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PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

FOR THE TOWN OF COVENTRY, CONNECTICUT

PRESENTED BY THE COVENTRY PLANNING AND
ZONING COMMISSION

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This Plan of Conservation & Development is dedicated to the people of Coventry.

You gave your thoughts and feelings on the wide-ranging issues affecting the Town's future growth, and they are here in this document. Every perspective you read in these pages, every comment, every goal and recommendation, began with your observations.

The pictures contained in this Plan were provided by Coventry residents and the Planning & Zoning Commission wishes to thank those people for their efforts.



Sunrise Over Lake Wangumbaug

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1 INTRODUCTION

Coventry traditionally has been both an agricultural and a semi-industrial community, as there were several mills along the brooks and rivers of the Town that were active in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Little industry remains at present, and there are several small active farms. During the early part of the 1900's, the Town became a tourist destination when many vacation cottages were developed along the shores of Lake Wangumbaug. Rapid residential development has occurred since the 1950's primarily in subdivisions with the concurrent loss of local commercial establishments.

Subsequent commercial and retail development has been minimal, resulting in the Town's grand list being 92.2 percent residentially based. The town has established a strong commitment to maintaining its rural character.



(Aerial photo of Lake Wangumbaug
from www.glsweetnam.com)

The State Requires a Plan of Conservation and Development

The State of Connecticut recognizes the benefits of cities and towns planning their future. Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that each municipality prepare a Plan of Conservation & Development, a POCD, in consideration of the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut (2005-2010). This POCD is consistent with the State Plan of Conservation & Development, with the Windham Regional Land Use Plan (2010) and the Windham Regional Transportation Plan (2005).

Purpose of the Plan

A good plan is a blueprint for the future. Our POCD records wide-ranging community input and projections by experts on Coventry's growth, and gives direction to public and private development that will define the Town's growth. The Plan's objectives are meant to look a decade or more into the future and then offer guidance on short and mid-term land use decisions. The reason for looking beyond the growth dynamic of the next few years rests on this principle: Long-term goals are seldom reached through short-term solutions.

Creating the Plan

This POCD took more than a year of dedicated effort to complete. A Planning & Zoning sub-committee was charged with assembling the new thought and information needed for presentation in the POCD. They met in weekly sessions beginning in the summer of 2008, consulting extensively with the Town Planner and other Town staff, boards and commissions, civic groups and the general community. All of their meetings were public sessions.

This collaborative work was aided by information gleaned from a statistically valid citizen survey completed in 2008. Survey results were supplemented by Town-sponsored visioning sessions for Coventry citizens to help determine their prevailing thought on future growth, development, conservation and public facilities. The work was also guided by a build-out analysis by the Green Valley Institute, which forecast future land use in Town based on demographic trends and existing zoning regulations.

This document is the fruit of those efforts. It is presented in a format of goals and recommendations/implementations for each element of the Plan along with an overview of the relevant factors behind them, and mapping to reflect current and future Plan recommendations.

The Plan document is final when the people of Coventry have the opportunity to comment during scheduled public hearings and is then adopted, with any amendments based on public comment, by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Using the Plan Going Forward

To help achieve a broader understanding of the Plan, some supplemental background material has been included in it. This material is available for review at the Town Clerk's office and on the Town website.

A list of these supplements—including the survey of Town residents—is given at the end of this document. It must be clearly noted, however, that this document, and not the supplements, will be the Town's official Plan of Conservation & Development. Once officially adopted, this POCD supersedes the 1997 Plan. It is an advisory document only; its recommendations are not legal mandates.

Going forward, the Plan's legitimacy is validated as it guides and informs the Town's many decisions on land use, zoning, land acquisition, public works, new public facilities and infrastructure, among many other official decisions.

Key to the Plan's effectiveness is how well it's understood and supported by the public, and how thoroughly the Planning & Zoning Commission and Town Council act to implement its recommendations.

The POCD is seen as a living document.

The Plan must be adaptable enough to respond to changes in its underlying assumptions, principally the social, economic and technological structure of the town and region. It should be reviewed from time to time to be sure those assumptions are still viable. If changes are needed, the Plan should be amended to show them.

Although prepared by the Planning & Zoning Commission, this POCD belongs and pertains to the entire Town of Coventry. It reflects community consensus on all aspects of future growth in Town.

OUR FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

In Coventry, we manage change with a vision, expressed in this Plan and animated by our fundamental values- the shared ideals and standards nurtured over three centuries and most treasured by our citizens.



Agriculture: The Town's rural character has its roots in the tradition of New England agriculture. Farms, large and small, offer pleasing vistas and provide residents with a local source of foods, forest products and other valued commodities. Coventry's Farmers Market embodies this value.

Community: Coventry's citizens and town staff take pride in caring for the basic needs of all residents. Often they show unique resourcefulness in doing so. The community engages in networking, church groups, schools, clubs and civic associations that build trust, sharing and a refined sense of personal charity.

Neighborhoods: The fundamental building block of any community is its neighborhoods. They promote a sense of ownership, family and cooperation. Neighborhood character and its diverse housing must be protected from encroachment.

Volunteers: Much of the work done to plan and carry out the work of positive growth in Town is done by citizen volunteers. We take heart in these efforts, believe in them, and strongly encourage citizens to volunteer in service to the community.

Vistas: Perhaps the most striking way to define rural character is to look at the scenic vistas in Town. These are an unfailing inspiration to residents and visitors alike. Some of them are singled out in this Plan.

Open Space: Open space is a powerful asset for the Town. We hold environmental, economic, recreational and visual factors in high regard. When we set aside open space to be enjoyed just for what it is, we speak eloquently of our community pride.

Mobility: Coventry is an expansive community that strives for safe, convenient access and mobility in a rich diversity of roads, sidewalks, paths and trails.

Villages: Coventry is blessed with an authentic 19th century mill village on lower Main Street, and an equally historic north village on the Boston Turnpike. These charming areas feature farms and well-kept old homes along with buildings once used as taverns and stage coach stops. Both areas have a Village Green. They are unique facets of our identity.

Businesses: Local enterprise is the backbone of any community's well-being. Jobs and revenue flow from it, residents can get to work easily, and the Town's vital volunteer services enjoy its longstanding support. Coventry's rich lot of small businesses also attracts many visitors.

History: Our links to the past range from our stone walls, old homes and barns to mill sites that trace back to the first settlers. We intend to preserve these ties to the past as defining instruments in our Town's character.

Waterways: Coventry is blessed with three rivers and a substantial lake, along with a rich assortment of ponds, brooks and wetlands. Some of these waterways were central to Coventry's early history and helped create its character.



RURAL CHARACTER

The way we think of Coventry today springs from our Town's rich and colorful history.

- *Fine old homes and a pair of town greens remain from colonial times.*
- *Stone walls wind along farm fields and through re-grown woodlands, pleasing reminders of our agricultural period.*
- *Venerable traces of mills beside streams that powered them, recalling our industrial era.*
- *Rustic farms and barns from all periods speak of our ties to the land.*



The connection we make with these and countless other links to Coventry's past is what we call rural character. It is all around us. It is constantly evolving. Our community's ongoing definition of rural character is what keeps it vital and fresh. Rural character is the essential nature of our Town that we define for ourselves.

Many choose to live here for the enduring charm of our Lake, the scenic vistas opening to fields, woodlands, hills and quaint historic sites, the small villages and communities, the quiet and privacy, farmland and the dark sky at night. These are among the many expressions of Coventry's rural character and we cherish them.



In surveys and interviews over the years, the people of Coventry have endorsed these sentiments. They've made it clear they feel rural character is the Town's most important quality and should be preserved.

Goal

Preserve and maintain the essential rural character of Coventry as change and growth occur in future years.

Recommendations (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Create and maintain a positive image of the community as a rural historic visitors' destination, and nice place to call home and to do business.

2. Preserve and enhance water quality in all the Town's water bodies, especially Lake Wangumbaug, which is central to quality of life in Coventry. [Planning & Zoning, Inland Wetlands, Water Pollution Control Authority and Land Use Staff]

3. Promote farmland operations and forestry management and resist economic pressures that force land into development. [Planning & Zoning, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission and Inland Wetlands]



4. Provide for positive and permanent protection of open space lands as recommended in the Town's open space plan. [Town Council, Planning & Zoning, Conservation Commission and Land Use staff]

5. Accommodate residential development at densities (lot size and families per acre) that can be supported by slope and soil conditions and also fit the natural landscape without major re-grading or slashing of wooded areas. Consider water quality needs as related to existing/new infrastructure.

6. Use established guidelines to identify and protect historically significant areas and structures as well as natural features. [Planning & Zoning, Conservation Commission, Coventry Historical Society and Inland Wetlands]

7. Provide for public buildings and commercial/industrial development to be sited and designed to enhance the surrounding area and to fit contextually with Coventry's rural character through regulations that stipulate the appropriate set backs from streets and property lines, landscaped areas or natural terrain, minimal areas of impervious surface, parking areas attractively designed and landscaped, and signage designed and located for a rural setting as specified in the Town's design guidelines. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission and Land Use staff]

LONG RANGE PLANNING

Proceeding directly from our ideals and values are the long range planning objectives for the future growth of Coventry. These were arrived at by asking citizens and a broad range of experts what's important to them as they view Coventry over the next 10 to 20 years.

In developing these objectives, consensus was taken from many sectors of the community. The means of gathering input are described earlier in this Plan. The recent Citizen Survey provided the baseline. That was supplemented by Green Valley Institute's build-out analysis, along with public visioning sessions and many meetings with civic groups and Town department managers.

The conclusions were quite clear. Coventry's citizens have a high regard for the character of their town and its neighborhoods, and a strong sense of community. The town is considered a safe place to live, with a relatively high quality of life. At the same time, there is a demand for more local jobs, more commercial and specific retail services and more recreational opportunities.

Recommendations (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Anticipate growth so that it can be accommodated by Town facilities and services. Update regulations to guide development and prevent unintended sprawl and to establish appropriate architectural and related standards.
2. Coventry's future growth should respect the Town's capacity to handle it, including roads, sewers, water supply, drainage, parks, recreation areas and schools, along with fire and police services. Residents must be able to pay for new infrastructure without undue hardship. All plans should respect the singular integrity of Coventry's rural character.
3. Recognize that Coventry and its neighboring towns are interdependent in many ways. Explore all viable options for regional cooperation in providing services and thereby reducing their cost. [Town Manager and Council, Public Works and Board of Education]
4. Incorporate into municipal regulations and standards the best progressive means of protecting the physical, social, historic and aesthetic well being of neighborhoods old and new. [Planning & Zoning, Inland Wetlands, Conservation Commissions & Land Use Staff]
5. Take measures to prevent the spread of blight. The Town should consistently support rehabilitation of sub-standard areas where private efforts have not worked. [Town Council, Planning & Zoning, Conservation Commission and Land Use Staff]
6. Encourage actions by all town bodies to reflect the goals and recommendations of the Plan. All codes, regulations and ordinances that affect conservation and development should be strengthened where necessary, and duly enforced to support the Plan.

7. Consider carefully the Town's financial resources in planning for future municipal projects.
8. Promote greater citizen involvement in local planning efforts, by such avenues as public meetings, publications, local cable TV access and the Town web site. [Town Staff]
9. Adhere to statutory requirements that all changes to the zoning regulations and map must be consistent with the Town's Plan of Conservation & Development. [Planning & Zoning and Land Use staff]
10. Control the issuance of variances by the Zoning Board of Appeals. [Zoning Board of Appeals and Land Use Staff]
11. Support continuing education for members of Town land use boards and encourage them to communicate fully among themselves. [Town Manager and Director of Planning]

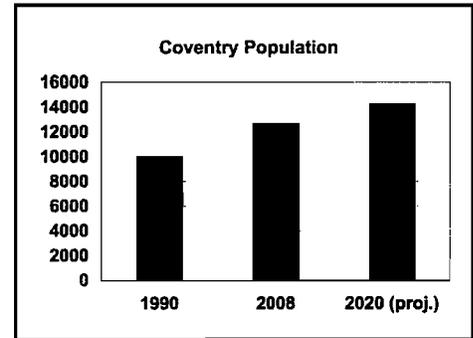
2 DEMOGRAPHICS

Coventry, part of Tolland County, is located 20 miles east of Hartford and includes its signature Lake Wangumbaug. The Hop River forms part of its western border and the Willimantic River its eastern boundary. Its main thoroughfares are Route 44 (east to west) and Route 31 (north to south). The University of Connecticut is five miles east and the town of Windham is southeast. The majority of the working population commutes out of town.



A. Population

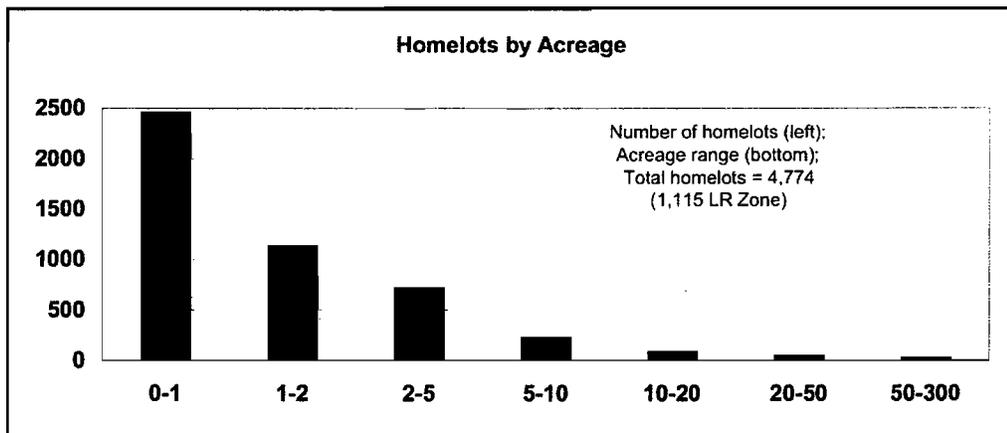
Coventry's population in 2008 reached 12,755, a 27 percent increase since 1990 averaging 1.3 percent per year. This compares with an average 20 percent population increase in the surrounding towns (Andover, Bolton, Columbia, Mansfield, Tolland, Vernon, Willington and Windham) and for Tolland County, and an average 8 percent increase for the state in total. Projections for the near term indicate a one percent increase in population per year.



Population density (residents per square mile) is now 324, compared to 534 for the surrounding towns and 724 for the state, indicating the town is fairly rural.

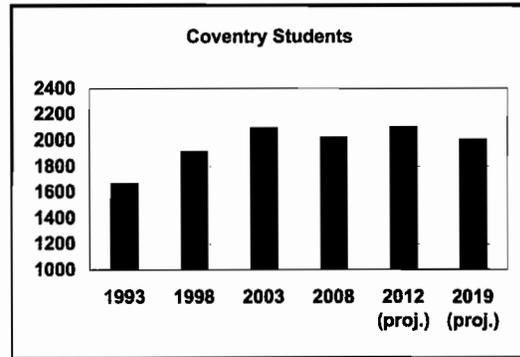
B. Households

Households in 2008 numbered 4,709, an increase of 30 percent since 1990. This compares with an average of 23 percent in the surrounding towns and for Tolland County, and an average of 8 percent for the state in total. The vast majority of households live in single-family units, most of those located on one acre or less.



C. Schools

Total school enrollment has increased 25 percent since 1993, but has decreased slightly for the past three years, and will not change significantly for the next 10 years.



D. Household Income

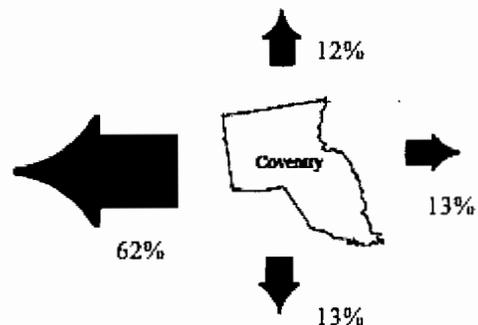
Household income for 2008 stands at \$80,175, a 72 percent increase from 1989, compared to an average increase of 61 percent for the surrounding towns, 63 percent for Tolland County, and 61 percent for the state in total. Coventry's 2008 household income is 9 percent above the county average and 19 percent above the state average.

E. Employment

Areas of employment have changed drastically since 1990. Agriculture has remained stable, construction has increased by 60 percent, manufacturing has decreased by 72 percent, transportation/utilities have increased by twofold, retail trade has increased by 17 percent, finance/insurance/real estate has increased by 360 percent, services have decreased by 14 percent and government has increased by 430 percent. The largest employers in town are the Board of Education, Sabrina Pools, Highland Market, Pelletier Builders and Teleflex.

F. Commuting

The adjacent sketch shows the percentage of those residents who commute out of town, and in which direction they travel. Commuters to the west include those to Manchester, East Hartford, Windsor and Hartford with the largest segment commuting to Hartford. Even with the recent improvements to Route 44 (left turn lanes), rush hour traffic is congested particularly at the Route 31 intersection in North Coventry Village and at the Bolton town line.



G. Age Composition

An analysis of age composition can be an effective tool for anticipating public facility and service needs. The following information illustrates that while Coventry's total population will increase modestly in the future, the age sectors will change more dramatically. Included with the various age sectors is a comment on the needs of those sectors which helps formulate municipal plans and strategies.

H. Age Related Data

<u>Description</u>	<u>Age Range</u>	<u>Needs</u>	<u>Percent of total 1990</u>	<u>Percent of total 2008</u>	<u>Projection</u>
Children	0-17	Child care, schools, recreation	25.5	24.0	Flat
Young Adults	18-24	Housing, jobs	9.2	7.0	Decreasing
Middle Age	25-49	Family programs, Trade-up homes	44.9	38.0	Increasing
Mature Adults	50-64	Smaller homes	12.7	21.0	Flat
Retired	65+	Tax relief, housing options, elderly care	8.1	10.0	Increasing

Sources:

Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC)

(<http://www.cerc.com/TownProfiles/county.asp?county=Tolland#Coventry>),

Connecticut Office of Policy & Management (OPM) Municipal Fiscal Indicators

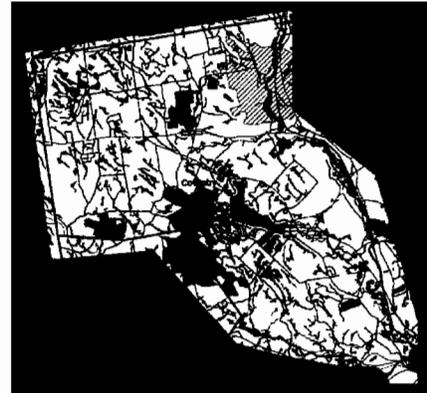
The Town of Coventry and the Board of Education



3 LAND USE

A. Existing Land Use (Refer to maps #1, #2 and #3)

The existing land use pattern of Coventry essentially reflects the Town's rural character. Much of the Town's 24,505 acres (~50 percent) is still undeveloped, as shown on the Table below. The 1978 Plan of Development found that approximately 70 percent of the Town was undeveloped, and in 1997 that figure was 61 percent.



B. Town of Coventry Land Use (by owner)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Residential	12,370	50.5	Parcels containing one or more residences (excludes Conservation easements- see Open Space)
Commercial	666	2.7	Includes utilities (96 acres)
Town Facility	995	4.1	Includes facilities, roads and rights-of-way (excludes parks- See Open Space)
Lakes/Ponds/Rivers	468	1.9	
Church/Societies	168	0.7	
Open Space	1,804	7.4	Includes conservation easements, Town owned, Town parks, Hale Forest, State/DEP & Joshua's Tract
Private Clubs	1,065	4.3	Sportsman's clubs, golf courses, Channel 3 Kids Camp
Farms	3,265	13.3	Active dairy, horse, etc., crop fields and woodlands
Vacant/Wooded	<u>3,704</u>	<u>15.1</u>	Vacant land contains no structures
TOTAL	24,505	100.0	

Although forests and farmlands still dominate the land area of Coventry, there are substantially developed areas throughout the Town. This is most evident in the area around Lake Wangumbaug, including Coventry Village along Main Street. The Village is Coventry's traditional "downtown." It is home to many of the Town's retail businesses, as well as some public and other institutions.

Approximately one-quarter of the Town's population lives around Lake Wangumbaug. Most homeowners in this area are members of associations that own and maintain some of the roads, beaches and other community facilities. Homes in the area were typically built as seasonal vacation cottages, but were subsequently converted to year-round dwellings. The density of development is relatively high, with many houses on lots of 5,000 square feet or less.

There is a smaller concentration of commercial and institutional uses in northern Coventry, around the intersection of Main Street (Route 31), Grant Hill Road and the Boston Turnpike (Route 44). The area contains several small shopping centers, free-standing commercial buildings, a school, a church and a fire station.

Smaller clusters of commercial uses are located at the intersection of Daly Road and Main Street; along the Boston Turnpike near the Bolton town line and near the intersection of Boston Turnpike, Bread & Milk Street (Route 31) and Swamp Road.

Residential development, aside from the Lake area, is generally distributed throughout the Town. The Pine Lake Shores community is a former vacation home community, largely converted to year-round residences, near Eagleville Lake. There are several newer residential subdivisions spread throughout the Town, reflecting recent growth.

In the early 1990's cluster subdivision regulations were adopted and in 1998 they were revised to include an open space provision which continues to serve the town well and are currently being updated based on recent experience.

C. Build-out Analysis- Residential

A build-out analysis was conducted for Coventry by the Green Valley Institute (GVI) in June of 2008. Based on current zoning regulations that limit lot size and building coverage and prohibit development in wetlands and steep slopes, a calculation was made regarding the maximum development possible. The data was obtained from the assessor's grand list and the parcel data from the Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping. The land use table above summarizes the data.

Combining the GIS data and U.S. Geological Survey soil mapping, GVI determined that 37.5 percent of the land in Coventry has some site limitations for development and 12.2 percent is within a wetland area. (Note: some of these areas were built upon before regulations were in place.)

Next a determination was made regarding the parcels that have the potential to be developed. Vacant parcels over two acres, without conservation easements or other protection could be developed. It was also assumed that a single structure on a parcel over five acres could be subdivided. All government owned lands were considered not available for future development.

Based on the above data, two calculations were made: If future lot size averaged 4.5 acres (2.2 acres buildable) an additional 2,329 homes could be built, a 49 percent increase; or if future lot size averaged 3 acres (1.5 acres buildable) an additional 3,417 homes could be built, a 72 percent increase.

Home building over the past two decades has grown approximately 0.93 percent per year. By that measure, a 49 percent increase would take about 45 years, and a 72 percent increase would occur in 60 years. This assumes all residences are single family. Should multi-family homes, mixed-use development or condominiums become more significant, the land would support more housing units.

The build-out analysis also makes some assumptions regarding revenues and expenses. If these growth rates come to fruition and there is no change in the commercial-to-residential ratio, and assuming no inflation nor any other changes other than directly affected by an increase in developed property, a twelve percent mill rate increase would be needed over ten years to maintain current services.

The 2007-08 cost of community services study calculated the cost of services provided relative to taxes paid for several land use categories. For every dollar paid in taxes, residential property uses \$1.06 in services; commercial property uses only 25 cents and open space/farm/vacant land uses only 25 cents in services.

D. Non-Residential Development Potential

The current zoning map allocates about 600 acres to commercial/retail development. About 50 percent of that land is not developed primarily in the areas of Route 6, Bread & Milk Street, Route 44 across from Highland Park Plaza and lower Main Street. With the assumption that two-thirds of that property has the soil and terrain for development, and assuming a suburban commercial floor area ratio (total building floor square footage divided by total site square footage) of .20 to .25, the potential exists for over two million square feet of new floor space.

Commercial/retail development in Coventry is limited by distance to limited-access highways, traffic count and little or no public water or sewer infrastructure. Currently, there is just over 400,000 square feet of commercial/retail development in town and it would seem feasible, based on the above data, that the town could support at least double the amount of current floor space, given that development retains its respect for the character and landscape of the town.

Development in the areas of existing water and sewer infrastructure will remain limited because of available land and sewer capacity. In areas without infrastructure, public water systems are logical and are encouraged by the State Department of Public Health. Community sewer treatment systems to support commercial development are an area that requires more study and possible regulation.

Commercial/Retail Land Use Summary

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Allowed Uses</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Village Gateway	Rt 31 & Rt 275	28	Offices & Services	Development potential north of the gas station and east of the Post Office
Village Center	Main Street, Teleflex to the Library	30	Offices, Services & Churches, Residential	Development potential primarily existing building re-use, Route 31 curve project planned 2012
Commercial	Main Street acr. from Town Hall	12	Business, services, educational, gov't & religious	Small parcel adjacent to town buildings
	South of Rt 44- Bolton Line	12		Nearly fully developed
	Route 6	110		Large parcel with potential for mixed use, Major challenge is crossing the Hop River
	Rt 44 & Bread & Milk St.	92		Some development adjacent to Rt 44, good potential north of Rt 44
	Rt 44 & Rt 31 South	195		Encompasses Highland Park Plaza, 2 pharmacies, food service, gas station, but much more potential.
Rural Development	Lower Main St.	46	Business, Manufacturing & Services	East side with no development, has had proposal for office park
	Bread & Milk St., North	58		Currently light industrial with good potential
Neighborhood Commercial	Rt 31 & Daly Rd.	6	Retail & Personal Services	Retail & food service, development will be re-use of existing sites
	Rt 31 & Depot Rd.	6		Limited development, potential west of Route 31
	Adj. Rt 195	10		No development at present
Professional Office	North of Rt 44 Bolton Line & adj Mark Dr.	11	Offices & Residential	Good potential for offices & services, and reuse of existing structures
		8		

4 CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL

Coventry's historical and cultural resources affect the potential for growth and are major contributions to the Town's quality of life. In addition, the remarkable views are a major contributor to rural character and are a significant factor that draws residents here. (Refer to map #4)



A. Archaeological Resources

According to the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History, archaeological resources in the Town of Coventry range from single artifacts to entire villages and span both the historic and prehistoric periods beginning as early as 10,000 years ago. They provide the primary sources of knowledge of the latter. Archaeological resources in Coventry are particularly important where Native American cultures prior to colonial settlement had no written history or records.

