



PORTLAND



2016-2026 Plan of Conservation and Development

STRATEGIC ELEMENT

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EFFECTIVE DATE

March 14, 2016



March 2016

Welcome!

This document is the 2016-2026 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for Portland. Required by Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the POCD is intended to provide guidance to elected and appointed officials with regard to the future physical, social and economic development of Portland. The overall aim of this POCD is:

- improve and maintain the overall quality of life in Portland;
- promote economic development and prosperity; and
- preserve and promote the character of Portland.

This document is called the “Strategic Element” since it identifies:

- desirable strategies related to the future conservation and development of Portland, and
- policies and action items which will help implement those strategies.

There is also a companion document called the “Implementation Element.” The Implementation Element is a working document that outlines the “leaders” and “partners” involved with implementation of the specific policies and action items. While the Strategic Element may remain unchanged over the anticipated 10-year timeframe of the POCD, the Implementation Element should be regularly updated to reflect new action items and/or policies in order to help accomplish POCD strategies.

The Planning and Zoning Commission prepared the POCD with assistance from Portland residents and municipal boards and staff who participated in the process. This Plan is an update of the 2006 POCD.

We hope you will help us implement the Plan!

Sincerely,

Bruce Tyler, Chair
Planning and Zoning Commission

A VISION FOR PORTLAND

Incentives will be created and adaptive reuse strategies instituted to preserve Portland's character while making it more energy efficient. Town policies will promote preservation as a community revitalization tool. The historic resources listed in *The History and Architecture of Portland* will serve as the inventory of resources to be preserved.

Commercial development of the Elmcrest property will result in Village District "place making," complement existing businesses and strengthen economic development.

Design improvement of both state and town roads will make them safer and more accessible for motorists, pedestrians (including those with mobility challenges), cyclists and transit users. Improvements will promote the economy and have a positive impact on the health and well-being of individuals.

Development of the Air Line Trail and a Town Park on Route 17, along with increased protection of open space in partnership with State and non-profit groups will enhance recreation opportunities, protect and preserve rural wildlife assets and safeguard our lakes, ponds, streams and Connecticut River.

This Vision Statement serves as a keystone for implementation and accomplishment of the 2016-2026 Plan of Conservation and Development. It represents the "Spirit" of Portland's citizens.

Significant contribution to the formulation of the above vision as well as particulars contained throughout the Plan of Conservation and Development are attributed to a Citizen Development Coalition currently comprised of:

- The Elmcrest Campus Advisory Committee,
- Air Line Trail Steering Committee,
- Complete Streets Group,
- Middlesex Land Trust,
- Park and Recreation Commission,
- Brownstone Quorum,
- Portland Historical Society, and
- Meshomasic Hiking Club.

INTRODUCTION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Plan

This Plan of Conservation and Development is intended to be a tool for guiding the future conservation and development of Portland.

To do this, the Plan:

- Organizes and states the community’s vision for its future,
- Recommends strategies which will help attain the vision, and
- Identifies action items that, when implemented, will help accomplish the strategies and attain the vision.

As Portland residents and officials implement this Plan, those efforts will help focus in special areas, protect important resources, guide appropriate development, and address community needs. Overall, these efforts will help to protect community character and enhance the quality of life of current and future residents.

This Plan was adopted on March 3, 2016 with an effective date of March 14, 2016.

Configuration of the Plan

Portland’s 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) consists of two elements.

This part - the “Strategic Element” - is a statement of strategic directions considered integral to the vitality, livability, and quality of life in Portland. It is “big picture” and strategic in nature so that Portland residents will use it to discuss and refine the major directions of the community.

The companion part – the “Implementation Element” – organizes tasks and action items to accomplish the strategies. It also identifies the entity responsible for completing the action item and the anticipated timeframe for completion.



Preparation of the Plan

The Planning and Zoning Commission prepared this POCD update with the assistance of Town Staff and a consultant. The Commission reviewed the 2006 Plan and discussed the strategies and recommendations in that Plan and made revisions and refinements to reflect the issues anticipated to affect the community in the coming years. Portland residents participated in public meetings and workshops on the POCD.

Before adopting the Plan, the Planning and Zoning Commission evaluated ways to promote implementation of the various policies and action items. The proposed Plan was then referred to the Board of Selectmen for review and comment prior to holding a public hearing on adoption.

This Plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Autumn Scene



EXCERPTS FROM CGS 8-23 – PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Commission shall:

- prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development ...

The Plan shall:

- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality, ...
- show 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.
- be designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people.
- make provision for the development of housing opportunities ... for all residents of the municipality and the planning region ...
- promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs ...

The Plan may:

- show the commission's recommendation for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets and other public ways; for airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; for general location, relocation and improvement of public buildings; for the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes; and for the extent and location of public housing projects.
- include recommended programs for the implementation of the plan ...
- (include) such other recommendations ... in the plan as will ... be beneficial to the municipality.

Overall Plan Direction

The overall philosophy of the Plan is as follows:

Portland will:

- ***Maintain its character as a small New England Town,***
- ***Promote business development,***
- ***Develop its riverfront,***
- ***Preserve its historic areas,***
- ***Create recreational opportunities,***
- ***Maintain and/or upgrade its infrastructure systems (water, sewer, roads),***
- ***Protect natural resources, and***
- ***Promote a high quality of life for its residents.***

To help demonstrate how this overriding philosophy will be applied, the plan has been organized around the following strategic themes:

- Focusing on priority issues
- Protecting important resources (conservation)
- Guiding appropriate development (development)
- Addressing community needs (infrastructure)
- Implementation

Key Strategies

The recommendations related to each of these strategic themes are presented below:

Focusing On Priority Issues

A. Strengthen The Town Center

- A.1. Strengthen the Town Center
- A.2. Encourage / Require Good Building Design
- A.3. Humanize the Streetscape
- A.4. Improve Vehicular and Parking Amenities
- A.5. Organize Activities In The Town Center

B. Promote Appropriate Redevelopment of Elmcrest

- B.1. Promote Appropriate Redevelopment of Elmcrest

C. Continue To Enhance The Riverfront

- C.1. Promote Riverfront Redevelopment
- C.2. Enhance Connections To The Town Center
- C.3. Enhance the Riverfront

D. Address Industrial Zoning

- D.1. Address Industrial Zoning

E. Establish The Air Line Trail

- E.1. Establish The Air Line Trail

Town Center



Protecting Important Resources

- F. Protect Natural Resources**
 - F.1. Protect Water Quality
 - F.2. Protect Other Water Resources
 - F.3. Protect Other Natural Resources
- G. Preserve Open Space**
 - G.1. Preserve Desirable Open Spaces
 - G.2. Enhance Open Space Preservation Tools
- H. Support Farms And Farming**
 - H.1. Support Farms And Farming
- I. Preserve Historic Resources**
 - I.1. Continue to Protect Historic Resources
 - I.2. Adjust Adaptive Reuse Strategies
 - I.3. Preserve And Celebrate Portland's Quarries
 - I.4. Protect Archaeological Resources
- J. Preserve Character Resources**
 - J.1. Preserve Scenic Resources
 - J.2. Preserve Undeveloped Land
 - J.3. Protect Portland Trees
 - J.4. Enhance The Design Review Process
 - J.5. Preserve Other Character Elements
- K. Promote Sustainability / Resiliency**
 - K.1. Promote Sustainability
 - K.2. Promote Resiliency

Character Assets



Guiding Appropriate Development

- L. Promote Economic Development**
 - L.1. Support Existing Businesses
 - L.2. Address Business Zones, Locations And Uses
 - L.3. Attract New Economic Development
 - L.4. Support Economic Development Efforts
- M. Guide Residential Development**
 - M.1. Protect Existing Neighborhoods
 - M.2. Encourage Conservation Subdivisions
 - M.3. Manage Multi-Family Conversions
 - M.4. Address Housing Needs

Business Development



Residential Development



Addressing Infrastructure Needs

- N. Address Community Facility Needs**
 - N.1. Address Community Facility Needs
- O. Address Vehicular Transportation**
 - O.1. Maintain and Improve Roadway Conditions
 - O.2. Maintain A Functional Road Network
- P. Support Walking**
 - P.1. Support Walking
- Q. Support Cycling**
 - Q.1. Support Cycling
- R. Enhance Transit Services**
 - R.1. Enhance Transit Services
- S. Provide For Utility Services**
 - S.1. Maintain And Enhance the Sewer System
 - S.2. Maintain And Enhance the Water System
 - S.3. Manage Stormwater Runoff
 - S.4. Address Other Infrastructure Needs

Greenway Trails



Implementation

- T. Implement The Plan**
 - T.1. Implement The Plan
 - T.2. Create A Plan Implementation Committee
 - T.3. Use the Plan To Guide Municipal Spending
 - T.4. Promote Inter-Municipal Cooperation
 - T.5. Use the Plan To Guide PZC Decisions
 - T.6. Update Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

Implementation



Use of the Plan

This Plan is intended to provide a framework for consistent decision-making by all Portland officials, boards, commissions, and residents.

Although the Plan was adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission, other boards and commissions have been involved in its preparation so that it represents a broad view of strategies and outcomes that are considered beneficial for the long-term health and success of the entire community.

While generally intended to guide conservation and development over the course of a decade, this Plan will lay the foundation for long-term goals reaching far into the future.

Plan Implementation Committee



Maintenance of the Plan

A POCD is intended to be a dynamic document. As circumstances change and as strategies are implemented and evaluated, the POCD should be refined to address new issues, adjust a course of action, or refine strategies.

It is envisioned that the Strategic Element will be occasionally reviewed to ensure that the strategic directions are appropriate for addressing the issues facing the community. While it is not anticipated that the strategic vision of the community will change significantly over time, the POCD should still be regularly reviewed.

The POCD recommends establishment of a Plan Implementation Committee to regularly review the POCD recommendations to ensure that the work program and tasks for the coming year (and beyond) reflect fiscal and operational capabilities. The Plan Implementation Committee would also update the implementation tables as tasks are completed and new tasks identified.

The challenge for the Planning and Zoning Commission will be to keep the Plan up-to-date and implementation on-course in the face of changing community priorities.



Overview

This chapter of the Plan of Conservation and Development summarizes conditions and trends affecting Portland at the time the Plan was being prepared.

Historical Context

The landscape of Portland was formed over millions of years. In addition to the landform evident today, this area contains a number of special areas such as the “brownstone” rock formation, other rock quarries, extensive sand and gravel deposits, and other resources.

Human settlement has existed for only about 10,000 years or so. Native Americans of the Wangunk tribe are known to have inhabited this area on the east side of the Connecticut River with the Mattabassett tribe located on the west side of the Connecticut River.

European “discovery” of this area began in 1614 when Dutch explorer Adriaen Block sailed into Long Island Sound and up the long tidal river as far as present day Hartford. Trade between Europeans and Native Americans began soon thereafter. European settlement of New England began in 1620 at Plymouth Rock and in 1634 along the Connecticut River near present day Hartford. European settlement began in Middletown around 1650 and came to the east side of the river around 1690.

It is believed that the first settlers came to this area to exploit the brownstone resources. Other people came to this side of the river to set up shipbuilding operations and farmsteads.

Due to the challenge of crossing the river for weekly religious services, a separate parish was formed in East Middletown in 1714. This area became a separate municipality known as Chatham in 1767. Then, in 1841, Chatham split into two towns – Portland and East Hampton.

In addition to prosperous farms due to the fertile soils, Portland had a strong economy due to the quarry operations and shipbuilding enterprises and population grew. Over time, some of these locational advantages were lost due to construction changes (concrete) and technological advances (shipbuilding) and also due to regular flooding along the Connecticut River.

Following World War II, the proliferation of the automobile and a desire for suburban living brought changes to Portland. People could live in Portland and commute to jobs in Middletown, Hartford, and other areas. Population grew and, today, Portland is primarily a residential community with fewer jobs in the community (2,281 jobs) than residents who are in the work force (5,212 workers).

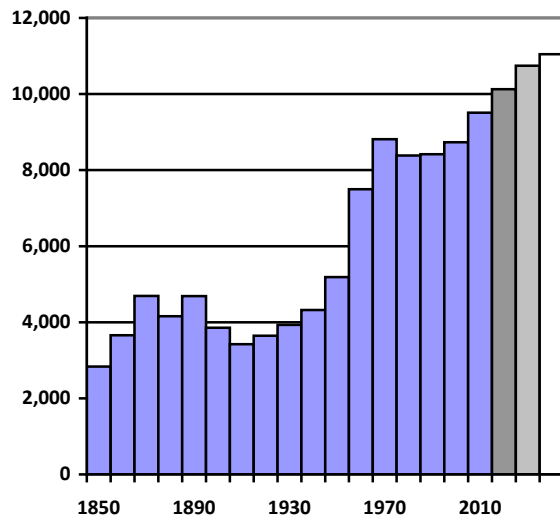
“If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it.”

Abraham Lincoln

Demographics

According to the Census, Portland had a population of 9,508 people in the year 2010. The increase of 776 people from the 2000 Census reflected a faster rate of growth than Portland had seen in the previous three decades.

Historic And Projected Population (1850 – 2040)



If this rate of growth were to continue, Portland might have a population of over 11,000 residents by the year 2040. It is not clear, however, whether this rate of growth will continue. The Connecticut State Data Center projects continued growth in the future but at a slower rate, mostly due to an aging population (households tend to get smaller as they age).

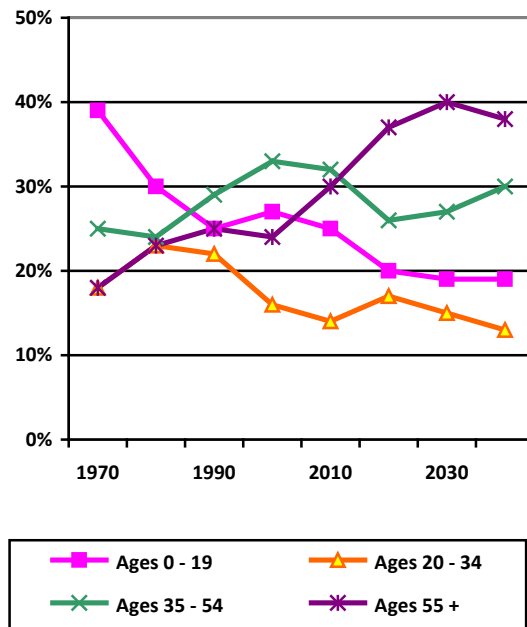
Although Portland had experienced net out-migration in prior decades, it experienced significant in-migration between 2000 and 2010.

Decade	Total Change	Natural Change	Net Migration
1970s	(429)	251	(680)
1980s	35	101	(66)
1990s	314	333	(19)
2000s	776	202	574
40-Year Total	696	887	(191)

Over the next twenty to thirty years, the major demographic trend in Portland is expected to be an increase in the number of older residents. The main reason for this is the aging of the “baby boomers” (people born between about 1945 and about 1965). In the year 2020, the “baby boomers” will be aged 55 to 75.

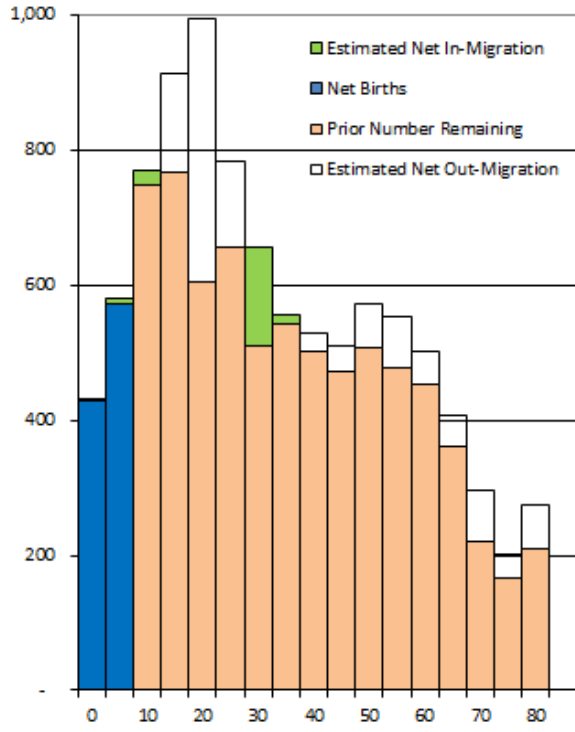
Since different age groups have different needs and desires, the changing age composition of Portland will likely be an important consideration.

Portland, like many communities, will transition from a community where 40% of the population in 1970 was younger than age 20 to a community where 40% of the population in 2030 may be over age 55. Portland might anticipate increased interest in housing options, tax relief and programs for older persons (adult education, passive recreation, social programs, etc.) over the next 20 to 30 years.

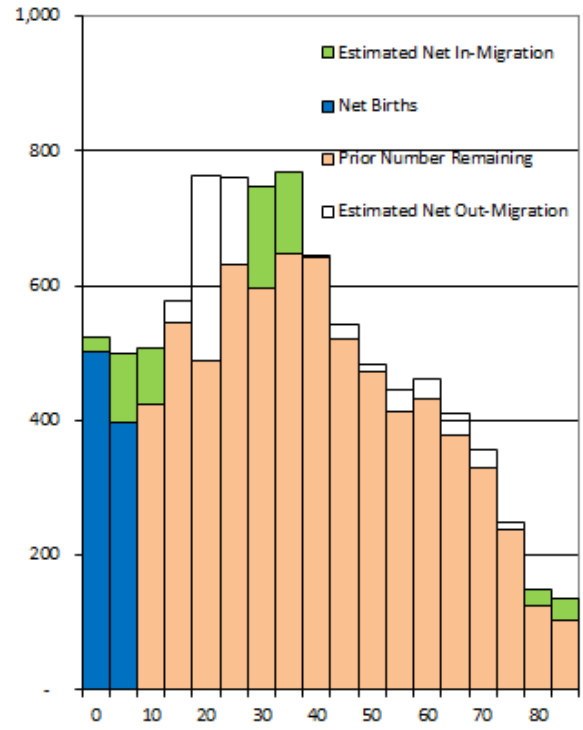


As can be seen from the charts on the facing page, Portland had been attracting younger households aged 30-39 and their children. Between 2000 and 2010, Portland attracted new residents in a range of age groups.

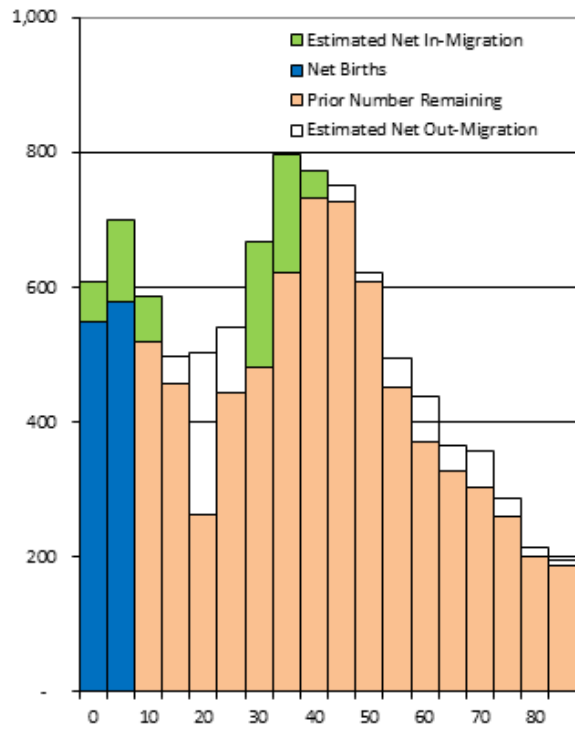
1970-80 Dynamics



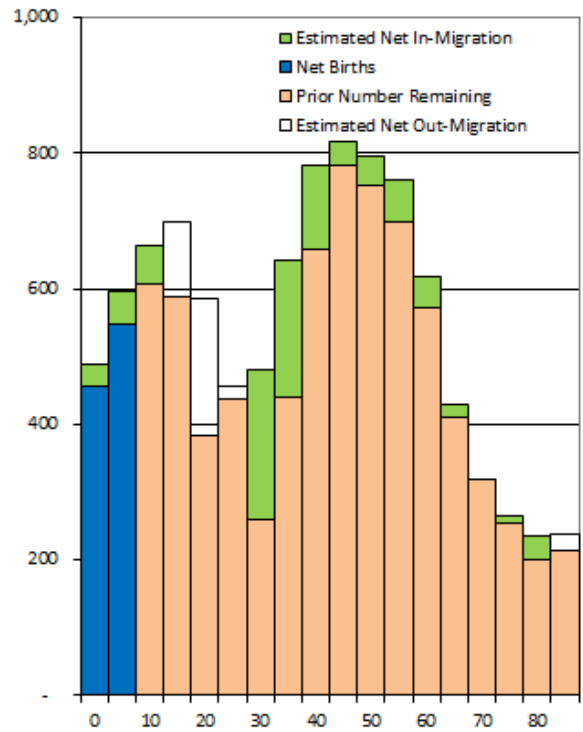
1980-90 Dynamics



1990-00 Dynamics



2000-10 Dynamics



Housing

Even though economic conditions slowed housing production in many communities in the last decade, housing growth continued, and even accelerated, in Portland.

Housing In Portland

Year	Units	Percent Change
1980	2,960	-
1990	3,289	11%
2000	3,528	7%
2010	4,077	16%

Source: 1980-2010 Census

Most housing in Portland is owner-occupied, detached housing. In terms of multi-family housing (which might be of interest to a younger household or an older household), Portland has fewer such units than some of the surrounding communities.

	Percent Multi-Family	Percent Affordable Units
Middletown	48%	22%
Cromwell	29%	7%
Glastonbury	17%	5%
Portland	17%	8%
East Hampton	12%	4%

Source: Partnership For Strong Communities (ACS)

Since less than 10 percent of the housing in Portland is governmentally assisted or deed-restricted to be affordable to persons earning up to 80 percent of the area median income, Portland is subject to the “affordable housing appeals process” (CGS Section 8-30g) whereby an affordable housing development may be proposed in almost any location, regardless of current zoning.

Economy

Due to structural changes in the economy and other factors, the number of jobs in Portland has contracted in the past several decades although it has increased from 2010 levels to 2,281 jobs in 2013 according to the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC).

Jobs In Portland

Year	Employment	Percent Change
1970	2,287	-
1980	2,630	15%
1990	3,300	25%
2000	3,260	(1%)
2010	2,066	(37%)

Source: CT Labor Dept.

The median household income in Portland falls in between those of surrounding towns.

