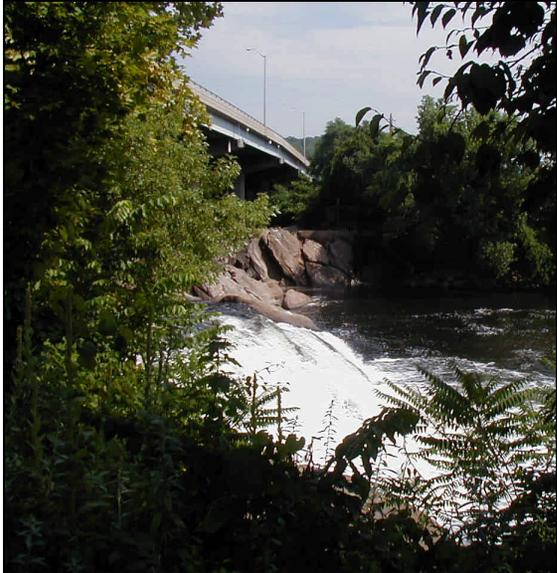


Smart Growth For The All-America Valley

SEYMOUR



Conservation



Development



Infrastructure

2002 Plan Of Conservation & Development

2002 Seymour Plan of Conservation & Development

Acknowledgments

The Residents of Seymour and the

Planning and Zoning Commission

Marco Rumbin *Chairman*
James Baldwin
Vincent Daddio
John Fanotto, Jr.
Clifford Strumello, Jr.
Elaine Buckley *Alternate*
William Forster *Alternate*
Dan Della Volpe *Alternate*

Technical and Administrative Assistance

Robert Looker *Seymour Staff*
Susan Pawluk *Seymour Staff*

Arroll Borden *Planimetrics, LLP*
Glenn Chalder, AICP *Planimetrics, LLP*



June 14, 2002

To Seymour Residents,

This document is the 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development for Seymour, Connecticut. The effective date is July 1, 2002.

The Plan is the product of public input and discussions with the Planning & Zoning Commission. Many issues discussed in the Plan were raised by Seymour residents at a public information meeting, and gathered through a town department survey. As we have all worked together to develop the Plan, many recommendations have been included that are designed to:

- improve and maintain the overall quality of life in Seymour, and
- preserve and promote the character of Seymour.

It is the Commission's belief that this Plan of Conservation & Development establishes a working blueprint for the future of Seymour.

Sincerely,

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Marco Rumbin, Chairman

2002 Seymour Plan of Conservation & Development

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	5
2	Conditions & Trends	9
3	Conservation Strategies	15
4	Development Strategies	23
5	Infrastructure Strategies	33
6	Conclusion	39

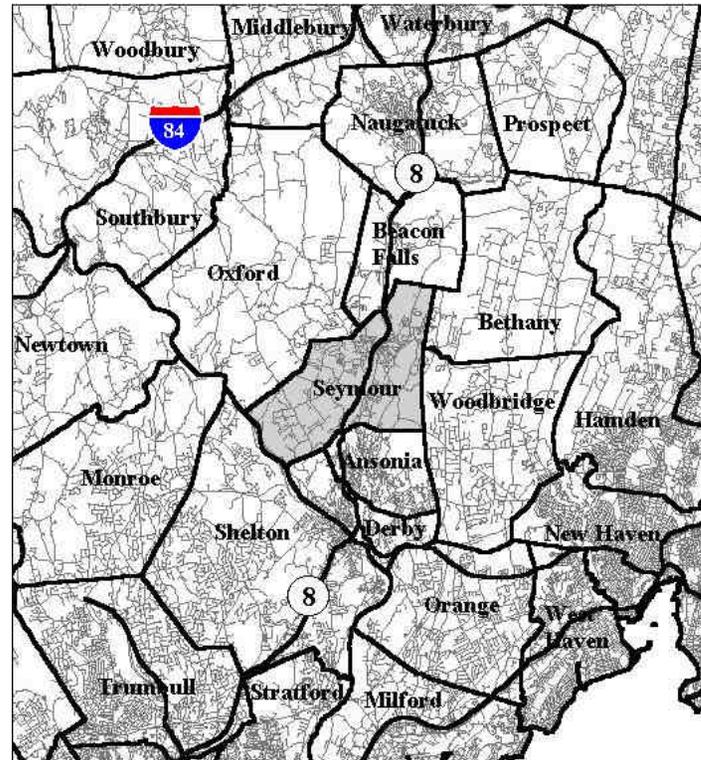
INTRODUCTION

1

Introduction To Seymour

Seymour is located in New Haven County in southwest Connecticut. The town is bounded by Beacon Falls to the north, Woodbridge and Bethany to the east, Ansonia and Derby to the south, and Oxford and Shelton to the west. Seymour is located about 35 miles southwest of Hartford, the State capital.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Seymour had a 2000 population of 15,454 people within its land area of about 15.0 square miles (9,600 acres). This is an increase of 1,166 people (8.2 percent) from the 1990 Census.



Statutory Reference

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that the Planning Commission prepare, adopt, and amend a Plan of Conservation and Development for Seymour. The requirements for the Plan are presented on the following page.

About Plans Of Conservation And Development

A Plan of Conservation and Development is a tool for guiding the future of a community. The Plan recommendations can be a continuation of current practices and procedures or, when appropriate, can recommend new directions or initiatives.

The goals and recommendations of this Plan reflect the overall consensus of what is best for Seymour and its residents in the future. This Plan was prepared by the Seymour Planning and Zoning Commission with input from Seymour residents. While it is primarily a statement of recommendations addressing the conservation and development of Seymour (the physical layout), this Plan is also intended to address the social and economic development of the community.

Use of the Plan of Conservation and Development

This Plan of Conservation and Development is an advisory document, not only to the Planning and Zoning Commission, but to all other Town boards and commissions and Seymour residents as well. It is intended to guide local residents and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities in Seymour over the next decade or so.

While the statutory responsibility to adopt the Plan rests with the Planning and Zoning Commission, implementation will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and officials of the Town of Seymour.

EXCERPTS FROM SECTION 8-23 OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES

The Commission shall:

- prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development ...
- review the plan of conservation and development at least once every ten years ...
- adopt such amendments to the plan or parts of the plan ... as the commission deems necessary to update the plan.

The Plan shall:

- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality, ..
- show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality.
- be designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people.
- be made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long Island Sound ...
- make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region ...
- promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs ...
- take into account the state plan of conservation and development ... and note any inconsistencies it may have with said state plan.
- consider the use of cluster development to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity.

