

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

TOWN OF CHESHIRE, CONNECTICUT

**ADOPTED BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION ON
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INTRODUCTION

ENABLING LEGISLATION

This plan was written pursuant to Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes which mandates that a plan be prepared which recommends the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable population densities within the municipality. The Commission is also directed to review the plan of development at least once every ten years. The Plan is advisory only and is implemented by the zoning regulations.

However it is customary for Cheshire to review the plan every five years and modify it where necessary taking into account recent construction, new technology and current priorities.

A COMBINED COMMISSION

Previously there were two distinct and separate commissions – one to draft the plan (the Planning Commission) and one to legislate its implementation (the Zoning Commission). The Planning and Zoning Commissions were combined into a single Commission with the adoption of a new Town Charter in 1971.

This is the 4th amendment of the Plan of Conservation and Development by the combined commission. There were 4 plans written prior to 1971.

Also the name of the Plan has been changed by the Planning Commission to the Plan of Conservation and Development to emphasis the town's continued commitment to balanced growth through development, conservation, and the preservation of open space.

PAST STUDIES

Cheshire's first town plan was developed in 1949 with the assistance of a consultant. The second plan was completed in 1954 with subsequent revisions in 1958 and 1965. The plan was totally rewritten in 1977; a review and minor revisions took place in 1984. A complete review was done in 1993 with some sections rewritten.

Cheshire was a town of 5,000 people at the time of the first plan. Now its population is 28,543. The basic goal of past plans has been to maintain the character of the town through periods of intense growth, by allowing for orderly development within the plan's guidelines. While growth has slowed substantially over the past decade it is still necessary to remain vigilant and to insure that orderly development be given a high priority. This is also a major goal of the plan.

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY

“The New Haven Colony, governing the area from Long Island Sound to the hills of Meriden, voted to set off a certain portion of land for the establishment of a new plantation, which was called Wallingford. Joseph Ives, a son of one of the first settlers of Wallingford, and his friend, John Hotchkiss, decided to move west, and in 1694 built the first log houses in what is now the southeastern part of Cheshire.”

“As roads were built, the settlement between Cook Hill and the Mill River grew. In 1718 the residents petitioned the General Assembly to set off the land west of Mill River as a separate parish, giving as reasons the distance to churches and schools in Wallingford. A Committee of the Assembly found that there were only 45 families involved, and that their estates were valued at two thousand pounds, and decided they should remain part of Wallingford.”

“In 1723, the ‘West Farmers’ again petitioned the Assembly. Their request was granted, and West Farms was made a distinct society by legislative grant, under the name of the Parish of New Cheshire. It remained a parish of Wallingford until 1780, when it was incorporated as the Town of Cheshire.”

“So the village started and grew into a community built around its religious and educational institutions. The First Congregational Church was erected in 1723, the first Episcopal Church in 1760. The original academy was built in 1796 and, under the direction of the Protestant Episcopal Church, was used both as a seminary and college for this and other dioceses until Trinity College was founded in Hartford.

“Figure I on the following page is a plan of the Village Center in 1856 which clearly shows how earlier Cheshire people decided on the location of a religious and civic center, set aside appropriate lands, and then built their churches and homes accordingly. The builders of the Town Hall recognized this plan when they built the present structure across the Green from the Church.”

“As the populations in the surrounding cities grew, farming in Cheshire expanded to meet their demands for more produce.”

“Early in the nineteenth century the overland route through Cheshire was supplemented by the Farmington Canal. After a short life, this slow means of transport gave way to the railroad, which opened up the whole Mill River Valley to industrial expansion of which Cheshire had its share. Then came automobiles and good roads which have given the opportunity for country living to a great many people who work in nearby industrial cities.”

TOWN SETTING

INTRODUCTION

Cheshire lies along the western margin of the Connecticut River valley. The linear ridge of trap rock, that runs through the center of the valley, touches the Town on the Wallingford line. Another similar ridge runs for a short distance along the Town of Prospect line and northeast for about three miles, to form Peck Mountain. To the west there is another small valley, then the land rises steeply to form a ridge marking the boundary of the western New England upland. The Cheshire Heights section is located on that up-land and is underlined by metamorphic rock. In contrast, virtually all the valley is underlined by red Triassic sandstone. The valley portion rises gently northwards from 150 to 200 feet above sea level with the Center of the Town located on a drumloidal ridge, highest point, 270 feet, overlooking the rolling lower land around it.

Cheshire's west boundary from the south is very clear. The steep slope west of Mountain Road forms a dividing line, the top of which is where the towns of Prospect and Cheshire meet. Route 10 is on a second high point in the Town with the valley between the Peck Mountain area and the border with Prospect and the Center of Town at Route 10. It should be noted that the Old Farmington Canal runs in a north-south direction between Route 10 and the Prospect line in the lowest point of the valley, and is bordered by wetlands for most of its course or corridor. The other side of Town, east of Route 10, on the other hand, eventually drops down to form Broad Brook Reservoir in the eastern boundary and again is quite different from the west side in that there are scattered hills, such as Jinny Hill, as well as rolling terrain. The south boundary with Hamden is not physically distinguishable. The northwest quadrant includes a large area of wetlands, at least partially because of the man-made constriction of the Ten Mile Aqueduct. The northeast, to the contrary, is high and slopes in the direction of Wallingford. Both the northwest and northeast are rich in sand and gravel deposits.

DRAINAGE PATTERNS

The Town of Cheshire can be divided almost directly in half latitudinally at the Town Center. It should be noted that water drains northward and southward of this line. The Ten Mile River runs down the mountain from Prospect filling Mixville Pond, the Town's bathing site, then from the Mixville Pond across the property of Consolidated Industries, northward across Route 70, behind the Currier Woods Condominium Development, through Lake Percival into a bog and wet area and flowing under the former Boston and Maine railroad in the vicinity of West Johnson Avenue. It continues northward to the historic Farmington Canal Ten Mile River Aqueduct, under that inadequately sized aqueduct and further north to join the Quinnipiac River just north of the Town of Southington boundary. A little further east is the historic Farmington Canal. The drainage from this canal also flows north to join the Ten Mile River in the vicinity of West Johnson Avenue.

JUDD BROOK flows southward from the Town of Southington, across West Johnson Avenue and joins the Ten Mile River in the vicinity south of West Johnson

Avenue. The HONEYPOT BROOK starts between Wiese and South Meriden Roads running westerly, north of Academy Road along the property of the Cheshire Academy, then northward behind the subdivided lands, across Country Club Road, continuing across Creamery Road, and then into the Quinnipiac River at Blacks Road. We note that there are also other tributaries in the area to the east of Wolf Hill, which flow directly into the Quinnipiac in a northerly direction. The Quinnipiac River is an exception to the northerly drainage flow for the area since the Quinnipiac flows first south from the Southington town line across East Johnson Avenue, Blacks Road, and then generally easterly in the area of Cheshire Street and South Meriden Road into the City of Meriden on its way to the Long Island Sound at New Haven.

The southwest quadrant of Cheshire is drained primarily to the south. SANFORD BROOK runs off West Mountain and then generally westerly into a little brook which is tributary to the Farmington Canal. FARMINGTON CANAL and WILLOW BROOK in combination with these tributaries act as one of the two main drainage courses running south in this area. The wet area in the vicinity of Route 10, Higgins Road and North Brooksvale Road is picked up partially by Willow Brook as are swamps in other areas of the quadrant as far west as Mountain Road. The wet area to the west of Mountain road, for almost its entire length from Cornwall to Bethany Mountain Road, seeks the Willow Brook and flows easterly so that the primary drainage in this southwest quadrant is Willow Brook flowing into the Town of Hamden generally along the route of the Old Farmington Canal.

On the easterly side of town in the southeast quadrant the drainage flows primarily to the south, the Mill River is the primary drainage source and it flows southward in the vicinity of Route 10. The burden placed on this river has increased drastically because of the commercial activity along Route 10.

Both the Willow Brook and the Mill River run into Hamden and are eventually tributary to the New Haven Water Company supply system. At the Broad Brook area of Coleman Road east, there is a breaking point whereby Broad Brook, even though on the southeast quarter of Town, flows in a northerly direction. This is another exception in that this flows to the Broad Brook Reservoir, as do other minor tributaries. Broad Brook Reservoir is located in the northeastern quadrant of Town.

As Cheshire grows, all drainage courses become more important. Increased amounts of hard surface paving and roof surfaces due to increased development increase the impact on natural drainage systems.

REGIONAL LOCATION

Cheshire is a member of the Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Planning Agency (CNVRPA), as well as the Tri-State Planning Region, which encompasses parts of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. See Figure 2. Cheshire is influenced by its location as part of the vast Boston-Washington Megalopolis as well as its location in the Tri-State and Central Naugatuck Valley Region.

Cheshire's location and proximity of three large cities to it (Waterbury, Meriden and New Haven) have created a situation where the Town has several orientations and is influenced in three directions.

Needless to say, this dilemma made the decision of affiliation with a region difficult. A choice was made several years ago and Cheshire became the easterly most town in the Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Planning Agency Region (CNVRPA).

Since that time, health planning as well as participation in the Council of Governments have tied Cheshire closer to the Central Naugatuck Valley Region. All data now, where possible, is created on this basis making it less confusing than if the Town were tied to different regions for different functions, such as transportation districts, health or the like.

The difficulty still arises in that the Federal Government created some legislation based on county lines rather than regions, urbanized areas or SMSA's*, all of which have different boundaries. These are the problems Cheshire will have to continue to live with.

Its proximity to Interstate 84, 91 Rt. 15 and I-691 as well as its central location in Connecticut, makes it an attractive, desirable and convenient place to live or work. During the period 1960-1970, Cheshire experienced the greatest net influx of new residents of all the towns in the CNVRPA**. From 1990 to 2000 Cheshire had one of the lowest growth rates in the 13-town region.

A preliminary look at what happened since 1950 shows clearly the significant growth of Cheshire and indicates by its figures good cause for the pressure and changes that have occurred in Cheshire over the last 25 years.

* Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area

** Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Planning Agency Revised Regional Plan of Development Technical Report, Housing Element, 1974

POPULATION GROWTH IN CHESHIRE 1950 - 2000***

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Population						
	6295	13,383	19,051	21,788	25,684	28,543

PERCENTAGE CHANGE

1950-1960	1960-1970	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000
112.6%	42.4%	14.4%	17.9%	11.1%

OLD CONCERNS

Some of the problems and concerns expressed in previous plans are traffic in the center of town which detracts from the green, inadequate parking, lack of open space, etc. Many recommendations of past plans are still relevant. The 1947 plan proposed one central shopping area. If implemented, this would perhaps have saved the south end from strip commercial development, and would have avoided some of the current pressures for expanded retail development in the north end. Other recommendations of the past are opportunities lost. The concept of a Route 10 bypass, for instance, will never become a reality.

NEW CONCERNS

Today there are new concerns and possible problems that did not appear in past plans but that the town must be prepared to face.

We must be aware of the location and effectiveness of future open space purchases and the recreational potential of some of these parcels.

Aquifer protection remains important and the zoning regulations must be kept current with land use practices and technology.

Promotion of a wide range of housing choices, population trends and the aging of the population are all planning issues that are gaining importance. In addition, the impact of future growth on our economic base and infrastructure are serious concern

COMMUNITY GOALS

A Plan of Conservation and Development (the “Plan”) is required by law. It is a “statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality”. According to Connecticut General Statute 8-24 it must be reviewed at least once every ten years but may be amended whenever the municipality deems it necessary.

This Plan is an advisory document prepared by the Planning and Zoning Commission, which shows the most desirable use of land within the community for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, open space and other uses. It differs from the zoning regulations, which are known as the comprehensive plan. The names of the plan was changed in 1995 from the “Plan of Development” to the “Plan of Development and Conservation ” to reflect the town’s commitment to conservation and the environment.

Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes stipulates that the plan must be designed to promote the coordinated development of the town and the general welfare and prosperity of its residents.

In addition the plan must make provisions for the development of housing opportunities for various income groups that are consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity.

There are various ways of achieving the objects of the plan. Goals for each of the chapters are outlined below.

1. PLAN GOAL

The Plan will serve as a guiding framework for future decision-making. It is a document that will be actively used by community leaders and citizens of Cheshire; it represents a vision of the towns’ future. The goals and policies set forth in the Plan will be reviewed and modified at regular intervals to reflect and achieve the stated goals. Goals in the plan are implemented by the zoning and subdivision regulations and the Plan will be are referenced whenever proposed changes are being considered in these regulations.

The Plan is an integral part of every 8-24 review and it should be coordinated with the town’s strategic plan and the long-range plans of the Town Council and Board of Education.

2. RESIDENTIAL GOALS

To encourage a balanced growth that is compatible with our infrastructure; to preserve the semi-rural nature of the community and to

provide a variety of housing types which offers a choice to meet the needs of various income levels and lifestyles.

Under the current zoning regulations, full development would result in a maximum population of approximately 40,000 residents. Steps will be taken by the Planning and Zoning Commission to ensure that the maximum population is not exceeded. These steps include but are not limited to a review of the rear lot regulations, lot sizes and other growth management strategies such as open space land acquisition. Future planning must recognize the relationship between increasing population and the effects on traffic congestion, increased demand for services, infrastructure, public facilities and the overall quality of life for residents of Cheshire.

3. COMMERCIAL GOALS

To provide, maintain and enhance commercial sites that encourage development in ways which are adequate to meet the town's present and future commercial needs.

To encourage regulations that permit retail developments of a size and scale appropriate for the town. To permit mixed use developments of appropriate size and scale allowing the development, in a compact form, of a tract or tracts of land with two or more different uses such as but not limited to office, retail, food service establishments, service businesses, banks, public entertainment and residential in limited and appropriate circumstances only when the PZC determines such development is consistent with the surrounding area. To encourage the redevelopment of existing commercial sites where necessary.¹

4. INDUSTRIAL GOALS

To continue to provide an adequate amount of industrially zoned land and encourage industrial development that is compatible with the environment, residential growth and community facilities. Further to give support to and enable existing industrial facilities to expand in town.

5. COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS

To provide for the adequate growth of community facilities in harmony with the orderly development of the town, to support a balance of residential, commercial, and industrial needs.

6. OPEN SPACE GOALS

To encourage the preservation, acquisition, management and development of lands necessary for the recreational and open space needs of the town in appropriate locations. Acquisition should be made with consideration as to how the land will be used and a management plan should be created to oversee the stewardship of the property. Large

¹ Amended 7/09/07 effective 7/13/07

parcels of open space should continue to be purchased according to the Open Space plan and continuous greenbelts created where possible.

7. TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION GOALS

To improve traffic circulation within town taking into account environmental factors inherent in regulating traffic in residential neighborhoods. The plan recognizes the importance of a through-road system sufficient to handle outside traffic safely and to minimize interference with local activity. Service roads should be planned to minimize curb cuts and to encourage cross access between commercial areas to reduce the number of driveway entrances on arterial roadways.

8. GENERAL APPEARANCE GOALS

To implement the Cheshire Beautification Plan whenever feasible. To encourage development that contributes significantly to the physical environment and that improves the overall aesthetics of the community.

9. AGRICULTURE GOALS

To encourage the conservation retention and continued agricultural use of the existing agricultural land in the town.

10. TOWN CENTER GOALS

To insure that development in the town center is done in a manner that preserves its character, which includes: minimizing vehicular traffic, encouraging pedestrian traffic and allowing for mix uses such as residential apartments combined with office space.

Physical improvement to streets and sidewalks and continued street tree plantings should be encouraged to improve the center's image and maintain its character.

There are a number of distinct historical structures in the town center, and where possible these should be preserved and be made an integral part of the Center's development. This would provide architectural diversity and help to insure the town's heritage.

11. PRIORITY²

While each of the Plan of Conservation and Development Goals is important to maintain a well-balanced environment, the Commission believes that action to promote the following goals should be given priority during the next 3-5 years:

- Commercial and Industrial
- Traffic and Circulation
- Open Space
- Town Center

² Amended 7/09/07; effective 7/13/07

PHYSICAL FEATURES

General

Much of New England's character may be attributed to the physical condition of its landscape and its natural resources. Early settlers encountered a variety of difficulties when they arrived, two of the worst being the harshness of the climate and the multiplicity of landforms. Fertile valleys and gently rolling hills provided excellent land for agriculture while numerous streams and rivers served as early transportation routes and a means of power for gristmills and primitive factories. What made New England unique, however, was the mosaic of steep hills, bedrock outcrops, swamps, and wetlands. It was these areas, which early settlers avoided, that to this day remain mostly undeveloped.

Cheshire, like most New England communities, can look back to earlier days and relate its present pattern of growth to choices its forefathers made in selecting sites on which to work and live. Municipal road patterns generally follow the old horse and wagon routes that led from one community to another and from farms to towns. The best land was settled first, and those who came later settled on less suitable land.

