

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Open Space is perceived of and defined in different ways. The views of open land and forested landscapes in Newtown combine to provide a public perception that large areas of the Town are “open space,” without distinction to the ownership characteristics of the viewed landscape. Much of the land perceived of by Newtown residents as “open space” is in fact not “preserved” as open space and is subject to future development.

Newtown is one of the faster growing towns in Connecticut. During the past twenty years, 13,000 acres of publicly perceived “open space” lands were developed for residential subdivisions. These 13,000 acres amount to 33% of the Town’s total land area.

Newtown’s “community character” and quality of life are shaped in part by its “green” and pastoral landscapes. Portions of these landscapes are disappearing at a rate of 600 acres per year. The cyclical residential land development pressures which consumed 1/3 of the Town’s landscape during the past twenty years show no signs of abatement. As a consequence, future development will continue to consume land perceived of as open space.



Rams Pasture

In 1999, the Newtown First Selectman created the Ad Hoc Open Space Task Force to make recommendations regarding the acquisition or preservation of open space. Since that time this volunteer organization has spent many hours identifying existing open space resources and formulating a report titled Open Space in Newtown 2002. This report identified strategies for the preservation of open space and the linking of open space resources by a town-wide system of trails. The preparation of this open space memorandum has benefited from the assistance provided by members of the Ad Hoc Open Space Task Force.

The concept of open space preservation has broad based community support in Newtown, as evidenced by the recently completed Community Planning Survey. However, the financial resources available to the Town to preserve open space are limited. It is therefore important to develop an open space plan which describes current conditions, defines policies related to the acquisition, use and maintenance of open space and proposes actions to implement a long range open space plan.

The Town is not alone in its quest to preserve open space for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations of Newtown residents. The Newtown Forest Association (NFA) is the oldest land trust organization in Connecticut and has developed a very successful program to preserve open space. The NFA is an all volunteer organization with protected open space holdings located throughout Newtown, currently totaling 1,000 acres. Other land trust organizations are also contributing to efforts to preserve open space. The State of Connecticut is Newtown’s largest benefactor in preserving open space. State owned forest, park and agricultural land holdings total nearly 2,800 acres.



Newtown Forest Association



State Agricultural Land- Fairfield Hills

II. CURRENT CONDITIONS

A. Existing Open Space Resources

The open space planning process began with an investigation of Newtown's current open space inventory. The inventory process was initiated with a broad definition of open space, to include: State park, forest and agricultural lands; town parks, town open space, Newtown Forest Association lands; land trust properties; major utility land holdings; and privately owned open space lands, including Newtown's two golf courses and fish and game conservation organizations. While the latter two categories are not open to the public and are



Grace Moore Road Open Space / Fire Pond



Pootatuck River- Private Conservation Land

not protected open space, their presence affects the visual open space appearance of the community and their loss would represent an erosion of Newtown's community character. Public school sites have not been included as open space, but are shown on open space resource maps to help viewers locate open space properties relative to known landmarks.

The attached map Parks and Open Space Resources provides a visual description of the location of open space lands within the Newtown. This information was mapped using Geographic Information System technology, so that every parcel identified on this map has an underlying computerized data base containing information relative to the properties ownership, use, acreage and map-block-lot identifiers. This map is useful in describing the location of open space resources within Newtown and the physical relationship of open space lands to one another. Table 1, Inventory of Protected Open Space, summarizes protected open space lands within

