

## Acknowledgements

### MAYOR

Michael S. Rohde (July '08 – Present)  
Mark Benigni (Dec. 2000 – July '08)

### CITY MANAGER

Lawrence Kendzior

### PLANNING COMMISSION

Enrico Buccilli, Chairman  
James Belote  
Daniel Brunet  
Arthur Geary, Jr.  
William Lake  
William Murdy  
Laura B. Uhrig  
David White

### POCD STEERING COMMITTEE

Enrico Buccilli, Chairman	Walter Hylwa
Daniel Brunet	Edwin J. Jones
Stephen T. Zerio	Frank Kogut
Brian F. Kogut	Rosario Gulino
Philip T. Ashton	Daniel Reardon

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Brian F. Kogut	Trevor Thorpe, Deputy Majority Leader
George E. McGoldrick, Deputy Majority Leader	Anthony D. Tomassetti
	Michael S. Rohde, Mayor

### DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENFORCEMENT

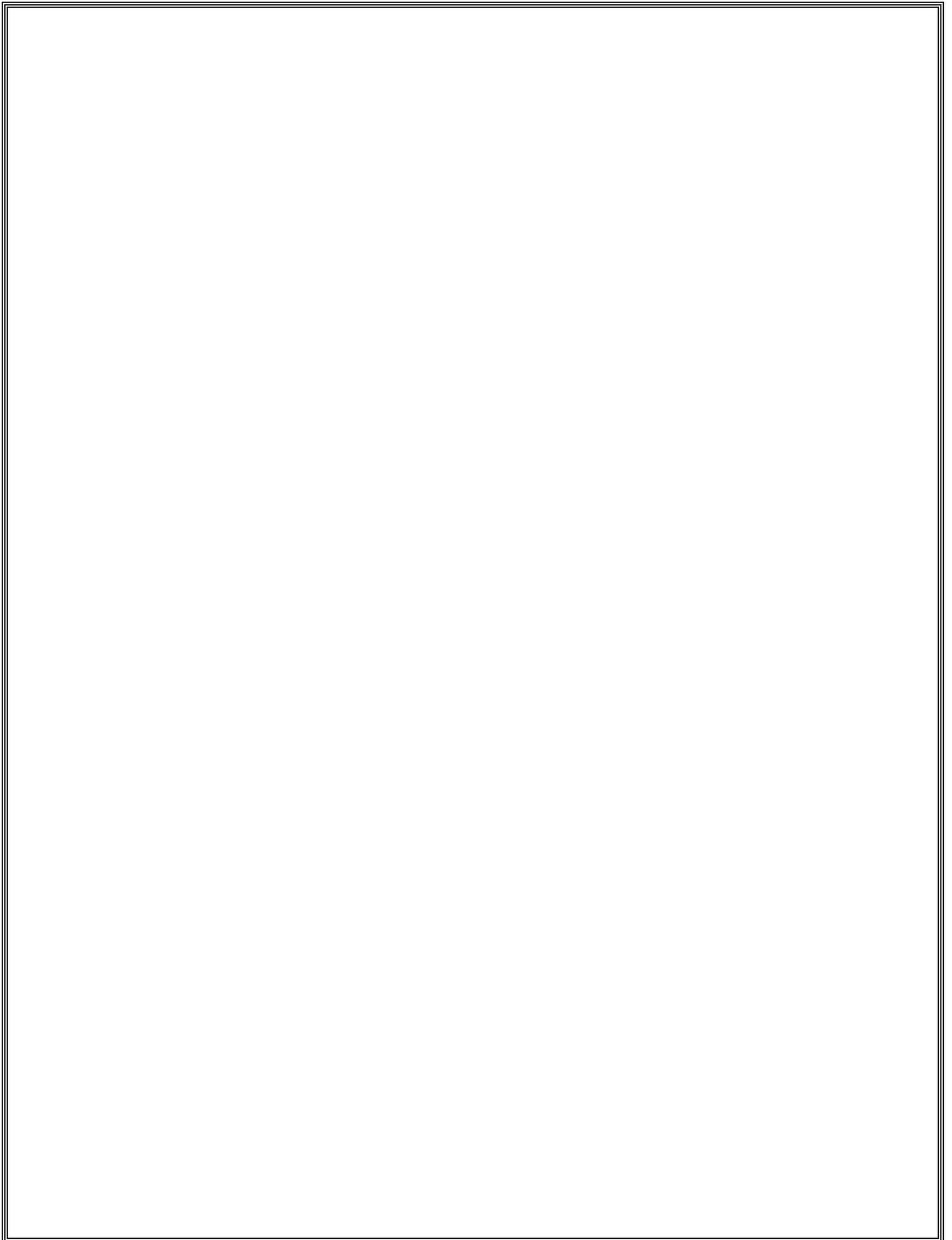
Dominick Caruso, AICP – Director of Planning & Development  
Thomas Skoglund, AICP – Asst. Planning Dir.  
James Anderson, LS – Env. Planner/ZEO

### CONSULTANT

Harrall – Michalowski Associates

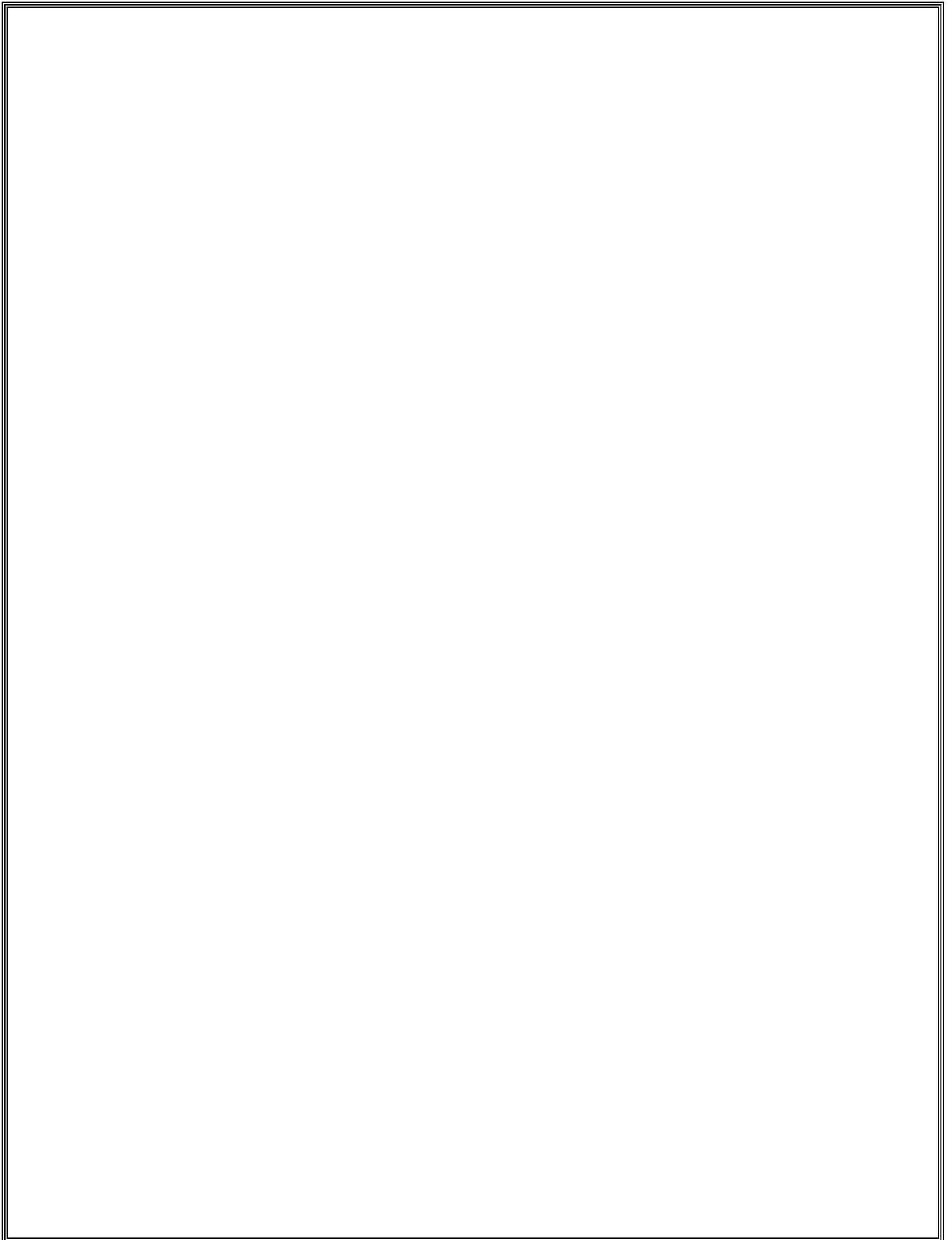
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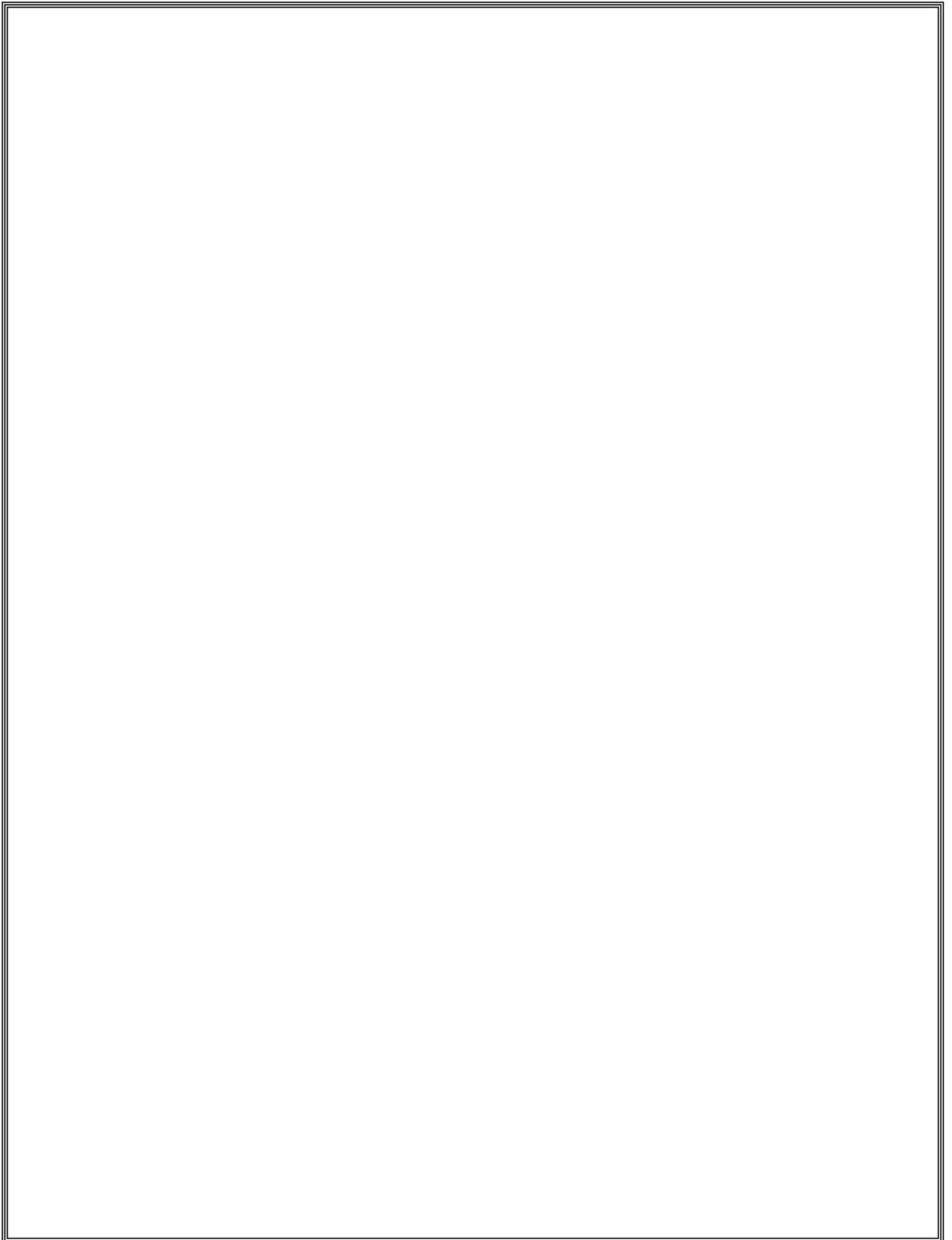


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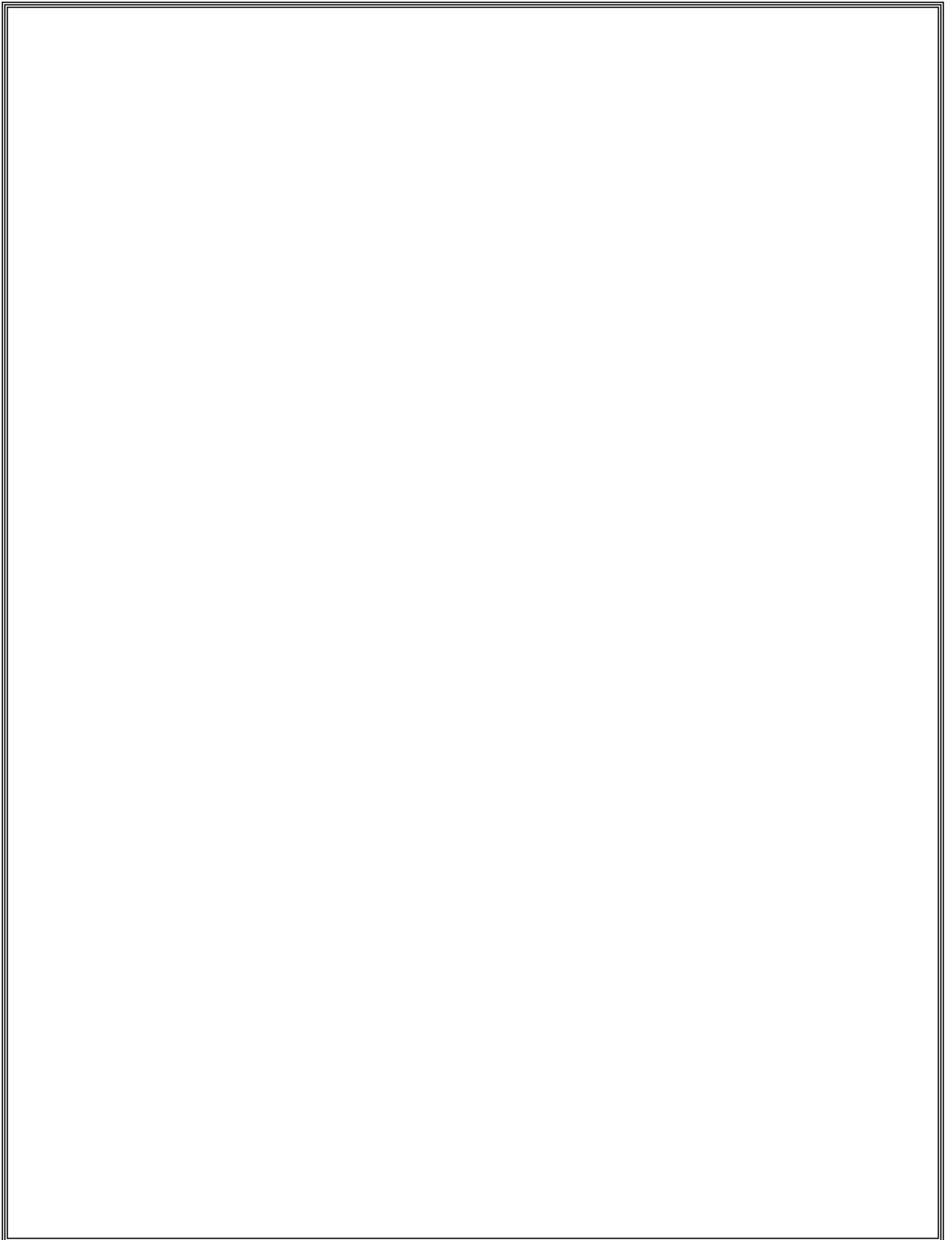
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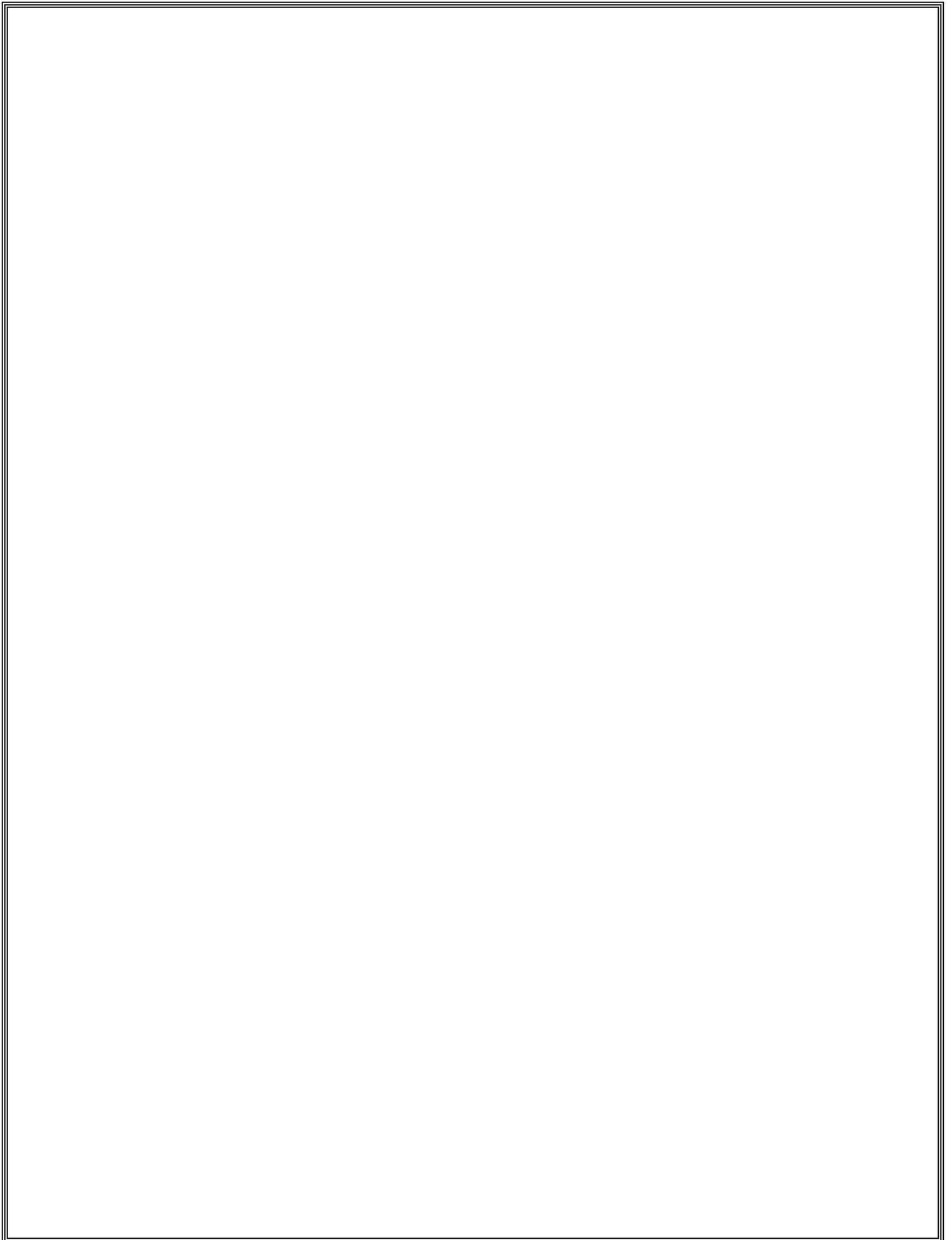


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# *I. Introduction & Background*

## **A. HISTORY OF MERIDEN**

Meriden is a community of roughly 60,000 people residing in more than 24,600 housing units throughout 24 square miles. Meriden contains over 1,300 businesses that provide a broad variety of goods and services, employing over 25,000 people.

The history of Meriden spans almost 350 years. In 1661, a fur trader and innkeeper named Jonathan Gilbert was given 350 acres of land by the Connecticut Colony that was situated along the west side of Lamentation Hill. His intention was to start a farm and maintain a tavern at his home, which he named Meriden.

In the 1600s, the area around Jonathan Gilbert's farm was the rural northern section of Wallingford. Initially, farmers were hesitant to settle in this part of Wallingford out of fear of raids by Native American tribes and wolf attacks. However, by 1666 a trail running through Meriden had become significant enough that the Connecticut General Assembly commissioned a man named Edward Higby to create a crossing over the Quinnipiac River near what is now the intersection of East Main Street and Colony Street that would be suitable for both humans and animals to use. In 1724, there were 35 families living in what is now Meriden, which by then was known as the North Farms section of Wallingford. Getting to Wallingford for religious services proved to be difficult at times, so the 35 families petitioned for a separate meetinghouse. This petition was granted, and in 1727 the first meetinghouse in Meriden was built at what is now the intersection of Ann Street and Dryden Drive.

As the 1700s progressed, Broad Street became the focal point of the community. The street overlaid an old Native American trail, and came to serve as the main transportation route through the village. The intersection of what is now Broad Street and East Main Street evolved in the center of town, with the meetinghouse relocated there in 1729 and Center Tavern constructed there in 1752. Meriden benefited from being adjacent to Middletown, which in the mid 1700s was Connecticut's largest city and had a very active port. In 1770, 123 families lived in Meriden, and as the town continued to grow, new businesses and services arose. Cobbler shops, stone cutting yards, blacksmiths, stagecoach service, mills, general stores and a variety of craftsmen begin to operate in Meriden. A pewter button shop opened on Broad Street in 1794, the first silver-based business in the town. In 1799, a turnpike was constructed through Meriden that connected the town to the larger markets of Hartford and New Haven. By 1806, Meriden's population had reached 1,000 people.

During the 1800s, Meriden quickly shifted from an agricultural community to a manufacturing center. Amid the booming industrial economy, Meriden continued to grow, with its first newspaper, hotels, banks, schools, churches, parks and additional businesses. The development of the railroad



**Andrews Homestead**

further strengthened Meriden's ties with New Haven, Hartford and points beyond. As rail became the dominant method of transporting goods, the center of development in Meriden shifted from Broad Street to Colony and West Main Streets, near the railroad line. The advent of trolleys allowed development, particularly residential development, to expand out into the furthest reaches of the City.

Meriden remained an industrial center well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, until the growing dominance of the automobile allowed businesses and manufacturers to move to cheaper land in the suburbs, where more and more of their workers and customers were choosing to live. After World War II, large businesses particularly in the silver industry began to move out of the City. A combination of neglect, fires and demolition took its toll on the Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods. Urban renewal efforts in the 1960s and 1970s, while removing some areas of blight, failed to revitalize the areas targeted for improvement. However, more recent efforts and developments in the 1990s and 2000s have met with more success, such as the creation of the Research Parkway industrial and research/office development, new investment in the Downtown and the Meriden City Center Initiative. In addition, new people and families are moving into Meriden, attracted by its modestly priced housing and traditional urban qualities.

**\* (The preceding historical information was gathered from the City of Meriden's official website.)**

## **B. WHAT IS A POCD?**

Chapter 126, Section 8-23, of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that a planning and zoning commission "prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development for the municipality". The purpose of a Plan of Conservation and Development is to record the best thinking of Meriden as to its future growth and to give direction to both public and private development. The Plan not only encompasses a long-term vision for the community but also offers guidance for short-term decision-making. The Plan should not be thought of as a rigid blueprint, but rather as a general guide for growth in Meriden. The proposals of the Plan do not have the authority of law or regulation; instead they are broadly based recommendations for future development and improvement of Meriden over the next decade and beyond.

While future-oriented, a Plan of Conservation and Development reflects the goals and objectives of a community at a point in time, with regards to changes in economic conditions, lifestyles, goals and objectives of a community. In recognition of this, the State Statutes require that the Plan be updated at least every 10 years, so that the long-term planning process is originating from a relatively current inventory of existing conditions and economic cycles.

**While future-oriented, a Plan of Conservation and Development reflects the goals and objectives of a community at a point in time, changes in economic conditions, lifestyles, goals and objectives of a community.**

### C. MERIDEN'S PLANNING PROCESS

In the fall of 2006, the City began the process of reviewing and updating its 1985 Plan of Conservation and Development. The POCD Steering Committee received plan element memoranda that covered various topics ranging from natural resources to economic development. Each of these plan elements provided background information, conditions maps, and analysis of trends and conditions since the completion of the 1985 Plan, and goals and recommendations for future actions. These documents were posted on the City's website for citizen review and comment. Because of the extent of the information provided, these plan elements serve as technical background for the contents of this Plan. These elements are on file at the Department of Development and Enforcement.

The Plan Elements prepared as part of the Plan Update Process were:

- Community Survey
- GIS Mapping Phase
- Community Character & Historic Resources
- Natural Resource Inventory
- Demographics & Population Trends
- Natural Resources Inventory
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Development Patterns and Trends
- Economic Development
- Transportation and Circulation
- Housing Element
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- Economic Development "Special Study"
- Generalized Future Land Use Plan



Transit-oriented development, investment and redevelopment in the Downtown, and enhanced commercial corridors are common themes throughout this Plan of Conservation and Development, as are the need to preserve and protect the City's residential neighborhoods, natural resources of waterways, ridgelines, and wetlands, and historic/cultural resources. The focus of the Plan is to enhance and protect the City's assets and to achieve balance through future development and regulatory control.

The key components of the Plan of Conservation and Development are the guiding Goals and Objectives, the Generalized Future Land Use Plan and the Action Agenda, which details steps towards implementation.

The Plan of Conservation and Development and its associated Generalized Land Use Plan serve to guide the City's future conservation and development efforts as an advisory or policy-guidance document. Key to successful implementation of the Plan is the creation and modification of Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, design guidelines, and/or implementation techniques that explicitly outline and enforce the "future visions" described in the Plan.

**Transit-oriented development, investment and redevelopment in the Downtown, and enhanced commercial corridors are common themes throughout this Plan of Conservation and Development, as are the need to preserve and protect the City's residential neighborhoods, natural resources of waterways, ridgelines, and wetlands, and historic/cultural resources.**

The Plan of Conservation and Development should not be thought of as a static document. This Plan must remain open to refinement and improvement where and when necessary to reflect new conditions and problems, or take into account changing goals and objectives. However, the Plan should be modified only after thorough study indicates that such changes are in Meriden's long-range interests. The Planning Commission should maintain a continuing planning program to monitor the implementation of the Action Agenda so that the Plan of Conservation and Development can be of continuing value in guiding the community's growth in an orderly and satisfactory manner. Such a planning program is key to the successful implementation of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Over a period of twenty-six months, the City studied its fabric, discussed its current status and options, debated difficult policy choices and on September 18, 2008, the POCD Steering Committee approved a POCD document to be sent to the Planning Commission for consideration. The document as required by State Statute was also sent to the City Council for comment. After additional meetings and discussion, the City Council adopted the POCD on February 17, 2009. The Planning Commission made modifications to the document based upon comments received and on March 11, 2009 adopted the ten year plan for Meriden.

