

# TOWN OF NORTH CANAAN, Connecticut

## PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT 2006

**Prepared for and by The North Canaan Planning and Zoning Commission**

## NORTH CANAAN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT—2006

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### WHAT IS THE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT?

One of the most vital factors for orderly community growth, whether it be a rural, suburban or urban community, is the preparation and use of the Plan of Development.

The Plan of Development is a process whereby a community seeks to understand where it is today—its assets and its problems, and where it is going—the extent of its future needs. It then develops a program that is sufficiently comprehensive to seek solutions for these problems and to provide for future needs through the full utilizations of its assets, both human and material, over a period of 10 to 20 years.

It is important to understand that a plan of development is *not* a legally binding document, such as a regulation, ordinance or by-law, nor it is a zoning by-law or zoning map. Most of all, it is not a panacea for all municipal problems—it is only a guide or tool that has been designed to be used in attacking these problems. If the plan is not understood by the community, or if it is not properly used, it is worthless.

Considering what the Plan of Development is *not*, let us consider what it *is*:

- The Plan of Development is a collection of plans, maps, studies and reports, which, together, attempt to visualize the long-range growth of the community. It will consider past trends and future potentials, major problems that need solutions and directions or objectives as guides to new growth. (See Exhibits and References at the end of this report).
- The Plan of Development, therefore, is a framework or guide for the community as a whole to use in shaping its future course over a period of many years. As such, it must be sufficiently general to permit the filling in of such changes and trends as may arise in future years.
- To serve over an extended period of time, the Plan of Development must be flexible. It must permit modifications and adjustments to all of its parts without unduly damaging its basic structure.
- The Plan of Development must be, as its name implies, comprehensive. It must deal with all aspects of the community's growth, not just one small area. The guiding principle for the plan's decisions should be, "What is in the best interests of the community as a whole, not just one area or one small group."

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To be specific relative to its content, the Plan of Development for Connecticut's towns shall show the following: (as applicable per Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of Statutes Governing Municipal Planning and Zoning):

- A. Desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes.
- B. Recommendation for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges and improvement of public buildings; for general location and extent of public utilities and terminals; for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes, and for location of public housing projects.
- C. A statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality.
- D. Zoning and subdivision controls, building and housing codes, safety regulations, plans for implementation of affordable housing and open space acquisition.

(NOTE: The Plan of Development should show existing as well as desirable proposed features.)

As the population of the community grows, we must realize what such expansion means in terms of land inventories and natural resources. The conversion of hundreds of acres to residential, commercial, industrial, recreational and agricultural land to service a growing population and to provide for the expansion of road networks is only one aspect of the problem. Thus, through careful reapportionment of the land to the important land use categories, protected by sound zoning to maintain the highest and best use of the land, we can hope to continue to support an expanding population. In addition, the increasing demand for more services is reflected in mounting tax bills facing every community across the country.

These problems are common to the nation as a whole and, taken individually, they affect each community. North Canaan is no exception. With an increasing population, concern about industrial and commercial expansion, the improvement and extension of the highway network and other major influences on the growth of the Town, it is evident that comprehensive planning will be of as much local interest as regional or national.

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### BACKGROUND

#### GENERAL

The Plan of Development, in essence, deals with five questions about the Town:

1. What does the town have now?
2. What influences have shaped its past development?
3. What are the trends that will determine its future?
4. What are the desirable goals to guide its future growth?
5. How can we achieve these goals?

**Question 1** is answered by the “Basic Studies” stage of the current planning study, which was completed on Oct. 17, 1989.

**Question 2** is partly answered by the “Basic Studies” and by the results of the Citizens Attitude Questionnaire distributed at the beginning of the 1990 planning program.

**Question 3** is answered by the above two elements.

**Question 4** is based initially on the goals developed in the 1972 Plan of Development, modified as a result of the current planning study and especially in light of the comments in the questionnaire.

**Question 5** is essentially the role of this current Plan of Development.

The CDAP Plan, (Community Development Action Plan) was a municipal planning program established and partially funded by the State of Connecticut in the 1970s as somewhat of a follow-up to the Sec. 701 planning program (Federally funded), which stressed physical planning. In contrast, the CDAP Plan was based on programs and dealt with some areas previously not a direct concern of the planning program (such as public health). In North Canaan, the two programs, CDAP and the Plan of Development, were undertaken at about the same time (1972) and were fairly well coordinated. The following outline touches on the highlights of each, many recommendations of which have been carried out during the following decade.

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### **CDAP PLAN**

The Community Development Action Plan of 1972 covered the following elements:

**EDUCATION, HOUSING, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, PUBLIC UTILITIES AND SERVICES, TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION.**

Recommendations included:

#### **EDUCATION:**

- Town to provide additional classroom space and other facilities at the elementary school.
- Town to recommend that the Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education the addition of technical courses.
- Town to recommend that Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education investigate a more comprehensive vocational guidance program.
- Town to recommend that Superintendent and Board continue to investigate forms of administrative regionalization.

#### **HOUSING:**

- Board of Selectmen will continue to seek all avenues to remain current with state guidelines.
- Housing Authority to apply for state grant for elderly housing.

#### **HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES:**

- The town will continue its affiliation with the Torrington Area Health District.

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### **PUBLIC UTILITIES AND SERVICES:**

- The need for sewer extension should consider the Green Acres area as its first priority.

### **TRANSPORTATION:**

- Connecticut Highway Department to improve Route 44/Trescott Hill Road intersection.
- CHD to improve Route 7/Ashley Falls Road intersection.
- Town to improve Allyndale/Casey Hill Road intersection.
- CHD to reconstruct and improve Route 44 with the existing right-of-way from Norfolk town line west to its intersection with Elm Street.
- Town to improve portions of Canaan Valley Road and Lower Road.
- Town should improve North Elm Street so that truck traffic could be eliminated from the central business district.
- Town should complete Green Street to connect with Housatonic Avenue.

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### 1990 PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

Many of the recommendations in the 1990 Implementation Section have been completed or are ongoing in nature.

1. Zoning was adopted July 5, 1999
2. Subdivision regulations were adopted April 5, 1971
3. Adoption of a Capital Improvements Program is still not complete and should be implemented as soon as possible.
4. The town is using the sanitary code of the state and is overseen by the Torrington Area Health District.
5. The Town is a member of the Regional Planning Agency.
6. Updating the Town Plan of Development is an ongoing project and needs to be done in a timely manner.

All of these recommendations are important elements of a complete Plan of Development and it is good to see that many of these recommendations either are already in force or studies are underway to complete them.

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### REGIONAL PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

The Town of North Canaan is located in the area of the state served by the Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments since 1985, which succeeded (on that date) the Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency, which then became an Advisory Body to the C.O.G. The other member towns include Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, North Canaan, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Warren and Washington. In essence, these member towns have voluntarily joined together to seek regional solutions to those problems in the area that are common to all of them and to cooperate on matters of regional concern.

The NWCOG and the NWCRPA have, over the years, produced a substantial library of reference works and studies on subjects of both local and regional concern, such as plans and studies dealing with transportation, housing, aquifers, population trends, etc., and in March 1989 prepared a “Regional Plan of Development.

Highlights of Goals and Objectives from this Plan include:

1. Land use for rural areas (outside village centers) should be concerned with conservation of critical areas (including special emphasis on preserving farmlands through all possible means, including State acquisition and use of land trusts) and environmentally sound development at a density that reflects the region’s soil systems and is consistent with its rural character.
2. Land use for villages should reflect the fact that here will be found most of the public sewer and water systems and thus, here should be located most new high density residential uses as well as most commercial uses and public buildings. Most industrial development should be at the fringes of the village, tied to public sewer and water.
3. Housing goals and objectives stress preservation of existing housing plus new residential development consistent with the region’s needs, character and environmental quality. This object would stress rehabilitation of existing housing wherever feasible, but without threatening environmental quality, increasing water pollution, etc. Further, as noted under Land Use, to stress the local village centers as sites for the bulk of future housing where sewer and water systems are most likely to be available.
4. Transportation’s goals and objectives stress the need to maintain and preserve the region’s existing transportation carrying capacity through controls on development of road frontage as well as measures to relive congestion in existing critical areas, including North Canaan’s intersections of Routes 7 and 44. In addition, the plan stresses the need for integrated transportation services, including all forms of public transportation with emphasis on rail service.

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5. Water supply: This goal recognizes the critical nature of the water resources in the region and to each town of the region and stresses promotion of water conservation measures and programs, especially of important aquifers in each town.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Plan is focused on three major areas, considered to be the most critical issues in the Region during the 1990s: Housing, solid waste disposal and transportation. We now have an Inland Wetlands Commission to oversee water and to protect the Town. The Town is in the forefront of animal waste usage and control.

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### STATE POLICIES PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The State Policies Plan of Conservation and Development is the State of Connecticut's overall policy plan for the future use of land in Connecticut. Since 1972 (as required by the State legislature) the State Office of Policy and Management has updated this comprehensive State planning document every five years.

Under the provisions of State Statutes and Executive Orders of the Governor, State agencies must be guided by the plan in deciding on locations for State facilities and other State land use decisions.

The State Plan's "Locational Guide Map" shows general areas recommended for "preservation," "conservation" and rural development, plus "urban" growth centers. These recommendations, while not binding on the Town of North Canaan, offer valid suggestions based upon extensive detailed mapping and research by State planners and agencies.

Preservation: Lands designated for "Preservation" in the State Plan are existing preserved lands, including all State Parks and Forest Lands, Federal land for the Appalachian Trail, private land trust holdings and permanent development easements.

