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Acknowledgments

Effective Date: May 19, 2014; Revised December 25, 2019
The Plan of Conservation and Development

The Plan of Conservation and Development (hereinafter “POCD”) is an important part of how Canton plans its future. The POCD is an advisory document intended to assess current conditions, anticipate important issues, and provide Canton with a framework for decision making regarding various aspects of planning for land use, infrastructure, and community facilities and services. The POCD represents a guide for:

- Nurturing and promoting the image and identity of Canton;
- Enhancing and sustaining the vitality of Canton; and,
- Securing a good quality of life for Canton.

By statute, the Town is directed to update its POCD decennially. This document represents the 2014 update of Canton’s POCD.
POCD Preparation

For this update, the Board of Selectmen assembled a committee composed of representatives of selected Town boards and commissions, community organizations, and interested residents. By design, the Committee’s membership reflected a variety of perspectives on the topics covered in the POCD. Many hours were spent by the Committee members and Town Staff gathering information, attending meetings, discussing strategies, and writing and reviewing multiple drafts of each chapter. The Board of Selectmen and members of the public closely monitored the progress of the update. The Committee appreciates the valuable interest and input from all who contributed.

This update represents the cooperation of these members to reach a consensus on what is the best plan for Canton. The Committee structured this update to:

- Be convenient, useful, and effective in guiding local decisions and the implementation of POCD objectives.
- Readily accommodate the assessment and evaluation of the progress of POCD implementation and effectiveness.
- Remain a living document that, through regular assessments and evaluation -- and resulting updates, can be as relevant in 2024 as it is in 2014.

Addressing Community Needs
(Community Facilities)

Making Things Happen
(Implementation)
POCD Interpretation

Keeping in mind that there are many other important themes and topics presented in this POCD, two prominent themes of recurring significance emerged as a result of the public input process, the Committee deliberations, and the POCD document itself:

- Preserving community character, and
- Building and sustaining the economic vitality of Canton.

These two themes may “pull” in different directions, but are not incompatible. With a commitment to coordinated and balanced planning and management, both themes will work together to enhance the overall quality of life in Canton.

Consequently, ‘balance’ is the paramount theme of the POCD. The Update Committee endeavored to integrate balance in every aspect of the POCD. Applying vision to stitch together competing interests and limitations are the challenge of good planning. Hence, every interpretation of any part of this POCD should look for and consider the potential balancing elements within the POCD.

The sequencing of POCD elements -- from the chapters and subtopics to the presentation of the individual implementation measures – was organized to best present the narrative of the Community’s vision, and is not intended to establish precedence unless specifically indicated.

Conclusion

The temporary Plan of Conservation and Development Update Committee was honored by the opportunity to serve the community to accomplish this important task. We tried to approach our duties with the diligence they deserved; and we are proud of the resulting POCD. We hope this POCD update will serve Canton well.
During the process of preparing this POCD, the following fundamental values emerged as the foundation for this Plan of Conservation and Development.

**Things We Want To Protect …**

| Community Character | Our town is rich in physical and social character. While the physical elements of character are often the main focus of a Plan of Conservation and Development, we are also proud of its social character which consists of many styles, personalities and tastes, all of which contribute to its independent, artsy, small-town character. Preserving and enhancing both types of character is important to us. |
| Natural Resources | Natural resources are an integral component of what makes our town unique and attractive. We will encourage the protection and preservation of important natural resources, while balancing the rights of property owners. |
| Open Space | We have long recognized the value of open space to the community. While we are proud of our past accomplishments, we also seek to acquire or preserve additional open space in the future while honoring and respecting private property rights. |
| Agriculture | Farms and farmland are important to Canton and the community has benefited from a thriving agricultural community since its earliest days. We will strive to ensure that agriculture remains an important part of our rural character, charm, and economy. |
### How We Want To Grow ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>Economic growth and development is fundamental to our community’s future and quality of life. Business development in suitable locations must happen in a manner that enhances the character of the community and reinforces strong property values.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Development</td>
<td>It is important that we maintain the neighborhoods that make our town a great place to live, raise our children, and provide a sense of community. We will seek to create new neighborhoods that enhance our community identity and historic rural character and respect the environmental landscape in which they are proposed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Services We Want To Have ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Facilities And Services</th>
<th>We will strive to provide and maintain necessary, functional, and attractive community facilities and services to meet the needs of residents and ensure our town continues as a desirable place to live and work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Transportation is integral to daily life and it is important that facilities and services are provided to serve the transportation needs and desires of our community with accommodations for vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and public transit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>Utilities such as drinking water, wastewater treatment, electricity, and communications are essential to our way of life. We will strive to use these utility services to meet community needs and support desired development patterns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organization Of This POCD

The Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for the Town of Canton consists of:

- a “Strategic Plan”, and
- an “Implementation Plan.”

This part – known as the “Strategic Plan” - is a statement of strategic directions considered important for preserving and enhancing those things integral to the vitality, livability, and quality of life in the community. It is “big picture” in nature; and is intended to be used by Canton residents, agencies, staff, and other community stakeholders to discuss and refine the major directions of the community.

It is envisioned the Strategic Plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure the overall strategies for Canton are appropriate for addressing issues facing the community and guiding Canton’s future. The Strategic Plan is also intended to fulfill the POCD requirements under CGS Section 8-23 for Canton.

The companion part – the “Implementation Plan” – is principally a compilation of implementation measures (i.e. tasks and active guiding principles) determined to help accomplish the overall strategies of the POCD. The implementation measures are presented in a series of tables organized according to the primary topic themes presented in the Strategic Plan that identify “who” is responsible for doing “what” and the timeframe (“when”) over which the measure is intended to be implemented. The tables also allow for tracking implementation progress. As measures are implemented and results evaluated, it is intended that the Implementation Plan will be updated - on a regular, on-going basis - to remain current.
INTRODUCTION

Overview

This document is the 2014 – 2024 Plan of Conservation and Development for Canton, Connecticut. This POCD was prepared by a dedicated group of residents working with Town boards in order to:

- Promote discussion about desirable future outcomes for Canton.
- Direct future growth and change in the community.
- Guide local boards and commissions.
- Comply with the requirements of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Protecting Important Resources

Guiding Growth and Change

Addressing Community Needs

Making Things Happen
Statutory Provisions (CGS Section 8-23)

The Commission shall:
- prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development ...
- review the plan of conservation and development at least once every ten years ...

The Commission may:
- adopt such geographical, functional or other amendments ... as it deems necessary.
- prepare, amend and adopt plans for the redevelopment and improvement of districts or neighborhoods which...
- contain special problems or opportunities ...

The Plan shall:
- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality ...
- be designed to promote...the coordinated development of the municipality ...
- recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes ...
- recommend the most desirable density of population in ... the municipality...
- note any inconsistencies with the following growth management principles:
  - redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers...
  - expansion of housing opportunities and design choices...
  - concentration of development around transportation nodes...
  - conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and existing farmland...
  - protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety...
  - integration of planning across all levels of government...
- make provision for the development of housing opportunities and promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing...

The Plan shall consider the following:
- the community development action plan of the municipality...
- the need for affordable housing...
- the need for protection of existing and potential drinking water supplies...
- the use of cluster development and other development ...
- the state plan of conservation and development ...
- the regional plan of development...
- physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends...
- the objectives of energy-efficient patterns of development...
- protection and preservation of agriculture.

The Plan may:
show the commission's recommendation for
- conservation and preservation of traprock and other ridgelines...
- airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds...
- the general location, relocation and improvement of schools...
- the general location and extent of public utilities...for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes...
- the extent and location of public housing projects...
- programs for the implementation of the plan...
- proposed priority funding areas...
Conditions and Trends

Examining the conditions and trends which affect Canton is important to understanding the planning strategies and recommendations.

Canton Is Growing …

According to the Census, Canton had a population of 10,292 people in 2010. Since 1950, Canton’s population has grown as a result of the automobile and the overall trend of suburbanization. Given recent economic conditions, the rate of growth has slowed but growth is expected to continue in the future.

Over the years, growth has been fueled by both natural increase (more births than deaths) and by net migration (more people moving in than moving out).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population Change</strong></td>
<td>2,085</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>1,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calculated Natural Increase</strong></td>
<td>864</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births</td>
<td>1,352</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>1,119</td>
<td>1,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated Net Migration</strong></td>
<td>1,221</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

US Census/CT Dept. of Public Health/Planimetrics
The Age Composition Of Canton Is Changing ...

Over the last several decades, Canton has been experiencing a shift in its age composition. This is not unique to Canton – it reflects demographic changes in the state and the nation. People are living longer and so there are more people in the older age groups than previously. At the same time, the people of the “baby boom” generation (people born between 1946 and 1964) are moving into the older age groups.

As a result, and for the first time in history, it is anticipated that people aged 55 and older will become the largest age group in Canton. This change in the age composition of Canton will affect the types of services desired by residents.

![Age Composition Of Canton (1970 – 2030)](image)

1970 - 2010 Census
Projections by CT Data Center (2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>AGE RANGE</th>
<th>NEEDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infants</td>
<td>0 to 4</td>
<td>• Child care • Child activities/programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Age</td>
<td>5 to 19</td>
<td>• School facilities • Recreation programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adults</td>
<td>20 to 34</td>
<td>• Rental housing • Starter homes • Social destinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Age</td>
<td>35 to 54</td>
<td>• Family programs • Trade-up housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature Adults</td>
<td>55 to 64</td>
<td>• Housing options • Second homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement Age</td>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>• Housing options • Tax relief • Medical care • In-home services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Current Housing Mix May Not Meet Our Future Needs …

Canton is experiencing some key housing trends:

- Household sizes (the number of people per housing unit) are becoming smaller and this may require more housing units to house the same number of people,
- An aging population may desire different types of housing units to meet their housing needs, and
- New housing construction will occur to accommodate the projected population growth and demand.

The cost of housing in Canton has increased significantly and at a pace that has exceeded inflation and the growth in income. While about seven percent of Canton’s housing stock meets one State definition of affordability (government-assisted, CHFA financed, or deed-restricted), the demand for affordable housing of all types is expected to grow in the future as older generations may live longer on limited incomes and younger generations may be saddled with educational debt.

Economic Considerations Are Important …

Canton has more residents working than jobs in the community – as a result, Canton is a net exporter of workers to other communities. Most jobs in Canton are involved in retail trade and services. Typical household incomes of Canton residents are higher than the State or the region.

In terms of local government, per capita expenditures are lower than the State average and typical for towns of Canton’s size. About two-thirds of local spending goes to educational services – the remainder goes to general government, public works, public safety, recreation, and other services.

Canton generates about 81 percent of its revenue from property taxes. Canton is more dependent on local property taxes to support local programs and services since it receives less state aid than similar communities or the statewide average. This is important because Canton’s tax base is more dependent on residential property than the State average.

There Is Development Potential Remaining …

Canton has a land area of about 16,086 acres. Most of the land in Canton is zoned for residential development on one- to two-acre lots.

There is presently more development potential remaining for residential homes than for business uses. This means that the business portion of the tax base may decrease in the future resulting in a greater tax burden on residential properties unless there is a growth in the amount of business property.
Residents Care about Character and Community ...

At one of the public meetings, residents were asked to identify the things in Canton which made them proud of their community. Responses concentrated around the following themes:

Physical Character – Things that contribute to the overall physical character of Canton (e.g., undeveloped areas, natural beauty).
  - **Collinsville**
    - Community focal point/community events
    - Quaint/sense of place
    - Attracts people from all over/meeting place
    - Has a great mix of people, artists, museums
  - **Waterways**
    - Farmington River/Cherry Brook/Nepaug Reservoir
    - Provide recreational and economic benefits
  - **Historic Areas**
    - Canton Center/reflection of the town’s past
  - **Rural Areas**
    - Farms/agriculture
    - “Ruralness”/open space
    - Scenic vistas

Community – Facilities and services that contribute to the quality of life for residents (e.g., community center, library, community events, and schools) or that help people feel they are part of a larger community.

  - **Town Facilities**
    - School system
    - Community center/library
    - Recreation area
  - **Other Amenities**
    - Rail trail/land trust trails
    - Canton Museum
    - Nature Center
    - Gallery on the Green
  - **Sense of Community**
    - Small town feeling/charm
    - Economic diversity
Residents Want to Address Issues and Concerns ...

Residents were also asked to identify the things in Canton which they were sorry about or wished they could change. Responses concentrated around the following themes:

**Deficiencies** – things people want which could enhance the community

- **Business Development**
  - Attract more/better business development
  - Need a more coherent program/seems reactive
  - Seems restrictive and anti-business
  - Make Route 44 more attractive

- **Collinsville**
  - Improved streets/streetscape
  - Better maintained buildings

- **Community Facilities**
  - Need more athletic fields and playgrounds
  - Town garage

- **Roadways**
  - More road maintenance/repair
  - Bikeways/walkways - Route 179 and elsewhere

**Irritants** – things that residents feel detract from the community or its quality of life

- **Canton Village Plaza**
  - Not pedestrian-friendly or driving-friendly
  - Could be more attractive/has incredible potential

- **Town Facilities**
  - Sewage treatment plant in the wrong place

- **Collins Company**
  - Seems to be neglected/deteriorating
  - It is such an asset/need to redevelop/reuse

**Losses/Threats** – things that changed or threaten to change what residents perceive as the existing or desired character of Canton

- **Loss of Open Space**
  - Conversion to residential subdivisions
  - Loss of golf course to commercial development
  - Failure to purchase development rights/open space

- **Appearance of Development**
  - Repetitive development patterns/styles
  - Loss of historic homes
Residents Identified The Following Priorities ...

At one of the public meetings, residents were asked to identify issues (from a pre-defined list) which they felt were most important to them as part of the planning process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Tier Issues</th>
<th>Things We Want To Protect</th>
<th>How We Want To Grow</th>
<th>Services We Want To Have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Middle Tier Issues               |                           |                    |                          |
| Community Character              |                           |                    |                          |
| Historic Resources               |                           |                    |                          |
| Traffic and Circulation          |                           |                    |                          |
| Walking/Biking/Transit           |                           |                    |                          |

| Lower Tier Issues                |                           |                    |                          |
| Community Structure              |                           |                    |                          |
| Water/Sewer/Utilities            |                           |                    |                          |
| Residential Development          |                           |                    |                          |
| Housing Needs                    |                           |                    |                          |

Public Meeting

Choosing Important Issues

Photos by John Fitts, Canton Patch
COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Overview

Canton is a town of many styles, landscapes, and personalities contributing to its independent, artsy, small-town character. Prominent hills and ridgelines divided by the fertile valleys of brooks flowing to the scenic Farmington River, thousands of acres of open space, farms, and forest, scenic roadways and fieldstone walls, a bustling commercial corridor, and historic compact village centers help define the physical attributes of Canton’s appeal.

A wealth of social attributes are likewise essential to Canton’s distinctive character. The community relishes the diversity in its neighborhoods, backgrounds, and businesses, along with its continued legacy of individual thinking, creativity, energy, and education. Canton remains a close-knit community that also relishes its eclectic events and gatherings, and its compassionate support of others when needed.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US

Community character is a common thread running throughout this POCD. It is important to us because preserving and enhancing it will continue to:

- **Support our community pride and spirit** – The people of Canton enjoy a strong sense of place and an abundance of pride in our community. We firmly believe Canton is a special place to live, work, and visit.

- **Enhance our image and identity** – Canton endeavors to project a positive and welcoming image to others, which helps to attract businesses, visitors, and consumers to our town.

- **Extend the legacy gifted by prior generations** – Canton has a rich history of careful stewardship, innovation and industry, responsibility, hard work, and community involvement and support. These attributes form the foundation on which the town is working to build its future.