Archaeological sites are often fragile and not immediately apparent. Only a few sites have been inventoried. Special attention must therefore be given to ensure that archaeological resources are not needlessly damaged or destroyed by current land use activity. Not only must it be determined whether archaeological resources are known to exist on a project area, but the likelihood of their presence should be ascertained before an irreversible action is taken. If their presence is likely, more detailed investigations are then warranted to determine the extent and significance of the resources, the potential impact of the proposed project, and the appropriate mitigation measures.

There are numerous areas in Coventry that can be considered archaeologically sensitive. At this time there are 58 identified prehistoric sites. Many of the archaeological sites can be found along the Skungamaug River, Theims Brook adjacent to Hop River Road, Route 31 and Parker Bridge Road. Other locations are along North School Road, an unnamed brook south of Reed Brook (North Coventry), and along the Willimantic River. When one examines the map of known archaeological sites it is clear that over 50 percent of Coventry can be considered archaeologically sensitive. Due to the number of mills along rivers and streams in Coventry's historical past, there are sure to be undiscovered sites as the Town develops and expands.

Current subdivision zoning regulations require a developer to obtain a statement from the State archaeologist regarding potential damage to archaeological elements on their site. The Planning & Zoning Commission will determine the need to protect the site or excavate for artifacts before construction begins.

B. Historic Sites

Historic districts:

The Coventry Glass Factory, Boston Turnpike and North River Road, active 1815-1848.
South Coventry Historic District, South Coventry Village, 19th Century Mill Village.

Houses on the National Historic Register:

The Loomis-Pomeroy House, 1747 Boston Turnpike, built in 1810
The Brigham Tavern, 12 Boston Turnpike, built in 1778
The Capron-Phillips House, 1129 Main Street, built ca1864
Captain Nathan Hale Monument, 120 Lake Street, erected in 1846
The Hale Homestead, 2229 South Street, built in 1776
The Parker-Hutchinson Farm, 207 Parker Bridge Road
The Elias Sprague House, 2187 South Street, built in 1821
The Strong-Porter House, 2382 South Street, built in the 1730's

Historic Museums include the Hale Homestead owned by the Connecticut Landmarks Society, the Strong-Porter House and the Brick School House owned by the Coventry Historical Society, the Turner House owned by the Museum of Connecticut Glass, the 1876 Building (Main Street Visitors Center) and the Tracy Mill building, both owned by the town.

Mill Buildings exist on the mill brook in South Coventry including the Boynton Mill on Lake Street- now apartments built in 1815; the Tracy Mill on Main Street- town owned, built ca1890; the National Silk Factory and the Kingsbury Box Shop- privately owned, built ca1870 on Mason Street; the old Washington Mill building- now town storage, built ca1890 on Bradbury Lane; and the Kenyon Mill, built ca1864, recently redeveloped as Kenyon Falls condos on Armstrong Road.

More than 250 houses were built in town before 1900, with a fair number erected in the 1700's. While they have no formal preservation controls, many are owned by families wishing to maintain their historical character. This large number of homes also creates part of the character of the town and its neighborhoods.

While regulations to limit or prohibit the deterioration or destruction of any of these old structures are not practical, design guidelines exist for development in South Coventry Village and are being prepared for selected sites on Route 44 from the Bolton town line to the intersection of Main Street. These design guidelines apply to commercial development, and residential owners are urged to consider their impact on all structures.



Like many New England towns, Coventry has many enduring stone features that add to the character of the town. They include bridges (Mill Brook under Main Street), dams (Teleflex, Woods Lane, Depot Road), foundations, root cellars and many miles of stone walls. The town wishes to recognize and preserve these features and to protect them from development impacts over the long term.

Goal: Maintain and improve those aspects of community development important to the quality of life.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Protect the Town's historically and architecturally significant structures and sites, and areas of unique natural beauty through acquisition, land development controls, and other preservation techniques. Include the use of historic signage. [Planning & Zoning, Conservation Commission, Coventry Historical Society and Land Use staff]
2. Improve the overall appearance and safety of the Town's business areas through the use of graphic symbols, planting of indigenous trees and shrubs, installing sidewalks, non-obtrusive lighting and street furniture, the improvement of public safety, and the provision of other amenities that will make these areas more desirable for pedestrians and shoppers. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission, Town Council and Land Use staff]
3. Improve the gateway entrances into the Town, particularly at the Route 44 Bolton town line. [Planning & Zoning and Public Works]
4. Provide for periodic meetings among the Historical Society, the Village Improvement Society and the Conservation and Economic Development Commissions to discuss common issues related to historic preservation. [Town Council, Town Manager]





5 ENVIRONMENTAL AND OPEN SPACE

Preservation and protection of natural resources and the environment continues to be of prime importance. The quality of ground and surface water, prime agricultural soils, wildlife habitats and unfragmented forest land are necessary for the health of our entire ecosystem. The careful acquisition of open space helps keep a stable mill rate. These elements are a major contributor to the quality of life of the town. (Refer to maps #5, #6 and #7)

A. Lake Wangumbaug Today

Moderate to high density residential development occupies 40 percent of the Lake's drainage area. However, several natural features of the lake-watershed ecosystem make Lake Wangumbaug somewhat resistant to processes where excess nutrients stimulate excessive plant growth. The following are rather unique, "healthy attributes" of the Coventry Lake ecosystem:



1. The area which drains to the lake ("watershed") is small when compared to the large, deep lake. This means that the lake does not need to process a large mass of additional watershed organic matter that would result in oxygen demand.
2. The mean depth and surface area of the lake are large compared to the drainage area. This gives Coventry Lake a "clear water" tendency.
3. The shape of the lake basin results in a small sediment-contact area at the depth where water remains cold in summer. The lake is also oriented such that wind mixing is strong compared to lakes of similar size. These features are beneficial to the aquatic life in the lake.

B. Lake Wangumbaug Threats

Wastewater, stormwater, sedimentation, and road runoff impacts have been quantified and indicate that Coventry Lake is a healthy ecosystem that has the characteristics of a high quality water resource with a moderate amount of dissolved nutrients. All physical, chemical, and biological evidence indicates that if Coventry Lake has an increase in spring phosphorus level, its resource quality will decline. Restoration at that time would be costly, so preservation of the existing condition is desirable through preventative maintenance, primarily in the limitation or elimination of phosphorous from lawn fertilizers.

Other data shows that water clarity has decreased somewhat since 2000, and oxygen loss has continued which could stimulate blue-green algae growth. Zooplankton (which consume algae) population has decreased somewhat, though not alarmingly. Algae abundance has increased over time, but the general condition of the lake remains stable with relatively low phosphorous and a good iron content.

Recent surveys have indicated small amounts of invasive species (curly pondweed and milfoil) in the lake which must be monitored closely. Steps to eliminate them should be considered and the public should be educated as to the source of these plants and their potential negative effects on the lake.

Although the drainage basin is small, it is also steep and the watercourse length is short. This results in a rapid runoff of rainfall which tends to make stable lake level management difficult.

C. Open Space

Coventry defines open space as land that is preserved, protected and may have use restrictions for any of the following purposes:

1. Maintains or enhances the conservation of natural, scenic, cultural and historic resources.
2. Protects wetlands/watercourses and other bodies of water.
3. Protects water supply sources.
4. Promotes the conservation of soils and prime farmland.
5. Enhances the public value of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, natural reservations and sanctuaries, and/or other open space.
6. Enhances public recreation opportunities.
7. Preserves historic and/or culturally significant sites.
8. Assists in the promotion of orderly growth and development.

There is other undeveloped land nominally considered open space that is not protected from development and includes sportsmen's clubs, camps, golf courses, farms, forests and vacant tracts. They remain a primary focus for preservation and formal protection.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Connecticut is the 4th most densely populated state in the country. An increase in sprawl development patterns threatens water supplies, wildlife habitat, agricultural lands, historic resources, and the quality of life for urban and rural communities. In response, Connecticut's citizens have accelerated their efforts to preserve remaining open space.



Connecticut is among the 12 states with the highest rate of land conversion to urban/suburban. The state is losing approximately 10,000 acres of farmland a year, a rate exceeding most other states. Connecticut has made progress in preserving open space and working lands. The state has set a goal to preserve 21 percent of the state's land as open space by 2023. In addition, they have a goal of protecting 130,000 acres of working agricultural lands.

In Coventry, over 500 acres of land have been dedicated as open space by direct conveyance or easement in thirty-six subdivisions since 1990. Seventy-five percent of that has occurred since November of 1999 when Open Space Subdivision regulations were adopted.



After eight years of experience with these regulations, the Planning & Zoning Commission recently adopted new subdivision regulations that consider building siting and open space dedication more from a natural resource perspective. This will enhance open space initiatives and provide better regulation both from the developer's and the town's standpoint. The Commission should monitor these regulations over the coming years to assess their use and effectiveness.

D. Open Space Plan

The Conservation Commission has developed an Open Space Plan for Coventry (Included in the Appendix). A very accurate map has been prepared that delineates all open space in town (public and private) and it will serve as a baseline. The primary function of the plan is to distinguish and identify areas that merit various levels of long term protection, and suggest appropriate methods to acquire and designate open space. It will serve as an educational tool and a guide for municipal organizations and private land owners.

Nine percent (~2,200 acres) of Coventry's total land area (24,505 acres) is presently protected open space. This Plan recognizes farmland, forest, lakes and rivers as the prime candidates for protection and preservation. Opportunities for additional protected open space include: about 1,000 acres owned by sportsmen's clubs (i.e. Manchester Coon & Fox Club and Manchester Sportsmens Association) and the Channel 3 Kids Camp, aka Times Farm Camp, about 500 acres of undeveloped state-owned land, over 1,000 acres of land designated as farmland, but having unused wooded areas, and several thousand acres of privately owned residentially zoned land, some of which may be subject to open space subdivision mechanisms or other protection.

With consideration of the opportunities above, a significant increase in protected open space is possible consistent with the community's goals. Much of this land is adjacent or near to one of our rivers, and being designated as open space will help protect our surface

and ground water. Unfragmented forest land is another important component. For the following reasons open space acquisition is a key element in future planning: Combining the desire of residents to maintain and protect our rural character, the need to protect natural resources, particular water and forest related, and the fact that open space will mitigate service and revenue demands.

E. Protecting Natural Resources

The Conservation Commission, the Inland Wetlands Commission and the Planning & Zoning Commission have regulations and review procedures that cover the maintenance and preservation of our local natural resources. Many of their activities are directed by the State Department of Environmental Protection.

Current zoning regulations require the identification of land contours, easements, wetlands, watercourses, wooded areas, stone walls, open space, flood zones, public or private water supplies etc. They also require hydraulic studies, an erosion and sedimentation control plan, consideration of passive solar techniques, archaeological evidence studies, environmental assessments and protection of historic resources that can be used to modify the site design.

The Coventry Town Council, in 2008, created the Conservation Corps. The Corps is composed of volunteers who monitor town owned open space. Corps members are assigned in groups of two or more, to walk properties at least four times a year to observe and report the status of the property to an appropriate town official.

Goals:

1. Provide adequate protection and preservation of the town's natural resources while providing open space along with recreational opportunities for all town residents.
2. Formally protect a minimum of 20 percent of the town's land area as open space. Consider as high priorities: farm soils, river aquifers and unfragmented forest. Strive to make open space land contiguous.
3. Protect the water quality of Lake Wangumbaug.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Protect the surface and groundwater resources in town with ongoing efforts to limit waste water, stormwater, sedimentation and road runoff. [Inland Wetlands, Planning & Zoning, Water Pollution Control Authority and Land Use staff]
2. Minimize or eliminate phosphorus runoff and the incursion of invasive species to Lake Wangumbaug. Educate the public regarding the potential negative impacts of these conditions. [Inland Wetlands, Conservation Commission and Land Use staff]

Consider:

- Monitoring the boat launches (public & private) to prevent the transfer of invasive species.
 - Limiting phosphorous-containing fertilizers in the lake watershed.
 - The formation of a Consolidated Lake Authority to address the above-mentioned issues.
3. Protect and conserve prime farmland soils, productive woodlands soils and large, unfragmented forest blocks, notable wildlife or plant life and fisheries habitat, streambelts composed of watercourses, inland wetlands and other associated riparian habitat components, and scenic views and vistas, through a range of preservation techniques, as identified in the Conservation Commission's Open Space Plan.
 4. Educate the property owners on the options to protect open space including conservation easements, outright conveyance of ownership, cash payment to the town instead of property conveyance, Transfer of Development Rights, tax incentives and Public Act 490 protection. [Conservation Commission, Planning & Zoning and Land Use staff]
 5. For developed areas, pay particular attention to water runoff from impervious surfaces and encourage natural drainage systems for new and modified developments such as vegetative filters and porous surfaces. Encourage proper septic/sewer maintenance.
 6. Maintain and increase interconnected, linear open spaces, greenways, trails and wildlife corridors, and when appropriate, link with other town, regional or state greenways.
 7. Utilize the Open Space Plan to guide town land acquisition strategies and acquire more open space and coordinate the plan with recreational needs as expressed in the Parks & Recreation section. [Conservation Commission, Town Council, Land Use staff]
 8. Continue monitoring and improving our natural resource based subdivision regulations. [Planning & Zoning, Conservation Commission and Land use staff]
 9. Promote the "greening" of the Town by installing and maintaining landscaping such as trees and shrubs along streets and other public rights-of-way and in public open spaces, and by requiring landscaping in new private developments using plants indigenous to the area. [Planning & Zoning and land Use staff]
 10. Consider strategies to reduce tree clearing, minimize grading and maintaining existing vegetation for new or modified developments, and promote, to the maximum extent possible, the underground installation of utility services for all new major residential projects, commercial and industrial development. [Planning & Zoning and Land Use staff]
 11. Cooperate with federal and state agencies to upgrade and maintain the air quality of the Town and encourage energy conservation and the use of alternate energy sources.

F. Vistas

Vistas are a key element in Coventry's rural character and are always there to be enjoyed by residents and visitors. Saving these vistas is an integral part of development plans. The Coventry Historical Society has prepared a list of significant vistas presented here.



1. Giglio Property- Route 44 at the Bolton line looking south.
2. Bread & Milk Street- Looking north from Route 44 to Zeya Drive.
3. Route 44- Looking east from Perrachio's farm to Main Street.
4. Silver Street- Looking south from Route 44 to South Street.
5. South Street #1- Looking west from Silver Street.
6. South Street #2- Looking West from the Hale homestead.
7. South Street #3- Looking Southeast from the old Huntington house.
8. Crossen Property- Looking southwest from South Street & Bunker Hill Road.
9. Hop River- Looking southeast from Bunker Hill Road to the Hop River.
10. Flanders Road- Looking southeast from Plains Road to the Willimantic River.
11. Pucker Street- Looking southeast from South Street to the Hop River.
12. Parker Bridge Road- Looking south from Bunker Hill Road to the Hop River.
13. South River Road- Looking south from Route 31 along the Skungamaug River.
14. Town Green- Looking west from the Town Green over Lake Wangumbaug.
15. Stonehouse Road- Looking northeast from the "Stonehouse" to the Eagleville dam.
16. Brigham Tavern Road- Looking north from Route 44 along the Willimantic River.
17. Brigham Road- Looking east from Lewis Hill Road to the Willimantic River.
18. Broadway- Looking east from Hannah Drive to the Skungamaug River.
19. Cassidy Hill Road- Looking east from the Cassidy Hill Winery
20. South Village- Looking northwest from Depot Road to Lake Wangumbaug including Main Street and the Mill Brook.

6 AGRICULTURE

Agriculture has become a prominent issue from a land use, economic and quality of life viewpoint. For decades, communities have been concerned about the loss of farmland for development. The State and municipalities have instituted various programs to preserve farmland with limited success. Coventry was one of the first towns in the state to offer tax relief for farmland. (Refer to map #8.)



A significant issue is the economic viability of the relatively small farms in Connecticut that sometimes results in the need to sell for development. In addition, with the recent globalization of food sources, concerns have been raised about the quality and safety of food acquired from sources that have little oversight, and the transportation costs in delivering that food.

A. Benefits of Agriculture

The benefits of local agriculture include:

- The preservation and creation of jobs
- Respectful land use and preservation
- Maintenance of the town's rural character
- Fresh and safe food growing and production
- Land use that uses less in municipal services than it pays in taxes
- Opportunities for unique recreation and education activities

Farm related commercial opportunities in town are typified by the Coventry Regional Farmers Market, roadside stands, pumpkin patch rides, hobby farms, corn mazes, horseback riding, Christmas tree cutting, wine production, farm educational tours and others. There has been a recent resurgence of horse stables and pastures and some suggestion of creating horse riding trails on public land.

Coventry has a variety of agricultural and livestock entities including dairy, hay and vegetables, horses, llamas, goats, herbs, Christmas tree farms, a winery, etc. With the recent success of the Farmers Market, the community has taken advantage of and benefited from locally grown foods and have appreciated the recreational and social benefits of attending and supporting the farmers market.

Goal: Preserve farmland and support farming activity, both crops and livestock, for their economic benefits and their educational/recreational opportunities.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Promote the farm assessment program (PA 490) to assist farmers with maintaining their agricultural land use. [Conservation Commission, Land use staff, Town Assessor]
2. Consider establishing a municipal or public/private program for purchase of farm development rights. [Town Council, Town Staff, Conservation Commission]
3. Encourage local farmers to collectively apply for the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program and assist them in submitting applications where necessary. Additionally, the Connecticut Farmland Trust offers expertise to preserving farmland. [Conservation Commission, Town Council, Town Staff]
4. Monitor the effects of the Commercial/Agriculture Zone and modify, if necessary, to assist farmland preservation. [Planning & Zoning and Land use staff]
5. Create educational and other farm friendly activities to support agriculture. (Conservation and Economic Development Commissions, Land use staff]
6. Encourage the use of Community Supported Agriculture programs.

7. Continue the sponsorship and support of the Coventry Regional Farmers Market, particularly as it relates to local farming opportunities and look for opportunities to strengthen and expand the market. [Economic Development Commission, Town Manager and Staff, Town Council]



8. Consider the recent popularity of horse stables/farms and pastures and collectively find ways to encourage or expand horse related activities. [Planning & Zoning, Conservation Commission, Town Staff]

9. Task the Conservation and Economic Development Commissions with establishing a goal for agricultural land preservation and monitoring agricultural land use in Town. [Conservation and Economic Development Commissions and Land Use staff]

10. Encourage and support the formation of an Agricultural Commission that will establish and maintain an open line of communication between the Town and the agricultural community. [Planning & Zoning, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission and Town Council]

7 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

A. Municipal Facilities - General

Goal: Continue to provide existing municipal services facilities and programs to best serve citizens' needs and expectations, and encourage their use. Retrofit existing facilities to reduce energy usage.



Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Coordinate the nature and location of public facilities with demographic variations from one section of the town to another.
2. Explore alternative uses of educational facilities during non-school hours. [Board of Education and Town Manager]
3. Complete the planning and construction of a replacement Public Works facility. [Town Council and Public Works]
4. Prior to the future development of all types of land uses, consider the feasibility of public/private partnerships to provide infrastructure, etc. consistent with other policies in this plan and with other governmental agencies such as the WPCA.
5. Plan capital improvements on the basis of a priority system carefully related to the needs of the community and fully integrated with the Plan of Conservation and Development.
6. Upgrade or replace Town facilities and parks to provide handicapped accessibility, energy efficiency, environmentally sound and efficient public use. [Town Staff, Town Council]
7. Acquire land for future unanticipated needs. [Town Council, Town Manager]

B. Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Commission was formed in the mid 1950's to develop and supervise recreational activities for the community. The Commission carefully interprets public opinion in deciding how it will best serve Coventry residents. The Parks and Recreation Department fosters active lifestyles, social well-being, and environmental stewardship.

The Department is responsible for the administration of all town-sponsored recreation activities and facilities, including the management and planning for town parks and recreational facilities. It also provides essential community benefits, including:

- Healthier residents. Physically active adults and children are less prone to obesity, diabetes, heart disease and depression.
- A wide range of free and low cost opportunities to experience the outdoors, engage in exercise and to interact socially.
- A sense of well-being and community spirit.
- Safer neighborhoods and a higher quality of life.
- Increased property values and economic development. Parks offer the perfect venue for community and regional events- tournaments, concerts, exhibitions, food festivals- that draw visitors and new dollars into our backyard.
- Respect for Nature. Spending time outside reminds us of our unique place in the world. Air, water and land are our greatest natural treasures. Conserving and enjoying green spaces and waterways for the generations to come is crucial.

Goals:

1. Provide quality recreational opportunities for all town residents and strengthen the community image and sense of place.
2. Preserve and promote those factors that help define the Town of Coventry as a unique community and creating an inviting, accessible and safe family atmosphere.
3. Provide quality opportunities by encouraging positive youth development, the inclusion of special populations, and promoting healthy lifestyles, enrichment & lifelong learning opportunities for adults.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Coordinate recreational needs with the Open Space Plan. [Parks & Recreation]
2. Explore the possibility of establishing bikeways and walking/hiking trails in this town and connecting, where appropriate, to the growing regional network of recreational greenways. [Parks & Recreation, Conservation Commission, Town Staff and Public Works]
3. Improve existing recreational programs and expand their coordination with existing semi-public recreational facilities. [Parks & Recreation]

4. Provide a well rounded recreational program for all age groups. [Parks & Recreation]

5. Complete the study (Milone & MacBroom consultants) of recreational opportunities for the town property in and around the old landfill and the Miller-Richardson Field. [Parks & Recreation, Land use staff, Public Works, Town Manager]

Coventry Parks

Neighborhood Parks:

Windswept Farms

School Parks:

Robertson Intermediate School

Coventry Grammar School

Captain Nathan Hale Middle School

Coventry High School

Community Parks:

Miller-Richardson Field- 6.3 acres

Laidlaw Park - 37.3 acres

Camp Creaser - 54 acres

Patriots Park- 17.5 acres

Lisicke Beach - 2 acres

Total: 170.5 acres

Trails and Sidewalks

Millbrook Greenway/Boat launch to Mason Street trail, proposed to be continued along Millbrook to Willimantic River. Also Millbrook Park trail development on Wall Street.

Riverview Park Trail- Merrow Road/Riverview Drive- inter-municipal trail system along Willimantic River frontage and part of the Willimantic River Greenway.

Hop River Trail (Rails to Trails)- Inter-municipal trail system linking towns along the former railway bed as part of the East Coast Greenway from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida.

Patriot's Park Forest & Trail- The hiking trail is an adjunct to the Cross Street/South Street sidewalk system.

South Street/Cross Street sidewalk system- Provides pedestrian friendly access over southern and most of western shore around Coventry Lake.

Coventry has a number of horse farms/stables and some of the owners have expressed an interest in developing a horse-riding trail system in town. This opportunity will be further explored.

Goals:

1. Develop an interconnected system of trails that serve transportation and recreational needs and accommodate a variety of skill levels.

2. Guide implementation by developers, public agencies and others.

3. Increase the number of trips made by foot and bicycle for both transportation and recreation.
4. Make pedestrian use and bicycling safer and more convenient for residents and visitors.

* * * * *

C. Fire Protection



The Coventry Volunteer Fire Association (CVFA) was founded as a private corporation in 1936. The original fire station was located at 1216 Main Street across from the Bidwell tavern. The department occupied this station for 64 years. In May of 1999, a new station located across the street from the Town hall was officially dedicated. A substation is located on the corner of South Street and Judd Road.

As a private corporation, CVFA contracts fire and emergency medical services to the Town and receives funding for the fire portion of its budget. The EMS portion comes entirely from a revenue recovery program. CVFA provides ambulance service for the entire town.

The North Coventry Fire Department was established in 1947 and provides primary fire protection to the northern portion of Town and rescue services to the entire Town. The department has two stations. The main station, built in 1950 and enlarged in 1955, is located at the corner of Main Street and Wrights Mill Road and a substation is located on Merrow Road at Laidlaw Park.

An earlier needs assessment report conducted by Patrizz Associates in late 1995 stated that the Coventry Volunteer Fire Association building was inadequate and in need of replacement. A new main station located on Main Street and a sub-station located on South Street were constructed to address this issue. This same report addressed the North Coventry fire departments current buildings and stated that they were at capacity with limited storage and office space available. The report also stated that a combined fire protection service would reduce operation costs to the town and the recommendation was that the two fire associations form a study committee to investigate this matter.

A study conducted by the Matrix Consulting group in early 2008 determined that the North Coventry fire station was inadequate and recommended the town work with the fire company to develop plans for a new or upgraded facility. The Matrix report also recommended hiring a town employee to oversee the budget and operational expenses and represent the town in negotiations, establishing operational requirements as well as suggesting that a merger of the two Companies be investigated.

