open space, and
- protect historic resources, and scenic views

These strategies will help conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources.

### **Principle 5 - Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.**

The Plan of Conservation and Development also contains recommendations to protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety. This includes goals, policies and objectives to protect water quality (both surface and ground), preserve floodplain areas, aquifer recharge area, preserve sensitive hillsides, and implement low-impact development policies and other similar strategies.



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

The Plan of Conservation and Development is part of the process of integrating planning with other levels of government and with other agencies.

The Plan recommends coordinating efforts with State agencies, Regional organizations and adjacent communities to:

Connect existing bikeways

Collaborate with Regional, State and Federal transportation officials to reactivate passenger rail on the east west line through Plainville.

Pursue the CT Home program and technical assistance provided by the State in developing the CT Home program



## TOWN OF PLAINVILLE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Implementation Plan

#### Implementation

This Plan, in order to be effective, must guide residents, municipal employees and agencies, developers, and businesses alike. Implementation of the strategies and recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development, among other actions, is paramount to an orderly Planning and development process.

In order to implement the various recommendations contained in this Plan of Conservation and Development, the following Action Program is proposed. The Action Program highlight previously suggested goals, objectives, recommendations and actions; and suggests agencies to lead implementation. The Planning and Zoning Commission has the primary responsibility for promoting implementation of the Plan's recommendations. Some of the recommendations can be implemented through amendments to Zoning Regulations, Zoning Map, Subdivision Regulations and application reviews. However, the Commission is not the sole facilitator.

The Action Program suggests a lead agency that is best suited to spearhead the implementation of a particular proposal. Many recommendations will involve multiple agencies. The nature of the activity required of a lead agency will vary depending on the type of recommendation. Some activities involve budget commitments and capital expenses and some require advocacy while others call for administrative action. Some recommendations are policy oriented; generally these are long-term guidelines that do not readily lend themselves to a specific schedule or measurement.

The Program also assigns priorities to recommendations in terms of when they should be implemented, priority 1 is (1- 3 years), priority 2, (4-6 years) and priority 3 (7-10 years). Many of the short term items are already underway. Mid and long term priorities are important activities but have a long time frame to implementation based on the fact that limited resources both in terms of time and money to implement the plan. Long term recommendations may also require additional focused planning before implementation can take place. The Action Program is presented in a way that will make it easy for the Planning and Zoning Commission to review and report on implementation progress.

One implementation tool used by many communities is a Plan Implementation Committee, which draws its members from appropriate Town boards and commissions. This Committee can use the suggested Action Agenda implementation program to guide the ongoing implementation and assessment of particular elements of the Plan in addition to assigning responsibilities to other groups and individuals not listed. The Committee would have the responsibility of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this Plan and could issue annual updates on implementation progress. The Committee can also make "real time" decisions about prioritizing implementation of recommendations based on actual need and available resources that may change from year to year.

#### Implementation Approaches

1. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) which draws its membership from the appropriate Town boards, commissions, Town legislative and operating entities;  
As necessary, review and update the Plan of Conservation and Development.

2. Use the Plan of Conservation and Development as a basis for land use decisions.
3. Undertake a comprehensive review of the Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations.
4. Educate the community about the Plan and overall community objectives.
5. Integrate the Plan and overall community objectives into customer service, enforcement, and other programs
6. Encourage the annual budget to reflect the priorities and recommendations of the Plan.
7. Encourage the capital budget to reflect the priorities and recommendations of the Plan.
8. Utilize the CGS 8-24 process for reviewing municipal capital improvements to ensure that the priorities and recommendations of the Plan are implemented.

### **Implementation Tables**

Implementation of the Plan is an on-going process. Some recommendations can be accomplished in a short period of time; other may require certain steps first and may only be realized by the end of the Planning period.

The Action Program that follows assigns responsibility to appropriate State agencies, municipal commission and departments and volunteer organizations. It is also recommended that Plainville sponsor the establishment of an Affordable Housing Committee and a conservation commission to assist with tasks enumerated in the action agenda. Finally, it is recommended that the Housing Partnership group, currently inactive, should be reactivated and utilized to help solve Plainville's housing deficiencies.

The implementation tables on the following pages assign primary responsibilities and preliminary schedules to the Plan's recommendations. Recommendations are assigned a priority ranking that the Implementation Committee may use as a guideline for establishing a time line for the completion of the strategies.

High priorities are considered to be critical steps to the overall planning strategy or relatively easy to implement. Moderate priorities are policies and actions that are not as time sensitive and may be more difficult to implement due to funding or organizational requirements. Lower priorities are long-range strategies that may require other recommendations to be accomplished first or are preceded by higher funding priorities.

**IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:**

AHC- Affordable Housing Committee (Proposed)  
AP- Aquifer Protection Agency  
BOE - Board of Education  
CC- Conservation Commission  
CCRPA – Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency  
DBC- Downtown Beautification Commission  
DH- Department Heads  
CTDECD- Connecticut Department of Community & Economic Development  
CTDEP - Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection  
CTDOT - Connecticut Department of Transportation  
DPW - Department of Public Works;  
EDA- Economic Development Agency  
GA- Greenway Alliance  
HP- Housing Partnership (Inactive)  
IC- Insurance Commission  
IWC- Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission  
LB- Library Board of Directors  
OSC –Open Space Sub-Committee  
PFD – Plainville Fire Department  
PIC- Plan Implementation Committee  
PPD – Plainville Police Department  
PRD -Parks & Recreation Department  
PB – Permits & Building Department  
PD – Planning Department  
P & Z – Planning & Zoning Commission  
RSWC- Recycling and Solid Waste Commission  
SCC- Senior Citizens Committee  
SCD-Senior Center Director  
TC – Town Council  
TE- Town Engineer  
TH - Town Historian/ Historical Society  
TM- Town Manager  
TS- Town Staff  
VC- Veterans Council  
WPCA- Water Pollution Control Authority  
ZBA – Zoning Board of Appeals

Housing	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Action:</b> Complete a detailed assessment of approximate number of units needed for elderly housing based on census information.	P&Z/ PD/HP/CCRPA			1
<b>Action:</b> Promote housing rehabilitation efforts that seek to preserve the supply of housing units in the Town, in a manner that maintains the architectural integrity of existing structures.	CD/P&Z/HP/CCR TC/PA		¥	
<b>Action:</b> Support programs that assist homeowners in rehabilitating and maintaining their homes.	TC/CD/P&Z /PD/HA		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Meet the needs of current residents through the provision of housing stock that allows for upward mobility and the retention of younger households.	P&Z /PD/HA	¥		
<b>Action:</b> Promote historic preservation and housing stock variety by preserving and adapting historic buildings for residential uses.	P&Z			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop upscale/luxury single-family housing and townhouse/rental units in an effort to attract new residents and businesses.	P&Z/HP/ PD		¥	3
<b>Action:</b> Explore alternative housing options for seniors to encourage their continued residence in the Town.	P&Z /SC/HP/PD			1
<b>Action:</b> Develop an infill strategy for the Town with new housing and neighborhood commercial centers and other support services which will stabilize neighborhoods.	PD/PZ/CCRPA			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop guidelines that promote infill residential development in a manner consistent with the scale and character of surrounding neighborhoods.	PD/PZ/CCRPA			2
<b>Action:</b> Provide well designed housing with features desired by specific demographic groups (20-35 demographic and over 65) that provides walkable access to downtown services and social gathering points.	P&Z /PD/ HP/DBC			2