*Canton is a cohesive community that:*

- relishes its differences in neighborhoods, backgrounds, and diversity, and
- fosters and favors individual thinking and creativity.
Strategic Directions

A. Preserve, conserve, and enhance Canton’s rural character.

Canton residents have long valued the rural character of our Town (see the “conceptual example” on the facing page). Input from community workshops and similar exercises conducted for this POCD update as well as the previous POCD update in 2003 emphasized the importance of “rural” aspects to the community.

The importance of rural character to the community is such that many of the strategies presented in this chapter and throughout the POCD are intended to perpetuate these rural patterns of development moving forward.

What Is Rural Character?

While a concise definition of rural character is difficult to come by, the following descriptions begin to outline what the concept means for Canton.

From a physical standpoint, rural character in Canton is viewed as that combination of space, scale, and ambience that differentiates us from an urban or suburban environment:

- A built environment that is smaller in scale.
- A density of development that is considerably lower than urban.
- Development is much less uniform than suburban.
- Historically development was clustered in village centers, business pockets, and farmsteads with significant open space in between.
- Roadway corridors are narrower.
- Commercial buildings have smaller footprints.
- A built environment that is experienced more at a human scale (e.g. pedestrian and bicycle friendly) than an automobile scale (e.g. wide roads designed to move auto traffic rapidly.)
- An overall ambience incorporating, respecting, and existing in harmony with the natural environment.

On the social side, rural character can be described as a balance of (quoting Ms. Perry from the sidebar on the facing page) “respect for individual human dignity and independence” and community-oriented compromise. The ability to value the diversity of individuality, yet come together as a whole community, not just as neighborhoods or interest groups.

Rural Character

“Rural character” is more than just farms, open spaces, and single-family homes.

In 1994, Randall Arendt (a popular lecturer in the planning community) wrote a book entitled “Rural by Design”. The book has become an important resource to the planning of non-urban towns not wishing to be ‘suburbia’.

In the book, Mr. Arendt highlights that town/village centers, commercial development along highway corridors, and multi-family housing are all very much integral to the modern rural landscape. And he illustrates that, if designed correctly, they can work to enhance, rather than detract from, the character of a rural community.
The Value Of Rural Living

In June of 1951, Canton resident Margaret Perry wrote a letter to the Hartford Courant in response to a Courant editorial on the virtues of zoning. The letter showcases that preserving rural character has been important in Canton for some time.

To the Editor of The Courant:

Your Sunday, May 27, editorial on Town Meetings and the Issue of Zoning was of great interest to me because it so clearly stated the suburban attitude toward "rural" life.

I, too, was all for zoning in the town of Canton when I thought of it in terms of protecting and fostering the "rural" way of life. It was not until I had listened to the zoning enthusiasts that it began to dawn on me what their real motive was in advocating zoning. They do not want to protect and foster rural life. They want to change this town from a rural community to a suburb or "bed town" for the Hartford area.

The split in this community is like that in every small town where the question of zoning arises: the newcomers and politicians versus the citizens who are the backbone of the town, or as you put it, "rural community." A politician's desire for zoning is straightforward enough: new jobs, added power, more loot. The newcomers' desires for zoning are different, for in zoning they think they see a means of controlling the growth of the town in accordance with their desires. They have moved in here for various reasons—real estate speculation, squire-like tendencies, taxpayers in search of a little puddle in which to become bull frogs, and then those who honestly felt that a small town was a better place to live or raise a family than the cities and suburbs.

You say in your editorial that "real estate values are now destroyed by thoughtless and indiscriminate use of land." If a person's sole interest in his town is the resale value of his property, zoning is no doubt desirable, because the potential buyers are frequently suburbanites, who feel that their social position and the value of their property depends upon the wealth of their neighbors and the value of their neighbor's property.

You state that "zoning protects everybody from potential loss, to say nothing of guarding against the intrusion of nuisances." I moved here from the suburbs because I want these "nuisances." I felt that this town was a better place to live and raise a family than the suburbs because of these "nuisances." The town of Canton is a mixture of farms, greenhouses, cabinet-making and metal working shops, woodland, residences, a public golf course, and a Frank Lloyd Wright theater, orchards, kennels, an experimental farm, stables, an ordnance proving ground, blacksmith's shop, building contractors' bone yards, gravel pits, general stores, etc. These are what make Canton a desirable place in which to live and learn. My children are rapidly approaching teen-age. In this community there are innumerable places for them to get after school and summer jobs where they can be both "helpful" and "helped." In a mixed community like this—a real honest-to-goodness rural American town—the young have a chance to learn not only a trade but a respect for individual human dignity and independence. Is it not better to have our teen-age boys and girls growing up with honest values and a chance to learn something from their elders, than to have them wandering suburban streets for years until we can raise money for a "Cornerstone Club"?

Even though the last Town Meeting vote was a vote of lack of confidence in zoning administration, the issues of zoning are far reaching. With their acceptance or rejection a decision will be made as to what kind of town Canton is to become. Will it remain a "rural community" with a life of its own, or will its spirit be destroyed, as other towns before it have been destroyed, and made over into another eating, sleeping, and drinking zone for the Hartford suburbanites.

Margaret Perry
Canton Center

Some Quotes

"[The Courant] states that zoning ... guards against the intrusion of nuisances." I moved here from the suburbs because I want these 'nuisances'. I felt that Canton was a better place to live and raise a family than the suburbs. "...

"In a mixed community like Canton — a real honest-to-goodness rural American town — the young have the opportunity to learn not only a trade, but also a respect for human dignity and independence." ...

"... a decision will be made as to what type of town Canton will become. Will it remain a 'rural community' with a life of its own, or will its spirit be destroyed, as other towns before it ... , and made over into another eating, sleeping, and drinking zone for the Hartford suburbanites.”
B. Support and enhance uniqueness and diversity.

Canton’s diversity is one of its primary strengths as a community. Its eclectic nature is represented, and should continue to be embraced, in many aspects of the town’s character, including business development and establishments, residential housing options, the relationships between business and residential uses, the distribution of various land uses, and the various types of events, artistic endeavors, and activities embraced and supported within the community.

Canton also has architectural uniqueness and diversity which (for the most part) adds to the character of the town. Architecture and site design are also key to the rural character of Canton. It is important that new development and renovations in town are designed to embrace and enhance Canton’s history and rural character in concert with its diversity. There are a number of great buildings with distinctive architectural elements in the town which can serve as design reference points to guide future architectural and site design. These buildings/elements should be incorporated into the design standards for Canton to codify and reinforce the importance of appropriate character in the design of future development to the community.

Preserving Character: Form-Based Codes

Form-based codes represent a growing regulatory answer to the erosion of community character associated with use-based zoning and its inability to deter automobile centric development. Form-based zoning recognizes that the neighborhoods and villages that remain most desirable are those, like Collinsville, that have ‘resisted’ the conversion to traditional zoning; and have maintained a mixed-use pattern where the ‘look’ of development re-mains more important than the particular uses. Form-based codes place emphasis on the “public realm” – what can be viewed and experienced from public spaces, such as streets. The result is neighborhoods and villages that are more accommodating to people outside of their cars – more livable communities.

CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLE

Shareholders

We are all “shareholders” in our community and sometimes this is expressed in unique ways. In the late 1950s, Canton needed a baseball field and a town-wide call for help was made. People of all ages responded and built what is now called Bowdoin Field on Simonds Avenue. Funds for materials and services the townspeople could not provide themselves were raised by “selling” 1–foot square parcels of the field. (See the “deed” below)
Preserving Character: Village Districts

The principles of form-based codes (see sidebar on the previous page) are most readily applied to individual neighborhoods or villages. Connecticut has adopted village district zoning which permits the implementation of form-based codes in areas of distinctive character, landscape or historic value. Village districts, when appropriately implemented, provide the most powerful and flexible means for a community to preserve and enhance the desired character of such an area while also providing the predictability and timeliness for the regulatory process that is important to existing business owners and developers. It is important to recognize, however, that village districts can also provide a means of over-regulation to the detriment of the community and its character. The regulations must incorporate the balance that is stressed by this POCID; and need to recognize the importance of uniqueness and diversity to the character of Canton. They should be developed through a very open process that encourages direct public participation; and need to provide for numerous, flexible design options that are acceptable by right.
C. Identify and protect scenic resources.

Canton has a number of scenic areas and scenic resources which contribute greatly to the character of Canton in varied locations, manners, and scales. Whether grand in scale (ridgelines, core forests, Farmington River, etc.) or more localized (roadside buffers of trees and shrubs, wetlands, smaller streams, and meadows), all contribute to the community’s positive image and identity.

Identifying our important scenic resources, including the public locations from which they can be viewed, and developing creative ways to preserve, conserve, maintain, and reestablish them while respecting individual property rights and other priorities of the POCD is a goal of this POCD.
D. Restore and nurture history and heritage.

Canton has a rich history reflected in its buildings and settlement patterns. This includes houses and barns from the 1700s, industrial buildings and villages from the 1800s, and residential neighborhoods from the 1900s. These buildings and settlement patterns enhance community character and should be preserved.

Canton also has two districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places – Collinsville and Canton Center. These areas, and other historic buildings and places in Canton, make a significant contribution to community character.

Canton needs to remain mindful of its history and heritage and incorporate it into its planning and development for the future.
Encourage and build sense of community.

Canton has a strong sense of community, with a rich legacy of volunteerism and inclusive events that bring the community together and further a hometown spirit. Many of these events are run by community organizations and volunteers. Some of these community assets are listed in the sidebar. Canton is, and wants to remain, a close-knit community where people help one another out in shared acts of support.

Canton’s citizens, although diverse in personalities, interest and family roots in town, are a most cooperative group. This POCD encourages the traditions of banding together and helping one another to accomplish a goal for the common good. Examples of this goodwill toward one another include:

- Supporting the Memorial Day ceremony to honor local war veterans and other special events,
- Forming the Canton Land Preservation Trust to help purchase and maintain undeveloped land throughout town,
- Collecting funds to build a ball field (see Conceptual Example on page 12) and a wading pool (see Conceptual Example on page 19),
- Students collecting canned goods, and making it a math competition, for the town’s food bank, and
- Serving hot meals to those without electricity and water during bad winter storms (2011) and other times of need.

Special Events

Canton has a number of valued traditions for fun, and entertainment:

- Sam Collins Day,
- Memorial Day parade,
- Firemen’s Carnival,
- Lobsterfest,
- Lobster Loop 5K race,
- Church strawberry festivals,
- Craft fairs,
- Suppers and other events at various town places of worship,
- Farmer’s market,
- Collinsville Halloween show and costume parade,
- Christmas in Collinsville with horse rides and luminaries, and
- Other Christmas season events.

Civic Organizations

Canton also has a number of civic-minded organizations, including:

- Roaring Brook Nature Center,
- Canton Land Trust,
- Canton Historical Society,
- FAVARH,
- the many places of worship.

Other Community Assets

Canton also has a number of community assets, including:

- the burgeoning arts and music community,
- the Farmington River Trail,
- a top-notch school system,
- the Mills Pond Park and Pool complex,
- the Public Library and Community Center.
Community Spirit

In the late 1980s, Mills Pond Recreation Center only had a pool for older children and adults. There was no wading pool where parents of young children could introduce them to water in a safe environment.

A Canton mother-to-be felt that a wading pool was important for a growing community with young families and children. She approached the Selectmen and was encouraged to raise funds to have a new wading pool built beside the larger in-ground pool at Mills Pond.

Several parents got together, created a non-profit organization called Friends of Canton Parks & Recreation, and began raising the $50,000 needed to construct a wading pool. They held many fundraising events, including fairs, an Easter Egg Hunt and Oscar Night, solicited businesses in town and applied for a State grant which would pay for 40% of the project once they raised the “seed money”.

Friends of Canton Parks & Recreation succeeded in raising the funds, obtaining approval for the State of CT matching grant, and worked with the Town to design, build, and open the pool. The ribbon-cutting was in 1993, and the pool has been open for young children ever since. Once the Canton wading pool was in full operation, the non-profit organization passed along excess funds to help beautify the Farmington River Rail Trail in Collinsville.

Initiatives like this, undertaken by motivated townspeople help make Canton a special place in which to live.
Overview

Natural resources are an integral component of what makes Canton a unique and attractive place to live and we will encourage the protection and preservation of natural resources, while balancing the rights of property owners to be able to make reasonable use of their property.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US

Protecting and preserving natural resources is important to us because doing so will continue to:

- **Preserve town character** - As discussed in the Community Character chapter, Canton’s natural environment contributes to the character of the town. Our streams, ponds, forests, wetlands, and wildlife are integral to the scenic beauty, openness, and rural charm of Canton that is so important to our residents and visitors.

- **Provide environmental benefits** - Our natural resources provide significant environmental benefits. Wetlands, woodlands, and meadows help to reduce pollution of streams and rivers from stormwater runoff first by reducing the amounts and rates of the runoff, and then by providing filtering to the runoff before it reaches the streams. In addition, reducing runoff rates helps reduce damage from floods and erosion. Vegetation also has a cooling effect on water, soil, and air.

- **Create recreational and economic value** - Canton’s natural resources allow for, and enhance, many types of active and passive recreation in a small geographic area. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, bicycling, and birding are all popular in town, and bring visitors to Canton. Property values are consistently higher when in proximity to natural resources.
Strategic Directions

A. Inventory important natural resources.

In order to protect local natural resources, the resources must first be located and identified. Once inventoried they may be preserved, conserved, or given special consideration in relation to future planning and development activities, regulatory changes, potential acquisitions or other town decision making. Rudimentary efforts have been made to initiate the documentation of such resources.

It is not the intent that every resource inventoried be preserved. A clear picture of where resources are located, whether they are significant and why, allows the Town to understand and value its natural resources and can guide future decision making.

B. Maintain the quality of the Farmington River, primary feeder streams and contributing watercourses as natural resources.

The Farmington River is a prime example of a true riparian resource. It is important for its ecology, environmental management, soil conservation, flood zones, fauna, aquatic ecosystems, environmental engineering, flood control, industrial/ power generation, scenic, wide ranging passive and active recreational opportunities, and present economic value and future potential. Future activities derived from and affecting the Farmington River will require a balance of economic and conservation priorities.

The Farmington River affects and is affected by changes within its watershed. Changes near primary feeders and contributing watercourses will have contributing effects on the environmental quality of the watershed as a whole.
C. **Minimize pollutants in stormwater runoff and promote other natural resource objectives of the POCD.**

Stormwater runoff from rainfall and snow melt represents one of the largest sources responsible for water quality impairments in rivers, lakes, ponds, streams and other water bodies and wetlands. Impervious surfaces from development increase the amount and rate of stormwater runoff. If not properly managed, this increased stormwater run-off may cause erosion, alter natural drainage features, reduce groundwater recharge to wetlands and streams, and increase the discharge of pollutants to wetlands and water bodies. Stormwater runoff can also negatively affect wildlife and property values.

Stormwater management regulations can address water quality (pollutants) and water quantity (flooding, low base flow and recharge) by establishing standards that require the implementation of a wide variety of stormwater management strategies. These strategies include environmentally sensitive site design, bioretention and other Low Impact Development (LID) techniques to minimize impervious surface and land disturbance, source control and pollution prevention, structural Best Management Practices (BMPs), construction erosion and sedimentation control, and the long-term operation and maintenance of stormwater management systems.
D. Protect environmental and scenic values of our remaining core forest areas.

Forest areas are an important aspect of Canton’s landscape. They provide scenery, wildlife habitat, erosion protection, seclusion, and contribute much to the rural character of our community.

