

Updating Newtown's Plan of Conservation and Development

PUBLIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

March 8, 2003

WORKSHOP TOPIC #6

Community Facilities: *What Improvements Will Be Needed During The Next 10 Years?*

Introduction

One of the primary functions of town government is to provide for, or assist in the provision of, essential public infrastructure services and community facilities including; public schools, parks and recreation, police, fire, library, sewer, refuse disposal, town roads and many other general government services. A growing community places stress on the ability of existing community facilities to serve the needs of its residents and businesses.

The following summarizes the Issues, Goals and Strategies that have been discussed for this topic:

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

ISSUE #1: General Government Facilities

1. Newtown's general government functions are located in several facilities throughout the Town.

Goal: *Strive for a more organized and efficient approach to housing municipal government operations.*

Strategy:

1. Continue to pursue the development of a new town hall facility on the Fairfield Hills campus that will house the municipal office operations currently located in Edmond Town Hall, Canaan House and the Public Works Garage.

ISSUE #2: Public School System

1. Continued growth in Newtown's population during the next ten years is likely to necessitate expansion of the Town's High School facilities.

Goal: *If the existing High School can not be expanded to meet projected needs, consider the utilization of Fairfield Hills resources to meet expansion requirements.*

Strategies:

1. The Board of Education will determine the best options for meeting future High School facility requirements.
2. In addition to high school facility needs, consider “land banking” a 25 acre site in southeastern Newtown for the location of an elementary school that may be required beyond the 10 year planning horizon of this POCD.

ISSUE #3: Parks and Recreation Facilities

1. Newtown’s population growth has lead to the need for additional recreational facilities.

Goal: *Implement Park and Recreation’s 10 Year Facilities Plan.*

Strategies:

1. Develop seven additional playing fields on the Fairfield Hills campus, as approved by voters in June of 2001 and as included in the Draft Master Plan for the future use of Fairfield Hills campus.
2. Develop a new recreation center building on the Fairfield Hills campus, as currently programmed in the draft Capital Improvements Plan.
3. Develop a new maintenance facility to serve the needs of Parks and Recreation, as currently programmed in the draft Capital Improvements Plan.

ISSUE #4: Senior Center

1. Newtown’s Senior Center does not have enough space for its current operations and the Town’s senior population will continue to grow during the next ten years.

Goal: *Provide sufficient space for the operations of the Town’s Senior Center.*

Strategy:

1. Pursue the programming, budgeting and development of a new and expanded Senior Center facility on the Fairfield Hills campus.

ISSUE #5: Public Sewer System

1. The existing excess capacity of the Town’s sewage treatment plant is limited.

Goal: *Maintain the capacity of the existing system to meet future needs.*

Strategies:

1. Maintain a strong sewer avoidance program.

2. Expand the sewer service area to include the 38 acres of land the Town will be receiving from the State, adjacent to Commerce Road. The Town has zoned this land to M-5 to support a wide variety of business uses.
3. Review future hookups to the sewer system that are located outside the current service area to ensure continuity with the goals of the updated Plan of Conservation and Development.

ISSUE #6: Water Service

1. Newtown's public water system is solely dependant on water from the Pootatuck Aquifer.

Goal: *Protect the Pootatuck Aquifer and consider developing additional drinking water resources.*

Strategies:

1. Continue municipal efforts to protect the Pootatuck Aquifer.
2. Consider the identification and protection of additional drinking water resources to serve Newtown.
3. Consider extending municipal protection to additional aquifers that possess the potential to serve as drinking water resources.

ISSUE #7: Police Protection, Fire Protection and Emergency Services

1. Newtown's growing population will place additional demands for police, fire and emergency services.

Goal: *Continue to provide for a high level of these services.*

Strategies:

1. Upgrade the existing Police Station or develop a new facility.
2. Continue financial support for and coordination of the operation of fire and emergency services within Newtown.
3. Consider actions that will encourage more Newtown residents to volunteer for fire and emergency service activities.

PARKS AND ACTIVE RECREATION

ISSUE: *Newtown's Parks and Recreational Resources*

1. Newtown's parks and recreational facilities are important components of the Town's community character;
2. Newtown's parks and recreational facilities provide residents with opportunities to engage in healthful and educational activities;

3. Parks and recreational facilities function as community gathering places that foster social interaction in an attractive environment;
4. Quality parks and recreational facilities benefit property values and the marketability of the community.

Goal: *Maintain and support recreational facilities at levels which enable the provision of recreational opportunities and programs that meet the expressed needs of townspeople of all ages.*

Strategies:

1. Continue the efficient utilization of existing Parks and Recreation facilities, including extended hours and creative scheduling;
2. Strengthen the existing cooperative relationship between the Parks and Recreation Commission and the School Board to maximize the use of all municipal recreational resources;
3. Improve playing fields at Newtown's elementary schools and middle school to facilitate their improved utilization for organized team sports;
4. Utilize the Fairfield Hills campus as a resource to meet the needs for additional recreational facilities during the next ten years;
5. Develop recreational access to lake Zoar for Newtown residents;
6. Study the development of a skateboard park;
7. Prepare a long range park and recreation plan.