The Plan may:

- show the commission's recommendation for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets and other public ways; for airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; for general location, relocation and improvement of public buildings; for the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes; and for the extent and location of public housing projects.
- include recommended programs for the implementation of the plan ...
- (include) such other recommendations ... in the plan as will ... be beneficial to the municipality.

Overall Plan Philosophy

During the process of preparing the Plan, the following philosophy emerged as the foundation for this Plan of Conservation and Development:

Promote an appropriate balance of conservation and development in Seymour in order to:

- **Preserve open space,**
- **Protect natural resource, and**
- **Enhance economic development areas.**

While there may be refinements in the goals and strategies of this Plan over time, it is anticipated that this philosophy will remain relevant during the anticipated ten-year life of this Plan of Conservation and Development.

CONDITIONS & TRENDS

2

History Of Seymour

The hilly terrain of Seymour was formed over millions of years by massive geological and hydrological forces. While it is believed that the earliest settlements occurred approximately 10,000 years ago, written history of this area is only available for the past 370 years or so following European colonization of New England.

The first Native American settlements in this area were located along the Housatonic River and the Naugatuck River. As European settlers moved inland from the coastal regions where land was becoming scarcer for homesteads, they first lived among the Pequot Indians. By the early 1740s, about 20 families were living in the area of the Great Falls. This area was called "Chusetown", after the chief Joseph Mauwehu.

Seymour, like most communities in the Naugatuck Valley, was once part of Derby (established in 1642). In 1804, after General David Humphreys introduced Merino sheep to this area and began operating a mill producing fine woolen products, the area around the Great Falls became known as Humphreysville.



Over the next fifty years, the entire Naugatuck Valley area grew as streams, brooks, and rivers were tamed to provide power for industrial operations. Some of the operations from this period included twisted augers, the first paper made from straw in Connecticut, and the opening of the New Haven Copper Company (1848). Transportation improvements also occurred with the establishment of a railroad line in the valley and the opening of Naugatuck Road to Bridgeport.

In 1850, due to Seymour's well-established manufacturing base and a growing population, the community requested that Humphreysville be incorporated as its own community, named Richmond. The request was granted on the condition that the town takes the name of the current State Governor, Thomas H. Seymour.

During the late 1800s, the development of Seymour increased as the Industrial Revolution continued. New companies were formed and many new buildings were erected. With the increased need for fire protection, the Citizen Fire Company was incorporated in 1882. In addition, the first public school was established (1884) and public library opened (1890). A water company was established to provide pressurized water for the downtown (1898) and the Seymour Electric Company was incorporated (1889).

During World War I and World War II, companies in Seymour and other parts of the Naugatuck River valley made significant contributions to the war effort. After World War II, several events have had a disproportionate impact on Seymour and surrounding communities. First, severe flooding during 1955 damaged many of the buildings in low-lying areas and this had long lasting impacts on the community, even though many buildings were rebuilt. Second, with improved transportation and increasing competition, much of Connecticut's economic advantage in terms of manufacturing was lost to other parts of the nation and the world. As a result, communities in the Valley had to deal with job losses and disinvestment as well.

Regional Roles & Implications

While there were over 4,400 jobs in Seymour in the year 2000, Seymour had almost 7,500 residents in the labor force. As a result, it can be seen that Seymour is a net exporter of workers to other locations. In other words, Seymour's primary role is that of a residential community, providing housing opportunities for people who may work elsewhere. Secondly, Seymour is a jobs center for residents of Seymour and other communities. Still, within the Naugatuck River valley, Seymour has one of the highest jobs/worker ratios (trailing only Shelton and Derby).

Jobs / Housing / Workers Balance (2000)

	Jobs	Housing Units	Jobs / Housing units	Local Workers	Jobs / workers
<i>Town</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Ratio</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Ratio</i>
Shelton	21,180	14,707	144%	19,810	107%
Derby	5,080	5,568	91%	6,255	81%
Seymour	4,470	6,356	70%	7,479	60%
Naugatuck	9,210	12,341	75%	16,840	55%
Ansonia	4,430	7,937	56%	8,453	52%
Oxford	1,870	3,420	55%	4,866	38%
Beacon Falls	960	2,104	46%	2,834	34%

2000 US Census, CT Dept Of Labor, ranked by jobs/worker ratio.

Where Residents Work

Seymour	19%
Stratford	9%
Other Fairfield Co.	25%
Other New Haven Co.	42%
Elsewhere in State	4%
Other State	1%

1990 Census

Actual Population

	Population
1850	1,677
1860	546
1870	2,122
1880	2,318
1890	3,300
1900	3,541
1910	4,786
1920	6,781
1930	6,890
1940	6,754
1950	7,832
1960	10,100
1970	12,776
1980	13,434
1990	14,288
2000	15,454

US Census Bureau

Population Projections

	Low	High
2010	15,840	16,620
2020	16,340	17,786

Population projections derived from:

- Continuing 1990-00 growth,
- OPM projections (series 95.1)
- CTDOT Series 27.

Growth Comparison

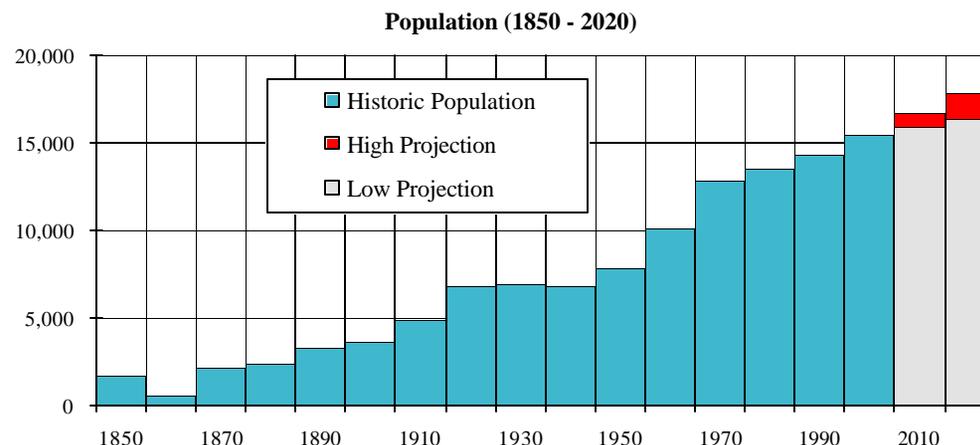
	1990-00
Woodbridge	13.4%
Oxford	13.1%
Bethany	9.4%
Seymour	8.2%
Shelton	7.6%
State of CT.	3.6%
Beacon Falls	3.2%
Derby	1.6%
Ansonia	0.8%

US Bureau of the Census

People Of Seymour

The U.S. Census Bureau reported Seymour's 2000 population to be 15,454 persons. This represents an increase of 1,166 persons from the 14,288 persons reported in the 1990 Census.

