

II. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

A. WHAT IS A PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT?

The purpose of a Plan of Conservation and Development is to record the best thinking of the Town as to how Newtown should continue to evolve in the future and to give direction to both public and private elements of change. Chapter 126, Section 8-23, of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that a planning and zoning commission “*prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development for the municipality*” at least every ten years.

Newtown’s Plan of Conservation and Development is an advisory document that offers a Vision of the community and provides guidance for municipal decision making. The process of updating the POCD enables public participation in shaping the future of the Town and provides an opportunity to prioritize goals and implementation strategies and to set the course to achieve the Vision of Newtown.

While future oriented, Newtown’s Plan of Conservation and Development reflects the goals and objectives of a community at a certain point in time and provides guidance for municipal decisions affecting the Town’s conservation and development.

Newtown’s updated POCD responds to the 1995 amendments to the State’s General Statutes that increased the emphasis on conservation in municipal plans and to incorporate reference for greenway protection. In 2001, the Statute was further amended to include referral of updated and amended POCD’s to the local legislative body for review and comment prior to adoption by a Planning and Zoning Commission.

The Planning and Zoning Commission fulfilled one of the requirements of Section 8-23 in the fall of 2003 by referring the draft plan to the Newtown Legislative Council for their review and comment. The Legislative Council reported back to the Commission with recommendations that were incorporated into this final plan.

Updating Newtown’s POCD What is Legally Required?

As defined by Connecticut General Statutes, the POCD shall:

- Be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality;
- Show the (Planning and Zoning) Commission’s recommendations for the most desirable use of land for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the municipality;
- Promote...the coordinated development... and the general welfare and prosperity of its people;
- Make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including multifamily dwellings...for all residents of the municipality and the planning region...;
- Promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing...and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified in the regional housing plan and the State’s Plan of Conservation and Development;
- Consider...the use of cluster development;
- Take into account the State’s Plan of Conservation and Development and note any inconsistencies...with said State Plan.

The requirement that the plan note any inconsistencies with the State Plan of Conservation was also accomplished. The Newtown Plan of Conservation and Development is generally consistent with the State plan and the “Locational Guide Map” except for in the following areas: the area along the southern portion of the Route 25 corridor, where the state plan does not accurately reflect Newtown’s long standing land use patterns of commercial, industrial and residential uses (Sand Hill Plaza, Riverview, Batchelder, etc.); the entire length of the Pootatuck River should be recognized as a greenway; the Hattertown Historic District should appear on the state plan; the Curtis Corporate Park should appear as a growth area and the two private game clubs in southeastern Newtown should also be recognized in the State Plan.

B. THE PROCESS OF UPDATING NEWTOWN’S PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

In early 2002, the Newtown Planning and Zoning Commission began the process of reviewing and updating the Town’s 1993 Plan of Development. During the past year and one half, the Newtown Planning and Zoning Commission caused the preparation of 10 planning memoranda, that included the following topics: Demographic Overview, Development Patterns and Trends, Community Character, Open Space, Conservation and Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, Community Facilities, Housing, Economic Development, and Transportation. Each of these plan elements provided background information, existing conditions, maps and photographs, an analysis of changes since the completion of the 1993 Plan, and a discussion of issues, goals and recommended implementation strategies. These individual plan elements serve as technical background for the contents of this Plan and are included in the appendix of this document.

In addition, the Commission prepared and executed a Community Planning Survey to gain input from Town residents on their attitudes and desires toward growth and change in Town and prepared a special planning study to investigate the feasibility of implementing Open Space Conservation Subdivisions as a means of conserving more of Newtown’s open landscape and preserving elements of the Town’s community character. The planning memoranda, the Community Planning Survey and the analysis of Open Space Conservation Subdivisions were posted on the Town website for citizen review and comment. Because of the extent of the information provided, these individual plan elements serve as technical background for the contents of this Plan.

Updating Newtown’s POCD What is Legally Required?

The Connecticut General Statutes require that the preparation of the POCD shall consider the following:

- The need for affordable housing;
- The need for protection of existing and potential public surface and ground drinking water supplies;
- The use of cluster development and other development patterns to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity of the municipality;
- The State and Regional Plans of Conservation and Development;
- Physical, social, economic and governmental conditions and trends;
- Energy efficient patterns of development, renewable energy and energy conservation;
- The needs of the municipality including: human resources, education, health, housing, recreation, social services, public utilities, public protection, transportation and circulation, and cultural and interpersonal communications.

As part of the process of updating the POCD, the Planning and Zoning Commission received input from Town departments and commissions. Each of the planning memoranda, the Community Planning Survey and the analysis of Open Space Conservation Subdivisions were discussed by the Commission during regularly scheduled meetings of the Commission. In addition, the Commission conducted a Public Planning Workshop on Updating Newtown's Plan of Conservation and Development to generate and benefit from public input and to encourage full participation on a variety of planning issues.

The key components of the updated Plan of Conservation and Development include a description of past growth and change within Newtown as it relates to future trends, a Vision Statement of what is desired for Newtown in 10 years and a description of the actions required to achieve this Vision, with an assignment of responsibilities for implementation. Important community issues are discussed, goals are described and strategies to achieve the goals are recommended. An assessment is made of the resources required to achieve implementation and responsibilities for implementation activities are assigned.

Community goals and objectives are established as a means to present clear and concise direction to guide future conservation and development actions. These goals take into consideration the recommendations of previous Town plans, the information compiled from planning and existing condition analyses; reports and study elements presented during the Plan of Conservation and Development Update process; existing land use patterns; future projections and community input. The identified goals will serve to guide Newtown's conservation and development activities over the next ten years and beyond.