Conservation: Lands designated for "Conservation" as recommended on the State Plan map are defined as areas with a "long-term public benefit contributing to the State's needs for food and water resources, open space, recreation and environmental quality." Developments in these areas must be limited to non-sensitive lands requiring careful site design treatment to protect the land's special resource value.

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### FACTORS AND TRENDS AFFECTING GROWTH

In March 1988, Public Act 88-13 was passed by the Connecticut legislature, which required the review of a municipal Plan of Development at least once every ten (10) years. The Planning Commission in each town must hold a hearing to approve these plans.

This mandate is essential to each town and is its responsibility to its citizens. All too often in the past, a lack of future planning has led to a variety of municipal problems, such as overcrowding, traffic overload, lack of educational, recreational and health care facilities, insufficient public utilities and a general deterioration of the quality of life in that city or town.

Conversely, proper planning could eliminate, or at least obviate some of these problems by anticipating such a increased population growth and the ability of the town to accommodate additional people and to provide the necessary services needed so as not to overburden the community. Zoning enforcement is a key element in controlling how land will be used and also in preserving open space areas. As environmental issues are now crucial to our whole planet, intensive planning must be focused in this area in regard to protecting water bodies, proper waste disposal and pollution of the environment.

Although future projections do not indicate either a substantial in-migration or birth rate rise for North Canaan, it is nevertheless prudent to plan for the possibility of an increasing population and also to attempt to alleviate any current problems. As with most towns, North Canaan does have certain features and potentials that, used to their best advantages, could both improve and enhance the quality of life.

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### FACTORS AND TRENDS AFFECTING GROWTH

#### POPULATION AND HOUSING

Since the Plan of Development is to serve as a framework to guide the orderly growth of the community over a period of years, it should be flexible enough to take into account all of the various influences of the community and yet strong enough to order the development of the whole. The population trends will affect many aspects of community life and will shape the perspective of its future.

During the 1990s, North Canaan's growth has been comparable to the population growth of its neighboring towns. It appears that North Canaan continues to lose people by natural decrease, although the amount of decline was less in the 1990s than in the 1980s. In terms of net migration, gains were greater in the 1990s than in the 1980s, as more people moved into town.

Table 1 shows North Canaan's population projections. These projections are useful for determining future school enrollment. For example, the project chart shows the middle and high school age population (10-19) would reach its lowest level around 2005. Yet, the elementary school age population (5-9) were to begin to fall again in 2005, after rebounding from another decline in the mid-1990s. Overall, the total population of young people (0-19), which was as high as 35 percent in 1970, is expected to continue to decline over the next two decades. In 1980, this figure equaled 28.2 percent. According to OPM estimates, the proportion of young people was projected to decline to 24.1 percent in 1990, 22.3 percent by the year 2000 and will be 20.9 percent by 2010. The proportion of elderly residents was to stabilize at roughly 18 to 19 percent over the same period. (See Table 3).

When examining the population projection, it should be noted that ConnDOT and NWCOG projections are outdated (1984), while OPM projections were published more recently (June 1989) and thus may be a more accurate measure. We now have the 2000 census from NWCOG and these figures have been inserted.

#### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

As noted in the Basic Studies Report, the population growth in North Canaan has been modest and projections indicate no significant departure from that trend. The following table shows four projections to 2000, which vary by less than 15 percent. The only new projections are from NWCOG:

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TABLE 1

POPULATION PROJECTIONS – NORTH CANAAN, CONNECTICUT

Source	1980	Projected Population		
	(Census)	1990	1995	2000
ConnDot	3,185	3,220	-----	3,240
NWCOG	3,185	3,284*	3,230	3,284*
OPM	3,185	3,400	3,450	3,450
Lord-Wood Associates	3,185	3,410	3,550	3,650

\*All sources use 1980 Census except for NWCOG, which is based on the 2000 census.

While the above data represents an attempt to project what the population of North Canaan might be in 10 years, the development of an estimate of the Town’s “holding capacity” gives an idea of what the “ultimate population” might be. Holding capacity is a measure of the number of persons who could live in North Canaan assuming all developable land were completely developed (See Table 2).

In determining holding capacity, we have assigned a density of population for each category of soils limitation based on the same conditions described in the 1972 Plan.

1. Slight Limitation: Assuming a density of one family, or four persons, per acre. This density is consistent with the regulations of the State Sanitary Code, which prohibits lots of less than one acre on any type of soil without sewers.
2. Moderate Limitation: Assumes a low density of one family per two acres of two persons per acre. This density is possible only with suitable drainage solutions.
3. Severe Limitation: Assumes a very low density of one family per five acres, or 0.8 persons per acre. This figure is representative only of the overall density pattern, as many portions of this land will not be able to be developed.
4. Very Severe Limitation: Assumes an extremely low density of one family per ten acres, or 0.4 persons per acre in view of the character of this land. It is indeed possible that the obstacles

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presented by the soil characteristics in this group will preclude development entirely.

5. Flood Plain: Assume no residential development.

TABLE 2  
HOLDING CAPACITY

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Persons per acre</u>	<u>Possible Development</u>
Slight limitation	3,941	4.0/A.	15,800 persons
Moderate limitation	1,059	2.0/A.	2,100 persons
Severe Limitation	4,293	0.8/A.	3,400 persons
Very Severe Limitation	889	0.4/A.	360 persons
Flood Plain	900	-----	-----
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT POSSIBLE			21,300 Persons
		75 percent*	16,000
		2000 population**	3,350
Estimated Holding Capacity			19,350

\* Total development possible reduced by 25 percent to account for development to other than residential purposes, i.e. streets, utilities, wastage, etc.

\*\* U.S. Census of Population, 2000.

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TABLE 3  
 NORTH CANAAN POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE AND SEX

	U.S. Census	OPM estimate	OPM projections				
	1980	1985	1990	1995	.2000	2005	2010
<b>Total</b>	3,185	3,350	3,400	3,450	3,450	3,500	3,500
0-4	185	240	180	190	200	190	170
5-9	211	230	230	180	200	200	190
10-14	238	200	200	200	170	180	190
15-19	263	250	210	210	200	160	180
20-24	226	220	150	180	190	190	150
25-29	216	220	200	150	180	190	150
30-34	205	230	300	230	160	190	200
35-39	171	240	260	310	330	250	180
40-44	155	200	280	290	330	250	180
45-49	164	200	220	290	290	340	260
50-54	164	160	190	210	290	290	330
55-59	189	160	190	210	210	300	300
60-64	176	190	150	180	200	210	290
65-69	183	150	160	130	170	180	190
70-74	154	150	120	130	110	140	150
75-79	110	140	150	120	130	110	140
80-84	77	90	120	110	80	90	70
85 and over	98	100	110	130	130	120	120
<b>65 and over</b>	620	640	650	610	620	640	670
<b>Median age</b>	36.4	37.0	39.5	41.2	43.1	45.4	46.9
<b>Female</b>	1,672	1,750	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,850	1,850
0-4	95	120	90	100	100	90	90
5-9	102	110	110	90	100	100	90
10-14	124	100	100	100	80	90	90
15-19	105	130	110	100	100	80	90
20-24	101	110	100	90-	100	90	70
25-29	117	120	120	110	100	100	100
30-34	96	100	130	120	120	100	110
35-39	91	120	150	160	140	130	110
40-44	80	100	140	160	160	140	130
45-49	76	80	80	120	150	150	130
50-54	84	80	110	90	130	160	160
55-59	96	70	100	120	100	130	170
60-64	107	110	50	80	110	90	120
65-69	103	90	90	40	80	100	80
70-74	92	90	80	80	40	70	90
75-79	67	90	90	80	80	50	70
80-84	57	70	90	70	60	60	30
85 and over	79	90	90	100	110	100	90
<b>Median age</b>	36.4	37.0	39.5	4.2	43.1	45.4	46.9
<b>Males</b>	1513	1,600	1,600	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650
0-4	90	120	90	100	100	90	90
5-9	109	110	120	90	100	100	100
10-14	114	100	100	110	90	90	90
14-19	158	120	110	100	100	90	90
20-24	125	110	50	90	100	100	80
25-29	99	100	90	40	80	90	90
30-34	109	120	170	110	50	90	100
40-44	75	100	150	130	170	110	50

45-49	88	120	140	180	150	190	120
50-54	80	70	80	110	160	130	170
55-59	93	90	90	90	120	170	140
60-64	69	80	100	100	90	120	170
65-69	80	60	70	90	90	80	110
70-74	62	60	40	50	70	70	60
75-79	43	60	60	40	50	60	70
80-84	20	20	40	40	30	30	40
85 and over	19	20	20	20	20	20	20
Median age	32.8	34.9	40.1	41.3	42.8	44.5	46.2

Prepared by: Office of Policy and Management (OPM), Connecticut Census Data Center, 80 Washington St., Hartford, CT 06106; 203-566-8285, June 1989.

Note: Due to rounding, numbers may not add to their totals.

### IMPACT OF POPULATION PROJECTIONS

1990: Estimated population of 3,350

By 2010: Estimated population of 3,813

This means 463 new people (142 new dwellings at 3.14 persons)

Estimated increase of 7 percent or .7 percent per year, compared with the .88 percent per year increase from 1980-88.