Median Household Income

Glastonbury	\$106,872
East Hampton	\$93,083
Portland	\$92,344
Cromwell	\$80,134
Middletown	\$60,542

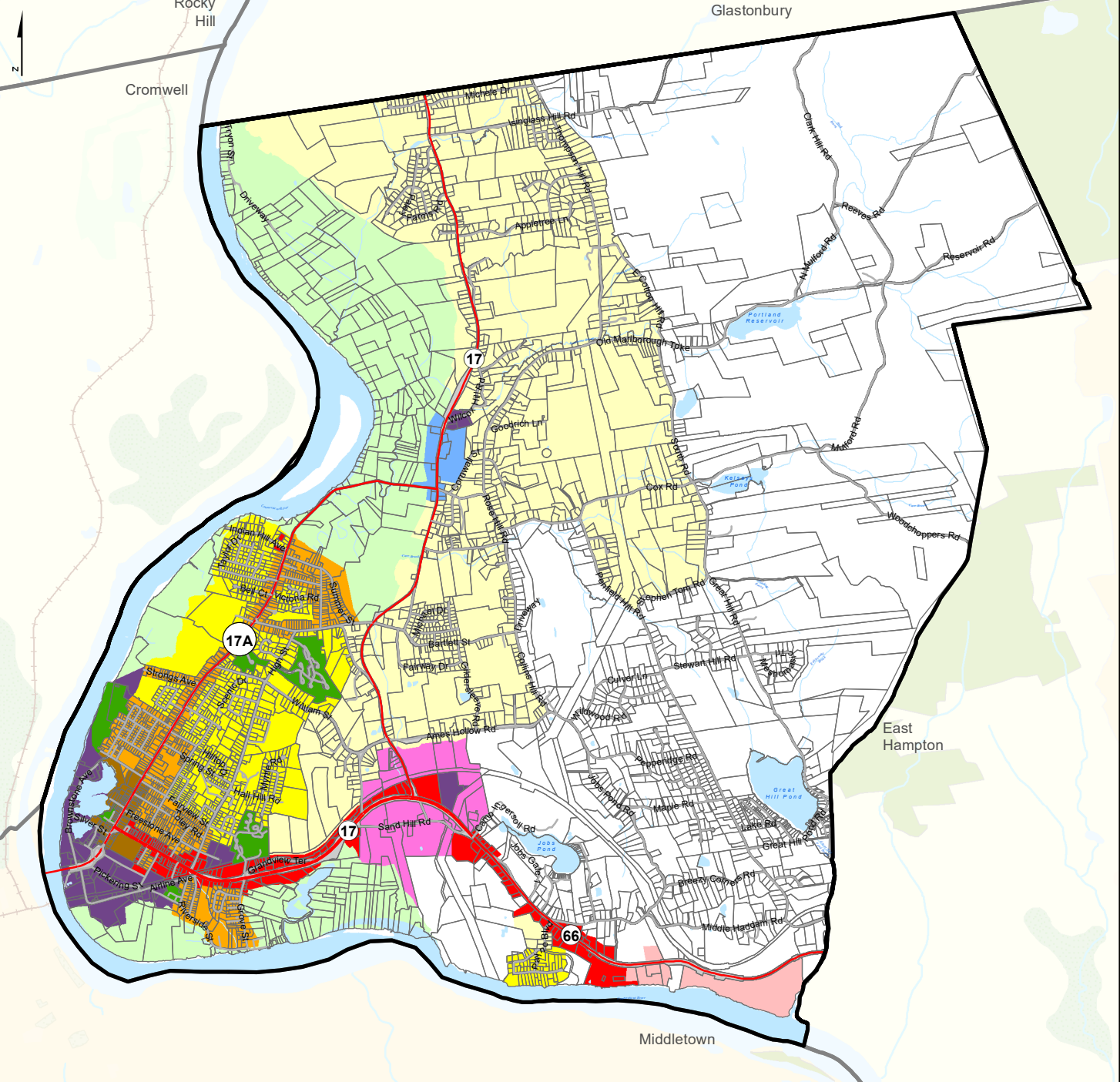
Source: American Community Survey, 2008-12

Zoning in Portland

As can be seen from the map on the facing page, most of Portland is zoned for residential development. Business areas are generally located in and near the Town Center and along Route 66.

Zoning Map

Portland, CT



Legend

RR Rural Residential 1 acre	B-1 Designed Business
R-25 Residential 25,000 sq. ft.	B-2 General Business
R-15 Residential 15,000 sq. ft.	B-3 Central Business District
R-10 Residential 10,000 sq. ft.	I Industrial
RMD Residential, Multi-Family	IP Planned Industrial
	RI Restricted Industrial
	FP Floodplain

3,250 Feet

Community Concerns

In spring 2015, a community meeting was held to learn about issues important to residents.

One of the exercises at the meeting asked people to think about things in Portland which made them “proud” of their community and “sorry” about their community and then:

- Write them on a card provided, and
- Place green dots (“prouds”) and red dots (“sorrys”) on separate maps of Portland to identify the location.

Some of the items identified as “prouds” included the following:

- Water / waterfront (river, ponds)
- Town Center
- Community facilities (recreation, schools, library)

Some of the items identified as “sorrys” included the following:

- Riverfront appearance / uses
- Elmcrest site
- Industrial/commercial area

The resulting maps are presented below.

Another exercise asked people to allocate “planning points” among boxes representing topics normally considered as part of a POCD:

Conservation Issues	495 Points
Open Space	175
Historic Resources	135
Natural Resources	100
Community Character	85

Development Issues	315 Points
Business Development	180
Structure / Town Center	100
Residential Development	25
Housing Diversity	10

Infrastructure Issues	495 Points
Community Facilities	180
Walking / Biking / Bus / Train	120
Traffic and Circulation	115
Water/ Sewer / Utilities	80

The remainder of the meeting involved an open discussion of the topics that received the most planning points. Some of the points raised during that discussion are summarized on the following page.

“Prouds” Map



“Sorrys” Map



Business Development

- We need more business development
 - Will lower property taxes
 - Will keep shopping local / bring new people
- Some areas not well suited for business development
- Some areas do not have infrastructure
- We need to create a healthy business environment / create opportunities, take advantage
- Must be done thoughtfully / need to keep character
- Some development has detracted from our character (large, metal buildings/big signs)
 - Need design standards town-wide
 - Need tougher standards

Community Facilities / Services

- Community facilities / services enhance the quality of life in Portland
- Some improvements may be warranted
 - Schools- some in need of repair, permanent “portable” classrooms
 - Some recreation facilities are not owned by the town (Ingersoll, Tomasso)
 - Some recreation fields are intensively used and this affects the quality
- Community facilities should be a cornerstone of the community / real community gathering places
 - Town Green / Band shell
 - Recreational complex on Route 17
 - Community center / Playgrounds

Open Space

- Open space enhances our character and quality of life
- We should continue to preserve forest, farmland, riverfront areas, habitat, waterfront
- Can we be more aggressive?
- Public access is key
- We need an inventory / we need a vision

Historic Resources

- Portland has an incredible historic fabric
- We need to protect this / show it off
 - Quarries are a key part of our history
 - Main Street residential is beautiful
 - Can't be too strict on historic preservation. Need to allow things to happen

Walking / Biking / Bus / Transportation

- More people are walking and cycling
- We need to support this
 - Safe sidewalks- good materials/well maintained
 - Bicycle paths
 - Crosswalks/safe routes are key
- Air Line trail- this could be key
- Have a “complete streets” citizen group
- Are working on recommendations
- Aging population- will need transit, dial-a-ride
- We need to accommodate traffic flow but slow them down to capture business potential

Community Structure / Town Center

- We are working to create and enhance the Town Center as an area with a “sense of place”
- We do not yet have a cohesive Town Center
- Should the village district, be enlarged?
- How do we make this stronger?
- Is higher density residential possible in the Town Center?
- Elmcrest is a key site/key location

Open Discussion

- How do we fund all this?
- Special services district in the Town Center?
- How can we upgrade the technological capability in Portland for residents and businesses?
- Resiliency will be important in the future
- Can we incentivize property maintenance / improvement?
 - i.e. waive permit fees, higher assessment, don't penalize people for improving properties
- Water/sewer needs to be looked at
 - Financial condition is not great
 - How can we improve this?
- Underground utilities
- Maintaining / enhancing community spirit is key

PZC Concerns / Priorities

At the time this POCD was being prepared, the Planning and Zoning Commission completed an exercise where they identified important issues and concerns and then characterized them as to which were:

- More important to address than other identified issues, and
- More urgent to address than other identified issues.

The results of this exercise are presented in the table below.

The issues identified as more important and more urgent are discussed in the next section of the POCD – ***Focusing On Priority Issues***.

The other identified issues are addressed in the remaining sections of the POCD organized around:

- ***Protecting Important Resources*** – things Portland would like to preserve or protect in the future (conservation strategies),
- ***Guiding Appropriate Development*** – how Portland would like to guide growth or change in the future (development strategies), and
- ***Addressing Infrastructure Needs*** – services or facilities Portland wants or needs in the future (infrastructure strategies).

		Urgency	
		More Urgent	Less Urgent
Importance	More Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Center development • Elmcrest redevelopment • Riverfront / Quarries / Brownstone Ave. • Industrial zones (development / infrastructure) • Air Line Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rte. 66 – Grove to Gospel (development / infrastructure) • Preservation of historic architecture • St. Clements expansion • Green space and public access
	Less Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rte. 66 - Main to Grove (development) • “Complete Streets” • Agriculture / farm preservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Sustainability (energy, conservation, etc.) • Main St./Glastonbury Tpke (Four Corners Intersection) • Rte. 66 – Gospel to East Hampton (development / infrastructure) • Technology infrastructure



Overview

Based on community input and discussion by the Planning and Zoning Commission, this section of the POCD focuses on the key issues and special areas.

Strengthen The Town Center



Redevelop Elmcrest



Enhance The Riverfront



Address Industrial Zones



Establish The Air Line Trail



A. Strengthen The Town Center

Portland's Town Center has been the focus of community life for over 300 years. Shops, schools, civic functions, churches, and a variety of other uses central to the daily life of the community are all located here.

It is a major goal of the Plan to ensure that the Town Center continues to be the focal point of the community in the future.

Ensure that Portland's Town Center continues to be the focal point of the community.

By creating and maintaining attractive and interesting places that people want to visit, the Town Center will continue to be the main focal point in the community and provide an important cornerstone to the local economy.

Terminology

Town Center – a term referring to the commercial uses and higher density residential neighborhoods located on and around Main Street and Marlborough Street

Village District – a special type of zoning district allowing for design review

Enhancement efforts should be pursued in a cohesive, organized, and proactive fashion. By addressing the following elements, the Town can support the development of a vibrant and revitalized Town Center along Main Street, where people can work, live, shop, play and enjoy many of the Town's important and unique resources.

Elements that contribute to a successful Town Center include:

- Configuration (location, size, market support, traffic)
- Uses (critical mass, intensity, variety, complementary)
- Building design (scale, design, materials, details, variations)
- Streetscape design (pedestrianism, building location, building orientation, focal point, streetscape amenities)
- Vehicular configuration (interconnected streets, on-street parking, interconnected parking areas, parking standards)
- Infrastructure systems (utilities, transit linkages)
- Personality

Although Portland currently has some of these elements, they do not yet exist at an appropriate intensity to support a vibrant Town Center. The following strategic actions, once successfully implemented, will provide the basis for a revitalized Town Center and provide necessary support to the Town's existing businesses:

- Strengthen the Town Center
- Encourage / Require Good Building Design
- Humanize the Streetscape
- Improve Vehicular and Parking Amenities
- Organize Activities In The Town Center

A.1. Strengthen the Town Center

The Town Center is well configured for success. It is located at the junction of two main travel routes and at the foot of the Arrigoni Bridge connecting to Middletown. It is a reasonably-sized area with a variety of uses and activities.

There are strong traffic flows to and through the Town Center. Daily traffic volumes average about 30,000 vehicles at the foot of the Arrigoni Bridge with 20,000 vehicles travelling east-west on Route 17/66 and about 10,000 vehicles travelling north-south on Route 17A.

However, the Town Center may not have a critical mass of activities (number, type, size, etc.) to attract people to the Center, to entice motorists to stop, or to compete with other sites in the community and the region.

A successful Town Center needs a critical mass of uses to create activity and vitality.

Efforts should be made to increase the range and intensity of uses allowed within the Town Center. The goal should be to attract a variety of different uses to Main Street (since it has more potential to be the key organizing spine) and organize them in an inviting, attractive, and pedestrian friendly environment. This should include more small retail shops, more second story residential units, more restaurants with outdoor dining, art galleries, museums, municipal services, and other things to attract people to the Town Center and to keep them there longer.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should review the Zoning Regulations with an eye to making changes to increase the variety and density of activities within the Town Center.

It is important that first floor uses be seen as inviting to pedestrians and encourage walking and exploring. Passive uses or inactive uses detract from the very environment the Town seeks to create.

Prohibiting or limiting commercial uses that discourage pedestrian activity (such as big-box stores) or impose obstacles for pedestrians (such as drive-through facilities for banks and fast food establishments) should be considered for the entire Town Center area.

Finally, signage that identifies the Town Center as the main commercial center should be visible along Route 66 and other access routes in order to provide guidance and information for individuals traveling along those roadways.

Policies	
1.	Encourage appropriate development and re-development within the Town Center.
2.	Encourage the establishment of a critical mass of activity within the Town Center.
3.	Increase the density of the Town Center with “in-fill” development by increasing the allowable density of buildings in a manner consistent with the Town’s character.
4.	Encourage housing in and near the Town Center.
5.	Consider participating in the activities of the Connecticut Main Street Center.
Action Items	
6.	Review the Zoning Regulations in order to increase the variety and density of activities allowed within the Town Center
7.	Work with CT-DOT to improve the intersection of Routes 17, 17A and 66 to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles.
8.	Identify and establish gateways.

A.2. Encourage / Require Good Building Design

It is not enough to simply encourage more variety and density of activities within the Town Center. The buildings which are established within the Town Center must contribute to and enhance the overall ambience. It is not unreasonable to state that one inappropriate building or use can have a significant negative impact on the level of pedestrian interest and activity and have a negative impact on the Town Center.

The Town Center is an area of distinctive character and historic value and these characteristics should be maintained. Building scale and design of new development should continue to be appropriate to the scale of existing buildings. Buildings which are too short (i.e. – one-story buildings) or too tall detract from the streetscape in a village. Portland’s building stock provides a potentially rich palette of interesting and architecturally significant buildings, mostly in the two- to two-and-a-half-story range.

To help ensure that building design in the Town Center area is appropriate, the Commission should:

- Expand the “village district” as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j to include all areas within the B-3 zone and all business areas which front on Main Street
- Consider establishing a Design Review Board or Committee to review plans rather than charge applicants for the costs of review (or make other arrangements to reduce the costs to applicants)
- Have the Design Review Board or Committee update and maintain the manual of design guidelines (building designs to emulate and avoid) to provide guidance to applicants

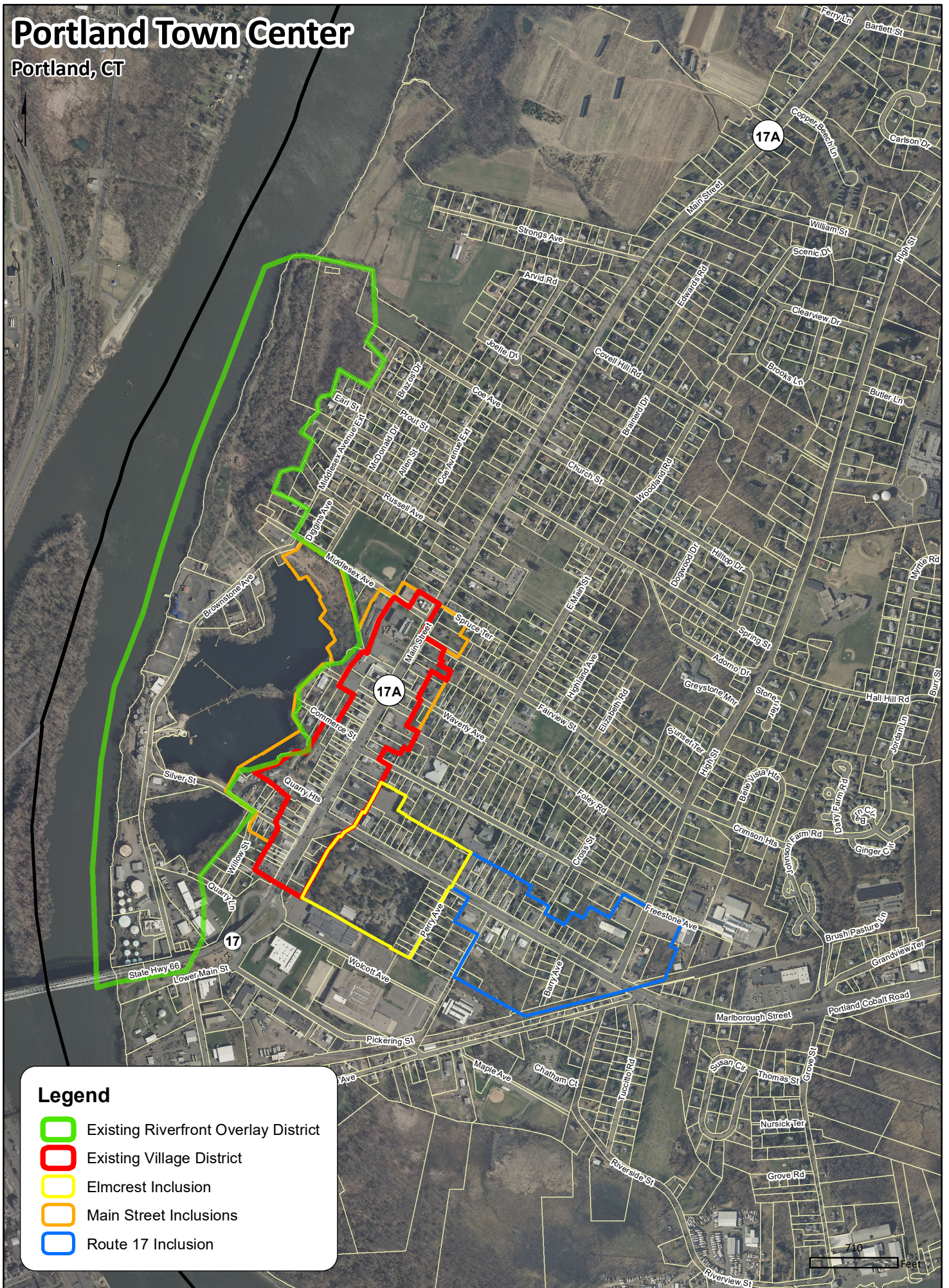
Town Center Design Elements








Policies
1. Encourage and/or require good building design in the Town Center area.
2. Encourage/require appropriate building scale.
3. Consider requiring that brownstone be used in development / redevelopment projects to the maximum extent practicable.
4. Maintain and enhance the manual of design guidelines (building designs to emulate and avoid) to provide guidance to applicants.
Action Items
5. Expand the “village district” to include all areas within the B-3 zone and more areas along Route 66 (or consider another approach) to ensure appropriate development patterns in the Town Center area.
6. Establish a Design Review Board or Committee to review proposals in the village district as opposed to a consultant.
7. Revisit the building heights in Section 5.5 of the Zoning Regulations and consider limiting to 35 feet unless the Commission grants a Special Permit.

Portland Town Center

Portland, CT



Legend

-  Existing Riverfront Overlay District
-  Existing Village District
-  Elmcrest Inclusion
-  Main Street Inclusions
-  Route 17 Inclusion

710 Feet

A.3. Humanize the Streetscape

Attractive buildings with enticing uses are an important part of creating a successful Town Center but they are only part of the equation. What happens in the public areas of the Town Center (i.e. – the streetscape) is just as important.

For many years, communities like Portland have allowed streets to become vehicular-friendly areas and this has, in many cases, created a barren landscape that does not invite visitation or use and has resulted in uncomfortable places for pedestrians.

The entire Main Street corridor should be improved with the addition of landscaping, and other amenities such as, benches, lighting elements, and underground utilities. In addition, many of the sidewalks are in terrible condition and should be repaired and maintained as required by Town ordinance. Making the street an inviting place to be may require a public-private partnership to ensure that all the necessary components of a pedestrian friendly environment are included.

Policies
1. Encourage the creation and maintenance of a pedestrian friendly streetscape.
Action Items
2. Create a master streetscape vision for Main Street to guide public and private improvements to sidewalks, parking, lighting, etc.
3. Undertake improvements to the pedestrian environment along Main Street (sidewalks, street furniture, landscaping, etc.).
4. Invoke the sidewalk ordinance, if needed, to compel sidewalk improvements.

CASE STUDY – Streetscape Principles

- Appropriate ratio of building height to facade-to-facade width (such as a 1:3 ratio signifying 30 foot buildings across a 90-foot separation between building facades) to create a pedestrian-friendly feeling and sense of enclosure
- Wide sidewalks to invite pedestrian usage and enjoyment
- Active building facades (window displays, etc.) at street level to entertain pedestrians
- Street trees to provide shade
- Benches to serve pedestrians
- On-street parking where feasible to provide a sense of convenience and safety to pedestrians
- Restaurants with outdoor dining to animate the street and attract more people
- Outdoor activities and events (such as sidewalk sales) which attract people and entice motorists

Inviting Streetscape



See page 71 for recommendations related to walking, bicycling, and the creation of “complete streets.”

A.4. Improve Vehicular and Parking Amenities

Even though there is a desire to create a pedestrian-friendly area, provision must still be made for traffic and for parking.

At the present time, there is an inconsistent configuration on Main Street with sporadic parking, both on-street and off-street, lane configurations, crosswalks, etc. This is exacerbated by inadequate parking having been provided when some historic homes were converted to multi-family uses or commercial uses and now cars are parked in front yards and other areas. Islands around light poles and electrical poles interfere with driver’s sight lines. Informational signage to help people navigate the area and find parking are inadequate or non-existent. In addition to being unsightly and detracting from the overall appearance of the Town Center, several accidents each year have been directly attributable to these situations.

Since Main Street is part of the numbered State highway system, any solutions will need to be coordinated with the State. Having this section of Main Street be part of the Town road system should be explored.

Policies
1. Simplify and enhance the design and function of Main Street in terms of traffic and parking.
2. Maximize shared parking opportunities.
3. Improve parking amenities and signage, directing drivers to additional off-street parking.
Action Items
4. Review parking standards and revise accordingly.
5. Undertake a Town Center parking plan.
6. Consider Town ownership and/or maintenance of Main Street (or “un-number” the State highway).

A.5. Organize Activities In The Town Center

If the Town Center is to be a place where people are drawn into it, the community should make a concerted effort to encourage and schedule more events and activities in the Town Center to improve its overall function and personality.

This can include art shows, concerts, sidewalk sales, and other special events to bring people to the Town Center area. These activities will complement the variety of uses (shopping, services, restaurants, civic activities, and residential opportunities) along Main Street.

Policies
1. Encourage and schedule more events and activities in the Town Center to improve its overall function and personality.
Action Items
2. Implement actions to organize activities in the Town Center.

Parades And Special Events



Outdoor Dining



B. Promote Appropriate Redevelopment of Elmcrest

Elmcrest is a former psychiatric hospital located at the most prominent intersection in Portland (Route 17 at Route 66). The facility has been closed since the mid-2000s and redevelopment of the site is likely to occur in the future. How this redevelopment occurs will be important to the overall future of the Town Center.

Following closure of the hospital facility, a developer proposed demolishing some of the buildings on the site (six of the buildings were subsequently listed on the National Register of Historic Places) and cutting down some of the significant trees that had been planted on the site. A site plan was approved at that time that included a shopping center anchored by a supermarket, several other commercial buildings, and some residential units. With changes in statutory timeframes, the approval is still valid but is slated to expire in 2018.

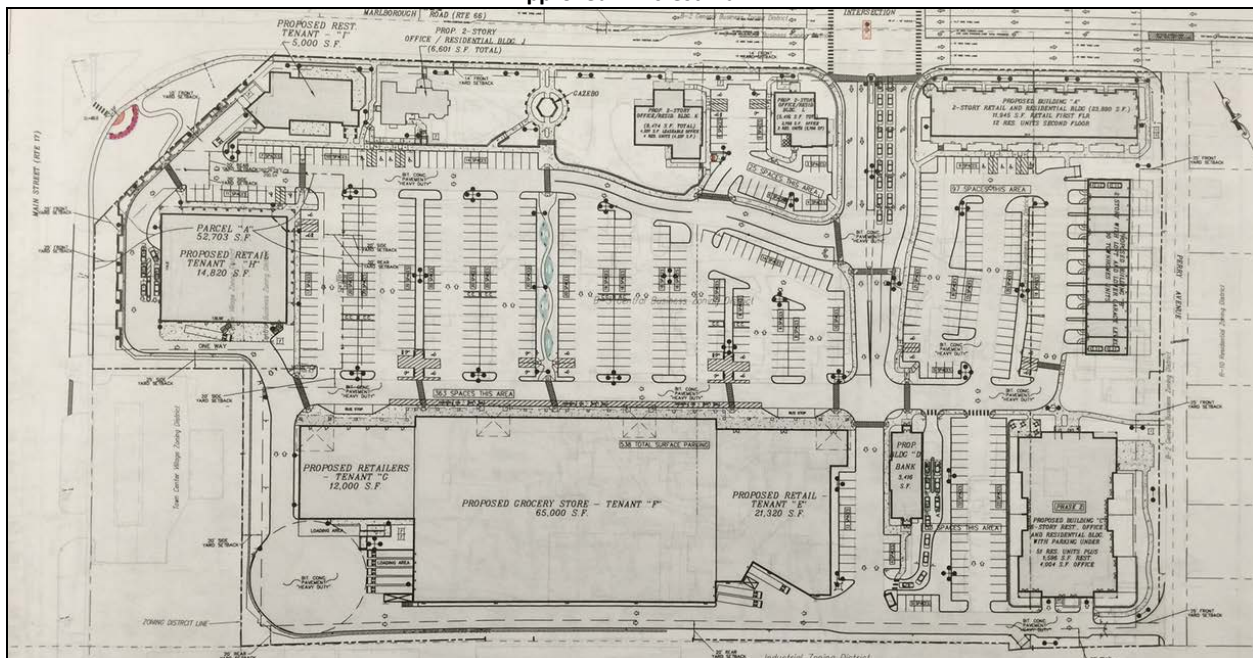
Promote appropriate redevelopment of the Elmcrest site in ways that will enhance the overall community.

