

Updating Newtown's Plan of Conservation and Development



Plan Memorandum #4

Development Patterns & Trends



May 2002

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I. Introduction

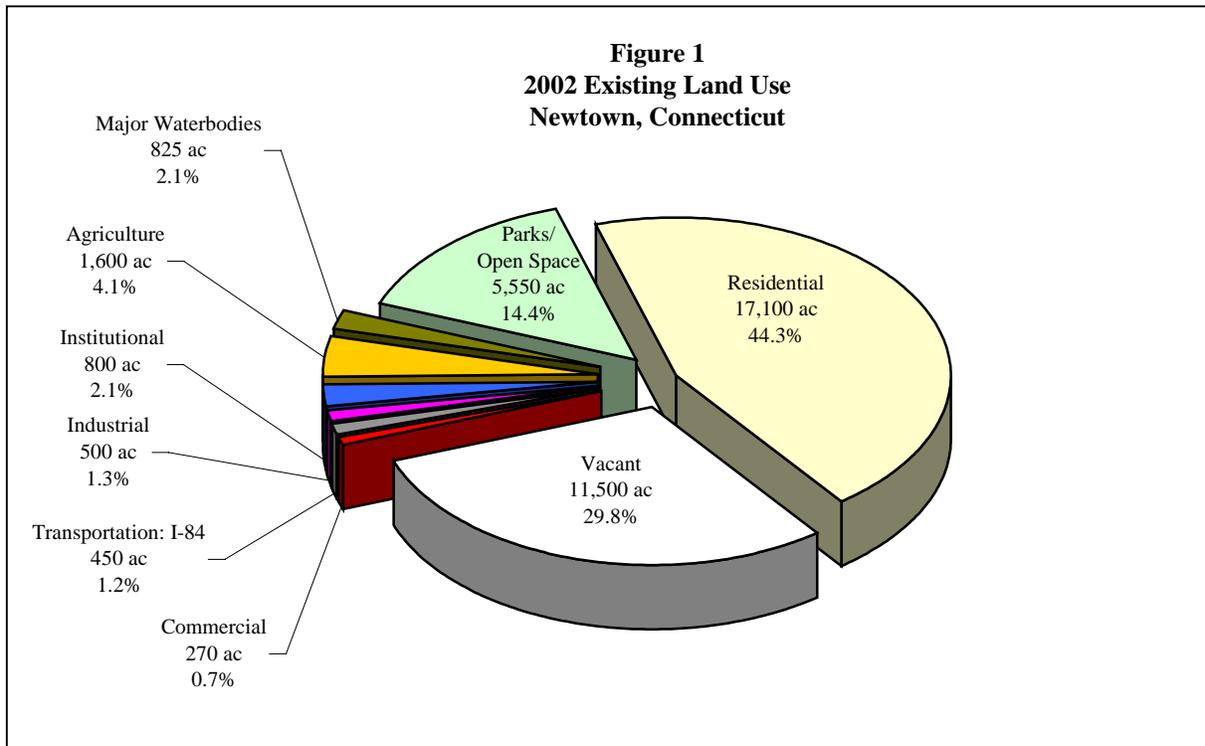
Understanding the existing development patterns and trends of the Town is an important component to the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). This memorandum provides a description of the existing land use composition of the Town of Newtown and provides an analysis of the development trends that have occurred in the last decade. In addition, a development potential analysis is provided. This analysis, commonly referred to as a build-out, estimates how much additional development can be accommodated on the remaining undeveloped land in Town.

Much of the data in this memorandum has been prepared from generalized land use maps provided by the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO). The maps were originally prepared in 1992 and updated on a general basis via windshield survey as part of the preparation of this memorandum. It should be noted that the land use map was not prepared on a parcel level and is intended to represent general land use designations. It is necessary to emphasize that information in this memorandum is useful for planning purposes and considered advisory (not predictive) for future policy decisions regarding land use.

II. Land Use Analysis

The Town of Newtown has total area of approximately 60.4 square miles or about 39,000 acres. The Town includes a variety of land uses including industrial, commercial, residential, institutional and open space. The predominant land use in Town is low density, single family residential on relatively large lots. Portions of Route 6 in the north and Route 25 to the Monroe town line continue to function as auto-oriented commercial districts. The Sandy Hook and Hawleyville areas also contribute important commercial uses in Town. Much of the Town's industrial development is located between the railroad tracks and Route 25, south of the Borough. The map titled Current Land Use illustrates Newtown's existing land use pattern. This map is based on an inventory conducted by HVCEO in 1992 and updated in 2002 to reflect the general land use patterns found today.

Nine major categories were utilized to record land use in the Town. The general breakdown of these uses is illustrated in Figure 1 and is based on information provided by HVCEO and updated by HMA via windshield land use surveys, the Newtown Land Use Department, the Newtown Community Development Office, the Town Assessor's Office and the Ad Hoc Open Space Committee.