Core forests are an important part of the forest ecosystem. Core forests are large contiguous forest areas which are remote from roadways or developed areas and provide wildlife habitat and other environmental benefits.

As Canton’s future build out continues its core forest areas will continue to diminish. The fragmentation of our core forest areas negatively affects the natural environment, disrupts the natural landscape, existing natural greenway and wildlife corridors, degrades surface water quality, and stresses habitats.

It is a goal of this POCD to manage development and preservation within our core forest areas in such a manner as to retain their natural resource functions. This POCD recommends retaining minimum forest area size of 500 acres where tracts of forest of that size currently exist. Wherever possible this should be accomplished through conservation focused development patterns or acts of preservation (through fair market acquisition). Smaller core forest areas are valuable from forestry and other perspectives.

Farmington River Wild and Scenic Designation and the Farmington River Coordinating Committee (FRCC)

In 1994, 14 miles of the West Branch Farmington River were added by the U.S. Congress to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The river received this honor due to its outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) including – high quality water, cold water fisheries, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and historic resources. The Farmington River is a Partnership Wild and Scenic River - which means that local, state, and federal governments as well as other stakeholders in the river community are partners in river management and stewardship. This is a model that other eastern rivers have followed as they have put together management plans.

The FRCC is mandated by the U.S. Congress to coordinate activities on the 14-mile upper river and particularly to provide for the protection and enhancement of the ORVs for which the river was designated. It is guided by the Upper Farmington River Management Plan referred to in its designation. The Committee is comprised of appointed representatives from the five riverfront towns (Barkhamsted, Canton, Colebrook, Hartland and New Hartford), state of Connecticut DEEP, MDC, NPS, FRWA, and FRAA.

This designation may offer future opportunities for the Town’s benefit. The FRCC receives annual funding from Congress to fulfill its mandate. The FRCC offers grants, scholarships, and land protection assistance for applicable projects.
E. Continue “good housekeeping” practices.

Common human activities can be very detrimental to natural resources. Excessive use of pesticides and herbicides can result in the chemicals being carried away with stormwater causing to wetlands and water bodies. The introduction or mismanagement of invasive species can significantly harm, or even eradicate, native species. The dumping of any kind of foreign substance or item into storm drainage systems or directly into or adjacent to watercourses or wetlands usually detrimental to the receiving wetland or watercourse. Dumping leaves into watercourses can cause unwanted flooding and sedimentation.

Good housekeeping starts at home. Therefore it is important that the policies and practices of the Town administration and staff are such as to minimize negative effects on our environmental resources and work to educate and set “good housekeeping” examples for our residents.

Upper Mill Pond Strategies

- Increase the water depth in the impoundment.
- Develop public access (i.e. a pocket park) and a designated fishing area on the 45 Bridge Street parcel (just north of the bridge).
- Redevelop the Garage parcel into a public park area with a boat ramp (non-motorized).
- Formalize public parking along Town Bridge Road near the bridge.
- Pursue possible beach access improvements near the Town Bridge Road bridge when opportunities arise to work with private property owners.
- Develop a maintenance/management plan to control non-native vegetation along the river.
- Thin out the tall vegetation on the MDC-owned strip of land north along River Road to enhance views of the river.
Overview

Canton residents have long recognized the value of open space to the community. Over 20 percent of Canton’s land area is currently preserved as open space due to the efforts and generosity of a number of people and organizations.

While Canton is justifiably proud of its past accomplishments, we also seek to acquire or preserve additional open space in the future, while respecting private property rights.

**WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US**

Protecting and preserving open space is important to us because doing so will continue to:

- **Preserve town character** - Natural resource, greenway, ridgeline, farmland, and non-developed properties are essential to maintaining the rural character of Canton and creating areas for local recreation and community interaction.

- **Provide recreational opportunities** – As Canton grows in the future, additional open space and recreational opportunities will be needed to serve the needs of our growing population without overburdening existing facilities.

- **Provide economic benefits** - Open space enhances the value of nearby properties and can reduce the cost of installing infrastructure and providing services. Open space preservation can avert residential development which usually requires more in service costs than it provides in tax revenue. Purchase of development rights can preserve land cost effectively while allowing farmers to continue farming the land. Open space donations or easements can also be used to reduce the estate tax burden or property tax burden to owners.
Strategic Directions

A. Encourage cooperation and communication in preserving open space.

When open space issues are considered, the Town can and should play an important role in identifying and facilitating communication among all stakeholders involved. The interests of the owner of the land being considered for open space, nearby property owners and residents, and those of the organization expected to be tasked with maintaining the open space must be considered. For meaningful preservation of open space to occur, cooperation among all parties is essential.

The Town recognizes that many land owners are passionate about their lands. In some cases substantial parcels of land have been held by families for generations dating back to the founding of the country. Regardless of whether land has been in a family for two centuries or two years, the most benign discussion involving acquisition of private property for a public purpose (even if the intent is to protect it) can be a sensitive one. Such discussions must always be initiated and conducted with respect for the private property owner’s perspective and interests. In all cases, once a property has been identified as having value as potential open space, the subject property owner should be engaged as early as possible. The acquisition of property for open space purposes by eminent domain is not in any way contemplated or encouraged by this POCD.

Open space creation and management is a community-wide endeavor. The Town is fortunate to have many dedicated and responsible partners in this endeavor, including the Canton Land Conservation Trust (Land Trust), the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), as well as other stakeholders.

Cooperation, communication, and coordination between the Town and these partners in the planning, acquisition, and management of open space can prove to have many benefits mutually to the Town and its partners, as well as to the community as a whole. This is especially true, and vitally important, with respect to the Land Trust, which is by far the largest steward of open space within the community.

Create a Meaningful System

The Town should strive to create a meaningful system of open spaces. Although the acquisition of isolated parcels may have individual merit in specific cases, the Town should carefully analyze how each parcel relates to the overall open space strategy for the Town.

Through subdivision the Town may accept a fee-in-lieu of open space. A fee-in-lieu of allows the Town to accumulate funds for the eventual purchase of open space directly related to town interests. The use fee-in-lieu of is preferred by this plan for the purpose of supporting meaningful acquisitions in the future.
Canton needs to continue efforts to identify desirable open space. Planning for open space allows the Town to make the most of limited available open space resources. It allows the community to direct resources and opportunities towards lands that furthers the open space priorities and objectives of Canton, as opposed to open space acquisition being merely a residual of development or a ‘take whatever we can get’ proposition. This is not to ignore the fact that opportunity is frequently a significant driving force in open space acquisition. Rather, it enables the coordination and pooling of efforts and resources to put the community in a position to work towards and take advantage of key opportunities when they arise.

Fortunately, the Canton community has shown the civic foresight, generosity, and wherewithal to steadily increase its open space inventory. In 1990, about 8 percent of Canton’s land area was set aside as dedicated or managed open space. As of 2012, dedicated and managed open space make up about 17 percent of the town, with identified restrictive covenant open space adding an additional 3 percent or so. The Canton Land Conservation Trust controls approximately 60 percent of this open space, the Town controls approximately 15 percent with the State, the MDC, and various private organizations owning the remaining land.

The creation of additional open space is desirable for the benefits and functions presented in the sidebar. Considering the admirable amount of open space land that has already been preserved by our community, the success of future open space planning will not be determined by the acquisition of some arbitrary percentage of the area of our Town, but rather through the ability of the created open space to meet these benefits and functions and enhance the quality of life in Canton. This can best be accomplished through a top-down open space planning approach:

- identifying the open space attributes and priorities that are most desirable for the community, and
- pursuing lands that move the community towards these objectives.

Such an approach also places a premium on having means available to be able to take advantage of key opportunities when they arise.

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### Open Space Purposes

1. **Natural Resource Protection Areas.** Includes animal and vegetative habitat, stream and wild-life corridors, environmentally sensitive areas, ridgelines, etc.

2. **Outdoor Recreation.** Active recreation such as ball fields, courts, playgrounds, and other facilities for structured recreational activities. Also, passive recreation such as fishing, bird watching, hiking, canoeing, picnicking, and relaxing in nature.

3. **Resource Management.** Such as actively used forestland and farmland.

4. **Protection of Public Health and Safety.** Floodplains, high-quality aquifers, wetlands, high ground water, steep slopes, etc.

5. **Historic or Archeological Sites.** Historic districts, town greens, historically significant structures or grounds.

6. **Areas that Shape Community Character or Design.** Greenways, buffers, village plazas, neighborhood open space, scenic roads and viewscapes, cemeteries, etc.

7. **Linkages.** Many of the benefits are enhanced when open space parcels can be linked together.
C. Maintain and publicize an up-to-date inventory of open spaces.

In order for open space efforts to be carried out efficiently and effectively, the Town needs to document and maintain a current, accurate inventory of all open space lands within and adjacent to its borders. Identifying the location, function, and primary characteristics of existing open space parcels is fundamental to the planning for acquisition of new open space. An accurate inventory will enable locations to be identified (and then prioritized) which may provide important connections or other attributes desired in the community’s open space portfolio. An accurate GIS map of existing open space will also be very helpful to land use commissions as they consider open space matters as related to land use applications.

A publicly available and easy-to-understand mapped inventory of existing open space lands will increase public awareness of open space within the community and help to educate residents of the value of additional open space in certain locations.

| Dedicated Open Space | Managed Open Space (Nepaug Reservoir) |

Types Of Open Space

**Dedicated Open Space.** Land which has been permanently preserved to serve one or more of the functional purposes identified previously. Such land may be owned by the Town, State, Canton Land Trust, or other similar entity or may have a conservation restriction. Public access is typically allowed.

**Managed Open Space.** Land which may have another purpose but provides open space benefits (e.g. Class I or II public water supply lands, cemeteries, golf courses, etc.). Such land may be owned by a quasi-public or other entity. Such land may or may not have a reasonable assurance of providing the open space benefits for a very long time.

**Protective Covenant Open Space.** Privately owned land which is preserved from future development through protective covenants recorded in the Town Land Records such as conservation easements, appropriately held development rights, etc.

**Open space typically does not include:**

- Undeveloped or agricultural land that is not preserved;
- Land submitted for reduced tax assessments under Public Act 490;
- Land which serves one or more of the functional purposes identified previously but has not been preserved for such purposes; (e.g. unpreserved wetlands, etc.)
Open Space
Canton, CT

This map is not intended to indicate parcel ownership in all cases. Due to ongoing open space acquisition and the establishment of conservation easements (not shown on this map), be sure to check with Town Hall for the most current information.
D. Maintain and manage open space areas.

In order for benefits and functions of an open space to be sustained, the land must be properly managed (including activity control, property monitoring, and maintenance). The methods and degrees employed in such management will vary depending upon the nature of the open space.

The questions of who will be responsible for the management of an open space area and what resources are expected to be available (in the short and long term) need to be considerations in the planning for open space.

When the Town is involved in the process of acquiring open space, it should take what steps are prudent to best assure proper management. All Town-owned open space parcels (or where the Town is the holder or beneficiary of a restrictive covenant) should be included in an open space management manual.

Priorities and Flexibility

Open space acquisition decisions require evaluating competing priorities and benefits. Good open space planning is not a straightforward endeavor and requires consideration of a number of issues:

**Priority** – consider open space funding within the context of the full range of municipal spending priorities while recognizing that land, once developed, may never become open space.

**Balance** - to achieve a well-rounded open space inventory that benefits the broadest spectrum of our population.

**Flexibility** - to adapt to the variability of lands and funding availability.
Overview

Farms and farmland are important to Canton – they link the past to the future through a landscape of fields and pastures, stone walls and weathered barns shaped by generations of hard-working farm families. Canton has benefited from a thriving agricultural community since its earliest days.

With nearly 500 acres of active farmland remaining, agriculture remains an important part of the community. We will strive to ensure that agriculture remains an important part of Canton’s rural character and charm and economy.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US

Protecting and preserving farms and farmland is important to us because doing so will continue to:

- **Preserve town character** - Active farmland is a significant factor in the rural character of Canton. It provides the community with a sense of legacy, rural sensibility, open space, and scenery – all of which contribute to the exceptional quality of life in Canton.

- **Provide locally-produced products** – Local farms produce local products for local consumption. Local food and nursery products are fresher with less opportunity for damage due to time, travel, and handling. Local agriculture also supports an increasing trend of environmentally conscious consumers who seek to live more sustainably by reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions associated with the products they purchase/consume.

- **Support local businesses** - Farms and other agricultural enterprises are businesses contributing to the local economy. Like any other business, they provide jobs, directly and indirectly, locally and regionally, and bring in consumer dollars from outside of the community. Also, as with other businesses, agricultural properties are typically tax positive – bringing in more local tax dollars than the cost of local governmental services required.
Strategic Directions

A. Take steps to protect active farms and farmland.

Due to overall development and financial pressures, active farmland is a vulnerable resource in Canton. Approximately 500 acres of land in Canton (roughly 3 percent of the Town’s total land area) is considered active farmland. Even if the community wished to preserve all of this land, it is unclear whether this could be accomplished due to cost and other considerations. Nevertheless, these areas are important to the community and efforts should be devoted to preserving as much of this land as is practical for agricultural uses.

The primary means of protecting active farmland outright is through land acquisition which can be accomplished by:

- Purchase from the existing owner and subsequently leasing the land for agricultural purposes, or
- Purchase of development rights to the land and retaining the existing farmer to work the land (the preferred approach).

When a working farm is converted to development, there is virtually no chance of farming returning to the site, as the topsoil will have been removed. Because of their location, farms, if developed, are likely to be converted to tax-negative single-family use.

The steps for protecting active farmland are similar to those recommended for preserving open space and other resources that the community desires to protect and conserve:

- identify and inventory the resource aspects;
- prioritization;
- identifying and developing funding sources;
- identifying and developing opportunities for acquisition; and
- putting an appropriate organizational structure in place to oversee and manage these processes.
Another primary means of protecting farmland and farming, and other forms of agriculture, is to take steps to assist them to remain viable as small businesses. Such steps should be designed to:

- Allow agricultural businesses to operate and flourish within residential (and other) neighborhoods, while respecting the historical character of the neighborhood.
- Afford agricultural businesses the flexibility to adapt to changes and volatility in production and market factors.
- Support and encourage a local consumer base for locally produced products.

Although farm stands can be thought of as retail enterprises located in residential zones, they are incredibly valuable to the people who use them and the farmers who provide them. Allowing farm stands in appropriate locations with tolerant and flexible business accommodations should be encouraged. The Farmer’s Market and community-supported agriculture (a means for farmers to “pre-sell” their crops to share the risks – and bounty – of farming with people and families that purchase farm shares) are also ways to help support local farms and farmers and should be continued and encouraged.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overview

Economic growth and development in Canton, and the sound management of public policy towards businesses, is fundamental to Canton’s future and the quality of life in town. In the face of flat or decreasing revenues from other sources, and slowly rising housing values, the financial health of the Town will improve through diversifying the tax base and becoming less dependent on the residential sector.

Business development in suitable locations must happen in a manner that enhances the character of the community and re-enforce strong property values. The Town understands that local businesses are an important part of our local economy and key members of our community.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US

Promoting and achieving economic development is important to us because doing so will continue to:

- **Enhance quality of life** - The quality of life enjoyed by the community is enhanced by businesses that provide valuable services and economic vitality to the community.

- **Provide tax revenue** – If the commercial component of our grand list fails to grow, the burden of increasing costs of services will ultimately be shouldered by the residential component of the Town’s tax base. A robust commercial sector provides much needed property tax revenue to the Town that can reduce the relative tax burden on residential home owners.

- **Provide jobs, goods and services** - A thriving business community provides needed goods and services for consumption in the community; it also provides income to the wider community in the form of employment and commerce. A strong and diverse business community helps the town adapt to market changes and withstand economic fluctuations.

