MONROE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

DECEMBER 14, 2010

BFJ Planning

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Stephen J. Vavrek

Town of Monroe Staff
Daniel A. Tuba, Town Planner
Scott Schatzlein, PE, Town Engineer
All Town Hall Department Heads

Special Thanks To
Lois Spence
Tom Buzi, Former First Selectman
Monroe POCD Subcommittees
Monroe Historical Society
David Merrill
Marven Moss
Jerry Dougherty
Edward Coffey, Town Historian
Vida Stone

Prepared By
BFJ Planning
Frank Fish, FAICP, Principal
Harlan Sexton, AICP, Senior Associate
Melissa Kaplan-Macey, AICP, PP, Senior Associate
Todd Okolichany, Senior Planner
Winnie Liu, Senior Graphic Designer

Urbanomics
Regina Armstrong, Principal
Tina Lund, AICP, Senior Associate

2010 MONROE
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Town of Monroe
Fairfield County
Connecticut

Planning and Zoning Commission
7 Fan Hill Road
Monroe, Connecticut 06468
www.monroect.org

Prepared by
BFJ Planning
115 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10003
(212) 353-7474
www.bfjplanning.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) update is a collaborative project of the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z), the planning sub-committees created by the P&Z, planning consultants, Buckhurst Fish and Jacquemart Inc. (BFJ), and the many Monroe residents and property owners who participated throughout the process. The purpose of this Plan is to guide policy and land use decisions in the Town of Monroe over the next decade.

The Town of Monroe updated its 2000 POCD, in conformance with Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), Title B, Chapter 126, Section 8-23, that requires each municipality to review its plan every 10 years. The intent of the updated Plan is to provide a guide to conservation and development actions that is both comprehensive and user-friendly. This POCD update is very illustrative, combining updated maps and figures, as well as a large collection of photos taken by the consultants and residents of the Town.

As highlighted below, the Plan outlines **Five Priority Actions** that the Town should implement in order to achieve its vision over the next decade and beyond. The Plan also incorporates the latest planning policies and strategies for making Monroe more "green" and "sustainable," which will truly benefit the residents and business owners of the Town for years to come.

One of Monroe's objectives for the plan-writing process itself was energetic public outreach. This ensured that the Plan was developed in public view, with transparency and wide-spread involvement. The P&Z organized sub-committees; these committed groups met throughout the process to generate information and ideas for use by the consultants and the P&Z. The P&Z held two public workshops, on September 17, 2009 and January 19, 2010, which were centered on group discussions of specific topics. Every P&Z meeting on the POCD was open to the public so that commissioners could take questions and involve attendees in the discussions on the plan chapters.

During the first half of the planning process, the consultants also administered a public opinion survey, which yielded a vigorous 29% response rate (see the Appendix for a summary of the survey results). During the second half, the draft plan was subject to a public hearing, as per Connecticut law, and distributed to the Town's boards, commissions, and departments for their review.

The Plan begins with a broad vision for Monroe then documents existing conditions and articulates the Town's goals and objectives for managing its issues and achieving its vision over the next decade. It contains a series of planning policies and recommendations that address general planning policies (locally, regionally and statewide), land use, zoning and community character, transportation and infrastructure, housing, economic development and employment, natural resources and environmental protection, open space and agriculture, municipal facilities, services and schools, and sustainable development.

Monroe's primary land use issues focus on the need to preserve the high quality of life enjoyed by its residents by guiding a limited amount of new development - commercial, office, light industrial, mixed uses, and housing for young adults and seniors - and enhancing the design aesthetics along its major corridors. Monroe is known to many as a beautiful community that offers a balance of suburban amenities, recreation, scenic beauty, and rural lifestyle. It has

distinct neighborhoods, such as Upper and Lower Stepney, Stevenson Lumber area, East Village, and the Lake Zoar area. It contains a mix of family oriented neighborhoods and historic areas, as well as a great school system. Monroe contains some large employers and has various businesses along three major corridors, Routes 25, 34, and 111. However, Monroe lacks a traditional Town center along these roadways, which mostly contain "convenience" commercial uses.

The POCD addresses these issues and the future development possibilities within Monroe, especially along Routes 25, 34, and 111, as well as several large development properties scattered throughout the Town.

Although the plan sets forth recommendations for Monroe's future, it is not in itself a law or regulation. Recommendations get implemented through zoning laws and other land use regulation tools, capital expenditures, and on-going planning. In addition, the plan enables Monroe to influence decisions by state agencies (such as ConnDOT, the state Department of Transportation) and the regional planners at GBRPA (Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency), and strengthen the Town's ability to attract state dollars for projects that support the plan.

While the planning process will be complete when the POCD is adopted by the P&Z, Monroe's work does not end there. The Plan is more than a synthesis of existing conditions; it is an agent of change and a vision for the future. The Town will need to implement the Plan's short- and long-term recommendations in order to achieve its goals. This will require ongoing review and modification of the Plan, as appropriate, to ensure that it remains representative of the community's vision and that its implementation strategies remain viable (see POCD Chapter 14.0 Implementation).

Monroe's Future: Planning Policies

Numerous views and objectives were expressed throughout the planning process, but there was substantial agreement on Monroe's future. This consensus is enumerated in the planning policies below. Together, these act as the decision-making guide for all those charged with land planning in Monroe. As new concerns and opportunities arise in Town life, unforeseen by this plan, elected and civic leaders will be able to act knowing that their choices are based on the Planning Policies.

Over the next 10 years, Monroe will act to make the Town a better place to live, work and visit by doing the following:

Policy 1: Improve the Economic Base

- Establish mixed-use Priority Growth Districts to direct development to selected locations, control intensity, shape design, and preserve outlying rural character. Priority Growth Districts help manage and define future growth by directing it to selected areas. These areas will be zoned using a mix of Village Districts, Overlay Zones, and change in base zone.
- Use traditional design to shape the scale and character of all new economic development, with a focus on Routes 25 and 111 where sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, and commercial design will make these corridors more attractive to businesses and customers. In Monroe,

traditional design refers to design standards that are in context with its current traditional New England design, and historical and rural character. Traditional design can also include a range of housing types, a network of well-connected streets and blocks, public spaces, and have amenities, such as stores, schools, and places of worship within walking distance of residences.
- Proceed with sewer district planning for areas along Route 25 and 111 best suited for significant development.
- Change the state's Locational Guide so that Monroe's industrial areas are depicted.

Policy 2: Maintain a Good Quality of Life

- Complete the zoning code update so that development regulations yield desired development.
- Encourage a mix of housing types so that Monroe remains a lifelong community with households of varying sizes, stages, and incomes.
- Designate historic properties, features, and scenic roads.
- Develop a capital improvement program for sustained, planned investment in municipal infrastructure and facilities.

Policy 3: Be Good Stewards of a Green Monroe

- Conserve land and natural resources.
- Encourage sustainable development techniques.
- Create a Monroe Greenway composed of dedicated open space parcels, trails, bicycle routes, parks, and connections among all these features.
- Maintain and upgrade parks and recreation.
- Encourage larger percentage of dedicated open space in new housing subdivision proposals.
- Allow new significant economic development in areas already developed to avoid sprawl, such as Stevenson Lumber and the existing commercial corridors.

Five Priority Actions

The above Planning Policies guide the recommendations found in POCD Chapter 13.0, Future Land Use Plan. Of the more than 175 recommendations, the following Five Priority Actions were identified. Each action is accompanied by a suggested timeframe for implementation, as well as responsible party for ensuring its implementation (see POCD Chapter 13.0 for the Future Land Use Plan map).

- *Open Space Inventory:* Identify existing and desired open space lands, including the Kelda / DEP lands, as a first step in creating the Monroe Greenbelt.
  Timeframe: 1 year
  Responsibility for Implementation: Planning and Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission, Town Council, Office of the First Selectman, Parks and Recreation, Citizens Advisory Committee

- *Priority Growth Districts:* Use Priority Growth District process to settle on uses, density, and design for writing the first two Village Districts in Upper and Lower Stepney.
  Timeframe: 2 years
  Responsibility for Implementation: Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, Office of the First Selectman, Town Planning and Zoning Department, Citizens Advisory Committee, Monroe Chamber of Commerce

- *Town Government Functions:* Improve the ability of town government to provide long-range planning through 1) creation of a GIS, 2) completed update of zoning regulations, and 3) creation of a Capital Improvements Program covering more than public and volunteer safety.
  Timeframe: 2 years
  Responsibility for Implementation: Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, Office of the First Selectman, Board of Finance, Town Departments, Officials and Staff

- *Lake Zoar / Stevenson Area:* Create a plan that encompasses Village District development, gateway creation, and land acquisition/ preservation.
  Timeframe: 4 years
  Responsibility for Implementation: Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, Office of the First Selectman, Town Planning and Zoning Department, Citizens Advisory Committee, Monroe Chamber of Commerce

- *Sewer District Plan:* Implement the Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP) to construct public sewers on Routes 25 and 111.
  Timeframe: 5 years
  Responsibility for Implementation: Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, Office of the First Selectman, Town Planning and Zoning and Engineering Departments, Monroe Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA)

CHAPTER 1.0
INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Function of the Plan

The Town of Monroe updated its 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), in conformance with Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), Title B, Chapter 126, Section 8-23, that requires each municipality to review its plan every 10 years. This plan update is a collaborative project of the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z), the planning sub-committees created by the P&Z, planning consultants, Buckhurst Fish and Jacquemart Inc. (BFJ), and the many Monroe residents and property owners who participated throughout the process.

The intent of the updated plan is to provide a user-friendly and illustrated guide to conservation and development actions in the Town over the next decade. With adoption of the POCD by the P&Z, Monroe's work does not end. The Town will need to periodically review the plan to ensure that it remains representative of the community's vision and that its implementation strategies remain viable.

Plans of Conservation and Development are commonly described as cookbooks, toolboxes and blueprints, all providing guidance and strategies for the municipal future. The plan-writing process is itself a crucial part of the plan update. The process involves research and assessment tasks, reviews of past plans and their recommendations, analyses of current conditions, identification of problems and concerns, areas of strength and pride in the community, and a clear summary of the actions needed.

Although the plan sets forth recommendations for Monroe's future, it is not in itself a law or regulation. Recommendations get implemented through zoning laws and other land use regulation tools, capital expenditures, and on-going planning. In addition, the plan enables Monroe to influence decisions by state agencies (such as ConnDOT, the state Department of Transportation) and the regional planners at GBRPA (Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency), and strengthen the Town's ability to attract state dollars for projects that support the plan.

1.2 Public Participation and POCD Planning Process

Many people were involved in the preparation of the Plan over a 19-month period. While it is not possible to name them all, the major participants are listed on the inside front cover of the Plan.

One of Monroe's objectives for the plan-writing process itself was energetic public outreach. This ensured that the Plan was developed in public view, with transparency and wide-spread involvement. The P&Z organized sub-committees; these committed groups met throughout the process to generate information and ideas for use by the consultants and the P&Z. The P&Z held two public workshops centered on group discussions of specific topics. Every P&Z meeting on the POCD was open to the public so that commissioners could take questions and involve attendees in the discussions on the plan chapters.

During the first half of the planning process, the consultants also administered a public opinion survey, which yielded a vigorous 29% response rate (see the Appendix for a summary on the survey results). During the second half, the draft plan was subject to a public hearing, as per Connecticut law, and distributed to the Town's boards, commissions, and departments for their review.

The planning process used to prepare the Plan consisted of four phases, including public workshops and major milestones. The planning process is illustrated by the following timetable:

Table 1.1: Timetable of POCD Planning Process

	Milestones	Milestone Date
Phase 1	Data Collection	Ongoing
	Monroe Today Report	September 2009
	Public Workshop #1	September 17, 2009
	Public Opinion Survey	October 2009
Phase 2	Plan Chapters	February 2010
Phase 3	Public Workshop #2	January 19, 2010
	Future Land Use Plan and Implementation Chapters	March 2010
	Draft POCD	March 2010
	Final Draft POCD	October 2010
Phase 4	Town Council and GBRPA 65 day review	October 2010
	Public Hearing	December 14, 2010
	Plan Adoption	December 14, 2010

In Phase 1, a comprehensive inventory and assessment of local conditions and trends was undertaken to identify needs and issues in Monroe. Our data collection efforts included a tour of the Town, preliminary field work and photo documentation, and interviews with Town staff, officials, residents and other regional agencies, and a review of the goals, objectives, and recommendations of the 2000 POCD. Our initial data collection efforts also included the town-wide survey.

As part of the first phase of the Plan, BFJ Planning worked with the P&Z to develop "Monroe Today". This document included information on demographics, growth trends, land use and zoning, as well as Town history and community character. Monroe Today also included preliminary planning issues and some preliminary thoughts on how to improve the Town. The report ultimately guided the first couple of chapters of the POCD.

The culmination of our work during Phase 1 was the first public workshop. At this workshop, Plan goals and objectives were identified, as well as current and anticipated planning issues in the Town. The public's ideas helped to form a "vision" for Monroe.

Phase 2 of the POCD planning process consisted of writing the bulk of the remaining draft chapters of the Plan, including housing, transportation and infrastructure, natural resources and the environment, open space and agriculture, municipal facilities, services and schools, and parks and recreation. During this phase, BFJ Planning met periodically with the P&Z to review draft chapters and discuss policy issues. These draft chapters were then revised to reflect input from the commission, as well as input received at the public workshops.

As part of Phase 3, a second public workshop was held with a focus on transportation and economic development planning in the Town. This workshop, along with the first workshop, public opinion survey and POCD subcommittee reports, was the impetus of the Future Land Use Plan recommendations, which were also prepared during this phase. Next, an Implementation chapter was prepared that provided strategies for achieving the Plan's vision and stated goals and objectives. At the end of Phase 3, the Draft and Final Draft POCD's were submitted to the P&Z for review.

Concurrent with the commission's review of the Final Draft POCD, the Plan was made available to the public, Town Council and the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA). Next, a public hearing was held on the final draft Plan, which became an important opportunity for residents and business owners to review the main body of the Plan document and provide feedback to the P&Z. The final part of the POCD planning process involved working with the P&Z to incorporate all of the final comments into the Plan and then guide the Plan through the adoption process.

While the planning process will be complete when the POCD is adopted by the P&Z, Monroe's work does not end there. The Plan is more than a synthesis of existing conditions; it is an agent of change and a vision for the future. It will require ongoing review and modification, as appropriate, to ensure that it remains representative of the community's vision and that its implementation strategies remain viable (see Chapter 14.0 Implementation).

1.3 Monroe's Future: Planning Policies

Numerous views and objectives were expressed throughout the planning process, but there was substantial agreement on Monroe's future. This consensus is enumerated in the planning policies below.

- Manage future growth along Routes 25, 111, and 34 to promote measured and attractive economic development.
- Enhance Monroe's historic and rural character.
- Protect Monroe's quality of life as a good place to live and raise families.
- Enlarge the parks, open space, and trail system to create a Monroe Greenway, with recreation and relaxation opportunities for all residents.
- Exercise stewardship over Monroe's natural features, such as wetlands, streams, and Lake Zoar.
- Conserve land and natural resources.

The planning policies guide the recommendations found in Chapter 13.0, Future Land Use Plan.

This chapter helps to place the Town of Monroe in context with its surrounding communities and regional and state planning policies. In addition, relevant regional and state plans are discussed.

CHAPTER 2.0
REGIONAL AND STATE PLANNING CONTEXT

2.0 REGIONAL AND STATE PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA) Plan

Monroe is one of six member municipalities comprising the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region. The other towns in the145-mile region are Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Stratford, and Trumbull. In 2008 the region's population was approximately 307,000 with 45% of residents living in Bridgeport (see Figure 2.1, Regional Context, Figure 2.2, Town of Monroe, and Figure 2.3, Greater Bridgeport Planning Region Land Use).

As the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region's federally designated transportation planning agency, the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA) conducts the transportation planning process for the region. The GBRPA also serves as the transportation planning agency for the Greater Bridgeport and Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

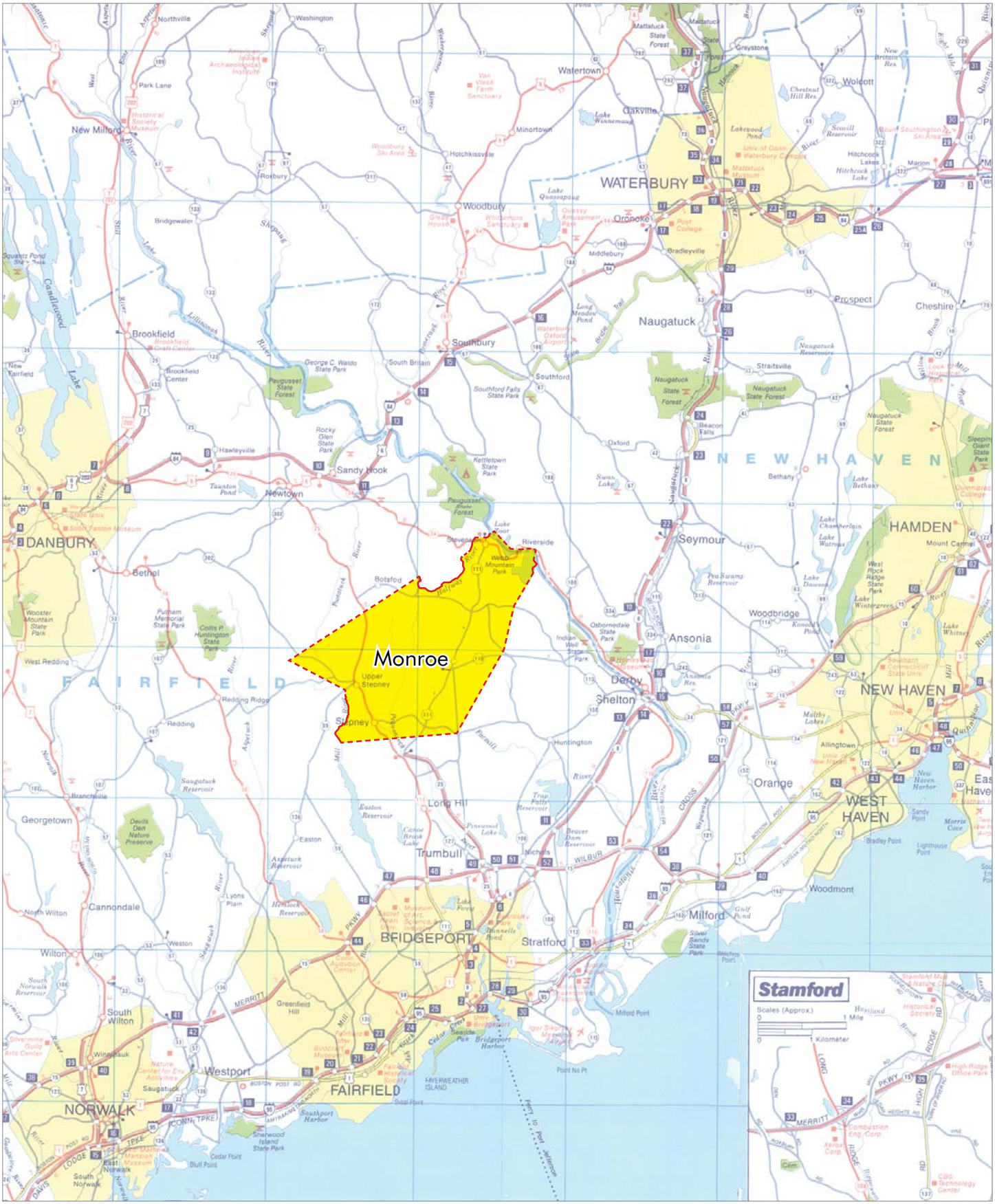
The GBRPA's most recent region-wide plan (*Growth Management Alternatives, Regional Conservation & Development Plan Update,* 2008) provides a 20-year outlook of the impacts of three future growth scenarios on land development and travel trends. As the region's transportation planning agency, the GBRPA also developed a *Regional Transportation Plan* in 2007, which presented information on existing traffic transportation, land uses, historic development patterns, taxes, and demographics. Recommendations focused on a regional response to transportation needs over the next 25 years.

The GBRPA's *Unified Planning Work Program* (2008 draft) recognizes the centrality of circulation to the six municipalities, calling the region "a metropolitan area in motion." Each day more than one million trips are made to, from and within the Region."[1] Recent GBRPA studies include:

- *Regional Profile for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region* (2003)
- *Growth Management Alternatives, Regional Conservation & Development Plan Update (2008)* and *Summary of 2020 Growth Management Alternatives*
- *Regional Transportation Plan for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region (2008)*
- *Transportation Improvement Program* (2006)
- *Update of the Regional Bicycle Plan* (2008)
- *Pedestrian Safety Assessment Plan* (2008)
- *Freight and Goods Movement Data Sources and Planning Analysis Report* (2006)
- *Greater Bridgeport Regional ITS Architecture and Advanced Concept Plan* (2005)

[1] *Unified Planning Work Program*, 2008 Draft, pg. 12.

Figure 2.1: Regional Context



Monroe Plan of Conservation & Development

Monroe, CT

Source: Hagstrom Map

NTS

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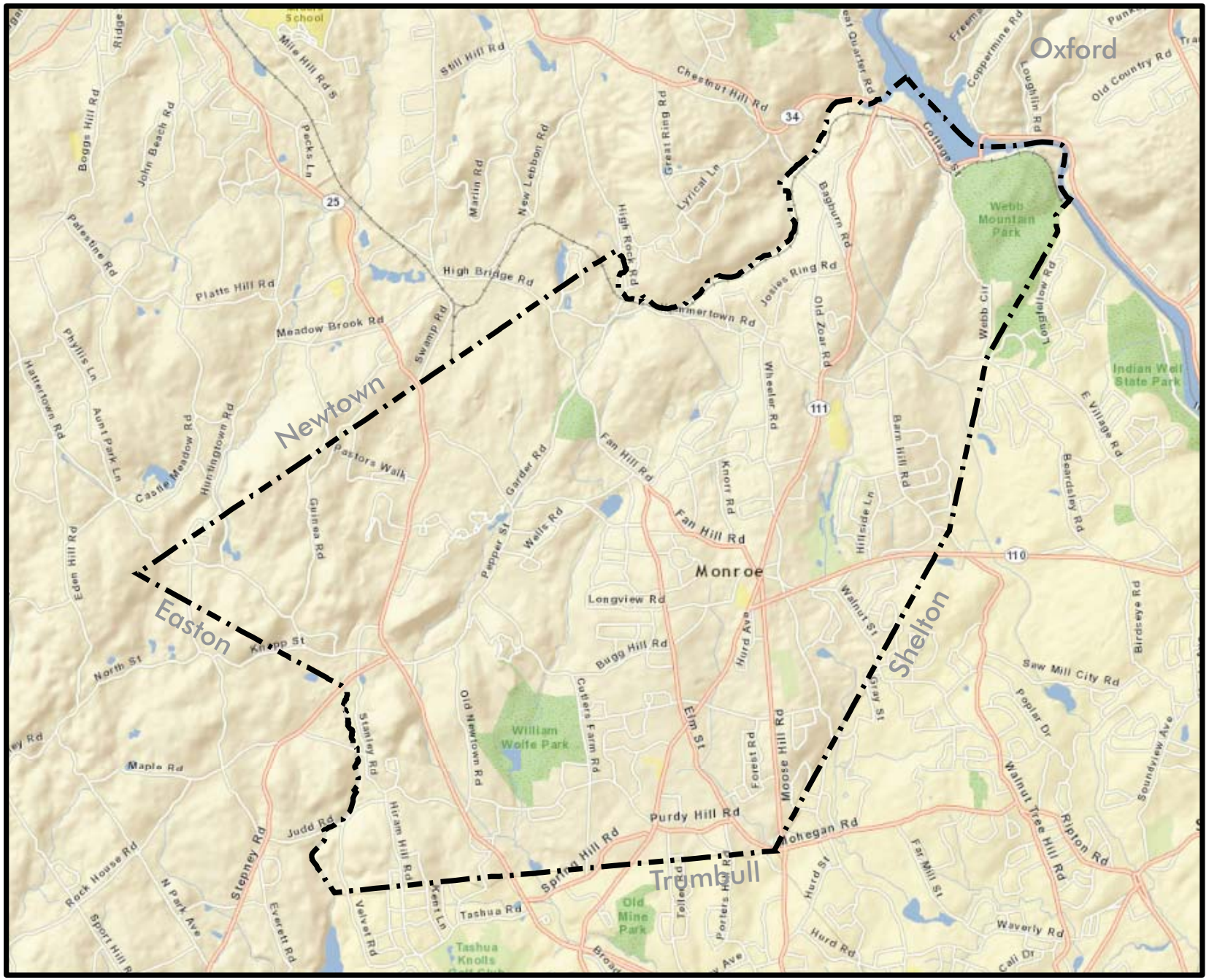
Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Figure 2.2: Town of Monroe



Monroe, CT

Sources: ESRI World Street Map, 2010; U.S. Geological Survey through CTDEP, 2005

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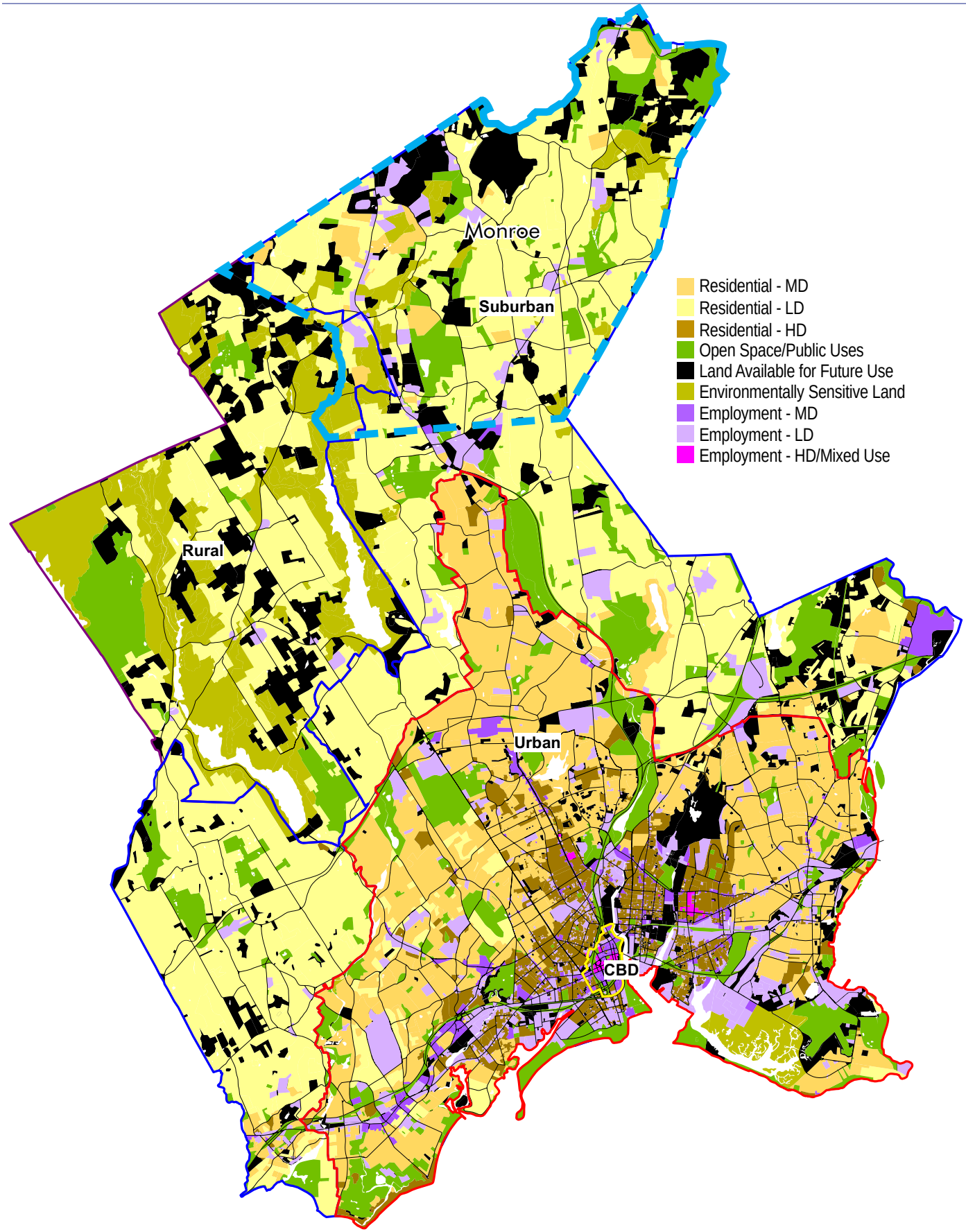
Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Figure 2.3: Greater Bridgeport Planning Region



Monroe, CT

Source: Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency, 2007

NTS

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Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

2.2 Relevant Regional Plans and Policies

The following plans were created at the regional level, and have significance for Monroe. These plans provide an analysis of current conditions and trends, and either directly suggest recommendations for particular areas in Monroe or identify policies that could affect Monroe and the surrounding region.

Regional Profile for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region (2003)

This report, prepared by the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA), provides an overview of demographic, transportation, health care trends, and other general characteristics of Monroe and the other municipalities in the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region, and is primarily based on data available from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. censuses. According to the report, between 1990 and 2000 Monroe was the "…Region's fastest growing community" and "…Will continue to grow" due to relatively large amounts of undeveloped land and relatively affordable home prices.[2] Among other general information about Monroe, the report discussed other trends in the Town, such as increasing levels of traffic along Routes 25 and 111 and the anticipated rise in the median age of residents over the next 20 years.

The following group of plans and reports were also prepared by the GBRPA under the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and mostly discuss transportation related matters:

Growth Management Alternatives – Regional Conservation & Development Plan Update (January 2008)

As previously mentioned, GBRPA's *Growth Management Alternatives* report provides a 20-year outlook of the impacts of future growth on land development and travel trends. It highlights three possible growth scenarios in the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region: continuation of current trends, development focused on regional centers, and development focused on multiple centers/transit oriented development.

Under the Current Trends alternative, future growth would follow current municipal plans for conservation and development. The plan states that municipal plans of the past few decades are generally characterized by "low density homogenous uses." Under this scenario, low density employment would remain along Routes 25 and 111, while low-density residential uses would replace some current vacant or underutilized land.

Under the Regional Center Development, alternative redevelopment and adaptive reuse strategies are prioritized and more efficient use of existing infrastructure is promoted. In Monroe, a quarter-mile growth boundary would be designated along both sides of Route 25. The intent of the growth boundary would be to channel future growth to appropriate locations served by infrastructure. Under this scenario, existing land that is currently available for development outside the growth boundary area would be protected.

[2] GBRPA Regional Profile, pg. 36.

The Multiple Center/Transit Oriented Development alternative prioritizes compact nodes of development along transit network corridors. Under this scenario future growth would be directed towards a new light rail station that would be built at the intersection of Route 25 with Route 111 in Trumbull.

In addition to these overall planning strategies for the future, the plan identifies current land use development patterns in the region based on 2000 data. Figure 2.3 shows existing land use patterns in Monroe. As can be seen, low-density residential uses are the Town's dominant land use form. Other land uses include commercial employment areas, mostly along Routes 25 and 111; open space/public uses, such as parks; environmentally sensitive land, such as wetlands; and land available for future use (i.e. vacant land).

Regional Transportation Plan for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region (May 2008)

One of the responsibilities of the GBRPA is the preparation of a 20-year long range transportation plan (LRP). The purpose of the LRP is to recommend "actions, programs and projects to improve, enhance and better manage and operate the public transit and highway systems, promote alternative modes, accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, provide freight mobility and mitigate environmental impacts."

The following projects were identified in the 2008 plan:

Roadway Improvements
- Various improvements to Route 25, including intersection improvements and major widening.
- Various improvements to Route 111, including minor widening and realignment of the Route 110 intersection.

Bridge Improvements
- Relocate Route 34 over the Housatonic River from the Stevenson Dam in Monroe.

Congestion Management System (CMS) Recommendations
- Route 25 CMS Program: various intersection improvements, traffic signal optimization actions and access management strategies.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements
- Develop a regional multi-use trail network extending from downtown Bridgeport to the Monroe-Newtown town line and connect the trail to the Wolfe Park section in Monroe.

Flexible Highway Design Recommendations
- Implement *Access Management Programs* along Route 25 in Monroe as well as other arterials to be determined.

The Regional Transportation Plan also lists other broad recommendations that are not specific to Monroe but may be applicable to the Monroe POCD:

- Preserve and maintain the expressway and arterial systems in a state of good repair.
- Replace, rehabilitate, and restore various highway bridges.

- Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs (eg. employer-based ridesharing programs).
- Implement and maintain the *Greater Bridgeport Regional ITS Architecture*.
- Improve transportation security.
- Develop a system of interconnected and continuous on-road bicycle routes to major attractions and multi-use trails.
- Implement a *Context Sensitive Solutions* approach to the development and design of transportation projects.
- Establish municipal *Traffic Calming* Programs, especially along residential streets.
- Address potential environmental and cultural impacts from transportation actions and projects.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (July 2006)

Required by federal law and prepared by the GBRPA and the Valley Council of Governments, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a five year plan that outlines all of the proposed highway and transit projects that are programmed to receive federal funding. These transportation projects are the most likely ones to be implemented in the Greater Bridgeport and Valley planning regions and are incorporated into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). For 2007-2011 the TIP anticipated approximately $686 million in funds for the implementation of listed projects (including local/regional projects and district/statewide projects that overlap the MPO area). Projects listed in the TIP are consistent with the *Regional Transportation Plan* for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region. In Monroe, these projects are:

- Intersection improvements on Route 25 (with Purdy Hill Rd and Route 59)
- Bridge replacement on Route 25 over the west branch of the Pequonnock River

The total amount of funds requested for the above projects was approximately $4.4 million.

Update of the Regional Bicycle Plan for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region (July 2008)

The *Regional Bicycle Plan* is a detailed assessment of bicycle safety issues and improvements, such as roadway safety, the number and location of bicycle accidents, and existing bicycle facilities and infrastructure. The plan also recommends safety improvements and bicycling accommodation as an alternative to the automobile.

The plan found that between 2004 and 2005 Monroe averaged approximately two bicycle accidents per year. The accident locations were along Route 25, Purdy Hill Road, Bugg Hill Road and Elm Street (all arterials). The plan discourages bike routes along roadways that are not conducive to bicycling, such as Route 25 in Monroe, which has high traffic volumes, frequent curb-cuts and inadequate shoulder width.

The plan also recognizes the importance of regional connectivity via the Housatonic Railroad Trail, an off-street shared use path, as wells as a network of bike routes that connect to area attractions, including Wolfe and Webb Mountain Parks. Proposed improvements include a new on-street bike route that would connect Webb Mountain Park to the Housatonic Railroad Trail, as

well as an extension of the trail that would allow a continuous network to Bridgeport and the Long Island Sound.

Pedestrian Safety Assessment & Plan for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region (June 2008)

The *Pedestrian Safety Assessment & Plan* assesses safety issues and concerns for pedestrians. The plan also recommends pedestrian safety improvements and ways to make the Greater Bridgeport planning region more walkable.

The plan found that between 2004 and 2005, Monroe only experienced one accident that involved a pedestrian. The accident was located along Route 25 at the north section of Town. With the exception of Bridgeport, the plan suggested that there were no patterns of pedestrian accidents in the region, which is evident in Monroe. The *Pedestrian Safety Assessment & Plan* does not offer a specific assessment on the walkability of Monroe, such as the availability of sidewalks and off-street paths throughout the Town and crosswalks at key intersections; however, the plan does suggest that pedestrian safety is not a major issue in the outer suburban areas (such as Monroe) due to the lack of pedestrian infrastructure. The plan also stated that the "unsafe use of the road by a pedestrian" was the most cited reason for accidents.

The *Pedestrian Safety Assessment & Plan* surveyed Town officials and/or employees that had a special interest in pedestrian safety, such as first selectmen, chiefs of police, planning directors and others. With the exception of the urban areas of Bridgeport and Fairfield, Monroe officials expressed the highest level of concern over the safety of their pedestrian facilities. Specific areas of concern included the Route 25 corridor, the Route 111 business area, and the area around the Monroe Elementary School (also on Route 111). Issues raised included high traffic volumes, vehicle speeds, and lack of sidewalks. General recommendations mostly included design countermeasures, such as the construction of more pedestrian facilities (e.g. sidewalks); enhancing roadway design (e.g. bicycle lanes) and intersection design (e.g. roundabouts); traffic calming (e.g. raised medians) and traffic management measures (e.g. partial street closures), signalization and signage improvements, and education and enforcement measures (e.g. speed-monitoring devices). Policy measures were also suggested to improve pedestrian safety, including the Safe Routes to School program.

Freight & Goods Movement Data Sources and Planning Analysis Report for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region (2006)

The *Freight & Goods Movement Data Sources and Planning Analysis Report* looks at freight and goods mobility, needs, issues and trends in the region. Other freight and goods mobility options, such as rail, air, sea and pipeline, are also explored, but to a lesser extent due to the dominance of truck freight traffic in the region. The plan identifies several key facilities for freight and goods movement. When combined with all modes of freight movement, these facilities helped move approximately 96.3 million tons of cargo to and from the Greater Bridgeport region in 2002:

- I-95
- Route 8 and 25 Expressways
- New Haven Rail Line

- Port of Bridgeport (and similar facilities on Long Island Sound)
- Sikorsky Memorial Airport

Interstate 95 is the most used road in the region for commercial trucks. In Monroe, truck traffic is most prevalent on Route 25, and to a lesser extent Route 111. According to the report, both roadways "…are important truck routes and provide connections between I-95 and various commercial and industrial areas." The report, citing information provided by the Federal Highway Administration's Freight Analysis Framework, also states that Route 25 carried an estimated 2,000 trucks per day and could reach about 2,900 trucks per day by 2010. Local rail freight is also carried through Monroe along a stretch of the Derby Branch Line, a short haul line owned by the Housatonic Railroad (HRRC).

The report recommends that signal synchronization should occur along Routes 25 and 111 to decrease vehicular delay. Other general recommendations are also provided, such as widening curb radii where appropriate (but not where pedestrian traffic is high), improving pavement conditions and pavement markings, and installing directional signs to facilitate freight and goods movement. Alternative means of long haul freight movement is also suggested as a means of alleviating truck traffic on the region's roads. These means included a container facility at Bridgeport for sea travel, expanded rail freight operations on some lines (does not include Derby Branch Line), and freight and fleet management intelligent transportation systems (ITS) initiatives, such as automated clearance for trucks at roadside check facilities.

Greater Bridgeport Regional ITS Architecture and Advanced Concept Plan (2005)

One of the recommendations of this plan is that the region should improve ITS solutions and integrate regional ITS concepts. The plan defines ITS as "…The application of advanced sensor, computer, electronics, and communication technologies and management strategies, in an integrated manner, to improve the safety and efficiency of the surface transportation system." Although no specific recommendations were provided for Monroe, general advanced ITS concepts that were identified for the region include:

- Advanced Communications System
- Archived Data Management System
- Active Real-Time Information Systems for Transit
- Enhanced Corridor Highway Operations
- Parking, Route, and Event System for Traffic Operations
- Transportation Emergency Response
- Regional Electronic Transit Fare and Integration System

Additional concepts focused on traveler information systems, traffic operations, parking management, and transit operations. Examples of the above concepts include tracking transit vehicles with GPS technology, real time travel and arrival information for transit riders, and a regional electronic transit fare program.

2.3 State Plan Monroe

As with the region, the state government makes large-scale plans that have local significance. The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) prepares a statewide plan every five years for adoption by the General Assembly. The current *Conservation and Development Policies Plan (C&D Plan)* covers 2005 – 2010. The plan is comprised of two components: the Plan text and the Locational Guide Map. Both components include policies that guide the planning and decision-making processes of state government relative to: (1) addressing human resource needs and development; (2) balancing economic growth with environmental protection and resource conservation concerns; and (3) coordinating the functional planning activities of state agencies to accomplish long-term effectiveness and economies in the expenditure of public funds (www.ct.gov, 6/9/09).

Growth Management Policies and Incentives

The current state plan is largely a statement of growth management policies, organized around six primary principles. Consistency between state agency actions and the principles listed below is required.

1) Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure
2) Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs
3) Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options
4) Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands
5) Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety
6) Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional, and local basis

OPM encourages the state's 169 municipalities to address these policies in their own plans of conservation and development. While recognizing that "unique situations and local interests" will shape the municipality's own planning principles, OPM is clear that "common ground" between the state plan and the local plan should be sought. The incentive for finding such common cause is state funding for local capital projects.

Municipalities and regional planning organizations (RPOs) are expected, per Connecticut General Statute 8-23, to bring their plans into conformity with the state's principles and the Locational Guide Map or to note inconsistencies where conformance is not possible. The significance of the growth management principles and the Locational Guide Map for Monroe rests in state funding. If Monroe seeks state funding for local projects, OPM will review those projects for conformance to the state plan's principles and map. Generally speaking, a municipal capital project is more likely to be awarded state funds if Monroe's plan and the state plan conform to one another. Thus, it is in Monroe's interest to make this Plan of Conservation and Development consistent with the state plan. Where that's not possible, Monroe should work closely with the state on the next five-year plan to align the Locational Guide Map with the municipal plan.

Transportation Projects

Monroe is specifically targeted in the 2005 – 2010 state plan's section on managing the existing transportation system. The relevant state policy states: "Maintain and maximize the efficiency and safety of the existing transportation system and improve the coordination of air, land, and water-based transportation operations to provide adequate mobility for its users." This is followed by the recommended action: "Complete major transportation projects identified in the Connecticut Master Transportation Plan contingent upon economic feasibility and successful environmental review of benefits and costs, including evaluation of secondary growth impacts induced by the project" (OPM website, 6/9/09). There are two major transportation proposals affecting Monroe that are listed in the plan:

- Route 34 Stevenson Dam Bridge improvements in Monroe/Derby
- Route 25 corridor improvements from Monroe to Newtown

Locational Guide Map

The following is OPM's own explanation of the map's function: "The Locational Guide Map plays an important role in coordinating relevant state actions by providing a geographical interpretation of the state's conservation and development policies."[3]

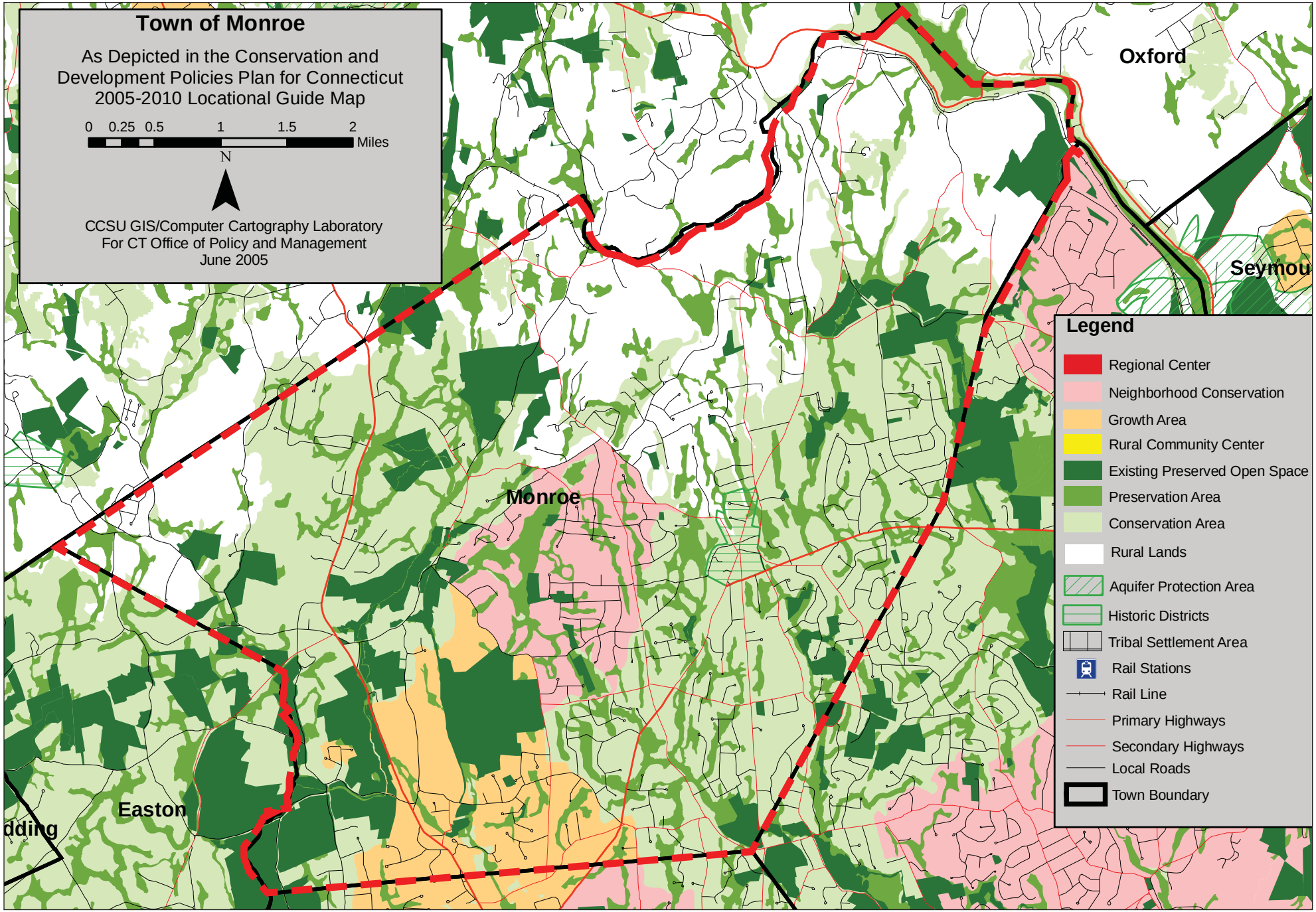
The state map divides Connecticut into development areas and conservation areas, each with four categories. These color-coded categories are shown on Figure 2.4 on the following page. The guiding policies for each are:

Development Area Policies (in priority order)

- **Regional Centers:** Redevelop and revitalize the economic, social, and physical environment of the state's traditional centers of industry and commerce.
- **Neighborhood Conservation Areas:** Promote infill development and redevelopment in areas that are at least 80% built up and have existing water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure to support such development.
- **Growth Areas:** Support staged urban-scale expansion in areas suitable for long-term economic growth that are currently less than 80% built up, but have existing or planned infrastructure to support future growth in the region.
- **Rural Community Centers:** Promote concentration of mixed-use development such as municipal facilities, employment, shopping, and residential uses within a village center setting.

[3] www.ct.gov/opm.

Figure 2.4: Locational Guide Map



Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Conservation Area Policies (in priority order)

- **Existing Preserved Open Space:** Support the permanent protection of public and quasi-public land dedicated for open space purposes.
- **Preservation Areas:** Protect significant resource, heritage, recreation, and hazard-prone areas by avoiding structural development, except as directly consistent with the preservation value.
- **Conservation Areas:** Plan for the long-term management of lands that contribute to the state's need for food, water, and other resources and environmental quality by ensuring that any changes in use are compatible with the identified conservation value.
- **Rural Lands:** Protect the rural character of these areas by avoiding development forms and intensities that exceed on-site carrying capacity for water supply and sewage disposal, except where necessary to resolve localized public health concerns.

OPM recognizes that the state-wide map "*is not intended to serve as a mirror image of all existing local development or zoning.* When a conservation priority is reflected on the Map in an area where development currently exists, the Plan text must be consulted to help interpret a proposed action's consistency."[4] In Monroe the Pepper Street Industrial Park located along the northern stretch of Route 25 is shown on the state map as open space and conservation areas. The next iteration of the state map must acknowledge this area's economic development intent.

2.4 Recommendations

The above plans and reports offer both local and regional perspectives. While local recommendations specifically focus on Monroe, regional recommendations and policies may also be applied.

Monroe-specific recommendations are:

- Roadway improvements and signal synchronization along Routes 25 and 111
- Congestion and access management recommendations along Route 25
- Bridge improvements over the Housatonic River and Pequonnock River

Relevant regional recommendations and general policies are:

- Maintain roadways and bridges
- Implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and traffic calming programs
- Develop interconnected bike routes to major attractions and trails
- Utilize Context Sensitive Solutions in design of transportation projects
- Address environmental and cultural impacts from transportation actions
- Improve transportation security
- Implement and maintain Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Utilize design countermeasures to improve traffic conditions (i.e. sidewalks, roundabouts, raised medians, partial street closures, etc.)

[4] www.ct.gov/opm.

The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM)'s Growth Management Alternatives report identified three possible scenarios for Monroe (shown below in Table 2.1).

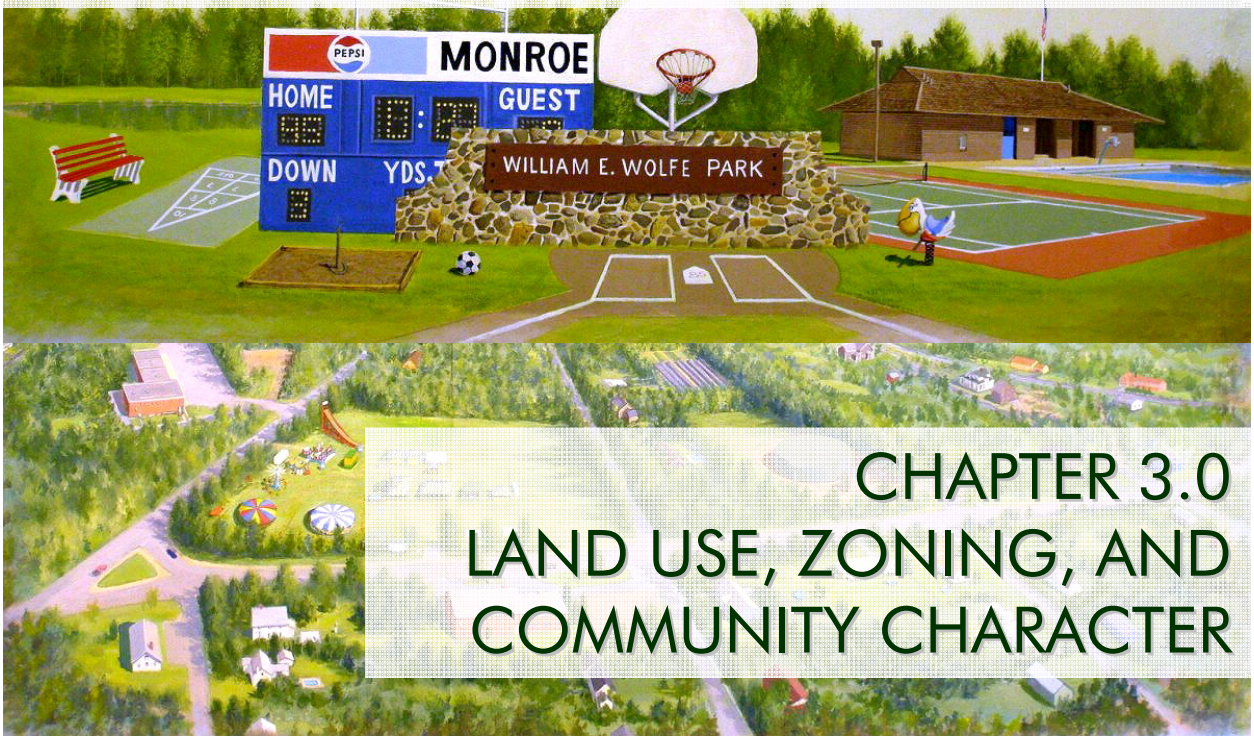
This Plan of Conservation and Development for Monroe determines that the second scenario best fits Monroe's own vision for itself, with some modification. While this POCD does not identify a firm growth boundary, as stated below, the overall impact of the land use recommendations is to channel higher density, compact commercial growth and small-lot housing to Routes 25, 111, and the Stevenson area, with specific priority growth areas along the commercial corridors identified for the bulk of such future development.

Table 2.1: Growth Management Scenarios

Scenario	Description	Possible Result
1. Current Trends	Follow current municipal plans for conservation and development	Low density remains along Routes 25 and 111; low density residential replaces some current vacant/underutilized land
2. Regional Center Development	Growth boundary placed 1/4 mile on each side of Route 25 to channel growth and use of existing infrastructure encouraged	Existing vacant land is preserved from development
3. Multiple Center/ Transit Oriented Development	Compact nodes of development along transit network corridors	Existing vacant land is preserved from development with light rail station built at Route 25-Route 111 intersection in Trumbull

Source: Connecticut Office of Policy and Management - Growth Management Alternatives, Regional Conservation & Development Plan Update (2008)

The built environment – the type, location, and intensity of existing land uses – as well as other qualities, such as historic significance, help to define the character of Monroe. Understanding how land is devoted to residential, commercial, industrial, open space, and other uses, and the locations of vacant and underutilized land, are key steps in developing a future vision. Town zoning and land use regulations are the central tools for controlling land development.



CHAPTER 3.0
LAND USE, ZONING, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

3.0 LAND USE, ZONING, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

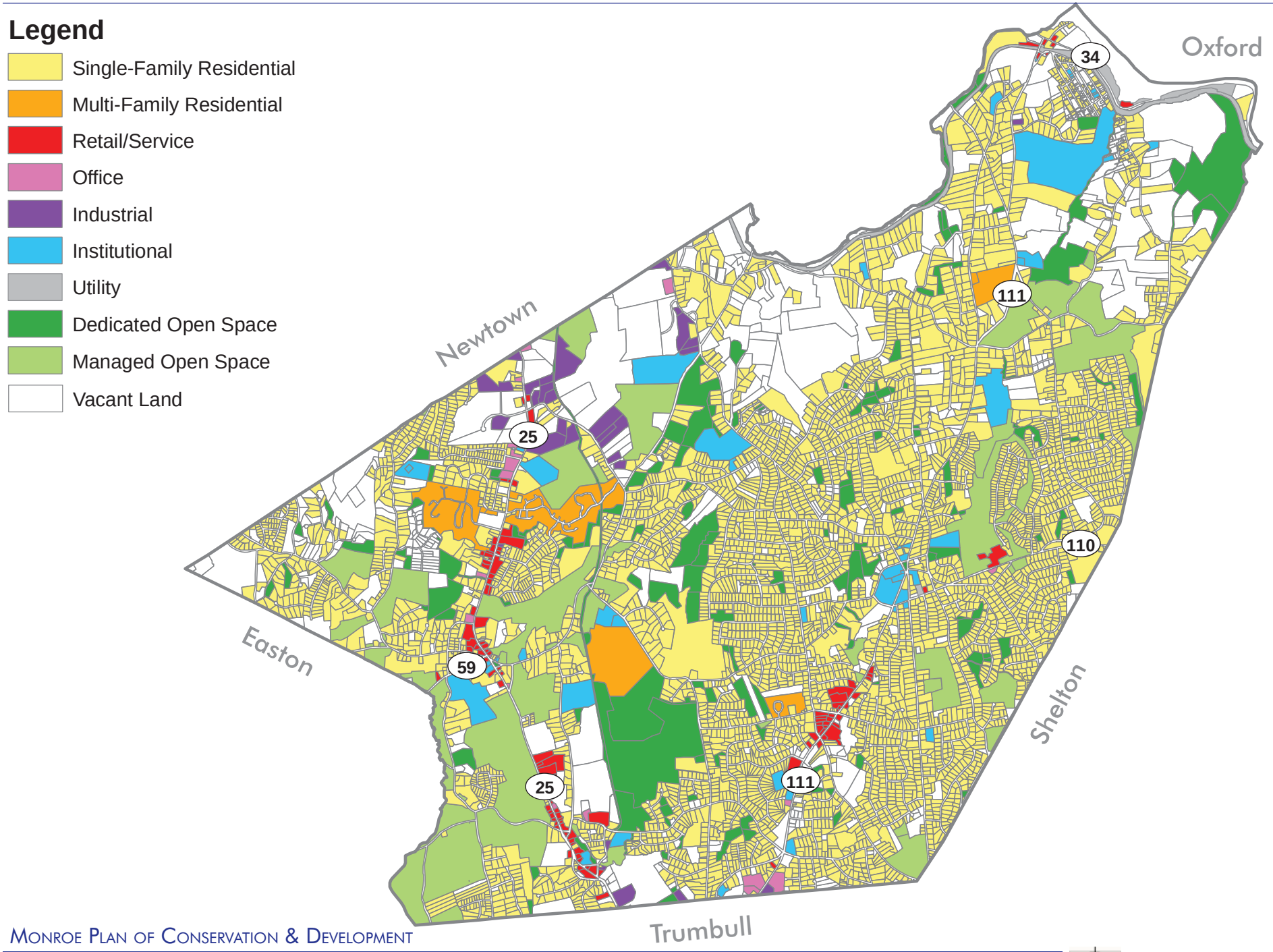
Monroe is known to many as a beautiful community that offers a balance of suburban amenities, recreation, scenic beauty, and rural lifestyle. It has distinct neighborhoods, such as Upper Stepney, Stepney, Stevenson area, East Village, and Lake Zoar area. It contains a mix of family oriented neighborhoods and historic areas, as well as a great school system. Monroe contains some large employers and has various businesses along three major corridors, Routes 25, 34, and 111. However, Monroe lacks a traditional Town center along these roadways, which mostly contain "convenience" commercial uses.

The Town has more undeveloped land than any other Town in the region – except Easton – but also has more land dedicated to commercial land use per capita than any other municipality in the region. The Town must now consider the impacts of future development possibilities for vacant parcels, as well as redevelopment opportunities along its major roadways, and several large development properties scattered throughout the Town. In doing so, it has the responsibility of environmental stewardship and of preserving its open space and recreation areas. This chapter explores the Town's land uses and zoning districts, as well as Monroe's regulatory framework and development controls. It also includes a future build-out of the Town under the current zoning regulations. This chapter concludes with recommendations aimed at preserving its community character and enhancing the visual appeal and function of several areas within the Town.

3.1 Land Uses

Monroe's natural environment and its built environment – the type, location, and intensity of existing land uses – define the Town's character. Most of the Town is zoned and developed for residential use, at varying densities (See Figure 3.1). Suburban densities are found throughout the Town. These range from minimum lot sizes of one acre to three acre per house. Rural densities are generally located north of Hammertown Road and East Village Road. These areas correspond to the RE District designation, which has a minimum lot size of three acres. By far, most housing stock is single-family detached. The Town has multi-family housing in several concentrated areas, largely in the western third.

The Town has a variety of housing types, each with distinct qualities



Monroe, CT

Sources: Monroe Planning & Zoning Department; Monroe Engineering Department

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Both small and large businesses employ Monroe and nearby residents

Commercially developed areas are tightly grouped and highly visible along Route 111 and 25, as well as some commercial uses along Route 34. There are scattered parcels of institutional (public) land uses and a growing concentration of new industry. The industrial land uses are located in a large industrial park on Pepper Street, set well back on either side of the northern reach of Route 25 near the Newtown border. The former Stevenson Lumber on Route 111 (near Route 34) presents a good redevelopment opportunity. Monroe also contains office uses along the southern stretch of Route 111 and various sections of Route 25.

Parks. Monroe's major parks are William Wolfe Park and Webb Mountain Park, and the smaller Lanes Mine Nature Park; these are discussed in detail in Chapter 9.0. They contribute greatly to Town character, providing significant green space and recreation in three different geographic areas. It is more likely an increase in green acreage will come from the acquisition of open space.

Open Space. There are four types of open space in the Town: dedicated open space (eg. parks), managed open space (e.g. cemeteries), residual land at public facilities, and uncommitted land on private property. Of this, about 1,324 acres can be counted as a permanent contribution to the Town's natural character, as this land is dedicated open space. The remaining three types count for 5,521 acres, which may be perceived by Town residents as open space but in fact may have development potential. Specifically, there are 3,240 acres of vacant land. The dedicated open space is primarily found in the three large parks and in much smaller parcels scattered throughout Monroe.

William E. Wolfe Park and Webb Mountain Park are valuable recreational areas in Monroe

3.2 Development Regulations

The Town's zoning and subdivision regulations are major influences on development patterns, alongside the street network and significant environmental features. Existing land uses by and large conform to Monroe's current zoning map (see Figure 3.2). Thus, changes to these development regulations can be far-reaching and so should be based on careful analysis and a common vision.

Zoning Districts

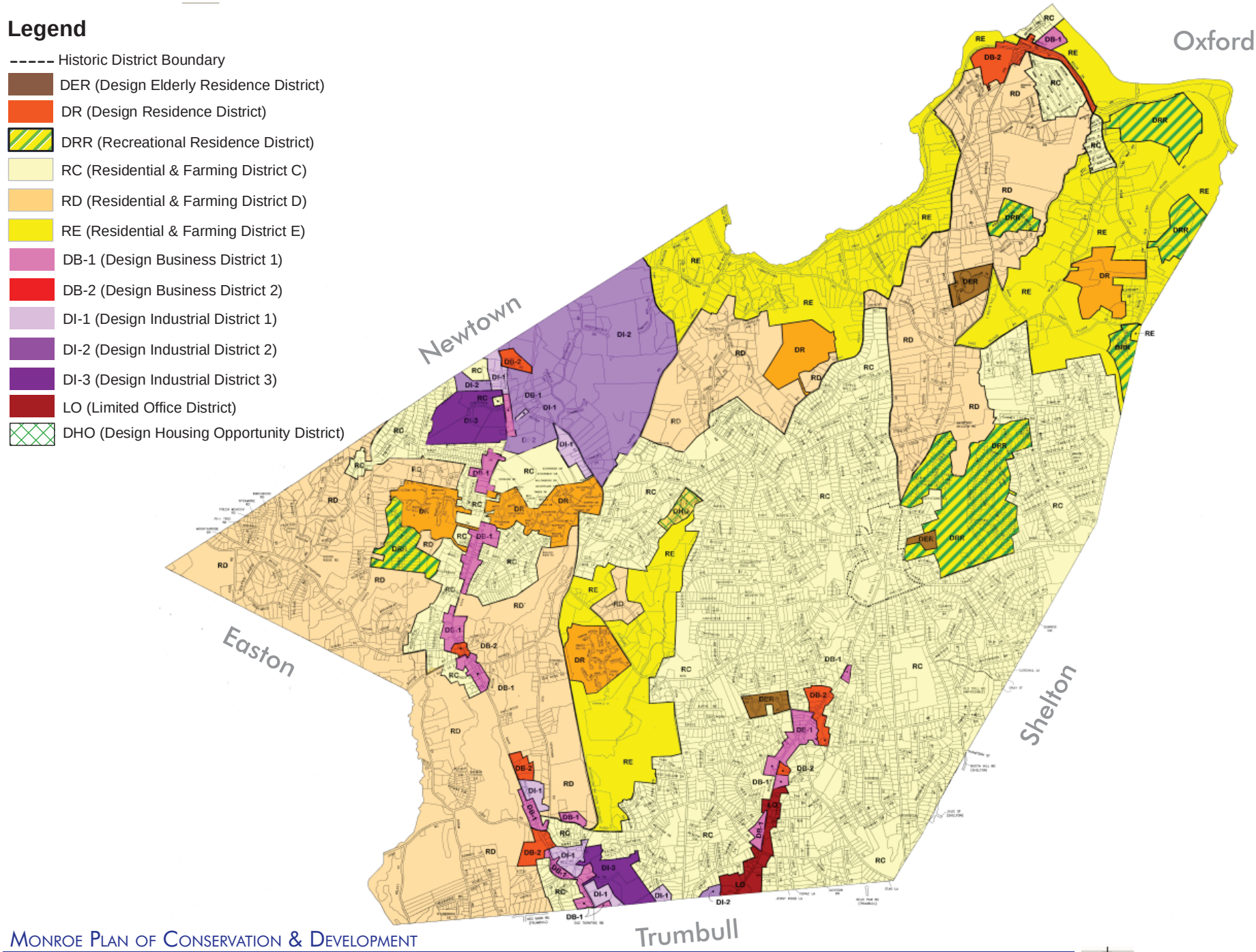
The current Zoning Regulations were approved in 1997 (with amendments up to 2009). The Town is committed to updating its Zoning Regulations and is reviewing a proposed update. Under the current regulations, Monroe has 15 zoning districts, with eight residence zones, four commercial zones (business and office), and three industrial zones. Additionally, the Town has development controls for inland wetlands, environmentally critical areas, scenic roads and historic districts.