Cheshire is no longer an agriculture-based community. Much former farmland has already been used for highways, houses, stores, and factories. Land once considered less fertile for farming is now some of the most picturesque residential property. And, as the population increases, undeveloped land becomes less abundant, and some land once thought to be too poor for development is now being built upon.

Development on less suitable land and within environmentally sensitive areas has already presented problems: on-site sewage disposal systems are failing; storm drainage is eroding hills and silting streams; water quality is being impaired; certain wildlife is declining; and our environment is being irreparably harmed.

Additionally, development within environmentally sensitive areas has begun to negatively-affect these areas through, at least, point-source and non-point-source pollution, alteration of native vegetation, and alteration of natural infiltration and drainage patterns.

It is the purpose of this chapter to classify the land as to its suitability for development, to identify environmentally sensitive areas where development should be restricted, and to recommend means for natural resource-sensitive development.

For purposes of this Chapter, natural resource-based development restrictions primarily include unfavorable soil characteristics, the presence of wetlands and watercourses, and proximity to either/both public drinking water supply aquifers and watersheds.

Soils

The United States Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) has developed a system for soil classification and mapping which assists in the evaluation of soils for development suitability.

The NRCS has conducted studies and reported on the limitations of each soil type for different uses. For the purpose of land suitability for development, soil limitations for constructing septic systems, homes with basements, and streets were used. The NRCS report groups soils by similar limitations rather than geomorphic origin. This methodology is relevant for planning purposes.

A list of soil mapping units, which describes limitations for various urban uses, is available in the NRCS's *Soil Conservation Handbook*, and detailed information for Cheshire is within the *Soil Survey of New Haven County, Connecticut*.

Soil suitability alone, however, cannot be used to determine the pattern of future growth in the Town, as growth is often determined by the provision of transportation routes, municipal facilities and services, economic incentives, laws, and a host of other reasons. It does, however, indicate the availability and location of land with soils suitable for development. It also provides a basis for determining where municipal sanitary sewers are needed if the anticipated density of development is to exceed the ability of the soils to support on-site sewage disposal.

Agricultural Land

One of Connecticut's greatest natural resources is its farmland. Approximately 29% (nearly one-third) of Cheshire contains "prime farmland soils" as defined by the USDA and the Connecticut DEP.

Since its peak in the late 1800s, southern New England's farming activity has declined dramatically and Connecticut has changed from a self-sufficient food production state to a state that now imports nearly 80% of its food.

Today, Cheshire has only a few tree farms, truck farms, and orchards, but the town is a leader in the bedding plant industry- small flower and vegetable plants ready to be planted in any garden. Cheshire has been officially proclaimed "The Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut" by the Governor.

Inland Wetlands

Inland wetlands are recognized as a unique and important feature of the landscape. Besides their aesthetic value, wetlands and watercourses serve as natural flood controls, provide habitat for wildlife, nutrient retention and sediment trapping, and exhibit a host of other functions and values. In the past, pressure to develop wetlands was high. The use of wetland soils is currently regulated under C.G.S. 22a-36-through-22a-45, the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations of the Town of Cheshire, and the State Health Codes concerning on-site sewage disposal.

The State defines “wetlands” as land, which consists of any of the soil types designated as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial, or flood plain by the National Cooperative Soils Survey. Such areas may include filled, graded or excavated sites which possess an aquatic (saturated) soil moisture regime as defined by the USDA Cooperative Soil Survey. “Watercourses” include rivers, streams, brooks, waterways, lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, bogs, and all other bodies of water, natural or artificial, vernal or intermittent, perennial or seasonal. Any regulated activity in a wetland or watercourse or any submerged land must be permitted by, at least, the Cheshire Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission. Approximately one-fifth (18%) of Cheshire’s land area meets the definition of a wetland or watercourse.

The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission’s primary concerns are the potential impacts of any proposed activity in wetlands and wetlands review areas, including the effects of the inland wetlands’ and watercourses’ natural capacity to support desirable biological life; to prevent flooding, to supply water; to control sediment, to facilitate drainage; and to promote public health and safety. The Commission regulates wetland activities by the issuance of permits to applicants who must supply documentation that proposed activities are not detrimental to any wetlands or watercourses areas. Thus, these fragile natural resources are either preserved or improved for the future.

Public Water Supplies

A reliable source of potable water is a fundamental need of every community. Public water supplies typically rely on surface reservoirs, sub-surface aquifers, or a combination thereof. Over half (57%) of the Town of Cheshire lays either within a public water supply watershed, over a public water supply aquifer, or both.

Contamination or pollution of a reservoir or an aquifer can have dramatic adverse effects on health throughout the community. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that efforts be made to protect the integrity of water quality throughout Cheshire, especially in areas contributing to a public water supply reservoir or aquifer.

Since 1980, Cheshire has relied entirely on aquifers for public drinking water, which is available to 80% of the population- the other 20% is served by private wells. These public supply aquifers underlay approximately 20% of the town. Since 1994, local aquifer protection regulations have been in place to assist with the protection of these invaluable natural resources, and cooperative protection efforts are on-going between the Town, the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, and the State of Connecticut.

Broad Brook Reservoir, while located in the town of Cheshire, is owned and operated by the City of Meriden. It is one of Meriden’s primary water supplies.

Much of the southern half of Cheshire lies within the watershed of the Mill River, which is a tributary to Lake Whitney in Hamden. While not currently utilized, the Regional Water Authority is planning to use Lake Whitney as a public water supply again in the near future.

Watersheds and Surface Waters

A watershed (also called a “drainage basin” or “catchment”) is the land area drained by a watercourse, its tributaries, and associated wetlands. A watershed may also drain to an isolated water body or wetland. All surface water runoff within a watershed drains to a common point, such as a stream or river. Watersheds may or may not be well defined, based on an area’s topography.

Watersheds are a useful unit for measuring water quality and environmental health. This is because as development factors such as amounts of impervious surfaces increase within a given watershed, the water quality and overall environmental health of the watershed can be expected to decrease.

Cheshire watercourses that are given DEP water quality ratings include the Quinnipiac River, Ten Mile River, Willow Brook, Judd Brook, and the Mill River. Other important streams include Honeypot Brook and Cuff Brook. It is the State’s goal to restore or maintain surface waters to a quality consistent with their designated use and supportive quality criteria goals.

In the past, the Quinnipiac River has been upgraded to the quality of Class “B” surface waters, which have designated uses for recreational use, fish and wildlife habitat, agricultural and industrial supply and other legitimate uses including navigation. The class upgrade was a direct result of the mandated efforts that were undertaken to upgrade the sewage treatment facilities in Southington, Meriden and Cheshire. In early 2002, the DEP announced a new initiative to further upgrade sewage treatment plants, which will likely assist with further improvements in water quality.

The effluent discharge of several sewage treatment facilities into the Quinnipiac River, combined with a periodic low volume of flow which is not sufficient to provide an extended zone of active decomposition (self-purification), result in very low D.O. (dissolved oxygen) levels.

Depending on several geographic and topographic factors, some rivers undergo self-purification in short distances from the point of pollution while others require twenty or more miles to accomplish it. The process is complex, and each stream or river is a unique ecosystem with its own specific capacity for purification and recovery. If oxygen is removed faster than it can be replaced by natural aeration or photosynthesis (a condition that once existed in the Quinnipiac), pollution worsens. An entire river can become contaminated if this condition is allowed to continue. Monitoring efforts have been underway along the Quinnipiac River in an attempt to maintain its present Class C/B rating.

Every effort should be made to continue upgrading the Quinnipiac River and to maintain at least a minimum of the "B" classification of all other rivers and wetlands which are some of Cheshire's most valuable resources. Those streams currently listed as Class A should not be allowed to degrade to Class B.

All surface waters within the Broad Brook, Willow Brook, and Mill River watersheds also require special protection against pollution, because of their contributing roles to public water supply reservoirs. Additionally, all surface waters which flow over Cheshire's public water supply aquifers should be adequately protected to avoid any potential influence on the underlying groundwater.

In effort to protect the quality of surface and groundwater drinking supplies, the Connecticut General Assembly passed Public Act 89-301. This act requires applicants of Planning and Zoning Commissions, Inland Wetlands Commissions, and Zoning Board of Appeals to notify water utilities of the following:

- a. Application to conduct or cause to be conducted a regulated activity in an inland wetland or watercourse, any portion of which is within the watershed of the company; and
- b. Application, petition, request or plan concerning any project on any site, which is within the watershed of the water company.

This legislation allows water companies to comment on project details, which concern the protection of water quality. The Planning Office will assist applicants in determining if their projects lie within the watershed areas in Town.

WATERSHED DEMONSTRATION PROJECT BROAD BROOK RESERVOIR/MACKENZIE RESERVOIR

This study's report, funded by a Clean Water Act grant and completed in January 1992, summarizes the procedures used to conduct a watershed demonstration study of public water supply watersheds. As development pressures have increased throughout the State and the relationship between land use and water quality is documented, more efforts are now being expended to develop source protection programs. These efforts include protecting the water in the ground, reservoir and tributaries prior to its withdrawal for treatment.

These types of source protection programs entail a community effort since land use decisions are made at the local level. Inter-municipal cooperation is an important component because watershed boundaries are defined not by municipal boundaries but rather by topography. In some instances, such as with Broad Brook Reservoir, the water supply serving a particular town is located within another municipality whose residents receive their water supply from another source.

Effective source protection programs, therefore, usually rely on a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms. In order to develop a program to protect water quality, the existing and potential water quality conditions must be identical and the current level of watershed protection evaluated. The overall objective is to develop a program to be implemented by the communities containing water supply watershed areas.

For each studied watershed, this report assesses risks to water quality based on existing land use activities and potential uses (i.e. as allowed by the local zoning regulations), evaluates existing regulatory and non-regulatory watershed protection mechanisms, and make recommendations for improvement.

The final report of the study also contains an overview on the concept of watershed/drainage basins, potential water quality impacts, and types and sources of pollutants of concern for water quality protection. The report is on file in the Town Planning Office.

Groundwater and Aquifers

Groundwater is all the water contained within pore spaces, fractures, cavities, and cracks beneath the surface of the ground. An aquifer is a layer of porous rock through which groundwater moves and is stored, capable of yielding several million gallons daily. Essentially, aquifers act as reservoirs for groundwater. An aquifer receives water from rain or melted snow that drains into the ground at the earth's surface and moves downward until it meets less permeable rock through which it cannot pass easily. Wells are drilled into aquifers, where potential water yields are economically sufficient to provide water for drinking, agriculture, and other uses.

Two large aquifers composed of stratified sands and gravels deposited by the glacier provide the water supply for 80% of Cheshire's residents. The remaining 20% of the population also relies on groundwater, but has private wells. Necessarily then, protecting groundwater quality and preventing groundwater contamination is a primary objective in Cheshire.

Beginning in 1979, the two existing public water supply well fields were affected by contamination associated with industrial and agricultural land use. To rid the water of contamination, the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (SSCRWA) constructed aeration treatment facilities at the well fields.

Prompted by the existing contamination problems, the Town of Cheshire adopted an Aquifer Protection Zone regulation to protect the two significant aquifers in use as public water supply well fields. The 1983 regulations, at that time, were considered an adequate safeguard against high-risk uses within the critical area. In 1987, the expanding base of information available about both groundwater quality and the

protection of public health prompted the Town to begin to review Aquifer Regulation modifications proposed by the SCCRWA. The Planning and Zoning Commission adopted modified regulations in 1994. In 2001, the Planning and Zoning Commission again began to review this regulation so that it may reflect current aquifer knowledge and aquifer protection techniques.

The State of Connecticut is also in the process of drafting and implementing Aquifer Protection Regulations. These model regulations have not yet been released and approved. Once approved by the State, Cheshire's local regulation will be required to be at least as stringent as the State regulation.

Trees

Cheshire has an abundance of shade and ornamental trees and shrubs on ridge tops, hills, in the valleys, along streams and roadsides, in woodlands and wetland areas, and within home landscapes.

Trees are a valuable, renewable natural resource. The protection of our trees and shrubs prevents erosion and provides us with clean air. They provide windbreaks and offer cover and nesting sites for a great variety of birds and animals. Trees and shrubs not only serve as indicators of environmental quality and aesthetic value but also have an important monetary role in our community.

To help preserve our trees and shrubs in Cheshire, the town and the Cheshire Land Trust together are acquiring land for open space, wildlife sanctuaries, and "greenbelts" particularly along our ridge tops. These open space areas will provide relief from built-up areas and will also preserve wetlands as well as to provide ideal habitat for bird and wildlife.

Vistas

Distant vistas have scenic quality and give character to New England communities. The white-spire church seen from several approaches to the center of Cheshire immediately identifies a New England village. Often man-built objects enhance natural views (old barns, stonewalls, steeples) because they seem appropriate and "fit". Other objects (junkyards, inappropriate structures, billboards) can detract or hide a scenic vista.

Vistas will be considered on the basis of the quality of the area viewed, specific vantage points, the presence or absence of detracting elements, and three focal zones: near (roadside), far, and intermediate. Three grades of quality will be designated, depending upon the values of the focal zones.

Natural Resource-Sensitive Development

It is important that irreplaceable natural resources be protected or improved, and renewable natural resources be properly managed. Further, it is important that the

community recognize potential cause-and-effect relationships between development and the health of the natural landscape. Therefore, the following guidelines should be followed with all new development and redevelopment:

- Retain natural vegetation, topography, infiltration, and drainage patterns.
 - Avoid channelizing, piping, and filling of wetlands and watercourses.
 - Minimize impervious surfaces, especially in low-traffic areas.
 - Encourage sheet-flow and “soft drainage” instead of curbing and piping.
 - Maximize buffers to wetlands and watercourses.
 - Follow State-recommended methods for sediment erosion and control. Employ available methods for on-site treatment of stormwater and pollution (e.g. detention ponds, oil/grit separators, sedimentation chambers, etc.).
- Utilize proper management techniques to ensure a continued abundance of high-quality renewable natural resources, such as soil, water, and woodlands.

Policies

1. Preserve, through acquisition, conservation easements, or donation, significant physical features such as unique geologic areas (including traprock ridges), glacial kettles, river and stream greenbelts, wetlands, etc.
2. Encourage development patterns and techniques that are sensitive to irreplaceable natural resources, public water supplies, and environmentally-sensitive areas.
3. Encourage development patterns and design standards that maintain or improve water quality within sub-regional watersheds.
4. During the development review process, encourage the setting aside as preserved open space any critical habitats when any rare or threatened species has historically been reported, or is listed in the DEP’s Natural Diversity Database.
5. During the development review process, promote methods of reducing non-point source pollution such as swales, permeable surfaces, etc.
6. Support state policy changes and legislative proposals which recognize that many natural resources are finite and that conservation and preservation of natural resources is critical to our quality life.

7. Continue to carefully evaluate the compatibility of proposed development with the protection of public water supplies.
8. Incorporate new Natural Diversity Database, groundwater/hydrogeologic, And other natural resource-related data as it becomes available, and use to refine existing policies and regulations.
9. Continue to follow guidelines specified in the “Watershed Demonstration Project/Broad Brook Reservoir and Mackenzie Reservoir”, prepared for the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority.

OPEN SPACE

INTRODUCTION

As time passes, development continues to encroach on natural areas cherished by Cheshire residents. This has led to a debate between the open space concerns of an ever-increasing population, and an ever-decreasing extent of undeveloped land.

The Town of Cheshire wishes to strike a responsible balance where development is weighed equally with preservation of irreplaceable natural and man-made features that define the character of our community. This balance is accomplished by recognizing aesthetic, biological and economic values of natural contours, existing vegetation, historic stone walls, etc., and by ensuring that future development not compromise the integrity of such features.

This Plan recognizes that only through a true balance of both natural resource conservation and development for economic and social advancement can a sustainable high quality of life exist for each and every member of the community

WHAT IS OPEN SPACE?

The term “open space” is as vague as the term “development.” What really is open space? It can include ballfields, linear trails, forested trails, untouched woodlands, wetlands, meadows, working agricultural lands, and more. Comprehensive planning requires a balance between the open space and development facets of the community. It also requires an internal balance of open space in terms of geographic distribution and intended uses.

For purposes of this Plan, open space is primarily assumed to be natural, relatively untouched land, and areas without active recreation such as athletic fields.



Prospect Ridge, Late Winter 2000

FUNCTIONS OF OPEN SPACE

There is an increasing realization that the undeveloped or open space portion of the community is equally as important to the operation of the community as the developed portion. In terms of its appeal, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt has characterized open space as equivalent to “beachfront” property. For planning purposes, open space has three basic functions:

- establishment of an attractive community design/ visually pleasant landscape
- preservation of natural processes (e.g. wetlands and wildlife habitat)
- recreational purposes

There are situations when all three functions overlap on one property. Such areas should have the highest priority for purchase and preservation.