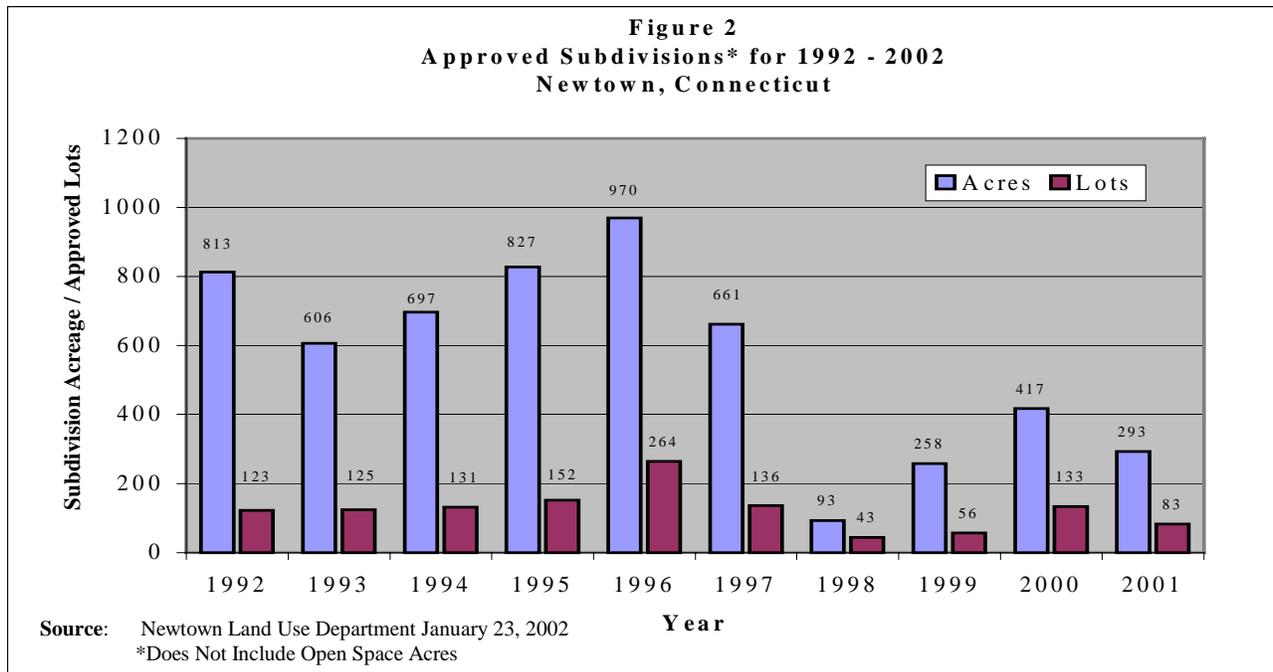


Residential

Figure 1 illustrates that the largest land use category within the Town of Newtown is residential with approximately 44% of the Town or a little over 17,000 acres. Residential area was calculated by adding the total amount of land approved for residential subdivisions after 1991¹ to the amount of land in residential use prior to 1991 as calculated in the 1993 Plan of Development (POD). According to information supplied by the Newtown Land Use Department, 162 residential subdivision applications were approved between 1992 and 2001. These subdivisions included a total of 1,246 lots and encompassed a total of 5,635 acres (not including open space acres) or approximately 15% of the Town's total land area. These statistics indicate that during the past 10 years,

¹ Source: Newtown Land Use Department January 23, 2002; Land dedicated for open space was not included.

subdivision approvals averaged approximately 125 lots per year. Figure 2 illustrates the annual rate and distribution of subdivision approvals in the last decade.



The residential development patterns witnessed during the past decade are in many ways a continuation of the residential growth patterns that occurred in the preceding decade. According to Newtown’s 1993 POD, 226 residential subdivision applications were approved between 1980 and 1991. These subdivisions included a total of 1,434 lots and encompassed 7,350 acres of land (not including open space acres) or approximately 19% of the Towns total land area. Table 1 describes the residential development activity in Newtown during the past two decades.