Below is a description of land uses within each zoning district:

Residence Districts

- One-Family Residence Districts: RC, RD, RE
- Design Residence Districts: DR, DRR, DER, DHO
- Mixed-Income Housing Residential District: MIH

Figure 3.2: Zoning



Monroe, CT

Sources: Monroe Planning & Zoning Department; Monroe Engineering Department, 2010

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

One-Family Residence Districts

Conventional subdivision layout in the RC zone

Monroe has three single family designations: Residential & Farming District C (RC), Residential & Farming District D (RD) and Residential & Farming District E (RE). Keeping in line with Monroe's suburban and rural character, these zones generally allow single-family detached homes, farms and farming related uses, such as nurseries, greenhouses and roadside farm stands. As such, minimum lot sizes are generally larger than typical suburban areas. Other uses are also permitted in the RC, RD and RE zones with a special exception permit. These uses are recognized places of worship, non-profit membership clubs, recreation and community facilities, cemeteries, nursery schools, public utilities, government buildings, horse stables and Continuing Care Retirement Communities (e.g., a form of senior citizen housing). Conditional uses are also allowed, including home occupations and accessory apartments within existing dwellings. The maximum allowable building height for all one-family residential districts is 35 feet (or two and a half stories). These zones make up the largest zoning districts in Monroe; about 85% of the Town is zoned for one-family residential use.

Typical single-family home in the RC zone

RC: As the largest zoning district in Monroe, the RC zone accounts for significant areas in the eastern, south and central sections of Monroe, as well as some smaller areas in the western and northern portions of Town. This zone is low density, with minimum one-acre lot sizes, and allows a maximum building lot coverage of 15%. Due to the large presence of wetlands in the Town, land area computations for zoning purposes may include land that is under water and/or consists of wetlands.

RD: This zone is the second largest zoning district in Town. The RD zone is primarily located in the western section of Town, around Main Street (Route 25), Hattertown and Pine Tree Hill Roads, and surrounding roadways. This zone is also located in some areas to the north, such as parts of Monroe Turnpike (Route 111), and Fan Hill and Turkey Hill Roads. This zone is lower density than the RC zone, requiring a minimum of two acre lots, and allows slightly less building coverage (10%).

RE: The RE zone is the third largest zoning district in Monroe and is the lowest density of the One-Family Residence districts, requiring a minimum of three-acre lot sizes. Similar to the RD zone, the RE zone has a maximum allowable building lot coverage of 10%. This zone is mostly located at the northeast section of Town along sections of Route 111, Webb Circle and other local roads, and in the northern-central section of Town, along Hammertown Road and other nearby roadways. The RE zone also includes some areas slightly east of Route 25, along Old Newtown and Cutler's Farm Roads and surrounding areas. This area mostly consists of William Wolfe Park, one of Monroe's greatest assets.

Typical single-family home in the RE zone

Design Residence Districts

Monroe has four Design Residence zoning designations: Design Residence (DR), Design Recreational Residence (DRR), Design Elderly Residence (DER), and Design Housing Opportunity (DHO). The purpose of the Design Residence districts is to allow a variety of different uses, such as single and multi-family units, senior housing and conservation and open space. Other uses are also permitted but only with a special exception permit. A site development plan review is required by the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) if the current use is changed or for a new building, building addition or major structural alteration. As a way to balance the types of housing in Monroe, the Town currently limits the number of multi-family units by allowing a certain percentage of them compared to the number of single-family units. Design regulations, such as specific landscaping, utility requirements, and architectural review, also apply to any new building, addition or major structural alteration. All four Design Residence districts allow a maximum building height of 35 feet (or two and a half stories), although have varying requirements for building lot coverage. These districts currently account for about 6% of the Town.

Multi-family subdivision layout with dedicated open space in the DR zone

DR: The DR zone is Monroe's second highest density residential district. This zone allows up to one unit per gross acre for detached single-family units and two and a half units per gross acre for attached units. The maximum allowable building lot coverage is 12%. Permitted uses are single and multi-family buildings, conservation and open space, and recreational uses. Developments located in this zone must provide water service and be capable of providing sanitary sewage disposal. Located mostly within the western section of Town, the DR zone requires larger tracts of land (minimum 70 acre parcel size) and includes the Northbrook and The Hills of Monroe condo developments.

Typical multi-family units in The Hills of Monroe development

DRR: The DRR zone mostly allows the same uses as the DR zone, with the exception that multi-family housing is not permitted. As such, this zone has a lower density not to exceed one unit per net acre; however, there are no building lot coverage requirements for this district. The DRR zone only encompasses three areas in Town due to its minimum parcel size of 25 acres. These areas are the Whitney Farms residential development and golf course on Route 110, Meadowview Terrace residential development on Route 25, and land next to Webb Mountain Park.

DER: The DER zone is intended for age-restricted units where at least one of the occupants is 55 years of age or older. Accessory uses that are incidental to the primary multi-family use are also permitted but with a special exception. Examples of these uses are a caretaker residence and recreational uses, such as a community center facility. The DER zone is the highest density residential district in Monroe, allowing up to five units per gross acre and allows a maximum building lot coverage of 35%. There are three areas in Monroe that are zoned as DER, including High Meadows, Hidden Knolls, and Fairway Acres.

Age restricted housing at Fairway Acres

DHO: Along with the Mixed Income Housing Residential District (discussed below) the DHO zone promotes affordable single-family homes. This zone is meant for persons or families who pay 30% or less of their annual income toward their home. At least 15% of the homes in this district must be set aside for persons or families whose income is less than 80% of the area or statewide median income. Additionally, 10% of the homes must be set aside for persons or families earning less than 60% of the area or statewide median income. In the DHO district, one and a half units per gross acre are permitted and the maximum allowable building lot coverage is 35%.

Mixed Income Housing Residential District

The Mixed Income Housing Residential District (MIH) allows a mix of housing types for diverse income groups. This district promotes affordable single-family homes for low and moderate income households, as well as "starter" homes. Housing developments within a MIH district must remain affordable for at least 40 years; if sold or rented, at least 15% of the homes must be set aside for persons or families earning less than 80% of area or statewide median income. Also, at least 15% of the homes must be set aside for families earning less than 60% of the area or statewide median income. In the MIH district, one unit per gross acre is permitted, the maximum allowable building height is 35 feet (or two and a half stories) and the maximum building lot coverage is 25%.

Non-Residential Districts

- Business Districts: DB1, DB2
- Office District: LO
- Design Industrial Districts: DI1, DI2, DI3

Business Districts

Monroe has two business designations: Design Business District 1 (DB1) and Design Business District 2 (DB2). Located mainly along the commercial corridors of Routes 25 and 111, these zones generally allow commercial and office uses. As is the case for all Design Districts, there is a site development plan review by the P&Z if the current use is changed or for a new building, building addition or major structural alteration. Business districts account for about 2% of the zoning districts in Monroe.

DB1: The DB1 zone allows general commercial uses, such as retail stores and shops, sit-down restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, alcohol sales and gas stations. Medical and dental offices, movie theaters, hospitals, bowling alleys, and indoor golf or billiards are also permitted. The maximum permitted building height is 35 feet (or two and a half stories) and the maximum allowable building lot coverage is 25%. Along Route 111, the DB1 district is mapped on both the east and west sides of the highway, mainly south of Cross Hill Road. Along Route 25, this district is also located on both the east and west sides; however, there are clusters of areas that are mapped as DB1. These clusters can be found near the intersection of Route 25 with Purdy Hill Road, Route 59, and north of Bart Road up to the Town border with Newtown. Other locations where the DB1 zone is mapped are along Purdy Hill Road and at the northern tip of Monroe near Lake Zoar and the Town of Oxford.


Typical DB1 commercial businesses along Main Street (Route 25) and Monroe Turnpike (Route 111)

DB2: This district allows the same uses as the DB1 plus more intensive uses, such as automobile repair shops, car washes, drive-through restaurants, storage and lumber warehouses, auto sales and other similar uses. The DB2 zone has the same building height and coverage restrictions as the DB1 zone. There are four areas where the DB2 zone is mapped: the intersection of Route 111 with Cross Hill Road, the northern section of Route 111 near the border of Oxford, the intersection of Route 25 and Purdy Hill Road, and on the east side of Route 25, slightly north of Purdy Hill Road.

Typical DB2 commercial uses along Main Street (Route 25) and Roosevelt Road (Route 34)

Office District

Established as a transitional zone between residential and business uses/zones and less desirable uses (e.g., highways, industry, etc.), the Limited Office District (LO) is meant to maintain the quality and character of the adjacent residential areas. Permitted uses are business and professional offices, medical and dental offices, laboratories and research offices and municipal buildings. The maximum allowable building height and coverage is less than the DB districts (30 feet/two stories maximum height and 20% building coverage, respectively). LO zones are mapped along both sides of Route 111 at the southern section of Town, up to the Monroe-Trumbull border. Only 0.5% of Monroe's land area is zoned for limited office uses.

Typical office use and U.S. Post Office on Monroe Turnpike (Route 111)

Design Industrial Districts

Monroe has three industrial designations: Design Industrial District 1 (DI1), Design Industrial District 2 (DI2) and Design Industrial District 3 (DI3). These districts are largely mapped along the northern stretch of Route 25, including the approximately 800 acres of contiguous industrial zoned property near the Monroe-Newtown border, as well as smaller stretch along the southern portion of Route 25 near Trumbull. Permitted uses are manufacturing and storage facilities, corporate office buildings, research and experimental laboratories, and warehouses. All three designations allow a maximum height of 40 feet (or three stories) and a maximum building lot coverage of 25%; however, building setbacks become more restrictive as the intensity of each DI district increases (i.e., DI1is the least intensive and DI3 is the most intensive). As is the case for all Design Districts, there is a site development plan review by the P&Z if the current use is changed or for a new building, building addition or major structural alteration. About 7% of Monroe's land area is zoned for industrial properties.

DI1: In the DI1 zone there are several permitted uses that are restricted solely to this zone. These uses are commercial vehicle terminals, storage of building materials, club recreational facilities, and business/professional/medical/office buildings. Out of the three industrial districts, the DI1 zone contains the least amount of land and only requires a minimum of one acre for development.

Typical DI2 professional office building along Pepper Street and DI3 office/warehouse off of Route 25

DI2: The DI2 zone is the largest industrial zone as it includes contains approximately 800 acres of contiguous industrial zoned property along Route 25, in the northwest section of town. This zone is the most active in terms of development, as new industrial buildings are constantly being completed. However, this zone also contains much of Monroe's current vacant parcels. This district is the only district that allows self-storage facilities. More intensive than the DI1 district, the DI2 zone requires a minimum of three acres for development.

DI3: Largely undeveloped, the DI3 zone requires a minimum of 10 acres for development. This zone can be found on the west side of Route 25, across from the 800 acres of contiguous industrial zoned property in the DI2 zone, as well as adjacent to a group of parcels mapped DI1 along the southern stretch of Route 25.

3.3 Other Development Controls

Inland Wetlands and Environmentally Critical Areas

Monroe contains a large presence of wetlands, streams, lakes, and rivers. Wetlands require conservation as they are biologically diverse with wildlife and plant species, provide natural filtration of pollutants, and help to control flooding. Wetlands are often threatened by real estate development that encroaches into or near their sensitive ecosystems. In turn, wetlands limit the build-out potential of Monroe's zoning districts.

Freshwater wetlands along Garder Road

Monroe is committed to conserving its wetlands and has an appointed Inland Wetlands Commission to ensure their protection. The commission enforces all provisions of the Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act, including

providing wetland-related recommendations to the P&Z for all new applications, including subdivisions and re-subdivisions, issuing permits/approvals for all regulated wetlands activity, and resolving disputed issues and violations. The Commission and/or its agent must be contacted for any and all activities taking place within "regulated areas", which include a minimum of 100 feet from all wetlands and watercourses. Failure to do so constitutes a violation any may result in legal actions and/or fines.

The P&Z also regulates certain activities with potential environmental impacts within the DI3 district for development activity that affects 50% or more of land that is within or adjacent to environmentally critical areas, such as inland wetlands, watercourses, 100-year flood boundary, and aquifer protection area or slopes exceeding 15%. The P&Z may grant a discretionary building height modification that would allow development to take place without adversely affecting these environmentally critical areas.

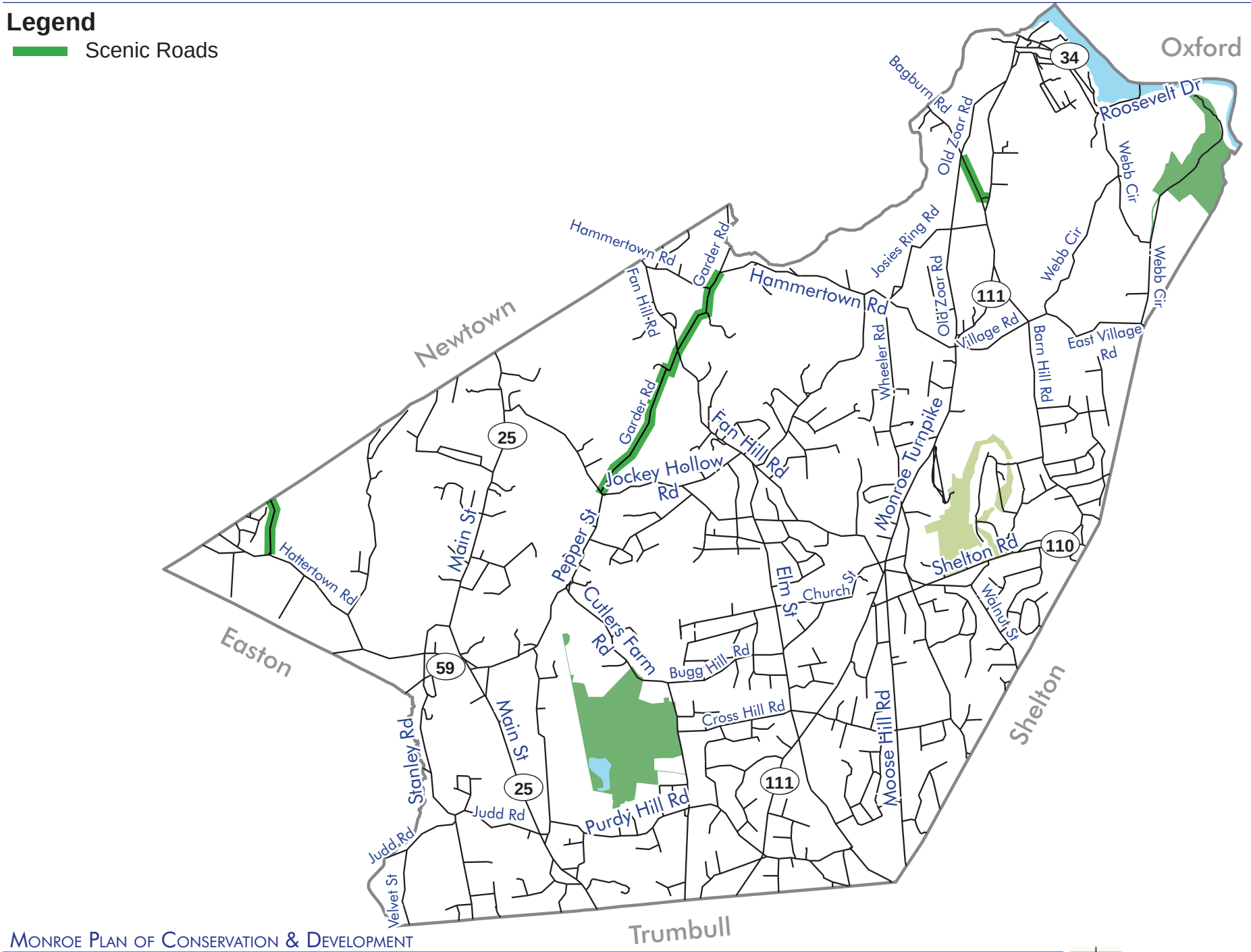
Scenic Roads

Implemented as per the recommendations of the 2000 Monroe POCD, the Town has a Scenic Roads Ordinance. The purpose of the ordinance is to preserve those roadways that offer scenic beauty to its users. With the authority to designate scenic roads, the P&Z requires that at least three of the following criteria are met: the road is unpaved, is bordered by mature trees or stone walls, is no more than 20 feet wide, offers scenic views, blends naturally into the surrounding environment, or crosses over any water body. Similar to the designation of historic districts or places, a scenic road designation cannot be approved without the consent of property owners.

Monroe has three scenic roads that can be found in the northern sections of Town (see Figure 3.3).

Scenic Road designations along East Village Road and Garder Road

Figure 3.3: Scenic Roads



Monroe Plan of Conservation & Development

Monroe, CT

Sources: Monroe Planning & Zoning Department; Monroe Engineering Department

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Historic Districts

Monroe has one locally designated historic district called the Monroe Center Historic District. Surrounding the Monroe Green, this area is also on the National Register of Historic Districts. There is one place listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and there are numerous historic places listed on the State Register of Historic Places (SRHP). Historically significant buildings, places, and districts that contribute to the character of Monroe are listed in Table 3.1(see Figure 3.4 for locations). The map shows potential historic districts in the Stepney area - in the vicinity of Routes 25 and 59 and Purdy Hill Road and Old Newtown Road - and the East Village area - near the junction of Route 111 and East Village Road.

Two-story brick home in Monroe Center Historic District and Eliot Beardsley Homestead

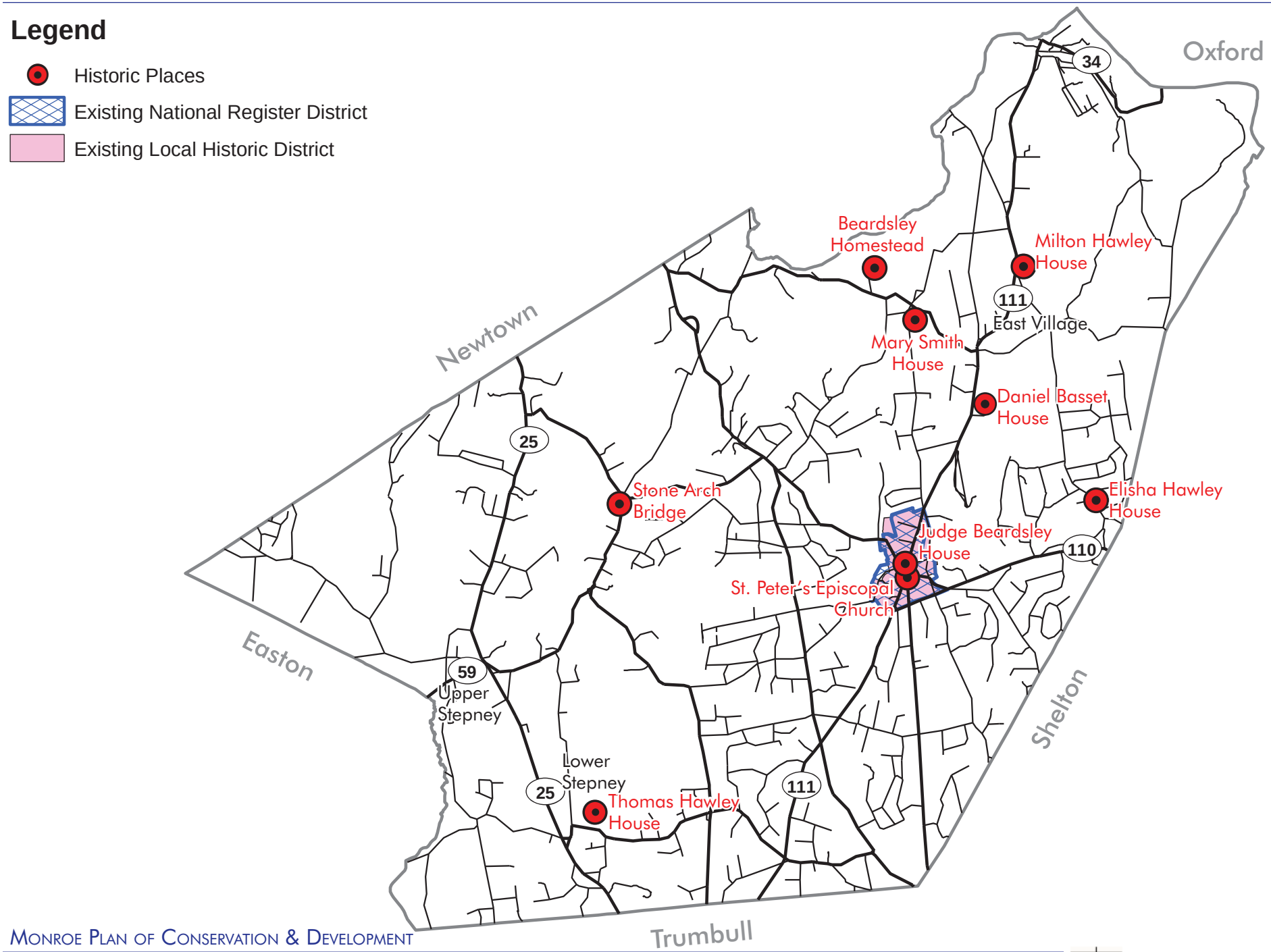
The Historic District Commission of Monroe "...is charged with the preservation and protection of buildings and places of historic interest in the district" (Monroe Town Charter, Chapter IV, Section 10). Promulgated by the Connecticut General Statutes, the commission is authorized to designate new and expand existing local historic districts and properties, enact amendments to a district's ordinance, take action to prevent violations to an ordinance, assist the P&Z on zoning variance and special exception requests for properties within the district, and recommend design concepts and maintenance procedures (e.g. streetscape improvements and sidewalk repair).

In order to designate a new or expanded local historic district, a study commission must be formed and the public must be given the opportunity to review the proposal. The study commission must prepare a report that analyzes the historic significance of the proposed historic area and architectural merit of the buildings and structures. Next, the proposed boundaries are mapped and the commission prepares an historic district ordinance that outlines how the district would be maintained and what restrictions would be used to preserve it. The report is then reviewed by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism and the local P&Z Commission. After a public hearing, property owners within the proposed district may vote on whether the historic district should be designated. If affirmed by two-thirds of all property owners, the local municipality may officially designate a new or expanded historic district. This process also applies to the designation of an historic place(s), except that only the owner of the property being considered as an historic place may object to its designation.

Table 3.1: Historic Districts and Places

District/Place Name	Location	Description	SRHP	NRHP
National Register Historic Districts				
1. Monroe Center Historic District	Near Route 111 and Fan Hill Rd	National Register Historic District around the Monroe Green and adjacent areas (includes 60 buildings over 1,200 acres)	1969	1977
Local Historic Districts				
1. Monroe Historic District	Near Route 111 and Fan Hill Rd	Local Historic District around the Monroe Green and adjacent areas (includes 57 properties)		
National Register of Historic Places				
1. Thomas Hawley House	514 Purdy Hill Rd	Built in 1755, this house is a pre-Revolutionary War saltbox	1978	1979
2. Daniel Bassett House	1024 Monroe Turnpike	Colonial style brick house Built c1775 during Revolutionary War	2006	2002
State Register of Historic Places				
1. Milton Hawley House	Barn Hill Rd	Large vernacular farmhouse built in 1757	1966	
2. Elisha Hawley House	Barn Hill Rd	Federal-style farm house built in 1810	1966	
3. Judge Beardsley House	Route 111 at Old Tannery Rd	Two-story brick Adamesque-style house built in 1810	1966	
4. Mary Smith House	Wheeler Rd	Two-story, brick, Federal-style house built in 1810	1966	
5. St. Peter's Episcopal Church	Monroe Green	Built in 1802, an example of late Georgian architecture	1966	
6. Stone Arch Bridge	517 Pepper St.	A stone-arch bridge built along the Housatonic Railroad	1994	
7. Beardsley Homestead	31 Great Ring Rd	N/A	1994	

Source: Monroe 2000 POCD, National Register of Historic Places and Edward Coffey



Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

3.4 Historic Resources and Preservation

The Town of Monroe originated from the colonial Town of Stratford established in 1639. Stratford originally encompassed twelve miles inland from the Long Island Sound between the Housatonic River and the Fairfield town line. The Town included all of present-day Monroe.

A Native American rock shelter in East Village

In 1662, the Paugussett Indian Nation transferred to Stratford territory, which comprises part of present-day Shelton and Monroe. In 1671, Stratford purchased the Paugusset Indians territory, which included the remainder of the northern portions of Monroe and Shelton, in what is known as *The White Hills Purchase.* This newly purchased land was officially annexed by the Township of Stratford.

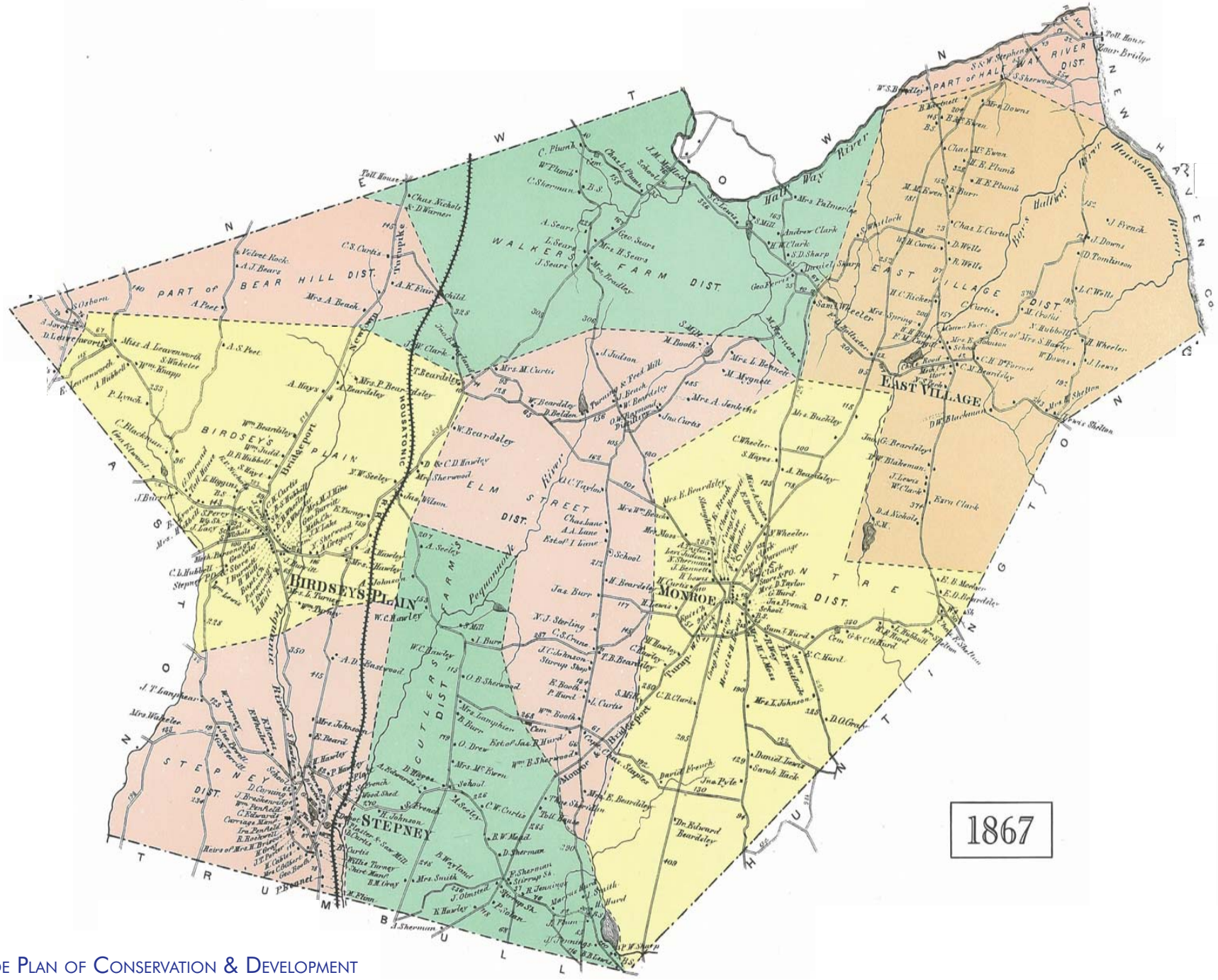
As the Town of Stratford grew and settlement was pushing inland, ecclesiastical societies were established. Each society was a local church and its surrounding settlement. In 1717, the Court of Connecticut established the Ripton Parish, which relieved farmers from traveling a long distance to church services in Stratford. Ripton Parish and another society known as North Stratford Society, established in 1744, served areas in northern Stratford until 1762. The New Stratford Ecclesiastical Society was created when settlers obtained permission to establish a distinct ecclesiastical society with its own meetinghouse.

The meetinghouse was strategically situated in the "Bushy Ring" area (now Monroe Historic Center) known for its central location at the crossroads of the highest point in the parish and views of the countryside and Long Island Sound. This area was designated the Center of New Stratford (now Monroe). After petitioning twice, Ripton and New Stratford were combined to create a new town named Huntington with the functions of collecting tax revenue and voting rights. Eventually, New Stratford residents wanted to break away from Huntington to create their own town. In 1823, the General Assembly finally granted township status. The residents voted to name the town after President James Monroe, president at the time.

Mural at Edith Wheeler Memorial Library depicts both historic and scenic images of Monroe

Monroe was primarily a farming community in the 18th century, producing grain and raising livestock. Mills, small shops, and businesses developed to meet the needs of local residents and the surrounding trading area. Main settlements at the time included Stepney and Birdseye's Plain, historic hamlets located on what is now Route 25 and known as Stepney; Monroe Centre, which is now on the National Register and designated a Local Historic District around the Monroe Green; and East Village, located along portions of north Route 111, and East Village and Barn Hill Roads.

Figure 3.5: 1867 Map of Monroe



Monroe Plan of Conservation & Development

Monroe, CT

Source: The Monroe Historical Society, Inc. (1983)

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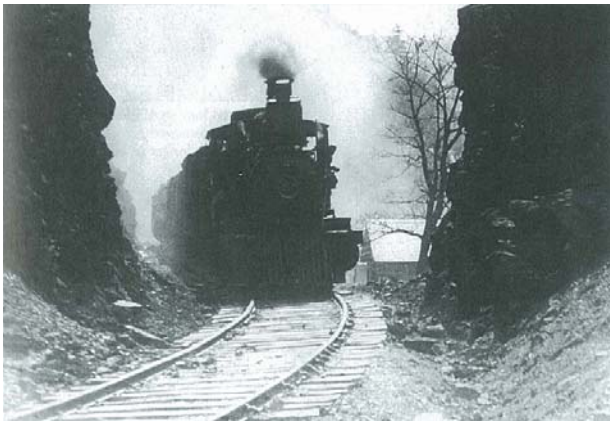
Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Transportation improvements had an impact on Monroe's development. Monroe grew from slightly over 1,000 residents in the early decades of the 20th century to about 19,250 in 2000. The groundwork for economic growth was laid in 1840 with the Housatonic Railroad's railroad track in Monroe. It connected Monroe to Bridgeport and New Milford along the Housatonic Valley. In the 1880s, another railroad line called the Derby Extension was constructed in the Webb/Stevenson area. In 1898, the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad purchased the Housatonic Railroad and operations expanded. Monroe businesses were able to ship products to Bridgeport, Danbury and New Haven, creating more businesses and development in Monroe.



The New York-New Haven-Hartford Railroad (c1910) and Stepney Garage on Main Street – both were indications of the changing times

In the 1920s, commuter transportation came to dominate Monroe's development. Bus and trolley service linked Monroe to Bridgeport. In 1928 the first building lot subdivision plan was filed at Town Hall, with the second coming in just three years later. Both subdivisions were located in Stepney. Highway and road construction in the 1930s led to Monroe's further evolution away from its farming and industrial history. In 1937 Monroe adopted its first formal zoning regulations. This act acknowledged Monroe's desire at the time to control the transformation of some of its farms into building lots. The suburbanization of Monroe began in the 1950s with the first large-scale housing development, Hillside Acres, in Upper Stepney.

In the first decades of the 1900s, Monroe grew slowly from 1,161 persons in 1920 to 2,892 in 1950. After World War II, suburban living became popular for many people as the automobile became the dominant form of transportation and the U.S. government made it easier to buy homes through VA and other loans. From 1960 on, growth was rapid in each decade – especially during the 1960s - due to Monroe's reasonable land and housing prices, proximity to job centers, quality of life, and remaining rural character.

In the 1970s, a corporate shift from urban areas to the suburbs made Monroe an even more appealing place to live. During this period its population grew even though the region's population peaked in the early part of the decade.

In the 1980s, multi-family housing became popular with the development of condominiums like the Northbrook and The Hills of Monroe. Still, single-family housing continued to comprise the largest share of housing in Monroe as developments like Whitney Farms permitted both single-family homes and a golf course. During this decade, Monroe continued to grow as the region's population stabilized. Even though the region's population reached a low in 1990 relative to its peak during the early 1970s, Monroe's population continued to increase concurrently with its job growth – a modest 54% increase between 1993 and 2001. During the 1990s, Monroe was the region's fastest growing community.

Now, in the first decade of the 21st century, population and housing growth are slowing but still rising. Monroe still offers an unprecedented quality of life due to its balance of quality housing stock, proximity to jobs, good schools, scenic beauty and recreation, and its character and charm. Although Monroe experienced rising housing costs in the early part of this century, its population is still estimated to slowly rise. Estimates by the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA) project Monroe to have a population of just over 22,000 by 2026 (TIP page 3). In 2000, Monroe had a population of 19,247. Monroe should also experience job growth if its 800 acres of contiguous industrial zoned property near the Monroe-Newtown border continues to attract new businesses. Already in 2007, Monroe welcomed Victorinox Swiss Army Inc.'s newly opened North American headquarters and distribution center off of Main Street (Route 25). During the next few decades Monroe will look to continue its balance of growth and preservation of its resources.

3.5 Community Character

Monroe is a beautiful town that offers a balance of suburban amenities, recreation, scenic beauty, historic assets, and rural lifestyle. The Town mostly consists of one acre to three acre single-family residential properties. Compared to other nearby suburban communities these lot sizes are relatively large and reflect the Town's agricultural past. Monroe has five quality public elementary/middle schools and one high school, and also boasts impressive physical aspects that add to its quality of life. Passive and active parks and open space, such as Webb Mountain Park, William E. Wolfe Park, Lake Zoar and the Monroe Green, offer residents valuable recreation services, scenic views, and open space. Collectively, these characteristics have made Monroe a family-oriented community with a small town feel.

Parks, such as William E. Wolfe Park, offer both bucolic scenery and recreation

The Town's small town atmosphere and beauty have attracted new residents to Monroe. A telephone survey of Monroe residents indicated that 40% moved to Monroe because of these attributes (Monroe 2000 POCD). Monroe's population and job potential are still growing, especially along its major arterial roads. These features have contributed to Monroe's mostly suburban nature. There is a major commercial presence along Route 25 and, to a lesser extent, Route 111, which also contributes to Monroe's suburban character. The Town's location to job centers will continue to attract people looking to benefit from Monroe's economic position.

With continued growth based on these assets, Monroe needs to plan for its community services, sewers, transportation, and other services.

A reflection of Monroe's small town feel: Residents at a local farmers market

3.6 Development Potential and Build-Out Analysis

The 2000 POCD reported that 75% of Monroe was developed, and of that 43% was residentially built. Housing lots constituted 56% of the Town's total land area. The next highest percentage of land use was public land and open space, constituting nearly one-quarter (24%) of the total land area. Business, utility, and industry occupied 4% of the Town's land area, as did public and institutional uses. The 2000 Plan analyzed unused development potential, taking into consideration land constraints. Under the existing zoning, 1,000 to 1,500 additional housing units could be built, yielding a total for the Town of about 7,500 units. This would result in a peak population count of about 24,000 people. The 2000 Census reported 19,247 persons in Monroe and 6,601 housing units.

The development potential for non-residential uses was 700,000 to 1 million square feet of new commercial floor area and 2.8 million to 6 million square feet industrial floor area. The Plan was careful to note that these calculations did not measure market potential, only what the combination of existing zoning and unused development potential could yield.

A basic build-out analysis was performed for the available vacant land in Monroe, as identified by the Town's parcel data as kept in geographic information system (GIS) format for electronic mapping purposes. A spatial join was performed to attribute the Town's existing zoning code to all 6,405 parcels in the database. Once the zoning was attributed, the vacant parcels were selected, as shown in the map on the following page (Figure 3.6).

In any build-out analysis, it is important to note that the results are theoretical, and that any future development is contingent on a variety of factors including the availability of land, physical and environmental conditions, and the local economy. The build-out analysis is a potential saturation point scenario that assumes all of the undeveloped residential and commercially zoned land in Monroe is actually developed; this information is a guide and does not suggest actual, or desired, building levels.

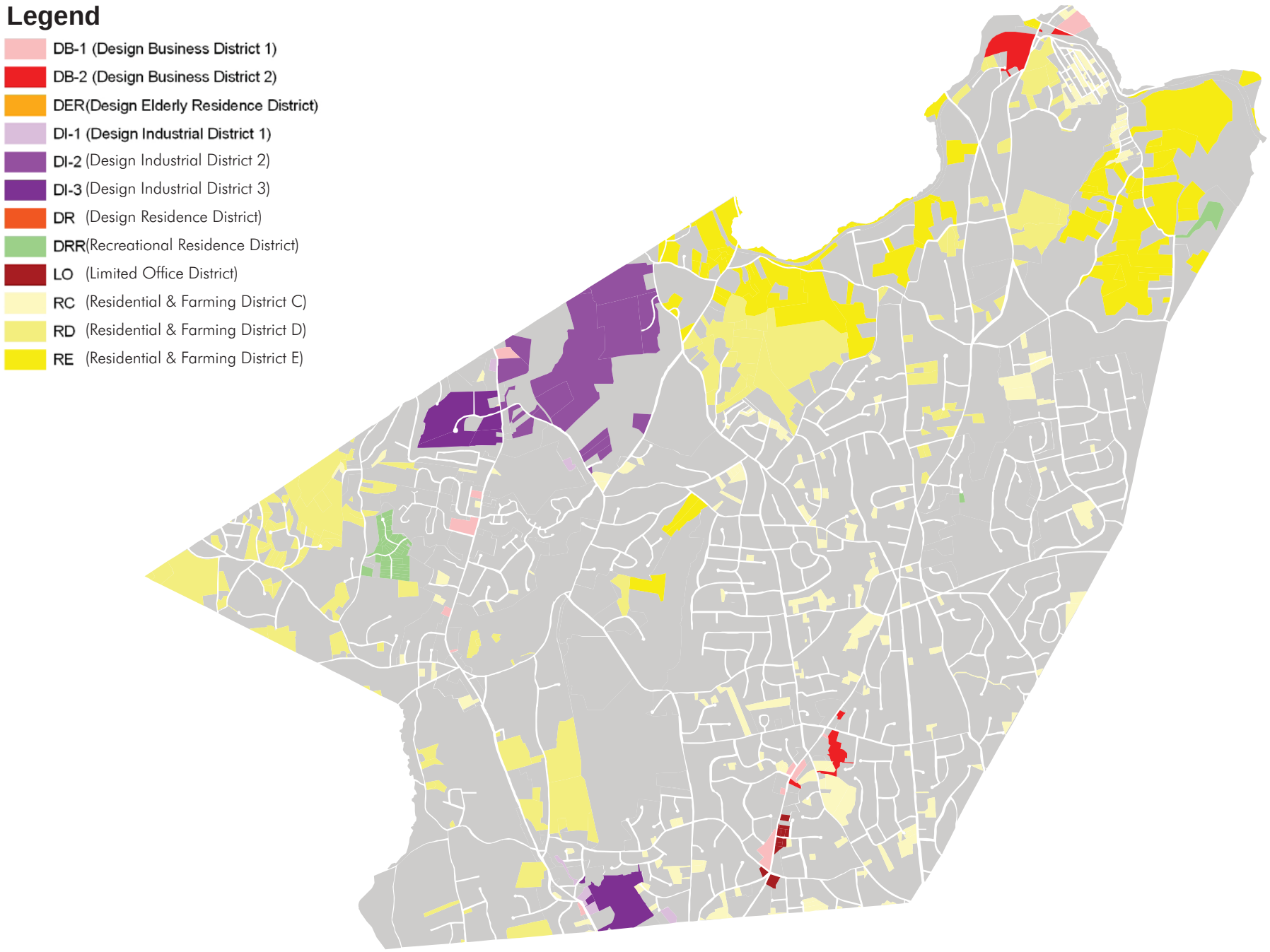
As shown in Table 3.2, vacant parcels numbered 641. Each lot was then examined to see if it met the minimum square footage criteria for development as set out in the zoning code (see Table 3.3). Parcels that met the minimum lot requirements numbered 361 as shown in Figure 3.7.

Table 3.2: Number of Vacant Parcels by Zoning District

Zoning	Vacant Parcels
DB-1	13
DB-2	6
DER	0
DI-1	7
DI-2	20
DI-3	8
DR	0
DRR	42
LO	12
RC	304
RD	143
RE	86
Total	**640**

Source: Monroe Planning and Zoning Department, 2000; Urbanomics, 2009

Figure 3.6: Vacant Parcels by Zoning Classification



Monroe, CT

Sources: Monroe Planning & Zoning Department, 2000; Monroe Engineering Department; Urbanomics, 2009

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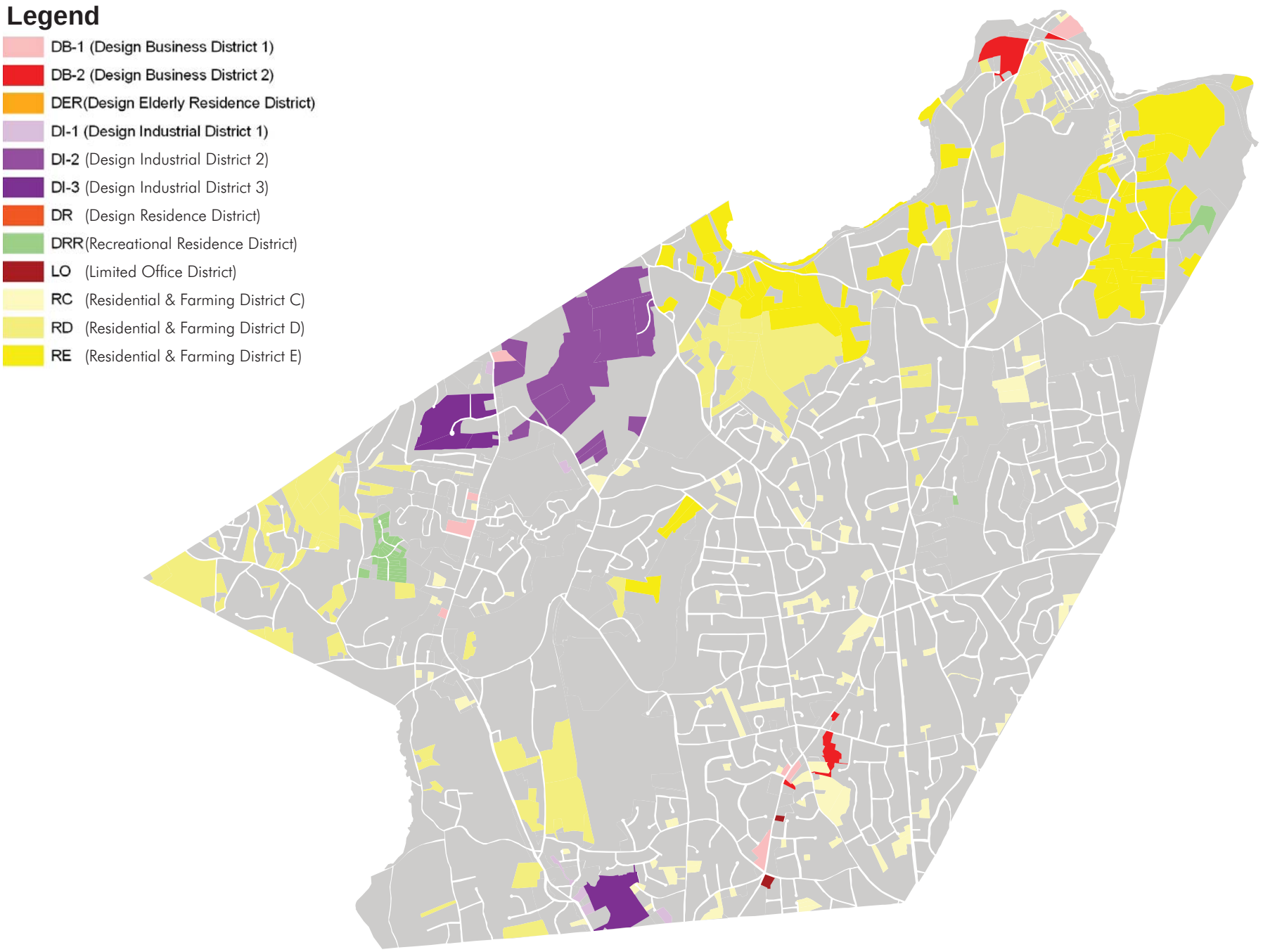
Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Table 3.3: Schedule of Area, Bulk and Dimensional Requirements

Zone	Description	Min Acreage	Min Frontage (SF)	Max Under Water	Max Wetland	Max Height (feet)	Max Stories	Max Coverage	Min Floorspace (SF)	Min Floorspace (Reuse)	*Unit Density*	*Max Units*
DB-1	*general business*	1	125			35	2.5	0.25	1400			
DB-2	*general business+*	1	125			35	2.5	0.25	1400			
LO	*restricted office*	1.5	150			30	2	0.20	2400	1800		
DI-1	*industrial*	1	120			40	3	0.25				
DI-2	*industrial*	3	200			40	3	0.25				
DI-3	*major industrial*	10	200			40	3	0.25				
RC	*residential*	1	150	0.20	0.50	35	2.5	0.15				
RD	*residential*	2	200	0.25	0.50	35	2.5	0.10				
RE	*residential*	3	250	0.30	0.50	35	2.5	0.10				
DR	*residential (condo)*	70	200			35	2.5	0.12			2.5	
DRR	*residential (cluster)*	0.75	90	0.20	0.50	35	2.5				1	
DER	*residential (elderly)*	10	200			35	2.5	0.35			2.5	125
MIH	*residential (afford)*	0.75				35	2.5	0.25			1	
DHO	*residential (afford)*		750			35	2.5	0.35			1.5	

Source: Town of Monroe

Figure 3.7: Vacant Parcels by Zoning Classification Meeting Minimum Lot Size for Development



Monroe, CT

Sources: Monroe Planning & Zoning Department, 2000; Monroe Engineering Department; Urbanomics, 2009

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BFJ Planning

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

To estimate total construction allowed on each lot, the zoning constraints were applied to each lot by zoning classification. This results in the following buildable residential units and commercial floor space:

Table 3.4: Buildable Residential Units and Commercial Floorspace

Residential		
Zoning	Parcels	Homes
RC	131	131
RD	97	68
RE	57	57
DRR	36	76
Total	321	332
Commercial		
Zoning	Parcels	Floor Space
DB-1	8	1,404,538
DB-2	5	1,359,835
LO	2	90,082
DI-1	6	640,659
DI-2	14	13,017,688
DI-3	5	5,452,623
Total	40	21,965,425

Source: Monroe Planning and Zoning Department, 2000; Urbanomics, 2009

As shown in the above table, buildable residential units and commercial floor space totals - without variances - resulted in 332 new housing units and almost 22 million square feet of commercial space. This Plan believes that this amount is unattainable; as mentioned previously, any future development is contingent on a variety of factors, such as the availability of land and environmental conditions.

3.7 Recommendations

The Plan will aim to achieve the following goals:

- Preserve Monroe's scenic beauty, family-oriented environment, while ensuring high quality development.

- Preserve and enhance Monroe's physical character, including its architectural quality along major commercial corridors and historic and scenic areas, and maintain the character of existing residential areas.

- Reinforce and establish traditional community centers.

- Expand the utilization of the POCD as a planning and decision making tool for all elected officials and Planning and Zoning Commission members.

Overall Recommendations

Ensure Compatibility with New York State and Regional Plans

- There are currently differences between local zoning and the State Plan (see Chapter 2.0 Regional and State Planning Context). As such, there is an incentive for finding a "common ground" between the local and State Plan for State funding of local capital projects.
- The Monroe POCD is generally compatible with the GBRPA's 2007-2035 Regional Transportation Plan.

Update Planning and Zoning Commission Procedures

- Ensure that the POCD is submitted to all existing and new Planning and Zoning Commission members, as well as all other land use commissions.
- Enhance training procedures for all Planning and Zoning Commission members, as well as all other land use commissions.
- Hold separate Planning Commission meetings on a quarterly basis to encourage proactive planning in the Town.

Land Use Planning Recommendations

Consider Priority Growth Districts, Village Districts, and Overlay Districts

- This POCD recommends that Monroe use a combination of Priority Growth Districts (PGDs) and Village Districts to achieve its vision for Upper Stepney, Stepney, East Village, Lake Zoar, and Stevenson area (see below section on PGDs and Village Districts).
- Adopt Village District and Overlay District zoning mechanisms for PGDs (see below section on Overlay Districts).
- In addition, the lengths of Route 25 and Route 111 lying outside Village Districts should be subject to improved design regulations via Overlay Districts.

Zoning Recommendations

Re-examine Existing Town Regulatory Framework

- Re-examine existing Town regulatory framework on minimum lot size and lot depth:
  - Currently, larger residential lot sizes encourage larger homes. There is a need for smaller (e.g. two bedroom) and less expensive homes for seniors and young adults, or people just looking to downsize their current homes. Also, depth of commercial lots on Route 25 are narrow but are constrained by adjacent residential uses and wetlands.
- Consider development incentives, such as slight increases in density or building height, for higher quality architectural design.

Encourage Open Space Development Patterns

- Consider increasing the maximum height of office and corporate office buildings within Design Business (DB) and Design Industrial (DI) zones to three to five stories within DB zones, and four to six stories in DI zones.
- Prepare a study that considers cluster zones (or Open Space Subdivisions) with open space trade-offs, where applicable, to minimize site disturbance and maximize open space.

Development Recommendations

- Prepare a redevelopment plan for vacant parcels along the Route 25 and 111 corridors.
  - As the Town is becoming built-out there is a need to determine the best uses for vacant parcels and the type of housing that is appropriate for remaining land.

Community Character Recommendations

Preserve and Enhance Visual Appeal

- Enhance the Town's gateways (Routes 25, 34, 110, and 111) with attractive landscaping, signage, lighting, and stone walls that are consistent with the Town's character.
- Retain stone walls, barns, and buildings of character as part of the Town's subdivision regulations.
- Encourage the designation of scenic roads by preparing a study that evaluates which roads should be designated, while addressing jurisdictional maintenance and balancing safety.

Evaluate Design Standards

- Perform corridor studies for Routes 25, 34, and 111 that assess existing and desired architectural styles, including building design, signage, lighting, landscaping, and streetscape design, as well as "green" design standards (see Chapter 11.0 Sustainable Development).
- Encourage design standards in Priority Growth, Village, and Overlay Districts.
- Encourage the use of LEED design or other "green" building standards for all new construction activities.

Promote Community Spirit

- Provide facilities that enhance quality of life and physical character, such as community gardens.
- Continue to organize events, such as the Strawberry Festival, Monroe Farmer's Market and classic car shows, that promote community spirit.
- Revitalize "Wish List" program and similar programs that enhance community spirit, character, and quality of life.
- Establish a Town email listserv where residents can subscribe to various lists and be informed of Town news and announcements, community events, planning and zoning notifications, and recreation activities. Reach out to all age groups, including seniors and young adults.

Historic Resources Recommendations

- Revisit Town designation as Certified Local Government for eligibility for grants and aid for historic preservation efforts.
- Complete a town-wide historic resources survey.

Priority Growth Districts and Village Districts

This POCD recommends that Monroe use a combination of Priority Growth Districts and Village Districts to achieve its vision for Upper Stepney, Stepney, East Village, Lake Zoar, and Stevenson area. This two-step process will enable the Town to plan for appropriate development and then to determine specific use and design characteristics for each area.

Priority Growth Districts

Monroe has five areas that are suitable as Priority Growth District (PGD). These are Upper Stepney, Stepney, East Village, Lake Zoar, and Stevenson area. A PGD is a land use technique that serves outlying suburban and exurban locales with a significant rate of growth, a remaining rural character, and the ability to direct future growth to selected locations. (*Breaking Ground: Planning and Building in Priority Growth Districts,* Land Use Law Center, Pace University School of Law; 2005). This technique is aimed at areas where improvements in the transportation network make the once-rural area more accessible. The response of the municipality is to control sprawl, enforce attractive commercial design, encourage smart growth practices, and create livable communities.

The intent of a PGD is not new: many exurban communities are now trying to shape growth. The PGD approach combines zoning, design, community planning, and capital improvements. A PGD should be located where the community wants a compact mix of land uses. In most cases, the PGD boosts density over the base zoning – either directly by rezoning the site or through incentive zoning that awards density bonuses in return for public goods. There should be infrastructure – whether adequate today or planned - to serve the municipal vision, including road and public transit, sewer, water, and stormwater management. Depending on the community, these areas might be on the edge of existing centers or may consist of intensive infill and redevelopment of existing centers that are undeveloped or haphazardly developed. The PDG

concept can also be applied to outlying areas where the community decides to create a new center or hamlet.

Monroe has viable PGD candidates -- Upper Stepney and Stepney lie at crossroads and are historic centers. While much of their traditional character is lost or obscured, a more attractive future can be achieved with new mixed-use development, landscaping, and pedestrian-friendly improvements. East Village and Lake Zoar should remain predominantly residential, although some limited neighborhood-scale commercial uses might be allowed in order for these outlying areas to better serve surrounding households. For example, Stevenson Lumber is a developed site, currently defunct; it provides a small infill site with economic potential.

The PGD principles should be followed in a flexible way, appropriate to the land area, complexity, and purpose of each area. The principles are:

- Collaboration. The plan and the zoning for each PGD should be based on community collaboration. Early and regular public involvement is important as there needs to be an understanding of the PGD boundaries, density, mix of land uses, and necessary new capital improvements.

- Directed Development. Development should be directed to existing population centers or once-developed sites to encourage reinvestment or redevelopment.

- Smart Growth. Use smart growth principles, such as compact or traditional neighborhood design. This will reduce the amount of land area given over to new development. Compact design fosters walkable commercial areas. With sufficient density or commercial concentration, bus transit becomes possible. Housing units can be smaller, thus diversifying the predominance of large-lot single-family houses and providing housing choices, including affordable or workforce housing. In most cases, zoning will allow a mix of land uses, such as office, commercial, and apartments or townhouses. Compact design will also relieve some development pressure on remaining open land and farms.

- Design Features. Adopt design principles that reflect Monroe's traditional and natural elements. These features might control the exterior appearance of new or expanded buildings, their landscaping, the placement of buildings on their lots, and the placement of parking on commercial lots. The overall purpose should be the creation of attractive public places and streets.

Planning Process. As mentioned above, the POCD recommends that Monroe use a two-step approach in planning for Upper Stepney, Stepney, East Village, Lake Zoar, and Stevenson area. The PGD discussions should be aimed at getting initial agreement on boundaries, land uses, density, design principles, and necessary capital improvements. Through these discussions, the first one or two areas to proceed to the next level of development control should be selected. That next level is an area-specific Village District. Connecticut enables its municipalities to exercise design control using the Village District mechanism (described below). The mechanism is also useful as a redevelopment tool, in addition to design control.

The POCD recommends that Monroe designate no more than two Village Districts at first, in order for the P&Z to acquire expertise in administering the districts through development

application review. This measured approach will also enable affected property owners to become familiar with the new mechanism. All lessons learned can then be applied in the next round of planning for the remaining PGDs.

Village Districts

The Village Districts Act, passed by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1998, is a planning tool to help municipalities protect and preserve their community character and historic development patterns. As of the writing of this POCD, at least seventeen municipalities have adopted Village Districts. The law allows towns to designate Village Districts as a way of protecting sections of towns that have distinctive character, landscape or historic structures. However, the law only applies to areas visible from the road. Within these areas, the town zoning commission may adopt regulations governing such matters as the design and placement of buildings, and maintenance of public views.

The Village Districts act provides for the conversion and preservation of existing buildings and sites in a manner that maintains the historic, natural, or community character of the district. The bill applies to rural, urban and suburban communities, which exhibit "village" characteristics. Proposed buildings or modifications in village districts should be harmonious with their surroundings. Village districts enable the adoption of flexible aesthetic regulations that are not strictly bound by any specific time period, architectural style, or other pattern of development or design established in the past. All applications for substantial reconstruction and new construction shall be subject to review and comment by an architect, Architectural Review Board or architectural firm contracted by the commission.

Provisions of the bill address:

- The terrain and the use, scale, and architecture of existing buildings in the vicinity that have a functional or visual relationship to the proposed building or modification.
- The scale, proportions, massing, size, proportion and roof treatments.
- The removal or disruption of historic, traditional or significant structures or architectural elements.
- Compatible arrangement and orientation of new construction.
- Preservation of scenic vistas and important public view corridors.

In **rural** areas, Village Districts may be appropriate in areas that:

- Lack a geographic concentration of historic buildings and structures.
- Include infill or newer developments, where the pattern of development is changing either through increased development pressure or different patterns of development.
- Lack sufficient community support for the creation of a historic district and corresponding historic district commission.

In **urban** areas, Village Districts may be appropriate in areas that:

- Lost their historical integrity due to urban renewal, redevelopment, select demolition or cumulative, insensitive changes to existing buildings and structures.
- Desire more flexible regulations to promote new development, encourage particular design trends and development patterns.
- Lack community support for historic district designation.

The five PGD areas fit both rural and urban contexts, as described above.

Village Districts and Historic Districts

Historic districts, as a control mechanism, predate Village Districts. They have the following common elements:

- Districts are delineated, contiguous geographic areas.
- Districts regulate land development patterns and aspects of development not addressed by traditional zoning.
- Districts are overlay zones – underlying zoning still applies and inclusion merely adds another layer of regulation.
- Legal authority for districts is based in traditional police powers – "public health, safety & welfare."
- Districts are administered locally using administrative processes very similar to those used for zoning and other types of land use regulations.
- Enforcement action can be taken for violations of the regulations governing districts.

There are, however, significant differences. Both Historic Districts and Village Districts offer protection of historic and scenic resources, but the processes and reasons for establishing each are different (see Table 3.5 on next page). Village District laws are wider in scope than Historic District regulations since their primary purpose is the protection of an area's overall character, which may include other attributes such as scenic or natural resources, rather than just its historic resources. Unlike Historic Districts, the creation of a village district is not subject to review by a Historic District Commission or to a vote by property owners in the district or by the town's legislative body. Under the act, the Village District regulations are part of the town's zoning regulations. As a result, they are subject to the procedural requirements of Connecticut General Statute Sec. 8-3.

Further, Village Districts differ from Historic Districts in that they can actively encourage development while also shaping it. Village Districts can provide incentives to property owners through increased base density or density bonuses, and greater flexibility on height variances, allowed building uses, and use of outdoor space (such as patios for outdoor dining, parking in alleys, and the closing of excess curb cuts).

Village District regulations draw on the history of the district to influence new construction and changes to existing buildings and structures, but are not constrained by that history. Compared to Historic Districts, Village Districts have a greater recognition of the importance of setting, context and the relationship between buildings and structures and the landscape. The Village District does not require the creation of a new commission and existing zoning regulations are amended to include new Village District regulations.

As a form of aesthetic regulation, a Village District zoning mechanism can be vulnerable to procedural due process challenges related to "vagueness." In the adoption of regulations, Monroe must be careful to identify the characteristics being preserved and provide guidance on what types of actions will be required in preserving those characteristics. Monroe should provide ample opportunities for public input and mechanisms in the enactment process. Procedures for a full and fair hearing regarding the administration of Village Districts should be included in the regulations.

Table 3.5: Comparing Historic District and Village District Laws

Establishment and Administration	Historic District	Village Districts
Goal	To protect historic buildings and areas	To protect distinctive character, landscape and historic structures
Process	Town appoints Study Committee	No study required
Findings & Report Reviewed	Planning & Zoning Commission reviews and comments. CT Historical Commission reviews and approves	No action by the State
Eligibility Requirements	Historic Buildings and Structures	Areas of distinctive character; landscape or historic value identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development
Property Owners Approval	2/3 yes vote of property owners within district	No approval by property owners
Town Legislative Body Approval	Ordinance approved and adopted by legislative body	No action by town's legislative body. Planning and Zoning adopts zoning regulations
Administration	Historic District Commission (HDC) must be established	No new town body required – administration by Zoning Commission
Jurisdiction	Alterations, demolitions, new construction, nonresidential parking areas, outdoor advertisements Paint color excluded HDC can request but not require plans and other documents	Broader in Scope – landscaping, road design, maintenance of public views Substantial rehabilitation and reconstruction of properties New Construction and color of materials Zoning Commission can require an applicant to provide plans and other documents
Enforcement	The town's zoning enforcement officer or building inspector can enforce the commission's regulations and orders.	Similar – Penalty for willful violation is tougher than HDC
Variances	Allows for variances	Allows for variances
Appeals	Superior Court	Zoning Board of Appeals
Outside Consultants	HDC may consult with groups of experts	Shall consult with an architect or architectural firm, landscape architect or planner on each application or an Architectural Review Board

Source: Connecticut General Assembly, Memo Re: Comparing Historic and Village District Laws. Kevin E. McCarthy, 1998.

Characteristics in Monroe to be Preserved

The state enabling legislation requires a town wanting to create a Village District to include information in its POCD that serves as the basis for the creation of the district. The following describes the characteristics in Monroe worthy of preservation through Village District zoning:

Upper Stepney. The proposed Upper Stepney Village District area is located in the western section of Town, approximately near the intersection of Route 25 (Main Street) with Route 59. The consideration of Upper Stepney (formerly Birdsey's Plain) as a Village District is based primarily on the area's historic value, public green, and distinctive character.

Statue at Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel

A history of Upper Stepney – or Birdsey's Plain and its Green – has its genesis in the "mother town" of Stratford, which was founded in 1639. Stratford purchased the prior hereditary claims to the Monroe area from the Paugusset Indians in 1671, in the White Hills Purchase, and it was officially annexed by the Township of Stratford.

The 19th century development of this area was largely brought about by construction of the Housatonic Railroad, which opened in 1840. Upper Stepney has been an important crossroads since colonial times. In the early 19th century, two turnpikes intersected there. The convergence of transportation routes was a catalyst for growth as one of Monroe's major commercial and population centers.

Today, Upper Stepney is still a major commercial area; however, the area still contains significant historic buildings, such as Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel, and other buildings that are mainly occupied by commercial uses. Upper Stepney also contains the Stepney Green, which was Monroe's second green, established just before Monroe's incorporation in 1823.

Thomas Hawley House (c 1755)

Stepney. The proposed Stepney Village District is located in the southwestern part of the Town, roughly at the crossroads of Route 25 (Main Street) with Purdy Hill Road, and including the West Branch Pequonnock River. The consideration of Stepney as a Village District is based primarily on the area's historic value, architectural and environmental significance, scenic value, and distinctive character.

Similar to the history of Upper Stepney, Stepney became one of Monroe's major commercial and population centers during the early part of the 19th century. Likewise, Stepney was the site of several mills in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as the location of the Housatonic Railroad Depot (a.k.a. Stepney Depot). A telegraph office

and post office were established there as well, marking its significance as a center for economic activity.

Today, the area contains several sites listed in the Connecticut State Historic and Architectural Resource Survey. Crescent Place, which is located in Stepney, contains five of these sites, as well as other homes with historic significance. This area also offers scenic beauty, with its gentle rolling hills and proximity to the Pequonnock River, and has a range of architectural styles, including New England Cape, Saltbox, Federal, Greek Revival, and Victorian.

Lake Zoar/Stevenson Area. The proposed Lake Zoar/Stevenson Village District is located in the northeastern section of Town, along Route 34 (next to Lake Zoar) and partially includes some of the Stevenson area near the crossroads of Route 111 (Monroe Turnpike) and Route 34. The consideration of Lake Zoar/Stevenson as a Village District is based primarily on the area's extraordinary landscape, historic value, environmental significance, and distinctive character.

Lake Zoar beach and local store

The Lake Zoar/Stevenson distinction as a historic recreation area dates back to the 1800s. At that time, Lake Zoar, which was created by Stevenson Dam, was a popular swimming and boating area for residents of Monroe and surrounding municipalities.