#### **D. VISION STATEMENT**

In 2025, Meriden will be a dynamic regional commercial and service hub capitalizing on Meriden's central location. Conservation and development will be balanced by:

Conserved areas such as the City's prominent ridge-tops, green parks, and forested open spaces, where residents walk, hike, and bike along clear blue water resources such as Harbor Brook, the Quinnipiac River, and ponds and reservoirs; and

Developed lands that sustain a growing commercial tax base including a segment of competitive business and technology jobs, regional health and other institutions, and attractive and safe residential neighborhoods.

There will be a diversity of cultures in Meriden's slowly growing population; a learning, working citizenry who shop and convene together in places such as an expanded and rejuvenated Downtown, where residents and employees can enjoy a pleasing stroll between the historic downtown and the new City Center, and visitors to the mall can trolley to the downtown and Hubbard Park for seasonal activities and festivals. There will be a balanced range of housing with prideful majority homeownership including a larger segment of higher value single detached homes.

Condominiums and apartments will be located near convenient services; their overall quality will be improved as declining structures are renovated or removed. The City will be fiscally stable as neighborhoods and developed areas such as Research Parkway retain their value and new development adequately contributes to quality services and infrastructure.

## II. *Community Character*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Community character is the essence of a city or town. Community character derives from our recollections from visiting and experiencing a place. The character of a community is shaped by its physical attributes and by the sense of community arising from the many activities which take place within its boundaries.

The creation of a community's character is a process characterized by incremental change. Change is a constant in every community and the character of a city or town evolves as the community grows and matures.

The utilization of the Plan of Conservation and Development to preserve and enhance desired aspects of Meriden's community character should begin with a collective perception of the elements that contribute to the formation of the town's community character. This section of the Plan will focus on defining Meriden's community character, followed by an examination of opportunities to preserve and enhance desired community character elements.



**Meriden City Hall**

### B. DEFINING MERIDEN'S COMMUNITY CHARACTER – THE VISUAL LANDSCAPE

The visual character of Meriden is defined by both its natural landscape and the built environment. Meriden's visual character is greatly shaped by its close connection to the traprock ridgelines which define its northern and eastern borders; the forested landscapes which surround these ridgelines; its rolling topography; the Quinnipiac River, Harbor Brook and the other small rivers and streams which course through the City; and the presence of an historic built environment. The physical character of Meriden will continue to evolve as elements of its natural landscape and built environment are altered, one lot at a time. The following summarizes some of the more prominent visual characteristics of Meriden's image and community character.

#### **The Natural Setting and Community Character**

##### *✦ Woodland Landscape and Topography*

While the overwhelming majority of Meriden's land area is developed in some form, there still remain several large areas of undeveloped woodland areas. These areas are primarily concentrated along the northern border of the City, and include Hubbard Park, West Peak, East Peak, South Mountain, Cathole Mountain, Lamentation Mountain, and Guiffrida Park. These areas are quite large and are tied into a larger regional system of ridgelines, trails and dramatic topographic features. While small vestiges of Meriden's agricultural past remain in the form of a few open fields and



**Ridgeline along  
Middletown border**

farms in the southeastern portion of the City, the woodland characteristics of the City's remaining undeveloped land dominate its visual character. These heavily wooded areas combined with steep terrain and rapid changes in topography help maintain a rugged natural environment even within a heavily developed community that further defines the City's character. Views of open land and forested landscapes combine to provide a public perception that large areas of the City are "open space," without distinction to the ownership characteristics of the viewed landscape.

**Steep slopes, ridgelines, small hills and valleys punctuate Meriden's rolling terrain, along with the sizable number of brooks, streams and ponds that are located in the City.**

✦ *Meriden's Natural Features*

Of the 169 towns in Connecticut, Meriden is the 99th largest with 23.7 square miles of land area. Steep slopes, ridgelines, small hills and valleys punctuate Meriden's rolling terrain, along with the sizable number of brooks, streams and ponds that are located in the City. In addition to the Quinnipiac River, Meriden contains several significant natural water features, including Harbor Brook, which effectively divides the City in half and whose periodic flooding has caused problems for over a century; Sodom Brook, which like Harbor Brook is a tributary of the Quinnipiac River and Hanover Pond and runs north-south through the City; Willow Brook and Spoon Shop Brook, which both run though the eastern side of the City; Hanover Pond, which lies at a turn of the Quinnipiac River; the Bradley Hubbard Reservoir; the Merimere Reservoir; New Dam; and many small ponds that dot the local landscape.

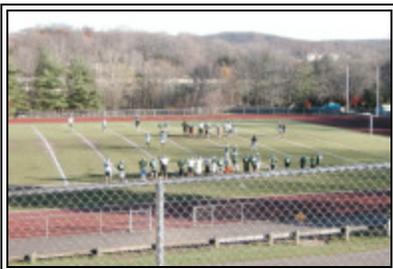
✦ *Public Open Space*

City Owned Open Space – The City of Meriden owns a number of large open space parcels. These include Hubbard Park, Giuffrida Park, and the Hunter Memorial Golf Course. A variety of smaller neighborhood parks play integral roles in the physical layouts of individual neighborhoods as well as the social and recreational lives of Meriden's citizens. These parks include Washington Park, Brookside Park, Ceppa Field, Falcon Field and Carroll Park. In total, the City of Meriden has over 3,000 acres of park space.



**Carroll Park**

Meriden Public Schools Open Space – Meriden Public Schools properties provide playing fields and open space in addition to that found in the City parks system. The three high schools have expansive areas for football, baseball, softball and track and field, while the elementary schools provide smaller ballfields and playgrounds for young children. The Thomas Edison Middle Magnet School also provides excellent baseball, softball and soccer facilities.



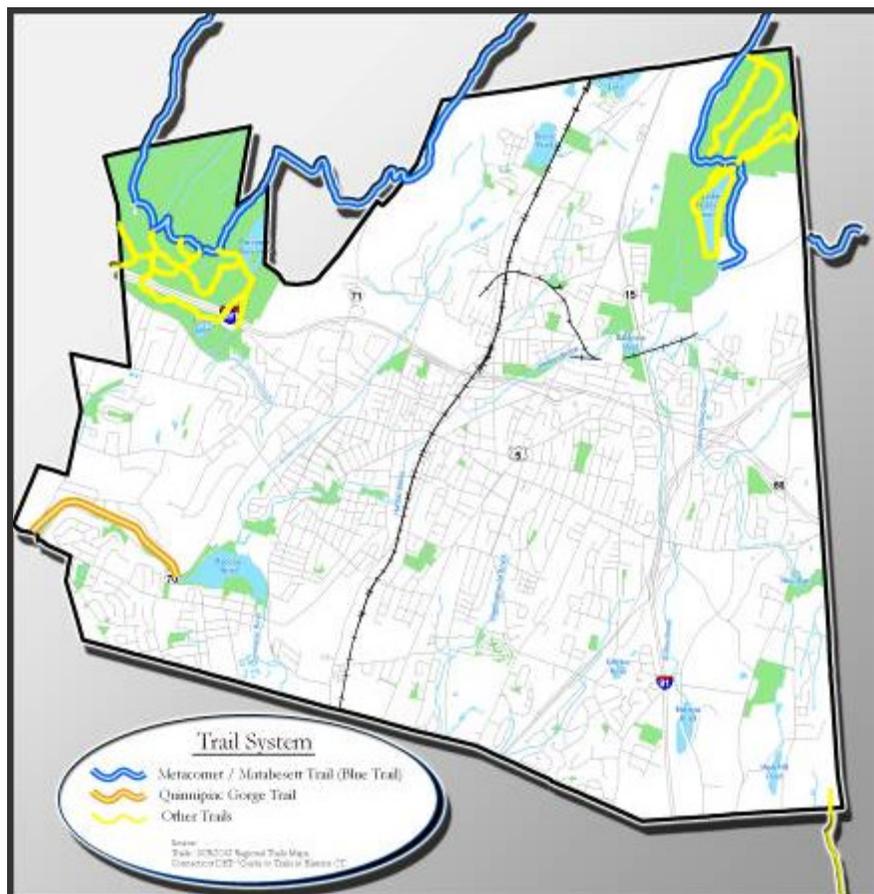
**Maloney High School  
Football Field**

Open Space Owned by Private Organizations The Meriden Land Trust owns and maintains a small number of properties as open space throughout the City. Several other properties in Meriden are owned by other private entities such as the Nature Conservancy.

Trail System - The City has a large network of trails providing most residents with relatively easy access to these amenities. Three city parks, Hubbard, Giuffrida, and Quinnipiac River, offer the most extensive trail networks in the City. The Metacomet and Mattabesset Trails pass through

Hubbard and Giuffrida Park and are part of the statewide Blue Trails system. The Connecticut Forest and Parks Association with the aid of volunteers maintain these trails. The Blue Trails system currently has over 700 miles of trails with the majority of the trails located on private land and exist only through a cooperative effort with the landowners. They offer some of the State's best ridge top hiking with views extending from Long Island Sound to Hartford. The Quinnipiac Gorge Trail begins near the historic Red Bridge and parallels the former rail bed westward along the river. The major trails coupled with other local trails and sidewalks provide a solid foundation for achieving an interconnected and accessible greenways and trail system. When properly planned, greenways can link existing parks and open space areas with neighborhoods and community facilities such as schools, and provide a pedestrian-friendly environment to serve residents. The following map illustrates the general location of Meriden's various trails.

**When properly planned, greenways can link existing parks and open space areas with neighborhoods and community facilities such as schools, and provide a pedestrian-friendly environment to serve residents.**



## C. DEFINING MERIDEN'S COMMUNITY CHARACTER – NEIGHBORHOODS AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

### Neighborhoods and Community Character

In addition to the City's natural landscape, the perception of community character is significantly influenced by the visual qualities of Meriden's built elements. These elements include:

#### ✦ *Downtown Meriden and Immediate Neighborhoods*

Downtown Meriden and neighborhoods immediately surrounding it generally encompass the area bounded by Broad Street to the east, I-691 to the north, Sodom Brook to the west, and Harbor Brook and Olive Street to the south. In addition to the part traditionally recognized as Downtown Meriden, this area includes the neighborhoods of Action 13, Bartlett James Monroe, ECHO, Goodwill and Lewis, Grove Street, Hobart, the Lower East Side, Mid-City, Randolph, Westsider and Windsor. This area is the historic heart of the City, with much of Meriden's governmental services, religious institutions, and higher density housing contained within its boundaries. The portion of East Main Street that passes through Downtown is home to the Meriden City Hall, a mix of retail businesses and residential apartments, office space two fraternal organizations, several churches and a synagogue. This area is the "civic block" that forms the perceived center of Downtown, and it is further highlighted on the map titled *Civic Block* shown in the margin. The state courthouse and Meriden Senior Center are located along West Main Street along with retail shops and office uses.



**Civic Block**

**The railroad has a long history of shaping development in Meriden, and its influence will continue well into the future with plans for expanded commuter rail service between New Haven and Springfield, Massachusetts.**



**Red Bridge**

In the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the Downtown core, one finds a mix of housing types including single-family homes on small lots, two- to four-family structures, apartment buildings and elderly housing. Industrial properties are also scattered around the periphery of Downtown, most notably around the intersection of State Street and Camp Street; along Center Street; near the intersection of Charles Street and High Street; and along Cooper Street. Although Meriden has no central Green, Columbus Park on Lewis Avenue, and Gillman Park on Cook Avenue provide open space and recreation opportunities for Downtown area residents. Finally, railroad access plays an important role in the character of Downtown Meriden, as the main line from New Haven and to points north bisects the Downtown area, providing access to the regional rail system via a passenger platform on State Street. The railroad has a long history of shaping development in Meriden, and its influence will continue well into the future with plans for expanded commuter rail service between New Haven and Springfield, Massachusetts.

#### ✦ *South Meriden*

The South Meriden area generally encompasses the area bounded by the Quinnipiac River and Hanover Pond to the north and the east, the Cheshire town line to the west, and the Wallingford town line to the south. South

Meriden consists primarily of single-family homes on quarter-acre and half-acre lots. The neighborhood centers around Main Street, which is home to several business establishments, some higher density housing and various religious and institutional uses such as Hanover Elementary School and the South Meriden Trinity United Methodist Church add “village flavor”. Route 70 (River Road) runs along the northern periphery of the area into the Town of Cheshire and along the most prominent geographic feature in the neighborhood – the Quinnipiac Gorge. Hanover Pond and its associated natural environs lie along the northern fringe of the neighborhood as well. Evansville Avenue, which runs south from Main Street, provides a connection with the Town of Wallingford, as well as providing access to the Meriden-Markham Airport and the City’s former landfill and sewage treatment plant. Numerous commercial and industrial businesses are also located on this road along the Wallingford town line.

✦ *North Meriden/Silver Lake*

The North Meriden/Silver Lake area generally encompasses the portion of Meriden west of the Berlin Turnpike and north of Britannia Street and Westfield Road running north to the Berlin town line. The area is visually dominated by the presence of the Berlin Turnpike with its multiple travel lanes and associated strip commercial development. Lamentation Mountain overlooks the neighborhood from the Town of Berlin, and a portion of Silver Lake extends into Meriden just west of North Colony Road. Along North Colony Road, a mix of industrial properties, businesses, single family residences and condominiums can be found. The southern portion of the neighborhood, in the area of Britannia Street, Griswold Street and the southern end of North Colony Road, contains an eclectic mix of uses. A variety of residential styles from single family homes and two-family structures to apartments and condominiums intermingle with industrial uses and automotive businesses.



**Silver Lake**

✦ *The East Side*

The East Side of Meriden is generally defined as the portion of the City east of South Broad Street and south of East Main Street, and the area north of East Main Street up to I-91. Given its large area, the East Side contains a diverse range of building types, land uses and natural features. Transportation linkages play a key role in defining this area of Meriden. East Main Street, which bisects the East Side in the east-west direction, is home to much of the strip commercial development in the City, with both regional and national retailers and food service establishments having a substantial presence along the road. East Main Street also serves as the link between Downtown Meriden and I-91. I-91 also has an important presence in the East Side, with three exits serving the immediate area. Finally, Route 66 links the area with Middlefield and the City of Middletown.



**East Main Street**

The residential portions of the East Side are generally composed of single family homes on medium-size lots often situated on cul-de-sac roads. Several condominium developments are also scattered around the neighborhood. Open space and recreational opportunities are available at Nessing Field located off of Murdock Avenue and the recreational facilities



**Research Parkway**

associated with the Thomas Hooker Elementary School on Overlook Road. Additional retail and commercial development can be found in a strip development configuration along Broad Street on the western edge of the neighborhood.

✦ *Research Parkway*

Located off of East Main Street in the southeastern section of the City, Research Parkway is the primary industrial park area in Meriden. Most of the City's largest developed office and industrial properties can be found along this road. Some development potential still exists in the form of unoccupied buildings and vacant land parcels. Research Parkway also connects with a similarly developed portion of northern Wallingford, and benefits from excellent access to the regional transportation network via I-91.

✦ *Dutch Hill/Hall Avenue*

The Dutch Hill/Hall Avenue area encompasses the portion of Meriden south of Downtown, generally bounded by Olive Street, the railroad tracks, Summer Street and Grove Road to the north, Hanover Avenue to the west, Broad Street to the east and the Wallingford town line to the south. Along Broad Street, a variety of retail and service establishments can be found, which tend to become larger and more intense in use as one travels south toward Wallingford. To the west of Broad Street lie small residential streets generally populated with single family homes, with some two-family and multi-family structures mixed in as one gets closer to the Downtown area. Two large cemeteries, Sacred Heart and Walnut Grove, occupy a substantial portion of the southern half of the neighborhood. The 10-acre Ceppa Field on Gale Avenue provides usable open space for the neighborhood. One of the more distinctive features of the neighborhood is the Curtis Home, a facility located on Crown Street that provides a wide range of specialized elderly services. Several condominium and elderly housing developments are located in the area, particularly along Crown Street and near the intersection of Hanover Avenue and Old Colony Road. Old Colony Road from Hall Avenue south to the Wallingford town line has a mix of land uses ranging from automotive businesses, office space and warehousing to single family residential and apartments.



**Curtis Home**

✦ *Washington Park*

The Washington Park area encompasses the portion of Meriden between Downtown and the I-91/Berlin Turnpike, east of the center of the City. It is generally bounded by I-691 to the north, Broad Street to the west, the I-91/Berlin Turnpike corridor to the east and East Main Street to the south. The neighborhood is characterized by a mix of single family and two-family residences on small lots that are situated north of the strip commercial development along East Main Street. The neighborhood is home to two schools: Maloney High School, located at the eastern end of the area along Gravel Street, and Roger Sherman Elementary School on North Pearl Street. The 10-acre Washington Park located on Liberty Street is another prominent feature from which the neighborhood derives its name. Along

the northern and western fringes of the neighborhood are several apartment buildings, along with additional commercial development.

✦ *Glen Hills*

The Glen Hills area encompasses the western portion of Meriden between Downtown and the Cheshire town line. It is generally bounded by I-691 and Reservoir Avenue to the north, Hanover Road and Bradley Avenue to the east, the Quinnipiac River and Hanover Pond to the south and the Cheshire town line to the west. The neighborhood is primarily composed of single family homes on large lots; however, other land uses also have a substantial presence in this part of Meriden. Lincoln Middle School, Wilcox Vocational-Technical High School and Platt High School form an educational corridor along Centennial Avenue and Oregon Road; in addition, Benjamin Franklin Elementary School is located a short distance away on West Main Street. Higher density housing can be found in the northeastern section of the neighborhood along Chamberlain Highway (Route 71) and adjacent to the Downtown area. Both the northern and southern sides of West Main Street have retail and commercial space, along with some apartment buildings. The entrance to the 1,800-acre Hubbard Park, the centerpiece of the Meriden parks system, is located along the northern edge of the neighborhood, while the southern edge is defined by the Quinnipiac Gorge and Hanover Pond.



**Castle Craig, Hubbard Park**

✦ *Kensington Avenue/Wilcox Avenue*

Kensington Avenue/Wilcox Avenue encompasses an area northwest of Downtown Meriden generally bounded by Reservoir Avenue, Sodom Brook and I-691 to the south, the main railroad line to the east, and the Berlin town line to the north and west. This area includes the Westfield Shoppingtown Meriden mall and the various big-box retail stores located in its vicinity. Midstate Medical Center, located across Chamberlain Highway from the mall, is a regional medical facility with substantial drawing power for the area off of I-691. The neighborhood is set against the dramatic backdrop of South Mountain and the Hanging Hills, with several apartment complexes situated near the base of these natural features. Single family homes stretch from Kensington Avenue up Gracey Avenue to the subdivisions around 15-acre Beaver Lake and its associated park space at the northern end of the neighborhood. In addition, several industrial uses are clustered along the southern end of Gracey Avenue near the historic Wilcox Avenue area. The first historic district in Meriden. The area is also home to 320+ acre NRG site that was recently acquired by the City of Meriden.



**Wilcox Avenue**

✦ *City Park/Brookside*

The City Park/Brookside area encompasses a small area northeast of Downtown Meriden generally bounded by I-691 to the south, the main railroad line to the west, Sherman Avenue to the north and Broad Street to the east. The neighborhood is primarily single family and two-family homes mixed in with a number of vacant parcels. Some higher density housing is located along Sherman Avenue, and various commercial and industrial businesses are situated on the eastern and western fringes of the



**MidState Medical Center**

neighborhood, including along Pratt Street and Broad Street and along Center Street. The dominant feature of the neighborhood is the 11-acre Brookside Park, through which Harbor Brook passes.

✦ *Nathan Hale/Baldwin Avenue*



**Hunter Memorial Golf Course**

The Nathan Hale/Baldwin Avenue area encompasses the northeast quadrant of Meriden, generally bounded by I-691 and I-91 to the south, Broad Street and North Broad Street to the west, the Berlin town line to the north and the Middletown city line to the east. While the area is overwhelmingly single family residential, there are also significant institutional, industrial and open space facilities located in this part of Meriden. Washington Middle School and the new Thomas Edison Middle Magnet School are both located along North Broad Street, while Nathan Hale Elementary School is located at the end of Atkins Street and along Baldwin Avenue. The parks in the area include Baldwin Pond and its associated park space, Falcon Field along Westfield Road, Carroll Park at the intersection of Bee Street and Baldwin Avenue, and the expansive Giuffrida Park and Bradley Hubbard Reservoir. In addition, the Hunter Memorial Golf Course owned and operated by the City of Meriden is located next to Giuffrida Park, and is generally recognized as one of the finest municipal golf courses in Connecticut. Finally, a substantial quarrying operation is run by Suzio York Hill along Westfield Road at the Middletown line.

The map titled *Council of Neighborhoods* on the following page highlights the location of the neighborhood associations that represent the areas identified and discussed above.

## **Churches and Cemeteries**

Meriden has a number of churches that provide visual character to the City as well as provide worship opportunities for a wide variety of faiths and denominations. These churches include Congregational, Episcopal, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and Evangelical Christian, Christian Scientist, Seventh Day Adventist, and Orthodox Christian denominations as well as Unitarian, Jehovah's Witnesses and Jewish congregations. The architectural styles represented by these churches are varied, and provide a distinct identity to their surrounding neighborhood. Not only providing visual variety and often historic character to the various parts of Meriden where they are located, the churches serve as pivot points in the community around which much of the history and built form of Meriden revolves.

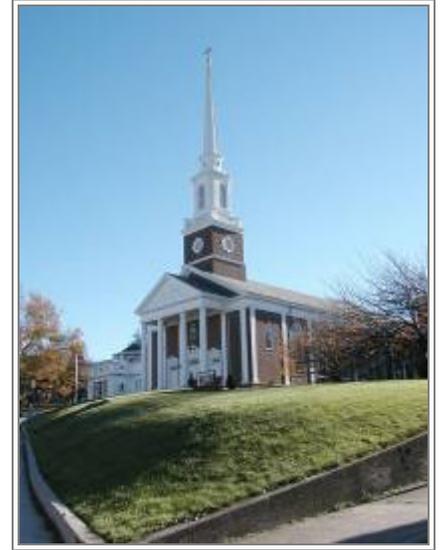
Meriden also has roughly a dozen cemeteries located throughout the City that range from large cemeteries serving the greater Meriden region to smaller historic cemeteries associated with individual churches. The burial grounds are a source of both historic information and visual character for the surrounding neighborhoods. The history enshrined in these cemeteries helps anchor a sense of community and neighborhood identity to a specific geographic place.

## **Historic Buildings and National Historic District**

As a community with over three centuries of history, Meriden has over 300 significant historic structures and neighborhoods. In addition, several buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as one National Historic District. The buildings listed are the Moses Andrews Homestead at 424 West Main Street; the Charter Oak Firehouse at 105 Hanover Street; the Curtis Memorial Library at 175 East Main Street; the Solomon Goffe House at 677 Colony Street; the Meriden Curtain Fixture Company Factory at 122 Charles Street; and the U.S. Post Office-Meriden Main at 39 Colony Street. Listed on the Register along with these buildings are Hubbard Park and the Red Bridge over the Quinnipiac River, near Oregon Road.

The Colony Street-West Main Street National Historic District includes roughly 1,000 feet of West Main Street stretching from Colony Street to Cook Avenue (Route 71), approximately 600 feet of Colony Street from West Main Street to Washington Street, and the building at 55 Grove Street. The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987, and includes a mix of office, retail and institutional properties including the state courthouse and the Meriden senior center.

The Planning Division maintains a listing and inventory of 315 places of local significance that spans two centuries of Meriden's architectural history. The City's inventory of historic structures and districts has been mapped in a Geographic Information System and illustrated on the map titled *Historic Resources Inventory*. To avoid losing additional City history, this inventory of historic resources should be consulted as part of future development and redevelopment efforts in order to identify potential impacts on such resources and the potential for preservation or need for mitigating actions.



**First United Methodist**

**As a community with over three centuries of history, Meriden has over 300 significant historic structures and neighborhoods.**

## D. GOALS

Elements of Meriden's community character that are highly valued can be developed into community planning goals. These community planning goals can serve as the Plan's foundation for addressing the key issues of growth, conservation and the management of change.

With limited amounts of readily developable land available, difficult decisions involving development versus conservation will become more frequent in the coming years.

- The future subdivision and development of land could create conditions that disturb or threaten the prime features (topography, watercourses, wetlands and woodlands) of Meriden's natural landscape.
- Future land development activities could alter the visual perception of Meriden's natural landscape.
- Meriden's neighborhoods are the historic and symbolic focal points of the City and contribute significantly to the City's community character.
- Underdeveloped and vacant land in neighborhoods will likely be a future focus of development pressures for a variety of uses.
- Meriden's historic inventory includes municipal buildings, churches, cemeteries, geographic features, and assorted residential and commercial structures. The quality of the historic inventory strongly influences the perception of Meriden's community character and community pride.
- Increased usage and the age of historic assets will necessitate continued maintenance and upgrading.

**Goal: Protect the Woodland Landscape and Unique Topography of Meriden While Still Permitting Future Development.**

### **Strategies:**

- Identify priority areas and individual parcels for conservation and preservation actions, as well as areas that should be designated as prime development areas.
- The Conservation Commission, in conjunction with the City and cooperating conservation organizations, should identify priority conservation parcels and develop a strategy for conservation and preservation as the land becomes available.
- High-priority open space acquisitions should be ones that enable the City to connect the existing parks and open space assets into a cohesive system.

With limited amounts of readily developable land available, difficult decisions involving development versus conservation will become more frequent in the coming years.

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Identify priority areas and individual parcels for conservation and preservation actions, as well as areas that should be designated as prime development areas.

High-priority open space acquisitions should be ones that enable the City to connect the existing parks and open space assets into a cohesive system.

- Future development should be guided toward areas of the City where it can be best integrated into the landscape, rather than forcing the natural environment and topography to change drastically to accommodate development.

**Goal: Protect the Prime Features of Meriden’s Natural Landscape.**

**Strategies:**

- Create a list of Open Space Criteria with weighted factors to serve as a base for decision-making for future open space acquisitions.
- Support actions that protect floodplains and that limit the development of flood-prone areas.
- Support actions that protect areas containing slopes that exceed 15%.
- Support proper soil conservation practices to guard against soil erosion and stream sedimentation resulting from future land development activities.

**Future development should be guided toward areas of the City where it can be best integrated into the landscape, rather than forcing the natural environment and topography to change drastically to accommodate development.**

**Goal: Enhance the Visual Appearance and Vitality of Meriden’s Neighborhoods**

**Strategies:**

- Encourage new commercial and residential development to occur in the established centers of individual neighborhoods, such as Downtown, and along Britannia Street and Parker Avenue, in order to reinforce the economic and social vitality of these centers and to keep development where infrastructure is already in place to support it.
- Encourage infill development of uses that are compatible with the existing fabric of each area using neighborhood-specific criteria and zoning designations.
- Consider the implementation of village district zoning regulations for several neighborhood centers.
- Encourage actions that will enhance the cohesiveness and appearance of neighborhood centers, such as signage, landscaping, lighting and other urban design features such as revised land use regulations, West Main Street streetscape and infrastructure improvements.
- Maintain the successful neighborhood code enforcement effort and the neighborhood initiative areas program in conjunction with the Police Department.