A possible fourth open space function is tax relief. Several studies, including a 1995 report prepared for the Southern New England Forest Consortium, and “The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space,” a 1999 report by the Trust For Public Land, discuss this idea. These studies suggest that when compared to developed land, preserved open space generates no taxes, but also requires far fewer municipal services than industrial, commercial, and residential uses.

Open space is a unique land use in that it can increase the livability of all other land uses, and smooth the transitions between them. For example, the buffering abilities of open space are useful for aesthetics and noise. Residential property values and desirability can increase when adjacent to protected open space. Flood storage capabilities of protected wetlands and lowlands can insure against property damage.

High priority should be placed in preserving linear open space systems augmented by large “spur” pieces of land. These systems, if possible, should contain water features, be part of a public groundwater system, or contain distinguished landforms such as ridge tops or steep slopes. Of course, land with two functions, or even one function of open space should not be excluded from consideration.

It is very important to state the intended use of a parcel at the time of its acquisition. At a minimum, each open space parcel should have a management plan that describes:

- existing conditions
- potential open space function(s)
- whether purely natural processes should be encouraged, the property should be maintained as-is, or it should be actively managed in some other way
- recommendations for level of recreational activities (active, passive, or both)
- potential non-recreational uses (i.e. cell towers, schools etc.)
- rationale for each bullet above

HOW MUCH OPEN SPACE?

Some suggestions...

New York Regional Plan Association: 25% of all land

**The National Recreation and Park Association: 10 acres per 1000 people
(based strictly on recreational needs)**

Ian McHarg (landscape architect and teacher): natural processes, not acreage, should be the basis for both open space and general planning decisions reflecting prohibition against certain types of land uses.

Other studies recommend that a community have 78 acres of open space of all kinds for every 1000 population. This figure would break down as:

42 acres per 1000 as regional open space

(state park, watersheds, etc.)

36 acres per 1000 for local parks

(private recreation, golf courses, green spaces)

Discussions regarding open space planning routinely raise the question “how much is enough?” A community cannot honestly or accurately answer this without also asking: “How much *development* is enough?”

The total amount of *open space* desired/needed by any community or region depends on, and is proportionate with, the amount of *development* desired, needed, and possible in the community.

The landscape available to a community for land-use decisions contains developed, preserved, and uncommitted land. The public’s desire to maintain existing community character and “sense of place” requires some balance of these three components. Therefore, as long as development continues, so will a public desire/need for additional open space acquisition. Further, as potentially developable land decreases, the desire/need for additional land preservation is expected to proportionately increase.

An open space / development balance should be determined by the members of the community, and more directly, by the taxpayers and voters.

The greatest open space challenge in Cheshire may not be how much open space is *enough*, but rather how much is potentially *available*.

**Public Referendum Results For Open Space Acquisition
Town of Cheshire, CT**

DATE	% FAVORING OPEN SPACE	\$ AMOUNT APPROVED	INFLATION-ADJUSTED AMOUNT (rounded to '000)*	COMMENTS
Mar. '86	69	\$175,000	\$270,700	First referendum
Nov. '86	68	\$200,000	\$304,900	
1987	69	\$1,950,000	\$2,843,900	Bartlem Park
1988	64	\$1,500,000	\$2,098,500	
1989	56	\$1,500,000	\$2,005,200	
1990	47	\$0	\$0	Not approved
1991		\$0	\$0	No referendum
1992		\$0	\$0	No referendum
1993	52	\$1,000,000	\$1,154,300	
1994	56	\$1,300,000	\$1,461,500	
1995	62	\$500,000	\$547,900	
1996	61	\$1,000,000	\$1,061,200	
1997	63	\$1,000,000	\$1,042,100	
1998	60	\$1,000,000	\$1,026,200	
1999	65	\$500,000	\$500,000	
TOTALS:		\$11,625,000	\$14,316,400	Over 1,100 acres Bought

* Inflation-adjusted to December 1999 dollars using Consumer Price Index.
(CPI Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Per Capita Public Open Space Town of Cheshire, CT

YEAR	CHESHIRE POPULATION	TOTAL PUBLIC OPEN SPACE*	OPEN SPACE PER PERSON	PER CAPITA EQUIVALENCE
1986	24, 126	316 ac.	570.6 sq. ft.	2-car garage
1999	26, 675	1, 416 ac.	2, 312 sq. ft.	tennis court

- Includes State-owned and Town-owned open space parcels.
-

LAND CONSERVATION & ACQUISITION PROGRAM

As shown in the preceding tables, the Town of Cheshire started a momentum toward land conservation and acquisition in 1986 when \$175,000 was dedicated

for open space purchase. Through a successful series of referenda between 1986 and 1999, over \$14.6 million have been approved for land acquisition, and over 1,100 acres have been purchased. The State of Connecticut has provided additional funding for several parcels.



Fields at Jackman Farm, Spring 2000.

Also in 1986, land preservation efforts were boosted when the Town Council voted to establish an Environment Commission. The group's first task was the development of a land preservation master plan. To properly evaluate and prioritize sites, the Commission examined Cheshire's land with respect to geological, ecological, aesthetic and historical significance. Public health was also a critical factor for land in and around the North Cheshire Aquifer.

The result of the early investigations was a list of "interest areas," submitted to and approved by the Town Council in November 1987. This original list provided a "wish list" of properties for open space acquisition, and between combined efforts of the Town, the State DEP, the Cheshire Land Trust, and private citizens, many listed properties have been successfully acquired or otherwise protected. Several other parcels, although not on the original list, have also been acquired. An example is the forested 300-acre Dime Savings property in northwest Cheshire.

In 1998, the Town Council accepted the final report of an Open Space Land Use Advisory Committee. This group, comprised of members representing various town boards and commissions, devised a method of ranking and rationalizing open space in terms of community value and appropriate use. The Environment Commission currently uses this report to evaluate existing Town-owned openspace. The report is also used to prepare presentations made to the Town Council regarding potential land acquisitions.

Recognizing open space acquisition progress of the past decade, the original areas of conservation interest list has been reviewed and adjusted where

prudent. The revised list emphasizes contiguous open space greenbelts. Specifically, parallel north-south greenbelts are identified for western, central, and eastern Cheshire. Emphasis is also placed on augmenting existing open space holdings, and focusing on large land holders, such as farms and utilities.

Areas of Conservation Interest

West Cheshire Greenbelt

- Prospect Ridge
- Mixville Hills Region

Parcels adjacent to existing preserved open space

Water company properties

Farmington Canal Greenbelt

- Properties adjacent to existing open space corridor

East Cheshire Greenbelt

- Properties bordering Quinnipiac River
- Lands surrounding Broad Brook Reservoir

- Academy Road / South Meriden Road region
- Other existing farmlands

Cheshire Academy woodlands

Moran & DeDominicus properties

The following properties from the original (1986) list have been successfully acquired:

- Portions of Prospect Ridge
- Portions of Mixvills Hills
- Former B&M Railroad
- Property on Quinnipiac River (Quinnipiac Recreation Area)
- Nettleton's Ravine
- Ten Mile River Floodplain (Moss Farms Lowlands Preserve)
- Farmlands (Jackman, Casertano, Lassen)

OPEN SPACE CASE STUDIES

[Two case studies are included to serve as models for varying open space acquisition techniques. Prospect Ridge is an excellent example of State, local, and private non-profit agencies cooperating to preserve a greenbelt of regional significance. Fresh Meadows Wildlife Preserve is presented as an example of how townspeople can actively contribute toward preservation of cherished landscapes, literally in their own back yard.]

Prospect Ridge is a north-south running basalt ridge which forms a large portion of Cheshire's western boundary. It is one of the Town's most prominent and significant natural landforms. Perhaps the most spectacular feature on the ridge is Roaring Brook Falls, an 80-foot cascade, and Connecticut's second-highest waterfall. The ridge also provides habitat for an incredible diversity of species, including several rare or endangered within the State.

The Ridge is excellent for nature study and education, and passive activities such as hiking and bird watching. An existing trail system includes the Quinnipiac (or Blue) Trail which runs along the ridgetop, and the Orange Trail, which leads from Roaring Brook Road to the Blue Trail via the falls.

Based on past success of acquiring properties along Prospect Ridge with Department of Environmental Protection matching funds, the Town of Cheshire continues to work with the DEP and the Trust for Public Land as additional properties along the Ridge become available.

If acquisition of the entire Ridge is realized, the land will create a continuous state-owned preserve administered by the Town through a cooperative management agreement with the DEP. This would successfully secure roughly 700 acres of what may someday be the northernmost section of a contiguous linear preserve extending from West Rock State Park in New Haven to Routes 68/70 in Cheshire.

Fresh Meadows Wildlife Preserve is a 34-acre parcel north of Cook Hill Road, bordered to the west by the Mill River. The property is generally flat, and contains high-quality habitat for meadow and early successional species within an otherwise residentially-developed part of town.

When a subdivision was proposed for the property in 1985, surrounding neighbors formed the Cheshire Neighborhood Association and raised funds themselves to purchase the property. The land was then deeded to the Cheshire Land Trust for stewardship and maintenance in a "natural and open state."

Preservation of Fresh Meadows as open space has proven valuable to wildlife, nearby residents, and members of the adjacent Elim Park community who frequent the preserve's trails for walking and birdwatching. Stewardship of the preserve has also provided the Land Trust with an easily accessed location for outdoors education workshops on wildflowers, amphibians, and other topics.

OTHER PRESERVATION OPTIONS

Direct acquisition is one of several options for open space protection. Other options are discussed below, some of which are currently being used.

- Donations of land to the Town, Cheshire Land Trust, Nature Conservancy or similar organizations are encouraged. Such donations can generate substantial tax relief for the donor.
- Conservation easements and Covenants should become a more active part of the development process. Where open space acquisition is not appropriate, designate environmentally significant areas as private or public conservation easements to promote preservation and limit use. Some such areas should include:
 - a. Ridge tops and steep escarpments
 - b. Farmlands
 - c. Significant wetlands and watercourses
 - d. Areas with historical or geological value, such as copper mines, baryte mines, etc.

The Cheshire Land Trust has acquired a 99-year conservation easement on approximately 54 acres of the Thayer-McKee estate, and the State DEP holds a conservation easement on the 100-acre Krampitz Farm on Peck Lane.

- Encourage inclusion of dedicated open space in new subdivisions.
- Encourage continued ownership and agricultural use of farmland, meadow, and orchards in recognition of their value as open space and a local resource.
- Restore and maintain the Farmington Canal and other historic areas.
- Develop an active database of native plants, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, breeding birds, butterflies, historic trees, etc. *A database will be a valuable tool when determining critical habitats to protect, as well as in daily land-use decision making procedures. Because the data base will also list rare or endangered species*

within the state, the general public will not be given access to this information. This information will be released at the discretion of the Environmental Planner, Town Manager, or the Chairman of the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission or the Planning and Zoning Commission.

- Encourage increased public involvement and education regarding open space. Members of the community know best which open areas they enjoy. However, misconceptions about zoning requirements, wetlands regulations and the like can unfortunately lead to “assumed open space.” The general public should attempt to become more savvy about the ownership of undeveloped parcels, the regulations that govern them, and conservation options available. Finally, regardless of options available, active public participation is encouraged.

• **CONCLUSION**

The Town of Cheshire recognizes the important role open space plays in the community. Open space preservation balances development, protects irreplaceable natural resources, and helps sustain a high quality of life for all citizens.

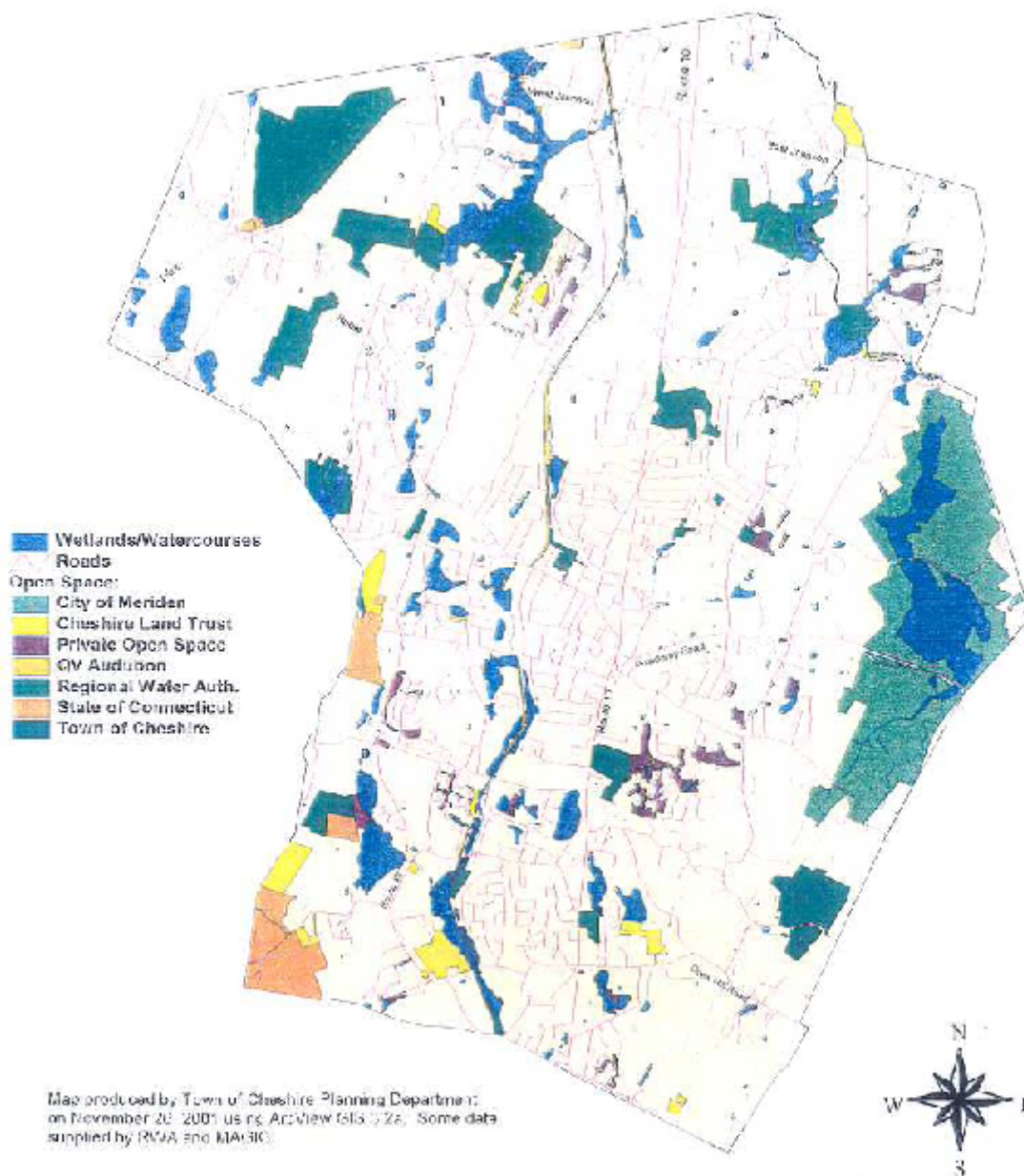
Since 1986, citizens of the Town of Cheshire have recognized and supported the need for Town involvement in open space preservation by approving over \$14 million for land acquisition. Over 1000 acres have been purchased with these funds. Efforts of an active Cheshire Land Trust and citizen groups have also helped to establish a strong open space program to grow on.

This Chapter encourages greenbelt formation by connecting various open space parcels. Also desired is the expansion of current open space holdings. Continued cooperation between Town, State, and private efforts, and an increase in public awareness will help ensure future successes.

*A procedure to evaluate appropriate uses for Town owned land was developed by the Open Space Land Use Advisory Committee in 1996-1998, and was adopted by the Environment Commission in March 1998 and the Town Council in May 1998. It uses a series of simple criteria to determine the degree of development that can be balanced with the preservation of open spaces, scenic vistas, historical, cultural and natural landmarks. *etc* . This procedure should be used by the Town Council or the professional staff in consideration of any acquisition, divestiture or change of use of Town land, and the evaluation forwarded to the Planning & Zoning Commission with all 8-24 referrals.

Ultimately, continued public support and funding are critical in determining how much open space Cheshire will protect, and what role this land will play in defining Cheshire’s community character.

Existing Open Space Town of Cheshire, Connecticut



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community facilities are a vital element within the comprehensive planning process. These facilities and the associated personnel provide necessary services to the citizens of Cheshire. This section analyzes the current scope of community facilities within Cheshire, as well as projected needs.

This assessment of community facilities should be integrated with the Capital Improvement Program. Such integration provides a fundamental overview of municipal needs, and provides an opportunity for long-range planning.

This chapter concerns facilities such as: Town Hall, Youth and Senior Centers, Library, Schools, Police Department, Fire Department and Public Works, as shown on the municipal Facilities Map and other facilities that serve the community.