Today, the lake is still a popular recreational venue for boaters and water-skiers alike, with activities overseen by an agency called the Lake Zoar Authority, which encompasses representatives from Monroe, Oxford, Newtown, and Southbury.

Monroe's lakefront is much smaller than in the other communities. The shoreline bordering the lake that belongs to Monroe accommodates a boat ramp and beach that are in disrepair and rarely used.


Historic residence on Barn Hill Rd. (c 1750)

East Village. The heart of the proposed East Village District is in the northeast section of Monroe, near the crossroads of East Village Road and Barn Hill Road. The consideration of East Village as a Village District is based primarily on the area's historic value and rural, architectural and distinctive character.

The heart of the East Village in the northeast section of Monroe is the crossroads of East Village Road and Barn Hill Road. The name is derived from its geography as the easternmost village in the Parish of New Stratford, which became the Town of Monroe in 1823.

The Village was the center of a growing agricultural community in the latter part of the 18th century. Nearby Boy's Halfway River provided power and gave rise to mills that were important to the Village's development. The character and architectural charm that the Village developed is still evident today, with several occupied federal colonial homes.

Historic East Village Bell

Overlay Districts

The POCD notes that Village District regulations are allowed to control only those areas visible from the road. Monroe may find in the PGD planning stage that there are interior areas requiring new zoning separate from Village District zoning. In addition, portions of Routes 25 and 111 lying outside Village Districts should be subject to improved design regulations. These interior and outlying parts of the commercial corridors need not have the same level of design control as the Village Districts, but should have stronger controls over building placement on the lot, landscaping, and parking location. This can be accomplished by leaving the base zoning in place while mapping an overlay district. The overlay districts can be allowed to extend further than existing commercial boundaries.

Graduated Zoning

To re-set the development pattern in some parts of Routes 25 and 111, a new district is needed, but should be implemented at the appropriate time. Graduated zoning is a two-tier approach to spurring new development. Existing commercial districts remain in place exactly as they are now, and a floating zone would be created. The floating zone would encourage *graduated density*. With a larger minimum lot size than the current minimum, the owner/developer would be allowed more uses, more height, and greater density, according to clear design standards. This two-tier zoning leaves existing owners and tenants with the same development framework in place that they are accustomed to, while providing an incentive towards land assemblage and redevelopment. With the first tier zoning - the existing commercial zones - remaining in place, there is no impact to the property owners or tenants by making their properties non-conforming under a new zoning regime. However, once a parcel of a certain larger acreage is assembled, the owner/developer qualifies for the second tier zoning. By tying greater development potential to larger lot sizes, Monroe creates an incentive for land assembly by the private market. Under this approach, existing owners may continue as they are, or take advantage of the economic incentive to build or sell.

The demographic trends of Monroe help us understand where the Town has been and where it is going. This chapter examines population, households and families, age, race and ethnicity.

CHAPTER 4.0 POPULATION

4.0 POPULATION

4.1 Population Growth and Trends

Over the course of the last 80 years, Monroe has evolved from an agricultural to a suburban community. Before World War II, the population was less than 2,000 people. With the return of soldiers and the beginning of the baby boom, the population of Monroe increased by 67% between 1940 and 1950. Far greater increases in population occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, when the population doubled in each decade, reaching12,047 in 1970. During this period of exponential growth, farms were sold and subdivided to capitalize on an urban population seeking the tranquility of the suburbs.

By the end of the millennium, Monroe continued to grow at a much slower average annual rate (1.9%) reaching just over 19,000. According to the Census Annual Intercensal Population estimates, Monroe's population peaked in 2004-2005 at 19,492, and since that time has stabilized at 19,359 as of July 1, 2009.

Table 4.1: Monroe Total Population: 1920-2009

Census: Decennial Counts and Annual Estimates	Total Population	Annual Average % Change
1920	1,161	n/a
1930	1,221	0.5%
1940	1,728	4.2%
1950	2,892	6.7%
1960	6,402	12.1%
1970	12,047	8.8%
1980	14,010	1.6%
1990	16,896	2.1%
2000	19,247	1.4%
2001	19,297	0.3%
2002	19,401	0.5%
2003	19,440	0.2%
2004	19,492	0.3%
2005	19,492	0.0%
2006	19,413	-0.4%
2007	19,340	-0.4%
2008	19,317	-0.1%
2009	19,359	0.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census: Decennial Censuses 1920-2000 Annual Census Estimates: 2001-2009

The Connecticut State Data Center (CTSDC) prepares projections of town populations to 2030. These projections differ from the Census estimates and other projections. The CTSDC's projections indicate that Monroe's household population will increase by 30.8% by 2030, surpassing 25,000. It should be noted that these State projections are only for population by household. It should also be noted that since 2005, the State projections of population by household have been consistently higher than the estimates prepared by the Census Bureau's Federal State Census Population Estimates (FSCPE).

4.2 Households and Families

In 2000, 19,247 persons lived in 6,481 households for an average household size of 2.97. The majority (82.5%) of Monroe's households is family households; of these, 4,793 are married couple families. Just over 44% (44.6%) of all households include children under the age of 18. Average family size is 3.31. Only 556 family households consist of single parents. Of Monroe's 1,132 non-family households, 85.3% are persons living alone, just under half of whom are 65 years or older. While there is a relatively small share of single elderly households, this can be expected to increase as the Town's elderly population grows.

4.3 Income Distribution and Employment

Monroe's median household income in 1999 was $85,000. The majority of households had incomes above $50,000 and 24.4% had incomes between $100,000 and $199,999. Approximately 10% of Monroe households had incomes of less than $25,000.

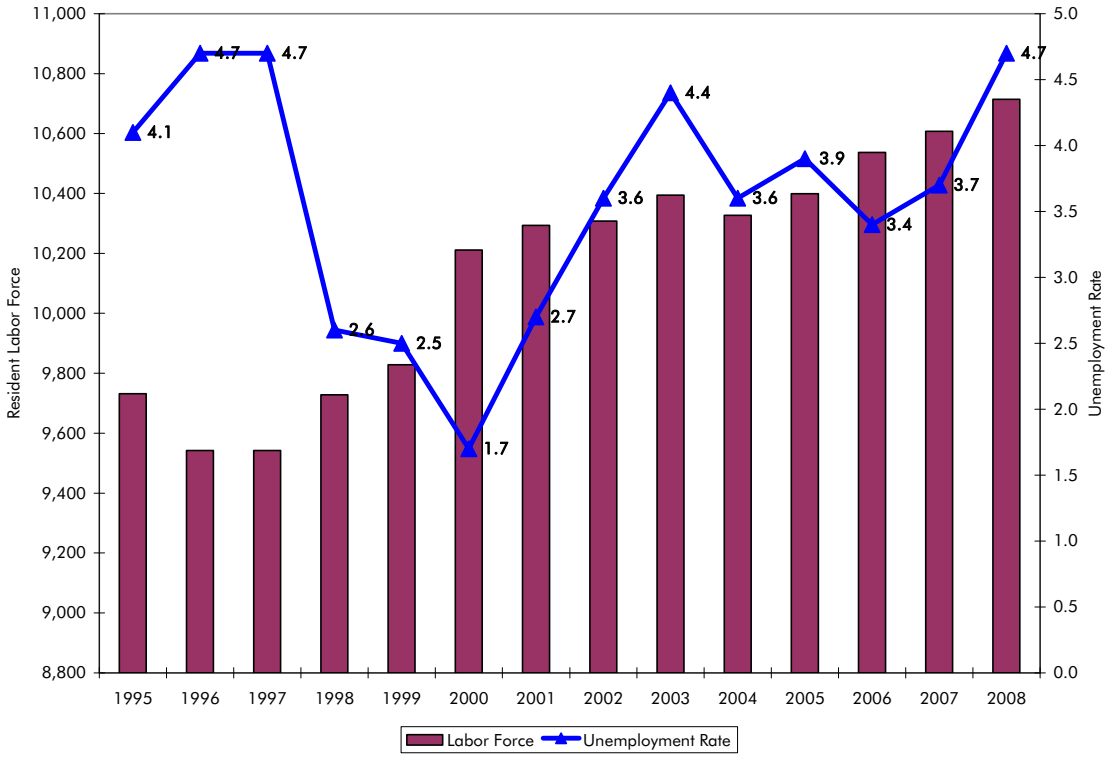
Family income in Monroe was generally higher than household income, with a median income of $92,514. Nearly 10% of families had incomes greater than $150,000.

Poverty Status. Very few families and persons in Monroe were classified as being below the poverty level. Only 1.8% of families were below the poverty level. Of these families, more than half have children under the age of five. For individuals, only 2.6% were below the poverty level—from this group, the highest share is for unrelated individuals.

Earnings. Only 1.2% of households received public assistance in 1999, however, a full 17.3%, almost one in five, received retirement income. This latter category is expected to grow over the course of the next 10 years. As Monroe's elderly population grows, demand for services may also increase.

Employment. With few exceptions, the resident labor force of Monroe has climbed since its trough in 1995. The exceptional periods are between 1995-1996, when the labor force declined by 2%, and, between 2003-2004, when it dipped by 0.6%. The largest annual increase in resident labor force in the recent past was between 1999-2000, when it increased by 3.9%; however, it is possible that this change may have had more to do with better Census enumeration methodologies than with an actual increase in residents.

Chart 4.1: Monroe Resident Labor Force and Unemployment: 1995-2008



Source: CT DOL LMA data by Town

The unemployment rate, although lower than Connecticut as a whole for these years, has followed regional trends. In 2000, the annual average unemployment rate was 1.7, preceding the bursting of the tech bubble and the events of September 11, 2001. In 2008, the unemployment rate was 4.7%, matching the rate high of 1996 and 1997.

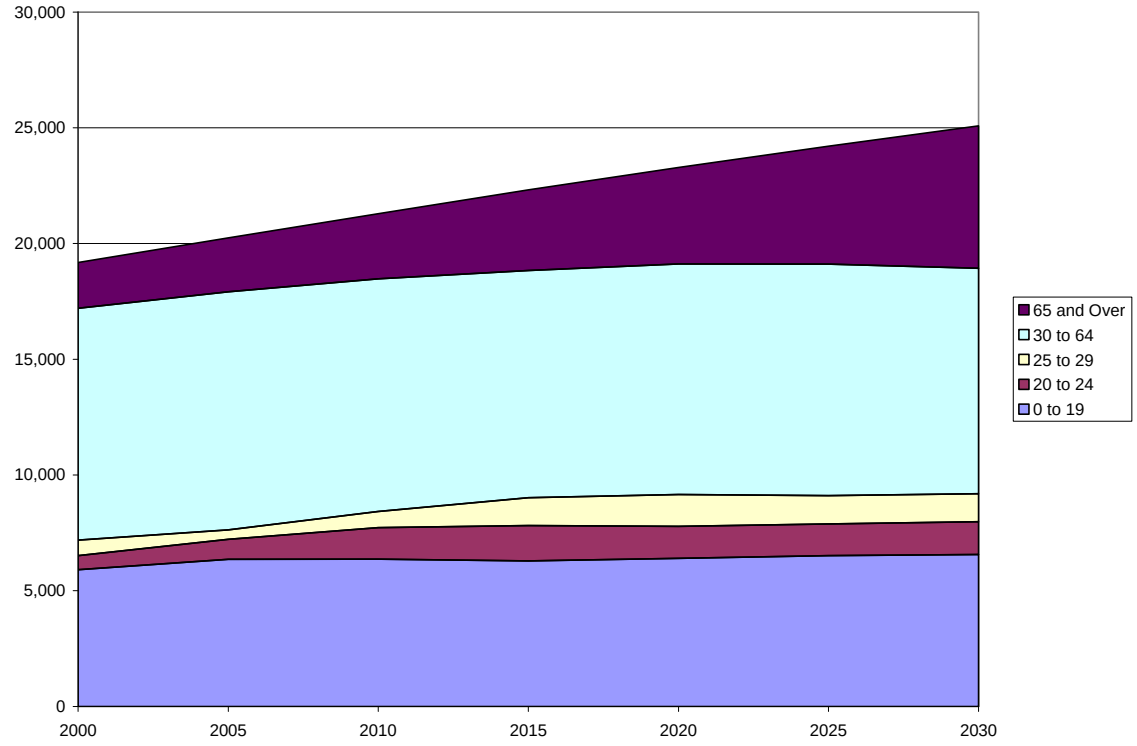
Monthly data for June 2009 shows the unemployment rate in Monroe was 6.6%; however, this is likely a seasonal low.

4.4 Age, Race, and Ethnicity

Age. As part of a global phenomenon, the elderly population of Monroe is expected to increase in share as the baby boomers continue to age. At the same time, shares of working age persons 30-64 and children are expected to decrease. Monroe is unusual, however, in that the shares of population 20-24 and 25-29 are projected to increase to 2030. This may be due to housing options and proximity to both natural attractions and New York City.

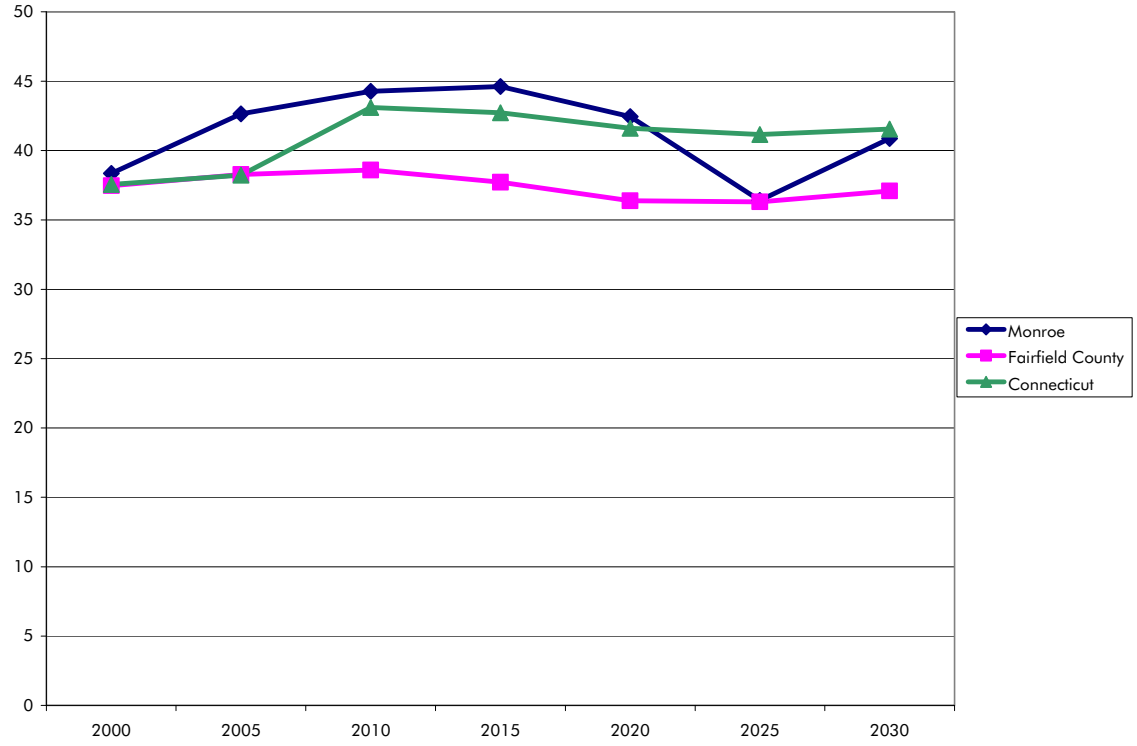
The median age in Monroe was 38.4 in 2000, slightly higher than the State of Connecticut and Fairfield County in that same year (37.6 and 37.5 respectively). It is expected that the median age in Monroe will peak in 2015, while median age in the State and County will peak in 2010. The peaks are expected to be followed by a decline to 2025, at which time the median age is expected to rise again.

Chart 4.2: Monroe Population in Households by Age Cohort: 2000-2030



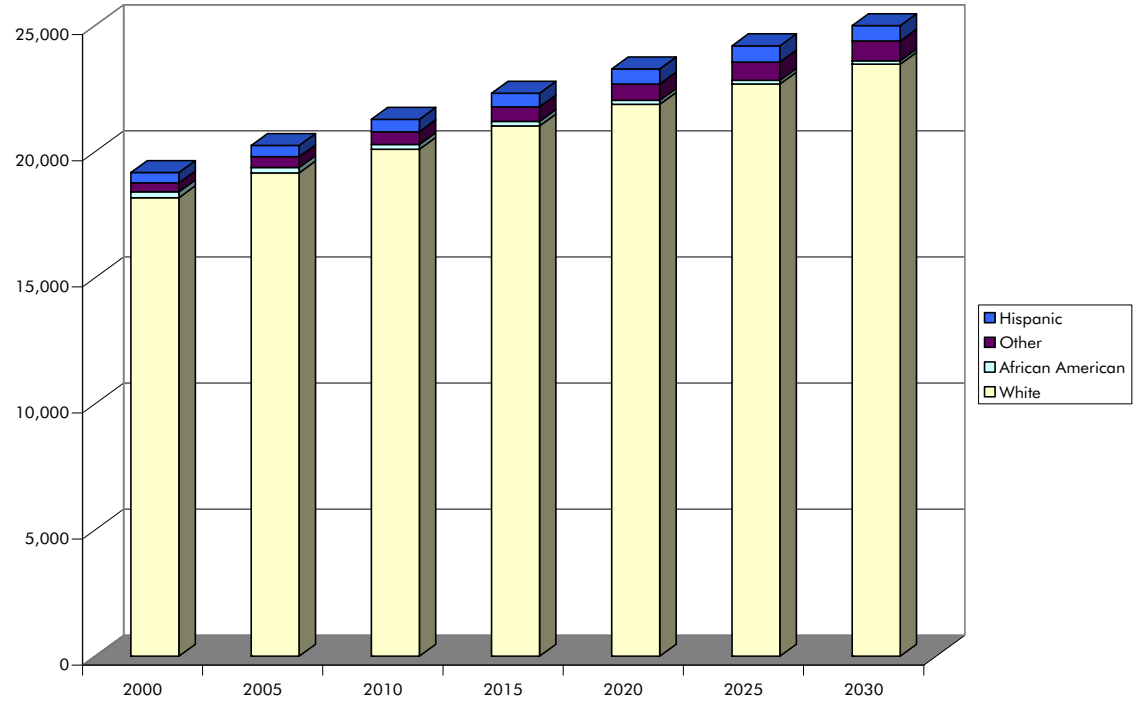
Source: 2000 Census & Connecticut State Data Center Projections

Chart 4.3: Monroe Population in Households by Age Cohort: 2000-2030



Source: 2000 Census & Connecticut State Data Center Projections

Chart 4.4: Monroe Population in Households by Race: 2000-2030



Source: 2000 Census & Connecticut State Data Center Projections

Race/Ethnicity. The racial/ethnic makeup of Monroe is expected to change little between 2000 and 2030. The White population (18,180 in 2000) will remain the vast majority in Monroe and is expected to increase in actual numbers, although it will decrease slightly in share. The Hispanic population is expected to increase by two-thirds over the 30 year projection period, growing from 413 in 2000 to 693 in 2030. The Asian/Other population will have the highest growth, more than doubling in 30 years. However, in actual numbers the increase is only 427 persons. The African American population is expected to drop by almost 50% in actual numbers (from 229 in 2000 to 132 in 2030), and from 1.2% to 0.5% in share by 2030.

4.5 Housing and Tenure

As of 2000, there were 6,601 housing units in Monroe. Of these, only 1.8% were vacant. A vacancy rate of 7% generally indicates a housing market in equilibrium. Monroe's low vacancy rate indicates the high demand for housing in the Town. Of the occupied housing units, only 427 units (6.6%) were rental units. Renter-occupied units have a smaller average size (2.24 persons) than owner-occupied units (3.01 persons).

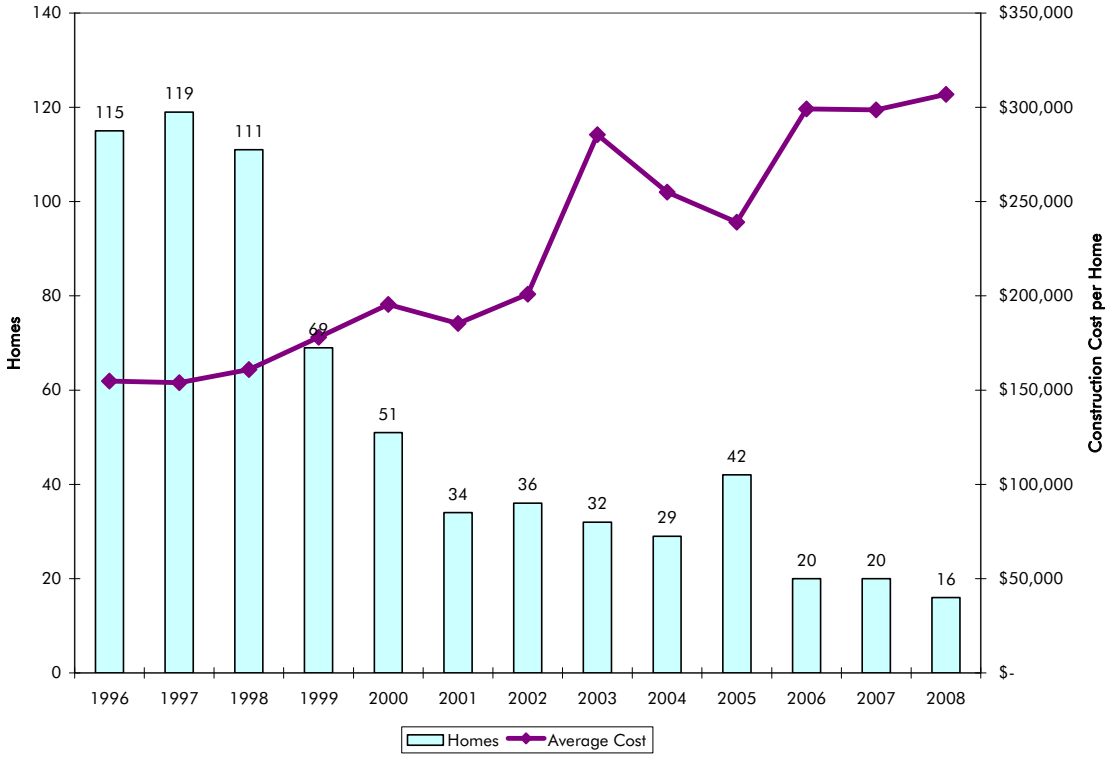
The housing stock is overwhelmingly single-family detached housing (86.9%). Garden apartments, single-family attached or two-unit structures, made up an additional 7.6% of the housing stock. There were 119 three or four-unit buildings, and 233 five to nine-unit buildings. Only seven residential buildings in Monroe have more than 20 units.

Roughly 75% of Monroe's housing stock was constructed between 1940 and 1990. The last construction boom was between 1980 and 1989 when some 1,491 units were constructed, just over 20% of the 2000 total.

New Construction: Building Permits and Costs. Since 2000, 280 residential building permits have been issued according to statistics reported to the Census. Each of these permits has been for a detached single-family home. The last permit issued for a multi-unit building was in 1997 for a six-unit structure.

While the number of permits issued has decreased over the past 12 years, the cost of construction for a single unit has almost doubled since 1996, going from $154,757 to $306,911 in 2008.

Chart 4.5: Monroe Building Permits: Homes and Average Unit Cost 1996-2008



Source: Census of Construction, 2008

4.6 Recommendations

Increase in Dependent Populations

The shift in age structure in the Town of Monroe has some inherent pitfalls. The decreasing share of workforce population in contrast to a stationary share of children and an increasing number of retirees has created an ever increasing dependency ratio. The dependency ratio is the number of non-working residents per every 100 workers.

Table 4.2: Monroe Total Dependency: 2005-2030

Monroe	Number of children (age 0 to 19) that are dependent on 100 workers (age 20 to 64)	Census 2000	CtSDC Projected **Children per 100 Workers**					
			2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
		52	55	53	50	50	52	53

Monroe	Number of elderly (age 65 and over) that are dependent on 100 workers (age 20 to 64)	Census 2000	CtSDC Projected **Elderly per 100 Workers**					
			2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
		18	20	23	28	33	40	50

Monroe	Number of children (age 0 to 19) plus elderly (age 65 and over) that are dependent on 100 workers (age 20 to 64)	Census 2000	CtSDC Projected **Total Dependency per 100 Workers**					
			2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
		70	75	76	78	83	92	103

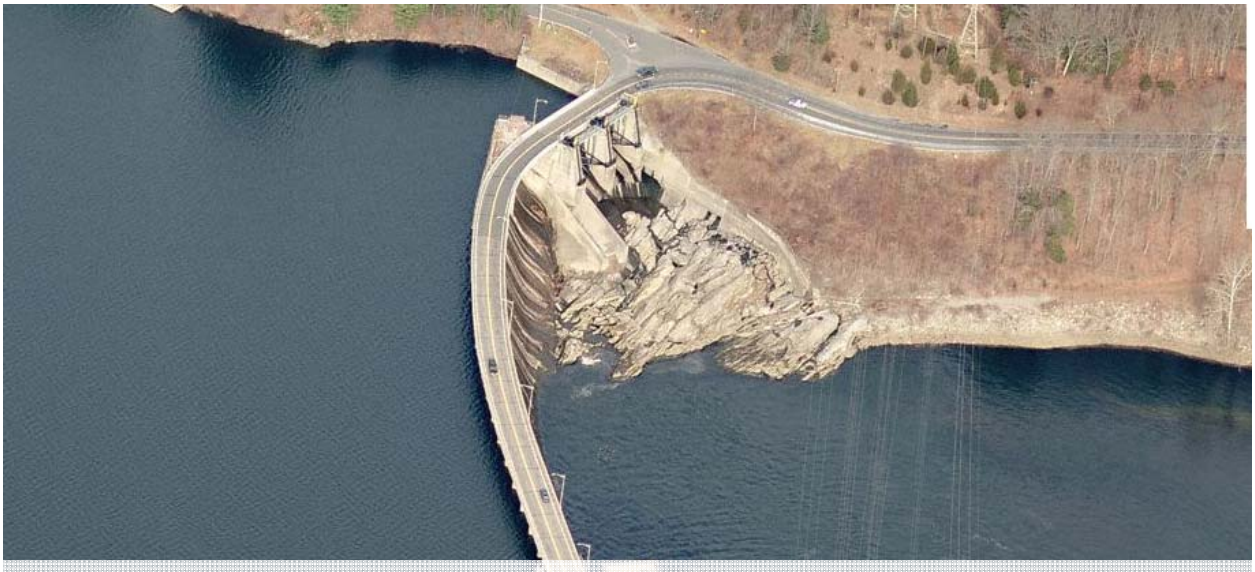
Source: CTSDC

If for any reason, retirement income or service resources are depleted, the Town could be required to provide additional services. Monroe town government should examine options for funding additional services through increasing and/or diversifying the tax base or other mechanisms in preparation for future demand.

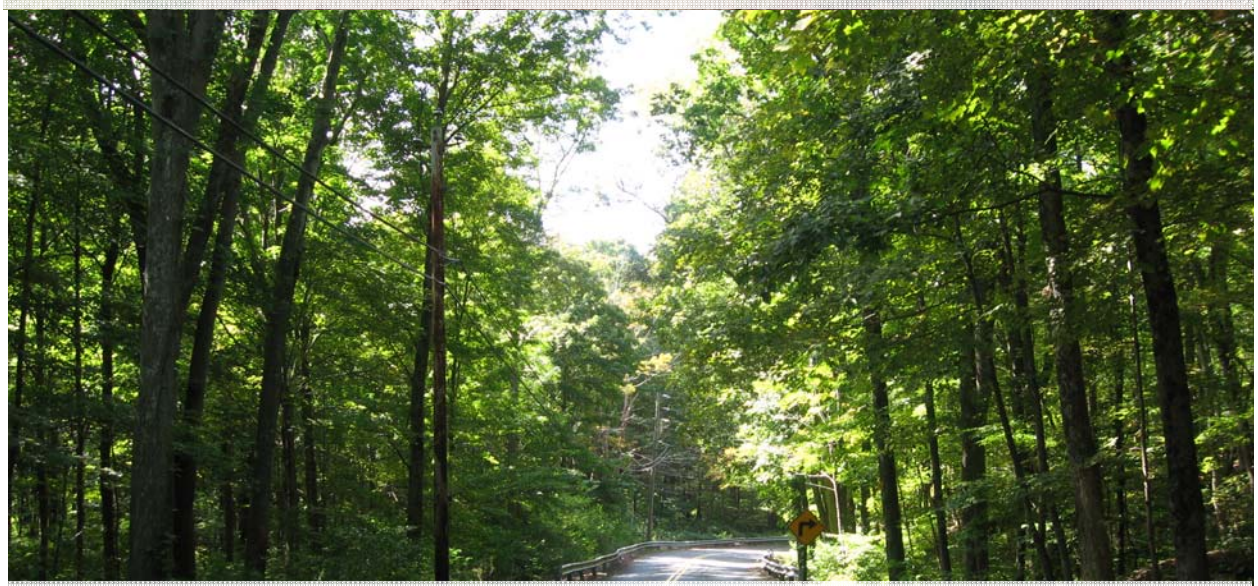
Suitability of Housing for Changing Population Structure

The vast majority of Monroe's housing stock is comprised of single-family homes on relatively large lots. As the shares of young workforce and elderly populations in Monroe increase, the demand for alternative housing options may do the same.

Young working populations often prefer rental units because they are unable to afford or not yet ready to purchase single-family homes. The elderly may be unable to care for a large home and may prefer smaller, and more easily cared for, condominium or rental units. Sites for such housing, if desired, should be carefully planned to ensure that they do not overtax the Town's infrastructure.



The transportation system in a community is an important factor in its growth, development, and mobility of people and goods. This element of the Plan is concerned with the configuration of the overall transportation network and the movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In addition, the infrastructure within Monroe, which supports its residential, commercial, and industrial uses, is examined.



CHAPTER 5.0
TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

5.0 TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

5.1 Transportation

Monroe's transportation system is comprised of highways, local streets, and a bus system. Although there is currently no commuter rail system, the Housatonic Railroad Company operates a short line freight railroad that connects to the national rail system through CSX Transportation (see Figure 5.1). The Town is well served in a north-south direction by the two major arterial roads: Main Street (Route 25) and Monroe Turnpike (Route 111). Both highways are state roads and outside local control. Travel in an east-west direction is more limited as there is no single road that crosses the entire Town. Motorists that want to drive from Route 25 to Route 111 must use several different roads. Other major east-west roads leading to abutting municipalities include Shelton Road (Route 110) and Easton Road (Route 59).

Routes 25 and 111 function as major arterial roadways that connect Monroe residents to their homes, religious institutions, recreation and shopping needs, owners to their businesses, and children to their schools. A major portion of Monroe's character is based on these routes; therefore, it is important that Monroe residents and business owners have a say in the future design of Routes 25 and 111.

5.2 Roads

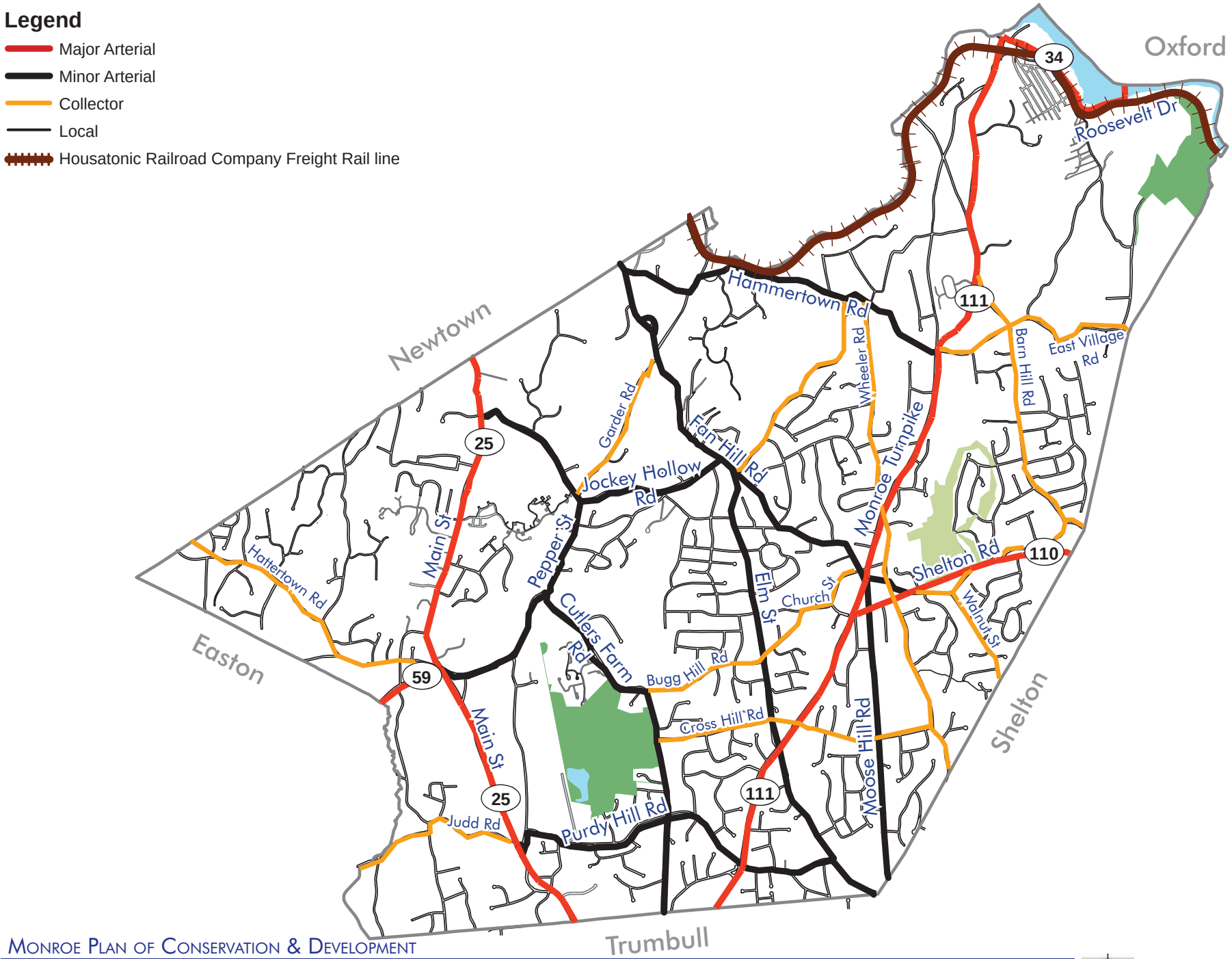
Monroe's extensive road network is a hierarchy of roadway levels, serving varying functions. By classifying roads, and thereby understanding the proper function of each road (e.g. its level of mobility and access), Monroe can more effectively design and manage its road network and adjacent land uses. Various design standards should be applied, such as pavement width, road grade, design speed, landscaped medians, roundabouts, sidewalks and other design features. Land uses should be allowed by zoning with some regard to the road's function and the impact that curb cuts (driveways) will have on traffic flow and safety. All streets should be considered multi-modal in that they accommodate multiple travel choices, trip purposes and travel lengths. Streets can also be designed as "Complete Streets," which allow multiple users - pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders - to share the road. Street function designation should define the broad purpose of the street, such as the need to primarily move vehicles or primarily provide land access. The street connectivity level for pedestrian and bicycle travel should be designed according to the function of the roadway and the surrounding land uses.

The current functional classification of Monroe's roads is shown in Figure 5.1 and can be defined as the following:

Limited Access Roads

These roads provide regional access for vehicles traveling to Monroe. They primarily carry high-speed and long-distance through traffic. All access and egress occurs via grade-separated interchanges, and access to individual properties along the rights-of-way is prohibited. Interstates 95 and 84, which are located outside Monroe to the south and north, are limited access roads.

Figure 5.1: Road Classification



Monroe Plan of Conservation & Development

Monroe, CT

Source: Town of Monroe Street Map (2009)

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Major Arterial Roads

Major arterials are designed to carry regional traffic between Monroe and the surrounding Towns. The five major arterials in the Town - Routes 25, 34, 59, 110, and 111- are state roads; three of which act as major gateways into Monroe (Routes 25, 34, and 111). The width of the pavement of the major arterial should be sufficient to permit the movement of traffic in both directions. Too much direct access (e.g. driveways and curb cuts) and on-street parking should be discouraged along major arterials, with the exception of areas that are designed for low speeds, such as designated Village Districts (see Chapter 3.0).

Commercial corridor along Route 25

Route 59 leading up to Route 25

Route 25 Corridor Plans. Numerous corridor studies and widening plans have been initiated over the years with various alternatives for both Routes 25 and 111. Perhaps no other roads have the greatest influence on Monroe's development pattern than these two. The history and future of Monroe's development pattern are heavily influenced by the design of these roadways. In the 1950s and 1960s, commercial and residential development significantly increased along Route 25 and, to a slightly lesser extent, Route 111. Since then, Route 25 has become an important link between the City of Bridgeport and Interstate 84 in Newtown, while Route 111 also provides access to much of Monroe's commercial businesses, residences, municipal and educational facilities, and other services. As such, traffic congestion has worsened over the years and is projected to increase.

Starting in the late 1950s, state plans proposed widening Route 25 from two lanes to four lanes and extending it as an expressway to connect Bridgeport to Danbury via Interstate 84. During the mid to late-1980s, several widening options were studied, including expanding the Route 25 right-of-way (ROW) up to 100 feet wide with a center median. However, public opposition, coupled with financial and environmental constraints from adjacent wetlands, caused the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) to narrow their scope in 1992 to a limited widening of Route 25, dropping their plans for the expressway[1].

[1] US EPA. Environmental Impact Statement, Trumbull, Monroe and Newtown, CT. Federal Register Environmental Documents. 31 October 1997.

As of 2001, ConnDOT's selected alternative entailed the widening of Route 25 from two to four 12-foot travel lanes – with two lanes in each direction – with an expansion of the current 60 foot ROW to an overall ROW width of 75 feet. The Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA) also proposes full widening as a long-term future option (see Figure 5.2).

Currently, ConnDOT is moving forward with its short-term plans for Route 25: roadway expansion covering two foot wide shoulders and turning lanes at the Route 25 approaches to two existing signalized intersections, Purdy Hill Road/Judd Road and Route 59. ConnDOT completed its design drawings and has acquired the land that is necessary to make the intersection improvements. It is expected that these projects could go to bid by the end of 2010 and could be in construction in the 2011-2012 time period, depending upon funding.

There is currently no funding for the long-term portion of this project, which entails the widening of Route 25, and there are no dates that have been established for pursuing this project. Although the proposed widening of Route 25 is recommended in order to alleviate current and projected traffic congestion by increasing capacity and safety along the roadway, it is in the Town's best interest to ensure that any future widening does not adversely impact its traditional small town character. Through continued coordination with ConnDOT and with design standards set in place, it is possible that Monroe can benefit from the widening of Route 25. Another alternative is to relocate Route 25 on a new alignment, rather than expanding the existing roadway.

In the past, ConnDOT has not provided for bicycle lanes or sidewalks along Route 25, since the required right-of-way would have to be expanded. ConnDOT agrees with GBRPA that a bikeway along existing (or future) trails is more appropriate. Sidewalk policy is left to the Town to determine, with the Town paying a 20% local share for construction costs.

Route 25 Study. In response to ConnDOT's proposed widening of Route 25, a study was undertaken by the Monroe Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) called the *Route 25 Study*, which evaluated the proposed road improvements, anticipated impacts along the roadway, and provided appropriate recommendations to the Town and ConnDOT. The study supported the limited widening of Route 25 with intersection improvements and recommended that widening not exceed 75 feet in width due to the environmental constraints mentioned above, as well as the potential detriment to adjacent commercial buildings. In addition, the study recognized that widening alone would not solve Monroe's traffic problems; rather, other options should be considered.

Further recommendations of the *Route 25 Study* included the following:

- Provision for left turn lanes at key intersections.
- Zoning changes that would encourage coordination of access and parking, simplify parking requirements and encourage pedestrian circulation.
- Dedication of a portion of the State property outside of the pavement devoted to landscaping, rather than parking.
- Coordination with the State to involve a registered landscape architect in the design of Route 25, installation of gateway features (i.e. stone walls, signage, landscaping, etc.), and provision for pedestrian crosswalks at Purdy Hill/Judd Road, Route 59/South Pepper Street, and North Pepper Street.

- Implementation of design standards for aesthetic guardrails, street lighting, and traffic signals (on cable from metal poles).
- Placement of wired utilities underground.
- Encouraging the expansion and improvement of existing utilities (i.e. water, sewer, gas, electric, telephone, and cable).

Route 111. Previous ConnDOT plans for Route 111 had also proposed major widening from two to four lanes between Purdy Hill Road and Fan Hill Road, while other portions would remain two lanes but with wider shoulders and uniform lane widths[2]. Similar to public opposition of Route 25, many residents opposed the overall intensity of the plan for fear that the Town's character would radically change and, in 1994, the Town administered a study of Route 111 with the GBRPA. The plan also recommended its expansion from two lanes to four lanes, but only between Purdy Hill Road and Gay Bower Road. It also recommended a constructing a continuous two-way left turn lane between Elm Street and Cross Hill Road – which has since been superseded by adding several left turn lanes - minor widening between Cross Hill Road and Fan Hill Road to provide 12-foot lanes with wider shoulders, and realigning the intersections of Route 111 with Route 110, and Route 111 with Fan Hill Road and Moose Hill Road[3] (see Figure 5.2).

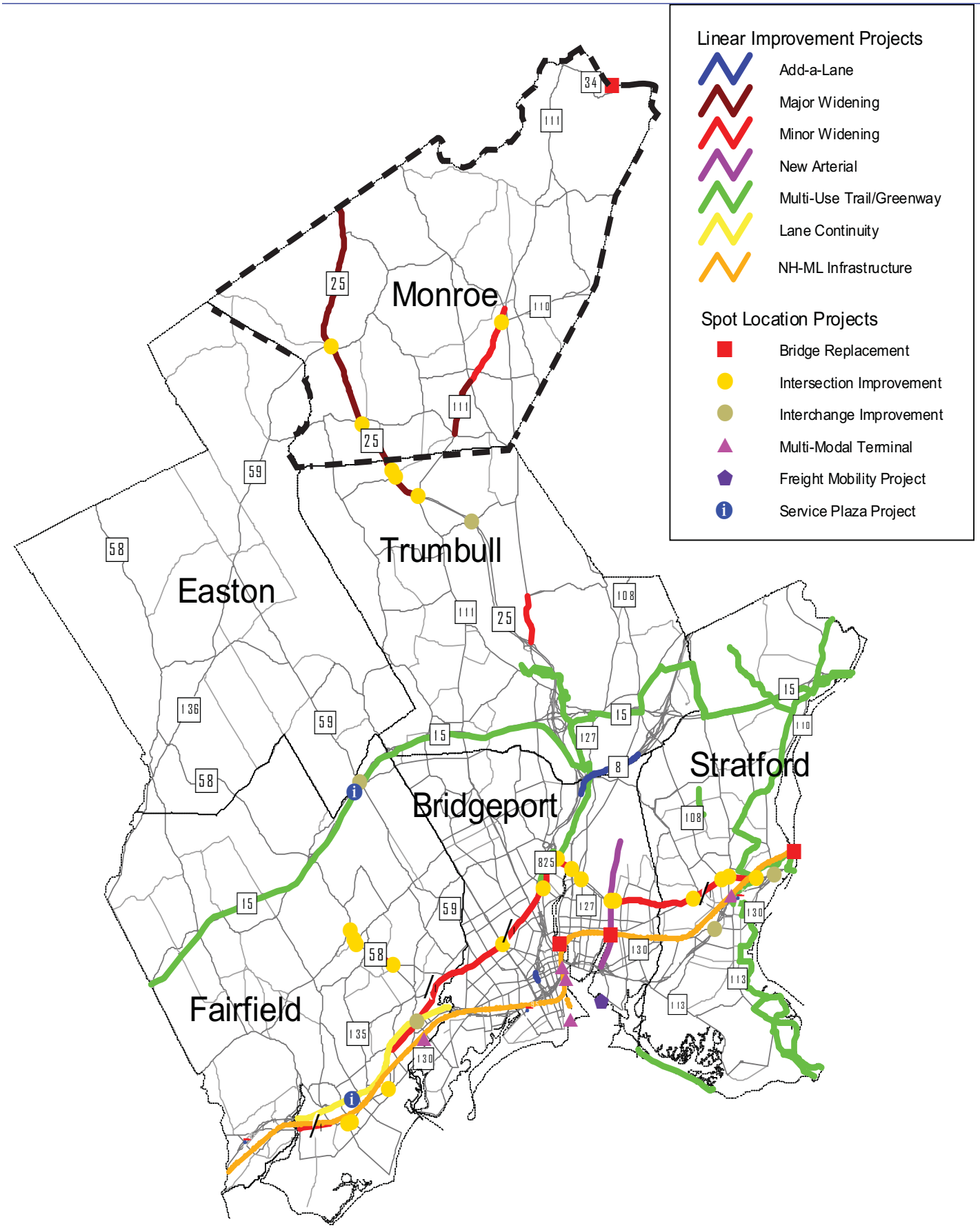
The State does not have any current plans for improving or widening Route 111. However, they will be guided by the past work that was done for Route 111 and also by GBRPA's 2007 Long Range Plan for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region. GBRPA's plan entails the realignment of the Route 110 intersection, as well as minor widening between Purdy Hill Road to Fan Hill Road, and a center turn lane between Elm Street and Cross Hill Road[4]. Due to the historic district and rural character surrounding the Monroe Green, it is recommended that widening occurs on Route 111 but only up to Route 110.

Commercial corridor along Route 111

Route 111 leading up to Monroe Green

[2] Kurumi.com. "Connecticut Roads". Route 25 and 25A and Routes 110-114.
[3] GBRPA. "TIP Amendment - Surface Transportation Program: Bridgeport Urban Area Revised Project Scope – Major Widening and Reconstruction of Route 111, Monroe". 1994.
[4] GBRPA. "Regional Transportation Plan for the Greater Bridgeport Region: 2007-2035". Preliminary Draft Summary Report; GBVMPO. "Draft FFY 2007-2011 Transportation Improvement Program Summary".

Figure 5.2: ConnDOT GBRPA Recommended Improvements for Routes 25, 34 and 111



Monroe, CT

Source: Greater Bridgeport Regional Transportation Plan: 2007-2035

NTS

BFJ Planning

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Route 34. Plans for the proposed Route 34 bridge over Lake Zoar are currently being re-evaluated by ConnDOT. The previously approved plans call for a separate bridge west of the current dam. The re-evaluation now underway is looking at a downstream crossing of the Housatonic River south of the current dam location. The reason for this change is that the Bald Eagle is no longer an endangered species and this creates greater flexibility at downstream alternatives, which have a narrower and less costly crossing of the Housatonic River. Another benefit of the potential downstream alternative is that scenic views of Lake Zoar would be preserved for Monroe residents and visitors.

Although there is currently no funding for the proposed bridge replacement, the State expects that it will have an environmental report and design for this crossing by the spring or summer of 2011. The State will then hold a series of public hearings to discuss the preferred alternative. Figure 5.3 shows all of the potential Route 34 bridge alternatives currently being evaluated by ConnDOT.

Minor Arterial Roads

Minor arterials are designed to carry intra-town traffic. In Monroe, these roads include part of Cross Hill Road, Cutler's Farm Road, Elm Street, Purdy Hill Road, and the complete length of Fan Hill Road, Jockey Hollow Road, Hammertown Road (north end of Town), Moose Hill Road, and Pepper Street. Similar to major arterials, the width of the pavement of a minor arterial should be sufficient to permit the movement of traffic in both directions. Too much direct access (e.g. driveways and curb cuts) should be discouraged along minor arterials, although on-street parking is acceptable in some areas, including Village Districts.

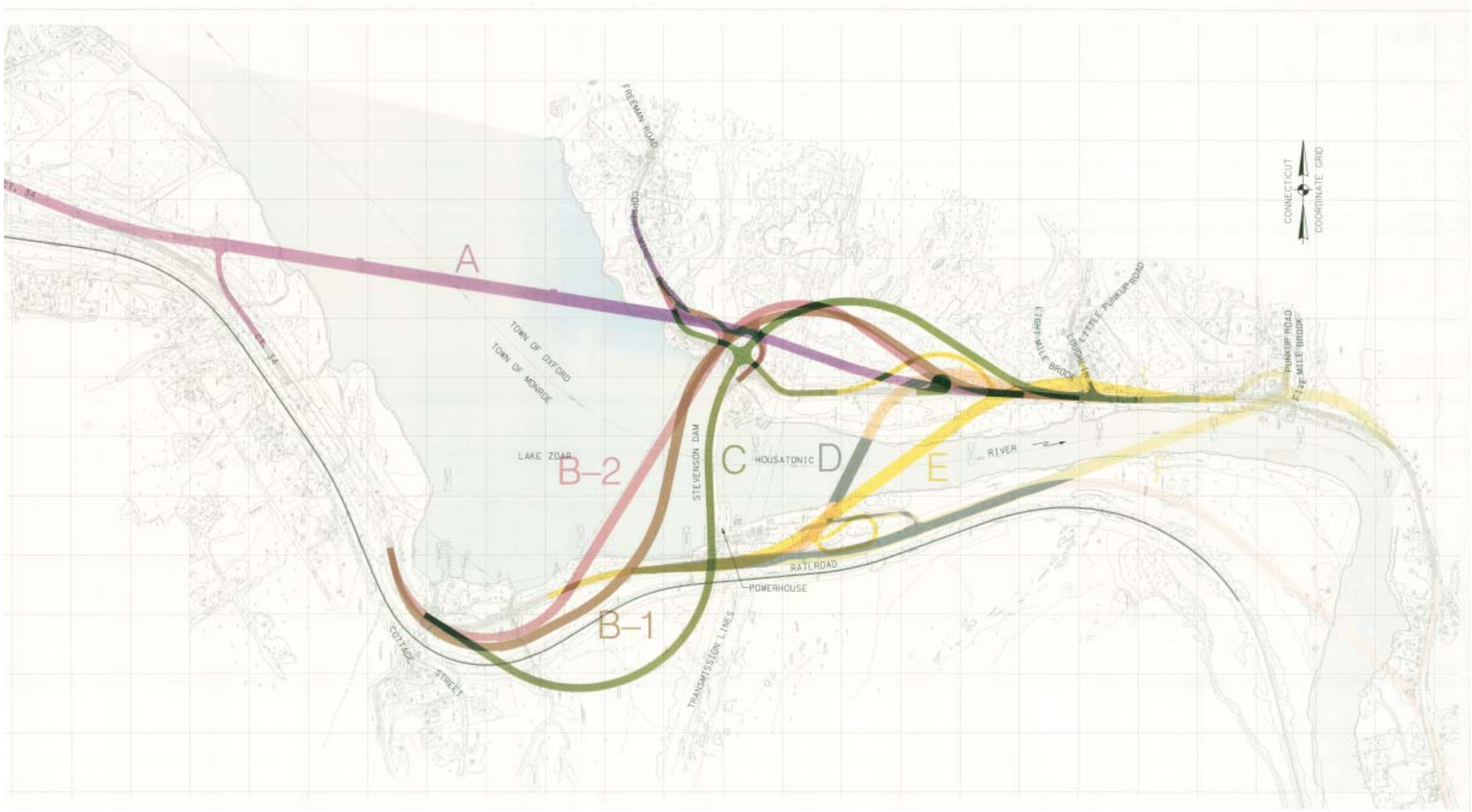
Collector Roads

Collector roads "collect" traffic from residential neighborhoods and funnel it to the arterial system, balancing access and mobility. These roads also serve business areas and generally provide more access to adjacent land uses than arterial roads. Collector roads in Monroe include parts of Cross Hill Road, Cutler's Farm Road, Elm Street, Purdy Hill Road, and the complete lengths of Abbey Road, Barn Hill Road, Bug Hill Road, East Village Road, Hammertown Road (west end of Town), Judd Road, Moose Hill Road, Old Tannery Road, Turkey Roost Road, Walnut Street, and Wheeler Road. These roads are typically somewhat wider than local roads to permit the passage of one lane of traffic in each direction without interference from parked or standing vehicles.

Local Roads

Local roads provide direct access to the properties located along them, and should not be designed to carry through traffic. They have very limited mobility, with average speeds topping at 25 mph, and a high degree of accessibility. Local roads serve residential neighborhoods as connectors to collector roads. Since land use plays a large role in road classifications, local roads mainly serve neighborhoods.

Figure 5.3: ConnDOT Proposed Route 34 Bridge Replacement Options



Monroe Plan of Conservation & Development

Monroe, CT

Source: ConnDOT, January 1996

NTS

BFJ Planning

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.


Typical local roads providing access to adjacent residential uses

Volumes and Levels of Service

With the exception of traffic congestion along Routes 25 and 111 and at some intersections during peak travel times, most roads in Monroe currently operate at acceptable levels of service. Currently, Route 25 reaches an average daily traffic (ADT) volume of 22,800 vehicles between Route 59 and Town Center Plaza (near Fairmount Drive). Route 111 experiences an ADT volume of up to 20,500 vehicles between the Monroe/Trumbull border and Elm Street[5]. As a comparison, most local roads in Monroe have an ADT volume of less than 2,000 vehicles, while some collector roads may reach an ADT volume of up to about 5,000 vehicles. (See Figure 5.4).

As part of GBRPA's Long Range Plan, estimated ADT volumes were projected up to 2035. As shown in Figure 5.5, ADT volumes will continue to be highest for Routes 25 and 111. Additional roadway segments will also have slightly higher traffic volumes than other roads in Monroe, including Routes 34, 59, and 110, and parts of Purdy Hill Road, Elm Street, and Pepper Street[6].

With population and employment growth anticipated to increase, roadway travel in Monroe is expected to increase in some areas, especially along Routes 25 and 111. According to GBRPA projections up to 2035, the entire length of Route 25 will have severe congestion problems. Route 111 will also have severe congestion between Purdy Hill Road and Elm Street, and will be approaching full capacity north of Elm Street, up to Route 110. (See Figure 5.6)[7].

[5] State of Connecticut Department of Transportation 2008 Traffic Volumes – Traffic Log.
[6] The future traffic volume was based on ConnDOT travel forecasting modeling and congestion screening report. ConnDOT growth rates were applied to GBRPA traffic counts (when available) or ConnDOT growth rate estimates were used directly.
[7] The V/C maps were based on ConnDOT's congestion screening report and reflect a division of volume by capacity (based on ConnDOT estimates).

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)

Total volume of vehicle traffic per 24-hour period

1,800 | 6,000 | 15,000 | 23,000

Traffic volumes are based on ConnDOT three-year count cycles for specific locations and include both directions of travel.

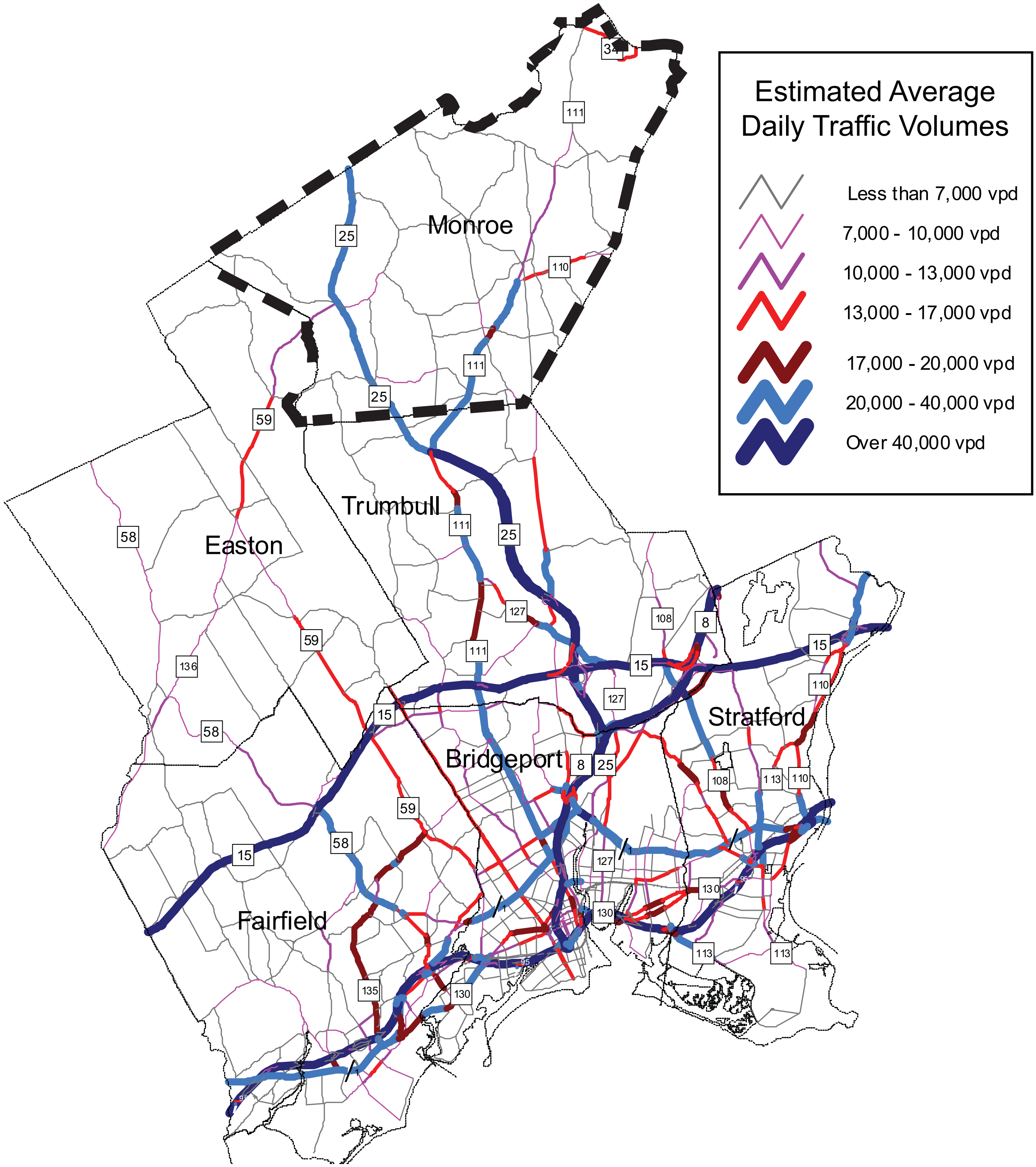
MONROE, CT

SOURCES: MONROE PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT; MONROE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT; CONNDOT, 2008

NTS

BFJ Planning

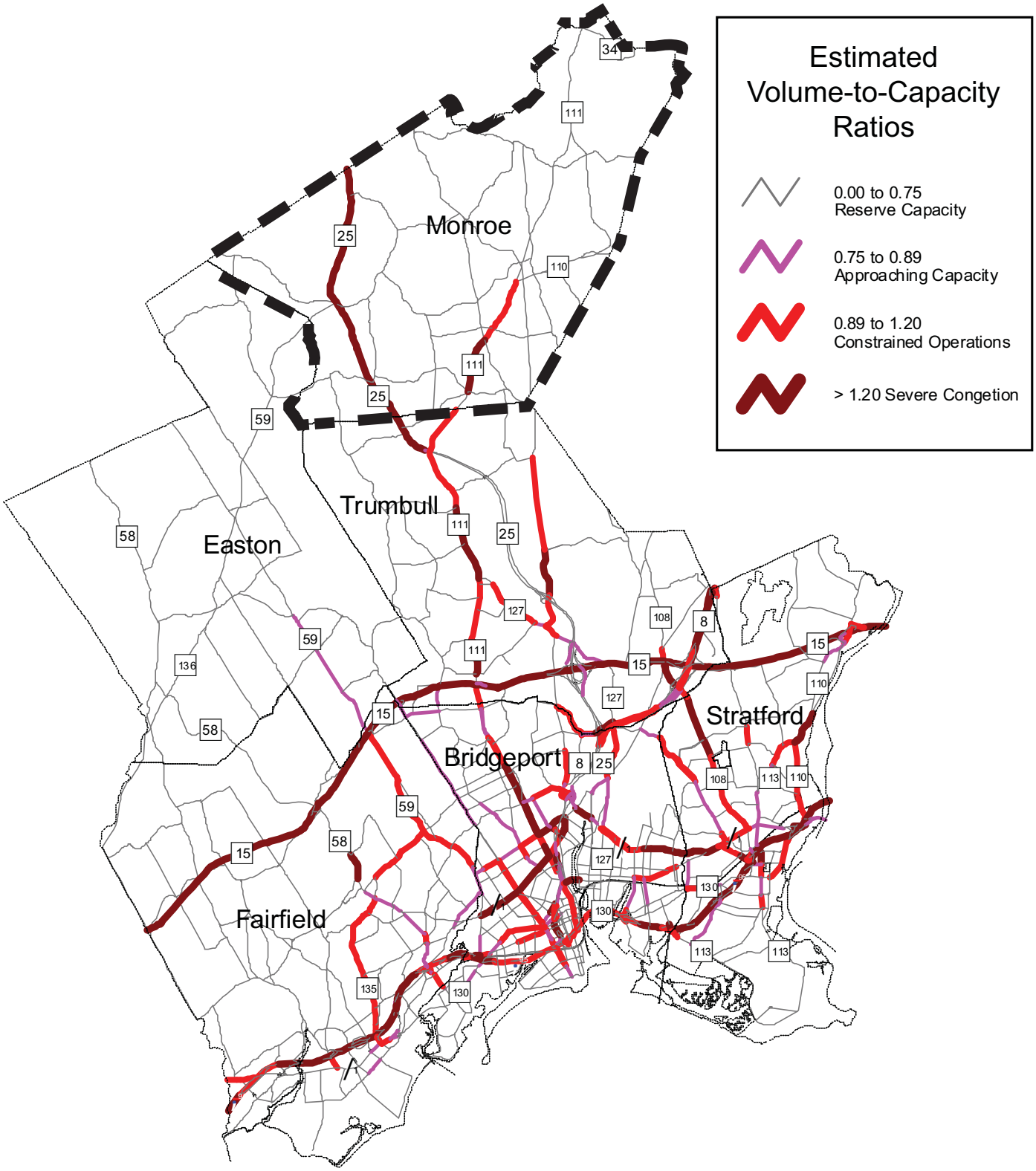
Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.



SOURCE: GREATER BRIDGEPORT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN: 2007-2035

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Figure 5.6: Estimated 2035 Congested Highways



Monroe Plan of Conservation & Development

Monroe, CT

Source: Greater Bridgeport Regional Transportation Plan: 2007-2035

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

5.3 Public Transit

There are two types of transit service in Monroe: People to Jobs (PTJ) and GBT Access. PTJ is a service contracting Regional Transportation Task Force whose goal is to improve access to jobs in the Southwest Connecticut region. PTJ coordinates with various transportation authorities to enhance their transit services and provide financial assistance. In Monroe, PTJ bus service is provided by the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority (GBTA) and is a valuable transit option for low to moderate-income persons. PTJ bus service also provides service to a small number of people that live in Monroe but work outside of Town and, to a lesser extent, people that are reverse commuting from Trumbull or Bridgeport to the southern portion of Monroe.

With increasing gas prices and the public's general increase in awareness of the adverse effects of automobile pollution, many PTJ routes experienced increases in ridership in 2008. This demand helped to increase service times and expand service for some of the Towns in the region, helping to fill in mobility gaps and providing increased access to employment opportunities for some Monroe residents. However, it is anticipated that PTJ ridership in Monroe will only slightly increase in the next decade, as the service is not the travel mode of choice for most Monroe residents.

There are currently only two PTJ bus routes that serve the southeast portion of Monroe:

Route 14. Monroe McDonalds to Westfield Trumbull Mall via Route 111.

Route 19X Express Bus. Monroe McDonalds to Downtown Bridgeport via Routes 25 and 111.

There is currently no bus system that serves the western portion of Town. The Route 25 corridor contains the Northbrook and The Hills of Monroe condominium complexes, as well as several large strip commercial developments, the Pepper Street Industrial Park, Swiss Army office building, and many other small businesses.