The adjacent chart shows population growth in Seymour from 1850. Current population projections predict a small increase over the next two decades.



Dynamics of Population Change

Seymour grew significantly during the 1950s and 1960s due to net migration (the number of people moving in exceeded the number of people moving out). During the 1970s and 1980s, net migration decreased significantly. Census data from 1990 showed that about one in five Seymour households had moved to their residence before 1960. As these households age, there could be a new influx of in-migration to Seymour.

Components of Population Change

	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
Total Change	2,268	2,676	658	854	1,166
Change Due To Natural Increase	1,109	1,031	533	679	696
Births	1,964	2,034	1,614	1,825	1,862
Deaths	855	1,003	1,081	1,146	1,166
Change Due To Net Migration	1,159	1,645	125	175	470

US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports, 1990s trend is 1990 to 1996 data extrapolated to a ten-year period.

The following table shows the population by age group for the 1970 – 2000 period. Projections by age group are based on 1995 projections prepared by the Connecticut Census Data Center.

Ages	Actual Population					Projections	
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
0-4	1,160	1,111	759	968	902	931	1034
5-19	2,591	3,704	3,133	2,444	3,107	3,035	2,871
20-34	1,691	2,510	3,495	3,822	2,780	2,497	2,993
35-54	2,948	3,349	3,046	3,727	5,138	4,764	3,885
55-64	744	1,081	1,666	1,323	1,306	1,867	2,343
65 +	966	1021	1,335	2,004	2,221	2,276	2,725

Children (ages 0-19)

Available data suggest that over the past ten years there has been an increase in the number of school age children and a decrease in the number of non-school age children. However, projections indicate a reverse in this trend. An increase in the number of young children could be attributed to younger married couples moving to Seymour (as indicated by the increase in young adults). The decline in school age children (5-19) could be attributed to families moving to larger homes in other communities. Although the projected increase is small over the next twenty years, special needs for this increase includes educational facilities, and recreational opportunities.

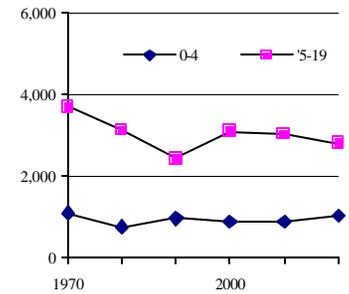
Adults (ages 20-54)

While the number of young adults (ages 20 to 34) has declined over the past ten years, there has been an increase in the number of families with younger children (ages 35-54). Projections indicate, as with the children population, a reverse of this trend. The increase in people aged 20 - 34 projected over the next twenty years indicates a need for smaller housing units priced for first time buyers.

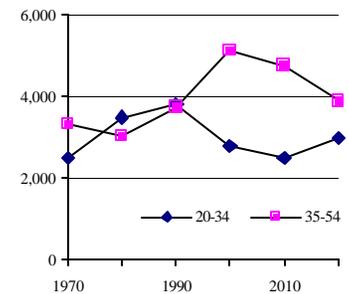
Residents Aged 55 and over

The number of residents aged 55 to 64 had a slight decline over the past decade. This could indicate residents are moving after their children have left school. However, the population of 65+ has increased. Projections indicate an increase in the older adult population through the year 2020. The growth of this age group is mainly due to the “baby boomers” and people living longer. An increase in the elderly population may create a need for more senior services and elderly housing options.

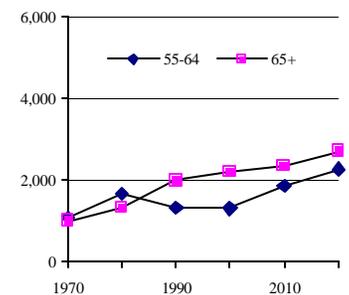
Children (ages 0-19)



Adults (ages 20-54)



Older Adults (ages 55+)



Tax Base Composition

	Percent Business
Naugatuck	33%
Shelton	29%
State of CT.	27%
Derby	24%
Ansonia	19%
Seymour	18%
Beacon Falls	18%
Oxford	10%

Source: 1999 - 2000 CPEC Municipal Profiles

Per Capita Spending

State of CT	\$2,341
Naugatuck	\$2,164
Seymour	\$2,109
Oxford	\$2,159
Derby	\$1,927
Shelton	\$1,952
Ansonia	\$2,092
Beacon Falls	\$1,972

Source: 1999 - 2000 CPEC Municipal Profiles

Per Capita Property Tax Revenue

State of CT	\$1,527
Oxford	\$1,502
Shelton	\$1,488
Derby	\$1,196
Seymour	\$1,165
Naugatuck	\$1,096
Beacon Falls	\$1,018
Ansonia	\$984

Source: 1999 - 2000 CPEC Municipal Profiles

Land Use & Development Potential

Seymour contains approximately 9,600 acres. While detailed land use information is not available, it is estimated that about 75 percent of the community (7,200 acres) is occupied for residential, commercial, or institutional use or is dedicated to a specific purpose such as public land or protected open space.

Conversely, about 25 percent of the land in town (2,400 acres) is vacant or uncommitted to a specific use and may be capable of supporting additional development in the future.

After considering physical and environmental constraints on the vacant and under-developed land, it is estimated that Seymour could eventually contain as many as 8,356 total housing units if fully developed under existing zoning. Thus, based on typical 2000 household sizes, Seymour could eventually be a community of about 22,310 people.

Fiscal Issues

Expenditures - Seymour spends about \$32.5 million in order to provide services to residents and property. Expenditures in Seymour are lower than the state average on a per capita basis. Local expenditures are clearly focused on education with about six of every ten dollars spent going to education.

Revenues - While the Town generates more than half of its revenue from local property taxes, Seymour also receives 27% of its total revenue from state aid. As a result, the amount of money to be raised from current taxes is less than the state average.

Tax Base - Seymour is not considered to have a wealthy tax base since it has less property wealth (measured by Equalized Net Grand List) than the state average. This makes Seymour eligible for more state aid under current state formulas. Seymour has a lower business tax base than many surrounding communities and the state average.

CONSERVATION ISSUES



Overview

Conservation issues addressed in the Plan of Conservation & Development include:

- Natural Resources
- Open Space
- Historic Resources
- Community Character

Protect Natural Resources

Protection of natural resources is important in terms of preserving environmental functions and protecting community character. The following table identifies the environmental resources where conservation efforts should be focused:

Conservation Summary Table		
Category	Definition	Proposed Criteria
Significant Conservation Areas	Very sensitive lands worthy of preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watercourses and waterbodies • Poorly drained soils (wetlands) • Floodplain (100-year, 1.0% probability) • Any slope in excess of 25%
Important Conservation Areas	Sensitive lands worthy of conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public water supply watershed areas • Aquifers and recharge areas • Unique or special habitat areas • Floodplain (500-year, 0.2% probability)

Conservation Goals

Protect Natural Resources . . .