Table 1
Comparison of Subdivision Activity by Decade
Newtown, Connecticut

Decade	Applications	Lots	Gross Acres	Open Space Acres	Net Residential Acreage	Average Acreage / Lot
1980 - 1991	226	1,434	7,919	569	7,350	5.1
1992 - 2001	162	1,246	6,149	514	5,635	4.5
Total	388	2,680	14,068	1,083	12,985	

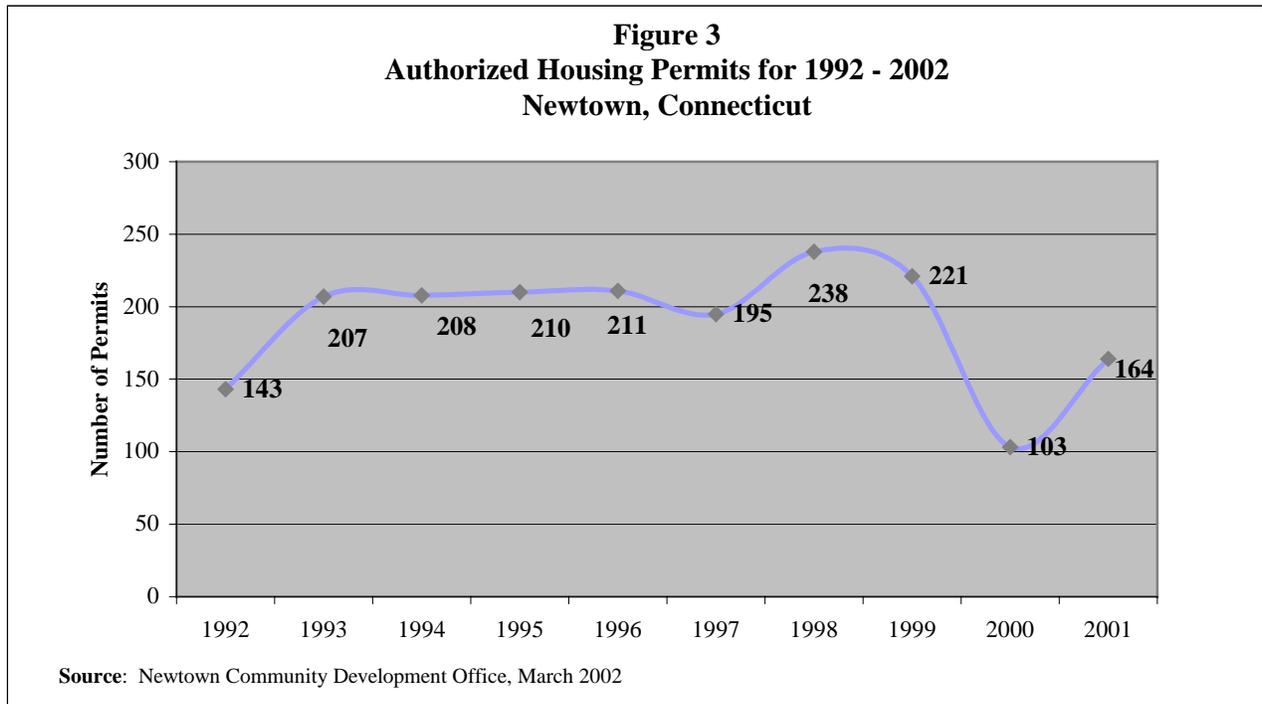
Source: Newtown Land Use Department January 23, 2002,
1993 Plan of Conservation and Development

As illustrated in Table 1, subdivisions over the past 20 years have favored large lots. Some factors involved in this trend include the desire of home buyers for single family houses on large lots, Newtown's desire, as expressed in its zoning regulations, for larger houses on larger lots, the need for larger lots to meet septic requirements due to the decreasing stock of vacant land that is void of environmental constraints, and the limited application of the zones that allow specialized multi-family developments (AHD and EH-10). In September of 2000, Newtown rezoned many lots from ½ acre or 1-acre minimum lot sizes to 1 or 2-acre minimum lot sizes. These factors will continue to contribute to the overall trend toward large lots. Lot sizes in subdivisions approved during the 1970's averaged 2.6 acres² compared to 4.5 acres during the 1990's. As indicated in Newtown's earlier Town Plans, the consequence of the larger average lot sizes (as well as a sustained strong housing market) is that new subdivisions are focused on the larger land parcels scattered throughout Town and not on the one or two lot splits common in other communities across the state.

Another indicator of residential development activity in the Town is the number of new housing permits issued on an annual basis. The Newtown Community Development Office and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) track the number of permits issued annually. According to these sources, 1,900 housing permits have been authorized between 1992 and 2001. This equates to an average rate of 190 housing permits per year. The yearly distribution of these permits is illustrated in Figure 3.

It is observed that the number of housing permits issued since 1992 (1,900) is greater than the number of building lots approved (1,246) during the same period. This may be attributable in part to the slow-down in residential construction that occurred during the late 1980's and early 1990's that probably resulted in the creation of an inventory of approved building lots available for construction. In addition, multi-family housing units approved since 1992 are not included in the calculation of building lots created through the subdivision process.