A GBTA bus on its route in Monroe

GBT Access is Monroe's only other transit option and provides paratransit services for persons with disabilities that meet the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). GBT Access is offered daily to qualified individuals who travel within a three-quarter mile radius of a GBTA public bus route. Trip destinations are not restricted; therefore, paratransit offers service to shopping, work, medical, and other needs of users.

Under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), at least 40 buses will receive enhancements that will help reduce carbon emissions and maintenance costs, thereby improving performance and reliability[8].

[8] Connecticut Department of Transportation. "Bus Engine Repowering – Greater Bridgeport Transit".

5.4 Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Monroe residents are active walkers and bikers. Walking around Monroe's neighborhoods and parks today one can easily observe residents walking, running, hiking, and biking. However, Monroe's pedestrian and bicycle network is lacking along most roadways and between commercial and residential uses. Along scenic roads, residents can be found running alongside cars on the roadway. With the exception of some existing sidewalks or new sidewalks that are part of new development projects, there are few walkways along major arterials and some local roads, as well as incomplete links connecting land uses.

New sidewalks along Route 111

Today, most walking and biking occurs within parks, such as Wolfe Park, and along the Housatonic Railroad Trail. The Housatonic Railroad Trail is one of Monroe's greatest assets for walking, biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing. At approximately four miles long, the trail is a continuous shared path for pedestrians and bicyclists, and is mostly separated from the road. As part of the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region (GBPR) Regional Trail Project, the trail currently extends from Purdy Hill Road at Wolfe Park up to the Monroe/ Newtown town line. Residents and visitors enter the trail from various trail openings and limited dedicated parking areas.

Bicyclists riding along the Housatonic Railroad Trail

A second phase of the trail is designed to complete the path in Monroe, extending the trail between Purdy Hill Road and the Monroe/Trumbull border. The section through Canterbury Square has been completed and connects the completed section in Trumbull. The Town of Monroe is designing the connection between Maple Drive and the start of the trail in Wolfe Park. The goal of the Regional Trail Project is to provide a continuous link between Bridgeport and Newtown, utilizing the old Housatonic Railroad and Pequonnock River Valley corridor[9] (See Chapter 9.0 Parks and Recreation for additional details).

In its past work, ConnDOT has not provided for any bicycle lanes or sidewalks along Route 25. Due to the right-of-way constraints of Route 25, the continued use of the Housatonic Railroad Trail is encouraged rather than an on-street bike lane, which could be dangerous for cyclists; however, sidewalks should continue to be encouraged where feasible.

On Route 111, bike lanes and sidewalks should also be examined. Previous GBRPA studies of Route 111 have had mixed recommendations for establishing bike lanes on this route. Whereas one Route 111 study recommended designating the shoulders as either a bicycle route or bicycle

[9] GBRPA. "The Housatonic Railroad Trail & Pequonnock Valley Greenway Project". 2006.

lane, the recent Regional Bicycle Plan (2008) does not recommend a bicycle route on Route 111. Instead, the plan recommends a bicycle route that connects Webb Mountain Park to Wolfe Park via Webb Circle, East Village Road, Turkey Roost Road, Fan Hill Road and Jockey Hollow Road to the Housatonic Railroad Trail (see Figure 9.1 in Chapter 9.0). The plan also recommends other bicycle route connections to its proposed regional bicycle route system, including an east-west route along Judd Road and Purdy Hill Road, and north-south routes along Hiram Hill Road, Teller Road, and Elm Street.

5.5 Managing the Impacts of Traffic: TDM and Access Management

Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is a general term for strategies that aim to reduce or change travel demand, especially for single occupancy vehicles. TDM strategies generally offer incentives that decrease the amount of travelers on the road but without negatively affecting the way people travel. A TDM program may include a number of strategies, such as ridesharing, alternate work schedules, improvements to public transportation, parking management, telecommuting, and other policies. A TDM program that includes several strategies can reduce traffic congestion, save time and money, and improve convenience and quality of life.

As part of its *Route 25 Corridor Congestion Management Study* the GBRPA prepared a *Transportation Demand Management Evaluation* in 1999 that considered the effectiveness of implementing a TDM program in Monroe, as well as evaluating current regional TDM measures and public transportation options that are available to commuters and employers.

The *Transportation Demand Management Evaluation* found that out-of-region commuter bus service is limited within the Greater Bridgeport area. In Monroe, current public transportation options are limited both locally and for commuters. Intra-region transit is available via the Route 14 and Route 19X express bus. Monroe travelers looking to commute to locations outside the region have the option of using one of nine park-and-ride lots in the Greater Bridgeport region; however, public transportation options are limited to these lots. Only the park-and-ride lot at the terminus of Route 25 (at Route 111) has direct transit service, but transit options are not available to Monroe residents.

Publicly subsidized ridesharing services are available via technical assistance provided to commuters and employers within the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region via MetroPool, Inc. Programs promoted by MetroPool include ridesharing options, such as the use of carpools, vanpools, trains, buses, telecommuting, and alternative work-hour programs, which are intended to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles during peak commuting periods. Subsidies are also available to employers that provide public transit subsidies or vanpool services for their employees.

The result of GBRPA's study was that the number of person trips and vehicle trips would decline (0.3% and 10.0%, respectively), with the implementation of a comprehensive TDM program for

the region[10]. The study also suggested that an enhanced regional TDM program for the southwestern Connecticut region could improve traffic flow without increasing the capacity of Route 25.

Access Management

Access Management is defined as the "systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections to a roadway. It also involves roadway design applications, such as median treatments and auxiliary lanes, and the appropriate spacing of traffic signals"[11]. The purpose of access management is to ensure that a roadway functions safely and efficiently while providing the appropriate degree of access to adjacent properties. Good access management reduces traffic congestion and improves safety for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike.

While access management strategies vary according to a number of factors – including the function of the roadway as well as surrounding land use activities – one key to access management is connecting adjacent properties (i.e. shopping centers) with driveway connections or service roads. This allows motorists to travel between two abutting parking areas without having to use the main road. These connections also minimize the number of ingress and egress points from the main road to the adjacent properties, thereby reducing the number of turning movements. The collective result is increased traffic flow along the main road as well as an overall safer environment for motorists and pedestrians.

As part of its *Route 25 Corridor Congestion Management Study* the GBRPA prepared an *Access Management Plan for the Route 25 Corridor* in September 1999. The basic objective of this study was to "...Preserve the integrity of arterial traffic, while maintaining essential access to adjacent property". The study identified critical areas where access management techniques, such as shared driveway access between commercial lots, could be applied. These areas included smaller commercial lots that result in numerous curb cuts along the Route 25 corridor, such as older commercial properties where current design standards have not been applied.

The *Access Management Plan* identified the vicinity of Route 25 and Purdy Hill Road/Judd Road as an area where the highest incidence of accidents at commercial driveways occur. Other high accident areas at driveways included the vicinity of Route 25 intersections with Route 59, Bart Road, Green Street, Pepper Street, and Stanley Road. In these areas, like many existing commercial strips along the Route 25 corridor, driveways are closely spaced and access points are not well defined.

The result of the *Access Management Plan* was the implementation of several access management strategies targeted at retrofitting or rehabilitating existing access points and the creation of access management design standards. Strategies included consolidating existing driveways (i.e. shared-use driveways) and combining driveways between commercial properties, narrowing existing driveway openings, relocating access to side streets and closing access to the

[10] The TDM model produced by GBRPA made several assumptions: 1) transit improvements would occur, 2) the TDM program would include the implementation of several measures, and 3) trips made along Route 25 include the overall corridor and not just trips made within the corridor itself.
[11] Transportation Research Board. 2003 Access Management Manual.

main Route 25 arterial, instituting left turn prohibitions, and requiring arterial roadway improvements for large new developments.

5.6 Stormwater Management

Stormwater discharges are generated by precipitation and runoff from land, pavement, building rooftops, and other surfaces. Stormwater runoff accumulates pollutants such as oil and grease, chemicals, nutrients, metals, and bacteria as it travels across land. Heavy precipitation or snowmelt can also cause sewer overflows which, in turn, may lead to contamination of water sources with untreated human and industrial waste, toxic materials, and other debris. Under Phase II of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater program, operators of large, medium and regulated small municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) require authorization to discharge pollutants under an NPDES permit.

In compliance with EPA regulations, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEP) issued a General Permit for Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems in 2004. As part of its State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) program, Urbanized Areas, defined by the U.S. Census as areas having a population density of 1,000 or more people per square mile, were required to develop a stormwater management plan (SWMP). The permit required the Town to develop, implement and enforce a SWMP designed to reduce discharge of pollutants from its storm sewer system to the maximum extent practicable. Monroe was one of 130 towns in Connecticut that was required to develop a SWMP.

Since the Monroe 2000 POCD, Monroe has implemented a SWMP that address six minimum control measures that are required by the state, as well as Best Management Practices (BMP) for each measure that aimed to reduce pollution and control stormwater runoff:

- Public Education and Outreach on Stormwater Impacts
- Public Involvement/Participation
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (i.e. map and monitor storm sewer outfalls)
- Construction of Site Stormwater Management Control
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping For Municipal Operations

In addition to preparing a SWMP to reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff, Monroe conducts annual wet weather sampling of stormwater discharges to monitor the impacts of stormwater runoff within the Town's water bodies.

Since the Monroe 2000 POCD, several recommendations regarding stormwater management have been implemented. The Town has prepared a SWMP that manages the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff. On a case-by-case basis the Town has also analyzed drainage needs and issues for specific development projects; however, no town-wide engineering study of drainage needs and issues has been developed. The 2000 POCD also recommended addressing stormwater drainage needs along Route 25 prior to any proposed widening by ConnDOT. Since no widening has occurred, this item has not been addressed.

5.7 Sanitary Sewers and Public Water Utilities

Sewer Services

Monroe does not currently have public sewers, which limits the intensity of new growth. All land uses are served by subsurface treatment systems, such as individual systems and community septic systems, which are located in most multi-family developments and some larger commercial sites. In 2004, the Health Departments of Monroe and Trumbull were combined to form the Trumbull/Monroe Health District. The Health District performs a number of public services that promote better health and prevent disease, including monitoring and maintaining community septic systems with onsite sewage disposal design flows of less than 2,000 gallons per day (GPD). The Health District also reviews septic systems for individual sites with design flows of less the 2,000 GPD[12].

Monroe's 2000 POCD recommendations on sewers reflected the growth in Monroe and planning policies at the time. The plan recommended the continued use of community septic systems for different land uses, which is currently accomplished on a case-by-case basis. The plan also identified potential public sewer areas for the southern portions of Route 25 and 111, where concentrations of commercial businesses and some offices are located. According to the 2000 POCD, municipal sewers were proposed for a distance of roughly 1.25miles from the Monroe/Trumbull town line extending along Route 25 to the northwest. The second area along Route 111 extended approximately 1.6 miles from the Monroe/Trumbull town line extending northwards.

The 2000 POCD also reflected recommendations of the last *Sanitary Sewer Study* (August 1998) that was prepared on behalf of the Town. At that time, Monroe's Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) was in discussions with Trumbull and Bridgeport to possibly establish a public sewer system that would have served non-residential uses in the area. The study included wastewater flow projections for areas within the Town proposed for municipal sewage to ensure that the system was designed properly and could accommodate a comprehensive sewer system in parts of Monroe.

Although there are no municipal sewers in Town, the current POCD supports an active Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA). It is the recommendation of the Monroe WPCA that future municipal sewer service be encouraged for the primarily commercial areas along the Route 25 and 111 corridors. The WPCA believes the introduction of a municipal sewer system in Monroe will greatly enhance the prospects for commercial development and an expansion of the commercial tax base. Also, it is believed that transitioning from a reliance on subsurface sewage disposal to sewers in these areas will minimize the potential for pollution resulting from outdated septic systems located on properties lacking ideal hydrologic and geologic site conditions ideal for a properly functioning septic system. As such, it is believed that such a transition will result in an enhancement to the quality of surface and ground water in these areas.

[12] The CT Department of Health reviews septic system applications for design flows between 2,000 GPD and 5,000 GPD. The CT Department of Environmental Protection reviews applications design flows greater than 5,000 GPD.

The WPCA has established a Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP) and Sewer Service Area Map. These tools are vital for sewer service to ultimately be brought to the Town and to, therefore, greatly enhance Monroe's economic competitiveness. They will facilitate an enhancement of the environment and water quality within the Town, and will eventually allow for a mix of uses and densities along Routes 25 and 111.

The Monroe WPCA has prepared a WPCP and Sewer Service Area Map in accordance with Connecticut DEP guidelines dated November, 2008. In addition to defining areas in which future sewers are planned, the Map also identifies areas currently served by existing community septic systems as well as "sewer avoidance areas," which are predominantly residential in use (see Figure 5.7). The WPCP will also enable the Town to plan for large capital expenditure required to implement the plan over time. Connecticut DEP informs towns that, "The sewer service area map should be included in the infrastructure section of the municipality's POCD adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission. This can be done in the decennial update or as an amendment to the adopted POCD when the sewer service area map has been prepared." DEP also notes that the municipal WPCP will have to be consistent with the State Plan of Conservation and Development. As such, the POCD recommends that the Monroe WPCA review the Town WPCP and Sewer Service Area Map for consistency with the State Plan of Conservation and Development and, as each may be periodically updated in the future, that the WPCA forward any changes to the DEP.

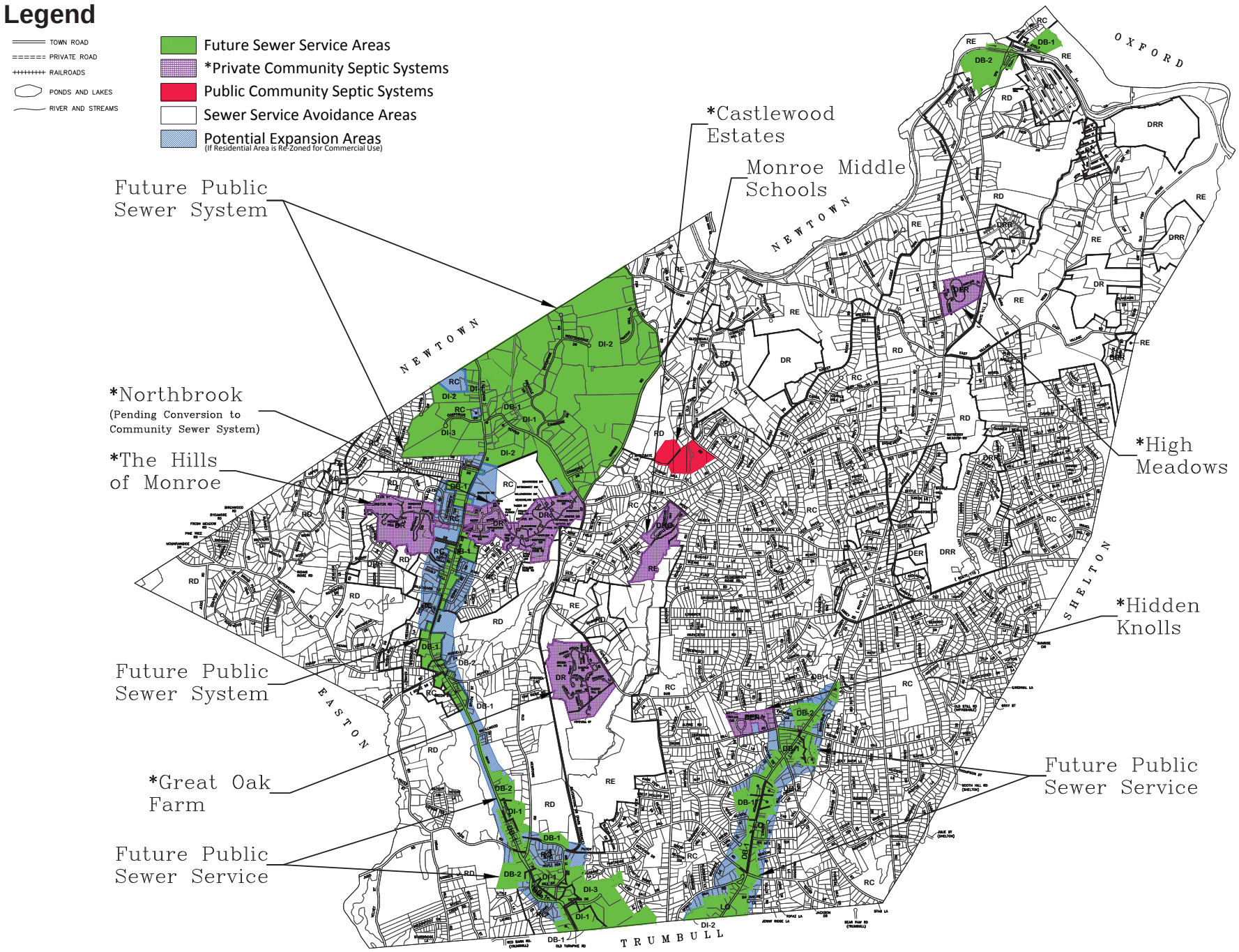
Water Service

Public water service presently reaches many of Monroe's land uses and most of its commercial business and industrial areas (see Figure 5.8). The 2000 Monroe POCD recommended the continued extension of the public water service to eventually provide water supply and fire protection to all of Monroe. Since 2000, public water service has been extended and continues to be an ongoing process in Monroe. Clean and ample public water service is imperative to public health and safety. It allows Town residents to safely use water for drinking, cooking, bathing, home maintenance, and yard work. It also helps fire fighters to protect property, encourages economic development, and helps shape land use and intensity where the Town desires growth. Regular monitoring of surface water bodies ensures clean water while stormwater regulation assists in controlling runoff, which ultimately leads to rivers and streams, and discharges to groundwater.

Monroe's water service is currently provided by Aquarion Water Company (formerly Bridgeport Hydraulic Company) as part of its Bridgeport System. The Bridgeport System serves about 350,000 people in 10 municipalities in the Greater Bridgeport Area. On average, customers of this service area use about 40 million gallons per day for drinking, bathing, restroom use, and watering the lawn. The water service is mostly supplied by eight surface reservoirs located throughout the state, as well as two Aquarion underground well fields. With the exception of the well field supply, which filters water naturally underground, water that comes from the reservoirs is filtered at one of three plants: Trap Falls water treatment plant in Shelton, Easton Lake Plant in Easton, and Warner Plant in Fairfield[13]. As a way to monitor the quality of water in its system, Aquarion Water Company prepares an annual Water Quality Report for public review. Its 2008 Water Quality Report found that the Bridgeport System provided water quality that met state and federal standards.

[13] Aquarion Water Company. "2008 Water Quality Report". Greater Bridgeport System.

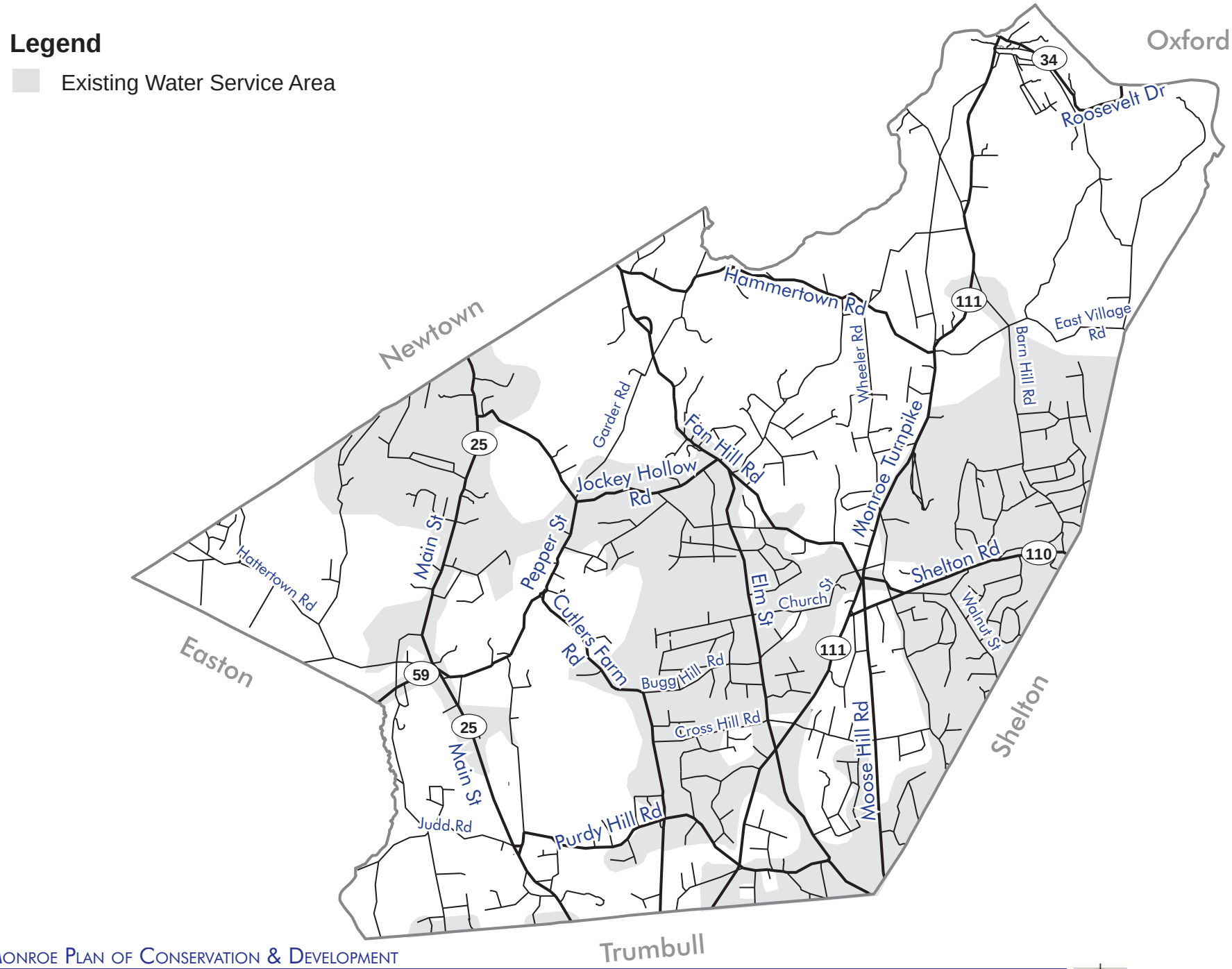
Figure 5.7: Sewer Service Area Map



Source: Monroe Water Pollution Control Authority, 2010

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.



Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

5.8 Solid Waste Management

Town refuse and recycling are both managed by the Department of Public Works (DPW), which currently disposes of approximately 12,000 tons of refuse and 1,300 tons of recycling on average each year. Residential and commercial refuse is collected by private haulers who are obligated to obtain an annual permit for each truck collecting refuse in town. The Town also offers Dial-A-Dump, an effective program that serves approximately 1,200 households annually by picking up and disposing of their bulky waste not collected by trash haulers[14].

Monroe contracts with the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority (CRRA)[15] to deliver a minimum yearly tonnage (with a 10% window) of refuse to the Waste-to-Energy plant owned and operated by Wheelabrator Technologies, Inc. in Bridgeport. All private haulers are required by local ordinance to deliver their waste to the Spring Hill Road Transfer Station in Trumbull where DPW also has a contract with Enviro to haul from there (after being compacted) to the plant in Bridgeport. Due to this complex process, private haulers occasionally take refuse directly to the plant in Bridgeport where the quantities are not reported from Monroe.

Unlike refuse hauling, recycling comprises part of the Town's tax base. The DPW collects from approximately 6,600 homes once per week, including condominiums. This is also a contract with CRRA that mandates that Monroe deliver recycling goods to a plant in Stratford, which is run by Fairfield County Recycling, Inc. The Town currently manages the Garder Road Bulky Waste Site and also participates in the cost of operation of the Spring Hill Road Transfer Station according to a three Town agreement between Monroe, Trumbull, and Easton. At the Garder Road facility, which is open on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 am to 3 pm, DPW accepts and recycles leaves, brush and small wood, tires, metal, and Freon appliances. All of these materials are also accepted at the Spring Hill Road facility, in addition to cardboard and other items accepted in the curbside residential recycling program (#1 & #2 plastics, aluminum/metal cans, glass containers, newspaper and magazines). Neither facility allows business participation.

The Garder Road facility is expected to reach its full capacity as a landfill in another eight to 10 years based on current fill quantities. In the future, it would still be utilized as a transfer/recycling station for the Town's recyclables (i.e. tires, leaves, metal, etc.) and processing of wood, while all bulky waste would go to the Spring Hill Road Transfer Station. In order to keep up with current and anticipated waste management needs, the Spring Hill Road facility will require the three Towns to commit funds to an escrow account for its future maintenance.

Monroe is one of 12 towns that meet with CRRA on a quarterly basis, and is trying to find ways to reduce refuse and increase recycling without jeopardizing the current disposal contract with CRRA. Currently, there are clauses that do not penalize for reduced waste deliveries as long as proof of increased recycling is evident. Toward these ends, the 12-Town consortium is currently exploring converting from double stream to single stream recycling[16].

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[14] Town of Monroe Department of Public Works.

[15] CRRA is a quasi-public agency established by the State in 1973 to modernize and consolidate Connecticut's solid waste disposal.

[16] Single stream recycling refers to a system in which all paper fibers and containers are mixed together in a collection truck, instead of being sorted into separate commodities (newspaper, cardboard, plastic, glass, etc.) by the resident and handled separately throughout the collection process. In single stream, both the collection and processing systems must be designed to handle this fully commingled mixture of recyclables.

5.9 Information Technology and Communication

Monroe's Information Technology (IT) Department is responsible for managing the Town's IT needs, including its roughly 2,200 computers, internet, intranet, and software. Monroe IT aims to provide the appropriate technology that allows Town employees, police officials, public schools (faculty and students), and emergency services to access and share information in such a way that will improve services to the Town and to the residents of the community. The IT Department also supports all computer and data network functions for all Town departments, such as the Town's intranet, which allows Town employees to access and share information.

Over the past few years, there have been a number of IT improvements. Improving communication and management within Monroe's public schools, the Town now uses PowerSchool software, a web-based student information system that enables teachers to manage their classrooms in a variety of ways, such as by tracking grades, projects, and homework assignments, and communicating real-time grades, attendance, comments, assignments, and scores to parents and students. Monroe public school faculty and students also have access to ClassLink, which enables them to access all of their work and programs that they use at school from home.

Various IT hardware has also been improved over the past few years, such as new computers and printers within public school classrooms, updated Police Department computers, replacement of copy machines at Town Hall, and installation of SMART boards in public school classrooms. Supporting energy efficiency within Monroe's public schools, the number of computer workstations has been reduced from three or four workstations per classroom to one workstation that is paired with up to three monitors, maintaining the same level of use for those computers.

Other system and network improvements have improved intra-municipal and public communications, including a switch from Novell to Windows XP operating system, new municipal telephone systems, corrected Police Department radio interferences, updated computer network firewall protection, and a new Town Hall website[17].

In 2007, the Town prepared a *Strategic Technology Plan* (STP) with an underlying strategy "…To provide decentralization and web-based computing capabilities throughout the Town while maintaining centralized management of the Town's technical environment, including the IT infrastructure, corporate data, technical standards and policies". The plan identified the Town's IT vision "…To use information technology to increase the capabilities of the organization by improving service delivery, supporting policy development, and enabling information access".

The STP provided recommendations that would support this vision, including continual upgrading of IT infrastructure (e.g. fiber optics), increasing the development of e-government applications that allow real-time transactions and immediate access to information by residents, improving relationships between IT and user departments, and increasing the Town's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capability to meet Town-wide needs.

[17] "Monroe Technology Time Line of Accomplishments". 4 November 2009.

The Town also has an *Information Technology Continuity Plan* (ITCP) that outlines strategies for responding to potential damages or outages to data and telecommunications systems that support municipal government. This plan satisfies critical emergency planning objectives for Monroe's internal and public communication structure by establishing a timeframe and assigning responsibilities to assist in restoring critical network and communication operations.

In addition to the Town's website, residents can tune into the WMNR radio station for emergency broadcasts. Monroe's emergency services radio system (for Police and Fire Departments, EMS and DPW) operates on a simulcast system utilizing two Town owned towers: one at the Police Department, which is for public safety only, and the WMNR Tower, which collocates with the Town owned radio station, and by Town Council stipulation, can only carry WMNR and emergency services radio. The system also collocates on two privately owned cellular towers located on Moose Hill Road and Monroe Turnpike[18].

Cellular service coverage is mostly made available to residents via three privately owned cellular towers, located behind the Stepney Fire Department - on Main Street, across from Clock Tower Square - and on the site of the old Monroe Landfill located on Guinea Road. Cellular coverage in Monroe is also supported by towers in surrounding Towns. There are gaps in coverage in some of the more remote areas of Town[19].

5.10 Recommendations

Efficient and safe transportation and the availability of infrastructure are instrumental in land use decisions. Transportation can have a profound effect on the character of a corridor or entire community. The expansion of infrastructure, such as sewers, can also benefit the Town by allowing for a mix of uses and increased densities along the Town's major corridors. Manageable density increases can yield improved housing options and business opportunities set with walkable, compact development.

The potential future widening of Routes 25 and 111 have been debated for years yet ConnDOT has only offered a general picture, as current plans only entail intersection improvements along these roadways as a result of current State budgetary constraints. Still, limited widening would be beneficial in easing Monroe's traffic congestion. Similarly, the State's plan to build a much needed new Route 34 bridge in the vicinity of Lake Zoar and the Housatonic River will also affect Monroe's character.

Roadway improvements to reduce or stabilize traffic congestion are not the only way to address this issue. The Town should consider expanding its network of sidewalks and trails to improve mobility for its residents, business owners, employees, and visitors. In addition to expanding the physical network, the POCD recommends Access Management and Transportation Demand Management as strategies for managing demand so that the network, as built, functions better. Bus transit options should also be further evaluated for existing multi-family residential areas and future mixed-use areas. The overall intent of the POCD recommendations is to guide future development to areas that can feasibly accommodate growth, while preserving natural, historic and cultural resources. POCD actions will help increase mobility and accessibility for many Town

[18] Monroe Police Department.
[19] Monroe Department of Public Works.

residents and business owners, link critical resources, and improve infrastructure needed to support Monroe's needs.

Transportation Recommendations

Coordinate Roadway, Infrastructure, and Village District Improvements with ConnDOT in Conjunction with Proposed Plans for Routes 25 and 111

- Implement the recommendations of the *Route 25 Study*.
- Develop a sidewalk plan that expands sidewalks and connects missing pedestrian links on both sides of Routes 25 and 111.
- Provide crosswalks and pedestrian traffic signals at key intersections and where pedestrian activity is high, such as in proposed Village Districts.
- Consider design elements, such as distinctive paving and curb extensions on side streets approaching Routes 25 and 111.
- Enhance sidewalks with architectural street lighting and landscaped buffer strips separating the street and sidewalks.
- Dedicate a portion of the State property outside of the pavement devoted to landscaping, within existing parking areas.

Alleviate Traffic Congestion

- Support the following ConnDOT proposed improvements:
  - Intersection improvements to Route 25 with Route 59, Pepper/Green Streets, and Purdy Hill/Judd Roads, and potential limited widening between Trumbull and Newtown town lines.
  - Intersection improvement of Route 111 with Route 110, and limited widening only up to Route 110.
  - Route 34 bridge replacement downstream from its current location.

- Implement access management strategies:
  - Access management strategies manage traffic volume without increasing the size and capacity of existing roadways. An effective congestion management technique is the computerization of traffic signal equipment so that signal timing can be adjusted according to traffic volumes and time-of-day. Such traffic signal upgrades are recommended for intersections along Routes 25 and 111.
  - Other effective access management techniques comprise adding turn lanes, installing traffic signals, controlling access to properties, establishing minimum spacing for driveways, consolidating adjacent driveways, constructing frontage service roads, installing medians and channeling traffic flow. Access management should be concentrated in the Overlay Districts shown on the Future Land Use Plan (Figure 13.1). Recommended access management strategies to control movement between development and adjacent streets are as follows:

Routes 25 and 111

- Set minimum driveway spacing and require that access roads of two adjacent lots be shared. New driveways should be located directly opposite existing driveways and should not be offset.
- Where practical, require access roads to be located on a side street rather than on Route 25.

- Increase the landscaped buffer requirement on Route 25 and prohibit parking in the buffer area.
- Require developers to install a left turn lane into their property.
- Require developers to conduct a traffic study for submission to the Planning and Zoning Commission as part of the site plan application process for projects over two acres. Such studies should include an analysis of the vehicular traffic that will be generated by the proposed development, an evaluation of the need for a new traffic signal, and an explanation of how access to the site will be managed.

- Institute a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program:
  - Promote MetroPool TDM services that are available to commuters and employers.
  - Work with GBRPA on developing an updated regional TDM program that reduces traffic congestion on Routes 25 and 111.

Expand Multi Modal Transportation System

- **Improve Monroe's bicycle and pedestrian network.** Improving Monroe's bicycle and pedestrian network will encourage people to cycle and walk to destinations in the Town, not just for recreation, but as a means of mobility. Improvements in the pedestrian network impacts a broad population spectrum, including kids, adults, and senior citizens. Potential benefits include a decrease or stabilization of automobile traffic and improved physical fitness. This can best be accomplished through a planning study to identify potential bicycle routes throughout the Town and the development of a pedestrian connectivity plan to enhance the pedestrian network. Improvements to the bicycle and pedestrian network should include:

  - Conducting a Sidewalk Improvement Study that assesses construction of sidewalks along major Town roads, such as Routes 25, 34, and 111, which lead to municipal, commercial, recreation, and proposed Village District areas, as well as sidewalks on local roads.
  - Collaborating with Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) during design phase of proposed road widening improvements.
  - Creating a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan consistent with the Connecticut SRTS Program, which outlines a school and community's intentions for making travel to and from school more sustainable and safe.
  - Finalizing construction of the Housatonic Railroad Trail.
  - Conducting a feasibility study for a bicycle lane on Route 111.
  - Upgrading of on-street bicycle routes, including installation of bicycle safety grates, ensuring adequate shoulder width, and cleaning sand and debris from roadways.
  - Developing of an on-street bicycle network that provides safe connections between Town parks and attractions, such as Wolfe Park and Webb Mountain, as well as schools and shopping centers.
  - Standardizing bicycle route signs by installing at intervals to direct bicyclists along the path and provide information about distances to key attractions. Pavement markings should also be installed to delineate such routes.
  - Evaluating potential bicycle routes outlined in GBRPA's *Regional Bicycle Plan*.
  - Maintaining bike and pedestrian facilities in a state of good repair.

- **Improve Monroe's public transportation network.** With the exception of People to Jobs and GBTAccess, Monroe residents don't have public transportation options. Expanding the GBTA public bus services into Monroe can help to alleviate some traffic congestion while offering transportation options for Town residents. Monroe should consider the following bus service improvements:

  - Focus on the transportation/land use connection on Route 25 in the Village Districts: greater density can generate higher ridership.
  - Locate some affordable housing near bus transit in order to comply with the state's credit ranking system for assessing affordable housing.
  - Evaluate the potential for bus service to existing multi-family developments and future mixed-use areas.
  - Consider expanding bus service to the Route 25/Route 111 intersection.
  - Consider new bus service connections from Monroe to regional park-and-ride lots.
  - Study ways to move drivers to rail transit, such as a park-and-ride in Monroe linked to a shuttle to the Fairfield railroad station or the Bridgeport ferry; install a rail ticket kiosk in Town to eliminate waiting at the Fairfield station.

Incorporate Transportation Planning into P&Z Actions

- Site plan applications for large traffic-generating uses should trigger a traffic generation study. To incorporate such a requirement into site plan regulations, Monroe will need to determine the square footage or dwelling unit count threshold. The P&Z should be enabled to hire a traffic consultant to assist the commission in evaluating traffic materials submitted by applicants.

Utilities Recommendations

Implement the Water Pollution Control Plan and Sewer Service Area Map

- Work with the Monroe WPCA to implement the new Water Pollution Control Plan and Sewer Service Area Map for potential public sewers along Routes 25 and 111.

Plan for Current and Future Waste Management Needs

- Conduct a Waste Management Study to determine new potential locations for refuse and recycling in anticipation of reaching full capacity at the Garder Road Bulky Waste Site, as well as to explore ways to increase waste management efficiency.
- Increase recycling efforts by expanding the material list of recyclables collected at residential properties, as well as allowing business participation in the Town's recycling program.
- Continue to commit escrow funds to the Spring Hill Road Transfer Station in Trumbull for its future maintenance.
- Expand hours at the Garder Road Bulky Waste Site to meet the waste management needs of Town residents.

IT Recommendations

Expand Information Technology Resources

- **Support the long-term goals of the *Monroe Strategic Technology Plan.*** The Plan discusses the continual upgrading of IT infrastructure. With constant advances in technology, it is also essential for Monroe IT and other municipal departments to maintain current technology platforms and software. Advances in IT and communication, such as Wi-Fi, should be studied for its applicability in Monroe. New software is also essential in managing and sharing information, such as the use of GIS to depict land uses and environmental resources. Data collection and electronic storage is also beneficial in addressing physical space constraints in Town Hall and other municipal facilities. Monroe should prioritize the following IT recommendations:

  - Recognizing the importance of geographic information in planning for and dealing with increasingly complex, interrelated governmental issues, a Town-wide GIS program should be initiated. A central GIS data repository allows spatial data to be accessed and shared throughout the Town.
  - Continue to upgrade IT management and data warehousing, including imaging/scanning and web-based applications, in order to maximize the use of municipal spaces and enhance municipal services to the public.

Since the vast majority of Monroe is zoned for residential use, an analysis of the qualities and characteristics of the housing stock in Monroe is an important component of the Plan. This chapter also examines housing needs of current and future residents.

CHAPTER 6.0 HOUSING

6.0 HOUSING

6.1 Housing Stock

The 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) reported that 75% of Monroe was developed and, of that 43%, was residentially built. Housing lots constituted 56% of the Town's total land area. As of the 2000 Census, there were a total of 19,247 persons and 6,601 housing units in Monroe. Of these housing units, only 1.8% were vacant. As a positive sign for the Town, homeownership rates were ranked second in Fairfield County in 2000 at a staggering 93%[1].

Monroe has a variety of housing styles that contribute to its character

The housing stock in Monroe is overwhelmingly single-family detached housing (86.9%). The Town contains a diverse mix of single-family housing types, including smaller cottages, historic buildings, colonials, ranches, custom design homes, farm houses, and larger luxury homes. Many of these homes are part of larger developments and neighborhoods, such as Whitney

[1] czbLLC, 2007.

Farms and Great Oak Farm. Many others are located along rural roads, such as Barn Hill, Stanley, and Hammertown Roads, and along other roadways, such as Route 111. Other areas contain historic homes and buildings, such as the Monroe Center Historic District, and East Village and Stepney areas.

According to the 2000 Census, of the occupied housing units, only 427 units (6.6%) were rental units. Garden apartments, single family attached or two-unit structures, make up an additional 7.6% of the housing stock. There were 1,193 four-unit buildings and 233 five to nine-unit buildings. In keeping with the character of the Town, only seven buildings in Monroe have more than 20 units.

Typical multi-family housing

Roughly 75% of Monroe's housing stock was constructed between 1940 and 1990. The last construction boom was between 1980 and 1989 when some 1,491 units were constructed, or just over 20% of the 2000 total. Since 2000, 280 residential building permits have been issued according to statistics reported to the Census. Each of these permits has been for single family detached buildings. The last permit issued for a multi-unit building was in 1997 for a six-unit structure.

Monroe does provide for alternative housing choices. Design Residence districts, such as Design Residence (DR), Design Recreational Residence (DRR), Design Elderly Residence (DER), and Design Housing Opportunity (DHO) allow a variety of uses, such as single-family, multi-family, and senior housing units and "starter" homes. The Town does have some areas where there are multiple single-family residential buildings on one parcel. There are also several pending applications or developments for multi-family housing. A 28-unit development - containing four buildings with seven units each – was recently approved as an affordable housing project under Sec. 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes.

To balance the types of housing in Monroe, the Town currently limits the number of multi-family units by allowing a certain percentage compared to the number of single-family units. In the DR and DRR zoning districts, the number of multi-family dwelling units cannot exceed 10% of the number of single-family units; in the DER zoning district, the limit is 5%.

In Chapter 3.0, a basic buildout analysis was performed for vacant available land in Monroe to estimate maximum future residential growth potential, consistent with existing zoning and

development patterns. The analysis began by identifying the number of vacant parcels in Town, which numbered 640. Each lot was then examined to see if it met the minimum square footage criteria for development as set out in the zoning code. Parcels that met the minimum lot requirements numbered 360. To estimate total construction allowed on each lot, the zoning constraints were applied to each lot by zoning classification. Buildable residential units - without variances - resulted in 332 potential new housing units (see Chapter 3.0 for more information).

In any residential build-out analysis, it is important to note that the results are theoretical, and that any future development is contingent on a variety of factors, including the availability of land and the local economy. The buildout analysis is a potential saturation point scenario that assumes all of the undeveloped land in Monroe is actually developed; this information is a guide and does not suggest actual, or desired, building levels. In fact, it is unlikely that a full buildout would occur in the foreseeable future, as remaining land tends to be less desirable in terms of ease and cost of development. This is due largely to limiting elements such as wetlands, floodplains, slope limitations, multiple ownership, varying estate issues, and a lack of land actually for sale.

For future housing development projects, the Town should consider its ten-year goals and objectives. This may start with conservation and preservation of existing developable open space. When neighborhoods are developed with conservation in mind, roads can be shorter and narrower than in conventional developments. With less impervious surface, there is less potential for polluted storm water runoff. Pavement can be further reduced where development is designed to resemble traditional villages, with homes close to streets, thereby reducing driveway lengths. In addition to protecting water quality, street widths that are scaled to actual neighborhood traffic volumes reduce driving speeds, calm traffic, and create safer pedestrian conditions. Where appropriate, open space may be used to treat contaminated stormwater associated with development. Common open areas could be managed by a Home Owner's Association (HOA) with eventual possession by a land trust or similar entity.

6.2 Affordability and Market Challenges

Monroe has grown from a rural to a prosperous suburban community, where most new homes are priced for middle-income to affluent households. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Monroe's median household income in 1999 was a healthy $85,000. Monroe is not without low-income households however; almost one in 10 had an income of less than $25,000.

While the number of permits issued has decreased over the past twelve years, the cost of construction for a single unit has almost doubled since 1996, going from $154,757 to $306,911 in 2008. Between low vacancy rates and increased construction costs, sale prices and rental rates are expected to continue increasing.

The vast majority of Monroe's housing stock is single-family homes on relatively large lots. As the shares of young workforce and the elderly in Monroe increase, the demand for alternative housing options may do the same. Young working families often prefer rental units because they are unable to afford or are not ready to purchase single-family households. The elderly may be unable to care for a large home and may prefer to opt for smaller condominium or rental units. Sites for such housing, if desired, should be carefully planned in order not to over-tax the Town's infrastructure.

In addition to addressing the need for affordable housing, the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) requires that the POCD consider opportunities for diverse housing types. Chapter 126, Section 8-23 notes that:

> "Such plan of conservation and development shall make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region in which the municipality is located…promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified in the housing plan…"

Finding local affordable housing options in Fairfield County is a problem for homeowners, especially those at the lower end of the income scale. Both mortgage and rental affordability have dramatically decreased over the past few years. According to the 2008 U.S. Census American Community Survey, the median house price in Fairfield County was $501,900. Under federal guidelines, housing is considered affordable when it costs no more than 30% of a household's monthly household income. In 2008, about 44% of home owners paid at least 30% of their monthly household income towards mortgage costs, compared to only about 28% in 1999. Also in 2008, more than half of all renters in the County paid 30% or more of their monthly household income for rent, compared to about 38% in 1999.

Monroe shares similar housing affordability attributes as Fairfield County. In 1999, about 27% of home owners and 27% of renters paid at least 30% of their monthly household income towards housing costs. Although rental affordability was slightly better in Monroe in 1999 compared to the County, mortgage affordability was about the same. Due to the housing boom of the first half of this decade, which peaked in 2005-2006 and precipitously dropped in the latter part of 2008, the cost of housing in Monroe is still relatively higher today than it was a decade ago.

Part of the affordability problem lies in the homogeneity of the Town's housing stock. By far, most homes are single-family detached units. Town staff reports that Monroe has about 300 in-law or accessory units, virtually all of which are conforming. While these apartments represent a lower monthly housing cost than single-family houses, they cannot be counted as affordable housing, under state definitions, unless all such units are declared affordable and committed to compliance with affordable housing regulations.

Monroe is committed to encouraging the production of affordable housing. Since the 2000 POCD, Monroe has established two zoning districts that encourage affordable housing: the Design Housing Opportunity (DHO) and Mixed Income Housing (MIH) zones. While the DHO zone promotes affordable single-family homes the MIH zone allows a mix of housing types for diverse income groups. Together, these zoning districts provide affordable housing options for low and moderate income households, as well as "starter" homes. To date there is only one area on the Zoning Map that is zoned DHO and no areas on the map zoned MIH. The area zoned for the DHO district currently consists of two vacant parcels located at West Maiden Lane and Wells Road. The MIH district acts like a "floating zone" in that it is only affixed to a particular parcel(s) upon approval of an application that changes the zoning of that parcel(s) to MIH, at which time an amendment to the zoning map is made. Affordable housing compliance is managed through Fairfield 2000 Homes Corporation.

Development limitation due to environmental, zoning, and other land constraints (i.e. steep slopes or contiguous parcels) hampers the creation of affordable housing. Multi-family housing is the most cost-effective method of producing greater housing variety and designated affordable housing. However, Monroe currently does not have sanitary sewers, which may limit the density of new multi-family units without the construction of a new sewer treatment facility or infrastructure.

This Plan recommends that Monroe conduct a housing study to identify the number of affordable units needed. Such a plan would also focus on realistic and cost-effective actions, such as accessory units and apartments over stores or in potential Village Districts, where the existing septic field can handle additional capacity. The Town may also consider changing zoning in some areas to allow multiple residences on one larger parcel in some areas of the Town without requiring subdivision. This innovation would allow families to maintain a parcel in single ownership but with separate houses for members of the family. Certain conditions would have to apply, such as the site soils capacity to provide subsurface sanitary disposal for all housing units, as well as minimum lot size for development, setbacks and design guidelines.

6.3 Recommendations

The POCD's goal is to preserve Monroe's existing predominant single-family owner-occupied housing character while also encouraging new housing opportunities for the elderly, moderate-income families, and young families. As highlighted in Chapter 4.0 and reinforced in this chapter, the vast majority of Monroe's housing stock is comprised of single family-homes on relatively large lots. As the shares of young workforce and the elderly in Monroe increase, the demand for alternative housing options may do the same.

Young working populations often prefer rental units because they are unable to afford or are not ready to purchase single-family homes. The elderly may be unable to care for a large home and may prefer smaller, and more easily cared for, condominium or rental units. Diverse housing options can include mixed-use housing with first floor commercial and residential apartments, or condos on second and upper floors. It can also include accessory apartments, in-law suites attached to existing homes, smaller lots, and townhomes for young starter families and seniors.

Current regulations on Route 25 preclude multi-use properties and multi-family housing. Although the Town of Monroe has an obligation to provide some affordable housing, it must be planned carefully to ensure that it is located near basic services and possibly jobs. It must also be designed in a way that is consistent with Monroe's small town character, and must consider potential impacts of higher density housing on the environment (e.g. wetlands, water bodies, open space), current infrastructure (e.g. roads, sewage systems) and traffic. Sites for such housing, if desired, should be carefully planned to ensure that they do not overtax the Town's infrastructure.

The Plan's recommendations will guide future development in areas that can feasibly accommodate residential growth, while preserving natural, historic and cultural resources. They will help meet the demand of alternative housing options for Monroe's growing workforce and senior populations and protect Monroe's existing housing stock, helping to preserve the Town's quality of life and character.

Overall Recommendations

Perform a Housing Need Study and Develop a Comprehensive Affordable Housing Policy

- Prepare a Housing Need Study to determine affordable housing need, including identifying parcels appropriate for elderly or workforce housing, and best methods for producing lower cost housing, given Monroe's environmental and regulatory constraints.
    - Potential new affordable housing units should be placed in areas that can support expanded bus transit services.
- Develop a comprehensive affordable housing policy that can be incorporated as one article into the Town's zoning regulations.
    - Encourage in-law accessory apartments that do not alter the outward appearance of single family homes in order to help address affordable housing needs.
    - Establish density bonuses which allow developers that incorporate affordable housing to build more units per acre than the Town's zoning regulations would usually allow.

Increase Housing Options

- Allow different types of housing, such as accessory apartments, smaller lots, townhomes, and multi-family units for starter families and seniors, in selected areas where density can be accommodated. These areas may include Route 25 and other parts of Monroe. Certain affordable housing locations should be selected for proximity to bus transit, in order to comply with state credit ranking for affordable housing projects.
- Allow by zoning apartments over (or to the rear of the first floor of) small commercial properties on major corridors. Adopt economic incentives to accomplish this, such as density bonuses.
- Ensure that new housing or mixed-use development reinforces the Priority Growth District/Village District concept discussed in Chapter 3.0. Compact (smart growth) development should generate lower cost, smaller dwelling units with lower upkeep, more green space, less impact on land, and a greater sense of community than large lot single family detached houses.

Update Zoning

- While leaving the residential base zoning as is, consider adopting the following:
    - A mixed-use overlay district for some residential and commercial districts along Routes 25 and 111, applicable to parcels with existing limited commercial uses that would allow some expansion of the commercial activity on the first floor and new housing units on the second and upper floors.
    - Regulations for graduated (tier) zoning that keep existing zoning district in place but add an overlay district that allows greater intensity and mix of uses than base zoning for some areas along Routes 25 and 111.
- Allow good quality manufactured houses, as a means to control housing construction costs.
- Plan for eventual residential redevelopment of historic summer colonies, with consideration of density, lot sizes, building placement, and natural feature preservation.
- Allow higher density housing if a tear-down in an infill situation can generate affordable housing.

Update Subdivision Regulations

- Amend the subdivision regulations to allow lot size reduction via a Conservation Residential Subdivision in return for open space preservation. Preferred affected districts are Residential and Farming Districts D and E (RD and RE).

This section of the Plan looks at the location and type of retail, office, and industrial development and other activities. Existing economic conditions, such as employment trends and labor resources, as well as growth trends and regional context are also covered.

CHAPTER 7.0
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

7.0 Economic Development and Employment

7.1 Regional Context

The Town of Monroe is one of the more affluent and educated areas in the Bridgeport-Stamford Labor Market Area (LMA), as designated by the State of Connecticut. It is also recognized by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) as being within the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) region. Among the 14 towns in the LMA/CEDS region, Monroe is a predominantly residential community. A recently released CEDS strategy – One Coast, One Future – provides a blueprint for the future economic development of the Bridgeport-Stamford LMA, which includes Monroe.

According to the CEDS strategy, the region has become economically vulnerable due to its over-dependence on financial services, a lack of affordable housing for young professionals, high property tax-rates and escalating congestion on its roadways. By working with other municipalities in the region and building public-private partnerships to implement goals and action steps of the regional economic development strategy, Monroe can potentially increase its economic activity and commercial tax revenues. The resulting Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) is operating as *Coastal Fairfield*, a partnership of the Bridgeport Regional Business Council and the Business Council of Fairfield County. This entity, guided by members of the CEDS action committee, is establishing and implementing regional programs for marketing, business retention, expansion, and attraction and promoting entrepreneurial activity. The Town of Monroe Chamber of Commerce should apply for membership and encourage local business owners and institutions of higher education to join as well.

7.2 Existing Economic Conditions

Employment Trends

According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, between 2005 and 2008, employment in Monroe declined by 20% from 7,027 jobs to 5,652 jobs. This decline followed five years of significant growth in business establishments, employment, and annual wages that occurred between 2000 and 2005 (see Table 7.1). Average annual wages per worker rose by 18% in Monroe between 2000 and 2008, but consumer prices increased by 25%. During this period, Monroe lost 12.4% of its employment base, while the Bridgeport-Stamford LMA lost 2% of its employment and the State as a whole experienced a 0.1% gain in employment.

Table 7.1: Total Employment in Town of Monroe by Sector, 2000-2008

NAICS CODE	TOWN OF MONROE INDUSTRY	2000 UNITS	AN'L AVE JOBS	AN'L AVE WAGES	2005 UNITS	AN'L AVE JOBS	AN'L AVE WAGES	2008 UNITS	AN'L AVE JOBS	AN'L AVE WAGES
	Total - All Industries	599	6449	$34,501	639	7027	$35,431	611	5652	$40,627
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
21	Mining	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
22	Utilities	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
23	Construction	83	278	$45,469	86	313	$46,609	80	270	$47,154
31	Manufacturing	35	1065	$42,920	38	828	$49,603	34	656	$62,405
42	Wholesale Trade	53	300	$61,521	53	316	$67,431	62	332	$63,998
44	Retail Trade	79	1067	$23,362	81	1021	$29,307	71	903	$30,858
48	Transportation & Warehousing	8	306	$34,694	8	265	$40,231	8	214	$47,564
51	Information	10	118	$89,394	6	19	$58,775	11	48	$75,277
52	Finance & Insurance	30	126	$36,943	27	130	$50,843	28	140	$47,423
53	Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	14	64	$19,814	12	40	$21,366	9	36	$28,662
54	Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	74	482	$49,987	74	352	$65,235	62	241	$69,912
55	Management of Companies	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
56	Administrative & Waste Management	52	748	$24,664	*	*	*	51	356	$27,799
61	Educational Services**	7	24	$12,560	10	20	$19,799	6	24	$22,438
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	41	287	$20,468	47	338	$25,624	49	367	$26,079
71	Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	*	*	*	12	274	$13,242	9	251	$14,562
72	Accommodation & Food Services	33	390	$12,294	47	583	$14,445	45	607	$13,796
81	Other Private Services	48	175	$19,026	63	210	$22,282	64	208	$23,566
90	Government	18	785	$41,576	17	881	$43,893	17	889	$50,714
99	Unclassifiable	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Covered Employment and Wages (*) not disclosed
***Includes public schools.*

By sector of employment, the Town's job losses were greatest in Manufacturing, Administrative & Waste Management, and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services. Collectively these sectors declined by 1,042 jobs between 2000 and 2008. With the exception of Manufacturing, these sectors, plus the Information sector, each contracted by more than 50% during this period. Three of these four sectors are export-oriented activities that provided the highest paying jobs in the Town and represented important components of the economic base. By comparison, job sectors that grew over the eight-year period included Accommodation & Food Services, Government, and Health Care & Social Assistance, all population-serving activities. As Table 7.1 shows, these sectors generated 401 new jobs, each growing faster in Monroe than in the LMA or the state. However, with the exception of Government, they rank among the lower paying employment opportunities.

The structural transformation of Monroe's employment that took place over the current decade shifted the market away from basic employment toward population-serving jobs, and reflected the sectoral trends of the broader LMA without capturing some of the region's strengths. The Bridgeport-Stamford LMA still retains disproportionate shares of employment in high paying Finance & Insurance, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, and the Management of Companies, although few firms are still growing in job opportunities. The LMA is increasing in Educational Services, a population-serving activity that can act as a magnate for firm attraction, as well as in Health Care and Government. Coupling Monroe's economic development efforts with the retention/attraction strategies and marketing of the LMA/CEDS region should serve to balance its future development.

Recent Firm Attraction and Relocation

Through efforts of the Economic Development Commission and the Department of Economic and Community Development, Monroe welcomes development from a wide range of businesses. The Commission has launched a new web site that includes an all inclusive Business Resource section plus a link to the Connecticut Economic Resources Center's (CERC's) "SiteFinder" that lists available buildings and properties in Monroe. They have also launched an aggressive marketing program to bring businesses to the Town.

The Town recently attracted the US headquarters of Victorinox Swiss Army, the well-known manufacturer of cutlery, timepieces and travel gear. The Town's Pepper Street Industrial Park is also drawing small businesses from coastal locations in Connecticut and stimulating the construction of several new facilities. The Department administers a Tax Abatement Program that has accounted for some of these relocations and new developments. However, designation as an Enterprise Zone of Connecticut is not an option.

Although Monroe has had success for the industries listed above, two electronics firms will soon leave Monroe due to consolidation – Robohand, Inc., a manufacturer of robotic parts, and Vishay Vitramon, Inc., one of Monroe's top employers that produces computer capacitors. Also, Stevenson Lumber, a long established business, vacated its 42-acre site.

In 2006, the top four major employers in Monroe were the Town and its School District, the US Post Office, Vishay Vitramon, Inc., and the Big Y Supermarket.

Labor Resources

Unemployment in Monroe reached 6.6%by Third Quarter 2009, though its rate of resident joblessness is less than that of the LMA (7.5%) or the State as a whole (7.9%). The civilian labor force of Monroe now stands at 10,734 residents, 10,024 of whom are employed, for an increase of some 627 persons seeking work or gainfully employed in 2000. In that year[1], the employed workforce consisted 5,324 males and 4,478 females, with one in every five workers having children under six years of age.

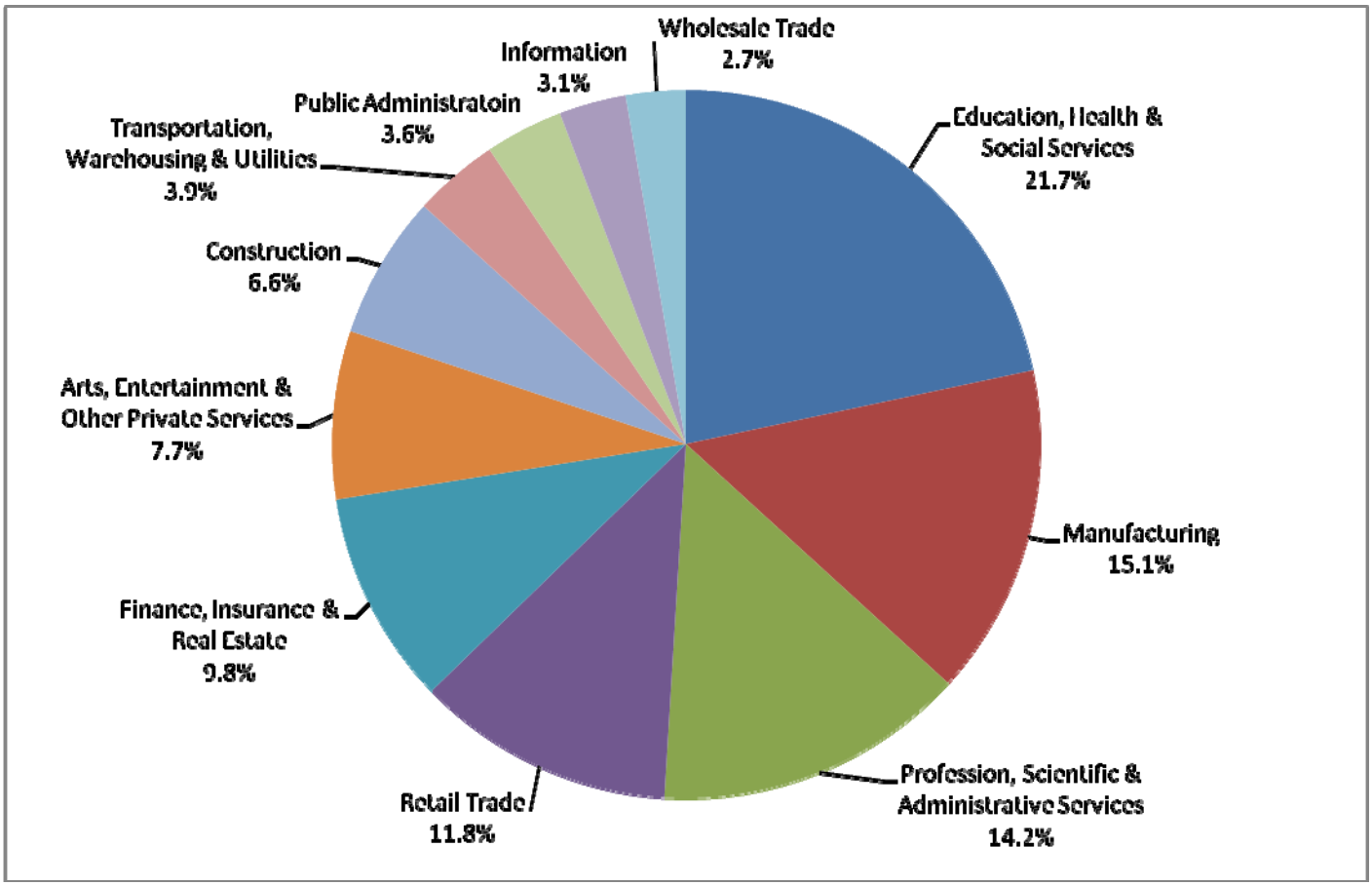
Less than a quarter of Monroe's employed residents (22%) both live and work in the Town. Most workers travel to adjacent towns of the LMA, indicative of the economic inter-dependence of the LMA/CEDS region. Whereas Bridgeport is a leading destination for Monroe residents, with 1,180 working there in 2000, considerably fewer Bridgeport residents work in Monroe (735). Bridgeport, Shelton, Trumbull and Newtown are the next major sources of Monroe's workforce and, with those from Bridgeport and Monroe, they account for roughly two in every three jobs in the Town. Most commuting – into or out of the Town – occurs by car, truck or van, while public transportation is virtually nil.. Typical work trips averaged 31 minutes in 2000, but growing congestion has undoubtedly lengthened travel times of the journey to work.

More than half of all employed residents report their occupations as high-skilled white collar workers, with 5,020 in management, professional and related occupations in 2000. Another one in four workers is a middle-skilled white collar employee in a sales or office occupation. Relatively few residents are engaged in blue collar (15%) and service (9%) work. Viewed from an industrial perspective, the leading business sectors that employ residents of Monroe are Education, Health & Social Services, Manufacturing, Professional, Scientific & Technical Services, and Retail Trade, in descending order of importance, as Chart 7.1 shows. Government workers comprise one in every seven employed residents, while the self-employed and unpaid family workers represent one in twelve. Fully 80% of Monroe's employed residents are private wage and salary workers.

Mid-level skilled workers are well represented in the State economy with job growth projected into the next decade. The growth sectors are primarily in Health Care, Education, Management, and Construction. At the regional level, there is considerable concern over the future of financial services, as the LMA/CEDS region is more than three times as dependent upon Finance & Insurance wages as the next leading metropolitan area with such specialization, including New York City.[2] In both regional and statewide contexts, the outlook for Manufacturing is not promising and efforts to diversify the office and other commercial services sectors are being promoted. Monroe is not as affected as Greenwich, Stamford, and Westport in terms of declined Financial Services.

[1] Labor force characteristics of Monroe residents are last available for the year 2000. The Town is not covered by the annual *American Community Survey*, the US Census Bureau's update of the decennial Census based upon survey research.
[2] *One Coast, One Future: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy,* September 2009.

Chart 7.1: Industry of Employed Residents of Monroe, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population

Tax Generation

Commercial and industrial uses not only provide employment and earnings for residents of Monroe, but also reduce the tax burden on its households. The Town's residential zones are largely developed, but its business and industrial zones still have some undeveloped land or idle sites. By maximizing the best use of the business, office and industrial districts of Monroe, the contribution of economic development to the tax base can increase significantly.

As Table 7.2 shows, some 345 parcels of commercial and industrial development in the Town of Monroe (4% of all parcels) comprise 10% of assessed value and account for $6.2 million in property tax liability. In FY 2009, they are expected to generate 10% of the total property tax collection. Commercial parcels are more valuable and numerous than industrial parcels, but represent fewer acres zoned for use. At an average per acre value of $288,484, commercial properties are more than twice as valuable as industrial properties and therefore generate more than twice the property tax liability, or $4.0 million in FY 2009. In addition to their property tax generation, business development in Monroe is subject to taxable business, personal property, and tax on registered motor vehicles for business use.