Preserve Open Space . . .

Protect Historic Resources . . .

Enhance Community Character . . .

Water Quality Issues

When projecting future land use and zoning, consideration should be given to the fact that:

- commercial and industrial development can generate 70%-90% impervious surfaces, and
- residential areas can range from 15% (1 acre zoning) to 65% (1/8 acre zoning) impervious surfaces, depending on the density allowed.

Protection Measures

Seymour recently adopted a buildable land regulation that requires contiguous buildable land excluding steep slopes, wetlands, and other natural features on a lot.

In addition, Seymour has a fully regulated area of 25-feet around wetlands, streams and watercourses, and a 100-foot regulated upland review area.

Enhancement Measures

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection is developing a fish run to enhance fish habitat and recreational activities.

Water Quality Protection

Water resources are the top conservation priority in Seymour. The protection of the major rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands helps to maintain a natural drainage system. Secondly, these resources provide for scenic and recreational opportunities. Efforts aimed at protecting surface water quality should be directed towards the Peat Swamp Reservoir, a backup water supply for Seymour and surrounding towns. Ground water protection efforts are especially critical in the areas not serviced by public water.

Pollution of water resources should be a concern of government and citizens alike. Water pollution can come directly from a known *point* such as sewage treatment plants, landfills or industrial locations. Significant progress has been made in recent years to limit this type of pollution.

Most pollution currently, however, comes from *non-point* sources in the form of polluted runoff. Polluted runoff occurs when water runs over the land (whether from rain, car washing, or watering lawns) and picks-up contaminants. Common contaminants can be salt/sand from roads, oil/gas from roads, agricultural chemicals from farmlands, and nutrients and toxic material from our lawns.

Polluted runoff is largely a result of how land is developed and used. As more impervious surfaces are built less water percolates into the soil and more runoff flows into streams and rivers. As development increases, it should be a goal of the community to increase protection of water quality.

The following elements could be included in land use regulations and site review standards to minimize runoff and protect watershed lands:

- Reducing the clearing and grading of sites so as to minimize the impact on natural drainage patterns.
- Emphasizing the economic and environmental benefits of natural drainage systems such as grassed swales, vegetative filters and, porous pavement materials over manufactured systems.
- Establishing wetland and riparian buffers to filter pollutants and protect them from direct receipt of runoff.
- Emphasizing preservation of open space as a tool to filter polluted runoff from adjacent impervious areas.

- Encouraging site design with a goal of minimizing imperviousness of streets, parking lots, driveways, and structures where feasible.

The Town of Seymour should consider minimizing non-point pollution before more of the town is developed by limiting impervious surfaces, maintaining storm sewers and drainage systems, and carefully planning sites for vehicle washing, waste disposal and outdoor storage of sand and salt.

Protect Hilltops

Hilltops are important natural resources in the community because they provide scenic views and contribute to the community's character. The most visible hilltops in Seymour are along the Naugatuck River and Route 8, and the Housatonic River and Route 34.

Concerns have been raised about the cutting of trees along the hilltops. The cutting of trees has occurred mainly due to businesses trying to be more visible from Route 8, or private residences wanting better views.

These hilltops must be identified and protected. The Conservation Commission should have an active role in the identification of significant hilltops. Once the hilltops have been identified, the Planning and Zoning Commission should consider adopting regulations to help protect these sensitive areas in town.

Monitor Timber Harvesting

The practice of timber harvesting is an issue in parts of Seymour. Timber harvesting can have an adverse affect on the environment due to erosion and sedimentation problems. These adverse affects can be especially damaging to the major water resources in Town.

Regulating timber harvesting is defined by Public Act 98-228. This Public Act limits the community's ability to regulate forest practices. In addition, the public act clarified the role of the Inland Wetlands Commission to regulate forest practices that may have an impact on wetlands and watercourses.

Seymour should consider expanding the definition of regulated activity or regulated area in the wetland regulations.

Definition

For the purposes of this Plan, open space is defined as land that is permanently preserved for or dedicated to open space uses.

This definition does not include land in private ownership that has not been developed.

Public Input

At a public meeting as part of the planning process, Seymour residents indicated that:

- Slow down development to preserve more open space
- Protect ridgelines
- Enhance and highlight the existing open space
- Tie together the existing open space

Open Space Planning

The basic steps of open space planning are:

- create an open space inventory,
- establish goals,
- assess potential open space opportunities, and
- develop implementation strategies.

Preserve Open Space

Open space, in adequate quantities and appropriate locations, can help conserve natural resources, protect community character, provide fiscal and economic benefits, enhance the quality of life, and shape development patterns.

Create an Overall Greenbelt System with Trails

While Seymour has existing preserved open spaces in the community and some trail networks, these are not interconnected in any meaningful way. During the planning period, Seymour should focus on acquiring additional open space and interconnecting existing areas to create an overall greenbelt and trail system. Establishing such a system throughout the community will help to protect important natural resources, enhance existing open space, and contribute to the quality of life of the residents. Further, since the amount of acreage needed to create a greenbelt/trail is low relative to the open space benefit it provides, this strategy will also prove to be extremely cost-effective for Seymour over the long run.

Efforts should also be devoted to connecting local open spaces and trails with those of surrounding communities. For example, Seymour should, along with other communities and agencies, continue to be involved in efforts to create a Naugatuck River Greenway.

Promote Open Space Preservation

Some of the tools that are available to help preserve open space include:

- Encouraging acquisitions of open space or development rights by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (such as the recent purchase of the Quillinan Reservoir property in Seymour and Ansonia),
- Encouraging the efforts of local land trusts,
- Establishing a municipal fund for open space purchases (supported by annual municipal appropriations), and
- Requiring open space set-asides at the time of development

Seymour may also wish to consider fully utilizing the use assessment program enabled by CGS Section 12-107 (also known as PA-490). While this program does result in some tax reduction to owners of undeveloped residential property, studies have shown that the PA-490 program reduces short-term development pressure, provides more time for preservation of the property as permanent open space, and can save a municipality money compared to if the property was developed residentially.

Protect Historic Resources

Since historic resources significantly contribute to community character, their identification and preservation are an important component of the Plan.

In 1978, important historic landmarks and areas in Seymour were identified in a historic resources survey. This type of resource is essential in the protection of historic resources and should be updated regularly.