**Encourage new commercial and residential development to occur in the established centers of individual neighborhoods, such as Downtown.....**

**Maintain the successful neighborhood code enforcement effort and the neighborhood initiative areas program in conjunction with the Police Department.**

**Goal: Maintain and Enhance the Contributions of Historic Resources and Open Space to Meriden’s Community Character**

**Strategies:**

- As the historic inventory of Meriden is a key element in defining the character of the City, a study should be made and steps taken to maintain, enhance and promote the historic assets of the community.
- New development should be consistent with and sensitive to the historic nature of the community, particularly in the Downtown and other neighborhood centers. Emphasis on quality physical design and site planning that is in keeping with the nature of the surrounding environment should be a high priority.
- Consider protecting additional historic assets if they become available in the private market to further enhance the historic character of the City.
- Consider relocating two key historic structures located in Meriden, The Andrews Homestead on West Main Street and the Solomon Goffe House on North Colony Street, to a site in the general Downtown area. These two structures could then be used as the anchors for an historic corridor that would run through Downtown.
- Create a distinct “Civic Block” designation for the area around City Hall in the Downtown, and highlight the historic nature of this particular area through lighting, streetscape and other urban design elements.

**Create a distinct “Civic Block” designation for the area around Main Street in the center of Downtown, and highlight the historic nature of this particular area through lighting, streetscape and other urban design elements.**

### III. Demographics

#### A. INTRODUCTION

The understanding of demographic and socio-economic trends, characteristics and forecasts is crucial to the Plan of Conservation and Development process. This information provides the background by which future changes and development within a municipality can be anticipated and planned for.

#### B. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

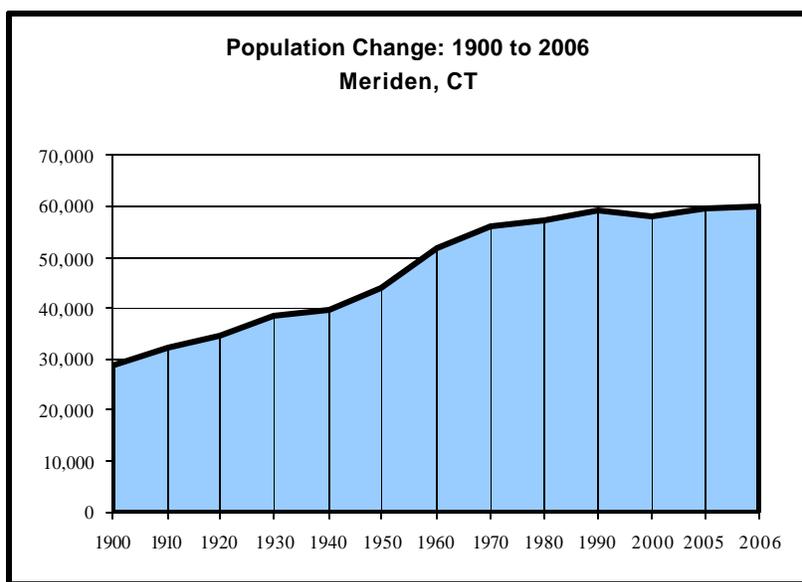
As shown in Table III-1 and the figure below, Meriden’s population growth over the past century has been characterized by a period of steady growth between 1900 and 1930, a leveling off of the population during the Great Depression, followed by a post-World War II population boom. Since 1970, however, Meriden’s population has only grown by approximately 4,000 people. The City experienced its greatest percentage and numerical growth between the 1950 and 1960 Census, adding 7,762 people during this decade. The population actually declined between 1990 and 2000, but recent estimates from the Census Bureau and the City of Meriden indicate that this trend has been reversed.

When comparing population change of the City with the adjacent communities of Berlin, Cheshire, Middlefield, Middletown, Southington and Wallingford, regional growth and migration trends are evident.

As shown in the Table III-2, Meriden and its adjacent communities all experienced population growth between 1960 and 2005. Meriden registered

Census	Population	% Change
1900	28,659	
1910	32,066	11.9
1920	34,764	8.4
1930	38,481	10.7
1940	39,494	2.6
1950	44,088	11.6
1960	51,850	17.6
1970	55,959	7.9
1980	57,118	2.1
1990	59,479	4.1
2000	58,244	-2.1
2005	59,653	2.4
2006	60,002	0.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census  
\*City of Meriden estimate.



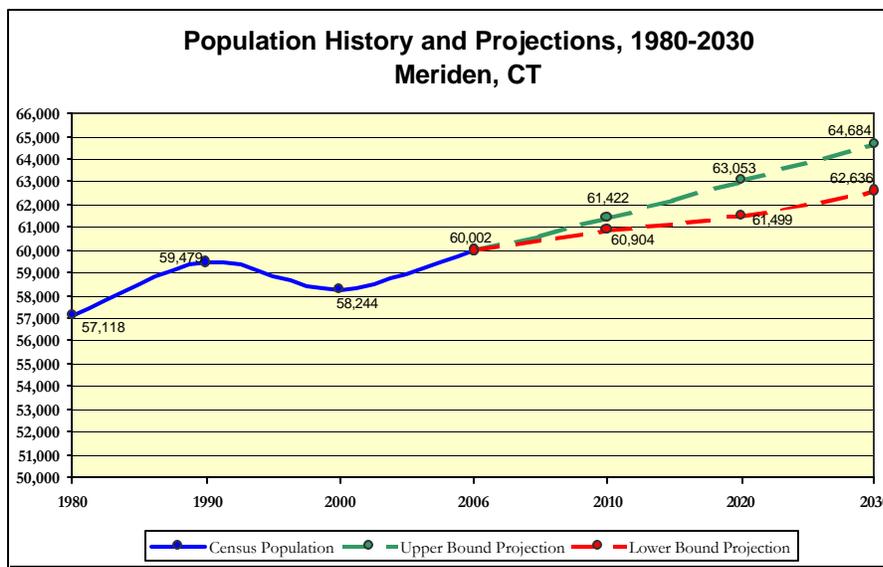
The City experienced its greatest percentage and numerical growth between the 1950 and 1960 Census, adding 7,762 people during this decade.

the smallest percentage increase in population of the seven communities, but still increased by 15%. Cheshire had the largest percentage increase with 117.4%, followed by Southington and Berlin. Southington had the largest numerical increase, gaining 19,280 people over the 45 year period. Meriden's population growth rate has generally lagged behind its surrounding communities, as well as the overall rates for the three counties of which it is either a part of or located adjacent to.

Table III-2								
Comparison of Population Change: 1960 to 2005								
Meriden and Surrounding Communities								
	1960 Census	1970 Census	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2005 Estimate	%Change 60 - 05	%Change 90 - 05
<b>MERIDEN</b>	51,850	55,959	57,118	59,479	58,244	59,653	15.0	0.3
Berlin	11,250	14,149	15,121	16,787	18,215	19,590	74.1	16.7
Cheshire	13,383	19,051	21,788	25,684	28,543	29,097	117.4	13.3
Middlefield	3,255	4,132	3,796	3,925	4,203	4,281	31.5	9.1
Middletown	33,250	36,924	39,040	42,762	43,167	47,438	42.7	10.9
Southington	22,797	30,946	36,879	38,518	39,728	42,077	84.6	9.2
Wallingford	29,920	35,714	37,274	40,822	43,026	44,736	49.5	9.6
New Haven County	660,315	744,948	761,337	804,219	824,008	846,766	28.2	5.3
Hartford County	689,931	816,737	807,766	851,783	857,183	877,393	27.2	3.0
Middlesex County	85,897*	115,018	129,017	143,196	155,071	163,214	90.0	14.0
<i>* Does not include the population for Town of Deep River</i>								
<i>Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.</i>								

The components of the population change in Meriden have remained very similar from decade to decade, as evidenced by Table III-3. Since as far back as at least the 1960s, Meriden has had a net outmigration of population. The reason that Meriden didn't lose population between 1960 and the present like other central cities in Connecticut is that the City has remained a very "young" community, with younger individuals and couples outnumbering older residents in the City. Thus, the birth rate has substantially exceeded the death rate in the last four decades, allowing natural increase to add to Meriden's population and generally offset the outmigration pattern. The only time in which this did not happen was during the 1990s, when the outmigration was large enough to exceed the natural increase in population. As a point of comparison, if births had only kept pace with deaths in the City between 1960 and 2004, Meriden's population would have declined from 51,850 in 1960 to 42,921 in 2004.

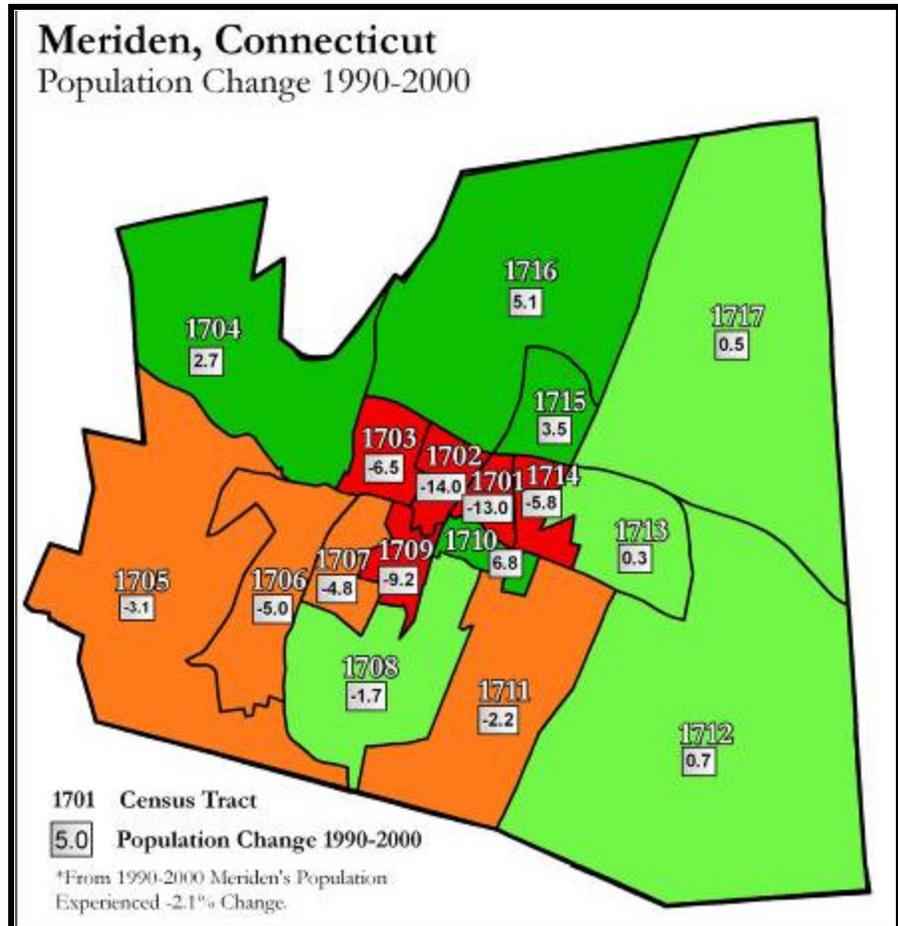
Table III-3					
Components of Population Change: 1960 to 2004					
Meriden, CT					
	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
<b>TOTAL CHANGE</b>	4,109	1,159	2,361	-1,235	919
Change Due to Natural Increase	5,367	2,773	3,649	3,495	958
Births	10,892	8,021	9,107	9,238	3,180
Deaths	5,525	5,248	5,458	5,743	2,222
Change Due to Net Migration	-1,258	-1,614	-1,288	-4,730	-39



The map below depicts population change between the 1990 Census and the 2000 Census by census tract. A reference map of the 2000 Census Tract boundaries for the City follows this page. Tracts 1701 and 1702 were previously subdivided into Tracts 1701.01 and 1701.02 and Tracts 1702.01 and 1702.02 for the 1990 Census; however, by aggregating the two subdivisions of these tracts, one can see how the population has changed from 1990 to 2000. As shown in the table below, and the chart and map that follow, 10 of the 17 tracts in Meriden lost population between 1990 and 2000. These losses were most pronounced in Tracts 1701 and 1702, which lost 13% and 14% respectively, of their population between 1990 and 2000. These two tracts comprise the area just north of the Downtown on either side of the railroad tracks. Of the seven tracts that gained population, Tract 1710 had the largest percentage gain of 6.8%, while Tract 1716 had the largest numerical increase, adding 213 people.

The tracts that experienced population growth were in the southern portion of the Downtown, the east side of the City, the northern end of the City around Silver Lake and the Berlin Turnpike, and the northwest corner of the City.

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### C. AGE CHARACTERISTICS

Similar to most communities in the State, Meriden's population aged over the decade between the 1990 and the 2000 Census. As shown in Table III-4, 43.7% of the City's population is currently in the 25 to 34, 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 year age cohorts. Although between the 1990 and the 2000 Census the City experienced a significant loss in persons between the ages of 25 and 34, it still remains one of Meriden's most populous age categories. The substantial increase of population in the 45 to 54 years of age category partially offset the decline in the 25 to 34 years of age category.

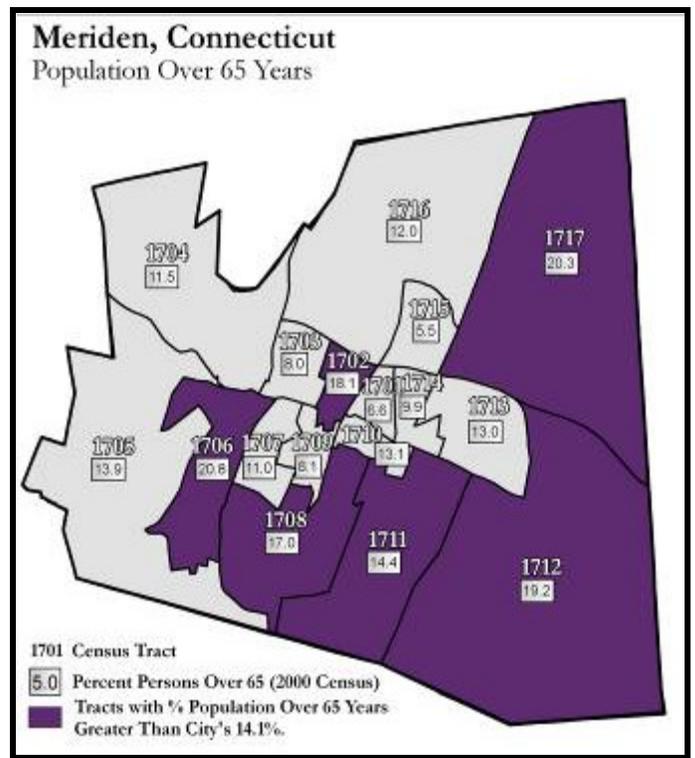
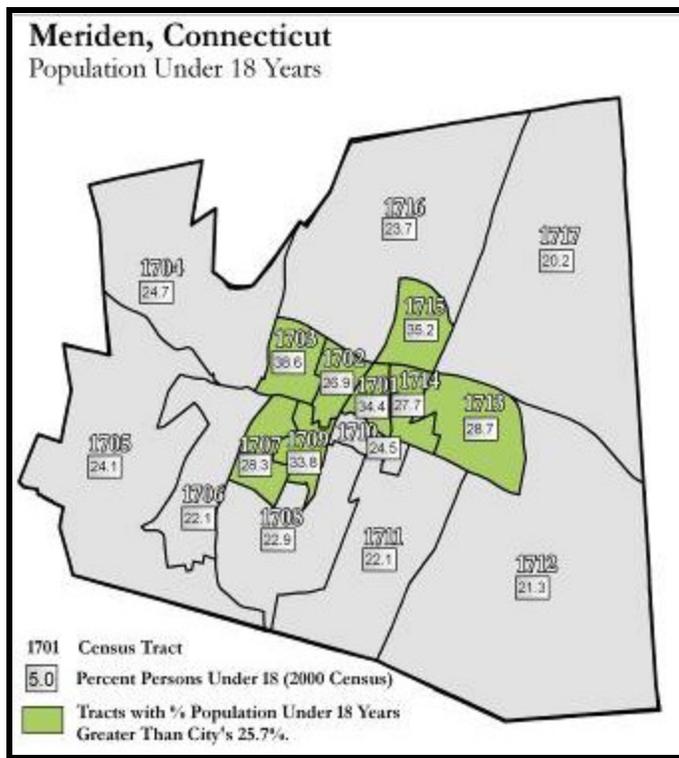
Pre-school aged population declined slightly between the two censuses. The elementary and middle school-aged population (ages 5 to 14), however, increased by 954 children. The high school-aged population had a slight increase of 116 persons. From a planning perspective, the increase in the middle and high school-aged population impacts school enrollment, park and recreation facility planning and youth services planning.

Population between 60 to 74 years of age declined substantially while population over 75 years of age increased. Changes in population over 65 years of age impact planning for senior facilities and senior support services. Meriden's median age in 2000 (36.2) was generally in line with the median ages of the State and the County, but was lower than any of the adjacent communities in the region. As shown in Table III-5, Meriden's percentage of persons under 18 was higher than the State and the County, as well as being the highest percentage in the immediate region; in fact, the percentage of persons under 18 grew by two percentage points since 1990. The City's elderly population percentage declined between 1990 and 2000, and now trails only Cheshire and Middletown as the lowest percentage in the immediate region.

Table III-4					
Age Distribution: 1990 to 2000					
Meriden, CT					
	1990 Census	2000 Census	% of 2000 Total Pop.	Numerical Change 1990 - 2000	% Change 1990 - 2000
Under 5 years	4,530	4,143	7.1	-387	-8.5
5 to 9 years	3,945	4,338	7.4	393	10.0
10 to 14 years	3,621	4,182	7.2	561	15.5
15 to 19 years	3,456	3,572	6.1	116	3.4
20 to 24 years	4,351	3,470	6	-881	-20.2
25 to 34 years	11,640	8,236	14.1	-3,404	-29.2
35 to 44 years	8,766	9,355	16.1	589	6.7
45 to 54 years	5,431	7,880	13.5	2,449	45.1
55 to 59 years	2,507	2,796	4.8	289	11.5
60 to 64 years	2,511	2,061	3.5	-450	-17.9
65 to 74 years	5,032	3,867	6.6	-1,165	-23.2
75 to 84 years	2,730	3,229	5.5	499	18.3
85 years and over	959	1,115	1.9	156	16.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Within Meriden there are individual census tracts and areas that have higher concentrations of elderly population and higher concentrations of persons under 18. The categories “Under 18” and “Over 65” represent two major age cohorts from a planning perspective. Often, a dependency ratio, which tells how many young people (under 18) and older people (over 64) depend on people of working age (19 to 64), is determined as part of a socio-economic analysis. This figure is used to calculate or analyze a community’s ability to support its “dependent population”. This support includes the provision of facilities such as schools, playgrounds, and senior centers; programs; and services targeted toward the City’s youth and elderly populations. The maps below depict the areas where higher concentrations of specific populations reside.



## D. RACIAL AND ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS

As shown in the table and charts on the following page, the racial and ethnic characteristics of Meriden's population changed noticeably between the 1990 and 2000 Census. In 1990 the White population comprised 89.7% of the total population; by 2000, the White population comprised over nine percentage points less at 80.2%. While overall population in the City decreased by 2.1% between 1990 and 2000, the White population decreased by 12.4%. The Native American population saw the largest percentage increase, more than doubling its 1990 population. The Asian and Other Race populations also experienced large percentage increases. The Hispanic population also saw a sizable percentage gain, jumping 51% during the decade, and the Black population experienced a gain of 47%. For the first time, the 2000 Census established a category of two or more races to recognize multi-racial populations in the country; 2.9% of the City's population reported that they were multi-racial in the 2000 Census.

**...the racial and ethnic characteristics of Meriden's population changed noticeably between the 1990 and 2000 Census.**

When race is examined for persons of Hispanic origin, the decrease in the number of White, non-Hispanic persons in Meriden between 1990 and 2000 is quite pronounced. The White, non-Hispanic population of Meriden declined from 48,481 in 1990, or 81.5% of the total population, to 40,709 in 2000 or just 69.9% of the population. This represents a decrease of 16% between the two censuses. Meanwhile, the Black non-Hispanic population grew by 43.5% over the same time period.

	<b>1990 Census</b>	<b>% 1990 Pop.</b>	<b>2000 Census***</b>	<b>% 2000 Pop.</b>	<b>Numeric Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
White	53,327	89.7	46,734	80.2	-6,593	-12.4
Black	2,553	4.3	3,754	6.4	1,201	47.0
American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	107	0.2	229	0.4	122	114.0
Asian or Pacific Islander	417	0.7	807	1.4	390	93.5
Other Race	3,075	5.2	5,036	8.6	1,961	63.8
Two or More Races*	N/A	N/A	1,684	2.9	N/A	N/A
Hispanic Origin**	8,144	13.7	12,296	21.1	4,152	51.0
Total Population	59,479		58,244		-1,235	-2.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Notes:

\* The 2000 Census now includes a category for multi-racial persons of two or more races.

\*\* Hispanic Origin populations may be of any race

\*\*\* Due to changes in the reporting categories between the 1990 Census and the 2000 Census, direct comparisons are not possible

Ethnicity	2000 Population	% 2000 Population
Hispanic	12,296	21.1%
Italian	10,382	17.8%
Irish	8,187	14.1%
Polish	7,970	13.7%
German	5,994	10.3%
English	4,764	8.2%
French	4,538	7.8%
French Canadian	2,280	3.9%
U.S. or American	1,895	3.3%
Russian	697	1.2%
Swedish	678	1.2%
Scottish	659	1.1%
Hungarian	624	1.1%
<b>Total Reported</b>	<b>68,127</b>	

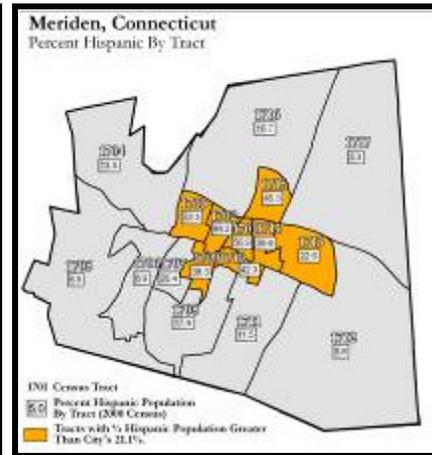
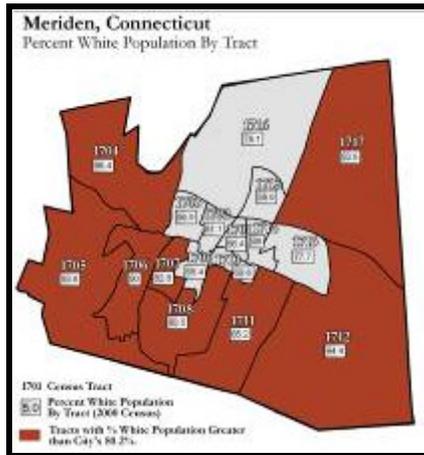
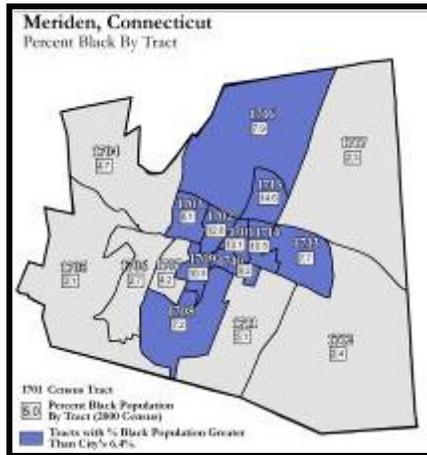
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table III-6 and the maps that follow depict racial and ethnic concentrations by Census Tract. These graphics indicate where in the community the highest percentages of specific racial groups reside. The maps indicate where census tract percentages exceed City-wide average percentages. Such data is often used for writing grants and ensuring an equitable distribution of services for housing, neighborhood and community development programs.

**Ethnicity and Ancestry**

Meriden is an ethnically diverse community with a wide variety of ancestries represented in the population. Although persons of Hispanic ancestry now form the leading ancestry category, those individuals claiming Italian, Irish, Polish and German descent still represent substantial percentages of the City’s population. Ancestries represented by 1% or more of Meriden’s population are listed in Table III-6.

Table III-8 breaks down Hispanic ancestry by specific nationality or the place of origin for their heritage. As this table illustrates, over 78% of Meriden’s Hispanic population is of Puerto Rican descent. Individuals of Mexican descent and those who classify themselves as “Other Hispanic or Latino” comprise a majority of the non-Puerto Rican Hispanic population.



Hispanic Origin	2000 Pop.	% 2000 Pop.
Total Hispanic	12,296	
Puerto Rican	9,637	78.4%
Mexican	948	7.7%
Cuban	165	1.3%
Dominican Republic	149	1.2%
Central American	140	1.1%
South American	289	2.4%
Other Hispanic	968	7.9%

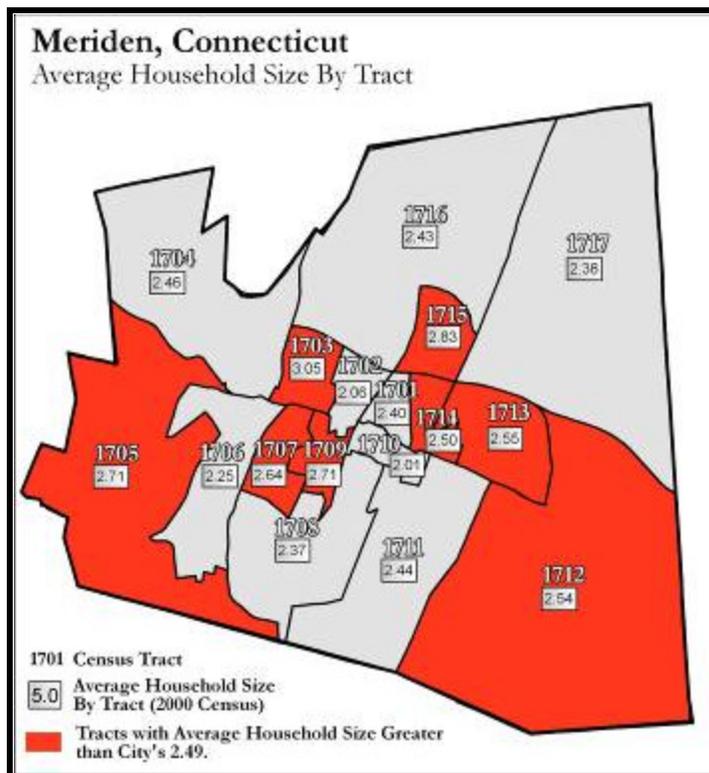
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**E. HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS**

Between the 1990 and the 2000 Census, the City of Meriden lost 289 households (1.2%). An increase in households occurred in all of the neighboring communities in the region. Berlin gained 768 households (12.7%), Cheshire gained 1,009 households (12.1%), Middlefield gained 185 households (12.7%), Middletown gained 1,733 households (10.3%), Southington gained 1,317 households (9.6%) and Wallingford gained 1,530 households (10.1%). Such gains and losses are reflective of residential development trends and the attraction of these communities for residential growth.