² 1993 Plan of Conservation and Development



Over the past decade, Newtown has been one of the fastest growing towns in Connecticut in terms of net gain of approved housing authorizations. According to DECD, over the past 10 years Newtown has been ranked among the top 10 towns in Connecticut for the total net gain of approved housing permits for every year except 2000.³ In 1995 and 1996, Newtown was ranked 2nd in the State for the total net gain of housing authorizations. This further exemplifies the fact that residential development has not only been the largest consumer of land in Town, but it is occurring at a rate faster than most other towns in the State.

Parks & Open Space

Parks and open space consists of approximately 5,550 acres or 14.4% of the Town's land area. The inventory of open space was compiled from maps and tax assessment records provided by the Open Space Ad Hoc Advisory Committee, the Land Use Office and the Community Development Office. Included in the inventory are lands owned by the

³ Connecticut Housing Production and Permit Authorization Construction, Construction Report 1992-2002, State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development; In the year 2000 Newtown was ranked 20th out of 169 for approved housing authorizations.

State, Newtown Forest Association, private non-profit organizations (i.e. The Nature Conservancy), public utilities (i.e. Bridgeport Hydraulic), as well as public parks, golf courses, and other miscellaneous open space land, including subdivision open space set-asides.

The Newtown Ad Hoc Open Space Task Force has recently published a report titled *Open Space in Newtown 2002* in which they inventoried the Towns existing open space areas. The inventory provided here differs from that provided by the Ad Hoc Task Force in that this inventory includes the Towns two golf courses, which total approximately 100 acres and the soon to be acquired Pole Bridge Open Space Preserve. Golf courses were included in this inventory because it is unlikely that these areas would be sold for development. An analysis of all the Towns open space areas will be the subject of a future memorandum.

Commercial & Industrial

Commercial and industrial land moderately increased over the past decade, however, these two land uses still comprise a relatively small percentage of the Towns overall inventory. Using the commercial and industrial land inventory prepared as part of the 1993 POD as a base, developments that have occurred since the plan was prepared were added to derive the current inventory. According to information supplied by the Newtown Community Development Office, the greatest amount of non-residential development activity during the past ten years has occurred in the manufacturing sector. The 41,000 square foot facility for the Curtis Packaging Corporation located on Route 34 and Toddy Hill Road and the 60,000 square foot manufacturing facility for Neumade Products Incorporated located on Pecks Lane are examples of this type of development. Significant activity was also observed in the retail/trade sector as exemplified by the 60,000 square foot expansion to the Newtown Shopping Center located on Queen Street. The storage/warehouse (miscellaneous) sector also observed substantial growth with the 26,000 square foot Christiano self-storage facility located on South Main Street (50,000 square feet have been approved) and the 20,000 square foot distribution and warehouse facility for KIM Properties located on Barnabas Road (both under construction).

In addition to new construction, renovation and conversions of existing buildings have contributed to the overall non-residential development inventory. The most active sector undergoing renovation or conversions is the mixed-use sector as exemplified in the 53,000 square foot Rocky Mill renovation and the 85,500 square foot flex space in the Simm Lane Business Building. Table 2 summarizes the non-residential development activity since 1992 by category. Developments that were conversions or renovations of existing building are separated out in order to highlight the amount of new building construction. Newtown's non-residential development averaged 48,802 square feet per year of new building construction between 1992 and 2001.

Type	New Building Construction - SF (Percent of Total)	Conversions or Renovations of Existing Buildings - SF (Percent of Total)	Total Development Activity – SF (Percent of Total)
Office	82,230 (19%)	21,500 (8%)	103,730 (14.7%)
Retail / Trade	102,624 (23%)	0	102,624 (14.5%)
Mixed Use	13,500 (3%)	138,760 (52%)	152,260 (21.6%)
Manufacturing	123,180 (28%)	65,000 (24%)	188,180 (26.6%)
Miscellaneous	117,685 (27%)	42,000 (16%)	159,685 (22.6%)
TOTAL	439,219 SF (100%)	267,260 (100%)	706,479 (100%)

Does not include assisted living or congregate living developments
Source: Newtown Community Development Office, 10/16/01

The life cycle of commercial buildings continues to shrink with 25 to 40 years a current range. As buildings become obsolete they will be renovated and adapted to new uses or replaced by contemporary structures. The locational attributes of easy access and infrastructure remain important to the continued viability of the non-residential zones in Newtown. The remaining vacant land in these zones will play a role in reshaping parcels to accommodate expansions of existing business or the creation of new development sites. It is in the Towns interest to remain flexible in its regulations so that the ever-changing building forms required by business can be accommodated, while respecting the environment and affected neighborhoods.