Housing, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Action:</b> Review the Town's zoning regulations to determine the overall effectiveness of the regulations in mitigating land use conflicts between residential and commercial/industrial uses, paying particular attention to setbacks and buffer areas. These regulations should be updated as necessary to provide maximum effectiveness.	PD/ PZ			1
<b>Action:</b> Base residential density of greenfield development upon limitations and opportunities afforded by topographic, soil, and watershed protection characteristics and limit multi-family and planned residential developments to areas served by public sewer and water and access to collector and arterials roadways and alternative transportation modes.	CCRPA/ PD/ PZ			1
<b>Action:</b> Encourage alternative housing options for mature families ("empty-nesters") and senior citizens who no longer desire single-family housing, but who wish to remain in the town.	P&Z /HP/ PD			2
<b>Action:</b> Encourage housing in locations where services and mass transit are readily available.	P&Z /PD		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Recognize as a public responsibility the encouragement of affordable housing opportunities for the elderly and for families and individuals that cannot afford current housing costs. Explore available programs of the local, state and federal governments that offer assistance in such housing, including opportunities for first-time homeownership.	CCRPA/PD/HP		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Encourage housing options such as group homes, emergency shelters, transitional housing and single-room-occupancy hotels for those individuals with special housing needs.	SCC/PD/HP/ CCRPA		¥	2

Housing, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Action:</b> Require that government-funded or subsidized housing developments be held to the same design standards as privately developed housing.	PD/PZ		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Continue efforts to establish an Incentive Housing Zone and use any needs assessment prepared as part of the study supporting this effort to identify additional areas of concern.	CCRPA/PD/ PZ			1

Historic Preservation	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Identification of Resources</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Review 1982 inventory and identify buildings that have been altered and compromise historical/ architectural significance.	TH/TS			2
<b>Action:</b> Inventory areas not included in the 1981/ 1982 historic resource inventory.	TH/PIC			2
<b>Action:</b> Seek funding from the State of Connecticut and other private organizations focused on historic preservation such as Historic New England.	PD/TH/PIC			2
<b>Action:</b> Consider creating a local registry of historic places.	PD/ TW/TS			2
<b>Action:</b> Consider establishing a cultural heritage board that can evaluate the merits of individual structures and sites for inclusion on a local registry of historic places.	TC			1

Historic Preservation, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority
<b>Protecting Resources</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Consider establishing Local Historic districts.	TC/PD/PZ/TH			1
<b>Action:</b> Consider establishing a Historic Overlay Zoning District.	TC/PD/PZ/TH			
<b>Action:</b> Consider Village District Zoning for historic preservation.	TC/PD/PZ/TH			2
<b>Action:</b> Continue to use the Demolition Delay provisions with increased public notice.	PZ/TH		¥	
<b>Action:</b> Develop Special Permit Criteria for projects involving historic structures.	TH/PD/PZ			1
<b>Improve Public Awareness and Education</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Publicize events and programs for historic preservation in collaboration with the Plainville Library, the Historical Society, and the Town Council.	TH/PIC/LB/EDA			2
<b>Action:</b> Place plaques at structures and sites on the National, State and local Registry of Historic Places.	TS/TH			2
<b>Action:</b> Create a GIS map and inventory of Historic Places.	PD			1
<b>Action:</b> Develop an interpretative map of historic sites and structures to be given out at the library, Town Hall and Historical Society building.	TH/LB/PD			1
<b>Action:</b> Organize walking tours of historic homes in and near downtown Plainville.	TH/			2
<b>Action:</b> Sponsor awards given to property owners who improve historic structures.	TC/PB	¥		2



Open Space & Natural Resources	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Protection of Land Based Resources</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Develop special permit standards for development on slopes greater than 10% and disallow development on slopes greater than 17%.	PD/ PZ/CC			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop a buildable land definition and develop a minimum buildable area based on minimum lot size in each zoning district.	PD/PZ			2
<b>Action:</b> Recommend all commercial landscaping and recommended all residential landscaping be only species listed on the Connecticut Native Tree and shrub list.	CC/PD			2
<b>Action:</b> Require all development applications to disclose any activity within areas designated by the State Department of Environmental Protection on their "Natural Diversity Database."	PD/PZ			1
<b>Action:</b> Require biological studies to accompany development proposals on lands identified as a "Natural Diversity Database Areas".	PD/PZ	¥		2
<b>Action:</b> Explore funding opportunities to complete a town wide biological study to identify wildlife corridors, breeding grounds and habitats of State and Federal Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern species and locally significant species.	CC/PD/CTDEP		¥	
<b>Action:</b> Complete town wide natural diversity study.	PD/PZ/CC			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop a working relationship with local and state conservation organization to provide mutual support for actions that preserve habitat needed for the survival of indigenous plant and wildlife species.	CC/PD/CTDEP		¥	

Open Space & Natural Resources, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Protection of Water Based Resources (Water Quality)</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Protect Plainville's Stratified Drift Aquifer as its is the primary drinking water source within the Town of Plainville.	PD/IWC/CC		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Continue process of adopting Aquifer Protection Area land use regulations.	PD/PZ			1
<b>Action:</b> Update Aquifer protection regulations and mapping as level "A" mapping is concluded by the State of Connecticut.	PD/PZ			1
<b>Action:</b> Continue to protect existing and potential water supply aquifers and water supply watershed lands from land uses and development methods that pose a risk to maintaining high water quality.	PD/IWC	¥	¥	
<b>Action:</b> Provide incentives for the use of storm water management techniques that limit impervious surface and on-site water retention/infiltration.	PD/CTDEP/CC/ P&Z	¥		2
<b>Action:</b> Identify existing threats and responsive mitigation plans for key groundwater and surface water resources in Plainville.	CC/CTDEP/ P&Z/ P&Z		¥	3

Open Space & Natural Resources, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Protection of Water Based Resources (Water Quality)</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Support improved pollution discharge standards	TC/CTDEP/PZ	¥	¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Update local zoning and wetlands regulations in order to reduce runoff and sedimentation.	PD/PZ			2
<b>Action:</b> Severely limit development other than temporary or passive recreation in 100 year flood plan.	PZ/PD/OSC/ IWC		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Develop public outreach materials to educate the community about the existence and purpose of an aquifer protection area and the role that they play.	PD/OSC/IWC	¥	¥	2
<b>Wetlands, Watercourses and Floodways</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Enhance regulations that will preserve and protect watercourses, wetlands, steep slopes, and floodplains, and conserve fringe floodplain area, well head areas, areas of high groundwater availability, and special habitat areas.	PD/PZ/IWC/ OSC	¥		1
<b>Action:</b> Adopt a policy of no net loss of wetlands.	PD/OSC		¥	2