Town Hall

The existing Town Hall in Cheshire, located at 84 South Main Street, is a three-story structure with an approximate floor space square footage of 33,580 gross. In 1989, the entire Town Hall was completely renovated and a 22,330 square foot addition was added. At the present time, it is adequate to serve as the community's administrative center. There is sufficient record storage space, public meeting rooms and the interior design of the building lends itself to easy access or convenience between offices. It encompasses the administrative offices of all departments except Park and Recreation, Library Services, Police and Fire, and includes a Council Chambers suitable for meetings of the Town's legislative body and boards and commissions. A preliminary design report indicated that the facility would adequately serve as the Town's municipal center until the year 2010.

Public Library

The Cheshire Public Library cooperates with other Town departments and local civic organizations to provide a comprehensive array of materials, services and programs to meet the information, education and recreation needs of Town residents.

The last major expansion and renovation of the Library was completed in 1996. The project brought the square footage of the building to 32,600 square feet and facilities for shared neighborhood parking, expanded meeting/study rooms, and broader computer services were incorporated.

An automated circulation system was installed in 1978. This provides inventory control for Cheshire Library's collection and through shared telecommunications and databases allows Cheshire's patrons to have immediate access to the collections of nearby towns. In 1990, additional telecommunications equipment was installed that provides linkage to most Connecticut town libraries and to many academic collections.

Cheshire Library has had a presence on the Internet since 1996 and offers full Internet access for the public.

Senior Center

The Dr. Wilbur Moore House on Maple Avenue was purchased by the Town in 1979 and extensively renovated to house senior services for the community in 1980. The two-story house has 6,000 square feet of usable space. The building has a large multi-purpose gathering area, two meeting rooms on the second floor, a large kitchen, four offices for staff, and two ground floor rooms used for television, reading and billiards. An elevator to the second floor provides easy access for persons with mobility impairments.

The central location allows residents at the two existing elderly housing projects to walk to the facility, as well as easy access to banks, shopping areas, and the post office.

In 1990, the Senior Center was designated by the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging as the focal point for senior services in Cheshire. As such, it provides cultural, nutritional, social, recreational and social services for residents over the age of 55.

In 1999 a 3,200 square foot expansion and renovation was approved. The expanded facility will house a new kitchen, multipurpose room, recreation room and social worker's office. In addition, the parking lot was expanded and better lighting was installed as well as improved access.

Youth Center

The Harmon Leonard, Jr. Youth Center, located near the Cheshire High School on South Main Street, provides a variety of athletic, educational and cultural activities to virtually all members of the community. The activities include programs for pre-school children, sports leagues for children and adults, senior citizens' meetings, and blood drives. The building also houses the main offices of the Parks and Recreation director and his staff.

Yellow House

In June of 2002 the Cheshire Youth Services began programming at the former Galayda property on Rt. 10 contiguous to Bartlem Park. The house now known as the Yellow House is used for a variety of youth programs, from homework mentoring to Basketball/Volleyball tournaments. All the activities and programs are created and developed based on input from the Cheshire Youth Advisory Council.

Artsplace

The Cheshire Performing Fine Arts Committee's ARTSPLACE moved to its new location at 1220 Waterbury Rd. (former VFW building) on June 10, 2002. Occupying

the entire facility, which consists of three classrooms and an office downstairs, and a large classroom/lecture hall upstairs, the Artsplace teaching staff of nine, plus four guest teachers offer approximately fifty-five diverse art classes.

Schools

Cheshire High School:

The Cheshire High School is located on South Main Street and was constructed in 1952. Additions were constructed in 1955, 1961, 1968, 1971, and modifications were made in 1985. There are 89 classrooms with a capacity of 1,600 students. The site is on 54 acres. A 48,000 square foot addition opened in September of 2000. This includes 13 classrooms, an annex to the cafeteria, new guidance and administrative offices and a new music room.

Dodd Middle School:

Constructed in 1958, with an addition built in 1969, the only middle school in Town is located on Park Place. There are 39 classrooms with a capacity of 700 students. The site is on 14 acres. A 28,000 sq. ft. addition for classrooms, library and other support facilities was constructed in 1993. An expansion of Dodd Middle School is currently under consideration.

Chapman School:

Chapman School, located on Country Club Road, was constructed in 1950. Two additions were constructed in 1954 and 1962. Modifications were made in 1981. There are 24 classrooms with a capacity of 496 students. It is located on a site of 6 acres.

Darcey School:

Darcey School is located on Waterbury Road, with an original construction date of 1947. Two additions were constructed in 1954 and 1961 and modifications were made in 1985. It is located on 11 acres.

Darcey School now functions as a kindergarten center and houses the Stephen August early intervention program.

Doolittle School:

Doolittle School, located in the Cornwall Avenue-Oak Avenue area, was constructed in 1962, with modifications made in 1981. It contains 24 classrooms and has a capacity of 496 students. It is situated on 24 acres. A 28,000 sq. ft. for classrooms and gymnasium was constructed in 1993.

Highland School:

Highland School is located on Highland Avenue, with an original construction date of 1971. The site is on 20 acres. Highland School is the most effectively designed and equipped of the elementary schools in Cheshire. It has 48 classrooms with a capacity of 985 students. Its size is the equivalent of two typical elementary schools. There is ample room for recreation and parking.

Humiston School:

Constructed in 1912, with two additions in 1919 and 1925, Humiston School is located on Main Street in Cheshire. It is situated on 3.2 acres. It was renovated in 1971 for use as a school for the trainable mentally retarded and is also the site for the Board of Education administrative offices.

Norton School:

Constructed in 1955, with additions in 1956 and 1979, and modifications made in 1981, Norton School is located on North Brooksvale Road on a site of 17.9 acres. There are 20 classrooms with a capacity of 496 students. A 10,000 sq. ft. expansion for classrooms and support facilities was constructed in 1993.

The Cheshire Board of Education has formed the Cheshire 2010 Committee to determine the future program and facility needs for the Public Schools through 2010. The committee will evaluate demographic data to project student population and evaluate the current school facilities to assess their adequacy in meeting the documented needs. The committee will report their findings by December 2002.

Police Department

The Cheshire Police Department is located at 500 Highland Avenue (Route 10), in close proximity to the center of Cheshire. The police facility was constructed in 1970, based upon a planning period of 20 years. In 1970, a full-time staff of approximately 23 moved into the new Headquarters building. Today a full-time staff of approximately 55 personnel occupy the building.

The Town and the Cheshire Police Department have grown at a pace which could not have been anticipated when the Headquarters was planned in the late 1960s.

Several years ago, a State of Connecticut Technical Assistance grant for a Feasibility Study of a Police Headquarters Expansion Project found that the Cheshire Police Headquarters should be doubled in size. Some areas of the building had serious deficiencies. There was insufficient training space, inadequate evidence processing and storage space and the dispatch center lacked security

In 1990 a 10,000 square foot expansion to the existing building and a 2,000 square foot garage were approved at referendum. The addition was completed in the spring of 1992.

The Police Department maintains communications service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. These include dispatching for police, fire and emergency medical services. The capability for radio communication with all other police agencies is maintained, as well as for other Town agencies, such as Public Works, Civil Preparedness and Board of Education. The Department also serves as the Emergency Operating Center, or central Command Post for all Town departments during storms and other Town-wide emergencies.

Fire Department

The Town of Cheshire has three fire stations located in three different sections of Town. It was originally located in the Town Hall, but was moved in 1952 to its present site. A new Headquarters was constructed in 1980. The South End (Station 3) Fire Station, located on South Main Street (Company 2), was constructed in 1972. The Cheshire Heights Fire Station, located on Byam Road, was converted from a community club to the fire station in 1955 with extensive additions and renovations in 2000.

The current fleet contains seven pumping engines, two ladder trucks, a heavy rescue truck, a hazardous materials truck and a brush fire truck. A confined space rescue truck is cooperatively owned with Prospect and Wolcott.

The past few decades have seen a specialization in rescue and firefighting equipment, with an emphasis on safety. Changes in society, including today's predominately two-income households, have prompted the Fire Department to constantly review incentives to help retain its all-volunteer membership.

Sanitary Sewer System

Since its inception 1967, the Town of Cheshire, Water Pollution Control Authority has implemented an ongoing program for abating pollution within the Town of Cheshire by constructing an orderly system of sanitary sewers. The existing Water Pollution Control Plant was upgraded in 1993 and is capable of treating 3.5 million gallons per day (mgd) by the activated sludge process with advanced treatment. After treatment, the effluent is discharged into the Quinnipiac River in the northeast quadrant of the Town.

In addition to the Treatment Plant, the sewage system at the present time consists of eight pump stations and approximately 119 miles of sewer, which provide service to approximately 45% of the dwelling units.

The majority of residential areas in the central, southern and northern areas of Cheshire have been sewerred. The Ten Mile River Interceptor provides sanitary sewer service to the major industrial areas in the northern portion of Cheshire. In early 90's, a project was completed that extended the sanitary sewer interceptor line into West Cheshire along Waterbury Road to the Town line. Several residential neighborhoods in the vicinity of this interceptor were also sewerred at that time.

As the Town's sewerred program progresses, a system of dry sewerred should be instituted through the Subdivision Regulations.

The program would have the obvious advantage of securing the necessary easements during the planning stage and, more importantly, it would result in substantial cost savings by avoiding not only the installation of the sewer but the added expenses and inconvenience of tearing up completed roads.

The Town recently updated its Facilities Plan which not only identified the areas of future sewer needs, but which also details the modifications which must be considered for the Town to continue to comply with its NPDES Permit to discharge to the Quinnipiac River. The policy of the Water Pollution Control Authority is to sewer areas with a residential density of two dwellings per acre, to sewer areas of one dwelling per acre only if it is adjacent to higher density areas or existing sanitary sewers, and not to sewer areas of one dwelling per two acres.

Storm Drainage

Adequate storm drainage facilities are required as part of the ongoing planning process as it relates to construction of new subdivisions. Some deficiencies in storm drainage facilities still exist along the older unpinned highways that have not been recently reconstructed. Drainage improvements are completed on a regular basis and this program will continue for several more years. In the early 1980's, a comprehensive storm drainage inventory was completed and in the early 1990's a Town-wide storm water management plan was completed.

Town Garage

The Public Works Department presently has a Town garage and equipment storage building located on Waterbury Road. In the early 1990's, a master plan for improvements to this Public Works facility was completed. In 1983, the first phase of this work, including a general renovation and a 1,700 square foot addition, was completed. A salt storage building was constructed in 1987. A 7,400 square foot vehicle storage building was completed in 1998. A 4000 square foot addition to the maintenance garage is scheduled in the near future, as is a storage building for sand/salt mixture. A 10,000 square foot garage facility is being constructed in 2000/2001 on the Waterbury Road site for the Park and Recreation Department

Solid Waste Disposal Facilities

The Town closed its Sanitary Landfill operation in late 1989. Solid waste is presently being disposed of at the Connecticut Resource Recovery Association Facility in Wallingford. The Town began a program of curbside collection of solid waste and recyclables in December, 1990 to meet State mandates.

Public Utilities:

Electricity

The majority of the Town of Cheshire is serviced by the Connecticut Light and Power Company. The Company works with the developer in installing the service in the new subdivisions. There is no problem of availability of electricity through C.L. & P. There have been changes in state laws that might allow other utility companies to do business in Cheshire. Currently, multiple electricity service providers are present in the community.

Town of Wallingford Electric Department services an extremely small section of Cheshire. In these cases, an agreement is made between C.L. & P. and the Town of Wallingford that they will service these houses with electricity, due to a lower cost for installation on the part of Wallingford.

Gas

Although Cheshire is not a heavy user of natural gas, the Central Naugatuck Valley Planning Region has a somewhat heavier reliance on natural gas than the rest of the state.

Two major natural gas companies have interstate transmission pipelines which run through the Region and the Town. They are the Tennessee Gas Company pipeline that bisects the Town, entering through Bethany, crossing Route 10 near Sandbank Road, and extending rough to Southington. An extension of this line goes east, crossing Route 10 near King Road, and traveling through to Wallingford. The Algonquin line goes through the northern section of Town, extending from the Waterbury/Prospect area to the Southington/Meriden area.

Locally, the Yankee Gas Services, a subsidiary of the Northeast Utilities System, services approximately 700 customers of Cheshire with natural gas, concentrated along Route 10 and going west along West Main Street; while to the west, only the immediate side streets are serviced.

Water

Cheshire is serviced by three water facilities: The South Central Regional Water Authority; the Water Department of Meriden, an agency of the city of

Meriden; and the Water Department of Southington, an agency of the Town of Southington.

The South Central Regional Water Authority services about 80% of Cheshire's population.

The present sources of supply directly serving Cheshire are North Cheshire Wells #1, 3 and 4 located on Blacks Road and two wells in the South Main Field located to the east of Route 10. In periods of high demand, Cheshire receives augmenting flows from the water system serving Hamden, through a pressure reducing valve on South Main Street. A 2.5 million gallon storage tank located in Prospect supplies equalizing storage as well as fire and emergency reserve capacity. A second 2.5 million gallon storage tank in Prospect was completed in 1980.

A regular sampling program is maintained to insure the quality of the water supplies and the water within the distribution system. A complete laboratory is maintained to analyze the collected water supplies.

Presently, the areas serviced by the South Central Regional Water authority are along the Route 10 and/or Routes 68/70 corridors. The area east of Route 110 (from the Police Station to Blacks Road); the industrial area near Knotter Drive (including much of Marion Road); and some areas near Wallingford Road.

The Water Department of the Town of Southington services one small section of Cheshire, the Birch Drive area. The City of Meriden services area of Cheshire Street. In both of these cases, the houses are closer to the other town's water supply than they are to Cheshire's water supply. Eighty percent of the population has access to fire hydrants.

Telephone

Cheshire is serviced by the Southern New England Telephone Company. Services will continue to expand in order to meet the growing demand for the telecommunications.

Wireless Telecommunications:

In 1996 the Telecommunications Act was signed into law. The legislation restructured and deregulated most aspects of the communications industry. As a result local governments are confronted with new opportunities and many new challenges. There are now multiple telecommunication providers in the market with new technologies and services, which can strengthen the local economy by providing jobs and potential new revenue.

However, the influx of new providers also poses significant challenges for Cheshire in terms of zoning and land use. If not properly sited, cellular towers can have a significant adverse effect on the town and its environment. It is important from the town perspective that towers should not be placed on ridgelines, in wetlands, or where they will adversely impact scenic views. Towers should also be sited in areas that have the least population density so that any negative effects on surrounding property values will be minimized.

While the ultimate decision on tower location rests with Connecticut Siting Council, the town will nevertheless take an active role in the decision making process through its "Wireless Telecommunication Facilities Regulation." This regulation provides for a local review of the proposed tower. The primary purpose of this regulation is to establish standards and procedures for review of the proposal. The regulation sets lot size, setbacks, location and type of equipment shelter and application requirements.

With local review and the collaboration and expertise of the Siting Council, placement of the tower hopefully will have a minimum impact on the town's environment

Cable Television

Cox Cable is responsible for cable television service to the town. Cox also has a business division, which supplies telephone service to a number of local business users.

RECREATION CHAPTER

The purpose of this Recreation Plan is to create a detailed chapter, which deals with recreational facilities. The Plan seeks to analyze existing facilities and conditions and attempts a coordination of efforts toward the implementation of an action plan so that the Parks and Recreation Commission can meet the goals outlined in the chapter and provide adequately for the needs of Cheshire, both now and in the future.

It is important that the Town adopt a Recreation Chapter in the Plan for a number of reasons.

A set of goals and guidelines is necessary so that the Parks and Recreation Commission can determine what actions to take, what lands to acquire and, more basically, what general direction to pursue over time.

With such guidelines, the Commission would be in a position to initiate projects and acquisitions rather than just simply to react to proposals from special interest groups and others. Such a set of goals and guidelines, would also make the analysis of acquisition proposals a less complex and considerably more organized procedure.

BACKGROUND

The population of Cheshire has grown from 6,295 residents in 1950 to approximately 27,000 today. Growth will continue, although at a slower rate into the foreseeable future. As this trend continues much of the open space, farms and forestland will be developed for housing and other uses.

At the same time residents will demand more land for both passive and active recreation. The town must remain vigilant and pursue every opportunity to acquire land either for open space to balance development or for active recreation such as parks and ball fields.

In the following sections existing recreational facilities are inventoried. With this information recommendations can be made based on our present facilities and projected future needs.

EXISTING FACILITIES

Recreational land for the purposes of this inventory include the following:

- Parks
- Private and Public School Sites
- Land Trust Holdings
- Private Recreational Facilities
- State-Owned Properties
- Open Space
- Utility Lands

PUBLIC RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND AREAS

At the present time, Cheshire has ten public recreational areas administered by the Cheshire Parks and Recreation Department. The department also operates programs in school buildings and on school grounds through the year.