A number of Portland residents have expressed displeasure with the “strip retail / big box retail” nature of the design. Portland received a grant in 2015 under the Vibrant Communities Initiative to explore possible alternative configurations.

The Plan recommends and supports appropriate redevelopment of the Elmcrest property in ways that will:

- Honor the history and heritage of the site and the community
- Retain historically important buildings
- Support and enhance the appropriate development of the Town Center area

Approved Elmcrest Plan



With the grant funding received from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation as part of the Vibrant Communities Initiative (VCI), the Town retained a consulting team to look at alternative development concepts for the Elmcrest site. The consulting team included:

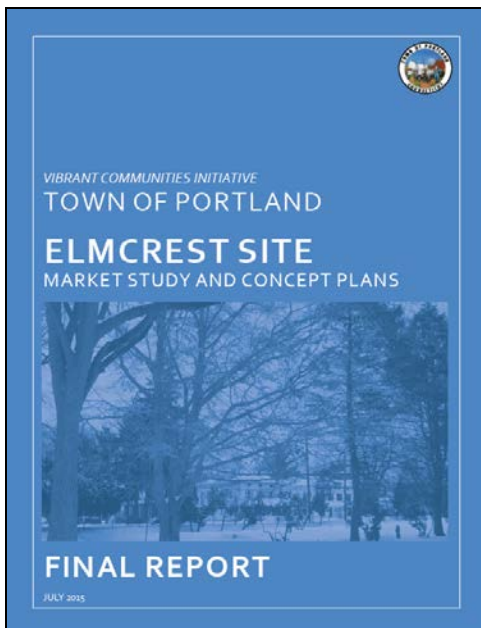
- The Cecil Group (community design)
- Tighe and Bond (engineering)
- Bartram and Cochran (market studies)

The objectives of the study were to:

- Define a shared community vision
- Provide a workable and beneficial redevelopment approach
- Advance pragmatic redevelopment concepts for the site

Community meetings were held in 2015 and several concepts were developed for further discussion and consideration.

The Plan recommends that development at the Elmcrest site follow the design concepts contained in the final VCI study report that was endorsed by Portland’s Board of Selectmen.



CASE STUDY – Elmcrest Alternatives

Some of the scenarios evaluated are depicted below.

Scenario A
Retail At NW Corner
Residential to South and East
Historic Buildings / Green In Center



Scenario B
Retail on West side
Residential on East side
Historic Buildings / Green In Center



Scenario C
Mixed Use Buildings At NW Corner
Residential to South and East
Historic Buildings In Center

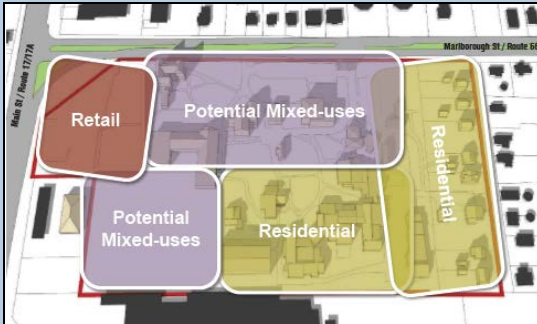


ELMCREST – Preferred Approach

Schematic diagrams showing the preferred approach are presented in the report.

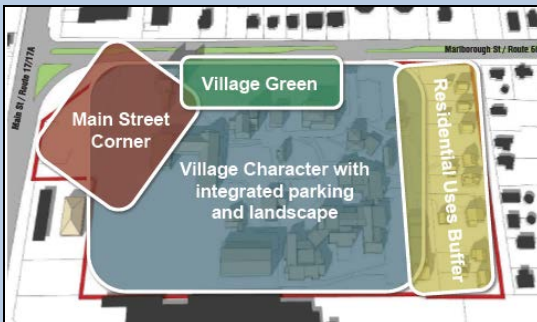
Use Concept

Transition from retail to residential across the site



Design Concept

“Main street” and “village” character with transition to residential



Policies

1. Promote appropriate redevelopment of the Elmcrest site in ways that will contribute to and enhance the overall community.

Action Items

2. Implement actions for redevelopment of the Elmcrest that follow the design concepts contained in the final VCI study report that was endorsed by Portland’s Board of Selectmen.

Elmcrest Aerial



Elmcrest Frontage



Elmcrest Building



C. Continue To Enhance The Riverfront

Portland has extensive frontage along the Connecticut River and this riverfront area has long been central to the evolution of the community and the local economy. It is a key recommendation of this Plan to integrate this riverfront area into the overall fabric of the community and to enhance this area for residents and visitors.

The Town owns riverfront property that abuts both the Connecticut River and the Brownstone Quarries. With National Historic Landmark status for the Brownstone Quarries, it is acknowledged that this area is an important asset both locally and nationally. In order to successfully identify and develop marketable uses for this area, it will be important to develop links between the existing infrastructure and commercial development of the Town Center, with the inherent recreational and economic opportunities of the Riverfront and Quarries.

It is a major goal of the Plan to continue efforts to integrate the Connecticut River into the overall fabric of the community.

Strategic recommendations include:

- Promote Riverfront Redevelopment
- Enhance Connections To The Town Center
- Enhance the Riverfront

C.1. Promote Riverfront Redevelopment

Enhancing the riverfront will likely also include development and redevelopment on public and private lands. A major strategy of this Plan is to encourage and support the redevelopment of the waterfront, particularly in the area adjacent to the Town Center, as a mixed use, pedestrian friendly environment with recreational amenities.

Balancing recreational, retail and other commercial activities will be critical to keeping this area active and vibrant. Any development proposals should include a commitment to preservation of the vistas of the river and the unique environmental considerations which exist.

As mentioned in the historic resources section of the POCD, a museum or preservation site to house artifacts, documents, and pictures of local quarries could be an important part of the overall vision for this area.

Policies	
1.	Promote redevelopment of the riverfront to create a pedestrian friendly environment with recreational amenities
2.	Work with private and public partners to promote redevelopment of the riverfront with recreational and limited mixed-uses.
Action Items	
3.	Implement actions to promote riverfront redevelopment.

C.2. Enhance Connections To The Town Center

In order for any of the projects related to the Riverfront Park to be successful, adequate parking and other amenities will need to be developed and maintained. Amenities include rest rooms, information kiosks, street furniture, landscaping, and a Welcome Center.

The overall goal is to focus traffic to the riverfront areas on Middlesex Avenue. This location provides direct access to many of the riverfront destinations and it also provides a good location to direct traffic through the downtown area.

There are accessible routes from the quarry area to Main Street but there are some inherent issues with some of the access routes. In addition, there is limited space to create significant parking opportunities along the River. As a result, it may be necessary to create a pedestrian network and provide pedestrian amenities so that visitors can park in the Town Center and walk to the Quarries along the River.

Policies
1. Maintain and enhance physical links between the Town Center and the Riverfront.
2. Continue to link parking areas, public access points, and visitor attractions via an overall network designed to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles.
3. Enhance the pedestrian environment through street furniture, fencing, street plantings, pedestrian scale lighting, crosswalks, signage, and sidewalk improvements.
4. Consider turning Silver Street into a cul-de-sac with access only from Main Street in order to simplify and organize traffic circulation in the Riverfront area.
Action Items
5. Implement actions to enhance connections to the Town Center.

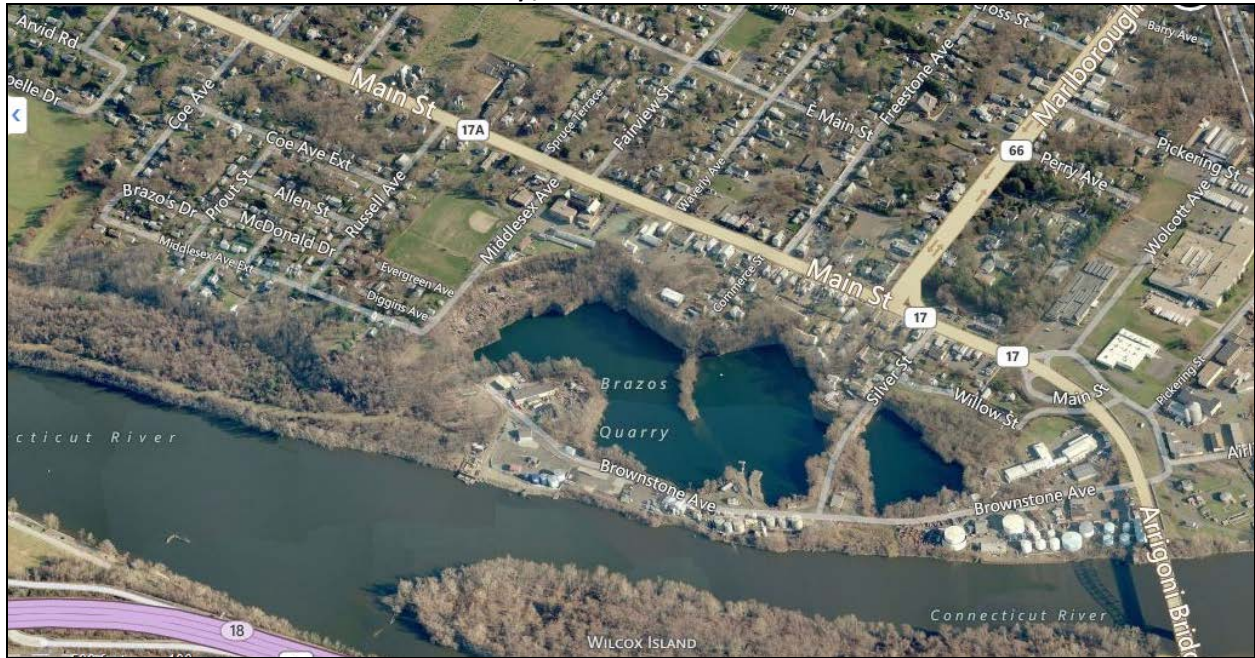
**Brownstone Avenue Connection
(looking northeast)**



**Brownstone Avenue Connection
(looking southwest from Middlesex Avenue)**



Quarry / Brownstone Avenue Area



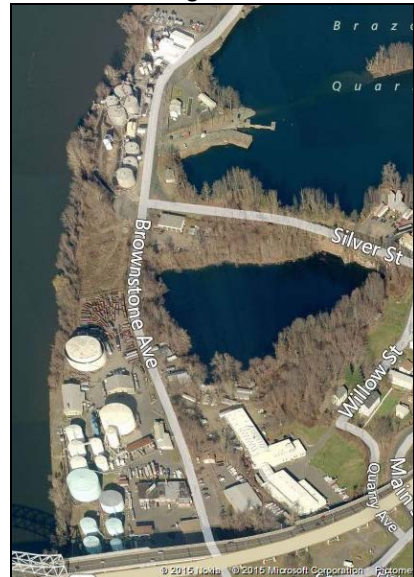
Brownstone Exploration & Discovery Park



Riverfront Park



Oil Storage Businesses



C.3. Enhance the Riverfront

Over many years, the Town has been working on ways to better integrate the riverfront into the overall fabric of the community. These efforts should continue.

The Town has acquired land along the river in order to preserve important resources and to provide for public access. This includes the Town acquisition of the historic brownstone quarries that have since been leased to a private operator and repurposed into the Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park. The Town has also been working on potential boat launch improvements on the river itself.

Providing for publicly accessible open space and trails (the Portland Riverfront Park) is also an important component of enhancing the riverfront.

Policies
1. Continue efforts to better integrate the riverfront into the overall fabric of the community.
2. Continue to acquire riverfront open space as opportunities present themselves.
3. Encourage the preservation of land as open space in areas prone to flooding, such as the Wangunk Meadows.
Action Items
4. Implement actions to enhance the riverfront.

Wangunk Meadows Area



D. Address Industrial Zoning

Economic development is important to Portland for a number of reasons. To ensure that the land use regulations are encouraging appropriate development (and not inhibiting desired development), the Commission should review the regulations for industrial zoning to ensure they are appropriate.

Another key issue is the availability of infrastructure (public water and public sewer) to encourage and support desired growth.

Ensure that appropriate industrial development is allowed, encouraged, and supported.

Industrial Zone

Within Portland, the Industrial zoning district at the foot of the Arrigoni Bridge is an intensively utilized area which has proven to be attractive to a number of businesses.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should review the zoning provisions in this area in order to ensure that appropriate and compatible development is being promoted and encouraged in this area and in other Industrial-zoned areas in Portland.



Planned Industrial (IP) District

In the 1960s, the Town zoned lands at the intersection of Routes 17 and 66 as a Planned Industrial District (IP) to allow for business development near the terminus of a new bridge across the Connecticut River. However, the new bridge was never built and the anticipated development never occurred.

The Commission should revisit the zoning in this area relative to the availability of water and sewer services and consider the following:

- Evaluate the cost/benefit of extending water and sewer services to this area (including possible state / federal loans or grants and/or the use of tax increment financing as recently authorized by the Legislature)
- Consider modifying the uses allowed in the Planned Industrial district depending on whether water / sewer service is available
- Consider modifying the zoning in this area to permit assisted living or similar developments if it might help make water / sewer service available

Uses That Might Be Considered For the Revised IP District

- **Drive-through Banks / Restaurants**
- **Grocery and/or Specialty Food Store**
- **Light Industrial**
- **Recreational Fitness Clubs**

Policies
1. Ensure that appropriate industrial development is allowed, encouraged, and supported.
2. Evaluate the appropriate strategy for the Planned Industrial district.
Action Items
3. Review the zoning in the Industrial District.

E. Establish The Air Line Trail

The Air Line Trail refers to a former rail corridor in eastern Connecticut which is being transformed into a recreational trail. The trail takes its name from a rail line established to create a direct route between New York and Boston, through the “air” so to speak. Widely known in the late 1800s, the Air Line service eventually fell out of use due to improvements on other rail lines and changes in rail equipment.

Since the 1960s, state agencies and communities along the rail corridor have been converting it to recreational use with the goal of creating a regional greenway. The corridor already extends from East Hampton Center east to Pomfret and Thompson and there are efforts underway to extend it west into Portland.

The Town has been working on this trail extension for some time and the Plan recommends that the trail be established and extended to the Town Center.

Establish the Air Line Rail Trail.

Additional recommendations related to trails in Portland are contained in the “Addressing Community Needs” section of the POCD.

Policies
1. Establish the Air Line Trail in Portland.
2. Establish connections from the Air Line Trail to the Town Center.
3. Establish connections from the Air Line Trail to Middletown and Glastonbury.
Action Items
4. Extend the Air Line Trail to the Town Center.

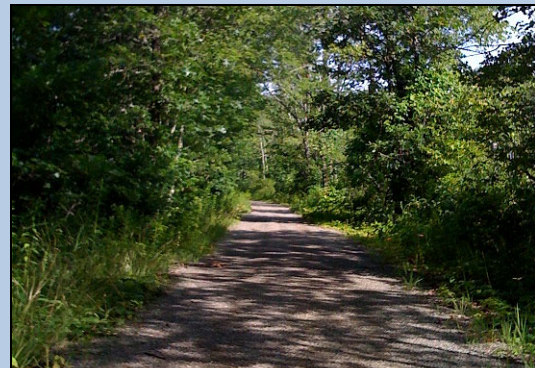
CASE STUDY – Air Line Trail

The Air Line Trail is a former rail corridor in Eastern Connecticut being converted to a recreational trail. The trail has several sections:

- East Hampton to Windham (22 miles),
- Windham to Putnam (21 miles)
- A Thompson extension (6.6 miles)
- A Colchester spur (3.6 miles)

Portland is working to extend the trail from East Hampton into Portland. Some of the challenges include fractured ownership (parts of the trail ended up in private ownership after the rail service ceased) and grade/drainage issues.

Air Line Trail





Overview

Portland derives much of its character and quality of life from its unique combination of natural, historic, and scenic resources. The Connecticut River, which wraps around the Town on the west and south, and the forested hills to the north and east, led to the growth of the Town's historic industries. These resources are key elements of the Town's character.

By protecting these important resources and guiding future development, Portland can maintain and enhance community character and quality of life for generations to come.

Portland will preserve and celebrate the natural, historic, and other community resources that provide Portland with its sense of place and help define its character.

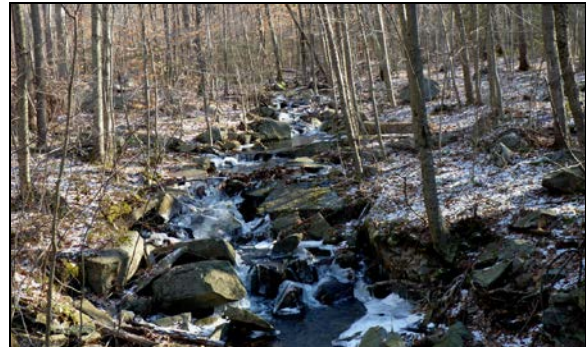
Strategies to help attain this overall vision include the following:

- Protect natural resources
- Preserve the town's unique geology
- Preserve open space
- Protect historic resources
- Protect Portland's unique character

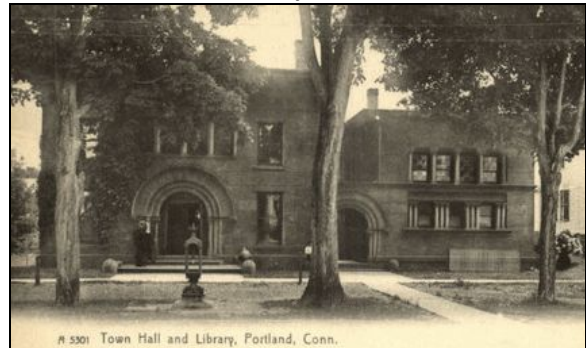
Natural Resources



Open Space



Community Character



F. Protect Natural Resources

Conservation of natural resources in Portland is important for preserving environmental functions, maintaining biodiversity and preventing damage to the environment.

Protecting natural resources is important to maintaining community character and the overall quality of life in Portland.

Many of the recommendations in this section of the POCD come from the “Natural And Cultural Resources / Open Space And Recreation” document prepared by the Conservation Commission in the year 2000. This document contains important information about protecting resources in Portland.

F.1. Protect Water Quality

Water quality is an important issue in Portland because many people rely on water from local wells. Water quality is also an important contributor to overall environmental health.

There are now two State-defined “aquifer protection areas” in Portland. These were identified by delineating areas which contribute water to public supply wells. The Town has adopted State-mandated regulations to manage land use activities in these areas and has designated the Planning and Zoning Commission as the regulatory agency.

Still, it is just as important to protect water quality in other areas of Portland as well.

Policies
1. Continue to protect water quality.
2. Maintain regulations to protect identified aquifer protection areas.
3. Continue to ensure that local septic systems function effectively.
Action Items
4. Amend local regulations to include “low impact development” (LID) strategies and reduce the water quality of impacts of new development.
5. Consider extending water quality provisions from the State-defined aquifer protection areas to other parts of Portland.
6. Conduct public education about protecting water quality (including reducing fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide use).

F.2. Protect Other Water Resources

Portland contains a number of water resources that provide recreational, environmental, and economic benefits to the Town:

- Connecticut River
- Portland Reservoir
- Great Hill Pond
- Jobs Pond
- Kelsey Pond

In addition to these water bodies, Portland has a number of watercourses and associated streambelt resources (wetlands, floodplains, habitat, etc.). Portland should continue to promote protection of streambelt areas in order to help minimize pollution, protect the ecosystem, provide and promote recreational areas, reduce flood damage and promote the scenic and natural beauty of the community.

Policies
1. Continue to preserve riparian buffers along wetlands and watercourses.
2. Maintain upland review areas and vegetated buffers adjacent to wetlands and watercourses in order to protect these resources.
3. Maintain regulations regulating the placement of structures near water resources.
4. Maintain floodplain regulations to manage activities in areas prone to flooding.
Action Items
5. Develop use restrictions for Portland Reservoir to help prevent contamination but will permit environmentally friendly passive recreation.
6. Consider a Pond Overlay Zone.

CASE STUDY- Connecticut River

The Connecticut River is New England’s longest river. The upper reaches of the watershed extend into Canada.

The river’s name reportedly comes from a Native American phrase *meaning long tidal river*. In fact, the tidal influence extends about 25 miles up the river from Long Island Sound to Portland.

The river has long been an important resource for the region in terms of ecology, economy, society, and transportation. The Connecticut River is an important part of the history of Portland and an important asset to the community.

Portland has the longest reach of the Connecticut River within its borders of any community in Connecticut.

Connecticut River



F.3. Protect Other Natural Resources

Portland also contains other natural resources worthy of preservation or protection.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has identified more than half of Portland’s land area as possibly containing rare and endangered species, species of special concern, and other sensitive or unique resources (called the Natural Diversity Database or “NDDB”). To help protect these resources, the Town should require that anyone requesting a development approval or permit in these areas contact the DEEP to ensure that the sensitive resource will be considered as part of the development plans.

Portland contains some good examples of “fanglomerates” and other geological formations and these resources should be preserved to the extent feasible.

Policies
1. Continue to protect other important natural resources in Portland.
2. Seek to maintain unfragmented forest areas for wildlife habitat and community character.
3. Protect “fanglomerates” and other unique geologic formations in Portland.
4. Continue to require applicants in NDDB areas seek input from the DEEP prior to obtaining local permits.
5. Discourage the introduction of non-native species in Portland.
Action Items
6. Maintain the “Natural And Cultural Resources / Open Space And Recreation” document from the year 2000.

CASE STUDY - Fanglomerates

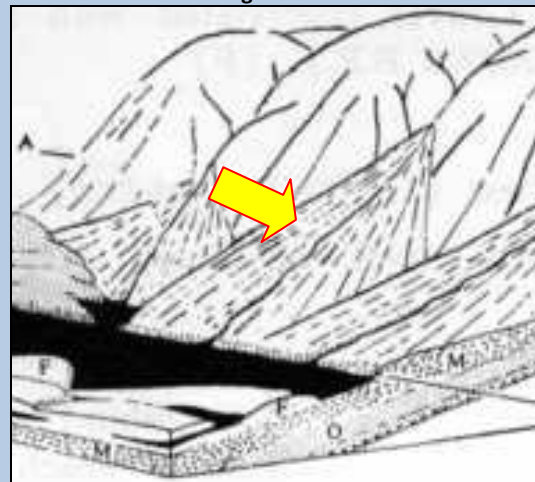
Portland is the location of some interesting geologic formations.

Millions of years ago, steep streams cut into the landscape at that time washed a mix of boulders and cobbles downstream and deposited them in a “fan-shaped” outwash area. This fan-shaped conglomeration of materials is known as a fanglomerate. In some cases, the original landscape has eroded away but the outwash area remains.