Open Space & Natural Resources, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Wetlands, Watercourses and Floodways</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Provide incentive within the zoning code for the use of pervious materials for parking areas and walkways on commercial and industrial development.	PD/PZC/			2
<b>Action:</b> Encourage the use of Low-Impact Development techniques through zoning and subdivision regulations	IWC/PD/PZ/CC	¥	¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Continue to strengthen and coordinate municipal regulation of flood hazard areas to protect life and property, and natural function of flood management systems.	CTDEP/PD/TE	¥		2
<b>Action:</b> Maintain flood hazard controls that ensure compliance with national Flood Insurance program and Community Rating System.	CTDEP/IWC/PD		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Provide incentives for on-site stormwater retention and use of grey water for landscaping.	CTDEP/PD PZ/			1
<b>Action:</b> Establish a practice of creating a deed restricted "no disturbance area" to buffer wetlands, watercourses, and sensitive habitat areas as part of any development approval.	CTDEP/IWC/PD			1
<b>Action:</b> Organize outreach and education concerning best management practices.	CTDEP/PD PZ/CC	¥	¥	1

Open Space & Natural Resources, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Open Space Planning</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Using the Open Space Inventory as a baseline, Develop an Open Space Plan that outlines long term objectives, criteria for lands to be acquired, strategies to be used, and funding sources.	PD/OS/CC/CCRPA			1
<b>Action:</b> The Open Space plan should take into consideration the seven elements of open space defined by Connecticut General Statutes Section 12-107b	PD/OS/CC/CCRPA			1
<b>Action:</b> Identify and preserve Plainville's most ecologically diverse and community revered open spaces, and ecologically rich land areas	OS/CC/PD/P&Z/TC	≠		1
<b>Action:</b> Inventory easements in favor of Town of Plainville and identify easements that may serve as key pieces of land to connect open space parcels	PD/ TS/ CC			1
<b>Action:</b> Utilize criteria defined in the Open Space plan to identify and prioritize protection of lands that embody spirit of defined criteria.	OS/ CC/PD	≠		1
<b>Action:</b> Work with Rails to Trails Organization and Railroad to explore methods to establish bike trail and allow continuation of active rail line.	PD/OS/CC/CCRPA/ GA/P&Z		≠	1
<b>Action:</b> Continue to pursue continuation of bike trail that currently ends at Plainville's border with Southington and Farmington	TC/PD/CCRPA		≠	1

Open Space & Natural Resources, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Open Space Regulations</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Require special studies as part of development applications when proposed development are within defined State of Connecticut Natural Diversity Database Area.	PZ/PD			2
<b>Action:</b> Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to allow P&Z Commission to select open space set-aside when land is subdivided. Land chosen will be based on characteristics outlined in open space plan (e.g. home to special species, unique geological features, and soil conditions).	PD/PZ			1
<b>Action:</b> As part of subdivision process, require that a trail system be designed within open space to be deeded, and require connections to existing system when possible.	PD/PZ			2
<b>Action:</b> Consider requiring conservation style development.	PD/PZ			1
<b>Action:</b> Allow for off-site dedication of open space as part of development of proposed land if it contributes to the overall open space plan.	PD/PZ		¥	2

Open Space & Natural Resources, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Open Space Acquisition &amp; Management</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Explore grant opportunities to conduct a wildlife corridor study to determine wildlife movement through town and use results to help prioritize property acquisition.	PD/PZ/ CC/OS/ CTDEP			2
<b>Action:</b> Pursue establishment of a working relationship with a land trust and/ or other resource protection agency active in the area or support the creation of a local land trust.	PD/ CC/OS		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Develop working knowledge of various land protection tools and generate literature that may be disseminated to local land owners to educate them about preservation techniques available and potential tax benefits.	PD/ CC/OS		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Develop a GIS database that is a repository for information linked to parcels of land. Inventorying information concerning known wetland areas, steep slopes, special species habitat areas, and watercourses, ensures land use decision and land protection efforts are formed by accurate analysis.	TC/PD/PZ/CCRPA	¥		1
<b>Action:</b> Make all passive and active recreation areas accessible and available for public use with adequate signage, parking areas, trail maps, and appropriate facilities for their designated use	PD/CC/DPW/PRD		¥	2

Open Space & Natural Resources, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Open Space Acquisition &amp; Management</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Initiate a public outreach campaign articulating Plainville's greenways plan and educate land owners about the value of conservation easements, and the important role they play in achieving a greenway.	PD/CC/DPW/PRD		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Develop and market materials and maps to the public that show the location of the open space, access points for active recreation and interpretive description of the land.	PD/CC/DPW/PRD		¥	2



<b>Downtown Development</b>
Please refer to the Downtown Development Scenario chapter for specific action steps that also correspond with the CERC Downtown Action Strategy

Town Wide Development Scenario	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
Please refer to the Town Wide Development Scenario chapter for general recommendations on General Development Issues, Zoning Ordinance Considerations, Sustainability, Landscaping and Safe Routes to School not suited for the Action Agenda				
<b>Access Management</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Develop an access management plan that applies to public and private projects and is referenced in the zoning regulations.	DPW/ PD/ PPD/ P&Z/ TE			1
<b>Commercial Infill</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Create an incentive for turning non-conforming residential property into conforming commercial development in designated areas.	TC/PD/DBC			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop building design recommendations for commercial corridors and establish incentives for fulfillment.	PD/P&Z			2
<b>Action:</b> Introduce access management strategies.	DPW/ PD/ PPD/ P&Z/ TE			2
<b>Action:</b> Improve landscaping standards	PD/P&Z/ DPW		¥	
<b>Action:</b> Develop a requirement that street trees, of specifications decided upon by the town, are planted as part of any development or redevelopment project in a commercial corridor	DPW/ PD/P&Z		¥	2

Town Wide Development Scenario	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Action:</b> Complete a corridor study along major commercial arterials to see exactly what infill opportunities exist based on actual land availability and other constraints.	TC/PD/ P&Z/ EDA/ TM		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Establish incentives that reward developments that implement low impact development strategies.	TC/P&Z/ PD		¥	2
<b>Outstanding Recommendations</b>				
<b>Action:</b> The town should consider seeking grants to fund an assessment of the old quarry area along North Mountain Road including a concept plan for the development of this area. Included in the study should be consideration of Exit 36 off of I-84 to provide access to land on the west side of the highway and an in-depth review of site constraints including man-made and fill areas.	TC/PD/P&Z/EDA/ CTDOT			2
<b>Action:</b> A targeted economic development effort should be developed for properties on the north side of Route 372.	TC/PD/P&Z/EDA/		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Update sign regulations to: develop specific standards for varying development districts, taking into consideration, scale massing and setback appropriate for each development type.	TC/PD/P&Z/EDA/			2
<b>Action:</b> Review existing permitted uses and determine which uses should require a Special Permit based on characteristics such as creation of peak hour trips over a certain threshold. For instance, any use generating over 100 peak-hour trips may warrant the consideration of a Special Permit anywhere within Plainville.	TC/PD/P&Z/TE			1

Town Wide Development Scenario	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Improve GIS Capability</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Pursue creation of updateable parcel data.	PD/DH/TS			1
<b>Action:</b> Link parcel data with tax assessor parcel data.				1
<b>Action:</b> Research grant opportunities to assist with costs associated with data collection.	TC/DH			1
<b>Action:</b> Make GIS data available to various town departments.	TS/DH		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Develop a protocol for updating and saving GIS information.	DH/PD		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Designate funding for GIS training for town staff and for continued professional development.	TC/TM		¥	2