Institutional

Institutional uses comprise approximately 800 acres or 2% of the Towns land area. The inventory of institutional uses was compiled from the land use mapping prepared by HVCEO and referenced in the 1993 POD. The inventory includes such uses as schools, churches, cemeteries, community centers, sewage treatment facility, police and fire stations, landfill, public works facilities, the State prison, and the Fairfield Hills campus. Since the 1993 POD was prepared, the only notable change to the institutional land inventory is the acreage around Fairfield Hills. As illustrated on the land use map, the inventory prepared as part of this Plan update more accurately categorizes the Fairfield Hills campus, the new 5/6 school and the prison as institutional and the balance of the land in this vicinity has been categorized as agriculture and open space.

Agriculture

Agricultural uses occupy approximately 1,600 acres or 4.1% of the Towns land area. This inventory includes all land areas identified by the Assessor's Office as participating in the Public Act 490 (P.A. 490) agricultural assessment program as well as agricultural land owned by the State of Connecticut located to the north of the Fairfield Hills campus. P.A. 490 is a State law that offers tax relief to farmers by providing an assessment for farms on the basis of its current use rather than market value. This reduces the overall tax burden of the farmer, which helps keep local farms viable. Within Newtown, there is active participation in P.A. 490 and for the purposes of this inventory it provides the best assessment as to the amount of land in Town currently being used for agriculture.

Major Waterbodies

Major waterbodies included in this inventory include the Housatonic River (Lake Lillinonoh & Lake Zoar) and Taunton Pond, which total approximately 825 acres or 2% of the Towns land area. While other waterbodies exist in town, they are included in one of the other land use categories.

Transportation: I-84

Interstate 84 occupies approximately 450 acres or 1% of the Towns land area. This area was calculated by HVCEO as part of the 1991 land use inventory. All other State and local roadways are included within the identified land use categories.

Vacant Land

After reducing the Towns total land area by the uses described herein, the remaining vacant land occupies approximately 11,500 acres or 29.8% of the Town. The location of these vacant areas are scattered throughout Town as illustrated on the map titled Vacant and Agricultural Land. This map has been prepared to illustrate the general location of areas that may be subject to development in the future. Agricultural uses are included because as recent development trends indicate, farmers are finding it increasing difficult to keep farms viable, even with tax relief in programs such as P.A. 490. Because of this trend, farms across the state are being sold for development. An exception to this trend is agricultural land that has been protected in perpetuity as part of a state or local farmland protection program. Newtown currently does not have any agricultural land protected under such programs. However, the State Department of Agriculture does own a large amount of land north of the Fairfield Hills campus. While this property is not permanently protected from development, it is unlikely that it will be sold for development. Therefore, this area is not considered part of the overall inventory of developable land

It is important to note that this map represents generalized areas of vacant and agricultural land and is not intended to represent specific parcels. Once the Towns digital parcel base map is completed in 2003 - 2004, these areas can be more specifically identified. This map also does not illustrate environmental constraints, which may impact the development potential of this land. This map does illustrate the areas of Town that can accommodate additional development. It is in these areas that future residential or non-residential growth can be expected to occur.

III. Development Potential

Balancing the demands for housing or new retail, office and industrial development with the physical constraints of the landscape and existing regulatory controls can prove to be a significant challenge. This challenge is compounded by the reality that there is only a finite amount of land available for future development. Future development in the Town is dependent on a variety of interactive factors related to the availability of buildable land. To permit development, areas must be free of environmental constraints and be zoned for the proposed use. As a component of this memorandum, a development potential (build-out) analysis was prepared that estimates the total amount of future residential and non-residential building potential.

The process used to evaluate development potential in Newtown involved a combination of techniques. Residential development potential was projected utilizing a straight-line projection method. This technique projects the maximum amount of residential dwelling units that could be built under existing conditions based on the estimate of vacant and agricultural land remaining (deducting land zoned for non-residential use) and applying the average land consumption (acres) per dwelling unit that has materialized over the past decade. Agricultural land owned by the State of Connecticut was not included for reasons previously described. The large ratio of 4.5 acres per unit experienced over the past 10 years (see Table 1) is partly due to the physical / environmental constraints of the landscape and is also attributable to the road infrastructure requirements of large lot subdivisions. These trends in land consumption per unit are expected to continue and may increase as traditional large lot subdivisions continue to be developed and land void of environmental constraints continues to diminish.

The process used to evaluate the non-residential development potential utilizes the 1993 POD estimates as a starting point of reference and 1) deducts the development activity known to have occurred during the past 10 years and 2) adds any new development potential that has been created due to zone changes or special planning studies that have occurred since the 1993 POD was prepared. As illustrated in Table 2, the Community Development Office has kept summary records of all the non-residential development

that has occurred in Town. By deducting the development that has occurred in the past decade from the projections provided as part of the 1993 POD, an estimate of the remaining development potential can be determined.