Techniques for protecting historic resources in a community range from educating individual property owners, to legislating districts the aesthetics of building in context with the surrounding area:

Technique	Benefits	Constraints
Responsible Ownership / Stewardship	Provides best protection regardless of other techniques.	Hit or miss. Cannot be legislated.
National Register of Historic Places State Register of Historic Places	Recognized by most people. Can increase pride and property values. Establishes eligibility for some state and federal programs.	Largely ceremonial. Provides little direct protection for historic resources
Local Historic Districts	Can provide significant protection. Requires consensus of property owners and specific regulations.	Regulatory program which can create controversy at time of adoption or for specific proposals.
Village Districts (Public Act 00-145)	Can provide significant protection. A zoning commission can establish specific regulations without property owner consensus.	May be most appropriate in business areas. Requires commission to get involved in aesthetic issues.
Adaptive Reuse / Use Incentives	Can provide an economic incentive to retain significant historical structures.	May not be appropriate in all areas. May allow only limited uses (such as bed and breakfast inns in local historic districts).
Demolition Delay Ordinance	Allows time to investigate alternatives to demolition or to document significant buildings prior to demolition.	Only delays demolition for a period of up to 90 days.

Historic Places

Sanford - Humphreys House S, N

Seymour High School and Annex N

N = National Register of Historic Places
S = State Register of Historic Places
L = Local Historic Treasure

Historic Districts

Downtown Seymour Historic District N
(Bounded by Naugatuck River, Main Street, Wakeley Street, and Deforest Street.)

N = National Register of Historic Places
S = State Register of Historic Places
L = Local Historic Treasure

Local Organizations

Local organizations that contribute to community activities and community spirit include:

- Seymour Land Trust
- Adopt - A- Spot Program
- Volunteer Fireman Associations

Local Events

Local events that contribute to community character, pride, and spirit include:

- Summer Concerts at the Strand Theater
- Seymour Farmers Market
- Pumpkin Festival

Community Character & Spirit

While community character and spirit are hard to define, they are important elements of any community's psyche. As shown below, physical attributes are an important component of community character and community programs are an important component of community spirit.

Physical Character

The Town Center

The downtown is a source of pride for local residents

Local Facilities

The Strand Theater and Antiques district

State Facilities

State Parks and other State facilities

Agricultural and Rural Features

Stone walls, farms, significant trees, contribute to community character

Natural Resources & Open Space

Natural features and open space contribute to community character

Ridgelines and Scenic Views

Ridgelines and panoramic views enhance scenic character

Vegetation

Vegetation is another important aspect of community character

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads contribute to character. (see CGS 13b-31 and CGS 7-149a)

Architectural Characteristics

Building architecture contributes to overall community character

Community Spirit

Local Programs Or Events

Community events (such as festivals, and concerts) add to community spirit and character

Local Organizations

Organizations where people help each other and their community help build community spirit.

Volunteer Contributions

Volunteer contributions have a lot to do with what makes Seymour special.

Local Recognition

Community spirit and pride is enhanced by positive publicity of local events and activities.

Historic Resources

Historical and archeological re-
sources contribute to character

Conservation Plan map

Conservation Strategies

Natural Resources

1. Continue to protect ground water quality and surface water quality throughout Seymour.
2. Continue to encourage the 100-foot regulated upland review areas.
3. Monitor areas served by septic system to protect ground water supplies.
4. Encourage more wildlife enhancement programs such as the fish walk around the Great Falls.
5. Encourage the identification of hilltops, and consider adopting regulation to preserve the hilltops.
6. Encourage minimizing timber harvesting in environmentally sensitive areas.
7. Consider adopting aquifer protection regulation to protect water quality.

Open Space

8. Tie both existing and new open space and recreational area together into an integrated greenbelt system.
9. Identify vacant land along major rivers for the purpose of future river greenways.
10. Focus on preserving environmentally sensitive land through the purchase of open space.
11. Support of the local land trust.
12. Establishing a fund for open space purchases.
13. Educate property owners on their eligibility for PA-490 designations.

Historic Resources

14. Update the 1978 historical resource survey, and identify additional historic resources outside of Downtown.
15. Work with the historical society on educational programs on maintaining historically significant resources.
16. Encourage downtown historic designation to preserve its historic charm.

Community Character & Spirit

17. Preserve and protect the historic feel of the Downtown.
18. Preserve and protect scenic views through the purchase of open space.
19. Continue support of the Adopt - A - Spot program.
20. Encourage the continued use of the Strand Theater.
21. Consider adopting a scenic road ordinance.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Development issues addressed in the Plan of Conservation & Development include:

- Community Structure
- Housing & Residential Areas
- Business & Economic Development
- Community Facilities

Maintain and enhance community structure . . .

Address housing needs . . .

Maintain and Enhance Community Structure

Promote economic development . .

Community structure addresses the overall organization of Seymour. Structure is an important consideration in the Plan since it addresses how people, both residents and visitors, perceive and understand the community. Structure is also an important guide for land use regulations and decisions. Regulations can be designed and implemented to reinforce the community structure and enhance community character.

Address community facility needs . . .

The downtown is the main focal point of the community and this area incorporates a variety of functions such as governmental, financial, entertainment, and retail services. The downtown area is a true mixed-use "node" and emphasis should continue to be placed on increasing the vitality and use of the downtown area. Incorporating the antiques district, train stop, Strand Theater, and eating establishments, can help to build a true destination for both residents and visitors.

In order to enhance community character in Seymour, efforts should be devoted to maintaining the highest standards for design of the development and the re-development of properties. These standards can include building design, landscaping, and maintaining appropriate buffers between uses. In addition, whenever possible, new commercial development should be designed to avoid "strip development" patterns by providing for pedestrian friendly development with walkways, shared parking, and at an appropriate scale.

Address Housing Needs

Seymour is primarily a residential community. The proximity to the larger employment centers by way of Route 8 helps to increase its attractiveness as a residential location for families and individuals alike.

The housing options in Seymour include single family homes, apartments, and condominiums. This mix of housing options will be important in terms of meeting the changing housing needs of residents.

Consider Open Space Development Patterns

The subdivision regulations provide that the Planning & Zoning Commission can require that up to 10 percent of the gross area of the property to be designated as open space. The zoning regulations have recently been revised to require that lots should have a minimum amount of contiguous non-wetland soils and pre-development slope of 25% or less. The additions to the regulations help to preserve sensitive areas, however the regulations produce the same type of subdivision development as produced in the past.

Modifying these regulations to allow the use of a density calculation, rather than minimum lot size, is a way to achieve a more desirable development pattern. A density regulation can result in a subdivision with smaller lots sizes (but not more lots), protected natural resources, meaningful buffers to adjacent uses, scenic view protection, and contribute to the desired overall open space pattern (greenbelts with trails). An example of an open space subdivision is presented on the facing page.