Community Facilities	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Actions to Upgrade Fire Station</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Complete ceiling repairs with already budgeted funds.	PFD/TS			1
<b>Action:</b> Budget funds to complete roof repairs	TC/PFD			1
<b>Action:</b> Evaluate need to hire full-time personal to address staffing gaps and maintain response time and ISO rating .	PFD/TC			2
<b>Actions to Upgrade Fire Station</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Organize campaign to recruit additional volunteers	TS/PFD		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Develop a procedure to evaluate equipment needs on a standardized schedule	PFD			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop an improvement plan to be incorporated into a 2-4 year capitol improvement plan	PFD/TC	¥		2
<b>Actions to Complete School Improvements and Monitor Needs</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Follow the 2002 Long Range Plan	BOE/TS			1
<b>Action:</b> Ensure scheduled renovations are completed	BOE/TS			1
<b>Action:</b> Continually update school enrollment projections	BOE	¥	¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Conduct an assessment of B.O.E space needs and develop recommendations to meet space needs including renovation the old Linden Street School Building	BOE			2

Community Facilities, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Actions to Complete Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrades and Future Needs</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Allow upgrading work to continue and be completed by late 2009 target date	DPW			1
<b>Action:</b> Conduct a needs analysis and financial implications of sewer expansion in 4 specific areas of Town.	DPW/ TC			1
<b>Action:</b> Complete assessment and action plan to address aging piping and manhole system.	DPW/ TC			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop emergency action plan to deal with overflow conditions.	CTDEP/PD/DPW			2
<b>Actions to Complete Downtown Improvements</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Monitor installation of Phase I improvements currently in progress.	DPW/ PD/DBC			1
<b>Action:</b> Ensure administrative details are executed in preparation of Phase II work.	TC/TS/DPW/PD DBC			1
<b>Action:</b> Research and identify funding sources for Phase III.	TC/PD/DBC			2
<b>Actions to Address Senior Center Space Needs</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Monitor Expansion project through completion.	SCC/SCD			
<b>Action:</b> Continue to solicit donations for new parking lot.	SCC/SCD			
<b>Action:</b> Develop space and equipment needs capitol plan for 10 year horizon.	SCC/SCD/PD		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Increase fundraising and grant solicitation campaign to secure funds for space and equipment needs.	SCC/SCD/PD		¥	2

Community Facilities, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Actions to Address Senior Needs</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Evaluate senior program needs to determine the type and amount of space and staff needs to provide these services and programs	SCC/SCD/PD			2
<b>Action:</b> Continually evaluate the type of services desired by the senior population	SCC/SCD/PD		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Continue fundraising efforts to increase programming capabilities	SCC/SCD		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Develop documentation that evidences need for additional staff	SCC/SCD			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop Capitol Plan to asses and articulate additional space and staffing needs over the next 10 years	SCC/SCD/PD/TS			1
<b>Actions to Address Management Plans for Municipal Facilities and Equipment</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Conduct a comprehensive community facilities study with a focus on department space needs	DPW			
<b>Action:</b> Develop management plans for town facilities	TS/ TC/DH			
<b>Action:</b> Establish coordination and cooperation among departments in planning for future Town facilities	TC/TM/DH			
<b>Action:</b> Group similar facilities when possible to take advantage of symbiotic relationships and increased efficiency by eliminating duplication of efforts	TC/TM/DH		¥	3

Community Facilities, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Actions to Address Municipal Meeting Space Needs</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Accurately asses space needs for all Commissions, Organizations and Groups that-utilize municipal meeting space.	TC/TM/DH		¥	3
<b>Action:</b> Inventory all available municipal meeting space.	DH/TM/PIC			
<b>Action:</b> Develop town-wide system to reserve meeting space.	TS/DH/PIC			3
<b>Action:</b> Asses options for creating additional meeting space.	PIC/TC/TM			
<b>Action Steps to Meet Recreational Space &amp; Program Needs</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Review 2000 Plan for Park Development and reassess priorities.	PRD	¥		1
<b>Action:</b> Explore State and Private funding sources for facility rehabilitation and facility construction.	PRD		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Develop a Master Recreation Plan with a focus on additional recreational fields and programming needs.	PRD/ TC		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Inventory potential lands/ existing buildings available for construction of indoor recreation space.	PRD/TC			2
<b>Action:</b> Conduct a resident survey on recreational wants/needs.	TS/PRD/EDA			2
<b>Actions to Monitor Police Department Needs</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Complete storage space needs assessment that looks at least 10 years into future	PPD/TC			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop a capitol plan that assesses staffing and equipment needs with consideration for energy costs	PPD/TC		¥	

Economic Development	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Actions to Develop a Business Retention Program</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Complete ongoing business survey and tabulate and analyze the results.	PD/ EDA			1
<b>Action:</b> Prioritize solutions to business and industry issues.	PD/EDA/TC		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Appoint specific individual as the point of contact within Town government for business community.	TC/PIC		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Generate suggestions for local action from economic development experts.	EDA/CTDECD		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Enhance communication with the business community regarding areas of interest and concern.	PD/ EDA		¥	2
<b>Action to provide tax incentives</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Create an incentive program targeting desired types of new businesses and assists existing businesses.	TC/TM/PD/ EDA/CTDECD			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop a spectrum of tax incentives that complement varied business needs.	TC/TM/PD/ EDA/CTDECD		¥	2



Economic Development, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Actions to identify appropriate business mix</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Conduct a "targeted industry study".	PD/EDA/TC			2
<b>Action:</b> Refine zoning regulations and map to encourage businesses that are indentified in study and desired.	PZC/PD/EDA			3
<b>Actions to encourage environmentally responsible businesses</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Create programs to encourage existing businesses to improve environmental responsibility.	TC/TM/PD/EDA		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Provide support to the downtown and other nodes of activity.	PD/PZC/EDA		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Develop an inventory of "low impact" land use techniques that could be included within the zoning regulations.	PD/PZC/EDA/CC			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop an inventory of "green building" techniques and sustainable business practices and make information available to the business community.	PD/PZC/EDA/CC			2

Economic Development, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Actions to provide job skill training and business assistance</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Inventory business management training and courses available through higher education institutions and disseminate to local business community.	PIC/CTDECD/ EDA			1
<b>Action:</b> Develop a job skill training program in conjunction with local trade schools that target skills for industries likely to locate in Plainville.	PIC/CTDECD/ EDA			2
<b>Action:</b> Inventory State and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) programs that provide assistance to local businesses.	PIC/CTDECD/ EDA/CCRPA			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop marketing program to educate business owners about assistance programs.	EDA/PD/CCRPA			1
<b>Actions steps to Develop Incubator Space and Support Homes Based Businesses</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Consider the role the town will play in the development of incubator space	EDA/PD/TC			1
<b>Action:</b> Evaluate the type of technology, building layout, and business requirements to meet start-up business needs.	EDA/CCRAP /CTDECD			2
<b>Action:</b> Develop a campaign to market incubator space.	EDA/PD			