Economic growth and development and the sound management of public policy towards businesses is fundamental to Canton’s future and the quality of life in town.
Strategic Directions

A. Increase business to residential tax base proportion.

In Canton, there is a need to increase the amount of land available for commercial development and to increase the assessed value of existing commercial parcels. Increasing the proportion of the property tax base that is commercial will decrease the relative tax burden on existing homes and businesses in Canton. It is a goal of this POCD to mitigate our historic reliance on residential tax property taxes by affording more opportunities for business within business zones, creating more business-friendly zones, and perhaps finding new sites to convert for potential business development.

This is likely to be increasingly important in the future for Canton, as the town has only about 50 acres of undeveloped land zoned for business and approximately 4,500 acres of undeveloped residential land. Managing the business to residential tax proportion will be key to keeping the Town’s tax rates competitive and keeping Canton a desired place to live and run a business.

The issue of limited inventory of land available for business and industrial use is exacerbated by the limited availability of public utilities (especially sanitary sewer) to some of these properties (which is an impediment to business development). At the same time, the town has a privately owned industrial park and the privately owned Collins Company site, both of which are significantly underperforming from an economic standpoint.

The POCD recommends mixed-use development as an important tool to help us achieve our economic development goals. Mixed use development has long been an important building block of Canton’s economic base and is increasingly being constructed around the country. While the town has not seen mixed use development in recent decades, it is a positive economic strategy which can help address the limited inventory of land for business in town and the importance of infill and redevelopment to reach our economic development goals. In 2018 the community established multiple mixed use districts under a Form Based Design Code.
Benefits of Mixed Use

Mixed use development is proven to yield higher tax revenues than traditional stand-alone commercial and residential developments.

Mixed use was a historic component of the town’s economic tax base and thriving development prior to zoning laws.

Mixed use also helps function as a transition in challenging locations between areas of business and single family neighborhoods.

Mixed Use for Canton

The map on the facing page identifies areas historically associated with mixed use and areas where mixed use potential should be considered. The following categories explain differing types of mixed use that presently exist or are recommended for consideration:

- Village Center/ Commercial Mixed-Use: This generally allows the most intense and widest range of development.
- Transitional Mixed-Use: single family, multi-family, and commercial similar/complimentary, but less intense, as adjacent commercial areas.
- The Form Based Code Design includes a range of densities and mix of uses depending on the location. The Code has different design standards based on characteristics of different areas.

Individual zone locations may/will have different use/development standards.
Develop a coordinated economic plan (i.e. a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy).

Economic development does not occur in a vacuum and it needs to be holistically integrated into community planning and decision making. A coordinated strategic approach is recommended.

A clear economic development vision will reduce friction in the development review process. Current business development regulation is the by-product of a series of unrelated decisions made on a case-by-case basis. This has led to uncoordinated development that can, and in some cases has, eroded value and unique identity within the community.

This vision should evaluate the business environment and develop marketing opportunities (e.g., “targeted industry study” marketing) that capitalize on the community’s assets and respects the character of the town.

Consensus about the vision and commitment to its implementation is key. If there is inadequate communication, local boards or commissions could end up working against each other and preventing the vision from being implemented. On the other hand, multiple agencies working together to accomplish the same things will pay significant dividends to the community.

C. Help existing businesses grow and succeed.

Retention and support of community businesses is a high priority of this POCD. Existing businesses are an important part of our community and the backbone of our local economy.

However, there is a perception among existing business owners that Town boards and commissions are generally unfriendly to their efforts to grow or improve their businesses and that the regulatory process is expensive and intimidating for small businesses which have been in our community for years. We should seek to simplify this process.

Some businesses are located in residential zones and are treated as “non-conforming” uses (a special zoning categorization which can complicate business operations). We should investigate how we might better manage this type of situation to find an appropriate balance. One approach might be to allow a non-conforming use to expand through a special permit process so that issues of compatibility can be considered during the review process.

Opportunity Locations

Within the POCD, the term “opportunity locations” is used to identify:

- Sites of significant economic potential; or,
- Sites where there is an expectation of a meaningful/tax positive contribution to the tax base.
- Sites where there are known development interests.

These sites may or may not be zoned for business use today or in the future.

These sites may or may not be developed today. If developed today, these sites may or may not be developed to their full potential.

The map on the facing page identifies some possible opportunity locations in Canton.
Potential Opportunity Locations
Concept Areas (not property line specific)
Canton, CT
D. Encourage infill and redevelopment.

With a limited amount of land available for new business development, Canton needs to seek additional opportunities for economic growth. Infill and redevelopment, which can increase the economic productivity of an already developed area, are great strategies for us to consider.

Expansion on existing developed sites can increase the tax base with less impact than expansion on a new site. Locations suitable for infill and redevelopment should be identified as priority development areas based on their development potential, ability to improve access and manage traffic, and maintain sensitivity to the context of the established area in which they are located.

Infill and redevelopment should be promoted for mixed-use areas where jobs, housing and retail activities can be located in close proximity together as well as at other business nodes and along transportation corridors. Future mixed-use zoning areas can result in residential buildings with street level commercial activities (again typical of a traditional village center). This can lead to a symbiotic relationship between commercial retailers, residents and employers that serve to strengthen the local community.

The following images, prepared for the Town of Simsbury by a firm called Urban Advantage, help people visualize how infill development and streetscape improvements can enhance the appearance of a community.
E. Ensure that future economic development enhances the community.

The appearance of Canton is an important quality of the town and should be maintained and enhanced by its business development. The character, quality, and appearance of our community are economic assets. Future development should re-enforce these assets and not detract from them.

A good economy with growth and development and a good community with character and pride are not mutually exclusive, but rather mutually beneficial. New development should reflect, draw from, and compliment such character in order to preserve the community’s identity and economic value. Development styles and standards indicative of “Any Town USA” or “off-the-shelf corporate America” that would erode Canton’s unique identity and value is discouraged.

In a public meeting held as part of this planning effort, Canton residents indicated they were very proud of the feel/environment of Collinsville. This feel/environment should be leveraged and expanded:
- Physically within Collinsville itself to help insure the sustainability of Collinsville.
- Into other areas of the community.
CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLE

Canton Village Plaza

At over 12 acres, Canton Village Plaza is one of the largest commercial developments in Canton. While many commercial developments of this size and age are performing poorly from an economic standpoint; the Canton Village Plaza has experienced on-going economic vitality with continuous high-occupancy rates.

This POCD recognizes the original layout of the Plaza to be one of the most important factors in its continued vitality. The numerous buildings with traditional facades and rooflines is in character with the surrounding neighborhood and the community as a whole. It also allowed for individuality within the buildings, which is a noted trademark of the town. The numerous buildings also help to break up the parking areas. This layout also offers flexibility for redevelopment of the site over time since the smaller buildings can be rehabilitated one building at a time.

However, Canton Village Plaza could be improved physically and expanded economically. More provisions could be made for pedestrians and the buildings more oriented to pedestrians – in other words, the development could be made more pedestrian friendly. The traffic patterns within the Plaza could be oriented towards making it less of a “cut-through” and more of an internal street. More could be done in vegetative landscaping and stormwater pollution measures. With the Farmington River Trail nearby, the Plaza would benefit from being friendlier to bicycle traffic as well.
CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLE

At the same time, there are probably opportunities to add “infill” buildings between some of the existing buildings to increase the amount of floor area. In addition, there may be opportunities to create more of a mixed-use environment with office and residential uses.
CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLE

Canton Green

The Canton Green area is at the intersection of Route 44 and Dowd Avenue. Although the appearance and character of this area has become diluted by the traffic volumes and patterns in this area, it was once an active focal point on the road between Hartford and Albany.

This area presents an opportunity for economic development by encouraging the sharing of parking and driveways among adjacent properties. Not only will this provide for better access to these properties for employees and customers, it will provide a safer travel pattern. Further, the sharing of parking should allow for additional development in this area.
**CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLE**

The following graphics suggest how:

- the historic streetscape of the Canton Green area might be retained,
- driveway access might be managed,
- building character preserved, and
- development encouraged.

---

Conceptual Example

This example demonstrates the following concepts:

1. Reducing the number of access points on Route 44. The access and parking concept presented reduces seven access points down to three, and then, in the second concept plan, is further reduced to two.

2. How various sites such as this could be redeveloped (the basics of the access and parking) around existing buildings (rather than a complete demolition and rebuild (with the exception of the nursery site).

3. How a site (in cooperation of the adjacent property) might be redeveloped without losing the existing street front building presence.

4. The overall principle of redevelopment – the existing buildings and form provide character that the plan endorses for Canton’s village centers and can be retained through the real future possibility of infill and redevelopment.

Under current zoning regulations such a redevelopment would likely involve a larger building (or two) near the back of the site with a large parking lot fronting the road. This example illustrates how a site like this might be redeveloped in such a way that reestablishes the building lines near the street (with parking in the rear), which is more in keeping with traditional village commercial development.
CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLE

Hart’s Corner

The Hart’s Corner area (intersection of Routes 44, 202 and 179) is another area where there is economic development potential. In fact, there is economic development potential in almost all portions of this area – both between some of the roadways and outside of them.

For example, the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Routes 44 and 179 is being used for a commuter parking lot at the present time. If some of the unused areas within the intersecting roads could be used for such parking, it could free up land for economic development purposes.
CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLE

If the commuter parking lot were to be relocated, it might be possible to use the site and parking area to support some small office buildings, retail stores, or restaurants. If additional parking was added, it might be possible to add a larger building similar to the building across Route 179 (Petals and Paws).

It might be possible to relocate the commuter parking lot to an area inside the roadway routes. One possibility is shown below. At a parking ratio of 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area, the 72 parking spaces at the existing commuter lot could support over 14,000 square feet of commercial floor area. At 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet, about 18,000 square feet of floor area could be supported. The following illustration shows an 11,000 SF one-story building and two two-story buildings of about 3,500 SF each.
F. Revisit business zoning standards and improve the development review process.

Currently, the zoning regulations set low maximum impervious and building coverage limits. Limitations such as these can restrict development potential, limit creativity, and promote sprawl. These requirements should be relaxed in most business areas (and offset by innovative storm drainage management requirements, such as low impact development strategies) to allow for more compact, friendly business areas that are more reminiscent of traditional village downtowns and in keeping with the character of Canton, in addition to better maximizing the limited available business land that the town has. Other business zoning regulations should be reviewed for similar potential improvements/enhancements.

New business looking to come to town, or an existing business seeking to expand or make changes, needs to be met by an efficient and supportive review and approval process.

The predictability and length of time of the development review process is critical to anyone evaluating a substantial financial investment in our community. The process of determining what can go where and what a business owner can or can’t do should be consistent, clear, coordinated and streamlined. Resolution and decisions affecting business need to be made in an efficient, respectful, and cooperative process.
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Overview

In terms of residential development, it is important that we maintain the existing neighborhoods that make our town a great place to live, raise our children, and provide a sense of community.

At the same time, we will strive to create new neighborhoods that enhance our community identity and diversity through the use of designs and patterns that connect to the historic rural character of the community and respect the environmental landscape in which they are proposed.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US

Promoting appropriate residential development is important to us because doing so will continue to:

- **Make us a sustainable community** - The provision (and maintenance) of a diverse housing portfolio is important for Canton to attract and retain an economically, demographically, and culturally diverse population which will provide a balanced labor pool, consumer base, and social structure. These are important building blocks to a healthy sustainable community.

- **Build and maintain strong neighborhoods** – Neighborhoods are the cornerstone of our community. Canton is committed to preserving, protecting, and enhancing its existing neighborhoods. It is Canton’s goal to provide neighborhoods that are safe, comfortable, and attractive – a home.

- **Strengthen community pride** - Maintaining a rural, small-town atmosphere is important to our residents. Quality, attractive, and distinctive residential neighborhoods enhance our community character and sense of place. Diverse and interesting housing and neighborhood development patterns also help create a unique character for Canton. All of these factors strengthen the pride Canton’s citizens have for their community.
Strategic Directions

A. Preserve and enhance the character of existing residential neighborhoods.

Neighborhood character can be difficult to define but you know it when you see it or feel it. Character is an important factor that gives a neighborhood its identity as a place. It is the sense one gets when experiencing (viewing, walking in, driving through, living in) an area. It is often a complex set of perceptions based on the area's location, geographic features, building types, architecture and spacing, landscaping, street layout, and other aspects.

The physical condition of these elements also affects the character of a neighborhood. Well maintained properties and public infrastructure make more livable and attractive neighborhoods that create greater place value. Well-kept neighborhoods also provide a healthier and safer environment in which to work, play, and live.

Maintaining the distinctive and diverse character of individual neighborhoods in Canton is integral to preserving the overall character of the Town. Canton has never been as a “one-size-fits-all” community; and this remains an element of the Town's character that this POCD looks to perpetuate.

This POCD presumes that neighborhood character was an important factor when Canton residents chose to live where they do. That is the reason the POCD considers preserving and enhancing the character of existing residential neighborhoods to be an important factor when planning the future development of the Town.

Our existing neighborhoods should continue to preserve and enhance the character of our town by:

- Providing a safe and pleasant place for residents to live,
- Maintaining property values,
- Preventing deterioration and blight,
- Maintaining the tax base, and
- Providing a sense of community and a source of pride for residents.
B. Provide for a variety of housing choices within safe and stable neighborhoods.

This POCD recognizes that adequate and diverse housing choices are important to the future of Canton. We have a history of strong housing diversity (such as the Collins Company building affordable housing in Collinsville for its workers in the 1820s) and we should strive to ensure housing diversity on the future.

While detached single-family homes on large lots may still be the predominant housing style in the future, more people will be seeking housing choices which are less expensive, require less maintenance, or meet other lifestyle needs.
C. **Restore the mixed-use element in Canton.**

**Mixed-Use Zoning**

Mixed-use zoning allows for development that includes a mix of both residential and commercial uses in the same proximity, often within the same building.

Such mixed-use development results in neighborhoods that more closely emulate the traditional village center. This environment brings a more pleasing rural character to our commercial areas than traditional zoning while also providing valuable residential diversity.

Historically, mixed-use residential development was very prominent in Canton’s village centers. Such mixed-use development is still very evident, and thriving, in the center of Collinsville; and to a lesser extent in Canton Center. Mixed-use development tends to create more of a sense of community for its residents, as they can spend more of their time and accomplish more of their tasks in their own neighborhood. It also can create more of a sense of comfortable vitality for those who ‘visit’ the neighborhood. This sense of community and vitality is part of Canton’s heritage and character.

The reintegration of mixed use buildings and development into our community will respect and enhance our community heritage and future vitality of Canton. In 2018 the community established multiple mixed use districts under a Form Based Design Code.
Residential Densities
Canton, CT

Legend
- Lower Density
- Moderate Density
- Non-Residential Zones
- Possible Mixed Use Opportunity Areas

*See also Mixed Use and Residential Opportunities mapping, page 37.
D. Manage the impacts of new residential development.

While residential development can have many positive benefits, it can also negatively affect our natural environment, require community services, increase the tax burden, and dilute community identity.

Conventional residential subdivisions can consume a lot of land which reduces farmland, core forest land, wildlife habitat, and potential open space. Conventional subdivisions typically require more roadway and other infrastructure (which must be maintained) than more compact developments. It might also not contribute as much to the sense of neighborhood and community as might more compact types of low and medium density residential development. The result is the erosion of the rural character and other aspects of the desired character of Canton.

Canton needs to responsibly manage these impacts to effectively minimize the potential negative effects of new residential development. This management may be accomplished through the encouragement of:

- density based zoning,
- appropriate designs for new developments,
- infill development (between existing developed parcels, especially in more densely developed areas), and
- two-family houses in areas where appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventional Design Subdivision</th>
<th>Conservation Design Subdivision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Density-Based Zoning**

Density-based zoning (DBZ) controls residential development on a units per acre basis rather than the minimum lot size basis of conventional zoning.