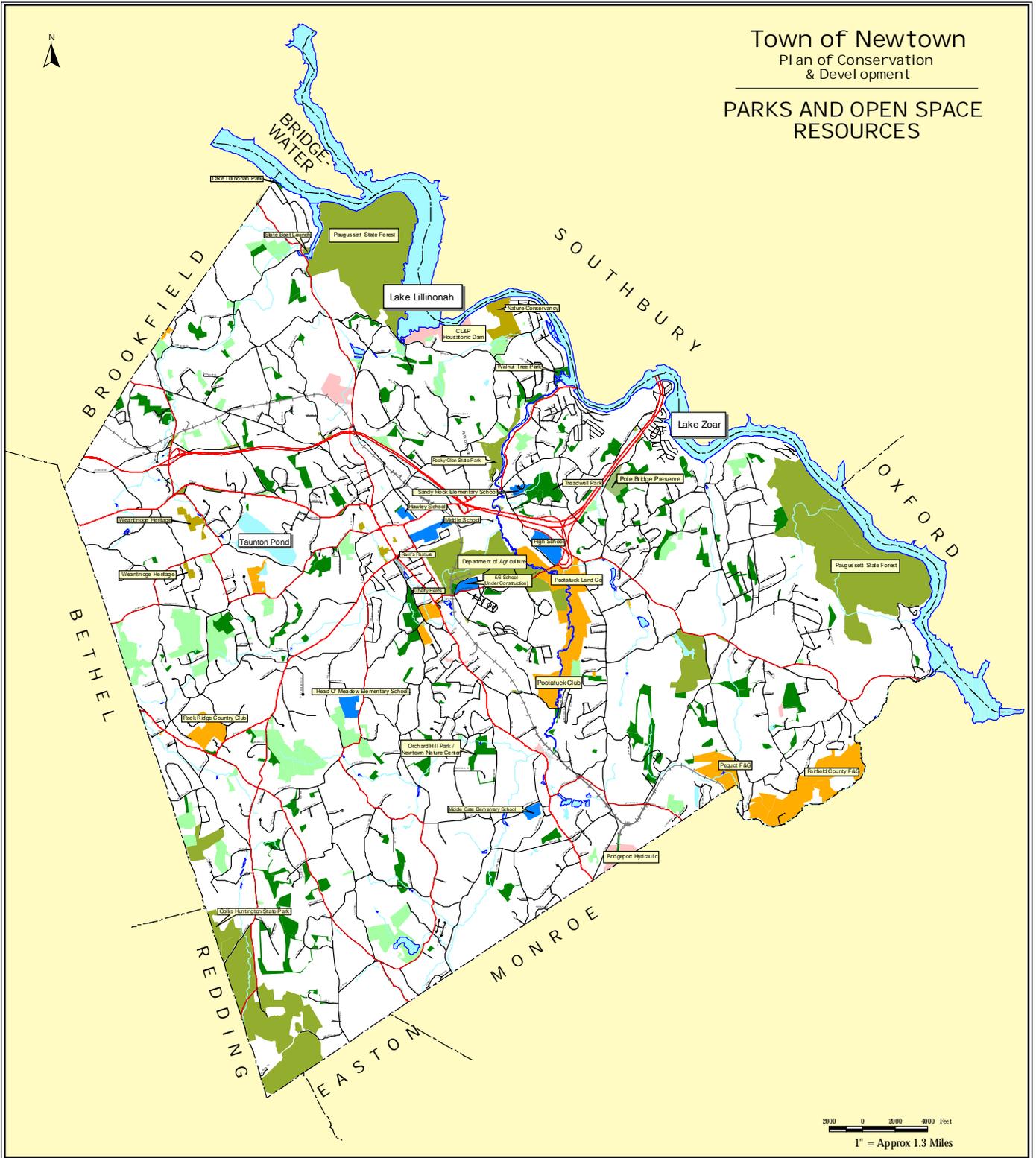


Housatonic River- Northeast Utilities Land

Town of Newtown

Plan of Conservation
& Development

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE RESOURCES



Source:
Ad Hoc Open Space Taskforce
Land Use Office
Community Development Office

Legend

	Town of Newtown		School
	State of Connecticut		Land Trust
	Private		Utility
	Newtown Forest Association		Town Purchase Under Consideration

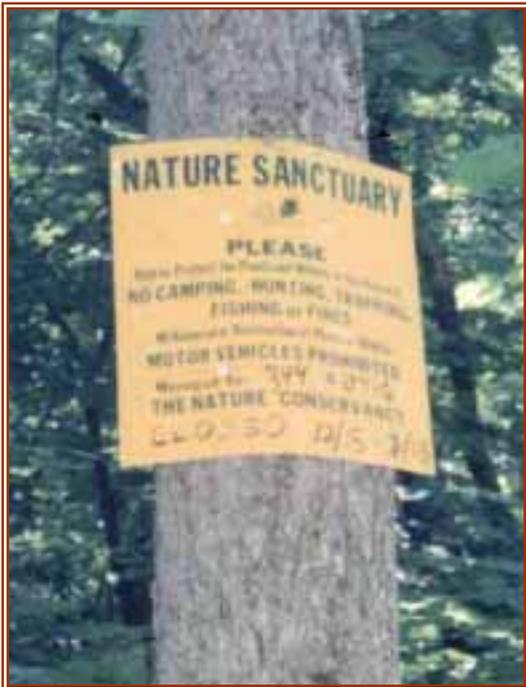
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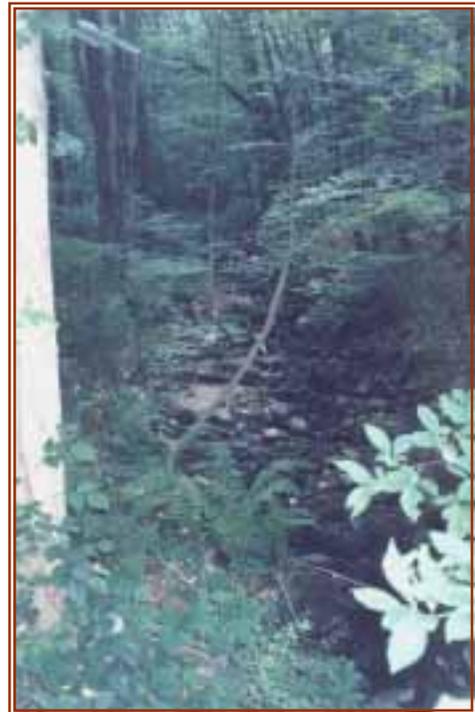
Newtown, by ownership category. Newtown's current inventory of protected open space is estimated at 5,788 acres, which represents approximately 14.8% of Newtown's land area.



State Open Space – Kazan Property



Nature Conservancy



Weantinoge Heritage – Saw Mill Rd.

TABLE 1	
TOWN OF NEWTOWN	
Open Space Inventory	
Open Space Category	Assessment Acreage
Town Parks	
Deep Brook at Fairfield Hills	10.00
Dickinson Park	29.91
Lake Lillinonah Park	3.10
Oakview Field	3.60
Orchard Hill Park	24.30
Treadwell Park	60.00
Walnut Tree Field	46.76
Subtotal	177.67
Town Owned Open Space	1,098.86
Newtown Forest Association	1,000.00
Private Organizations	
Brookfield OS Legacy	3.69
BSA - Cullens Youth Ass.	17.53
Fairfield Fish and Game	301.03
Nature Conservancy	49.44
Pequot Fish and Game	81.08
Pootatuck Club	80.90
Pootatuck Land Company	282.20
Ram's Pasture (Newtown Cemetary Association)	10.30
Sandy Hook Athletic Club	7.85
Weantinoge Heritage	35.57
Subtotal	869.59
State of Connecticut	
Collis P. Huntington State Park	38.09
Department of Agriculture	341.00
Kazan Property	162.02
Paugussett State Forest North	752.50
Paugussett State Forest South	1,099.88
Rocky Glen Park	44.17
Former Bridgeport Hydraulic Properties	637.55
Subtotal	3,075.21
Public Utilities	
Bridgeport Hydraulic	45.50
Northeast Utilities Generation	233.00
Rocky River Realty	55.00
United Water of Connecticut	8.12
Subtotal	341.62
Golf Courses	
Newtown Country Club	40.00
Rock Ridge Country Club	60.00
Subtotal	100.00
Open Space Inventory- Totals	6,662.95
Source: HMA, with assistance provided by the Ad HOC Open Space Task Force, Town Conservation Officer and Town Tax Assessor	

B. Utilization of Existing Open Space Resources

There are approximately 187 parcels of Town owned open space, totaling 1,099 acres of land located throughout Newtown, as described on the attached map. Some of this land contains trails and is used for passive recreation but most Town owned open space remains in its natural state.

It is recommended that the Town prepare an on-site assessment and management plan for each parcel of Town owned open space. Such an assessment would include an analysis of site conditions, including a natural resource inventory, and identification of associated easements, rights of way, etc. The management plan should include a recommendation for future use/non-use of the open space parcel, access, as well as recommendations for the management and maintenance of the parcel and associated trails and easements.



