

IV. ACHIEVING THE VISION

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

A. INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Plan illustrates the proposed pattern of conservation and development for Newtown. It recommends the most appropriate location and relationship of major land uses, including proposals for residential development; commercial development; business districts; industrial development; community facilities, conservation and open space areas, civic uses and institutional uses and special design districts. The Future Land Use Plan is a graphic presentation of the Town's vision for the future.

The attached Future Land Use Map provides a broad-based illustration of desired development patterns. It is based largely upon existing land use and development patterns, environmental and natural features, physical features, current zoning, planning analysis and the desires and vision of citizens and community stakeholders as expressed at public workshops and the numerous Commission meetings held throughout the plan update process.

B. NEWTOWN'S FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

About 30% of Newtown's land area, including some environmentally sensitive areas, is vacant land. The future use, conservation and protection of these areas, along with infill development along Newtown's commercial corridors and the redevelopment of brownfield and under-utilized properties can significantly impact the Town. In order to support and protect the quality of life envisioned as part of the Town's future, a balance between development, the conservation of open space and natural resources, and the preservation of the Town's historical and cultural resources is necessary. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas and the conservation of open space have been a major focus in the development of this plan update.

At the same time, it is recognized that investment and development are necessary to address tax base issues and the economic well-being of the Town and its residents. A balance between conservation, preservation and development is a primary focus for future land use issues in Newtown. The achievement of a balance between these issues can be achieved by adhering to broad policies as well as specific goals and implementation strategies. POCD goals and strategies will guide the Town's development over the next ten years and beyond.

C. POCD GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The over-arching concerns for Newtown's future are focused on: the preservation of the Town's community character; the preservation and enhancement of the Town's open space and recreation resources; the creation of greenway linkages between open space and residential neighborhoods; the conservation and preservation of the Town's historical resources; the promotion of economic development to attract and retain businesses and to attain a more balanced tax base; the enhancement of Newtown's commercial corridors; and the promotion of community improvement activities in the Borough and the Sandy Hook village center as well as in the Hawleyville, Botsford and Dodgingtown hamlets.

The development of an updated Plan of Conservation and Development and its accompanying Future Land Use Plan serves to guide the Town's future development as an advisory and policy

Figure 10 – Future Land Use

setting document. Key to successful future development is the creation of zoning and subdivision regulations, design guidelines and implementation techniques which explicitly outline and enforce the vision for the Town, as set forth in the Plan.

The Future Land Use Plan contains a variety of land use categories which address location, density and current conditions. Due to the generalized nature of the Future Land Use Plan there may be individual parcels within an area where existing land use differs from the Plan's land use designation. As described above, the purpose of the Future Land Use Plan is to illustrate broad proposed patterns and relationships of uses and to present desirable land use patterns to guide future change. Existing land uses are not affected by the map.

D. RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CATEGORIES

1. Low Density Residential

Areas having a single family residential density of 2 or more acres per housing unit. These areas are found throughout the Town and have been developing primarily since the 1980's. The land in this category is currently zoned R-2 and R-3. The majority of the Town's remaining developable residential land is located within this land use category. Appropriate conservation design principles that emphasize the protection of open space and natural resource preservation should be incorporated as part of the development process.

2. Medium Density Residential

Areas having a single family residential density of ½ to 2 acres per housing unit. These areas are generally located within the Borough and along Newtown's older collector roads which were developed primarily between 1960's to 1980's. Most of this land is currently zoned R- ½ and R-1. Relative to the balance of Newtown, little vacant, developable land is available for future development within this land use category and in-fill development should be sensitive to neighborhood character and patterns, and provide for open space or community facilities needs and linkages.

3. Medium-High Density Residential (relative to Newtown)

Areas having a residential density of less than 1/8 acre to less than ½ acre per housing unit. This land use category can be found in the Borough, Sandy Hook village center, in some of Newtown's older lakeside neighborhoods and in the few multi-family areas of Town. Very little land is available for new development within this land use category.

E. NON-RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CATEGORIES

1. Industrial Uses

Industrial land uses include a variety of manufacturing and warehousing businesses located primarily along the Main Street South Corridor, along Commerce Road, Edmond Road, Barnabas Road and the intersection of Toddy Hill Road and Route 34.