Thereby, DBZ offers the flexibility to customize each project by joining the preferences of both the developer and the town with the capabilities of the land. DBZ implemented as conservation subdivisions reduces sprawl and land consumption for development while preserving more land in its natural state, as open space, or as farmland. It also reduces the cost per lot for maintaining the installed infrastructure.
Overview

Canton strives to provide necessary, functional, and attractive community facilities and services to meet the needs of residents. Keeping facilities current and well maintained is critical to ensuring Canton continues as a desirable place to live and work.

Considerable growth in the last decade has created intense demand on public facilities and services, some of which are near the end of their useful lives and needed improvement before the population expansion over the past decade.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US

Providing community facilities and services is important to us because doing so will continue to:

- **Provide for community interests and needs** - Public facilities and services address the needs and interests of the community and enrich the quality of life for all.

- **Reflect our commitment to the future** – The quality of community facilities and services are an important component in how a town is measured, both internally by its residents and businesses, as well as by the outside world. Competing with other towns in the Farmington Valley requires Canton to keep facilities current and well maintained.

- **Use resources efficiently** – Funding for community facilities and services comes primarily from the town budget and we should be as efficient and economical as possible while providing for the long-term needs of the community.

We seek to provide necessary, functional, and attractive community facilities and services to meet the needs of residents.
Strategic Directions

A. Continue long-range planning for capital projects.

Canton has a number of town-owned facilities that will need improvements over the next ten years. As the Town plans for the future, it will continue to be important to distinguish between things which are critical to municipal operations (“needs”) and things which are desired to enhance and improve quality of life (“wants”).

Using the following prioritization criteria, the Town’s Capital Project Study Group identified the issues presented in the table on the facing page:

- Safety
- Preserve Existing Assets
- Funding
- Financial Benefit
- Conservation
- Legal Mandates
- Future Costs

Proper maintenance of existing community facilities is a key priority. Some Connecticut communities use a capital replacement planning approach (see sidebar) to identify long-term needs and to plan for their financial impacts on the annual budget. Long-term capital planning, along with a reserve account, is important, as it can offset large fluctuations in the budget and tax rate and it allows the community to anticipate and plan for capital projects.

To deliver improved services to our residents and provide a future financial savings, the development of a Facilities Management Plan is currently being undertaken. This plan will play an important role in directing the future management of all town facilities.

Capital Project Planning

The Town has shown success in recent history through a comprehensive process in which capital projects are reviewed and debated, and ultimately resulted in a short list of priority projects for funding.

This includes maintenance and improvements to existing facilities as well as replacement of major equipment or facilities. A “life-cycle” costing approach has significant advantages to plan, budget and pay for replacements without large tax increases, or emergency funding.

This type of process is encouraged to be replicated in the coming years to evaluate community wants and needs and to promote the efficient programming of funds that result in maximum benefit to the community as a whole over individual interests and wants.

Capital replacement plans ensure that:
- Important facility needs are anticipated well in advance,
- sufficient funds are available when they are needed,
- full costs are estimated,
- replacements are made at the right time and are affordable, and
- budgets remain stable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIMARY FUNCTION</th>
<th>EXISTING FACILITIES</th>
<th>IDENTIFIED ISSUES*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Government/Administration</td>
<td>Town Hall</td>
<td>• Ongoing maintenance (replace doors, windows, HVAC, chiller and gutters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), fire and building code compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Services</td>
<td>Police station</td>
<td>• Ongoing maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Fire stations (2 private)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Collinsville fire station (improve/replace)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance/EMS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>Highway Garage</td>
<td>• New facility is needed (completed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Salt storage (completed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Vehicle storage and washing (completed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Staff and office space (completed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and Enrichment</td>
<td>Mills Pond</td>
<td>• Ongoing maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Town Green</td>
<td>• Mills Pond Pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>• Town Green Gazebo improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Center</td>
<td>• Community Center Roof (in progress)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>• Community Gym (at High School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Center</td>
<td>• Recreational fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Cherry Brook Primary</td>
<td>• Ongoing maintenance (e.g., replace windows, carpets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canton Intermediate</td>
<td>• Solar Panels (Intermediate, and High schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canton Middle</td>
<td>• Upgrade school fields (in progress)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canton High</td>
<td>• Roof (Cherry Brook, intermediate, and High schools) (in progress)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• New Access Road to High School (in progress)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parking lot upgrades (Cherry Brook)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Address senior and social service needs.

Canton is currently the ‘oldest’ town in the Farmington Valley, with a senior adult population of 25 percent. The percentage of individuals who are over the age of 55 is projected to be over 40 percent come year 2030. The town is home to multiple, primarily privately owned, elderly and elderly/disabled housing communities. Accessibility within certain town buildings is challenging for older adults and others with mobility difficulties and should be addressed when improvements are made.

The current housing stock is not expected to accommodate the income constraints of older residents or lower income families. Convenient affordable housing options can provide opportunities for lower income families to become self-sustaining and may enable older residents to stay in their community.

Also the distances separating places of residence and needed services (senior, social, medical, retail, etc.) are an issue for less mobile residents seeking to stay engaged and active within the community. As the senior population expands so will the need for affordable transportation services to serve them. The current successful Dial-A-Ride transportation program will not be able to keep up with the increasing demand.

Many health care services for the elderly population commonly found in larger more developed areas are not readily available in Canton. Also older adults in need of in home care services often have trouble finding providers that are willing to service the Canton area.

Many elderly and lower-income residents also rely on important community programs such as the Canton Food Bank and Energy Assistance Program to help make ends meet; and the demand for these services is increasing. They also rely on town social services for important assistance and (in the case of our senior citizens) group activities and opportunities to support their emotional well-being. Trained staffing to provide programming for older adults and manage social work caseloads should be current and adequate to meet these demands.

Priority issues for consideration:
- Transportation Options
- Improving Health Services
- Access and Space
- Affordable Housing
- Staffing, Equipment and Technology
C. Address public work's needs.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) aspires to a broad, comprehensive view of the future infrastructure management needs of the community. The following priorities have been identified:

Public Works Garage – There is a long-recognized need for a new public works garage/yard facility (see sidebar). A 2007 study concluded that:

- storage space for vehicles, equipment and materials is inadequate;
- vehicle/equipment service life will be increased by indoor storage;
- staff facilities are substandard in size, condition and accommodation;
- salt for winter roadway operations cannot be stored at the site; and
- there is no way to wash vehicles and equipment on site due to the proximity to the Farmington River.

Compounding these issues is the fact that regulations make building at the present location, within the floodplain, cost-prohibitive.

Town Transfer Station – The transfer station needs to continue evolving into a “user-friendly facility” that meets local needs for solid waste and recycling while meeting state requirements. Some of this work is underway and future plans involve up-dating the open container drop off areas and re-aligning the traffic pattern allowing for easier and safer access.

Road Conditions – Maintenance of town roads is growing in importance with increased usage and aging infrastructure. Many town roads are in poor condition and require excessive maintenance and significant improvements. The “pavement management” approach (See Transportation Chapter) provides objective information and useful data for analysis so that consistent, cost-effective, and effective decisions can be made regarding maintenance and rehabilitation of town roads.

Public Works Garage History

Originally a horse barn, and located in the floodplain of the Farmington River, the Town Public Works Garage is neither large enough nor properly located to house the vehicles and equipment used by Public Works or to adequately accommodate needed operations and functions.

The need for a new location and facilities for Public Works first appeared in the Town's POCD in 1989 (over 20 years ago) and was confirmed by a town study committee in 1999.

In 2007, the town retained an engineering firm to study the issue, specifically examining the possible expansion of the existing garage. The study identified a building space need of 24,000 square feet, based on the town's population, square miles serviced, the number of vehicles, amount of equipment, and proper staffing. The current facility has about 5,600 square feet.

The Connecticut DOT removed its salt storage shed from the river floodplain a number of years ago; the Town of Canton should do the same.

In 2017 the community approved funds to tear down the existing public works garage and build a new one on the same site in an improved configuration. The new building was constructed in 2018 with a new replacement ball field.

Recapturing the natural and scenic river-front land occupied by the current public works garage would provide valuable public access and enhance the river's role in the community (See the Upper Mill Pond Master Plan.)
D. Address public safety needs.

**Existing Fire Facilities** – The town-owned Collinsville and privately owned Canton fire stations (located at River Road and Canton Springs Road respectively) are inadequate to meet the needs of the Fire/EMS Department. Both buildings present concerns regarding accessibility and OSHA compliance. Buildings are undersized for modern day response apparatus and there are an insufficient number of bays.

The privately owned North Canton Station is newer, with more current ADA compliance. It also has a workable (though not ideal) exhaust system. This station also lacks a sleeping area; however, there is space to create one.

**Fire Station Ownership/Coordination** - The town currently owns only one of the three stations (Collinsville). The other two stations are owned by private groups. This can create complications with respect to space and needed building updates and changes.

**Fire Equipment and Apparatus** – Present fire apparatus meet the basic demands. Apparatus is typically replaced on a twenty year cycle. The Town approved funding in 2013 to replace Engine 6 and Engine 1. The amount and scale of development that has occurred over the past 20 years has surpassed the capability of the present apparatus which are not intended for accessing large commercial buildings such as the Shoppes, CVS, a large home improvement store, etc.
Emergency water/fire protection standards – Public water within the commercial corridor is not consistently available. Development continues to occur in areas that do not have emergency water supply or service. An emergency water supply either has to be created during development, or residents have to rely on water being brought on site during a fire. There are no regulatory standards for providing emergency water to these sites.

Access – New residential development continues to place houses in locations that are not readily accessible or visible. There are no regulatory standards on the construction and design of private lots which can create complications during an event requiring rapid response.

Personnel availability – As most of our local emergency response personnel are volunteers who work in a wide range of locations and situations, there is typically a limited number of people available during daytime hours. Small businesses, which comprise the majority of businesses in Canton, operate with fewer employees and are often unable to discharge workers for emergency response.

Ambulance Equipment/Facility – It is anticipated that ambulance service will require expansion as demand increases during the next 10 years (given the projected growth in population accompanied by a significant growth in the number of senior citizens served). The department currently has two ambulances which barely fit in the current station and leave no room to house an additional ambulance should it become necessary. An additional ambulance may become necessary in the next ten years.

Emergency Shelter - The Community Center currently functions as the emergency shelter. It was used heavily and met needs over an 8 day power outage during the October 2011 storm. Although the shelter served residents well, a few deficiencies have been identified such as the lack of showers, and poor accessibility in rest rooms originally built for elementary school children.

Police - The Canton police station is the newest free-standing municipal building in town and continued maintenance is important. Additionally, the department has acquired a speed trailer, message board, and equipment trailer, which are currently stored outdoors. In the last ten years, the Farmington River Rail Trail expansion has significantly increased the demand for police coverage of pedestrian and cyclist’s traffic along with other recreational users to the community and the department has developed a bicycle patrol.
E. Address library/community center needs.

The town library is a popular community resource and provides a wide range of services to the community in many formats and forms. In addition to its print, multi-media, and electronic resources, the library provides a number of worthwhile programs and valuable social and educational functions for a variety of age demographics (especially increasing its importance in the lives of teens). The roles of the library within the community are ever evolving, and the technology needs for staff and patrons continue to evolve with its roles.

The building that houses the library also serves as the Community Center – housing numerous rooms for town meetings, the Departments of Parks and Recreation, and Social Services, serves as the Senior Center and the Emergency Shelter, and accommodates other community functions.

Serving these multiple purposes, parking is at times inadequate. The Library/Community Center parking also gets used as unofficial overflow parking for events at the nearby Intermediate School, which further worsens the parking situation. As noted elsewhere in this plan, there are concerns regarding the adequacy of entrances and restrooms and availability of community meeting rooms at the facility.
The town population has continued to grow, and participation in youth athletics has increased significantly. In the past 5 years the town has seen the development of youth and high school boys and girls lacrosse programs, youth and high school football, and increased participation in other sports such as baseball, softball, track and field, and cross country (among others).

Field development has not kept pace with the growth in population and participation. The need for additional field space has been well documented for several years. Athletic fields are overburdened and, in some cases, existing fields do not meet specifications for certain sports.

The Capital Projects Study Committee also identified deficiencies with the popular Mills Pond Swimming Pool, which is almost 40 years old, and is in need of significant repair and updating. In 2012, the town committed $400,000 in funds to upgrade the pool and is committed to extending its lifespan.

Passive and “un-programmed” recreation spaces also serve a valuable function to the community. A number of residents enjoy bird-watching, hiking, kayaking and canoeing, fishing and walking fostering these types of activities as part of our community character and adds to our quality of life (as documented in other chapters of this plan). Adequate access to the Farmington River and other natural resource areas is necessary to accommodate these activities.

55 Lawton Road, originally purchased by the town for a future school, is an approved but unconstructed Designed Recreational Facility, inclusive of multi-purpose recreational fields.

There is also recurring community interest in finding an appropriate site for a community dog park.
G. Address educational facility needs.

The quality of schools is important to providing high caliber education and attracting families to the community. Canton has long viewed education as one of its highest priorities; and the reputation of its school system serves as testament to this stance. Canton’s largest municipal project, commenced by referendum ten years ago, expanded and renovated the Canton Intermediate School (CIS) and the Canton High School/Middle School (CHS/MS) site using a combination of local bonding and state reimbursement funds.

It is, however, unavoidable that improvements to these facilities will continue to be needed. Current and ongoing structural improvements focus on ADA accessibility, window replacement at CHS/MS. Roofing improvements at Cherry Brook Primary School (CBPS), CIS and CHS/MS are currently underway. Recreation space will also be needed (see Parks and Recreation section of this chapter).

The Capital Projects Study Group also recently evaluated, but did not recommend for immediate bonding, the installation of solar panels at CHS/MS and CIS, as well as a community gymnasium at CHS/MS.
Community Facilities
Canton, CT

Education
1. Cherry Brook Primary School
2. Canton Intermediate School
3. Canton Middle and High School

General
4. Canton Library and Community Center
5. Town Hall

Public Safety
6. Canton Police, Fire, EMS
7. North Canton Fire Department
8. Canton Station

Public Works
9. Public Works Facility/
Water Pollution Control Facility
10. Transfer Station

Parks and Recreation
11. Community Gardens
12. Mills Pond Park
13. Approved Lawton Road
Recreational Facility

Open Space
H. Address town hall needs.

The Capital Projects Study Committee identified the need for ongoing maintenance (replacement of doors, and chiller unit) and the improvement of ADA accessibility and access in general as issues to be addressed at the Town Hall (gutters were replaced in 2012). The Town Hall auditorium was renovated in the past decade and is now used for community meetings and also houses a theater company. As use expands pressure to improve access and convenience will likely increase. Renovating/refurbishing of interior space and updating the mechanical systems is also a concern.

I. Address energy efficiency needs.

There is growing interest in creating buildings and facilities that are more environmentally responsible. Energy-efficient buildings are less expensive to operate over time. Simple techniques, such as putting lighting on motion-detectors or turning them off completely can save the town thousands of dollars annually.

Other communities have also assessed streetlights and removed lights that were no longer warranted. Others have replaced all streetlights with full cut off fixtures, which require a lower voltage to light an area. Both of these techniques can save Canton money and should be evaluated.

Other environmentally-responsible approaches should be considered, especially when cost savings can be realized. Installing solar panels, purchasing energy-efficient vehicles, installation of charging stations, pursuit of hydro-power, and purchasing renewable energy are among current techniques employed to reduce costs.