TABLE 4—POPULATION PROJECTIONS (AGE GROUPS) TO 2010

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>2000 Census</u>	<u>2010 Board's Projection</u>
0-4 (preschool)	169	191 (plus 22 preschoolers)
5-14	453	511 (plus 58 elementary school)
15-19	239	270 (plus 31 high school age)
20-24	145	163 (plus 18 college)
25-64	1,707	1,927 (plus 220 workers)
65-plus	<u>637</u>	<u>719 (plus 82 retired persons)</u>
	3,350	3,781*

\*Source: U.S. Census and PZC projections.

Schools: With an estimated increase in elementary school age and preschool children from 622 to 702 by 2010, new classrooms may be needed during this plan.

Land Use, residential: Approximately 142 new housing units (based on a household size of 3.14 persons) will produce the following impacts:

Per existing Land Use Study, assume an average of 1.5 A/dwelling unit (outside village center); .5A in the center and one-third of all dwelling units located on about 24 A (reduced by multi-family units) in center.

Therefore,  $1/3 \times 142 = 48$  new units in the center and  $2/3 \times 142 = 95$  outside the center (or about 143 A. of new residential land outside of the village.)

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According to the 2000 Census, the number of owner-occupied housing units was 901. The percent of occupied units was 67.1 percent. The median value of owner-occupied units was \$127,700 as compared to \$139,000 in 1990, a decrease of 8.5 percent. The median rent in 1999 according to the U.S. Census was \$594.

Workers: Based on Table #1, the population increase will result in 200 new workers.

Public Facilities: Based again on the estimated age breakdown of the project population growth, the impact on Public Facilities (other than schools) is expected to be modest. Some additional recreation areas may be required and modest expansion of sewer and water service areas, but based on a 10-year growth, these can be considered minimal (See appropriate section)

### HOUSING

The decade of the 1990s showed a dramatic escalation of housing prices throughout Connecticut, but not in North Canaan. In 1990, the median value of an owner-occupied unit was \$139,600, but that figure declined to \$127,700 in year 2000. This was a change of 8.5 percent or \$11,900 per unit. Compare this to Litchfield County's average of \$156,600 for year 2000. (Source NWCOG; U.s. Census)

In 2000, North Canaan's publicly assisted housing totaled 114 units, while the Northwestern Connecticut Region had a need for 891 units at that time. Assuming housing needs are uniform across the region, North Canaan's share of the affordable housing need might amount to 115 units. Future housing development in the Town, therefore, should consider more affordable housing options, which will insure an equal opportunity of housing choice for all residents of the town. The median rent in 1999, according to the 2000 census, was \$594.

In 1990 there were 1,355 housing units in North Canaan. By 2000, this had increased to 1,444 units, an increase of 89 units for 6.5 percent in 10 years. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the number of owner-occupied housing units was 901. The percentage of occupied units was 67.1.

The town should address the concern about affordable housing by using the following steps.

1. Define what is meant by "affordable" in North Canaan.
2. Determine, based on current population data (with an assist from the 2000 census of housing) what the need is, in numbers of families, for North Canaan.

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3. Identify all available resources to meet this need (existing elderly housing units, apartments, etc.)
4. Determine the probable existing need in number of “affordable” units.
5. Identify all available funding programs and sources such as the Connecticut Housing Partnership Program, Affordable Housing Program, Municipal Housing Trust Fund program and the like.

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### FACTORS AND TRENDS AFFECTING GROWTH

#### TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

The Regional Transportation Plan noted the following trends and needs in this region, much of which is especially applicable to North Canaan, where Routes 7 and 44 intersect in the town center.

New Arterial Highways: Projected traffic volumes and volume/capacity ratios provided in 1978 by ConnDOT confirm that no arterial highways would be needed in this region in the near future. Dutcher's Bridge remains dangerous despite recent improvements and this needs to be corrected. The center of town is a serious traffic problem because of heavy truck usage. North Elm Street might be a better route for trucks going through town.

The most congested segments in the region currently are Canaan Village, where Routes 7 and 44 intersect; and Route 44 through Salisbury/Lakeville.

Highway and Road Maintenance: A major highway need is improved maintenance. Due to rising costs and tightened budgets, some maintenance on the region's highways has been deferred.

Town road maintenance is also caught in the same bind as state road maintenance is deferred. Some town's counter their roads less frequently as a cost-saving measure, especially at times with the state cuts its Town Road Aid allowance. Moves such as this represent a false economy as the time will come when roads become so deteriorated that massive funds will be required to put them back in shape—an such funds may not be available from the State.

Highway Access Management: As long as commercial development along highways is controlled and residential development is orderly, new highways probably won't be needed for some time. However, to help control such development, planning and zoning commission need to practice highway access management—especially in review of subdivision plans.

Water Quality: It has been determined that the transportation sector is a partial contributor to some of the region's sever water quality problems, such as road and road-bank erosion, highway runoff, salt and sand storage and maintenance activities. A study of impacts should be made and policy recommendation formulated.

Air Quality: The NWCOG is pressing or improved road maintenance because it feels that this will be the most significant contribution that can be made toward cleaner air.

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### RIDESHARING

Ridesharing: Daily commuting traffic does not indicate significant numbers of persons entering or leaving the region that could benefit from a regional ridesharing program, however, two areas, North Canaan and the Warren/Washington area, may have some potential for ridesharing. Industries in North Canaan are informally promoting ridership with some success.

Volunteer dial-a-rides through the Northwestern Area Agency on Aging serving as feeders to its elderly fixed route Senior Transit Service have not been successful, however, continuation of the rural Transit Program through Winsted is supported and encouraged. Several towns have agreed to assist the Rural Transit Program by providing part of the match as requested on a formula, fair-share match.

Mass Transit: While mass transit resources are limited, there are some opportunities, and one of the most exciting may be the possible return of the railroad (even if on a limited basis). The concept of developing a “railroad town” theme for the downtown area may be given a boost by future extension of rail traffic between North Canaan and Danbury.

Sanitary Sewer System: The Canaan Fire District owns and operates the only municipal sewer system in the Town of North Canaan and serves approximately half of the town’s residents. The plant itself was built in 1971 and expanded in 1994-1995 to increase its permitted capacity from 330,000 gpd to 400,000 gpd and to provide UV disinfection. It is currently operating at approximately two-thirds of its design capacity during most months.

The design average flow of 400,000 gpd is exceeded three to four months of the year because of excessive infiltration and inflow, which enters the existing sanitary sewers and manholes during periods of heavy rainfall and high groundwater. However, this condition has not diminished the ability of the treatment process to continually exceed the minimum treatment/removal efficiency of 85 percent required by the discharge permit.

In the 1972 CDAP Plan for the Town of North Canaan, the CDAP Agency concluded that the Fire District should be encouraged to extend sewer service to a level that more closely matches the capacity of the treatment plant. It should be noted that although the 1972 conclusion may still be valid, the high capital cost of a sewer extension, combined with the current lack of significant government aid, may limit the ability of the District to pursue major expansions to the existing sewer system without financial support from private developers, etc..

In addition, despite the previous efforts in the 1980s to reduce the amount and inflow entering the sewer system, the District will need to investigate and employ new trenchless technologies in the near future to increase the reserve capacity of the treatment plant.

## NORTH CANAAN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT—2006

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The plant was of infiltration designed to reach full capacity in about 2015.

**Public Water Supply:** A problem could result from the fact that the four shallow wells providing the major source of supply for the Water Company are all located within a 500-square-foot area, leaving the source of water supply for the town vulnerable to possible contamination if a spill of hazardous waste took place in that area. The water company has been aware of this possibility and has located monitor wells in each well field to check regularly for pollutants. There are private wells nearby that might serve as temporary replacements in the event of such an emergency and two unused wells in the Greenacres water company, also owned by Aquarion, could be pressed into service. Aquarion has an aquifer protection plan and has established monitor wells in the region from whence the water flows to give as much forewarning as possible. Still, the need for greater dispersion of supply sources should be examined.

The original system was developed over the years between 1890 and 1960 under the North Canaan Water Company. It was bought out in 1960 by Bridgeport Hydraulic Company, which sold it to a British firm, Kelda, in the 1990s. It currently operates under the name of Aquarion.

During its early development, the water system was laid out so that the railroad right of way divided it into two service areas with few cross connections across the tracks. This meant that fire protection could be affected by limited points of access to the mains from one side of the railroad to the other.

With North Canaan's total supply based upon wells located in the same aquifer, all close together and close to major highways where spills are possible, protection of aquifers and dispersion of the water supply source must be important concerns. And, as traffic and land development increases in this critical area, efforts to relocate the town's source of water—or at least to develop an alternate source in a less vulnerable situation—should be given high priority.

In 1981, the Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency prepared an "Aquifer Protection Booklet" for the Town of North Canaan that made a number of recommendations (See Appendix A) that should be studied for inclusion in proposed zoning regulations or otherwise implemented.

The state has enacted new legislation that gives the Planning and Zoning Commission control of the town's aquifers. Mapping has been done by the state and is now available. The recommendations offered in the 1990 plan will be reviewed and used as the commission begins to deal with the new regulations. These issues are new to the commission and will be developed with the help of the state in the near future.

## CANAAN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT—2006

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3. Some comments reflected a concern with use of Town recreation facilities by outsiders.

In 2006 the YMCA opened at the new Geer Village. This included a pool and fitness facilities for anyone who wishes to become a member. In 2006, improvements were made at the town skating pond and Little League field. The town pool and facilities are in need of repairs, improvements and/or replacement and this is being addressed at this time.