Town Open Space – Chestnut Knoll

Consideration should also be given to the development of an attractive open space signage program, similar to that used by the Newtown Forest Association, to publicly identify Town owned open space, signifying pride of ownership and identifying permitted uses.



Pootatuck River at Walnut Tree Field

III. FUTURE OPEN SPACE PLAN

A. Framework for Future Open Space Actions

It is recommended that the future open space plan for Newtown be closely aligned with the seven elements of open space defined by Connecticut General Statutes Section 12-107b. These seven elements are also the basis for the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Open Space Task Force and provide a solid footing for future Town efforts in the development a town-wide system of protected open space.

B. Recommended Goals and Objectives

As described in previous POCD memorandums, Newtown has a wealth of natural and scenic resources which should be considered for conservation and preservation actions to protect public health and safety, provide for passive recreation opportunities and maintain Newtown's community character and quality of life afforded by the presence of these resources.

The following recommendations are suggested to guide the on-going development of Newtown's open space system. The implementation of these recommendations will result in a comprehensive system of protected open space that will evolve to meet the future needs of Newtown residents. These recommendations can be accomplished through a combination of activities and resources, including municipal regulations, conservation easements, open space acquisitions and partnering with non-profit and governmental entities dedicated to the protection of open space.

The following goals and objectives are recommended to provide a foundation for future open space preservation and passive recreation actions. These recommendations are based on the seven elements of open space, as defined by the Connecticut General Statutes referenced above:

Goal 1. Maintain and Enhance the Conservation of Natural or Scenic Resources

Utilize the natural resource inventory and community character information prepared as a part of this Plan of Conservation and Development update and additional research materials as they become available in the future, to identify areas of Newtown that would benefit from open space conservation and preservation actions. Natural and scenic resources identified for open space conservation and preservation activities include:

Objectives

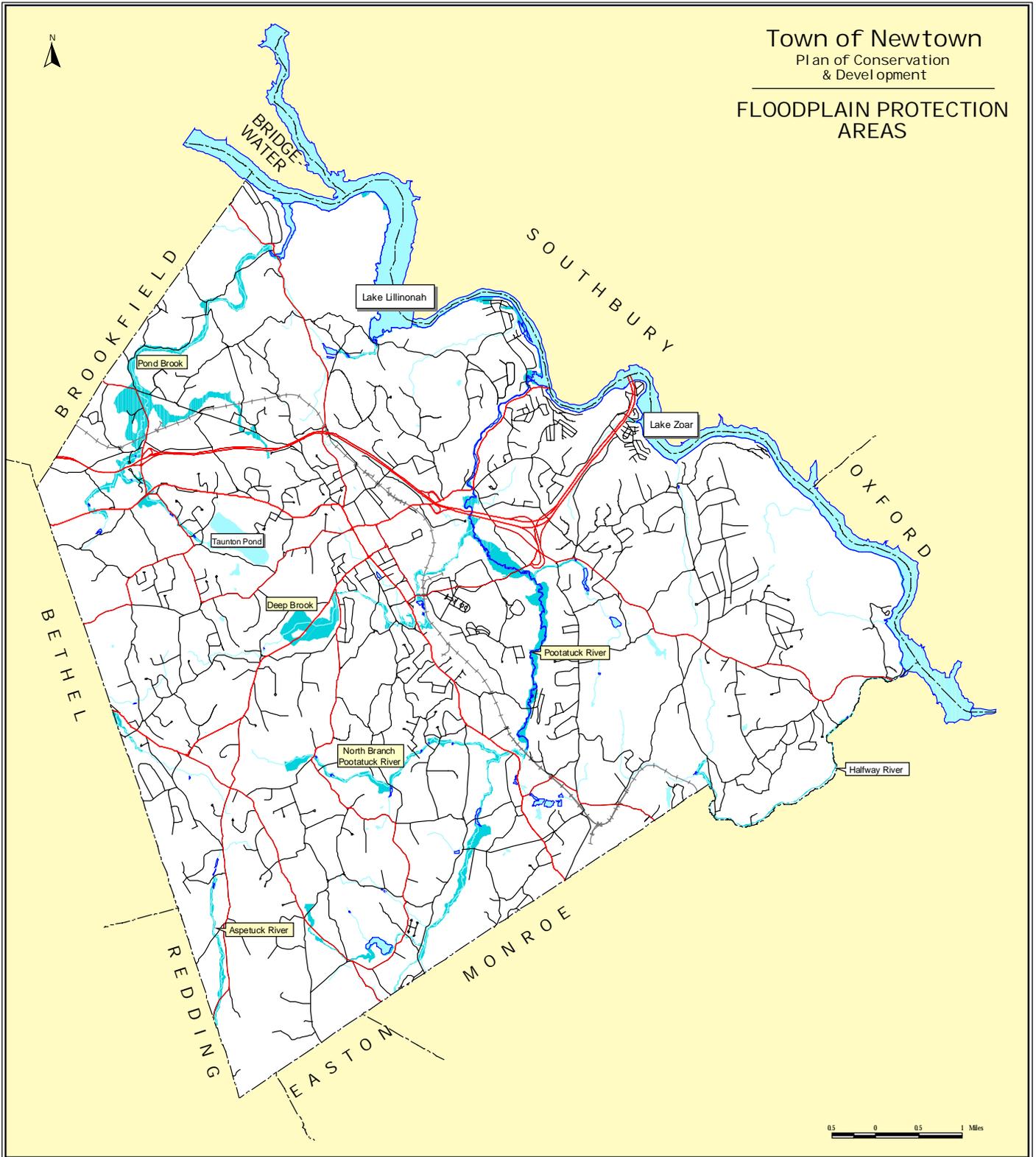
- 100 Year Flood Zones- Consider additional municipal actions to limit or prohibit development in federally defined 100 year



Aspetuck River Flood Plain

Town of Newtown
 Plan of Conservation
 & Development

FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION
 AREAS



Source:
 HMA
 Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
 Environmental and Geographic Information Center
 Federal Emergency Protection Agency

Legend

Potential Floodplain Protection Areas

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 Hamden, Connecticut July 2002

flood plains, as identified on the attached map. Note: The information on this map is in the process of being updated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Updated information should be incorporated into the POCD data base as it becomes available.