Since July of 2017 the Town has embarked on a number of energy efficiency related projects. The first of which is the energy upgrades at the Police Department, including both HVAC controls to reduce natural gas and electric consumption and upgrading to LED lighting to reduce electric consumption at the Police Department which have resulted in an overall reduction in yearly electrical consumption by 35.3% and a reduction in yearly natural gas consumption of 7.8%. The second project undertaken was the Town’s purchase, from Eversource, of its streetlights which has resulted in an average monthly savings of $1,150.

Over the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the Town will be planning to upgrade the purchased streetlights to LED fixtures that should provide additional electrical savings; installing solar panels on the Canton Junior/Senior High School, the Canton Intermediate School, the Cherry Brook Primary School, and the new DPW building; and further implementing energy upgrades [consistent with those that were implemented at the Police Department] to the Community Center building, the Canton intermediate School, and the Cherry Brook Primary School.
Overview

Transportation within Canton is integral to daily life for every resident, business owner, employee, customer, and visitor of the Town. Transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, sidewalks, and multi-use trails, also represent a substantial investment for the Town that costs a considerable amount to build, maintain, and rehabilitate. It is important that transportation facilities and services are developed to best serve the entire community, including those who may not be able to or prefer not to travel via automobile.

The transportation aspiration of this POCD is to enhance service to the community through the development of multi-modal facilities and connections that improve circulation, access, and safety, reduce the reliance and dependence on the automobile, and promote healthy activities while effectively managing the costs to the taxpayers.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US

Providing and maintaining transportation facilities and services is important to us because doing so will continue to:

- **Provide essential functions** - Transportation infrastructure and systems facilitate and support our daily lives (obtaining goods and services, accessing jobs, participating in daily activities, recreating, etc.).

- **Provide for public safety** – The essential nature of transportation facilities and systems makes it especially important that they be designed and maintained for safety.

- **Reflect community image and character** – The nature and condition of our Town’s transportation infrastructure should display a welcome invitation to people to enter and enjoy our community. Their condition may be viewed as an integral part of the first impression people form of our town.

We intend to see that transportation facilities and services are developed to best serve the entire community, including those who do not travel via automobile.
Strategic Directions

A. Maintain our transportation facilities.

Canton’s transportation infrastructure is estimated to be worth more than $125 million in replacement value. These assets provide valuable services to virtually every resident of the community, directly and indirectly. Keeping Canton’s transportation facilities functioning to meet these service requirements needs to be a high priority for the community.

Proper upkeep is important to maintaining the value of physical assets. Applying the proper maintenance measures in a timely manner is especially important to transportation facilities. If not maintained on a timely basis, roads will deteriorate to the point that they will require expensive rebuilds. For roads, it is very true that “an ounce of preventative maintenance will avoid a pound of cure.” As a result, timely maintenance of roads is about saving the Town a lot of money as much as it is about making the road ride better and look nicer.

Pavement Deterioration Curve

A 2011 pavement management study found that 46% of the Town roads were in poor or very poor condition. Moreover, 85% of the estimated renovation cost backlog was attributable to those roadways.

The Town has used this information to increase its funding for preventative maintenance in the operating budget and establish, a capital funding program for the more extensive and expensive, and rehabilitation measures. Beginning with the Town’s 2011-2012 fiscal year budget and continuing to the present 2018-2019 budget, the Town has expended a total of $10,137,963 on the maintenance of its roadway system [reconstruction, overlays, drainage, crack sealing, chip sealing, etc.] primarily due to an infusion/inclusion of bond funding to supplement the Town’s yearly pavement maintenance budget amount, resulting in a yearly average expenditure of $1,267,245 on the Town’s roadway system over that period.
B. Provide for improved systems and facilities for pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit.

Canton’s transportation systems and facilities should provide for all transportation users. Walking and bicycling are becoming more and more popular as modes of transportation. Transit provides important transportation options to a number of residents. Limited resources in funding and land mean that these uses must coexist in the same general space.

The overall concept of multiple transportation modes sharing the same space is called “complete streets.” According to a number of sources:

*Complete streets are streets designed to accommodate all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transit users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street. Complete street networks offer users a variety of safe choices for how to travel to their destinations. People typically find areas with complete streets to be more attractive and inviting places to shop, work, play, and live.*

*The proper design of a complete street depends on its surroundings and the numbers of various types of users anticipated or encouraged (aka “context sensitive design”). In a more urban commercial area, features may include sidewalks, curb ramps, raised medians, curb bump-outs, pavement treatments (different materials or coloring to help guide users), or designated bicycle lanes on the roadway. In a rural area, the features may include striping to narrow the vehicle travel lanes, providing wide shoulders for pedestrian and bicyclists, and ensuring adequate sight distances for motorists to see pedestrians walking along the roadway. Because of the large difference in travel speeds between motorists and pedestrians/bicyclists, and in the amount of personal protection, most complete street designs involve some sort of traffic calming measures to help encourage slower, safer driving by motorists.*

The Town needs to strive for its transportation systems and facilities to accommodate this coexistence in a safe and practical manner. Planning and design need to consider all potential modes of transportation in their development. The concept is to provide, where practical, pedestrian and bicycle friendly connections between neighborhoods, transit stops, bike routes and greenways/trails, recreational areas, public facilities, points of interest, village centers, and other key commercial areas; and also transit service between destinations as demand and need dictates.
C. Manage vehicular traffic.

Traffic Calming
Traffic calming is a term used to describe techniques incorporated into street design which encourage slower driving.

It uses physical and visual cues that induce driving at lower speeds without relying on signals, signs, or increased enforcement. When used correctly, traffic calming has proved to be effective at reducing speeds and the number and severity of accidents and noise levels.

Typical traffic calming measures include curb extensions/bump outs, rotaries, speed tables, streetscaping, chokers, medians, and street parking.

The benefits and drawbacks of traffic calming depend on the measure. Cost is nearly always a consideration. Other drawbacks may include how the measure affects transit or emergency vehicle traffic, effects on sight-line distances, and the potential to increase congestion or shift traffic problems to adjacent roads.

Overall, traffic calming used correctly has many benefits and is encouraged. Traffic calming measures are nearly always part of a complete streets solution to making a community more livable, sustainable, and friendly to pedestrian, bicycle, and transit users. However, the measures do need to be applied judiciously.

Increasing population locally and in neighboring towns whose residents commute through Canton, and the growing popularity of commercial and recreational amenities of Canton to residents of other communities, are causing an increase in vehicular traffic in Canton. This increasing vehicular traffic, along with the previously mentioned increasing popularity of non-motorized modes of transportation, make management of vehicular traffic an important focus for the community.

State Route 44 (Albany Turnpike) accommodates more than 30,000 vehicles per day in some locations. Numerous other roads in town carry between 6000 and 12,000 vehicles per day with one traffic lane in each direction. These roads run through commercial areas, village centers, mixed-use areas, and residential neighborhoods, typically with most adjacent properties having individual direct access to the roads.

Vehicular traffic management issues include: excessive travel speeds and other unsafe or stress-inducing vehicle actions, access management, turning movement management, meeting parking needs, traffic circulation and connectivity, and accommodating coexistence with non-motorized modes of transportation (addressed previously). Successful traffic management improves the safety, environs, and livability for pedestrians, bicyclists, adjacent properties, and the motorists themselves.

Some specific observations and recommendations relating to traffic conditions along Route 44 and elsewhere are contained in Chapter 11.
Canton desires to become more pedestrian and bicycle friendly – especially in its village centers such as Collinsville. Slowing down vehicle traffic on major roads within village centers without resorting to signals or stop signs (i.e. traffic calming) can be a major step towards this goal.

As shown in the adjacent graphic, installing a roundabout at the intersection of Bridge Street, Maple Avenue, and River Road - State Routes 179 and 565 - would calm traffic without reducing capacity at the intersection by allowing all traffic to pass through the intersection without stopping, just at slower speeds.

The next graphic shows multiple traffic calming and pedestrian-friendly measures being applied to the intersection of Bridge Street (Route 179) and River Street. Southbound through traffic uses a slightly offset bypass lane (i.e. single lane chicane), which slows vehicles down to a reasonable speed in order to comfortably maneuver the bypass.

The bypass also allows for the creation of a dedicated left turn lane onto River Street, which should help reduce congestion caused by left turns at Center Street and at Main Street. The bump out and curbed median on Bridge Street to the southeast of the intersection tends to slow down northbound traffic on Bridge Street approaching the intersection and the crosswalk. The curbed median can also serve as a refuge for pedestrians crossing Bridge Street; and the combination of the bump out, median, and bypass makes the actual traffic lane crossing shorter and much safer for pedestrians.
D. Manage transportation costs.

Transportation infrastructure costs a lot of money to build, maintain, and rehabilitate. Canton’s transportation system represents a huge public investment of taxpayer dollars: past, present, and future. It is vitally important to the taxpayers of Canton that these facilities and services be planned for and maintained with the goal of maximizing their value and useful life; i.e. get the most bang for our bucks.

Minimizing the physical extents of facilities when first built (i.e. - pavement narrowing) is one measure that can be significant in reducing costs. Using narrower road designs means less infrastructure to build up front and less to maintain and rehabilitate later. It is also important to consider the life-cycle cost of facilities. Using less or cheaper materials or less expensive construction methods can lead to higher maintenance costs or a shorter life for the facilities. The full long-term costs of facilities should be considered as they are planned and designed.

Managing the cost to taxpayers is not solely about reducing costs, however. Transportation infrastructure provides many valuable and essential functions for the community. Proper cost management requires the balancing of life-cycle costs of the facilities with the overall benefits that these facilities will provide to the community over their lifetime. This task is rarely straightforward, as key benefits are not always quantifiable to a cost-related value. The evaluation will typically require the application of prudent judgment and sensibilities by the community. The important step is bringing all of the foreseeable significant factors over the lifetime of the facility into consideration. The Community should remain mindful not to short-change itself by focusing solely on up-front costs.

Need For Pedestrian Facilities  Need For Bicycle Facilities
Overview

Drinking water, telephone and other communication and information services, electricity, natural gas, and wastewater treatment are essential to our way of life. Our utilities need to meet the community’s needs and support desired development patterns.

Since most of Canon’s utilities are privately owned and operated, this POCD has limited direct influence over utility implementation and policy. However, the POCD can influence the utility services to its residents.

**WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO US**

Providing and maintaining utility facilities and services is important to us because doing so will continue to:

- **Protect health and the environment** - Properly handling and treating water supply and wastewater is essential to public and environmental health.

- **Provide needed services** – The services provided by utilities are essential to our businesses, economics, and our overall way of life.

- **Enhance economic opportunities and help manage development** – The availability of adequate utilities is key to maintaining and furthering business development in Canton and providing tax-positive benefits to the Town grand list. The availability of utilities also helps determine the intensity of development that may be placed in any location.

*We intend to guide utilities need to meet community needs and support desired development patterns.*
Strategic Directions

A. Support provision of reliable and sustainable utility services.

The reliability and sustainability of the supply and service of our utilities reinforces the safety and economic competitiveness of Canton and its residents. Increasing available alternatives to supply these services and their benefits helps to achieve these goals.

B. Use utility availability to guide development.

The availability of public water, natural gas, and especially wastewater treatment services significantly affects the feasibility and density for many types of tax positive development. With the available land in Canton for commercial development limited, creating the opportunity to affordably realize the potential of this land for economic and tax base purposes are critical.

Conversely, managing the availability of public sewer services and other wastewater treatment options can inhibit the expansion of more intense development into unwanted areas and can work to promote desirable housing alternatives.

Canton’s Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) is a separate legal municipal entity from Canton’s Town government. The WPCA is tasked to responsibly plan, construct, and operate the municipal sewer system for the benefit of the Town of Canton. This POCD strongly supports the WPCA in its mission to safely and adequately collect and treat sanitary sewerage wastes from within its service boundaries and to be fiscally responsible to its customers and to its ability to sustain its mission. The policies of the WPCA do impact the ability of the community to achieve its goals with respect to development and tax base distribution. It therefore behooves the WPCA and the Town Government to work together to endeavor to resolve such issues to the benefit of the Town.
Encouraging policies that help to keep costs down for utility consumers and initiating programs and taking actions that minimize tax burdens are beneficial to the residents of Canton.
Overview

Seven general “districts” within Canton have been identified as a means of improving the understanding and implementation of this POCD, especially with respect to character and development history. Each district represents an integral part of the town with differing characteristics. This discussion on districts is intended to help guide future Town decisions where surrounding or neighborhood context is a consideration.

Preserving the distinctive character of Canton is an important priority that is repeated throughout this POCD. The elements of town character are not homogenous, however. Many characteristics vary significantly throughout Canton. Understanding the different contexts of the town’s character can remove ambiguity and facilitate better decision making.

As an example, the characteristics of Canton Center are different than those along the Route 44 corridor; and the characteristics of the Route 44 corridor near the Avon and Simsbury town lines (East Gateway District) are different than the character of the Route 44 corridor near the New Hartford town line (West Gateway District).

The district boundaries are not hard lines. The limits of the districts are transitional and blurred. The districts are identified through general demarcations focusing on major access routes, commercial corridors and village centers for economic reasons; and historical patterns of development for more character-driven focus. However, each district also has an important single family residential neighborhood presence; and the proximity of these residential neighborhoods to commercial development must always be kept as a consideration.

With a vast majority of non-residential parcels in Canton already being developed under current regulations, and few remaining commercial parcels being isolated from residential areas, economic growth continues to be a balancing act between maintaining residential life and strengthening the community’s tax base with new developments and successful business activity.
Collinsville District

Location/Extent

The Collinsville District is identified as the southwestern portion of Canton; essentially the area south of the Routes 44 and 202 corridor and west of East Hill Road and Atwater Road. The district includes the historic village of Collinsville.
Conservation

The village that was to become Collinsville was established in 1806. Twenty years later, the Collins Company opened its doors for business, in essence creating the framework for the village as it exists today.

Collinsville has shown resilience in recovering from natural and economic calamity (1955 flood, 1966 closing of the Collins Company). The village also avoided urban renewal by the narrowest of margins at a town meeting decades ago. Thereafter the Collinsville Historic District was established to preserve the appearance of this area. Collinsville has emerged as a center for the arts and eco-tourism in northern Connecticut; and was selected by Arthur Frommer’s Budget Travel magazine as one of the “Ten Coolest Small Towns in America”. Collinsville is also the location of a popular farmer’s market which has served Farmington Valley residents since 2008 and provides a variety of locally grown foods to residents and revenue for local farmers.

The Farmington River flows south out of the West Gateway District, essentially bisecting the Collinsville district, until it exits Canton into Burlington at the south edge of the district. Through much of the district, the river forms a narrow reservoir behind the historic dam built to serve the former Collins Company. The river has provided ecological, economic and recreational benefits to the community throughout the last two centuries; with the dam providing power to the Collins Company for many years and the river and reservoir being a source for boating and kayaking, eco-tourism, aesthetic pleasure, and identity.

The lower reaches of Rattlesnake Brook also flow through the district, reaching its confluence with the Farmington River just north of the village of Collinsville. The district also contains Canton’s portion of the Nepaug Reservoir, a reasonably large public water supply reservoir. The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) owns the reservoir and a significant amount of land abutting the waterbody. This land is considered to be open space as it is protected as primary public watershed land.