Maintain Housing Diversity

The housing needs in the community relate directly to the changing demographics. Seymour does have a number of multi-family developments (apartments and condominiums) distributed throughout the community. These developments provide more affordable housing to the younger population, the elderly population, and small families.

The town also allows accessory or in-law apartments. These apartments allow for the shared use of a detached single family dwelling. These accessory apartments help lessen the need for additional multi-family units, accommodate the elderly and disabled residents, allow for on-site caregivers, and in limited cases, allow for additional income for the homeowners.

Seymour Housing Authority operates 120 units. Currently the housing authority is seeking approval for additional units. These units will provide necessary services to the elderly population.
Open Space Development Graphics

Economic Development

It is the goal of the Economic Development Commission to:

- To enhance the commercial and industrial zones by providing a method of attracting business.
- Work with other Lower Naugatuck Valley communities to encourage investment in our area as a member of the "Alliance for Economic Growth.
- Reviews every application for admittance into the Silvermine Industrial Park to ensure uniformity and to provide increased investment possibilities.

Promote Economic Development

Economic development in a community helps to create a diversified tax base, provides residents with goods and services, and provides employment opportunities. Seymour has a mix of commercial and industrial businesses concentrated within its various business zoned areas. Seymour's high visibility from Route 8 is key to its commercial and industrial success.

At the present time, business development in Seymour is still heavily based on industry. The major industrial uses, in addition to being the major employers in the community, are the Kerite Company, R&R Manufacturing, Haynes Construction Company, and MicroBoard Processing, Inc. One of the major changes in the past ten years was the demolishing of the Specialty Wire Company to make way for the Stop and Shop. Over this same time period, there has been some spread of commercial activity down South Main Street and along Roosevelt Drive near the Housatonic River.

The overall goal of the Business and Economic Development Plan is to enhance the areas currently dedicated to commercial activity, maximize the land currently held for industrial purposes, and provide guidelines for future economic development. These strategies will help to maintain a healthy commercial and industrial base, while maintaining the community's character and not infringing on residential areas.

Enhance Current Economic Areas

The downtown area, bounded by DeForest Street, Wakeley Street, Route 67, and Main Street, is the major focal point of the community. The downtown has become an antique shopping destination within the state and region. This increase business from the antiques has helped to rehabilitate and improve buildings in the downtown.

However, additional improvements are needed within the downtown to help build on the momentum created by the antiques businesses. Improvements to the downtown area should include building façade improvements, sidewalk enhancements, and other beautification efforts, including street trees, and other plantings. Another way to enhance the downtown visually is burying the power lines underground. Efforts should also be focused on improving the outer boundary of the Downtown (New Haven Road). Enhancing the overall appearance of this area would create an inviting gateway into the downtown from Bank Street. An example of current efforts for improving this area is the Adopt - A - Spot Program.

Additional improvement efforts should be devoted to the smaller shopping areas in the community. The Klarides Village shopping area is one such example. Small improvements to the general appearance of the shopping areas could help to fill the vacant shops, thereby providing additional shopping opportunities to resident (such as a general clothing store), while improving the general appearance and character of the area.

Maximize Economic Development Areas

Seymour, like many Valley communities, has a small amount of remaining buildable commercial and industrialized land. In addition, the housing pattern is well developed and therefore future economic areas are hard to acquire. By maximizing the current economic areas, Seymour can maintain a strong economic base, while not intruding on its residential structure.

The main areas that are currently underutilized in the business areas include the lower Derby Avenue area, and the remaining industrially zoned land among the business parks and north of Stop & Shop.

The Derby Avenue area consists mainly of automotive type development (repair, service, and parts). The topography of the land does not lend itself to deep lots. Therefore future development would have to be in a vertical direction, rather than the typical single story development. This area should be considered as a secondary node for the community, mainly catering to the traffic along Route 8. Any development plans in this area should be carefully managed to avoid strip type development from occurring. Strip development in this area, which would introduce numerous curb cuts and cause traffic congestion, can be alleviated by the introduction of shared parking, and an internal circulation network.

The underutilized industrial zoned land could be a major asset to the community. However, like most of the remaining land in Seymour, topography is a major issue. The major focus in these areas should be to tailor the remaining land through regulation to allow for development. The development should first and foremost complement the landscape and enhance the surrounding area. Creating flexible land regulations and working with developers for the best type of development will enhance the community through employment opportunities and bring more tax revenue to the community.

Provide Guidelines for Future Economic Development

The future economic development in Seymour will occur in areas that are less than desirable in terms of topography and access. Therefore, it is desirable that development guidelines are constructed. These guidelines should provide information as to the desirable development outcome. In addition, the natural land constraints that exist on many sites should be preserved whenever and wherever possible.

Address Community Facilities Needs

Community services and facilities include such governmental functions as education, public works, public safety, and recreational services. Such services contribute significantly to the character of a community and its quality of life. The Plan of Conservation & Development reviews the physical aspects of such services and facilities to ensure they are appropriately located and sized to meet community needs during the planning period and beyond. The Plan is not intended to address the management, operations, or programs of individual departments or facilities.

There are a number of issues related to community facilities that can be directly related to the growth of the community. It is reasonable to expect that community growth will increase the need for community facilities and the challenge will be to prioritize and phase these improvements over time.

Evaluate Re-use of Existing Buildings

Currently Seymour is having a major enhancement of several community facilities. These facilities include a new Police Station and the building of a new Middle School. The construction of these new facilities has created space at the old facility locations. The re-use of these facilities to enhance the services provided to the residents should be a major focus in the next five to ten years.

Community Center

Through community surveys distributed as part of this planning process, the desire for a community center by residents is apparent. The concept of a community center would combine the services and activities of other community services, and provide these services from one centralized location. The types of services that could be combined at such a facility would be senior services, recreation department, social services, and a youth services department. The centralized location is a critical element of the facility since it allows for convenient access by all residents of the Town.

Continued Evaluation of Community Facility Needs

The evaluation of community facilities and services should be a continual process. This evaluation should consider the following:

Public Safety – Fire protection services in Seymour are staffed by volunteers and it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain volunteer staffing levels due to increasing training requirements and time commitments. Steps should be taken to encourage volunteer staffing since a paid fire department can be an expensive undertaking. In addition, equipment needs should be monitored to ensure the fire departments ability to safely operate in any situation.

The Ambulance Association, which is staffed by paid personnel, services Seymour and provides backup services for the seven communities along its borders. Evaluating the equipment needs and the operational location of this service is critical to maintaining fast emergency response. While a new police department is being built, it is still important to maintain adequate police staffing levels and vehicle maintenance.