Average household size in Meriden dropped slightly from 2.51 persons per household in 1990 to 2.49 persons per household in 2000. Drops in average household size are consistent with recent regional and national trends. Household sizes have decreased as a result of an increase in single person households, an increase in divorce and separations, the tendency for young professionals to delay marriage and families, and an increase in the number of elderly who remain in their own homes as opposed to residing with family. Much steeper declines in average household size occurred in the communities surrounding Meriden. Despite these declines, Meriden still has the second lowest average household size in the immediate region, trailing only Middletown whose statistics are heavily influenced by the presence of Wesleyan University.

..... Meriden still has the second lowest average household size in the immediate region.....



....of the 22,951 households in Meriden, 65.2% are family households containing one or more related individuals and 34.8% are non-family households.

According to 2000 Census figures, of the 22,951 households in Meriden, 65.2% are family households containing one or more related individuals and 34.8% are non-family households. As shown in Table III-8, 7,192 households in Meriden are family households with children under the age of 18. Of these 7,192 family households with children, 4,471 or 62.2% are married couple families; 2,199 or 30.6% are single mother families; and it can be assumed that the remaining 522 or 7.3% are single father families.

Non-family households comprised 34.8% of all households in the City according to the 2000 Census. Non-family households include individuals living alone or households which contain one or more non-related individuals. They do not include people living in group quarter situations such as nursing homes, group homes, dormitories or other similar shared

housing accommodations. Of the 7,991 non-family households enumerated by the 2000 Census, 6,629 were householders living alone or single person households.

These single person households comprised 28.9% of the City's total households. Elderly individuals living alone made up 2,446 of the 6,629 single person households. The number of single person elderly households, especially those living in private market housing, is an important figure because many of these households will vacate their homes due to health or age-related reasons. Oftentimes, this turnover of units becomes an important resource for new families and households moving to a community.

Table III-8 shows Meriden's household characteristics along side of those of four similar communities, as a point of comparison.

Household Type	Number of Households	% of Households	% of Households, Bristol	% of Households, East Hartford	% of Households, Manchester	% of Households, Norwich
Family Household	14,960	65.2	65.0	63.5	60.4	60.1
With Own Children Under 18	7,192	31.3	29.6	29.2	28.2	29.0
Married Couple Family	10,414	45.4	49.6	41.5	43.8	40.7
With Own Children Under 18	4,471	19.5	21.0	16.2	18.2	16.7
Female Householder, no husband present	3,479	15.2	11.5	17.4	13.0	15.0
With Own Children Under 18	2,199	9.6	6.6	11.0	8.3	9.9
Non-Family Householder	7,991	34.8	35.0	36.5	39.6	39.9
Living Alone	6,629	28.9	28.9	30.2	31.1	32.0
Householder 65 years and over	2,446	10.7	10.7	11.3	10.1	12.5
Households with individuals under 18	7,811	34.0	31.6	32.3	30.1	31.6
Households with individuals 65 years and over	5,643	24.6	25.1	26.9	22.9	25.8
Total Households	22,951		24,886	20,206	23,197	15,091

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

## F. DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In terms of planning for the next 10 years and beyond, several population, housing and demographic trends in Meriden have future implications. These include:

- The City of Meriden experienced a limited population decline between the 1990 Census and the 2000 Census. However, more recent population estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that this trend has reversed itself and that Meriden's population is once again in a growth phase. Based upon this more

recent data as well as Census data from the past 45 years, Meriden is projected to grow slowly over the next quarter century.

- The City's population, although aging at a steady pace, remains one of the youngest populations in the immediate region. Considerable growth in the age 45 to 54 and age 5 to 19 cohorts have almost offset the steep declines seen in the age 25 to 34 and age 60 to 74 cohorts. The changes in the numbers and concentrations of the school-aged populations has immediate implications for school planning, park and recreational planning and planning for facilities and services for the Town's youth. Much further in the future, demands for senior services will need to be evaluated as the 45 to 54 year olds reach the age of 65.
- The growth in population between 45 to 54 years of age, regarded to be the age cohort of adults in their prime earning years, may impact housing turnover, the demand for new housing situations and the demand for particular town services and programs. These changes are likely to emerge over the next ten years.
- The racial and ethnic composition of Meriden's population is changing rapidly. Meriden's Hispanic population grew by 51% between 1990 and 2000, while the White non-Hispanic population decreased by 7,772 people over the same time period. These demographic changes are occurring in a more pronounced manner in particular sections of Meriden. Addressing the implications of these changes will be particularly important for neighborhood planning activities and initiatives.
- Average household size in Meriden is lower than all of its neighboring communities except Middletown, and is lower than the average household size for New Haven County and the State. The relatively low average household size of 2.49 persons is reflective of the large number of single-person households, which comprise almost 29% of the households in Meriden. This in turn is attributable to a housing stock that has a significant rental component comprised of smaller apartments.
- Meriden's history is defined by steady growth from 1900 to 1970, followed by a leveling off of population growth in the past 35 years. While the current demographic data, trends and projections indicate that Meriden's population will likely continue its slow growth for the next 25 years, planning for additional growth and development before it occurs is the most proactive approach.

**The City's population, although aging at a steady pace, remains one of the youngest populations in the immediate region.**

**The growth in population between 45 to 54 years of age, regarded to be the age cohort of adults in their prime earning years, may impact housing turnover, the demand for new housing situations and the demand for particular town services and programs.**

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# IV. Housing

## A. INTRODUCTION

As one of the principal land uses within a community, housing and housing-related issues affect all residents. The form, layout, condition, and cost of housing available are key to the quality of life within a community.

Section 8-23 of the General Statutes for the State of Connecticut sets standards for a municipal Plan of Conservation and Development. The Statute reads, "Such plan shall make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multi-family dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity. Such plan shall also promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate-income households."

## B. EXISTING HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS & DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

### Existing Housing Characteristics

The 2000 Census recorded 24,631 housing units in Meriden. Ninety-three point two percent (93.2%) of the housing units were occupied, leaving a 6.8% vacancy rate. Of the total 22,951 occupied housing units, 59.9% were owner-occupied and the remaining 40.1% were renter-occupied units. According to Census counts, 1,680 housing units were vacant.

**Of the total 22,951 occupied housing units, 59.9% were owner-occupied and the remaining 40.1% were renter-occupied units.**

Table IV-1 depicts the housing unit characteristics of Meriden compared to its neighboring communities, New Haven County, Hartford County and the State of Connecticut. The City's vacancy rate of 6.8% was higher than the New Haven County, Hartford County and State rates of 6.4%, 5.1% and 6.1%, respectively, but not drastically different. In terms of local communities, Meriden at 6.8% had the highest vacancy rate, with Middletown and Middlefield a distant second and third. Berlin, Cheshire, Southington and Wallingford all had very low vacancy rates.



**Single family home, Morley Dr.  
(HMA)**



**Queen Anne style home,  
Wilcox Ave. (HMA)**

TABLE IV-1						
Housing Unit Characteristics: 2000						
Meriden and Surrounding Communities						
	Total Housing Units	% Occupied	% Vacant	Total Occupied Units	% Owner Occupied	% Renter Occupied
<b>MERIDEN</b>	24,631	93.20%	6.80%	22,951	59.90%	40.10%
Berlin	6,955	97.70%	2.30%	6,792	88.30%	11.70%
Cheshire	9,588	97.50%	2.50%	9,349	86.60%	13.40%
Middlefield	1,740	94.50%	5.50%	1,645	84.40%	15.60%
Middletown	19,697	94.20%	5.80%	18,554	51.30%	48.70%
Southington	15,557	97.00%	3.00%	15,083	81.40%	19.60%
Wallingford	17,306	96.50%	3.50%	16,697	72.70%	27.30%
New Haven County	340,732	93.60%	6.40%	319,040	63.10%	36.90%
Hartford County	353,022	94.90%	5.10%	335,098	64.20%	35.80%
Connecticut	1,385,975	93.90%	6.10%	1,301,670	66.80%	33.20%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

✦ *Rental Units*

Meriden’s percentage of rental units (40.1%) is only slightly higher than the New Haven County and Hartford County rates. The communities in the immediate region all have renter percentages that are much lower than Meriden with the exception of Middletown, where almost half of the housing stock is renter-occupied. Thus, Meriden has a housing stock whose composition in terms of occupancy of units is characteristic of a moderate-sized urban community. This fact is indicative of Meriden’s industrial history, and the higher percentage of rental stock may also explain why Meriden’s vacancy rate is higher than the smaller surrounding communities.

**Development Trends**

Meriden’s housing stock of 24,631 units, as enumerated by the 2000 Census, consisted of 48.4% single family detached housing; 5.5% single family attached (generally condominium) housing; 19.5% multi-family housing (5 units or more); 26.1% two, three and four-family housing and 0.6% mobile home or other.

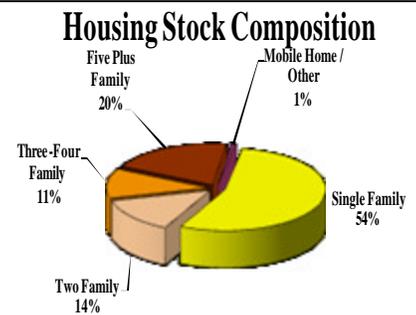
The densest housing in Meriden is concentrated in a central area of the City from Britannia Street south to Hall Avenue, and bounded to the east by Route 5 and to the west by Sodom Brook. High-density housing is also found in numerous individual locations scattered around the rest of the City. The oldest housing in the City is in the form of center chimney timber-style homes that dot the landscape along such streets as North Colony Street, Hall Avenue, Murdock Avenue, South Broad Street and East Main Street, and date from the early to mid 1700s.

**Meriden’s percentage of rental units (40.1%) is only slightly higher than the New Haven County and Hartford County rates.**

**Meriden’s housing stock consists of 48.4% single family detached housing; 5.5% single family attached (generally condominium) housing; 19.5% multi-family housing; 26.1% two-four family housing and 0.6% mobile home or other. (2000 Census)**

✦ *Changes in Housing Stock, 2000-2006*

Table IV-24 illustrates changes that have occurred in the City's housing stock between the 2000 Census and the end of 2006. According to available data from the Census, the State of Connecticut and the City of Meriden Building Department, between April 2000 and December 2006 the number of housing units in single family detached structures increased by an estimated 343 units. Units in two to four-unit structures declined by 96 units or -1.5%. Multi-family units in structures with 5 or more units also increased, gaining 168 units or 3.5%. Mobile homes and other forms of non-traditional housing remained unchanged over the time period. The total estimated number of housing units in Meriden as of the end of 2006 was 25,180.



Based upon these figures, most of the increase in housing units since the 2000 Census have been in single family units (477 out of 549) including both detached homes and condominiums, while the remainder of the increase in units has occurred in the 5 or more units category. Structures with 2 to 4 units have continued to decline due to extensive demolitions earlier in the decade.

TABLE IV-2						
Change in Housing Units by Structure Type: 2000 to 2006						
Meriden, CT						
	Total Housing Units 2000 Census	% of Housing Stock	Estimated Total Housing Units 2006*	% of Housing Stock	Change in Units 2000-2006	% Change Between 2000-2006
TYPE OF STRUCTURE						
1 unit, detached	11,914	48.4	12,257	48.7	343	2.9
1 unit, attached	1,361	5.5	1,495	5.9	134	9.8
2 to 4 units	6,429	26.1	6,333	25.1	-96	-1.5
5 or more units	4,785	19.4	4,953	19.7	168	3.5
Mobile home, trailer, other	142	0.6	142	0.6	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>24,631</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25,180</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>2.2</b>

\* Estimated using 2000 Census data and applying more recent data from DECD and the Meriden Building Dept.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; DECD; City of Meriden Building Dept.; compiled by HMA

In addition to the U.S. Census data and the Meriden Building Department data, the state Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) maintains an annual inventory of housing units by town, current to 2006. As of 2006, DECD reported that Meriden had an estimated

25,182 housing units, an increase of 551 units since the 2000 Census. Of these 25,182 units, 13,705 (54.5%) were single family attached and detached units, 3,435 (13.7%) were in two family structures, 2,896 (11.5%) were in three or four family structures, and 4,953 (19.7%) were in structures with five units or more. There were also 142 mobile homes.

✦ *Housing Stock – Regional Comparison*

Compared to other communities in the region, Meriden had the second highest percentage of multi-family units after Middletown. It is interesting to note that Meriden's percentage of multi-family units is very much in line with the percentage for New Haven County as a whole. Where Meriden clearly stands apart from its surrounding communities is in terms of condominiums and two to four unit structures. A substantially higher percentage of Meriden's housing stock is comprised of these housing types than any of the surrounding communities. Meriden's percentage of single family detached homes is the second lowest in the immediate area, ahead of only Middletown which has a very high percentage of its housing in multi-family structures for a community of its size.

✦ *Housing Construction by Structure Type*

The majority of Meriden's new housing development during the last decade was in the form of single family detached housing and single-family attached condominium units as shown in Table IV-3. In fact, were it not for 190 permits issued for housing units in structure with more than 5 units in 2004, almost all of Meriden's recent housing construction would have been in the form of single family housing (including single-family attached units such as condominiums, which are aggregated together with the detached units to create a total single family housing units statistic). Although 926 new housing permits were issued in Meriden between 1997 and 2006, the City only experienced a net gain of 428 units during this period due to a large number of demolitions. These demolitions were spread across both single family and multi-family housing structures, with almost all involving demolition of units built before World War II. Between 1997 and 2001, when many of these demolitions occurred, the City routinely ranked near the bottom of Connecticut communities in terms of annual net gain in housing units. By 2004 and 2005, however, Meriden's net gain ranking had climbed substantially.

While Meriden has a balance of housing styles, types and unit configurations, the housing stock is generally comprised of low and moderate-valued residential structures with few high-end residential structures, particularly in the single-family detached housing category. This value imbalance often has social implications, including situations where a household experiences an increase in income and is in the market for a new home that is larger or has more amenities which the household can now afford. Such units may be difficult to find in Meriden; however, they are often abundant in surrounding communities, which may lead households in Meriden with increasing incomes to leave the City for more desirable housing stock in the surrounding suburbs. Adding units to the City's housing stock that provide economically upwardly mobile Meriden residents the opportunity to upgrade their housing choice while

**While Meriden has a balance of housing styles, types and unit configurations, the housing stock is generally comprised of low and moderate-valued residential structures with few high-end residential structures, particularly in the single family detached housing category.**

remaining in the City and continuing to contribute to its growth and improvement should be a strategy employed to maintain the City's middle class resident base.

**TABLE IV-3**  
**Housing Units & Construction Activity Authorized: 1997 to 2006**  
**City of Meriden**

Year	Total Housing Units Authorized	1 Unit	2 Units	3 & 4 Units	5 Units or More	Demolitions	Net Gain	Rank in State by Net Gain
1997	37	37	0	0	0	103	-66	168 <sup>th</sup>
1998	53	53	0	0	0	37	16	129 <sup>th</sup>
1999	43	41	2	0	0	148	-105	167 <sup>th</sup>
2000	68	68	0	0	0	36	32	87 <sup>th</sup>
2001	46	46	0	0	0	58	-12	164 <sup>th</sup>
2002	73	71	2	0	0	39	34	92 <sup>nd</sup>
2003	97	95	2	0	0	38	59	53 <sup>rd</sup>
2004	323	133	0	0	190	17	306	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2005	126	118	2	0	6	13	113	24 <sup>th</sup>
2006	60	58	2	0	0	9	51	N/A
<b>Totals</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>428</b>	

Source: State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, "Connecticut Housing Production and

Note: "1 Unit" includes new single family units, additions of 1 unit to existing structures and condominium units of any scale.

✧ *Future Housing Development*

Housing construction trends into the near future will generally be guided by several forces including:

- 1) the availability of buildable land,
- 2) regulations regarding residential development/redevelopment and how they are implemented, and
- 3) market factors

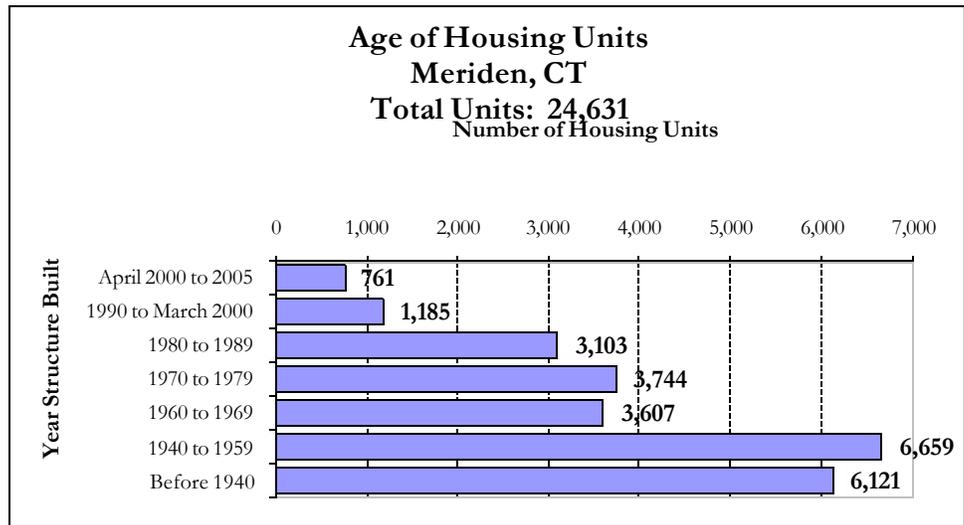
As the map titled *Land Zoned for Residential Use* shows, the majority of the City of Meriden is zoned for some form of residential use. This fact runs counter to the perception one might have of the City's zoning patterns when traveling down main arterials such as Broad Street or East Main Street. However, the reality is that Meriden is a predominantly residential city. The map titled *Potential Residential Infill Areas* illustrates that although Meriden is a substantially developed community, there are still opportunities for more residential development scattered around the City.

**...50.8% of Meriden's housing stock was built before 1960.**

The 75 foot minimum lot width in the R-1 zone, and the lack of qualitative requirements such as buildable area or usable yards, contribute to lots that are contrary to the City's objective of balancing the housing stock with additional higher end homes that are now under-represented in the City.

✦ *Age of Housing Stock*

An indicator of housing condition and housing variety in a community is the age of the housing stock, shown in Table IV-4 below. The age of the housing stock generally affects both aesthetic appeal as well as the availability of a variety of housing types.



\*Estimated as of 1/1/07.

Source: Base information - U.S. Census; updated data - City of Meriden Building Dept.; compiled by HMA.

Time Period	Number of Structures	Percentage
Prior to 1939	4,961	34.0%
1940-1959	4,171	28.6%
1960-1979	3,345	22.9%
1980-1989	1,226	8.4%
1990-2006	887	6.1%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>14,590</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

✦ *Mortgage Lending Statistics*

Mortgage lending statistics often provide a unique and insightful view of the changing dynamics of a community's housing market. Of all the home purchase loans taken out on properties in Meriden in 2005, 64.3% were to Whites, 11.1% were to African-Americans and 21.5% were to Hispanics. This distribution is quite similar to the overall racial and ethnic distribution of Meriden's population. However, statistics on the percentage of refinancing loans issued by subprime lenders in Meriden in 2004 shows that only 27.1% of refinancing loans to Whites were from subprime lenders, while 50.0% of refinancing loans to African-Americans were from subprime lenders and 42.2% of refinancing loans to Hispanics were from subprime lenders. In addition, 32.3% of conventional home purchase mortgage loans issued for properties in Meriden in 2004 were from subprime lenders, and 34.1% of all refinancing loans were from subprime lenders. Meriden's 32.3% rate of subprime home purchase mortgages ranks it 83<sup>rd</sup> out of the 664 cities in the United States with a population of 50,000 or greater. Within the State of Connecticut, Meriden's subprime lending rate is close to that of Ansonia (31.8%), West Haven (33.3%) and New Haven (35.9%), but not nearly as pronounced as in Hartford (42.2%) or Bridgeport (42.8%). Given the current problems in the subprime mortgage industry, a rise in default rates for these mortgages could cause housing problems that would be felt more acutely in Meriden than in other communities in the region and the State.

**Affordability of Housing**

The issue of housing affordability is a state-wide problem. Affordability on a regional basis is also complex and defies simple solutions. The cost of housing is the result of a variety of factors including, but not limited to, the demand for a specific location, availability of buildable land, and labor and material costs. Other factors, such as the age and quality of the existing housing stock as well as the introduction of new product to the market greatly affect the cost of housing. Other factors independent of housing cost, including interest rates, job growth, and local economic conditions, all work together to influence the cost and availability of housing. Most of these factors are beyond the control of local governments.

The population of Meriden and adjacent communities is over 235,000. The housing market for Meriden, tied to ease of commuting and confirmed by work transportation patterns, greatly extends beyond adjacent communities. In 2000, over one-third of all workers commuting into Meriden commuted from outside the City and adjacent communities. Meriden residents comprise a significant and equal percentage of workers from both new Haven County and Middlesex County, and a lesser but still significant percentage of Hartford County employment. The extended housing market area for Meriden may encompass as many as 1.4 million residents.

Given the housing affordability problem in the State of Connecticut, and the scale of the surrounding and extended housing market, there will always be market pressures to develop additional affordable housing in Meriden.

**Given the housing affordability problem in the State of Connecticut, and the scale of the surrounding and extended housing market, there will always be market pressures to develop additional affordable housing in Meriden.**

The State of Connecticut requires that the issue of affordable housing be addressed in each community's Plan of Conservation and Development. Development over the years in Meriden has resulted in a housing stock that is quite diverse in terms of housing types and styles. Current zoning regulations are flexible in terms of providing a wide range of allowable densities and housing types. The housing built in Meriden during the last ten years has been more affordable than the housing built in any surrounding municipality.

✦ *Meriden's Program to Address Affordability*

The City of Meriden has been addressing the issue of affordable housing needs locally for decades through the local Housing Authority and the City's Community Development Office. Meriden is designated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as an Entitlement Community for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds only. Other sources of federal funding such as HOME fund, Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) and Housing for People with AIDS (HOPWA) are available by applying through the State of Connecticut's Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD).

In 2005, the City of Meriden prepared a five-year Consolidated Plan which enabled it to receive CDBG funds from the federal government. The Plan identified three priority strategy areas<sup>1</sup>:

- Strategies for Inner-City Neighborhood Revitalization
- Strategies for Special Populations: Renters with Severe Cost Burden; Homeless; and Other Special Populations
- Strategies for General Community Development Needs

In terms of housing goals, the Consolidated Plan listed nine specific objectives under the national objective heading of "Provision of Decent Housing". These goals were:<sup>2</sup>

- To maintain and rehabilitate its existing housing stock both privately and publicly owned.
- To retain its housing stock in a standard, livable condition.
- To reduce and eliminate slum and blighting influences.
- To reduce severe cost burden problems of rental households.
- To promote, develop, and expand homeownership opportunities.
- To reduce isolation, and increase housing choice for lower income persons.
- To reduce and prevent lead poisoning.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Meriden, "Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development, July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2010 – Draft"; p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> City of Meriden, "Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development, July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2010 – Draft"; p. 136.

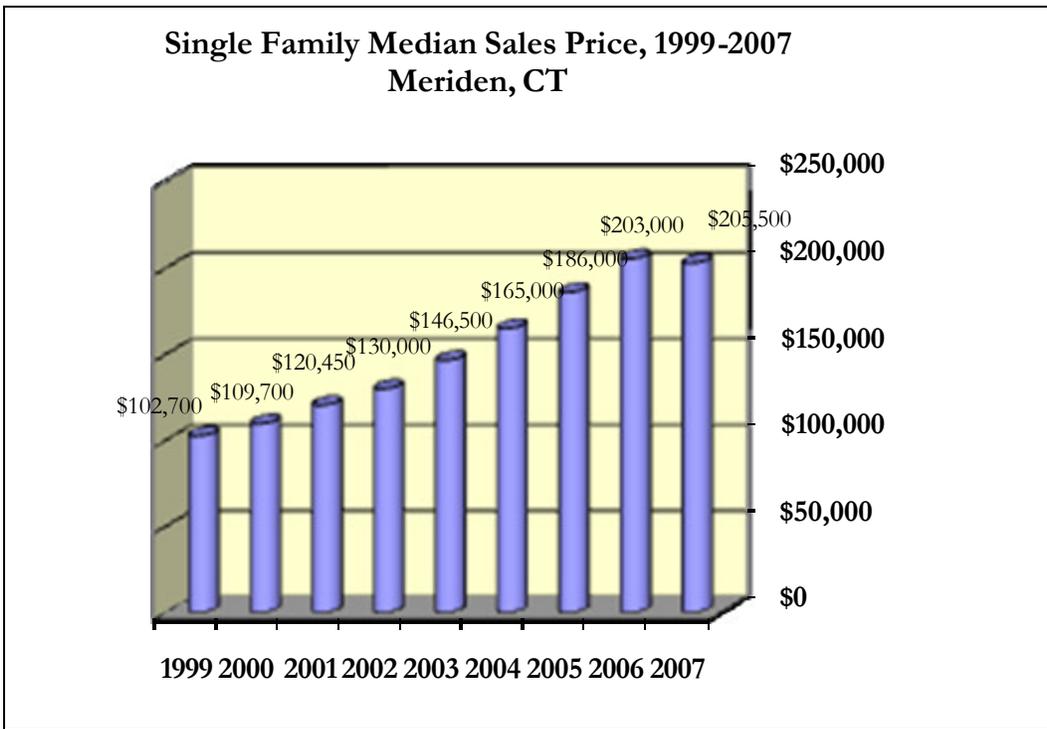
- To provide for the housing needs of the homeless, victims of domestic violence, the emotionally psychologically challenged, and other special populations.
- To upgrade and improve the local infrastructure.

The City of Meriden is also eligible to apply for HOME, ESG and HOPWA funds from the State of Connecticut.

✦ *Past Home Sales and Median Sales Prices*

According to recent real estate market statistics for the period of 1999-2006, an average of 826.6 homes per year were purchased in Meriden. As shown in the figure below, median single family residential sales prices have been on a steep upward trend since 1999.

Compared to adjacent communities, over the past several years Meriden’s median residential sales prices have started to catch up as shown in Table IV-5. Cheshire remains the highest-priced town in the immediate area, as it was in 1999. However, the rate of increase in median sales price has been higher in traditionally more affordable communities such as Middletown and Wallingford. Between 1999 and 2006, the median sales price in Meriden increased by 118.5%, which was the highest rate of increase in the immediate area. Median sales prices in the surrounding communities increased from a low of 58.1% in Cheshire to a high of 85.5% in Middletown.



In comparison to Table IV-5, the median sales prices of only a few years ago in Meriden are considerably lower. It must be remembered that listing prices are very often higher than the actual sales price of a home, sometimes by a substantial amount. Table IV-5 shows that 19% of the current residential listings are over \$300,000; however, 37 of the 67 listings (55.2%) are either for new construction or homes built since 2005, not established existing homes. It is typical to see newly constructed homes listed for sale at a minimum price of \$300,000. Thus, the \$300,000 price range is likely not typical of the City of Meriden, since almost 93% of the housing stock was built before 1990. A price of \$180,000 to \$225,000 for an existing home, close to the 2006 median sales price, is probably more in line with the realities of the Meriden real estate market.