The Departments have identified and labeled 26 water sources (fire ponds) around Town to provide more accessible water sources. Two more are planned. Depending on location, these features may lower the cost of homeowners insurance.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. The existing building committee and the Town Council work to provide proper and adequate facilities for the North Coventry Fire Department and continue to investigate the possible merger of the two companies. [Fire Departments, Town Council & Manager]

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D. Police Protection

The Coventry Police Department was organized on August 25, 1965 and was housed in the basement of Town Hall. Today, the police department is located in its own separate facility on Main Street that was opened in 2006. The new station provides a safe, more efficient and professional atmosphere to administer law enforcement services.



The department consists of fourteen sworn officers (including the chief), three full time dispatchers, an administrative assistant, and a community service officer. Part time dispatchers are employed on the weekends and holidays and a Lake patrol officer is employed on most weekends during the boating season. One officer, assigned as a detective, conducts follow-up on more serious or time consuming criminal cases.

The dispatch center operates 24 hours a day to dispatch police officers to calls for service as well to provide records, permits, and other services to the public. The center also acts as an after-hours point of contact for other town agencies.

The department continues to look for ways to improve and professionalize its service to the community. It has recently become accredited through the State of Connecticut POST Council, and is in the process of preparing for national accreditation through CALEA. A variety of services are now available online through the department's website.

Goals:

1. Ensure that staffing levels of department accurately reflect activity levels and demands for service. Evaluate the rank structure to facilitate more efficient use of personnel.

2. Continue to investigate technology that would enhance delivery of services and increase efficiency.
3. Investigate and consider service sharing agreements with surrounding communities without municipal police departments. These agreements grant sworn law enforcement officers from other jurisdictions the authority to make misdemeanor arrests, issue summonses and infractions in the jurisdictions entering into the agreement. Exploring the feasibility of these options should take place within the next four years.
4. Evaluate becoming an authorized Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) and institute combined dispatch for police, fire and EMS within the next four years.
5. Receive CALEA (Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act) Accreditation within three years.

* * * * *

E. Schools

Existing Facilities



Currently the town has four schools located on three sites. Coventry High School (grades 9 - 12) shares a facility with the Capt. Nathan Hale School (grades 5 - 8). This shared facility is located on a 99-acre site in the south central portion of Town. This site is shared with the Town Hall and the school Administration Building. The Administration Building is a new addition to town, with its completion in

1999. Coventry High School has a current enrollment (2009-2010) of 567 students and the Capt. Nathan Hale School current enrollment is 479 students.

The Town has two elementary schools. The Coventry Grammar School (grades K - 2) is located on a 21-acre site in the northern part of Town and has a current enrollment of 413 students. The George H. Robertson School (grades 3 - 5) is located on a 20-acre site in the southern part of Town and has a current enrollment of 439 students.

Total enrollment as of September 2009 is 1,927. There are 137 students attending other schools.

Projected School Enrollments

Projected enrollments for the next ten years show the following trends:

1. Grades K - 2 Enrollment should increase by at least 65 students.
2. Grades 3 - 5 Enrollment will not change significantly.
3. Grades 6 - 8 Enrollment is projected to decline to 422 students by 2013-14, but will regain students to an enrollment of 465 in 2018-19.
4. Grades 9 - 12 Enrollments will grow to 702 in 2011-12, but will drop back to about 571 by 2018-19.

Projected Facility and Site Requirements

In April 2008, a Preschool Facility Feasibility Study was done and presented to both the Coventry Board of Education and the Coventry Town Council. Recommendations were made to provide a 13,020 square-foot building, which would house up to 120 preschool children. At the time this Plan was prepared, no decisions had been made.

Recommendations:

The Board of Education should develop a plan for facilities for a public pre-school program and consider the possibility of State mandated full-time kindergarten. They should also prepare a facility capital improvement plan for such items as roof replacements and the like.

* * * * *

F. Human Services

Goal: Provide the necessary human services and educational opportunities to Coventry residents.

Recommendations- (All actions are the responsibility of the Human Services Department)

1. Encourage the provision of services such as child and adult day care, and public transportation for all who need such services to allow them to enter and remain in the job market.
2. Encourage adult education, which can expand/upgrade general knowledge, vocational skills and cultural endeavors at times and locations that are easily accessible to potential enrollees.
3. Encourage programs of education in health care, housing care and maintenance, personal growth, and other "non-academic" subjects for all town residents.

4. Encourage the establishment of programs and facilities which address the Town's needy and homeless families and individuals.

5. Make social services available at the local neighborhood level, whenever possible, on a comprehensive and coordinated basis. Provide necessary health care education and service options.

* * * * *

G. Public Works

The Coventry public works garage is located on a 1.8-acre site at 46 Bradbury Lane in Coventry Village. The building contains 10,430 square feet with a mezzanine of 1,860 square feet. It was an old industrial building built in the late 1940's and purchased by the town in July 1983 for the public works facility. Adjacent is a very old mill one-story mill building of approximately 1,500 used for cold storage. The Mill Brook runs under this building. The site also holds a new, large salt shed, steel framed and fabric covered.

The main building contains areas used for offices, maintenance and vehicles storage. All indoor maintenance activities are done here including maintenance of all Town vehicles. The building cannot hold all the public works equipment and some is stored outside or offsite. The maintenance area does not have a water separator that is needed for the steam cleaning of the vehicles. Therefore, this must be done outdoors which could lead to pollution of surface or groundwater.

In addition to the constraints of the site and how it relates to the immediate neighborhood, the location is also problematic to the efficient operation of the Public Works Department. Coventry is a large community covering over 38 square miles; some areas of Town are relatively long distances from other areas of Town. The garage's location in the southern end of the Town is a twenty minute drive from some areas of northern Coventry. This makes it more difficult and time consuming to dispatch crews and equipment to perform services such as plowing snow to these areas. Generally, a facility such as a public works garage should be located central to the area served.

In September of 1996 a public works facility report was completed by the consulting firm of Fuss & O'Neill Inc., and it recommended no additions be made to the building, and that the best interests of the town would be served by constructing a new facility of 18,000 square feet on a new site. No substantial actions have been taken since then and the nearly 60-year-old building has deteriorated over time. The public works staff continues to perform repairs to the building and its systems with some modifications to the structure itself to maintain its integrity.

In January of 2009, Silva Engineering LLC completed a structural assessment of the building. It found significant problems with cracks and voids, rust, bent support columns, ponding on the roof, etc. They concluded that substantial retrofit will be required simply to maintain the building which today is inadequate in terms of space and safety.

The existing public works garage does not serve the Town in an efficient manner, as it is too small to properly store and maintain Town equipment and insure the safety of the employees. By its nature, the impact on neighboring residential uses and its continued presence at that location could inhibit efforts to revitalize Coventry Village. The 1990 Preservation Plan for Coventry Village indicated that the public works garage is not compatible with its surroundings and recommended its removal from the site.

The Town has purchased a parcel of land southwest of Fern Road, advantageously very near the geographic center of Town. Plans are in place to clear the site, provide access from Main Street and construct a new salt shed there. Funds have been allocated to accomplish this. Architectural plans have been prepared for a new, steel-framed public works facility to be constructed on this site, and construction will begin once funds are acquired.

The Land Use Office and the Conservation Commission continue to support and administer the Adopt-A-Road project. This volunteer effort involves residents “adopting” all or a portion of a Town road and collecting roadside trash and debris to improve the environment as well as the aesthetics of the Town. Free standard trash bags and disposal are offered for participants.

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H. Town Hall

The existing Town Hall was built in 1964. With the Police Department move to a separate building and the addition of the Annex for meeting space, the immediate space needs of the Town Hall were addressed. Significant renovations of the mechanical systems and security system are still required as well as improvements to the building’s energy efficiency. While not fully code complaint, most ADA issues have been addressed. Long term the need for larger meeting space to accommodate larger Council and Planning & Zoning Commission meetings will need to be addressed. Solutions could include an ell-wing addition of meeting space off the rear entrance or enlargement of the Town Hall Annex. A room capable of holding 125 people is envisioned.

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I. Water Pollution Control Authority

In 1973, the Town Council created a sewer commission designated as the Sewer Authority in accordance with the provisions of the Chapter 103, General Status of Connecticut, 1958 Revision. The Sewer Authority was succeeded by the Water Pollution Control Authority, (WPCA), on March 17, 1980 under Section 7-246, Connecticut General Statutes, and Town of Coventry Ordinance No. 134. The WPCA is responsible for the Operation and Maintenance of the Water Pollution Control Facility and associated Collection System.

The purpose of the WPCA is to prepare and periodically update a water pollution control plan for the Town of Coventry. The plan designates and delineates the boundary areas:

- Served by any municipal sewerage system
- Where municipal sewage facilities are planned and the schedule of Design and construction anticipated.
- Where sewers are to be avoided.
- Served by any community sewage system not owned by the municipality
- To be served by any proposed community sewage system not owned by a municipality.

Sewer System- Original Orders

The Department of Environmental Protection found that a community pollution problem existed in the Town of Coventry at Waterfront Manor and Lakeview Terrace and issued an order on February 20, 1971 to: "Construct sewerage facilities within the Town of Coventry consistent with the recommendation of the report on the Sewerage System- Coventry, Connecticut, prepared for the Coventry Town Council by Cahn Engineers, Inc, and Griswold Engineering, Inc. dated January, 1971."

The design and construction, and startup of the sewerage system encompassed 1982-1987. The system was installed to abate pollution by providing wastewater disposal for densely developed properties which could not meet their needs by continued use of on-site subsurface disposal. A limited sewer system was designed to serve 310 properties and avoid induced growth within the Coventry Lake Basin. The sewers were planned to allow future service to certain identified additional areas (e.g. the Westerly Lake area) should off-site sewage disposal become necessary. The sewers were also planned to support "revitalization" of the Village area and to serve the industrially zoned area in the vicinity of Route 31 and South Street Extension in the future.

Sewage System- Geographical Identification

The Wastewater Treatment Facility is located at 394 Main Street. The associated lateral collection system encompasses Lakeview Terrace, Waterfront Manor, South Coventry Village, Main Street from Route 275 to the High School, Lakewood Heights, Gerald Park, Waterfront Park, Bellevue Association, Oak Grove Association and Standish Shores.

A significant expansion to the sewer system was completed in 2008. It encompassed many of the properties in close proximity to the Lake. There are now 85,000 feet of sewer pipe (45,000 added recently). There are about 1,000 properties in the service area and about 240 homes are not yet connected. Once all connections are made, the treatment facility will be near 90 percent capacity.

Sewer System Future Plans

Future sewer service areas anticipated in the facility plan include the Upper Oak Grove, Cheney Lane, Hemlock Point and Waterfront Heights. Currently developed areas on the

eastern side of Lake Wangumbaug and the industrial zoned area on Route 31 near the treatment plant are considered high priority areas by the WPCA. Community Treatment Systems will be considered by the WPCA to correct septic problem areas where they may develop.

The Authority should consider sewer plant expansion and/or connecting to another town's sewer system within the next ten years. Connecting to Bolton's planned sewer system to resolve existing septic issues on Route 44 at the Bolton line should be explored. A community septic system or a "package plant" should be considered for the Route 44/Main Street area.

Solid Waste Management

The Town Council established a Solid Waste Study Committee in 1981, to study the possibility of the Town participating in the Windham Energy Recovery Facility (WERF) Project, a trash to energy plant in nearby Windham. In 1988, the Committee formally recommended not to participate in the WERF Project and to continue use of the Town's landfill.

The Committee was dissolved in June 1993 when the Town decided to close the landfill. It was replaced by the Coventry Municipal Resource Recovery Authority (COVRRRA) in order to satisfy new state regulations and mandates regarding solid waste and recycling initiatives. The Authority receives advice from the Conservation Commission and Department of Public Works on day-to-day operations relative to recycling education and initiatives and the "pay-per-bag" trash disposal system.

COVRRRA functions to meet the regulatory requirements and mandates of the Connecticut General Statutes relative to the regulation and control of solid wastes and recycling programs. Under State Law, the Town is responsible to provide for the disposal of solid waste generated by its residents and businesses located in the Town. Although not mandated by the State, COVRRRA also encourages towns to recycle plastic, waste antifreeze, tires, brush, magazines and junk mail.

A Regional Hazardous Waste Center, located in Willington, began operation in the spring of 1994, under the general supervision of Mid-NEROC. The communities that are members of Mid-NEROC share in having a common drop-off place for residents to dispose of household chemical hazardous and other hazardous wastes.

The Town has been recycling for some time and is currently in compliance with State recycling requirements. The town has one of the highest recycling amounts in the area. In the Spring of 1994, an agreement was signed between the Town of Coventry and the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority (CRRA) located in Hartford to incinerate the Town's Solid Waste. This contract will expire in 2012 and the town will be analyzing all options for continued recycling and waste disposal.

In November of 1994, the Town opened a residential recycling drop-off facility on the site of the old landfill to provide residents with disposal options for material not covered by contract with the Town's contractor. The facility was constructed using a State of Connecticut Grant administered through Mid-NEROC. The facility is permitted by the CT DEP to receive construction debris, metal, tires, electronics, CFC's, leaves, cardboard and empty propane tanks.

Household Chemical Hazardous Waste is also an area where public education needs to be emphasized. Education can also serve to point out alternative nonhazardous substitutes for problem substances. An education program can help people to identify hazardous materials that they already have stored in their garage, basement, or barn. If upon identifying a material as being hazardous, and the resident wishes to properly dispose of it, the Town can direct the resident to the Household Chemical Waste Drop-off Facility located in the Town of Willington.

Future Development

As indicated in the forgoing, the Town is currently approaching recycling on a "regional" basis through Mid-NEROC. It appears that the Mid-NEROC Region will continue to be a viable way to handle both the marketing of recyclables and dealing with future State recycling regulations. Recycling will continue to be an important link to reducing the waste stream. Future legislation is expected to mandate elimination of wasteful packaging and encourage the use of recyclable packaging materials.

It is also expected that in the future there will be both voluntary and legislated programs to reduce the amount of household hazardous chemical waste generated. Programs that require sellers to take back dead batteries, unused household chemicals, etc. would seem to be the best way to have those responsible for generating hazardous wastes pay for the costs of disposal or recycling.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Public education is of primary importance in making the waste stream minimization and recycling programs work. State mandates serve to ensure that minimal efforts and results are obtained but it will take a willing public to make any waste reduction or recycling efforts viable. [Conservation Commission, Town Council and Public Works]
2. With the addition of the Residential Recycling Transfer Center, the Town's current Waste Disposal Program should adequately handle the Town's waste disposal needs for the foreseeable future. There are no recommendations to consider the construction and operation of a full Transfer Station due to the proximity of CRRA's Mid-Connecticut trash-to-energy plant or alternate private facilities in Windham.

8 HOUSING

Housing has long been a central focus of public policy. Governmental agencies on the federal, state and local level are constantly evaluating the quality, availability and the cost of housing. On a local level, housing is often the principal land use, and it affects all residents. Its condition, cost, form and availability are major determinants of the quality of life in a community. An examination of the Town's housing stock has been conducted resulting in a determination of the future needs and actions to address those needs.

A. Housing Data

Data provided by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) for 2007 indicate Coventry has 4,843 housing units. Ninety-two percent are single family, six percent are multi-family and two percent are condominiums. Eighty-two percent are owner occupied. Condominiums are



located on Merrow Road (98 units) and Bidwell Village on Stonehouse Road (14 units). Kenyon Falls condominiums are under construction on Armstrong Road (46 units). In addition, Orchard Hill Estates, 80 one and two bedroom subsidized units for low and moderate income elderly, is located at 1630 Main Street.

The median price of a house (early 2009) is \$235,000 which is 92 percent of the county median and 80 percent of the state median. Fifty-two percent of the houses are located on one acre or less of land, and about one-quarter of the housing stock is located around Lake Wangumbaug. Housing permits since 1997 have ranged from 34 to 80 per year with the average being 58.

The housing stock of Coventry provides a wide range of choices and is generally in good condition. However, some of the neighborhoods around Lake Wangumbaug have suffered from certain problems related to housing conditions. Most of the homes in these neighborhoods were originally constructed for use as vacation homes during the summer. As such, neither the homes nor the infrastructure of the neighborhood were designed to accommodate the needs of a year round, relatively high density residential environment.

The neighborhoods around Lake Wangumbaug were originally subdivided into relatively small lots. Many of the lots have been combined, but there are still homes on lots of 5,000 square feet or less. Until recently, each house had an individual well and septic system. Many of these houses were only used seasonally, but with the conversion of homes to year

round dwellings, some problems have arisen such as inadequate heating and the concentration and overuse of individual wells and septic systems. This led to a variety of public health issues and the potential degradation of the lake water quality.

Dramatic improvements of neighborhoods have occurred over the past 18 years enabled by Connecticut Development Block Grants (CDBG) for housing rehabilitation as well as many private owners adding significant investment to their properties. The recent sewer expansion project, completed in 2008, has provided the majority of the lake homes with sewer service, addressing many of these issues.

B. Fiscal Impact

Single-family detached housing has a negative net fiscal impact on municipal finances, primarily because they place more demand on municipal and public education services. A recent study (2008 Build-out Analysis) indicated that single family houses in Coventry require \$1.06 in services for every dollar in tax revenue they provide.

In comparison, attached single family homes and multi-family housing generally consist of smaller units with fewer bedrooms, and are generally not as attractive to large families. In addition, much of this type of housing is oriented towards specific population groups, such as "empty nesters" who generally demand less in municipal services. With fewer school children, attached single-family homes and multi-family housing generally have less of a negative fiscal impact.

Furthermore, streets and utilities within these developments are often privately maintained, which can reduce the municipal fiscal burden. Country Place Condominiums on Merrow Road and Bidwell Village Condominiums on Stonehouse Road are examples of these types of residences.

C. Demographic Trends Create Challenges

Demographic trends (see Section 3) indicate the two most significant housing challenges are those related to the affordability of housing for younger residents starting their career or looking for their first home and for older residents on fixed incomes. The second challenge is older individuals wishing to down-size or live in congregate housing such as the "over 55, active adult" communities that are becoming available. Both challenges are more severe for those with lower incomes.

D. Affordability of Housing

The issue of housing affordability is extremely complex, and defies simple solutions. The cost of housing is affected by a wide variety of factors. Mortgage interest rates, labor and material costs, land costs, consumer preference, environmental regulations and local economic conditions, all influence the cost and availability of housing.

Most of these factors are beyond the control of local government. Federal and State governments have used a variety of housing programs to produce housing or subsidize housing costs without addressing underlying economic factors. A common characteristic of these programs has been that they all involve a direct or indirect financial subsidy to lower the cost of the units being produced.

Municipalities are inherently limited as to what actions they can take to encourage the building of affordable housing. A municipality, as a part of a larger economic region, cannot, by itself, have any significant impact on the market forces that affect the supply and demand for housing. However, collective actions of municipalities throughout the State can have an impact on the housing market.

Due to recent legislation on affordable housing, Coventry has received 2009 funding (Home CT Grant) to study increasing housing density in areas where there is existing infrastructure and to comply with smart growth initiatives. The results of this study may lead to zoning regulation changes that encourage affordable workforce housing.

A 2008 report by the Partnership for Strong Communities (Hartford, Ct.) noted that housing is more affordable in Coventry than any other municipality in the state, as measured by the cost of housing versus household disposable income. This data indicates the town has a diversity of housing opportunities that should be maintained.

Coventry has more than 18 years experience acquiring and managing CDBG grants that promote equal opportunity housing for those families at or below 80 percent of the median Hartford-Metro region family income. The grants can be applied to rehabilitation or maintenance of existing homes whose owners meet certain criteria. Nearly 400 projects totaling some eight million dollars have been completed.

Given that Coventry has a multitude of residences that qualify for these grants, and since the demographic trends indicate the continued need for these modest homes, this program is the most effective way to preserve affordable housing in town and should be continued aggressively.

E. Subdivisions

Driven by the 1997 Plan of Conservation and Development, the town adopted open space subdivision regulations in 1998. Those regulations provided for a more flexible design, sustainable neighborhoods, open space protection and were density neutral. As of 2009, the Planning & Zoning Commission has developed updated subdivision regulations based on the 10-year experience with the existing rules. The new regulations will provide for more interaction between the developer and the town and provide more focus on designs that are compatible with natural landscapes and sustainable neighborhoods.

F. State of Connecticut Initiatives

The State requires that municipal plans of conservation and development address the issue of affordable housing. A program to address the housing needs of Coventry should be consistent with the other land use goals and objectives of the Town, as set forth in this Plan. A multifaceted approach that utilizes a number of strategies would be the most effective program. The primary State/Federal Program that applies to Coventry is the CDBG Housing Rehabilitation Grant Program that is designed for low and moderate income homeowners and landlords with low and moderate income tenants to address safety and public health code violations, as well as provide funds for necessary house repairs.

Goal: Encourage housing, both rental and homeownership, in an acceptable quantity and quality to meet the economic and social needs of the town's population. The design and location of new housing should blend with the surroundings and respect the natural landscape. Preserve the affordable housing stock that currently exists in the community.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Continue attention to the progress of open space subdivisions and modify regulations as necessary to provide sustainable neighborhoods, open space protection and increased land values. [Planning & Zoning, Conservation Commission and Land use staff]

2. Encourage and protect stable residential development of long-term quality and a favorable range of housing values. Dwellings and related land and buildings will constitute the bulk of the tax base.

3. Support the preservation of the physical and architectural characteristics of large houses and their sites. Encourage the conversion of large houses into uses compatible with the neighborhood, structure and site. The overall goal is to maintain and/or improve the exterior of the houses. [Planning & Zoning]



4. Continue to encourage mixed-use and nodal development in appropriate areas, particularly the Route 44/Main Street intersection. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission and Land use staff]

5. Monitor the Coventry Village regulations/design guidelines that provide for mixed use development and improve as necessary. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission and Land use staff]

6. Work to adaptively reuse older buildings, particularly mill structures and build on the recent success of the Kenyon Falls condominiums that provide 46 affordable housing units.

7. Pursue an affordable housing plan which emphasizes public private cooperation. The plan should be specific as to potential sites for affordable housing and methods of implementation. The plan should ensure that the affordable housing be dispersed throughout Town and integrated within the community. The concentration of affordable housing in any one neighborhood should be avoided. [Planning & Zoning, Land use staff and Town Council]

8. Apply for additional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to upgrade existing low-to-moderate income housing and insure zoning regulations allow appropriate housing initiatives. Consider streamlining zoning regulations and possible tax abatements for existing affordable homes and their maintenance. [Planning & Zoning, Town Council, Land use staff]

9. Encourage alternative housing options for mature families (empty-nesters) and senior citizens who no longer desire single-family housing but who would prefer to live in multi-family planned environments that offer a wide range of residential amenities or in other alternate living arrangements more appropriate for their stage of life (e.g., accessory apartments, multi-family housing, congregate housing, self-care facilities). Based on the demand for apartments at Orchard Hills, as well as the fact that the site has public sewers, conduct a study as to the feasibility of expanding housing units on site. Apply for CDBG funding to make necessary improvements and modernization to Orchard Hills under the State of Connecticut 2009-10 Action Plan for Housing and Community Development. [Planning & Zoning, Town Council and Land use staff]

10. Continue efforts to upgrade the neighborhood environment of the communities around Coventry Lake. Efforts should be oriented towards the improvement of the neighborhood's public infrastructure, water supply and roads, as well as the upgrade of the homes of low and moderate income residents. Participation in the CDBG program is a method for financing and implementing these improvements and should be continued. An emphasis of any program should be the leverage of public actions to encourage private investment in the area. [Planning & Zoning, Land use staff, Town Council]

11. Consider areas in Town with adequate existing or emerging infrastructure where some moderate density residential development (up to four units per acre) may be appropriate. Development at this density could be in the form of single-family detached, single-family attached, two-family or multi-family housing with more than two units. The analysis performed with Home-CT grant will help identify housing needs and solutions. Zoning regulations may need to be revised where appropriate to reflect these recommendations and the needs of the community.

12. New regulations adding flexibility for farm labor quarters should be monitored and updated as experienced is gained. [Planning & Zoning and Land use staff]

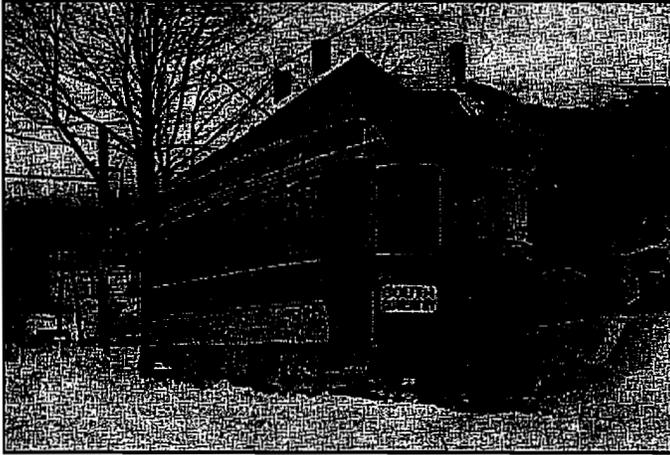
13. Promote, where possible, residential development that is pedestrian friendly- sidewalks, pathways or bikeways- that allow access to neighborhoods and non-residential amenities.

14. Promote residential development that conserves energy and takes advantage of active and passive solar techniques. [Planning & Zoning and Energy Conservation Committee]

15. The 2008 build-out analysis indicated that depending on lot size and land use, between 2,300 and 3,400 additional single family homes could be built in town over the long term. The town should employ strategies that will keep population growth at a level consistent with the ability to provide adequate services. Housing density should be kept consistent with the neighborhood and the infrastructure.