Senior Services - The population of elderly person is expected to increase in Seymour and additional demand can be anticipated for services such as recreation, health, transportation, and housing.

Public Works - The public works department is charged with the task of maintaining the streets, parks, town buildings and facilities, and overseeing the operations of transfer station, and household garbage and recycling pickup. Currently the public works facilities and equipment are adequate. Future needs of the department include the building of an additional salt/sand storage facility in the western part of town, and increasing staffing levels as the community grows.

Recreation Department - This department provides the community with numerous activities, including camps, classes, clinics, and family activities. In addition, the department has many sponsored trips in the State and regionally. The Recreation Department, as stated earlier, could benefit from being located in a combined community center. Combining the resources of these departments with youth and senior services could enable the department to incorporate a much larger population into its programs.

Education and Library Facilities - Currently the Town is in the process of building a new Middle School and re-configuring the classes to meet the students needs. The Seymour public library is currently adequate for the community's needs. However, evaluation of these services is essential to providing the best possible educational and cultural facilities for the residents of Seymour.

Development Strategies

Community Structure

1. Continue to enhance the Downtown area into a local and regional "Node".
2. Encourage the creation of commercial nodes.
3. Avoid strip development.
4. Structure regulations to help enhance the Downtown.

Housing & Residential Areas

5. Modify local regulations to provide for open space development patterns:
 - using a density regulation rather than a minimum area requirement to regulate development yield,
 - requiring a specific percentage of the parcel area be preserved as open space, and
 - providing flexibility in minimum lot size requirements.
6. Maintain the housing diversity to meet the needs of the community.
7. Continue to permit accessory apartments.
8. Continue to work with the Housing Authority to meet the needs of the elderly population.
9. Explore additional ways to integrate housing into the downtown area.

Development Plan

Business & Economic Development

10. Enhance current economic development areas by:
 - Encouraging mixed use developments,
 - Encouraging the use of plantings and other enhancement programs, and
 - Examining the feasibility of burying power lines.
11. Encourage a downtown study to evaluate current commercial needs, including:
 - Surveying resident as to their needs,
 - Examining parking needs and configuration, and
 - Examining overall vehicular and pedestrian circulation through the downtown.
12. Provide incentives for redevelopment of under utilized areas while:
 - Maintaining the community of the surrounding area,
 - Creating "nodes", not "strips", and
 - Enhancing the shopping opportunities of the residents.
13. Establish design guidelines for future development in all commercial areas, that:
 - Maintain and protect sensitive areas whenever possible, and
 - Maintain appropriate buffers between residential and commercial uses.
14. Continue offering tax incentive programs for new businesses.

Community Facilities

15. Evaluate the best re-use for community facility buildings.
16. Consider the building of a centrally located community center.
17. Continue to monitor the long-term needs of the education and cultural facilities.
18. Monitor staffing levels for all departments to best serve the growing community.

INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

5

Infrastructure issues addressed in the Plan of Conservation & Development include:

- Transportation
- Utilities

Transportation

The transportation system in a community is an important factor in its growth and development. This element of the Plan of Conservation and Development is concerned with the means by which people and goods are moved from one place to another. It is designed to encourage, support, and serve the current and desired future land use pattern for Seymour.

Seymour's transportation network consists of numerous State Routes (Route 8, Route 67, Route 34, Route 188, Route 334, Route 313, and Route 115) and smaller local roadways. Over the past decade, the roadway network is carrying increased amounts of regional traffic from surrounding towns and this has had a major impact on several roadways.

Conduct a Corridor Study on Route 67

Seymour is heavily impacted by development in surrounding communities as vehicles use local roads to get to Route 8, especially at interchange 22 (Route 67). In addition, a considerable amount of Seymour's industrial and commercial services exist along Route 67. The combination of regional commuting traffic, local community traffic, and local business trips make for a very congested section of roadway. This area should be the major focus of the transportation improvement in the near term.

Enhance The Overall Transportation Network...

Monitor Maintenance Of Piped Utilities...

Enhance Wired Utilities...

Monitor Placement Of Wireless Utilities...

The first step should be to conduct an access management study along Route 67 to evaluate the need for possible curb cut consolidation throughout the corridor. In addition, signal timing should be evaluated to ensure the flow of traffic is optimal at all times of day.

Enhance The Overall Transportation Network

Several key programs should be considered to enhancing the transportation network. First, this Plan recommends adopting new roadway classifications based on their function (such as access versus through traffic), major land use (business or residential), traffic volumes, and overall condition.

Second, a more detailed study should be conducted to evaluate the entire circulation network. The major focus of this study should be to examine the core downtown area, including Route 313, Route 115, Route 67, and the Route 8 interchanges.

Third, the town should work closely with the Valley Regional Planning Agency to ensure that the Regional Transportation plan recommendations are conducted in a manner that is both beneficial to the Town, and the Region.

Improve Transit Service

Transit Options

Train

Metro-North

Bus Service

CT Transit District

Valley Transit District

Personal Service

CT Limo

Valley Cab Co.

There are numerous transit services available for use by Seymour residents. However, some of these service, specifically train and bus service, are designed specifically for working trips, and therefore are not frequent enough for social and recreational trips. In addition to improving the major transit services, it is important to support the continued use of transportation services for the elderly and disabled. The services include dial-a-ride, and the Valley Transit District.

Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel

Seymour has a limited network of sidewalks, mainly concentrated in the downtown area. The redevelopment of commercial areas should incorporate the use of sidewalk, especially when connection can be made between existing commercial area. In addition, when new construction of roadways occurs, the incorporation of bikeways should be considered whenever feasible.

Infrastructure Plan

Utilities

Utility infrastructure includes piped utilities (public water, public sewer, natural gas), wired utilities (electric, telephone, and cable television), and other utilities (cellular communications). The location and capacity of infrastructure is important to the future growth and development of Seymour since it can direct growth towards or away from certain areas.

Monitor Maintenance of Piped Utilities

Public water service in Seymour is provided by two separate water companies (Bridgeport Hydraulic and Birmingham Utilities). Approximately 86% of Seymour's population is being served by the current public water system. The combined demand on the two water company supplies is about 50% of the total safe yield. In addition, a new storage tank was constructed in the Great Hill area to serve future needs. Recently the service area was expanded to the new Middle School on Mountain Road and to a new residential subdivision on Botsford Road. The current water supply, and new storage facilities, will adequately service the future needs of the community.