Table 7.2: Property Tax Generation by Non-Residential Land Use in Monroe, FY 2009

Non Residential Uses	*Parcels*		*Assessed Value*	*Market Value*	*Acres*	*Average Value per Acre*	*Property Tax Liability*
Commercial	241		$135,435,330	$193,478,164	670.673	$288,484	$3,995,342
Industrial	90		$59,492,940	$84,877,380	780.458	$108,753	$1,755,042
Utility	6		$13,112,828	$18,733,870	41.89	$447,216	$386,828
Mixed Use Residential	8		$1,993,810	$2,848,300	10.35	$275,198	$58,817
Total	345		$210,034,908	$299,937,714	1,503.37	$199,510	$6,196,030
All Property	8,091		$2,070,589,018	$2,956,213,044	15683.9	$188,487	$61,082,376
% of All Property	4.3%		10.1%	10.1%	9.6%	105.8%	10.1%

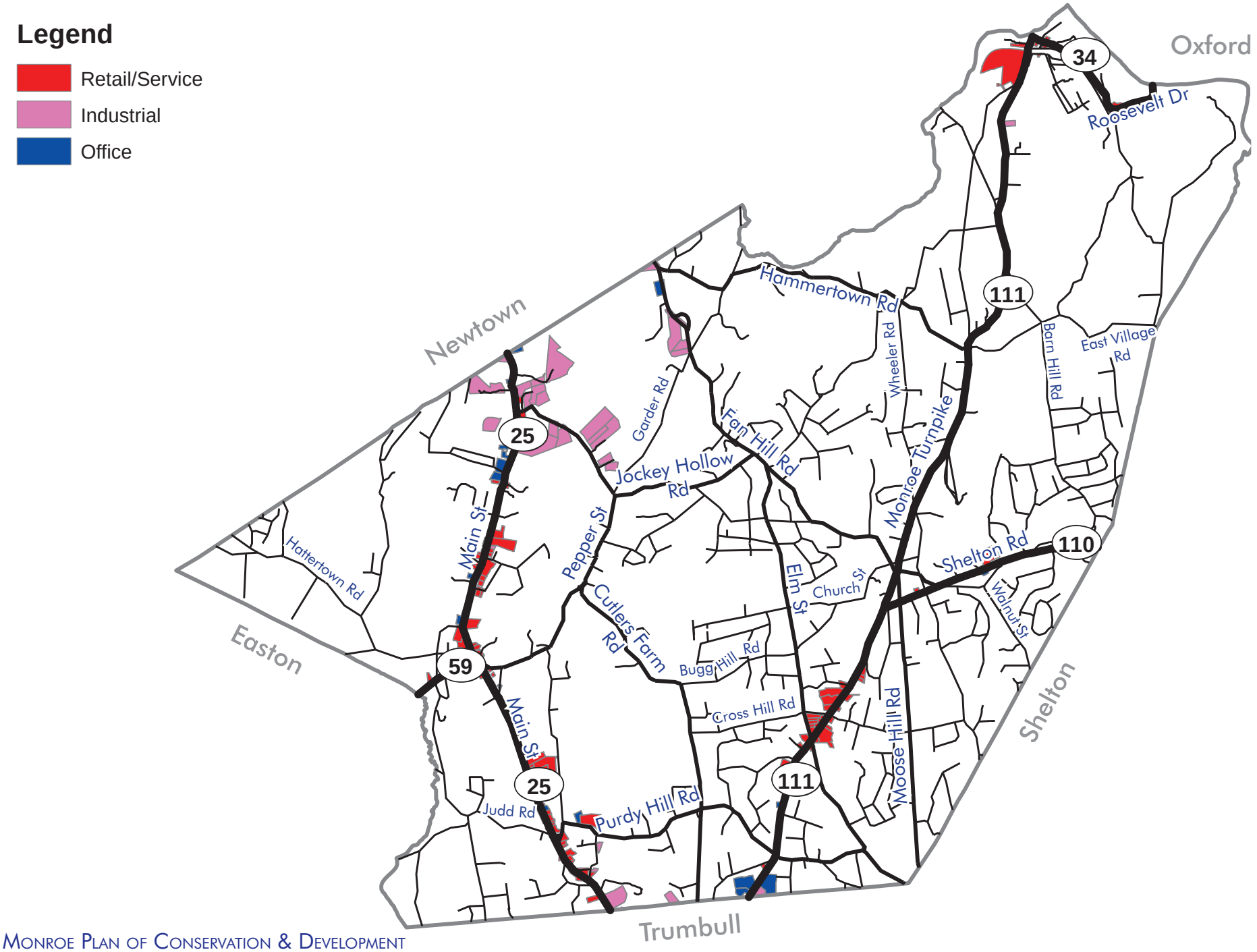
Source: Town of Monroe

Locational Attributes

In light of the steep declines in Manufacturing recorded in Monroe, the LMA/CEDS region and the State, as well as the acknowledged long term outlook for middle-skill job growth in Health Care, Management, and Education, the prospect for future economic development of the Town requires careful examination. Monroe is not physically well suited for further industrial development, given the lack of public water and sewers in certain areas. Nonetheless, the Town contains approximately 800 acres of contiguous industrially zoned property along Route 25 in the northwest section of town, which is being developed. This area is in addition to the industrially zoned properties located along Route 25 near the Monroe/Trumbull town line.

Proposed highway improvements will soon be implemented to Route 25, a major commercial corridor in the Town. The interchange improvements will relieve congestion, while landscaping and sidewalk improvements will make Route 25 conducive to new commercial development, as well as redevelopment of some existing properties. Route 111, which has attracted office development, also requires upgrading, including widening, walkways and commercial corridor zoning. Sites in the Town appear more suitable for office, commercial and institutional development than industrial.

Figure 7.1 shows the location of existing industrial and commercial uses in Monroe. Figure 7.2 depicts the zoned areas for economic development.

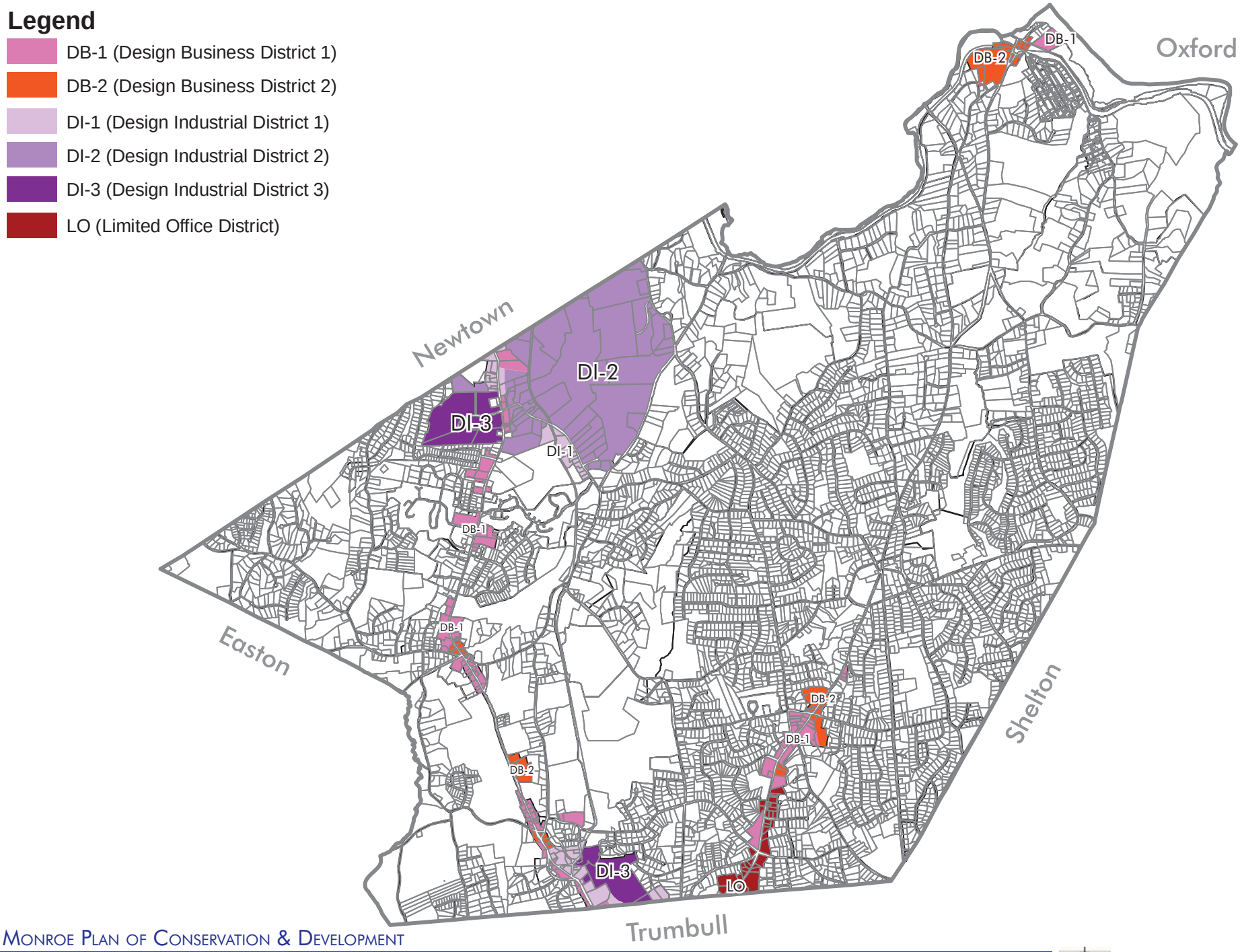


Monroe, CT

Sources: Monroe Planning & Zoning Department; Monroe Engineering Department; Connecticut Land Use-Land Cover (1961); UConn MAGIC

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.



MONROE, CT

SOURCES: MONROE PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT; MONROE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

7.3 Land Zoned for Economic Development

Six major commercial and industrial zones have been defined to accommodate office, commercial and industrial economic development. Sites in many of these districts are vacant or underdeveloped, lack sewers, and require other improvements to attract investment. By zone, the proportion of land in employment uses is compared with vacant, residential and other uses to identify the capacity for future development in Table 7.3.

Design Business District 1 (DB1)

DB1 designation has been assigned in four locations, along Route 111 mainly south of Cross Hill Road, along Route 25 in clusters, along Purdy Road on selected sites, and at the northern tip of Monroe near Lake Zoar. Of the total land area (243 acres) 75% is developed in commercial and industrial uses, and 25% is vacant. Vacant sites amount to 61 acres of land.

Design Business District 2 (DB2)

DB2 designation, which allows for similar and more intensive commercial uses than DB1, occurs at Route 111 and Cross Hill Road, in the northern section of Route 111 near the Oxford border, at Route 25 and Purdy Hill Road, and along the east side of Route 25 north of Purdy Hill Road. Of the 112 acres designated DB2, 104 are developed primarily in commercial uses and only eight acres are vacant.

Limited Office District (LO)

LO designation occurs along both the east and west sides of Route 111 at the southern section of the Town to the Trumbull line. It is the smallest zone, at 43 acres, with 64% developed primarily in commercial uses and 36% of land vacant.

Design Industrial District 1 (DI1)

DI1 designation is restricted to Route 25 and occurs south of Purdy Hill Road, north of Pepper Street to the Newtown line, and along Pepper Street in the Industrial Park. Smaller in scale than either DI2 or DI3, with proportionately smaller parcels, the zone is 83% developed and includes 31 acres in commercial uses. Only 15 acres remain undeveloped.

Design Industrial District 2 (DI2)

The majority of undeveloped zoned industrial land exists under DI2 zoning, primarily as part of the approximately 800 acres of contiguous industrially zoned property on the east side of Route 25 near the Monroe/Newtown town line. Currently, 418 acres are vacant, or 69% of all DI2 designated land.

Design Industrial District 3 (DI3)

The next largest amount of vacant zoned industrial land occurs in DI3, which is mainly found on the west side of Route 25 near the Monroe/Newtown town line, as well as to an area east of Route 25 south of Purdy Hill Road to the Trumbull line. This district also recently attracted the US headquarters and distribution center of Victorinox Swiss Army and applies to 184 acres in total, of which 137 acres are currently vacant.

Other Districts – DRR, RC/RD/RE

The remaining commercial and industrial land accounts for some 226 acres largely in commercial usage. One hundred eighty-two acres are occupied by commercial development, six by industrial and utility usage, while 39 acres are vacant zoned industrial.

All Commercial and Industrial Property

For the Town of Monroe as a whole, 693 acres of commercial and industrial land is currently vacant or undeveloped, comprising 46% of all land in the designated zones. Most of this land, 606 acres, is zoned industrial, far beyond the potential demand for such land given current economic trends. Relatively little vacant land, or 87 acres, is zoned commercial and the majority is located in DB1 zones. Effort on the part of the Town to attract office development, or to encourage the creation of an office park, is limited by the imbalance in current zoning.

Table 7.3: Land Use by Commercial and Industrial Zoned Districts of Monroe

Zone	Commer-cial	Industrial	Residen-tial	Utility	Total Developed	Commer-cial Vacant	Indus-trial Vacant	Total Vacant	Total Property
	In Acres								
DB1	180.56	0.78	0.28	0.00	181.62	61.27	0.00	61.27	242.61
DB2	101.29	2.28	0.00	0.00	103.57	7.56	0.53	8.09	111.66
LO	24.23	2.88	0.00	0.00	27.11	15.54	0.00	15.54	42.65
DI1	30.98	38.38	2.04	0.00	71.40	2.95	11.75	14.70	86.10
DI2	79.21	112.27	0.00	0.00	191.48	0.00	417.85	417.85	609.33
DI3	0.00	47.03	0.00	0.00	47.03	0.00	137.25	137.25	184.28
DRR	151.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	151.53	0.00	0.00	0.00	151.53
RC/RD/RE	30.58	2.46	0.00	3.39	36.43	0.00	38.50	38.50	74.93
Total	598.37	206.08	2.32	3.39	810.16	87.32	605.89	693.21	1503.09
	As % of Total Acres by Zone								
DB1	74.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	74.9%	25.3%	0.0%	25.3%	100.0%
DB2	90.7%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	92.8%	6.8%	0.5%	7.2%	100.0%
LO	56.8%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%	63.6%	36.4%	0.0%	36.4%	100.0%
DI1	36.0%	44.6%	2.4%	0.0%	82.9%	3.4%	13.6%	17.1%	100.0%
DI2	13.0%	18.4%	0.0%	0.0%	31.4%	0.0%	68.6%	68.6%	100.0%
DI3	0.0%	25.5%	0.0%	0.0%	25.5%	0.0%	74.5%	74.5%	100.0%
DRR	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
RC/RD/RE	40.8%	3.3%	0.0%	4.5%	48.6%	0.0%	51.4%	51.4%	100.0%
Total	39.8%	13.7%	0.2%	0.2%	53.9%	5.8%	40.3%	46.1%	100.0%

Source: Town of Monroe Assessment Office

7.4 Regional Growth Targets

The outlook for employment growth in Monroe is more dependent upon regional trends than national or global forecasts. Although employment forecasts are not available for the LMA/CEDS region from the Economic Development Strategy for the 14 Towns, *One Coast, One Future*, limited and dated forecasts are available from the Connecticut Department of Labor for the Southwest Region[3], from the Connecticut Department of Transportation for the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency[4], and from the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council for Fairfield County and the Connecticut Subregion (Fairfield, Litchfield and New Haven Counties). Implications of these forecasts are drawn for Monroe.

[3] Consisting of the 14 Towns of the Bridgeport-Stamford LMA and 6 Towns of the Ansonia-Derby LMA.

[4] *Transportation in Connecticut: Trends & Planning Data,* June 2006. The Greater Bridgeport RPA consists of six Towns (Fairfield, Bridgeport, Stratford, Easton, Trumbull & Monroe).

Employment Forecasts for 20-Town Southwest Region

The 20 Towns of the Southwest Region, consisting largely of the LMA/CEDS region, were anticipated to grow by only 9% between 2004 and 2014, creating 34,600 new jobs or only 3,900 new annual growth openings. As Table 7.4 shows, leading occupational categories of growth were in Healthcare Practitioners and Healthcare Support (4,600 jobs), Sales & Related (4,400 jobs), Business & Financial Operations (4,200), and Food Preparation & Serving (3,000 jobs), while Production Occupations were expected to decline by 1,100 jobs over the 10 year period.

Table 7.4: Employment Growth by Occupations in the Southwest Region, 2004-2014

Employment by Occupation	Employment*		Job Change 2004-14*	Annual Growth Openings*
	2004	2014		
Total, All Occupations	376.8	411.4	34.6	3.9
Management	21.4	24.2	2.8	0.3
Business & Financial Operations	23.1	27.3	4.2	0.4
Computer & Mathematical Skills	11.7	14.3	2.6	0.3
Architecture & Engineering	8.1	8.7	0.6	0.1
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	3.5	4	0.5	0.1
Community & Social Services	5.4	6.3	0.9	0.1
Legal Occupations	3.7	4	0.3	0.0
Education, Training & Library	22.7	24.5	1.8	0.2
Arts, Entertainment & Sports	6.9	7.9	1.0	0.1
Healthcare Practitioners	18.8	21.7	2.9	0.3
Healthcare Support	10.2	11.9	1.7	0.2
Protective Services	7.9	8.3	0.4	0.0
Food Preparation & Serving	22.2	25.2	3.0	0.3
Building, Grounds & Maintenance	15.8	17.7	1.9	0.2
Personal Care & Service	13.8	16	2.2	0.2
Sales & Related	44.9	49.3	4.4	0.5
Office & Administrative Support	68.6	69.9	1.3	0.4
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.0
Construction & Extraction	12.7	13.9	1.2	0.1
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	12.3	13.2	0.9	0.1
Production Occupations	22.6	21.5	-1.1	0.0
Transportation & Material Moving	20.2	21.2	1.0	0.1

**In thousands*
Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, 2006

Employment Forecasts for Six-Town Greater Bridgeport Planning Region

Twenty year statewide and regional projections of employment are made by the Connecticut Department of Transportation for purposes of forecasting travel demand, using establishment-based employment of the

Current Employment Statistics series.[5] The Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA) projection predicts an increase in total employment of 20,000 jobs between 2010 and 2030, or a growth of 1,000 jobs per annum distributed among the Towns of Fairfield, Bridgeport, Stratford, Easton, Trumbull and Monroe. The estimated industrial composition of employment growth was not available, although the shift of jobs away from manufacturing to the service sector statewide was acknowledged.

Employment Forecasts for Fairfield County and Connecticut Subregion

Industry employment forecasts were prepared for a larger region, consisting of the three former counties of Fairfield, Litchfield and New Haven as the Connecticut Subregion, by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, a metropolitan planning organization for the New York region. These projections foresee the growth of 109,300 jobs for the three counties between 2010 and 2030, of which Fairfield County is expected to capture 46,900 jobs. As Table 7.5 shows, Manufacturing is anticipated to decline by 22,100 jobs, while Education & Health Services will grow by 55,200 jobs. Other significant growth sectors are Professional & Business Services, forecasted to increase by 22,600 jobs, Government by 16,100 jobs, and Finance, Real Estate & Leasing by 10,000 jobs. Fairfield County can expect to share in the strong gains of Education & Health Services and Professional & Business Services.

Table 7.5: Employment Growth by Industry in the Connecticut Subregion, 2010-2030

	Employment in Thousands				
Industry: Fairfield-Litchfield-New Haven	2000	2010	2020	2030	Change, 2010-30
Construction	33.6	37.2	39.7	44.6	7.4
Manufacturing	120.9	84.3	72.4	62.2	-22.1
Transportation & Utilities	22.4	25.9	28.2	31.8	5.9
Wholesale Trade	33.2	29.6	28.4	27.3	-2.3
Retail Trade	105.8	108.0	111.8	115.3	7.3
Information	26.3	21.5	20.9	20.6	-0.9
Finance, Real Estate & Leasing	64.1	72.3	76.0	82.3	10.0
Professional & Business Services	138.2	130.9	141.1	153.5	22.6
Education & Health Services	129	152.0	174.6	207.2	55.2
Leisure & Hospitality Services	59.6	69.0	70.2	71.4	2.4
Other Services	30.4	34.9	38.4	42.4	7.5
Government	101	105.2	111.7	121.3	16.1
Total NonFarm Employment	864.5	870.7	913.4	980.0	109.3
	Employment in Thousands				Change,
Industry: Fairfield County	2000	2010	2020	2030	2010-30
Total NonFarm Employment	429.4	425.9	442.5	472.8	46.9

Source: New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, Technical Memorandum 5.3.1, October 2008

[5] Consistent with the employment shown in Tables 7.1 through 7.3 of this plan.

Employment Growth Assumption for Monroe, 2010-2020

Given the scale of regional growth foreseen by reputable forecasting agencies over the near and longer term, a reasonable assumption of job growth for the 2010-2020 period would range from 1,000 to 2,000 net new jobs.

The likelihood is that most new job growth will be in commercial and institutional uses, such as Professional & Business Services, and Education & Healthcare, demanding occupations associated with sales, business and financial operations, computer services, and healthcare support (such as assisted senior living). In addition, more population-serving activities can be expected, in line with recent past growth in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services, and Other Private Services. To the extent that the manufacturing can grow, despite being a declining sector, firms will likely be small in scale and hi-tech in operations. In total, roughly one to two million square feet of nonresidential development can be anticipated over the 10-year period.

7.5 Recommendations

Monroe's primary economic development goal is to increase local employment opportunities. This, in turn, will alleviate the tax burden on residential land uses and lessen travel to work times for locally employed residents. The Town can realize these goals by acting regionally and locally. Monroe is an integral part of the broad regional goals articulated by *One Coast, One Future*, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The regional goal for the business environment, noted earlier, holds promise of federal funding.

Local Recommendations

Recommendations for local action follow below. These reflect the discussions and actions of the Town of Monroe Economic Development Commission and the POCD Economic Development Team. Some recommendations are discussed in more detail in other chapters of this Plan, specifically the Land Use and Zoning Chapter. However, each is vital to economic development. To underscore their importance they are summarized as follows:

Build Infrastructure to Increase Competitiveness with Surrounding Communities

- Improve the Route 25 corridor concurrent with planned intersection improvements. Anticipate eventual state action on roadway widening.
- Prepare for new development with outreach program and, in particular, energize area around Victorinox Swiss Army facility, Pepper Street Industrial Park, and within commercial and potential Village District areas along the corridor.
- Require improved commercial building architecture, walkways and landscaping, and encourage "green design." (See Chapter 11.0 Sustainability).
- Study town-wide storm and sanitary sewer issues for residential and commercial demand.
- Create a Gateway to Monroe along Route 34 by promoting State reconstruction of the Route 34 bridge downstream from its current location, by Town purchase of property south from the Waterview property to the dam, and by seeking an appropriate developer of waterfront property in recreational areas along Lake Zoar. Alternatively, consider designating a Village District for this area.

Improve Zoning

- Review DB1 and DB2 zoning to increase business potential. Consider consolidation of other zones to simplify it for developers.
- Create Village Districts and Overlay Districts on Route 25 (from Trumbull to Newtown's town line) and Route 111 (from the Trumbull town line to Route 110) that require design standards for all non-residential properties, and allow a mix of land uses and increased density in certain locations.
- Create graduated (tier) zoning, as described in Chapter 3.0 Recommendations.
- Consider changes in parking requirements to allow for shared parking areas, reducing the number of parking spaces for mixed-use development and shared parking areas, allowing for additional front yard landscaping or placement of parking spaces to the rear of buildings.

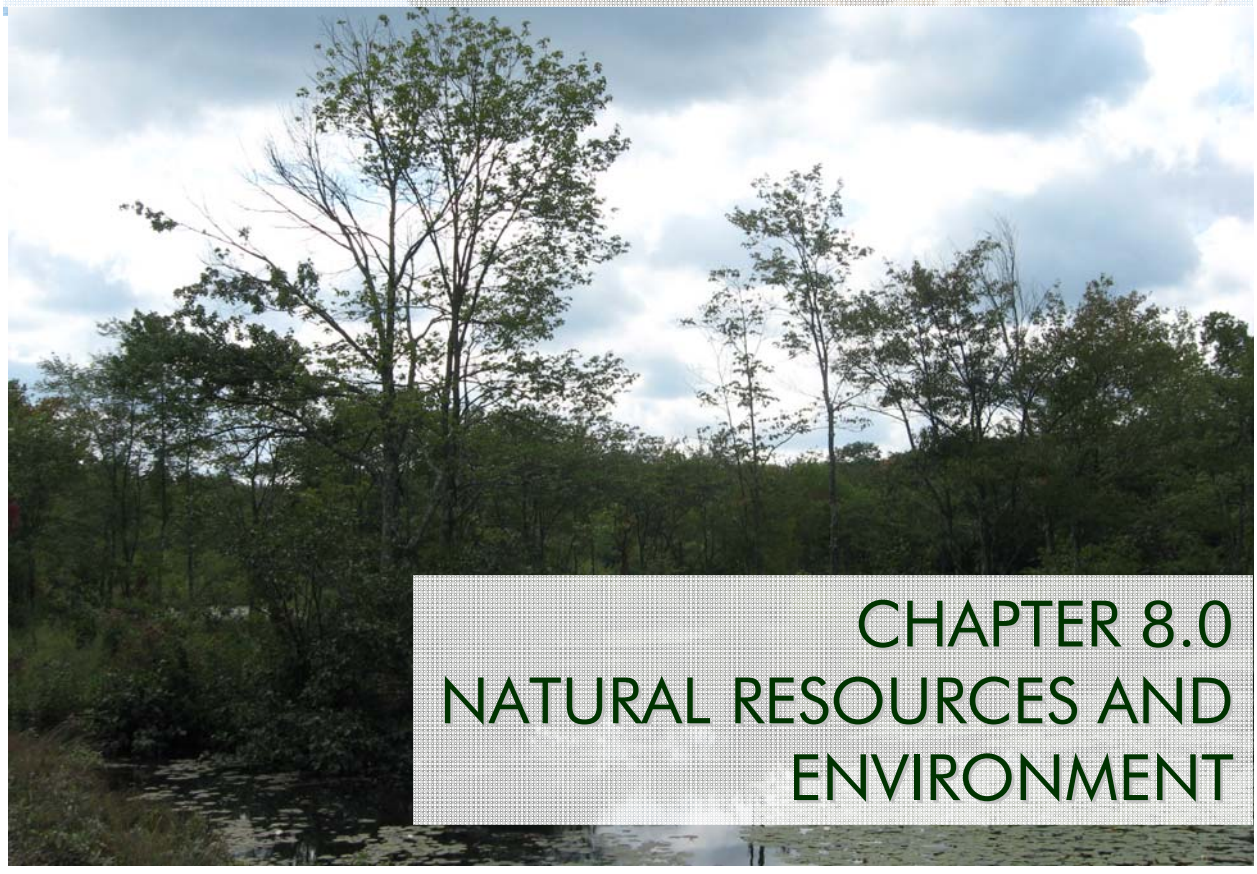
Evaluate Commercial and Industrial Development

- Work with the State to include the Pepper Street Industrial Park on the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan Locational Guide Map.
- Consider zoning changes to increase or attract office parks.
- Examine the type of development as it relates to the costs of Town services required by the development.
- Consider larger office developments to benefit the tax base and encourage employment growth.

Strengthen Economic Development Incentives and Permitting Process

- Mandate that the Monroe Planning and Zoning Commission and the local Economic Development Commission meet at least once a year to coordinate goals and objectives. First priority shall be Route 25 and Route 111.
- Review and revise the Town's Tax Abatement Ordinance to incorporate Green Development and Green Renovations for tax relief as needed.
- Communicate the Abatement program more effectively to developers.
- Invest in a GIS system to accurately map and maintain property records of the Town.
- Identify incentives to entice property owners to redevelop properties along "smart growth" and sustainable principles.
- Encourage pre-application meetings for non-residential applications along Routes 25 and 111.
- Improve Economic Development Commission membership and training through a standing plan that contains such goals.

Monroe is known for its stewardship of natural resources and the environment; however, new development can have significant implications for the Town's environmentally sensitive areas. This chapter reviews the Town's natural resources and habitat, open space, and agriculture, with an emphasis on protecting the Town's sensitive environmental features.



CHAPTER 8.0
NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Top photo courtesy of Paul Fusco, CTDEP Wildlife Division

8.0 NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Monroe's development pattern has been partly determined by its topography and wetlands, while much of its character is based on the Town's historical rural roots. This chapter reviews the Town's natural resources and habitat, open space, and agriculture. It reviews the existing regulations, which protect significant environmental resources as well as proposals for further regulations. The emphasis of this chapter is on protecting the Town's sensitive environmental features, particularly the protection of surface and groundwater quality, preserving open space, and ensuring smart growth for future development and redevelopment.

8.1 Natural Resources and Habitat

The Town recognizes that there is a strong relationship between the region's water resources, steeps slopes, stormwater management, wildlife and plant habitat, and the general use of land resources. There is a need to preserve scenic views to preserve Monroe's character, prevent soil disturbance on steep slopes and unnecessary tree removal, and protect surface water and groundwater resources. The appropriate management of these resources is an important health, safety, and general welfare concern for property owners within the Town.

Monroe is located in southwestern Connecticut, an area referred to by geologists as the "Western Uplands". Millions of years of geologic and climatic activity have altered the landscape, leaving behind a relatively shallow (less than ten feet) deposit of silt and sand over the underlying bedrock. In some places, this layer of "glacial till" has been eroded away over time, resulting in ledge outcroppings and exposed rock on hilltops. The rivers and streams that formed have also shaped the land and created the many lakes and swamps, which are found throughout the area.

Monroe's environmental setting is highlighted by a variety of natural resources, including:

- landform and terrain (including ridgelines, cliffs, steep slopes, forest land, soils and rocks),
- watercourses, waterbodies and watersheds,
- swamps, marshes, vernal or seasonal pools, and other types of wetlands,
- floodplains and floodways,
- groundwater resources (including aquifers), and
- wildlife and plant habitats.

These resources are distributed throughout the community in a variety of ways and present opportunities for conservation of natural resources as well as constraints to development. Both the 1988 and 2000 Monroe Plans of Conservation and Development (POCD) recognized that, although physical constraints do not completely forbid development, they render development difficult. Wetlands may prohibit the expansion of an existing business due its environmental sensitivity; a steep slope may make it financially infeasible to develop a new home or residential subdivision.

Monroe contains a variety of natural resources that should be protected, such as steep slopes and wetlands.

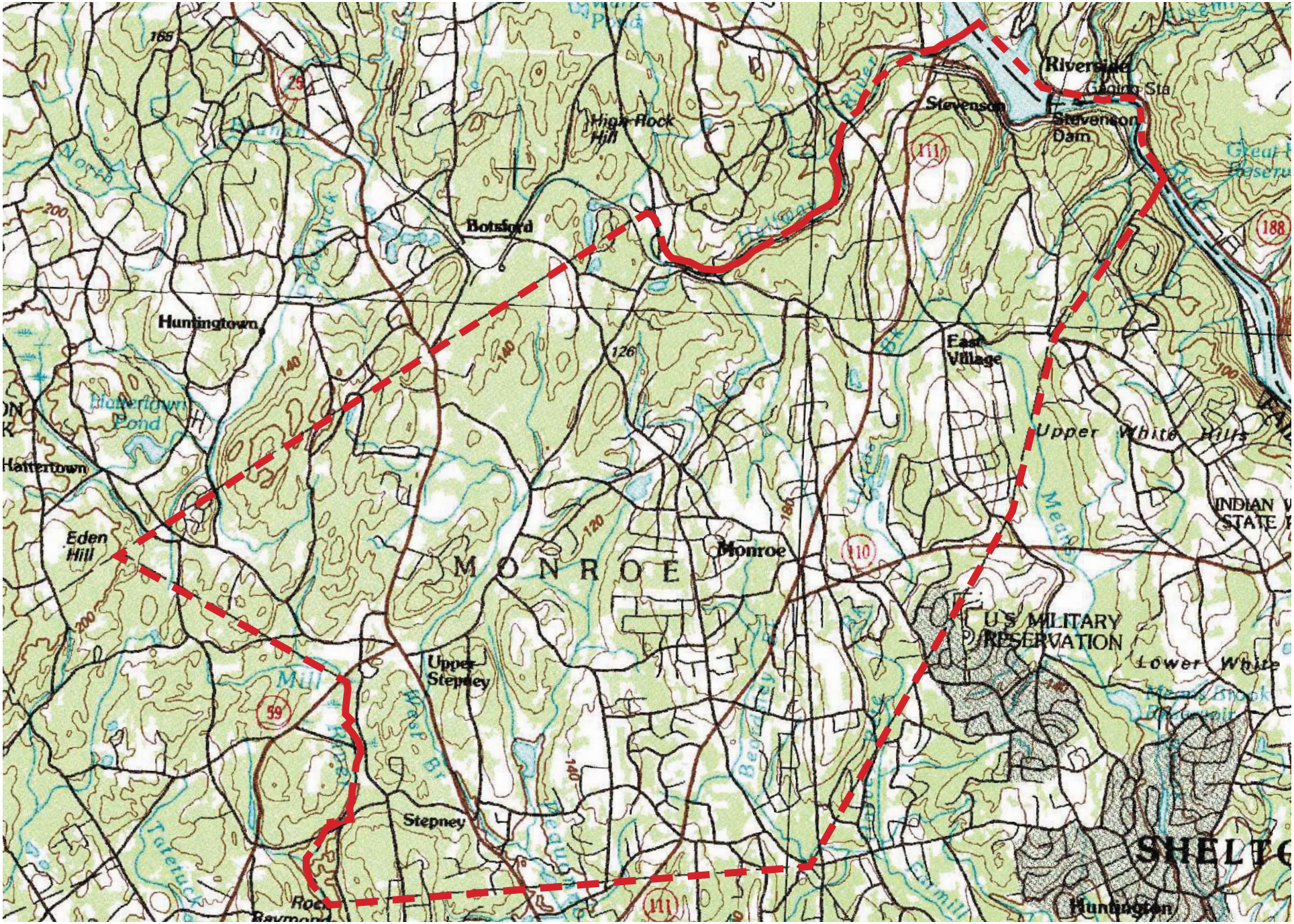
Slopes and Topography

Topography in Monroe ranges from steep slopes along Lake Zoar, to rolling hills in the south and eastern portions of Town, to more rugged and hilly terrain in the northwestern section of Town, west of Route 25 (see Figure 8.1). The highest elevation in Monroe (720 feet above sea level) is found along the Monroe/Newtown border north of Hattertown Road. Also notable in height is Webb Mountain, which is about 500 feet above sea level before dropping down to Lake Zoar and the Housatonic River. The lowest elevation is along the Housatonic River where the elevation is about 30 feet above sea level. Slopes are a special development concern with respect to erosion potential and potential adverse impacts to natural resources. Uncontrolled development of heavily-sloped sites causes topsoil and vegetation loss, and altered drainage patterns that increase rates of runoff. Further, over-development of or improperly managed disturbance to steep slopes and rock outcroppings is detrimental to the visual character of the Town. Development located at the crest of a ridge can be visually intrusive. In addition, locating roads, driveways, utilities, and septic systems on steeply sloped lands results in increased development and maintenance costs.

Population growth and increased land values have resulted in the development of areas with steep slopes. At one time, these were considered too difficult and prohibitively expensive to develop. However, Monroe's steady population growth, from 2,892 persons in1950 to a peak of about 19,492 persons in 2005[1], has resulted in continuing development pressure on some areas with steep slopes, as most readily developable sites have already been built upon.

[1] U.S. Bureau of the Census: Decennial Censuses 1950-2000; Annual Census Estimate 2005.

Figure 8.1: Topography



Monroe Plan of Conservation & Development

Monroe, CT

Source: USGS, 1986

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.


A developed versus untouched steep slope. Rock outcroppings can be seen throughout the Town.

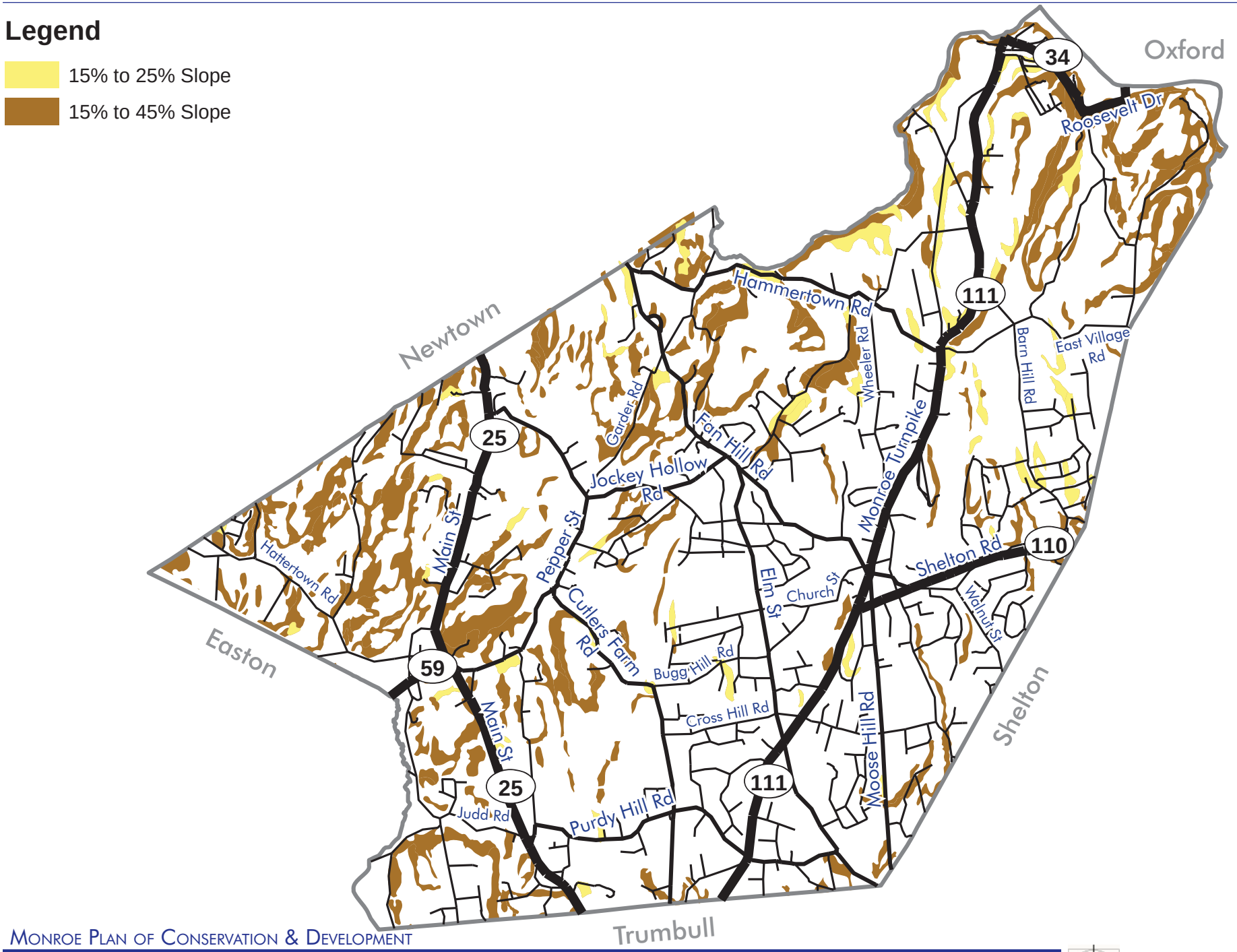
Generally, slopes between 15% and 25% can be developed at lower intensity if proper design and construction principles are applied. (See Figure 8.2 for soils with generalized slopes between 15% and 25% and 15% and 45%). Slopes in excess of 25% are generally not suited for development except at very low intensity and require significant and costly mitigation measures. These constraints may be compounded by the presence of unsuitable soil characteristics, such as compacted or very shallow soils, which make it much more difficult to develop in areas of steep slopes.

There are several undeveloped portions of hills in various sections of Monroe, including, but not limited to, the northwestern section of Town off Hattertown Road, and off Garder and Fan Hill Roads (in the northeastern section) (See Figure 8.2). For these areas, steep slope protection and/or tree clearance ordinances should be introduced.

Soils

Soils are an important factor in determining conservation and development potential. This is especially true in Monroe since soil characteristics determine the suitability for, and intensity of, development in areas that rely on septic systems for sewage disposal and wells for water supply. The Town requires that each development application involving excavation present a detailed site plan before the Planning and Zoning Commission that consists of site-specific grading, drainage, and soils data. This ensures that development is sensitive to the actual effect of soil characteristics and slopes. Soils types in Monroe are:

Poorly Drained Soils - Poorly drained soils (also called wetlands, floodplains, marsh and swamp land) retain water or have high water tables year-round. Poorly drained soils typically contain water at or close to the surface during the wettest times of year and may pond during prolonged and/or heavy rains. As a result, these soils are generally unsuitable for structures, septic systems or other related uses. Activities in wetland areas are regulated by the Monroe Inland Wetlands



Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Commission (IWC) since such areas also provide habitats of varying values, water quality protection, and flood storage functions.

Hardpan - The term hardpan is used to describe a layer of highly compacted soil that severely restricts the vertical movement of water, forcing it to travel over the hardpan instead. Seasonal high water tables often exist above areas of hardpan, which can limit development since traditional septic systems rely on percolation of water through the soil. Hardpan and seasonal high water tables also result in foundation seepage, frost heaves and soil slippage. While these problems can sometimes be mitigated with engineered solutions, soils of this type limit development at higher densities and can result in increased flooding, increased surface runoff, pollution, and surface water quality degradation.

Shallow and Rocky Soils - Very rocky soils and shallow soils (less than 20 inches to bedrock) pose similar development constraints. Shallow and rocky soils have limited ability to properly treat septic waste. While this condition can sometimes be overcome through the use of engineered septic systems, these systems are expensive and must be carefully maintained. Rocky and shallow soils make grading for foundations, driveways and roads, and the installation of underground utilities (such as sewer and water) difficult and expensive. In areas of rocky soils, an accurate soil survey may identify areas of deeper soils more suited to development.

Excessively or Well Drained Soils - This soils group consists primarily of sands and gravels - soils often associated with aquifers and water supplies. Development in areas of excessively drained soils must be carefully managed to guard against pollution from urban runoff and/or contamination. Protection measures include limits on development densities, separating land uses from well areas, and prohibition of certain land uses or the use of potential contaminants.

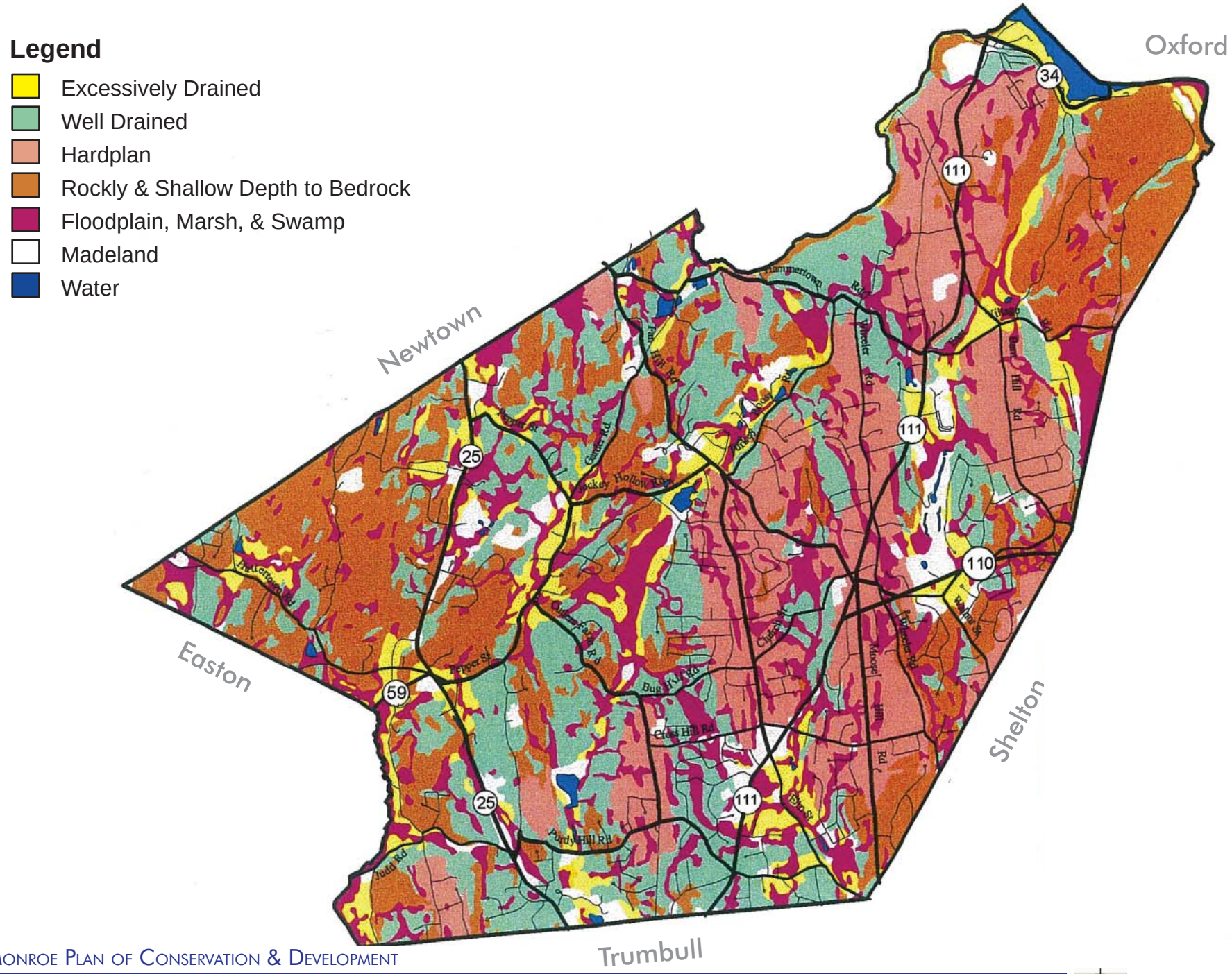
Madeland or Urban Land Soils – Madeland or urban land is soil that has been modified by disturbance of the natural layers with additions of fill material to accommodate development, such as commercial development or golf courses. Urban land can have a large range of characteristics from depth to bedrock, slope, and depth to water table, as it varies from site to site. As an area covered by impervious surfaces, this soil series generally has very low permeability and high runoff of rainwater; however, developed sites can be well-drained if drainage from the site is controlled via stormwater management.

Figure 8.3 depicts these soil groups. As can be seen, soil groups vary throughout the Town and generally relate to the types of natural features found throughout Monroe. For example, excessively drained soils can be found adjacent to waterbodies, such as Lake Zoar, as well as adjacent to some areas that contain floodplains or wetlands; whereas shallow and rocky soils can generally be found in areas with steeper slopes, such as Webb Mountain and the northwestern section of Monroe.

Groundwater and Surface Water Resources

Monroe has a wealth of water resources, including both groundwater and surface water. Various lakes, ponds, rivers, and creeks are located throughout the Town, such as Lake Zoar, the Housatonic River, and the Pequonnock River. These features provide recreational and environmental functions for Town residents and are valuable assets that need to be protected with land use controls that minimize potential negative and harmful effects. Clean and ample public

Figure 8.3: Natural Soils Groups



Monroe Plan of Conservation & Development

Monroe, CT

Sources: Monroe 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development

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Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

water service is also imperative to public health and safety in its use as potable water and fire protection. Regular monitoring of surface water bodies is one way to ensure clean water, in addition to regulation of stormwater runoff, which ultimately leads to rivers and streams, and discharges to groundwater.

Water resources serve multiple functions, including recreation, scenic value, supporting wildlife, and maintaining water quality.

Monroe residents and business owners mostly rely on water service provided by Aquarion Water Company of Connecticut (formerly Bridgeport Hydraulic Company and now owned by Kelda Group) as part of its Bridgeport System. The Bridgeport System serves about 350,000 people in 10 municipalities in the Greater Bridgeport Area. On average, customers of this service area use about 40 million gallons per day for drinking, bathing, restroom use, and watering the lawn.

About 60% of Monroe residents are served by the public water supply. The Town's water service is mostly supplied by eight surface reservoirs located throughout the state. Significant portions of the Town are also within the watersheds of Aquarion's Easton Lake, West Pequonnock, Means Brook, and Far Mill reservoirs. Reservoir water is filtered at one of three plants: Trap Falls water treatment plant in Shelton, Easton Lake Plant in Easton, and Warner Plant in Fairfield[2]. Additional potable water supply is located in private groundwater wells, which serves about 40% of the Town's residences. These private wells mainly serve individual homes and do not serve as public aquifers for the larger Town population.

One of the critical planning policies put forward by this plan is the continued and serious commitment to groundwater, surface water, and drinking water protection. Possible water quality issues include potential contamination by nitrates from wastewater and fertilizers, pesticides, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from spills of industrial solvents and fuel components, and chlorides resulting primarily from de-icing of roads and parking areas. The challenge for the Town will be to protect its existing and future water quality from over-development in sensitive areas, while encouraging targeted tax-base growth.

Currently, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's (CTDEP) Aquifer Protection Area Program protects major public water supply wells in sand and gravel aquifers (also referred

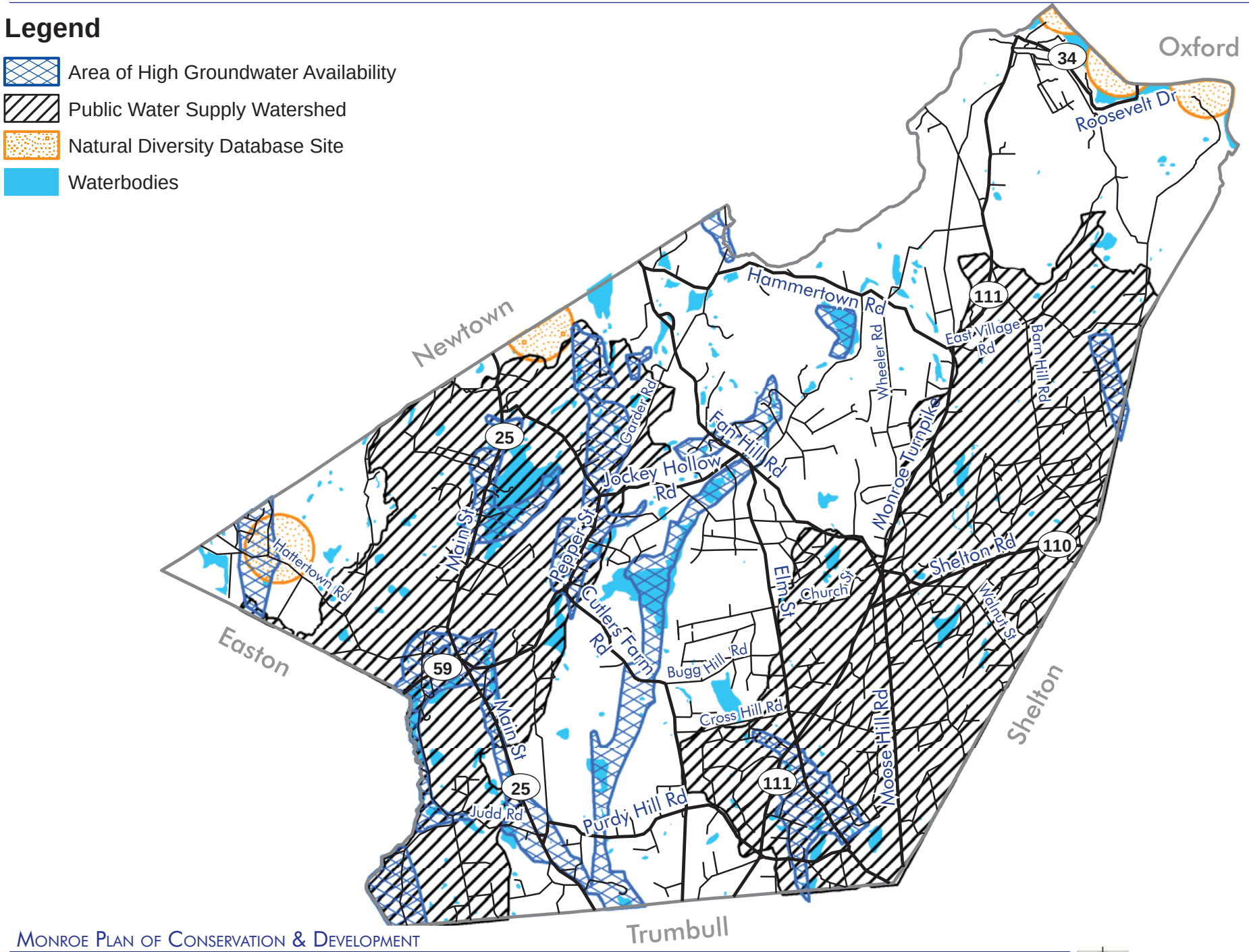
[2] Aquarion Water Company. "2008 Water Quality Report". Greater Bridgeport System.

to as wellhead protection areas). However, according to the CTDEP, the Town of Monroe is currently not listed in Connecticut's Aquifer Protection Area Program.

The CTDEP Aquifer Protection Land Use Regulation is another tool for protecting public aquifers. However, the regulation only applies to regulated activities located within a protected aquifer used by water systems serving over 1,000 people. The protected area encompasses the area of contribution and recharge area of the well field.

Figure 8.4 depicts areas sensitive to development in Monroe, including areas of high groundwater availability (aquifers), public water supply watersheds, waterbodies, and Natural Diversity Database sites, which represent approximate locations of endangered, threatened and special concern species, and significant natural communities in Connecticut[3].

[3] Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP).



Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

The CTDEP measures water quality using the Water Quality Standards and Criteria (WQS), which sets an overall policy for management of Connecticut's surface and groundwaters. As part of the WQS, the CTDEP classifies inland surface waters by type of waterbody (i.e. potable, recreational, fish and wildlife habitat, agricultural, industrial, or navigational uses) and water quality. The WQS classifications for inland surface waters are Classes AA, A, and B (acceptable water quality), and Classes C and D (unacceptable water quality).

According the CTDEP, portions of Lake Zoar and the Housatonic River are classified as C and D. This classification allows recreational, fish and wildlife habitat, agricultural, industrial supply, and navigational uses. However, the water quality is unacceptable. CTDEP's goal is to bring these waterbodies into Class B level by improving water quality and cleaning up pollutants such as Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

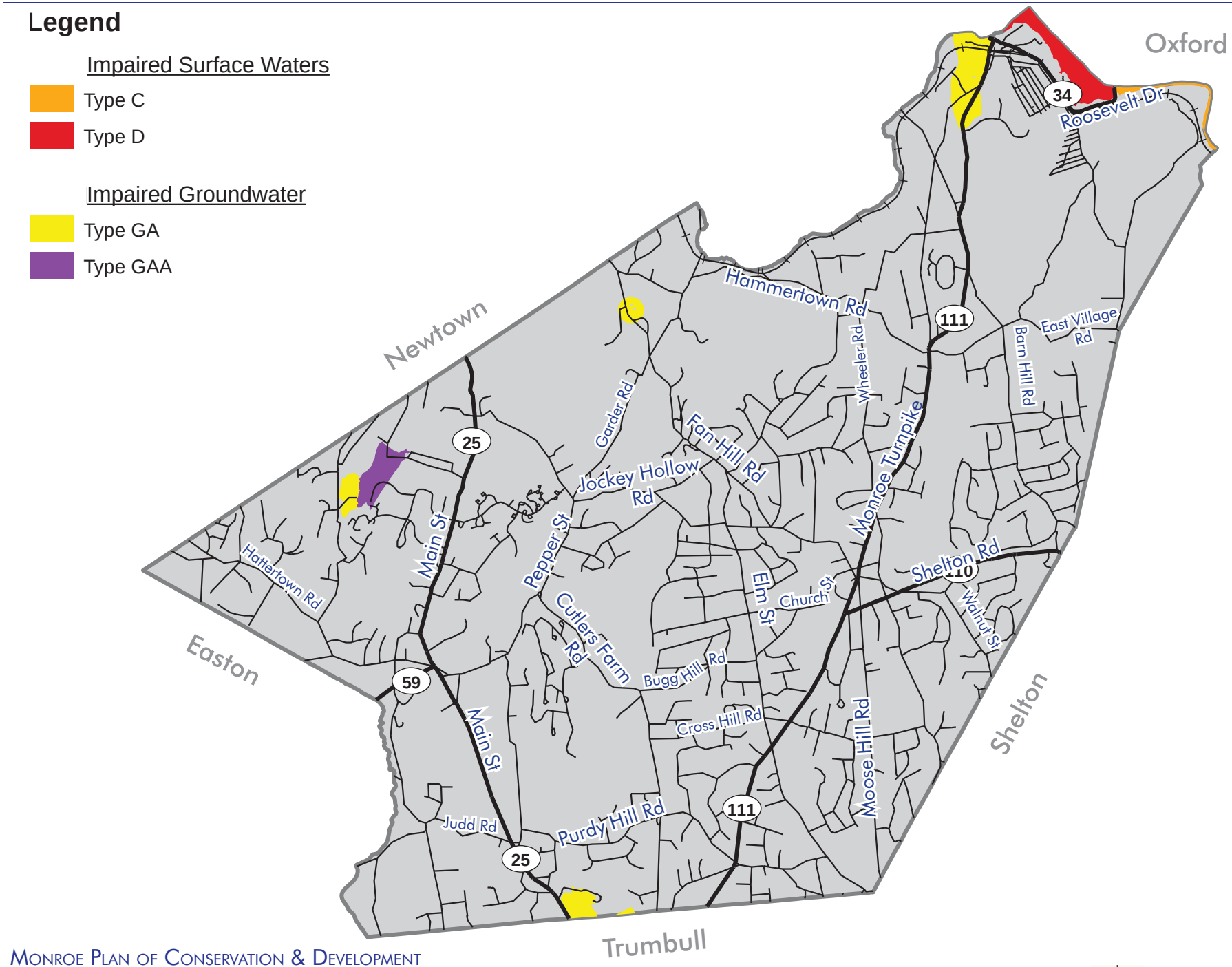
Groundwater also has similar WQS classifications in order to determine the use of the groundwater supply and water quality. There are two types of groundwater classifications in Monroe: 1) Class GAA, which includes existing or potential public supply of water suitable for drinking without treatment, baseflow for hydraulically connected surface water bodies, and discharges limited to treated domestic sewage, certain agricultural wastes, and certain water treatment wastewaters; and 2) Class GA, which includes similar uses as GAA, but discharges are expanded to include discharges from septage treatment facilities subject to stringent treatment and discharge requirements, and other wastes of natural origin that easily biodegrade and present no threat to groundwater.

The CTDEP has determined several groundwater resources classified as GAA and GA to be impaired in Monroe. Figure 8.5 depicts both impaired surface waters and groundwater in the Town.

Wetlands

Monroe contains a large quantity of inland wetlands, streams, lakes and rivers. Data from the CTDEP is used to define those areas with hydric soils, which typically contain attributes commonly associated with inland wetlands. General locations of inland wetland soils are indicated on Figure 8.6[4], including a 100 foot buffer – known as the Upland Review Area - around these areas. The Upland Review Area signifies the minimum regulatory jurisdiction of the Monroe Inland Wetlands Commission for any disturbances and alterations located within the Upland Review Area. Inland wetlands are also protected at the federal and state level. Any activity that might have an impact on these wetlands (excavation, filling, building, obstructions, potential pollution sources, clearing, grading, etc.) is regulated, whether or not the activity occurs in the wetland itself or on land adjacent to the wetland.

[4] This map is not an official regulatory map – for accurate delineation of the wetland boundaries refer to the CT DEP regulatory Freshwater Wetland Maps. While any future regulatory use of the map would require field checks, it has been assumed that the soil types mapped are those that generally support or maintain wetland areas. Wetlands are subject to constant change, in terms of their hydrology, plant life and drainage. Therefore no definitive Town wetlands map can be produced, as it would require constant modification. At the site specific level, delineation of wetlands will require the services of a soil scientist to determine exact boundaries.



Monroe, CT

Sources: Monroe Planning & Zoning Department; Monroe Engineering Department; CTDEP

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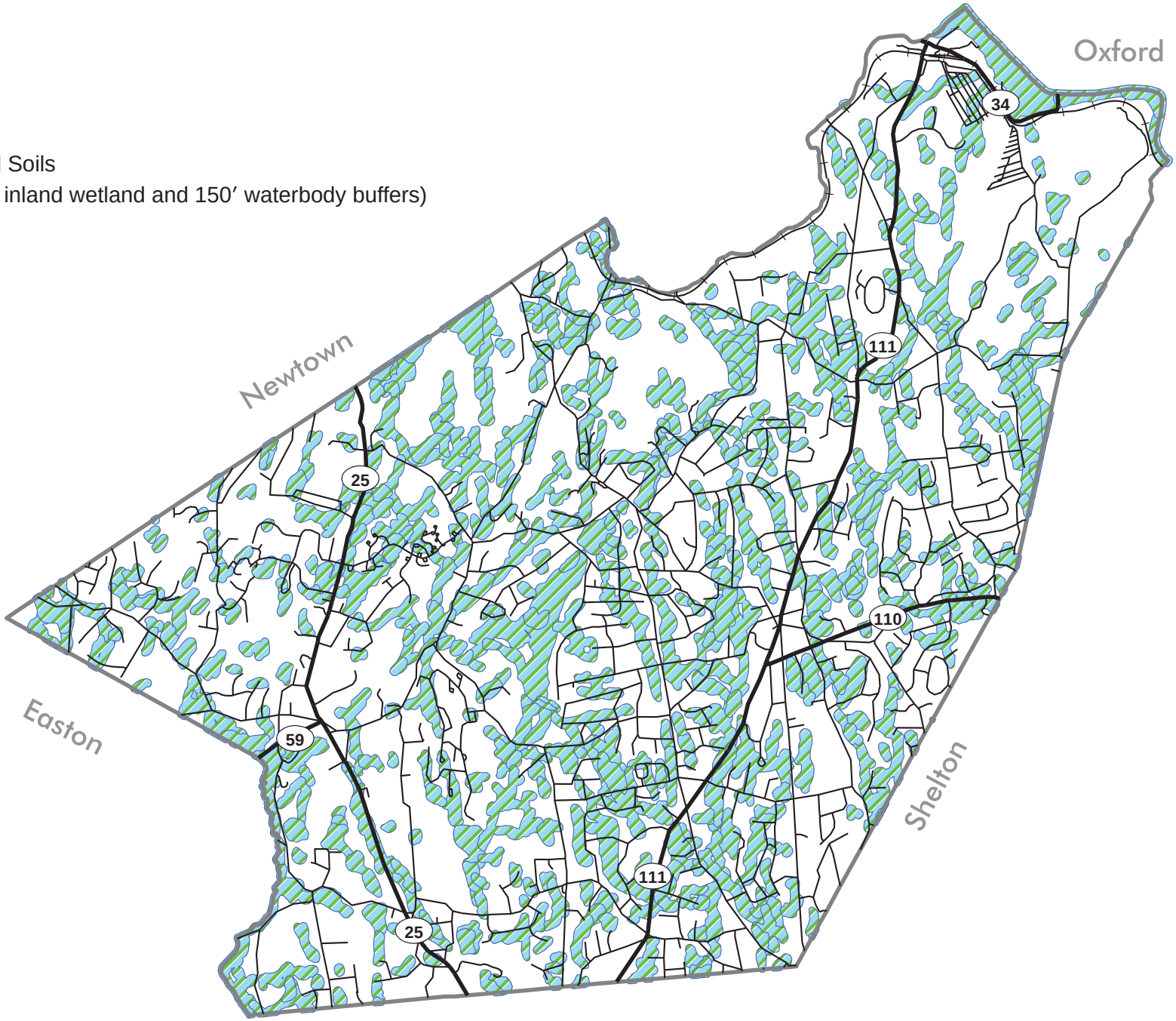
Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Legend

Inland Wetland Soils
(including 100′ inland wetland and 150′ waterbody buffers)



SOURCES: MONROE PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT; MONROE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT; CTDEP
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Wetlands function as natural storage basins for floodwaters and aid in groundwater recharge. Groundwater is replenished from rain that percolates through the soil into the ground, and from recharge areas, such as wetlands. This function is particularly important, as approximately 40% of Monroe is supplied by on-site individual wells. Wetlands also serve as a natural filtration system that assists in purifying surface water prior to entering the aquifer. Other functions of Monroe's various wetlands are their importance for wildlife habitat and their contribution to the Town's natural and scenic beauty.

Wetlands require conservation, as they are biologically diverse with wildlife and plant species, provide natural filtration of pollutants, and help to control flooding. Wetlands are considered to be unsuitable for development because they must be preserved in their natural state to ensure functionality.