16. The zoning regulations were changed in 2006 to address houses with accessory apartments for family members. Monitor the administration of these permits and address issues as necessary. [Planning & Zoning and Land use staff]

9 TRANSPORTATION



The transportation system of a community is important in its growth and development. It represents a major public investment, and the service provided by the facilities in the system is often cited as an important factor in the quality of life of a community. Like other public facilities, the transportation system is usually impacted by growth in the community and region. However, traffic congestion is more readily apparent to residents than growth impacts on many other services.

The goal of the transportation system in town is to provide multi-modal accessibility, connectivity, and mobility for citizens of all ages and abilities. Accessibility is the overall ease by which a person can reach a desired destination. Connectivity is the directness of travel paths and the density of intersections. Mobility refers to the ability to travel from one place to another at a reasonable cost.

Available data on the existing transportation system has been analyzed. A more detailed system analysis may be appropriate as a future phase of study. (Refer to map #9)

A. Regional Setting

Coventry lies along several major regional transportation corridors. U.S. Route 44, in conjunction with Interstate 384 links the Town with Hartford and other major traffic generators such as the University of Connecticut at Storrs, as well as shopping, employment and housing in Mansfield. Coventry also lies between Willimantic and Interstate 84.

Preferred routes emanating from Willimantic generally skirt Coventry via Routes 195 and 32 to the east, or U.S. Route 6 to the south; however as these routes have become increasingly burdened with heavier volumes, alternate routes through Coventry have experienced increased use as well. Route 31 is the primary access to Coventry Center from points north and west and south and east, while Route 275, Stonehouse Road, connects Coventry Center easterly with Eagleville and Routes 32 and 195 to Mansfield and Storrs.

According to the 2000 Census, about 80 percent of Coventry's working population commute out of town, with the majority of workers traveling towards the Hartford area.

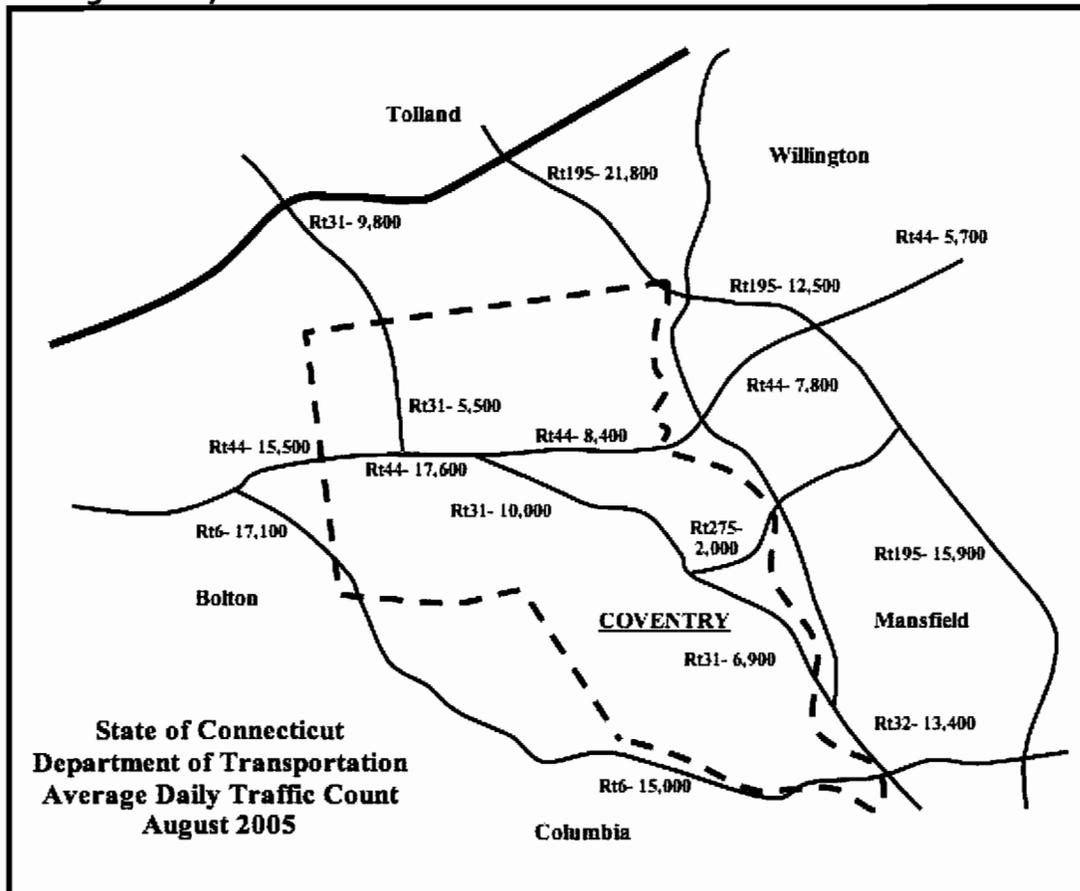
B. Mass Transportation

Coventry is served by the Regional transit system with commuter bus service to Hartford and a commuter parking lot on Route 44 at the Second Congregational Church. The commuter service to Hartford should be monitored to ensure its continued adequacy in terms of convenient parking, scheduling and promotion to encourage its use. Investigate low-cost, private bus service to Boston and New York from the Vernon I-84 exit.

At present there is no transit service between Vernon and Windham. It would be desirable to investigate this route through Coventry for future mass transit opportunities. Currently there is no student bus service from UConn to Coventry. The opportunity exists to connect the University with commuter bus service and retail establishments in North Coventry Village and with retail and housing in or near South Coventry Village.

Bradley International Airport is approximately 30 miles from Coventry and the State owned Windham Airport is less than ten miles from Coventry Center. Only freight, charter and other general aviation services are currently available at Windham Airport but its significant surplus capacity may attract increased usage in the future, as other competing facilities approach capacity.

C. Existing Road System



The highest traffic volumes in Town are where Routes 31 and 44 intersect. Route 44 crosses the northern part of the Town east-to-west. Where 1-384 terminates at the junction of Routes 6 and 44, nearly equal proportions of traffic continue on Route 44 as those which travel south on Route 6 toward Willimantic. Traffic volumes on Route 44 will probably increase over the long term. The State has modified the road with increased pavement width with left turn lanes from the Bolton town line to the east intersection of Route 44 and Carpenter Road. Further improvements are needed in Bolton, and eventually, improvements may be needed into Mansfield.

Route 31 north of Route 44 is an important link in the Town's transportation system, providing access to I-84. Although traffic volumes are currently not very high, they are expected to increase as more development occurs in northern Coventry. The road is in generally good condition and has been improved by the State DOT through several projects along specific sections of the road.

Other improvements proposed in the Regional Plan of Transportation include Route 31 between Route 275 and Woods Lane. Plans are in place for this "context sensitive" project which will soften the curve east of Route 275 and add pedestrian and parking access.

While the state highways form the corridors for through-traffic and the spine of local circulation, other important roads for internal circulation include Daly Road, South Street, Pucker Street, Flanders Road, Flanders River Road, North River Road and Goose Lane.

As growth continues in the northern part of Coventry, east-west circulation will rely increasingly on Broadway, Merrow Road and North School Road. The completion of an east-west connection between Bread & Milk Street and Cedar Swamp Road, would facilitate east-west access in North Coventry, and keep some local traffic off of Route 44.

Cedar Swamp Road and Grant Hill Road are important collectors as well. Brigham Tavern Road, River View Drive and Jones Crossing Road, as improved, should serve as a convenient connection along the easterly Town boundary and as access to Route 195.

Recommendations for dead-end roads include: Extending Riley Mountain Road would facilitate circulation in the area, and provide a second outlet to the homes along the road; therefore promoting public safety. Extending School House Road is needed to provide for a second access to the condominiums in the area. A second route of access/exit to the Mountain Ridge Estates subdivision should be considered as well.

With the new development at the intersection of Route 44 and Main Street, Stage Road has become an area of concern due to its out-dated intersections with Route 44 and Grant Hill Road. Some improvements will occur in 2009 and should be monitored carefully.

In the east-central section of Town, Lewis Hill and Ripley Hill Road complete the link along the east edge of Town between Route 31 and Brigham Tavern Road toward Route 195. Sam

Green Road and Richmond Road serve as secondary local streets and access new development in the vicinity of Old Tolland Turnpike. The intersection of Old Tolland Turnpike and Route 31 is unsafe due to its alignment and vertical grade and is currently discontinued, though a right-of-way remains.

In the west-central section, Silver Street, or a combination of Swamp Road and Brewster Street provide access between South Street and Route 44. Silver Street should be designated and improved to standards of a major local street, because of its central location and direct configuration. In the future it may also be desirable to provide a connection between Wrights Mill Road (at the intersection of Case Road) and Swamp Road via Love Lane.

South Street from Route 6 to Flanders Road is the longest major road linking central and southern sections of town. At the eastern end, South Street Extension is not improved through to Route 31. Completing this connection would improve east-west circulation through the south part of Town, and provide an alternative connection between Route 31 and Route 6. The intersection of South Street and Swamp Road is narrow and dangerous and a significant upgrade is needed.



Upgrading Snake Hill Road and High Street would improve the circulation around Coventry Village. Snake Hill Road has particularly dangerous sight lines. To improve traffic flow in the Village it would be desirable to provide a connection (along an old right-of-way) between the intersection of Bradbury Lane and Prospect Street southward to High Street. Eagleville Road and Depot Road provide an alternative connection between Routes 31, 275 and 32.

D. Railroads

A short stretch of railroad track runs through Coventry, crossing Depot Road. It is part of a line that extends from New London north into Canada, running along the Willimantic River just over the Town line in Mansfield. The line is used primarily for freight traffic. There is increasing support for passenger service on this line from New London to Montreal, Canada.

The former rail line between Willimantic and Manchester that goes through the southern part of Coventry has been abandoned. It is currently under the control of the Department of Environmental Protection and is now used for recreational purposes. The right-of-way will remain intact, should it be needed in the future.

E. Street Classification

A street classifications system is used to define the variety of functions served by different types of roads in the community. The system is useful in formulating a Plan of Conservation and Development in that it can be used to describe the functions and the associated level of improvements and construction standards which should be maintained, as well as to some degree, the type and design of adjacent development.

The Town uses a system of street classification in its zoning regulations as one basis for regulating development, with different standards for the development of property along different classifications of streets. The existing street classifications are generally determined by existing road conditions and use or actual traffic volumes. Coventry Zoning Regulations define streets in four classifications:

1. Principal State Route: Connecticut Routes 6, 31, 44, and 275.
2. Major Local Street: Bunker Hill Road, Cross Street, Daly Road, Flanders Road to Route 32, Flanders River Road, Goose Lane, Lake Street, Lewis Hill Road, Merrow Road, North River Road (to Goose Lane), North School Road, Pucker Street, Ripley Hill Road and South Street.
3. Secondary Local Street: Babcock Hill Road, Case Road, Cedar Swamp Road, Grant Hill Road, River Road South (from Talcott Hill Road to Case Road), Seagraves Road, Silver Street, Snake Hill Road, Swamp Road and Wright's Mill Road (from Case Road to Route 31).
4. Minor Local Street: All other Streets in Town.

The current classification system is defined primarily by street construction and right-of-way standards. In order for it to be effectively used in the Plan of Conservation and Development, definitions should be expanded to include function which can then relate to construction, right of way standards and contextual sensitivity as follows:

1. Limited Access Highways, as their name implies have limited, controlled access from the local street network and provide no access to adjacent property. They are integral components of the State transportation system and are intended to carry large volumes of traffic between communities and regions.
2. Principle State Routes are intended to carry large volumes of traffic between different neighborhoods and communities. They are important components of the regional transportation network. Transportation is their primary function, with access to properties

along them a secondary function, which should not interfere with traffic carrying capacity and level of service (LOS).

3. Major Local Streets are intended to collect traffic from neighborhood areas and carry it onto the state routes. They are not intended to be used for long trips or to carry large volumes of traffic. They are also used to connect different sections of a community. Although their primary function is transportation, access is also important, providing that it does not significantly interfere with the traffic carrying capacity of the road.

4. Secondary Local Streets are similar to primary local streets, except that access to adjacent property is a more important function than transportation. They are intended to fill short potential gaps in the local transportation network.

The primary function of Minor Local Streets is to provide access to adjacent properties. They are intended only for low traffic volumes and should not be used for through traffic. The street system should be designed to avoid extensive travel on local streets and employ traffic calming measures where appropriate.

F. Unimproved Roadways

The Town of Coventry currently maintains and oversees 3.56 miles of unimproved roads. These roadways are surfaced with gravel and receive grading twice a year. During unusual weather events these roadways may receive additional grading.

The following roadways are deemed unimproved; North School Road from Dunn Road to Route 31, Hop River Road, approximately one half mile in from Bunker Hill Road to the Town Line of Columbia, Riley Mountain Road, approximately one half mile in from North River Road to the end, South Street Extension, from Plains Road to the end and Times Farm Road, from Town Line in Andover to the end at Channel 3 Camp, and Whites Hill Road, starting .02 miles in from Route 275.

G. Semi-Unimproved Roadways

The Town of Coventry currently maintains and oversees 3.25 miles of roadway that has been upgraded or improved by the means of applying milled asphalt to the riding surface. These roads have been classified by the State as being improved, however no drainage improvements, widening, or other improvements have been made outside of the top riding surface. These roadways had the milling applied between 2004 and 2007. The following roadways have received the milling treatment: Babcock Hill Road Ext., Bishop Lane, Brigham Road, Folly Lane, Forest Hills Road, the first half mile of Hop River Road in from Bunker Hill Road, Mohegan Trail, South River Road, from Seagraves Road to South Street and Tunxis Trail.

H. Scenic Roads

The Town Scenic Road Ordinance (#184) provides for an overlay designation which could be applied to Minor Local or in some cases Secondary Local Streets, which by virtue of their unique beauty, including vistas, stone walls, mature trees, historic structures and the like, could be degraded by otherwise desirable improvements to comply with design standards for its street classification. The following roads have been designated as scenic roads:

- North School Road
- Skinner Hill Road
- South Street (in the area of the Hale Forest)
- River View Drive

I. Compliance with Regional Transportation Plan

The Regional Transportation Plan of 2005 was reviewed relative to Coventry. Proposals, which have been completed, include reconstruction of many Lake area roads in conjunction with the sewer project, the Parker Bridge Road bridge over the Hop River and the reconstruction of the intersection of South Street and Skinner Hill Road. The remaining recommendations of that plan have been addressed in this section.

J. Greenways



The Millbrook-Greenway linear trail project is anticipated to offer a formal pedestrian link from the Lake Wangumbaug boat launch area to the Village Center and then along the Mill Brook to the Willimantic River. The section from the Lake boat launch along Lake Street and Monument Hill Road, then through Mill Brook Park to Mason Street has been completed. A sidewalk along Cross Street also connects this Greenway to South Street and its sidewalks.

The Town has created a routing/master plan for the potential future linkage phases which will prospectively follow the banks of the Mill Brook, highlighting the significant historic mill and residential architecture. Other phases can potentially create a connection with the Charter Oak Greenway and Willimantic River Greenway.

The Willimantic River Greenway is a long-term project to link existing open spaces and to extend walking trails and bike routes along the 25-mile length of the river. Other goals include improving the existing canoe/kayak route from Stafford to Windham and also protecting natural resources.

The Willimantic River Alliance maintains a regional greenway vision for the towns and offers information about potential projects and about resources for town and regional projects. Although the greenway projects will be planned and completed over many years, they will in time offer residents and visitors better opportunities to access the river and enjoy its natural beauty and historic features. Several riverside towns are working together on multi-town trails along the Greenway. The section in Coventry is partially completed and work continues on the remaining areas.

Goal: Provide for the efficient and orderly movement of people and goods into, out of, and within Coventry and provide adequate access to places of employment, residences, recreational and commercial activity. The Plan recognizes that residents are automobile-oriented and that will serve as the primary means of transportation.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Provide for adequate circulation within and between all sections of the town. Dead-end roads or cul-de-sacs in new development should not preclude strategically located through-streets that would improve traffic flow.
2. Provide and maintain public infrastructure facilities such as roads, sewers and storm drainage, where appropriate, in all areas throughout the town to prevent physical deterioration, in keeping within the town's Capital Improvements Program. Any new roads or existing road improvements should be accomplished in a "context sensitive" manner that respects the natural environment and landscape, considers non-vehicular mobility and is compatible with the neighborhood.
3. Work with the State and other affected communities to evaluate future transportation needs as they could impact Route 31, Route 44, Route 6, Route 195 and Route 275, and implement improvements in a manner which is not disruptive to the communities. Particular focus should be made to the proposed changes to Route 31 in Coventry Village.
4. Monitor traffic volumes on town roads to assess capacity and future needs. [Public Works]
5. Continue to support the improvement of Lake Association roads through joint cooperative effort between the Town and the Associations, including facilitating transfer of ownership. [Public Works, Town Engineer, Town Council]
6. Consider Scenic Road designations and educate the public about the benefits of scenic road designation. Review the applicability of the ordinance over time and make appropriate changes. [Town Council, Planning & Zoning and Land use staff]
7. Encourage the use of public transit by maintaining and improving amenities such as related parking facilities and publicizing their benefits. Consider public transit from Vernon

to Willimantic and extending the UConn student bussing routes to include Route 44 and Route 31/275 in Coventry.

8. Strive to minimize the number of curb cuts to State and Major Local Streets.
9. Intersections, alignments and drainage should be improved on local streets as needed to promote public safety.
10. Consider pedestrian mobility as a significant opportunity in the context of subdivisions and their relation to retail/commercial nodes where appropriate. An example of such an opportunity is the plan to connect the Pilgrim Hills subdivision to Grant Hill Road, then to the Williams subdivision and then along Coventry Brook to Route 44 with potential extensions to the Skungamaug River.
11. Provide pedestrian/bicycle access from the High School to Lake Street, via Main Street, and provide pedestrian walkways and crossings in the Village in conjunction with the Route 31 project. [Public Works, Town Council, Town Engineer]
12. Request the Conservation Commission to create bicycle route mapping (present and proposed) for connecting densely populated areas and along scenic viewsheds. [Conservation Commission and Land use staff]
13. Continue and expand inter-municipal cooperation for trail systems such as the Hop River Rail trail and the Willimantic River Greenway. [Public Works, Land use staff, Town Manager, Town Council]
14. Publish biking and walking trail systems on the town web site.
15. Follow a policy of "Complete Streets" whereby provisions are made for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians on every major transportation project.
16. Locate off-street parking behind or to the side of buildings to maintain aesthetic value and pedestrian accessibility between adjacent destinations.

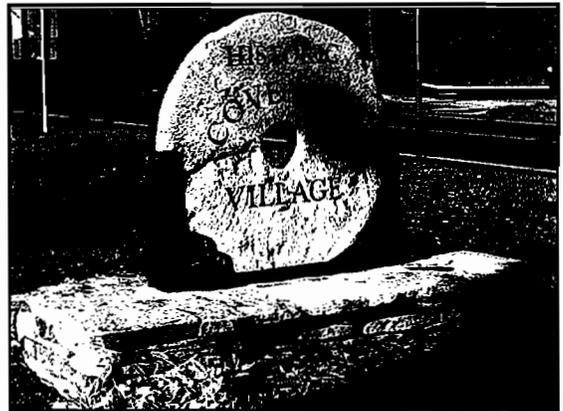


10 COVENTRY VILLAGE

Coventry Village was the traditional social and economic center of South Coventry until the 1970's when economic and demographic factors diminished its role and function. Residential growth shifted to northern Coventry. Reduced dining and shopping added to its decline.

The Village layout of small lots and underused mill sites, is not conducive to large scale development, and the 40 year-old zoning regulations made creative development difficult. Traffic on Main Street, a state road, remains an issue as vehicles tend to exceed the speed limit the majority of the time, thereby limiting the enjoyment of the Village.

In 1990, a Plan of Preservation and Development was commissioned, and its recommendations, which still apply today, have been actively pursued by municipal and private entities. The aforementioned plan says: "Coventry Village remains an area of impressive architectural and natural beauty, retaining the significant cultural assets associated with its 18th and 19th century life as an industrial mill village.... The landscape features of the area around the Mill Brook contribute to its significance and beauty."



The 1990 Plan called for a new beginning. Driving development in the Village since then has been an awareness of its basic qualities of small scale, dense development patterns, multi-use buildings and shared parking. Most of the Village is served by public water and sewer, which fits the infrastructure well and enhances smart-growth principles. Zoning changes facilitated this new approach.

The Village Today



As recommended by the 1990 plan, improvements have occurred in the Village. A seven-acre tract has been preserved as open space and named the Mill Brook Park. The new regulations also include design guidelines to help preserve the character of the area. The long-envisioned Mill Brook walkway has been implemented from the lake to Mason Street or about one fifth of its goal to parallel the entire brook.

In recent years, grant money has been used to greatly improve the facades of some twelve buildings, and it has encouraged private investment totaling an amount greater than the grant funding. Another grant allowed the placement of fifteen interpretive historic signs in the Village as an educational and recreational asset.

Two major residential projects, including active adult condominiums and a significant redevelopment of the old Kenyon Mill to condominiums have added to the residential base. The Village now includes an eclectic mix of shops, personal care options, a general store and several dining establishments in addition to the existing post office, bank, library and the Congregational church.

While there has been significant revitalization progress made in the past eight years, continuing effort is required to realize the opportunities to improve the quality of life of the residents and visitors to the Village.

Goal: Preserve the historical and architectural resources in Coventry Village in addition to increasing its economic and functional vitality.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Continue to preserve the Village's Architectural and Historical Resources. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission, Land use staff, Village Improvement Society]

- Conduct a thorough site plan review of all land use proposals and employ the new design guidelines to their fullest extent.
- Create and/or administer a revitalization loan and grant program.
- Encourage strong advocacy for historic preservation by existing or new groups. The Village is on the National Register of Historic Places.

2. Increase Economic and Functional Vitality. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development, Land use staff]

- Selectively promote intensive and appropriate residential and commercial uses.
- Install sidewalks, on Main Street and Lake Street where possible, to specifically connect available parking and commerce.
- Continue working with the state Department of Transportation on their planned contextual reconstruction of a portion of Main Street that will include sidewalks and streetscapes, and demand that traffic calming measures are included.
- Plan a careful strategy to combine new uses, including services, retail starter businesses, clustered housing on the Village edges, and infill commercial development along Main Street.
- Target new uses that will have regional attraction, including those associated with local universities.

- Develop the Village's tourist potential in tandem with Coventry's significant tourist draws; the Hale Homestead, Coventry Lake, Historical Society Sites and the Farmers Market.
- Participate actively in planning with "The Last Green Valley" Heritage Corridor.

3. Adaptively Reuse Coventry Village's Historic Mills and Under Utilized Properties. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission, Land use staff, Town Council]

- Develop adaptive re-use plans for the mills as new centers for commercial growth, each mill may serve as a different thematic center or for housing although the appropriate flexibility of land scale must be allowed. Target the two mills on Mason Street, the Tracy Mill on Main Street and the potential availability of the Town garage site on Bradbury Lane.
- Develop and promote a plan for the following properties: Woodland Road lakeside parcel, the old building at 44 Lake Street in combination with the Lakeview Restaurant, potential commercial use of the front lot across from 1159 Main Street, potential commercial use of the buildings at 1340 Main Street, 41 Stonehouse Road and the corner of Main and Paden Roads.
- Continue working with the Teleflex Corp. for potential expansion adjacent to their present facilities, and assist in maintaining their presence in the Village.



4. Enhance Significant Natural Resources. [Planning & Zoning, Conservation Commission, Public Works, Land use staff]

- Continue the development of a linear park hike/bike trail along Millbrook between the lake and the Willimantic River, with public access and open space linkages to Main Street. Restore the old mill ponds and dams where feasible, and create a protective zone around the park with heightened planning review powers.
- Study and implement a plan for improved recreational opportunities at Patriots Park and at the linear park near the Willimantic River.
- Enact an archaeological protection ordinance.
- Encourage open space preservation through such processes such as incentive zoning, conservation easements, outright purchase and other techniques.
- Designate roads that might be considered under the Scenic Roads ordinance.

5. Initiate Public Actions and Improvements. [Town Council, Public Works, Town Engineer]

- Relocate the Town Garage, making the site available for reuse.
- Improve traffic control and monitor its progress on Main Street in conjunction with the Route 31 curve realignment project. Implement traffic calming measures.
- Design and implement and maintain, in conjunction with the Route 31 curve realignment project, a program of coordinated parking facilities and new sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, street furniture, signage, and landscaping in the Village Center. Develop a comprehensive streetscape plan, with indigenous plants, which includes sidewalks on the southerly side of Main Street from Post Office area to Armstrong Road.

6. Establish Financial Incentives and a Revitalization Strategy. [Town Council, Economic Development Commission, Town Staff]

- Implement the existing property tax incentives for economic development, and consider same for historic restoration.
- Create a revitalization loan and grant program, with public and private funding and participation.
- Provide for an economic development director to coordinate projects and citizens groups' activities that support the Village and the town.