The village of Collinsville, and the Farmington River as it flows past, is tucked between two prominent and scenic hills. Sweetheart Mountain is to the west, and Huckleberry Hill lies to the east. The town line splits these hills such that the southern portions of the hills are in Burlington. A significant amount of Huckleberry Hill has been developed into single family residences. However, a historic cemetery and older single family neighborhood development facing the business district of Collinsville still work to provide the northwest slope of the hill with a quaint New England charm. Most of the easterly and westerly slopes of Sweetheart Mountain have been preserved as open space. A subdivision was recently constructed along the top of the hill ridge in Canton. However, an agreement between the Town and the developer has resulted in a design that keeps the buildings screened from view within Collinsville.
CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLE

Collinsville Historic District

The Collinsville Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 since it represented a fine example of a compact nineteenth century mill town. The district contains approximately 300 structures exhibiting diversity in age, function and style including mill buildings, workers’ housing and public places dating from the 1830’s to the present built predominately by the Collins Company, an axe and tool factory established in 1826.
**Development**

Collinsville (the village), is a quintessential example of an intact working New England mill village (or “Company Town”) with employment, workforce housing, retail services and transportation services laid out in close proximity. Set in the hills above the Farmington River, its 19th Century scale, architecture, and road network remain intact.

The business district of Collinsville is a wonderful mix of small retail shops, quasi-industrial service businesses, restaurants, offices, arts culture, and residential units. The residential housing includes single family houses, two family units, multi-unit residential buildings, and residential housing above business establishments. Most of the area is very pedestrian friendly. In many respects, Collinsville represents the mixed-use vision that many communities are looking to re-create in their own village centers.

A significant opportunity for moving towards this goal is available in the potential redevelopment of the Collins Company complex. While some of the space within the old factory complex has found periodic reuse since the closing of the company (including use as a business incubator in the recent past), overall the condition of the complex has deteriorated. Village-character redevelopment of this over 15-acre site would be expected to provide new residents to support the existing businesses of Collinsville, new businesses to help sustain Collinsville as a regional attraction, and a significant increase to the Town’s tax base to support community services and help offset the tax burden on single family residences. In 2016, the Town developed a preliminary Tax Increment Financing Master Plan to support the redevelopment of the Collins Company Complex (PIC).

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**Character**

“What makes Collinsville different from most other similarly situated places is the proximity and ongoing relationship between businesses and residents. This is something that should continue to be cultivated.

Collinsville therefore needs to remain a stable desirable place to live with recreational dining and shopping opportunities. While we build this place as an entertainment and retail destination, we also have to ensure the quiet enjoyment by residents of their properties free of unnecessary noise, litter, difficult traffic and other nuisances.

There needs to continue to be services and shopping that residents can use.”

– Collinsville Resident
It has been stated that the key to Collinsville’s economic success lies in its past. Future development and improvements throughout the district must respect Collinsville’s heritage as a mixed-use industrial village designed as a company town in which employment, laborers, residences, stores and services efficiently co-existed within the same neighborhood.

The Collinsville District also is home to many municipal buildings and facilities. The Town Hall is located in the Collinsville village business district. The intermediate school, high/middle school, library/community center and two ball field complexes, as well as the Town’s largest recreation park (and swimming pool) are located in the Simmonds Avenue/Dyer Avenue/East Hill Road area. A smaller passive-use park, the wastewater treatment facility, police station, a fire station, and the public works facility are all located along River Road. The Town is looking to relocate the public works facility and repurpose its grounds.

Most of the remaining development in the district is single family homes. In general, the neighborhoods become ‘newer’ as one moves away from the village of Collinsville, with relatively recent development along the ridge of Sweetheart Mountain and the northerly slopes of Huckleberry Hill. The area of Collinsville directly across the river from the business district includes a number of two-family residences constructed for Collins Company employees, as well as a large church and a small commercial presence. The Collinsville district developed a healthy diversity of housing choices without the aid of zoning; and continues to successfully offer them to the benefit of the community despite their non-conformance with zoning.

In order to preserve and enhance the distinctive character of Collinsville, the establishment of a properly implemented village district, form based codes, or specific design standards (see sidebars on pages 12 and 13) should be considered for this area. Such efforts should coordinate and work in concert with the existing Collinsville Historic District.
Infrastructure

State Route 179 (Bridge Street and River Road), a state Scenic Corridor that generally parallels the Farmington River through the district, and State Route 565 (Maple Avenue and Dowd Avenue) are the primary roadways serving the district. Nearly 13,000 vehicles travel through their intersection just north of the village of Collinsville every day. Simmonds Avenue and East Hill Road also accommodate nearly 3000 and 2000 vehicles per day respectively. This motor vehicle traffic is a benefit for economic reasons, but must be managed properly to ensure that Collinsville remains a pedestrian orientated neighborhood (as suggested by the 1997 Collinsville Scenic Corridor Study).

Collinsville is the hub of a rapidly growing multi-use trail system connecting 4 historic town centers in the Farmington Valley by bike and foot through a unique 28 mile recreational loop. The trail is an excellent resource attracting people from all over the region to Collinsville and providing an important bicycle and pedestrian link throughout the District and many of the business areas of Canton. The business district of Collinsville has good sidewalk distribution and is very pedestrian friendly. Sidewalk runs from the village center area north along Maple Avenue to Dyer Avenue. The sidewalk then follows Dyer Avenue until it again connects up to the Farmington River Trail, creating a small, but convenient pedestrian loop. The sidewalk continues north along Dyer Avenue to serve the municipal complexes in the neighborhood.

While transit service is not directly available to Collinsville, a potential connection exists about ¼ mile away on Dyer Avenue.

The Collinsville District has the most complete public water and sewer service of any of the districts. Most of the village of Collinsville, the municipal complex area and its surrounding residential neighborhood, and a significant portion of the residential area to the west of the river are served by public water, sewer, and natural gas.

Active Recreation

Passive Recreation
West Gateway District

**Location/Extent**

The West Gateway area is identified as the vicinity of the Route 44/202 corridor west of East Hill Road to the New Hartford Town Line. This district also includes the commercial/industrial and multi-family areas at the north end of River Road (Route 179 south of Route 44). This area has been identified by residents as “a gateway to Litchfield County and beyond.”

**Conservation**

The Farmington River, a prime riparian resource and a dominant feature of the Town, runs through this district. The associated floodplain and wetlands are also major natural resources for the Town. These resources serve as important ecological habitat; and the river supports significant recreational activities for residents.

Two of the most visible farmland plots in the town are located in this district. Bristol’s Farm is located adjacent to Route 44 on the north side just west of its intersection with Route 179; and another smaller, but just a visible, farm parcel is located directly south of Route 44 as it nears the New Hartford Town Line.
Development

This corridor through the West Gateway District includes important opportunity and potential infill sites for Canton as it looks to increase its economic base. Care must be taken; however, if/when any such development occurs to respect the character of the surrounding district.

This area already contains more than a dozen retail and care facilities (some quite sizable along the Route 44 corridor, and two light industrial areas (one on Powder Mill Road and one on River Road) are nearby. The Town’s transfer station is also located in the Powder Mill Road industrial area. The successful buffering/screening of some of the larger developments in the area (e.g. Canterbury Condominiums and Cherry Brook Health Care facility) also helps lend to the perception of less development.

The district also has a substantial residential presence. Single family neighborhoods are located in the north and west portions of the district and a number of higher density residential developments located in the district as well.

The complex transportation node where Routes 44, 202, and 179 intersect, and including surrounding parcels, is locally known as Hart’s Corner. With available public water and sewer, three state routes, existing commercial and industrial uses, and multi-family residential development all within close proximity, the future potential of Hart’s Corner should not be overlooked. For this reason, the Hart’s Corner area was selected as a conceptual example for this POC. This area is also located close to New Hartford’s sewer service and business area (including the ski slope), which warrants the exploration of the additional land uses and density in this area, hence leading to their identification as opportunity locations.

Infrastructure

As discussed above, three state highways traverse and serve the West Gateway District. As a result, this is well served for vehicular access. The district is, however, very under-served with respect to pedestrian facilities. There are no off-road bicycle facilities in the district at the present time.

Areas south of Route 44 and east of (and including) River Road, including the Hart’s Corner area, generally have public water and sewer available. Public water also is available in much of the Powder Mill Road industrial area. Public water and sewer is not available for the rest of the district. Most notably, the Route 44 corridor between Hart’s Corner and East Hill Road is not currently served by public water and sewer. The West Gateway could benefit from the establishment of a properly implemented village district, form based code, or specific design standards (see sidebars on pages 12 and 13) to protect its character and help restore elements eroded by the extensive transportation facilities.
Canton Village District

Location/Extent

The Canton Village District is identified as the vicinity of Route 44 and Dowd Avenue beginning at Lovely Street to the east and continuing to East Hill Road (along both streets) to the west.

Conservation

The Canton Village District has played an important role in the history of the community. The Town Green is located at the intersection of Albany Turnpike and Dowd Avenue. Originally populated with Greek revival and Victorian structures, the area has a historic character that the Town should endeavor to incorporate in area development. A hotel was once located at 171 Albany Turnpike (the site is presently used as a law office). The original school house located at the Town Green still exists and is now repurposed as an art gallery. There are a number of older buildings in the district that were originally built as single family residences that are currently used commercially or as multi-family residences. The scale and architectural features of these buildings are important to the character of the District.

The Canton Village District also includes scenic and natural resources such as Mount Horr, Rattlesnake Brook – and a major tributary thereto, Bond Pond, portions of the public water supply aquifer, and some significant wetland areas. A Road Safety Audit, funded by CTDOT Community Connectivity Program Grant (CCPG) was conducted in 2017 resulting in a series of recommendations. In 2017 a TOD grant was applied for to reconfigure the intersection of Dowd and Route 44 which was not awarded. A smaller grant was subsequently awarded from the CCPG in 2017 funding pedestrian improvements along Dowd Avenue and Commerce Drive in the Canton Village Area.
Development

The Canton Village District has developed at a scale significantly different than that of the East Gateway. This area reflects smaller community businesses which evolved over time by repurposing existing buildings and sites (including single-family homes) along the Town’s main transportation route. As a result, development patterns within this district favor small, free standing, more residential-scale buildings over strip mall type development. The district includes the second largest commercial plaza in Canton – the Canton Village plaza. (See the conceptual example on this plaza for more information and how this plaza works well with the rest of the district).

While the existence of an arterial roadway such as Route 44 within the district presents a challenge, this POCD envisions that this area has the potential and opportunity to retain and redevelop village center characteristics that are seen by many to be the desired rural commercial centers of tomorrow. The incorporation of the community character related development strategies presented throughout this POCD, including improved bicycle and pedestrian access, mixed-use and infill development, appropriate landscaping, vehicular access management, stormwater management, and respect for our history and heritage, can create a mixed-use commercial area that is able to take advantage of the consumer base provided by Route 44 while providing, to a significant extent, a village center atmosphere with its own identity.

The Canton Industrial Park (privately owned) is located south of Dowd Avenue. This area is recognized as an opportunity location for future development. Although underperforming at the present time, all of the infrastructure and services needed to support more intensive development is in place.

Canton Village includes, and is surrounded by, a significant residential population with a variety of housing choices. Higher density residential complexes exist within walkable distances to places of commercial activity are located along Dowd Avenue and at the fringe of the district near East Hill Road. Historic and modern single family neighborhoods are located within close proximity to commercial and town services. An existing mix of uses and active pedestrian presence can be found throughout this district. This mixed use development approach has worked well and should be continued.

Infrastructure

Although a significant amount of infrastructure exists for pedestrians and cyclists, this district remains an auto-dependent environment. Additional provisions should be made for bicycles and pedestrians by expanding connections between nearby commercial, residential, and institutional uses. Such actions could also connect to and enhance the use of the Farmington River Rail Trail (FRRT). Access management (reducing curb cuts) is a key traffic objective in this area. Water and sewer are available within the district (with limitation).
East Gateway District

Location

The East Gateway is identified as the vicinity of the Route 44 corridor east of Lovely Street and Lawton Road to the Simsbury/Avon Town Line.

Conservation

An existing trap rock ridge towards the east side of this district (near the Town Line) is a defining scenic quality of this gateway. Jims Brook and Roaring Brook run through this area feeding the wetlands systems associated with Secret Lake. This area also contains a CT DEEP aquifer protection area - a natural resource (as well as a public water supply area) that requires consideration for certain proposed development activities. Past industrial activities and discharges resulted in groundwater contamination associated with the Swift superfund site near the intersection of Route 44 and Colonial Road.

Development

The East Gateway is Canton’s large scale commercial retail corridor and most active growth area. This area contains national retail businesses anchored by the Shoppes at Farmington Valley, a regional shopping destination. The district also includes some small industrial areas as well as other scattered local business enterprises.
Currently, this district is the primary tax revenue growth engine for Canton. Approximately 50% percent of the Town’s non-residential property tax revenue is derived from within this district. Economic growth in this district is expected to bring revenue to pay for needs and services throughout the community. A few opportunity locations (key areas of significant economic potential) remain in this area and a number of parcels in the district are good candidates for infill and more intensive redevelopment. An industrial-zoned area on the south side of Route 44 near the Town Line with Avon (and on the east side of the trap rock ridge – a.k.a. Ledgemere) is identified as an opportunity location for future development.

The Route 44 commercial corridor is flanked on either side by single family residential neighborhoods. Opportunities to create transitional areas (e.g. mixed use or low-unit multi-family dwellings) should be pursued to help soften the transition from the intense commercial uses to the single family areas. The use of appropriate landscaping and other buffering, with clearly defined standards, also helps to soften the transition.

Infrastructure

State Route 44 (Albany Turnpike), and its associated vehicular traffic, is the principal factor affecting the East Gateway District.

Even though bicycle and pedestrian facilities are limited along the Route 44 corridor, the area has been experiencing increased bicycle and pedestrian traffic and more is expected in the future due to the completion of the Farmington River Trail from Collinsville to the intersection of Routes 177 and 44. Efforts to increase access, safety, and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists within this area and to connect the commercial areas of Canton to those in Avon/Simsbury should continue. A safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists is encouraged.

Water and sewer, although available within the district, is limited. Provision of public water and sewer service areas to identified opportunity locations will support economic growth.

Roadway Considerations

Route 44’s large traffic volume creates a ready customer base for businesses in the district; it also creates a number of drawbacks typically associated with high traffic flows.

Access management (controlling the number and location of driveways) will be an important tool to maintain an adequate level of service in this area for traffic while also providing relatively convenient access to properties.

The entrance to Gateway Commons and the Colonial Road industrial area is an example of a location where turning movements can be very uncomfortable for drivers, and therefore would benefit from a coordinated signal light.

Lawton Road and Washburn Road, which pass through older residential neighborhoods, are used as a cut through for traffic destined for the center of Simsbury, Bradley Airport, and other locations to the north and east.

It is important for the Town to remain conscious of the impacts of vehicular traffic in the district and the opportunities and need for mitigation in the future.
Canton Center District

Location/Extent

The Canton Center District comprises the Cherry Brook Valley and surrounding hillsides in the vicinity of Canton Center along with Ratlum Mountain and Breezy Hill.

Conservation

The Canton Center District was home to the original village and government center of Canton. The area has a rich history of farms and shops making diverse products to bring in revenue from the outside ‘world’.

Cherry Brook, Barbour Brook and Ratlum Brook are key features of this district. The brooks are primary cold-water feeders to the Farmington River. This district also contains the Ratlum Mountain/Breezy Hill ridgeline. Much of the active farmland in the district is also located in the vicinity of Cherry Brook and Barbour Brook.