Finally, in a general comparison of Town, recreation facilities with national standards for public recreation programs, it seemed that North Canaan's primary deficiency is the distance to many of the existing areas—a situation often encountered in rural towns where the population in outlying areas is sparse and cannot usually justify, for example, a park area within one-quarter to one-half mile from each residential area.

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## NORTH CANAAN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT—2006

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### FACTORS AND TRENDS AFFECTING GROWTH

#### EXISTING LAND USE

The use of land and development trends that have occurred since 1990 have on the one hand served to strengthen the general land use patterns in Town (i.e. the downtown as a site for almost all commercial, industrial and high-density residential use; the rest of Town largely open, rural and agricultural land).

Table No. 5 on the next page illustrates the changes that have been taking place. One important element in the recent land-use trends, however, has been the substantial increase in gravel mining by a number of individual farmers as a means of supplementing lagging farm income. An outline of changes since 1990 shows the following:

Residential—makes up 11% of total land, which has nearly doubled since 1972, and now constitutes 61.41% of all developed land.

Commercial—Amounts to 14.27% of developed land (about double the 1972 figure) with the major concentration of uses in the downtown area; most of the rest is along Route 44 east of the center.

Industrial—Amounts to 11.37% of developed land, showing the greatest percent increase of all uses since 1972 (324%).

Agriculture—Constitutes about 7.6% of total land in town, estimated at 4,529 acres, down slightly from 1972. This is the land area most vulnerable to future development.

Public/Semi-public—Includes state forest, roads, streets, rights-of-way, Town-owned land, utilities, railroad, airport and the like. Semi-public includes churches, cemeteries, club, etc. There has been only change since 1972.

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TABLE 5  
 Existing Land Use (2005)\* Compared to 1989\*\*

USE	1989 (ACRES)	(%)	2005 (ACRES)	(%)	DIFF (ACRES)	(%)
<u>DEVELOPED LAND</u>						
Residential	1406	50%	1,774	54%	368	+4%
Commercial	171	6%	653	20%	482	+14%
Industrial	648	23%	526	17%	-122	-6%
Public/ Semi-Public	265	10%	28	.55%	-237	-9.45%
Public Apts.						
Utilities	27	1%	22	.45%	-5	-.55%
Roads	270	10%	270	87%	—	—
Total Develop.	2,887	100%	3,273	100%	+486	+17.5%
<u>OPEN LAND</u>						
Agriculture	4,529	45%	4,493	-36		-.5%
Public/ Semi-public	1,151	11%	3,244	+2,093		+155%
Vacant	4,411	43%	921	-3,490		-263%
Water bodies	50	1%	50	N.C.		0%
Total Open Land	12,928	78%	11,981	0		

Note: \* 2005 Figures from Town of North Canaan Assessors Office  
 \*\* 1989 figures are from the 1990 Plan of Development  
 Some categories may differ between 1989 and 2005

## NORTH CANAAN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT—2006

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### FACTORS AND TRENDS AFFECTING GROWTH ECONOMIC FACTORS

#### General

According to the Assessors' records, the largest share of taxes in North Canaan [61%] are paid by residential property owners:

Residential properties, taxes [2005]	\$115.3 million	61.23%
Commercial properties, taxes [2005]	\$27.1 million	14.39%
Industrial properties, taxes [2005]	\$21.24 million	11.28%
Public utility, taxes [2005]	\$.328 million	.17%
Vacant land, taxes [2005]	\$14.84 million	2.77%
Use assessment, taxes [2005]	\$14.84 million	7.88%
Apartment, taxes [2005]	\$4.18 million	2.22%

Other than the residential property, the commercial properties pay the next largest amount of taxes. It is important that the commercial areas, such as downtown, East Main Street and Ashley Falls Road, be maintained in good condition and that parking and traffic problems be resolved as best as possible. Every effort should be made to attract new commercial uses as well as retaining those already here.

In addition, industrial development—representing a very small land area compared to residential, pays a much more substantial proportion of taxes (proportionally nearly five times as much). It therefore would seem to be also in the interest of keeping the residential tax burden down by encouraging some new industrial growth in the proper locations. It is for this reason that the Future Land Use Plan shows three relatively large areas for possible industrial expansion or development.

Within the time frame of this plan, therefore, there seem to be few major trends that will affect the town's economy. Certainly such economic factors may include gravel operations, limited industrial expansion and the railroad ... but perhaps the greatest short-term possibility is in the downtown commercial area (which, in effect, could include all the others except gravel mining).

## NORTH CANAAN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT—2006

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It should be stressed, however, that in any program to attract new commercial or industrial development to the Town, there are two important factors to consider:

1. Don't forget the existing commercial and industrial properties that are already there.
2. To assure that any new non-residential development will conform to the goals and objectives of the Plan of Development, it is important to control future development and this is best carried out through zoning.

Zoning is the best means available to the town for protection of property from inappropriate adjacent land uses and for retaining the amenities of residential neighborhoods. A good zoning regulation can regulate the future development of land within the guidelines set by the Plan of Development and is an important tool in the economic health of the community. As a result of our zoning regulation, we now have a commercial district.

### THE DOWNTOWN AREA

The downtown area of any small town is characterized by several factors that can determine its success or failure—the aesthetic quality of its environment, the economic potential of its existing commercial establishments and its development feasibility. In the “successful” downtown, the appearance, form and arrangement of those elements that make up the environment are orchestrated to create a sense of overall organization—a pleasant visual image, a sense of vitality and a convenient area for pedestrian activity.

An indictment of “Main Street America,” which was written in 1975 as a part of a Brookline, Mass., study on appearance codes states:

“The visual environment has obviously been neglected in America. Many cities and towns are almost indistinguishable now in an obscuring encroachment of standardized blinking lights, flopping banners, twirling signs and brash architecture, which proclaim the banality of sameness.”

While all these criticisms may not directly apply to North Canaan, it is evident that some of these features do exist. Communities such as North Canaan should realize their responsibility to regulate for better design in their commercial and industrial development and to institute revitalization efforts wherever feasible. Because in most small towns a substantial proportion of the tax base is located in the “downtown,” it behooves all taxpayers to be concerned that their downtown is “successful.”

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Steps toward improving the aesthetic quality of new development can be taken through the adoption of landscaping controls that may be written into zoning ordinances that may call for specific design standards.

As with most successful endeavors, a coordinated approach is most helpful in the revitalization process. One enlightening example of cooperation and partnership among citizens concerned about their downtown area was in Rutland, VT, where 200 citizens, civic, cultural and business leaders participated in a “Share the Vision Forum.” After dividing into groups, participants were asked what features they found attractive about the downtown and what other features were lacking.

Through brainstorming efforts, these citizens developed a shared vision of what the downtown should represent. There were many useful suggestions for revitalization, such as a return of activities such as festivals, sidewalk sales and holiday decorations. They discussed how the appearance of the downtown area could actually be a detraction, especially coupled with inadequate parking, stores and services. What highlighted the forum was the unanimous agreement that leadership and management were the keys to success, but that “everyone” in the community should take part in the process—“a regional partnership of citizens, businesses, cultural and arts groups and local government.”

In a 1990 editorial in the Lakeville Journal, business leaders were reported to have voiced much concern over the run-down condition of the downtown area and a lack of long-range planning. However, there now seems to be a growing optimism in the town and talk about revitalization. The most effective revitalization programs are those that are built on the downtown’s existing physical assets and visual qualities. A Small Cities Grant upgraded the facades of many downtown buildings and a second grant is currently [2007] promoting a streetscape plan of plantings, new sidewalks and street benches. Future plans, if grants become available, would move the maze of wires that detract from the appearance of Main and Railroad Streets.

North Canaan’s downtown area could very successfully lend itself to a theme based on the railroad, for example in the form of the railroad museum that is planned for the revitalized Canaan Union Depot, now undergoing reconstruction following the 2001 fire that destroyed the east wing. Because of its location astride U.S. Route 7 (one of the important north-south tourist routes between metropolitan New York and Vermont), North Canaan is in a unique position to attract “tourist” business. Because tourism could play a large role in the economy of a small town, a thematic approach could provide pleasant “sightseeing” opportunities for tourists. With resources such as these, plus a number of good restaurants and the Pleasant rural setting and the willingness of local citizens to improve the appearance of the storefronts, North Canaan could strengthen the downtown’s role as vital part of a multiple-use market. Because the downtown area is relatively small and can be easily

## NORTH CANAAN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT—2006

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covered on foot, providing a pleasant, diverse and interesting pedestrian experience should receive top priority in terms of planning.

### FACTORS AND TRENDS AFFECTING GROWTH

#### SUMMARY OF PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Population growth is projected at a rate that will not be likely to create serious problems over the next 10 years and, with a current population of slightly more than 3,500, there is little likelihood that it will double before 2109, if ever. These population projections therefore, suggest that there is no foreseeable possibility of reaching the “holding capacity” of 19,185. During the life of this Plan there is not even an expectation of enough increase in school-age children to require any additional elementary school expansion beyond the need for new specialized classrooms. At the same time, the rising costs of property throughout the region, has made the issue of affordable housing critical.