Economic Development, Cont.	Lead Agency	On-going	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Actions to provide job skill training and business assistance</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Develop clear regulations on what type of home-based businesses are permitted, under what circumstances and the process for receiving town approval to conduct the business.	EDA/PD/PZ			1
<b>Action:</b> Encourage the Chamber of Commerce to support home based business and the role they play in the overall economy of Plainville.	EDA			2
<b>Actions to update industrial/business park regulations</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Review “park” regulations from other Connecticut communities.	PD/PZC			1
<b>Action:</b> Determine what type of uses would complement the business and employee needs of the primary “park” tenants.	EDA/PD/PZC			1
<b>Action:</b> Encourage prospective businesses to include “accessory” service uses as part of their development plan.	PD/EDA/PZC			2

Transportation	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Actions to Maintain the Transportation System</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Promote policies that maintain the existing system rather than call for the expansion of roadways.	TC/ PD/ PW	¥	¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Continue to improve and maintain the Town's road to ensure the efficient and effective movement of both people and goods.	TC/PD/ PW	¥	¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Work with the State and Regional agencies to identify and prioritize highway projects that highlight preservation activity.	CTDOT/CCRPA PD	¥	¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Utilize the State's functional roadway classification (as shown earlier) to be used as standards for improvements to roads in Town.	PD			1
<b>Actions to improve the Transportation Network and Transit alternatives</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Encourage the use of alternative transportation systems, such as mass transit, bicycling, and vanpooling to reduce single occupant vehicles.	TC/PD/CCRPA		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Continue operation of specialized services for the elderly and disabled.	TC/PD/CCRPA		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Provide for increased circulation within and between all sections of the Town.	TC/PD/CCRPA		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Provide facilities for non-motorized transportation including walking and bicycling.	TC/PD/CCRPA		¥	2

Transportation, Cont.	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Action:</b> Overall expressway access to the downtown (from Route 72) needs to be improved, particularly from the Tinty Site.	TC/PD/ CTDOT		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> The Exit 36 interchange of I-84, Slater Road, should be reconstructed to provide access to the land on the west side of the highway.	TC/ CTDOT/CCRPA		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> The Towns should continue to implement Phase II and III of its downtown transportation improvements which are part of a plan to combat Plainville's deteriorating downtown.	TC/PD/PW			2
<b>Action:</b> As identified in the CCRPA's Long Range Transportation, a Route 10 corridor study should be undertaken which examines the function of key intersections, safety, and land use impacts.	TC/PD/CCRPA			1
<b>Action:</b> An access management strategy should be developed that looks at methods to reduce multiple access/egress points, and promote shared parking.	PD/PW		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> The Town should continue to promote the continued operation of Robertson Airport; as well as study the feasibility of purchasing the airport.	TC		¥	1
<b>Action:</b> The Towns should propose to ConnDOT to conduct a new feasibility study to investigate passenger rail service between Waterbury and Hartford along existing infrastructure.	TC/CCRPA		¥	
<b>Action:</b> Additional bikeways should be constructed in conjunction with recreational facilities, as well as to link existing town facilities together (including Town Hall, the library, and schools).	TC/PD/PRD			1
<b>Action:</b> The Town should work with CCRPA to promote local bus service and rideshare efforts, as well as with employers to develop alternative commuting programs.	CTDOT/TC/PD/ CCRPA			1

Transportation, Cont.	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Action:</b> Pursue the acquisition of Robertson Airport as outlined by Clough Harbour & Associates in their December 2008 Feasibility Analysis.	TC			2
<b>Action:</b> Pursue discussions with the State of CT to implement a widening plan on Route 372 from Hooker Street to Cooke Street.	TC/TE/ PD			2
<b>Action:</b> Pursue bridge reconstruction on Tomlinson Avenue.	TC/TE/ PD			2
<b>Strategies to improve safety</b>				
<b>Action:</b> The Town should continue to improve Town Line Road to the standards of a collector road, especially at the intersection with Route 10.	TC/TE/PW		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> As identified in CCRPA's Long Range Plan, the Town should make improvements to New Britain Ave (Cooke to Hooker).	PW/CCRPA		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> The Town should develop a pavement/ sidewalk management plan that calls for sidewalks to be installed along both sides of collector and arterial streets (including New Britain Avenue and Camp Street),	TC/PW/PD			2
<b>Action:</b> The Town should explore the development of a "Safe Routes to Schools" program.	BOE/TE/PD		¥	2
<b>Strategies to protect neighborhoods and encourage good design</b>				
<b>Action:</b> Develop policies that encourage transportation and land use to be compatible.	PD/PZ/TE	¥	¥	1
<b>Action:</b> As part of a zoning regulation overhaul, a traffic Impact studies should be required for major development projects that reach a certain "tipping point", perhaps by Special Exception, to ensure appropriate development patterns.	TE/PD/PZ			1

Transportation, Cont.	Lead Agency	Ongoing	Policy	Priority 1, 2 or 3
<b>Action:</b> Developers should be required to comply with any road proposal recommendations that are included in the POCD, if the proposed road segment is located within the developer's land.	PZ/PD	¥	¥	1
<b>Action:</b> Cul-de-sacs and dead end streets in new developments should be kept at a minimum to ensure that traffic flow is not impeded though the overall neighborhood.	PZ/PD/TE		¥	2
<b>Action:</b> Bicycle accommodations should be considered in all road improvement and large scale site development projects.	PZ/PD/TE	¥	¥	1



**TOWN OF PLAINVILLE  
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**




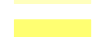













**Appendix**



**Plainville, CT**  
**Plan of Conservation**  
**and Development**

*Zoning*

**Legend**

-  Municipal Boundary
-  Railroad
-  R-40 (40,000 sf)
-  R-20 (20,000 sf)
-  R-15 (15,000 sf)
-  R-12 (12,000 sf)
-  R-11 (11,000 sf)
-  R-10 (10,000 sf)
-  R (8,750 sf)
-  General Commercial (GC)
-  Central Commercial (CC)
-  Flood Control (FC)
-  General Industrial (GI)
-  Restricted Industrial (RI)
-  Technology Park (TP)
-  Quarry (Q)
-  Flood Plain (FP)