The potential adverse impact to wetlands is especially prevalent along Route 25, which is mostly developed with commercial and light industrial uses. Many properties along Route 25 are adjacent to or encroach upon wetlands, thereby limiting the size and scale of development along this corridor. Impervious surfaces, such as pavement, buildings, concrete, asphalt, and roofs threaten wetlands as these surfaces are resistant to penetration by moisture. They also promote stormwater runoff, contribute to increased flooding, and assist in diverting pollutants toward wetlands and other water bodies. Therefore, future development and redevelopment should address these concerns by incorporating Low Impact Development[5] guidelines.

Critical Habitat

Connecticut enjoys a great diversity of wildlife habitats and the Town of Monroe is no exception. From red maple swamps, rocky ledges, vernal pools and rivers, to large tracts of forest and open space, Monroe is rich in diverse habitats. Conservation of these habitats them is critical to the Town and its environmental health, economic development, and community character. The conservation of Monroe's wildlife habitats is essential to creating and maintaining a viable future for the Town.

The CTDEP has identified habitats in the Town that support endangered, threatened, or special concern species. Although the Town currently does not have any federally designated endangered animal or fish species, it has critical environmentally sensitive areas that contain rare animal, aquatic, and plant life that needs to be protected. This is especially prevalent in the Town's wetland and wetland buffer areas, as well as near Lake Zoar (see Figure 8.7). The Town should also protect wildlife in its forested areas, which provide food and shelter for a variety of wildlife, such as songbirds, deer, squirrels, and salamanders.

While it is imperative that these areas remain undisturbed, other areas throughout Town require preservation. Monroe should be cognizant of proposed plans for ConnDOT's replacement of the Route 34 bridge over the dam at Lake Zoar (see also Chapter 5.0). Given the removal of the bald eagle from the endangered species list, ConnDOT has greater flexibility in locating the new bridge, which will likely now be south of the dam.

[5] Low Impact Development is an approach to land development (or redevelopment) that aims to manage stormwater runoff by use of onsite natural features to protect water quality, instead of only relying on manmade stormwater management products.

Habitats and Health

Human health and the health of our environment are inextricably linked. As West Nile, Lyme disease, and other ailments become more prevalent, causes and connections must be understood. For example, white-nose fungus has all but decimated Connecticut's bat population. One small brown bat can consume over 1,200 mosquitoes each night. As their population plummets, mosquitoes – and the potential diseases they spread - may continue to increase.

Another issue is the deer population in Monroe. The deer population in Fairfield County is approximately 60 deer per square mile. These animals have not yet reached their habitat's carrying capacity but have reached suburban cultural capacity. From Lyme disease to roadway accidents to habitat damage, a better balance in Monroe's deer ecosystem is needed. Preserving large tracts of land as parks and open space, and creating and maintaining greenways are a top priority for the health and safety of both Monroe's citizens and local wildlife.

Non-Native and Invasive Species

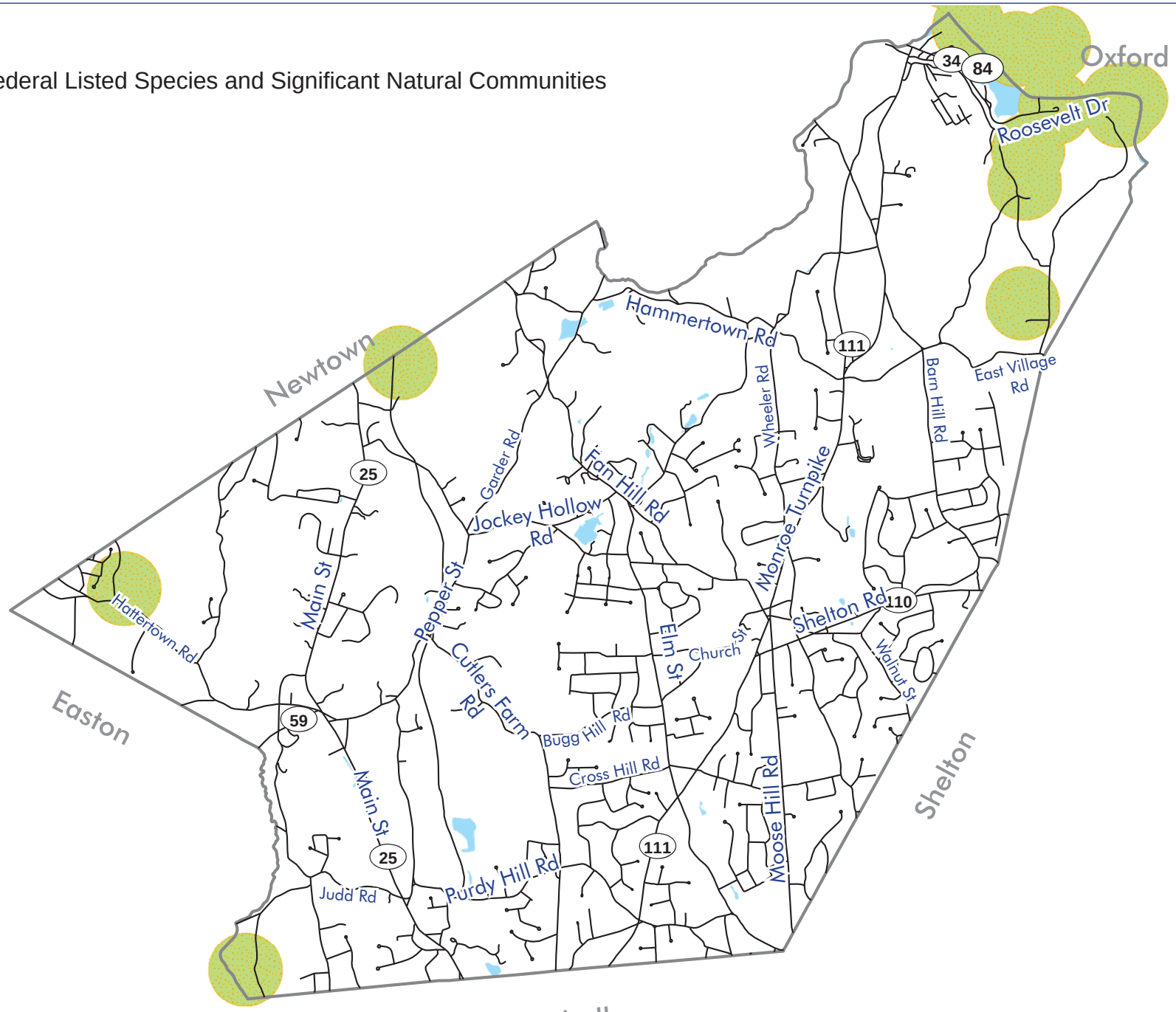
Mapping and understanding habitats in the Town will ultimately help to preserve them. However, there are other risks to biodiversity in Monroe, such as invasive species. These are non-native species that harm the environment or human health. In the Town's parks, environmentally sensitive areas are threatened by human disturbance such as fires, and hiking or walking off designated trails and on sensitive areas. Hikers should be made aware of sensitive areas with signage that would direct them when to stay on a particular trail. In residential areas and on golf courses, the use of phosphorous-based fertilizers is another example of how humans can adversely affect environmentally sensitive areas, such as waterbodies. In some cases, invasive species are accidently introduced to areas by humans.

Invasive wildlife, plants, and insects can result in habitat loss. Plant species, such as Asiatic bittersweet, can kill native trees. Winged euonymus (burning bush) and Japanese barberry can negatively impact shrubs on the forest's understory. Likewise, Phragmites can take hold in disturbed wetlands and eliminate native cattails, a nesting site for red-winged blackbirds and an important food source for other native wildlife. Public education is one of the best tools for providing informative guidelines on how to reduce the human footprint on natural landscapes and increase awareness of invasive species.

The CTDEP has policies on non-native and invasive species, including protecting native species and the habitats in which they occur. To address the issue, the CTDEP has taken measures to control and remove invasive species on state land while offering technical assistance to private landowners seeking to manage invasive species on their properties. CTDEP may offer other forms of assistance, such as partnerships, cost sharing, and/or personnel, whenever practical. In addition, the General Statutes of Connecticut (*Chapter 446i, Sec. 22a-381d*) contain a list of invasive plants and prohibits importing, moving, selling, purchasing, transplanting, cultivating, or distributing such plants, notwithstanding the provisions of any municipal ordinance.

Legend

State/Federal Listed Species and Significant Natural Communities



SOURCES: MONROE PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT; MONROE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT; CTDEP

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8.2 Environmental Protection

Monroe's environmental features are a Town asset. Its wetlands, trees, and hillsides provide beauty, rural character, habitat, water quality protection, and natural stormwater management, and need to be preserved. Development is generally shaped by zoning, which seeks to balance community development and preservation through regulating overall density and type of development. However, zoning controls do not fully shape development because other supplemental regulations are in place that address environmental issues.

Monroe relies on a number of regulatory measures for environmental protection. The purpose of these controls is the long-term protection of important public assets: clean water, firm (non-eroded) hillsides, tree cover, healthy ecosystems, and mix of suburban and rural character.

Since the Monroe 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), several recommendations regarding natural resources protection and conservation have been implemented. The Town is in the process of reviewing updated zoning regulations that increase water quality protection in all zoning districts. The existing regulations include soil erosion and sediment control standards for land development, which requires that a soil erosion and sediment control plan be submitted for any development application that disturbs a half acre or more.

Trees

Monroe is one of 15 communities in Connecticut designated by the U.S. Arbor Day Foundation as *Tree Cities USA,* a recognition given to municipalities across America that commit a significant amount of resources toward promoting the urban forest. Even with this recognition, the Town does not regulate the removal of trees, with exception of regulations for clearing and grubbing.

Although there are no State designated forests in Monroe, the Town still has many forested areas that should be preserved. Trees enhance the outdoor ambience of any community environment by knitting together the social fabric of neighborhoods, beautifying the landscape with their foliage and stateliness, and attracting businesses and visitors. Trees filter impurities from the air, provide shade, and can increase property values and provide energy savings. They yield fruit and sustenance for birds and wildlife and serve as fences and buffers to adjacent properties.

In Monroe, the majority of trees are on private property, including residential, commercial, and vacant parcels. There are also a great number of trees on land that belongs to utility companies and on Town-owned properties, such as schools, parks, and along rights-of-way. Opportunities should be examined to conserve and maintain trees, especially on vacant parcels. The planting of new trees should also be considered when redeveloping existing commercial parcels.

Wetlands, Floodplains, and Watercourses

Protection of natural resources (i.e. wetlands, waterbodies, steep slopes, etc.) and local plants and wildlife is administered by the plan review and regulatory actions by the Monroe Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) and Inland Wetlands Commission. The Inland Wetlands Commission (IWC) enforces all provisions of the Connecticut Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act, including providing wetland-related recommendations to the P&Z for all subdivisions and re-subdivisions; issuing permits/approvals for all regulated wetlands activity; considering

amendments to the Town Wetlands Map; resolving disputed issues and violations; and hearing appeals to the designated Wetlands Agent. The Commission requires contacting IWC for development activities taking place within 100 feet of designated wetlands and 150 feet of designated watercourses. The IWC also reviews the potential environmental impacts on wetlands and adjacent areas for development applications.

The P&Z regulates certain activities with potential environmental impacts within the DI3 district for development activity that affects 50% or more of land that is within or adjacent to environmentally critical areas, such as inland wetlands, watercourses, 100-year flood boundaries, aquifer protection areas or slopes exceeding 15%. The P&Z may grant a discretionary building height modification that would allow development to take place without adversely affecting these environmentally critical areas.

Stormwater Management

The Town regulates soil erosion and sediment control to prevent excessive nutrient loading and sedimentation of waterbodies, wetlands, and floodplains. Since the Monroe 2000 POCD, the Town has a implemented a stormwater management plan (SWMP) that address six minimum control measures that are required by the state, as well as Best Management Practices (BMP) for each measure that aim to reduce pollution and control stormwater runoff:

- Public Education and Outreach on Stormwater Impacts
- Public Involvement/Participation
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (i.e. map and monitor storm sewer outfalls)
- Construction of Site Stormwater Management Control
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping For Municipal Operations

In compliance with Phase II of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater program and CTDEP, the Town enforces the Stormwater Associated with Commercial Activities General Permit (DEP-PERD-GP-004), which requires registration for stormwater discharges directly related to retail, commercial, and/or office services whose facilities occupy five acres or more of contiguous impervious surface. Operators of these properties must undertake measures, such as parking lot sweeping and catch basin cleaning, to keep stormwater clean before it reaches waterbodies.

In addition to preparing a SWMP to reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff, Monroe conducts annual wet weather sampling of stormwater discharges to monitor the impacts of stormwater runoff within the Town's waterbodies.

There are environmentally sensitive areas in Town where drainage has been a concern:

1. The Garder Road area where the roadway is a gravel surface adjacent to wetlands. Maintenance is a continuous problem due to the gravel surface, lack of drainage and inadequate profile between the roadway surface and adjacent wetlands.
2. The Great Pine Swamp (just northeast of Enterprise Drive and along the border with Newtown) is a resource currently stressed by environmental issues and surrounded by commercial development.

3. The lake area along lower Main Street is also a concern due to the presence of commercial development and inadequate profile between existing grades and adjacent wetlands and bodies of water.

Currently, there are plans for drainage facilities on Elm Street, and the rebuilding/upgrading of the northerly portions of Pepper Street. Long range plans include drainage improvements along Routes 25 and 111 as part of ConnDOT's proposed widening plans. The POCD recommends that, in addition to these actions, Monroe update its stormwater drainage maps so that they are accurate and useful to the various involved Town departments.

Sewage Disposal

The Town of Monroe is served entirely by subsurface treatment systems, such as individual septic systems[6] used by single-family homes and community septic systems, which are located in most multi-family developments and some larger commercial sites. Septic systems are a common choice for treating wastewater from a financial perspective but they must be properly maintained and can be harmful to environmentally sensitive areas. As such, buffers must be established to protect these areas. Some limitations on septic systems include: overloading the system with excess water, putting plastics or other non-biodegradable items into the system, dumping chemicals in the system, and letting solids build up in the system. The waste treatment industry is developing new technologies for subsurface treatment; the POCD recommends that the Town's Water Pollution Control Authority be charged with determining their applicability in Monroe.

In 2004, the Health Departments of Monroe and Trumbull were combined to form the Trumbull/Monroe Health District. The Health District performs a number of public services that promote better health and prevent disease, including monitoring and maintaining community septic systems with onsite sewage disposal design flows of less than 2,000 gallons per day (GPD). The Health District regulates the installation of new septic systems by reviewing septic systems for individual sites with design flows of less the 2,000 GPD[7]. The District currently requires a 75 foot buffer between septic systems and wetlands, and 10 feet between a septic system and house or property line. Similar to pollution attributed to stormwater runoff, groundwater contamination can take place from septic fields and should be monitored closely. The Health District also enforces relevant public health laws. Currently the Health District has no regulations on the maintenance of existing septic systems, but does take action in the event of a system failure. One of the leading causes of septic failure is inadequate maintenance of septic systems, particularly the lack of periodic pump-outs.

With the increasing vulnerability of natural resources and water quality, the Town must address sewage disposal management with its Monroe's Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA). The

[6] Individual septic systems generally consist of two basic components: a septic tank and a drainfield. The septic tank performs two functions once wastewater leaves the house: it is a holding tank that allows the solids to settle out; and it enables naturally occurring bacteria to break down solids and destroy pathogens. After the treatment process is started in the septic tank, the effluent enters the drainfield. There it percolates through a gravel bed, then the effluent exits the drainfield and goes into natural soil, where the remaining pathogens are destroyed. The cleaning process continues as the water migrates through the soil.

[7] The CT Department of Health reviews septic system applications for design flows between 2,000 GPD and 5,000 GPD. The CT Department of Environmental Protection reviews applications design flows greater than 5,000 GPD.

POCD supports implementing a Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP) and the recently completed Sewer Service Area Map, which depicts potential areas for future public sewer service. The updated WPCP and Sewer Service Area Map ensures Monroe's economic competiveness and would update its sewer infrastructure, improve the environment and water quality within the Town, and allow for a mix of uses and densities along Routes 25 and 111 in the areas designated by this POCD as Priority Growth Districts **(see Chapter 3.0).** The WPCP and map also allows the Town to plan and manage its sewer system rather than react to development applications (**see also Chapter 5.0**).

Summary: Natural Resources Conservation

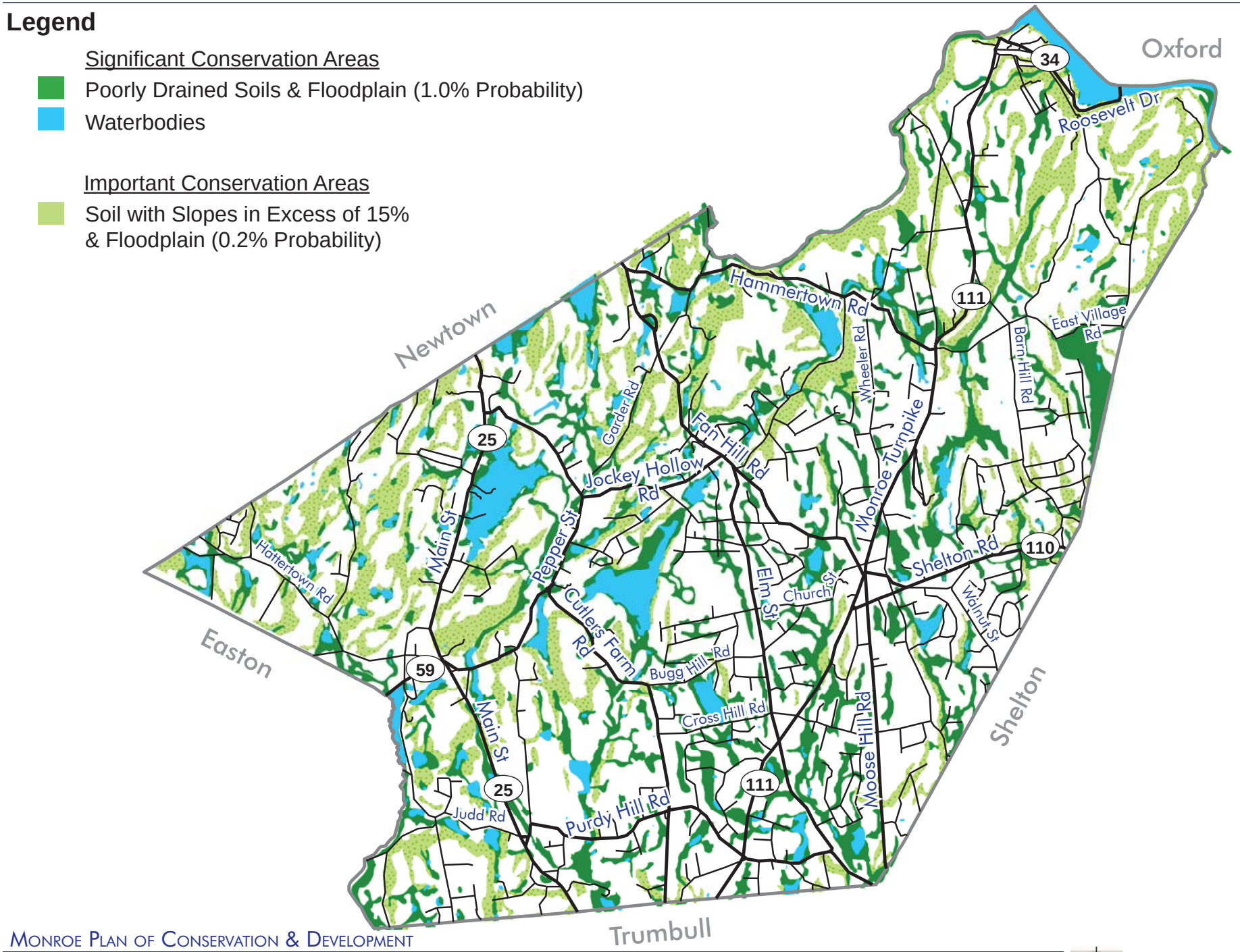
The following table (Table 8.1) categorizes natural resources in Monroe in terms of the opportunities for conservation. The table includes a list of resources, including watercourses, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, public water supply watershed areas, areas for high groundwater availability, and unique or special habitat areas, as well as the rationale for conserving these resources (also see Figure 8.8).

Table 8.1: Natural Resource Summary Table

Definition	Resource	Rationale For Conservation
Significant Conservation Areas		
Very sensitive lands worthy of preservation	• Watercourses	Watercourses provide important drainage, scenic, and recreation functions.
	• Poorly drained soils (wetlands)	Wetlands provide habitat, water quality, and flood storage functions.
	• Floodplain (100-year, 1.0% probability)	Areas that flood occasionally, threatening life and property.
Important Conservation Areas		
Sensitive lands worthy of conservation	• Any soil with natural slopes in excess of 25%	Natural slopes exceeding 25% have significant structural and septic concerns and erosion potential.
	• Any soil with natural slopes between 15% and 25%	Natural slopes exceeding 15% present problems for development of roads and septic systems.
	• Floodplain (500-year, 0.2% probability)	Areas that flood occasionally, threatening life and property.
	• Public water supply watershed areas	Areas that drain to public water supply reservoirs.
	• Areas of high groundwater availability	Areas that have a geologic composition favorable to extracting large quantities of water.
	• Unique or special habitat areas	Areas that provide important habitat or represent unique areas in the State.

Source: 2000 Monroe POCD

The above table provides the general types and locations of critical natural resources in the Town. These conservation efforts are meant to act as a guide for development activities, but are not intended to restrict development efforts in the Town. When possible, redevelopment or revitalization strategies are encouraged as a means of conserving natural resources and ensuring the economic vitality of certain areas. Other conservation techniques should also be considered, such as "green" building strategies, to ensure that Monroe is on the leading edge of sustainable development practices (see Chapter 13.0).



Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

8.3 Recommendations

Monroe has a wealth of natural resources that not only contribute to its scenic beauty and visual appeal, but are important to the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents, business owners, and visitors. The Town must assure the protection of its sensitive environmental features, particularly the protection of surface and groundwater quality, wetlands, ridge lines, trees, and rivers and tributaries, as well as ensuring smart growth for future development and redevelopment.

Additionally, Monroe's open spaces, whether available to the public or not, contribute greatly to Town character, providing significant green space and recreation. The Town must continue to add parcels to its open space inventory and shape land development patterns to help reduce the strain on municipal services associated with the development of new residential homes.

Zoning Regulations Recommendations:

Open Space Acquisition and Protection

- Adopt open space subdivision provisions and acquire open space as per an official Open Space Inventory Report.
- Require undisturbed buffers and setbacks along river and stream edges and wetlands.
- Offer incentives to developers to protect open space and environmentally sensitive areas. Common incentives are density or building height bonuses; a long-term mechanism is a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).

Lakefront Zoning

- Enact a lake overlay zone to prevent and control water pollution, preserve habitat, vegetative cover, and natural beauty. Standards should address:

  - Improved septic system design standards.
  - Reduced maximum amount of impervious surface to reduce stormwater runoff.
  - Reduced phosphorus concentrations in lakes.
  - Protected slopes and vegetation.
  - Additional erosion and sediment control plan requirements.
  - Lake management plans.
  - "General permit" issued by the P&Z to ensure implementation of Lake Management Program regulations.

Code Enforcement, Maintenance, and Administration Recommendations:

- Increase enforcement of environmental codes, such as disturbances to wetlands and other sensitive environmental features.
- Continue to maintain municipal parcels, such as the town greens, to uphold visual appeal.
- Have the Monroe Zoning Enforcement Officer sign off on tree planting in any new development application that comes before the P&Z for consistency and adherence to POCD, and to prevent plantings of invasive plantings.

Visual Appeal Recommendations:

- Maintain the Town's character and appearance within new development by retaining trees (especially specimen trees) and natural undisturbed landscaping whenever appropriate.
- Encourage developers to retain natural vegetation and to the maximum extent possible. This also retains the "country character" of Monroe.
- Enhance areas with the addition of vegetation, especially along commercial corridors that are currently lacking visual appeal. Avoid the use of invasive plant species as listed by the General Statutes of Connecticut (*Chapter 446i, Sec. 22a-381d*).
- Consider converting an area at Town Hall and/or Town Library for an educational arboretum with plantings of desirable trees, shrubs, plants, and flowers.
- Create a Tree Alliance responsible for advocating tree preservation and plantings, and training volunteers in tree planting and care. The alliance should comprise business owners, non-profit groups, government agencies, and concerned citizens.

Natural Resources Protection Recommendations:

Steep Slope, Hillside/Viewshed Protection, and Tree Ordinances

The Town should consider preparing the following ordinances and maps:

- A **Steep Slope Ordinance** recognizes the importance of erosion control to prevent excessive nutrient loading and sedimentation of waterbodies within the Town's watershed, the deleterious effects of large-scale clear cutting of trees, as well as the protection of viewsheds, natural features, and aesthetics. The Town should create this ordinance in order to regulate development of commercial and residential development on slopes of 25% or greater, and should consider specially permitted uses depending on various development factors (e.g. slope gradient, soil type, drainage, availability of infrastructure, access to the site, natural qualities, etc.). The Town should consider the following when preparing the Steep Slope Ordinance:

  - Balancing property owner's development needs with protection of steep slopes.
  - Possible creation of an overlay zone consisting of permitted uses that would result in minimal impacts to sleep slopes.
  - Assessment of alternative placements of proposed structures and whether acceptable ground cover can be established in disturbed areas.
  - Preparation of a Steep Slope Inventory map.
  - Establishment of a committee to analyze town needs to protect steep slopes, hillsides, and ridgelines.

- A **Hillside Protection Ordinance** addresses the Town's undeveloped hills, including portions of the hills surrounding Lake Zoar. This would limit the percentage of an area that could be significantly disturbed and would regulate the cutting and filling required to place development on hillsides. Such a regulation is particularly important for commercial areas and multi-family housing in which

large, level areas are required for both the building footprint and parking. Finished grades could also be addressed by such a regulation.

- A **Viewshed Protection Ordinance** limits or prohibits building on or near a hillside. This would preserve important public viewsheds in areas such as Lake Zoar and Webb Mountain, and along scenic roads.
- A **Tree Preservation, Protection, and Clearance Ordinance.** The management of tree clearance complements the existing Steep Slope and Erosion Control Ordinance, and any proposed Hillside/Viewshed Protection regulations. It recognizes that the loss of top soil and vegetation due to the uncontrolled removal of trees from lots and tracts of land results in increased drainage control costs, alteration of drainage patterns, and excessive loading of nutrients and sediment to the various surface water bodies in the Town. In addition, the removal of trees decreases property values and impairs the visual attractiveness of the Town.

    - The ordinance should incorporate a tree cutting application for all commercial and high-density residential properties, and reinforce tree preservation for P&Z development applications.

Critical Habitat and Invasive Species:

- Prepare a town-wide inventory of animal, plant, and fish species that may not be listed on federal or state endangered or critical lists, but should be protected whenever appropriate.
- Work to eradicate invasive species in the Town's parks and other Town-owned properties as listed in General Statutes of Connecticut (*Chapter 446i, Sec. 22a-381d*).
- Establish a Town program that educates residents on the use of native species for home landscaping.

Groundwater and Surface Water Quality Protection

- Examine current regulations for groundwater and surface water protection and encourage measures to enhance local recharge, including installation of roof-drain dry wells and in-garden recharge areas, disconnection of drainage conveyances that pass over porous soils, and replacement of paved areas (impervious surfaces) with porous surface grading.
- Prepare a study to examine and map the Town's aquifers for potential inclusion in the State's Aquifer Protection Area Program.
- Distribute educational materials to landowners to encourage water conservation techniques and address proper disposal for many household chemicals, discourage chemical lawn uses, and discourage use of septic systems for any compounds other than human wastes.
- Implement special water quality protection regulations.
- Examine the Town Code for consideration of the following recommendations:

    - Establish natural, undisturbed riparian buffer zones of varying widths, depending on resource to be protected, soil type, and other natural features. Refer to DEP's Upland Review Area Guide.
    - Retain and maintain maximum amount of natural vegetation on slopes over 15%, particularly those within the Upland Review Area of a watercourse or

wetland. Prevent clearcutting or tree removal beyond the established limits of disturbance.

- Establish no-build setback areas from wetlands and watercourses for new development of structures, pools, septic systems, etc.
- Establish restrictions on types of land uses located within the Federal Emergency Management Agency designated 100-year flood elevation.
- Preserve pre-development site hydrology through use of dry wells, rain gardens, rain barrels, pervious pavement and other similar means where such techniques are appropriate.
- New development applications should reference compliance with the 2002 Connecticut Soil Erosion and Sediment Control guidelines (as amended or most current edition) and those from the 2004 Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual (as amended or most current edition).
- Consider using appropriate treatment on all storm drainage systems and discourage "piped storm water systems" in favor of systems that provide bio-remediation from overland flow and infiltration of "clean water" to provide groundwater recharge.
- Establish requirements for maximum lot coverage for all new development and redevelopment.
- Consider increasing minimum open space requirements for new residential subdivisions, including a suggested minimum of 20% open space in all subdivisions and 30% in cluster subdivisions. Wetlands and steep slopes greater than 20% should not be counted toward the total open space percentage.
- Require conservation easements to be placed on Upland Review Areas of new subdivisions.

- Maintain the integrity of stream banks, streambeds, and associated tree canopy.
- Discourage impervious surfaces, especially in riparian buffers. The quality of life in a wetland or watercourse significantly decreases with increases in impervious area in its watershed.
- Encourage Low Impact Development wherever possible and practical.
- Retain areas of flooding, floodplains, and wetlands in their natural state to the maximum extent possible to preserve water quality, protect water retention capabilities, facilitate flood-flow levels, and reduce the hazards and costs associated with flooding.
- **See also recommendations in Chapter 3.0 Land Use, Zoning, and Community Character; Chapter 9.0 Open Space and Agriculture; and Chapter 11.0 Sustainability.**

Impervious Surfaces and Stormwater Management

- Town road standards should be reviewed to incorporate the goal of reducing the amount of impervious surfaces by reducing road widths whenever appropriate.
- Produce and adopt an accurate map of waterbody and wetland buffers, with the assistance of CTDEP, to increase awareness of the regulations.
- Minimize impervious surfaces in recreation, playground, and parking areas, as per recommendations in Chapter 11.0 Sustainability.
- Prepare a town-wide drainage study to improve drainage, especially in environmentally sensitive areas, and prioritize improvements.

- Update Town stormwater drainage maps for use by the Town Departments.
- Address drainage needs along Routes 25 and 111 by coordinating improvements with proposed ConnDOT plans.
- Propose ordinance that prohibits improper water discharge.

Sewage Infrastructure and Management

- The Monroe Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) shall address sewer infrastructure needs along Routes 25 and 111, as well as other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Implement the recommendations of the Town's Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP) and Sewer Service Area Map to ensure Monroe's economic competiveness, update its sewer infrastructure, and improve the environment and water quality within the Town.
- Promote homeowner education about septic systems to ensure proper operation and maintenance. Periodic pumping should be required along with a reporting program established by the Town.
- Research alternative sewage systems in terms of effectiveness, cost, and potential applicability in Monroe; new technologies should be explored. Septic system design advances should also be studied, including septic tank filters, pretreatment devices, and improved septic tank designs, as well as new monitoring devices for grease traps and smart pump systems that track flows, unusual environmental conditions, and effluent quality.
- Low flush toilets should be encouraged for new developments.

Retrofitting Existing Commercial Properties

- Create standards for retrofitting existing commercial properties for stormwater management adjacent to the wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas, especially for properties along Routes 25 and 111.

Monroe's open spaces contribute greatly to town character, providing significant green space and recreation. Many of the Town's open spaces also contain important architectural or historic elements. In Monroe, agriculture is a time-honored tradition that is also part of the Town's character. Recognizing this, the Town must ensure the protection and preservation of open space and agriculture.

CHAPTER 9.0
OPEN SPACE AND AGRICULTURE

9.0 Open Space and Agriculture

Monroe's open spaces, whether on private land or available to the public, contribute greatly to town character, providing significant green space and recreation. Some of this land also continues to be used for agriculture. Many of the Town's open spaces also contain architectural or historic elements, such as stone walls and buildings that should be preserved as reminders of Monroe's past. Given these valuable resources and their contributions to the Town, Monroe should continue to be committed to supporting the preservation of open spaces and local agriculture.

9.1 Open Space Types in Monroe

One of Monroe's greatest open space assets is its major park system, consisting of Webb Mountain Park and William E. Wolfe Park, and the smaller Lanes Mine Park. These parks serve three different geographic areas in Town, and provide recreational resources to Town residents and visitors (**these recreational resources, as well as trail and greenbelt opportunities, are discussed in detail in Chapter 10.0**). Monroe greatly supports new open space acquisitions. Since 2000, the Town has acquired over 200 acres of open space, including additional acreage within Wolfe Park and the creation of the Webb Mountain Discovery Zone. By adding parcels to its open space inventory, the Town can help relieve some of the development pressure on environmentally sensitive lands, while reducing the tax burden and common strain on municipal services that is associated with the development of new single family homes.

There are four types of open space in Monroe, which are depicted on Figure 9.1:

- Dedicated open space: land that is permanently preserved as open space either for public access or for natural or scenic values (e.g. town parks).
- Managed open space: land that is used or preserved for a purpose that provides open space characteristics (e.g. cemeteries, golf courses, land used by utility companies (e.g. Kelda lands[1]), and railroad rights-of-way).
- Residual land at public facilities: land that is used by the public as part of municipal or public buildings (e.g. athletic fields and playgrounds at schools).
- Uncommitted land on private property: land that is currently not available to the public (e.g. vacant land, Public Act 490 program parcels). (See Section 9.2.)

As shown in Table 9.1, there are approximately 6,845 acres of "perceived" open space in Monroe. Perceived open space is dedicated open space, managed open space, residual land, and vacant or uncommitted land. Although vacant (undeveloped) land appears to be open space, it actually includes some privately held land, including Public Act 490 (PA-490) (see Section 9.2) program parcels that could potentially be developed in the future.

Of the approximately 6,845 acres, about 2,867 acres are preserved open space, which includes dedicated open space and managed Aquarion Water Company lands, and is acknowledged as a permanent contribution to the Town's natural character. Yet, 3,978 acres of "perceived" open space, including about 3,410 acres of vacant and uncommitted land, may have development

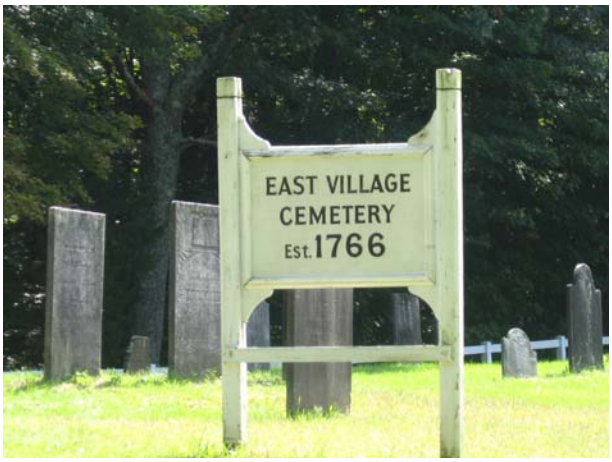
[1] Kelda lands should be considered in the open space types and properly mapped.

potential[2]. With respect to land use, the dedicated open space is primarily comprised of the two largest parks (Wolfe Park and Webb Mountain Park), and several smaller parcels scattered throughout Monroe.

Table 9.1 Existing Monroe Open Space

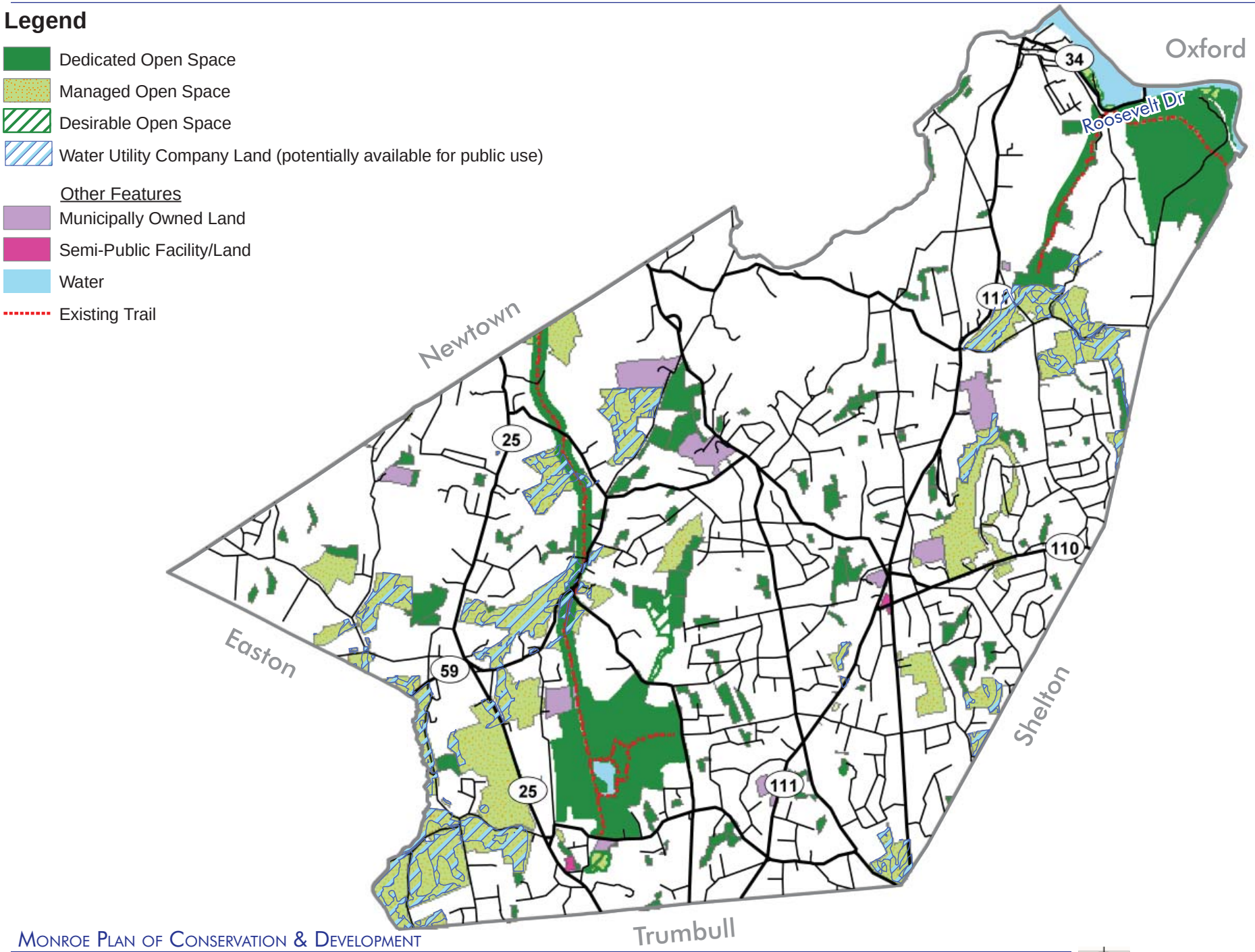
Owner/Use	Preserved	Total Area (acres)	Dedicated Open Space (acres)	Managed Open Space (acres)	Perceived Open Space (acres)
Dedicated Open Space			**1,324**		**1,324**
Town of Monroe	Yes	1,324			
Managed Open Space				**1,874**	**1,874**
Aquarion Water Co.	Yes	1,543			
Connecticut Light & Power	Probably	39			
Railroad R.O.W.	Probably	93			
Golf Courses	Probably	130			
Cemeteries	Probably	69			
Residual Land				**237**	**237**
Town of Monroe	Maybe	237			
Vacant / Uncommitted Land					**3,410**
Vacant Private Property	No	2,041			
PA-490 Program (incl. Vacant & Single-Family)	Maybe	1,369			
TOTAL		**6,845**	**1,324**	**2,111**	**6,845**

Sources: Town of Monroe, Tax Assessor Records



Perceived open spaces come in many forms in Monroe, including town greens, cemeteries, and parks.

[2] Perceived open space may look like open space today because it is not developed, but could potentially be developed in the future.



Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

9.2 Open Space Resources

PA-490 Program

The PA-490 program is an important land preservation tool in Connecticut. Promulgated by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT General Statutes Sections 12-107a through 107-f), the program allows Towns to assess land or portions of land as farm, forest, or open space, reducing the tax burden of those parcels. In Monroe, the PA-490 program is managed by the Tax Assessor's office, which assesses the use value rather than its fair market, or highest and best use value. For example, a single-family home that is located on a large parcel may be able to dedicate a portion of the property to the PA-490 program. The portion of the property that is included in the PA-490 program would then be taxed less than the single-family home. The state law sets no minimum for farmland; however, forest land of generally 25 acres or more must be designated as such by the Forestry Division of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEP).

Although the Tax Assessor may designate parcels or portions of parcels as farm or forest lands, the assessor generally refers to property designated as such in an Open Space Plan or in the POCD when managing the PA-490 program. Currently, about 9% of all land in Monroe participates in the program.

Open Space Preservation through Land Subdivision

Monroe can accomplish open space preservation by encouraging development patterns that yield dedicated open space even as land is put into productive use. The Town's current zoning regulations allow conventional land subdivision design -- all land in the subdivision project is divided into home lots that conform to zoning, with no common land set aside. In the past, this type of subdivision layout gave rise to Monroe's residential areas and created their expansive appearance. The POCD recommends that an alternative subdivision layout be used, especially on large sites with open space potential, in order to preserve the Town's remaining rural character. This alternative is called open space or conservation subdivision design.

The number of home lots generated by open space design is the same as with a conventional layout (i.e., there is no inherent density bonus). The open space layout relies on reducing the allowed lot size and then clustering the lots. Land that is suitable for open space is then set aside, with no remaining development rights, to be owned and managed by the subdivision's Homeowners Association. In order for the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) to most effectively use the open space subdivision approach, the Town should complete an Open Space Inventory Report. This report would identify all existing and desired open space parcels. The P&Z can then use the report when it reviews subdivision applications – if the applicant's parcel includes land identified as a potential open space acquisition, the P&Z and the applicant can then shape the residential layout accordingly.

A related method of Town acquisition is a payment-in-lieu mechanism. The POCD recommends that the Town create a Land Acquisition Fund as authorized by CT General Statutes Sections Section 7-131r to accumulate fees paid by land developers who do not create open space set-asides on their sites. The fund would accumulate the fees, with the Town purchasing open space land, or conservation easements, to complete the acquisition program laid out in the (above-mentioned) Open Space Inventory Report.

Kelda Lands

In 2002 the CT DEP, together with the Nature Conservancy (TNC), purchased outright or acquired permanent conservation easements on more than 15,000 acres of unimproved land, most of it in Fairfield County, owned by Aquarion Water Company. Kelda had previously owned Aquarion Water Company, from 2000 to 2007.

DEP and TNC now own all of Kelda's Class II and Class III land (5,460 acres in Fairfield County) and purchased conservation and public use easements on Class I land, which is co-managed by DEP, TNC, and Aquarion. All land owned by a private or municipal water company falls into three classes: Class I, which includes watershed land nearest to water supply sources, and Class II and Class III land, which consists of the remainder of the watershed and water company land[3].

By law, all DEP and TNC-owned land must be permanently preserved for the protection of natural resources and appropriate recreational uses (including hiking, fishing, and hunting). Therefore, all Class II and Class III land is protected as managed open space that cannot be sold to private developers. Similarly, the Class I conservation easements will prevent any sale or development. Although water supply protection is the foremost purpose of these lands – especially on Class I land – recreational opportunities for these areas are potentially available to Monroe residents (see Figure 9.1).

9.3 Agriculture

Monroe was originally settled by farmers. Agriculture flourished in Monroe until growth pressures and residential development began to replace farm lands. Monroe residents support and desire agriculture and its associated benefits. Agriculture is a time-honored tradition in Monroe and part of the Town's character, related to its large residential lots, woods, and sense of rural character. Recognizing this, the Town must ensure the protection and preservation of agriculture in its zoning regulations and Town policies.

Existing Agricultural Conditions

Monroe's historic roots in farming still thrive today at a number of working farms, giving the community its pastoral character and New England charm. Agriculture in Monroe provides citizens with views, fresh food, and wildlife habitat. There are more than 20 fully active farms and equestrian stables in Monroe with several major nurseries and greenhouse businesses. In addition, there is a successful farmer's market that contributes to community pride, a festive family-oriented atmosphere, and the Town's local farmers.

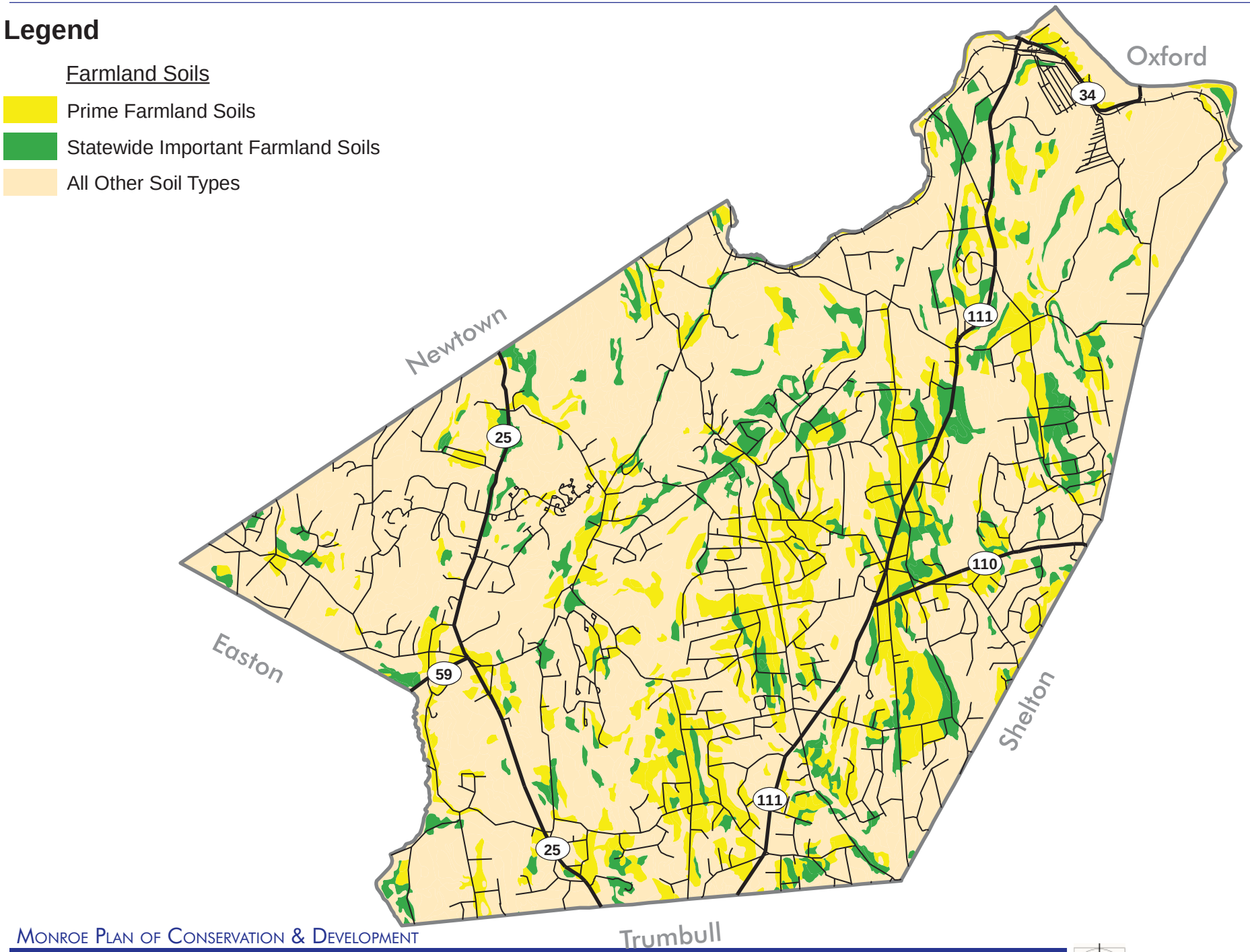
[3] Connecticut General Statutes § 25-37c and OLR Research Report, "Abandonment of Water Company Lands and the Kelda Lands". 20 March 2002.

Farms in Monroe offer produce, home and garden supplies, scenic views, equestrian activities, and rustic charm.

Farms remain the cornerstone of many Connecticut communities, linking the past to the future through a landscape of fields and pastures, stone walls, and weathered barns shaped by generations of hard-working farm families. However, the advantages that are valued by many Monroe residents and visitors – the pastoral landscape and rural lifestyle that farms promote – are sometimes only recognized after farms disappear.

Monroe is committed to preserving farmland and maximizing its benefits through mixed single-family/agriculture zoning districts. In accordance with the Connecticut "Right to Farm" law (Connecticut General Statutes, Section 19a-341), the Town encourages agricultural uses in a supportive environment that limits farmer/non-farmer neighbor conflicts. Agricultural uses are permitted in the R1, R2, and R3 zoning districts. Within these zones and in conjunction with residential uses, farming related uses are allowed, such as permitted buildings, fences, animals, equipment, nurseries, and other related uses. Similar to other uses in the R1, R2, and R3 districts, buildings and structures related to agriculture uses have setback requirements, and the number and type of animals are regulated. Figure 9.2 depicts prime farmland soils in the Town as categorized by the CTDEP.

Still, housing and commercial development pressure have largely transformed Monroe into a suburban community. However, the Town has several farmers' markets and small residential-based operations. Monroe's agricultural presence includes a diverse mix of uses run primarily by families. These include equine, greenhouse and nursery, and livestock, as well as dairy, egg, honey, and vegetable production. The weekly Farmer's Market in the summer regularly enjoys a large attendance. The residents of Monroe encourage continued agricultural uses in town and the POCD supports agricultural operations where appropriate.



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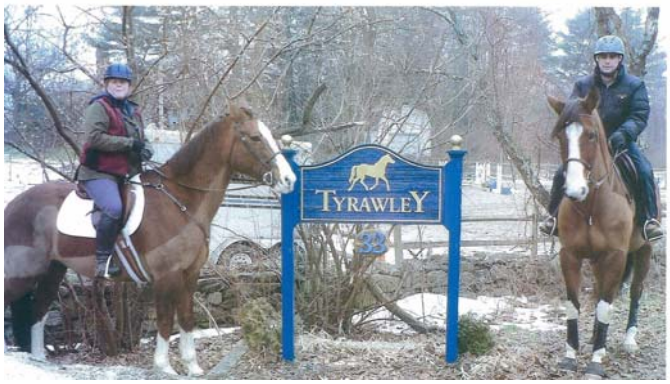


Equestrian riders at Tyrawley Farm on Bagburn Hill Road and Benedict's Home and Garden on Purdy Hill Road

Agriculture Programs

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture has established the Farm Link Program, a service to help new farmers find farm land (for rent or for sale) and to aid in the process of land rental and/or farm transfer to the next generation of farmers. Persons interested in the process can receive applications now available at www.farmlink.uconn.edu. The Department of Agriculture is encouraging all next generation farmers and transitioning family farms in Connecticut to participate.

Monroe should also support other agricultural programs of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, such as the "Farm-to-School" and "Farm-to-Chef" initiatives, which send fresh, nutritious locally-grown produce directly to school cafeterias and restaurants.

9.4 Recommendations

Open Space Recommendations

Examine Potential Public Use of Water Utility Company Property

- Recreational opportunities are potentially available on lands co-owned or co-managed by CT DEP and Kelda Group (a.k.a. Aquarion Water Company).
- The Town should assess which lands are available for recreational use and which lands should be set aside for conservation. Monroe should have the right of first refusal of purchase of these lands from the water utility company or State if made available for sale.

Acquire and Expand Open Space

- Adopt an Open Space Inventory Report that would list all existing open space parcels, list criteria for evaluating potential new open space acquisitions, identify and map parcels for eventual acquisition (or easement), and recommend methods of acquisition and funding.
- Use land subdivision process to acquire (or obtain easements on) open space set-asides; see Zoning Regulations above.
- Use open space acquisitions to build the proposed Greenbelt (**also see Chapter 10.0 Parks and Recreation).**
- Create a public process that allows public input on the acquisition and use of future and current open spaces and trails (**also see Chapter 10.0 Parks and Recreation**). This could include a subcommittee or public review process where residents and/or business owners can provide their valuable input.
- Encourage efforts of land trusts and open space donations to land trusts to help acquire desired open space areas, such as water utility company land.
- Move forward with a Land Acquisition Fund, as authorized by Section 7-131r of the Connecticut General Statutes, funded by a fee in lieu of open space that authorizes the P&Z to accept a fee in lieu of a required open space set-aside when a subdivision is in an area with little valuable open space.
- Educate land trusts on how to obtain open space funds from the Connecticut Land Trust Challenge Fund and Connecticut Land Trust Excellence Program. The goal of the Challenge Fund is to build long-term strength and effectiveness of land conservation organizations in Connecticut and to advance land trust efforts to implement Land Trust Standards and Practices.

    - Eligible land trusts may apply for consultant-led services, which may be applied toward a spectrum of capacity-building needs, including, but not limited to, strategic planning, enhancing stewardship practices, increasing fundraising skills, building new collaborations, improving volunteer management, or advancing community outreach.

Agriculture Recommendations

Promote and Preserve Agricultural Uses

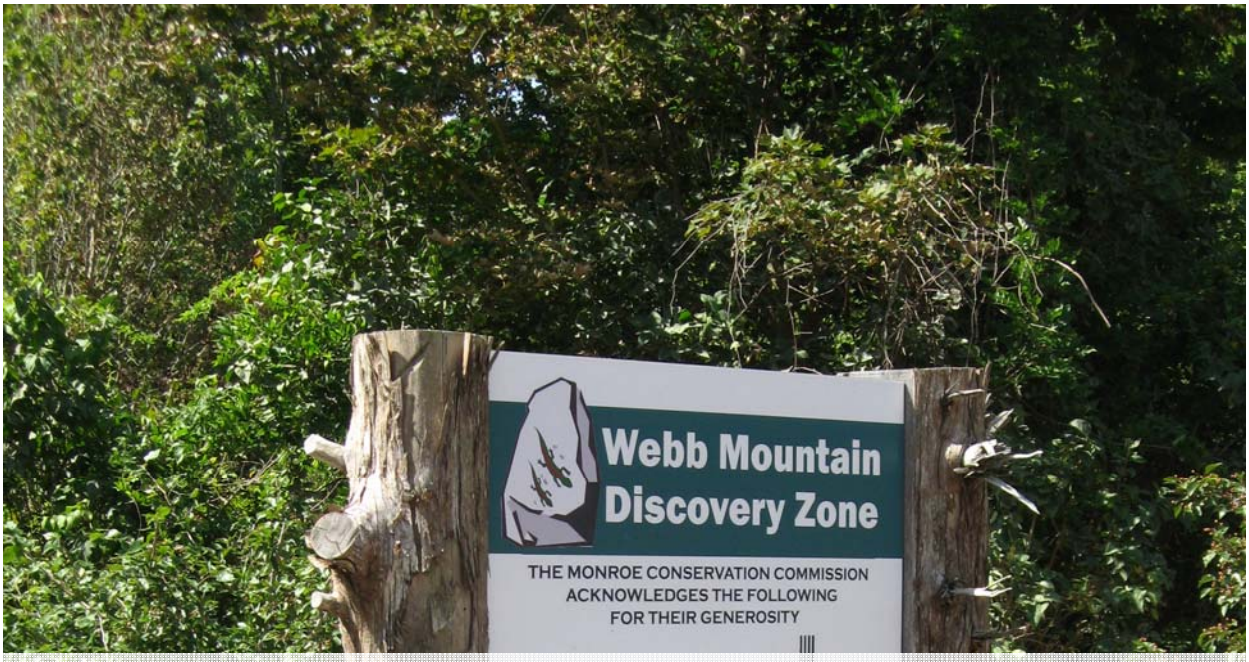
- Whenever appropriate, support agricultural uses in coexistence with other zoning districts and uses.
- Consider further development of the Town's farmer's market and other agricultural businesses.
- Evaluate the Town's existing zoning regulations to ensure the preservation and possible expansion of existing agricultural uses. Farming issues, such as the right to farm, farm stands, farm signage, building setbacks, number of structures, and types of animals, poultry, livestock, and stables, should be addressed.
- Enact a Right to Farm ordinance.
- Promote preservation of farmland through community education programs.
- Monitor the progress of the federal Farm Bill, which would give tax deductions to landowners for donating conservation easements, as well as other available tax incentives for farming.
- Consider allowing use of some preserved open space for farming.

- Consider alternative programs to preserve endangered farmland, such as purchase or lease-back programs.

Preserve Water Resources

The state of Connecticut exempts certain farming activities from Inland Wetland Commission review. Although it is Monroe's intention to foster farming activities, it is recommended that the following restrictions be considered for inclusion in the P&Z and/or subdivision regulations to help prevent potential pollution of the town's wetlands, watercourses, and groundwater:

- Maintain minimum distance between manure piles and wetlands/watercourses (manure management), as well as natural barriers, such as earthen berms.
- Maintain undisturbed buffer zone between wetlands/watercourses and agricultural uses, increasing buffer size for uses requiring fertilizer, pesticides and other pollutants.
- Also see recommendations in Chapter 8.0 Natural Resources and Environment, and Chapter 11.0 Sustainability.



Monroe's park system includes both passive and active recreation that strengthens Monroe's community character, provides fiscal and economic benefits, and enhances the quality of life for Town residents. This chapter highlights Monroe's inventory of parks and recreation and multi-use trails, as well as identifies mechanisms that will enhance these resources.

CHAPTER 10.0
PARKS AND RECREATION

10.0 PARKS AND RECREATION

10.1 Parks and Recreation

Monroe's park system includes both passive and active recreation[1]. Monroe currently contains about 1,324 acres of dedicated open space, land that is preserved for either public uses such as parks or land that has natural or scenic value. Parks include Webb Mountain Park, William E. Wolfe Park, and Lanes Mine Park (see Table 10.1). These spaces help strengthen Monroe's community character, provide fiscal and economic benefits, and enhance the quality of life for Town residents.

Since 2000, the Town has acquired over 200 acres of open space, much of which has been added to the existing public park system or as recreational areas for schools. Major open space acquisitions yielded:

- Wolfe Park: 23 acres
- Webb Mountain: 18 acres
- Masuk High School: 10 acres

In 2004, Monroe acquired an additional 170 acres to create the Webb Mountain Discovery Zone, which offers an outdoor classroom, interactive "scavenger hunt" and nature trails for all ages (see Table 10.1).

Webb Mountain Discovery Zone offers an outdoor classroom and other interactive activities

Table 10.1: Major Public Parks

Major Public Parks	Size (Acres)	Uses/Activities
Lanes Mine Park	75	Hiking and shared use equestrian trails
Webb Mountain Park	157	Camping, scenic overlook, hiking trails (includes part of the Paugussett Trail)
Webb Mountain Discovery Zone	170	Outdoor classroom, interactive scavenger hunt, nature trails
Wolfe Park	331	Public pool, sports fields, basketball courts, playgrounds, hiking trails, paved walking paths, Great Hollow Lake, sand beach, picnic areas, fishing, non-motorized boating

Source: Monroe Parks and Recreation

[1] Active recreation includes such uses as athletic fields and swimming pools. Examples of passive recreation include parks that maintain natural environmental features and include non-motorized activities, such as walking or nature trails.

Monroe contains both active parks, such as Wolfe Park, and passive parks, such as Webb Mountain

Other recreation opportunities include Whitney Farms Golf Course, which is open to the public, sport and club programs offered by the Town's schools, and the Fairfield County Fish and Game Protective Association, a private outdoor club offering archery, fish and stream, hunting, rifle and pistol range, trapping, skeet shooting, and sporting clays court.

Lake Zoar

Residents can access the publicly owned Lake Zoar boat ramp off Route 34, on the west bank of the lake, upstream from Stevenson Dam. Parking is available on the north side of Route 34 and on the south side opposite the snack hut. Although there are picnic tables at the snack hut, greater lake use by residents for swimming, fishing, canoeing/kayaking, or just admiring its scenic views is limited.

Housatonic Valley River Trail

The Housatonic Valley River Trail promotes canoe and kayak use on the Still and Housatonic Rivers. Paddlers use a combination of the Lake Zoar boat ramp in Monroe and the Stevenson Dam bridge to portage around the Stevenson Dam and reconnect to the Housatonic River downstream from the dam.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) plans to replace the historic Stevenson Dam bridge over the Housatonic River between Monroe and Oxford. The portion of Route 34 that crosses the original dam, constructed in 1919 by the Connecticut Light and Power Company to produce hydroelectric power, will be replaced with a new bridge structure.

Currently, ConnDOT is evaluating different location options. With the removal of bald eagles from the endangered species list, ConnDOT has greater flexibility in placing the new bridge. The Town needs to engage in this project to ensure recreation objectives are integrated into the plan – such as safe canoe and kayak portaging. This POCD notes that preservation of eagle habitat, access to water, and upland views of the dam and river are all important ways to connect people in their local environment.

Monroe Parks and Recreation Department

The Monroe Parks and Recreation Department manages seasonal sports leagues, such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, and baseball/softball leagues, aerobics, swimming in the public pool at Wolfe Park and at Great Hollow Lake, and other programs. The department also organizes teen and family events, such as ice skating and laser tag.

Recently, the Parks and Recreation Department and Community Field Study Task Force surveyed current and future use of Monroe's athletic fields. Though not a statistically significant survey, it indicated a strong perceived community interest in adequately meeting present and future demand for sports facilities in the town. Based on the strong survey response rate of 24%, the survey indicated that many Monroe families have children that participate in sports and that there is a great demand for recreational activities and field usage. According to the survey, there is an interest in having more fields (baseball, soccer, football, lacrosse, etc.), improved rest room facilities, field lighting, and conversion of some grass fields to a turf surface.

Numerous recreation activities are available to Monroe residents

The survey also indicated that the level of participation in most sports will remain about the same in the next five years with the exception of lacrosse, which is expected to increase. In response to a question regarding what sports children would most likely participate in over the next five years, soccer, little league/Babe Ruth baseball, lacrosse, football, and softball were the most popular sports.

Given the current popularity of sports in the Town, maintenance of fields and scheduling conflicts may become issues over the next few years as field demand continues to exceed supply. Although in generally good repair, maintenance of the Housatonic Railroad Trail has been an issue in some areas as the number of Town staff dedicated to maintaining Monroe's parks and trails is small in comparison to the Town's substantial park system. Given the demand for and variety of Monroe's parks and recreation activities, the Town should be guided by a formal Parks and Recreation Plan. The plan would inventory need, project future demand, analyze usefulness of existing facilities, and make recommendations on operating and capital expenditures.

10.2 Trails

Monroe's trail system serves a variety of users and provides a multitude of benefits for residents. As the Town's last POCD pointed out, "The configuration of the open space system in Monroe is as important as the amount of open space." The trail system is intended to connect people to parks and recreation areas, enhance the value of those areas, provide alternatives to driving, connect residents to scenic areas and wildlife habitat, and contribute to the quality of life for residents. Due to the various uses of the town's trails, including opportunities for walking, biking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding, many of Monroe's trails can be viewed as multi-use trails. However, not all multi-use trails permit the same uses. For example, the Housatonic Railroad Trail – described in more detail below – currently excludes horseback riding.

A section of the Housatonic Railroad Trail offers opportunities for walking, biking, and cross-country skiing

Housatonic Railroad Trail

Some of Monroe's trail sections are also part of the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region (GBPR) Regional Trail Project. The goal of the Regional Trail Project is to provide a continuous link between Bridgeport and Newtown utilizing the old Housatonic Railroad and Pequonnock River Valley corridor[2].

In recent years, Monroe completed a four-mile section from Doc Silverstone Drive (near Great Hollow Lake) up to the Monroe/Newtown town line. Known as the Housatonic Railroad Trail, it is one of Monroe's greatest assets for walking, running, biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing. The Railroad Trail is a continuous shared path for pedestrians and bicyclists, and is mostly separated from the road.

A second phase of the trail will complete the path in Monroe, extending the trail between Doc Silverstone Drive and the Monroe/Trumbull border. The section through Canterbury Square has been completed and connects the completed section in Trumbull. The Town of Monroe is designing the connection between Maple Drive and the start of the trail in Wolfe Park.