TABLE IV-5									
Comparison of Median Sales Prices: 1999-2007									
Meriden and Surrounding Communities									
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>MERIDEN</b>	\$102,700	\$109,700	\$120,450	\$130,000	\$146,500	\$165,000	\$186,000	\$205,500	\$203,000
Berlin	\$165,700	\$170,000	\$183,000	\$200,000	\$232,500	\$235,000	\$272,500	\$280,000	\$280,000
Cheshire	\$219,900	\$230,000	\$240,000	\$260,000	\$290,000	\$329,000	\$342,500	\$354,900	\$344,000
Middlefield	\$157,500	\$161,500	\$165,000	\$175,000	\$225,000	\$243,750	\$268,000	\$256,500	\$280,000
Middletown	\$133,000	\$132,000	\$150,000	\$167,500	\$191,000	\$220,000	\$246,500	\$245,000	\$245,000
Southington	\$165,000	\$177,500	\$189,950	\$206,000	\$240,000	\$246,000	\$279,900	\$285,000	\$278,000
Wallingford	\$164,500	\$160,000	\$175,000	\$190,000	\$220,000	\$250,900	\$266,688	\$283,500	\$279,000

Source: The Warren Group.

However, on a regional basis, Meriden now has the lowest median home sales price of the 15 municipalities in the South Central Connecticut Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG), having been surpassed by New Haven in 2005. This has occurred despite the concurrent 118.5% increase in median homes sales price in Meriden, indicating that although housing prices have increased in Meriden over the past several years, prices in other parts of the region are growing at similar, if not greater, rates. As a result, Meriden's housing stock is perhaps the most affordable on a regional basis in the South Central Connecticut area. In addition, statistics provided by HOME Connecticut, an initiative of the Partnership for Strong Communities organization, indicate that Meriden has the smallest "gap" in terms of raw dollars between its median household income and the qualifying income needed to purchase a home at the median sales price in the City.

**...on a regional basis, Meriden now has the lowest median home sales price of the 15 municipalities in the South Central Connecticut Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG), having been surpassed by New Haven in 2005.**

In a community such as Meriden, which not only has ample numbers of affordable housing units, but also has a significant percentage of the total region's affordable housing stock, different strategies must be utilized to decrease the "gap" between median household income and median home sales price. In Meriden, rather than applying more pressure to the supply side of the affordable housing market by adding more units, a more effective strategy would be to focus on economic development and public policy initiatives that would raise household incomes to higher levels rather than attempting to moderate and lower the cost of housing, since these costs are already quite low relative to the surrounding region.

✦ *Gross Rent – 2000 Census*

Detailed housing figures from the 2000 Census included statistics on gross rent for renter occupied units. With 9,189 specified renter-occupied units (i.e., the sample size from the Census for purposes of computing rent data), Meriden's median rent in 2000 was \$618. This rent level is the lowest among the surrounding communities. As to be expected, Meriden, Middletown, and to a certain extent Wallingford, contain the vast majority of the area's rental housing. In 2000, over 40% of the area's rental units fell within the \$500 to \$749 gross rent cohort, by far the highest percentage of any of the rent cohorts. Units renting for more than \$1,000 per month in the area accounted for 10.7% of the area's total.

✦ *HUD Fair Market Rents – 2007*

Due to the rapid changes that have occurred in the housing market throughout Connecticut since the 2000 Census, these rent levels are becoming out of date. HUD issues, on an annual basis, a schedule of Fair Market Rents for counties and metropolitan areas across the United States. HUD's FY 2007 Final Fair Market Rents for Existing Housing provide a better picture of actual rents in these areas at the present time. Fair Market Rents are based upon 2000 Census data that is updated through various rental housing survey tools. For 2007, the Fair Market Rents for the New Haven-Meriden area (of which Meriden, Cheshire and Wallingford are a part) was \$777 for a studio apartment, \$882 for a one-bedroom apartment, \$1,065 for a two-bedroom apartment, \$1,275 for a three-bedroom apartment and \$1,457 for a four-bedroom apartment. The Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford area, of which Berlin, Southington, Middlefield and Middletown are a part, had Fair Market Rents of \$702 for a studio apartment, \$842 for a one-bedroom apartment, \$1,029 for a two-bedroom apartment, \$1,236 for a three-bedroom apartment and \$1,524 for a four-bedroom apartment.

✦ *Rents – 2007 Market Snapshot*

To supplement Census and HUD data on market rents, a sample of units currently for rent were examined across several different housing types including apartment complexes, condominiums for rent, multifamily housing and individual homes for rent. Data sources included the Meriden Record-Journal rental listings and Apartmentguide.com listings. Of six apartment complexes identified, rents for studio and one-bedroom

**In Meriden, rather than applying more pressure to the supply side of the affordable housing market by adding more units, a more effective strategy would be to focus on economic development and public policy initiatives that would raise household incomes to higher levels rather than attempting to moderate and lower the cost of housing, since these costs are already quite low relative to the surrounding region.**

apartments ranged from \$685 to \$1,430 per month, two-bedroom apartments ranged from \$790 to \$1,695 per month, and three-bedroom apartments ranged from \$855 to \$1,340 per month. Two particular apartment complexes, Newbury Village and Britannia, generally constituted the high end of this market.

Apartments for rent in multifamily and unspecified complexes constituted a lower price range, ranging from \$500 to \$850 per month for studio and one-bedroom apartments, \$500 to \$895 per month for two-bedroom apartments, and \$795 to \$900 per month for three-bedroom apartments.

Homes for rent formed the upper end of the market price range, with the three-bedroom and four-bedroom units available for rent ranging from \$1,150 to \$1,950 per month. In addition, the one-bedroom condominium units ranged from \$650 to \$900 per month, and the two-bedroom condominium units ranged from \$1,100 to \$1,250 per month.

✦ *Affordable Housing Inventory*

The most recent data from the State Department of Economic and Community Development Affordable Housing Appeals Program puts the number of affordable housing units in Meriden in 2006 at 3,572. This is 14.50% of the number of housing units in the City according to the 2000 Census. This level exempts the City from the affordable housing appeals procedure. Affordable housing is distributed as follows:

Number of Governmentally Assisted Units:	2,557 units
Number of CHFA/FmHA Mortgages:	1,011 units
Deed Restricted:	<u>4 units</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,572 units</b>

The Meriden Housing Authority administers 611 federal Section 8 housing choice vouchers as part of its operations. In addition, the Housing Authority operates three federal public housing developments and two State moderate-income developments. Of these five rental complexes, four are for low-income families and one is for low-income elderly and disabled residents. The Housing Authority currently has a waiting list for units that is approximately three to six months long, with shorter waits for elderly units and longer waits for family housing.

All of the 221 elderly units in Community Towers are one-bedroom units. Of the remaining 479 units of family public housing, there are 26 one-bedroom units (5.4%), 287 two-bedroom units (60.0%), 116 three-bedroom units (24.2%), and 50 four-bedroom units (10.4%).

The City should continually evaluate its housing stock and the direction of its residential development patterns in order to meet the housing needs of an increasingly diverse group of residents in the coming decade.

**The City should continually evaluate its housing stock and the direction of its residential development patterns in order to meet the housing needs of an increasingly diverse group of residents in the coming decade.**

✦ *Meriden Survey and Housing Implications*

A recent telephone survey of Meriden residents conducted by The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) showed that out of several different types of housing that might be built in Meriden, residents felt that Meriden needed more housing for residents age 55 and older, smaller affordable-valued single family homes, mid-sized medium-valued single family homes, and housing designed for young professionals. Consideration of these types of housing should include a fiscal impact analysis to determine the potential impact on tax revenues and municipal expenditures as a result of developing housing units in these formats.

**A recent telephone survey of Meriden residents showed that out of several different types of housing that might be built in Meriden, residents felt that Meriden needed more housing for residents age 55 and older, smaller affordable-valued single family homes, mid-sized medium-valued single family homes, and housing designed for young professionals.**

✦ *Housing Stock by Assessed Value*

The *Housing Stock by Assessed Value* map on the following page shows the residential properties in Meriden by assessed value. The areas of highest assessed value are generally located in the parts of the City that have the newest housing stock, such as the West Side and the southern areas of the East Side. Pockets of other high assessed value housing stock are scattered around the City. However, the map is quite striking in that there are no identifiable areas of significant size that have large concentrations of low assessed value housing. In general, Meriden has an impressive mix of housing values in its constituent neighborhood areas, a unique characteristic for a community of 60,000 residents. The R-1 District lot regulations were established in the 1965, when the average size of a new single family home in the State was about half of what it currently is. The regulation for required lot width is particularly low. Higher value homes are located in Districts with wider lots.

**Multi-Family & Elderly Housing**

✦ *Multi-Family Housing*

Of the 24,631 housing units in Meriden, 19.5% are multi-family units (buildings with 5 or more units), but an additional 26.1% of the inventory is in 2 to 4 unit structures. Currently, multi-family dwellings are permitted in the R-3, R-4, C-1, C-2 and PRD districts. The number of units allowed per site is determined by dividing the total site area by 2,500 square feet per unit in the R-3 district, by 2,000 square feet per unit in the R-4 district, by 500 square feet in the C-1 district, and by 1,500 square feet per unit in the C-2 district. In the PRD district, a density of up to 20 dwelling units per acre is allowed. Two-family and three-family dwellings are also allowed by right in the R-2 district.

**Of the 24,631 housing units in Meriden, 19.5% are multi-family units (buildings with 5 or more units), but an additional 26.1% of the inventory is in 2 to 4 unit structures.**

✦ *Demographic Shifts and Market Opportunities*

A significant market opportunity exists in Meriden due to the changing demographics of the region, Connecticut and the nation as a whole. The most common living arrangement in the United States is currently unmarried people with no children. As a result, the 2000 Census indicated that only 23.5% of households were of the “traditional” nuclear family variety, down from 45% in 1960. Average household size is also at a record

low of only 2.59 persons as of 2000. In addition, changes in the age distribution of the population will also impact future housing development. The dominant household demographics in the coming years will likely be singles and couples age 25 to 34 and households of all types between the ages of 55 and 70. Through their choices of housing, these households are demanding active, mixed-use locations in established urban areas and town centers where higher densities of development create an environment that combines housing, employment, shopping, dining and entertainment opportunities.

As an established urban center with a well-defined Downtown area, Meriden has an opportunity to capitalize on this growing demographic trend. By allowing residential development in the Downtown area, particularly around the Hub Site, to achieve a particular level of density, Meriden can capture a segment of this housing market to strengthen its existing Downtown core assets.

✦ *Future Multi-Family Housing Development*

**Future multi-family housing in Meriden should be primarily concentrated in mixed use and transit-oriented developments (TOD).**

Future multi-family housing in Meriden should be primarily concentrated in mixed use and transit-oriented developments (TOD). Guiding this form of residential development away from lower density single family residential neighborhoods and toward established mixed use/commercial corridors, major arterials, and key transportation nodes and facilities will protect the suburban character of many of Meriden's neighborhoods while enabling multi-family residential development to thrive in the areas where it is most appropriate and where there is sufficient existing infrastructure to support its existence. TODs can range from planned developments that combine transportation, residential and commercial developments on one unified site to something as simple as allowing slightly greater housing density in a radius around bus or train stations. The underlying urban planning premise is that the combination of these uses support one other and make each individual use more viable than if it were standing alone. Any mixed use developments or TODs that are constructed or designed in Meriden should not be "cookie cutter" applications of projects from other communities, but rather should be tailored to Meriden's unique character, density and urban design elements.

✦ *Elderly Housing*

Housing for the elderly is a critical concern for most communities. As the population of a city ages, it is important that a community provide alternative living arrangements from single family detached homes to multi-unit communities as options for seniors. This gives the elderly population opportunities to continue to reside in the community where they have spent the majority of their years and not be forced out by escalating housing prices. Housing product for the elderly spans a broad range of types and supporting services. From housing designed to promote mobility (e.g., one-level, grab bars, ramps, etc.) to provision of medical and support of daily living functions, there are many variations of housing product. The main distinguishing characteristics of the housing types are the level of medical assistance and the extent of communal facilities provided. The various

forms of elderly housing are differentiated by the degree of emphasis on the components of housing, hospitality and health care.

✦ *Active Adult Housing*

A rising trend in elderly housing is the Active Adult Retirement Community (AARC). The AARC is commonly associated with resort-type settings in climates that are more temperate; however, increasingly these communities are being located throughout the country to allow seniors to remain near family, social and business relations yet enjoying the activities and commonality of community that these retirement communities provide. The AARC or resort community is less common in Connecticut than the other types of senior housing; however, recent development trends have resulted in an a large number of these housing developments being proposed and constructed in the state for the 55 and over market, and they are commonly referred to as “age-restricted housing”. There are two age-restricted housing developments currently under construction in Meriden, and they represent the first entries into the age-restricted housing market in the City.

**C. PAST INVESTMENT IN AND FUTURE POTENTIAL OF SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING STOCK**

Significant potential exists for additional investment in existing single family homes by property owners. Reinvestment can come in a wide range of forms, from additions and large-scale renovations to adding a garage, work shed, or deck. These improvements add value to the assessed value of the existing home, and thereby expand the City’s Grand List and capture additional tax dollars for the City. To determine the rough extent of potential reinvestment, single-family homes and their accompanying lots were examined by neighborhood sector in terms of median lot size, median building coverage and percentage of lot coverage. The results are summarized in Table IV-6.

As Table IV-6 shows, regardless of which measure of statistical centrality employed, Meriden residential properties generally have building footprints small enough to enable some modest expansions. In the Central sector, which has by far the smallest lot sizes for single family homes, lot coverage is only 14.2%. What is clear is that many of Meriden’s single-family properties have room for additions and small secondary structures. In addition, many single-family properties can be converted to two unit properties with additional parking. It is important to note that the statistics and calculations presented in Table IV-6 concern building footprint and coverage of the primary residential structure, not total impervious site coverage.

Not only would additional investment in single family homes help stabilize and strengthen the physical nature of Meriden’s neighborhoods, it would also be a fiscally positive development for the City due to the increased property taxes that often result from larger-size homes.

<b>TABLE IV-6</b>			
<b>Footprint Coverage of Single Family Homes b</b>			
<b>Meriden, CT</b>			
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Median Lot Size (sq. ft.)</b>	<b>Median Footprint Coverage (sq. ft.)</b>	<b>% Footprint Coverage</b>
Central	6,690	953	14.2%
East	14,229	1,204	8.5%
North East	12,772	1,245	9.7%
North End	12,657	1,134	9.0%
South	12,788	1,170	9.1%
South Central	9,394	1,045	11.1%
West	14,109	1,157	8.2%
<b>CITY</b>	<b>12,056</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>9.4%</b>

Source: City of Meriden; compiled by HMA.

Reinvestment in terms of the quality of homes is also beneficial. For instance, there are many older neighborhoods primarily composed of modestly-sized ranches. Such housing may provide a niche for “empty-nester” couples or parents with one child. The neighborhood remains livable because the small lots have compatible small houses and small households.

#### **D. HOUSING ISSUES, TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS**

In terms of planning for the next ten years and beyond, several housing issues and trends in Meriden have future implications. These include:

- Meriden recorded a small decrease between 1990 and 2000 in both population and the total number of housing units in the City. A substantial part of the decrease in the number of housing units is attributable to aggressive efforts to eliminate abandoned buildings and blight in Meriden’s neighborhoods. However, from 2000 to 2006, the City has added 549 housing units to its housing stock. This Plan’s projected population increase will lead to/be a product of, a corresponding increase in housing units. Many of the new units are likely to be attached multiple units, and it is necessary to revise the specifications and controls for multi-family residential uses to balance the housing stock. A renewed growth in population coupled with an increasing housing stock means that Meriden must be proactive in terms of guiding future residential development to areas where it is most appropriate and promoting housing types that are best suited for the City’s residents and are in harmony with the City’s character, as well as maintaining a balance of socio-economic populations served by its housing stock. This set of circumstances also has numerous implications regarding the provision of municipal services, open space conservation and traffic generation.
- According to the 2000 Census, 59.9% of Meriden’s housing stock is owner-occupied and 40.1% is renter-occupied. The 40.1% rental housing rate contrasts sharply with the rental occupancy rates of most of the surrounding towns, with the exception of Middletown.
- Between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses, Meriden experienced a net loss of 195 housing units. However, the City actually gained 481 single family detached housing units during the decade, as well as 34 units in structures with 10 or more units. These additions to the housing stock were reduced by the loss of 710 units during the 1990s in single family attached structures, two to four family structures, five to nine family structures, mobile homes, trailers and other housing types.
- In 2004 and 2005, Meriden ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, respectively, in new housing permits authorized in the State of Connecticut. This is indicative of a home construction market in Meriden that strengthened considerably.

**According to the 2000 Census, 59.9% of Meriden’s housing stock is owner-occupied and 40.1% is renter-occupied.**

- Most of the remaining vacant and agricultural land zoned for residential use is spread around Meriden as individual lots in established neighborhoods or in small clusters located on the fringes of developed areas. The distribution of potentially developable residential land indicates that much of the future housing development in Meriden will likely occur on an in-fill basis.
- Natural resource conservation and the preservation of open space will likely emerge as a major issue in residential development as the remaining areas of agricultural and vacant land are considered for residential development.
- New growth provides housing choice which is important to promote economic development. New growth also adds to the City's tax base. However, new growth also brings increased population which requires municipal services. The balance between development, resource and service needs, and the location of new growth is a key part of the long-range planning process underway in this Plan of Conservation and Development update.
- Affordable housing opportunities, both in the form of public housing and market-rate housing, are in good supply in Meriden. The relatively moderate cost of housing in Meriden, in comparison to the surrounding suburbs, allows the City to retain key demographic components of its population.

**New growth provides choice which is important to promote economic development. New growth also adds to the City's tax base.**

**Given the diversity of the housing stock in tenure, type, size and price, the City of Meriden is in a position to meet the housing needs of a wide variety of residents in the coming decade.**

Given the diversity of the housing stock in tenure, type, size and price, the City of Meriden is in a position to meet the housing needs of a wide variety of residents in the coming decade.

## **E. HOUSING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Over the roughly 350 years of its existence, the City of Meriden has taken a variety of different forms. Beginning as a rural farm community and then transitioning into an important stopover between New Haven and Hartford, an industrial innovator and factory town, and a central city, Meriden has been constantly evolving as the social, political, economic and demographic forces impacting the City have changed over time. This evolution will continue over the next ten years, and one of the most dynamic segments of a municipality in terms of change is the housing stock. Today, Meriden's housing stock is a dominant feature of the City, providing a variety of residential options to accommodate the evolving nature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century household. Since so much of the City's land is used for residential purposes, a substantial amount of Meriden's fiscal well-being is predicated on the strength and quality of its housing stock and housing market. Meriden's housing stock must be viewed as a portfolio of investments for the City, and as in any investment strategy, diversity is important. Relying too heavily on only one or a few types of housing leaves the City open to negative impacts should the market for the relied-upon

**Provide appropriate uses for undeveloped residential land so as to maintain and complement the character of existing residential areas:**

housing types contract. In addition, different housing types can have significantly different fiscal impacts in terms of tax revenue and municipal expenditures. A housing stock that has many different types of housing is better able to cope with setbacks in the market for individual housing types or styles, and a balance of high tax revenue/low municipal expenditure housing such as age-restricted housing combined with more traditional types of housing not only provides shelter for a diverse array of households but also moderates the fiscal impact of housing on the municipality.

**Goal: Provide appropriate uses for undeveloped residential land so as to maintain and complement the character of existing residential areas:**

- By maintaining and improving the quality of life in existing residential neighborhoods.
- By protecting stable residential areas from blighting influences of certain nonresidential uses.
- By providing areas for new residential development at appropriate densities which include adequate provisions for traffic circulation, utilities and public facilities.

**Goal: Enhance the character of existing residential areas by requiring that new developments be compatible with such areas.**

**Through revision of the zoning ordinance, delineate limits of expansion of non-residential areas where adjacent to residential areas.**

**Goal: Through revision of the zoning ordinance, delineate limits of expansion of nonresidential areas where adjacent to residential areas. Specific areas affected by this directive are as follows:**

- West Main Street, between existing business area and Hubbard Park.
- West Side of South Broad Street between Hall Ave. and Gale Ave. and East side of South Broad Street, between Hall Avenue and Ann Street.
- East side of North Colony Road, between Frary Avenue and Catherine Drive.

**Study the Meriden Center area as the location for development of new high-density housing and transit-oriented development (TOD).**

**Goal: Study the Meriden Center area as the location for development of new high-density housing and transit-oriented development (TOD).**

**Goal: Study the NRG Site for possible Planned Development which will provide for a mix of residential uses, economic development and open space.**

**Goal: Revise circulation, utility and recreation plans to accommodate new growth, where consistent with the Future Land Use Plan. However, sewer should not be extended to very low density areas.**

**Goal: A variety of housing types (with respect to both lot size and homes versus apartments) should be available to reflect the needs and desires of all Meriden residents.**

**Objectives:**

- Per the findings of the recent telephone survey of Meriden conducted by the Center for Research and Public Policy (CRRP), encourage the development of reasonably priced single family housing developments in the City targeted for families and young professionals.
- Also per the CRRP survey, promote more age-restricted or “active adult” housing to provide substantial net tax revenue and counter-balance the municipal expenditures that may arise from the development of single-family homes.
- Promote the development of larger single family homes to further diversify Meriden’s housing stock. Strong emphasis should be incorporated into regulations to improve lot standards that minimize site disturbance and protect the character of the surrounding properties and neighborhood.
- Maintain housing designed and designated for seniors as such.

**Goal: The need for a variety of housing types in Meriden must be carefully balanced against the municipal fiscal implications of housing development and the preservation and conservation of the City’s character.**

**Objectives:**

- Review the City’s zoning regulations and other land use regulatory documents and instruments and revise as necessary to ensure that residential development will occur in the areas desired and in forms and densities that are appropriate.
- Maintain a balance between residential growth, open space conservation and natural resource protection and economic development by monitoring development trends and considering options.

**The need for a variety of housing types in Meriden must be carefully balanced against the municipal fiscal implications of housing development and the preservation and conservation of the City’s character.**

Housing unit density in areas such as the Downtown and along primary transportation routes will be a key component in revitalizing and strengthening the development of these areas.

**Goal:** In certain identified areas of Meriden, new housing should be developed at different densities than in the more suburban residential neighborhoods. Housing unit density in areas such as the Downtown and along primary transportation routes will be a key component in revitalizing and strengthening the development of these areas.

**Objectives:**

- Guide residential development pressure away from sensitive natural areas and into parts of Meriden that have existing infrastructure capable of supporting new development or redevelopment of lots.
- Capitalize on the proposed New Haven-Springfield commuter rail service that would stop in Meriden, an expanded rail station and the redevelopment of the Hub site as an asset that could spur additional residential/mixed use development in the Downtown area.
- Examine established transportation corridors and developed areas such as Route 5 and East Main Street as potential areas for combining secondary residential development with economic development in mixed use formats.

.....infill housing development should be a primary strategy for meeting the housing needs of Meriden's residents.

**Goal:** Given the limited amount of readily buildable residential land in Meriden, the sensitive environmental nature of many remaining open land parcels, and the availability of small previously developed vacant lots within the core neighborhoods of the City, infill housing development should be a primary strategy for meeting the housing needs of Meriden's residents.

**Objectives:**

- Strategically utilize selected City-owned vacant lots in the established neighborhoods immediately surrounding Downtown as opportunities for new housing and enhanced neighborhood cohesion.
- Where feasible, combine City-owned vacant lots to create larger developable sites that would be more attractive to potential private housing developers and non-profit development organizations.
- Where vacant lots cannot be combined to create larger developable sites, offer for sale to abutting owners to increase yard sizes.

Encouraging increased reinvestment in residential properties ....should be a primary strategy for strengthening existing residential areas while adding value to the City's Grand List.

**Goal:** Encouraging increased reinvestment in residential properties, particularly in Meriden's core neighborhoods, through residential building, renovations and timely maintenance. This should be a primary strategy for strengthening existing residential areas while adding value to the City's Grand List.

**Objectives:**

- Encourage reinvestment in homes by continuing to offer financial incentives such as reduced home improvement loan rates, façade grants for targeted areas or tax abatements for set periods of time.
- Create a “Home Improvement Recognition Program”, in which homeowners who complete substantial renovations/improvements to their property are publicly recognized for their efforts and investment through local media outlets and by way of congratulatory signage placed on their property by the City.
- Continue to support and promote the City’s Neighborhood Preservation Loan Program.

**Goal: Establish a high standard for innovative approaches to infill development in order to minimize potential adverse impacts to established neighborhoods while promoting new economic vitality for under-utilized properties.**

**Objectives:**

- Identify the best opportunities for infill development and review land use patterns, existing zoning and financing programs to determine the most appropriate measures to ensure infill residential development occurs in harmony with surrounding property uses.
- Consider establishing an infill regulation, to retain more public control in assuring new investment is respective and representative of the surrounding environment.
- Better control of multifamily development to ensure development is high in quality/is beneficial.

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# V. Existing Land Use & Development Potential

## A. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the existing land use patterns of the City is an important component to the Plan of Conservation and Development. Knowledge of where specific types of uses are located, particularly on a parcel basis, can help local officials identify areas that may have potential for economic development or open space protection.

## B. LAND USE PATTERNS

The City of Meriden has a total area of approximately 15,360 acres or 24 square miles. Using the City's land use categories, a current digital land use map of Meriden was utilized. The existing digital base map and corresponding property records from the assessor's database, resulted in a detailed *Existing Land Use Map* and inventory for all parcels within the City was compiled.

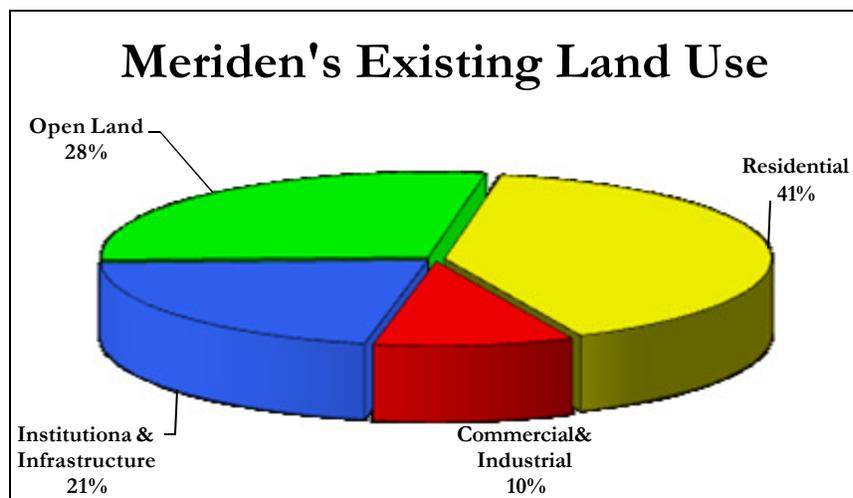


Table V-1 on the following page provides a more detailed breakout of the existing land uses in the City, which are also illustrated on the map titled *Existing Land Use*. Although it is recognized that some differences in inventory methodology and categorization of land uses between 1981 and 2007 exist, it is helpful to compare land use characteristics between decades in order to identify general trends in land development.