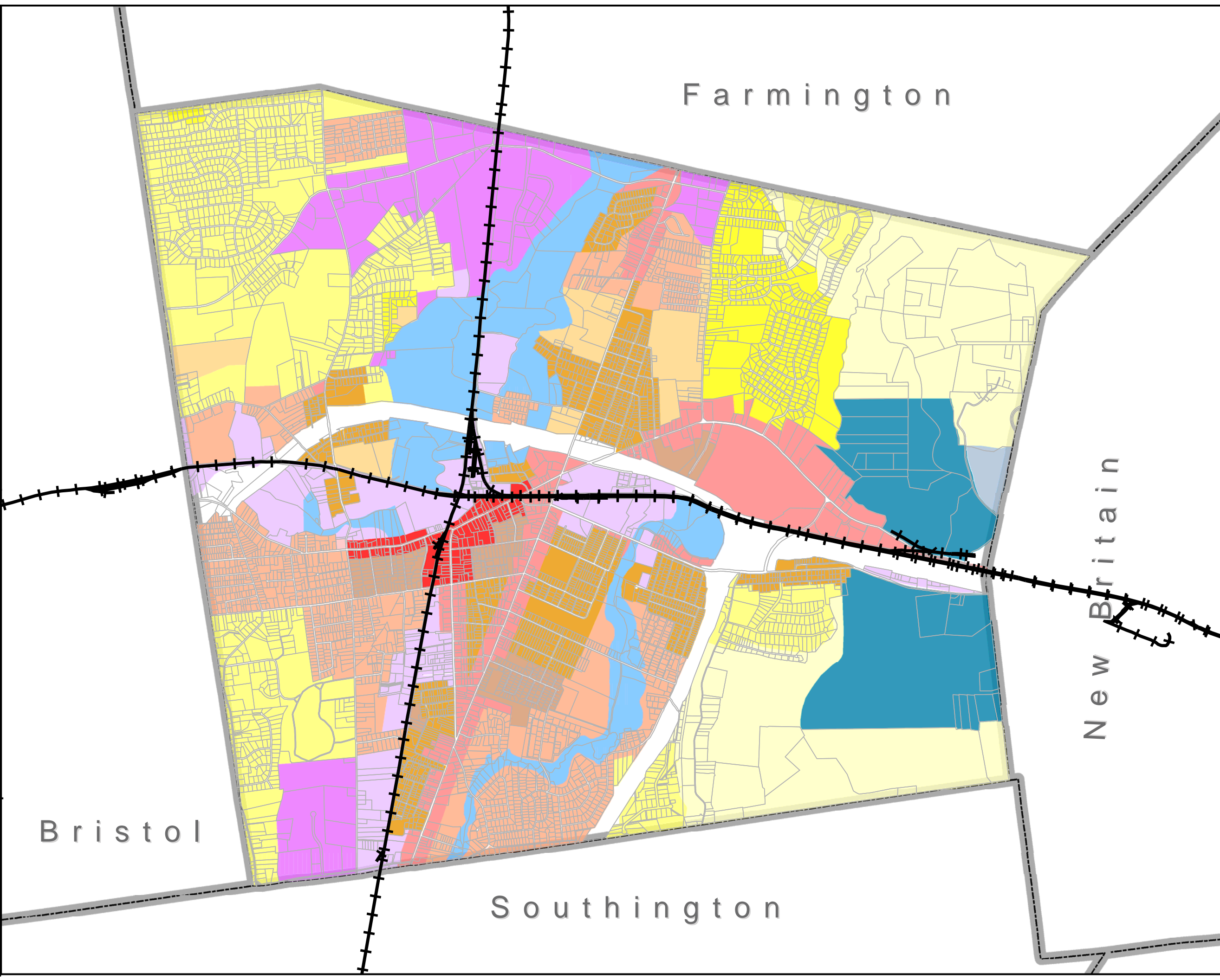


0 1,000 2,000 Feet

Sources of Data:  
Town of Plainville  
CT DOT

Urbitran, A Division of DMJM Harris  
October 2008

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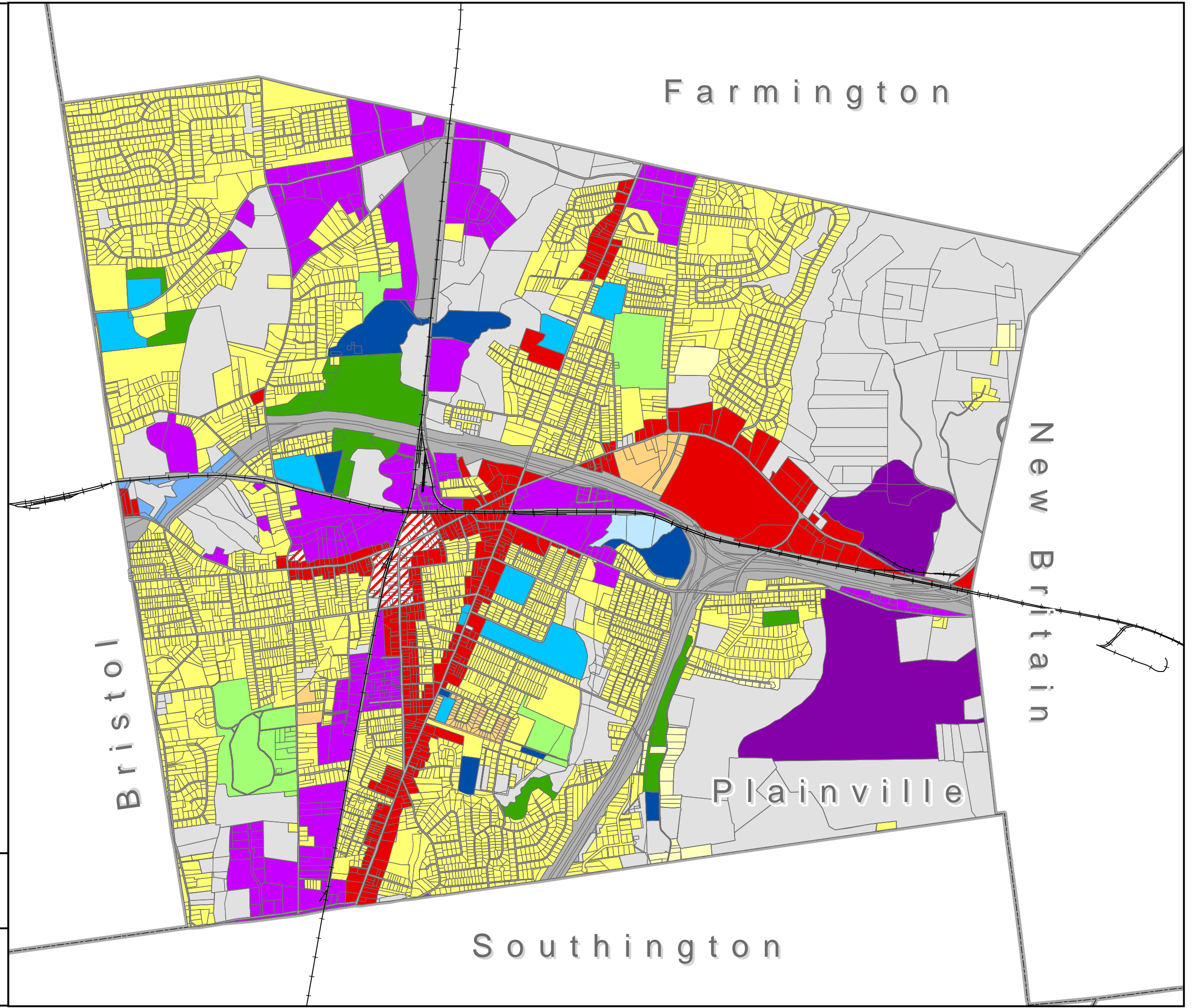


# Plainville, CT Plan of Conservation and Development

## Land Use

### Legend

-  Railroad
-  Parcel Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary
- Land Use**
-  HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
-  MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
-  LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  CENTRAL BUSINESS
-  TRANSPORTATION
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  TECHNOLOGY PARK
-  INSTITUTIONAL
-  TOWN OWNED LAND
-  STATE OWNED LAND
-  QUARRY
-  OPEN SPACE
-  RECREATION
-  VACANT LAND
-  VALLY WATERSUPPLY