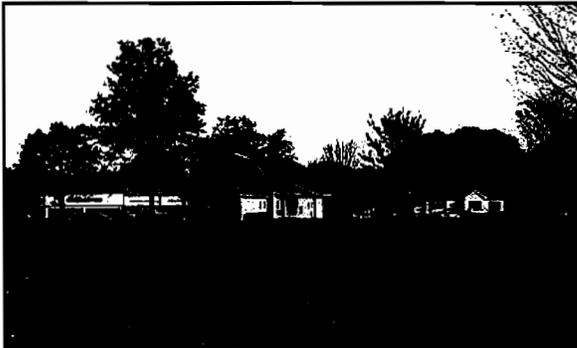
7. Explore the potential of financing public improvements that may include the creation of a special assessment district, tax increment financing and Community Development Block Grants. [Town Council, Manager and Staff]

8. Work to create a pedestrian link from the post office to the high school and from the Bidwell Village Condominiums to Main Street. [Public Works, Town Council and Staff]

9. Review and strengthen, as necessary with experience, the special zoning district which considers factors such as pre-existing structures, parking and setback constraints, and existing geographic features. Special attention should be made to design criteria, including strict standards for signs. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission, Town Staff]

11 NORTH COVENTRY VILLAGE

North Coventry Village was the traditional social and economic center of North Coventry and included the Second Church, a tavern and stage coach stations in the 1800's. It encompasses the area bounded north and east by Coventry Brook, south by the North Coventry Volunteer Fire Station and west by Silver Street.



The layout and configuration of the area, namely large farms, are an attraction to large scale development. Traffic on the Boston Turnpike has the highest volume of any road in town which attracts development. The large farms present an opportunity for farm and rural character preservation and an increase in agri-business.

Development in the area began in the 1970's with the creation of Meadowbrook Plaza and was followed more recently by Vinton Village and the CVS/Dunkin Donuts/ New Alliance Bank complex. A Walgreens pharmacy was recently built at the intersection of Route 44 and Grant Hill Road. Due to the traffic volume and the significant increase in residential development, more activity is anticipated. A schematic plan for the area was developed in 1990, and it must be updated.

The issues are:

- Traffic congestion created by further development around the intersection of Main Street and Route 44
- The need to preserve the neighborhood character, preserve farm land and provide for needed commercial services.
- The lack of sewers limits development
- The perceived need for public transportation both easterly and westerly
- Threats to historic buildings

The opportunities are:

- Likely adequate water supply
- A high bandwidth fiber optic cable under Route 44
- Relatively large parcels of land available for development close to the intersection
- Opportunities to use proximate open space for passive recreation and walking trails
- An available commuter parking lot
- Close proximity to the Glass Museum property (North River Road)

Goal: Preserve the historical and architectural resources in the North Village in addition to increasing its economic and functional vitality.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Continue to preserve the architectural and historical resources of the area. [Planning & Zoning, Land Use staff, Coventry Historical Society]

- Conduct a thorough site plan review of all land use proposals and apply the new design guidelines.

2. Increase Economic and Functional Vitality. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission, Town Staff]

- Selectively promote appropriate commercial, retail, service and agriculture uses.
- Work with the state Department of Transportation on future traffic potential, curb cuts and safe ingress/egress for both pedestrians and vehicles.
- Plan a careful strategy to combine new uses, including services, especially retail starter businesses and infill commercial development.
- Target new uses that will have regional attraction, including those associated with local universities.

3. Develop and promote an integrated plan for the following properties: [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission, Town Staff, Town Manager]

- The commercially zoned property east of Walgreens.
- The next phase of development behind Dunkin Donuts with attention to ingress/egress.
- The complete re-development of Vinton Village and adjacent residences.
- Stage Road traffic flow management.
- Meadowbrook Plaza, the adjacent gas station and access to both Routes 44 and 31.
- The adjacent property on Main Street across from the Dunkin Donuts.
- The proposed enlarged volunteer fire facility and the adjacent intersection with Wrights Mill Road with particular attention to the Coventry Grammar School.
- Commercially zoned land east of the old Pomeroy Tavern with attention to set back and sensitivity to the adjacent historic homes.
- Farm land preservation in the North Village area.

4. Upgrade zoning regulations that consider factors such as pre-existing structures, parking and setback constraints, traffic flow, and existing geographic features. Special attention should be made to design criteria, historic character, and strict standards for signs. [Planning & Zoning, Land use staff]

5. Conduct a study on the necessary infrastructure needed for rational development of the area including water supply, local sewer systems and public and shared transportation. [Planning & Zoning, Town Engineer]

12 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. Overall Fiscal Analysis

The local tax burden in Coventry is placed squarely on residential property due to the lack of diversity of the tax base. The growth of the grand list is nearly all attributed to the development of single family homes which create fiscal pressure on the education and town services budgets.



B. 2008 Assessments of Real Property in Coventry:

Residential	92 %
Commercial	3 %
Agricultural, Vacant, Forest & open Space	5%

The percentage of commercial assessment in Coventry is about one-fifth the average of all towns in the state and about 40 percent relative to towns with a similar grand list.

The 2008 survey of citizens, conducted by the National Research Center, indicated a high degree of satisfaction with their quality of life, but compared to other towns that level is about the norm. Their satisfaction with the local job opportunities is very low (and below the norm for their national peers). With regard to shopping the satisfaction is nominally low as is their opinion of availability of child care and health care. A small percentage (18 percent) indicated the town has too much growth and a smaller percentage (9 percent) indicated a lack of growth.

Taxes were the single highest problem expressed by citizens of town. While residents felt very safe in their neighborhoods and the town in general, the two areas they would be willing to make more investments were police/fire and open space. The challenge for economic development is to create jobs (particularly well paying jobs), increase the retail services (in part to minimize travel distances) that match the needs of the citizens while not creating the need for significant additional services (roads, police, fire), and maintaining the image and quality of life perceptions.

C. Employment

Nearly 60 percent of the employment in town is in the service and government sector. Thirty-two percent of the population (over age 25) have a high school degree and 28 percent have a bachelor's degree or more. Roughly 30 percent of those employed in town commute from the surrounding towns. The vast majority of the labor force commutes out of town with the following towns having the highest number commuting: Hartford, Manchester, Mansfield, East Hartford and Windham.

D. Economic Development Opportunities (Refer to maps #10 and #11)

The Town should broaden its economic base without losing its rural character. Business development is welcomed particularly when it complements and enhances the town's rural and historic nature, is appropriate for the neighborhood, creates high-quality jobs and provides goods or services that are needed by the residents of Coventry and the immediate surrounding towns. Coventry's geographical location has not made it a prime target for commercial development, but there are indications that the population count, household income, and traffic on main roads are now approaching the level that will attract corporate attention, particularly in the area of retail and medical services.

The town recently significantly updated its zoning regulations and zoning map to more clearly define the areas of development and to some extent focus the kind of development. The enhancements included Design Guidelines in the South Village, and proper recognition of several levels of home-based business and their compatibility with the neighborhood.



Significant efforts have been made to streamline the approval process for development applications. This will serve as a good base for future development.

The Special Planning Areas map and narrative, included later in this section, provides details of future growth and infill in various areas of Town.

Goals:

- Support a stable diversified economic base
- Increase high quality jobs
- Provide the goods and services needed by the community
- Reduce the distance traveled for work, shopping and recreation
- Improve the balance between the commercial/retail and the residential components of the grand list (currently 2.9 and 92.2 percent respectively)

The 10-year goal for commercial/retail is an increase of 30 percent as measured by the grand list. Assuming the residential growth is one per cent per year, this 30 percent increase will yield a commercial/retail grand list segment of 3.4 percent. The 25 year goal is a 100 percent increase, translating to 5.2 percent of the grand list.

These goals should be achieved within the current zoning map categories and include adaptive re-use of existing structures, infill of existing development and new development. Mixed use development is appropriate where allowed, and infrastructure needs will be a major issue particularly public sewer and water. Traffic and pedestrian access management and design guidelines will also be a critical part of the equation. Design Guidelines should be used as a critical part of creating respectful development.

Recommendations- (Action items include the responsible party, in brackets)

1. Encourage balanced commercial, light industrial, retail and service development and home-based businesses, subject to proper location and standards.
2. Protect residential neighborhoods from commercial encroachment by discouraging zone changes that would allow mixed uses in established residential areas unless they are compatible with the neighborhood. (i.e. planned development that includes mixed uses)
3. The Town should coordinate local and regional efforts with the Windham Region Council of Governments and the Route 6 Economic Development Council to guide and coordinate economic development efforts. The plans should address issues of existing businesses, as well as potential new businesses. For existing businesses, the strategy should include methods to encourage their economic health and growth. The economic development strategy should also address the need to attract appropriate businesses into Coventry.
4. Conduct a market analysis to identify those businesses and industries that would be mutually compatible with the Town. A strategy can then be formulated based upon these findings and it should identify specific methods to pursue the economic development objectives, such as the use of state programs, public infrastructure or regulatory means to further the objectives. The Town's formulation of its own economic development strategy will be compatible with a regional economic development strategy to ensure that the interests of the Town are represented. [Economic Development Commission, Town Staff]
5. Using the 2006 zoning map and other available resources, develop an inventory of sites for future growth with targeted, specific uses of the available land that meet the needs of the community. Monitor and react to the changing market and modify the inventory as needed. [Economic Development Commission, Town Staff]
6. Facilities for growing industries, particularly those involving research and development, professional services and internet-based services require different types of physical facilities than traditional manufacturing firms. Truck or railroad access is not as vital as there are

fewer goods with a service based industry. Coventry's rural nature matches this need very well, and particular emphasis should be made toward these types of businesses. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission, Town Staff]

7. Encourage the growth of small businesses and industries through a variety of methods, including application of the recent home business regulations and the use of incubator facilities. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission, Town Staff]

8. Promote the revitalization of Coventry Village as a mixed-use activity center in accordance with the recommendations of Section 10. The Village has both water and sewer infrastructure. A special zoning district has been created for the Village. [Planning & Zoning, Economic Development Commission, Town Staff, Village Improvement Society]

9. Promote the revitalization of the North Coventry Village (Route 44 and Main Street) as a mixed-use activity center of the Town and implement design guidelines to supplement existing regulations.

10. Promote the economic interests in agricultural, forest land, and other natural and cultural resources. Encourage the preservation and creation of viable and active farms that provide varied products to the regional populace. Consider methods to allow commercial agricultural operations and the processing and/or sale of locally grown products. Encourage farm related enterprises for recreation and education.

11. Continue to monitor and adjust the zoning regulations to be more 'user friendly', reduce uncertainty, and streamline the review process. Continue to monitor the Zoning Map to insure adequate land is set aside for needed municipal and private services. [Planning & Zoning, Land use staff, Economic Development Commission]

12. Evaluate small, town owned parcels that would be better served by sale to the public with proceeds to be used to acquire more suitable public land. [Planning & Zoning, Land use staff]

13. Investigate methodologies to create needed public infrastructure in specific targeted commercial areas. [Planning & Zoning, Land use staff, Public Works, Town Engineer]

14. Develop a cooperative relationship with the University of Connecticut, Eastern Connecticut State University, Councils of Government and Chambers of Commerce for business ventures and business development education. Maintain awareness and promote partnering with the State Economic Development entities to take advantage of the services and initiatives offered. [Economic Development Commission, Town Manager, Town Staff]

F. Tourism-Recommendations-

1. The Town should continue to encourage the growth of tourism as an economic component of the Community. An initial step is the formulation of a tourism plan, preferably as a part of the regional tourism efforts both public and private. [Economic Development Commission, Planning & Zoning, Town Manager, Town Staff]

The plan should address the development of attractions and the marketing of the community. It should build on the successes of recent tourism initiatives, primarily the Farmers Market, and should strive to provide a quality buying experience, show how tourism benefits local businesses, and protect natural and historical resources.

G. Special Planning Areas for Growth and Infill

1. Rte 44/ Bolton Gateway- Commercial, Professional Office and adjacent Commercial Agricultural zones. The area presently contains several commercial/retail establishments on the south side of Route 44. Opportunities exist for new development, in-fill and re-use. There are two houses of historic value on Cedar Swamp Extension, and there is a significant Vista to the south. There is good access to route I-384, with improvements to Route 44 in Bolton, and future sewer plans in Bolton present the opportunity to use this infrastructure. Utilize the commercial development design guidelines to consider the following:

- Recognize that this area is the gateway to Coventry and creates a first impression of the Town.
- Consider changing zoning regulations to provide larger setbacks and parking in the rear of commercial buildings.
- Apply access management strategies to minimize curb cuts and consider shared and interconnected parking.
- The site includes a commercial/agriculture zone and uses should target the economic vitality of farms.

2. Rte 44/ Bread & Milk Street- Commercial zone. The area currently contains several retail and service establishments on the north side of Route 44 and a public golf course on Bread & Milk Street. Opportunities exist for new development along the east side of Bread & Milk Street where there is a large vacant parcel that has had prior commercial interest. There is a historic house on the northwest corner of Route 44 and Bread & Milk Street. Public sewer does not exist. A public water supply exists in the adjacent Pilgrim Hills subdivision.

- Consider a community sewer treatment system
- Consider another access to Route 44 from the site east of Bread & Milk Street
- Minimize curb cuts particularly adjacent to the intersection
- Utilize the commercial development design guidelines
- Target businesses compatible with the neighborhood (Pilgrim Hills and Northfields subdivisions) and existing businesses.
- The site includes a commercial/agriculture zone and uses should target the economic vitality of farms.

3. North Coventry Village (Route 44/Route 31/Grant Hill Road)- Commercial zone. One of the most active retail sites in town, this area includes Meadowbrook Plaza which, in 2009, received a significant exterior upgrade. The North Coventry Fire Station and the Coventry Grammar School are adjacent to the east. Several historic homes exist on Stage Road and north of Route 44 to the west. The Walgreens and the CVS/Bank site have further potential development adjacent to them. No sewers exist, but there are public water supply infrastructures on site. Consider an overall strategic plan for the area that includes:

- The potential for a community septic system to serve the area.
- Careful attention to traffic patterns at and near the intersection, particularly on Route 44 near the entrances to Meadowbrook Plaza.
- A rear traffic access from Route 44 (south side) to Main Street (southwest side)
- Respect the historic homes, the rural character and the adjacent farms.
- Utilize the commercial development design guidelines.
- Target new development on the site east of Walgreens, northeast of Dunkin Donuts, across Main Street from Dunkin Donuts, the area adjacent to Meadowbrook Plaza, a site north of Route 44 west of the old Pomeroy Tavern, and a site north of Stage Road.
- Consider shared and interconnected parking where possible.
- Consider a zoning map change to restrict commercial access to Grant Hill Road.
- Respect Coventry and Olson brooks as natural resources.
- Maintain or expand the green, landscaped areas adjacent to the intersection.
- The site includes a commercial/agriculture zone and uses should target the economic vitality of farms.

4. Rte 31 North (Bread & Milk Street)- Rural Development zone. The area contains small commercial and manufacturing establishments with potential to expand. The nature of the soils (high water table) present challenges to expansion. I-84 is in close proximity northward. Business, light manufacturing and service facilities are deemed suitable for this zone which is separated from neighborhoods. Several historic houses exist on the west side of the road as well as some active farms.

- Commercial development should be set back from the road to limit their negative visual impact on the neighborhood.
- Utilize the commercial development design guidelines.

5. Rte 6 Corridor- Commercial zone. This 100+ acre parcel is undeveloped. It has had interest in the past for large scale development including a holistic conference center and retail outlet stores. The two challenges are: access to the parcel requires crossing the Hop River, and the topography is uneven. The site is about two miles from I-384 and has no public water or sewer. Large scale, mixed-use development is the likely candidate for this site.

- Coordination with adjacent towns is ongoing through the Route 6 Economic Development Council.
- Consider specific zoning regulations to accommodate the envisioned multifaceted development.
- Consider alternate access via Bolton's South Road.

- Recognize the proximity to the Hop River and the Hop River Trail.

6. Daly Road/Main Street- Neighborhood Commercial zone. Commercial enterprises exist on both sides of Daly Road. The parcel on the east side has a large older building suitable for redevelopment with a lake view. Sewers are available. Adequate parking exists. Development is restricted to retail and services due to the proximity to neighborhoods.

- Target businesses that can benefit from good traffic count and accessibility, sewers and proximity to the lake.
- Consider access management changes in line with future development.

7. Rte 195- Neighborhood- Commercial zone. There is no commercial activity on this site which borders Route 195. The parcel is about ten acres and suitable for re-use, infill or new development. It is close to the Willimantic River Greenway and walking trails.

- On site sewer and water supply needs to be provided.
- Consider the proximity to Willington's and Mansfield's commercial nodes.

8. South Coventry Village- Village zones. The area has fairly dense residential and commercial development with public water and sewer. Future development includes mill re-use, some in fill, and mixed residential/commercial uses. Strict design guidelines exist. The area is a designated historic zone and retains significant characteristics of a nineteenth century mill village. The recent success of the Kenyon Falls condominium project points to the fact that mill reuse can be successful in the Village. This Plan has a section specifically related to the Village.

- Utilize the existing design guidelines.
- Work with the State DOT on the Route 31 curve realignment project to enhance growth opportunities.
- At the Main Street/Stonehouse Road intersection, potential exists for new and infill development north of the gas station and east of the small plaza.
- On Mason Street potential exists for significant adaptive reuse of the old mill buildings in the Mill Brook.
- On Bradbury Lane potential exists for redevelopment of the public works site once the new facility is built at another location.
- Some infill opportunities exist on Main Street particularly at the old antiques shop just south of Stonehouse Road, and a parcel across from the exercise gym.
- Studies are ongoing for potential sites for workforce housing.
- A site on Woodland Road was approved for a small office complex but was never built.
- The flea market building on Lake Street has potential for re-development.

9. Depot Road/Main Street- Neighborhood Commercial and Commercial Agricultural zones. This area, similar to the Daly Road/Main Street zone, has a few small service businesses. There are historic homes along Depot Road, and the Mill Brook and an old mill pond intersect the site. It is a short distance west of the Miller-Richardson sports field, the recycling center and the old town landfill. Infill and re-use opportunities exist for small scale

commercial development consistent with the neighborhood and the well-traveled Main Street. Public sewers exist on Main Street.

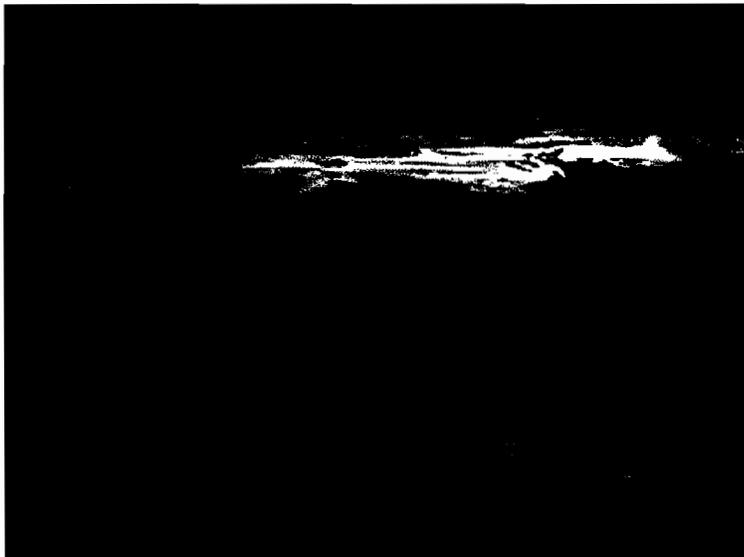
- Consider small service related businesses.
- Respect the neighborhood and the proximity to the Mill brook and wetlands.
- Consider access management issues.

10. Depot Road at the Willimantic River- River Aquifer zone. An old railroad station and an auto repair garage exist on the site. There are several historic houses on Depot Road. A rail bed for a spur exists.

- Consider potential long-term expansion of rail service (New London to Montreal) that may occur along the existing line, and the opportunities presented here.
- Respect the residential neighborhood and the river aquifer zone.
- Consider adaptive reuse of the former railroad station.
- Consider uses that benefit from the proximity to the Willimantic River.

11. Rte 31 South- Rural Development zone. There is no commercial development on this site bordering both sides of Main Street. An office park was approved several years ago but was not built. No public infrastructure exists. Light manufacturing or service businesses are likely candidates. No public water supply exists.

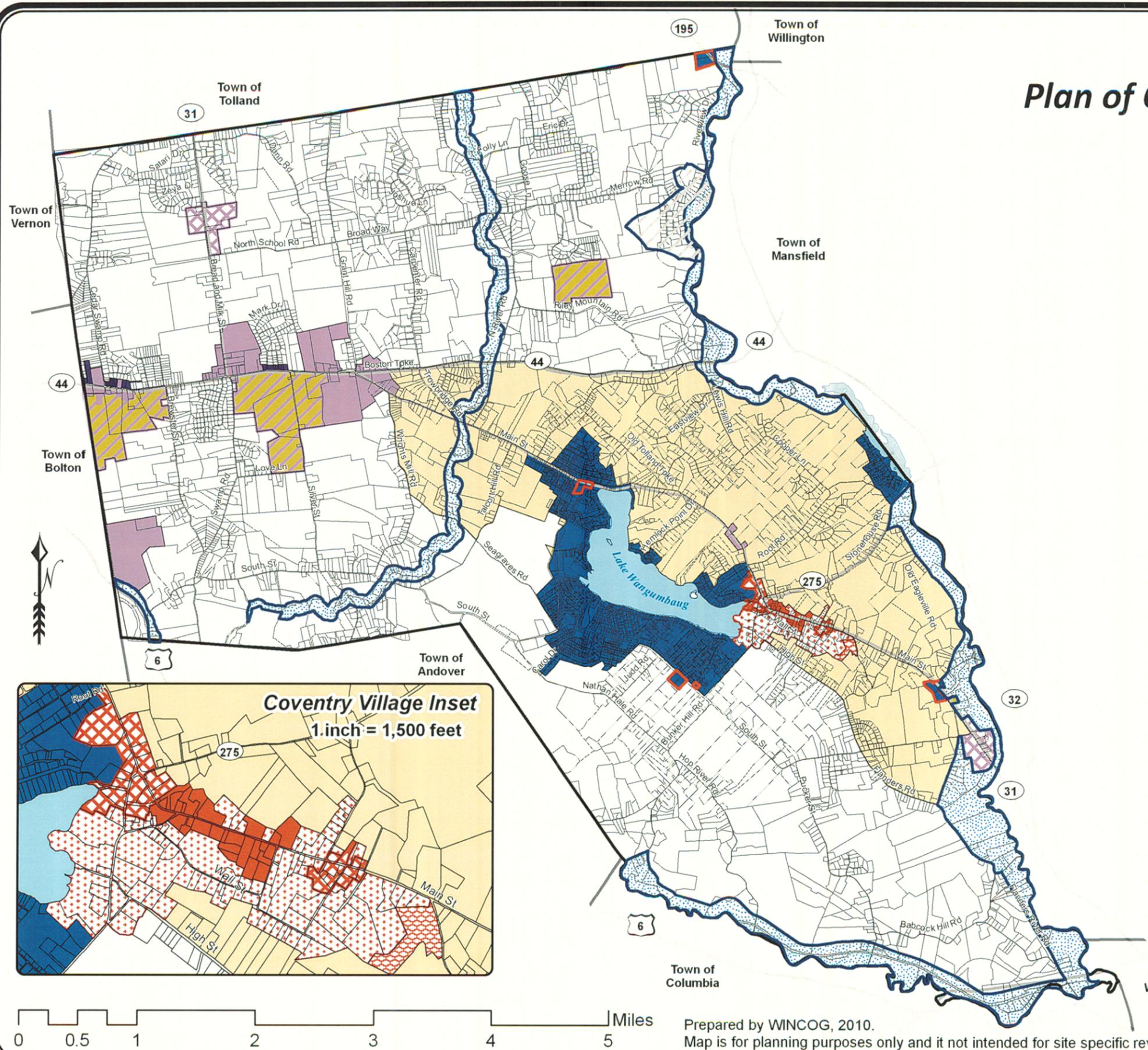
- Development should occur in a manner removed from proximity to Main Street with a single curb cut and respect for the local neighborhood.
- Public sewer could be extended to this site.
- Consider the proximity to the Miller-Richardson sports field and the town recycling center and old landfill.
- Consider the proximity to the Willimantic River Greenway.



Sunset At Lake Wangumbaug

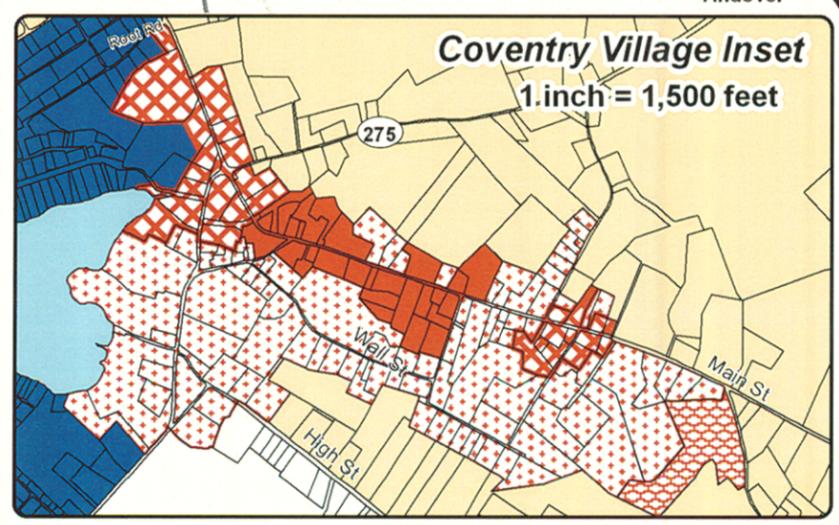
Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

1. Current Zoning 2009



- General Residential Zone - 80
- General Residential Zone - 40
- Lake Residential Zone
- River/Aquifer Zone
- Village Gateway District
- Village Residence District
- Village Center District
- Industrial Heritage Overlay District
- Commercial Zone
- Commercial/Agricultural Zone
- Rural Development Zone
- Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- Professional Office Zone
- Aquifer Protection Area - Level A

Map Sources:
 "Parcel Maps", Coventry Tax Assessor. 2009.
 "Zoning Map", Coventry Planning &
 Zoning Commission, 2009.