PUBLIC RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

1. CHESHIRE PARK – 75 acres

3-60' baseball fields (one additional field to be added next spring), one field is lighted, and a basketball court that is lighted, 5 tennis courts, playscape, pavilion, outdoor ampi-theater, restrooms, batting cage, league storage building, sand volleyball

2. MIXVILLE RECREATIONAL ARES – 62 Acres

1-60' baseball fields, 2 pavilions, basketball court, sand soccer, sand volleyball, restrooms, sledding and skating in Winter.

3. HARMON LEONARD JR. YOUTH CENTER – 2.7 Acres

6-lighted tennis courts, one lighted basketball court, and one lighted sand volleyball

4. LOCK 12 HISTORICAL PARK – 12.8 Acres

Museum, Picnic area, Lock

5. ROARING BROOK FALLS – 85 Acres

Fall, Hiking area

6. McNAMARA/LEGION FIELD – 12 Acres

3-60' baseball fields, 1-80' baseball field, basketball court, playscape, restrooms

7. QUINNIPIAC RECREATION AREA – 20 Acres

4-multi-use fields (primarily soccer), pavilion, rollerblading rink, restrooms, playscape

8. BARTLEM PARK – 45 Acres

1-90' baseball field, 2 large multi-use fields, a playscape, community garden, gazebo, (soon to be completed) pavilion, restrooms and the Community Swimming Pool.

9. VFW COMMUNITY CENTER – 1.5 Acres

10. LINEAR PARK – 35 Acres

2.9 miles of 10' paved trail should be extended 4.6 miles to the Southington Town line within the next 5 years.

SCHOOL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND AREAS

The Parks and Recreation Commission and the Board of Education have successfully worked together in the development of multi-use facilities on school sites. This program has opened another opportunity for neighborhood activities by making fuller use of school fields and recreational facilities and maximizing the return of investment. Therefore, it is felt that continuing and broadening the cooperation between the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Board of Education should be a goal of the Plan.

Approximately one-quarter of the town's population attends one of the six public schools in the community. Scattered throughout Cheshire, some of these school grounds also make up a portion of the network of neighborhood facilities.

The following is an inventory of existing facilities including those constructed under the Multi-use Educational-Recreational Facilities Study. The use of the multi-use facilities is administered jointly by the Board of Education and the Parks and Recreation Department, and are open to both neighborhood residents and school children. (The acreage of the entire school site is listed.)

1. CHESHIRE HIGH SCHOOL - 43.1 ACRES
2. BERTRAM F. DODD, JR. HIGH SCHOOL - 8.5 ACRES
3. HIGHLAND SCHOOL - 23.6 ACRES
4. CHAPMAN SCHOOL - 3.0 ACRES
5. NORTON SCHOOL - 14.9 ACRES
6. DOOLITTLE SCHOOL - 19.6 ACRES

OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES

1. COPPER VALLEY CLUB – 25 Acres
Private swim and tennis club

2. CHESHIRE ACADEMY – Approximately 125 acres of recreational land, including ball fields, tennis courts and track
3. NAUGATUCK STATE FOREST – 59 Acres of wilderness containing part of the Quinnipiac/Blue Trail

4. UTILITY LANDS:

South Central Regional Water Authority – approximately 115 acres of open space surrounding two public wells, part open as hiking trails.

Meriden Water Company – 100 Acres for fishing and hiking

5. Prospect Ridge – 250 Acres contains Blue Trail and Roaring Brook Falls
6. There are 17 trails for hiking and biking, all are listed in the trail book printed in 1994.
7. The town has purchased approximately 1000 acres of open space land since 1986. Some of this land will be used for active recreation facilities (Casertano Farm) others will remain as open space for passive recreation.

An additional goal of the Recreation Plan is to establish a town-wide system of bicycle and hiking trails, and footpaths using whatever possible town-owned property, utilities easements, abandoned right-of-ways and the like, to create a network for recreational use and a secondary access in the town. By cooperation with other town agencies, and attempting to take advantage of opportunities to interconnect open spaces between subdivisions by encouraging their inclusion in new developments (similar to street stubs), the amount of school busing and automobile travel could be reduced by the usage of these facilities.

RECREATIONAL STANDARDS

In order to determine the future recreational needs of the community, standards should be examined in light of our present population, and the amount, type and location of our existing facilities.

Generally a standard set by the National Recreation and Park Association is 20 acres of recreational land per 1000 population. This standard is somewhat flexible and is dependent on local factors such as topography, demographic composition and population density.

Based on the foregoing inventory the town currently has approximately 2250 acres of land either in whole or in part devoted to recreation. This breaks down to 12± areas of recreation land for 1000 residents, which is below the standard of 20 acres per 1,000 population.

CONCLUSION

The town has made progress in meeting its recreational needs but more will have to be done in the future. As population increases the demand for recreational services and land raises proportionately. There is a need to continue examining areas which can be preserved as open space and to establish the means for acquiring other areas for educational and recreational purposes.

The Park and Recreation Commission, has developed a list of potential recreational facilities that they feel will be needed in the near future. The list is as follows:

- West End Recreation Area

 - Expansion of current facilities wherever possible, such as additional ball fields

 - Golf Course with a clubhouse and other amenities

 - Development of Casertano Farm for playing fields

 - Lights at a West Cheshire Recreation area

 - Expansion of the Linear Park

 - Lighting of fields for Little League Baseball/Softball

 - 200' fences for little League Fields

 - Sports complex to include multi-use fields in south end of town if possible

 - Skateboard park in a recreation complex

 - 90' baseball field at Bartlem Park

 - More adult playing fields

 - Walking trails as part of recreation complex

 - Equestrian Trail

 - Development of a "Dog Park"

AGRICULTURE CHAPTER

The designation of Cheshire as the Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut in 1988 indicates that agriculture continues to be one of Cheshire's most important industries. Historically, as well, agriculture has played an important role in shaping Cheshire's transportation routes and current zoning. This rural character created a small town charm which appealed to many people who moved to Cheshire. However, during the 1980's, Cheshire's farms came under extreme pressure from developers. Development continues to be the single most important threat to the future of Cheshire farms. A number of other problems also plague Cheshire farms. Fortunately, new, creative approaches promise to help preserve some of our area farmland. The following will further elucidate the value of farms, problems facing area farmers, and provide some possible solutions and policies specific to the preservation of area farmland.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Farms and the bedding plant industry are an important component in our local economy. Much of a farmer's profit is locally reinvested in equipment, labor and other expenses. And, although farms are not taxed as heavily as other uses, such as residential use, the amount they contribute when compared to the amount of services used (schools, police, etc.), results in a net gain to the Town, whereas other uses yield net losses.

HISTORIC, AESTHETIC, AND CULTURAL VALUES

Throughout New England, farms are celebrated for their scenic qualities, and Cheshire is no different. Farms provide area residents with open space and aesthetic relief, plus help to define our cultural identity. Through its versatility, farmland provides a variety of environmental functions from which we all benefit. For example, a hayfield is at once a food factory, a solar energy converter, a wildlife habitat, a flood control structure, a scenic vista and an area for groundwater recharge.

PROBLEMS FACING AGRICULTURE

Changes in American society have caused major problems in Cheshire's agricultural industry. Large-scale farming operations in the west and south, inexpensive transportation of fresh produce, the advent of the supermarket, a shortage of labor, and the soaring costs of equipment, material, insurance and farm help, have all contributed to the demise of New England agriculture. In addition, a shift in societal work patterns from home centered to work outside the home has created more of a demand for prepackaged, prepared foods.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

Innovative conservation approaches are helping to preserve Connecticut farms. Creative tax and real estate arrangements have been proposed by environmentally concerned groups, and conservation-minded estate planning techniques are being tested. Some communities have chosen to implement agricultural zones, conditional use zones, and area-based allocation zones, all of which are designed to cluster houses on the land that is least suitable for agriculture and leave the prime farmland undisturbed. These zoning techniques have been most successful when used in conjunction with other farmland preservation techniques, such as transfer of development rights, tax incentives, and other programs which support the continued development of the agricultural economic base.

Connecticut's Farmland Preservation Program which began several years ago has had limited success in Cheshire. The program is managed by the State Department of Agriculture and is an attempt to preserve farmland by acquiring development rights to agricultural properties. The farms remain in private ownership. A permanent restriction is placed on all nonagricultural uses of these properties.

The program is voluntary on the part of the applicant and it gives farmers a realistic alternative to selling their farms for residential development.

The continued use of Public Act 490³ is vital to the preservation of agricultural land, open space and woodland in Cheshire. In 1987, there were 91 owners of farmland listed under P.A. 490, today there are 152. Acreage devoted to farmland has also grown from 2,533 acres in 1987 to 2,879 acres in the year 2000.

The current status may change as a result of Boulder Knoll Farm being sold to the town and the farming activities being discontinued.

Boulder Knoll was the last remaining dairy farmer in town. The owners of the farm rented several hundred acres to grow corn for cattle feed, the land that was used for this purpose was considered farmland under P.A. 490.

THE CHESHIRE SITUATION

Although farmland is scattered throughout Cheshire, the majority of it is located in the northern end of town on land, which is predominantly zoned industrial. Agriculture and industry can be compatible uses and should not be discouraged. Creative land use can allow for the protection of both farmland and industry by including good buffers, leaving wild areas, and correct placing of buildings. Cheshire recognizes the economic, cultural, aesthetic and environmental value of active

³ PA 490 is an assessment classification given to land that qualifies as farmland by the local assessor. The assessor takes into account, among other things, the acreage of the property, how much is in actual use as farmland and the income derived from the farming activity.

agricultural land use and farming through the town. For years, a variety of crops have been produced by local farmers and made available at local farm stands and food markets. In support of continued agriculture, the town should attempt to preserve productive agricultural land through a number of techniques, which could include encouragement of local, state and federal legislation, which offers assistance for preservation of farmland.

Consider leasing town open space for temporary agricultural use when such use is deemed appropriate and not detrimental to the environment surrounding most properties. Consider acquisition of land or some interest in land for agricultural use when such use is deemed appropriate in conjunction with development review and approval.

Where appropriate, review all development proposals adjacent to agricultural land for provision of effective buffers. Such buffers may include, but are not limited to, vegetation, conservation easements, open space and fences.

Review all development proposals adjacent to agricultural land for potential disturbances and conflicts, which might jeopardize farmers and their agricultural land. For example, encourage cluster-type development to provide adequate spacing between residential units and adjacent orchard.

Establish a local farm advisory committee, which involves farmers and town officials.

Identify, evaluate and map significant agricultural lands to determine the desirability of permanent preservation. "Significance" will be determined by percentage of prime and important agricultural soils, farm acreage, and collateral and environmental objectives, such as aquifer protection, flood plain preservation, historic preservation, aesthetics, and overall location within town.

CIRCULATION AND TRAFFIC

The Roadway System

The lifeline of a community is its transportation network. The components of Cheshire's transportation system of roads, intersections, highways and sidewalks should provide safe and efficient traffic and pedestrian circulation to all areas of town. The highway system is overburdened in places due to extensive development, which took place in the past 40 years. There is no doubt that the automobile will continue to be the primary means of transportation in Town but the use of mass transit as well as various other transportation systems and management strategies should be investigated.

Any change in Cheshire's residential or commercial zoning regulations that will increase population or create more traffic must be scrutinized for potential traffic impact. The inter-relationship between traffic congestion and its negative impacts on the overall quality of life in town must be found.

Cheshire has five major road classifications: expressways, arterials, collectors local streets and service roads. The 174.2 miles of roads within the town's boundaries are defined as follows:

Expressway: An expressway is a limited access highway and its primary function is for rapid movement of traffic (i.e. I-84, I-69I).

Arterial Roads: Arterial roads route traffic through the community. These roads also provide access to property as a secondary function. In most instances, arterial roads are state numbered routes (ie. routes 42, 10, 68/70).

Collector Roads: A collector street provides for the movement of traffic from point to point within the community as well as access to property (ie. Peck Lane, Mountain Road).

Local Streets: A local street provides direct access to individual property.

Service Roads: A service road is an internal roadway system used primarily to connect commercial areas. They are intended to enable vehicles to go from site to site and are not designed to carry large volumes of traffic.

TYPE	MILES
Expressways	5.50
Arterials	20.50
Collectors	51.40
Local Streets	<u>96.80</u>
TOTAL	174.20

The basic problem associated with the design of street systems is the conflict that arises between the movement of traffic and access to other roads and properties. Traffic volumes increase as one travels from the perimeter of the Town to its center.

Therefore, it is desirable to separate traffic by purpose and distance to destination in order to design a street system that meets the community's various requirements related to access to property and the movement of traffic. Each classification of road requires that particular design criteria and road geometry standards be met in order to enable a road to adequately carry traffic and meet its land access objectives. While the details of road design and improvements are matters of engineering, there are certain planning principles such as right of way widths, traffic lanes, the location of site ingress and egress, and overall circulation which are evaluated during the Planning and Zoning Commission's review of proposed projects.

Further circulation planning in Cheshire should take into consideration the function and design of streets as well as the possibility of future connections between existing and proposed roads. As a practical matter, consideration needs to be given to the possibility for the extension of the Town's existing network of roads to undeveloped properties. During the site planning process, consideration must also be given to the possibility and probability of the future connection of streets and site accessways.

Although cul-de-sacs are an attractive feature for some homeowners, it is essential that options remain open for potential through roads to permit better emergency access.

Overall circulation planning efforts may provide secondary access to property and may result in the reduction of curb cuts on arterial roads and collector streets. It may also provide access to otherwise land locked parcels. Ideally, streets should lead to other streets carrying the next greater volume of traffic; local to collector, collector to arterial, arterial to expressway.

Consideration should be given to requiring service roads to provide public and truck access between commercial properties wherever possible. Service roads are roadways that internally link parking areas and/or driveways so that patrons of commercial establishments are able to get from one store or property to another without using the public highway.

Service roads could in many cases eliminate curb cuts, improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation, safety and lessen congestion on Route 10 and other major roadways.

There are two locations in town that lend themselves to service roads. The first is the area behind the post office and those businesses fronting of Maple Avenue. A service road could be constructed from the new driveway to Maplecroft Plaza

(opposite West Main) and go northerly to the Senior Center parking lot or the Waverly. This would alleviate the congestion at the intersection of Maple and West Main and allow businesses along Maple to access the service road and the light at Main, Maple, and West Main from the driveway to Maplecroft Plaza.

The second location would be a road from the driveway to Old Towne Condominiums opposite the light at Cornwall Avenue running southerly behind those businesses fronting Rt. 10 to the rear of Dunkin Donuts. This would eliminate some curb cuts on Rt. 10 and allow drivers to these establishments to exit onto the service road go north to the light at Cornwall and go north of south.

Although the primary impact of circulation problems may be subjective in nature, measured by a driver's level of frustration and anxiety, transportation planners attempt to translate these problems into a more objective framework.

These planners analyze intersections based on volume to capacity (V/C) ratios and an intersection's level of service (LOS). The V/C ratio compares the present volume of traffic with the design capacity of a given road. The level of service relates to the operation of a given intersection, measuring the delay that drivers experience while proceeding through an intersection.

A number of changes to roadway intersections have occurred in the past few years to help improve safety conditions as a result of a traffic flow improvement study done in 1986. The results were based on a review of the existing and projected traffic volumes on some major roads in town.

1. Rt. 68/70 at the Notch - road widening and realignment
2. Realignment of traffic signal at intersections of Rt. 10/Creamery Road and Rt.10/Higgins Road.
3. Rt. 10 and Cheshire High School - turning lane, intersection improvements
4. Installation of computerized traffic signal system from Cook Hill Road to Country Club Road.
5. Signal installations on Highland Avenue at Hinman Street, Jarvis Street, Industrial Avenue and Fieldstone Court.
6. Relocation of intersection at Main Street and Highland Avenue and intersection improvements including widening and turning lanes at Academy Road and South Main Street.
7. Center turn lane between North Brooksvale Road and entrance to Cheshire Shopping Center.

Other proposed projects include:

1. Extend center turn lane from Cheshire Shopping Center to Everybody's Shopping Center.

Mass Transit

Connecticut Transit provides inter-town transportation in the form of the Waterbury-Cheshire-New Haven bus route along Route 10 (South Main Street) and Route 68/70 (West Main Street/Waterbury Road). Commuter bus service is available to Hartford, commuter parking lots are located adjacent to both the I-84 interchange with Route 70 (Waterbury Road) and I-69I interchange with Route 10 (Highland Avenue). A third commuter lot, located near the center of Town along Rt. 10, is in the rear lot of Cheshire Shopping Center.

The Town provides inter-town transportation to the elderly and disabled in the form of mini-bus services. The mini-bus program is administered by the Department of Human Services and rides are provided to the elderly and disabled on both a regular schedule and on as needed basis. Three vans are available for use and the cost to individuals is a twenty-five cent donation.