Portland has at least three fanglomerate areas and they are often visited by geology classes to study these geologic formations. They are located:

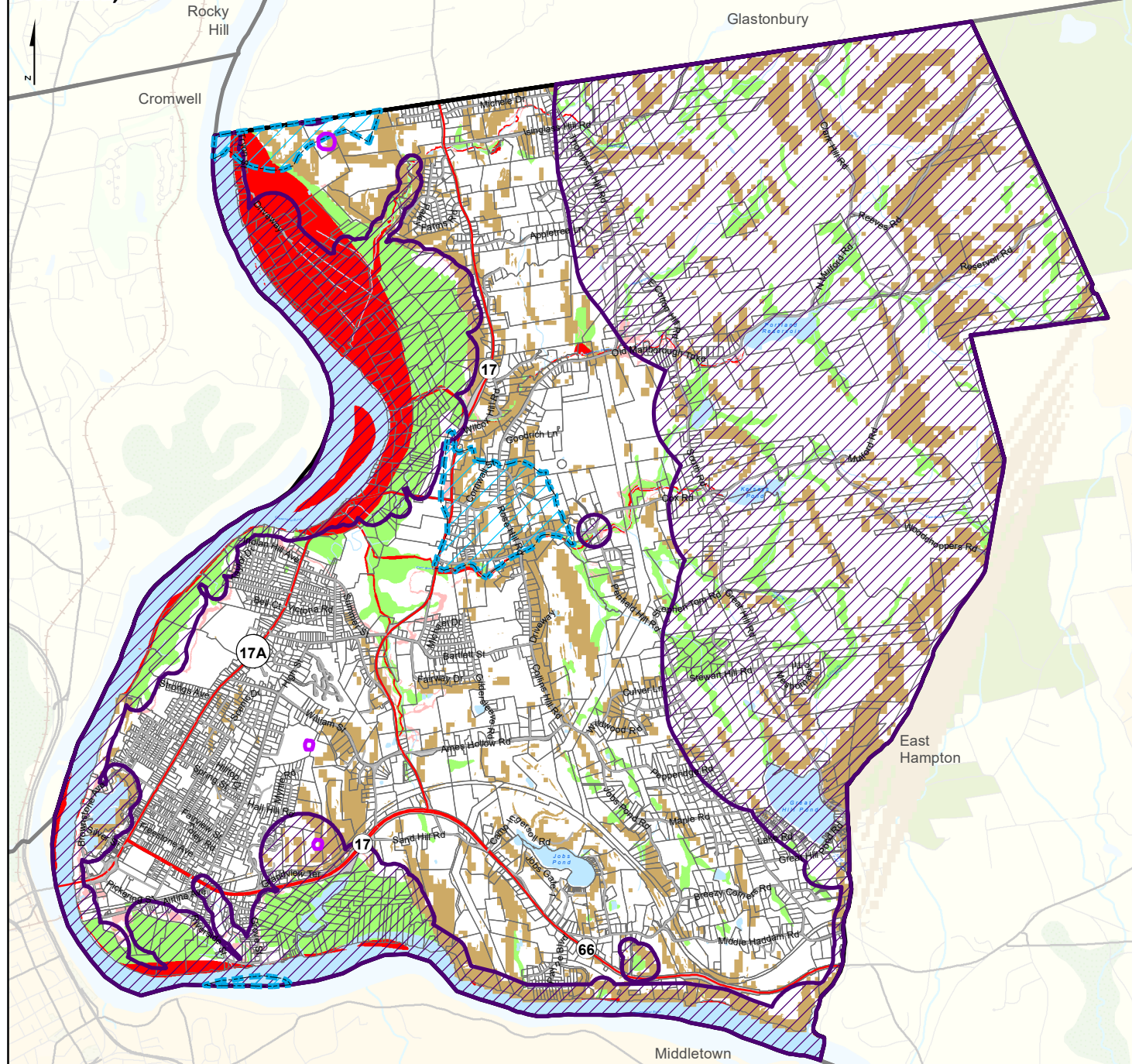
- east of the High School,
- north of Grandview Terrace, and
- west of Route 17 and south of the Glastonbury town line.

Fanglomerate



Natural Resources Map

Portland, CT



Legend

-  Water
-  Inland Wetland Soils
-  100-year Floodplain
-  500-year Floodplain
-  Slopes > 15%
-  Aquifer Protection Areas
-  Natural Diversity Database
-  Fanglomerate Areas

3,250 Feet

G. Preserve Open Space

Preserving open space in Portland will help conserve important natural resources, protect community character, provide fiscal benefits, and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Preserving open space is important to maintaining community character and the overall quality of life.

In order to ensure that there will be sufficient open space in the future, attention must be paid to identifying and preserving additional open space today. Regulation, donation, land purchase, and collaboration with an array of partners are some of the tools the Town can use to protect open space. The Town will need to pursue multiple strategies simultaneously in order to preserve its valuable open spaces and protect the community character.

Types of Open Space

Dedicated Open Space - Land preserved as open space, usually with some form of public use allowed.

Managed Open Space - Land used for another purpose (such as a golf course or water reservoir) which provides some open space benefit. Public use is not guaranteed.

Perceived Open Space - Land that looks or feels like open space (such as a farm field or private woodlands) but is not protected.

CASE STUDY – Open Space Preservation

Many communities that are more developed than Portland wish they had preserved more open space when they had the chance.

Portland residents may not feel the urgency of preserving open space since about one-third of the land area has been permanently preserved as open space and another one-third of the land area is undeveloped land that is privately owned (but looks like open space). However, it is important for Portland residents to recognize that this privately owned land could be developed in the future. Once it has been developed, it will no longer make the same contribution to the overall character of the community or be available to enhance the quality of life of all residents and visitors.

Even now, Portland should strive to preserve the open spaces it wants to preserve for all time.

Open Space



G.1. Preserve Desirable Open Spaces

In order to help achieve Portland’s land use and open space goals, the Town should continue to identify desirable open spaces for preservation. The Conservation Commission maintains a list of desirable properties for consideration by the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Board of Selectmen, and others.

These desirable open spaces should be linked, to the maximum amount practicable, in order to create greenway trails and wildlife corridors. When open space areas are interconnected into meaningful systems for people, plants, and animals, the value of the open space system increases exponentially.

For example, land along the Connecticut River would contribute to a meaningful overall open space system within Portland and the Region. In addition, the former Air Line Railroad corridor is in the process of being converted to a regional greenway trail and this will help interconnect open spaces within Portland and help connect Portland with other communities.

The Town can use the map as a guide for possible future open space acquisitions. The Planning and Zoning Commission should use the map as a reference in the subdivision process to obtain the most desirable open spaces.

Policies
1. Continue efforts to preserve open space in Portland.
2. Maintain an inventory of existing open spaces.
3. Establish an interconnected system of open space in order to create greenway trails and wildlife corridors.
4. Continue efforts to establish a regional open space resource along the Connecticut River.
5. Support efforts (such as those by the State of Connecticut) to increase the amount of preserved open space along the Connecticut River, especially in the Wangunk Meadows and Pecauset Pond areas.
6. Expand access to the Connecticut River for people and boats.
7. Encourage expansion of the Meshomasic State Forest and the acquisition / preservation of adjacent properties.
Action Items
8. Identify desirable open space areas for future preservation.
9. Develop appropriate river access points for canoes, kayaks and boats.
10. Maintain open space areas appropriate for their use and activity.
11. Seek to provide water access for fishing and boating (such as canoes and kayaks).

G.2. Enhance Open Space Preservation Tools

There are several methods available to a municipality for acquiring property and Portland uses most of them. The Town should continue to utilize these methods of preserving open space.

Through land use regulations, the Town can require that a certain percentage of land area be set aside as part of a subdivision. Portland presently requires that 15 percent of the land area of the subdivision be preserved as open space. This provision should be increased.

The open space provisions in the Subdivision Regulations can be enhanced by establishing a fee-in-lieu of open space provision (as authorized by CGS Section 8-25). This provision will give the Commission the option to acquire land in a subdivision when it contributes to an overall open space system but accept a fee if the proposed land dedication would result in a small or isolated parcel with little open space value.

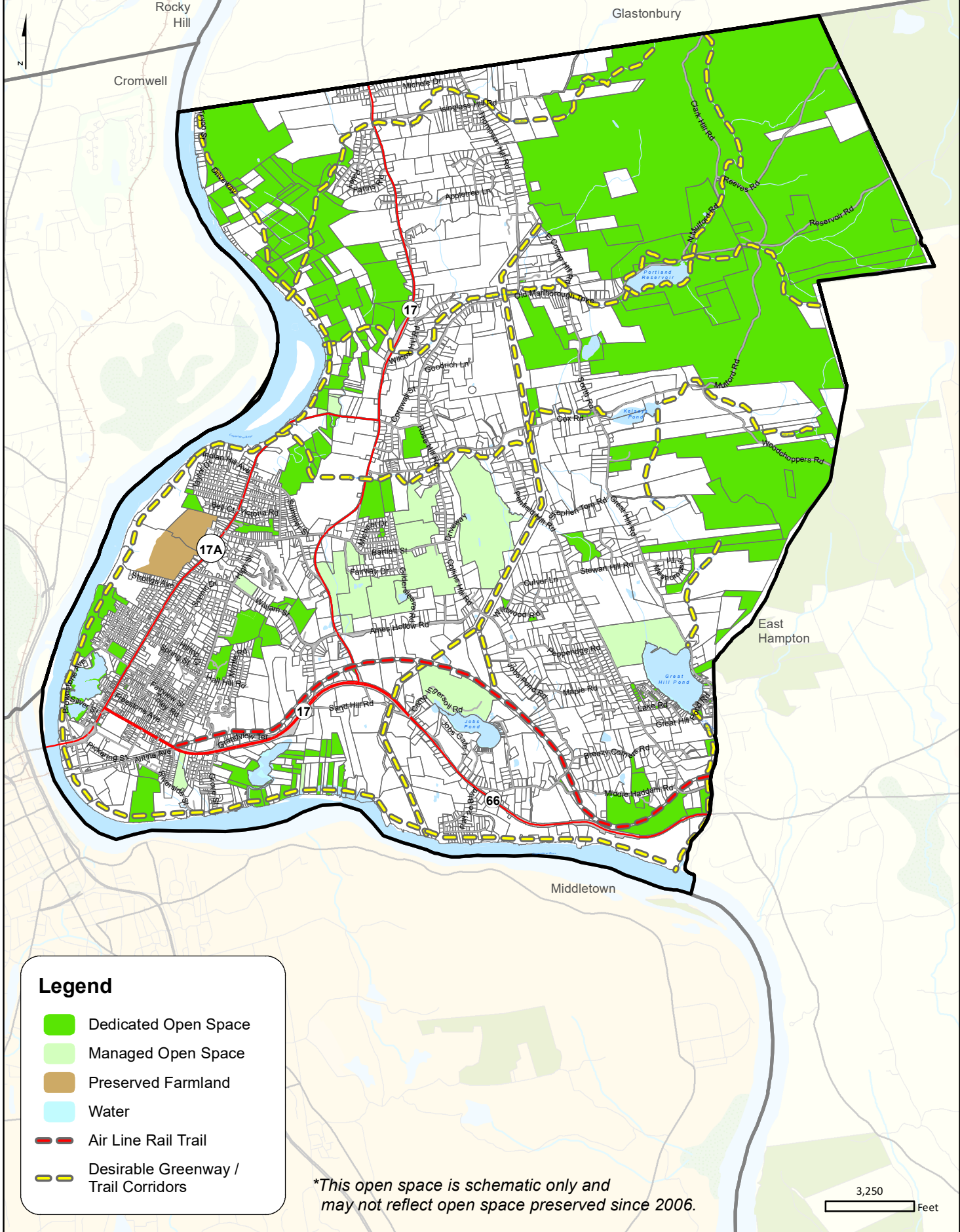
Collaborating with others can also be an effective tool to help with the preservation of open space. Potential partners include the CT DEEP, The Nature Conservancy, the Middlesex Land Trust, Mattabassett Audubon Society, and private property owners.

While acquiring land as open space offers the most community benefits, acquiring conservation easements or development restrictions may be appropriate in a few situations.

Policies
1. Seek to maximize the preservation of open space as part of new development.
2. Be prepared to preserve open space areas as opportunities arise.
3. Continue to collaborate with other organizations to preserve and manage open space properties.
4. Continue to seek grants for preservation of desirable open space areas.
5. Promote “open space development” patterns when residential development occurs.
6. Encourage open space philanthropy.
7. Contribute funds for open space preservation from the operating budget or a bond issue.
Action Items
8. Create an Open Space Fund to set aside funds for open space preservation.
9. Adopt a fee-in-lieu-of-open space provision in the subdivision regulations.
10. Adopt regulations to allow off-site dedication of open space.
11. Increase the open space set-aside requirement in a subdivision from 15 percent to 20 percent.

Open Space

Portland, CT



Legend

- Dedicated Open Space
- Managed Open Space
- Preserved Farmland
- Water
- Air Line Rail Trail
- Desirable Greenway / Trail Corridors

**This open space is schematic only and may not reflect open space preserved since 2006.*

3,250 Feet

H. Support Farms And Farming

Thanks to the rich agricultural soils found throughout Portland and especially along the Connecticut River, the Town has a long and proud agricultural heritage. Portland has approximately 1,000 acres of agricultural lands producing a range of agricultural products including bedding plants; nursery stock and a variety of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and trees.

For Portland, supporting farms and farming is a strategy that will contribute to the Town’s economic health, help preserve food sources, and preserve community character.

Farms and farming contribute to the Town’s economic health, help preserve food sources, and preserve community character.

Portland Farm



As the Town continues to develop residentially, conflicts between farms and residents may increase over such issues as odors, wandering livestock, noise, trespass, etc. Portland should adopt a “right to farm” policy that supports agricultural activities by protecting farmers from nuisance claims that may arise from the normal operation of their farm in close proximity to residential development.

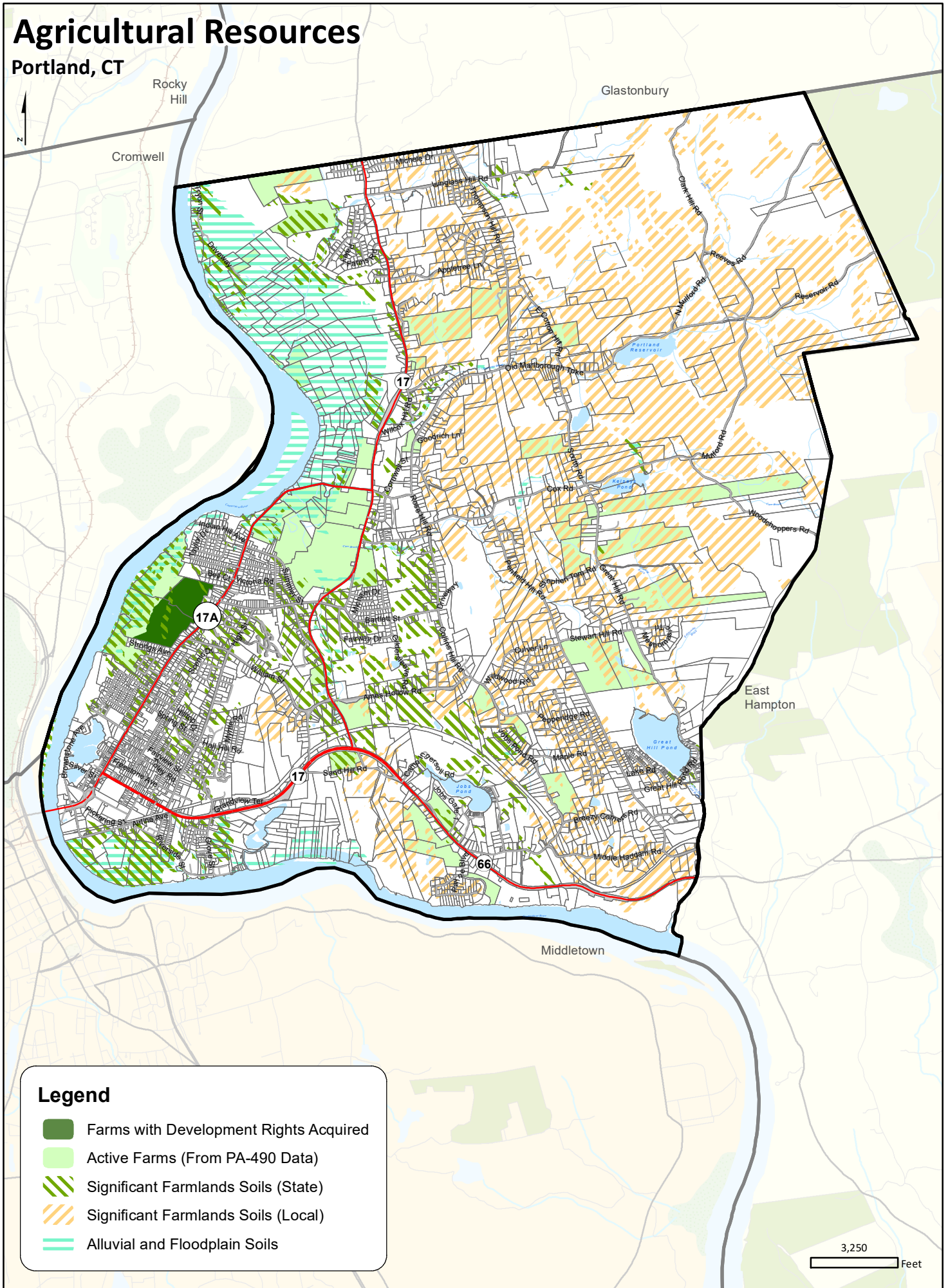
One way of supporting farms and farming is by preserving prime farmland through a program that purchases development rights from farmers. The State of Connecticut operates a Farmland Preservation Program, a voluntary program that accomplishes four things:

- Allows farms to remain in private ownership and farmed in perpetuity;
- Prevents farmland from ever being developed;
- Provides farmers with an influx of cash, eliminating the need to sell all or part of a farm for development; and
- Reduces the taxable value of the land, making farming more viable.

Policies
1. Continue to support farms and farming in Portland.
2. Encourage local farms to participate in the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program.
3. Continue the farm assessment program (P.A. 490) in order to help farms and farming.
4. Seek to preserve farmland soils of statewide significance and those identified by the US Department of Agriculture as local important farmland.
Action Items
5. Review local regulations to understand whether they reflect current farming needs.
6. Adopt a “right-to-farm” policy to protect agricultural uses.

Agricultural Resources

Portland, CT



Legend

- Farms with Development Rights Acquired
- Active Farms (From PA-490 Data)
- Significant Farmlands Soils (State)
- Significant Farmlands Soils (Local)
- Alluvial and Floodplain Soils

3,250 Feet

I. Preserve Historic Resources

Portland is rich in history – in terms of events, activities, buildings and other resources – and these historical resources contribute to the character of the community. It is important that historic sites and structures be preserved in order to pass along some of Portland’s history to future generations.

Preserving historic resources is important to maintaining Portland’s community character.

More information about the history of Portland and historic resources in the community can be found in The History and Architecture of Portland, written by J.P. Loether, G.L. Porteus, and D.D. Sherrow in 1980, and other books available at the Portland Library.

Portland’s Octagonal Houses



I.1. Continue to Protect Historic Resources

Portland should continue to protect and preserve historic resources.

The Historic Resources Inventory for Portland is composed of the sites and structures listed on the Historic Resources map on page 43 and those listed in the book entitled The History and Architecture of Portland, with updates as specified in the Implementation plan. Also to be considered as historically significant are Portland’s burying grounds, stone walls, stone foundations and sites of commemorative plaques marking lost structures. These are considered the basis for a comprehensive preservation plan for Portland.

Portland is somewhat unique in that the different eras in its history (ship-building, quarrying, etc.) are all represented in its historic resources and the resources range from worker housing for the many immigrants who worked in the Town’s early industries all the way to the larger, grander houses of the proprietors.

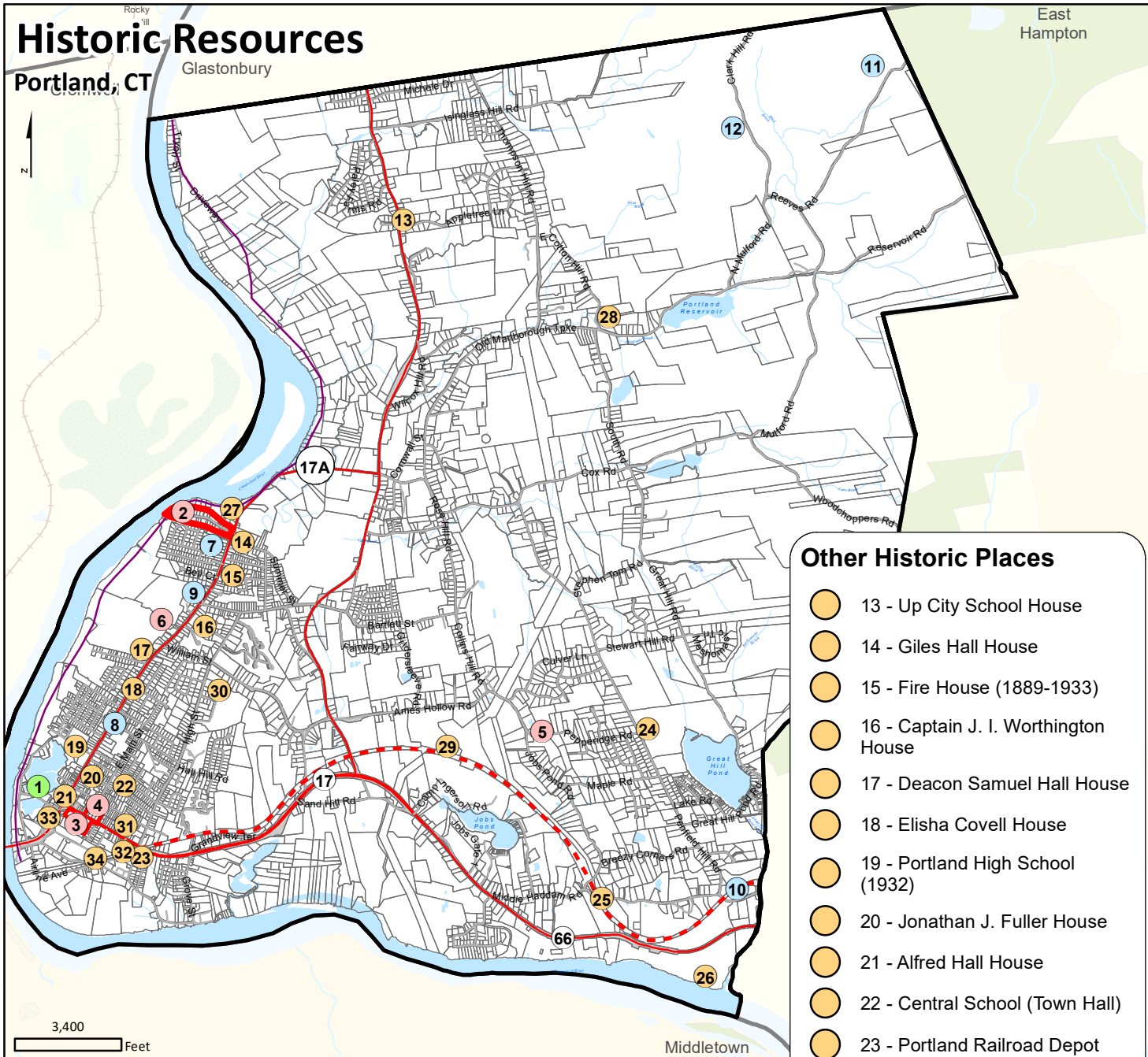
Policies
1. Continue to protect historic resources.
2. Work with property owners and other partners to maintain, restore, and promote Portland’s historic resources.
3. Maintain the Historic Resources Inventory.
4. Consider establishment of a local historic district supported by affected property owners.
5. Add additional sites and structures to the Historic Resources Inventory as appropriate.
Action Items
6. Implement actions to protect historic resources.
7. Place a map on the Town Green pointing out historic buildings and sites.

Historic Resources

Portland, CT

Glastonbury

East Hampton



National Historic Landmark

- 1 - Portland Brownstone Quarries

National Register of Historic Places

- National Historic District
- 2 - Indian Hill Avenue Historic District
- 3 - Marlborough Street Historic District
- 4 - Williams and Stancliff Octagon Houses
- 5 - Daniel and Mary Lee Houses
- 6 - White - Overton - Callander House

State Register of Historic Places

- 7 - George Lewis Jr. House
- 8 - Trinity Episcopal Church
- 9 - Civil War Monument
- 10 - George S. Hubbard Farmstead
- 11 - Nike Missile Site - Command
- 12 - Nike Missile Site - Launch

Other Historic Places

- 13 - Up City School House
- 14 - Giles Hall House
- 15 - Fire House (1889-1933)
- 16 - Captain J. I. Worthington House
- 17 - Deacon Samuel Hall House
- 18 - Elisha Covell House
- 19 - Portland High School (1932)
- 20 - Jonathan J. Fuller House
- 21 - Alfred Hall House
- 22 - Central School (Town Hall)
- 23 - Portland Railroad Depot
- 24 - Penfield Hill School
- 25 - Stone Arch Railroad Bridges
- 26 - St. Clements / Howard A. Taylor
- 27 - Indian Burial Grounds
- 28 - Bucks Hollow
- 29 - Railroad Bed
- 30 - Capt. Ebenezer Smith House
- 31 - George Ranney Jr. House
- 32 - John Ramberg House
- 33 - Laverty's Tavern
- 34 - Pickering Governor Co.