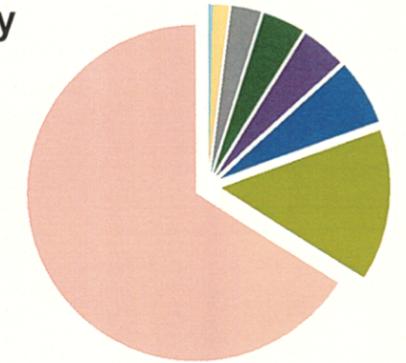
Prepared by WINCOG, 2010.
 Map is for planning purposes only and it not intended for site specific review.



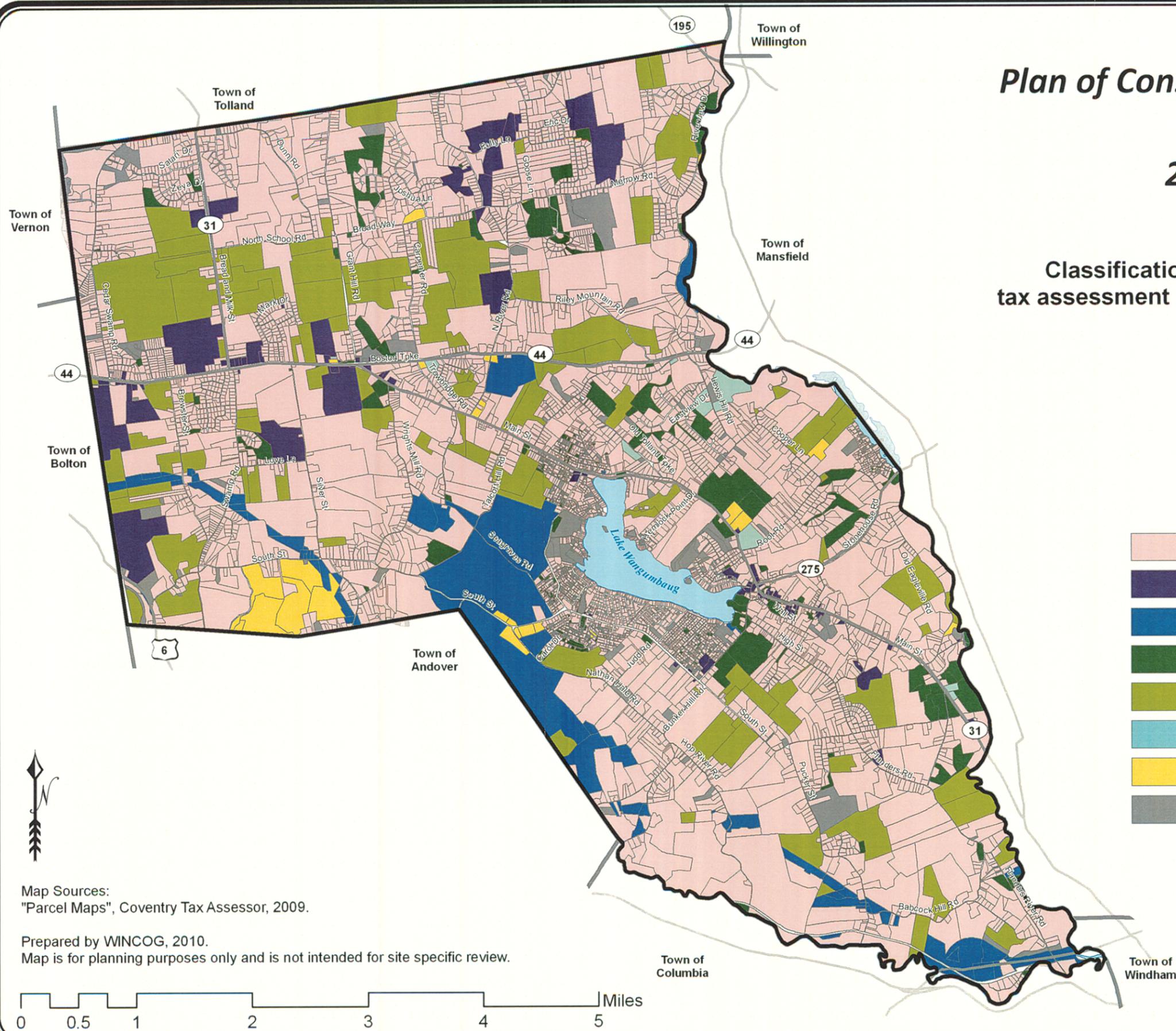
Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

2. Land Use Classifications

Classifications are for tax assessment purposes only



- Residential (15,485 acres)
- Commercial (1,005 acres)
- State of Connecticut (1,473 acres)
- Town of Coventry (949 acres)
- PA 490 Farm and Forest (3,414 acres)
- Religious (108 acres)
- Charitable Exempt (355 acres)
- Other (684 acres)



Map Sources:
"Parcel Maps", Coventry Tax Assessor, 2009.

Prepared by WINCOG, 2010.
Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for site specific review.



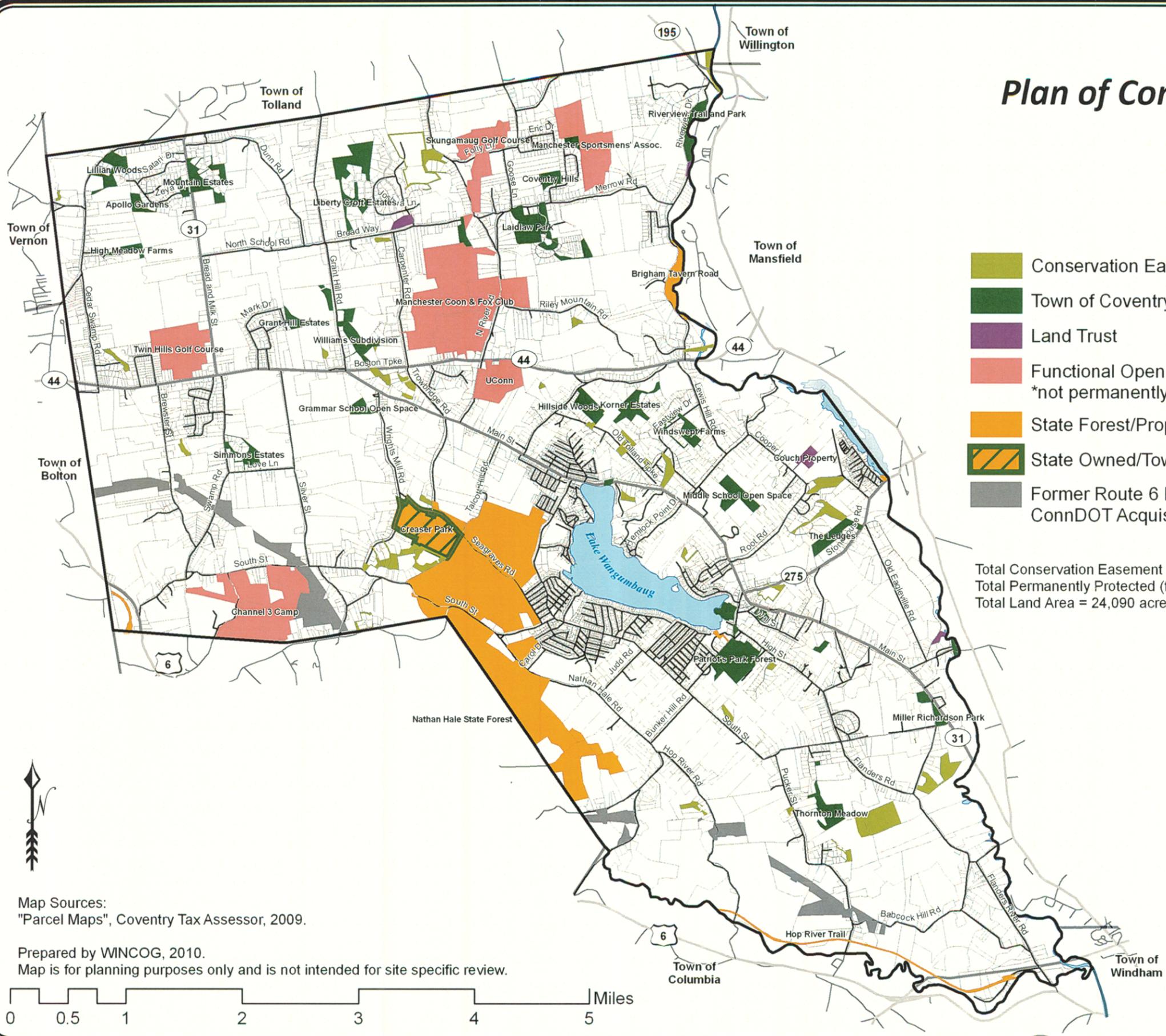
Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

3. Existing Open Space

-  Conservation Easements
-  Town of Coventry
-  Land Trust
-  Functional Open Space
not permanently protected
-  State Forest/Property
-  State Owned/Town Park
-  Former Route 6 Expressway
ConnDOT Acquisitions

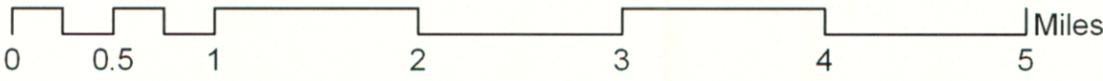
Total Conservation Easement = 295 acres
 Total Permanently Protected (fee) = 930 acres
 Total Land Area = 24,090 acres

Name	Type	Acres
Apollo Gardens	Town of Coventry	18
Boat Launch	State	2
Brigham Tavern Road	State	30
Broadway	Town of Coventry	9
Channel 3 Camp	Functional Open Space	23
Couch Property	Land Trust	12
Coutu Property	Town of Coventry	7
Coventry Hills	Town of Coventry	21
Creaser Park	State/Town	99
Depot Road	Town of Coventry	5
Grammar School Open Space	Town of Coventry	12
Grant Hill Estates	Town of Coventry	19
High Meadow Farms	Town of Coventry	12
Hillside Woods	Town of Coventry	25
Hop River Trail	State	36
Kenyon Falls	Town of Coventry	4
Korner Estates	Town of Coventry	28
Laidlaw Park	Town of Coventry	38
Liberty Croft Estates	Town of Coventry	67
Lillian Woods	Town of Coventry	29
Lisicke Beach	Town of Coventry	3
Manchester Coon & Fox Club	Functional Open Space	39
Manchester Sportsmens' Assoc	Functional Open Space	11
Merrow Road Park	Land Trust	2
Middle School Open Space	Town of Coventry	31
Miller Richardson Park	Town of Coventry	13
Mountain Estates	Town of Coventry	35
Nathan Hale State Forest	State	87
North Coventry Farms	Land Trust	10
Old Eagleville	Land Trust	4
Old Eagleville Park	State	1
Patriot's Park	Town of Coventry	13
Patriot's Park Forest	Town of Coventry	58
Riverview Trail and Park	Town of Coventry	28
Robertson School Open Space	Town of Coventry	6
Rolling Woods	Town of Coventry	32
Simmons Estates	Town of Coventry	18
Skungamaug Golf Course	Functional Open Space	10
The Ledges	Town of Coventry	26
Thornton Meadow	Town of Coventry	27
Town Green	Town of Coventry	2
Twin Hills Golf Course	Functional Open Space	11
UConn	Functional Open Space	77
Williams Subdivision	Town of Coventry	33
Willow Glen	Town of Coventry	5
Windswept Farms	Town of Coventry	23



Map Sources:
 "Parcel Maps", Coventry Tax Assessor, 2009.

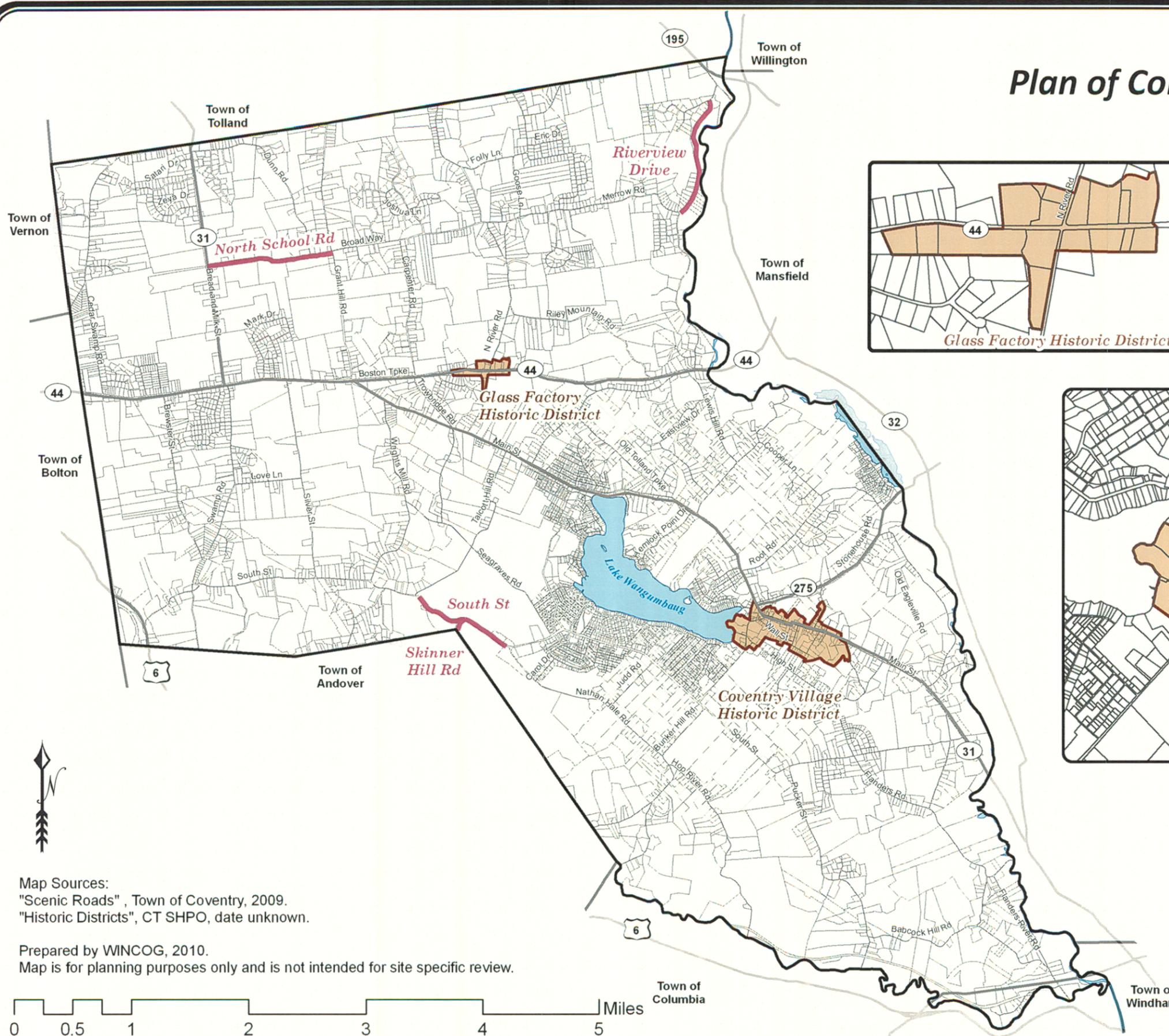
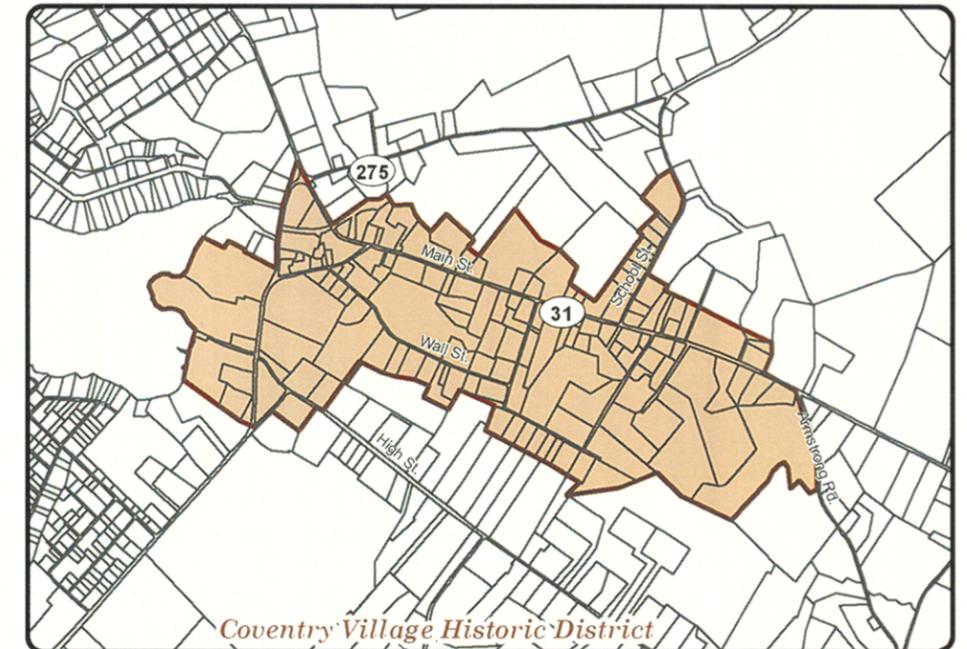
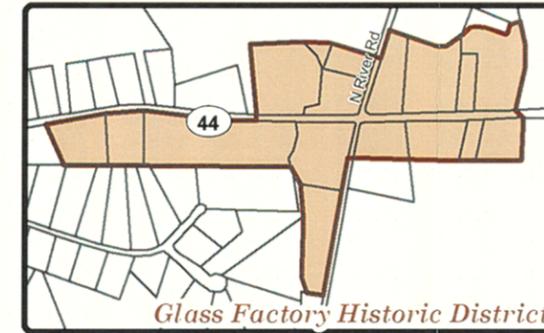
Prepared by WINCOG, 2010.
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Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

4. Historic Resources & Scenic Roads

-  Scenic Roads
-  Historic Districts



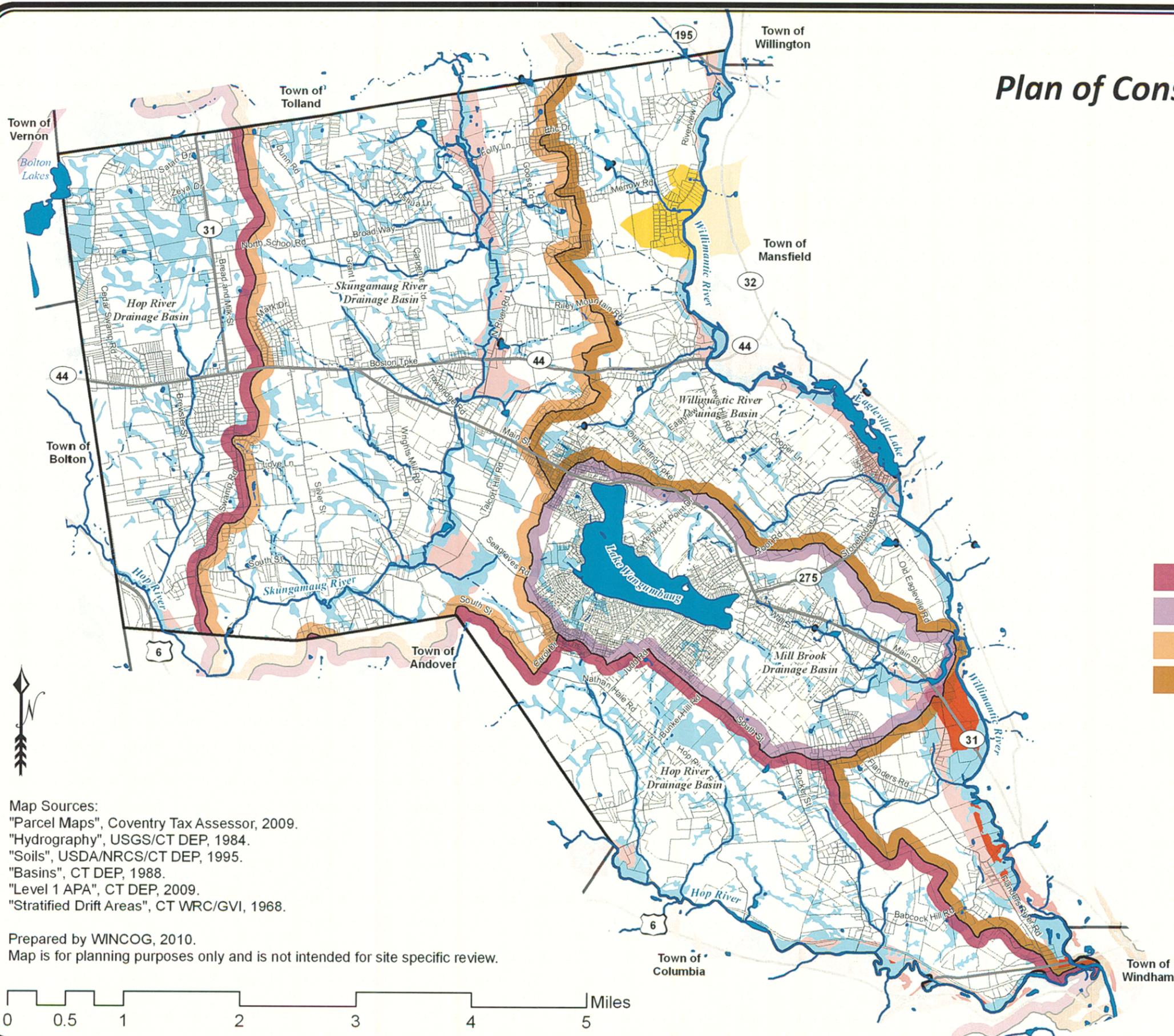
Map Sources:
 "Scenic Roads", Town of Coventry, 2009.
 "Historic Districts", CT SHPO, date unknown.

Prepared by WINCOG, 2010.
 Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for site specific review.



Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

5. Water Resources



- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- Dam
- Water
- Wetland Soils

Drainage Basin Boundaries

- Hop River Drainage Basin
- Mill Brook Drainage Basin
- Skungamaug River Drainage Basin
- Willimantic River Drainage Basin

- CT DEP Aquifer Protection Area

Stratified Drift Aquifer Areas

- 10 to 80 Feet
- 80+ Feet

Map Sources:
 "Parcel Maps", Coventry Tax Assessor, 2009.
 "Hydrography", USGS/CT DEP, 1984.
 "Soils", USDA/NRCS/CT DEP, 1995.
 "Basins", CT DEP, 1988.
 "Level 1 APA", CT DEP, 2009.
 "Stratified Drift Areas", CT WRC/GVI, 1968.

Prepared by WINCOG, 2010.
 Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for site specific review.

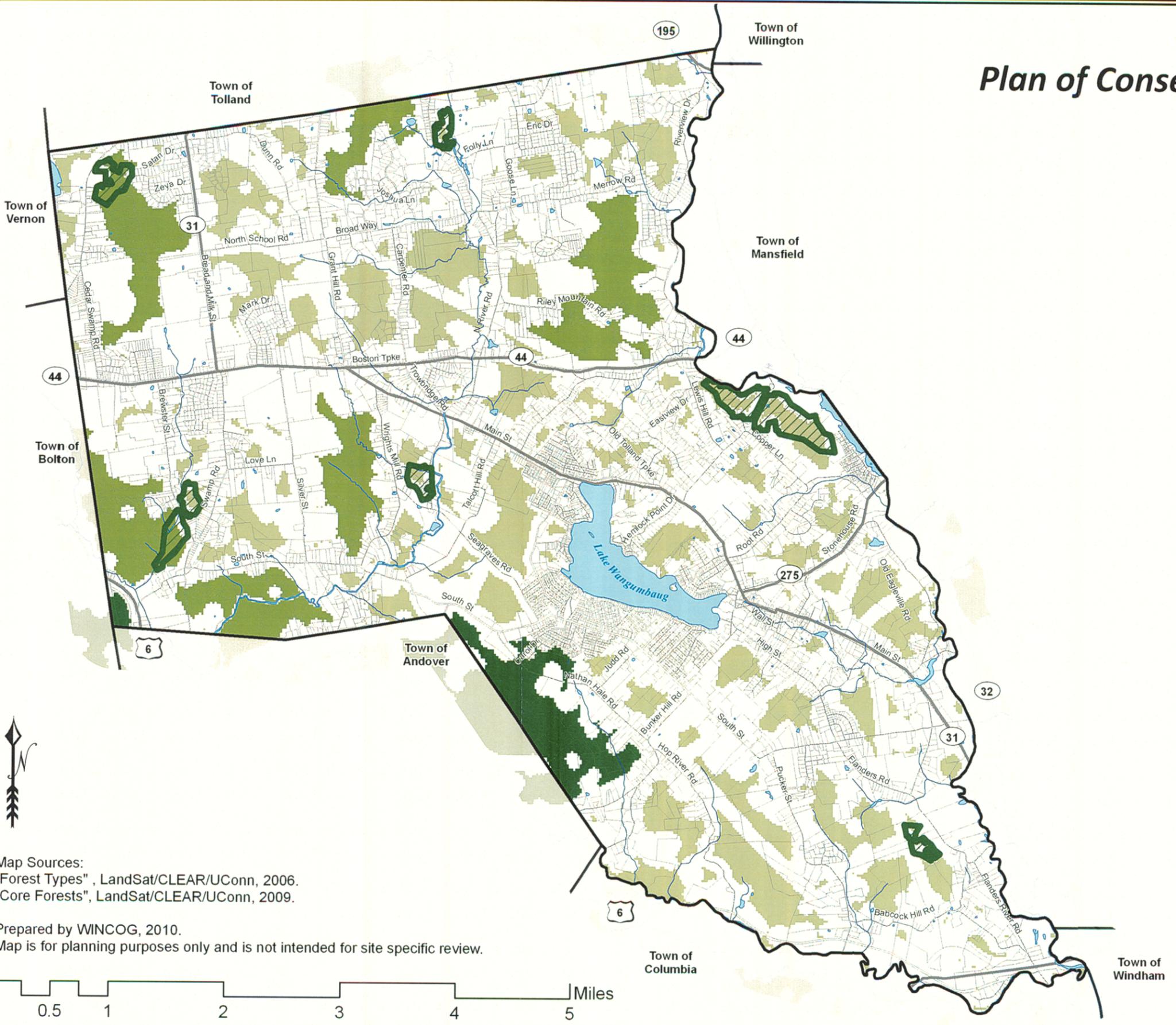


Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

6. Forest Resources

Forest Types

-  Significant Coniferous Forest Stand (>20 ac)
-  Core Forest (<250 ac)
-  Core Forest (250-500 ac)
-  Core Forest (>500 ac)



Map Sources:
 "Forest Types", LandSat/CLEAR/UConn, 2006.
 "Core Forests", LandSat/CLEAR/UConn, 2009.