- Prime Agricultural Lands- Work with existing and future agricultural businesses to preserve land used for agricultural purposes. Accomplish this through the utilization of Newtown’s “Conservation and Agricultural Zone,” and through the utilization of conservation easements, the purchase of development rights and open space acquisitions. Consider the use of purchase-lease back agreements to help sustain agricultural uses.



Sugar Lane Corn Field

- Reduced Tax Assessment for Farm, Forest and Open Space Lands- Work with property owners to encourage the full utilization of the reduced tax assessment program made possible by Public Act 490 (now Section 12-107e of the Connecticut General Statutes), as one means of maintaining privately owned agricultural, forest and open space lands in their present condition.



Sugar Hill Heifers

- Forest Management- Work with property owners and utilize existing municipal regulations and the “Forest Stewardship Program” of the University of Connecticut to encourage forest management practices that maintain the good health of Newtown’s forests.

- Bedrock and Surficial Geological Features- Identify, and where possible, seek to protect Newtown’s unique bedrock and surficial geological features. These features create specialized habitat for some plant and animal species and contribute to Newtown’s scenic character.



Rock Outcrop – Great Quarter Rd.

- Wildlife and Plant Life- Identify and seek to protect unique habitat areas identified by the Connecticut DEP’s Natural Diversity Database.
- Large Contiguous Blocks of Land- Consider the open space protection of large, “undisturbed” contiguous blocks of land to sustain a diverse wildlife habitat and to enhance the conservation of Newtown’s natural and scenic resources.
- Wildlife Corridors- Identify, conserve and protect Newtown’s existing wildlife corridors and associated habitat needed for the survival of indigenous wildlife species.
- Scenic Ridgelines, Hilltops and Vistas- Protect the scenic vistas identified in the 1998 Town report titled “The Views of Newtown.” Identify open ridgelines and hilltops which contribute to the natural characteristics of Newtown’s landscape. Seek to preserve these “scenic resources” through revised municipal land use regulations, conservation easements and open space acquisition.
- Image Corridors- Preserve the picturesque views of the “countryside” in Newtown which establish images of the Town’s natural beauty and contribute to the visual character of the Town. Identify “Image Corridors” along State and Town roadways and establish a strategy to preserve these views, as is currently being accomplished with the purchase of the Pole Bridge Road Open Space Preserve.
- Visual Buffers- Preserve Newtown’s “scenic resources” by creating visual buffers from new development occurring along Newtown’s roadway system. While this action may not add to protected open space, it will have the consequence of preserving the open and rural characteristics of Newtown’s visual landscape.
- Prepare a natural resources inventory and management plan for each open space parcel acquired, with recommendations for long term parcel utilization, access, conservation, preservation, management, maintenance and signage.



Parmalee Hill Road

Goal 2: Protect Natural Streams and Water Supply

Objectives

- Aquifer Protection- Continue Town efforts to protect the Pootatuck Aquifer through the implementation of the Aquifer Protection District. Consider the expansion of this protection approach to other aquifers in Newtown which may possess the potential to supply public drinking water in the future.

- Pursue land use measures that will enable the attainment of the water quality goals established for Newtown's streams and rivers by DEP's Surface Water Classification System.



Aspetuck River

- River Protection Corridors - To protect natural streams and water supplies, inventory Newtown's streams and rivers to identify candidates for river protection overlay districts. Such corridors are designed to protect life, public safety and property, protect and improve water quality by filtering pollutants and sediments, stabilize stream banks and river beds, improve aquatic habitat and provide travel corridors for wildlife. Potential River Protection Corridors are identified on the attached map of Stream and River Corridors.

Goal 3: Promote Conservation of Soils and Wetlands

Objectives:

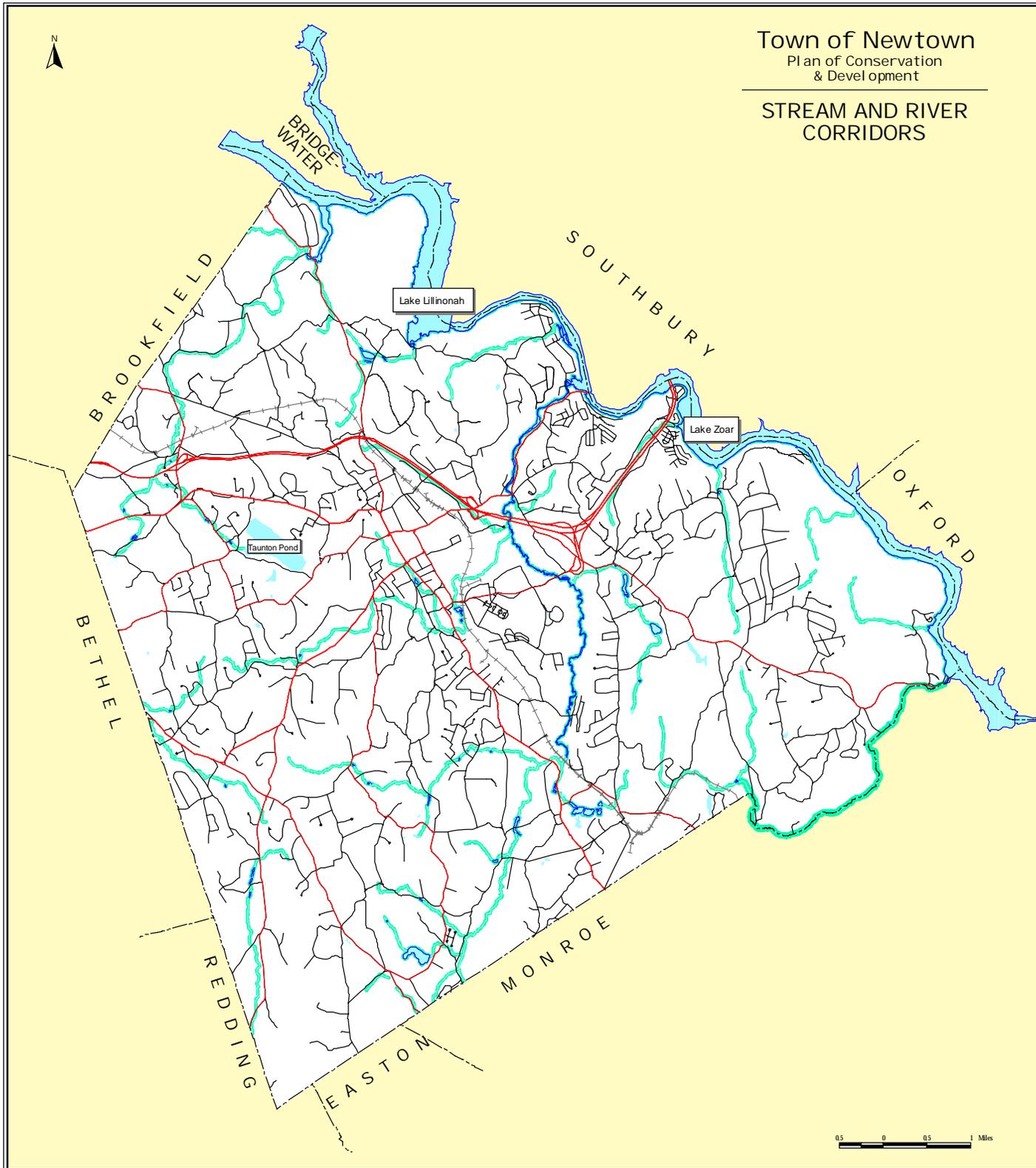
- No Net Loss- Maintain a policy of no net loss of wetlands. Promote land use initiatives that enable wetlands to continue to function as water storage areas, natural habitat areas, natural water purification systems and ground water recharge areas. Consider all regulated wetlands as potential protected open space.