**Table V-1  
Meriden 2007 POCD Existing Land Use**

<b>Residential</b>			<b>Institutional / Infrastructure</b>		
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Residential: Single Family	5,097.38	33.2%	Public Service	134.33	0.87%
Residential: Two Family	375.23	2.4%	Public Infrastructure	216.95	1.41%
Residential: Three Family	124.44	0.8%	Educational Facilities	256.68	1.67%
Residential: Multi-Family	599.38	3.9%	Private Institutional	482.19	3.14%
Residential: Trailer Park	0.79	0.0%	Misc. State Property	111.95	0.73%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>6,197.21</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	ROW*	2,101.55	13.68%
<b>Commercial</b>			<b>Total: 3,303.65 21.5%</b>		
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Open Land**</b>		
Commercial: Automotive	71.46	0.5%	<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Commercial: General	123.55	0.8%	Open Space: Developed Park	438.15	2.9%
Commercial: Office	322.51	2.1%	Open Space: Natural Area	1,712.87	11.2%
Commercial: Retail & Food Service	307.16	2.0%	Open Space: Private / Semi-Private	53.40	0.3%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>824.68</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	Agricultural	398.98	2.6%
<b>Industrial</b>			Vacant Land	1,190.77	7.8%
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	Municipal: Vacant Land	538.92	3.5%
Industrial: Quarry / Gravel Processing	201.74	1.3%	<b>Total:</b>	<b>4,333.09</b>	<b>28.2%</b>
Industrial: Warehouse/Storage	142.31	0.9%	<b>Total Acreage of City: 15,360</b>		
Industrial: Manufacturing	357.32	2.3%	* Includes Public, Private, and Rail ROWs.		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>701.37</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	**Open Land includes open space and other undeveloped land categories.		

**The top three land use categories in 2007 are Residential at 40.4%, Open Land at 28.3%, and Institutional /Infrastructure at 21.4%.**

**The City has 2,204.5 acres designated as open space, comprised of 1,712.9 acres of natural areas, 438.2 acres of developed parks, and 53.4 acres of private open space.**

Because of the differences in source data and methodology, we hesitate to quote specific growth statistics based on the 1981 and 2007 studies, which may or may not be directly comparable. Nevertheless, Meriden has continued to develop and mature as a community in all respects particularly in the industrial, commercial, and residential categories, which experienced growth of 75%, 55%, and 29% while undeveloped lands experienced a decrease of 48%. The top three land use categories in 2007 are Residential at 40.4%, Open Land at 28.2%, and Institutional /Infrastructure at 21.5%. In total, approximately 72% of the land within the City is in a developed category (Table V-1).

**Open Land**

The City has 2,204.5 acres designated as open space, comprised of 1,712.9 acres of natural areas, 438.2 acres of developed parks, and 53.4 acres of private open space. The open space category represents land used for active and passive recreation and illustrates areas generally protected from future development. At 14.3% of the City's area it exceeds the States' goal of 11% for Open Space for municipalities.

As stated before, the declining amount of vacant land in the City indicates that future growth, especially in core areas of the City, will likely involve "infill" development projects to fill in the gaps of the existing land use pattern. In addition, it is likely that many of the new commercial

developments that will occur in Meriden over the decade or so are likely to involve redevelopment projects, or conversion of old and abandoned land uses and brownfields into new redefined development projects. Evidence of this trend can already be seen with the City focusing on redevelopment for the Hub Site, the Undercliff Property, Factory H, the VMMC (former hospital) site and land assemblage and “infill” of the areas around the Chamberlain Highway-Kensington Avenue corridor. The distribution of the City’s remaining vacant land is illustrated on the map titled *Vacant and Agricultural Land*.

...the declining amount of vacant land in the City indicates that future growth especially in core areas of the City will likely involve “infill” development projects to fill in the gaps of the existing land use pattern.

### **Commercial / Industrial**

From 1981 to 2007 commercial land and industrial land both experienced significant growth of 57% (from 525 to 825 acres) and 75.3% (from 400 to 701 acres) respectively. Despite this growth over the last several decades, for a city of Meriden’s size and maturity, a relatively small percentage of land (1,516.7 acres or 9.9% of the total land area) is categorized as a commercial or industrial use. In comparison, the percentage of land used for commercial or industrial purposes in some other communities are: New Haven, 11%; North Haven, 12%; West Haven, 12%; Milford 14.9%; East Hartford, 13.9%; Bristol, 7.2%; and Hamden, with only 5.6%<sup>3</sup>. Commercial land is densely clustered in both the main east/west (East/West Main St.) and north/south (Colony Road and Research Parkway) transportation corridors, creating the perception that the City is much more commercially and industrially developed than in fact it is. Of all the parcels with frontage along the 4.1 mile stretch of Main Street from Pomeroy Avenue to Allen Avenue, parcels with a commercial or industrial use account for over 67% of the total land.

... for a city of Meriden’s size and maturity, a relatively small percentage of land (1,516.7 acres or 9.9% of the total land area) is categorized as a commercial or industrial use.

### **Institutional / Infrastructure**

Meriden has 3,303.65 acres or 21.5% of its land categorized as institutional/infrastructure. Of the 3,303.6 acres in this category, 2,101.6 acres or 13.7% of all land in Meriden is classified as right-of-ways (ROWs). A majority of the land classified as ROWs in Meriden is a result of Interstate 91, Interstate 691, and Route 15 bisecting the City. The remaining 1,202 acres contain the municipal, educational, medical, religious, fraternal, and other non-profit service institutions in the City.

### **Residential**

Historically, Meriden has been a residential community, consisting largely of low density single family residential units. In fact, in 2007 single family residences comprise over 82% of all residential land. The City has been experiencing significant growth in the residential land use category over the last few decades. From 1981 to 2007 residential land use grew by 29% from 4,800 acres to 6,197 acres. Based on the 2000 Census indication that the City’s population is growing, it is reasonable to expect that this current land use pattern and trend will continue in the City. In addition, it is reasonable

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that these percentages were taken from each community’s respective Plans of Conservation and Development, and thus were calculated at different points in time. For example, Bristol’s percentage is from 1998, Hamden’s is from 2002, and Meriden’s is from 2007.

to expect that the residential land uses will expand in the coming years in order to accommodate this expected growth. Any expansion of residential uses in Meriden will most likely occur on the remaining vacant and underdeveloped residential land.

### **C. ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY**

As a component of the Meriden Plan of Conservation and Development, an analysis was conducted assessing the development potential for the City. This analysis reviewed vacant and agricultural land zoned for residential and non-residential uses for its physical capacity to support new or expanded growth. This growth is expressed in terms of potential dwelling units for vacant land areas zoned for residential use and total acreage for land areas zoned for non-residential use. In addition to privately owned vacant land, the City of Meriden has been acquiring blighted properties throughout the City for the purpose of blight removal and creating redevelopment opportunities. The blighted properties available for sale and underdeveloped residential parcels are also included in this analysis. Underdeveloped parcels for this analysis have been defined as residentially zoned parcels that are greater than three times the minimum lot size by zone.

In addition, an estimate of the net additional dwelling units that could be created through redevelopment of currently built parcels in the C-1, C-2, R-3 and R-4 zones is provided.

The development capacity calculated represents a reasonable scenario of growth but not an absolute build-out of every parcel in Meriden to a maximum density.

#### **Land Analysis**

As illustrated in Table V-2, 7.8% of the City is classified as private Vacant Land. An additional 2.6% is classified as agricultural and as stated earlier is included in the development potential analysis. Visualizing the distribution of these vacant and agricultural parcels (see Vacant and Agricultural Land map) is important in order to gain an understanding of *where* future development on raw vacant land can be accommodated. By combining the zoning boundaries with the vacant and agricultural land through overlays, a detailed understanding can be gained on *what* type of development can be produced under existing regulations. The map titled *Vacant & Agricultural Land* illustrates the relationship between existing zoning and the remaining vacant and agricultural parcels in the City and their distribution is summarized in Table V-2.

**Table V-2  
Vacant & Agricultural**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Acres within Zone District (acres)</b>	<b>Vacant &amp; Agricultural Land (acres)</b>	<b>Percent of Zone Vacant &amp; Agricultural</b>	<b>% of Total Vacant &amp; Agricultural Land</b>
C-1/C-1A	243.5	10.3	4.2%	0.6%
C-2	360.2	53.3	14.8%	3.4%
C-3	571.3	28.8	5.0%	1.8%
C-4	16.5	0.5	3.1%	0.0%
M-1	281.6	38.8	13.8%	2.4%
M-2	247.8	25.8	10.4%	1.6%
M-3	643.8	38.7	6.0%	2.4%
M-4	322.7	71.6	22.2%	4.5%
NCDD	24.9	0.4	1.5%	0.0%
PDD	505.8	29.8	5.9%	1.9%
PEOD	26.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0%
PRD	295.5	8.9	3.0%	0.6%
R-1	5,188.4	354.4	6.8%	22.3%
R-2	863.8	40.2	4.6%	2.5%
R-3	658.1	20.5	3.1%	1.3%
R-4	106.8	4.5	4.2%	0.3%
R-R	3,546.7	613.8	17.3%	38.6%
RDD	289.1	50.1	17.3%	3.2%
S-R	1,167.9	199.6	17.1%	12.6%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>15,360</b>	<b>1,589.7</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Residential Development Capacity**

In order to calculate the development capacity of residentially zoned land, each parcel was assessed as to its capacity to accommodate new development based on the presence of development constraints. For the purposes of this analysis, development constraints are defined as wetlands, steep slopes in excess of 20%, water features, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year floodplain. Areas that contain development constraints were subtracted out from the gross land area, yielding a net developable land area. For those parcels that are large enough to be subdivided (greater than two times the minimum lot size as defined by zoning), an additional deduction of 20% of the total parcel size was factored in to account for the potentially required internal roadways. Finally, the minimum lot size of the underlying zone is applied to the remaining net developable land yielding an approximation of potential residential dwelling units. Vacant parcels with a net buildable area of less than one-half the minimum lot size but have a gross area greater than or equal to the minimum lot size were included for potential dwelling units. The results of this analysis are summarized in Table V-3.

Table V-3 indicates that most of the potential detached units are located in the R-1 District (over 60% of potential units in the SF zones). Table V-3 indicates that only about 9% of total potential units are located in the R-R (very low density) District.

Table V-3								
Residential Development Potential								
Under Existing Zoning Regulations								
Zone	Gross Raw Vacant Land (Acres) <sup>(1)</sup> (2)	Gross Under-developed Residential Lots (Acres)	Constrained Land (Acres)	Net Buildable Land (Acres) <sup>(2)</sup>	Dwelling Units From Existing Vacant Building Lots	Dwelling Units From Raw Vacant Land	Dwelling Units Under-developed Lots	Total Potential Dwelling Units
R-R	555.1	517.47	400.8	671.8	76	277	201	554
S-R	187.4	286	154.1	319.3	20	296	319	635
R-1	336.1	901.44	517.6	719.9	243	608	993	1,844
R-2 <sup>(3)</sup>	33	114.7	62.2	85.5	168	113	335	616
R-3 <sup>(4)</sup>	17.1	39.9	21.9	35.1	11	192	103	306
In the R-3 zone, 25% of single, two, and three family lots were analyzed for redevelopment potential as multi-								144
R-4	4.6	0	0.8	3.8	0	57	0	57
In the R-4 zone, 25% of single, two, and three family lots were analyzed for redevelopment potential as multi-								52
PDD	43.4	0	29.1	14.3	225	0	0	225
<b>Residential Zone Subtotal:</b>	<b>1,176.7</b>	<b>1,859.5</b>	<b>1,186.5</b>	<b>1,835.4</b>	<b>743.0</b>	<b>1,543.0</b>	<b>1,951.0</b>	<b>4,433</b>
C-1 <sup>(5)</sup>	24.5	----	15.5	9.1	13	747	----	760
In the C-1 zone, 25% of single, two, and three family lots were analyzed for redevelopment potential as multi-								103
C-2 <sup>(5)</sup>	84	----	63.5	20.5	9	583		592
In the C-2 zone, 25% of single, two, and three family lots in the R-4 zone were analyzed for redevelopment								115
<b>Commercial Zone Subtotal:</b>	<b>108.5</b>		<b>79.0</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>1,330.0</b>		<b>1,570</b>
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>1,176.7</b>	<b>1,859.5</b>	<b>1,186.5</b>	<b>1,835.4</b>	<b>765.0</b>	<b>1,543.0</b>	<b>1,951.0</b>	<b>6,003</b>
<sup>(1)</sup> Includes privately owned vacant land, municipally owned vacant land for sale, and agricultural land.								
<sup>(2)</sup> Vacant land from existing vacant building lots on the ground not included in this total.								
<sup>(3)</sup> Dwelling units based on 48 building lots with 2.5 units per lot.								
<sup>(4)</sup> Calculation of dwelling units based on a density of 1 unit / 2,500 sqf of lot area.								
<sup>(5)</sup> Under-utilized parcels in C-1 (4,000sqf) and C-2 (8,000 sqf) zones are calculated as single family building lots in this analysis.								
General Note: Complete residential redevelopment potential is not shown in this table.								

### Residential Development Potential

The results of the residential development potential analysis indicate that, based upon existing zoning, approximately 4,433 additional dwelling units potentially could be built within the City's residential zones and an additional 1,570 dwelling units within the commercial zones yielding a total of 6,003 units. This represents an approximate 23.8% increase over the

25,131 existing dwelling units calculated during the 2000 census. Table V-4 and the *Potential Dwelling Units by Planning Sector* map illustrates the distribution of the dwelling units calculated in this analysis according to their respective planning sector.

<b>Table V-4</b>			
<b>Potential Dwelling Units By Sector</b>			
<b>Planning Sector</b>	<b>Total Potential Dwelling Units</b>	<b>Total Area (acres)</b>	<b>Total Potential Dwelling Unit Density (new units/acre)</b>
Central	1,243	955.3	1.30
North End	1,235	1,947.1	0.63
South Central	678	1,795.9	0.38
South	285	812.7	0.35
East	1,325	4,058.1	0.33
West	739	2,987.5	0.25
North East	498	2,804.0	0.18
<b>Total:</b>	<b>6,003</b>	<b>15,361</b>	<b>0.39</b>

An interesting observation that can be drawn from the *Potential Dwelling Units* map is that greatest number of potential dwelling units are found in the East Sector. Although the East Sector has the greatest number of units it does not have the greatest density. In fact, at a density of 0.33 units/acre, it has a potential density lower than the City average of 0.39 units/acre. However, this is not surprising because this sector has the greatest area of all the planning sectors and also contains a large amount of the City's vacant or agricultural land. The Central and North End Sectors have the second and third largest number of potential units at 1,243 and 1,235 and the greatest overall densities 1.30 and 0.63 units/acre. These three sectors can expect the greatest amount of future residential development.

It is important to note that these results come with the caveat that due to the many variables involved in land development, these numbers are speculative as the factors that permit land to be developed may change. One important factor is the possibility of regulatory changes on the development of land. These changes could manifest in zoning changes, which could place fewer or greater restrictions on the buildable area of a parcel. In addition, vacant land can be purchased for open space, which would obviously remove acreage from the developable land inventory. Also, market factors could drive land values to increase to a level that would stimulate assembly and redevelopment of developed lots to their maximum dwelling unit yield which would be greater than shown in the tables, particularly for multifamily units. The development potential totals given here are intended to indicate a relative order of magnitude estimate and will likely change over time.

Due to the limited amount of land, it is clear that reuse, redevelopment, and assembling of properties will play an increasingly critical role in the City's future development.

It is in the City's best interest to remain flexible in its regulations so that the ever changing building forms required by businesses can be accommodated while respecting traditional neighborhood values.

### Non-Residential Development Capacity

When describing non-residential development capacity, the distribution of the remaining vacant land within these zones is an important factor in City-wide planning. In Meriden, it becomes increasingly important due to the limited amount of remaining developable vacant land zoned for non-residential use. Therefore, for purposes of this Plan of Conservation and Development Update, non-residential development capacity is evaluated by the distribution of the remaining vacant parcels zoned for non-residential use. The distribution is illustrated on the map titled *Vacant & Agricultural Lands Zoned for Non-Residential Use* and is tabulated in Table V-5.

The City has a limited amount of available land for development in commercial zones (49.1 net acres / est. 641,639 sq. ft. of building space), industrial zones (97.7 net acres / est. 851,162 sq. ft. of building space), and planned development districts (37.6 net acres / est. 491,357 sq. ft. of building space). The majority of this land is in the form of relatively small (1 acre or less) parcels scattered throughout the City with a significant number of them located along the main arterials feeding the City center. The most notable cluster of larger parcels is located along Research Parkway. Due to the limited amount of land, it is clear that reuse, redevelopment and assemblage of properties will play an increasingly critical role in the City's future development. Studies have shown that the life cycle

of commercial buildings continues to shrink, with 25 to 40 years of use as the current range. As buildings become obsolete they will be adapted to new uses or replaced by contemporary structures. The locational attributes of easy access and infrastructure remain important to the continued viability of the non-residential zones throughout Meriden. The remaining vacant land in these zones will play a role in reshaping parcels to accommodate expansions of existing business or the creation of new development sites. It is in the City's best interest to remain flexible in its regulations so that the ever changing building forms required by businesses can be accommodated while respecting traditional neighborhood values.

### Population and Housing Unit Density

Based upon the 2005 estimated population for the City of Meriden from the U.S. Census Bureau and Meriden's land area of 24 square miles, the City has a population density of 2,517 persons per square mile. While this figure is substantially higher than the State of Connecticut's population density of 722.5 persons per square mile, it is very similar to the population density of Bristol (2,315.2), East Hartford (2,731.8) and Manchester (2,035.6), three communities with similar population levels and development patterns as Meriden. However, Meriden is far less dense than Connecticut's larger cities such as Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford, which have population densities ranging from roughly 6,600 to 8,700 persons per square mile. Thus, for a community of approximately 60,000 people, Meriden is not overly dense from a population standpoint.

Zone	Gross Raw Vacant Land (Acres)	Const. Land (Acres)	Net Buildable Land (Acres)	Potential Building Ground Floor Area (SQF)*
C-1	12.2	3.4	8.8	114,998
C-2	80.3	60.2	20.1	262,667
C-3	33.9	15.0	18.9	246,985
C-4	1.1	0.1	1.0	13,068
NCDD	0.4	0.1	0.3	3,920
<b>Commercial Zone Subtotal:</b>	<b>127.9</b>	<b>78.8</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>641,639</b>
M-1	38.8	10.4	28.4	247,421
M-2	25.8	10.0	15.8	137,650
M-3	39.1	16.0	23.1	201,247
M-4	71.6	41.2	30.4	264,845
<b>Industrial Zone Subtotal:</b>	<b>175.3</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>97.7</b>	<b>851,162</b>
RDD	50.1	12.5	37.6	491,357
PEOD	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
<b>Planned Dev. Districts Subtotal:</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>491,357</b>
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>353.3</b>	<b>168.9</b>	<b>184.4</b>	<b>1,984,158</b>

\* Floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.3 was used for the commercial zones and planned districts while 0.2 was used for the industrial zones.

In terms of housing unit density, Meriden's estimated 2005 housing unit total of 25,131 units results in an overall housing density of 1.64 housing units per acre. Once again, this density is in line with the densities of Bristol (1.58), East Hartford (1.85) and Manchester (1.43). Similar to the population density figures, Meriden's housing density is far below that of Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford, which range from 4.36 to 5.31 units per acre. Thus, residential development density in Meriden appears to be quite standard for a city of its size and composition.

To assess the impact of the build-out estimate, the estimated addition of 6,003 housing units are added to the current housing unit count of 25,131 units resulting in 31,134 units. This increases the housing unit density to 2.03 units per acre. Applying the current household size of 2.4 persons per unit to the 31,134 units yields a City population of 74,721 and a population density of 3,113 persons per square mile.

#### **D. CONCLUSIONS**

- The major land use category in Meriden is residential with 40.4% of the land committed to this use. Single family housing comprises 82% of the residential acreage.
- The combined area currently in use for commercial and industrial purposes is 9.9% of the City's acreage. This percentage is less than would be expected given Meriden's size and maturity. A 12% to 15% use factor is more typical for cities Meriden's age and size. Currently, 19.7% of the land area in Meriden is zoned for commercial and industrial purposes with some additional potential in the mixed use PDD zone.
- Commercial land is clustered along major transportation corridors, creating the perception that Meriden is much more commercially and industrially developed than in fact it is.
- Much of Meriden's vacant land is located in low-density residential zones.
- The lack of a sizeable inventory of raw vacant land in commercial and industrial zones indicates that much of Meriden's future development activity will be a combination of infill development, redevelopment and revitalization projects.
- Under existing zoning there exists the potential for 6,003 new dwelling units to be built in the City.
- The greatest amount of potential residential growth will occur in the East, Central, and North End Planning Sectors.
- A total of 184.4 net buildable acres of non-residential land remains under existing zoning throughout the City. It is important to note

**The combined area currently in use for commercial and industrial purposes is 9.9% of the City's acreage. A 12% to 15% use factor is more typical for cities Meriden's age and size.**

**Much of Meriden's vacant land is located in low-density residential zones.**

**...much of Meriden's future development activity will be a combination of infill development, redevelopment and revitalization projects.**

**The greatest amount of potential residential growth will occur in the East, Central, and North End Planning Sectors.**

that this only includes net buildable from raw vacant land and not redevelopment and reuse sites. Slightly under 2 million square feet of commercial or industrial space could be built on this acreage.

- In terms of population and housing unit density, Meriden is very similar to other Connecticut communities of roughly the same size, and given its number of residents is not overly dense.
- To maintain a desired balance in the housing stock, the Very Low Density Residential zoning districts should be increased.

## VI. *Economic Development*

### A. CONNECTICUT, NEW HAVEN LABOR MARKET AREA AND MERIDEN ECONOMIES

During the past ten years, the Connecticut economy has provided most residents with a high economic standard of living, enabled by one of the highest per capita income levels in the United States.

#### **Population Changes:**

From July of 2000 through July of 2006, the population of Connecticut grew by only 2.7%, adding 92,270 people. Over the same time period the population of the New Haven LMA grew by only 2.1%, adding just 12,000 people, and actually had a small population loss between 2005 and 2006. The New Haven LMA, which accounted for 16.8% of the State's population in 2000, recorded 13.0% of the State's population growth between 2000 and 2006. By comparison, the population of Meriden grew by 1,160 people (2.0%), and accounted for 9.7% of the population growth in the New Haven LMA between 2000 and 2006.

#### **Labor Force**

On the statewide level, despite the low rate of population growth and the aging of Connecticut's population, the total labor force increased in size between 2000 and 2006. The state added 107,404 workers to its labor force (a 6.2% increase) while only adding 92,270 people to its population total. These seemingly contradictory figures can be explained to a certain degree by the fact that many older workers are choosing to remain in the workforce well past the traditional age range for retirement, and that many immigrants entering the state are of working age. Similarly, the New Haven Labor Market Area had an increase of 14,666 workers between 2000 and 2005, while only adding 13,742 people to the population total. The resident labor force of Meriden only increased by 270 workers (0.9%) between 2000 and 2006.

**The City of Meriden's workforce is predominantly locally-based, with two-thirds of identified workers over the age of 16 employed in the New Haven-Meriden Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).**

#### **Median Household Income**

Median household income data for both 2000 and 2007 was examined for both the City of Meriden and 11 surrounding communities. This data is summarized in Table VI-1.

The income data shows that over the past seven years, median household income in the towns of Berlin, Prospect and Durham have increased substantially. Most of the communities have median household incomes that fall between \$64,000 and \$84,000; Durham and Cheshire form the high end, with median incomes over \$90,000. Waterbury, Meriden and Middletown form the low end of the area in terms of income. However, Waterbury has by far the lowest median household income at \$37,000; this

**TABLE VI-1**  
**Median Household Income by Community, 2000-2007**

Municipality	MHI, 2007	MHI, 2000	% Change
Durham	\$94,691	\$78,113	21.2%
Cheshire	\$91,463	\$79,908	14.5%
Berlin	\$83,698	\$67,744	23.6%
Prospect	\$83,247	\$67,984	22.5%
Southington	\$72,117	\$60,590	19.0%
Wolcott	\$68,925	\$61,101	12.8%
Cromwell	\$68,750	\$60,644	13.4%
Wallingford	\$67,751	\$57,842	17.1%
Middlefield	\$64,163	\$59,415	8.0%
Middletown	\$54,870	\$47,933	14.5%
<b>Meriden</b>	<b>\$47,940</b>	<b>\$43,499</b>	<b>10.2%</b>
Waterbury	\$37,000	\$34,485	7.3%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

....Meriden’s population is second to last within the 12 communities in terms of advanced educational attainment, on a percentage basis.

income level is only approximately 40% of the income level in communities such as Durham and Cheshire.

**Educational Attainment of the Adult Population**

Claritas data for 2007 regarding educational attainment for the population age 25 and older was examined for the same communities studied for median household income. The data is summarized in Table VI-2.

As Table VI-2 shows, the communities with the highest percentage of adults with at least a four-year college degree generally have the highest median household incomes as shown in Table VI-1. Once again, similar to the income statistics in Table VI-1, the spread between communities at either end of the spectrum is substantial. While over 48% of Cheshire’s age 25 and older population has at least a bachelor’s degree, this figure is only 13.7% in Waterbury. Similar to median household income, Meriden’s population is second to last within the 12 communities in terms of advanced educational attainment, on a percentage basis.

**TABLE VI-2  
Educational Attainment by  
Community, 2007  
Population Age 25+**

Municipality	BA/BS or Higher	Less Than HS Diploma
Cheshire	48.1%	7.5%
Durham	39.2%	8.0%
Cromwell	33.6%	12.9%
Berlin	31.3%	12.7%
Middletown	30.9%	16.2%
Wallingford	29.0%	13.6%
Southington	27.4%	13.9%
Middlefield	26.5%	12.9%
Prospect	22.9%	12.8%
Wolcott	19.4%	12.1%
<b>Meriden</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>22.8%</b>
Waterbury	13.7%	28.2%

Source: Claritas, Inc.

**B. MERIDEN’S ECONOMIC BASE**

**Existing Characteristics of Meriden’s Employment Base**

The changes in the size and composition of a community’s employment base over time are good indicators of that community’s economic health. Data from the State of Connecticut Department of Labor from 2005 indicates that Meriden’s economy contains over 1,300 businesses that provide a broad variety of goods and services, employing over 25,000 people. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Zip Code Business Patterns for 2004 indicates that over 68% of businesses in Meriden have fewer than 10 employees, while 24.3% had between 10 and 49 employees, and only 7.1% had 50 or more employees. While Meriden has several high-profile businesses that employ several hundred people each, the City’s economy is very much centered around small businesses.