The westerly two-thirds of the District, topographically dominated by the ridgeline, is predominately forests with low density residential development lining relatively scattered roadways. Much of the town’s remaining large core forest areas (> 500 acres) are found in this area. Also, much of the ridgeline is preserved as open space held by Canton Land Conservation Trust. Overall, over 1200 acres of preserved open space are located in this district.
CONCEPTUAL EXAMPLE

Canton Center Historic District

The Canton Center Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. The district, which contains approximately 500 acres, was recognized for the overall assemblage of homes constructed during the period of growth and prosperity in the 1800s, the community buildings such as the church, store, school, and blacksmith shop, and the agricultural buildings and uses still evident in the district.
Development

Character

Canton Center is known for its charming village center comprised of a church, general store, post office, and graveyard. The Canton Center Historic District was established to preserve the appearance of this area. The Church/Post Office/General Store complex, which also includes rental apartments, serves as the primary public meeting place in the District. Cherry Brook Primary School, located on Barboutown Road, is a major town facility located in the district. A second place of worship is located just to the north of the school. The district is also home to an art studio and gallery, a significant portion of an active ski/snowboarding area, and a number of home-based businesses including plumbing, home improvement and landscape carpenters, forestry and firewood, and machine shops. These small businesses allow their owners and employees to avoid the wasted time and fuel expense of going elsewhere to work while bringing millions of dollars of purchasing power into the community.

The District is currently zoned for two-acre residential use except for a three-hundred-foot wide one-acre strip zone lining the sides of Cherry Brook Road south of the village. And, where developed outside of the village area, much of the development conforms to this zoning. Yet, despite this large-lot single-family residential-only zoning, the charming village of Canton Center is blessed with an eclectic legacy of multifamily housing and a multitude of nonconforming uses and forms. Retention of these characteristics is an important consideration of this POCD. The Canton Center General Store and Post Office -- multi-use properties with affordable residential uses above retail and service operations -- are right out of cutting edge rural village planning philosophy. The several multi-family rental properties in the village area, as well as in diverse outlying areas in the district, offer affordable housing that serves singles and small families for the community.

Cherry Brook Road (State Route 179) is the major highway serving Canton Center. It runs along the east side of Cherry Brook traversing the district from north to south. Most other roads in the district use Cherry Brook Road as their primary means of ‘outside’ access. Cherry Brook Road and Wright Road experience a modest, but significant, amount of seasonal bicycle traffic. The district has no public water or sewer service.
East Hill District

Location/Extent

The East Hill District is identified as the residential areas on the east side of Canton adjacent to Onion Mountain, East Hill, and the northerly side of Mount Horr.

Conservation

The East Hill area could be considered the birthplace of Canton. The first permanent house in what is now Canton was built there by Richard Case in 1737.

The rolling terrain in this area resulted in a development pattern epitomized by widely-spaced farms and homesteads. Some active farmland remains in the area. Spaced in between are some sizeable pockets of core forest area and other natural resources. Rattlesnake Brook and Jim Brook originate in and drain a vast majority of this area. Preserving and protecting these important resources is a key strategy for the future of this area.

A significant amount of the undeveloped area in the district has been preserved as open space. In 1948, what is now the Roaring Brook Nature Center (RBNC) was established on Gracey Road. In 1964, 100 acres adjacent to the RBNC was bequeathed to the State of Connecticut as “Werner Woods”. In addition, the Canton Land Trust owns over 300 acres in the district which preserves most of the ridgeline and western slopes of Onion Mountain.
Development

The present day development of the East Hill District can be seen as mirroring its history. The farms were so disperse that no church or store gained a foothold, and the school house, on East Hill Road just north of Bahre Corner Road, became the social gathering place for the area.

The developed land is almost exclusively clusters of rural single family neighborhoods tucked into the rolling hills. Where these clusters of housing exist, they tend to be more densely spaced than the residential development in the North or Center Districts, (the other two largely rural residential districts in Town).

Infrastructure

There are no arterial roadways traversing the East Hill District. The major local roads effectively ring East Hill and Onion Mountain as they provide access to and from Albany Turnpike (Route 44) to the south, Cherry Brook Road (Route 179) on the west, and Simsbury to the east. Lawton Road and Washburn carry the highest volume of traffic of any local roads in Canton.

The East Hill District includes Phase IV of FRRT, presently being marked as an on-road route along Lawton and Dry Bridge Roads. This marks a commitment towards the completion of the 28 mile loop of the FRRT as a spur to the East Coast Greenway. Traffic calming and management through this area is a priority and should seek to re-establish a safe neighborhood environment.
North Canton District

**Location/Extent**

The North Canton District is identified as the area of Canton north of the Canton Center and East Hill districts; (i.e. essentially north of Wright Road and High Valley Drive.)

**Conservation**

North Canton is the most rural, least populous, least developed area of the town and does not contain a village type setting as often found in most defined “centers”. Originally settled as West Simsbury, a historic school building remains as do a number of historic houses along Route 309 (Adams, Moses, and Messenger). It also includes the former Grange building, a church, fire station, and a small post office. In 2012 the US Postal Service indicated its intent to close the North Canton Post Office, much to the chagrin of local residents.

Cherry Brook and its valley traverse the district from north to south. The Ratlum Mountain ridge bounds the valley on the west side, and the West Mountain ridge bounds it to the east. Most of these ridges remain as core forest areas. Wetlands are scattered throughout the district. Over 500 acres in the district have been preserved as open space, including a portion of Cherry Brook Farm. A small portion of the McLean Game Refuge extends into Canton. A number of active farm parcels are also scattered throughout the district.
Development/Infrastructure

Large lot single family residential and agriculture are presently the dominant land uses. However the area contains the towns’ largest inventory of available land closest to Bradley airport (approximately 20 minutes). The lack of public water and sewer in the district as well as being surrounded by single family residential, both in Canton and the Town of Granby to the north, remain a deterrents to any kind of limited commercial development in the area.

State Routes 179 (Cherry Brook Road) and 309 (West Simsbury Road), as well as Case Street, are the primary roadways serving the district.
Overview

The Future Land Use Plan and the Conservation and Development locational guide maps are a reflection of the stated goals, objectives, and recommendations of the POCD as well as an integration of the preceding elements of the Plan of Conservation & Development. In essence, these maps and plans are a statement of what the Canton of tomorrow should look like and how conservation and development activities might be guided to help us get there.
## Descriptions of Future Land Use Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Density Residential</strong></td>
<td>Areas where, due to sensitive natural resources, infrastructure limitations or desirable patterns of development, typical density less than one unit per acre would be expected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate Density Residential</strong></td>
<td>Areas presently used for multi-family development or where the existing density of development may exceed one unit per acre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing Business Zones</strong></td>
<td>Areas which have developed or are intended to develop with business and/or light industrial uses (may include adjacent transition areas).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Mixed Use Development Sites</strong></td>
<td>Area where mixed uses may be appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Opportunity Locations</strong></td>
<td>Areas where opportunities for business expansion will be investigated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Facility/Institutional Use</strong></td>
<td>Areas containing existing community facilities (schools, library, Town Hall, etc.) and institutional uses (churches, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing Open Space</strong></td>
<td>Areas that are currently preserved or used for open space purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Future Land Use Plan

The map on the facing page is the future land use map for Canton.

As required by statute, it shows “... the commission’s recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality.”
Future Land Use Plan
Canton, CT
Conservation Vision

The Locational Guide Map - Conservation shows areas in Canton which contain attributes which Canton feels are important to conserve or preserve. Darker shades indicate that there are more such resources located in that area.

If conservation resources and development resources (see facing page) exist in the same area, additional investigation may be needed to ensure that the both objectives are balanced.
Development Vision

The Locational Guide Map - Development shows areas which contain attributes which are important to supporting the overall development vision for Canton. Darker shades indicate that there are more such resources located in that area.

If development resources and conservation resources (see facing page) exist in the same area, additional investigation may be needed to ensure that the both objectives are balanced.
Consistency with Other Plans

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle 1 –</th>
<th>REDEVELOP AND REVITALIZE REGIONAL CENTERS AND AREAS OF MIXED-LAND USES WITH EXISTING OR PLANNED PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.</th>
<th>FINDING – Consistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The POCD encourages growth in Collinsville with mixed land uses and recommends additional physical infrastructure for this area. Canton does not have a designated “regional center”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle 2 –</th>
<th>EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND DESIGN CHOICES TO ACCOMMODATE A VARIETY OF HOUSEHOLD TYPES AND NEEDS.</th>
<th>FINDING – Consistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The POCD recommends that Canton seek to diversify its housing “portfolio” and address recognized housing needs – housing that is more affordable and housing for an aging population.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle 3 –</th>
<th>CONCENTRATE DEVELOPMENT AROUND TRANSPORTATION NODES AND ALONG MAJOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS TO SUPPORT THE VIABILITY OF TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND LAND REUSE.</th>
<th>FINDING – Consistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The POCD continues with the overall zoning framework of more intensive development on and near Route 44 where it is served by State highways, bus transit, and arterial roads.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle 4 –</th>
<th>CONSERVE AND RESTORE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES, AND TRADITIONAL RURAL LANDS.</th>
<th>FINDING – Consistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The POCD identifies the importance of protecting important community resources such as the natural environment, open spaces, cultural and historical resources, and undeveloped land.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle 5 –</th>
<th>PROTECT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS CRITICAL TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY.</th>
<th>FINDING – Consistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The POCD contains recommendations to protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety such as water quality and public water supply watershed lands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle 6 –</th>
<th>INTEGRATE PLANNING ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS ISSUES ON A LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND STATEWIDE BASIS.</th>
<th>FINDING – Consistent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The POCD is part of the process of integrating planning with other levels of government and with other agencies. The POCD will be used to coordinate efforts with:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• adjacent communities,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• regional organizations, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• state agencies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In addition, this POCD was compared with the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development prepared by the Capitol Regional Council of Governments and found to be generally consistent with that Plan.

Any inconsistencies can be generally attributed to:
* differences in definitions of desirable uses or development densities,
* local (as opposed to State or regional) desires about how Canton should grow and change in the coming years, or
* the fact that the State Plan and the Regional Plan make policy recommendations for land use intensity and environmental sensitivity while this POCD suggests specific land use types.
Overview

This POCD contains a number of recommendations intended to guide the future conservation and development of Canton.

In preparing this POCD, the Plan of Conservation and Development Update Committee, the Board of Selectmen, and the Planning Commission:

- reviewed and discussed information about Canton,
- conducted public meetings and surveys to determine residents’ attitudes,
- discussed conditions, trends, and issues affecting the community, and
- assembled and refined a number of strategies to help guide the community during the planning period.

As a result, this POCD is believed to reflect the consensus of the community in terms of where Canton should devote much of its effort over the next ten to twenty years to enhance the vitality, livability, and quality of life in the community. While situations and conditions will undoubtedly change, this POCD establishes goals for all Canton residents to work towards.

By preparing this Plan of Conservation and Development, the POCD Update Steering Committee and the Planning Commission feel that Canton has taken a significant step forward towards enhancing the vitality, livability, and quality of life in our town.

Implementation

The most critical step in bringing the POCD to fruition is implementing its recommendations. Canton recognizes this and has prepared a separate Implementation Plan to aid and guide implementation. It is intended that the Implementation Plan will be a working document used to implement strategies identified in this Strategic Plan.

By preparing this POCD, Canton has taken a significant step forward towards enhancing the vitality, livability, and quality of life in our town.
To guide implementation of the Strategic Plan, the key agencies involved in preparing it (the POCD Update Committee, the Board of Selectmen, and the Planning Commission) recommend the establishment of a Plan Implementation Committee. As stated in the Implementation Plan itself:

Experience in other communities has shown that POCD implementation can be much more effective if the Town establishes a POCD Implementation Committee (PIC) to oversee implementation. The PIC would be established and populated by the Board of Selectmen. Members would likely include representatives from Town staff and some Town agencies, though the BOS may see fit to draw from other resources. The PIC would be responsible for coordinating and monitoring implementation of the POCD. The PIC would be tasked with assessing the status of specific recommendations, evaluating priorities, and suggesting new implementation techniques where appropriate. This document presumes the establishment of a PIC; if a PIC is not established, then references to the PIC should be interpreted as meaning whatever Town entity/entities is/are tasked with overseeing POCD implementation.

The Implementation Plan contains tables to identify specific tasks or policies, who is primarily responsible for its implementation (and who will help), and the general priority:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Primary Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>CC1</td>
<td>Preserve, conserve, and enhance Canton's rural character</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>ZC, BOS, BOF, Town, CoC, MIST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>CC2</td>
<td>Reduce land use regulations to keep development features in a human scale</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>ZC, BOS, BOF, Town, CoC, MIST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>CC3</td>
<td>Reduce regulations to encourage multiple smaller buildings (or the appearance of multiple smaller buildings) on commercial sites</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>ZC, BOS, BOF, Town, CoC, MIST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>CC4</td>
<td>Reduce regulations to minimize vehicle congestion (physical and visually) in commercial areas</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>ZC, BOS, BOF, Town, CoC, MIST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

The Implementation Plan contains tables to identify specific tasks or policies, who is primarily responsible for its implementation (and who will help), and the general priority:
In addition to recommending the formation of an Implementation Committee, the Implementation Plan also makes the following recommendations:

- Use the POCD to organize annual work programs including operating budget requests, capital planning, work efforts and commission activities,
- Use the Strategic Plan as a basis for land use and other decisions within the Town,
- Reviewing municipal and other activities proposed in the Town of Canton for consistency with the recommendations of the POCD, and
- Use the Strategic Plan as a guide for municipal spending priorities, including preparation of the annual operating budget and for capital improvement programming.

As can be seen, it is expressly intended that this Plan of Conservation and Development be used on a regular basis. In addition, it is recommended that the Implementation Plan be regularly reviewed and refined on a regular basis on order to:

- Assess how implementation is proceeding,
- Delete tasks or actions completed satisfactorily,
- Add tasks or actions that will help accomplish strategic goals, and
- Refine tasks or actions already under way to enhance their implementation or improve their effectiveness.

This process is intended to cultivate a “culture of planning” within Canton where the overall strategies are periodically reviewed and the supporting tasks and policies are regularly revised to respond to changing conditions. This approach will help the POCD (and POCD strategies) be relevant over a long timeframe.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Residents of Canton

POCD Update Steering Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Thiesse</td>
<td>Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Reynolds</td>
<td>Vice-Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemary Aldridge</td>
<td>POCD Update Committee/Former Planning Commission Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Carr</td>
<td>Canton Advocates For Responsible Expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael DiPinto</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Evens</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius Fialkiewicz</td>
<td>Parks &amp; Recreation Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Freeman</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Jackson</td>
<td>Economic Development Agency (to June 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Mortimer</td>
<td>POCD Update Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Oswald</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Pane</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansford Perry</td>
<td>POCD Update Committee/Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Shepard</td>
<td>Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Town Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neil S. Pade, AICP</td>
<td>Director of Planning and Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roland R. Klee, AICP, CZEO</td>
<td>Assistant Town Planner, Zoning Enforcement Officer, and Inland Wetlands &amp; Watercourses Agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Charest, CZEO</td>
<td>Land Use Coordinator (from July 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Brodeur</td>
<td>Land Use Coordinator (to June 2013)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Planning and Zoning Commission

David Bondanza Chair
Jonathan Thiesse Vice Chair
Phil Pane Secretary
Keith August Alternate
Michael DiPinto Alternate
David Evens Alternate
David Freeman Alternate
John Huyghebaert
Lansford Perry
William Sarmuk Alternate

Board Of Selectmen

Richard J. Barlow First Selectman
Stephen Roberto Deputy First Selectman
David W. Gilchrist
Lowell F. Humphrey
Thomas Sevigny

Robert Skinner Chief Administrative Officer

Technical assistance in the preparation of this Plan was provided by Planimetrics, Inc.

Glenn Chalder, AICP President
Jason Vincent, AICP Vice-President (to May 2012)
Leonard Desson, GIS Manager (to October 2013)
New England GeoSystems GIS Manager (From November 2013)