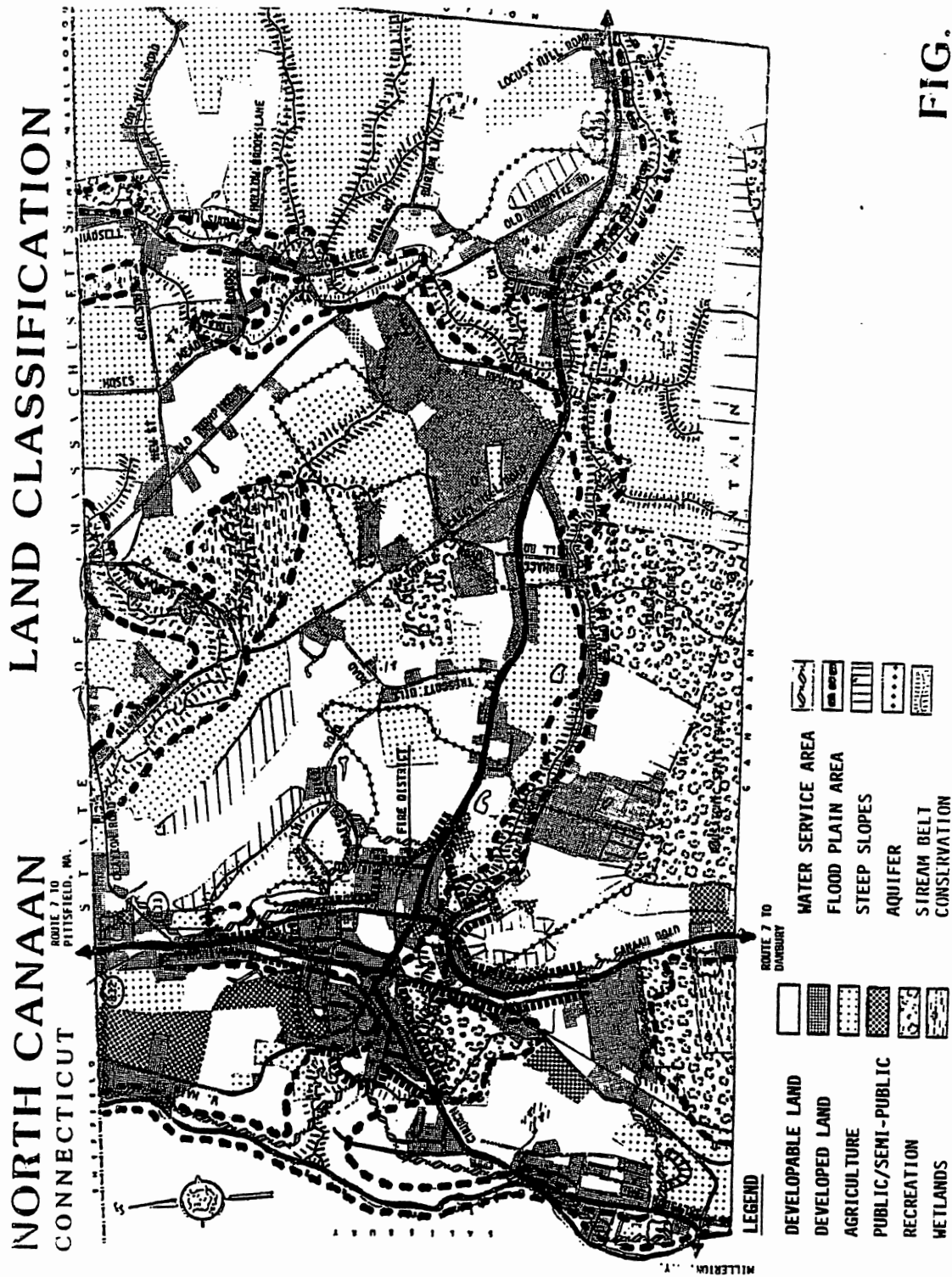
While the upgrading of Route 7 has now progressed only to New Milford, with no indication that it will continue past that community in the near future, traffic continues to increase in the region.

At the present time, and in terms of the Future Land Use Plan, essentially all public utilities are located in the downtown area (Fire District) and have capacity for reasonable expansion to meet anticipated growth, although the sewer service may be subject to some limitation due to the high capital cost of sewer extensions and mandated upgrades/expansions to the existing wastewater treatment plant.

Although the downtown area has felt some of the impact of economic sluggishness in the last few years, there are positive signs of new developments, including a resurgence of interest in tourism and a general citizen concern over the appearance of the downtown.

The land use pattern in North Canaan has not changed significantly over the past two decades except for the growth of the gravel mining being undertaken on individual farms and even residential parcels. The two critical stages of the process—the operation itself and restoration of the site after completion of the mining—are addressed in the zoning regulation. The Planning and Zoning Commission will continue to monitor this situation closely.

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### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Every plan should have a purpose and the following statement reflects that purpose for this Plan of Development:

“To retain the general ‘quality of life’ of North Canaan—its rural residential character, historic heritage, its river valleys and wetlands and awareness of the natural environment. At the same time, to recognize the need for modest, balanced growth at a pace and quality that doesn’t upset this balance, while seeking to resolve significant problems that are incompatible with that quality of life.”

A firm foundation on which North Canaan can plan for future growth includes realistic planning objectives, but the Town must recognize its responsibility to implement these goals. Each generation should respect and preserve the heritage it has received, passing it on with new contributions that assure a better environment in which to live, work, play and raise a family—blending the heritage of the past with the promise of the future.

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### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Connecticut statutes and the courts hold that a Plan of Development is purely an advisory document. The Plan outlines policies, standards and programs intended to guide a community's physical development. Not a law, it is rather a guide to develop goals and objectives to lead a town where it wants to go. This guide or plan is actually carried out by specific laws, or ordinances such as zoning, building codes, subdivision and wetland regulations, etc., that are adopted by the townspeople. The following goals and objectives should provide a firm foundation upon which future growth may be based. Goals and objective should be reasonable with relation to the town's potential and must be predicated upon principles understood and accepted among its citizens.

Goals should not be too specific. They should be clearly stated policies indicating the directions that future development should take. Given such a set of general goals, it is then possible to formulate a list of more specific, detailed objectives to help achieve them.

Goals and objectives should relate to all phases of community life. There may be overall goals that are inclusive of the town in its entirety and others may specifically address important local development issues such as residential development, economic development, environmental quality, community facilities and transportation. It is also important that these goals and objectives should promote the general health, safety, community pride, convenience and general welfare of the citizenry.

The following goals are based on those prepared as part of the 1990 Plan of Development, which have been reviewed carefully to determine if they are still applicable today and also to include concerns that reflect today's conditions.



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### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

#### GENERAL:

##### RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

###### Goal:

To provide for varying densities and types of accommodations based on the needs and desires of the citizens, the physical character of the land, anticipated utility service and existing development patterns.

##### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

###### Goal:

To develop Canaan Center as a viable primary commercial area with sufficient land to provide needed commercial and ancillary services, anticipated utility services and efficient traffic circulation.

###### Goal:

To provide limited neighborhood retail and service uses for convenience shopping, in appropriate locations, designed to reduce strip commercial and avoid depreciation of adjacent properties or conflict with residential uses.

##### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

###### Goal:

To protect North Canaan's industrial land with proper zoning regulations by planning for a cohesive type of industrial park development with provision for adequate vehicular and utility services and proper protection for adjacent residential areas.

##### TRANSPORTATION AND CIRUCLATION

###### Goal

To design a street system that will provide safe and efficient transportation for current and future residents, businesses and industries.

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### RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION

#### Goal

To encourage public or private acquisition of open space to preserve the character of the town and to provide parklands and areas for public recreation.

#### Goal

To preserve insofar as is practical, those areas of the community that provide flood protection, ground water retention, wildlife refuge, or other inherent natural resources.

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

#### Goal

To review the general location and size of sites for public facilities such as schools, firehouses, garages and libraries to meet the existing and future requirements of the town's citizens.

#### Goal

To indicate those areas where the extension of public sewer and water is desirable and state priorities for such installation; and further, to indicate those areas where provision of such services may be unnecessary or uneconomical.

#### Goal

To continually evaluate the most efficient use of the town's educational plant.

### PUBLIC UTILITIES AND SERVICES

#### Goal

To provide a financially practical level of service that is consistent with the town's population, its physical characteristics and existing and potential development patterns.

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### FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Perhaps the most important resource, in smaller towns especially, is the land and its potential for various uses. The land has had a major role in shaping life in North Canaan as well as throughout the Housatonic and Blackberry river valleys. Minerals, gravel, etc., have been instrumental in mining activity that has been so important throughout North Canaan's history. The quality of glacial soils and annual flooding have provided excellent farmland. The topography of the land and the river valleys was instrumental in shaping the transportation crossroads that still characterizes North Canaan and the visual environment along these river valleys has provided the town with its most dramatic and scenic resources.

The primary goal of North Canaan's Land Use Plan has to be the efficient yet controlled development of land that would result in a productive, balanced and attractive environment for the citizens of the town today and in the future.

North Canaan is fortunate, compared to many towns in Connecticut, in having so far avoided the crushing pressure of development that has changed the character of so many former rural towns to just another residential suburb or bedroom community. In general terms, North Canaan probably has not changed its visual appearance greatly in the 14 years since the last Plan of Development—almost all high-density uses (multi-family dwellings, commercial and industrial uses, plus most public uses), are still located in the Fire District, which is essentially the downtown area.

In spite of casual visual impressions, there have been changes:

- Total developed land has doubled since 1970;
- Total undeveloped land has decreased by 12% in the same time;
- Residential use (about one-half of all developed land now) has increased by 92% since 1970.
- Although commercial and industrial land together only amount to less than one-third of the total area of developed land, they have increased in area by 256% and 324% respectively since 1970;
- A minimal increase in roads suggests that there have been relatively few subdivisions—most new development to date has been along existing roads.

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The Future Land Use Plan is based on the assumption that the recorded trends will continue through the life of the plan.