As part of an agreement with the State for the expansion of the State Correctional Facility, a shuttle service is now available to provide transportation for family and friends to visit the facility. This service picks up the visitors at the Town Green near a public bus stop.

The Greater Waterbury Transit District and the Greater New Haven Transit District provide transportation to the elderly and disabled from Cheshire to the Greater Waterbury Area and Greater New Haven area for medical appointments, employment, and socialization. Recent State and Federal grants have been used to provide transportation from Waterbury to the Cheshire Industrial Park to transport people to and from work. This enhanced service not only helps employers and employees but may also help with our recruitment efforts to attract businesses into this area. Additional efforts should be made to widen this service to other areas in Cheshire to provide transportation for employment.

Pedestrian Circulation

For the safety of Cheshire's citizens, for the general convenience, and to alleviate the costs associated with school bussing, the Town is developing a comprehensive sidewalk system. Presently, sidewalks are required in new subdivisions on both sides of the street in R-20, R-20A, R-40 and R-80 zones. Sidewalks may be waived if the Planning and Zoning Commission finds that any of the following conditions exist:

- the lots on the road are not within legal walking distance to any school.
- proposed road reconstruction makes the installation of sidewalks impractical.

-
- unusual physical or topographical conditions in conjunction with the absence of sidewalks in the area make the immediate installation of the walks impractical.

Minimally, sidewalks should be installed within a mile and a half radius of public or private schools regardless of the zone. This radius takes into consideration the Town's school bussing policy, which varies depending on the grade of the pupil, the linear mileage of the journey to school, and the availability of sidewalks in the general area. The maximum distance that may be required for students to walk to school or to the bus stop is as follows:

.5 mile for kindergarten
1 mile for grades 1 through 3
1.5 miles for grades 4 through 12

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials recommends that sidewalks used by pedestrians as access to schools, parks, shopping areas, and transit stops be placed along both sides of the road. Sidewalks should be located on both sides of the street in commercial areas. In residential areas, sidewalks are desirable on both sides of the streets but need to be provided on at least one side of all local streets.

The rails-to-trails project is a paved path running along the Canal. It is also being extended south into New Haven and north into Southington. It is open year around for bikers and hikers to enjoy from sunrise to sunset.

It is important that there is adequate pedestrian access to the trail along its entire length. Residential areas should have sidewalks and bikeways, which connect directly to the trail wherever possible. When the trail traverses a commercial area such as West Main Street, users of the trail should be able to leave the trail to visit shops or restaurants. Sidewalks should be provided to connect the trail to those facilities as well as connect parking areas.

In order for the Town's transportation network to be complete, focus should be placed on creating a well-integrated sidewalk system. A sidewalk network supplements the Town's road system by providing a means of secondary access and a secondary circulation system. As commercial, industrial and residential development continues and traffic volumes increase, sidewalks become an increasingly important safety consideration.

The location of sidewalks should be determined by objective criteria that relates to the facilities and the areas that the walks are intended to service. For example, this need to evaluate the location of sidewalks becomes acute when one considers any of the following conditions: the needs of elderly and handicapped persons, nearby recreational facilities, and the proximity of residential areas to schools and

commercial areas. Sidewalks should connect main arteries, businesses, neighborhoods, schools and parks.

The town has recently made great strides in closing gaps and extending sidewalks along the eastern side of Route 10 from the Town Hall southerly to Cook Hill Road. This stretch of sidewalk is extremely important to link key areas together such as the Town Hall and Town Green to Bartlem Park and Cheshire High School as well as shopping areas. This will help with access and parking problems during special events by encouraging people to park further away and walk to the event.

The “Town Center Area” between the Town Hall, the Public Library, and the Senior Center is also an important area to link together. The area surrounding the Maplecroft Plaza is especially important. As part of the Stop & Shop project various pedestrian safety improvements are being undertaken. Crosswalks are being relocated to the new traffic light on Route 10 making crossing for residents of Hillside Village and Cheshire Academy more convenient and safer. An internal walkway system is being constructed to connect Hillside Village with Stop & Shop, the Senior Center, the Post Office and West Main Street.

Additionally, gaps need to be completed to connect existing sidewalks on sections of Route 10 between the Town Hall and the Police Department to accommodate elementary school walkers and residents who use the area frequently.

Conclusion

An integrated transportation network that takes into consideration the present and future needs of the community and the limitations of certain roadways is necessary in order to ensure that the Town of Cheshire’s circulation system adequately meets the demands placed on it as a result of continued development throughout the Town. This objective may be met as a result of planning efforts that take into consideration the existing traffic conditions, the overall circulation needs of the Town, the potential for the existing networks to be extended to undeveloped properties, and the suitability of land dedicated for possible extension of the existing network of roads.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should expand its role in the process by working closely with the Town Engineers on identifying areas of town where it feels that sidewalks would be most appropriate. Their suggestions should be incorporated into the 5-year capital expenditure plan and updated annually.

POPULATION CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION

An analysis of past trends and the projection of future population are the basis for most major planning decisions. Population analysis measures the size and density of the various groups within the community, which gives an indication of the level or magnitude of the demand for public services and facilities.

The projection of future population is based on various assumptions and the analysis should be done and used with great care. Ideally, population estimates should be made periodically to track major changes rather than rely solely on the decennial census. This Chapter presents a series of tables, which give a demographic profile of Cheshire's current population; from this information projections are made of future populations.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS 1950 – 2000

Cheshire's population grew at a significant rate between 1950 to 1970 as shown by TABLE I below:

YEAR	POPULATION	% CHANGE
1950	6,295	-----
1960	13,383	112.6%
1970	19,051	42.4%
1980	21,788	14.4%
1990	25,684	17.9%
2000	28,543	11.1%

The 2000 census shows the town's total population as 28,543; however, this figure includes persons who currently reside in institutions. The census shows 3,009 as institutionalized with another 161 persons residing in group quarters * for a total of 3,170 people. If this figure is subtracted from 28,543 then there are only 25,373 people in the total population or more accurate growth rate of 7.8% or less than 1% a year.

However, for the sake of consistency with other data the 28,543 figure will be used unless noted otherwise.

Historically, Cheshire's greatest population growth occurred between 1960-1970 with an increase of 42.3%. The increase from 1970 to 1980 was a mere 14.3%. The population for the twenty year period 1960 to 1980 increased by 62.85%, the growth for the twenty year period for 1980 until 2000 was approximately half that amount or 31%. TABLE II below lists Cheshire's population history and some projections by the State's Office of Policy and Management (OPM)

*There are two general categories of people living in group quarters:

- 1) The institutionalized population, which include correctional institutions, nursing homes etc.
- 2) The non-institutionalized population in group quarters such as dormitories and group homes.

TABLE II		
YEAR	POPULATION	SOURCE
1960	13,383	U.S. CENSUS
1970	19,051	U.S. CENSUS
1980	21,788	U.S. CENSUS
1990	25,684	U.S. CENSUS
1995	28,090	CONN. OPM
2000	28,543	U.S. CENSUS
2005	29,900	CONN. OPM
2010	30,810	CONN. OPM

Cheshire's household size declined significantly from a high in 1960 of 3.58 persons per household to 2.66 in 2000.

Population Composition By Age And Sex

Figures from the 2000 census detail the age and sex of the total population. The median age increased from 31.9 in 1980 to 35.3 in 1990 and 38.4 in 2000. It is predicted by the State's Office Policy and Management that by the year 2010 the median age will be 42.4. Among those people 65 years and older the percentage of the total population grew from 10.1% in 1980 to 11.9% in 1990 to 12.6% in 2000. The age distribution table below show that the largest age group in town are the 35-44 year olds at 18.2% of the population.

TABLE III		
CHESHIRE POPULATION BY AGE		
		% OF TOTAL
UNDER 5 YEARS	1,648	5.8
5-9	2,026	7.1
10-14	2,137	7.5
15-19	2,362	8.3
20-24	1,238	4.3
25-34	3,199	11.2
35-44	5,206	18.2
45-54	4,609	16.1
55-59	1,564	5.5
60-64	960	3.4
65-74	1,682	5.9
75-84	1,319	4.5
85 YEARS & OVER	591	2.1

There are 11,386 males over 18 years old and 9,955 females. This number is misleading, because of the prison population, which is all male. In actuality there are fewer males (8,377) in town over 18 years of age then females. This is also true of the over 65 population, there are 1,423 males and 2,169 females.

Employment

In June of 2000 Cheshire had a total of 13,973 people employed in nonagricultural jobs. This was an increase of 19.1% from 1990. The region as a whole grew only by 4.5% and the state by 4.9% for the same period. Cheshire and Middlebury had the lowest percentage of unemployed workers in the region at 2.1% in 1999.

Household Income

Cheshire had the highest median household income (the combined income of all members of a household) in the region in 1999 at \$84,224. Median family household income (the combined income of all members of each family) was also the highest at \$90,995. Per capita income was \$ 35,704; the state per capita income is \$ 31,816.

Ethnicity

Cheshire's population is 89.4% Caucasian which is not significantly different than the rest of the region. According to the Census 4.7% of the population is black, 0.2% American Indian and 2.6% Asian, another 3.1% of the population is made up of other races.

Population Projections

In 1995 the Office of Policy and Management predicted that Cheshire will continue to grow but at a much slower rate. From 1990-2000 they predicted 13.3% growth, in actuality we only grew by 11%. From 2000-2010 they show 5.2% and for the decade 2010-2020, 3.3%.

Natural Increase

The rate of natural increase has fluctuated widely since 1965 as TABLE IV indicates.

TABLE IV

YEAR	BIRTHS	DEATHS	NATURAL INCREASE
1965 14,600	267 (18.2/1000)	108 (7.4/1000)	159
1970 19,100	304 (16/1000)	138 (7.2/1000)	166
1975	205	192	12
1976	193	169	24
1977	190	158	32
1978	195	179	16
1979	219	185	34
1980 21,788	227 (10.4/1000)	193 (8.85/1000)	34
1981	255	189	66
1982	219	202	16
1983	239	203	39
1984	242	240	2
1985	245	235	10
1986	261	220	41
1987	255	223	32
1988	301	234	67
1989	287	212	75
1990 25,684	296 (11.5/1000)	217 (8.4/1000)	79
1991	265	194	71
1992	279	217	62
1993	290	209	81
1994	294	232	62
1995	290	235	55
1996	282	252	30
1997	301	244	57
1998	305	254	51
1999	283 (9.9/1000)	238 (8.3/1000)	45
2000 28,543			

Note: Numbers in () indicate birth rate and death rate per one thousand residents for selected years.

It is significant that the birth rate per thousand has declined from 18.2 in 1965 to 11.5 in 1990 to 9.9 in 1999. The death rate, however, has shown a slight increase from 7.4 to 8.3 in 1999. It is estimated that these trends will continue into the near future.

In-Migration

In migration depends on a number of variables. National and local economic conditions, which effect mortgage rates and wages and influence residential construction and peoples ability to purchase real estate. In addition, the cost and availability of land, changes in the town's residential policies such as allowing higher densities also have an effect.

Note: In the year 2000, 68 one family permits were issued. The average person per household is 2.71, therefore, $68 \times 2.71 = 184$ new residents.

EXISTING LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to inventory existing land uses, the nature of each use, the extent of the acreage involved and the general location of the major land uses.

An inventory of this type is an important tool when used in conjunction with other Chapters of the Plan such as Physical Features. Recommendations for alternating, extending or stabilizing existing patterns should be based on this information.

Land Use Patterns

The Land Use Map shows the types and locations of the various uses throughout town. A review of the map reveals several important land use patterns and features. The dominant type of development is residential, mostly single family. Residential land use has been primarily around the center of town, working its way outward toward the northeast and southward on both sides of Route 10.

Commercial and industrial uses play a relatively minor role in the overall land use scheme. There are still large tracts of farmland and undeveloped property scattered throughout town.

Analysis Of Existing Land Use

The amount of developed and undeveloped acres in each land use category is shown in the following table:

TABLE I

LAND USE CATEGORY	TOTAL AREA	RESIDENTIAL R-20, R-40, R-80, R-20A	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL				
	ACRES	%	ACRES	%	ACRES	%	ACRES	%
DEVELOPED	8,501	40.00	6,694	36.6	141	71.94	1,666	62.6
UNDEVELOPED	12,627	60.00	11,578	63.4	55	28.06	994	37.4
TOTAL AREA	21,128	100.00%	18,272	100.00%	196	100.00%	2,660	100.00%

Residential

According to the table, residentially zoned land accounts for 86% of all the land in Cheshire about 37% or 6,700 acres have been developed and contain approximately 9,300 dwelling units, most of which are single family. (See residential Chapter for additional information) Of the 11,578 acres of undeveloped land in the residential zones, 4,403.9 acres is taken up by the following uses:

Schools (public)	150 acres
Open Space	314 acres
Land Trust Property	250 acres
Audubon Society	8.4 acres
Park Land (includes Farmington Canal Park)	329 acres
Meriden Water Company	1335 acres
Regional Water Authority (includes only South Cheshire Wells and miscellaneous property)	36.5 acres
Other miscellaneous property owned by the Town	60 acres
Farmland	1921 acres

Commercial

Contained within the commercial land use category are a number of uses, mixed residential, retail, office space, etc. According to Table I, there are 196 acres of commercially zoned land, 141 acres have been developed. Most of the commercial uses are located along Route 10 with some scattered sites in outlying areas.

Industrial

Most industrial uses are located in the north end of town with some of the older uses along Willow Street, near the rail line. Early industrial development began in this area to take advantage of the Farmington Canal and later followed the railroad north to Sandbank Road.

There are over 2,600 acres of industrially zoned land in town with approximately 63% developed. The industrial area and uses on the northeast side of Route 10 is heavily impacted by the aquifer protection regulations. The North Cheshire Well field contains 115 acres of land that is dedicated as open space for well protection.

State Owned Properties

The State of Connecticut owns land along Route 10 in several locations. Grounds of the Cheshire Correctional Institute (CCI) comprise approximately 442 acres. The former Regional Center on Creamery Road accounts for another 25 acres.

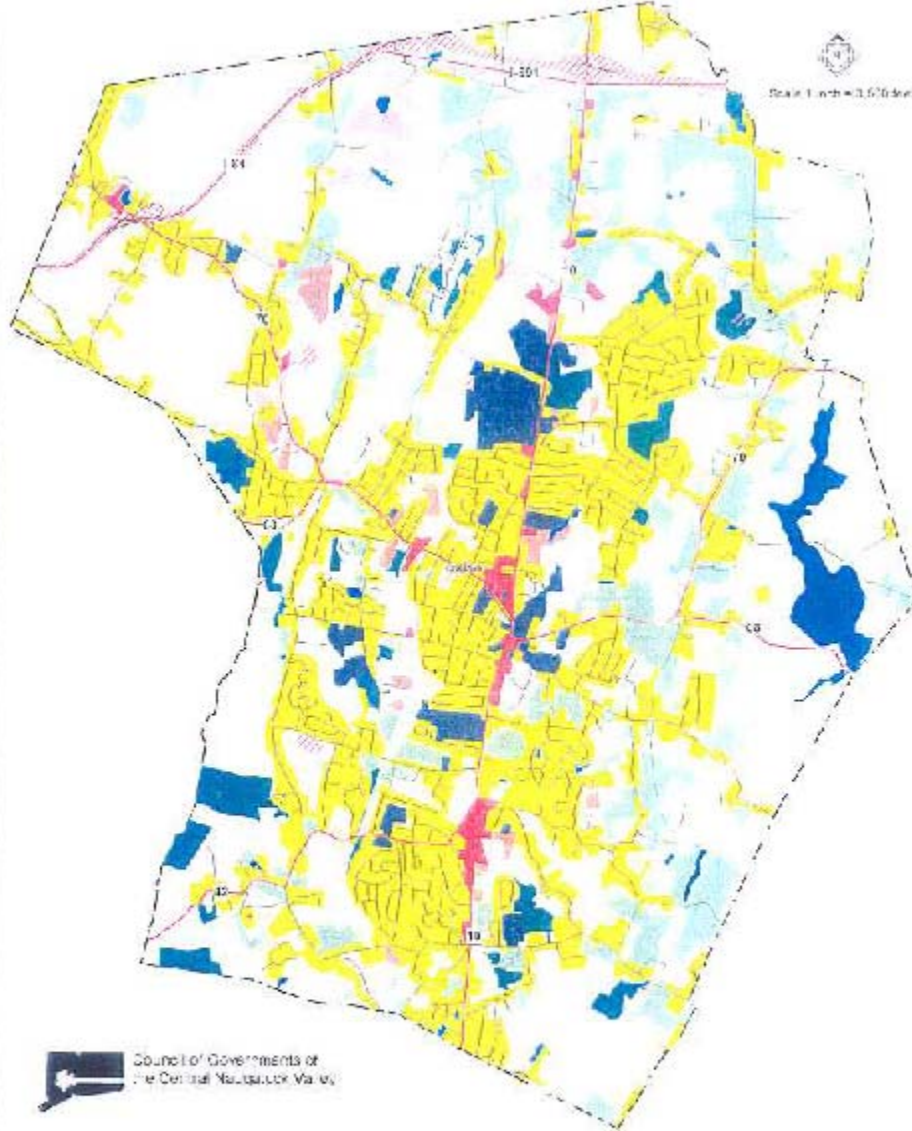
Other parcels include part of the Naugatuck State Forest, land along Prospect Ridge and the linear park along the canal, and various other parcels in the north end of town along I-691.