1.2. Adjust Adaptive Reuse Strategies

The phrase “adaptive reuse” refers to the use of a structure that differs from its traditional use, particularly when the new use helps preserve a historic building. In Portland, Section 10.6 of the Zoning Regulations allows the Commission to consider or require adaptive reuse when a property is identified in the POCD.

Since the Commission wants to encourage preservation of historic buildings, it should review the effectiveness of the current zoning regulations and see if there are ways to create more “carrots” that will encourage developers and property owners to preserve historic buildings.

Policies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To help preserve historic structures, allow for adaptive reuse when and where appropriate.
Action Items
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Review the effectiveness of Section 10.6 of the zoning regulations and see if there are ways to create more “carrots” that will encourage developers and property owners to preserve historic buildings.

Example Of Adaptive Re-Use



Other Historic Resources

Some other unique resources for consideration include:

- Large brownstone tunnel that allows drainage beneath the railroad bed, off Grandview Terrace
- Remains of a large stone bridge that connected Old Marlborough Turnpike with Wilcox Hill Road
- Dams along Cox Brook, including at least one west of the Rose Hill intersection
- Dam and pond west of Route 17 on Hale Brook
- Remains of dam and foundation on Hale Brook east of Route 17, labeled, “distillery” on 1874 town map
- Remains of dam for sawmill on Reservoir Brook, near East Cotton Hill Road

Railroad Bridge Over Middle Haddam Road



1.3. Preserve And Celebrate Portland's Quarries

The quarries in Portland are an important part of the history of the community. While most people immediately think of the Portland brownstone quarries, there were other quarries as well.

The Portland brownstone quarries may have been the most significant because the stone, considered to be of exceptionally high quality and adaptive to fine carving and polishing, was used in many cities and important buildings over a wide area. By the late 1800s, brownstone quarry operations employed 1,500 men and 25 ships transported stone to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and London for public buildings, schools, colleges, and private residences. By 1926, architectural styles and construction methods changed and demand for the stone decreased and there were only intermittent operations. The quarries were permanently shut after a major flood in 1936.

Due to the significance of local quarry operations, the community should consider ways to establish a quarry museum and/or preserve remaining quarry sites to the extent possible.

Policies
1. Seek to preserve and celebrate Portland's quarries.
2. Collect and retain artifacts, and mineral samples from the Town's historic quarries for inclusion in a quarry preservation museum.
3. Consider ways to preserve remaining quarry sites to the extent possible.
4. Consider ways to establish a local quarry museum.
Action Items
5. Implement actions to preserve and celebrate Portland's quarries.

Portland Quarries

North Quarry / South Quarry: Acquired by the Town, the property on Brownstone Avenue is now leased to a private operator who operates a recreational park.

Strickland Quarry: Consists of several quarry holes located in a series of north/south ridges in the eastern uplands off Rose Hill and Collins Hill Roads.

Hale Quarry: This quarry is located south of Isinglass Road.

Case Quarry: This quarry is located off East Cotton Hill Road.

Stewart Hill Quarry: This granite quarry is located northeast of Great Hill Road.

Other Bedrock Quarries: According to the Citation List and References Cited for Bedrock Mines and Quarries of Connecticut by Robert J. Altamura of the Connecticut Geological and Natural History Survey, there are many more bedrock quarries located throughout Portland.

Hale Quarry



I.4. Protect Archaeological Resources

Archaeological resources (pottery, tools, campsites and other evidence from past cultures and the way people lived) are a component of historic resources.

There are a number of areas in Portland that have been identified as having high archaeological sensitivity. This does not mean that archaeological resources will be found there, only that conditions exist which would suggest that such resources could be there.

Development activities can jeopardize archaeological sites, which are often fragile and not immediately apparent. Attention should be given to ensuring that archaeological resources are not needlessly damaged or destroyed by land use development and other activities. The goal is not to prevent development of sites which may contain archaeological resources but to collect and document any resources that may be found in order to increase our understanding of the history of this area and its inhabitants.

When development activities are proposed in areas which have high archaeological sensitivity, the applicant should be required to contact the Office of the State Archeologist to determine whether an archaeological review is appropriate or whether another approach might be prudent.

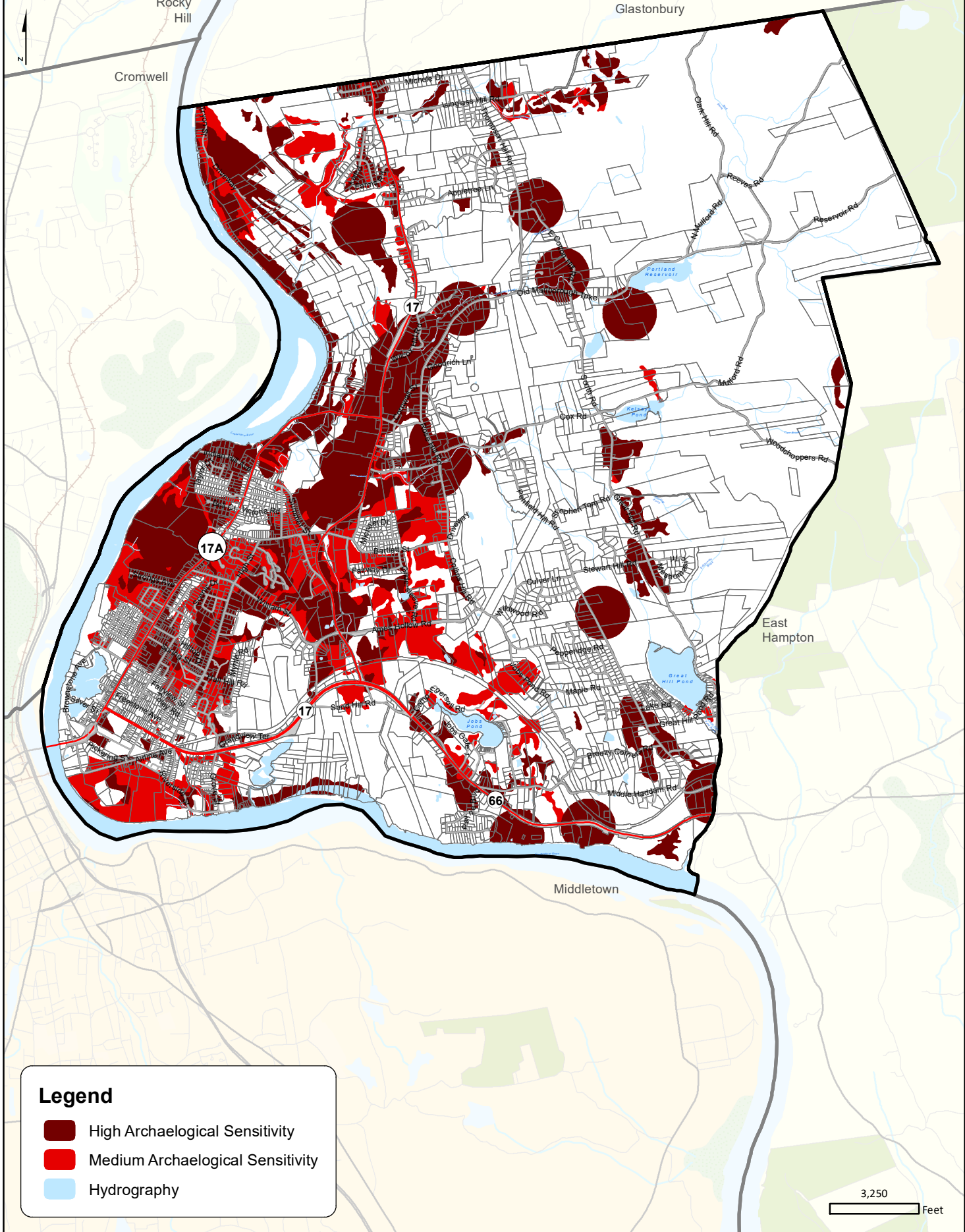
Archaeological Investigation



Policies
1. Maintain an archaeological sensitivity map.
2. Collaborate with organizations involved in archaeological research.
Action Items
3. Change regulations to require new development in areas with high archaeological sensitivity to contact the Office of the State Archeologist.

Archaeological Resources

Portland, CT



Legend

- High Archaeological Sensitivity
- Medium Archaeological Sensitivity
- Hydrography

3,250 Feet

J. Preserve Character Resources

The “character” of Portland is something that is commonly mentioned by residents and visitors as one of the defining attributes of the community. Preserving and enhancing the things that contribute to this sense of character is a key recommendation of the Plan.

Character resources should be preserved since they contribute to Portland’ character and quality of life.

In order to retain the special characteristics that make Portland special, efforts to preserve community character must continue and be given priority. This Plan recommends and urges the Town to seek and use every possible legal and policy device available to enable Portland to protect its special qualities and unique characteristics.

Scenic Character



J.1. Preserve Scenic Resources

Portland has a number of scenic areas and the preservation of these scenic resources (roads, views, vistas) is an important recommendation of the Plan. Scenic views and vistas should be considered in development decisions as they provide visual relief and enhance the private development as well as the community at large. Conservation easements should be sought where appropriate.

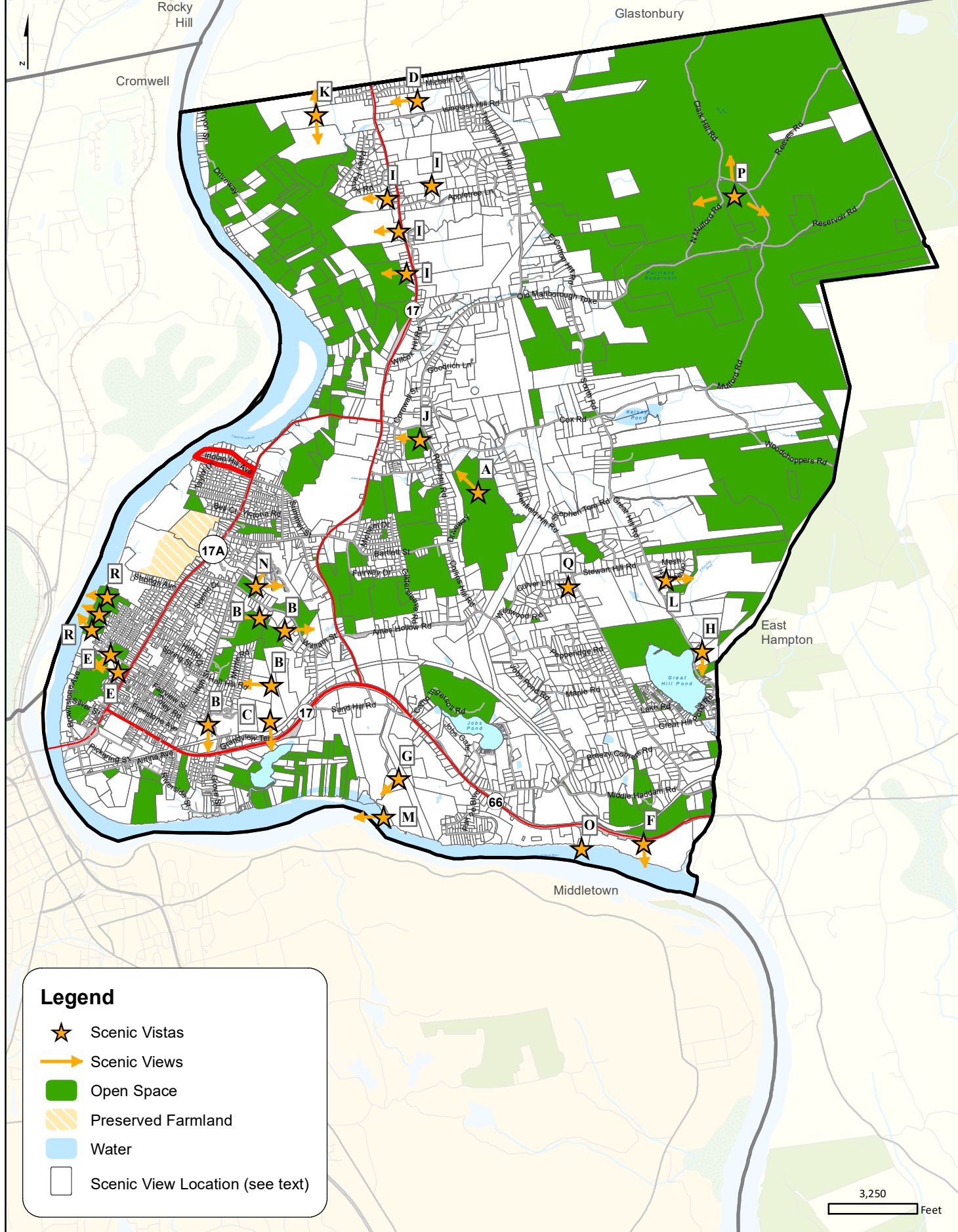
Policies
1. Continue efforts to preserve scenic views and vistas.
2. Encourage maintenance of the scenic view or vista when threatened by a development.
Action Items
3. Update the Scenic Resources Plan for views, vistas, roads and other scenic resources.
4. Consider adopting a scenic road ordinance.

Scenic Views and Vistas (keyed to map on facing page)

- A. Collins Hill (1x)
- B. Crow Hill (3x)
- C. Hoboes” Inn (1x)
- D. Ridge at Isinglass Hill / Michele Drive (1x)
- E. Brownstone Quarries (2x)
- F. St. Clements (1x)
- G. Strait’s Hill (1x)
- H. Great Hill (1x)
- I. Route 17 Corridor (4x)
- J. John Bransfield Park (1x)
- K. Dufford Orchard at Simpson / Walnut Hill (1x)
- L. Stewart Hill Quarry (1x)
- M. Bodkin Rock (1x)
- N. William Street / Swedish cemetery (1x)
- O. Paper Rock (1x)
- P. Big Pines (1x)
- Q. Big Oaks / Culver Lane (1x)
- R. Riverfront Park (3x)

Character Resources

Portland, CT



Legend

- ★ Scenic Vistas
- Scenic Views
- Open Space
- ▨ Preserved Farmland
- Water
- Scenic View Location (see text)

3,250 Feet

J.2. Preserve Undeveloped Land

Working lands, undeveloped land, and land in its natural state contributes to the overall character of a community. Preserving land in an undeveloped state as long as possible will help Portland preserve its rural character for as long as possible.

One way to preserve private lands in an undeveloped state is through the use of the Public Act 490 program (CGS 12-107). This program assesses such lands based on its “use value” rather than its market value. Since the use value is significantly less than market value, this makes undeveloped land less expensive to own and property owners are likely to keep it undeveloped.

The PA-490 program is available to land used for:

- Farm
- Forest parcels of 25+ acres, and
- A local option as determined by the Town.

State criteria determine what land is eligible for the farm and forest elements of the program. On the other hand, a Town can institute its own “local option” program (also called the “open space assessment program”) and Portland may wish to consider doing this.

Policies
1. Continue to use the PA 490 program to help preserve undeveloped land longer.
Action Items
2. Consider adopting a PA-490 assessment program for forest parcels less than 25 acres in size or for other undeveloped lands.

J.3. Protect Portland’s Trees

Another of Portland’s assets is its trees. In addition to the numerous trees in the State Forest, there are also beautiful trees throughout Portland including many on large wooded lots, and along tree-lined streets. These trees contribute to the overall character of the community and should be preserved.

Portland is also home of some of Connecticut’s largest trees of certain species and these “notable trees” should be preserved as well.

Notable Trees of Portland

Popular Name	Location
Northern Catalpa	121 Great Hill Rd.
Cutleaf Silver Maple	311 Main St.
Dunkeld Larch	695 Glastonbury Tpke
Cawara False Cypress	505 Main St.
Silk Tree aka Mimosa	St Clements/Rte 66
American Holly	460 Main St.
Kwanzan Cherry	533 Main St.
Variegated Sycamore Maple	533 Main St.

Policies
1. Continue to protect and preserve trees in Portland. Establish a tree replacement protocol to address felled trees.
2. Protect the “notable trees” in Portland.
Action Items
3. Explore and implement appropriate tree protection strategies.

Tree Recognition Plaque



J.4. Enhance The Design Review Process

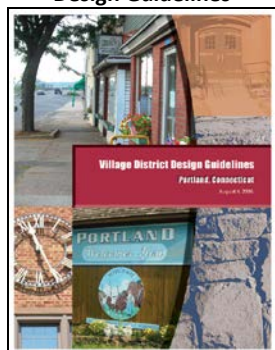
Following adoption of the 2006 POCD, Portland established design guidelines for the “village district” area. These guidelines help guide applicants in preparing development projects so that they enhance the Town Center.

However, residents have indicated they care about the design of new commercial, industrial, multi-family, and institutional development in other parts of the community as well. Portland should consider extending design review to such projects in other areas and adjusting the design guidelines as necessary.

Portland should consider establishing a Design Review Committee to help guide applicants and implement the design guidelines.

Policies
1. Maintain a design review process.
Action Items
2. Establish a Design Review Committee to help guide applicants and implement the design guidelines.
3. Extend design review to new commercial, industrial, multi-family, and institutional development in areas outside the “village district.”
4. Adjust the design guidelines to guide projects outside of the village district area.

Design Guidelines



J.5. Preserve Other Character Elements

There are also other ways Portland can enhance community character:

- Promoting community events
- Supporting community organizations
- Preserving stone walls
- Controlling illumination and maintaining “dark skies”
- Controlling clear cutting of trees
- Waiving building permit fees for maintenance / improvement (but not expansion or addition) of a residential home
- Encouraging private activities that enhance character

Policies
1. Promote local programs and events to raise Portland’s visibility as a special place and add to community spirit and character.
2. Maintain a community calendar on the Town’s internet web site to inform people of upcoming events.
3. Encourage and support local organizations that help build community spirit.
4. Seek to preserve historic stone walls.
5. Continue to manage illumination and protect night skies from light pollution.
6. Ensure reclamation / restoration of sand and gravel excavation sites for appropriate future uses.
Action Items
7. Review sand and gravel excavation regulations.

K. Promote Sustainability / Resiliency

Sustainability and resiliency will be important concepts for Portland to work towards in the coming years.

Sustainability and resiliency are expected to be important issues in Portland in the future.

K.1. Promote Sustainability

For the purposes of this Plan, “sustainability” refers to the philosophy of encouraging activities that allow present generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

In the future, Portland will strive to be a “greener” community by:

- Promoting energy conservation and evaluating alternative approaches for municipal energy use (heating, lighting, equipment, building envelope, electrical consumption, electrical generation, and vehicles)
- Promoting water conservation
- Promoting waste reduction / recycling
- Educating residents about sustainability concepts

Policies
1. Promote energy conservation / sustainability.
2. Promote water conservation.
3. Promote waste reduction / recycling.
4. Educate residents about sustainability concepts.
Action Items
5. Investigate opportunities to install additional solar panels on Town facilities.

K.2. Promote Resiliency

For the purposes of this Plan, the term “resiliency” refers to the community’s ability to readily recover from sudden changes or adversity. Portland has been affected in recent years by some unusual weather events and trends seem to indicate that this trend will continue.

Preparedness for possible future emergency situations is important. Portland should continue to review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events, such as flooding. In addition, Portland will continue efforts to assess the vulnerability of public and private infrastructure (e.g., utilities, transportation, structures) to such events, prepare for recurring events, and respond to such events when they occur.

Portland will also continue to review and improve emergency preparedness plans (single events) in order to be able to respond to these events in the future.

Policies
1. Continue to review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events, such as flooding.
2. Continue to review and improve emergency preparedness plans.
Action Items
3. Assess the vulnerability of infrastructure (e.g., utilities, transportation, structures) to natural events, prepare for recurring events, and respond to such events when they occur.
4. Consider ways to provide redundant power supplies for shelters and other community facilities.

GUIDING APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT

Overview

Portland is a desirable community and growth is expected to continue. How this growth is managed will have a significant impact on Portland community character and the quality of life for its residents.

Portland seeks to guide development in ways that will address community needs and contribute to our character and quality of life.

Business Development



Housing



Town Center



L. Promote Economic Development

Economic development is important to Portland in order to make jobs available for workers, offer goods and services to residents and visitors, and support a strong tax base to help fund local services.

Portland, recognizing that it has many unique resources, has determined to pursue an economic strategy that will continue to protect its valuable resources while taking important steps towards economic renewal.

Continue to encourage and promote appropriate economic development.

Business Development



L.1. Support Existing Businesses

Portland has a number of existing businesses that already contribute to the community. These uses should be supported and encouraged to thrive.

This can be encouraged by:

- Maintaining relationships with local businesses and business organizations in order to understand issues and opportunities
- Identifying a Town staff-person or agency to be the “ambassadors” if local businesses have issues to be considered
- Maintaining a directory of local businesses
- Highlighting local businesses so that residents and other businesses are familiar with them
- Encouraging residents to “buy local”
- Continuing to allow appropriate home-based businesses

Policies

1. Continue and enhance effort to support local businesses and encourage them to thrive.
2. Establish and maintain relationships with local businesses and business organizations in order to understand issues and opportunities
3. Identify a Town staff-person or agency to be the “ambassadors” if local businesses have issues to be considered
4. Encourage residents to “buy local.”
5. Continue to allow for appropriate home-based businesses.

Action Items

6. Establish and maintain a directory of local businesses.
7. Continue programs to highlight local businesses so that residents and other businesses are familiar with them.

L.2. Address Business Zones, Locations And Uses

Having appropriate zoning regulations in place which encourage or allow compatible development is important in terms of supporting existing businesses and providing opportunities for new businesses.

Strategies for the Industrial Zone (at the foot of the Arrigoni Bridge) and the Planned Industrial zone (at the intersection of Route 17 and Route 66) are discussed in the Priority Areas section of the POCD (page 27).

Routes 17 and 66



Routes 17 and 66

Due to the limited number of bridges over the Connecticut River, Route 66 is a major traffic route carrying between 16,000 and 30,000 vehicles per day through Portland. Over the years, a strip development pattern has emerged along some sections of the roadway.

The POCD recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission review the zoning and design guidelines for this area in order to improve development appearance and function. Encouraging access management (shared driveways, interconnected parking areas, etc.) and better landscaping will improve site design. Building design, signage and lighting guidelines will also help improve the appearance of this corridor.

Designating several specific areas for commercial development rather than allowing it along the entire length of Route 66 should be considered. In terms of uses, activities that would not be appropriate in a pedestrian-friendly village area (such as drive-through windows for banks and fast-food restaurants) could be allowed along Route 66.

Big Box Retail

The prospect of “big box” retail development creates a conundrum for Portland.

On the one hand, a major new addition to the Grand List is a welcome event. The tax revenue generated by the proposed use will help support local programs and services and offer the prospect of tax relief. Depending on the nature of the store, the goods and services offered may expand local offerings and may be at lower prices.

On the other hand, such uses also have impacts that should be considered. There are only so many retail dollars to be spent and new stores only reallocate existing spending – they do not result in people spending more than they do already. In other words, if the new location captures dollars being spent at other stores in Portland, it is not a net benefit to the community. If the new location captures dollars from shoppers in other communities and brings them to Portland and there are new sales attracted to existing stores, it may benefit the community.

The design of such uses affects the appearance and character of the community. Such uses attract significant traffic and this affects the operation of nearby roadways.

Due to the desire to strengthen and enhance the Town Center and prevent the loss of Portland owned and operated businesses, this Plan recommends that “big box” retail establishments be carefully evaluated before being permitted.