Currituck Road Wetlands

Town of Newtown
Plan of Conservation
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STREAM AND RIVER
CORRIDORS



Source:
HMA
Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
Environmental and Geographic Information Center

Legend

 River Protection Corridors

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Hamden, Connecticut July 2002

Stream Buffers- Incorporate “upland review areas” into Newtown’s wetland regulations as an additional means of conserving and protecting Newtown’s wetlands and watercourses. This conservation approach is described in the 1997 Connecticut DEP report, Guidelines- Upland Review Area Regulations.

- Vernal Pools- Identify Newtown’s vernal pools and seek to protect these areas and the wildlife and plant life indigenous to this habitat. Vernal pools are considered intermittent streams and can therefore be regulated as wetlands.



Goal 4: Enhance the Value to the Public of Abutting or Neighboring Parks, Forests, Wildlife Preserves, Nature Reservations, Sanctuaries or Other Open Spaces

Objectives

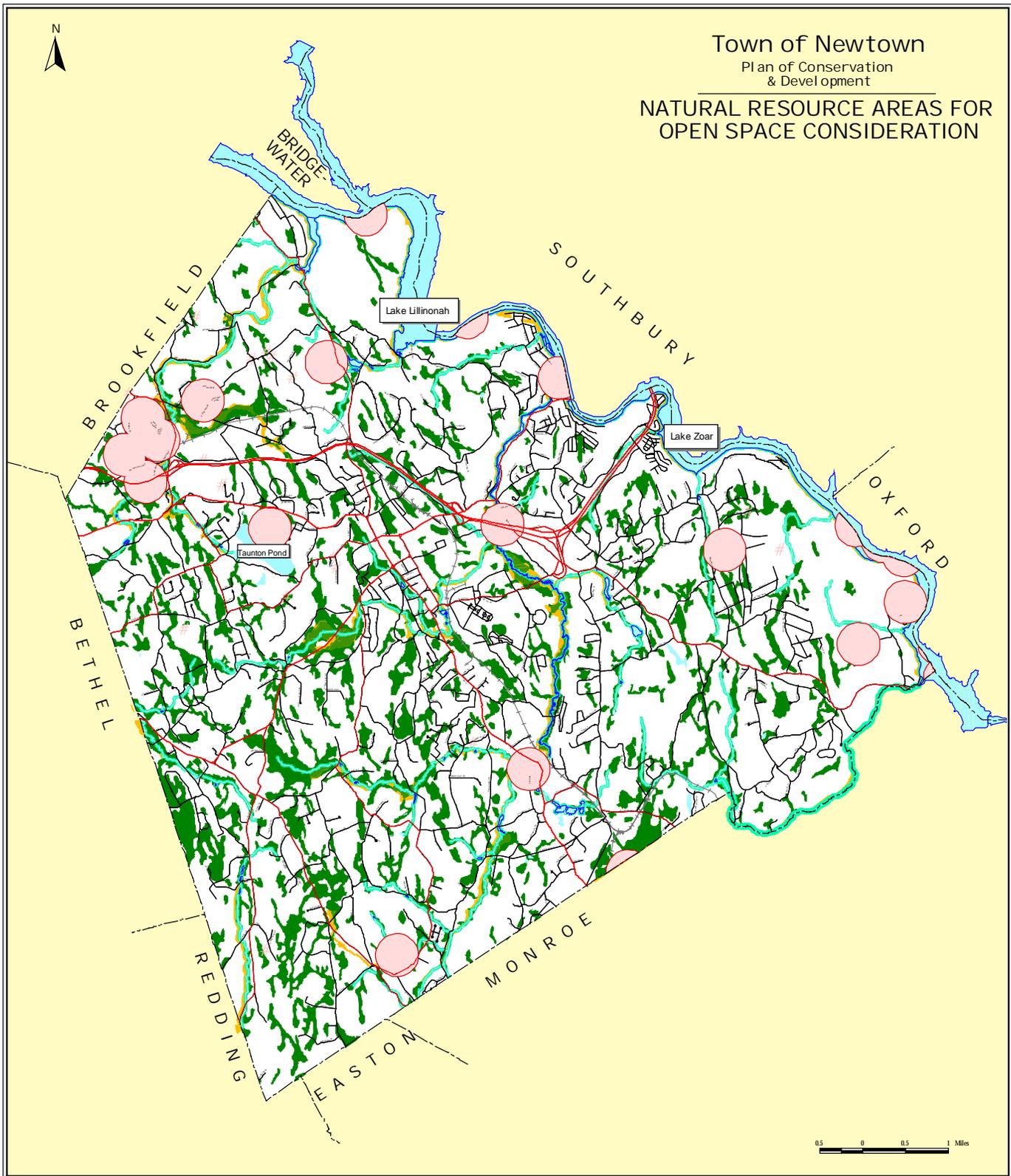
- Open Space Additions- Identify opportunities where the value to the public of existing open space lands would be enhanced by adding to those lands.
- Greenways- As defined by Section 23-100 of the Connecticut General Statutes, “...greenway means a corridor of open space that (1) may protect natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources or offer opportunities for recreation or nonmotorized transportation, (2) may connect existing protected areas and provide access to the outdoors, (3) may be located along a defining natural feature, such as a waterway, along a man made corridor, including an unused right-of-way, traditional trail routes or historic barge canals or (4) may be a greenspace along a highway or around a village.”