A. Residential Development Potential

Based on the existing land use inventory, it was determined that approximately 11,500 acres of vacant land and 1,350 acres of unprotected agricultural land remain in Town. Unprotected agricultural land includes all P.A. 490 land, but not land owned by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. These estimates indicate that the total amount of land available for future development is approximately 12,850 acres. According to the Community Development Office, approximately 675 acres⁴ of this total are zoned for business or industrial use leaving 12,175 acres of vacant or agricultural land available for residential development.

As illustrated in Table 1, Newtown subdivisions over the past 20 years have favored large lots. In fact, the average land consumption per dwelling unit over the past decade was 4.5 acres, down a little from the previous decade average of 5.1 acres per dwelling unit. As land that is void of environmental constraints continues to be consumed by residential growth coupled with the fact that the majority of the remaining vacant land is zoned for 2-acre residential lots, it is reasonable to expect that the patterns of large lot residential developments will continue into the next decade. Based on this assumption, it is estimated that the maximum build out of the remaining 12,175 acres of residentially zoned vacant and agricultural land could accommodate a net total of 2,705 new homes, if an average land consumption per dwelling unit ratio of 4.5 acres is maintained. These residential figures do not take into account development that could take place under the Affordable Housing provision or the Elderly Housing District, both of which allow higher densities of residential development.

⁴ Town of Newtown, Connecticut, Vacant Industrial Zoned Land, August 2, 2001; Town of Newtown, CT, Vacant Business Zoned Property, 5/3/01.

The estimate of 2,705 potential new dwelling units at full build out, in addition to the existing housing supply of 8,600 housing units⁵, would bring Newtown's total housing inventory to 11,305 units, representing a 24% increase.

These build-out estimates come with the caveat that land suitable for development may change if the regulations controlling development are modified based on the desires of the community. What this means is that as the Town approaches build-out, the community may desire additional density to accommodate more affordable housing and a wider choice of housing types. In this example, the Town could respond to the communities request by increasing densities for those areas of Town serviced by public water and sewer, which in turn would affect the overall development potential of the Town and further increase the Towns potential population. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that the results presented here represent full build-out of residentially zoned vacant and agricultural land. The likelihood of this scenario becoming reality during the 10-year life of this Plan of Conservation and Development update is remote.

The build-out estimates presented should be considered as a point of reference for general planning purposes and not an expected scenario. The available base mapping resources do not permit the development of a more accurate quantification and characterization of vacant land resources. It is assumed that Newtown will update the inventory of vacant land once accurate, updated digital parcel maps become available for use in 2003-2004.

It is important to note additional factors that could affect the residential development potential. These factors include the Affordable and Elderly Housing Regulations and zoning amendments that have recently taken place.

⁵ 2000 Census

Affordable Housing Regulations: Residential development potential may be increased by use of the Affordable Housing Development (AHD) regulations, adopted in 1992. The AHD provisions require a minimum of 6 acres, placing the majority of such developments on large vacant parcels. The AHD provisions can be implemented in *any* residential zone outside the Borough and a maximum of 4 dwelling units per acre is allowed. In addition, there is a requirement within the AHD regulations that 30% of the land area shall remain as open space as opposed to the 10% requirement for traditional subdivisions.

Elderly Housing Regulations: Residential development potential may be increased by use of the Elderly Housing (EH-10) regulations. The EH-10 regulations require a minimum of 10 acres and like the AHD regulations, focus such developments on relatively large vacant parcels. The EH-10 zone allows for elderly housing and congregate housing at different densities. Elderly housing is allowed at the density of 3.5 times the lot acreage or a maximum of 150 units, whichever is less, and congregate housing is allowed at a density of 6 times the lot acreage or a maximum of 300 units, whichever is less.⁶ As stated in the regulations, it is the intent of this zone to encourage the provision of multi-family housing for the elderly consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity of the land.

Residential Rezoning: In September of 2000, the Town approved the rezoning of 2,444 parcels. While the majority of these parcels were already developed, 408 parcels were vacant. Of the 408 vacant parcels, 261 were changed from the R-1/2 zone to either R-1 or R-2 zones and 147 vacant parcels were changed from R-1 to R-2 zones. Based on the methodology used to calculate the updated residential development potential, it is difficult to determine the exact impact that the rezoning will have on the projected residential development potential. However, due to the limited number of vacant parcels affected by the rezoning, and the fact that the average subdivision lot size is over 4 acres, it can be assumed that the overall effect on the projected development potential is likely to be minimal.

⁶ See §4.10.360 and §4.10.370 of the Newtown Zoning Regulations respectively.

Hawleyville Area: About 100 acres of residentially zoned land (R-1 and R-2) in the Hawleyville area (Exit 9 of Interstate 84) was rezoned to EH-10. This area is split between two parcels of approximately 40 acres and 60 acres each. Currently, 280 units are planned for the 60-acre parcel, while no development plans have yet been approved for the 40-acre piece. Based on the densities allowances described in the EH-10 regulations above, the remaining 40-acre parcel has the potential to accommodate a maximum of 140 units⁷ if developed for elderly housing and a maximum of 240 units⁸ if developed for congregate housing. This zone change increases the total residential development potential of these parcels from approximately 21 units⁹, as permitted under the R-1 and R-2 zones, to between 420 and 520 units¹⁰ as permitted under the EH-10 zone.