Policies
1. Establish and maintain regulations which encourage or allow compatible development.
2. Carefully evaluate the impacts of “big box” retail establishments since such uses may harm efforts to strengthen and enhance the Town Center and may contribute to the loss of Portland owned and operated businesses.
Action Items
3. Review zoning designations and regulations for the land along Route 66

Example Of Big Box Retail

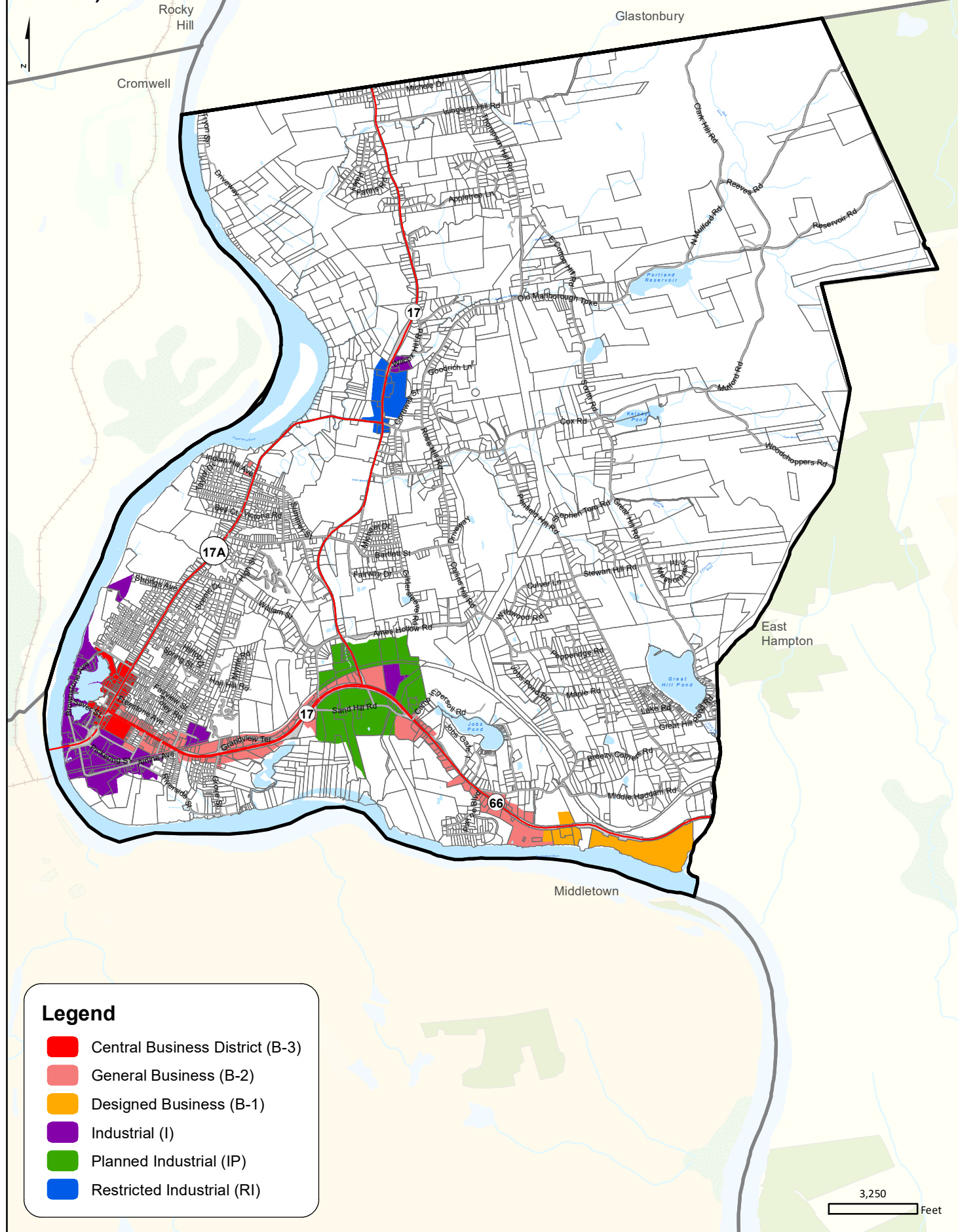


Example Of Big Box Retail









Business Development

Portland, CT



Legend

-  Central Business District (B-3)
-  General Business (B-2)
-  Designed Business (B-1)
-  Industrial (I)
-  Planned Industrial (IP)
-  Restricted Industrial (RI)

3,250 Feet

L.3. Attract New Economic Development

Portland should also promote new economic development in Portland that is compatible with the overall character of, and vision for, the community.

Within the Town Center, it will make sense to attract uses that support the vision for a vibrant, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area. This could include small shops, small offices, restaurants, outdoor dining, and similar uses. Residential apartments could be located on upper floors to address housing needs and extend the activity level in the Center to more times of the day and days of the week. Opportunities for hospitality and tourist amenities are examples of businesses that build on current resources and amenities and should be pursued. Developing motels, bed and breakfast lodging houses, and inns are considered an integral component of the Town Center revitalization program.

In other areas of Portland, businesses will be attracted by the strategic location, available buildings or sites, market opportunities, available labor force, or other factors.

Economic development may also include uses other than business or industry. Institutional housing for the growing population of older people provides an opportunity for economic development since the tax revenue generated exceeds the cost of municipal services provided. This may include nursing homes, medical services, and elder care as well as age-targeted housing.

Tourism destinations and events (such as the Brownstone Discovery and Exploration Park and St. Clements Castle) provide opportunities to attract economic development as well.

Policies
1. Promote new economic development that is compatible with the overall character of, and vision for, Portland.
2. Consider promoting other forms of economic development such as hospitality, lodging, age-related housing and tourism.
Action Items
3. Identify historic, recreational, and sporting attractions for the Town through signage and markers.

Industrial Use



Business Use



L.4. Support Economic Development Efforts

Communities across the state and the nation are all seeking additional economic development for the same reasons as Portland. For Portland to be competitive in attracting new uses and activities, it has to be ready to support economic development opportunities that arise.

Some strategies to support economic development include:

- Maintaining an Economic Development Commission to advocate on behalf of economic development opportunities
- Maintaining economic development staff within the Town
- Maintaining tax incentives for businesses that build new buildings in Portland
- Simplifying the land use approval process when and where possible

Policies
1. Support economic development opportunities that arise.
2. Maintain an Economic Development Commission to advocate on behalf of economic development opportunities.
3. Maintain and consider expanding economic development staffing / functionality within the Town.
4. Promote the availability of tax incentives for businesses that choose to build new buildings in Portland
5. Simplify the land use approval process when and where possible.
Action Items
6. Implement actions to support economic development efforts.

CASE STUDY – St. Clements Castle

Saint Clements Castle is a special events facility located along the Connecticut River in Portland. The facility is known throughout the northeast as a venue for weddings and other special events.

Originally built at the end of the 1800s as a private home, it has been converted to a special event facility and is a memorable place for the thousands of people who come there every year.

As a major attraction, it can help support and grow the local economy.

St. Clements Castle



Connecticut River View



M. Guide Residential Development

Guiding residential development is an important consideration in the POCD since most land in Portland is zoned and used for residential development.

Guide future residential development to protect important resources, reduce environmental impacts, manage fiscal impacts, and promote housing diversity.

Residential Home



Residential Home



M.1. Protect Existing Neighborhoods

Some of Portland's greatest assets can be found in its residential neighborhoods. Protecting the character and environment of these residential areas is one of the objectives of the POCD.

Policies

1. Protect the character and integrity of residential neighborhoods.

Action Items

2. Implement actions to protect existing neighborhoods.

Town Center Neighborhood



Rural Neighborhood



M.2. Encourage Conservation Subdivisions

Section 9.2 of the Zoning Regulations allows for “conservation subdivision” design where a development is allowed to occur with more flexibility provided:

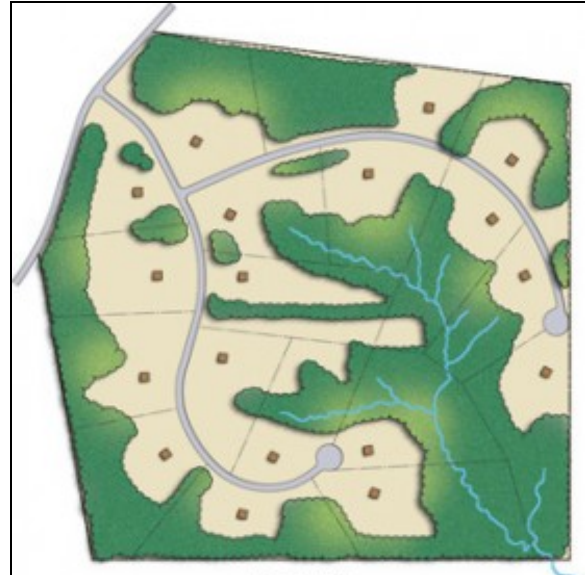
- More open space is preserved (at least 30 percent of the parcel),
- No more lots are created than would occur in a basic subdivision.

Portland may wish to consider requiring that conservation subdivisions be the “default” approach and that conventional subdivisions require a special permit.

Such subdivisions enable development while ensuring that more open space is preserved and that important resources can be protected.

Policies
1. Continue to encourage the use of conservation subdivisions.
Action Items
2. Consider requiring that conservation subdivisions be the “default” approach in outlying areas of Portland and that conventional subdivisions require a special permit.

**Conventional Subdivision
(18 Lots With No Open Space
And All Land In Lot Areas)**



**Conservation Subdivision
(18 Lots With Extensive Public Open Space
And All Lots adjacent To Open Space)**



M.3. Manage Multi-Family Conversions

In areas in and near the Town Center, some of the once-stately houses were converted to multiple family residential units without careful regard to the impacts on the character or function of the area.

The Town has now adopted regulations (Section 9.3 of the Zoning Regulations) allowing such conversions under specific conditions intended to address:

- The number of units
- Number / location of parking spaces
- Utility requirements

These provisions should be reviewed to ensure their purpose is being achieved.

Impacts which result from conversions which predated these regulations (such as parking) may need to be addressed through local ordinance or other means.

Policies
1. Continue to manage the conversion buildings to multi-family uses within the Town Center.
Action Items
2. Review Section 9.3 of the Zoning Regulations to ensure the intended purpose is being achieved.
3. Adopt an ordinance to prohibit parking in the front yard on key streets unless approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Multi-Family Conversion

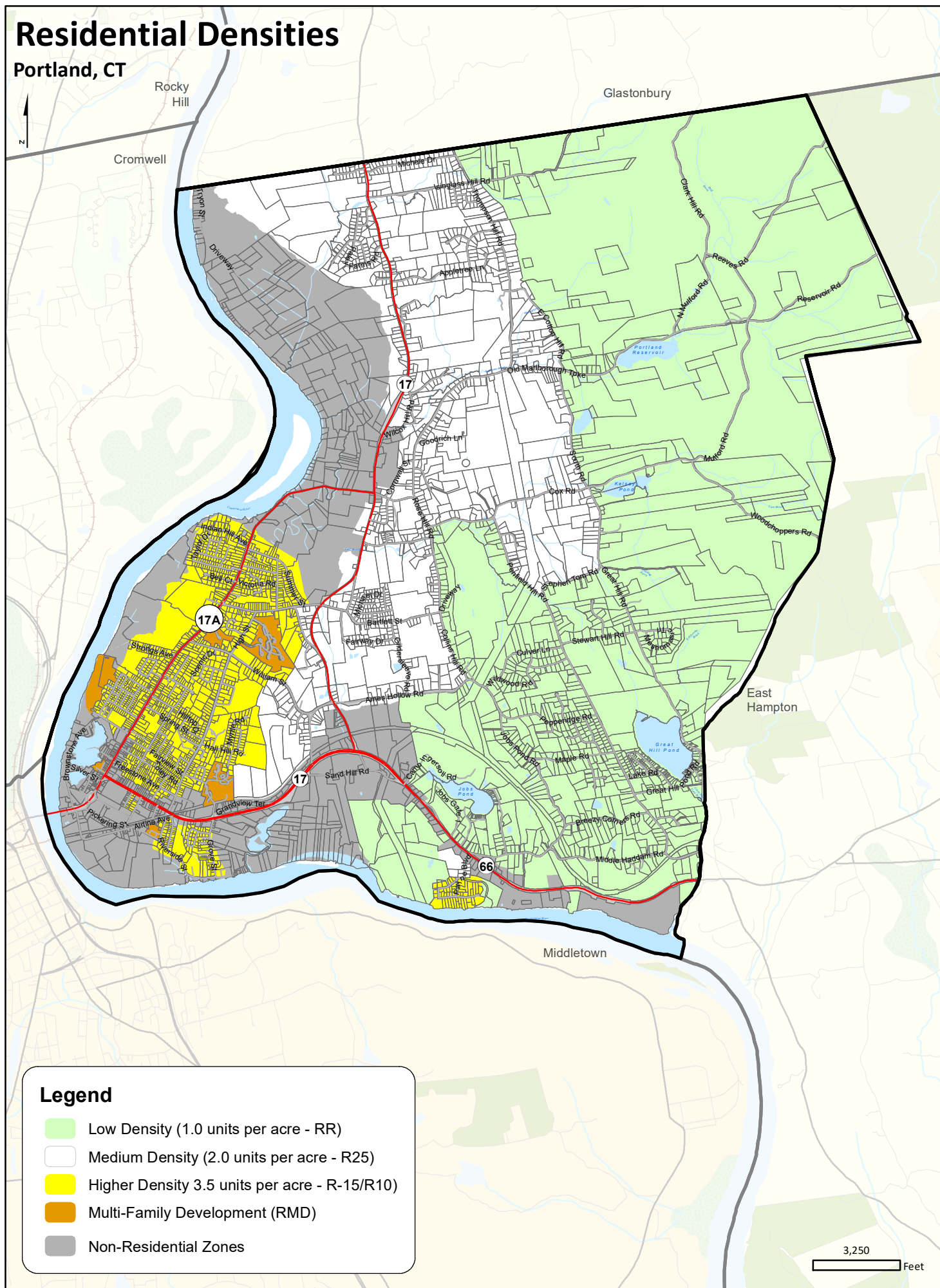


On-Street Parking








Residential Densities

Portland, CT



Legend

-  Low Density (1.0 units per acre - RR)
-  Medium Density (2.0 units per acre - R25)
-  Higher Density 3.5 units per acre - R-15/R10)
-  Multi-Family Development (RMD)
-  Non-Residential Zones

3,250 Feet

M.4. Address Housing Needs

There are two housing needs that should be considered in Portland:

- Housing units suitable for an aging population, and
- Housing for moderate-income households and first-time buyers.

It is anticipated that these housing needs can best be accommodated in the Town Center due to the existing density of development availability of water and sewer infrastructure, availability of transit, walking distance to a variety of amenities, and other locational considerations. Such developments may be appropriate in other areas of the community as well.

Housing For An Aging Population

As Portland’s age composition changes and as the number of households comprised of older residents increases, experience in other communities suggests that there will be increasing interest in alternative forms of housing.

In the future, Portland should consider ways to provide for some housing diversity (condominiums, apartments, congregate care, etc.) designed to meet the needs and desires of older residents. There may also be increased interest in accessory apartments (allowed by Section 9.1 of the Zoning Regulations) and housing for income-limited elderly households.

For those people who choose to remain in their existing home, Portland might anticipate increased demand for elderly programs such as meals-on-wheels, dial-a-ride, and other services which allow these residents to maintain their relative independence.

There may also be increased interest and demand for elderly tax relief programs for age- and income-eligible residents.

Housing for a Diversity of Incomes

Portland may also have a need during the planning period for housing for moderate-income households and first-time homebuyers.

Some communities have addressed this need by the following types of programs:

- Developing affordable units
- Requiring all new residential developments to address housing affordability by creating units or paying a fee (“inclusionary zoning”)
- Charging an affordable housing fee as part of any zoning permit
- Establishing a “housing fund”
- Establishing an “incentive housing zone” as authorized by CGS Section 8-13m
- Working with Habitat for Humanity, churches or other organizations to construct small-scale projects

Portland may wish to consider similar approaches or other approaches.

Policies
1. Recognize the need for housing options for an aging population.
2. Recognize the need for housing options for a diversity of incomes.
3. Monitor the availability of adequate housing options for seniors.
Action Items
4. Explore ways to diversify Portland’s housing portfolio.

ADDRESSING INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

Overview

For the Plan, the term “infrastructure” refers to services or facilities Portland might want or need to support conservation and development strategies and enhance the overall quality of life in the community.

Services and facilities such as municipal buildings, parks, recreation facilities, roadways, and utilities help support the type of community that Portland has indicated it wants to be. Such services and facilities also affect residents’ quality of life.

By providing for adequate facilities and services, Portland can maintain and enhance residents’ quality of life.

Community Facilities



Transportation



Infrastructure



N. Address Community Facility Needs

Community facilities support important community functions such as education, public safety, and recreation and contribute significantly to the quality of life in Portland.

Portland has addressed a number of community facility needs in recent years and these efforts should continue.

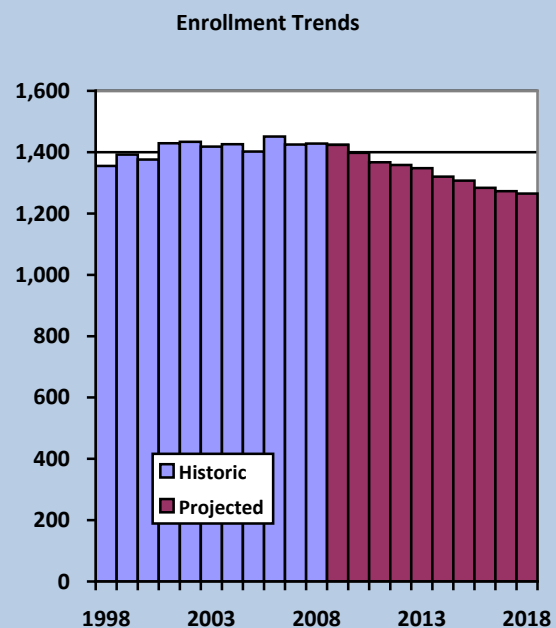
Community facilities and services are major contributing factors in determining the overall quality of life in Portland.

CASE STUDY – Enrollment Projections

Education services comprise approximately 60% of Portland’s annual budget and fluctuations in enrollments can have a major impact on the budget.

However, enrollment projections for the Portland school system point to declining enrollments in the near term. This trend reflects the changing age composition of Portland and is similar to what is forecast in other Connecticut municipalities. Eventually, this enrollment trend will change and so continued enrollment projections are recommended.

This type of information helps Portland anticipate and prioritize community facility needs. Gathering this type of information should continue to occur.



CASE STUDY – Portland Town Park

Since 2005, the Town of Portland has been planning for a new town park / recreation facility on Route 17 near Strickland Street. Following receipt of a grant from the State of Connecticut in 2011, the Town was able to prepare a feasibility study of the property for use as a recreation complex.

Then, in 2012, an advisory committee was established to oversee design of the improvements. Following site walks, public outreach, and property surveys, several options for the property were evaluated. As of 2015, a preliminary plan has been prepared and final authorization to proceed is the next step.

This type of approach is an example of how Portland anticipates and prioritizes community facility needs. This type of process should continue to be used for other community facilities.

Route 17 Portland Town Park Master Plan



N.1. Address Community Facility Needs

Some community facility issues may warrant consideration during the planning period:

- Maintaining a planning process for anticipating and prioritizing community facility needs
- Maintaining existing buildings and facilities
- Update municipal facilities to meet anticipated needs
- Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, especially in terms of the recreation complex on Route 17 at Strickland Street
- Maintaining adequate staffing for fire and emergency medical services (EMS)
- Monitoring school enrollment trends and projections

For all municipal facilities, consideration should be given to acquiring additional land adjacent to each facility as it becomes available in order to be able to provide for possible future expansion.

Town Hall



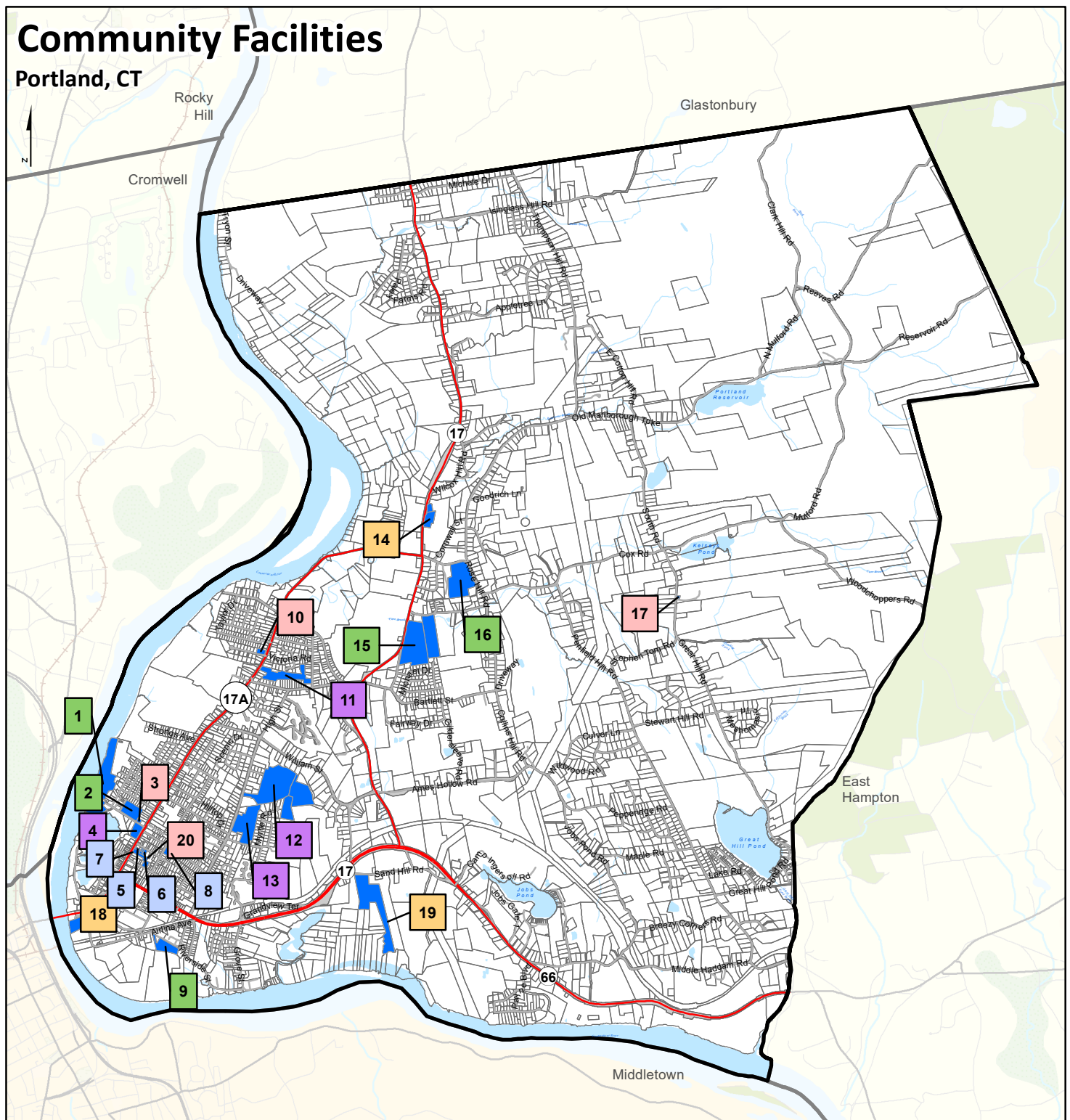
Highway Garage



Policies
1. Maintain a planning process for anticipating and prioritizing community facility needs.
2. Maintain the buildings and facilities already existing, including adding staffing as needed.
3. Update municipal facilities to meet anticipated needs.
4. Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, especially in terms of the Route 17 Portland Town Park.
5. Maintain adequate staffing for fire and emergency medical services (EMS).
6. Monitor school enrollment trends and projections.
7. For all municipal facilities, consider acquiring additional land adjacent to each facility as it becomes available in order to be able to provide for possible future expansion.
Action Items
8. Implement actions to address community facility needs.

Community Facilities

Portland, CT



Legend

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 - Riverfront Park | 8 - Town Hall | 15 - Portland Town Park (proposed) |
| 2 - Middlesex Ave. Fields | 9 - Brownstone Park | 16 - Bransfield Park |
| 3 - Fire Station #1 | 10 - Fire Station #2 | 17 - Fire Station #3 |
| 4 - Brownstone Intermediate School | 11 - Gildersleeve School | 18 - Sewer Plant |
| 5 - Community Center | 12 - High School / Middle School | 19 - Transfer Station / Recycling Center |
| 6 - Senior Center | 13 - Valley View School | 20 - Police Station |
| 7 - Library | 14 - Highway Garage | |

3,250 Feet

O. Address Vehicular Transportation

Overall, the vehicular circulation needs of Portland residents and businesses appear well served by the State highway system and the network of local streets.