0 750 1,500 Feet

Sources of Data:  
Town of Plainville  
US Census Bureau

Urbitran, a Division of DMJM Harris

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Southington

New Britain

Plainville

Farmington

Bristol



# Plainville, CT Plan of Conservation and Development

## Community Facilities

### Legend

--- Railroad

▭ Municipal Boundary

#### Facility Type

▭ Plainville Housing Authority - Elderly

▭ Park, Public

▭ School

▭ Town/Community Facility/Service

1. Plainville Chamber of Commerce

2. Plainville Fire Department

3. Plainville Historic Center

4. Plainville Municipal Center

5. Plainville Public Library

6. Plainville Senior Center

7. Plainville Town Hall

8. YMCA

K

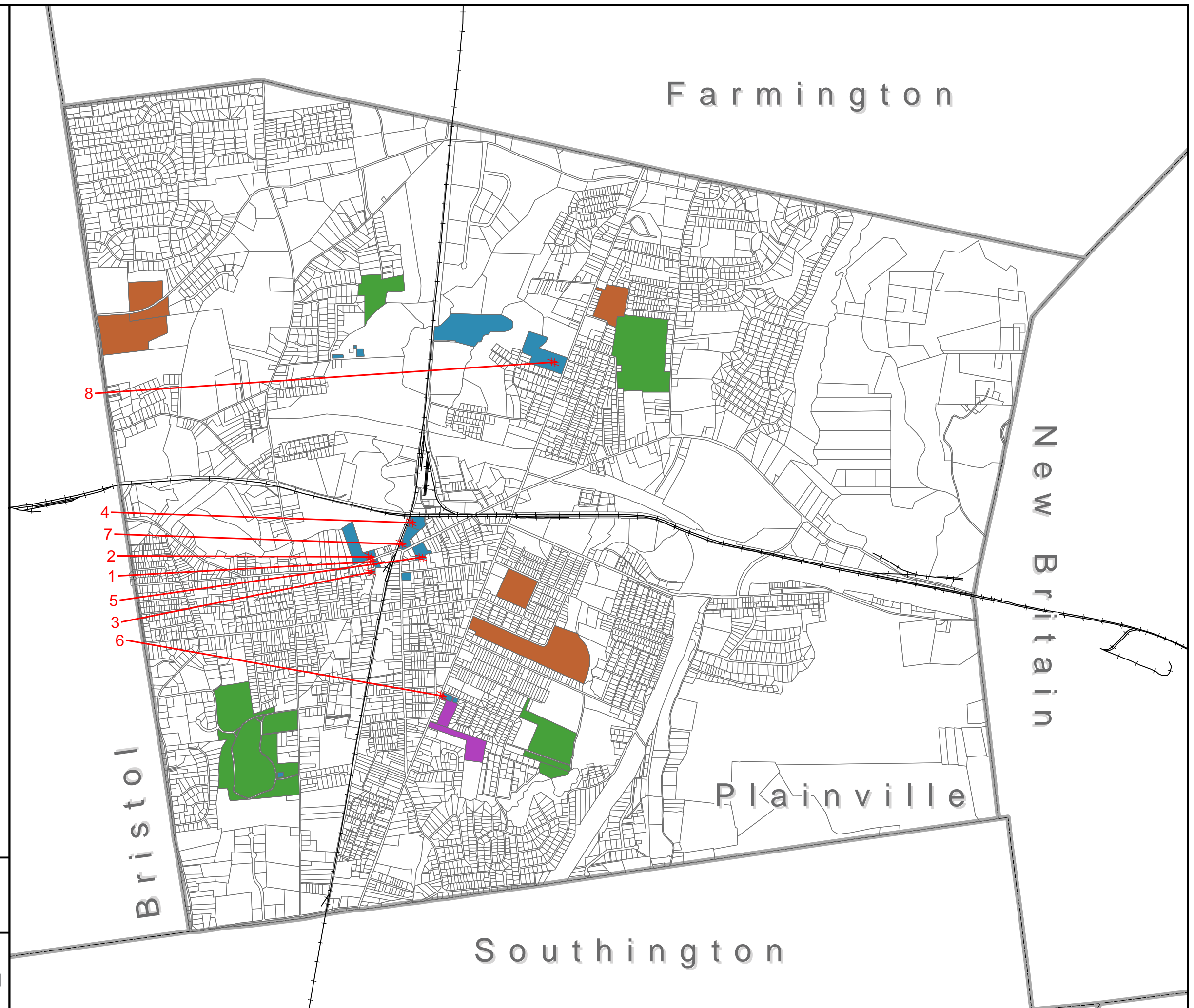
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Sources of Data:  
Town of Plainville  
US Census Bureau

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October 14, 2008

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# Plainville, CT Plan of Conservation and Development

## Vacant Land

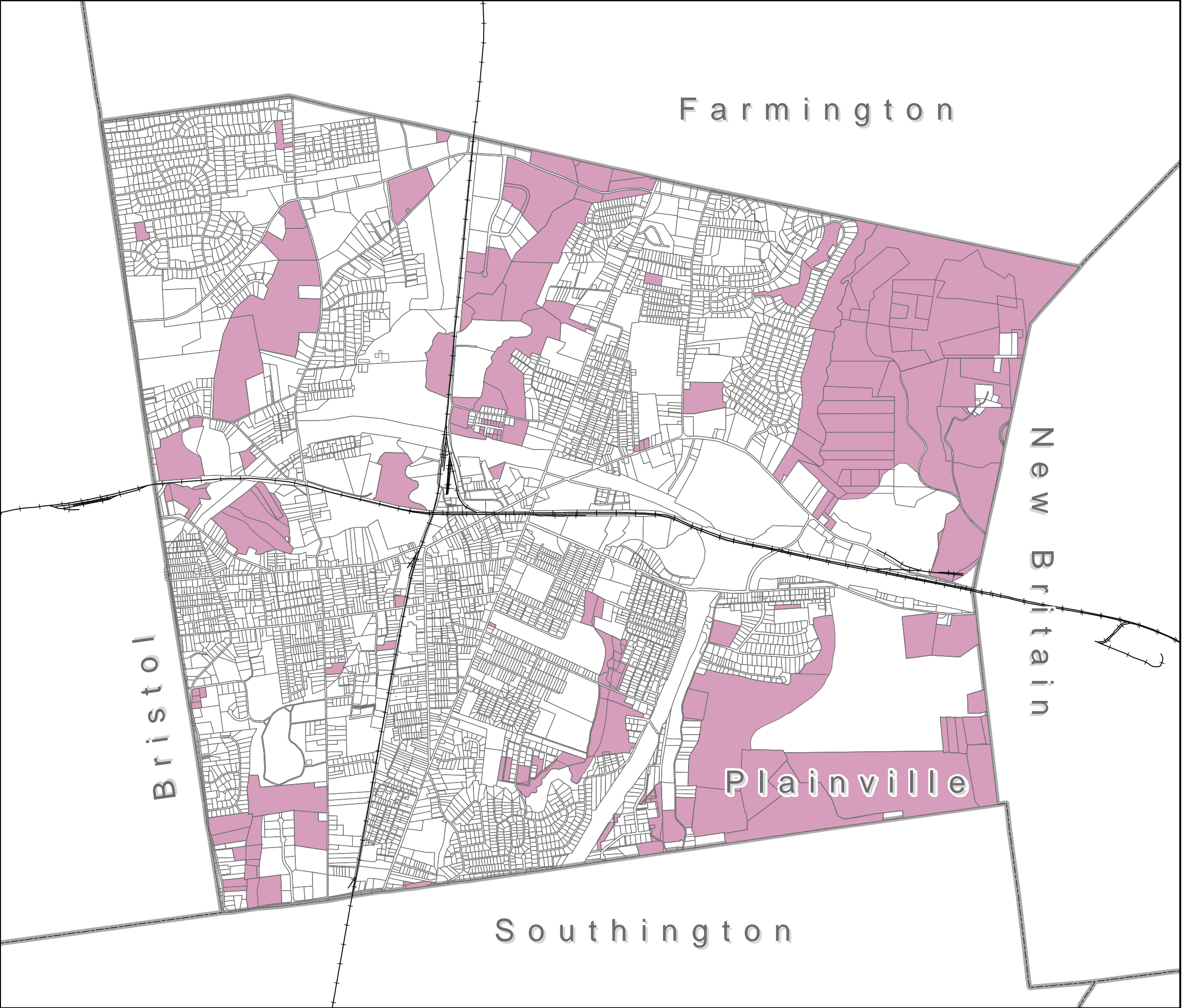
*This map was prepared using aerial photography dated 2004. In addition, local development records were reviewed to remove parcels that have been, or were currently being developed at the time this map was being prepared. Land held as open space or parklands have been excluded. This map makes no representation as to the development potential of any vacant parcel shown. For the purpose of preparing this map, the reviewer excluded vacant lands attached to partially developed lots where it could be reasonably determined that no additional development could occur.*