The completed sections of the Housatonic Railroad Trail are generally in good repair; however, as some sections of the trail are over 10 years old, continued trail rehabilitation will be needed. Most sections are wide and made from crushed stone and ballast, which provides a level off-road experience. However, some sections of the trail are narrowed by growth of the surrounding grass, weeds and brush, with branches overhanging the trail. Ruts and gullies have also formed in some areas due to drainage problems. It is important to maintain these sections to the best extent possible to maximize safety and mobility.

[2] GBRPA. "The Housatonic Railroad Trail & Pequonnock Valley Greenway Project". 2006.

Paugussett Trail in Monroe

Park Trails

Other Monroe parks contain trails with similar attributes to the Railroad Trail; these are Wolfe Park, Webb Mountain Park, and Lanes Mine Park. In Wolfe Park, the existing trail connects to the Railroad Trail; however, it is the only major park in Monroe to do so. Wolfe Park also contains paved walking trails around Great Hollow Lake. At Webb Mountain, hikers can traverse a section of the Paugussett Trail, an almost nine-mile trail that connects to the Town of Shelton and contains such features as Indian Well Falls and views of the Housatonic Valley, Stevenson Dam, and Lake Zoar. On National Trails Day, the Connecticut Forest and Park Association sponsors an annual group hike on the Paugussett Trail, which is also part of the statewide Blue Blaze Hiking Trails system that was created, maintained, and operated by this association.

Trail Classification

For future planning, an extensive trail system should include various types of trails that serve different users and functions. Just as a roadway hierarchy provides a functional classification of the road system (i.e. its level of mobility and access), trails should also be classified. In Monroe, trails and paths should be classified as follows:

Bicycle Lanes are separate on-street lanes that are marked for bicycle use only.

On-Street Shared Roads are shared by bicycles and vehicles where traffic speeds are low. Prominent signage is needed to alert drivers to the presence of bicyclists.

Off-Street Shared Paths are used by bicyclists and pedestrians. They can be for horseback riding, where appropriate.

Off-street shared paths offer recreation and mobility

Regional Trail System

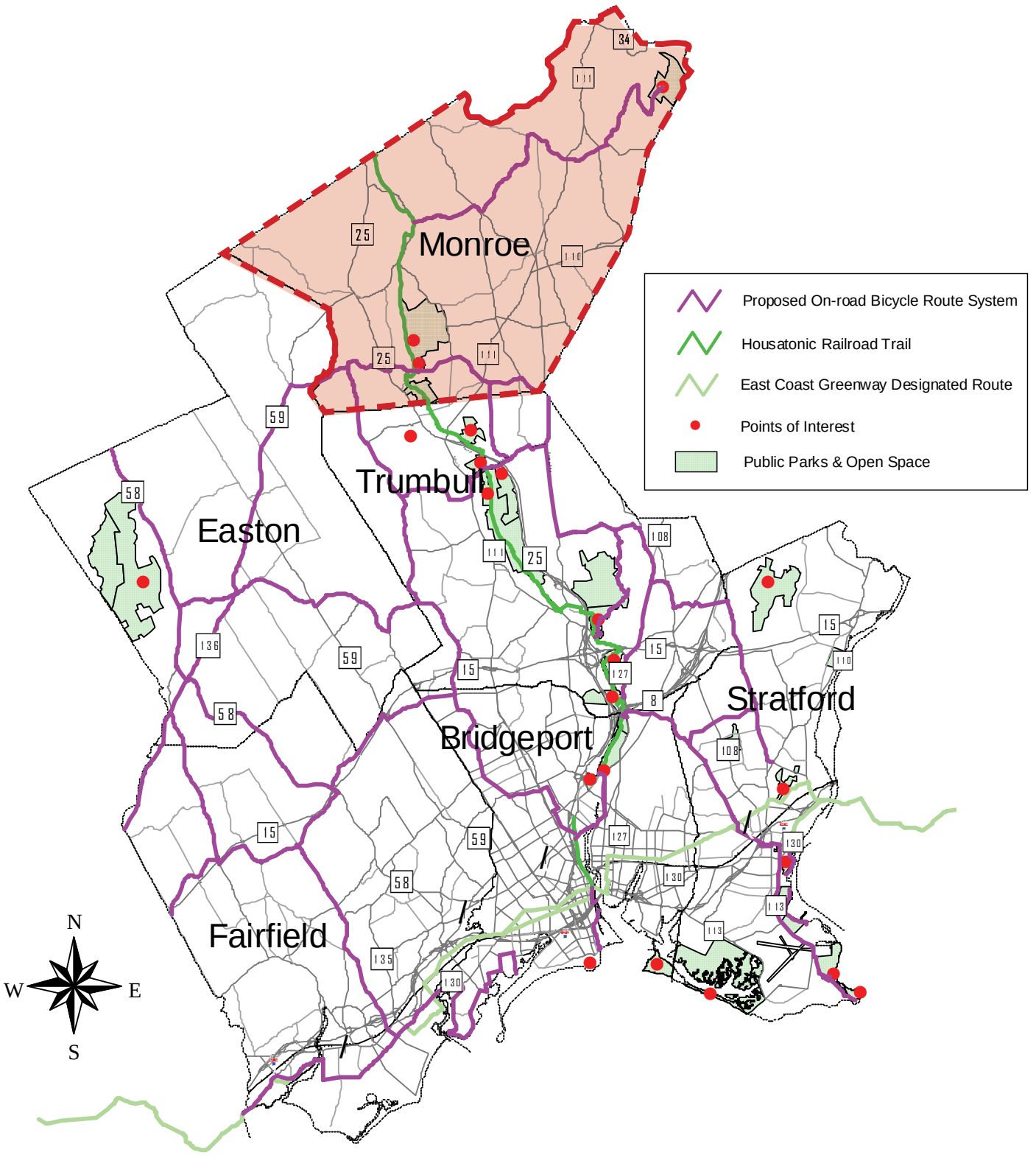
On a regional planning scale, the Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency (GBRPA) has developed two recent studies regarding bicycles and pedestrians (also see Chapter 2.0 State and Regional Planning Context) (See Figure 10.1). The Update of the Regional Bicycle Plan for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region (July 2008) is a detailed assessment of bicycle safety issues and improvements, such as roadway safety, the number and location of bicycle accidents, and existing bicycle facilities and infrastructure. The plan also recommends safety improvements and bicycling accommodation as an alternative to the automobile.

The plan recognized the importance of regional connectivity via the Housatonic Railroad Trail, an off-street shared use path, as wells as a network of bike routes that connect to area attractions. In Monroe, these attractions included Wolfe and Webb Mountain Parks. Proposed improvements included a new on-street bike route that would connect Webb Mountain Park to the Housatonic Railroad Trail, as well as an extension of the trail that would allow a continuous network to Bridgeport and the Long Island Sound.

The *Pedestrian Safety Assessment & Plan for the Greater Bridgeport Planning Region (June 2008)* assessed safety issues and concerns and recommended pedestrian safety improvements and ways to make the Greater Bridgeport planning region more walkable. The study surveyed Town officials and/or employees who had a special interest in pedestrian safety, such as first selectmen, chiefs of police, planning directors and others. With the exception of the urban areas of Bridgeport and Fairfield, Monroe officials expressed the highest level of concern over the safety of their pedestrian facilities. Specific areas of concern included the Route 25 corridor, Route 111 business area, and the area around the Monroe Elementary School (also on Route 111). Officials raised concerns about high traffic volumes, vehicle speeds and lack of sidewalks.

General recommendations covered design countermeasures, such as the construction of more pedestrian facilities (e.g. sidewalks), enhancing roadway design (e.g. bicycle lanes) and intersection design (e.g. roundabouts), traffic calming (e.g. raised medians) and traffic management measures (e.g. partial street closures), signalization and signage improvements and education and enforcement measures (e.g. speed-monitoring devices). Policy measures were also suggested to improve pedestrian safety, including the Safe Routes to School program.

Figure 10.1: Greater Bridgeport Planning Region Proposed Bicycle Routes



Monroe Plan of Conservation & Development

Monroe, CT

Source: Greater Bridgeport Regional Planning Agency, 2008

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

10.3 Recommendations

One of Monroe's greatest assets is its parks and recreation system. The facilities offer both active and passive recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. However, the Town lacks connectivity between these resources and some areas are underutilized.

Overall Recommendation

Produce a Recreation Plan. Prepare a Recreation Plan that would become part of the overall Comprehensive Facilities Report (see Chapter 11.0). The plan should be prepared by an outside organization or recreation consultant, and should be updated every three to five years to encourage the evaluation of new concepts on a frequent basis. The plan should be one component of a Comprehensive Facilities Report. The plan's recommendations would be incorporated into the municipal Capital Improvement Program and budget (see Chapter 14.0 Implementation). The plan should advise on:

- Potential acquisitions, such as the marina on Lake Zoar.
- Program expansion, such as increasing the number of fields for lacrosse and other sports programs.
- Incorporation of Housatonic Railroad Trail maintenance within the Parks and Recreation Department.
- The Town Parks and Recreation Department and the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) should regularly evaluate rules and uses for the parks, recreation areas, and multi-use trails.

Specific Recommendations

Lake Zoar

Expand Recreation Use of Lake Zoar

- Within six months of the adoption of this POCD, identify parcels for Town purchase to expand recreation opportunities on Lake Zoar. The priority acquisition is the marina.
- Expand trail system alongside Lake Zoar, connected to the overall greenbelt system (see below).

Establish a Lake Zoar Committee

- Create a town-wide committee that would provide public education, write grants, share resources in a cost effective manner, and advise on new land use regulations for the lake area. The committee should also coordinate studies, starting with the potential for additional recreation and public access to Lake Zoar. It is recommended that the committee is created within the first six months of the adoption of this POCD.

Trail System

Create a Town Greenbelt. With the existing parks, open spaces, and multi-use trails, Monroe is ready to integrate these assets into its own greenbelt. A greenbelt is a corridor of places and connections: parks and open spaces are linked with trails, paths, and sidewalks.

The P&Z, volunteer subcommittee, or professional consultant should create a greenbelt plan with an inventory and wish-list, supplemented with a map. The Town would first inventory all existing greenbelt features and then identify the land and rights-of-way needed for future parks, open spaces, and connections. The corridor map should show existing and future places and linkages. In reviewing subdivision and site plan applications, the P&Z would then rely on the plan to determine where open space set-asides can occur, on a site-by-site basis. The plan would also be used by the Town in its capital budget planning to identify parcels for direct acquisition. The creation of the greenbelt network is seen as long-term recommendation, to be accomplished within five to 10 years.

As Figure 10.2 shows, Monroe can begin to fulfill the greenbelt recommendation through land that is already dedicated to public use (e.g. Town and State parks, the Housatonic Railroad trail), semi-public land (e.g. fireman's field), and managed land (e.g. cemeteries, golf courses, land used by utility companies (e.g. Kelda lands), and railroad rights-of-way).

When developing the Monroe Greenbelt, the Town should consider the following:

- Tie both existing and new open space and recreational areas together into an integrated greenbelt system.
- Establish a series of multi-use trails as a key element in connecting open space and recreation areas into an integrated system.
- Work with Aquarion Water Company (Kelda) and Connecticut Light & Power to develop public trails on their lands.
- Allow open space dedication elsewhere in Monroe to meet the open space requirements of a development if the offered open space makes an important contribution to the overall greenbelt or trail system.
- Work with regional planning agencies and adjacent communities to develop a regional trail system.
- Connect Town schools and municipal facilities to the trail system, offering school children and faculty, parents, and municipal employees increased recreational opportunities.
- Connect retail and business locations for pedestrian access.
- Evaluate potential barriers to creating a continuous Greenbelt, such as privately owned land. Work with property owners to establish trailway easements and consider incentives, such as tax incentives, to encourage participation.

Improve Walking, Bicycle, and Equestrian Trails

Establish an extensive trail system by linking existing trails with new ones and with existing and planned parks. The Town should plan an extensive trail system catered to different users and functions. Specific trail improvements should include:

- **Walking Trails**
  - Consolidate trail maintenance under one Town department for consistency and conduct regular maintenance of all Town trails.
  - Install wayfinding/trail signage and maps to allow easy navigation and create awareness of the entire network.
  - Prepare a town-wide trail and bicycle route map showing all on-street and off-street paths and designated routes.
  - *Housatonic Railroad Trail*:
    - Extend the trail to the Monroe/Trumbull town line to complete the network to Bridgeport and the Long Island Sound.
    - Provide additional dedicated parking areas.
    - Consider joint operations of the trail with Trumbull and Bridgeport or incorporate Railroad Trail maintenance within the Parks and Recreation Department.
    - Develop a Maintenance and Operations Plan for the trail.

Trail signage and maps delineate paths and the overall trail network

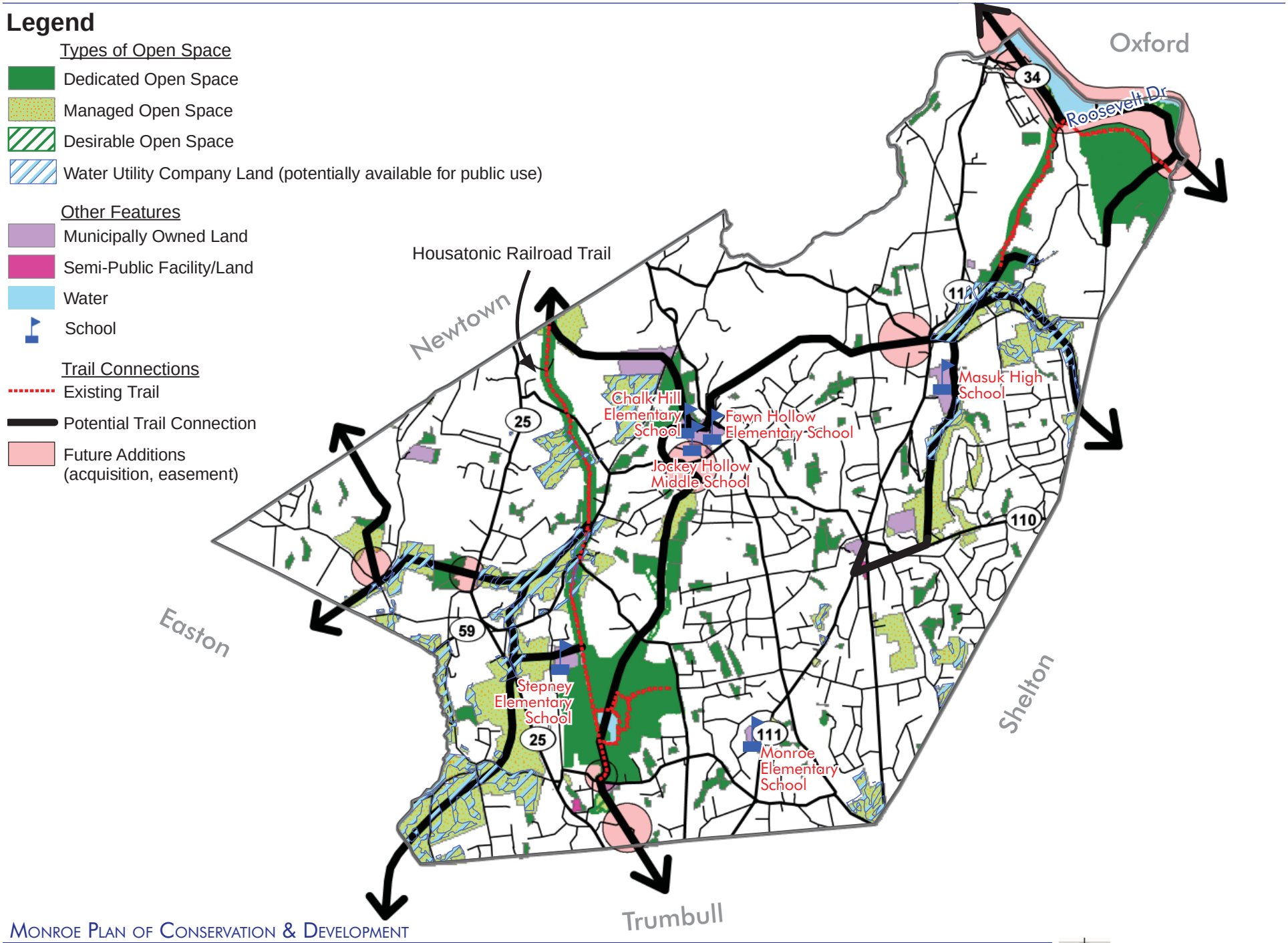
- **Equestrian Trails:** Examine potential areas for horseback riding, including shared use trails, such as recently done in Lanes Mine Parks. The Housatonic Railroad Trail should be studied for possible equestrian usage.

- **Bicycle Trails:** In addition to the Chapter 5.0 recommendations, identify areas for off-street shared paths, or trails and connections between Webb Mountain Park and the Housatonic Railroad Trail.

- **Multi-use Trails:** Identify multi-use trails for grants/funding initiatives and expansion within Monroe.

Create a public process that allows public input on the acquisition and use of future and current open spaces and trails (**also see Chapter 9.0 Open Space and Agriculture**). This could include a subcommittee or public review process where residents and/or business owners can provide their valuable input.

Figure 10.2: Trail and Greenbelt Opportunities



Monroe, CT

Sources: Monroe Planning & Zoning Department; Monroe Engineering Department

NTS

Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Monroe has seen an increasing need for various community services and facilities as a growing community in southwestern Connecticut. Community facilities in Monroe include municipal buildings, such as Town Hall, and the Town library. Government services include education, emergency services, and parks and recreation. The Plan reviews the physical aspects of such services and facilities to ensure they are appropriately located and sized to meet current and future community needs.

CHAPTER 11.0
MUNICIPAL FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND SCHOOLS

11.0 MUNICIPAL FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND SCHOOLS

11.1 Facilities

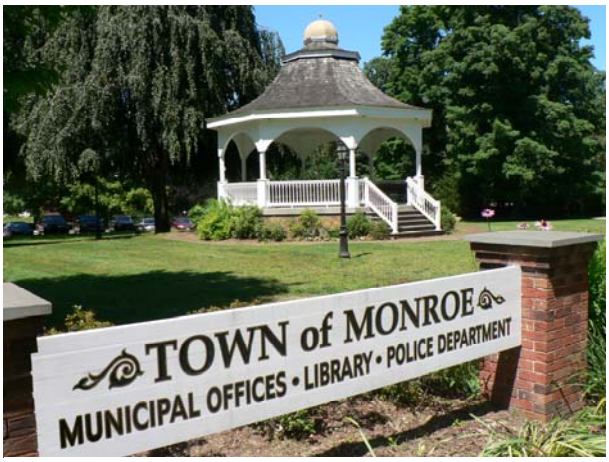
Facilities and services provided by tax and other revenue must meet the needs of Monroe's residents and property owners. Funding comes primarily from the Town budget, though many services are supported by user fees, donations, and other means. Volunteers also play a crucial role in delivering services such as firefighting, emergency medical services, and recreation and social programs.

Monroe has seen an increasing need for various community services and facilities as a growing community in southwestern Connecticut. As a result, the new Edith Wheeler Memorial Library was constructed adjacent to Town Hall in 2006. The Monroe Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (MVEMS) also moved to a new headquarters in 2001, which allowed the Monroe Police Department to expand within Town Hall.

Even with these improvements, many Town departments are experiencing funding constraints. This chapter reviews remaining public needs and makes recommendations regarding the upgrading of facilities and services within the Town.

Town Hall Complex

The Town Hall Complex houses most municipal departments and the police station (see Figure 11.1). The Edith Wheeler Memorial Library is also part of the complex, although the actual building is separate from the Town Hall building. In addition to the new library, a community room was built to the rear of the library that is available for use by community groups, as well as municipal meetings. Since the last Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) the Town Hall Complex has adjusted to meet space needs.



The Town Hall Complex houses most municipal departments, the Police Department, and the new library.

Since completion of the new library, several municipal departments moved to the Town Hall Annex, almost doubling the amount of floor space available for general municipal services. Constantly evaluating its needs within Town Hall, several departments also relocated within the complex.

Recent relocations within the Town Hall Complex are as follows:

- **Planning Department:** moved from their previous Town Hall offices (adjacent to the Building Department) into the Town Hall Annex.
- **Building Department:** occupied a portion of the freed-up space made available by the Planning Department's move to the Town Hall Annex.
- **Town Clerk:** also occupied a portion of the freed-up space made available by the Planning Department's move.

- **Finance Department:** occupied the Building Department's former space.

With the renovation of the Town Hall Annex, current space needs of most municipal departments will be met. However, scheduling meeting rooms has been an issue within Town Hall as both municipal departments and non-municipal groups utilize meeting rooms. As the Town population continues to grow, albeit at a slower rate than in prior years, facility needs for municipal government should continue to be examined in the event that Town government also grows.

In addition to spatial needs in Town Hall, other upgrades, such as lighting, HVAC, etc., need to be addressed. Both interior and exterior upgrades could help save the Town money in energy costs, as well as its demand on infrastructure.

Public Works

The Public Works Department is responsible for maintenance of all public roads, drainage structures, municipal vehicles and buildings, management of waste and recycling sites, inland wetlands, and tree maintenance in public locations.

Currently, the Public Works garage on Purdy Hill Road houses most of the equipment and services to meet public needs. However, there are space constraints as Public Works shares the garage with the Monroe Animal Shelter, as well as storage and maintenance of the school bus fleet. In addition, the current facility and parking layout does not meet all of the needs of the Public Works Department. There are an insufficient number of bays for the Department's truck fleet and limited space for trucks with snow-plows attached. Combined, these facility issues disrupt the department's operations.

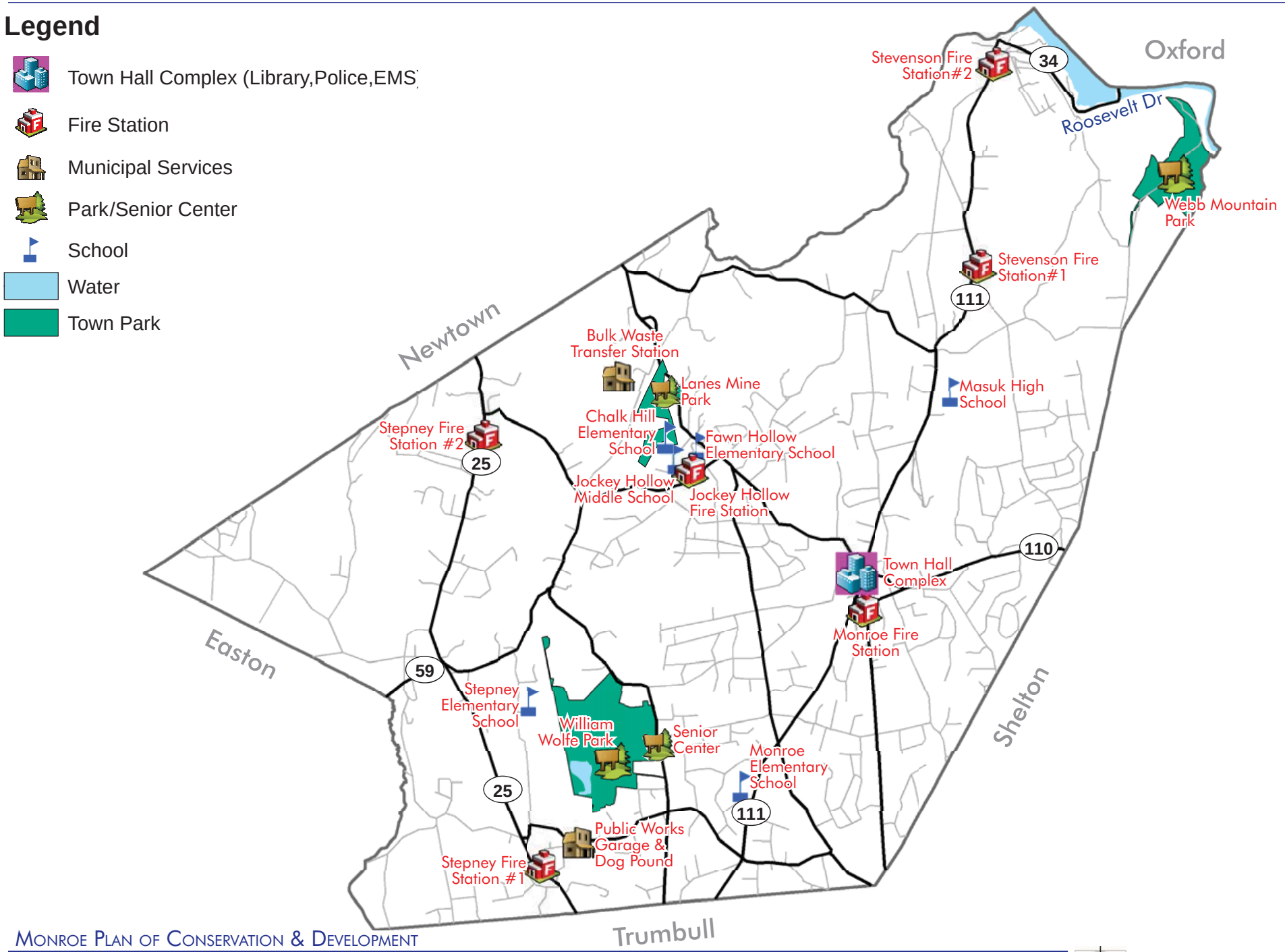
Helping to alleviate some of the current congestion problems at the current site, the Public Works Department has installed a satellite sand/salt facility at Masuk High School for the Stevenson Area. The Department is also currently exploring options to address its facility needs, such as renovations, or possible relocation.

The Public Works Department currently has 31 employees, which includes three full-time supervisory/administrative staff, two full-time and one part-time Land Use Staff (Inland Wetlands and Engineering), and 22 full-time and three part-time staff in the Maintenance Division. The part-time Inland Wetlands Secretary should be a full-time position to allow the Town Engineer to direct more time to engineering plans rather than administrative work. Also, there is a need to add one highway worker since the miles of roads that Public Works maintains has increased over the past few years.

Library

The new Edith Wheeler Memorial Library is one of Monroe's newest assets. Sitting on a roughly two and a half-acre site adjacent to the Town Hall building, the library holds more than 94,000 cataloged items, including books and audiovisual items, as well as over 233,000 circulation items[1].

[1] Library Business Statistics 2008-2009.



Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

The Edith Wheeler Memorial Library had over 120,000 visits in the 2008-2009 fiscal year

Edith Wheeler Memorial Library maintains three meeting rooms for use by community clubs and organizations, town boards and commissions, not-for-profits entities, and for-profit businesses. The library meeting rooms are available for both Monroe-based groups and groups that are based outside of the town.

Open seven days per week, the availability of the library's meeting rooms for Monroe-based groups are as follows:

- The Ehlers Meeting Room (150 person capacity): Sundays through Saturdays, 10 am to 10 pm
- The Rotary Club Board Room (15 person capacity) and the Quiet Study Room (8 person capacity): Open during regularly scheduled library hours only

There is high demand in Monroe for library services yet the Town library currently under-serves residents due to budgetary constraints. In the past few years, budgetary problems have resulted in a reduction of hours that the library is open, number of full-time staff, and programs offered.

The Friends of the Edith Wheeler Memorial Library continue their support of library activities with donations that range from museum passes to children's programs and author visits. The Friends also provide a fund that meets the small, day-to-day needs of the library, and advocate for library funding.

11.2 Services

Emergency Services

Monroe Volunteer EMS. In 2001, MVEMS relocated from the Town Hall Complex into dedicated space at its new headquarters at the Jockey Hollow Fire Station, shared with the Monroe Company Volunteer Fire Department. The new headquarters provides two bedrooms, a small dayroom for on-duty crew members, and a large training room.

The new headquarters reduced average response times to less than five minutes and allowed MVEMS to expand to over 80 members, who annually volunteer more than 25,000 hours of community service[2]. A majority of members are Connecticut-certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), testifying to MVEMS's commitment to training. The remaining members are Ambulance Drivers certified with emergency vehicle training and CPR, and Medical Response technician (MRTs) trained in CPR for the Health Care Provider and other medical care, or who are awaiting EMT training. During daytime hours, MVEMS is supplemented by a contractual arrangement with American Medical Response out of Bridgeport.

[2] www.monroevems.org.

Once operating only two ambulances, MVEMS purchased a third in 2009. Since then, MVEMS has replaced two older ambulances and converted one of them into a Mass Casualty/Incident Command Vehicle. MVEMS vehicles have been upgraded with recent technology. In 2008, new laptop computers were installed in all three ambulances in order to upgrade the vehicles with Electronic Patient Care Charts, which are used to manage patient care records.

New 2009 LifeLine Ambulance

Monroe Police Department. With the establishment of the new MVEMS headquarters, the Monroe Police Department expanded its footprint from 6,500 net square feet to about 6,883 net square feet within Town Hall. This allowed the Police Department to re-acquire its two garage bays for a mobile crime van and speed trailers. It also gave them the use of the bays to process bulk items, such as cars, for physical evidence.

The Police Department occupies the former utilities equipment space of Town Hall, and is very limited, as the area is shared with other Town Departments. The space is also used for officers' athletic equipment storage.

Other current police operations in the Town Hall Complex are general offices, communications center, meeting space, locker rooms, holding cells, a booking area, and an indoor pistol range. With a large staff of 39 full-time and four part-time sworn officers, and 11 full-time and five part-time non-sworn employees, more space is needed.

The Town will need to meet statutory and societal demands for police services. Specifically, the Police Department needs better facilities for policing juveniles and accommodating its female personnel:

- Interior sally port with a garage door (for delivery of detainees)
- Additional meeting space
- Female locker facilities
- Upgraded holding cells

The Town of Monroe should also review and plan for a new public safety facility that would potentially upgrade the Town's emergency dispatch services for Police and Fire (9-1-1), new possible combined facilities for Police and Fire Departments, as well as department training and administration spaces. The Town should assess all of its municipal properties and determine possible locations for such a facility, including underutilized properties, such as existing educational buildings or vacant municipal land. A study for such a process should be developed.

Monroe Volunteer Fire Departments. Fire protection in Monroe comprises numerous volunteers and facilities. There are currently about 70 volunteers, including officers, fire fighters, administrative staff, and lady auxiliary, and over 150 junior and senior members that support this

emergency service. There are three Volunteer Fire Departments (or Companies) that cover six stations throughout Town. Each company, listed below, has two stations:

- Monroe Company
- Stepney Company
- Stevenson Company

Monroe fire fighters respond to a vehicle fire

The Companies currently use their own fire engines, vehicles, and equipment that are both Town and Company-owned. The Companies worked together in 2008 to have the Town of Monroe acquire new fire equipment for the Volunteer Fire Departments.

The number of fire engines and other equipment vary from station to station. Generally, the stations are well-equipped with high-speed Internet and communications equipment. Due to the number of stations located throughout Town, Monroe volunteer firefighters also assist nearby towns on a mutual aid basis.

In order to keep up with the latest training and safety requirements, firefighter training has become more and more time consuming. Volunteers generally log many hours of their time, especially those volunteers that are employed outside Monroe. Recognizing the immense contribution of these volunteers, steps have been taken to attract and retain both Fire and MVEMS personnel.

Water availability for fire suppression is generally adequate in most areas. Additional water re-supply facilities are needed in some areas, particularly the Stevenson area. Water re-supply facilities (ponds or underground fire cisterns) provide valuable emergency water in areas where there is no water supply infrastructure (i.e. water mains and hydrants). Currently, Monroe's subdivision regulations require water supply review and recommendations by the Town Fire Marshal for subdivisions that are located more than 500 feet from an existing public utility water supply main.

Senior Citizen Services

Due to the increasing senior citizen population, services that support Monroe's aging population are very important. The senior community relies on a number of programs and services such as the senior community center, the Monroe Commission on Aging, and transportation services.

The Monroe Senior Center, located on Cutler's Farm Road, provides social, recreational, educational, health maintenance, home management, and financial services programs and activities for persons age 60 or older. A membership is required to support its programs, which is available to both residents of Monroe and non-residents. The Senior Center also has a Town Outreach Program that provides assistance regarding government entitlement programs and educates residents and their families about available resources and services.

The Monroe Commission on Aging develops programs and policies for advancing the well-being of seniors in Monroe and the provision of services to senior citizens by the Department of Community and Social Services. The Town also offers transportation services to and from home to various points in Monroe, Bridgeport, Stratford, and Trumbull, which are available to residents over 60 and disabled persons.

11.3 Parks and Recreation

Chapter 10.0 is entirely devoted to parks and recreation in Monroe. For the purposes of this chapter, the POCD notes municipal efforts to improve field and pool facilities in the past few years. The grass turf has been replaced at Wolfe Park, Great Hollow Lakes, and Masuk High School. Basketball courts at Wolfe Park have also been resurfaced.

Responding to the high demand for use of the public pool at Wolfe Park, the existing public pool has been upgraded and replaced with a new pool.

Many Town residents enjoy the refreshing pool at Wolfe Park; a new public pool opened in the spring of 2010.

11.4 Schools

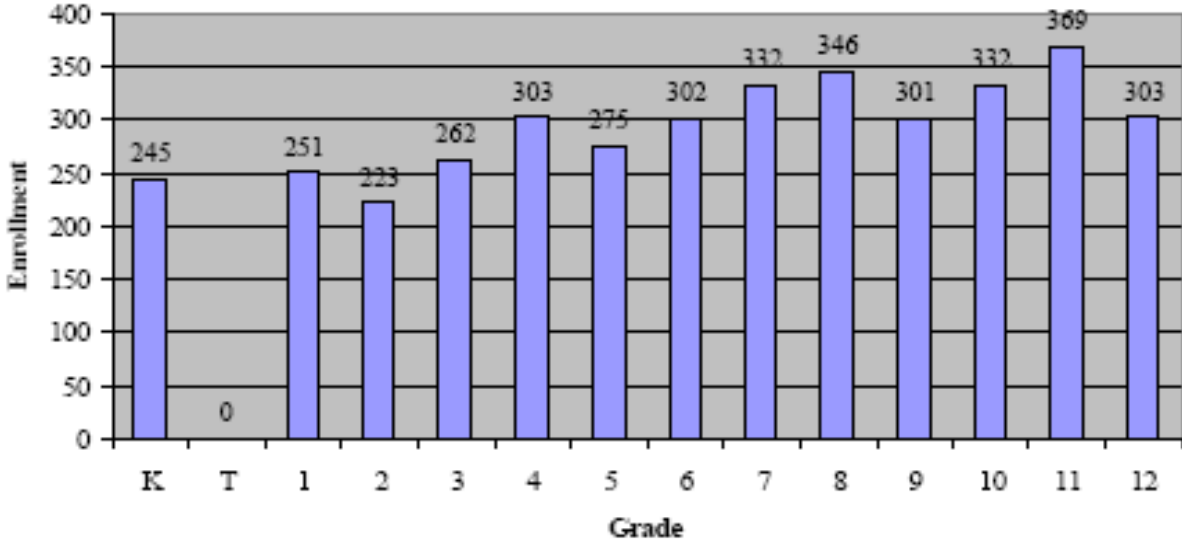
Monroe Public Schools currently serves over 3,800 students in grades Pre-kindergarten through 12, housed in six distinct school facilities located throughout the town. For the 2010-2011 school year, the district grades will be allocated as follows:

School	Grade(s)
▪ Monroe Elementary School	Pre-kindergarten through grade 5
▪ Fawn Hollow Elementary School	Kindergarten through grade 5
▪ Stepney Elementary School	Kindergarten through grade 5
▪ Chalk Hill Upper Elementary School	Grade 6
▪ Jockey Hollow School	Grades 7and 8
▪ Masuk High School	Grades 9 through 12

Additionally, the Central Office Administrative Offices are located on the second floor of Monroe Elementary School.

Chart 11.1 shows the student enrollment in Monroe's schools by grade for 2009. As can be seen, Grade 11 has the highest enrollment (369), followed by Grade 8 (346). Grade 2 has the least enrollment (223).

Chart 11.1 Enrollment by Grade, 2009



Sources: Monroe Board of Education; Monroe Public Schools Enrollment Projection Updated to 2019 – Peter M. Prowda, PhD.

The special education pre-school students are drawn from the entire district and transported to Monroe Elementary School for their educational program. Upon entering kindergarten, these students are then assigned to the elementary school to which their home residence is districted. Chalk Hill School, Jockey Hollow School, and Masuk High School are all district schools, drawing students from the entire town.

Monroe Public Schools has experienced some declining enrollment over the past few years. A significant contributor to the shift in enrollment has been the departure of tuition students from Oxford upon graduation from Masuk High School. The enrollment of these out-of-district students inflated the numbers of students attending public school in Monroe for the period of time for which they attended.

As shown in Table 11.1, the Monroe public school system experienced a decline in approximately 190 students (or 4.7%) between 1999 and 2009.

Table 11.1: Monroe School Facilities Summary, 1999 to 2009

Type	Grades	# of Schools	1999 Enrollment	2009 Enrollment	% Change (1999 to 2009)
Elementary	K-4	3	1,555	1,284	-17.4%
Middle	5-8	2	1,256	1,255	-0.1%
High School	9-12	1	1,223	1,305	6.7%
Total	**K-12**	**6**	**4,034**	**3,844**	**-4.7%**

Sources: Monroe Board of Education; Monroe Public Schools Enrollment Projection Updated to 2019 – Peter M. Prowda, PhD.

Beyond the exodus of the Oxford students there has been a decline in Monroe students over the past few years, prompting the district in the summer of 2008 to commission a long-range projection of enrollment for planning purposes. This 10-year projection was completed by two sources, Dr. Peter Prowda and the New England School Development Council. The dual results were very much aligned to show a 10-year trend of a decrease in approximately 1,000 Monroe students, with a total enrollment projected to be approximately 2,900 in October 2018.

In response to this initial report of predicted enrollment numbers, the district contracted with Dr. Peter Prowda again during the fall of 2009 to re-run the 10-year prediction of enrollment. His report, completed this past fall, very much paralleled the outcome of the previous year's report, with student enrollment predicted to be approximately 2,850 in October 2019. While the methodology employed behind these reports integrates current information on the demographics of the Town, Dr. Prowda cautions that the turbulence of the current extreme economic climate may influence projected trends calculated today and possibly distort the projections for the future.

As a result, the district has made a commitment to authorize annual enrollment projections for the district and monitor student enrollment carefully as it plans for the future. Given the information provided to the district regarding the projected number for future student enrollment, the district advised the Town of Monroe in the fall of 2008 to suspend the renovation of Chalk Hill Upper Elementary School.

While the district had projected it could transition to five facilities for its students in the year 2014 - assuming that enrollment projections were accurate - financial constraints in this fiscal year 2010-2011 forced the district to close half of Chalk Hill Elementary School and maintain grade 5 in the three elementary schools. Prior to this coming school year, all three elementary schools housed only up to grade 4 students.

It is anticipated that over the next few years, Chalk Hill School will be closed completely as a school facility and grade 6 students will be housed elsewhere. The timing of this will rely on updated enrollment numbers, capacities of the other facilities, educational programs, and fiscal pressures.

Chalk Hill School was identified as the school to close given its aging infrastructure, as well as its capacity to house lower elementary school students. State fire regulations prohibit kindergarten and grade 1 students from being housed above ground level, with grade 2 students not permitted

above the second floor of any structure. These regulations safeguard that in the event of an emergency evacuation, the youngest and smallest children would not be trampled in stairwells or left in a situation with an egress of considerable distance to travel.

As the cafeteria and library are located on the top level (considered third floor), this school cannot house grades K, 1 or 2. These limitations, coupled with the need for extensive facility led to the decision to designate Chalk Hill Upper Elementary School as the most likely school to close for long-term needs of the district.

Going forward, the district will monitor and adjust its needs for facilities usage accordingly. Knowing the limitations of any 10-year prediction made during a recession, the Board of Education needs to exercise its prudent restraint not to embark on any one plan for facilities usage until it can be more confident in the enrollment numbers each year.

11.5 Recommendations

The recommendations below aim at efficiently managing and improving Town facilities and services. The POCD intends to help the Monroe Town government prepare for a changing population and improve the quality of life for Monroe's current residents and school children.

Produce a Comprehensive Facilities Report. With the completion of the Edith Wheeler Memorial Library and re-organization of the Town Hall Complex, Monroe should move on to the next phase of facilities improvement: a study of all municipal facilities. The Town needs to understand and plan for re-use, expansion, and new construction. For example, meeting spaces within Town Hall need better management and planning to ensure that all users are accommodated. Better long-term planning for staffing requirements is also needed.

Such a report would greatly help Monroe in creating a Capital Improvement Program and budget (**see Chapter 14.0 Implementation**), as well as address implementation measures to address its needs. The report should also consider sustainable practices that can help save energy costs and make Monroe's municipal buildings more "green" (**see Chapter 12.0 Sustainable Development**).

Recreation. Prepare a Recreation Plan that would become part of the overall Comprehensive Facilities Report. The plan should be prepared by an outside organization or recreation consultant, and should be updated every seven to ten years.

Town Departments and Library

- The needs and plans for various Town departments should be clearly outlined in a document from each department head and incorporated into future sections of this POCD process. This will help provide better overall planning, forecasting, and budgeting.
- To assist with future planning and use of municipal resources in Monroe, the Town should prepare a Municipal Responsibility Chart, coupled with a Town Property Inventory.
- Other specific recommendations for the Public Works Department, Town Hall, and Edith Wheeler Memorial Library include:
    - **Public Works.** Plan for eventual renovation or replacement of the Public Works facility.
    - **Town Hall.** Evaluate conference rooms, storage, room layouts, and space usage.

- **Edith Wheeler Memorial Library.** Support programs and fundraising events to supplement the library operating budget for increased hours of operation, number and quality of programs offered, and expanded youth programs. In doing so, the needs of the community and the library must be evaluated.

Services for a Changing Population

- **Senior Services.** Balance the increasing need for senior services with tax revenues and assess services and facilities to meet the needs of Monroe's senior population.
- **Schools.** Monitor school enrollment projections and prepare for potential school consolidation.

This chapter aims to identify specific recommendations that are appropriate for Monroe's long-term sustainable development and the well being of its people, environment, habitat, and natural resources.

CHAPTER 12.0
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

12.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

12.1 Sustainability

The American Planning Association defines sustainable development as "development that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community wellbeing while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend." Achieving a sustainable future by balancing *conservation and development* is a central idea that runs throughout the chapters of this POCD. The Town of Monroe supports sustainable development through an integrated approach to planning for land use, transportation, the environment, housing, economic development and infrastructure. In addition, as sustainability and "green development" are gaining traction across the country, Monroe has an opportunity to actively pursue a greener future through specific policies related to low impact development[1], green buildings, resource preservation, energy conservation, groundwater protection, recycling, and waste management.

12.2 Land Use Regulations

An important way in which Monroe can enhance the sustainability of its built environment is through its land use regulations. Zoning, site plan, subdivision, and inland wetland regulations are the primary tools through which the Town controls land use. These regulations should be reviewed and updated to promote green, low impact development, and environmental conservation. Monroe should establish green goals to guide this effort and should explore the following green land use regulations:

- Establish reduced lot size ("cluster") subdivision regulations, encouraging the preservation of natural open space on development sites.
- Reduce parking requirements, where appropriate, and implementing innovative parking solutions such as shared parking and underground or rooftop parking where applicable.
- Encourage green building practices, including the use of pervious pavements, green roofs, rain gardens, and bioswales.
- Require on-site stormwater retention.
- Require the Town Zoning Enforcement Officer to sign off on all planting plans associated with development applications.
- Require natural, undisturbed buffers and setbacks along rivers, streams, and wetland areas. Undisturbed riparian buffer zones of varying widths should be required, depending on resource to be protected, soil type, and other natural features. Refer to

[1] Low Impact Development (LID) is a stormwater management approach that emphasizes conservation and use of on-site natural features to protect water quality.

DEP's Upland Review Area Guide (**also see Chapter 8.0 Natural Resources and Environment**).

- Protect viewsheds and preserve trees.

Landscaping

In addition, Monroe should work to promote sustainable landscape design as part of its site plan review process. Landscaping should break up continuous pavement of interior parking areas. This will provide aesthetic improvements and improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow. Minimizing impervious surfaces will also help to reduce stormwater runoff. Natural landscape elements should be preserved to the maximum degree possible, with re-grading of land kept to a minimum. Landscaping can also buffer residential neighborhoods from commercial uses. Lots abutting residentially-zoned land should include densely planted strips of deciduous trees and shrubs, landscaped berms and fencing to preserve the residential character of the neighborhood. Where a building façade cannot be used to frame the sidewalk edge, landscaping such as hedges, shrubs or low walls and fences should be used. Regularly spaced street trees should be planted between roadway and sidewalk in order to provide a sense of protection for pedestrians. Rows of trees can also help to visually unify parking lots and buildings that line commercial roadways. Tree plantings can provide an effective screen to parking lots located adjacent to major roads.

12.3 Green Buildings

A national standard for sustainable or green building design has been developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). This standard, referred to as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), promotes the design and construction of buildings that save energy, water, reduce carbon emissions, improve outdoor environmental quality, and encourage stewardship of environmental resources. LEED is a voluntary program that has been developed to provide a common standard of measurement for green buildings, recognize environmental leadership in the building industry, stimulate green competition, and raise consumer awareness about the benefits of green buildings.

Nationwide, buildings are responsible for nearly 40% of all carbon dioxide emissions. In order to address this important issue many municipalities across the country are encouraging green building practices through development standards and site plan review practices. While

LEED has historically applied to commercial buildings, recently the USGBC created the LEED for Homes Certification program, which promotes high-performance, green single and multifamily homes. The USGBC also offers a Green Home Guide that provides guidance on increasing the energy-efficiency of existing homes. It provides resources aimed at helping homeowners save energy (and money) through a variety of measures such as insulating attics and windows, planting shade trees, and replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).

In order to encourage green buildings, Monroe should consider incorporating sustainable development practices/green building criteria into its site plan regulations. In addition, the Town should work to encourage a "green identity" for Monroe through:

- Establishing a permanent "Green Team" ad-hoc committee that can serve as an information resource for residents and business/property owners, as well as an advisor to the Town administration on green issues.
- Encouraging green industries to occupy commercially zoned property.
- Establishing a "green" webpage for the Town and dedicated space in the Town Hall and library devoted to promoting green buildings and green living.
- Hosting Fairfield County "Green Share" fair, showing "green advances" in local communities, across the nation and around the world.

In addition to encouraging residents and businesses to become greener, the Town of Monroe can lead by example by working to retrofit existing municipal facilities to make them more sustainable and energy efficient. In the long term this could result in significant energy cost savings. Such improvements could be funded through:

- Federal, state, and private grants
- Tax funds (either an allocated amount or a voluntary additional contribution)
- A designated fund into which fines from zoning and wetlands violations could be deposited

12.4 Energy Conservation

An important way that the Town can enhance its sustainability is to reduce dependence on non-renewable energy and expand the use of renewable energy resources. Renewable energy resources are those that are derived from the natural movements and processes of the earth, and can be naturally replenished at a rate proportional to their use. They include sunlight, wind, biomass, moving water and the heat of the earth[2]. There are a variety of renewable energy and/or energy efficient technologies that Monroe should investigate:

[2] Massachusetts Division of Energy Resources Renewable Energy & Distributed Generation Guidebook: www.mass.gov/Eoca/docs/doer/pub_info/guidebook.pdf

- Wind power - wind turbines
- Photovoltaic - solar panels that produce electricity, usually roof mounted
- Solar heating - solar panels that produce hot water, usually roof mounted
- Hydroelectric[3] - typically located in or adjacent to a stream or river
- Geothermal - in this region limited to heat capacity of earth used for smaller-scale heating and cooling
- Biodiesel - plant or animal-based fuel usable in diesel engines
- Compact florescent lamps (CFLs)
- Light-emitting diode (LED) lighting

Direct actions that the Town should consider to improve its energy efficiency include:

- Retrofitting public buildings with energy saving technologies, such as solar panels for electricity and/or heat; timers or motion sensor lighting; CFLs.
- Replacing the municipal fleet with smaller, more efficient hybrid and/or electric vehicles.
- Installing ceiling fans to more evenly distribute heat and A/C in municipal buildings with high ceilings, such as the Town Hall Annex and Council Chambers.

In addition, the Town should support existing and create new innovative programs to conserve energy. Connecticut Light and Power's Plan-It Wise energy pilot program recently demonstrated that customers will use significantly less energy during peak times of electric usage when rates for peak period use are higher than those for off-peak use. The Town should work with CL&P to encourage participation in such programs. Monroe may also consider exploring a "green homes program" through which it could encourage homeowners to make energy-saving improvements to their homes. The Town of Babylon, New York has created an innovative green homes program that lets homeowners pay for energy-saving home improvements with benefit assessment financing. The Town offers assistance for home improvements up to $12,000, which the homeowner then repays with money saved on utility bills every month. This program, which was featured on CNN Money, could serve as a model for Monroe.

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[3] As with any potential recommendation, the pros and cons of hydroelectric power would need to be explored by the Town, and appropriate studies conducted to determine its feasibility.

12.5 Resource Preservation

Monroe's natural resources are its trees, hillsides, and steep slopes – all of which contribute to both the Town's visual character and environmental sustainability. Protecting and enhancing these resources is essential to preserving Monroe's "country feel" as well as its natural environment. In order to protect these resources, the Town should consider implementing a ridgeline protection ordinance, tree preservation ordinance, and steep slope ordinance as follows:

Steep Slopes

Building on steep slopes disturbs fragile land and can increase erosion from the slope, as well as sediment loading into water bodies. A Monroe Steep Slope Ordinance would regulate construction on steep slopes, which would protect water quality and prevent erosion. This is important for the protection of Monroe's undeveloped hillsides, limiting areas that can be disturbed and regulating cut and fill.

Viewshed Protection

Viewshed regulations protect the scenic and ecological resources associated with hill and/or mountain ridges, and generally take the form of an overlay district. Such a district would limit or prohibit building on or near a ridge and would protect the scenic character of hillsides such as those surrounding Lake Zoar.

Tree Preservation and Protection

The management of tree clearance would complement the existing steep slope and erosion control ordinance and any proposed viewshed protection regulations. It would prevent large-scale, clear cutting of trees and recognize that the loss of top soil and vegetation results in increased drainage control costs, alteration of drainage patterns and excessive loading of nutrients and sediment to nearby water bodies. Such an ordinance should require the Town's Zoning Enforcement Officer to review tree removal and planting plans for all development applications.

These mechanisms will help Monroe maintain its character as new development occurs. Key considerations to be addressed as new regulations are developed are:

- Retaining trees and natural landscapes
- Increasing open space
- Planting native species along commercial corridors to enhance visual appeal and environmental sustainability

Lake Zoar

Monroe should also give special consideration to one of its most significant natural resources - Lake Zoar. The Lake Zoar Authority (LZA), a multi-town organization consisting of representatives from the four towns that border the lake (Monroe, Newtown, Oxford and Southbury)
currently manages water quality and safe boating on the lake. Monroe should consider a lake overlay zone in the Lake Zoar area to prevent and control water pollution and preserve habitat, vegetative cover, and natural beauty.

12.6 Groundwater Protection

Approximately one-third of Connecticut's drinking water comes from groundwater. Groundwater also provides base flow for most of the state's rivers, streams and wetlands. The quality of the state's groundwater is generally good and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) estimates that more than 90% of the State's groundwater is suitable for drinking without treatment. However, groundwater contamination is present in all of Connecticut's municipalities due to sources such as industrial activities, underground storage tanks, landfills, salt and storage facilities, and the application of road salts, pesticides and fertilizers. [4]

Protecting groundwater and drinking water, and minimizing potential sources of contamination will be an important aspect of Monroe's sustainability strategy. The Town should examine existing regulations for groundwater and surface water protection to determine whether or not they adequately address current groundwater issues and concerns. Monroe may wish to consider encouraging and/or requiring additional measures to enhance local recharge, including installation of roof-drain dry wells and in-garden recharge areas, disconnection of drainage conveyances that pass over porous soils, and replacement of paved areas (impervious surfaces) with porous surfaces. In addition, the Town should work to educate land owners about ways to conserve water and properly dispose of household chemicals and unwanted drugs. It should also discourage the use of chemical lawn treatments and pesticides, and the disposal of any compounds other than human waste into septic systems. Standards for retrofitting existing commercial properties adjacent to wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas should also be considered.

[4] Groundwater Protection Council: www.gwpc.org.

Impervious Surfaces

Parking area with permeable pavers

Reducing impervious surface area will help the Town achieve its groundwater protection goals. Impervious surfaces generate runoff, which leaches into water bodies as well as groundwater. Monroe should encourage the use of pervious paving materials to the maximum extent practicable and minimize impervious surfaces in recreation and open space areas. Semi-pervious surface products, such as permeable pavers, should be used instead of asphalt or concrete pavement within low-traffic areas or parking areas. Within subdivisions, open areas should be designed to serve as filters, buffers, swales, wet and dry ponds, and detention and retention areas. Public open areas such as parks and playgrounds should be designed to filter polluted runoff from adjacent impervious areas.

12.7 Waste Management

A final issue relevant to Monroe's sustainability is waste management. Two major waste issues that should be addressed to enhance the Town's environmental quality are the disposal of sewage and recyclable materials. Currently, the majority of Monroe's residential properties are served by septic systems. Poorly maintained septic systems can cause groundwater contamination. Homeowner education is crucial if septic systems are to be properly operated and maintained. Periodic pumping should be required, especially in or near critical environmental areas such as aquifer zones, wetlands, and wetlands buffers. In addition, Monroe should work to enforce current recycling laws and expand its recycling program to include curbside pickup of corrugated cardboard, paperboard boxes, and milk/juice cartons. The Town should also consider expanding recycling opportunities to include such items as household batteries, sneakers, and electronics.

12.8 Recommendations

The POCD makes the following recommendations for private and public development.

Land Use Regulations

- Establish reduced lot size ("cluster") subdivision regulations to preserve open space on development sites.
- Reduce parking requirements, where appropriate, and implement innovative parking solutions, such as shared parking and parking spaces set aside for long-term parking (which can be smaller in size than short-term parking spaces).
- Encourage green building practices, including the use of pervious pavement, green roofs, rain gardens, and bioswales.
- Require on-site stormwater retention and other low impact development techniques.
- Require the Town Zoning Enforcement Officer to sign off on all planting plans associated with development applications. Encourage formation of a Tree Alliance.
- Establish regulations requiring undisturbed buffers and setbacks along river and stream edges and wetlands.
- Consider ridgeline/viewshed protection and tree preservation ordinances to complement existing steep slope regulations.
- Authorize imposition of fines on violators of Inland Wetlands and Zoning ordinances.

Landscaping

- Incorporate sustainable landscape design into site plan review.
- Use landscaping to buffer residential neighborhoods from commercial uses.
- Use landscaping to improve pedestrian experience in commercial areas, with front yard planting, street trees, and parking lot tree planting.
- Adopt landscaping regulations for proposed development addressing tree planting, preferred species, and undisturbed natural areas.

Green Buildings and a Green Identity for the Town

- Establish a "Green Team" that can serve as an information resource for residents and business/property owners, as well as an advisor to the Town administration on green issues. Encourage the Green Team to set achievable goals for Town government.
- Encourage green industries to occupy commercially zoned property.
- Establish a "green" webpage for the Town and dedicated space in the Town Hall and library devoted to promoting green buildings, green living, and community gardens.
- Host Fairfield County "Green Share" fair showing green advances in local communities, across the nation and around the world.
- Retrofit municipal buildings for sustainability and energy efficiency.

Energy Conservation

- Reduce municipal dependence on non-renewable energy
  - Retrofit public buildings with energy saving technologies, such as solar panels for electricity and/or heat; timers or motion sensor lighting; CFLs.
  - Replace municipal fleet with smaller, more efficient hybrid and/or electric vehicles.
  - Install ceiling fans to more evenly distribute heat and A/C in municipal buildings with high ceilings, such as the Town Hall Annex and Council Chambers.
  - Undertake an annual energy efficiency audit for all municipal facilities.
- Encourage private use of:
  - Wind power: wind turbines
  - Photovoltaic: solar panels that produce electricity, usually roof mounted
  - Solar heating: solar panels that produce hot water, usually roof mounted
  - Hydroelectric: typically located in or adjacent to a stream or river
  - Geothermal: in this region limited to heat capacity of earth used for smaller-scale heating and cooling
  - Biodiesel: plant or animal based fuel usable in diesel engines
  - Compact florescent lamps (CFLs), LED lighting, and other high efficiency light sources
- Support Innovation and Education
  - Encourage participation in CL&P Plan-It Wise energy program.
  - Explore a green homes program.
  - Seek funding sources to assist Town government in shifting to sustainable substitutes, either through grants, donations or bequests, tax increment, or accumulated fines.
  - Incorporate environmental sustainability into school curricula and support local groups in their green activities.

Resource Protection

- Consider adopting a Viewshed Protection ordinance to limit or prohibit building on or near a ridge, and to protect the scenic character of hillsides such as those surrounding Lake Zoar.
- Consider adopting a Tree Preservation and Protection ordinance to manage tree clearance and planting, with the intention of avoiding excessive tree clearance during pre-construction site preparation, and which includes enforcement, fines, and withholding of Certificate of Occupancy.
- Consider adopting a landscaping ordinance to retain trees and preserve natural landscapes, and require native species to be planted along commercial corridors to enhance visual appeal and environmental sustainability.
- Consider a Lake Zoar Overlay zone to prevent and control water pollution and preserve habitat, vegetative cover, and natural beauty.

Groundwater Protection

- Encourage measures to enhance local recharge, including the installation of roof-drain dry wells and in-garden recharge areas, disconnection of drainage conveyances that pass over porous soils, and replacement of paved areas (impervious surfaces) with porous surfaces.
- Educate land owners about ways to conserve water and properly dispose of household chemicals.
- Discourage use of chemical lawn treatments and pesticides, and the disposal of any compounds other than human waste into septic systems.
- Consider adopting standards for retrofitting existing commercial properties adjacent to wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Encourage the use of pervious paving materials to the maximum extent practicable and minimize impervious surfaces in recreation and open space areas.
- Within subdivisions, design open areas to serve as filters, buffers, swales, wet and dry ponds, and detention and retention areas.
- Within public open areas such as parks and playgrounds, design for filtering polluted runoff from adjacent impervious areas.

Waste Management

- Require periodic pumping of septic fields, especially in critical environmental areas such as aquifer zones, wetlands, and wetlands buffers.
- Expand the recycling program to include curbside pick-up of a greater variety of plastics, corrugated cardboard, paperboard boxes, and milk/juice cartons and to pick-up household batteries, sneakers, and electronics.

This chapter highlights the planning policies and recommendations that are discussed at the end of each previous chapter. A Future Land Use Plan is also provided that illustrates the Plan's recommendations on a map. Together, these are the decision-making tools for those charged with land planning in Monroe.

CHAPTER 13.0
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

13.0 FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

13.1 Planning Policies

The Monroe Plan describes the Town as it is today – its physical and land use characteristics, population, road network, housing and economic development, and municipal services and facilities. These existing conditions give rise in some instances to problems that should be resolved over the 10- year life of this plan. Each chapter ends with recommendations. Throughout the plan, the recommendations balance the need to increase the tax base to lessen the burden on property owners, most of whom are homeowners, with protection of the remaining historic and rural character and the natural environment from inappropriate development. The population continues to grow. The in-Town job potential is also projected to grow. Monroe's Selectmen and the Planning and Zoning Commission must ensure that new development is the best possible for Monroe – properly located, well-designed, serving modern needs while protective of Monroe's historic and rural qualities. In particular, commercial properties along Routes 25, 111, and 34 must enhance the overall look of Monroe from these well-travelled roads.

Planning Foundation

Some of Monroe's attributes require preservation and others improvement. However, before the plan can recommend specific actions, these actions must have a foundation. The foundation is the list of planning policies, below. These policies are more than general statements and, taken together, comprise a decision-making guide for the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Selectmen, and all those charged with land planning in Monroe. The recommendations that follow in this final chapter are based on these planning policies. And, as new concerns and opportunities arise over time, unforeseen by this plan, elected and civic leaders will be able to act knowing that their choices are grounded in these foundational principles.

Over the next 10 years, Monroe will act to make the Town a better place to live, work and visit by doing the following:

Policy 1: Improve the Economic Base

- Establish mixed-use Priority Growth Districts to direct development to selected locations, control intensity, shape design, and preserve outlying rural character. Priority Growth Districts help manage and define future growth by directing it to selected areas. These areas will be zoned using a mix of Village Districts, Overlay Zones, and change in base zone.
- Use traditional design to shape the scale and character of all new economic development, with a focus on Routes 25 and 111, where sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, and commercial design will make these corridors more attractive to businesses and customers. In Monroe, traditional design refers to design standards that are in context with its current traditional New England design, and historical and rural character. Traditional design can also include a range of housing types, a network of well-connected streets and blocks, public spaces, and include amenities, such as stores, schools, and places of worship within walking distance of residences.

- Proceed with sewer district planning for areas along Route 25 and 111 best suited for significant development.
- Change the state's Locational Guide so that Monroe's industrial areas are depicted.

Policy 2: Maintain a Good Quality of Life

- Complete the zoning code update so that development regulations yield desired outcomes.
- Encourage a mix of housing types so that Monroe remains a lifelong community with households of varying size, stages, and incomes.
- Designate historic properties, features, and scenic roads.
- Develop a capital improvement program for sustained, planned investment in municipal infrastructure and facilities.

Policy 3: Be Good Stewards of a Green Monroe

- Encourage sustainable development techniques.
- Create a Monroe Greenway composed of dedicated open space parcels, trails, bicycle routes, parks, and connections among all these features.
- Maintain and upgrade parks and recreation areas.
- Encourage larger percentage of dedicated open space in new housing subdivision proposals.
- Allow new significant economic development in developed areas to avoid sprawl, such as the Stevenson area and the existing commercial corridors.

13.2 Future Land Use Plan

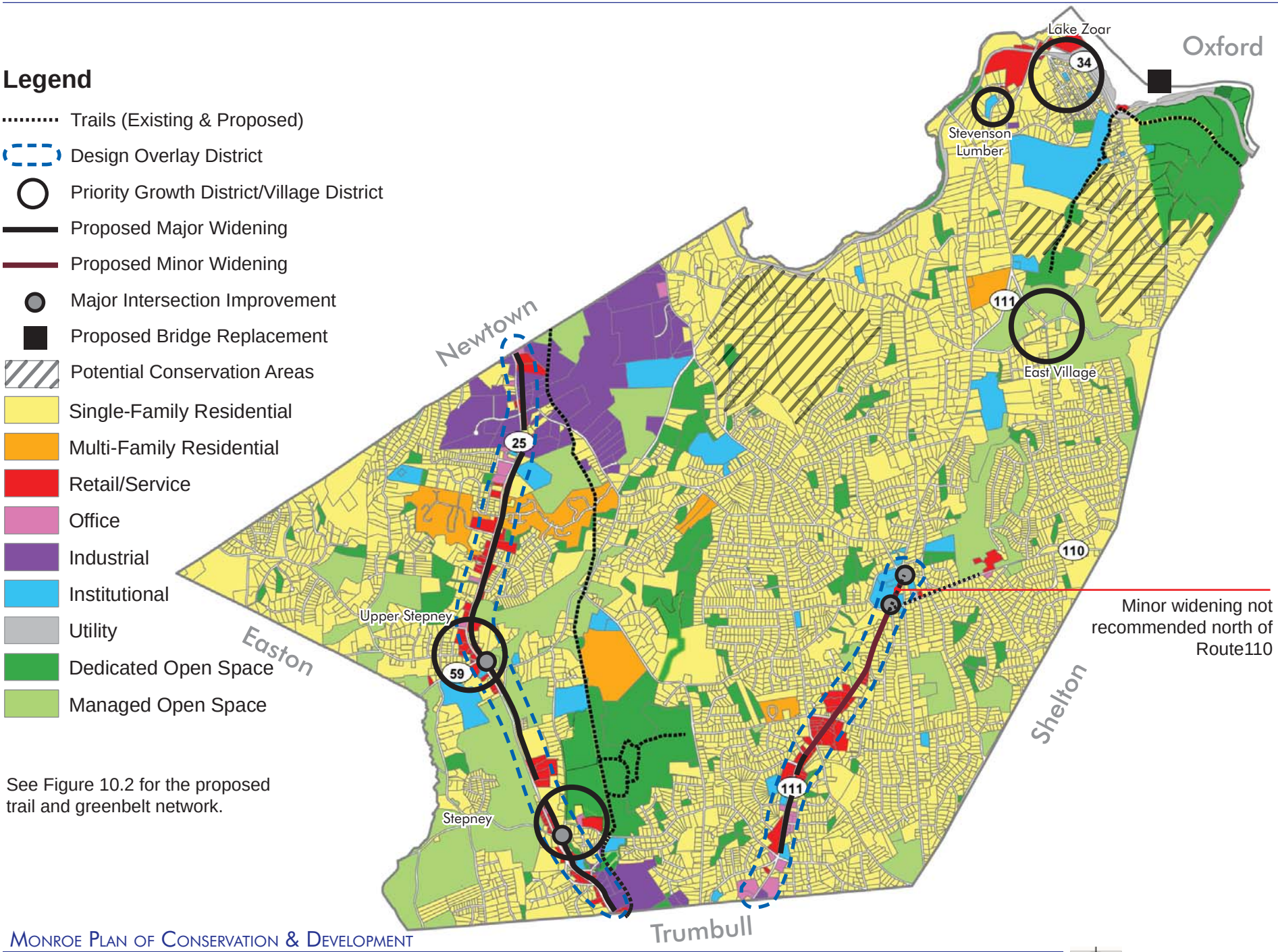
The Future Land Use Plan includes a list of of the plan recommendations and an illustration in map form of all future generalized land uses in Monroe. Any recommendation that can be mapped (shown graphically) is shown on the Future Land Use Plan Map (see Figure 13.1). The map represents the total effect of the plan recommendations and provides an overview of preferred land use types and locations, consistent with the plan. It is important to note that the Future Land Use Plan is not completely future oriented, as it depicts Monroe as it is today, recognizing existing and desired land uses. The Future Land Use Plan also illustrates future elements, such as Priority Growth Districts, Village Districts, major desired open space or park acquisitions, Greenway connections, and significant roadway improvements. The Future Land Use Plan illustrates where major implementation actions are needed.