Housatonic River Trail

The development of the Pootatuck Greenway was recommended in the Town’s 1993 Plan of Development. Those recommendations are still valid and should be pursued. They include the creation of an open space greenway through the central portion of the community, extending from Walnut Tree Park on the Housatonic River, southward along both

Town of Newtown
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 NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS FOR
 OPEN SPACE CONSIDERATION



Source:
 HMA
 USDA, Natural Resource Conservation
 Service (NRCS)
 Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
 Environmental and Geographic Information Center

Legend

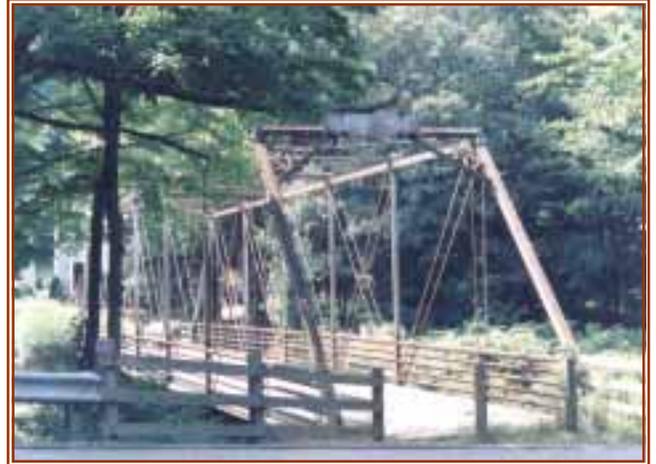
- Floodplain
- Wetland
- Wetland & Floodplain
- River Protection Corridors
- Natural Diversity Areas
- # Scenic Views

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sides of the Pootatuck River and connecting with the rail to trail project extending northward from the Town of Monroe. The Pootatuck Greenway is proposed to be improved with walking and bicycle trails and possibly bridal trails, with signage, interpretive stations and parking.

Newtown's Ad Hoc Open Space Task Force has described a vision for an interconnected system of multi-use greenway trails radiating out from the former Fairfield Hills Hospital campus and linking with the many open space resources located throughout Newtown. This greenway trail system would connect with Rocky Glen State Park, the upper and lower Paugussett State Forests, the Kazan property, Huntington State Park and numerous public open space resources owned by the Town and non-profit organizations, to provide passive recreation opportunities for Newtown residents.



As an example, actions are currently underway to develop a greenway trail which would begin in the vicinity of Newtown's new 5/6 school at Fairfield Hills and extend generally northward along Deep Brook, the Pootatuck River, Black Bridge Road, Nature Conservancy lands and connect with the trails of the upper Paugussett State Forest, as described on the attached sketch. This effort and future attempts to develop greenway trails should be encouraged. Some of these trails provide opportunities for connections to the trail networks in adjacent communities.

Goal 5: Enhance Public Recreation Opportunities

Plan Memorandum #5, Parks and Recreation, addressed the existing inventory and future requirements for Town facilities to serve the active recreational needs of Newtown residents.

Over time, the Town has developed a recreational service approach of concentrating its active recreational resources in large, centralized locations and also maximizing the recreational resources associated with Newtown's schools to meet the active recreation needs of residents. This centralized service approach is projected to continue for at least the next ten years, as the Parks and Recreation Department has proposed the construction of seven additional playing fields and active recreation resources needed to meet community needs as part of the re-use proposals for the

former Fairfield Hills Hospital campus. Funding for these additional active recreation resources was included in the Fairfield Hills bond package, approved by voters in 2001.

The following map, Newtown's Parks and Recreation Facilities, identifies the location of these active recreational resources. Note the absence of Town parks and recreational facilities outside the physical core of the community. Newtown's Open Space Plan should address the passive recreational needs of Newtown residents, on a town-wide basis. Passive recreation is defined as walking, running, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, bird watching, wildlife viewing, fishing and picnicking.

Objectives

- **Passive Recreation Improvements-** A Community Planning Survey was undertaken as part of the process to update the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Eighty-five per cent of the respondents to a question concerning the use of Town owned open space acquired in the future "somewhat agree or strongly agree" that such lands should be used for passive recreation, such as walking.

Newtown has had the foresight to plan for and to develop, on an incremental basis, an evolving system of trails that, in combination with the future creation of greenway open space corridors, can be utilized to meet the passive recreation needs of town residents.