### Legend

- +— Railroad
- Parcel Boundary
- Vacant Land
- ▭ Municipal Boundary

0 750 1,500 Feet

Sources of Data:  
Town of Plainville  
US Census Bureau





# Plainville, CT Plan of Conservation and Development

*Open Space  
and  
Park Lands*

## Legend

- +— Railroad
- State Owned Dedicated Open Space
- Town Owned Dedicated Open Space
- Park
- ▭ Municipal Boundary

K

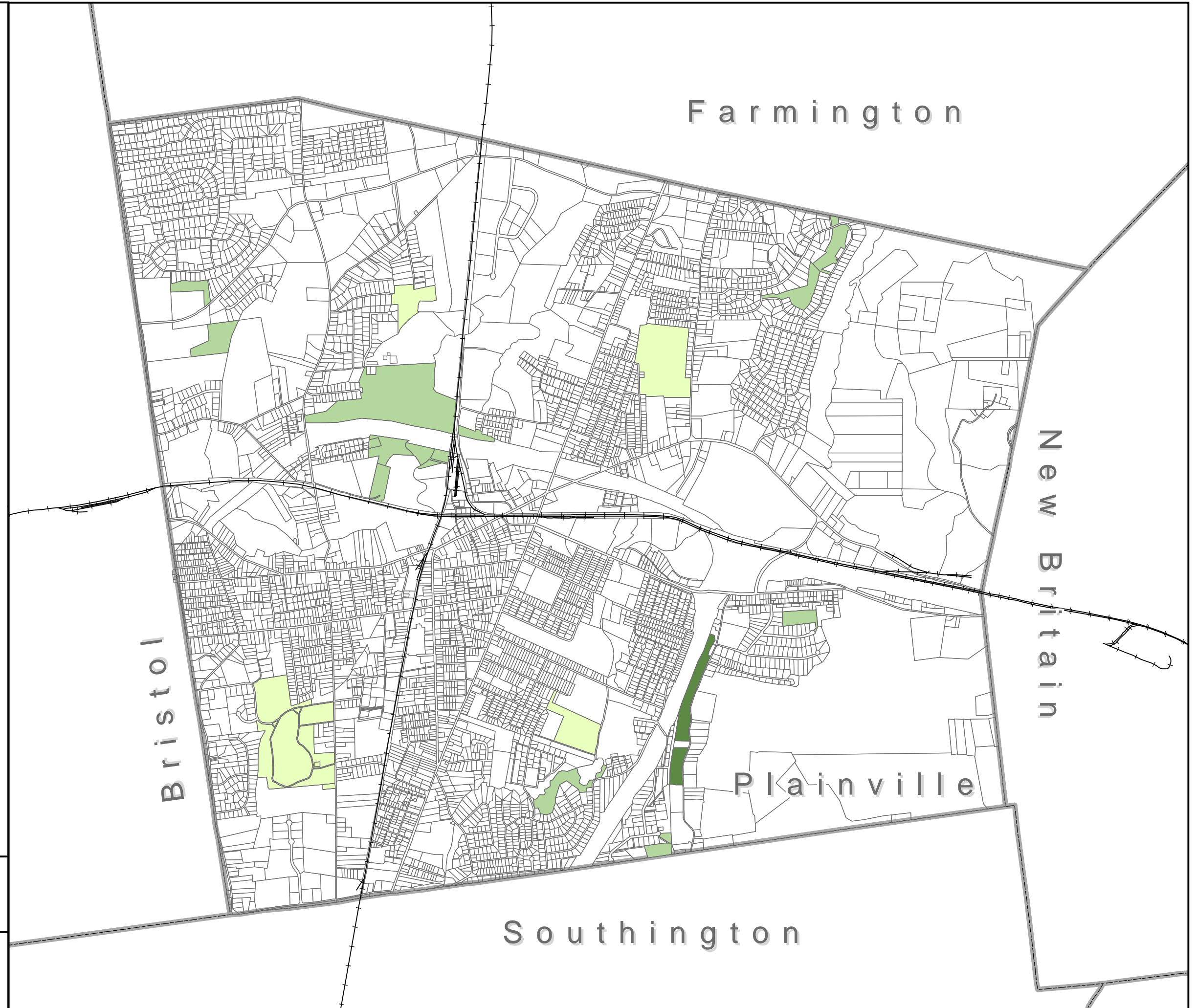
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Sources of Data:  
Town of Plainville  
US Census Bureau

Urbitran, a Division of DMJM Harris

October 14<sup>th</sup> 2008

DMJM HARRIS | AECOM



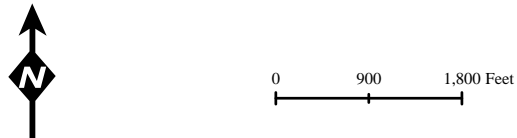


Plainville, CT  
Plan of Conservation  
and Development

Future Land Use

Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Railroad
- Mixed-Use District
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION AREA
- COMMERCIAL
- CENTRAL BUSINESS
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL/MULTI-FAMILY
- REGIONAL COMMERCIAL
- REGIONAL ECONOMIC CENTER
- TRANSPORTATION
- AIRPORT
- INDUSTRIAL
- OFFICE AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- TECHNOLOGY PARK
- QUARRY
- GREENWAY
- TRANSITIONAL



Sources of Data:  
Town of Plainville  
CT DOT

Urbitran, A Division of DMJM Harris  
October 2008