Mixed Use Zones: Since the 1993 POD was prepared, three new zones have been put into effect that allow for a mix of residential and non-residential developments types. These zones include the Sandy Hook Design District, the Hawleyville Center Design District, and the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse zone. These zones allow for the development of residential units either as of right or by special permit. The potential for residential development within the mixed-use zones could contribute additional dwelling units to the estimates presented. However, based on the amount of land within these zones and the densities allowed under the existing regulations, it is estimated that the total contribution to the overall development potential estimates would be minimal. One possible exception to this assumption is the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse zone. This zone allows for multi-family development based on the Affordable Housing Regulations, which allow a density of 4 dwelling units per acre and the Elderly Housing Zone (EH-10), which allows for a maximum residential density of 6 times the lot acreage or 300 units, whichever is less. While it is unlikely that residential development will occur on the Fairfield Hills site at the densities allowed under existing regulations, the potential does exist, which could affect the development potential estimates as presented.

⁷ 3.5 times the lot size

⁸ 6 times the lot size

⁹ Using the methodology described in the residential development potential analysis of 4.5 acres per dwelling unit.

¹⁰ Derived by adding 280 units as planned for the 60-acre parcel to the range of 140 – 240 units calculated for the 40-acre parcel.

Other Residential Zoning Amendments: Since the 1993 POD was prepared, numerous zoning amendments that affect residential development have occurred. Many of these amendments are site-specific zone changes and have little or no affect on the overall development potential of the Town. While some of the amendments may have a minimal impact on development potential, others have an affect on the land use policy of the Town. These amendments include provisions for driveway grades, the removal of earth materials, fire suppression, antennas / wireless towers, and the boarding, caring and keeping of horses.

B. Non-Residential Development Potential

The maximum build-out analysis calculated in the 1993 POD projected the development potential of an additional 936,547 to 1,137,335 square feet (SF) of non-residential building development. It was estimated in 1993 that this scenario could be achieved in 12 to 17 years at an average development rate of between 60,997 and 86,412 SF/year.

Table 2 summarizes the amount and type of non-residential development experienced by the Town during the past 10 years. Total non-residential land developed (new building construction) during this timeframe was 439,219 square feet, translating into average annual growth of 48,802 SF/year. This rate of development is slightly below the projected range described in the 1993 POD.

Since the 1993 POD was prepared, the Town has made efforts to actively promote economic development including zone changes and economic incentives. While these efforts will be subject of a future economic development memorandum, it is important to mention several changes that will affect the development potential estimates. The implementation of these changes would add to the estimate of the amount of additional non-residential building space that could be developed in Newtown. These changes affect the Hawleyville area, the Curtis Corporate Park, the expansion of the Commerce Park off Church Hill Road and the re-use of the former Fairfield Hills Hospital campus.

Hawleyville Area: The Hawleyville area around the intersection of Routes 6 and 25 has been designated for future economic development activity in Newtown's POD's for several decades. During the 1990's the Town undertook a detailed planning study of this area. This effort resulted in an amendment to the POD and several zoning changes that would allow for the development of up to 1,280,000 square feet of non-residential building space. The 1993 POD had projected approximately 735,000 square feet of future non-residential building potential for this area. This change represents a potential net gain of approximately 545,000 square feet of non-residential development.

Curtis Corporate Park: In 2000, the Town rezoned an area along Toddy Hill Road, near the intersection with Route 34, for development as an industrial park. This action led to the subdivision of land for the Curtis Corporate Park, which is currently under construction. This industrial subdivision contains 12 lots totaling 22.4 acres. Assuming the development of a single story building with a building coverage averaging 25% of the lot¹¹, and assuming that 100% of the land is free of environmental constraints and buildable, this 12 lot industrial subdivision could support 244,000 square feet of building space.

It is important to note that this area is not served by sewer or water and falls within the Aquifer Protection Overlay District as defined under the current zoning regulations. The aquifer overlay combined with the lack of utility connections could affect the overall development potential in this area. In addition, the aquifer overlay prohibits certain uses within its jurisdiction. While this does not have a direct affect on develop potential per se, it does limit the types of business that can locate in this area.