Public sewer service in Seymour is operated by the Seymour Water Pollution Control Authority. The wastewater treatment facility is located on Derby Avenue in Seymour. The treatment facility has a capacity of approximately three million gallons per day. The average daily flows are approximately 50% of total capacity. The Seymour wastewater treatment plant also has inter-municipal agreement with Oxford. The inter-municipal agreement allocates 7% of the total capacity of the system to Oxford. Future expansion of the current service area may include the Fountain Lake area along Great Hill Road. Capacity and operational conditions of the treatment plant should meet the needs of the community through the planning period.

Natural gas service in Seymour is provided by Yankee Gas. There is a natural gas transmission line running along Route 67 with available service extensions. In fact, the new police station has been outfitted with a Gas / Oil hybrid heating system.

Seymour should begin to familiarize itself with the new EPA Phase II stormwater discharge requirements since it will require a complete system inventory and map by about 2003 and an ongoing operations plan by about 2006.

Encourage Enhancement of Wired Utilities

The major wired utility enhancements in Seymour should be directed towards improvement and expansion of high speed internet, digital television, and telephone services. Through public input it was indicated that service improvements are necessary and additional providers should be encouraged to service Seymour residents.

In addition, as improvements are made to these utilities, wherever possible, the utilities should be placed underground to protect community character.

Monitor the Placement of Wireless Utilities

Wireless communications are provided by numerous companies. Wireless facilities, mainly towers, are situated along Route 8. As additional coverage is needed there will be a push for more facilities along the arterial roadways in town. Therefore, it is important that the Town consider requesting the use of stealth technologies (i.e. flag poles, church steeples), attaching panels to existing buildings, and or smaller relay facilities. The uses of these techniques will help to provide a good communications network while preserving the community's scenic beauty.

Infrastructure Strategies

Transportation

1. Conduct a Route 67 corridor study.
2. Evaluate the transportation circulation in the Downtown Area.
3. Monitor and encourage the enhancement of the public transit system.
4. Monitor the transportation needs of the elderly and disabled.
5. Encourage the placement of sidewalks to allow for safe and convenient pedestrian travel.
6. Incorporate, whenever feasible, bikeways when new roadway construction occurs.

Utilities

7. Monitor non-sewered areas to protect ground water supplies.
8. Encourage the expansion of the public water service area.
9. Monitor the capacity of the current wastewater facilities and make improvement as necessary.
10. Continue to encourage buried utilities in all types of development, including the downtown.
11. Encourage the expansion of the natural gas system.
12. Encourage the enhancement of telephone, internet, and cable television.
13. Consider constructing regulations to enhance the placement and design of wireless technologies.

CONCLUSION



Overview

As part of a Town Plan, the recommendations of each of the preceding chapters are generally reviewed to present an overall Future Land Use Plan.

However, this plan is an overview of topics usually included in a Plan of Conservation and Development. Without more detailed mapping and more in-depth analysis typically found in such a plan, it is difficult to prepare a future land use plan. The plan does however, in a general way, provide a broad direction to guide land use decisions can be guided.

This plan is a reflection of the stated goals, objectives, and recommendations of Seymour municipal commissions, Staff and the general public. It presents a vision for Seymour based on historic character, current land use patterns and desired economic growth and community facilities. It outlines the general policies the town should pursue in future.

Plan Consistency

This Plan was compared with the Locational Guide Map in the 1998-2003 State Plan of Conservation & Development and found to be generally consistent with that Plan. In addition, this Plan was compared with the 1988 Regional Plan of Development (updated 1996) for the Valley Regional Planning Agency and found to be generally consistent with that Plan.

Any inconsistencies can be generally attributed to:

- differences in definitions of desirable uses or development densities,
- local (as opposed to State or regional) desires about how Seymour should grow and change in the coming years.

Responsibility

While the Planning & Zoning Commission has the primary responsibility of implementing the Plan's recommendations, other local boards and commissions such as the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and similar agencies, are also involved.

If the Plan is to be successfully realized, it must serve as a guide to all residents, applicants, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly growth of Seymour.

“The Plan shall show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential ... purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality.”

Implementation Priorities

Implementation of the Plan is a gradual and continual process. While some recommendations can be carried out in a relatively short period of time, others may only be realized towards the end of the planning period, and some may be even more long-term in nature. Further, since some recommendations may involve additional study or a commitment of fiscal resources, their implementation may take place over several years or occur in stages.

Implementation Tools

Tools available to implement the Plan of Conservation and Development include:

- **Annual Work Program** - The strategies in this plan can be used by the Planning & Zoning Commission to develop an annual work program, both for itself and other boards and commissions.
- **Plan of Conservation & Development** - Using the Plan of Conservation & Development as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning & Zoning Commission will help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan. All land use proposals should be measured and evaluated in terms of the Plan and its various elements.
- **Zoning and Subdivision Regulations** - The Zoning and the Subdivision Regulations provide specific criteria for land development at the time of applications. As a result, these regulations are important tools to implement the recommendations of the Plan. However, this is only true if the regulations reflect the recommendations of the Plan.
- **Capital Budget** - The Capital Budget (or Capital Improvement Program) is a tool for planning major capital expenditures of a municipality so that local needs can be identified and prioritized within local fiscal constraints that may exist. A five-year capital budget should be prepared for Seymour.
- **Referral of Municipal Improvements** - Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that municipal improvements (defined in the statute) be referred to the Planning & Zoning Commission for a report before any local action is taken. A proposal disapproved by the Commission can only be implemented after a two-thirds vote by Town Meeting.

Summary

The Plan of Conservation & Development has been prepared to meet the challenges that will confront the Town of Seymour in the future.

The first step in the planning process was to find out where Seymour has been as a community and where it is going. Information was collected and reviewed as part of the process of assembling this Plan. The second step was to determine where we want to go. Meetings were held to assess issues in Seymour and discuss alternative strategies. Through this work, general goals and policies were developed and a vision for the future of Seymour was confirmed. The third step was to layout specific actions that will help us remember how we will get there. These specific strategies are detailed throughout the Plan.

However, the most important step of the planning process will be implementation of the recommendations. While the task of implementation rests with all Seymour residents, the realization of the Plan is orchestrated by the Planning and Zoning Commission and other Town agencies and officials.

The Plan is intended as a guide to be followed in order to enhance the quality of life and the community character of Seymour. It is intended to be flexible in order to allow adjustments in the manner that specific goals and objectives are achieved while maintaining stability in the long-term goals of the community.

During the next few years, some of the goals will hopefully be achieved, some circumstances will undoubtedly change, and some conditions will certainly arise that will suggest that it is time to reconsider the Plan or some of its elements. Such situations are to be welcomed since it will mean that the Plan is being used as a beacon by residents. Programs that help achieve community consensus, establish community goals, and promote community welfare will all turn out to be positive steps in the history of Seymour.

By preparing this Plan of Conservation & Development, that process has already begun.