The overall goal of this section of the POCD is to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods over the roadway network in Portland.

Provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods over the roadway network in Portland.

Route 17A / 66



Route 17 at Route 17A



O.1. Maintain and Improve Roadway Conditions

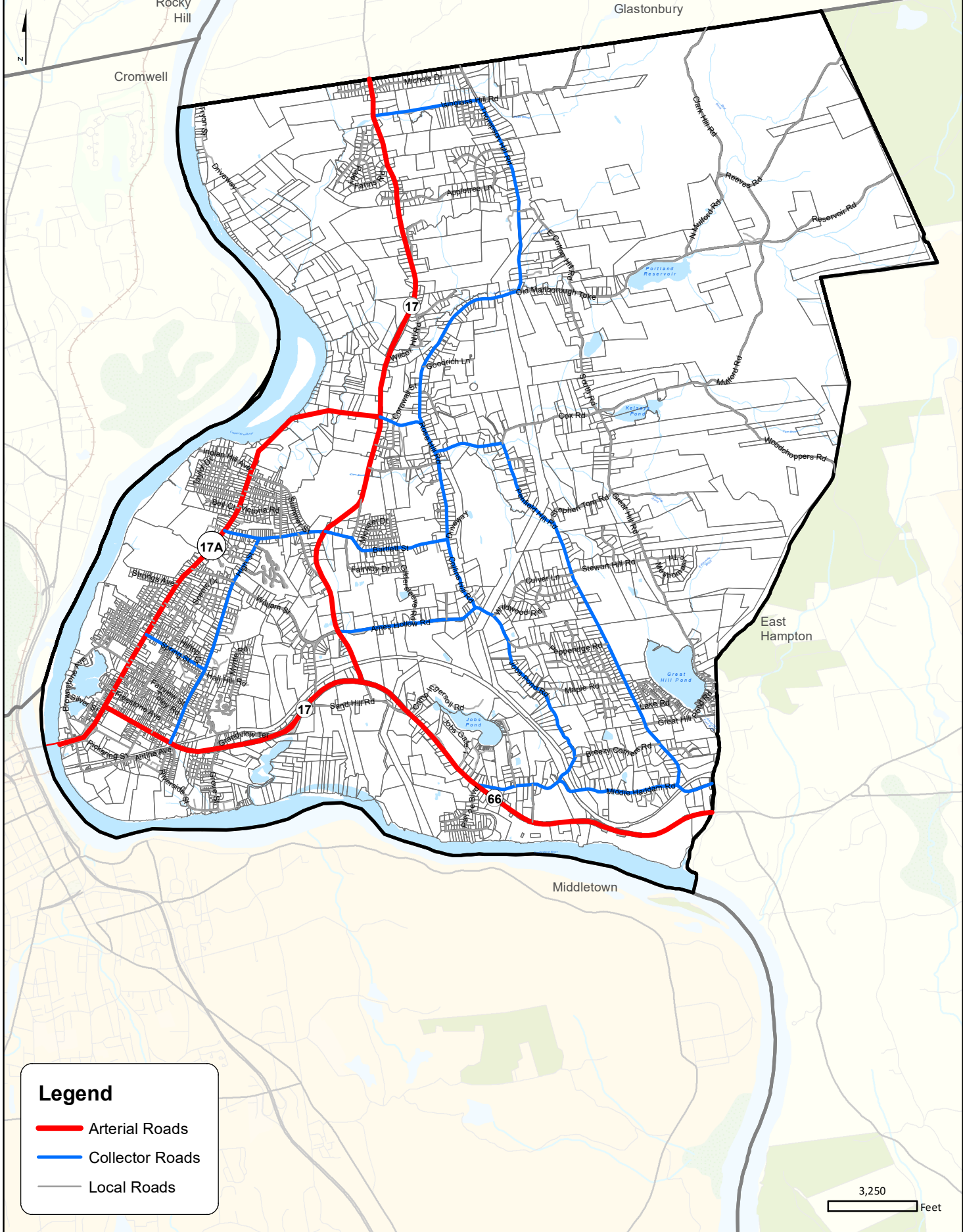
Roadway safety involves many factors including sight lines, road geometry, drainage, surface conditions, and road width. The Public Works Department (PWD) regularly reviews road conditions to address safety or other issues which may arise. Design and routing considerations could include roundabouts, road relocations, and other approaches. Roadway improvements may include storm drainage installations, road widening and extensions, horizontal and vertical realignments, and total road section reconstruction.

Maintaining roadway pavement is a considerable financial obligation for Portland and one that seems easy to delay given fiscal constraints. However, all road pavement will eventually deteriorate and experience has shown that modest improvements in early years (crack sealing, chip sealing, etc.) will extend the useful life of roads and avoid considerable expenses later (total reconstruction). Portland should strive to maintain road pavements as cost effectively as possible over the lifecycle of the road.

Policies
1. Continue to address roadway safety and other conditions as they arise.
2. Consider traffic calming approaches where needed to protect the quality of life in residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, near schools and recreational areas.
3. Maintain road pavements as cost effectively as possible over the lifecycle of the road
Action Items
4. Implement actions to maintain and improve roadway conditions.

Vehicular Transportation

Portland, CT



Legend

- Arterial Roads
- Collector Roads
- Local Roads

3,250 Feet

O.2. Maintain A Functional Road Network

Since the major roads in Portland are part of the State highway system, the Town should continue to work with regional and state agencies to maintain and improve the overall roadway network.

The basic elements of the roadway circulation system for Portland are in place. It is anticipated that private developers will build future roads as part of the subdivision of property. As this occurs, the Town should ensure there are reasonable connections within and between subdivisions. Developers often like to build cul-de-sac streets and these roads can complicate the efficient provision of municipal services (school buses, snow plows, emergency response, etc.).

Should traffic speed or volume become an issue in residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, near schools or recreational areas, “traffic calming” might be considered.

Policies
1. Continue to work with regional and state agencies to maintain and improve the overall roadway network.
2. Ensure that there are reasonable connections within and between future subdivision roads and that cul-de-sac streets are minimized.
Action Items
3. Implement actions to maintain a functional road network.

CASE STUDY- Traffic Calming

“Traffic calming” is a series of approaches to managing the design or use of roadways in order to control traffic speeds and/or volumes. Some approaches include:

Education

1. Educating drivers to try and alter behavior
2. Neighborhood meetings to raise awareness of the issue and identify possible approaches.
3. Neighborhood newsletter to share information about safety concerns and proposed responses.
4. Radar speed sign to alert motorists to prevailing speed.
5. Traffic signs to inform drivers of a speed-sensitive area.

Enforcement

6. Enhanced enforcement of speed limits and other traffic laws.

Design

7. Implement a Complete Streets Plan to include ideas, like Road Diets, that narrow travel lanes (pavement markings, landscaping, or curbing) to slow traffic and provide space for pedestrians and cyclists.
8. Mini-roundabouts to require vehicles to slow down and navigate around an island.
9. Temporary / permanent constriction of travel lanes (curb extensions, bump-outs, chicanes, etc.) to slow traffic and deter through traffic.
10. Speed bump / hump to deter speeding and - through traffic.
11. Partial / full closure to prevent traffic.

P. Support Walking

Portland should aspire to be a pedestrian-friendly community. These efforts will help support the Town Center and the overall quality of life in the community.

Sidewalks – Portland wants to have sidewalks (surfaced walkways located along streets) established and maintained within the Town Center and extending out to surrounding areas (such as the Quarries, the Riverfront Park area, and the Arrigoni Bridge). The Town Center area will benefit from encouraging a pedestrian-friendly environment and from providing a continuous system of safe, inviting, and attractive sidewalks and crosswalks. Sidewalks should be of adequate width to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Trails and Multi-Use Paths - Portland seeks to establish a system of off-road trails and multi-use paths to interconnect open space areas and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the landscape of Portland including the riverfront area and the Meshomasic State Forest. Portland has been working on improving the Air Line Rail Trail as part of a regional greenway system and this will enhance the effort to be recognized as a pedestrian-friendly community. Trail connections to Glastonbury through Wangunk Meadows are also encouraged.

Promote walking, biking, and transit in Portland as recommended in the “complete streets” plan.

Policies
1. Aspire to be a pedestrian-friendly community
2. Ensure that adequate and safe pedestrian crosswalks are provided in appropriate places.
3. Close gaps in discontinuous sidewalks.
4. Enforce the existing sidewalk maintenance ordinance.
Action Items
5. Develop and implement a sidewalk improvement program.
6. Implement recommendations of the Complete Streets Group.
7. Adopt a “complete streets” plan.
8. Identify who is responsible for sidewalk repairs on Main Street and compel them to complete them.

Sidewalks



Air Line Trail



Q. Support Cycling

Portland should aspire to be a bicycle-friendly community.

The Complete Streets Group has been looking at how to make better provisions for bicycles in the future. Completing the Air Line Trail in Portland and connecting it to the Arrigoni Bridge is a great step forward in terms of being a bicycle-friendly community.

Policies	
1.	Aspire to be a bicycle-friendly community
2.	Create an overall system of bicycle routes in Portland.
3.	Accommodate bicycles whenever practical in road and site development projects.
4.	Narrow travel lanes and create bicycle lanes where possible.
5.	Establish formal bike lanes with medians where space is available.
6.	Work with CTDOT to include bike lanes on all state roads in Portland.
Action Items	
7.	Implement recommendations of the Complete Streets Group.
8.	Seek designation as a “bicycle-friendly community”.

R. Enhance Transit Services

Portland is currently served by a bus route operated by the Middletown Transit District. This service connects Portland and East Hampton to downtown Middletown and other bus connections available there. This service should be maintained and enhanced since the frequency of bus service limits its use.



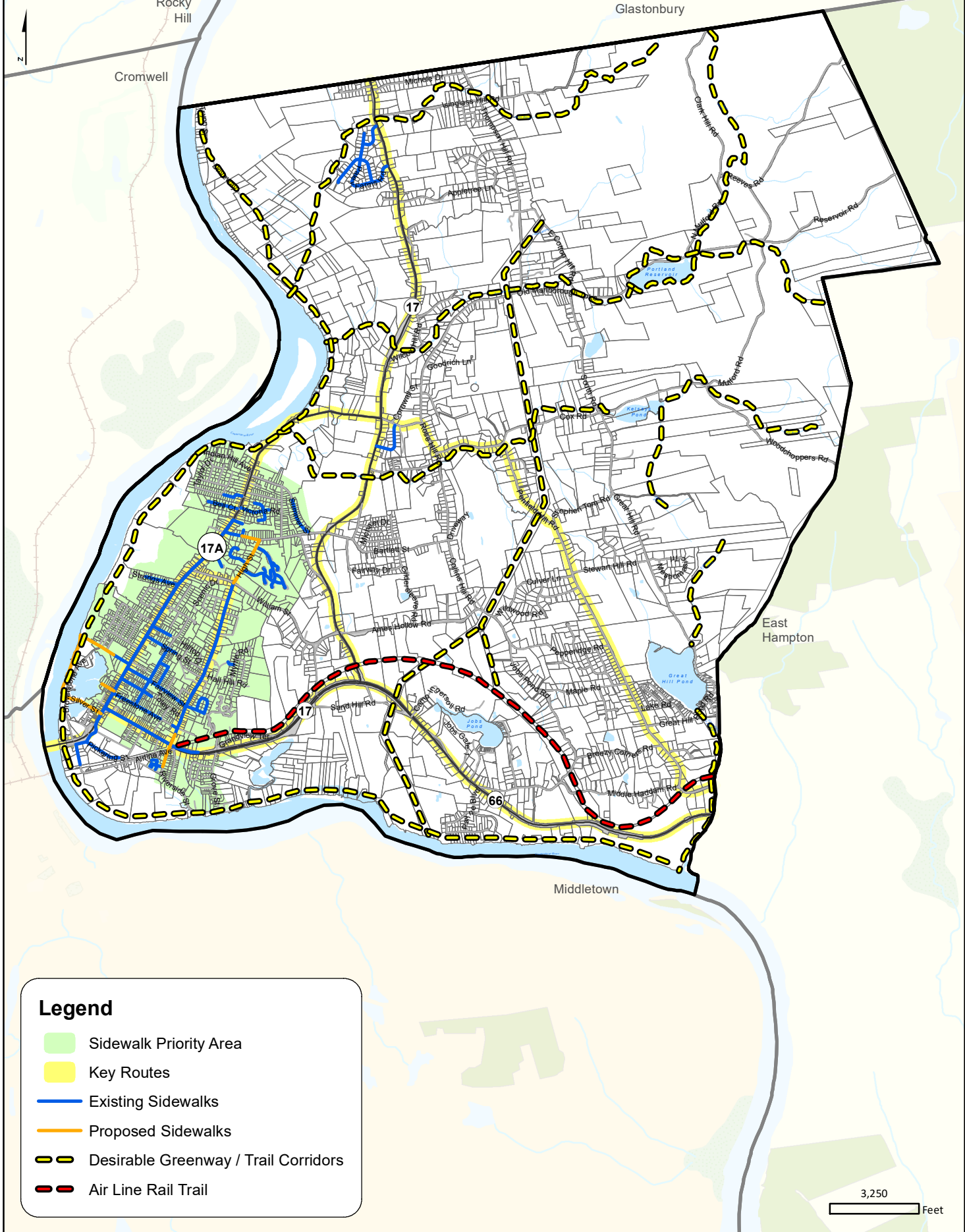
Portland participates in a regional dial-a-ride service for the elderly and disabled operated by the Middletown Area Transit District. Eligible persons can schedule trips for medical, shopping, educational and recreational purposes.

In addition, the Town also owns two handi-capped accessible vans that transport seniors for day trips and special events.

Policies	
1.	Maintain and enhance transit services.
2.	Monitor transit usage since demand may increase as the age composition of the community changes.
Action Items	
3.	Implement actions to enhance transit services.

Walking / Cycling / Transit

Portland, CT



S. Provide For Utility Services

The availability of utility infrastructure (such as public water and sewer service) can have a significant impact on the development of a community. These utilities should be used to guide and support appropriate development patterns by ensuring that sufficient capacity is available in desired locations.

Promote adequate utility services to support the desired development pattern in Portland.

Sewer Service



S.1. Maintain And Enhance the Sewer System

While most areas of Portland rely on private septic systems, sewer service exists in the Town Center. The sewers help support the intensity of development desired in this area.

The treatment plant (located just south of the Arrigoni Bridge) has been upgraded to meet environmental requirements and anticipated community needs. The plant is permitted for discharge to the Connecticut River at average daily flow of 1.0 million gallons per day (MGD). The approximately 1,750 customers generate about 400,000 gallons of wastewater per day. As a result, Portland is expected to have adequate sewage capacity to meet community needs for the foreseeable future.

Still, the extension of sewer service would benefit the overall economic development objectives of the community. For example, extending sewer service to the Planned Industrial zone around the intersection of Route 17 and Route 66 and on Sand Hill Road would help attract new development to this area.

Policies
1. Maintain and enhance the current sewer infrastructure in the community.
2. If necessary to protect public health, extend sewer service to residential areas experiencing a high incidence of septic failures.
Action Items
3. Investigate expanding the sewer service area to promote economic development.
4. Adjust sewer usage rates to provide revenues that meet expenditures.
5. Provide staffing/resources to maintain sewer infrastructure.

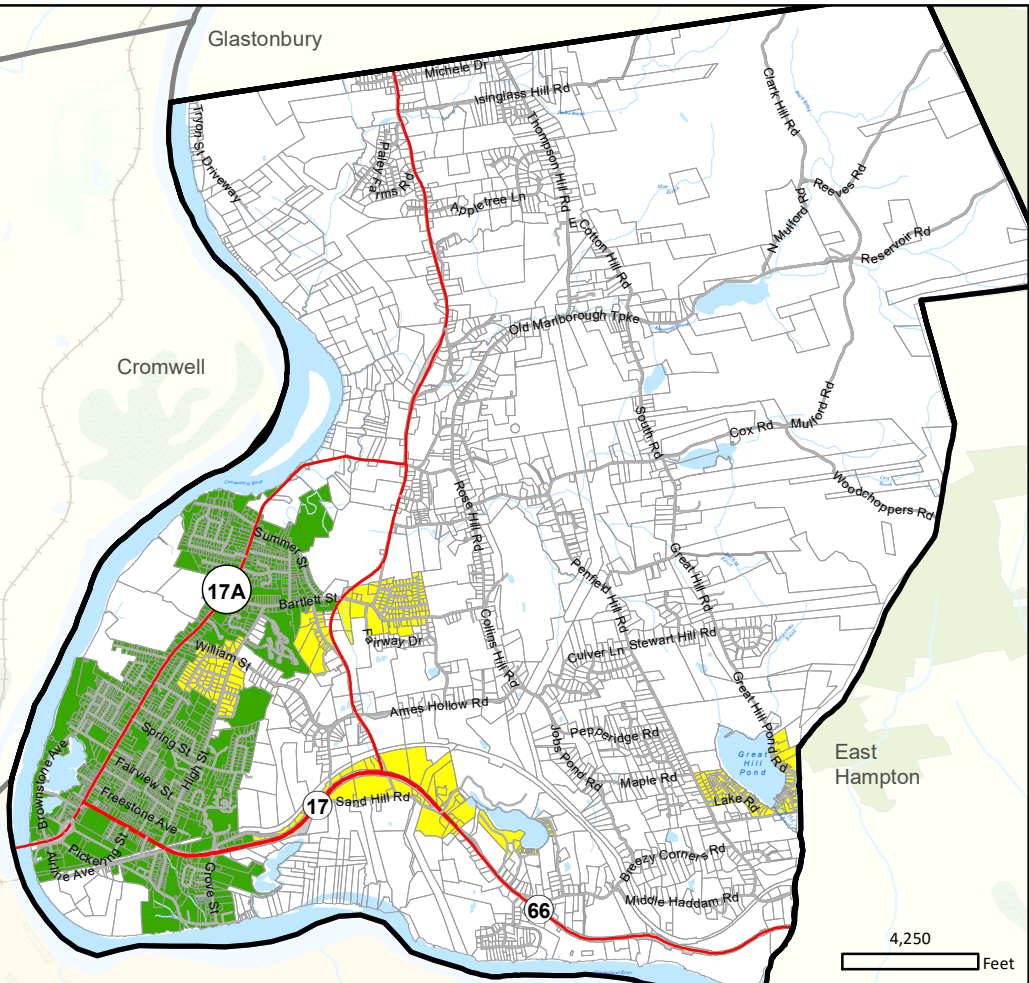
Sewer Service

Portland, CT



Legend

- Existing Sewer Service Area
- Proposed Sewer Service Area
- Planned Sewer Avoidance Area



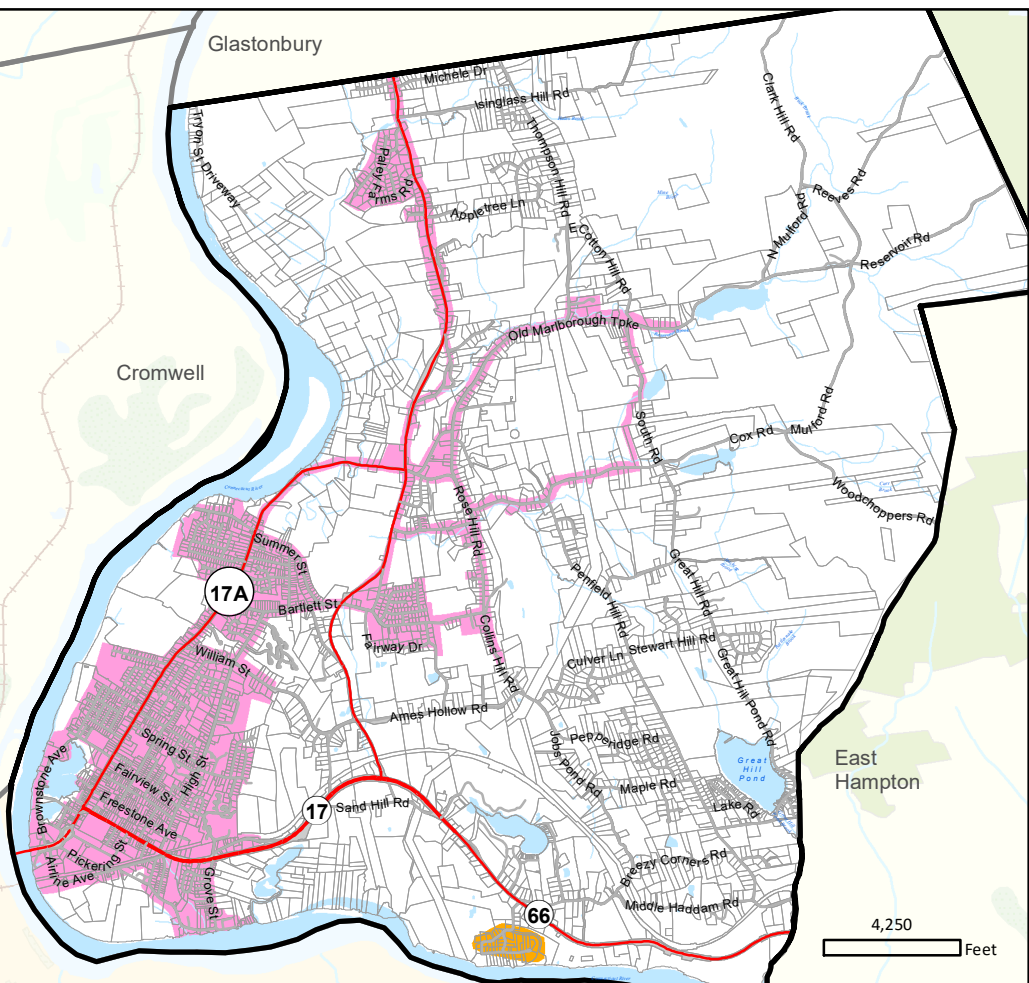
Water Service

Portland, CT



Legend

- Portland Water Department
- ECRWC - Rivercrest Division



S.2. Maintain And Enhance the Water System

While most properties in Portland rely on private wells, public water service is available in the Town Center and other areas.

CASE STUDY- Water Supply

Portland has an agreement to purchase water from the Metropolitan District Commission (a provider of water in the Hartford area) in order to supplement local sources. This arrangement was originally entered into by the Town to avoid the cost of building a filtration plant and to provide a secure water source.

Since that time, there have been some concerns expressed about the cost of the water being provided. Further, this discussion has resulted in calls to consider alternatives to the current contract with MDC.

Since the MDC Agreement is due for renewal, the Town should investigate ways that it might become independent in terms of the water supply and what the costs might be. Once the investigation is done, the Town can balance the overall advantages and disadvantages of different approaches and make a decision for the future.

Portland Reservoir



Public water for approximately 2,400 users is supplied from:

- A water supply agreement with the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), and
- A local water source (the “Glastonbury Well”) located on Glastonbury Turnpike.

Together, these two sources provide sufficient water to meet the Town’s requirements during the planning period. An emergency water source is available at the Portland Reservoir although this is not expected to be needed due to the arrangement with the MDC.

Issues to consider in terms of the water system include the following:

- Making improvements to increase water pressure (domestic and hydrants) in the Town Center area ,
- Improving water supply for fire suppression in outlying areas (such as underground cisterns as part of new developments)
- Extending water service for public health or economic development purposes.

Policies
1. Maintain and enhance the current water infrastructure in the community.
2. Improve water service in the Town Center.
Action Items
3. Revise the Subdivision Regulations to require underground storage tanks connected to dry hydrants for subdivisions in areas not served by public water.
4. Investigate the costs and benefits of different water supply approaches.
5. Adjust water usage rates to provide revenues that meet expenditures.
6. Provide staffing/resources to maintain water infrastructure.

S.3. Manage Stormwater Runoff

Storm drainage in most areas of Portland is accomplished by structural systems (catch basins, pipes, and culverts) or by sheet flow off impervious surfaces such as roads, roofs and parking areas.

There is increased attention being paid to the water quality impacts from stormwater runoff and Portland should consider addressing this issue as well.