Prepared by WINCOG, 2010.
 Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for site specific review.

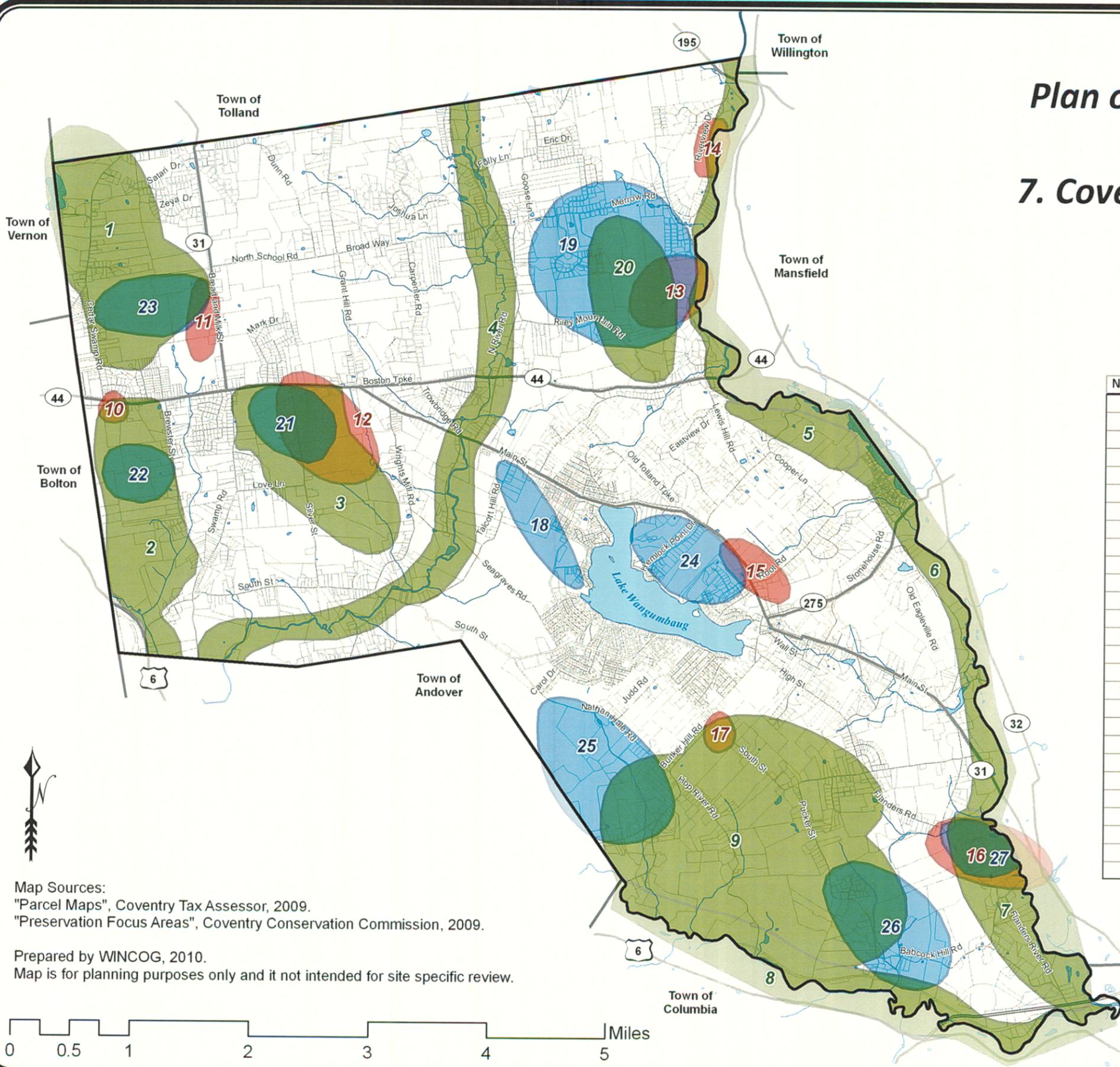


Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

7. Coventry Conservation Commission Preservation Focus Areas

-  Areas with Cultural Value
-  Areas with Functional Value
-  Areas with Natural Resource Value

Number	Resource Categories	Resources Present
1	Natural Resource Value	PFS, UFF, ES, UFS
2	Natural Resource Value	PFS, UFF
3	Natural Resource Value	PFS, UFF
4	Natural Resource Value	ES, PFS, WR (Skungamaug River)
5	Natural Resource Value	UFS
6	Natural Resource Value	ES, WR (Willimantic River)
7	Natural Resource Value	PFS, UFS
8	Natural Resource Value	ES, UFF, WR (Hop River)
9	Natural Resource Value	PFS, UFF, ES
10	Cultural Value	SV (SSW)
11	Cultural Value	SV (W)
12	Cultural Value	SV (SE)
13	Cultural Value	SV (river)
14	Cultural Value	SV (river)
15	Cultural Value	SV (SE)
16	Cultural Value	SV (ESE)
17	Cultural Value	SV (SW)
18	Functional Value	Adjacent to preserved open space
19	Functional Value	Adjacent to perceived open space, PFS
20	Natural Resource Value	PFS, UFF, perceived and preserved open sp
21	Functional Value	Perceived open space
22	Functional Value	Perceived open space
23	Functional Value	Perceived open space
24	Functional Value	Adjacent to lake
25	Functional Value	Adjacent to Nathan Hale Forest
26	Functional Value	Adjacent to preserved open space
27	Functional Value	Perceived open space



Map Sources:
 "Parcel Maps", Coventry Tax Assessor, 2009.
 "Preservation Focus Areas", Coventry Conservation Commission, 2009.
 Prepared by WINCOG, 2010.
 Map is for planning purposes only and it not intended for site specific review.

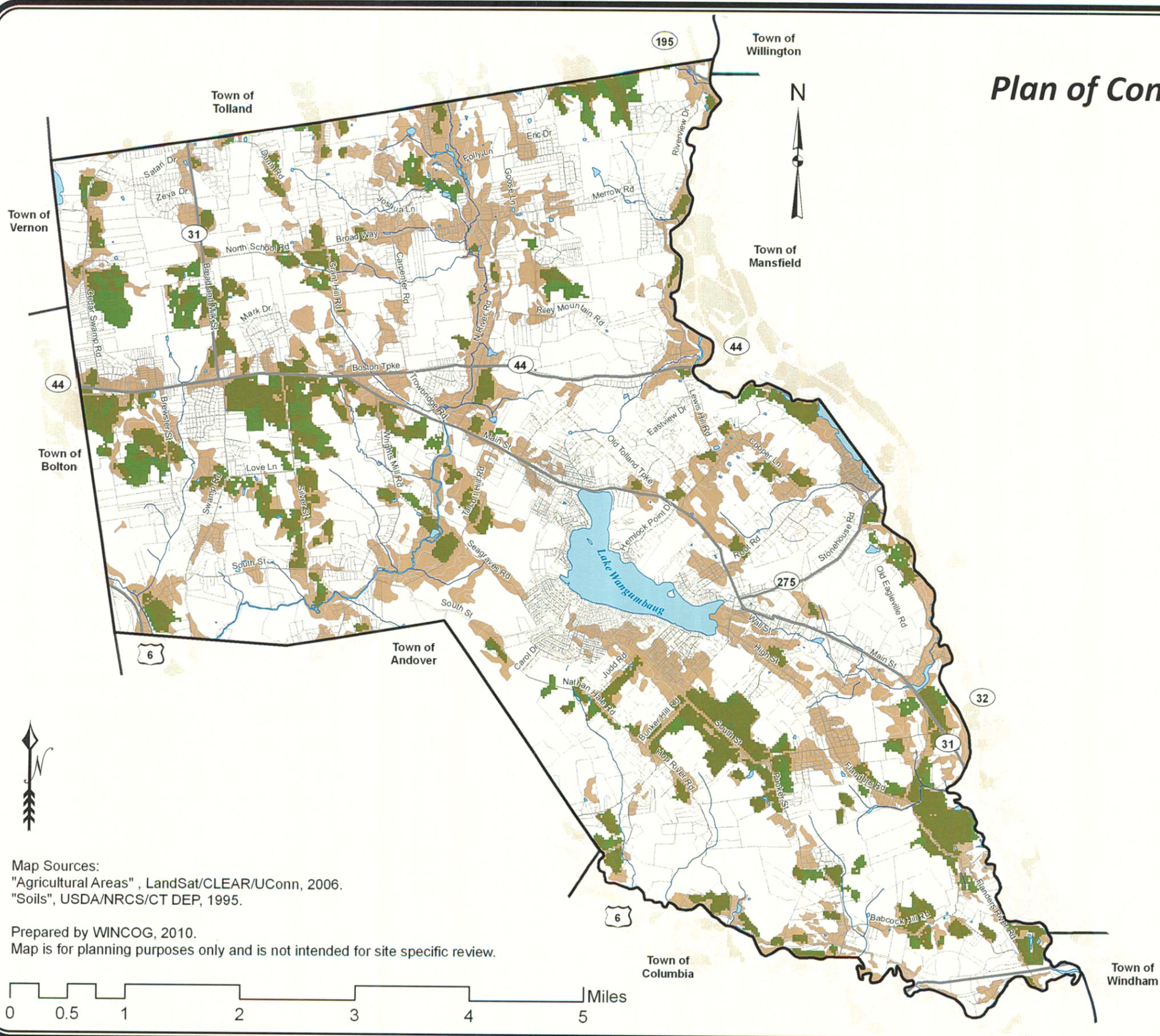


Legend:
 PFS- Prime farmland soils
 UFF- Unfragmented forest
 UFS - Unique forest stand
 WR - Water resources
 ES - Endangered species
 SV - Scenic vista



Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

8. Agricultural Resources



-  Prime and Important Farmland Soils
-  Agricultural Areas as indicated from remote sensing data



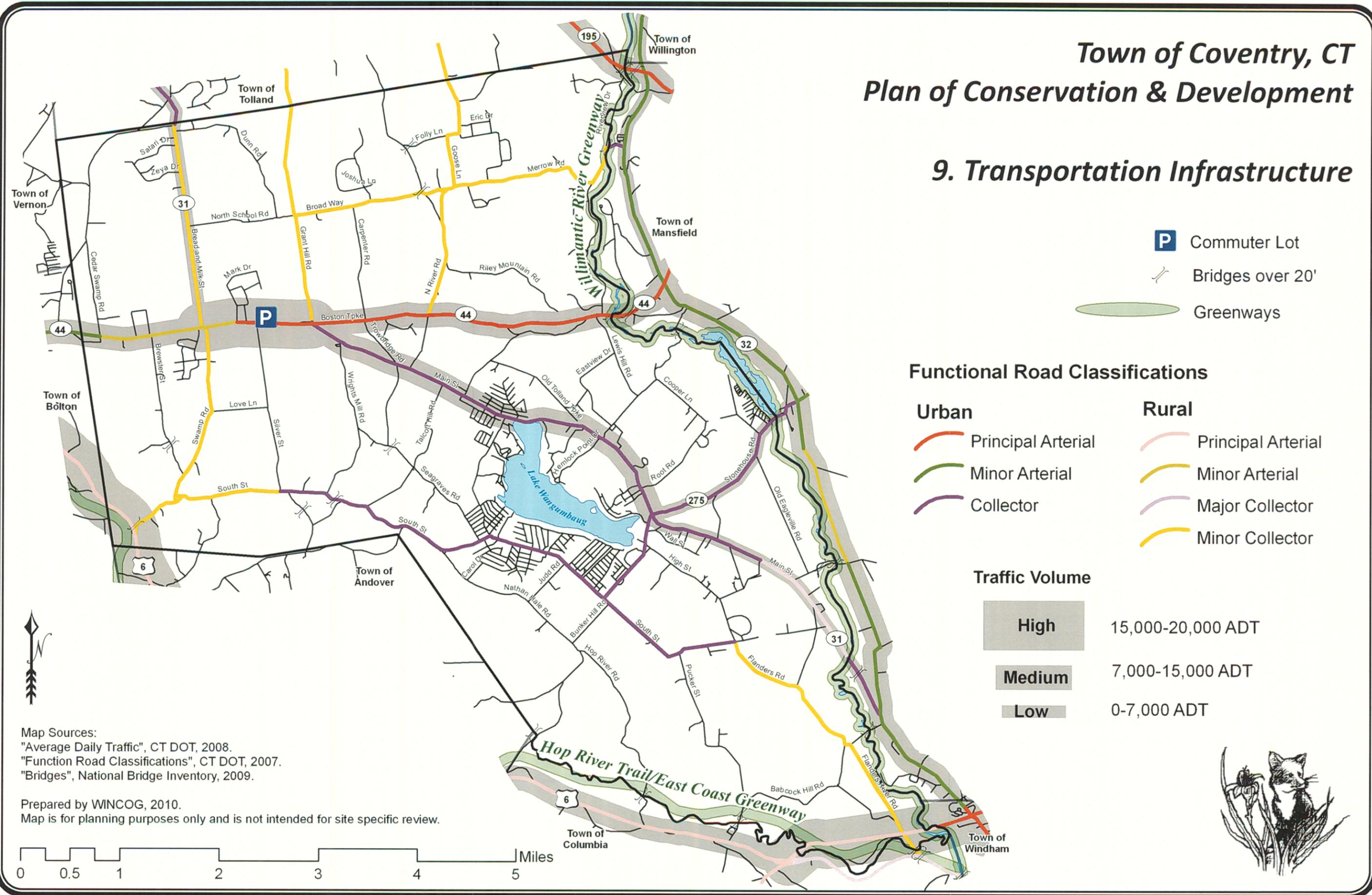
Map Sources:
 "Agricultural Areas", LandSat/CLEAR/UConn, 2006.
 "Soils", USDA/NRCS/CT DEP, 1995.

Prepared by WINCOG, 2010.
 Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for site specific review.



Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

9. Transportation Infrastructure



- P** Commuter Lot
- Bridges over 20'
- Greenways

Functional Road Classifications

- | Urban | Rural |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Principal Arterial | Principal Arterial |
| Minor Arterial | Minor Arterial |
| Collector | Major Collector |
| | Minor Collector |

Traffic Volume

- | | |
|--------|-------------------|
| High | 15,000-20,000 ADT |
| Medium | 7,000-15,000 ADT |
| Low | 0-7,000 ADT |

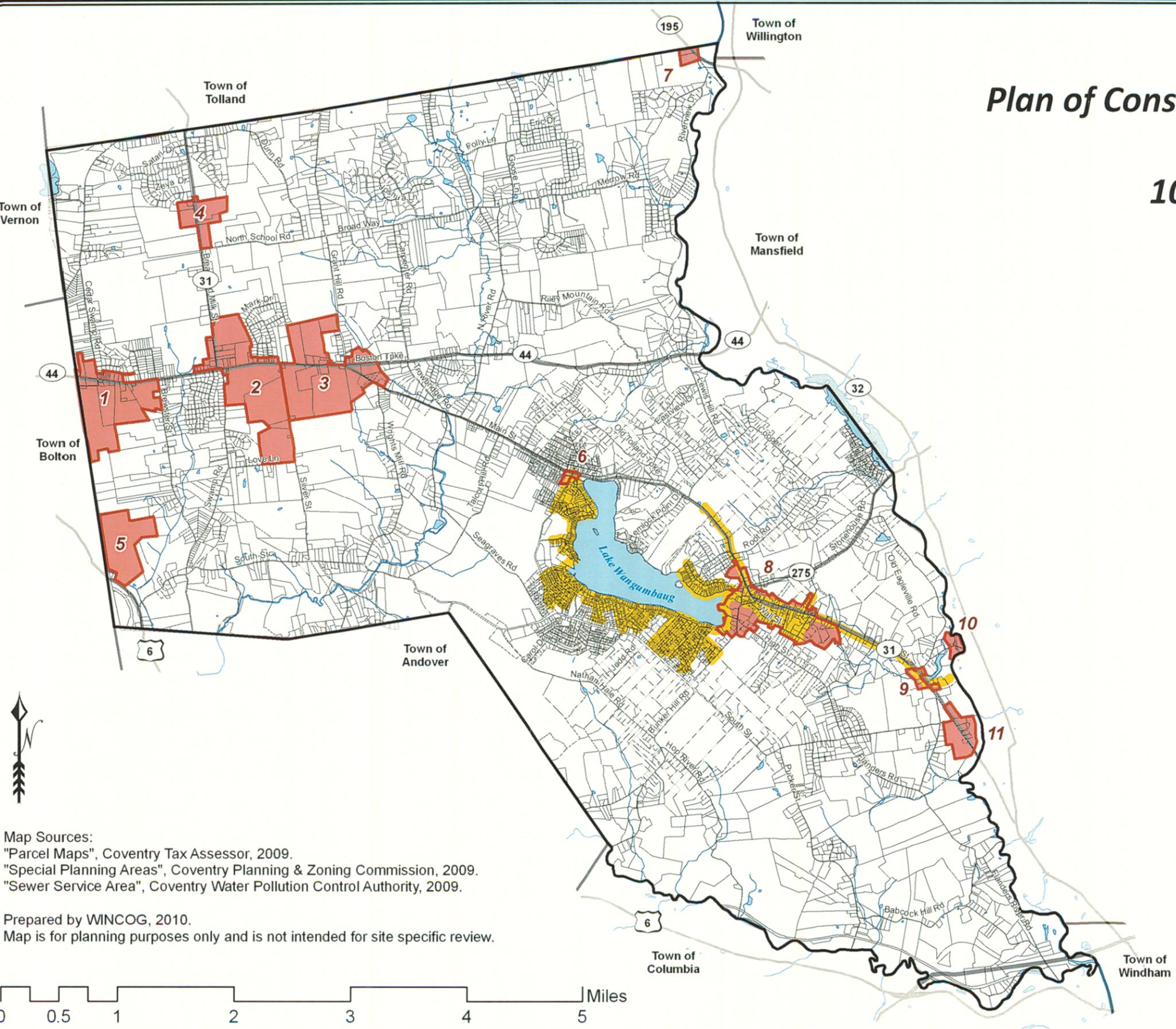
Map Sources:
 "Average Daily Traffic", CT DOT, 2008.
 "Function Road Classifications", CT DOT, 2007.
 "Bridges", National Bridge Inventory, 2009.

Prepared by WINCOG, 2010.
 Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for site specific review.



Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

10. Special Planning Areas for Growth and Infill



 Sewer Service Area
 Special Planning Areas

Number	Special Planning Areas	Acres
1	Rte. 44/Bolton Gateway	225
2	Rte. 44/Bread & Milk St.	312
3	North Coventry Village	301
4	Rte. 31 North	66
5	Rte. 6 Corridor	119
6	Daly Rd./Main St.	6
7	Rte. 195	12
8	South Coventry Village	208
9	Depot Rd./Main St.	14
10	Depot Rd. at Willimantic River	15
11	Rte. 31 South	57

Map Sources:
 "Parcel Maps", Coventry Tax Assessor, 2009.
 "Special Planning Areas", Coventry Planning & Zoning Commission, 2009.
 "Sewer Service Area", Coventry Water Pollution Control Authority, 2009.

Prepared by WINCOG, 2010.
 Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for site specific review.



Town of Coventry, CT Plan of Conservation & Development

11. Recommended Future Land Use

Preservation Focus Areas & Special Planning Areas



-  Preservation Focus Areas
-  Special Planning Areas
-  Permanently Protected Open Space

Number	Special Planning Areas	Acres
1	Rte. 44/Bolton Gateway	225
2	Rte. 44/Bread & Milk St.	312
3	North Coventry Village	301
4	Rte. 31 North	66
5	Rte. 6 Corridor	119
6	Daly Rd./Main St.	6
7	Rte. 195	12
8	South Coventry Village	208
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10	Depot Rd. at Willimantic River	15
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Map Sources:
 "Parcel Maps", Coventry Tax Assessor, 2009.
 "Special Planning Areas", Coventry Planning & Zoning Commission, 2009.
 "Preservation Focus Areas", Coventry Conservation Commission, 2009.

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Town of Coventry

Build-Out Analysis and Cost of Community Services Study

Prepared by
Green Valley Institute
June 19, 2008

A *Build-Out Analysis* is a valuable tool to help a community understand the impacts of development based on current land use regulations. Once a community understands these implications and has a clear vision for its future, it can determine if current regulations and planning strategies meet their needs or if alternatives should be investigated and additional steps taken to address their goals.

The Cost of Community Services Study is a tool used to demonstrate the cost to provide town services on a land use basis. The American Farm Land Trust developed the methodology 20 years ago, and it has been used across the country to evaluate the differences between revenue generated, and services required, by specific land uses.



A Coventry farm along the Willimantic River



Coventry Village

Aerial photos courtesy of GLSweetnam.com

BUILD-OUT

The Build-Out Analysis is based on current zoning regulations that stipulate site conditions prohibiting development (such as wetland soils or steep slopes) and minimum lot size or building envelope size. The analysis then calculates the maximum development possible in a community. A Build-Out Analysis isn't an attempt to forecast what will happen, but rather what is possible under current zoning regulations.

Process. The first step in determining how much can be built in a town is to determine what is potentially available for development. Meaning, a fully developed site cannot be developed further, nor can sites smaller than the regulated minimum lot size or others with wetland soils or steep slopes.

This step is made somewhat easier with computerized mapping, known as Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping. GIS links maps with a database similar to an Excel spreadsheet. Each specific point on the map is geo-rectified (precise latitude and longitude), as new information is layered on, each bit of data sits precisely in its proper geo-rectified location. With a mouse click you can see soil type, depth to bedrock, vegetation, zone, parcel data, etc. for a specific area. GIS is an excellent tool for town-wide planning, but site specific planning still requires detail field work, especially to determine soil types and wetland areas.

Parcel Information. Once a year the Town Assessor develops a Grand List of all the properties within the town along with an assessment, for tax purposes, of each property. The Coventry Assessor had developed a list for 10/1/07 and was in the process of verifying each assessment when we began the data gathering. A digitized GIS Coventry parcel map, dated 2005, was also utilized. By merging the Assessor data with the parcel map, a table listing all Coventry parcels, the owner, the use and the acreage was developed. Care was taken to remove from the GIS database any parcels that, based on the assessor's grand list and information from the Town Planner, had been subdivided and considered 'developed'; in all cases, when in doubt, the conservative approach was taken.

Table 1, to the right, summarizes Coventry's parcel data, based on the 10/1/07 Assessor's Grand List. Coventry is currently divided into 6,727 properties totaling over 23,000 acres.

Table 1

**Town of Coventry
Current Land Use Summary**

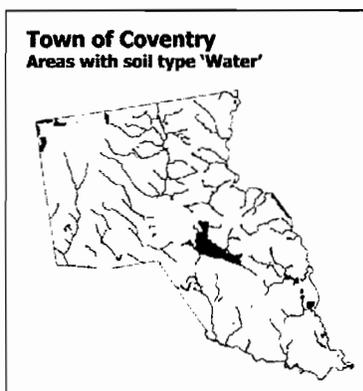
Category	Number of Lots	Acres	Avg Acres
Residential			
Condo	112	-	-
Less than or equal to 1 acre	2,335	1,285.89	0.55
Between 1 and 2 acres	1,127	1,567.40	1.39
Between 2 and 3 acres	418	1,015.21	2.43
Between 3 and 5 acres	302	1,182.98	3.92
Between 5 and 20 acres	334	2,959.38	8.86
Greater than 20 acres	92	4,507.94	49.00
	<u>4,720</u>	<u>12,518.80</u>	
Commercial, Industrial and Public Utility			
Less than or equal to 3 acres	51	60.04	1.18
Between 3 and 5 acres	3	11.85	3.95
Between 5 and 10 acres	2	19.56	9.78
Greater than 10 acres	5	353.16	70.63
Industrial	9	42.05	4.67
Public Utility	29	111.04	3.83
	<u>99</u>	<u>598</u>	
State/Municipal/Institution			
CT/Coventry less than 1 acre	197	54.28	0.28
CT/Coventry more than 1 acre	190	2,572.46	13.54
Quaisi Government	15	53.38	3.56
Almada Lodge	11	355.91	32.36
Trust	4	35.63	8.91
Church/Cemetery	16	141.49	8.84
	<u>433</u>	<u>3,213.15</u>	
Vacant Land			
Less than 1 acre	1,017	222.98	0.22
Between 1 and 2 acres	110	155.29	1.41
Greater than 2 acres	348	6,538.08	18.79
	<u>1,475</u>	<u>6,916.35</u>	
	<u>6,727</u>	<u>23,246.00</u>	

Source: 10/1/07 Coventry Grand List

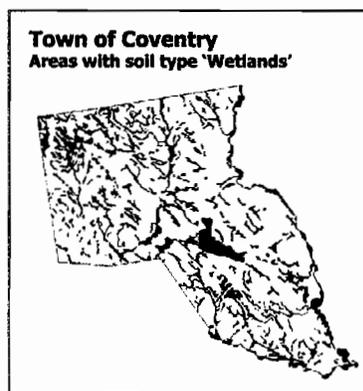
According to GIS calculations, the total area within the town borders is 24,505 acres. This calculation is determined by spatial analysis of the GIS Town Boundary data layer. The variance between the Grand List totals and the GIS totals was researched; the primary difference is because the Assessor’s Grand List does not include Coventry Lake, nor streets and roads.