- A. That the general pattern of use (most high-density uses, commercial and industrial, to be in or adjacent to the Fire District) will be preserved.
- B. That most agricultural areas will be preserved and that the practice of gravel mining associated with agricultural use will be subjected to reasonable controls as to operation and restoration.

### RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

Three types of residential land use are shown on the Future Land Use component of the Plan of Development. These categories are based on factors that must be considered for residential as well as other land use types:

1. The suitability of the soil for development and the desirability of the land for on-site sewer systems.
2. The slope and contours of the land.
3. The pattern of past and present uses of the land.
4. The existence of, or potential for, public facilities and utilities such as water, sanitary sewerage systems, fire protection, schools and roads.
5. The greater value of preserving the land because of its natural value, beauty or welfare to the community.

Residential Land Uses shown on the Plan of Development consist of:

- High Density Residential (primarily in the central downtown area), which includes smaller lots, multi-family housing, apartments and condominiums, characterized by both public sewer and water service. Minimum lot size here is .5 acre.
- Moderate Density Residential (located in peripheral areas around the downtown center, in Green Acres). These areas are characterized by small to moderate size lots, mostly single family, but some two-family dwellings and subdivision-type homes. Some of these areas may have the possibility of future public sewer/water service. Minimum lot size in this area is 1.5 acres.
- Rural Residential (essentially the rest of the town—especially those areas east of the Route 7 corridor—with the exception of Route 44

frontage). These areas are generally rural in character, characterized by large lots, farms, woodlands, etc., and include extensive acreage of agricultural uses, plus large areas devoted to gravel mining. Uses here are a mix of single-family residential, agricultural and mining, with considerable areas of open and undeveloped woodland. Minimal lot size for residential properties is 1.5 acres per zoning regulations.

## COMMERCIAL

The high per capita sales for North Canaan indicate that people still come here from surrounding towns to make their retail purchases. Thus, Canaan Center serves as an important market center in the Northwestern Connecticut region.

Most of the 70-plus or minus acres of retail and service activity noted in the land use survey are located in Canaan Center, along Main and Railroad Streets and along Ashley Falls Road. Canaan Center is literally located at the crossroads of the region—Routes 7 and 44. Unfortunately, due to physical conditions, the visual quality of the commercial area leaves much to be desired. Also, one of the greatest problems for the businesses at the intersection of Main and Railroad is providing adequate and convenient parking. These problems, traffic, parking and aesthetics, were a major problem for respondents of the Planning Questionnaire.

Canaan Center is expected and is recommended to continue to serve the commercial needs of the town and the region. The present development represents a large investment in land, buildings and inventory that should be maintained and expanded for the future. It is also consistent with these factors that zoning will seek to discourage strip commercial development along Routes 7 and 44 and will not permit regional shopping centers outside of the Fire District.

In recent decades a major substance abuse rehabilitation center has been operated south of Canaan Center. It is located on Route 7 somewhat more than a quarter-mile from the terminus of the sewer line. Plans have been discussed, but not yet implemented, to extend sewer service to this major facility. A new development within the Fire District boundaries was the construction of Geer Village, a large assisted living complex, also on Route 7, south of Canaan Center.

This Plan of Development recommends a number of measures to improve traffic flow, parking and the appearance of the downtown and to permit areas of land for new commercial development to be accessed within the downtown area. NORTH CANAAN

## PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT—2006

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Therefore, within the life of this Plan, future commercial uses are expected to be developed primarily in or adjacent to the existing downtown area.

### INDUSTRIAL

Due to its somewhat remote location relative to major highways and population centers North Canaan is not expected to attract substantial new industrial development during the life of this Plan. On the other hand, this is a Future Land Use Plan, and, as such, there is an obligation to identify areas considered most suitable and desirable for industrial development if and when there is an interest. For these purposes we have identified several areas based on the following criteria:

- a. In all cases provide, as feasible, for new industrial development as an expansion of existing areas;
- b. All industrial areas should be served by both public sewer and water.
- c. All new industrial areas should have direct access to major state highways (Routes 7 or 44) without going through residential areas—also, access to rail sidings.
- d. All new industrial areas should consist of land that is relatively well suited to development, i.e., no wetlands, moderate slopes and the like.

In light of the above criteria, we have shown three areas of the Future Land Use Plan for future industrial:

The Plan of Development map outlines three large areas, which are much the same as in the 1972 Plan. These have excellent potential for industrial growth if the demand occurs. These seem to be the best locations for industrial activity in North Canaan, each characterized by good highway access, existing or possible water and sewer service, existing rail service and an existing industrial land use character.

The first area consists of the existing Industrial Park on Grace Way west of Route 7. This area is bounded by Route 7 to the east, the railroad to the west and the power line right-of-way to the south.

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The second site is a possible expansion of the industrial development around the MinTech Company east of downtown. This site is bounded by Rattlesnake Hill and the rear of properties on Elm Street and has access from Daisy Hill and Granger Lane.

### OPEN SPACE/CONSERVATION (LAND AREAS TO REMAIN UNDEVELOPED)

The Future Land Use Plan suggests four classifications of open space land that should remain undeveloped due to natural conditions: flood plains, wetlands, stream belts and steep slopes. These areas are briefly described below:

1. Flood Plains are those areas prone to seasonal flooding and should be protected via appropriate regulations. The best uses for flood plains are agricultural and open space. Much of the flood plain along the Blackberry River contains crop fields. At any rate, buildings should not be allowed in areas prone to seasonal flooding. This is not only to protect inhabitants, but to prevent restriction of natural flooding that might cause event greater damage downstream.
2. Swampland/wetlands such as Robbins Swamp, Squabble Brook and the Blackberry River have been created due to the flat topography and the type of soil. These wetlands as well as the flood plains are drastically important to the well being of the environment. First, these areas provide natural habitats for numerous types of fauna, flora and aquatic life. Second, these areas provide a natural storm drainage system with little cost to the town. During a heavy rain or quick thaw, the water fed into these basins is absorbed, stored and slowed down in its drainage to the Housatonic River. The “sponge” characteristic of these wetlands protects the other built-up areas from dangerous flooding. Third, these wetlands store water that raises the surrounding water table and helps recharge the water supply for municipal and domestic wells.
3. Streambelts consist of all the major waterways that collect runoff and naturally drain the soil. These areas also include the flood plains and swamps. The narrow streambelts leading up to valleys in the town are natural storm drainage sewers. When these are disturbed or filled in, they generally require man-made drainage structures that remove the natural beauty, cause increased water flow downstream and often destroy the aquatic life in the streams.

Streambelts should not be disturbed or changed if at all possible, except where man can help the quality of the waterway. Development alongside these streambelts must be carefully controlled so the water system is not necessarily contaminated.

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4. Steep Slopes are shown on the Plan map where the grade is greater than 30%. These hillsides should be left as undisturbed as possible. The steepness of the grade makes high accessibility nearly impossible and erosion generally inevitable when cleared of vegetation. This includes areas that, due to their very nature, may never see development of any type. Severely limited by very poor soils and steep slopes, these areas are generally unsuitable for any development other than scattered homes on large estates, farms, orchards and/or open space. Most of this category is located on the hillside and mountain areas of North Canaan and is especially concentrated in the Canaan Mountain area.

The preservation of “open space” was high on the list of desirable planning actions of townspeople throughout the questionnaire and the various public meetings. Some points should be made in that respect:

1. Relatively large areas of permanent open space are now protected in the form of State lands (the Housatonic State Forest with its 269 acres, for example).
2. Other large areas of “open space” consist of areas not suited to development and, to varying degrees, protected by State and local laws, such as lakes, ponds, wetlands, flood plains, and the like, which total 1,000 acres.
3. Agricultural lands, farms, etc., provide perhaps the major proportion of “open space” as well as creating much of the rural setting that is so important to the townspeople (All of North Canaan’s major farms are protected from development through the State Public Act #490). Total farm and agricultural land could amount to nearly 4,000 acres.

Means of “preserving” or “conserving” open space are varied and depend to some extent on the type of open space, i.e., wetlands are to a large extent protected by State laws; some agricultural lands are protected by Public Act 490; etc. Another technique that has been used effectively in several nearby towns (such as Sharon) is the land trust. The land trust essentially provides a non-profit fund that accepts gifts and bequests to be used for the purchase or preservation of land for a specified purpose, such as environmental conservation, recreational open space, parks and the like. A good example is the Weantinoge Heritage, which has land holdings in 13 towns in the Northwest region.

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### Agricultural Lands

Agricultural and farmlands, which may also be considered an open space, will show on the Future Land Use element of the Plan of Development as “Rural Residential,” which is intended to recognize the fact that agricultural lands in North Canaan intermixed with residential lots, constitute much of the land area east of the Route 7 corridor and north of the state forest lands. It is a fact of the pattern of land use development in this part of town that road frontage throughout these parts of town have attracted considerable residential development, such as Trescott Hill Road, Old Turnpike Road, and the like, which are set against the backdrop of agricultural lands.

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### TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Because there has been little change in the transportation resources that serve the Town of North Canaan, much that was proposed in the 1990 Plan of Development is valid, as outlined below.

Within the town, automotive transportation is the primary means of circulation. Although there is a small, privately owned airport, a railroad line and an inter-town bus route, the town's road network provides the transportation system that serves its residents, businesses and industries. Therefore, North Canaan's transportation plan is primarily a highway plan and is designed to fulfill the two basic highway planning criteria of safety and service.