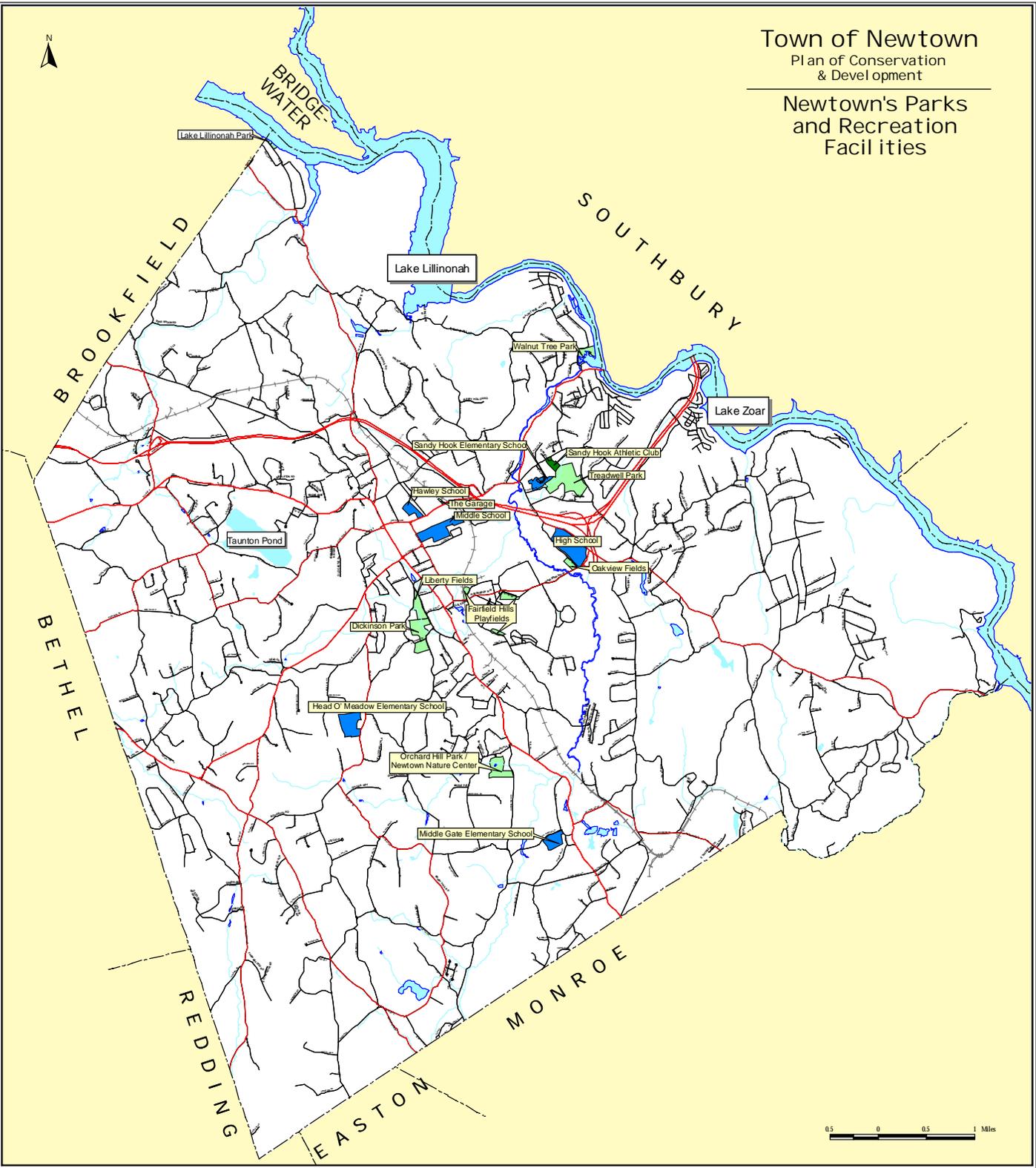


Old Purdy Road Trail

In acquiring open space set-asides through the subdivision process, the Town has endeavored to obtain land and easements that can be used to provide linkage to an interconnected, town-wide open space system. The development of a trail system, capable of supporting a range of passive recreational activities and connecting Newtown residents to open space owned by the Town, the State and land trust organizations, can provide enhanced opportunities for quality passive recreation.

Portions of the existing trail system, especially those portions used as bridal paths for horseback riding, are located on private property, thanks to the generosity of participating land owners. Such arrangements should be encouraged, as they often provide essential linkage to other trails and to open space areas. However, such

Town of Newtown
 Plan of Conservation
 & Development
 Newtown's Parks
 and Recreation
 Facilities



Source:
 NEWTOWN PARKS AND REC DEPT, 2002
 HMA FIELD SURVEY 2002

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Legend

- Town of Newtown
- School
- Private



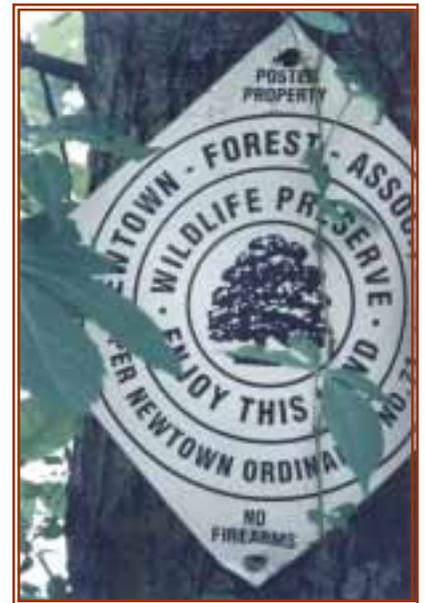
arrangements are also quite fragile and the public needs to be informed of the absolute necessity to respect the property and privacy of participating land owners.

It is recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission continue the practice of obtaining open space lands and easements that further the creation of a town-wide, interconnected trail system capable of supporting the range of passive recreational activities identified above. The diligent efforts of the Ad Hoc Open Space Task Force to identify all trails and trail easements is to be commended. This work will prove especially valuable when the Town's new computerized tax map has been completed and information on trails can be accurately mapped and displayed.

- It is recommended that the Town develop a more formalized working relationship with the Newtown Forest Association (NFA) to maximize available resources toward the goal of preserving open space. The NFA has been very successful in assembling 1000 acres of protected open space. A portion of the NFA's open space land holdings result from land donations made by the Town during the subdivision open space set-aside process.

There may be future opportunities for the Town and the NFA to join forces in a united effort to obtain open space and, where possible, provide opportunities for passive recreational opportunities. Similar formalized working relationships should be pursued with the several non-profit organizations in Newtown that are focused on open space preservation and the development of trails for passive recreational activities.

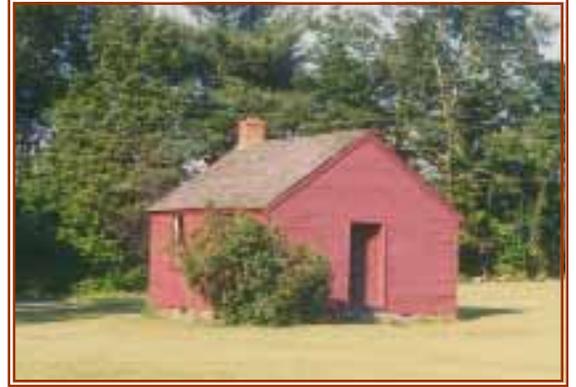
- The Town is encouraged to develop a dialogue with the several fish and game conservation organizations which own significant open lands in Newtown, as identified on the map, Parks and Open Space Resources. The private organizations which own these properties appear to be good stewards of the land which they control. The Town should work with these organizations to ensure that these lands remain undeveloped.



Goal 6: Preserve Historic Sites

Objectives

- The Town is encouraged to identify unprotected historical sites whose conservation, as part of the Town's open space system, would ensure the preservation of these important elements of the Town's community character and links to the past.