In 2000, over 79% of the quantified jobs in Meriden were within the “service producing” sector of the economy and the balance in the “goods producing” sector; by 2005, this percentage has increased to slightly over 81%.

**C. CHANGING CHARACTERISTICS OF MERIDEN’S EMPLOYMENT BASE**

Between 1995 and 2005, Meriden’s economy experienced notable fluctuations in employment levels. From 1995 to 2000, employment levels in Meriden increased significantly by 2,430 jobs (10.0%). Most of this increase in employment was concentrated in the services and construction sectors. However, the recession of 2000 to 2003 hit Meriden particularly hard, causing a decrease in employment of 2,736 jobs between 2000 and 2003 and wiping out all of the employment gains made during the economic expansion of the late 1990s.

While Meriden has several high-profile businesses that employ several hundred people each, the City’s economy is very much centered around small businesses.

Between 1995 and 2005, Meriden’s economy experienced notable fluctuations in employment levels.



**Meriden Executive Park  
Offices**



**Research Parkway Offices**

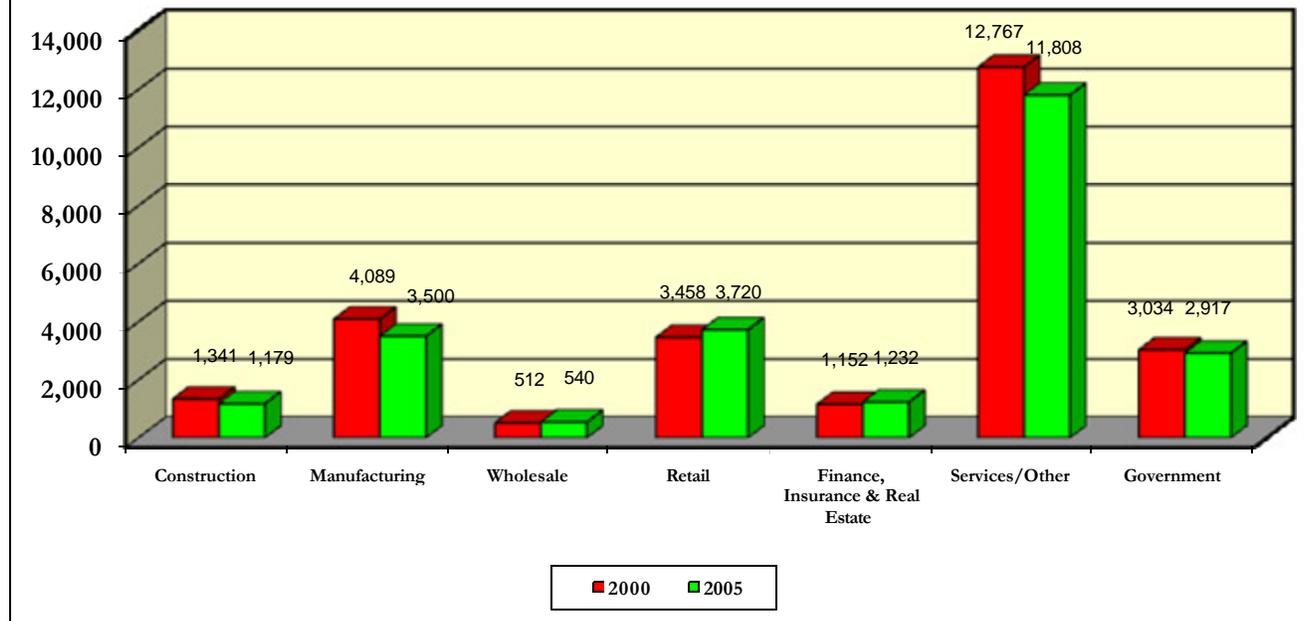


**Downtown Meriden**

Between 2003 and 2005, Meriden's employment base rebounded from the recession and grew by a modest 4.6%. This employment rebound was fueled primarily by increases in the retail, health care, administrative and waste management, and accommodation and food service sectors. Meriden's goods producing sector continued to decline over this period.

In comparison, employment in Connecticut during the same period grew by only 1.1%, and employment in the seventeen-town New Haven Labor Market Area, which includes Meriden, grew by only 1.1%. Thus, Meriden's economic recovery from the last recession occurred at a much faster rate than in both the LMA and the State as a whole. The composition of Meriden's employment base also experienced fluctuations between 2000 and 2005. The percent of jobs in the goods producing sector (construction and manufacturing) in 2000 was 20.5%, but decreased to 18.7% in 2005. The trade sector (wholesale and retail) saw its percent of total jobs climb from 15.0% in 2000 to 17.0% in 2005. The FIRE sector (finance, insurance and real estate) increased from 4.3% of the total jobs in Meriden in 2000 to 4.9% in 2005, while other services actually decreased from 48.2% in 2000 to 47.1% in 2005. Finally, the government sector remained virtually unchanged from 11.5% in 2000 to 11.6% in 2005. The chart on the following page illustrates the changes in the composition of Meriden's employment base from 2000 to 2005.

## Employment by Industry Sector, 2000-2005 City of Meriden



### D. MERIDEN'S RESIDENT LABOR FORCE

**...Meriden produces 5,701 more workers than the City employs within its borders.**

In 2005, the labor force generated by Meriden residents numbered 30,768 people. This compares to 25,067 persons employed within Meriden. In 2005, Meriden's resident labor force exceeded the number of jobs located in the City by 22.7%, meaning that Meriden produces 5,701 more workers than the City employs within its borders. Meriden's resident labor force represented 10.2% of the total labor force in the New Haven Labor Market Area in 2005. Table VI-3 describes the employment characteristics of Meriden's economy relative to the six adjacent communities. Note that each municipality in the immediate vicinity of Meriden has a unique distribution of labor.

**TABLE VI-3  
MERIDEN'S IMMEDIATE MARKET AREA**

**Employment by Town - 2005**

	<b>Berlin</b>	<b>Cheshire</b>	<b>Meriden</b>	<b>Middlefield</b>	<b>Middletown</b>	<b>Southington</b>	<b>Wallingford</b>
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>11,389</b>	<b>14,876</b>	<b>25,067</b>	<b>1,741</b>	<b>30,563</b>	<b>15,189</b>	<b>27,025</b>
<b>Goods Producing</b>	<b>2,828</b>	<b>3,657</b>	<b>4,679</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>5,099</b>	<b>2,904</b>	<b>6,170</b>
Mining	0	0	*	0	0	0	0
Construction	618	537	1,179	252	725	842	883
Manufacturing	2,210	3,120	3,500	683	4,374	2,062	5,287
<b>Service Producing</b>	<b>5,968</b>	<b>10,475</b>	<b>20,217</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>24,127</b>	<b>9,765</b>	<b>20,355</b>
Utilities	*	*	*	0	*	0	*
Retail Trade	1,270	1,529	3,720	56	1,845	2,119	2,945
Wholesale Trade	645	1,657	540	45	511	622	1,809
Trans. & Warehousing	167	361	578	*	455	378	490
Information	*	72	1,593	*	424	110	1,005
FIRE	140	903	1,232	23	6,376	101	1,341
Professional and Technical	528	958	777	52	996	424	1,269
Mgmt. Of Companies	84	*	282	*	119	*	126
Admin. & Waste Management	760	519	2,049	*	1,299	472	1,122
Education	122	*	245	*	*	*	*
Health Care/Social Assistance	521	1,125	4,173	47	5,209	1,818	4,169
Arts, Entertainment & Rec.	180	144	*	*	*	*	458
Accommodation & Food Service	436	473	1,389	38	987	1,710	1,614
Other Services	348	464	722	41	793	643	1,137
Government	767	2,270	2,917	147	5,113	1,368	2,870
<b>Nonclassified</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Farm Employment</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>

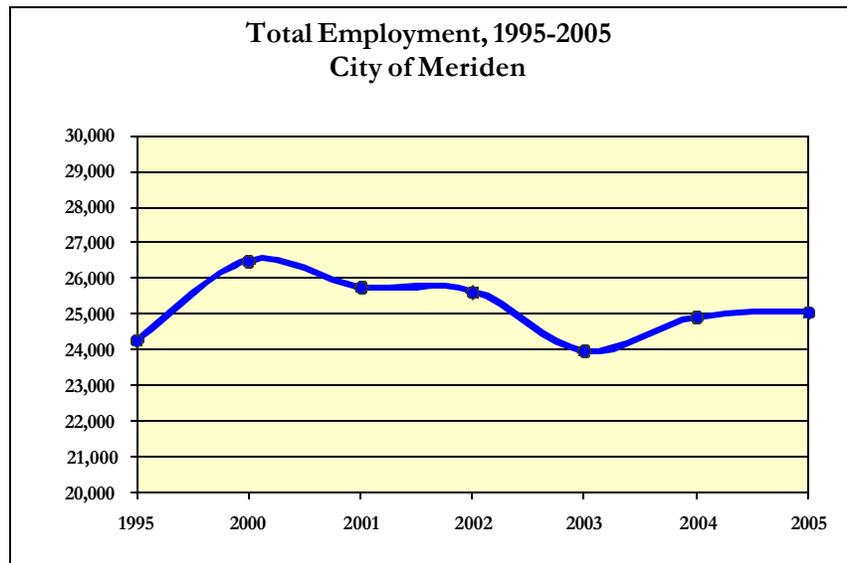
\*Disclosure provisions of Connecticut's Unemployment Insurance Law prohibit the release of figures which tend to reveal data reported by individual firms

Source: CT Dept. of Labor, QCEW Program Data, 2005.

Given Meriden's larger population, one would expect to find more jobs located in the City than in the smaller surrounding communities. However, Middletown, which has over 12,200 fewer people than Meriden, has almost 5,500 more jobs and Wallingford, which has roughly 15,000 fewer people than Meriden, has almost 2,000 more jobs than Meriden. Middletown's high number of FIRE jobs is mainly attributable to the presence of Aetna.

Although Meriden has significant retail development along East Main Street, Broad Street, and the Westfield Shoppingtown mall, as well as the successful Research Parkway area and the Midstate Medical Center, the City is still a predominantly residential community. While Wallingford and Middletown also have significant residential development, their non-residential land uses are generally of a higher intensity than those in Meriden and require more workers to be employed. Only 9.9% of Meriden's land area is devoted to commercial or industrial use.

**.... Meriden is at a distinct disadvantage in terms of land and building inventory for economic development.**



East Hartford, Milford and West Haven, three communities of a similar size as Meriden, have anywhere from 12% to 15% of their land in commercial or industrial use. North Haven, which has a well-developed commercial and industrial base, has 12% of its land used for commercial or industrial development. The City of New Haven, even with the dominating presence of institutional land uses including four colleges, two hospitals, courthouses and government offices, still has 11% of its land used for industrial or commercial purposes. With such a differential between Meriden and these other example communities in terms of the percentage of each municipality's land utilized for industrial and commercial purposes, Meriden is at a distinct disadvantage in terms of land and building inventory for economic development.

### Meriden's Grand List

The need for Meriden to diversify its tax base is very evident from an analysis of the City's Grand List. The 2006 total real property Grand List had a value of \$3,251,850,410, of which 77.1% was residential and apartments. Commercial real property accounted for 17.3% of the Grand List, while industrial real property only accounted for 5.0% of the Grand List. The remaining 0.6% was composed of public utilities, vacant land and use assessments. With such a high concentration of the City's real property value tied into residential properties, any increase in municipal expenditures for general government services and education is felt acutely by the average City homeowner in the form of property taxes.

The Westfield Meriden Shoppingtown is the largest taxpayer in Meriden by a significant margin. The mall has a net assessment of approximately \$142.6 million; the next largest taxpayer, Computer Sciences Corporation, has a net assessment of only \$47.9 million. Connecticut Light & Power is next with a net assessment of \$32.1 million, followed by Urstadt Biddle, owners of the Townline Square shopping plaza, at \$23.4 million. Rounding out the top taxpayers are Radio Frequency Systems, Inc., Yankee Gas, Carabetta Enterprises, Inc., Newberry Village Development, LLC, and Fusco-Meriden Associates Limited Partnership.

**The 2006 total real property Grand List had a value of \$3,251,850,410, of which 77.1% was residential and apartments.**

It is important to note that the net assessment values presented in the previous paragraph represent both real and personal property assessments for each taxpaying entity. For example, while Computer Sciences Corporation has a net assessment of \$47.9 million, only \$10.2 million is in the form of real property. The remaining \$37.7 million of assessed value is from business equipment, which in the case of Computer Sciences Corporation includes very sophisticated and expensive information technology equipment.

## E. RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRENDS IN MERIDEN

### Research Parkway

The Research Parkway area has been the epicenter of much of Meriden's economic growth during the past decade. Table VI-4 lists the firms that have either moved into Research Parkway area facilities or expanded existing space during the past five years, along with the industry sector they represent.

These businesses have added several hundred employees to the area and have occupied over 500,000 square feet of commercial space.

### East Main Street

While the additions to the Research Parkway area have been impressive, economic development in Meriden over the past five years has not been limited to this area alone. Retail and service sector businesses have continued to grow along East Main Street, particularly the area around the I-91 Exit 16 interchange.

### South Broad Street

The South Broad Street area has been enhanced with renovations at the Townline Plaza, the JPress Building and Robert's Dodge dealership. New fast food restaurants have opened along South Broad Street, and a new retail plaza named Silver Commons at 500 South Broad Street will be completed soon. The office/industrial complex at 500 South Broad Street has nearly reached full occupancy as well, with Response Insurance Group expanding to encompass 65,000 square feet of space and growing from 50 employees to 200 employees.

### West Main Street

A wireless Internet network (WiFi) has been created in this portion of Downtown Meriden, with service starting at the corner of West Main Street and Colony Street and extending 1,000 feet to the north and the west. Middlesex Community College, located at 55 West Main Street, brings over 600 students into the Downtown and continues to expand its operations. Several mixed use projects combining ground floor retail and office space and upper-story residential units have either been completed or are in the planning stage. West Main Street has also been targeted as an arts district in the City Center Initiative.

**The Research Parkway area has been the epicenter of much of Meriden's economic growth during this decade.**

<b>TABLE VI-4 Research Parkway Area, New/Expanded Firms, 2002-2007</b>
<b>Aplicare, Inc.</b> – 550 Research Parkway (Biotech)
<b>J&amp;J TriState Delivery</b> – 550 Research Parkway (Warehouse/Distribution)
<b>Infinity Warehouse and Distribution</b> – 550 Research Parkway (Warehouse/Distribution)
<b>CDG-Fraternal Order of Police Center</b> – 210 Pomeroy Avenue (Social Organization)
<b>Four Points by Sheraton</b> – 275 Research Parkway (Accommodations)
<b>Yogi's All-American Sports Bar &amp; Grill</b> – 275 Research Parkway (Restaurant)
<b>Electrical Wholesalers</b> – 54 Research Parkway (Wholesale)
<b>Environmed</b> – 476 Murdock Avenue (Biotech)
<b>IbasedT</b> – 639 Research Parkway (Information technology)
<b>Closets, Etc.</b> – 200 Research Parkway (Custom carpentry)
<b>MidState VNA &amp; Hospice</b> – 1 Research Parkway (Health care)
<b>Securitas</b> – 321 Research Parkway (Security services)
<b>Tickets.com</b> – 321 Research Parkway (Entertainment)
<b>Nest Egg Auctions</b> – 30 Research Parkway (Gallery/auction house)
<b>Perricone Cosmeceuticals</b> – 377 Research Parkway (Cosmetics)
<b>Protein Sciences</b> – 1000 Research Parkway (Biotech)
<b>Holiday Meriden Cinemas 10</b> – 61 Pomeroy Avenue (Entertainment)



**Walgreen's Pharmacy,  
W. Main St./Chamberlain  
Highway**

**Mall/MidState Medical & Chamberlain Highway**

The Westfield Shoppingtown Meriden has added a number of new stores and other tenants have expanded recently. Additional retail developed along Chamberlain Highway. Finally, the MidState Medical Center has expanded three times over the course of six years, and is currently planning to expand its emergency department with a 100,000 square foot building addition.

**Other Areas**

Economic development has also occurred in other parts of Meriden, particularly in the areas surrounding Downtown. The map titled *General Economic Development Areas* shows the traditional areas of economic development in the City of Meriden.

**F. DESIGNATIONS AFFECTING FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Several economic development designations have the potential to affect the future economic development of the City of Meriden. First, the establishment of Meriden's Information Technology Zone (ITZ) is designed to spur the development of information sector businesses in Meriden. This zone, which begins at the Wallingford-Meriden town line and runs north generally between South Broad Street/Broad Street and Old Colony Road/Cook Avenue through Downtown and up to the Britannia Street/Kensington Avenue area, provides real and personal property tax abatements for 45 different types of companies if these companies locate within the zone's boundaries and complete various dollar amounts of real property improvements. This zone designation has already led to the successful occupancy of space at 500 South Broad Street. However, the ITZ's target area substantially overlaps the boundaries of the City's Enterprise Zone area, which actually offers better tax incentives for businesses. This limits the impact of the ITZ, and a future strategy for the City should be to reevaluate the boundaries of the ITZ area. Incentives are particularly important in a community where a relative small amount of land is designated for commercial and industrial uses.

**On-Going Major Economic Development Initiatives**

Several future economic development projects are already in the planning and development stages. These include the following:

**The Hub Site**

By far the most significant and highest profile development initiative underway in the City, the demolition and redevelopment of the Hub Site in Downtown Meriden has the potential to generate substantial economic benefits for the City.

Demolition of the Hub site is complete, and the design element of the redevelopment project is moving forward. The development scenarios remedy the flooding problems that have plagued Harbor Brook and also lay out options for creating commercial development on the site along with a

**By far the most significant and highest profile development initiative underway in the City, the demolition and redevelopment of the Hub Site in Downtown Meriden has the potential to generate substantial economic benefits for the City.**

central City green. Any development on the Hub site would include expansion of the existing rail station on State Street into a larger intermodal transportation center in conjunction with the State’s planned New Haven to Springfield commuter rail line.



**Site plan for Hub Site**

The reuse of the Hub site has the potential to be the linchpin of Downtown Meriden’s transition into a transit-oriented “village” style of development and trigger redevelopment of adjoining areas. With the addition of the intermodal transportation center, Downtown Meriden would fit many of the criteria needed for a successful “transit village”. It would be centered around a transit facility, have underutilized or deteriorated buildings within walking distance that can be reused and redeveloped, have a strong residential element in the area (which is found in the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the Downtown core), have good pedestrian access around the area, and have strong historical and architectural built environment elements. In addition, the City Center Initiative calls for the redevelopment of portions of the area surrounding the Hub site in a manner consistent with many transit-oriented development guidelines and principles.

**The reuse of the Hub site has the potential to be the linchpin of Downtown Meriden’s transition into a transit-oriented “village” style of development...**

MidState Medical Center Expansion

After completing the \$18.7 million “Pavilion D” expansion and an expansion to existing administrative office space, MidState Medical Center is planning a 100,000 sq. ft. expansion to their emergency room facilities. In a relatively short period of time, MidState has rapidly expanded its Lewis Avenue campus, fueling construction jobs and highlighting Meriden as a regional center for medical care.

## Economic Development Opportunities in Meriden

In addition to the economic development initiatives already in the process of being studied, designed or implemented and discussed above, Meriden has several properties/locations where additional substantial economic development could be realized. These sites and their future use are important to the City from an economic development standpoint since Meriden has few relatively large sites remaining for tax base development.

To ensure the long-term economic health of Meriden, the City must explore areas within its borders for increasing economic development and expanding the tax base. To this end, the City's Planning Commission authorized HMA to study the economic development potential of several selected sites across the City as part of the POCD update process.

Development potential was assessed for these sites, as well as determination of the preferred long-term general land use for each site. The findings of these special studies are described below.

### The Former NRG Site



NRG Site (2005)

Located along the north central edge of the City, the former NRG property comprises roughly 310 acres of land. The site is bound to the north by Berlin, to the west by Chamberlain Highway (Route 71), Sams Road and Kensington Avenue to the south, and City-owned open space and residential neighborhoods to the east. The NRG plant building and its accompanying 22.6 acres remain under the control of the generation company. An easement for piping in cooling water from the Connecticut River exists from the plant boundary northward to Berlin bisecting the site. Two vehicular access points to the site exist, one off of the Chamberlain Highway and the other at the end of Sams Road. Topography of the site is highly variable, with the greatest relief along the southern section of the site. The difference in elevation is 250 feet between the lowest point near Hicks Avenue and the highest point at the southwestern peak overlooking Route 71. Due to the topography and overall size of the site the land uses surrounding the site are extensive. To the south of the site is the Westfield Meriden Shoppingtown mall, to the west is a low density residential and undeveloped areas of Berlin, to the east are medium density residential neighborhoods and city owned open space.

#### Site Characteristics

Size: 310.9 Acres City Owned

22.6 Acres For Generation Plant

Zoning: Planned Development District (PDD)

Wetlands: 7.8 Acres

Steep Slopes > 25%: 135.3 Acres

Part of site contains CT DEP Natural Diversity Database Listed Species (NDDDB)

Ridgeline Protection Areas along southern boundary

Vernal Pool Conservation Area: Approx. 3 Acres

Utilities: Electric, Sewer, Gas, & Water

Preferred Long-Term Land Use: Individual Pods of Light Industrial, Office, Large-Lot Residential and Age-Restricted Residential, combined with substantial areas of open space retention.

### **The Hall Property**

The Hall property is a 70 acre parcel located within the triangle formed by I-91, I-691/Route 66 and Preston Avenue. Its location provides excellent access to the regional transportation system. The site is adjacent to an existing corporate office space campus further north on Preston Avenue, making the Hall property a logical site for office or light industrial use. The property is currently zoned “S-R – Suburban Residential”, and is across the street from a newly-constructed, small age-restricted residential community. A zone change would be required to develop the property for commercial use. The western edge of this property abuts the north branch of Spoon Shop Brook and wetland areas. The topography of the site is fairly flat with the areas of greatest relief along the Route 66 eastbound off ramp near the southern edge of the site.



**Hall Property (2005)**

#### Site Characteristics

Size: 71.8 Acres  
Zoning: Suburban Residential (SR)  
Wetlands: 23.6 Acres  
Steep Slopes > 25%: 6.9 Acres  
Utilities: Electric, Sewer, Gas, & Water

Preferred Long-Term Land Use: Mixed-Use village-style development with commercial and residential components.

### **The Bilger Property**

The Bilger property is located along Westfield Road south of Giuffrida Park and across the street from the Hunter Memorial Golf Course in the northeastern section of Meriden. The property is the site of the Bilger Farm, with over 30 acres of agricultural fields and approximately 27 acres of wetlands. The proximity of the property to the Hunter Memorial Golf Course and Giuffrida Park gives the site a unique advantage in terms of desirable amenities for residential development. The topography of the site is moderate with very little areas of steep slopes. Vehicular access to the site is limited to Westfield Road. The northern section of the property is zoned M-3 and R-R while the southern area is zoned S-R.



**Bilger Property (2005)**

#### Site Characteristics

Size: 87.5 Acres  
Zoning: S-R, R-R, & M-3  
Wetlands: 27.2 Acres  
Steep Slopes > 25%: 9.5 Acres  
Utilities: Electric, Sewer, Gas, & Water  
Access to the interior of the property requires crossing the former spur rail to the Quarry.



**Esposito Property (2005)**

Preferred Long-Term Land Use: Age-Restricted Residential and preservation and protection of existing wetlands and open space at the northern end of the site.

### **The Esposito Property**

Located near the junction of Oregon Road and Route 70 across the street from Hanover Pond, the 52 acre Esposito property is adjacent to the new Quinnipiac Gorge Trail as well as several residential streets. The site is currently zoned “R-R – Rural Residential”, and is somewhat limited in its development potential due to topography. The surrounding neighborhood is entirely residential, although Oregon Road’s use as a key north-south connection between West Main Street and Route 70 provides the traffic and transportation linkage.

### **Site Characteristics**

Size: 52.3 Acres  
Zoning: Rural Residential (RR)  
Wetlands: 2.8 Acres  
Steep Slopes > 25%: 12.1 Acres  
Utilities: Electric, Sewer, Gas, & Water

Preferred Long-Term Land Use: Large-Lot Residential development, combined with protection and preservation of steep slope facing Oregon Road. Potential connection to Quinnipiac River Trail system.



**Undercliff Property (2005)**

### **Undercliff Property**

The Undercliff Property is approximately 103 acres in size and is currently occupied by the State of Connecticut’s Department of Mental Retardation and the Department of Public Works. Its proximity to I-691, the Westfield Meriden Shoppingtown mall and other retail development enhance its potential for economic development purposes. The City of Meriden is currently in discussions with the State of Connecticut regarding a possible transfer of the site to City ownership. The topography of the site is moderate with steep slopes to the north along the Berlin town line and to the south near I-691. The only vehicular access to the site is via Undercliff Road off Chamberlain Highway.

### **Site Characteristics**

Size: 103 Acres  
Zoning: Regional Development District (RDD)  
Wetlands: 0 Acres  
Steep Slopes > 25%: 33.2 Acres  
Part of site contains CT DEP Natural Diversity Database Listed Species (NDDDB)  
Utilities: Electric, Sewer, and Water

Preferred Long-Term Land Use: Commercial/Retail development combined with high-tech/R&D lab and office space. Retention of open space and steep slopes where logical.

### The Saab Site

The Saab site is a 50 acre property situated along the Meriden-Wallingford town line between I-91 and Murdock Avenue. The site is currently zoned “RDD – Regional Development District”, and has been vacant for some time. Its existing industrial zone designation and its proximity to industrial development over the town line in Wallingford make the site a logical location for economic development.

Preferred Long-Term Land Use: Office and/or R&D space similar to Research Parkway District.

The map entitled *Economic Development Initiatives and Opportunity Sites* shows the locations of the sites and properties discussed in the preceding section.



Saab Site (2005)

### Economic Development Constraints

There are several structural limitations to future economic development in the City of Meriden. First and foremost, Meriden is largely a built-out community; there is little in the way of vacant undeveloped land in the City which is zoned for commercial or industrial use. Therefore, redevelopment activity would be required to transform well-located sites into new activity centers. Second, the building inventory in Meriden that is ready for immediate tenant occupancy, particularly for office or industrial use, is limited at this time. This fact currently limits business recruitment efforts since it is difficult to find vacant, ready-to-occupy space for potential new businesses. To locate a potential new business in Meriden often requires more effort and more time than in other, less built-out communities.

**...the building inventory in Meriden that is ready for immediate tenant occupancy, particularly for office or industrial use, is limited at this time.**

At this time, there are no privately-owned identified brownfield sites available in Meriden. However, the City should position itself to be responsive should a new site or sites be identified in the future. The City should also be prepared to assemble such sites for redevelopment.

**As sites become available and are identified as brownfields, the City should be prepared to be proactive in securing remediation funding and returning the properties to economic use.**

## **G. ISSUES, GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

As a substantially built-out community, Meriden faces the difficulty of creating new areas for economic development and expansion, a significant hurdle for growing Meriden’s economy and tax base. As sites become available and are identified as brownfields, the City should be prepared to be proactive in securing remediation funding and returning the properties to economic use.