It is anticipated that Portland will transition to “low impact development” (LID) approaches where storm water quality and quantity is managed more by non-structural systems. By addressing stormwater runoff closer to where the raindrop falls, LID approaches can help promote groundwater recharge, reduce the frequency or severity of flooding, and address water quality.

Policies
1. Address the water quantity and water quality impacts of stormwater runoff.
2. Address outstanding drainage issues within the community.
Action Items
3. Incorporate LID approaches into local regulations.

S.4. Address Other Infrastructure Needs

Natural Gas

Portland is in the franchise area of the Connecticut Natural Gas Company. Natural gas service is being extended into Portland from East Hampton along Route 66. While natural gas service is not widely available in the community at present, it could be important for residents and businesses. Portland should work to make natural gas service available within more areas of Portland in the future.

Electrical Service

Electricity is delivered locally by Eversource (formerly Connecticut Light and Power). Electric service in Portland is reported to be reliable town-wide and should be able to meet both current and anticipated future needs.

The main threat to electrical reliability in Portland is downed power lines due to storm events. Electrical lines can be protected by placing them underground as opportunities present themselves although this can be very expensive. Finding an appropriate balance between tree-lined streets and electrical reliability will be an on-going issue.

Wired Communication

Wired communication services (telephone, cable, internet) are available town-wide to meet current and anticipated future needs. As the use of digital communication devices grows, Portland should seek ways to enhance the capacity and speed of wired communication services.

Wireless Communication

More and more communications are happening on wireless devices and Portland should seek to enhance the coverage, capacity and speed of wireless communication services.

As people may migrate away from “wired” communications in the future to wireless devices, Portland should evaluate the best ways to address this trend. Finding an appropriate balance between a rural landscape and the quality and reliability of wireless communications will be an on-going issue. This includes “wi-fi” services.

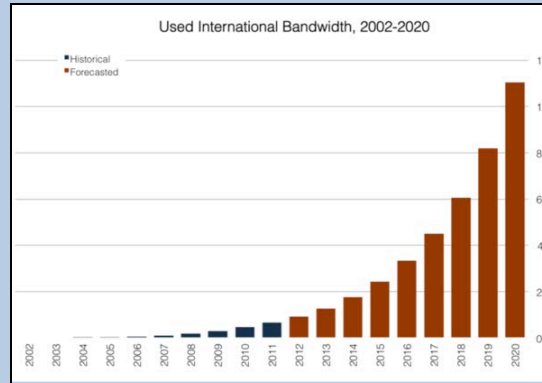
Policies
1. Work to make natural gas service available within more areas of Portland in the future.
2. Seek to find an appropriate balance between tree-lined streets and electrical reliability.
3. Seek to place electrical lines underground, especially within the Town Center, as opportunities present themselves.
4. Seek ways to enhance the capacity and speed of wired communication services.
5. Seek to enhance the coverage, capacity and speed of wireless communication services.
6. Find an appropriate balance between a rural landscape and the quality and reliability of wireless communications.
Action Items
7. Develop a tower siting preference policy for wireless communications.

CASE STUDY- Technology

Internet speed and accessibility is becoming an increasingly important issue for businesses and people. Over the last decade, there has been a significant increase in demand for speed and bandwidth. During the same period, there has been a transition from wired devices to wireless devices.

Portland needs to stay on the front edge of this transition in order to remain competitive for businesses and have access to what is now considered a basic service.

Bandwidth Demand



Wireless Devices





IMPLEMENTATION

Overview

Implementation of the Plan is the main purpose of the planning process and should be an ongoing priority.

Portland should implement the Plan ...

T. Implement The Plan

T.1. Implement The Plan

Through the process of preparing this Plan, issues and opportunities affecting Portland have been identified and strategies have been developed. If Portland is to take charge of its future, implementing the strategies and recommendations outlined in this Plan is important.

The Planning and Zoning Commission can implement many of the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development through regulation amendments, application reviews, and other means. However, other recommendations may require cooperation with and action by other local boards and commissions such as the Board of Selectmen and similar agencies.

Yet, if the Plan is to be realized, it must serve as a guide to all residents, businesses, builders, developers, applicants, owners, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly conservation and development of Portland.

While some recommendations can be carried out in a relatively short period of time, others may only be realized by the end of the planning period or beyond. Since some recommendations may involve additional study or a commitment of fiscal resources, their implementation may take place over several years or occur in stages.

Tools that have been shown to be effective at implementing POCD recommendations and are recommended for Portland are described on the following pages.

Policies
1. Make implementation of the Plan an ongoing priority.
2. Maintain the POCD by regularly reviewing the policies and action items associated with the different strategies.
Action Items
3. Use implementation tables to prepare an annual implementation program of issues to be addressed by boards and commissions.

Ribbon Cutting



T.2. Create A Plan Implementation Committee

A Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) is an effective way to help implement the Plan. An “ad hoc” committee made up of residents and representatives of local boards would be a significant step towards including a variety of Town agencies in implementing the Plan and monitoring progress. This Committee should provide status reports to the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, and others.

The PIC should meet two to four times a year to establish priorities and guide implementation of the Plan’s recommendations. In addition, the Committee should assess the status of specific recommendations, establish new priorities, and suggest new implementation techniques.

The PIC can prepare implementation schedules and/or develop an annual implementation program of issues to be addressed by boards and commissions.

As the ultimate responsible agency, the Planning and Zoning Commission can also assume the responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Plan’s recommendations.

Action Items
1. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee to help implement the POCD.

CASE STUDY – Policies And Action Items

Recommendations in each section of the POCD have been broken into “policies” and “action items.”

Policies are long-term guidelines that do not readily lend themselves to a specific schedule or measurement. Policies might be used by the Planning and Zoning Commission or other agency to determine if a proposed activity is consistent with the POCD.

Action Items on the other hand, are specific actions that can typically be scheduled, completed, and evaluated. These are discrete work items, which can and should be completed to implement the strategies recommended in this POCD.

Collaborative Model



T.3. Use the Plan To Guide Municipal Spending

A Plan of Conservation and Development can also be used as a guide to two key elements of municipal activity:

- Annual operating budget
- Long-term capital budget

While the POCD does not generally address the day-to-day activities of municipal departments and agencies, it can help improve the overall efficiency of municipal government if those activities are in general accordance with the long-term goals of the community. Communities that have used the POCD to guide the preparation of the operating budget have realized some of the greatest improvements and efficiencies from having prepared a POCD.

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a tool for planning major capital expenditures of a municipality so that local needs can be identified and prioritized within local fiscal constraints that may exist.

The Plan contains several proposals whose implementation may require the expenditure of Town funds. The Plan recommends that these and other items be included in the Town's CIP and that funding for them be included as part of the Capital Budget.

Policies
1. Use the POCD as a guide when preparing the annual operating budget.
2. Use the POCD as a guide when preparing the annual capital budget and the multi-year Capital Improvement Program.

T.4. Promote Inter-Municipal Cooperation

Portland can continue to work with other towns in the region, the Council of Governments, the State of Connecticut, and other agencies to explore opportunities where common interests coincide.

Policies
1. Continue to work with other towns in the region, the Council of Governments, the State of Connecticut, and other organizations to explore opportunities where common interests coincide.

T.5. Use the Plan To Guide PZC Decisions

Using the Plan of Conservation and Development as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning and Zoning Commission will help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan. All land use proposals should be measured and evaluated in terms of the Plan and its various strategies.

Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that municipal improvements (defined in the statute) be referred to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a report before any local action is taken. A proposal disapproved by the Commission can only be implemented after a two-thirds vote by Town Meeting.

Policies
1. Use the POCD as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Zoning Commission.
2. Use the POCD as a guide when reviewing referrals of municipal improvements under CGS Section 8-24.

T.6. Update Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

Many of the recommendations in the Plan of Conservation and Development can be implemented by the Planning and Zoning Commission through application reviews. However, this is only true if the regulations reflect the recommendations of the Plan.

In the near future, the Planning and Zoning Commission should undertake a comprehensive review of the subdivision regulations and the Zoning Commission should similarly review the zoning regulations and zoning map, making whatever revisions are necessary to:

- make the regulations more user-friendly,
- implement Plan recommendations, and
- promote consistency between the Plan and the regulations.

The importance of updating local regulations as soon as possible cannot be over-emphasized.

Action Items
1. Undertake a comprehensive review of the subdivision regulations.
2. Undertake a comprehensive review of the zoning regulations and zoning map.

Implementation Tables

Implementation tables summarizing the strategies, policies and action steps from the preceding sections of the POCD are contained in the Implementation Element (a separate document).

The tables identify a “leader” for each policy and action step and may include one or more “partners.”

The “leader” is the entity considered most likely to bear responsibility for implementing the policy or completing the action step.

Partners are other entities likely to be involved in implementation.

The “leaders” and “partners” for each policy and action item are identified in the Implementation Element.



CONCLUSION

Overview

The Plan of Conservation and Development has been prepared to meet the challenges that will confront the Town of Portland over the next ten years and beyond.

The first step in the planning process was to review the previous POCD (2006) and identify work items that had been accomplished and new priorities for the community. Information was collected, presented, reviewed, and discussed as part of this process.

The second step was to determine what direction the residents of Portland want to take. A municipal survey was conducted to get input from residents about strategies for the future. From this, general goals were developed and refined.

The third step was to identify actions and policies to guide Portland residents and agencies towards achieving their vision. These specific strategies are detailed throughout the Plan.

Despite all of the thought and effort that went into preparing this Plan, the most important step of the planning process is implementation. While the task of implementation falls on all Portland residents, the responsibility for implementing the Plan lies with the Planning and Zoning Commission and other Town agencies.

Conservation



Development



Infrastructure



Future Land Use Plan

The recommendations of each of the preceding chapters can be combined to present an overall Future Land Use Plan for Portland. The Future Land Use Plan is a reflection of the stated goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Plan.

The Future Land Use Plan depicts the Plan's recommendations for the future conservation and development of Portland...

In essence, the Future Land Use Plan is a statement of what the Portland of tomorrow should look like.

Future Land Use Plan Categories

CONSERVATION AREAS

Natural Resources	Areas with significant environmental constraints (wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, floodplains, etc.) that are high priorities for conservation.
Open Space	Areas currently preserved and/or used for open space purposes
Farms	Areas currently being farmed and where farming is desired in the future.

DEVELOPMENT AREAS

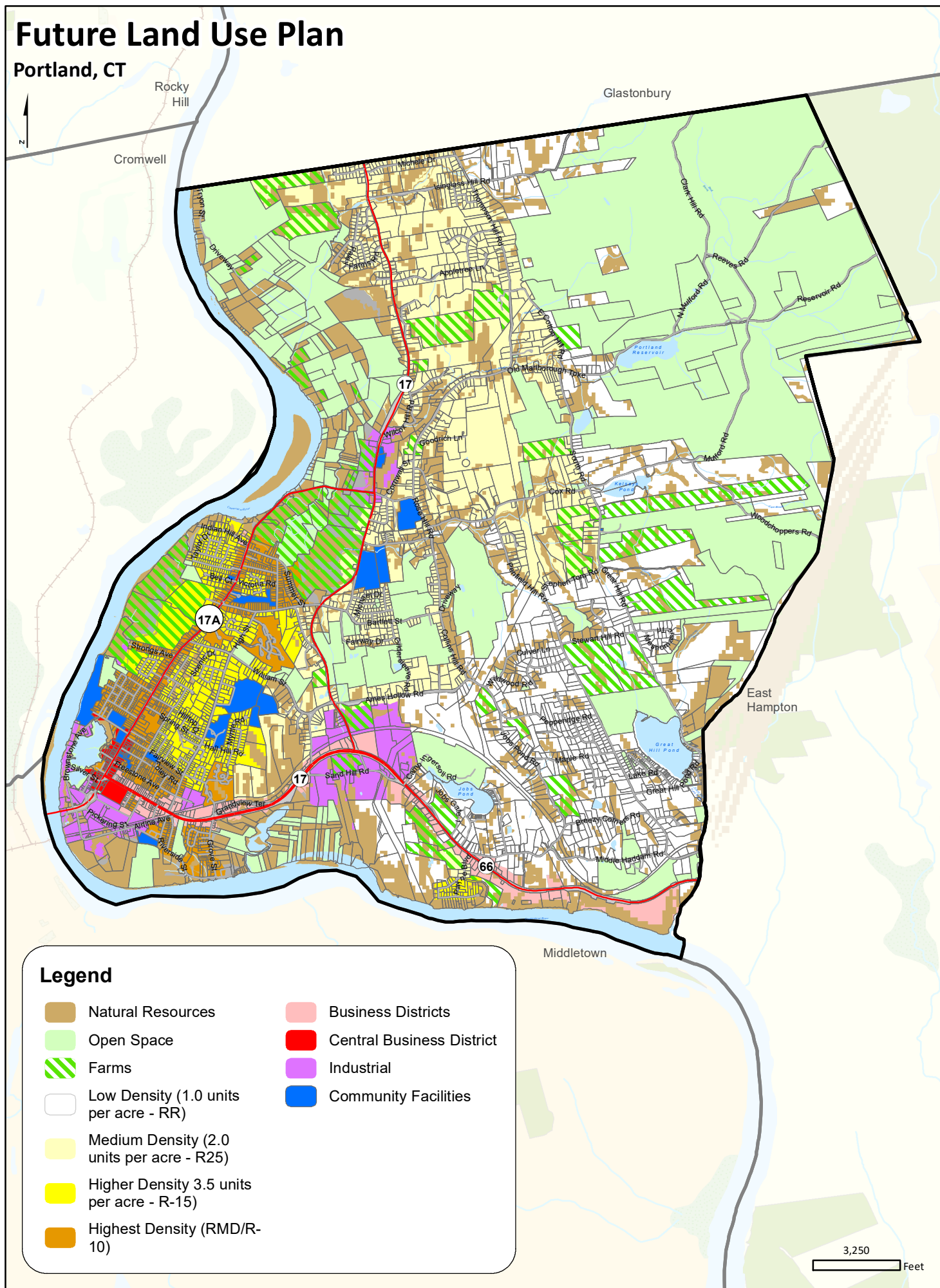
Low Density	Areas where environmental conditions (soil types, terrain, etc.) are suitable for residential densities of approximately one dwelling unit per acre or less.
Medium Density	Areas where environmental conditions are suitable for residential densities of approximately two dwelling units per acre or less.
Higher Density (Town Center residential)	Areas where environmental conditions and infrastructure availability and capacity are suitable for residential densities of approximately four dwelling units per acre or less.
Multi-Family	Areas where multi-family developments exist.
Town Center Business (B-3)	Areas that have been, and are intended to be, developed with mixed land uses in a pedestrian friendly setting.
Business (B-1, B-2)	Areas that have been, and are intended to be, developed with retail, personal service, and office facilities.
Industrial (I, IP, RI)	Areas that have been, and are intended to be, developed with office and industrial development and similar facilities.

OTHER AREAS












Community Facility / Institutional	Areas that have been developed or are intended to develop with community facilities and/or institutional uses.
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Future Land Use Plan

Portland, CT



Legend

 Natural Resources	 Business Districts
 Open Space	 Central Business District
 Farms	 Industrial
 Low Density (1.0 units per acre - RR)	 Community Facilities
 Medium Density (2.0 units per acre - R25)	
 Higher Density 3.5 units per acre - R-15)	
 Highest Density (RMD/R-10)	

3,250 Feet

Plan Consistency

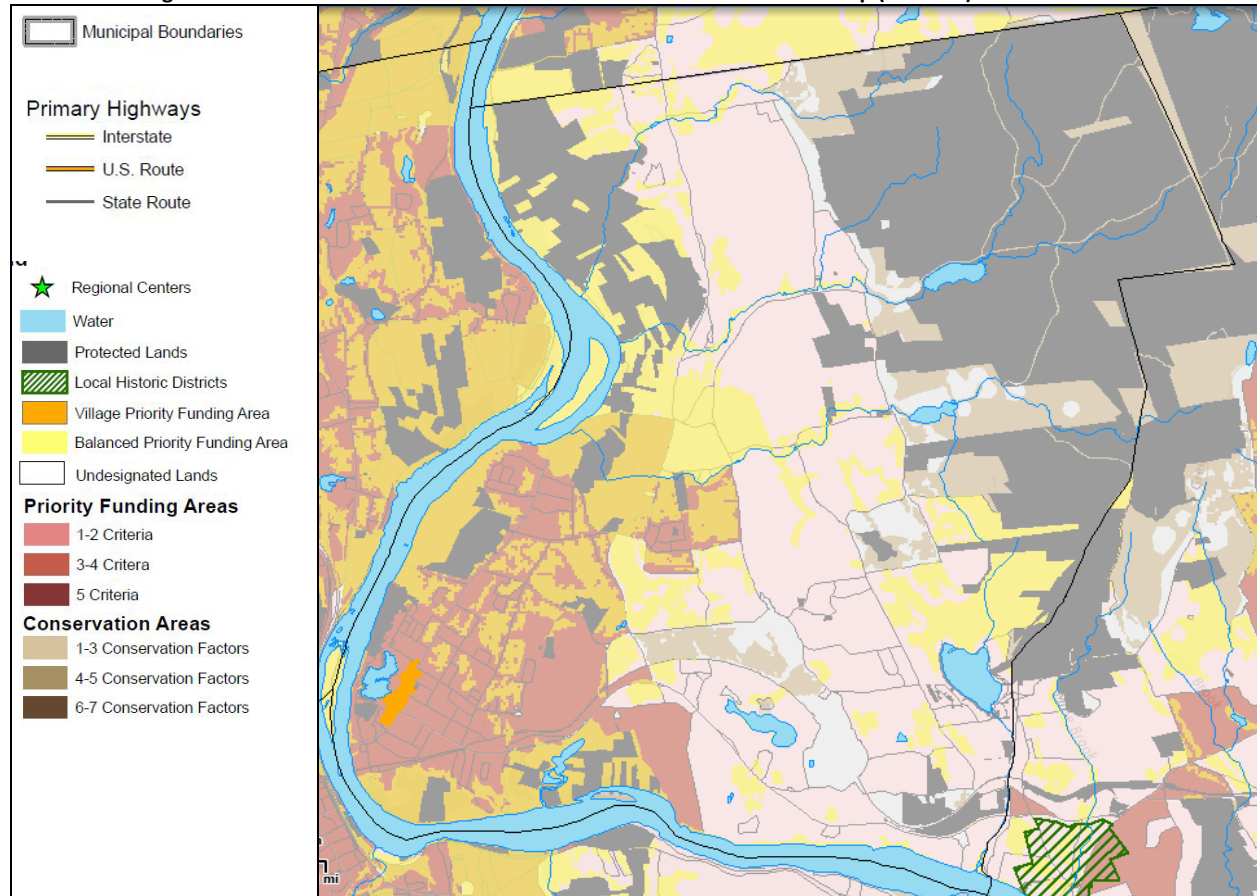
State - Locational Guide Map

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

Portland's vision for its future conservation and development is generally consistent with the State Locational Guide Map.

State Plan Categories

State Locational Guide Map (2013-18)



State Growth Principles

In accordance with CGS Section 8-23, the Plan of Conservation and Development was evaluated for consistency with statewide growth management principles and found to be generally consistent with those principles.

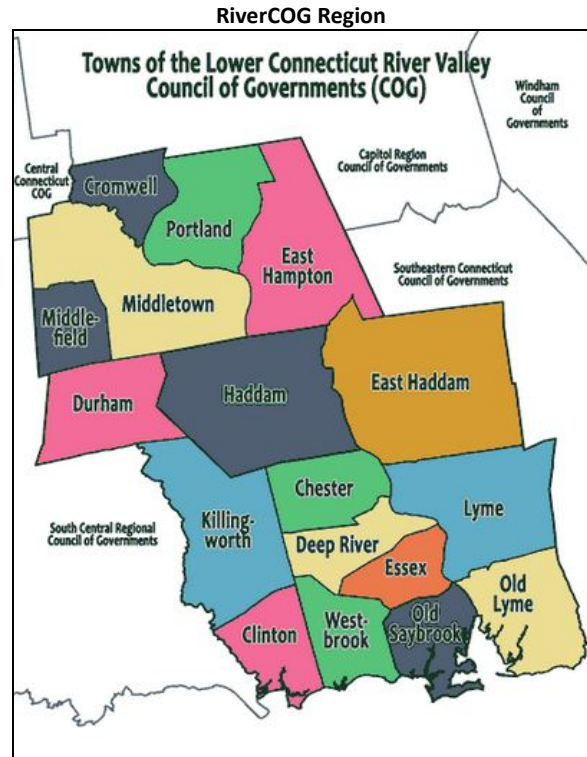
Portland's vision is generally consistent with the State's growth management principles ...

<p>Principle 1 – Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan encourages appropriate growth in the Town Center, which is a mixed use area. This area is served by existing water and sewer infrastructure and infrastructure improvements are planned to meet anticipated needs.</p>
<p>Principle 2 – Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan recommends that Portland seek to diversify its housing “portfolio” and address recognized housing needs – housing that is more affordable and housing for an aging population.</p>
<p>Principle 3 – Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan continues with the overall zoning framework of more intensive development in the Town Center which is served by bus transit and major transportation routes. Since Portland is on one side of the Arrigoni Bridge (one of only a handful of bridges over the Connecticut River in Connecticut), it is a strategic location to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.</p>
<p>Principle 4 – Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan identifies the importance of protecting important community resources such as the natural environment, farmland, open spaces, and historic resources.</p>
<p>Principle 5 – Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan contains recommendations to protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety. In particular, the Plan stresses the importance of protecting water quality.</p>
<p>Principle 6 – Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan is part of the process of integrating planning with other levels of government and with other agencies. The Plan will be used to coordinate efforts with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjacent communities, • regional organizations, and • state agencies.

Regional Plan

Since the beginning of 2015, Portland has been part of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments (RiverCOG) – a regional organization that serves 17 municipalities from the mouth of the Connecticut River upstream to Portland and Cromwell. Prior to that time, Portland was part of the Mid-State Regional Planning Agency.

With the merger of the two regions, RiverCOG decided to prepare a new regional plan with the participation of all the communities in the region. While that Regional Plan has not yet been adopted, it is anticipated that there will be considerable consistency between this municipal POCD, the new regional POCD, and the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan.



From The RiverCOG Website (May 2015)

When the Midstate and Estuary Regions merged in 2012, the PCODs for the two regions were at different stages of development based upon the last time each Plan had been adopted. The CRERPA POCD was almost complete, but because of the imminent merger it was finished without final recommendations and entitled "Report on the Region: Topics, Trends and Tools, 2012 - 2022". Although significant information was compiled for the Midstate POCD, timing was such that no plan or report was available.

As a result, the decision was made to start anew with the Regional POCD that will guide RiverCOG forward for the next decade. The Regional Planning Commission (RPC), the appointed planning arm of the Council of Governments, has started discussion on the POCD and is moving forward to establishing the Plan as soon as possible.

Next Steps

The Plan is intended as a guide to be followed in order to accomplish the overall philosophy of the POCD:

- Maintain Portland's character as a small New England Town,
- Promote business development,
- Develop the riverfront,
- Preserve historic areas,
- Create recreational opportunities,
- Maintain and/or upgrade Portland's infrastructure systems (water, sewer, roads),
- Protect natural resources, and
- Promote a high quality of life for Portland residents.

The POCD outlines policies and action items to help accomplish these overall goals. Implementation of these policies and action items is the next step.

The Plan is intended to be flexible in terms how specific goals and objectives are reached, provided that the long-term goals of the community are achieved.

During the next few years, many of the higher priority action items will be completed and hopefully goals will be achieved. Circumstances will inevitably arise that may suggest that it is time to reconsider the Plan or some of its sections. Such situations should be welcomed since it will mean that the Plan is being actively used and considered by residents.

By preparing this Plan of Conservation and Development, Portland has taken the first step towards creating a better future for the community and its residents.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Residents of Portland

Planning and Zoning Commission

Bruce Tyler	Chair
Robert D. Ellsworth	Vice Chair
Chantal H. Foster	Secretary
Carol B. Caldes	
Terry A. Grady	
Michael K. Woronoff	Alternate
Vacant	Alternate
Vacant	Alternate
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Frederick R. Knous	
Benjamin R. Srb	
Carl A. Chudzik	
Michael A. Pelton	

Technical Assistance

Glenn Chalder, AICP	Editing / Formatting
Alfredo Herrera New England Geo-Systems	GIS mapping