2. Commercial and Office Uses

Commercial and office land uses include retailing and service businesses. These uses are primarily located along the Main Street South Corridor, within the Borough and along Commerce Road, in the Sandy Hook village center, in the Hawleyville, Botsford and Dodgingtown hamlets, along portions of Route 6 west, and in several other scattered locations.

3. Institutional Uses

Most of the institutional land uses located within Newtown are owned by the Town and include

uses such as schools, Edmond Town Hall and Public Works. Other institutional land uses include churches, cemeteries and fire stations.

4. Fairfield Hills- Town Owned

The Future Land Use Map identifies the area of the former Fairfield Hills Hospital that will be acquired by the Town. While the master plan for this area has not been completed, it can be anticipated that the core campus area will support a variety of future uses including a Town Hall, playing fields, community uses and limited economic development. The majority of the Fairfield Hills property to be acquired by the Town will be used as open space.

5. Parks and Open Space

Park and open space land uses include Town and State parks, as well as open space resources located throughout the Town that are owned by Newtown and private land trusts.

6. Private Open Space Uses

There are several significant open space land uses, including two golf courses and several private conservation organizations that are located across Newtown. The future continuation of these uses is important to the visual character of the Town.

7. Agricultural Uses

Newtown has a limited number of private agricultural uses. As is the case for privately owned open space, the continuation of these uses is important to the visual character of the Town. In addition, a significant portion of the former Fairfield Hills Hospital property is designated as an agricultural preserve.

8. Water Company Uses

Most of the former water company lands in Newtown have been purchased by the State for protection as open space. An important water company land use remains on Swamp Road.

F. DISTRICTS AND CORRIDORS

Several Districts, Corridors and Hamlets have been identified to bring a focus of action to the future development of these areas.

1. Main Street South Corridor Design District

This land use category encompasses Main Street South from Borough Lane southward to the Monroe town line. The purpose of this corridor district is to promote the development of a mix of uses including commercial, office, and service uses, and where appropriate, housing, to bring vitality and an uplifted visual quality to the Town's primary commercial area. The provision of linkages, both physical in terms of pedestrian, transit and vehicular linkages and functional in terms of shared usage and uses which complement future development should be encouraged in these areas.

Regulations need to be crafted that protect adjoining residential areas and areas proposed for open space protection that enhance the visual character and vitality of this corridor. Development proposals within this corridor should address the need for intersection and driveway improvements to Route 25.

2. Borough and Sandy Hook Village Districts

Support the development and implementation Village District Regulations for the Borough and the Sandy Hook village center that will govern the design of future development activities.

Encourage mixed-use development within these areas and incorporate landscaped public plazas and design features that create pedestrian friendly environments.

3. Hawleyville, Botsford and Dodgingtown

Newtown has three historical, mixed-use hamlets that add to the Town's community character and provide services required by the surrounding neighborhoods. These historical mixed-use functions should be reinforced. In addition, the Future Land Use Map reinforces the development of the Planned Commercial Development zone and Hawleyville Center Design District as one of the key economic development growth areas within Newtown.

4. Commerce Road / Edmond Road Employment Center

The Future Land Use Map reinforces the infill development of these important employment center locations near the heart of Newtown.

5. Route 34 / Washington Avenue Scenic Corridor

This six mile corridor, extending from the Sandy Hook village center to the Monroe town line, represents an opportunity to preserve an important visual asset of Newtown's community character. Nearly five miles of Route 34 have no commercial uses fronting on this State highway, a rarity in western Connecticut.

6. Route 302 / Sugar Street Scenic Corridor

This corridor, extending from the Bethel town line to the Monroe town line, represents an opportunity to preserve an important visual asset of Newtown's community character. Nearly five miles of Route 34 have no commercial uses fronting on this State highway, a rarity in western Connecticut.

7. Wetlands and Water Course Corridor Focus Areas

While not technically land uses, the land use map identifies wetlands and watercourse corridors. These are important natural resource features of Newtown's landscape and provide a focus for the management of future land use proposals that may affect the functioning of these assets.

8. Aquifer Protection Areas

This designation identifies critical water supply areas requiring protection from pollution by managing land use. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is in the process of finalizing regulations that would limit the types of land uses that could be sited in a protection area that coincides with a well recharge area of an aquifer. The Town of Newtown has taken a proactive approach and has adopted zoning regulations limiting the type of development allowed over the Pootatuck River's sole source aquifer, as identified on the Town's Zoning Map.