Institutions Other Than State-Owned: Private schools, places of worship and elderly care amenities

Other land uses that are located on substantial pieces of property are Cheshire Academy, Legionaries Seminary, the Franciscan Center, places of worship and elderly care facilities. These properties together total approximately 400 acres and are shown as institutional on the land use map.

Generalized Land Use

Town of Chatham



Council of Governments of the Central Nantuxuk Valley

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Woods Use | Forest & Wetland Use | Other |
| High Density | Conifer Forest/Peatlands | Regional Airport |
| Medium Density | Open Space and Pastures | Local Road |
| Low Density | Wetlands | Shaded Boundary |
| Municipal | Agricultural | Plan |
| General Trade and Service | Recreational/Conservation | Municipality Name |
| Industrial | Water | |
| Transportation/Utilities | Vacant | |

RESIDENTIAL CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION

In a community such as Cheshire where over 90 percent of the land is dedicated to residential zoning, the establishment of policies to guide future residential growth is a fundamental part of the planning process.

Before an attempt is made to formulate policies however, it is essential to know the amount of existing housing, the composition of that housing (single family, condos, etc.) density and finally its location.

Many of the residential policies that were stated in former plans are still valid. The town is and will remain essentially a residential community, however, there are changes, which have occurred in the past decade, which should be evaluated and addressed. These include affordable housing, aquifer protection and flood plain management. Each of these issues has some impact on the town's overall residential development.

The 1979 Plan stated that "it is not the purpose of this Plan to dictate anyone's life style, to the contrary, we believe that one of the goals of the Plan is to provide a wide choice of life-styles within the parameter of sound planning and the concept of a balanced growth."

This statement should remain as the central theme of this chapter but should also be a stated goal of the entire plan.

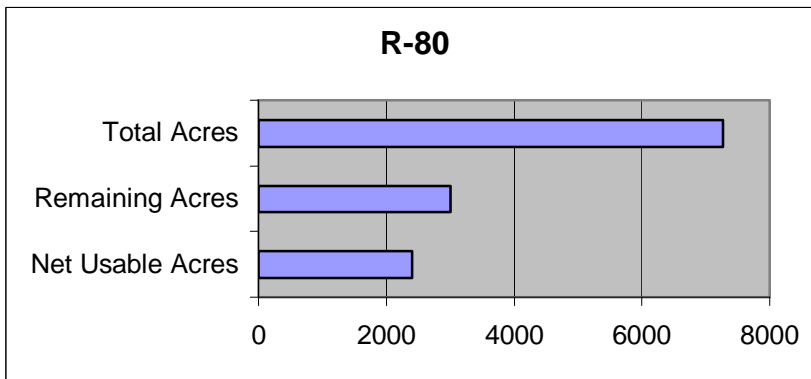
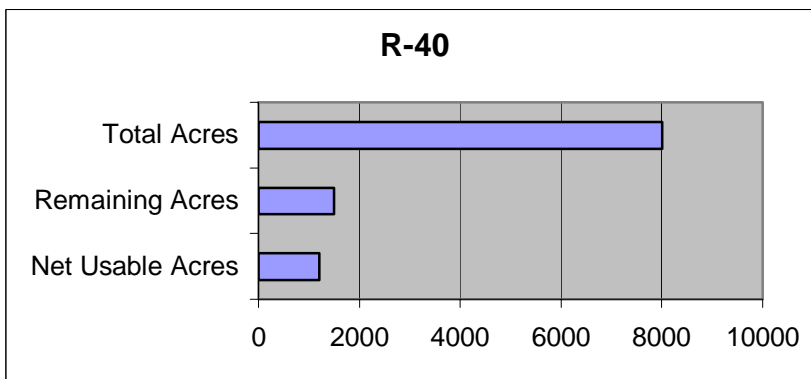
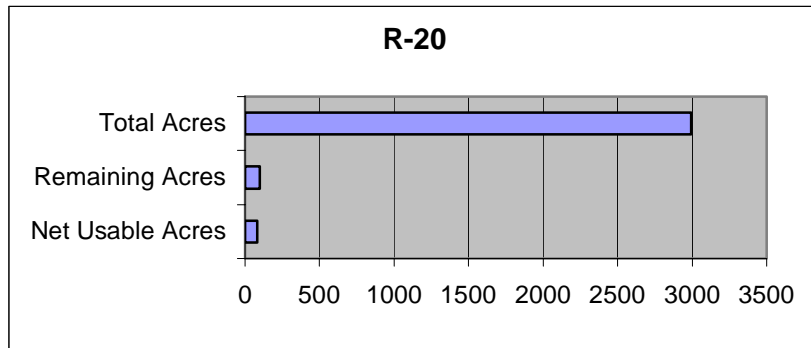
DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

In the past, residential growth took place predominantly in the R-20 zones around the Town Center. The existence of sewers, the lower cost of half-acre lots and the proximity to shopping, schools and other public facilities have been incentives to development. Most of the R-20 zones are fully utilized at this time.

It is interesting to note that approximately 8,000 people or one third of the population live within a one-mile radius of the Cheshire Correctional facility.

Radial development patterns have emerged in the R-40 zones but development has occurred generally in a northeasterly direction. The R-80 zones are the least developed, and it is unlikely that much development will occur soon because of a sewer moratorium placed in effect in 1987. Basically the moratorium prohibits the Planning and Zoning Commission from approving any use requiring public sewers, such as, condominiums and cluster developments therefore, only two acre lots with on site septic systems may be developed.

The charts below represent the total acres, remaining acres, and the net usable acres in each zone. The net usable acres represent the remaining acres with a deduction of 20% for proposed roads, wetlands, etc.



From the charts, we can assume an approximate number of dwelling units of: **174** in R-20, **1307** in R-40, and **1307** in R-80. This totals **2788** dwelling units possible in the residential zones.

ZONE	REMAINING ACRES (converted to sq. ft.)	MINIMUM ACRE PER LOT	POTENTIAL DWELLING UNITS
R-20	80 acres (3,484, 800 sq. ft.)	÷ 20,000 sq. ft. =	174 units
R-40	1200 acres (52,272,000 sq. ft.)	÷ 40,000 sq. ft. =	1307 units
R-80	2400 acres (104,544,000 sq. ft.)	÷ 80,000 sq. ft. =	1307 units
TOTAL	3600 acres (160,300,800 sq. ft.)	÷ minimum area required per zone	2788 dwelling units

Units By Type

SINGLE FAMILY	8,196
TWO FAMILY UNITS	219
THREE-FOUR FAMILY	254
FIVE+ FAMILY	821
OTHER HOUSING TYPES (Elderly, Cooperatives etc.)	196

Value

The median value of a single-family home in Cheshire grew from \$82,169. in 1980 to \$203,000 in 1990 and decreased slightly to 198,570 in 1999.

Needs Assessment

From 1990 to 2000 there were 1150-building permits issued. There were 996 single family dwelling units applied for and only 154 multi-family units. The years 1994 to 1999 were the more active with a peak in 1997.

In 1990 the Cheshire Housing Partnership was formed to investigate ways to create and develop adequate supplies and opportunities for affordable housing. As part of their responsibilities they generated a needs assessment report, which was submitted to the State Department of Housing. In summary, this report found that for the period 1980 to 1986 Cheshire's total number of housing units increased by nearly 20% compared to the region's more modest 13.2% increase. The region had a vacancy rate of 7% in 1990 while Cheshire was a low 3%. This is below the desirable rate for owner occupied housing as well as rental units. There were 304 apartments converted to condominiums during 1980, which significantly impacted the rental market.

In 1998 the town adopted a comprehensive affordable housing regulation. The regulation allows for the development of single-family, multi-family and congregate housing by special permit in all residential and commercial zones. There are 197 units of housing that are counted as affordable by the state. These include, housing built under the above regulation, CHFA funded housing and Section 8 housing for the elderly and homes built by Cheshire Interfaith Housing.

The trend seems to be more toward elderly housing than strictly affordable. Since 1980 there has been 349 units of elderly housing built with 100 more approved but never built. These units are both condominiums and assisted living.

COMMERCIAL CHAPTER

BACKGROUND

Commercial development began in Cheshire in response to residents' needs for essential goods. Very old maps of the Town showed development extending along some major roads but concentrated primarily in the Town Center around the Green and the First Congregational Church.

A 1856 plan of the Village Center clearly shows a cluster of stores along Route 10 from Cornwall to Spring Street.

The first formal Plan of Development adopted in 1947 proposed that the Town be divided into four districts, each with its own "shopping center to supply butter and eggs." In addition, it called for a central shopping area for business and large commercial uses. As an aside, the plan also highlighted the effects of the heavy traffic crowding through the center of Town and spoiling the effect of the Village Green.

The next Plan written in 1954 was very specific about the amount of retail space that should be made available as the Town population increased. It recommended that an area of about 25 acres be set aside as a principal commercial center on the east side of South Main Street, south of Wallingford Road, and that various neighborhood shopping centers be created.

A revision of the Plan in 1958 proposed expansion of the commercial areas outlined in the 1954 plan. Further expansion was planned in the triangle formed by Maple Avenue, Highland Avenue and Hinman Street. A detailed plan of the Town Center was also included in this plan, which recommended a new Administrative Center and a new Shopping Center site, south of the Town Hall on what is now Old Towne Condominiums.

The 1958 Plan was amended in 1965. This plan basically addressed industrial expansion and major road realignments, but it did recommend the containment of strip commercial development along the main highways and an expansion of the commercial areas to provide for a regional shopping center in the vicinity of proposed relocated Route 10 and 6A. (The relocation of Route 10 obviously never materialized.)

The last amendment was made to the plan in 1975. It again recommended a strong Town Center concept. The boundaries of the Center, at that time, are delineated on the accompanying map. The area is known as the Special Development District (SDD) and is an overlay zone, which essentially encourages retail growth, and some residential uses by offering incentives to the developer, such as increased density and relief of certain parking requirements. Since its inception, excellent projects have been developed under this regulation and more should be encouraged where it is appropriate.

EXISTING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

Enterprises considered commercial are found in Zones C-1, C-2 and C-3, as specified in the Zoning Regulations. These activities include retail, service and professional uses.

RETAIL AND SERVICES

For the purpose of this plan, retail is the activity requiring the exchange of money for a commodity. Services include activities, such as beauty parlor and barber shops, repairs, cleaning - generally the exchange of money for the skill of another. Professional activities are also services but more specifically associated with the medical, dental, legal banking and other financial occupations. Retail generally takes place in stores, while services are mostly in or out of offices or special buildings.

The retail trade activities are housed in approximately 492,021 square feet of space. This space varies from the Cheshire Shopping Center on South Main Street, the Maplecroft Shopping Center, to the single-story, freestanding shops, and the small strips of four to eight tenants.

This array of stores, combined with all the services, occupies most of the land zones for commercial purposes.

The Planning and Zoning Commission recently passed a regulation limiting retail stores to 50,000 square feet for a single store with a combination of 120,000 square feet of retail space for buildings sharing common parking area. The purpose of the regulation is to limit the size of retail establishments and to prevent the construction of very large warehouse type retailers.

Offices

Buildings used exclusively for offices are found in the commercial and industrial zones. One hundred office complexes are found throughout the commercial and R-20A zones. The total square footage involved amounts to over one million square feet.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Retail

The expansion of the retail sector appears to be virtually at an end in the Town Center area. Changes and growth do and can occur, however, by conversion of residential (R-20A) uses to compatible commercial uses, and by the redevelopment of existing commercial properties. Several other properties are prime targets for redevelopment and innovative zoning techniques.

The first is the West Main Street commercial area. The area along West Main Street from Grove Street to Deepwood Drive is characterized by a mix of commercial and industrial uses. The area is unique because it is isolated from upper West Main Street, which is predominantly residential. The area lies in a valley next to the former railroad right of way, which is visually significant. Parking for most of the commercial buildings are in front and there is very poor vehicular circulation.

The area could benefit from being designated a Special Development District or Village District. This concept would build in flexibility to allow a wider range of uses at a higher density, but at the same time put tighter controls on design considerations, such as façade improvements, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and landscaping. Heavy reliance should be placed on the recommendations in the Beautification Plan for this area.

When the Farmington Canal Linear Park is extended northward from Cornwall Avenue, this area will take on special significance. The Ball and Socket building could become the focal point for a redevelopment effort both east and west of the linear park. An urban design study should be undertaken in the near future to graphically show the potential aesthetic possibilities of the area.

The second area in need of attention is the intersection of Main Street and Maple Avenue. This is an extremely congested intersection due to poor traffic circulation and confusing driveway locations. The area lacks any significant landscaping or distinctive architecture. Until the Post Office is relocated or a driveway is connected into the Maplecroft Plaza opposite West Main, these problems will remain. The Maplecroft driveway could also provide for a service road to the rear of the Post Office, the Bank, Victorian house, Senior Center, Fire House and the Waverly property. This road would eliminate much of the congestion that occurs from these facilities on Maple Avenue.

The same driveway would provide access to the back of the Plaza Block and adjoining properties. Further, when new development does occur along Main and Maple extensive landscaping such as street trees, shrubs etc. should be provided.

The third area of Town, which needs to be addressed, is the area immediately south of the Town Center. Some excellent development has taken place on both sides of Route 10, but there are still properties that should be upgraded or rehabilitated. There are problems on the east side especially from the theater block northward to Wallingford Road. Some of the buildings are in a dilapidated state and many have very poor parking arrangements. This is another area that would benefit from a service road running along the easterly boundaries of these properties.

The road could begin at the traffic light at Lanyon Drive and run along the easterly property lines of those buildings on Route 10 northward to Wallingford Road. All of the buildings on Route 10 would benefit if access was to the rear and fewer curb cuts were on the main road.

This area is extremely important because it provides a visual image for the entrance to the Town Center and the Green. These properties are also located in the Special Development District and when development does occur extensive landscaping should be required as well as a row of street trees.

The last plan advocated neighborhood convenience centers at appropriate locations around town. This may still be a possibility and should be given further consideration. A neighborhood convenience center, which may consist of a small food store, a bank, a dry cleaner, and, depending on the location, a gas station, might also serve the purpose of reducing traffic along the main roads. While it is not the purpose of this suggestion to create spot zones for such a use, it is suggested that existing locations now serving as convenience centers could be expanded if contiguous land is available.

It is an aim of this Plan of Development to incorporate ideas on traffic control and smooth flow wherever possible. One such possibility exists in the South Main Street area from Cheshire Shopping Center to Everybody's Plaza. That is, to design and have installed an interior road between the two centers. This service road would serve the purpose of saving shoppers time and reduce traffic on Route 10 as well.

TOWN CENTER

Older plans tried to foresee the Town Center as the focal point of all or most commercial activity. This goal has not been achieved and probably will not be. However, it is the intent of this Plan to redefine the boundaries of the Town Center in order to establish an area over which a substantial degree of control can be exercised in terms of uses of the land, architectural minimums, and the preservation of the historic ambience that has become the Cheshire character.

The boundaries of the Town Center, are as follows: from the high school and Bartlem Park on the south, north to Hinman Avenue, west to include Main Street and Maple Avenue to the Gateway Park. The easternmost boundaries would include Old Towne Condominiums, the cemetery and Cheshire Academy. The western boundaries would be the Congregational Church, Humiston School, St. Peter's Church, and St. Bridget's Church.

Within this area, it would be the intention to establish a zone that would maintain historic homes and other structures, encourage the Special Design District; create as much ambulatory attraction as possible; and to allow such uses that would lend an air of "centeredness" to the Town Center to increase its focal attention. In some areas of the Town Center, the concept of mixed use may be appropriate on a limited scale. The theater block is an area that would lend itself to a mixed use development, possibly a mix of residential and upscale retail. As mentioned above, the theater block may be an area that lends itself to this type of development. Another possible site is the building that currently houses Cliff's Pizza. The concept of mixed use is one in which office, retail and residential uses could all be included in

a single project under a unified plan. Most mixed-use developments are characterized by two or three uses, which are mutually supporting. They have pedestrian walkways, are architecturally attractive, and are compatible with the surrounding area. It is extremely important that any development of this type recognizes the historic value in the Center and enhances those values rather than detracts from them.

Some mixed uses have already occurred and have been very successful in the Center. The building on the southeast corner of Academy Road houses professional offices and retail uses. The second building easterly on this property contains retail as well as residential space. The architecture of both of these buildings contains elements of the Watch Factory and Cheshire Academy and compliments both facilities.