#### Classification of Existing Streets

Historically, roads have served two functions: access to property and movement of vehicles between places. At the local level, the residential street supplies access to adjoining property and is not intended to carry large volumes of through traffic. At the opposite extreme, the expressway limits access to property and is designed to move traffic from one point to another as quickly as possible. The following classification system was established for North Canaan's streets in the 1990 Plan and is repeated here as being essentially still applicable:

#### 1 Arterials

An arterial provides access to properties and carries traffic between communities. An arterial is usually a U.S. or state-numbered route. The following streets are classified as arterials:

##### Route 44: (East Canaan Road, Main Street, Church Street, Salisbury Road)

Route 44 provides North Canaan's primary east-west through service, linking the town to Hartford and other communities to the east and continuing westerly through Salisbury to New York State. Within the town, Route 44 also provides access to the many houses and businesses fronting on it.

Route 7 (Ashley Falls Road, Railroad Street, Elm Street, High Streets, South Canaan Road) North Canaan's primary north-south artery is Route 7, which runs north through Great Barrington and Pittsfield, Mass., providing access to the Massachusetts Turnpike via Route 20; and south, providing direct access to I-84 in Danbury. Route 7 in North Canaan is also a major carrier of local traffic, particularly in the Canaan Center area.

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### 2. Collectors

A collector offers access to property and also serves traffic moving from place to place within the community. It is often a connector between arterials, or the circulation spine for a subdivision. Essentially, these streets collect traffic from local roads and distribute it to various parts of town and adjoining areas, or to arterial highways.

The following existing streets or portions of them are classified as collectors:

Sand Road	Casey Hill Road
North Elm Street	New Street
Daisy Hill Road	Brown's Lane
Lower Road	Ashley Falls Road
Allyndale Road	Lime Kiln Road
Canaan Valley Road	College Hill Road
Tobey Hill Road	Sodom Road
West Main Street	Old Turnpike Road
Granger Lane	Moses Meade Road
Trescott Hill Road	Belden Street (Route 126)
Clayton Road	

### 3. Local Streets

A local street primarily offers access to abutting properties without serving major through traffic. All of North Canaan's remaining streets or portions thereof are classified as local.

### TRAFFIC VOLUMES

As noted in the Traffic and Transportation section of the Basic Studies Report, traffic volume projections in the 1972 Plan were based on an estimated 5% annual increase; however, when actual counts became available in the 1980s it was shown that increases were more in the range of 1%. As a result, the pressure to get DOT funding for improvements on Routes 7 and 44 may well be turned

## NORTH CANAAN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT—2006

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down on the basis of low traffic volumes and funds directed to other areas of the State with much greater traffic congestion.

### NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

Although plans for major reconstruction on Routes 7 and 44 are probably out for the life of this Plan, there are proposals for new roads shown on the Plan of Development as local roads:

1. To provide access to commercial land and properties on the west side of Railroad Street, north of West Main Street.
2. To the extent that the Plan of Development can provide support for other forms of transportation, the possible re-instatement of rail service through North Canaan from Danbury, providing both passenger and freight service is stressed in this Plan as an important addition to the transportation services available to the townspeople and businesses of North Canaan. As support for this, the Plan shows two of three industrial areas located along the rail line as proposed relocation of the bus station adjacent to the rail line for possible future link-up between rail and bus service. Since the 1990 plan, freight service from Danbury north has been re-established.

### PUBLIC FACILITIES AND UTILITIES PLAN

The consideration of future land use patterns includes the physical requirements of municipal facilities during the planning period, so that these can be viewed within the framework of the Plan.

### SCHOOLS

#### EXISTING FACILITY

The North Canaan Elementary School is located on Pease Street. The entire 45-acre site is in town ownership and includes the town hall, town garage and yard as well as the recreation center and the school.

The school was built in 1955 and contains 21 classrooms, a cafeteria, gym, media center, auditorium, offices and the like. In 2006/2007 the student directory indicated a K-8 population of 352, with an additional 20 pre-K students. Six of the 20 pre-K students come from Falls Village, attending N.C.E.S.' program. (The 1990 Plan of Development had no numbers listed for the pre-K program).

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This shows an increase in enrollment in K-8 of 35 students over the 1990 Plan of Development. The actual enrollment is still lower than the projected 1980 enrollment of 520 students, and reflects a decrease of 30 percent in expected student populations between 1972 and 2007.

The current student body is approximately 11% of the total population (3,350) of the Town of North Canaan.

The school building expansion and renovations of the past are still only at 70% (158 fewer students) than projected for 1980. In 2006, school building improvements were made, including the replacement of roof shingles. In 2005, a committee was formed to develop plans to make further improvements on the existing building or for possible expansion, even though student population was lower than the enrollment projected for 1980 of 520.

### LIBRARY

The Douglas Library is located on West Main Street in Canaan Center and is a two-story frame building, purchased by the town in 1927. On the top floor, it houses the Canaan Museum. An elevator has been added at the rear of the building facilitating use of the second floor. The basement is used for library storage. As problems with parking and traffic circulation in the center become more critical, the library will probably need to find more room for parking.

It was proposed in the 1972 Plan that when and if additional library space is required, consideration be given to building a new library facility at the Town acreage off Pease Street. This recommendation does not suggest a jointly administered school-town library; merely the relocation of the physical facility. Such a move, however, would increase the convenience of the Pease Street parcel for public use, at the same time freeing up much-needed building and parking space in the critical area west of the West Main Street and Railroad Street intersection in the downtown area.

### FIRE STATION

While the present fire station at the intersection of Routes 7 and 44 seem to have adequate space, both as building and site, for the foreseeable future, there has been consideration of acquiring land on Route 44 at Canaan Valley Road for a possible sub-station to serve that area of Town. If such an eventuality appears worthwhile, the acquisition of the land should be considered while the land is available and before land prices go up any more.

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### RECREATION

Recreation facilities include play equipment immediately adjacent to the school, plus the town pool, softball fields and tennis courts on the same site. In 2006 the YMCA OPENED AT THE NEW Geer village. This included a pool and fitness facilities open to anyone who becomes a member.

In 2006, improvements were made at the town skating pond and the Little League field. The town pool and facilities are in need of repairs, improvements and/or replacement, which is currently being addressed.

The Basic Studies report outlined suggested standards for the provision of recreation facilities in Towns and Cities, which were based to a large extent on the standards prepared by the National Recreation Association. The primary deficiency that might be identified here is that in North Canaan the recreation areas are almost totally concentrated in the “downtown” area in the northwestern part of town, whereas many recreation facilities standards specify distances of no more than one-quarter to one-half of a mile from any residences to the facility. One possibility to improve this condition somewhat is to provide for a neighborhood recreation complex in the East Canaan area.

However, since the bulk of the town’s population is concentrated in the western third of town, it has been suggested that space for an additional recreation facility in the area behind the elementary school become part of the broad school/park/recreation complex off of Pease Street.

### UTILITIES

The existing sanitary sewer system serves or is available to serve essentially all of the properties within the Fire District boundary and the Treatment Plant capacity plus the sizing of most street mains would permit expansion to serve certain nearby areas such as Route 7 north of Elm Street and the area along West Main Street.

The public water system also serves the Fire District area plus some additional parcels beyond. As with the sewer system, it would be an important asset for the town’s development program to have a feasibility study and cost estimates for extension to service the proposed industrial park site at the northwest corner of town.

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It is also recommended that the water company explore the possibility of establishing a reserve well field in a location where it would be less vulnerable to pollution. The state and town have new regulations protecting aquifers. This is handled by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

### FIRE PROTECTION

Because there is no public water service beyond the Fire District, it is recommended that provision be made for dry hydrants to be located at certain rivers in outlying parts of town to give the fire department locations in these areas where tanker trucks can be refilled. Currently the only dry hydrant is near the state DOT garage. Locations suggested are (total of five hydrants):

Konkapot River: 1 at Clayton Road near Allyndale; 1 at Allyndale Road before Sodom.

Whiting River: 1 on Toby Hill Road between Canaan Valley Road and Emmons Lane.

Blackberry River: 1 on Route 44 near the intersection with Canaan Valley Road.

Housatonic River: 1 on Route 44 near intersection with Bond Street.

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### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

To enhance the economic climate of the Town, there are a number of measures that can be taken under this Plan of Development:

#### A. Industrial Development

A program to encourage industrial development should have two objectives: One, to ensure that existing industries will remain in town and where necessary, be given opportunities to expand in town rather than have to move out; Second, to seek to attract selected new industries to areas set aside and improved for future industrial development (See Future Land Use Plan).

As previously noted, the steps that should be taken to lay the groundwork would be:

1. Develop zoning regulations that define specific types of industrial uses deemed most appropriate for North Canaan and to designate industrial areas on the Zoning Map as shown on the Plan of Development.
2. Provide for extension of sewer and water services to these areas.

#### B. Downtown commercial

New commercial uses should be encouraged to expand in the downtown area where roads, utilities, sidewalks and the like are in place. As previously noted, it will take a concerted community-wide effort to revitalize the downtown, but revitalization attempts need not create an unacceptable financial burden on the community.

If existing resources are the basic raw materials, then strengthening the positive visual characteristics through signs that reflect and complement the architectural style of the buildings, flowering trees and planters along the perimeters of the streets, could achieve exciting results. Many of the storefronts have been redone and a streetscape project with many new plantings is underway. New lighting is in the planning stage.