Site Limitations. The next step was to look at site limitation based on current zoning and wetlands regulations that place restrictions for development. In Coventry, building is not permitted on wetland soils, flood plain soils, within a 100-year flood plain, or slopes greater than 20%; and Inland Wetland regulations required that any activity within 75’ area of wetland soils, or 150’ from an important river or waterbody, be reviewed.

By analyzing Coventry’s GIS information, the potential site limitations for development can be determined. The USGS Soil Survey data defines soils by various categories including water, hydric or wetland soils, and also by the amount of slope. You can’t build in water; Map A shows the amount and locations of soils classed as water. Regulations stipulate that you cannot build in wetland soils, or areas with flood plain soils; the USGS Soil Survey refers to these as Hydric Soils and they are shown in Map B. The USGS Soil Survey does not classify slope at 20%, so slopes greater than 15% were used as depicted in Map C, the actual limited areas are less than shown.



Map A: Water



Map B: Hydric Soils



Map C: Slopes > 15%

The result of this analysis is summarized in Map D and also Table 2. 37.5% of the land in Coventry has some site limitations for development, additionally 12.2% is within the wetland review area. Much of Coventry was developed long before these regulations were in place, so some of these ‘unbuildable’ areas have actually been built upon.



Map D: Summary of all Site Limitations

Total Acres per GIS	24,505
Coventry Lake	374
Streets and Roads ROWs	791
	1,165
	Net 23,340
Town-wide Site limitation (in acres):	
Slopes > 15%	3,194
Ponds, Streams and Rivers	1,246
Wetlands	4,304
	8,744
	average site limitations town-wide 37.5%
Buffer on Wetlands, Rivers.	2,838
	average additional limitations 12.2%

Source: GIS soil data layer by classification from GVI 2/08

Potential for Development. The next step was to determine the parcels that have potential to be developed based on the existing land use. Clearly, vacant parcels over 2 acres, without conservation easements or other protection, have the potential to be developed. Also, some developed parcels are not fully developed and conceivably could be subdivided in the future. For this analysis, a single family home on a parcel larger than 5 acres was considered to have excess land that could also be subdivided and later developed. The State of Connecticut and the Town of Coventry combined have ownership of over 2,500 acres of the land, for this analysis those lands were considered not available for further development. Table 3 summarizes the land, by category, which for this study was considered potentially developable for residential purposes.

**Table 3
Town of Coventry
Current Parcels with Potential for Development
(based on Use and Size)**

	Number of Lots	Total Acres
Residential Use (between 5 and 20 acres)	334	2,959
Residential Use (greater than 20 acres)	92	4,508
Vacant Parcels (greater than 2 acres)	348	6,538
Total	774	14,005

Source: Synthesis of Table 1

Build-out Calculation. The process of calculating a mathematical build-out includes setting aside land for any existing use, reducing available land by Coventry’s average site limitations (49.6% including wetland review), then subtracting land (15%) for infrastructure that would be needed to accommodate future growth such as roads and new municipal buildings and parks. If future lot size averaged 4.5 acres (2.2 acres without site limitations), an additional 2,329 homes could be built in Coventry, a 49% increase in the number of residences. If the future average lot size were 3.0 acres (1.5 acres without site limitations) the number of additional homes would increase to 3,417 homes, a 72% increase. Table 4 summarizes the build-out analysis. Because the GIS data was also available, the buildout was calculated on a parcel level for comparison; those results were within a 3.9% variance.

In each of the previous two decades, Coventry’s population has increased 13% and 14%. With the housing pressures facing Eastern Connecticut in the future, a 10% growth rate per decade is likely, if so, build-out could be reached as soon as 42 years from now, only 30 years if the growth rate is 15%.

**Table 4
Town of Coventry
Buildout Calculations**

	Lots	Tot Ac.	Avg. Acre	Ac. Set Aside for Ex Use	Avg. Acre	Reduced by Avg Limitations	Less 15% for Future Infrast.	Net Available Acres	If 3 acre with 1.5 acres buildable	If 4.5 acre with 2.2 acres buildable
Residential Use: 5 to 20 ac	334	2,959	8.9	5.0	3.9	2.0	1.7	567.8	379	258
Residential Use: > 20 acres	92	4,508	49.0	5.0	44.0	22.2	18.9	1738.8	1,159	790
Vacant Parcels > 2 acres	348	6,538	18.8		18.8	9.5	8.1	2818.8	1,879	1,281
	774	14,005								
									Additional households projected	
									3,417	2,329
									Current Residences (Table 1)	
									4,720	4,720
									72%	49%
									Projected population	
									21,582	18,696

COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDY (COCS)

The Green Valley Institute conducted a COCS study for Coventry based on the 2008 FY budget. Budget documents, bonding structure and financial statements were analyzed, and each budget revenue and expenditure was allocated to one of three land use categories: Residential, Commercial/ Industrial or Open Space/Farm/Vacant.

The residential category includes all town revenues and town expenditures associated with single- and multi-family residences, apartment buildings, farmhouses, and rental units and the people that inhabit them. Town revenues and expenditures associated with businesses, manufacturers or retailers are allocated to the commercial and industrial category. The open space/farm/vacant category includes all town revenues and town expenditures associated with all undeveloped lands, agriculture lands, forests, and excess residential land (based on Town Assessor data).

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, the study showed that tax revenues from residential properties are not sufficient to support the cost of services provided to them; for each dollar paid in town taxes \$1.06 was used in services. The other two land use categories each paid more in taxes than were used in services.

Although counterintuitive, development over time may not bring lower taxes. There is an immediate increase in tax revenue, but gradually the demand for increased services, and the need to upgrade infrastructure increases expenditures to an amount that exceeds the increased revenue, and the mill rate must be increased. Even new commercial and industrial development can cause an increase in residential development, require additional infrastructure, increase traffic, and have other impacts that can contribute to an increased cost of services.

Coventry Cost of Community Services Study			
The dollar cost of services for every dollar paid in local taxes			
	Residential	Commercial Industrial	Open Space Farm/Vacant
Coventry 2007-08	1.06	.25	.25

Table 1. Cost of Community Services Study shows the amount of services provided to each land use category for every \$1.00 paid in local taxes. These results indicate that as land use shifts from undeveloped to residential use, the demand for services increases. This increased demand will result in an increased mill rate.

Other Connecticut COCS Studies			
The dollar cost of services for every dollar paid in local taxes			
	Residential	Commercial Industrial	Open Space Farm/Vacant
Bolton (1)	1.05	.23	.50
Brooklyn (3)	1.09	.17	.30
Durham (2)	1.07	.27	.23
Farmington (2)	1.33	.32	.31
Lebanon (4)	1.12	.16	.17
Litchfield (2)	1.11	.34	.34
Pomfret (2)	1.06	.27	.86
Windham (3)	1.15	.24	.19

(1) Geisler 1998; (2) SoNE Forest Consort 1995; (3) GVI 2002
(4) GVI 2007

Table 2. Cost of Community Services Studies for other Connecticut towns parallels the Coventry results and shows that the more developed towns have increased demand for services from residential properties.

FUTURE FISCAL IMPACT: A 20-YEAR PROJECTION

Any land use changes, will have a fiscal impact in the future. Developing a parcel removes it from a vacant status to 'developed' and increases the Grand List for tax assessments. Because this developed parcel now has a greater demand for town services, town expenses will also increase. For example, if a large parcel were to become a factory employing 50 people with many truck deliveries, perhaps the town would have an added expense of upgrading and maintaining nearby town roads. Many future expenses are incremental – one more house won't mean the need for an addition to the elementary school, but perhaps 50 or 100 more houses would increase the student population enough that an expansion would be necessary.

Assumptions. Projections are based on assumptions. The assumptions that were used for this study are based on information received from Coventry and other fiscal forecasting studies.

To isolate the effect of change in land use from the effect of inflation and other budget increases, the following assumptions were made for the calculations:

- State aid to Coventry would remain the same
- State reimbursement rate (%) for education would remain the same
- Coventry's mill rate was fixed at 27.59, the current rate
- There would be 0 % inflation
- All town salaries would remain the same
- All 2008 debt would be paid within 20 years

Assuming a 10% per decade population growth, in 20 years:

- Revenue from town services and fees would increase at the rate of growth
- Taxes would increase by the growth in the grand list from the shift from vacant to developed
- Certain expenses would increase at the rate of growth (i.e. library, public works)
- Certain expenses would increase at less than the rate of growth because population increase would have limited affect (i.e. legal counsel, elections)
- Certain expenses would increase at a higher rate than the rate of growth because population increase would have a greater affect (i.e. public safety may require addition of one more officer, or additional fire safety personnel and equipment may be needed)
- Bonding for municipal non-educational projects would total \$25 million during those 20 years.

Assumptions made regarding Coventry education system

- Primary and Intermediate Schools will reach capacity in less than 20 years
- High School and Middle School have capacity for 20 year's growth
- School population would increase at a rate of 1.2 per new households for 13 of the 20 years, and at the current town average for the other 7 years.

Projections. If Coventry were to grow at 10% per decade, in 2028 (20 years from today) land use could shift with 2,917 acres removed from vacant land and developed into 939 homes and 10 new businesses. This could result in an increase in the grand list of over \$133 million and bring in \$4.1 million in additional local taxes at today's mill rate. However, even with conservative estimates, the demand for services for an increased population and additional school children would cost an additional \$6.7 million in expenditures, and create a short fall of \$2.8 million, a 3.31 mill rate increase (12%), would be needed to balance the budget. This increase is only due to the services needed for the additional population as inflation and other variables were excluded from the study.



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The Town of Coventry, Connecticut

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SURVEY BACKGROUND

About The National Citizen Survey™

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

Understanding the Results

Survey Administration

Following the mailing of a pre-survey notification postcard to a random sample of 1,200 households, surveys were mailed to the same residences approximately one week later. A reminder letter and a new survey were sent to the same households after two weeks. Of the mailed postcards, 29 were undeliverable due to vacant or “not found” addresses. Completed surveys were received from 495 residents, for a response rate of 42%. Typically, the response rates obtained on citizen surveys range from 25% to 40%.

It is customary to describe the precision of estimates made from surveys by a “level of confidence” (or margin of error). The 95 percent confidence level for this survey of 495 residents is generally no greater than plus or minus 4 percentage points around any given percent reported for the entire sample.

The results were weighted to reflect the demographic profile of all residents in the Town of Coventry. (For more information on the survey methodology, see Appendix B in the Report of Results. A copy of the survey materials can be found in Appendix C of the Report of Results.)

Use of the “Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor” Response Scale

The scale on which respondents are asked to record their opinions about service and community quality is “excellent,” “good,” “fair” or “poor” (EGFP). While symmetrical scales often are the right choice in other measurement tasks, we have found that ratings of almost every local government service in almost every jurisdiction tend, on average, to be positive (that is, above the scale midpoint). Therefore, to permit finer distinctions among positively rated services, EGFP offers three options across which to spread those ratings. EGFP is more neutral because it requires no positive statement of service quality to judge (as agree-disagree scales require) and, finally, EGFP intends to measure absolute quality of service delivery or community quality (unlike satisfaction scales which ignore residents’ perceptions of quality in favor of their report on the acceptability of the level of service offered).

Putting Evaluations onto a 100-Point Scale

Although responses to many of the evaluative questions were made on a 4 point scale with 1 representing the best rating and 4 the worst, many of the results in this summary are reported on a common scale where 0 is the worst possible rating and 100 is the best possible rating. If everyone reported “excellent,” then the result would be 100 on the 100-point scale. Likewise, if all respondents gave a “poor” rating, the result would be 0 on the 100-point scale. If the average rating for quality of life was “good,” then the result would be 67 on a 100-point scale; “fair” would be 33 on the 100-point scale. The 95 percent confidence interval around an average score on the 100-point scale is no greater than plus or minus 3 points based on all respondents.

PROFILE OF COVENTRY

As assessed by the survey, about 33% of Coventry residents have lived in the community for more than 20 years and 72% are over age 34. Another 13% are over age 64. Eighty-one percent are currently employed; 15% rent; 85% own and 87% live in detached single family homes. Over 79% of Coventry residents have at least some college and 77% have annual household incomes above \$50,000. Three percent of Coventry residents reported that they are Spanish, Hispanic or Latino and 96% said they are White or Caucasian.

COMMUNITY LIFE

The National Citizen Survey™ contained many questions related to the life of residents in the community. Survey participants were asked to rate their overall quality of life, as well as other aspects of quality of life in Coventry. They also evaluated characteristics of the community, and gave their perceptions of safety in the Town of Coventry. The questionnaire assessed use of the amenities of the community and involvement by respondents in the civic and economic life of Coventry.

Quality of Life

When asked to rate the overall quality of life in Coventry, 12% of respondents thought it was “excellent.” Only 1% rated overall quality of life as “poor.” Coventry as a place to raise children received an average rating of 63 on a 100-point scale.

Ratings of Community Characteristics

The highest rated characteristics of Coventry were ease of car travel, overall appearance, and sense of community. When asked about potential problems in Coventry, the three concerns rated by the highest proportion of respondents as a “major problem” were taxes, too much growth, and run down buildings, weed lots, or junk vehicles. The rate of population growth in Coventry was viewed as “too fast” by 51% of respondents, while 5% thought it was “too slow.”

Perceptions of Safety

When evaluating safety in the community, 85% of respondents felt “somewhat” or “very safe” from violent crimes in Coventry. In their neighborhood after dark, 87% of survey participants felt “somewhat” or “very safe.”

As assessed by the survey, 9% of households reported that at least one member had been the victim of one or more crimes in the past year. Of those who had been the victim of a crime, 84% had reported it to police.

Community Participation

Participation in the civic, social and economic life of Coventry during the past year was assessed on the survey. Among those completing the questionnaire, 39% reported volunteering in the past year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Several aspects of the government of the Town of Coventry were evaluated by residents completing The National Citizen Survey™. They were asked how much trust they placed in their local government, and what they felt about the services they receive from the Town of Coventry. Those who had any contact with a Town of Coventry employee in the past year gave their impressions of the most recent encounter.

Public Trust

When asked to evaluate whether they were pleased with the overall direction taken by the Town of Coventry, residents gave an average rating of 52 on a 100-point scale.

Service Provided by Coventry

The overall quality of services provided by the Town of Coventry was rated as 57 on a 100-point scale.

The Town of Coventry Employees

Impressions of the Town of Coventry employees were assessed on the questionnaire. Those who had been in contact with a Town of Coventry employee in the past year (79%) rated their overall impression as 72 on a 100-point scale.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Five additional questions were asked by the Town of Coventry as listed below. The results for these questions are also available in the Report of Results.

Policy Question #1

To what extent do you support or oppose funding the current level of services for each of the following?	Public safety	Road and bridge improvements	Economic development	More recreation facilities	Preservation of open space	Education
Strongly support	52%	38%	34%	19%	52%	64%
Somewhat support	40%	56%	51%	48%	32%	23%
Somewhat oppose	6%	5%	12%	26%	11%	7%
Strongly oppose	2%	1%	4%	8%	5%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Policy Question #2

If the Town were to have to reduce services, in which services are you willing to make changes? Please check all that apply:	Percent of Respondents
Reduce Town Hall operating hours and services	28%
Increased response time for the Town to answer citizen complaints on building, fire, health and zoning enforcement	22%
Reduce educational expenditures	19%
Reduce recreation programs or park maintenance	17%
Reduce the level of public works services	14%
Eliminate lake patrol and crime prevention programs	14%
None of these	38%
Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one category.	

Policy Question #3

Please rate how important, if at all, you think each of the following investments is for the Town of Coventry:	Open space (e.g. land purchases)	Programs for senior citizens (e.g. Dial a Ride)	Public safety: Police and Fire (e.g. North Coventry Fire Station expansion)	Public infrastructure (e.g. new public works facility, streets, bridges)	Develop parks and ball fields (e.g. soccer fields)	Programs for children (e.g. Pre-school Center)
Essential	36%	17%	39%	15%	11%	22%
Very important	27%	38%	30%	33%	18%	28%
Somewhat important	25%	38%	22%	43%	48%	34%
Not at all important	12%	7%	10%	10%	23%	16%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Policy Question #4

If the Town was to consider a plan to acquire open space, development rights or conservation easements, assuming that every \$1 million dollars borrowed would increase the taxes of the average household by \$15.00 per year, please indicate to what degree you would support or oppose a bond issue for this purpose:

Strongly support	30%
Somewhat support	36%
Somewhat oppose	15%
Strongly oppose	18%
Total	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.

Policy Question #5

Please rate the quality of service by the Coventry Police Department in the following areas:	Overall agency performance	Overall competence of agency employees	Officers' attitude and behavior toward citizens
Excellent	29%	28%	34%
Good	54%	50%	41%
Fair	13%	17%	16%
Poor	4%	4%	10%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Note: "don't know" responses have been removed.



OPEN SPACE PLAN

COVENTRY
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
2010

OPEN SPACE PLAN COVENTRY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

The Open Space Plan was developed by the Coventry Conservation Commission for the purpose of providing town officials, boards and commissions, and the residents of Coventry with a framework by which land use decisions can be made. The primary function of this plan is to distinguish and identify areas that merit various levels of long term protection. The Plan will point out some of the benefits of open space preservation, list some specific objectives, and identify some possible methods of achieving these goals. Also, based on information from our Natural Resources Inventory and open space mapping, recommendations will be made for preservation of specific critical areas

OPEN SPACE DEFINITION

Open Space is land that is preserved or restricted for any of the following purposes (with limited or restricted access to the public):

- Maintains or enhances the conservation of natural, scenic, cultural and historical resources.
- Protects wetlands/watercourses and other bodies of water.
- Protects water supply sources.
- Promotes the conservation of soil and prime farmland.
- Enhances the public value of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, natural reservations and sanctuaries and/or other open space.
- Enhances public recreation opportunities.
- Preserves historic and/or culturally significant sites.
- Assists in the promotion of orderly growth and development.

WHY PRESERVE OPEN SPACE IN COVENTRY

Economic Benefits

Protecting open space can produce fiscal and economic benefits to the town of Coventry.

- Increased property values

Properties close to permanently protected open space actually increase in value. This benefits not only the property owner, but the entire town by increasing the grand list.

- Lower taxes
Farm, forest, and open space land provide a town more money in tax dollars than they require in service expenditures. The most recent study in Southern New England indicated that for every dollar of revenue generated by residential development, the equivalent of \$1.14 is required in expenditures (Commonwealth Research Group, Inc. 1995). In contrast, every dollar of revenue generated by lands held in open space requires only \$0.42 in expenditures. Residents who keep their land in open space actually subsidize residential property owners by keeping their taxes lower.
- Improved financial ratings
Communities with sound conservation plans have been shown to actually improve their bond rating. These ratings reflect the fact that unlimited and/or mismanaged growth can make a community extremely expensive to manage and threaten its fiscal health. Good land use planning including open space promotes cost-effective development and avoids potential environmental problems that can be expensive to remedy.
- Lower utilities costs
Land conservation allows nature to recharge groundwater, cleanse our drinking water, prevent soil erosion, and absorb flood waters. It would be costly to do this outside of the natural cycle. Property taxes are protected as well. Imagine the loss of property values if Coventry Lake were to become polluted.
- Business opportunities
Outdoor recreation and tourism are big businesses today. Managed properly, the historic and scenic assets of the town will provide the potential for drawing recreational and tourism dollars to our town.

Natural resource protection

Coventry is known for its wide variety of high quality natural resources. (See Natural Resource Inventory) With a strategic open space protection plan, we can preserve these crucial resources.

- Protect the quality of our water resources – both drinking water and recreational uses.
- Protect natural plant and wildlife resources
- Protect agricultural resources
- Protect woodlands for forestry production resources
- Protect the quality of our air

Quality of life

The future quality of life in Coventry will be significantly influenced by how well we manage the aesthetic features that make our town an attractive place to reside.

Cultural resources and historic settings

By protecting cultural resources, such as historic, educational, and archeological sites, we can ensure that the uniqueness of the town's character is maintained.

Rural character and scenic vistas

To a great extent, Coventry's residential attractiveness can be attributed to its meandering streams and rivers, its scenic farmlands, rolling hills and woodlands, its numerous stone walls, and of course our signature feature – Lake Wangumbaug

Active and passive outdoor recreational opportunities

By preserving appropriate areas, the town can meet the growing need for active and passive activities for residents of all ages.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Protect surface and groundwater quality for domestic use, recreational use, and for fish and wildlife habitat.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prohibit high- risk land uses in critical public water supply watersheds, and aquifer recharge areas.
- Encourage the establishment of riparian corridor protection zones along year round and intermittent streams.
- Initiate a public education program to highlight the importance of watershed protection and water quality issues, including invasive species control. This is particularly crucial in the area around Lake Wangumbaug.

2. Protect forest and wildlife resources

Conserve productive forest tracts in a way that protects native wildlife populations, supports local forest based industry, preserves Coventry's rural character, and supports forest based recreational opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish and preserve wildlife habitat by reducing forest fragmentation and encroachment, promoting conservation-sensitive planning for new development, and connecting existing forested habitat by designating habitat corridors.
- Foster economically viable and environmentally sound forest management practices and habitat protection through education, voluntary action and better land use decision-making by commercial interests, private citizens, and government.
- Make use of SCS soils maps and Natural Resources Survey to identify undeveloped sites in town that are conducive to forest growth and wildlife habitation.

3. Protect unique and critical habitats

RECOMMENDATION

- Protect lands or waters that provide habitat for state endangered or threatened species of plants and animals

4. Protect agricultural resources

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Priority should be given to the protection of prime farmland soil areas. (see Natural Resource Inventory maps)
- Prevent the fragmentation of prime farmland areas
- Require protective buffers on land adjacent to existing farmland
- Actively promote agriculture related business in town.
- Continue tax abatement program for farmers
- Adopt a right-to-farm ordinance

5. Protect land that contributes to character of the town

Scenic areas

Ridgelines, vistas, forest tracts, river/wetland areas, lakes, ponds, and open fields all contribute to the rural and natural attractiveness of the town and should be protected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage the use of the scenic road ordinance to protect the rural character of some of our town roads.
- Protect lands overlooking viewsheds, particularly those with public access.
- Protect land that contributes to the character of the town, such as lands that provide visual access to natural, historical, and attractive roadside features

Cultural and historic sites

Sites with historic or cultural significance contribute to the character of the town and preserving these assets provides an important link for Coventry residents between the town's past and present.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhance the conservation of our local historic, archaeological, and cultural resources by identifying these areas and integrating them into a town-wide cultural resources management plan.
- The State Archeologist should continue to be consulted concerning areas of archeological sensitivity.
- Protect sites connected with historically significant buildings and/or landmarks.
- Strengthen regulations to protect stone walls.

6. Protect lands that provide connections to existing permanently committed open space

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Protect lands providing connections between or abutting properties owned by the state or town, or by land trusts.
- Protect existing or potential greenways, especially along waterways.
- Identify and protect existing wildlife corridors.

7. Create areas for active and passive recreation

Setting aside lands for active and passive recreation is an important quality of life issue for Coventry residents

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Protect lands that abut existing recreational areas
- Taking into consideration geographic locations, protect lands that are conducive to future active or passive recreation
- Promote the establishment of hiking and biking trails for public use.

METHODS OF PROTECTION

- Direct purchase or donation of land
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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review the Open Space Fund and seek avenues to adequately fund it.
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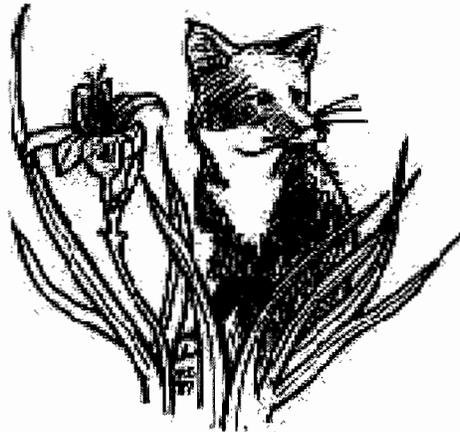
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The Coventry Conservation Commission – December 2009

Leroy Lowe
Rob Guliano
Robert Proctor
Art Hall
Paul Manzone
Jim Parda
Roy Shook



obtained
on
12/8/11



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COVENTRY
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