Two other very important elements of a plan for the Town Center are to encourage the placement of utilities underground. This should be a long-range goal because of the cost involved, but is essential from an aesthetic standpoint. Another aesthetic consideration should be the placement of signs. Advertising signs are not as great a problem as are directional and route signs erected by the State. The Town should have an ongoing program to improve signage throughout the Town, but especially in the Center. The Industrial and Traffic and Circulation Chapters of this Plan place great emphasis on establishing an adequate overall traffic circulation plan. Nowhere is this more crucial than in the Center of Town. Every Plan of Development since 1947 has recognized the problem. Many of the opportunities to correct the problem have been lost over the years, but two options still exist.

First, secondary roads should be improved to reroute some of the thru traffic around the Town Center and, equally important, improvements should be made to the existing roadways, wherever possible, to increase the traffic flow. Second, the need for service roads to connect existing and proposed parking lots should not be overlooked. Making it possible to travel directly between shopping areas on a service road eliminates the need to continually use Route 10. Finally, the need for an overall pedestrian circulation pattern, especially in the Town Center, should be a top priority. Sidewalks to major business and shopping areas are essential if more housing is to be encouraged in the Town Center.

TOWN BEAUTIFICATION

In 1984 the Town embarked on a beautification effort that has steadily gained in momentum. The activities of the Town Beautification Committee are evident in the many hundreds of new trees lining the main streets.

Commercial activities play an important role in the town appearance. The majority of the retail establishments are located along Route 10 and other major roads. It is extremely important that these establishments have attractive signage, are well landscaped and are architecturally pleasing. People visiting or passing through town leave with an impression of what they have seen on the main thoroughfares.

Therefore, it should be a high priority on the part of the Planning and Zoning Commission in cooperation with the town Beautification Committee to insure that the town is as ascetically pleasing as possible.

HOTELS

At the present time, there is only one motel in Town, which has 22 rooms and was built in 1946. As the industrial and business sectors of the Town's economy continue to grow, the demand for a high quality hotel will also increase. The ideal location for such a facility would be in the Interchange Zone, which is currently zoned for such a use and is located around a major intersection.

The other use that should be encouraged in that area of Town is a conference center, and ideally the two would be connected or in close proximity. Like all development in that end of Town, only those projects of the highest quality should be encouraged and allowed.

CHESHIRE ACADEMY

Cheshire Academy adds beauty, character and liveliness to the Town Center and, in fact, the Town as a whole. Its buildings and grounds are historically accurate and contribute to the architectural integrity of the Center. The Town is fortunate to have the Academy as such an integral part of its life and looks. Also, the Town is fortunate to have been able to share some of the athletic facilities of the Academy in light of the absence of such facilities at Town properties. It is possible that as the Town grows and the need for yet unforeseen cultural and/or athletic facilities becomes apparent, it may be to the advantage of the Town and the Academy to consider the joint sponsorship of such a facility on Academy grounds. For that reason, it is recommended that the Town and the Academy establish an informal liaison to keep each other informed on plans and possible developments, and the Town should encourage the continues growth and success of the Academy.

CONCLUSIONS⁴

1. Encourage redevelopment of old, outmoded areas in the commercial area.
2. Encourage SDD's. Uphold the character of the Center. Create an ambulatory center.
3. Encourage beautification.
4. Encourage expansion of neighborhood shopping center.
5. Limit the square footage of new retail establishments to under fifty thousand square feet, except in approved Interchange Special Design Districts where the size and design of retail establishments is compatible with the overall design of the surrounding area.
6. Encourage the joint participation of Cheshire Academy and the town in needed public facilities on the campus.

⁴ Amended 7/09/07; effective 7/13/07

7. Explore opportunities for development of mixed-use development in the northern area of the Town designated as the Interchange Zone (I-C).
8. Development that does occur in the Commercial zones be encouraged to follow the guidelines for Natural Resource Sensitive Development in the Physical Features Chapter of this Plan.

INDUSTRIAL CHAPTER

BACKGROUND

Prior to the 1954 Plan of Development, industrial development was not a major issue. The 1954 Plan did raise the question of whether or not the Town should remain completely rural or pursue industry to broaden the tax base.

It was recognized at the time that Cheshire has a unique central location in the region and would continue to gain population from surrounding towns. Further, industries were beginning to spread outward to the suburbs in search of more reasonably priced land and room for expansion. The Plan suggested that the Town encourage the creation of industrial parks where desirable industries could find large sites with good facilities. The area suggested for this type of development was a section of land (978 acres) north of the Cheshire Correctional Institution. It was felt that the CCI would separate industry from the center of Town. The other section was the intersection of West Main Street and the railroad tracks. This area was chosen because it contained an existing lumber yard and some similar uses, as well as Ball & Socket Manufacturing. It was proposed that this area would remain small while the north end would grow over time.

Four years later, in the 1958 Plan, the major recommendation was still the 978 acres along the railroad and south from the Southington town line on the west side of Route 10. However, it was proposed that an equally large area (991 acres) on the east side of Route 10 be set aside for industrial expansion if needed.

The 1965 Plan echoed the 1958 Plan and proposed that all industrial development take place in a planned and integrated district in the northern section of town. The Plan proposed one-acre sites for smaller industries between Route 10 and Reinhard Road, north of Sandbank Road to West Johnson Avenue. A detailed plan was worked out for a typical industrial area, which it was hoped, would guide the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Industrial Development Commission in administering an industrial development program. The Plan illustrated general principles, such as coordination of industrial streets with major roads, location of buildings, access and utilities. If the scheme were fully realized, the area would contain 4.6 million square feet of building area. The Plan was used to promote some excellent development, such as the Cheshire Industrial Park.

In 1979, the Plan was again revised. A great deal of information had been gathered since the 1965 review. A Community Development Action Plan was drafted in 1971 and a traffic study was done by Wilbur Smith and Company and various infrastructure studies were carried out.

The majority of the industrial land in the I-1 and I-2 classification was still largely undeveloped or being used for agriculture. The only major change proposed by the Plan was to investigate the possibility of an area on the west side of Marion Road for corporate expansion. The town's experience with the Cheshire Industrial Park was so positive that they wished to encourage more of that type of industrial development. The next section will examine the existing land use in the industrial zone and the possibilities for future industrial growth.

EXISTING INDUSTRIAL ZONING

The northern industrial area contains approximately 2,660 acres (approximately 13.1% of the total acreage in Cheshire), distributed by zones as follows:

Industrial I-1 Zones: 305 acres

Located in two sections: 260 acres bounded by Sandbank Road; The former Railroad Right-of-way; Schoolhouse Road and Rt. 10 - and 45 acres bounded by Schoolhouse Road, Reinhard Road, West Johnson Avenue, and Route 10.

Industrial I-2 Zones: 1, 955 acres

All land in the entire zone, exclusive of I-1 and Interchange Zones

Interchange Zone: 400 acres

Basically the four quadrants of the I-69I Interchange with Route 10, extending on the west to Dickerman Road, on the north to the Southington-Cheshire line; on the east to the Quinnipiac River on the north side of I-691; and approximately 3,500' east of I-691 on the south of the highway following a line south-westerly to a point approximately 1,500' east of Route 10 on East Johnson Avenue, and including 30 acres on the southeast corner of Route 10 and East Johnson Avenue. The northeast quadrant, which is now owned by the State of Connecticut is being used by the Department of Public safety as a dog training facility and is not available for development.

Other smaller zones include an I-2 zone located on Mixville Road and Route 70, the site of Consolidated Industries; an I-1 zone which runs north and south of West Main Street abutting the former railroad right-of-way and Willow Street; and a third I-1 piece located on South Meriden Road opposite Oregon Road. These three zones will not be considered in the general overall discussion that follows principally because they were created to make conforming existing industries located on these sites before zoning.

EXISTING LAND USE IN THE INDUSTRIAL ZONE

Uses in the industrial zone include manufacturing, warehouse, headquarters, office, agriculture, retail, recreational, services, banks, restaurants, and some residential. This wide range of uses is expected to expand, a subject to be discussed under the next section. The current uses are approximately as follows:

Use	Zone I-1 Acres	Zone I-2 Acres	Zone I-C Acres
Manufacturing, Warehouse	114	603	0
Headquarters, Office Buildings	19	34	5
Retail, Restaurants, Banks, Other Services	29	9	0
Residential	2	93	15
Agriculture	<u>16</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>3</u>
Developed Sub-total:	180	927	23
Undeveloped	<u>125</u>	<u>1028</u>	<u>377</u>
Total Acreage	305	1955	400

*Uses have been scaled and totaled by the Economic Development Commission. The total acreage is from the Albertson, Sharp & Backhoes Impact Study. The undeveloped land shown above is subject to losses up to 25% or more to all for wetlands, steep slopes, additional roads, and other unforeseen eventualities.

Manufacturing and related uses predominate in the I-1 and I-2 zones. Agricultural uses, primarily in the I-2 zone, are subject to reuse in other categories, and in a sense can be considered undeveloped.

The Town should be aware of the State's transfer of development rights program which has the possibility of permanently removing some industrially zoned land from the market.

The program allows the farmer to sell the development rights to the State and the land remains forever farmland, thereby precluding its use for industrial purposes. Only one property; a 100 acre farm on Peck Lane has taken advantage of the program to date.

At this time, utilities in the zone adequately serve the area under development and can be readily extended. Sewer serves from the Cheshire Industrial Park easterly along West Johnson Avenue to Diana Court, and from Creamery Road to Schoolhouse Road. In each case, it is extendable to adjacent areas. Electric power has been improved throughout the area and is capable of serving major development. Gas also is available in most of the area. Water services the principal users in the area. Both gas and water are able to be extended to service future users.

There have been major improvements in the road system serving the northern industrial zone in the past ten years. However, infrastructure improvements should continue to be included in the Capital Budget plan to insure a systematic approach to anticipate improvements that need to be made to attract future development.

OUTLOOK FOR THE INDUSTRIAL AND INTERCHANGE ZONES

INDUSTRIAL ZONE

The status of the overall industrial zone is positive and encouraging. There are over 160 businesses in the zone. They occupy nearly four million square feet , an increase of 29% since 1990.

The possibilities for growth in the industrial zone can be estimated based on the amount of undeveloped land and the allowable usage per acre allowed by the zoning regulations. After deducting land area for roads, wetlands, etc., an estimate has been made by the Economic Development Commission that the I-1 zone could accommodate an additional 525,000 square feet and the I-2 zone, 4,000,000 square feet.

From the Outlook Report by the Economic Development Commission, 11/1/90.

INTERCHANGE ZONE ¹

The 400-acre Interchange Zone was created in 1985 to encourage quality development around the intersection of the newly constructed I-69I and Route 10. The purpose of the zone was to prohibit certain types of land uses, such as strip malls, fast food restaurants, car dealerships and gas stations, while at the same time promoting corporate head-quarters, hotels and conference centers, light manufacturing, and one large regional mall. These uses would be located on large,heavily landscaped sites with frontage directly on the highway or in close proximity.

¹ Amended 9/25/95; effective 9/29/95 at 12:01 A.M.

Since the zone's inception in 1985, a 950,000 square foot regional mall, a hotel, and 120,000 square foot office building have been approved and reapproved, but at this time nothing has been built.

The town is at a crucial juncture in the development of the Interchange Zone. A number of changes have taken place in the past five years that will have a definite affect on the future development of the zone.

A major development was the removal of malls as a permitted use from the zone in 1995. As a result the price of land has been reduced to more accurately reflect the market values based on the other permitted uses. There is a renewed interest in the zone. This renewed interest has come about as a result of joint meetings of the Town Council, the Town's land use agencies, and the Economic Development Commission and considerable public input. The Town should leave open the additional option to consider development including mixed-use development consistent with this Plan and its goals and which promotes the economic development of the town.⁵

The Interchange Zone is the northern gateway to the town and only development of the highest quality should be allowed.

The standards for future development in the industrial zone has already been set. Projects in general have been of very high quality, they are architecturally distinctive and show attention to detail in the types of materials used and landscaping. Much of the undeveloped land is under the control of people who understand and appreciate the town's commitment to quality development. Adherence to high quality development both by the public and private sectors will give Cheshire a competitive edge in attracting users that appreciate well-designed business parks and buildings. In order to make the IC zone attractive to potential developers and to supply as much information as possible about the site the town has had a comprehensive analysis done to determine the extent and cost of infrastructure improvement to the various properties.

The study revealed that the areas to the south of I-691 have easy access to public sewer, water and gas with very little offsite improvements. The land to the north of I-691 would have to be sewerred from Southington with some considerable cost, however, once the line is installed on Rt. 10 onsite infrastructure improvements will be easily accomplished and at reasonable cost.

The Planning and Zoning Commission is going to consider allowing manufacturing facilities in the industrial zone to use part of their facility to sell their product at retail. The retail sales would be strictly an ancillary use. With the adoption of the new more restrictive aquifer regulations, this change would be one way to lessen the impact on businesses that are located in the industrial zone.

⁵ Amended 7/09/07; effective 7/13/07

WHAT KIND OF GROWTH CAN BE EXPECTED IN THE INDUSTRIAL ZONE?

An across-the-board mix of industry, business, service, office, research and development, hotel and warehouse activities is the best economic base. The Town can expect periodic down turns in the local economy. However, it is possible to encourage a wide mix of business of various sizes which will provide the best chance of minimizing the effects of a slow economy. Methods of accomplishing this mix are built into the Zoning Regulations.

SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED BUSINESSES

Small businesses can be accommodated on one acre minimum sites which allow a footprint of 10,000 square feet, or in existing condominiums on a sale or lease basis, or in a number of facilities offering space for lease in sizes from 200 square feet up. This type of offering should be available for the next ten years.

The Zoning Regulations have been drawn wisely to establish certain prohibitions in land use and, further, to rely on performance standards by business and industry rather than attempting to specify the types of business allowed, or wanted. As a result, the mix of businesses now includes precision machine shops, sales and service offices, assemblers, printers, trades of various sorts, as well as many office operations. It is a good mix and a welcome one, for some businesses prefer to locate where the services they need are locally available. This mix should continue to grow and it should be encouraged.

LARGE BUSINESSES

Businesses with 500 or more employees are considered large. There are other criteria, but this will suffice. Cheshire has five as of August 2000: Bozzuto's, Pratt & Whitney, Eagle Services, UDO Central Systems, and Federated Direct. The possibility of adding more large businesses is within reason on several sites. Foremost among those is the Interchange Zone, which allows the following uses: manufacturing, research and development, hotel, and office buildings. All of these uses would probably be large according to the definition. Several other sites exist where a large business could locate, namely, along Route 10 and West and East Johnson Avenues.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Aquifer: Cheshire is served by two public wells owned by the South Central Regional Water Authority (RWA). The well in the north end of town has an aquifer recharge area of approximately 3,715 acres. This area includes prime industrial land on the east side of Route 10 and property in the Interchange Zone. Development is possible in the aquifer recharge area but is highly restricted.

The town's aquifer regulations are found in Section 47 of the Zoning Regulations, which have been recently updated. The purpose of the regulation is to safe guard the public health by reducing the risk of contamination from certain hazardous land use activities. There are currently twenty-one activities that are prohibited from locating in the zone, other uses, while not restricted, are reviewed by the Regional Water Authority.

It is anticipated that when the Department of Environmental Protection adopts the draft regulations, other uses may be allowed subject to their review.

The Prison: While the Cheshire Correctional Institution has no noticeable adverse effect on the industrial zone at present, it is likely that future expansion of the facility will begin to have a role in the decision-making process of prospective businesses. It is extremely important that the town be aware of future expansion plans and that objections be raised if the proposed activity appears to be detrimental to industrial or commercial growth, or in any way overtaxes our infrastructure/service capacities.

Infrastructure: It is extremely important for the Town to have a continuing program of infrastructure improvements. This should include, at a minimum, a Town-wide master road plan for repairing, widening, sidewalk construction, inter-section improvements, drainage, and the possibility of building service roads. Special attention should be paid to improving overall traffic circulation. Travel across town is extremely difficult because of the inordinate amount of cul-de-sac streets. Most north/south traffic is forced to use Route 10 due to a lack of adequate secondary through streets. In addition, top priority should be given to rebuilding, where necessary, roads that service existing industrial development: Peck Lane, Marion Road, Blacks Road, Sandbank Road and East Johnson Avenue. In the past five years the town has rebuilt Marion Road, Blacks Road and East Johnson Avenue, still to be done are Peck Lane and Sandbank Road. Good development can be stalled or lost altogether if reasonable access and proper utilities are not in place. Investment in roads and sewer by the Town is an expenditure with an expected return.

It is important that future development in the industrial zone attempt to follow the guidelines found in the Physical Features Chapter entitled Natural Resource – Sensitive Development.