Given the economic importance of the downtown area, the physical environment should be made as pleasant as possible to encourage activity among the townspeople and should establish a high level of amenities in the forms of shopping, employment, housing and recreation. If these visual improvements

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could be accompanied by improvements in traffic and parking, real results might be achieved.

The Plan of Development includes some specific recommendations for improving the downtown area based on all of the previous considerations:

- Improve sidewalks and plant street shade trees as feasible on Main and Railroad streets, a process underway through the streetscape program.
- Improve parking in the depot area south of Main Street, undertake landscaping around the depot and diner, extend parking around east and south of the depot.
- Seek action by the State to improve culvert and drainage conditions under Route 44 (Church Street) and concurrent improvements to drainage between Bragg Street and Main Street.
- Once the above drainage condition has been improved, consider a short access road from Main Street north, parallel to Railroad Street, then east to exit onto Railroad Street south of Bragg Street. This should be used as a basis for general improvement of parking facilities behind properties on the north side of Main Street and the west side of Railroad Street as well as providing an opportunity for some new commercial buildings.
- As part of the above programs, encourage existing commercial properties on Main and Railroad streets to develop new storefronts facing the new parking areas to be developed. Also encourage improvements of several older buildings on the west side of Railroad Street.
- Another access road should be explored that might run from the south side of Main Street, opposite Granite Avenue, then turning to run west parallel to Main Street south of the railroad track intersecting Route 44 (Church Street). This could open up considerable land for new commercial development from the railroad spur south of the river.

The Capital Improvement Program can become an effective guide to paying for the town's future development needs. To make the program work, the Capital Improvement Program must be revised annually for its projected five-year period and the first year's program must become part of each annual town budget. If the Planning Commission transmits a revised program annually to the Selectmen, and there is cooperation from all town departments in carrying it out, the local costs of the plans recommendations can be met on an orderly and realistic basis.

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### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM**

The intent of this section is to provide an outline of a Capital Improvements Program that could be implemented in the future if it is felt that the intensity of growth and development warrants it.

The development of a Capital Improvements Budget is a combined planning/financial operation that spells out how and when certain capital expenditures may be made for needed civic improvements. The Capital budget is that part of the total Town budget that provides for non-recurring expenditures; the rest of the budget is principally an operating budget that provides for recurring expenses for the regular operation of municipal administration and services.

Generally, the Capital Improvements budget will cover a five- or six-year period. It is essential that this budget and its financial details be reviewed annual to reflect the best estimates of the changing needs of the community.

Financial planning, such as the Capital Improvements budget, is one of the positive and constructive ways by which a community can regulate its expenditures, maintain its credit rating, work toward a stable tax rate, maximize the tax dollar returns, establish a balance between pay-as-you-go and borrowing, and get needed improvements completed.

The following objectives of a Capital Improvement budget are the principal elements of the program:

- To anticipate and schedule capital improvements over a period of years, according to priority of need, consistent with the town's fiscal policy and ability to pay,
- To forecast necessary borrowing, the probable impact of the capital improvements on the operating budget and the tax rate, and to provide a stabilizing influence on present investments.
- To build and maintain a sound capital program as the basis of municipal growth.

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A Capital Improvements Program has the following major characteristics:

- It does not commit the Town or its officials, but merely provides factual information and an authoritative recommendation as a guide for the decision-making process of government.
- It is prepared for the current year and the following five-year period, which is considered practical for such forecasting and programming.
- It covers capital improvement needs arranged in a suggested order of relative priority, based on the financial structure of the Town and its Plan of Development proposals.
- It is sufficiently flexible to permit actual revisions to adjust to changes in a project needs, financial conditions and community attitudes and desires.

In Connecticut, a capital improvement is defined in the State statutes as a “major improvement or betterment of a non-recurring nature to the physical plant of the municipality, as differentiated from ordinary repairs or maintenance of a recurring nature.” Most towns add to this definition a dollar amount, such as “and costing in excess of \$2,500.”

Some examples of capital projects could be:

- The construction, reconstruction, replacement, major repair or extension of a public building, highway, sidewalk, storm drain, sewerage system, bridge, playground, park, or similar public works or for a facility structure or utility appurtenant to any of them, whether financed in whole or in part by Town funds, or
- An expenditure similarly financed, for the purchase of land, items of equipment, buildings or structures.

The Capital Improvements Program is usually prepared annually from a list of Capital Improvements, prepared by community officials, department heads, committees and other municipal agencies. All pertinent information should be recorded on forms with explanation of when and why each project is needed.

A forecast of estimated receipts, expenditures and other fiscal data should be prepared from a historical summary of the community’s previous financial transactions to accompany this list.

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A recommended schedule of projects is then established and financial requirements are analyzed and related to the forecast of the community's ability to pay. By a process of study and analysis of project schedules and financial forecasting a capital budget program is then prepared for submission to the community and its legislative body for action.

The forecast might also include estimates for operating as well as capital expenses. Estimates of revenue other than local tax sources are also made. Subtracting revenues from expenses, the sums needed from local sources can be computed. Finally, estimates of valuations are prepared and the resulting tax rates computed, giving a picture of future tax loads. In this manner, the financial effect of a capital budget program can be determined and adjusted to meet community needs and ability to pay.

There are several important actions that should be taken by the town to establish a foundation for a capital improvement process and to set the mechanism in place. The following suggestions may be used in the development of the program.

1. Understand the Process: Research and understand the process and evaluate its use and benefits for your community. There are quite a number of good publications on the subject. In addition, check with the Regional Planning Commission for advisory assistance and general information, particularly.
2. Evaluate Programs: Once underway, it is important to evaluate programs in a regular schedule to improve their effectiveness and insure that the program is not just a "wish list."
3. Take Steps to Formalize the CIP: Once a decision has been made that the process is worthwhile and should be a continuing financial planning and budget function in your community, steps should be taken to formalize it.
4. Develop Public Support: If the CIP effort is to become an accepted process in town, it will need the support of the whole community. There are many programs that "bit the dust" simply because an administration failed to properly and fully explain what was going on to the general public.

For continued acceptance, it is important that not only the official town family, but also interested community groups, taxpayer organizations, and the like, be consulted and informed to prevent future misunderstandings and to further a

## NORTH CANAAN PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT—2006

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measure of agreement concerning the program and projects. These key community groups play a most vital role in the success of the program. The public hearing has always provided a valuable method of informing and providing for citizen input.

The bottom line is that citizen support is absolutely imperative when approval is needed for capital improvement bond issues. The outcome of this kind of public referenda depends on how well the specific issue was understood and how important the expenditure is to the community.

### **ADVANTAGES AND BENEFITS OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING\*:**

1. A town should adopt a program that can be paid for comfortably and within its ability to support the cost of major improvements.
2. If the program is carefully planned and implemented, the probability of sharp increases in the tax rate will be avoided.
3. The program enables the town to see in black and white what its needs will be over the next five- or six-year period, so it will be ready to take immediate advantage of any federal or state grants or loans that may become available.
4. The process of coordination between the various town/city units of government will improve and may result in joint programs that will produce further savings.
5. Early land acquisition may be made prior to construction for open space, recreation areas, the fire station site or street rights-of-way, thus reducing costs.
6. In any town, pet projects always appear and tend to impede balanced development. Under the CIP such projects could be deferred or eliminated, thus giving all areas of the community impartial treatment.
7. The CIP provides the tools for proposals within the comprehensive town/city plan to be implemented.
8. When projects are based on the Town Plan of Development and also have been reviewed by the Planning Commission and carefully evaluated and programmed within the CIP, town officials will be in a very strong position when projects require justification.

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- 9. One of the most important advantages is the opportunity it gives to town citizens to provide input, advice and recommendations with respect to proposed improvements and expenditures.
  
- 10. When adopted, it sets in motion a system that will be updated on an annual basis, thus becoming an important part of the annual operating budget of the community.

From the publication entitled "Techniques," published by the Capitol Region Council of Governments, 1983

The following are sample project forms and a summary schedule of proposed project to be submitted by each department or agency:

**TOWN OF NORTH CANAAN, CONNECTICUT**

CAPITAL BUDGET PROGRAM

PERIOD 2005-2010

**SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED PROJECTS**

SUBMITTED BY \_\_\_\_\_DEPT.\_\_\_\_\_ DATE\_\_\_\_\_

Capital project	Est. Total Cost	Source of Funds	Schedule of Project Cost by Year						L A T E R
			2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	

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**TOWN OF NORTH CANAAN, CONNECTICUT**  
**CAPITAL BUDGET PROGRAM**

**PERIOD** \_\_\_\_\_

(To Accompany Schedule of Proposed Capital Project Improvements)

1. Title and description of Project
2. Location
3. Need for Project (Explain Fully):
4. Estimated Cost:
  - A. Engineering and Surveys
  - B. Acquisition of Land
  - C. Site Development
  - D. Construction
  - E. Equipment Purchase
  - F. Other

**Total**

5. Method of Financing: Budget Appropriation \_\_\_\_\_ Bond issue \_\_\_\_\_  
State Aid \_\_\_\_\_ Federal \_\_\_\_\_ Assessment \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. Will Project be Revenue Producing? Yes ( ) No ( )

7. Estimated Annual Cost of Operation and Maintenance:

A. Salaries and Wages

B. Expenses

Estimated useful life \_\_\_\_\_ years

8. Will Project Remove Taxable Property From List? Yes ( ) No ( )

Land

Buildings

9. Remarks:

10. Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ Department \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Peter Bickford  
Steve Allyn  
Peter Broon  
Frank Mantagna  
Norman Tatsapaugh, alternate

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