Commerce Park Expansion: The Town intends to acquire 37.5 acres of land adjacent to Commerce Road from the State of Connecticut. Current plans for this land call for an expansion of Commerce Park. The number of buildable lots that

¹¹ The existing zoning regulations allow for a greater Floor Area Ratio (FAR), however, many developments only reach 25% as observed in other parts of the State

this parcel will support is unknown at this time. However, it is known that wetlands exist on this site, which will affect the parcels development potential. If it is assumed that 25% of the site will be removed from development due to road infrastructure, wetlands or other environmental constraints, and that single story structures with 25% building coverage will be constructed,¹² then approximately 306,000 square feet of non-residential building space could be supported.

Fairfield Hills: In 1993, the State of Connecticut had no plans to close the hospital facility and therefore the future re-use of the Fairfield Hills hospital campus was not factored into the 1993 POD's development potential analysis. The State has since closed the hospital and the Town is in the final stages of negotiating the purchase of the property. Newtown is currently developing a plan for its re-use.

The hospital campus includes a mixture of institutional buildings, a small portion of which are currently used for town offices, open space and recreational facilities, the Governor's horse guard and the Towns new 5/6 middle school (currently under construction). The former hospital complex contains approximately 1,000,000 square feet of building space.

The Towns Fairfield Hills re-use planning study will consider a range of actions for this 185-acre resource, including rehabilitation, demolition and new construction. While it is too early in that planning process to determine the exact amount of development that will occur on the 185 acre site, it is reasonable to expect that the future use of the campus will contribute some additions to the Towns potential future inventory of non-residential building space.

Other Zoning Amendments: Since the 1993 POD was prepared, numerous zoning amendments that affect non-residential development have occurred. Many of these amendments have already been discussed. However, there are some amendments that may affect land use policy while having a minimal affect on the

¹² See infra note 11

overall development potential in the Town. These include Route 25 access management, and the removal of earth materials.

In order to estimate the total non-residential development potential of the Town, the amount of non-residential development that has occurred since 1992 (Table 2) was subtracted from the estimates calculated in the 1993 POD. These figures were then added to the additional development potential estimated for Hawleyville, Curtis Corporate Park and the Commerce Park Expansion to derive the estimate of total non-residential development potential. As described in Table 3, this methodology yields a total non-residential development potential of between 1,595,000 – 1,795,000 square feet of building space.

TABLE 3 Estimate of Non-Residential Development Potential, 2002 Newtown, Connecticut	
Source of Estimates	Building Area (SF)
Non-Residential Development Potential Estimated in 1993 POD ¹	936,547 – 1,137,335
Less Non-Residential Building Construction Since 1993 POD ²	(439,219)
Subtotal (rounded)	500,000 – 700,000
<i>Additional Development Potential Created Since 1993 POD</i>	
Hawleyville Area	540,000
Curtis Corporate Park	244,000
Commerce Park Expansion	306,000
Subtotal (rounded)	<u>1,090,000</u>
Total Non-Residential Development Potential Estimated in 2002	1,590,000 – 1,790,000

¹Newtown Plan of Development, 1993, p. 32

²Newtown Community Development Office, Newtown Land Use Department, 2002

As with the residential development potential, it is important to note that these build-out estimates come with the caveat that land determined to be suitable for development may change as development pressures increase. Therefore, the development potential totals given here are for planning purposes and subject to change. It is also important to point out that the estimates contained herein do not take into account market demand or other locational factors.

IV. Impacts of Development Potential

As mentioned before, the development potential estimates provided here are based on a variety of assumptions and mapping resources. While the estimates are useful for planning purposes, they are considered advisory (not predictive) for future policy decisions regarding land use. It is not expected that Newtown will reach its full build-out during the life of this plan. However, a continuation of current development trends will impact Newtown's population and the need for additional community services. These impacts will be distributed over time and will require municipal actions to provide new or expanded services.

In terms of residential development, the estimate of 2,705 new dwelling units at full build out, in addition to the existing housing supply of 8,600 housing units,¹³ would bring Newtown's total housing inventory to 11,305 units. Most of the additional housing units are expected to be single-family detached residences, as permitted by current zoning. There is a continued need to maintain an evaluation of Newtown's existing housing stock and the types of housing uses permitted in Town. This will be the subject of a future POCD update memorandum.

Maintaining the current average household size (2.9 persons per household¹⁴), it is estimated that 2,705 new housing units would generate an additional 7,844 residents, bringing Newtown's population to approximately 32,875. As mentioned earlier, it is not expected that Newtown will reach its full build-out during the life of this plan. In fact, it is impossible to predict when, if ever, a full build-out scenario would occur, due to the

¹³ 2000 Census

¹⁴ 2000 Census

fact that the rate of development is dependant on a number of factors including outside market forces.

It is an important aspect of the planning process to evaluate the potential impact of such residential growth (coupled with non-residential growth) on public facilities (schools, parks, recreation, etc.) and infrastructure (roads, sewers, waters, etc.). A future POCD update memorandum will include an evaluation of community facilities in Newtown in relation to present needs, population trends and future growth expectations.