Goal 7: Promote Orderly Development

Objectives

- Newtown is one of Connecticut's faster growing communities. This growth is anticipated to continue as long as favorable economic conditions permit. Privately owned open land, that is often perceived of by Newtown residents as open space, is being developed for new residential subdivisions at the rate of 600 acres per year. It is important for Newtown to act now to identify areas of the Town to be preserved as protected open space and to develop a comprehensive open space implementation program.
- Newtown should consider the implementation of open space / conservation subdivision regulations as an additional means of promoting orderly development, in a manner that will result in significantly increasing the amount of land preserved as protected open space.



By requiring open space / conservation subdivisions, each new subdivision application would be viewed as an opportunity to create a significant amount of protected open space. The subdivision approval process can continue to ensure that protected open space furthers the creation of a town-wide system of interconnected open space, preserving the Town's natural and scenic resources, providing passive recreational opportunities, contributing to the maintenance of the Town's visual character and enhancing the quality of life afforded by these resources.

IV. OPEN SPACE IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

A. Recommended Implementation Strategies

The implementation of recommended open space conservation activities is an open ended process that will continue indefinitely. The following is a description of a variety of conservation, preservation and acquisition techniques that could be considered for use, as appropriate, in implementing recommended open space actions.

Fee Simple Acquisition

- **Outright Purchase of Open Space Land by the Town-** The Ad Hoc Open Space Task Force has recommended that the Town fund open space acquisition at the rate of \$200,000 per year for the next five years, toward achieving or exceeding the Governor's state-wide goal of 21% of the State held in public or private trust for open space and passive recreation.

Referencing the Community Planning Survey prepared as a part of this POCD update process, 55% of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay additional taxes for new open space and sixty-nine per cent of those respondents indicated that they were willing to pay \$50 annually in Town taxes for the purchase of new open space.

- **Ownership by Gift-** Actively solicit gifts of land to the Town, the Newtown Forest Association or to one of the several land trust organizations active in Newtown. Early in 2002, at the suggestion of the Ad Hoc Open Space Task Force, the Town contacted owners of land parcels containing 10 or more acres to inform them of the Town's interest in obtaining open space. These efforts should be continued on a regular basis and will eventually result in the protection of additional open space.
- **Reserved Life Estate-** The Town purchases land with the provision that the property owner can continue living on the land until his or her death, after which the Town acquires all rights to the property. This approach can prove to be an affordable means of purchase since it allows continual use of the property by owners and may spread the costs of acquisition over a period of several years.
- **Charitable Gift Annuity-** A land owner transfers property to a land trust, which in turn agrees to make regular annuity payments to beneficiaries designated by the owner.
- **Charitable Remainder Trust-** A land owner places a conservation easement on the property and places the land in a trust. The trustee sells the land to a land trust. The net proceeds from the sale are invested and beneficiaries designated by the land

owner receive annual payments for a fixed term or for life. Remaining funds are turned over to the land trust.

- Purchase and Leaseback- The Town acquires land and leases it back to the seller or another party for a certain type of use or development subject to restrictions. This approach may have special application for lands used for farming and other agricultural uses.
- Land Lease/Purchase Option- While not fee simple ownership, the Town has benefited from the leasing of land for active recreational uses and the same approach might apply for certain passive recreational activities. An example would be the leasing of land to complete a link in a trail system, where the owner is reluctant to sell the needed land but is willing to lease the land. The inclusion of a purchase option within the lease agreement is recommended, to identify the potential long term costs associated with this type of land agreement.
- Subdivision Open Space- The Town currently requires a portion of each new subdivision to be dedicated as permanently protected open space. The Town can assume the ownership of dedicated land or the land can be deeded to another organization approved by the Town, such as the Newtown Forest Association, with appropriate use and management requirements.
- Fees in Lieu of Open Space- Instead of requiring the dedication of open space land within a new subdivision, the Town may receive a fee tied to the value of open space land. Fees in lieu of open space can be used by the Town to purchase priority open space land in other areas of the Town. This approach is useful in instances where the land being subdivided has a minimal amount of natural or scenic resources worth protecting or when the land to be dedicated would not meet the Town's long term open space objective of a network of interconnected open space areas.

Conservation Easements

- A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a land owner and the Town or a land trust that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. This type of agreement allows the owner to continue to own and use the land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs.

Conservation easements can be used for many purposes, including the protection of natural resources, historic or archeological features, agricultural resources, scenic views, etc.

Purchase of Development Rights

- Purchase of Development Rights- The land owner receives a payment for the “development rights” to the property but retains ownership and use of the property. The property remains on the tax role, but at a reduced assessment rate due to the restriction of use. As ownership of the land changes, restrictions on the land remain with the parcel. This technique of land preservation is recommended to help preserve the Town’s remaining significant agricultural lands, as it allows for the continuation of farming and the preservation of a link to the Town’s agrarian past.

Modification of Existing Land Use Regulations

The Town’s existing land use regulations could to be revised to help achieve some of the open space conservation and preservation actions described above. Some modifications for consideration include:

- Conservation and Open Space Subdivision Regulations could be considered as one means of significantly increasing the amount of land conserved and protected as open space. Under this approach, each new subdivision application would be viewed as an opportunity to create a significant amount of protected open space.
- Viewshed- Consider the modification of Newtown’s land use regulations to include viewshed protection requirements which would be designed to conserve distinctive hilltops, ridgelines and scenic vistas so as to preserve Newtown’s scenic resources.
- Preservation Overlay Zoning- Consider the creation of overlay zones which have certain development restrictions that are designed to protect natural, cultural or scenic resources such as floodplains, wetlands, riparian corridors, watercourses, agricultural areas, scenic view areas and historic, cultural or archeologically significant resources. Newtown is currently using this approach, through the utilization of the Aquifer Protection District, to protect a valuable natural resource, the Pootatuck Aquifer.

Partnering

The Town has partnered with governmental and non-profit organizations, such as the State of Connecticut (Kazan Property), the Newtown Forest Association (subdivision open space parcels), the Trust for Public Land (Pole Bridge Open Space Preserve) and other organizations as part of a pragmatic approach to realizing the goal of protecting open space. These efforts should be encouraged and enhanced, as partnering provides the opportunity to combine and focus the financial and personnel resources needed to realize open space conservation and preservation.