The POCD guides Monroe in its implementation of the planning policies. The Future Land Use Plan is both a map and accompanying text describing the Town's general land use categories and specific recommendations. It recognizes the established settlement pattern, natural features, opportunities for new development, and the need for sewer construction in certain areas. Thus, the Future Land Use Plan attempts to reconcile community goals for conservation and development over the next 10 years, with existing land uses, existing zoning, optimal locations for economic development, and environmental constraints on development.

It is important to note that the Future Land Use Plan is distinctly different from a zoning map. While it is intended to provide the planning framework for future zoning changes, the Future Land Use Plan delineates broad categories of land use, but not site-specific zoning districts. When and whether such properties should be rezoned to reflect the recommendations of the Future Land Use Plan is the purview of the P&Z, authorized by the Connecticut General Statutes to adopt and amend the Town's Zoning Map and Zoning text. The Future Land Use Plan map is not intended to be used as a parcel-specific determinant. Rather, it is to be used by Monroe for general planning and providing conceptual guidance. For example, the areas shown as proposed Village Districts may have residential lots within them or internal lots that are not appropriate for eventual Village District designation. A formal district study, subsequent to the plan's adoption, will identify the actual parcels that will lie within the district boundary.

This plan does not in itself change zoning, fund infrastructure improvements, or assure implementation of plan recommendations. Over the years, Monroe has been developed by a myriad of individual and group decisions, which will not change. This plan will guide the Town Planning and Zoning Commission, the Selectmen, those who develop their property, their neighbors, and the various boards that oversee or advise on such development. In this way, collective individual decisions over time create an overall improvement in the Town's character, development and quality of life

The Future Land Use Plan map's purpose is to underpin Monroe's official zoning map, other official Town maps, and the maps contained within this plan. These maps should be referred to in conjunction with the Future Land Use Plan map, in order to plan for the potential future development or conservation of a particular lot.



Note: Information shown on this map is approximate and should only be used for general planning purposes.

Land Uses

The Plan map is generally consistent with existing development. Dramatic changes in existing land uses are not proposed, as the settlement pattern is generally one that Monroe property owners are satisfied with and wish to see continued. The zoning changes are limited to recognizing Priority Growth Areas. In these areas, the basic existing zoning and land use will not change significantly; the significant change will be intensity of use and a greater mix of allowed land uses.

For example, the proposed Village Districts on Route 25, covering Upper Stepney and Stepney, do not change the commercial nature of these areas. The proposed district zoning will focus on design controls, more mixed uses, and permitting more development than currently allowed.

This Plan largely supports existing zoning, as it allows homes where people wish to live and businesses where they are best located. Access to adequate roads and proximity to water and sewer utilities are two key factors defining the feasibility of different types and densities of development. The existing road network generally supports the residential density in the Town. The Plan's recommendation to permit a greater intensity of businesses in the Priority Growth Areas is dependent on the carrying capacity of existing soils and groundwater, or the construction of a sewer district.

Land Use Color. The map uses the colors below to show land uses. A lighter shade indicates less development density; as the shade darkens, development density increases. This map is not a substitute for and does not supersede Monroe's official zoning map.

- Residential: Yellow (two shades)
- Retail/Service: Red
- Office: Pink
- Industrial: Purple
- Institutional Blue
- Utility: Grey
- Open Space: Green (two shades)

The residential category does not exclude uses that are typically found embedded in residential areas, such as schools, places of worship, cemeteries, and private foundations or membership clubs. These other uses are normally seen as compatible with dwellings in overwhelmingly residential areas, and even as necessary to the proper functioning of such areas.

Residential Areas. Most of Monroe is zoned and developed residentially; this will not change. The map shows the extent of residential development in Monroe, which is the entire land area of the Town zoned for residential use. The map uses two shades of yellow to distinguish single-family areas and multi-family areas; the lighter shade represents the less intense land use. In Monroe, residential development will not achieve a density requiring sewer construction, whether single or multi-family. It is understood that on a parcel-by-parcel basis, future residential development on vacant (underutilized) land may not actually occupy the full site. There are often site-specific conditions, such as wetlands, rock ledge, or special habitats that preclude development. Similarly, areas that are shown in the single-family shade could be developed for

multi-family, if the rezoning complied with this overall plan and its policies. The Priority Growth Areas may allow residential uses.

Retail, Service, and Office Areas. Areas shown in red and pink are retail, service, and office areas, and can be mixed-use locations. These lie primarily along Routes 25, 111, and 34, and scattered sites along Route 110. The Future Land Use Plan largely follows existing zoning and land use patterns in identifying where new non-residential development should be located. The map varies from existing zoning and land use where the Priority Growth Areas are shown. These areas are anticipated to develop through infill, redevelopment, and new greenfield development into somewhat larger office, commercial, and mixed use areas than are found now. The intent is to allow sufficient office and commercial development in clearly targeted areas so that market pressure all along the routes is reduced. This, in turn, should provide Monroe residents and employees with a small number of pedestrian and shopper friendly commercial areas in a Town that lacks a central downtown area.

Industrial Areas. The Future Land Use Plan map adheres to the current existing zoning map regarding industrial areas. These are the DI-1, DI-2, and DI-3 districts. These districts, shown in purple, are located along Route 25, the southern end of Route 111, and within the Pepper Street Industrial Park. The Future Land Use Plan does not anticipate that Monroe will identify new areas for industrial development. However, further detailed study of actual industrially-zoned areas, after the conclusion of plan-writing, may identify areas that should be rezoned to other non-residential uses. Therefore, over the course of the next 10 years, industrial development in Monroe should be guided by the Future Land Use Plan map and any future study on mapping industrially-zoned areas. The Town's focus should be on assisting industrial property owners to lease their sites to "clean" and desirable businesses, and to provide water and sewer utilities if needed.

Institutional Uses. Areas shown in blue depict Monroe's institutional uses, most of which are schools, places of worship, and town facilities in their current locations. The POCD anticipates that over the course of 10 years, some of these uses may perhaps change. New locations may be developed; older facilities closed or re-purposed. The plan does not show potential new locations, as the construction of a new institutional use is uncommon for a town of Monroe's size. Each project would be reviewed and approved on its merits, taking into account the specifics of the proposed new location.

Utility. Areas shown in grey are Monroe's roads and freight rail line. Monroe's existing road circulation network is not expected to change substantially. The existing functional classification system of through, collector, and local roads shall be made to function as efficiently and safely as possible. Monroe should work with ConnDOT towards eventual expansion of Routes 25 and 111, including sidewalks. New residential construction should be limited to local roads. Any new local roads shall be coordinated with the existing through and collector system to provide for both the convenient circulation of local traffic and to discourage use by through traffic. New subdivisions should be required to plan for through roads connecting to abutting properties. All safety, speed, and congestion improvements shall be made as necessary and with regard for local design and community character.

Open Space. The Future Land Use Plan map shows in green all existing parks, trails, and dedicated open space. The major parks are Webb Mountain Park in northern Monroe and William Wolfe Park to the south-central part of town. In addition, the map shows significant

proposed expansions of this remarkable existing system: new trails and connections, and major parcels desired for open space acquisition. The overall intent is to create a Monroe Greenway -- a recreation network both within Monroe and connecting Monroe to major recreation or open space areas in Trumbull, Newtown, and Oxford. The Town's boards, commissions, and citizens will use the plan as a general guide; the map is not intended to be a site-specific designation of new trails and connections, nor represent a precise identification of potential open space parcels.

13.3 Plan Recommendations

Recommendations from each POCD chapter are listed below (in less detail) in order to summarize all actions required to realize this POCD. Some recommendations appear in more than one chapter, an indication of their importance. For the reader's ease, the section below eliminates duplication.

1.0 Regional Planning (GBRPA) Recommendations

- Improve roadway and signal synchronization along Routes 25 and 111.
- Implement congestion and access management mechanisms along Route 25.
- Implement bridge improvements over the Housatonic River and Pequonnock River.
- **Timeframe: Over the 10-year life of this plan.**

2.0 State Planning (OPM) Recommendations

- The State Plan's Locational Guide shows the Pepper Street Industrial Park as "open space and conservation." Monroe must work with OPM on the next State Plan to have the Location Guide recognize this area's economic development intent.
- **Timeframe: Two years.**

3.0 Land Use, Zoning, and Community Character

3.1 Overall Recommendations

- Ensure that the POCD is submitted to all existing and new Planning and Zoning Commission members, as well as all other land use commissions.
- Enhance training procedures for all Planning and Zoning Commission members, as well as all other land use commissions.
- Hold separate Planning Commission meetings on a quarterly basis to encourage proactive planning in the Town.
- **Timeframe: One year and then ongoing.**

3.2 Land Use Planning Recommendations

- Use a Priority Growth Districts (PGDs) planning process for Upper Stepney, Stepney and their outlying commercial corridors, East Village, Lake Zoar area, and Stevenson area.
- Adopt Village District and Overlay District zoning mechanisms for PGDs.
- The lengths of Route 25 and Route 111 lying outside Village Districts should be subject to improved design regulations via Overlay Districts.
- **Timeframe: Immediate and then ongoing.**

3.3 Zoning Recommendations

Re-examine Existing Town Regulatory Framework

- Re-examine existing Town regulatory framework on minimum lot size and lot depth.
- Consider development incentives, such as slight increases in density or building height, for higher quality architectural design.
- Timeframe: Two years.

Encourage Open Space Development Patterns

- Consider increasing the maximum height of office and corporate office buildings within Design Business (DB) and Design Industrial (DI) zones to three to five stories within DB zones and four to six stories in DI zones.
- Consider open space (conservation) subdivision requirements.
- Timeframe: Two years.

3.4 Development Recommendations

- Prepare a redevelopment plan for vacant parcels along the Route 25 and 111 corridors.
- Timeframe: Three years.

3.5 Community Character Recommendations

Preserve and Enhance Visual Appeal

- Enhance the Town's gateways (Routes 25, 34, 110, and 111) with attractive landscaping, signage, lighting, and stone walls that are consistent with the Town's character.
- Retain stone walls, barns, and buildings of character as part of the Town's subdivision regulations.
- Encourage the designation of scenic roads by preparing a study that evaluates specific roads, while addressing jurisdictional maintenance and balancing safety.
- Timeframe: As listed elsewhere; five years and then ongoing.

Evaluate Design Standards

- Perform corridor studies for Routes 25, 34, and 111 that assess existing and desired architectural styles, including building design, signage, lighting, landscaping, and streetscape design, as well as "green" design standards.
- Encourage design standards in Priority Growth, Village and Overlay Districts.
- Encourage the use of LEED design or other "green" building standards for all new construction activities.
- Timeframe: As listed elsewhere; five years and then ongoing

Promote Community Spirit

- Provide facilities that enhance quality of life and physical character, such as community gardens.
- Continue to organize events, such as the Strawberry Festival, Monroe Farmer's Market and classic car shows, that promote community spirit.
- Revitalize "Wish List" program and similar programs that enhance community spirit, character, and quality of life.

- Establish a Town email listserv where residents can subscribe to various lists and be informed of Town news and announcements, community events, planning and zoning notifications, and recreation activities. Reach out to all age groups, including seniors and young adults.
- **Timeframe: Two years and then on-going.**

3.6 Historic Resources Recommendations

- Revisit Town designation as Certified Local Government for eligibility for grants and aid for historic preservation efforts.
- Complete a town-wide historic resources survey.
- **Timeframe: Five years.**

4.0 Population Recommendations

- Allow a variety of housing types to accommodate the changing population structure. Alternatives to single-family housing using small lots, townhouses, apartments (condominiums or rentals) and, specifically, designated affordable housing, should be encouraged. See Chapter 6.0 Recommendations below.
- **Timeframe: Ongoing.**

5.0 Transportation and Infrastructure

5.1 Recommendations: Route 25, Route 34, Route 111

Alleviate Congestion

- Work with ConnDOT on intersection improvements to Route 25 with Route 59, Pepper/Green Streets, and Purdy Hill/Judd Roads, and plan for future improvements.
- Use computerized traffic signal equipment to manage traffic volumes and ease congestion during peak travel periods.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

Create a Pedestrian-Friendly Environment

- Conduct a Sidewalk Improvement Study that assesses construction of sidewalks and crosswalks along major Town roads, such as Routes 25, 34, and 111, that lead to municipal, commercial, recreation, and proposed Village District areas, as well as sidewalks on local roads.
- Provide crosswalks and pedestrian traffic signals at key intersections and areas of high pedestrian activity, such as in proposed Village Districts.
- Enhance sidewalks with architectural street lighting and landscaped buffer strips separating the street and sidewalks.
- Dedicate a portion of State property outside of the pavement to landscaping, within existing parking areas.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

Implement Access management

- Set minimum driveway spacing and require that access roads of two adjacent lots be shared. New driveways should be located directly opposite existing driveways and should not be offset.

- Require access roads to be located on a side street rather than on Route 25.
- Increase the landscaped buffer requirement on Route 25 and prohibit parking in the buffer area.
- Require developers to install a left turn lane into their property.
- Require developers to conduct a traffic study for submission to the Planning and Zoning Commission as part of the site plan application process for projects over two acres. Such studies should include an analysis of the vehicular traffic that will be generated by the proposed development, an evaluation of the need for a new traffic signal, and an explanation of how access to the site will be managed.
- Timeframe: Two years and then ongoing.

Institute a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program

- Promote MetroPool TDM services that are available to commuters and employers.
- Work with GBRPA on developing an updated regional TDM program that reduces traffic congestion on Routes 25 and 111.
- Timeframe: Five to 10 years.

5.2 Transportation Recommendations: Expand Multi-Modal System

- *Current Bicycle Opportunities:*
  - Upgrade on-street bicycle routes, including installation of bicycle safety grates, ensuring adequate shoulder width, and removal of sand and debris from roadways.
- *Future Bicycle Planning:*
  - Evaluate potential bicycle routes outlined in GBRPA's *Regional Bicycle Plan* and study further the feasibility of a Route 111 bicycle lane.
  - Develop an on-street bicycle network that provides safe connections between Town parks and attractions, such as Wolfe Park and Webb Mountain, as well as schools and shopping centers.
  - Standardized bicycle route signs should be installed at intervals to direct bicyclists along the route path and provide information about distances to key attractions. Pavement markings should also be installed to delineate such routes.
- *School Routes:* Create a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan— a written document, consistent with the Connecticut SRTS Program, that outlines a school and community's intentions for making travel to and from school safer and more sustainable.
- *Maintenance:* Maintain pedestrian and bike facilities in a state of good repair.
- Timeframe: Three years and then ongoing.

5.3 Transportation Recommendations: Improve Public Transit

- Focus on the transportation/land use connection on Route 25 in the Village Districts: greater density can generate higher ridership.
- Locate some affordable housing near bus transit in order to comply with the state's credit ranking system for assessing affordable housing.
- Evaluate the potential for bus service to existing multi-family developments and future mixed-use areas.
- Consider expanding bus service to the Route 25/Route 111 intersection.
- Consider new bus service connections from Monroe to regional park-and-ride lots.
- Study ways to move drivers to rail transit, such as a park-and-ride in Monroe linked to a shuttle to the Fairfield railroad station or the Bridgeport ferry; install a rail ticket kiosk in Town to eliminate waiting at the Fairfield station.

- **Timeframe: Three years and then ongoing.**

5.4 Transportation Recommendations: Incorporate Transportation Planning into P&Z Actions

- Site plan applications for large traffic-generating uses should trigger a traffic generation study.
- Enable the P&Z to hire a traffic consultant to evaluate traffic materials submitted by applicants.
- **Timeframe: Ongoing.**

5.5 Utilities Recommendations

- Implement sewer service construction on Routes 25 and 111 with oversight from the Monroe Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA).
- Conduct a Waste Management Study to determine new potential locations for refuse and recycling, and increase recycling efforts.
- Continue to commit escrow funds to the Spring Hill Road Transfer Station in Trumbull for its future maintenance.
- Expand hours at the Garder Road Bulky Waste Site.
- **Timeframe: Immediate and then on-going.**

5.6 IT Recommendations

- Implement the *Monroe Strategic Technology Plan*, and expand information technology (IT) resources to include a Town-wide GIS, upgrade of IT management, and data warehousing.
- **Timeframe: Immediate and then ongoing.**

6.0 Housing

6.1 Housing Needs Study and Policy

- Prepare a Housing Needs Study to determine affordable housing need, including identifying parcels appropriate for elderly or workforce housing, and appropriate mechanisms for producing lower cost housing.
- Potential new affordable housing units should be placed in areas that can support expanded bus transit services.
- **Timeframe: Four years.**

6.2 Housing Options Through Zoning Regulations

- Allow different types of housing, such as accessory apartments, smaller lots, townhomes, and multi-family units for starter families and seniors, in selected areas where density can be accommodated, either with changes in base zoning or through mixed-use overlay districts.
- Allow by zoning apartments over (or to the rear of the first floor of) small commercial properties on major corridors, possibly using incentives such as density bonuses.
- Allow good quality manufactured houses as a means to control housing construction costs.
- Plan for eventual residential redevelopment of historic summer colonies, with consideration of density, lot sizes, building placement, and natural resource preservation.

- Allow higher density housing if a tear-down in an infill situation can generate affordable housing.
- **Timeframe: Two years and then ongoing.**

6.3 Subdivision Regulations

- Amend the subdivision regulations to allowing lot size reduction via a conservation (open space) subdivision in return for open space preservation. Preferred affected districts are Residential and Farming Districts D and E (RD and RE).
- **Timeframe: One year.**

7.0 Economic Development

7.1 Competitiveness Recommendations

- Implement Route 25 corridor improvements (see above).
- Implement sewer service (see above).
- Implement GIS recommendations (see above).
- Insert Pepper Street Industrial Park on State Locational Guide (see above).
- Prepare for new development with outreach program and energize area around Victorinox Swiss Army facility, Pepper Street Industrial Park, and within commercial and potential Village District areas along the corridor.
- Review and revise the Town's Tax Abatement Ordinance to incorporate green development and green renovations for tax relief. Communicate the Abatement program more effectively to developers.
- Identify incentives to entice property owners to redevelop properties along "smart growth" and sustainable principles.
- Mandate that the Monroe P&Z and the local Economic Development Commission meet at least once a year to coordinate goals and objectives. First priority shall be Routes 25 and 111.
- Improve Economic Development Commission membership and training.
- **Timeframe: As listed elsewhere; three years and ongoing.**

7.2 Zoning and Site Plan Review Recommendations

- Review DB1 and DB2 zoning to increase business and office potential. Consider consolidation of other zones to simplify it for developers. Consider re-mapping underutilized industrially-zoned land to other economically productive uses.
- Create a Gateway Village District in the Lake Zoar/Route 34 Bridge area, augmented with Town purchase of property south from the Waterview property to the dam; encourage appropriate waterfront development in recreation areas along Lake Zoar.
- Create Village Districts and Overlay Districts on Routes 25 and 111 (see above).
- Reduce parking requirements (see above).
- Require improved commercial building architecture, walkways and landscaping, and encourage green (sustainable) design.
- Encourage pre-application meetings for non-residential applications along Routes 25 and 111.
- Examine the type of development as it relates to the cost of town services required by the development, as part of site plan review.
- **Timeframe: As listed above; three to five years.**

8.0 Natural Resources and Environment

8.1 Zoning Regulations Recommendations

Open Space Acquisition and Protection

- Adopt conservation (open space) subdivision provisions and acquire open space as per an official Open Space Inventory Report.
- Require undisturbed buffers and setbacks along river and stream edges and wetlands.
- Offer incentives to developers to protect open space and environmentally sensitive areas. Common incentives are density or building height bonuses; a long-term mechanism is a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR).
- **Timeframe: Immediate and then ongoing.**

Lake Zoar Protection

- Enact a Lake Zoar overlay zone to prevent and control water pollution and preserve habitat, vegetative cover, and natural beauty. Standards should address:
  - Improved septic system design standards.
  - Reduced maximum amount of impervious surface, to reduce stormwater runoff.
  - Reduced phosphorus concentrations in the lakes.
  - Protected slopes and vegetation.
  - Additional erosion and sediment control plan requirements.
  - Lake management plans.
  - "General permit" issued by the Planning and Zoning Commission to ensure implementation of Lake Management Program regulations.
- **Timeframe: Immediate and then ongoing.**

8.2 Code Enforcement, Maintenance, and Administration Recommendations

- Increase enforcement of environmental codes.
- Maintain municipal parcels, such as the town greens, to uphold visual appeal.
- Zoning Enforcement Officer to sign off on tree planting in any new development.
- **Timeframe: Ongoing.**

8.3 Visual Appeal Recommendations

- Maintain the country appearance within new development by retaining trees.
- Encourage developers to retain natural vegetation to the maximum extent possible.
- Enhance areas with the addition of vegetation, especially along commercial corridors.
- Consider converting an area at Town Hall and/or Town Library for an educational arboretum.
- Create a Tree Alliance responsible for advocating for tree preservation and plantings.
- **Timeframe: Four years and then on-going.**

8.4 Natural Resources Protection Recommendations

Steep Slope, Hillside/Viewshed Protection, and Tree Ordinances

- Adopt a Steep Slope Ordinance to limit development in order to control erosion and excessive nutrient loading and sedimentation of waterbodies.
- Adopt a Hillside Protection Ordinance to protect undeveloped hills and regulate finished grades in new construction.

- Adopt a Viewshed Protection Ordinance to preserve important public viewsheds.
- Adopt a Tree Preservation, Protection and Clearance Ordinance to better manage trees.
- Timeframe: Five years.

Critical Habitat and Invasive Species
- Inventory animal, plant, and fish species in Town that may not be listed on federal or state endangered or critical lists, but should be protected.
- Work to eradicate invasive species in the Town's parks and other Town-owned properties.
- Establish a Town program that educates residents on the use of native species for home landscaping.
- Timeframe: Five to 10 years.

Groundwater and Surface Water Quality Protection (Including Inland Wetlands)
- Protect groundwater and surface water, and enhance local recharge.
- Prepare a study to examine and map the Town's aquifers for potential inclusion in the State's Aquifer Protection Area Program.
- Implement special water quality protection regulations, which have already been written by the Town but not adopted.
- Examine the Town Code for establishment of natural, undisturbed riparian buffer zones, conservation easements, and other regulations concerning inland wetlands.
- Maintain the integrity of stream banks, streambeds, and associated tree canopy.
- Discourage impervious surfaces, especially in riparian buffers.
- Encourage low impact development wherever possible and practical.
- Retain areas of flooding, floodplains, and wetlands in their natural state to the maximum extent possible.
- See also recommendations in Chapter 12.0 Sustainable Development.
- Timeframe: Three years and then ongoing.

Impervious Surfaces and Stormwater Management
- Adjust Town road standards to reduce road widths.
- Produce and adopt an accurate map of the waterbody and wetland buffers.
- Minimize impervious surfaces in recreation, playground, and parking areas, as per recommendations in Chapter 11.0 Sustainability.
- Prepare a town-wide drainage study to improve drainage.
- Update Town stormwater drainage maps for use by the Town Departments.
- Address drainage needs along Routes 25 and 111 by coordinating improvements with proposed ConnDOT plans.
- Create standards for retrofitting existing commercial properties for stormwater management.
- Propose ordinance that prohibits improper water discharge.
- Timeframe: Five years and then ongoing.

Sewage Infrastructure and Management
- Implement the recommendations of the Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP) and the Town's Sewer Service Area Map.
- Promote homeowner education about septic systems to ensure proper operation and maintenance. Require periodic pumping.

- Research alternative sewage systems in terms of effectiveness, cost, and potential feasibility in Monroe.
- **Timeframe: As listed elsewhere; five to 10 years.**

9.0 Open Space and Agriculture

9.1 Open Space Recommendations

Examine Potential Public Use of Water Utility Company Property
- Assess availability for recreation or conservation purposes.
- Purchase right of first refusal of purchase of these lands from the water utility company or State if made available for sale.
- **Timeframe: Three years and then ongoing.**

Acquire and Expand Open Space
- Adopt an Open Space Inventory Report.
- Use land subdivision process to acquire (or obtain easements on) open space set-asides; see Zoning Regulations above.
- Use open space acquisitions to build the proposed Greenbelt (see Chapter 9.0 Parks and Recreation).
- Create a public process that allows public input on the acquisition and use of current and open spaces and trails.
- Encourage efforts of land trusts and open space donations to land trusts to help acquire desired open space areas, such as water utility company land.
- Establish a Land Acquisition Fund as authorized by Section 7-131r of the Connecticut General Statutes funded by a fee in lieu of open space.
- Educate land trusts on how to obtain open space funds from the Connecticut Land Trust Challenge Fund and Connecticut Land Trust Excellence Program.
- **Timeframe: As listed elsewhere; five to 10 years.**

9.2 Agriculture Recommendations

Promote and Preserve Agricultural Uses
- Where appropriate, support agricultural uses in coexistence with other zoning districts and uses.
- Consider further development of the Town's farmer's market and other agricultural businesses.
- Evaluate the Town's existing zoning regulations to ensure the preservation and possible expansion of existing farms.
- Enact a Right to Farm ordinance.
- Promote preservation of farmland through community education programs.
- Monitor the progress of the federal Farm Bill, which would give tax deductions to landowners for making conservation easements.
- Consider allowing use of some preserved open space for farming.
- Consider alternative programs to preserve endangered farmland, such as purchase or lease-back programs.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

Preserve Water Resources

- Maintain minimum distance between manure piles and wetlands/watercourses.
- Maintain undisturbed buffer zone between wetlands/watercourses and agricultural uses.

10.0 Parks and Recreation

10.1 Produce a Recreation Plan

- **Timeframe: Three years.**

10.2 Lake Zoar

- Expand recreation use of Lake Zoar.
- Identify parcels for Town purchase to expand recreation opportunities on Lake Zoar. The priority acquisition is the marina.
- Expand trail system to travel alongside Lake Zoar, connected to the overall greenbelt system (see below).
- Establish a Lake Zoar Commission to provide public education, write and implement grants, share resources in a cost effective manner, and advise on new land use regulations for the lake area.
- **Timeframe: Immediate (within six months) and then ongoing.**

10.3 Expand Trail System

- Create a Town Greenbelt comprised of existing and new open spaces that connect to schools and municipal facilities, with a series of multi-use trails and roads as connectors. Work with private landowners, adjacent communities, and GBRPA to implement.
- Connect retail and business locations for pedestrian access.
- Work with Aquarion Water Company (Kelda) and Connecticut Light & Power to develop public trails on their lands.
- In lieu of open space dedication in a subdivision, allow the developer to dedicate open space elsewhere in Monroe if the offered open space contributes to the Greenbelt.
- **Timeframe: Five years and then ongoing.**

10.4 Improve Walking, Bicycle, and Equestrian Trails

Walking Trails

- Consolidate trail maintenance under one department for consistency and conduct regular maintenance.
- Install wayfinding/trail signage and maps to allow easy navigation throughout the entire network.
- Prepare a Town-wide trail and bicycle route map showing all on-street and off-street paths and designated routes.
- Create a public process that allows public input on the acquisition and use of current and open spaces and multi-use trails.
- *Housatonic Railroad Trail:*
  - Extend the trail to the Monroe/Trumbull town line to complete the network to Bridgeport and the Long Island Sound.

- Provide additional dedicated parking areas.
- Consider joint operations of the trail with Trumbull and Bridgeport or incorporate Railroad Trail maintenance within the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Develop a Maintenance and Operations Plan for the trail.

- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

Equestrian Trails: Examine potential areas for horseback riding, including shared use trails. The Housatonic Railroad Trail should be studied for possible equestrian usage.

- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

Bicycle Trails

- Identify areas for off-road shared paths or trails, and connections between Webb Mountain Park and the Housatonic Railroad Trail.
- Prepare a Town-wide trail and bicycle route map showing all on and off-street paths and designated routes.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

Multi-use Trails

- Identify multi-use trails for grants/funding initiatives and expansion within Monroe.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

11.0 Municipal Facilities, Services, and Schools

11.1 Produce a Comprehensive Facilities Report

- Use analyses and recommendations to form the Capital Improvement Program and budget.
- **Timeframe: Immediate and then ongoing.**

11.2 Recreation. Prepare a Recreation Plan (see Chapter 10.0 Parks and Recreation).

11.3 Public Works, Town Hall, and Library

- The needs and plans for various Town departments should be clearly outlined in a document from each department head and incorporated into future sections of this POCD process.
- To assist with future planning and use of municipal resources in Monroe, the Town should prepare a Municipal Responsibility Chart, coupled with a Town Property Inventory.
- *Public Works.* Plan for eventual renovation or replacement of the Public Works facility.
- *Town Hall.* Evaluate conference rooms, storage, room layouts, and space usage.
- *Library.* Support programs and fundraising events to supplement the library operating budget for increased hours of operation, number and quality of programs offered, and expanded youth programs.
- **Timeframe: Immediate and then ongoing.**

11.4 Services for a Changing Population

- Senior Services. Balance the increasing need for senior services with tax revenues and assess services and facilities to meet the needs of Monroe's senior population.

- Schools. Monitor school enrollment projections and prepare for potential school consolidation.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

12.0 Sustainable Development

12.1 Land Use Regulations

- Amend or adopt new regulations on open space subdivisions, reduced parking requirements, and low impact development for stormwater management.
- Require the Town Zoning Enforcement Officer to sign off on all planting plans associated with development applications.
- Create undisturbed buffers and setbacks along river and stream edges and wetlands (see also Section 8.1 above).
- **Timeframe: As listed above; five to 10 years.**

12.2 Landscaping

- Incorporate sustainable landscape design into site plan review.
- Use landscaping to buffer residential neighborhoods and to improve the pedestrian experience in commercial areas.
- **Timeframe: As listed above; five to 10 years.**

12.3 Green Buildings and a Green Identity for the Town

- Establish a "Green Team" that can serve as an information resource and advisor.
- Encourage green industries to occupy commercially zoned property.
- Establish a "green" webpage for the Town and dedicated space in the Town Hall and Library devoted to promoting green buildings and green living.
- Host Fairfield County "Green Share" fair showing green advances in local communities, across the nation and around the world.
- Retrofit municipal buildings for sustainability and energy efficiency.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

12.4 Energy Conservation

- Reduce municipal dependence on non-renewable energy.
- Encourage private use of alternative energy sources, such as wind turbines and solar panels.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

12.5 Support Innovation

- Encourage participation in CL&P Plan-It Wise energy program.
- Explore a green homes program.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

12.6 Resource Preservation

- Adopt regulations on Viewshed Protection, Tree Preservation and Protection, and a Lake Zoar overlay district.
- Adopt landscaping controls to retain trees and natural landscapes, and require native plant species along commercial corridors.
- **Timeframe: As listed elsewhere; five to 10 years.**

12.7 Groundwater Protection

- Enhance local groundwater recharge.
- Educate land owners about ways to conserve water, to properly dispose of household chemicals and drugs, and to reduce use of chemical lawn treatments.
- Adopt standards for retrofitting existing commercial properties adjacent to wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Encourage pervious paving materials.
- Within subdivisions, design open areas to serve as filters, buffers, swales, wet and dry ponds, and detention and retention areas.
- Within public open areas such as parks and playgrounds, design for filtering polluted runoff from adjacent impervious areas.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

12.8 Waste Management

- Require periodic pumping of septic fields, especially in critical environmental areas such as aquifer zones, wetlands, and wetlands buffers.
- Expand the recycling program to include curbside pick-up of a larger variety of plastics, corrugated cardboard, paperboard boxes and milk/juice cartons, and to pick-up household batteries, sneakers, and electronics.
- **Timeframe: Five to 10 years.**

Five Priority Actions

Of the more than 175 recommendations, the following Five Priority Actions were identified. The implementation of these actions will ensure that the major issues facing Monroe will be addressed in a timely manner. These priority actions should not replace the remaining recommendations, but rather serve as the guide for achieving the Town's vision over the next decade. Each action is accompanied by a suggested timeframe for implementation, as well as responsible party for ensuring its implementation.

- ***Open Space Inventory:*** Identify existing and desired open space lands, including the Kelda / DEP lands, as a first step in creating the Monroe Greenbelt.
  Timeframe: 1 year
  Responsibility for Implementation: Planning and Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission, Town Council, Office of the First Selectman, Parks and Recreation, Citizens Advisory Committee

- ***Priority Growth Districts:*** Use Priority Growth District process to settle on uses, density, and design for writing the first two Village Districts in Upper Stepney and Stepney.
  Timeframe: 2 years
  Responsibility for Implementation: Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, Office of the First Selectman, Town Planning and Zoning Department, Citizens Advisory Committee, Monroe Chamber of Commerce

- ***Town Government Functions:*** Improve the ability of town government to provide long-range planning through 1) creation of a GIS, 2) completed update of zoning regulations, and 3) creation of a Capital Improvements Program covering more than public and volunteer safety.

Timeframe: 2 years
Responsibility for Implementation: Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, Office of the First Selectman, Board of Finance, Town Departments, Officials and Staff

- *Lake Zoar / Stevenson Area:* Create a plan that entails Village District development, gateway creation, and land acquisition/ preservation.
  Timeframe: 4 years
  Responsibility for Implementation: Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, Office of the First Selectman, Town Planning and Zoning Department, Citizens Advisory Committee, Monroe Chamber of Commerce

- *Sewer District Plan:* Implement the Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP) to construct public sewers on Routes 25 and 111.
  Timeframe: 5 years
  Responsibility for Implementation: Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, Office of the First Selectman, Town Planning and Zoning and Engineering Departments, Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA)

The standard methods that municipalities use to ensure that their long-range municipal plan is realized are discussed in this chapter, as well as strategies for continuing planning.

CHAPTER 14.0
IMPLEMENTATION

14.0 IMPLEMENTATION

A necessary first step in putting the POCD to work for Monroe is its adoption as official town policy by the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z). However, adoption does not by itself bring the Plan's recommendations into being. Once adopted, there are three standard methods that municipalities use to ensure that their long-range municipal plan is realized.

14.1 Land Use Controls

Zoning and subdivision regulations are the two most common tools used to implement a plan. The Planning and Zoning Commission will need to complete the zoning update already underway. This plan recommends improvements to Monroe's existing land use controls. Development controls give a municipal plan its teeth. The adopted plan is a strong foundation supporting specific provisions of the regulations. It is not desirable or possible to completely regulate all aspects of land development. However, the creation and strengthening of land use controls – such as zoning, site plan and subdivision review, and environmental protection ordinances – are necessary. There must be a balance between enabling flexibility for tje property owner and regulation that serves the public interest.

14.2 Capital Programming

The second key tool is a capital improvement program (the CIP). At present, Monroe does not use the CIP method bit does expend funds on public projects. The Town's most expensive regular public improvement tends to roadway investments. In recent years, capital have expenditures produced the new library and the Masuk High School renovations. The way that Monroe spends public revenue on public improvements – on water and sewer studies and utilities, road construction, major equipment purchase, municipal facilities, new or renovated parks and recreational facilities – and the standards to which they are built have a significant effect on the Town. Once this Plan is adopted, Monroe should evaluate and choose capital projects based on plan recommendations.

Monroe's CIP will be a management and fiscal planning tool. The capital budget systematically assigns priorities to the town's capital needs and schedules their accomplishment through the expenditures of public funds from Grand List revenues and bonding capacity. Projects are scheduled on a multi-year basis, with each succeeding year seeing the completion of a project, or a phase of a long-range project. New projects come on line as others started earlier in the cycle reach completion. The rolling approach enables municipal governments to plan for necessary infrastructure improvements and other large, non-operational needs. Capital needs remain in balance with available financing, and the Town achieves elements of its long-range plan with steady, predictable steps over time.

The process of preparing the capital budget, the resulting document (capital program), and the improvements themselves, are important tools in implementing the comprehensive plan. Such a program is indispensable for a sustained capital improvement effort. It allows for a continuous update on municipal needs without allowing the revision process to stall the planning and scheduling, and without being sidetracked into unnecessary and poorly planned projects. Monroe

will know its capital commitments for at least five years into the future. Thus, it can plan financing in an orderly way and stabilize the tax rate structure by spreading improvement costs systematically over a period of years. In this way, the CIP facilitates the infrastructure and facilities upgrades required by plan recommendations.

Public input into the planning process continues, long past the plan's adoption, as capital budgets are heard publicly. The orderly public expenditures on needed improvements send a positive signal to private businesses and property owners: the CIP enables them to plan their investment knowing that the town is also responsibly planning.

14.3 Continuing Planning

Private Development

Most development in Monroe has been, and will continue to be, carried out by private individuals and organizations. Therefore, private investments a key element in developing the community, guided and regulated by the town. The POCD, zoning and subdivision regulations, environmental protection controls, and the town offices that administer these regulations, cannot force development of a particular site for a particular use. However, the plan can provide an orderly framework for private development and related municipal service facilities. The plan, therefore, helps private enterprise in determining the right type of development and its proper location. Where there is a good town plan, and it is followed on a continued basis, private enterprise has a more reliable foundation upon which to plan and build. This not only encourages good development, but also helps to accomplish some of the specific recommendations of Monroe's long-range plan.

In all likelihood, most site plan and subdivision applications will conform to existing land development regulations. In these instances, the P&Z exercises careful oversight to get the best possible outcome for Monroe, but is not required to make a policy decision. In other cases, a requested zone change or subdivision application may necessitate such a policy choice. The P&Z will look to the adopted POCD for guidance: does the plan anticipate a zoning change, or open space preservation, or the creation of a new recreation trail? The plan can also aid business recruitment and commercial building renovations through its discussion of the commercial areas.

Future Studies and Ad-Hoc Committees

Some of the plan's recommendations are preliminary: they require that Monroe study a problem and its solutions in depth before a final recommendation can be pursued. For example, the plan recommends that Monroe create an Open Space Inventory, map the desired trail land and open space acquisitions or easements, and adopt specific zoning language into the zoning controls, all of which are aimed at enabling the P&Z to use private development to expand the Monroe Greenway. The town will need to fund such a planning project or commission a citizen's group to undertake this implementation step.

This plan cannot anticipate all new needs for continuing planning; Monroe can expect that new problems or opportunities will arise during the next ten years before the POCD is updated. Monroe's boards, commissions, advisory groups, and its informed and active citizens will ensure

that planning for Monroe continues. The P&Z may also choose to create a subcommittee to oversee the implementation of those recommendations that the Town has the authority to implement. The subcommittee could then monitor and report on the progress of implementing the Plan's recommendations.

Cross-Jurisdictional Cooperation

Given that Monroe has state highways running through the town, it must work with ConnDOT and GBRPA to improve safety, function, and efficiency. Monroe must also assert its land use development preferences at the state level. The state plan includes a Locational Guide, which is a map showing generalized land uses in all Connecticut municipalities. The current Locational Guide does not conform to Monroe's Future Land Use Plan Map, particularly in the large scale industrial areas. As these state and regional entities plan, Monroe must make clear its concerns and preferences. With an adopted POCD, Monroe's position is, in effect, on record and must be taken into consideration.

Updates to the Plan

As new opportunities and problems arise over the next 10 years before, the P&Z should plan for yearly reviews and updates. This will ensure that the plan remains current and relevant to the town. Within five years of the Plan's adoption, the Commission should produce a progress report assessing implementation of the Plan's recommendations on a year-by-year basis. Through public outreach efforts, the Commission can ensure that the Office of the First Selectman, Town Council, other boards and advisory groups, residents, and stakeholders continue to plan for Monroe's future.

APPENDIX - POCD PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

A Public Opinion Survey was performed for the Monroe 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development. Surveys were sent out to a random sample of 1600 Monroe residential properties as listed in the Tax Assessor's database. The envelopes were addressed to the listed owner name "or current resident." Of the 1600 sent out, 463 viable (completed) surveys were returned—a response rate of 28.9 percent.

The survey solicited opinions on housing development, economic development, traffic, community services, community character and demographics. A copy of the complete survey has been attached as an appendix. Following is a summary of the raw responses to each question.

Demographics

Respondents were asked several questions regarding their residency in Monroe.

Place of Residence

The survey asked the taker to identify where in Monroe he or she lived. The greatest number, 222 or 47.9 percent, live in Monroe Center. One in three (155) live in Stepney while 71, or 15.3 percent, live in Stevenson. Fifteen survey takers left this question blank.

Duration of Residence

More than two of every five respondents (43.4%) have lived in Monroe for more than 20 years. The next most common duration of residence was 6-10 years at 18.8 percent, followed by 11-16 years at 17.3 percent. One out of every ten surveys was filled out by someone who had lived in Monroe for 5 years or less (11.0%). The category of 16-20 years had the smallest percentage of respondents at 9.5%).

Business Owners

One in every ten respondents (56 or 12.1%) owns his or her business.

Housing tenure

All but 2 respondents (99.6%) reported that they own their homes. One person reported that they rent their home, while another left the question blank.

Housing Development

In this section, residents were asked what types of housing development should be a priority in Monroe. Respondents were asked to select one of the following choices: *Yes*, *Maybe*, *No*, or *No Opinion* in answer to each question.

Smaller Lots

Residents were asked if residential development that allows smaller lots (than required by site zoning) in exchange for dedicated open space (like Whitney Farms or Great Oak Farms) should be allowed. The majority of respondents (52.8 %) replied in the negative. 23.0 percent said "yes"; 19.1 percent said "maybe" and 5.0 percent had no opinion.

Lower Cost

Lower cost housing located in areas with adequate infrastructure, even though it is not subsidized, received even fewer positive responses. 55.6 percent said "no"; 20.3 percent said "maybe"; 19.8 percent said "yes"; and 4.4 percent had no opinion.

Housing Alternatives

When asked about alternatives to large lot single family detached housing, such as condos, age-restricted housing, townhouses, and small lot houses, 25.7 percent of respondents said "yes" and 24.6 percent said "maybe"; however many of these indicated that they were most interested in age-restricted housing options. Negative responses were seen on 45.8 percent of surveys, with the final 3.9 percent showing "no opinion".

Economic Development

Respondents were asked their opinions on the level and types of commercial development needed in Monroe, as well as whether incentives should be offered for business improvements. Again, the surveyed were asked to select one of the following choices: *Yes*, *Maybe*, *No*, or *No Opinion* in answer to each question.

Level of Development

Residents were asked three similar questions about the level of development in order to confirm the results.

First, the survey asked if the amount and type of economic development in Monroe should remain the same. More than half (51.5%) of those who responded said "no" indicating that change is desired. Roughly the same percentage of respondents were unsure or didn't have an opinion at 13.6 percent or 13.8 percent respectively. One in every five respondents feel that no changes should be made.

Almost seven in every ten survey takers (68.1 %) feel that economic development should be allowed to increase, with only 16.2 percent firmly against that increase. The remaining 15.7 percent were uncertain or did not have an opinion.

Finally, when asked if economic development should be made to decrease, 69.2 percent of respondents said no while one in ten (11.8%) said yes.

The results of all three questions indicate an overwhelming desire for additional and/or improved commercial development.

Commercial Property Incentives

When asked if the Monroe town government should study commercial properties (especially vacant lots and structures) and consider an incentive program, the results were as follows: 69.9 percent said "yes", 16.6 percent said "maybe", 9.4 percent said "no" and 4.1 percent had no opinion. In addition, written in comments indicate a desire to focus on vacant structures for adaptive reuse.

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed use development does not have the same support as incentives for vacant property reuse. Only 27.9 percent of survey takers were positive about mixed use development. Although 21.4 percent were uncertain, a full 47.0 percent, or almost half of respondents were against mixed-use development.

Sewers

Three out of five survey takers (64.4%) think sewers along Routes 25 and 111 are needed to support economic development. Eighteen percent are unsure while 5.6 percent have no opinion. Only 11.9 percent do not think the sewers are needed at all.

Traffic, Circulation, and Transit

Survey takers were asked several questions regarding traffic patterns, congestion and transit needs.

Traffic Patterns to Alleviate Congestion

First, survey takers were asked if they thought the Monroe town government should develop new traffic patterns to alleviate congestion along Route 25. 64.3 percent said "yes" the town should develop new traffic patterns. One in every six people was unsure (16.7 %) while another 16.1 percent said "no".

When asked about the traffic on Route 111, 45.1 percent said that the town should develop new traffic patterns while 26.8 percent said "no". Another 24.6 percent were unsure, while 3.5 percent had no opinion.

No one doubts that traffic congestion along Routes 25 and 111 is bad—write-in comments include "terrible" and "can't get anywhere at rush hour". Even those who responded in the negative seem to think that a solution is unlikely. Write-in comments include "impossible!" and "not the Town's job".

Circulation Study

When asked if the Monroe town government should develop a circulation study of local and through roads, including the potential for a cross-town road between Route 25 and Route111and future improvement of Route 25 more than half (53.5%) said "yes". 19.3 percent said "maybe" while 1.7 percent had no opinion. One in every four (25.4%) disagreed with write-in comments stating concern with the cost of such a study and doubts about of realistic possibilities for change.

Community Services and Facilities

Community Services

Residents were asked where the Town government should plan for a community center for youth and adult recreation, assembly rooms, etc. Respondents were asked to write in their own answers. A list of the most popular responses follows.

Table 1. Top Seven Proposed Community Center Locations

Wolfe Park Area	33.4%
Senior Center	17.3%
Not Needed	10.2%
Vacant Properties	9.3%
Town Green/Town Hall	4.2%
Schools	3.4%
Central Location	2.5%

The Wolfe Park area was mentioned by one third of survey respondents. This was followed by the new Senior Center, which was mentioned by 17.3 percent of those who wrote in an answer. The third most popular answer was that a community center was not needed—it would be an unnecessary burden on an already strained tax base. The reuse of existing vacant buildings was mentioned by 9.3 percent of respondents—with specific suggestions including the Masuk property and empty buildings on Route 25. The Town Hall/Town Green area was named by 4.2 percent; using schools at night for community facilities was suggested by 3.4 percent; and finally, a general recommendation for a geographically central location was required by 2.5 percent.

Regional Planning

The survey asked if Monroe town government should participate in regional planning and projects that benefit the town. Respondents were asked to select one of the following choices: *Yes, Maybe, No, or No Opinion*.

Table 2. Regional Planning Activities by Type

	Bus/ Light Rail	Schools	Health Districts	Fire Companies	EMS	Police
Yes	54.6%	55.7%	57.9%	62.0%	69.9%	63.3%
Maybe	18.7%	18.5%	23.4%	18.2%	17.4%	16.7%
No	23.3%	21.8%	12.4%	15.4%	9.7%	16.7%
No Opinion	3.5%	4.0%	6.3%	4.4%	3.1%	3.3%

As seen in the table above, the distribution of responses was very similar regardless of the type of regional planning activity.

More than half (54.6%) of Monroe survey takers felt that the Town should take part in Regional Transportation (bus or light rail) plans. The transportation question had the largest share of negative responses at 23.3 percent of residents saying the Town has no role in regional transportation activities. 18.7 percent said "maybe".

Regional education plans should be followed according to 55.7 percent of survey respondents, 21.8 percent said "no", 18.5 percent said "maybe" while the final 4.0 percent had no opinion.

Monroe should take part in regional health district programs according to 57.9 percent of respondents. The health district question had the greatest share of uncertainty of any of the regional questions at 23.4 percent—this could be because residents are unsure what a health district is and what the programs would be, but were unwilling to voice a definite opinion against it. In addition, 12.4 percent said "no" and 6.3 percent had no opinion.

Fire companies garnered more than 60 percent support, while an additional 18.2 percent said "maybe". Only 15.4 percent said "no", however this minority wrote-in many comments including "how many fire trucks does Monroe need?"

Regional emergency medical response planning had the most support with 69.9 percent of survey takers agreeing the Town government should be involved. Fewer than one in ten was against participation while just over 20 percent were either unsure or had no opinion.

Like the fire companies, the police had strong support (63.3% in the affirmative) with a vocal minority (16.7%) who indicated that there were too many officers for the size of the Town and that Police pensions were too high.

Community Character

Residents were asked several questions regarding community character. Some were open, while for others respondents were asked to select one of the following choices: *Yes*, *Maybe*, *No*, or *No Opinion*.

Open Space

Open space is defined as land with no remaining development rights, set aside in perpetuity for the preservation of habitat, natural resource, or rural character. The survey asked, if the survey taker believes Monroe needs more open space, how would he or she support getting it.

The first option, direct acquisition of undeveloped land, using town capital or special assessment funds, received approval from roughly one quarter of all respondents (26.4%). More than one third (34.9 %) said "no", 28.1 percent said "maybe" and 10.5 percent had no opinion.

Other methods such as voluntary conservation easements and land set-asides due to subdivision approval were more popular, with 43.8 percent approval and 31.1 percent stating "maybe". Only 12.0 percent said "no" while 13.1 percent had no opinion.

Place Most Representative of Community Character

Survey respondents were asked where in Monroe they would bring an out-of-town friend to show the best of Monroe's character.

Of the 384 survey takers who wrote in a response, the overwhelming majority (241, or 62.8%) of those listed Wolfe Park/Great Hollow Lake as the place that best represents Monroe's character. Attributes listed included being great for families, quiet and relaxing, having activities for all ages. "These demonstrate the dedication of Monroe to families and quality of life."

The Town Green was the second most popular response with roughly 50 proponents of the "quaint" New England character. Other responses included the new library, the historic district, rails to trails, small independent stores and Benedicts. It should be noted that the fifth most popular answer overall was an indication that there is no longer anyplace in Monroe that represents what its character should used to be (i.e., quaint and not just "one big strip mall").

Places to Avoid

The survey then asked where a resident would avoid taking this visitor. Of the 320 responses written in, 121 specified Route 25 while another 50 mentioned Route 111—a total of 53.4 percent. Other places to avoid included the Pepper Street Industrial area; poorly maintained roads in general with Elm and Maple being specified; Stevenson area; strip malls; and "McDonalds". It should also be noted that some 38 persons responded that there was no place in Monroe to be avoided: "Monroe is beautiful no matter where you go."

Sustainable Practices

The survey also asked if Monroe town government should promote sustainable practices such as the location and design of neighborhoods to reduce vehicle miles traveled, jobs and services being accessible by foot or public transit, and efficient energy and water use. Respondents were asked to select one of the following choices: *Yes, Maybe*, *No*, or *No Opinion*.

More than half (51.8%) of survey takers said "yes" to sustainable practices, while 21.3 percent said "maybe". One in seven (16.6%) disagreed and 10.3 percent had no opinion.

Planning Priorities

Survey respondents were given a list of planning projects and development issues and were asked to rank them in the order of necessity, with 1 being the most needed. In the table on the following page, each issue is listed in the order of importance as determined by the number of responses each received.

Concerns were raised at the January 19, 2010 public workshop regarding the interpretation of the priority ranking questions for different types of development. To clarify the results for these categories, the development ranking questions were cross-tabulated with the corresponding opinion questions at the beginning of the survey. For example, Question 2.a.ii *The amount of economic development in Monroe should be allowed to increase*, was cross-tabulated with the Retail/Commercial development ranking question as well as the Industry priority ranking. The results of the additional tabulations are included under the corresponding category below.

The subject of concern to the greatest number of survey respondents was Retail and Commercial Businesses. Of the 428 responses, 26.2 percent were "1" and 21.5 percent were "2". This issue was ranked in the top five by 76.9 percent of respondents. The respondents who ranked Retail and Commercial Business as a top-5 priority were cross-tabulated with the overall economic development opinion question, of these 329 persons, 76.6 percent had indicated that economic development in Monroe should increase.

Traffic on Routes 25 and 111 received the second largest number of responses at 419. Reducing traffic was of the greatest priority to 23.9 percent of respondents, with 74.5 percent rating it in the top five.

Industrial development was next in the number of responses. One in every four of the 417 people who rated this issue indicated it was the first priority for the Town. Industry was given top-five priority by 72.7 percent or 303 persons; of these, 85.4 percent had agreed that the amount of economic development in the Town should increase, while only 6.6 percent of these felt it should decrease.

Table 3. Planning Issues by Share of Rank of Importance

Planning Issue	Total	Ranking Share by Issue										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Retail and commercial businesses	428	26.2%	21.5%	14.5%	10.0%	4.7%	4.9%	5.1%	3.3%	2.8%	4.0%	3.0%
Traffic on Routes 25 and 111	419	23.9%	16.0%	12.9%	12.2%	9.5%	6.2%	4.5%	5.5%	4.8%	3.3%	1.2%
Industry	417	25.9%	17.7%	14.4%	6.5%	8.2%	6.0%	3.6%	3.1%	3.8%	7.4%	3.4%
Sewers	412	23.1%	15.3%	13.6%	9.2%	6.6%	6.3%	4.4%	7.3%	5.8%	5.8%	2.7%
Public education improvement	390	19.7%	9.0%	11.8%	12.1%	9.5%	8.7%	8.5%	5.6%	5.6%	5.4%	4.1%
Open space acquisition	385	9.9%	7.0%	6.8%	8.6%	12.2%	4.9%	8.1%	10.9%	12.2%	11.4%	8.1%
Lower cost housing alternatives	379	5.3%	3.4%	4.7%	4.7%	6.6%	5.3%	5.8%	8.4%	10.8%	18.7%	26.1%
Town-owned land and facilities planning	374	6.4%	7.8%	9.9%	9.1%	16.6%	9.9%	11.5%	10.2%	7.0%	7.5%	4.3%
Lake Zoar recreation	373	4.6%	6.2%	6.2%	7.8%	11.8%	8.6%	8.6%	9.9%	12.1%	13.4%	11.0%
East-west road	372	6.5%	4.8%	8.9%	8.6%	11.0%	9.9%	10.5%	8.1%	9.4%	14.5%	7.8%
Sustainability projects	357	5.6%	8.1%	9.2%	9.2%	13.4%	12.6%	13.4%	12.9%	8.1%	4.8%	2.5%

Sewers were ranked by 412 respondents, of whom 23.1 percent rated it as the number one issue for Monroe. Two in every three rated this project in the top five needs for the Town.

Public Education Improvement was ranked by 390 persons with 19.7 percent saying it is the primary priority, however only 62.1 percent in all ranked it in the top five and 15.1 percent ranked Education Improvement in the bottom three.

In the middle of the rankings is Open Space with 385 survey responses. Relative importance split the middle as well with 44.4 percent ranking the category in the top five and 50.6 percent in the bottom five.

Lower Cost Housing Alternatives received 379 responses, the greatest number of which were "11". A full 26.1 percent ranked the need for Lower Cost Housing last, more than the 24.8 percent that rated the category in the top five.

Town-owned land and facilities followed with 374 responses, however the feelings regarding this category were more positive with roughly half rating the importance in the top five and only 4.3 percent giving it the lowest rank.

The Lake Zoar recreation improvements were rated by 373 persons, with more than one third (36.5%) rating the necessity in the top five; however an equal number ranked this development in the bottom three.

The East-West Road received 372 ratings. Of these, 39.8 percent were in the top five, but the greatest share went to the second to last, or "10" ranking.

Sustainability projects received the fewest number of ratings with 357, however comments written on the surveys indicate that many residents were unsure exactly what was meant by "sustainability". The majority of responses (52.4%) were in the "5" to "8" range.

Conclusions

Residents are very proud of Wolfe Park and Great Hollow Lake. They would like to see more "New England character" in commercial and residential areas. This latter was indicated by comments recommending the village green and many who expressed the desire to be more like Westport and other "quaint" New England towns.

Monroe residents would like to see more retail and commercial options. They would like to improve traffic congestion on Routes 25 and 111. They do not want to housing other than large single family lots, the exception being age-restricted options.

Attachment: Public Opinion Survey Instrument

Public Opinion Survey for Monroe 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

1. Housing Development. Should the following be a priority in Monroe? *Please circle your response.*

a. Residential development that allows smaller lots (than required by site zoning) in exchange for dedicated open space (like Whitney Farms or Great Oak Farms).
Yes: 23.0% Maybe: 19.1% No: 52.8% No Opinion: 5.0%

b. Lower cost (not subsidized) housing located in areas with adequate infrastructure.
Yes: 19.8% Maybe: 20.3% No: 55.6% No Opinion: 4.4%

c. Alternatives to large lot single family detached housing, such as condos, age-restricted housing, townhouses, and small lot houses.

Yes: 25.7% Maybe: 24.6% No: 45.8% No Opinion: 3.9%

2. Economic Development. *Please circle your response.*

a. The amount and type of economic development in Monroe should… *(Please circle one for each statement.)*
   i. Remain about the same. *Yes: 21.1% Maybe: 13.6% No: 51.5 % No Opinion: 13.8%*
   ii. Be allowed to increase. *Yes: 68.1% Maybe: 10.4% No: 16.2% No Opinion: 5.3%*
   iii. Be made to decrease. *Yes: 11.8% Maybe: 5.0% No: 69.2% No Opinion: 14.1%*

b. Monroe town government should study commercial properties (especially vacant lots and structures) and consider an incentive program.
Yes: 69.9% Maybe: 16.6% No: 9.4% No Opinion: 4.1%

c. Monroe should encourage mixed-use development (commercial and residential on the same lot or in the same building) in commercial areas.
Yes: 27.9% Maybe: 21.4% No: 47.0% No Opinion: 3.7%

d. Sewers along Routes 25 and 111 are needed to support economic development.
Yes: 64.4% Maybe: 18.0% No: 11.9% No Opinion: 5.6%

3. Traffic, Circulation, and Transit. *Please circle your response.*

a. Monroe town government should develop new traffic patterns to alleviate congestion.
   i. Along Route 25 *Yes: 64.3% Maybe: 16.7% No: 16.1% No Opinion: 2.9%*
   ii. Along Route 111 *Yes: 45.1% Maybe: 24.6% No: 26.8% No Opinion: 3.5%*

b. Monroe town government should develop a circulation study of local and through roads, including the potential for a cross-town road between Route 25 and Route111and future improvement of Route 25. *Yes: 53.5% Maybe: 19.3% No: 25.4% No Opinion: 1.7%*

4. Community Services and Facilities.

a. Where should Town government plan for a community center for youth and adult recreation, assembly rooms, etc.? *For results refer to report.*

b. Monroe town government should participate in regional planning and projects that benefit the town. *(Please circle one response for each item.)*

i. Transportation (bus/light rail)
Yes: 54.6% Maybe: 18.7% No: 23.3% No Opinion: 3.5%

ii. Schools *Yes: 55.7% Maybe: 18.5% No: 21.8% No Opinion: 4.0%*

iii. Health districts *Yes: 57.9% Maybe: 23.4% No: 12.4% No Opinion: 6.3%*

iv. Fire companies *Yes: 62.0% Maybe: 18.2% No: 15.4% No Opinion: 4.4%*

v. Emergency medical response
Yes: 69.9% Maybe: 17.4% No: 9.7% No Opinion: 3.1%

vi. Police enforcement *Yes: 63.3% Maybe: 16.7% No: 16.7% No Opinion: 3.3%*

5. Community Character. *Please circle your response.*

a. Open space is defined as land with no remaining development rights, set aside in perpetuity for the preservation of habitat, natural resource, or rural character. (Recreation lands are a different category.) If you think Monroe needs more open space, how would you support getting it?

i. Direct acquisition of undeveloped land, using town capital or special assessment funds.
Yes: 26.4% Maybe: 28.1% No: 34.9% No Opinion: 10.5%

ii. Other methods such as voluntary conservation easements and land set-asides due to subdivision approval. *Yes: 43.8% Maybe: 31.1% No: 12.0% No Opinion: 13.1%*

b. If you brought an out-of-town friend to a place that represents the best of Monroe's character, where is that place? Tell us why you choose it.

_____

_____ *For results, please refer to report.* _____

_____

_____

_____

c. Where would you avoid taking this visitor? _____

_____ *For results, please refer to report.* _____

d. Monroe town government should promote 1) the location and design of neighborhoods to reduce vehicle miles traveled, 2) jobs and services being accessible by foot or public transit, and 3) efficient energy and water use.
Yes: 51.8% Maybe: 21.3% No: 16.6% No Opinion: 10.3%

e. Please rank the following projects or development in Monroe, with 1 being the most needed:

For results, please refer to the body of the report.

i. Retail and commercial businesses _____
ii. Industry _____
iii. Lower cost housing alternatives _____
iv. Sewers _____
v. Open space acquisition _____
vi. East-west road _____
vii. Lake Zoar recreation _____
viii. Sustainability projects _____
ix. Public education improvement _____
x. Traffic on Routes 25 and 111 _____
xi. Town-owned land and facilities planning _____

6. Demographics. *Please check the correct response.*

a. Your home:

i. Own: 99.6% Rent: 0.2% No Answer: 0.2%

ii. How many years have you lived in Monroe? *Check one.*

- 0-5 yrs 11.0%
- 6-10 yrs 18.8%
- 11 – 15 yrs 17.3%
- 16 – 20 yrs 9.5%
- 21 or more yrs 43.4%

iii. Which section best describes where you live?

- Stevenson 47.9%
- Stepney 33.5%
- Monroe Center 15.3%
- No Answer 3.3%

b. Your business. Do you own a business in Monroe? Yes: 12.1% No: 87.9%

THANK YOU. Please return the completed survey in the enclosed envelope.

2010 MONROE PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

History of Planning in Monroe

Monroe has a strong tradition of preparing, adopting, and amending Plans to evaluate land use trends and the future needs of the community and to implement those recommendations:

Date	What	Major Recommendations
1955	Planning Study	Graduate students at Yale University recommended creating a Monroe Planning Commission (merged into the Planning & Zoning Commission in 1957).
1958	Planning Reports	Goodkind & O'Dea, Planning Consultants prepared reports that comprised the first comprehensive plan addressing Monroe's future development.
1964	Plan of Development	This Plan, prepared by Bryan & Panico, Planning Consultants, provided an overall future land use plan in response to rapid growth occurring in Monroe.
1976	Plan of Development	Technical Planning Associates helped prepare a Plan that recommended cluster development in order to retain open space in Monroe.
1988	Plan of Development	The Plan, prepared with the assistance of the Maguire Group, addressed transportation and development patterns issues then facing Monroe.
2000	Plan of Conservation and Development	The goals of the last POCD, prepared by Planimetrics, LLP, concentrated on enhancing community character, protecting water quality and natural resources, strengthening the existing community structure, promoting historic preservation, and expanding and improving utility services. In addition to these goals, the following issues were identified as the highest priority issues for implementation: 1. Address community facility needs, such as improving the Town Hall complex and addressing educational facility needs. 2. Preserve land as dedicated open space and encourage open space development patterns. 3. Create an overall greenbelt system with trails. 4. Modify road standards and improve transportation systems. 5. Simplify business zoning and encourage economic development. 6. Address housing needs.