Over the short-term, an achievable goal for the City would be to focus on identifying, marketing and, in some selected cases, acquiring vacant or underutilized industrial and commercial properties. The City already has a very active Economic Development office, Chamber of Commerce, and multiple business organizations and commissions that aggressively pursue and promote reinvestment in Meriden. The City should continue to build upon this institutional and private market sector strength.

**Continued infill development along established commercial corridors, where feasible, should be an on-going strategy for the City as well.**

**Continuing to assist businesses in expanding when needed, keeping such businesses in the City, and recruiting new ones to enter Meriden's economic mix will also be vital in maintaining Meriden's economic base.**

**Downtown development should continue to be the cornerstone of economic development in Meriden over the coming years, particularly by way of the unique opportunity to pursue transit-oriented development and the "transit village" concept with the redevelopment of the Hub site.....**

Continued infill development along established commercial corridors, where feasible, should be an on-going strategy for the City as well. The physical enhancement of industrial and commercial areas, via improved streetscapes, better and more attractive signage, proper access management and road maintenance should be pursued to show that the public sector is willing to make an investment in these areas that matches private reinvestment in properties. Continuing to assist businesses in expanding when needed, keeping such businesses in the City, and recruiting new ones to enter Meriden's economic mix will also be vital in maintaining Meriden's economic base.

Small cities around the country such as Meriden are discovering that being a successful small city often hinges on the strength or weakness of the community's Downtown area. The City of Meriden, as well as both the public and private sector, has taken a number of intelligent and aggressive steps to improve the Downtown area, with projects and initiatives such as the Hub site redevelopment, the City Center Initiative, residential and commercial rehabilitation and the relocation of Middlesex Community College to the Downtown being critical to spurring reinvestment in the City's center. Downtown development should continue to be the cornerstone of economic development in Meriden over the coming years, particularly by way of the unique opportunity to pursue transit-oriented development and the "transit village" concept with the redevelopment of the Hub site, the initiation of the New Haven to Springfield commuter rail service, and the implementation of the City Center Initiative program.

Finally, it should be recognized that the older models and strategies for economic development are in the process of shifting and changing. It is often not enough for a community to simply try to lure businesses and jobs to locate within its borders. While this approach is still important to build the economic base, it is just as important to develop a supply of educated and highly skilled workers who, by their very presence in the community, will attract high-end businesses and industry. Meriden should make efforts to create such a workforce by attracting educated and skilled workers to the City by highlighting and marketing the many positive features of Meriden, and should also strive to produce highly-skilled students from within its school system. These students will constitute the future workforce of the City, and the skill sets that they acquire while in school will ultimately determine the types of businesses that will choose to locate in Meriden. Transit-oriented development Downtown should include residential development that would attract a young, skilled workforce.

The following goals and objectives are designed to provide guidance for Meriden's economic development efforts over the next 10 years:

**Goal: Identify, market and, in some selected cases, acquire vacant or underutilized industrial and commercial properties.**

**Objectives:**

- Work with individual property owners to identify and overcome land use or other issues which may impede the development of vacant parcels. Issues of focus should be those the City may impact through the changing of municipal policies or through the use of public programs and subsidies to spur development.
- Continue to investigate properties that may become available for development and explore any brownfields-related issues. If existing, the City should assist owners and developers in using public programs for remediation.
- Assist developers in conducting site assemblage of smaller vacant and underutilized parcels to create larger, more marketable development sites in areas such as along East Main Street, South Broad Street and the Berlin Turnpike.

**Goal: Strengthen and enhance the commercial corridors in Meriden to create critical densities of economic development in established corridors and build the City's Grand List by continuing to aggressively promote and encourage commercial infill development in these areas.**

**Objectives:**

- Corridors of particular focus should be East Main Street, West Main Street, South Broad Street and Chamberlain Highway, where a planning has already been conducted.
- Build upon existing clusters of uses in specific areas (retail, office, hi-tech) when marketing the corridors and recruiting new businesses.
- Coordinate design and access management for infill development along commercial corridors. Ensure that quality development occurs in these areas.
- As a planning and zoning policy objective, prevent the fragmentation of existing commercial corridors by non-commercial uses to preserve as much land as possible for economic development.
- Consider modifying the City's zoning regulations for older industrial areas to permit a wider array of commercial uses to help maintain existing industrial properties as sites for economic development.

**Goal: In addition to efforts geared toward attracting businesses and jobs to the City, place emphasis on attracting skilled workers to Meriden and, via the Meriden school system, producing future workers with the skill sets needed to flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.**

**Strengthen and enhance the commercial corridors in Meriden to create critical densities of economic development in established corridors...**

**...place emphasis on attracting skilled workers to Meriden and, via the Meriden school system, producing future workers with the skill sets needed to flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.**

**Utilize Meriden's relatively affordable housing stock, access to regional transportation networks, proximity to prestigious colleges and universities and central geographic location as salient points for marketing Meriden as an attractive place for hi-tech businesses.**

**Objectives:**

- Encourage and expand current linkages between educational institutions and local businesses to tie students' educational experience to real-world employment and economic situations.
- Reassess the target area of Meriden's IT Zone to include additional areas that lie outside of the Enterprise Zone boundaries. Expand boundaries to include areas where IT clusters are already located. Aggressively market the IT Zone tax benefits and the City's loan financing to lure hi-tech firms to Meriden.
- Consider expanding the City's MAP loan program to include IT companies.
- Utilize Meriden's relatively affordable housing stock, access to regional transportation networks, proximity to prestigious colleges and universities and central geographic location as salient points for marketing Meriden as an attractive place for hi-tech businesses.
- Work with other cities and towns in south central Connecticut to further strengthen a regional market for high-tech firms.

**Goal: Place strong emphasis on developing the "creative economy" in Meriden, centered around arts, culture, education, the non-profit sector and entrepreneurship.**

**Objectives:**

- Promote the continued development and expansion of community assets such as Middlesex Community College.
- Support the development of a Phase I Arts Facility, as proposed and discussed in the Meriden Arts Study conducted by Hunter Interests, Inc., offering space for a variety of different art media, to further develop the nascent Meriden arts community.
- Encourage additional development of loft-style housing units, gallery space and studio space in Meriden, particularly in the Downtown or in the future redevelopment of the Hub and the City Center Initiative target areas, to promote the growth of the arts community and young business professionals.
- Work with local arts, music, cultural and philanthropic organizations to coordinate the existing assets and needs of the creative community to develop a framework for action for expanding the creative community and economy in Meriden.

**Goal:** Pursue economic development objectives for already identified potential development sites to create sustainable, high-quality commercial, office and industrial space that is designed in a manner that maximizes tax revenue while being sensitive to surrounding neighborhoods and environmental assets.

**Objectives:**

- Continue the process of acquiring the Undercliff site from the State of Connecticut for economic development purposes and the redevelopment of the Hub site and the larger area to the north as specified in the City Center Initiative.
- Change the zoning for other potential economic development sites discussed previously, such as the Hall property and the NRG site.
- Insist upon high-quality, innovative physical design in the economic development components of each of these sites that maximizes tax revenue, limits traffic impacts, protects and retains important natural features and blends harmoniously with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Reserve a portion of the City's former Westvaco parcel for appropriate economic development that is high revenue generating with private infrastructure investment. A railroad crossing would be necessary.

**Goal:** Develop the Downtown area as the location for new employment, high-density housing and other transit-oriented development (TOD).

**Objectives:**

- Add a Transit Oriented Development section to the City's zoning regulations to guide mixed-use development within a designated downtown area.
- Promote TODs for the area around the Hub Site.
- Conduct a series of public workshops to discuss the concept of TODs, the design and density of TODs that would be most appropriate for a city such as Meriden, and the potential location or locations for such developments to occur.

**Goal:** When the commuter rail service from New Haven to Springfield, MA is completed, it will become an important component of Meriden's transportation network. It is critical that the City capitalize on this asset to garner the most benefit in terms of ridership, ancillary economic impacts, and the drawing of visitors into the Downtown. In order to continue to grow in a manner that protects the character of Meriden's neighborhoods and minimizes the disturbance of the City's natural environs, transit-oriented development (TOD) should be promoted.

**In order to continue to grow in a manner that protects the character of Meriden's neighborhoods and minimizes the disturbance of the City's natural environs, transit-oriented development (TOD) should be promoted in several key locations.**

**Modify the City's Zoning Regulations to enable the development of TODs in specified areas.**

**Make redevelopment and reinvestment in Downtown Meriden the cornerstone of the City's economic development efforts.**

**Objectives:**

- Redevelop the HUB Site in a manner that addresses flood control, creates a central public open space for the Downtown and develops land uses that will have a symbolic relationship with the Meriden rail station, such as housing, office and commercial uses.
- Utilize enhanced rail service to draw visitors to Meriden's Downtown by creating a business recruitment program to establish new dining, entertainment and cultural attractions around the rail station.
- Market Meriden's Downtown as a single "transit-oriented development", with an emphasis on the reasonably priced housing options in the area and the ease of commuting to Hartford or New Haven or Fairfield via the commuter rail service.
- Conduct a series of public workshops to discuss the concept of TODs, the design and density of TODs that would be most appropriate for a city such as Meriden, and the potential locations for such developments to occur.
- Modify the City's Zoning Regulations to enable the development of TODs in specified areas.

**Goal: Make redevelopment and reinvestment in Downtown Meriden the cornerstone of the City's economic development efforts.**

**Objectives:**

- Continue to pursue the City Center Initiative, the redevelopment of the Hub site, and other on-going projects in the Downtown area that will strengthen the built environment as well as draw in residents, shoppers, visitors and commuters.
- Redevelopment of the Hub site should focus first and foremost on solving the Harbor Brook flood control issues, followed by solidifying the Downtown center through the creation of a central green space/public use area, positioning the Downtown to capitalize on multimodal transportation opportunities by way of rail access and the development of new transit facilities, and creating development "pads" that will provide space for new economic development opportunities in the center of Downtown.
- Continue to work with applicable organizations and governmental agencies to bring commuter rail service into the Downtown, and develop plans to capitalize on its presence.
- Encourage a mix of higher-density housing types in the Downtown, particularly in mixed-use buildings, to create a critical mass of residents in the area to support local businesses and stores.

**Goal:** Continue to strengthen efforts in the areas of business recruitment, business retention, and expansion of existing businesses in Meriden.

**Objective:**

- Continue to provide the resources to maintain a vibrant economic development marketing and promotion effort via the Economic Development Office.

**Continue to strengthen efforts in the areas of business recruitment, business retention, and expansion of existing businesses in Meriden.**

**Goal:** Enhance the physical attractiveness of commercial and industrial areas.

**Objectives:**

- Review existing applicable regulations, such as signage and landscaping requirements, to gauge their impact on the physical design and appearance of Meriden's economic generation areas. Make appropriate changes to these regulations where necessary.
- Present an attractive and inviting physical environment for businesses and their employees. Highlight the fact that Meriden is a physically appealing place to do business.
- Develop a façade improvement program for the Downtown business district utilizing a combination of loans and grants to improve the physical appearance of Downtown properties while spurring individual owners to invest in their respective properties.
- Create a new City program similar to the existing C.I.D.E.W.A.L.K. program to focus on improving sidewalks in commercial and industrial areas, where needed.
- Develop design guidelines to address storefront improvements, signs, window and door types, approved siding materials, masonry repair, replacement or highlighting of trim, cornices, appropriate colors and other architectural details.
- Encourage the conversion of vacant upper floor commercial space to market rate residential uses, which can bring pedestrian activity, vitality, and buying power to the Downtown.
- Establish a low-interest rate revolving loan program to enable Downtown property owners to make needed repairs to their building, as funding resources permit.
- Encourage and provide regulations for the location of retail uses at the ground floor level in Downtown to develop more visual interest for shoppers, pedestrians and visitors to the area.

**Enhance the physical attractiveness of commercial and industrial areas.**

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# VII. Transportation & Circulation

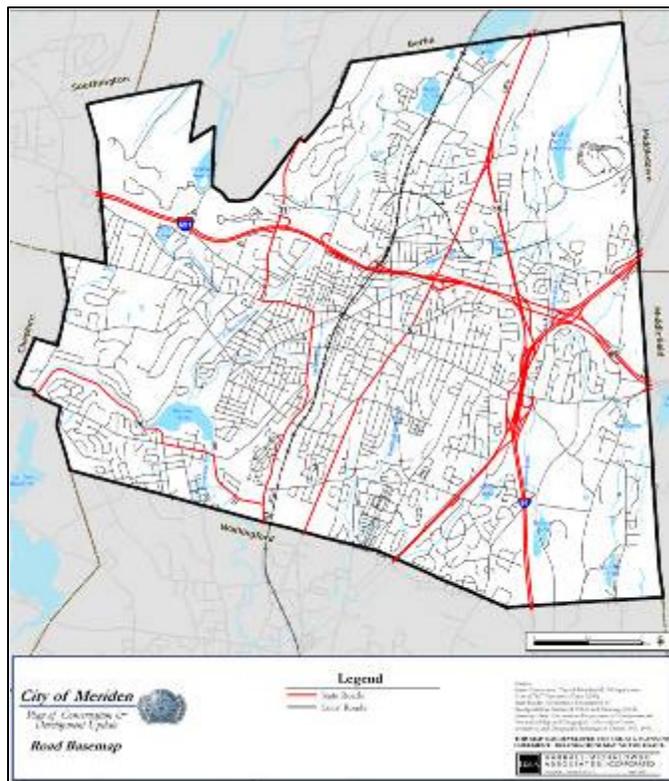
## A. INTRODUCTION

To ensure that the City of Meriden can continue to grow and prosper, it is essential to provide a safe, efficient and economically viable transportation system. This system, comprised of a surface transportation network of highways, streets, an airport, walkways, greenways, bikeways and mass transit must provide for both inter-town and intra-town travel movements.

## B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The mid-point location between the cities of New Haven and Hartford, the presence of Interstate 91, Interstate 691 and Connecticut Routes 5 and 15, the path of the Quinnipiac River, the railroad right-of-way and the establishment and growth of the historic city center have all shaped Meriden's current roadway system. Meriden's link to the interstate highway system is among the best available in Connecticut.

The roadway system within Meriden is comprised of a series of interconnected corridors with varying levels of roadway functional classification. According to the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Meriden is served by 213.99 miles of public roads, 88% of which are City roads (187.40 miles) and the balance (26.59 miles) are State roads. The following titled "Road Basemap" illustrates the locations of City-maintained and State-maintained roads throughout Meriden.



**Meriden's link to the interstate highway system is among the best available in Connecticut.**



**East Main Street**

### Functional Classification of Roadways in the City of Meriden

Transportation officials classify roadways based on traffic volumes, accessibility and function. The State DOT has identified six different levels of roadway classifications in the City of Meriden: Principal Arterial - Interstate, Principal Arterial - Expressway, Principal Arterial - Other, Minor Arterial, Collector and Local Road. In some cases, the actual classification of a road may change along its length or may operate differently than its assigned functional classification. The map titled *State Functional Road Classification Map* illustrates the distinctions in roadway types.



**I-691 in Meriden**

### State Roadways - Average Daily Traffic Volumes

The following describes existing traffic conditions on State roadways within Meriden, using available traffic count data from the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

In assessing the change in travel patterns for entire roadways over time, only Route 71 witnessed a decrease in traffic volumes, where 9,500 fewer vehicles per day traveled the roadway in 2004 than in the earliest reporting date (1990 or 1993) for each counting station. Route 70 remained unchanged from its previous traffic counts with 41,900 vehicles per day. In contrast, Route 5, Route 15 and the East Main Street/West Main Street corridor all exhibited overall increases in traffic volume. In fact, combined traffic volumes on these three routes in Meriden increased by a combined 14.5% between 1990 and 2004, while the City's population actually declined by 0.5% between 1990 and 2004. This pattern is consistent with the relatively high rate of land development compared to modest population growth in communities throughout Connecticut. The traffic volumes for 2004 by location are depicted on the map titled *Average Daily Traffic Volumes (2004)*.



**Meriden Markham Airport**

### Meriden-Markham Airport

Meriden-Markham Airport is a full-service airport with a recently reconstructed runway owned by the City and located on Evansville Avenue, straddling the Meriden-Wallingford town line, that is operated by Meriden Aviation Services, Inc. The airport has a single 3,100-foot runway that was outfitted in 2005 with a new all-night remote lighting system. The taxiway for the runway is also lighted and the airport has a rotating beacon light to identify its location at night. The airport complex also includes the main terminal, hangars and a maintenance facility. Meriden-Markham Airport offers a wide variety of services, including aircraft rental and maintenance services, flight and ground training and instruction, charter flights, pilot supplies and computer services including weather mapping and laptop hook-ups. Proposed future improvements to the airport include new "T"-hangars for aircraft owners who store their planes on the premises year-round.

**Meriden Train Station**

Presently, the Meriden rail station is served by Amtrak, which enables Meriden commuters to travel to either Hartford or New Haven by train and from New Haven connect to the MetroNorth and Shoreline East rail services. Approximately six trains each day depart from Meriden toward New Haven and Hartford on weekdays; however, the stops made between Meriden and these two cities are limited.



**Meriden Train Station**

CONNDOT calls for the Meriden rail station to be one of the “Action Stations” of its implementation strategy. In other words, the Meriden station is one that has been selected as a station where upgrades or modifications to existing rail facilities are proposed as part of the implementation strategy. Modifications at the Meriden station would include:

- Two new passenger platforms
- An “up and over” pedestrian walkway that would enable passengers to cross the railroad tracks from the rail platforms to the remainder of the Hub site
- Parking facilities for approximately 218 vehicles
- A multimodal transportation center, either in the former Post Office building or as part of the Hub site redevelopment, once funding is secured

The CONNDOT Report notes that the total weekday daily “ons”, or ridership, for the Meriden station would be 206 “ons” as a result of the proposed action plan. Commuter trains would depart from Meriden roughly every 30 minutes during peak commuting times. The presence of these additional commuters and the increased number of trains passing through Meriden every day would help support existing Downtown businesses as well as any new commercial spaced developed as part of the Hub site redevelopment. The proposed action would also establish Downtown Meriden, particularly the Hub site, as the transportation center for the entire City. This development “anchor”, in conjunction with the rest of Meriden’s City Center Initiative Plan, could accelerate the revitalization of the entire Downtown area.

**Transit Network**

Owned and operated by ConnDOT, Connecticut Transit operates three bus routes (See Table VII-2) that connect Meriden to the bus system serving the Greater New Haven/South Central Connecticut area. The frequency of service varies between bus routes, with the Yale Acres-Westfield Shoppingtown line (A) and the Kohl’s Plaza-South Meriden line (B) offering the most frequent service (60 minute starting at 6:30am and running to 5:30-6:00pm). The Meriden rail station, located on State Street, serves as the “hub” for all three bus routes.

<b>TABLE VII-2</b>	
<b>Bus Routes Serving Meriden</b>	
<b>Bus Route</b>	<b>Description</b>
A	Yale Acres - Westfield Shoppingtown
B	Kohl's Plaza - South Meriden
C	West Main Street - East Main Street

In June 2007, Governor Rell announced a state-wide expansion of various bus services. Included was funding to provide for Saturday flexible route service within the City of Meriden that would connect with the Greater New Haven system via the transfer point at Kohl’s Plaza on Route 5 just

over the Wallingford line. This service expansion will allow Meriden riders to travel by bus throughout the Southern Connecticut region on Saturdays, a service which had previously been available. In addition, proposals to better connect the central areas of Meriden, Cheshire and Southington through bus service continue to be discussed.

### **Trail Systems in Meriden**

The City of Meriden has a growing network of hiking and walking trails. At the present time, there are four distinct sets of trails that run through the City. The Metacomet/Mattabesett Trail, also known as the Blue Trail, passes through three City-owned locations in Meriden: Hubbard Park; the NRG site; and Giuffrida Park. The Blue Trail is one of the longest trail systems in Connecticut, running from the Massachusetts-Connecticut state line in Suffield south to northern Guilford, and northeast through Durham, Haddam and Middletown to the Connecticut River.

**The Metacomet/  
Mattabesett Trail, also  
known as the Blue Trail,  
passes through three City-  
owned locations in  
Meriden: Hubbard Park;  
the NRG site; and  
Giuffrida Park.**

In addition to the Blue Trail, both Hubbard Park and Giuffrida Park have their own interior circulation trails for hiking and passive recreation that also link up with the Blue Trail at several points. Finally, the southwestern corner of Meriden is home to the Quinnipiac Gorge Trail that runs alongside the Quinnipiac River from Hanover Pond west to the Cheshire town line. The second phase of the Quinnipiac River Trail will involve extending the trail north from Dossin Beach to West Main Street, generally along the west side of Sodom Brook. The development of additional trail sections will also have the added benefit of improving flood. Collectively, these facilities provide a solid foundation toward achieving an inter-connected and accessible greenways and trail system in the City.



**Quinnipiac Gorge Trail near  
Oregon Road**

### **South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) - Transportation Initiatives**

SCRCOG's *Regional Plan of Development (November 2000)* called for revitalizing the South Meriden Center along Main Street through a streetscape improvement program, which has recently been completed. Also proposed is an extension of the Quinnipiac River Trail from Hanover Pond north through Downtown Meriden and then west toward Cheshire. Finally, improvements to the Lewis Avenue infrastructure and new streetscape elements to better connect the mall and Midstate Medical Center area with Downtown Meriden have been completed between West Main Street and Columbia Street.

SCRCOG's *South Central Regional Long Range Transportation Plan 2007-2035* recommends or identifies several transportation improvement projects within the City of Meriden that are part of the long range plan. The Long Range Transportation Plan states the following:

**I-691 Chamberlain Highway - Meriden** – The previous Plan identified improvements to this interchange as desirable for the efficiency of the local highway network. Additional movements at this interchange could be beneficial and provide better access to and from I-691 in both directions.

The SCRCOG encourages CDOT to study this interchange for possible modifications and improvements.”<sup>4</sup>

Recently, in SCRCOG’s *Unified Planning Work Program* for Fiscal Year 2008, \$100,000 was assigned for this interchange project to pay for a consultant study. Said plan’s options have been completed.

Other projects listed include:

STP Urban Projects: **Gravel St Phase #1** – The City of Meriden recently solicited a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for consultant design of this project. Design will be for both Baldwin Avenue and Gravel Street based upon work previously completed.

I-91: Incident Management/ Traffic Advisory system improvements

US 5: Drainage improvements

Rail: New Haven-Hartford-Springfield - Service enhancements and Commuter service

Transportation Enhancement: Quinnipiac River Trail - north bank west of Oregon St.

As part of the on-going *Regional Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan*, SCRCOG has identified several improvement projects areas in the City of Meriden for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure enhancements. Table VII-3 shows the location and length of these proposed improvement areas.

TABLE VII-3		
SCRCOG Proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvement Areas		
Meriden, CT		
Facility Name	Begin/End	Distance Estimate
Route 71 – West Main St./Cook Ave.	Capital Ave. to Hanover St.	3,700 feet (0.7 miles)
Quinnipiac Linear Trail	City-wide trail	Short – 1.7 miles
		Medium – 2.5 miles
		Long – 4.5 miles
Kensington Avenue	North Mall entrance to Route 71 (Chamberlain	1,700 feet (0.32 miles)
Liberty Street	Cottage St. to Gravel St.	3,600 feet (0.68 miles)
Chamberlain Highway	Steuben St. to I-691 entrance ramp & 330 feet north of Lockwood St.	1,500 feet (0.28 miles)

Source: SCRCOG; City of Meriden; compiled by HMA.

<sup>4</sup> SCRCOG, “South Central Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, 2007-2035” (Final Draft – 5/9/07), p. 34.

CONNDOT's *2007 Master Transportation Plan* identifies the State's priority transportation projects for the next ten years. Several of the projects that are identified in the Master Transportation Plan and located in the City of Meriden overlap those identified by SCRCOG. The projects listed in the Master Transportation Plan include:

Route 5 (Broad Street): Drainage Improvements – *FY 2009*

Route 71: Replace bridge over Harbor Brook – *FY 2009*

Harbor Brook Flood Control Project – *Partially Funded*

Columbus Avenue: Replace bridge over Harbor Brook – *Funded & Designed*

Gravel Street: Reconstruction of intersection at Baldwin Avenue – *Funded*

Additional roadway projects underway in Meriden include new curbs, sidewalks, pavement and drainage along West Main Street between Cook Avenue and North Second Street (which has been designed but is awaiting funding), and various other small roadway improvements equally distributed around Meriden as part of the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

### **Journey to Work Patterns**

The United States Census Bureau provides recent data for analyzing commuting patterns within and between local communities. This data is helpful in understanding general traffic flows into and out of a community generated by daily trips to and from the workplace.



The City of Meriden has an estimated 27,345 workers, of which 10,158 workers (37.1%) are employed within the City itself. The remaining 17,187 workers (62.9%) commute to jobs outside of Meriden. Meriden's resident workforce is definitely oriented in the southern direction in terms of employment; 72.7% of Meriden workers are employed in New Haven County, while only 16.5% are employed in Hartford County and 6.8% in Middlesex County. Fewer than 1% of Meriden's resident workers commute outside of Connecticut for work.

Many employed residents of Meriden are likely to have a short commuting distance to and from their workplace. Almost 64% of all Meriden workers work either in Meriden itself or in an adjacent municipality. Other important employment destinations for Meriden workers include New Haven (1,087 workers), Hartford (968 workers), North Haven (857 workers), and Waterbury (685 workers). What is also quite clear is the important role that the Interstate 91/Route 15/Route 5 corridor plays in the economic life of Meriden residents. An estimated 11,317 Meriden resident workers, or 41.4% of the total resident workers, use this corridor to commute to their place of employment. When these numbers are combined with the number of workers who remain in Meriden to work, the total is 21,502 workers or 78.6% of the total resident workers.

According to Census data, an estimated 13,945 workers commute into Meriden for employment everyday, combined with the 10,158 workers mentioned previously who both reside and work in the City itself. Commuters into Meriden come from a wider range of communities than are represented as destinations for Meriden resident workers; while over 65% of the commuters OUT of Meriden go to one of the top ten destinations communities for work, only 52% of commuters INTO Meriden come from the top ten communities of origination. A substantial percentage of commuters into Meriden come from larger urban and suburban communities such as Wallingford (15.1%), Southington (7.4%), Middletown (5.5%), Waterbury (5.2%), New Haven (4.2%) and Cheshire (4.2%). Likely due to its geographically central location in the State and proximity to the confluence of major interstate highways and state routes, Meriden draws workers into its economy from all directions.

### **C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MERIDEN'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

The following identifies a comprehensive program of transportation improvements recommended to mitigate traffic congestion, improve traffic circulation, reduce traffic accidents and encourage multi-modal travel.

**GOAL:** Route 5 serves the City as the most critical north-south roadway for local traffic and business access, and its segments accommodate anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day. Addressing the current needs of this roadway and planning for future impacts from development along its length should be a high priority for the City to ensure that Route 5 does not become overburdened.

#### **Objectives:**

- Work with SCRCOG and CONNDOT to improve the drainage system along Route 5.
- Devise strategies to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents along Route 5, particularly in the area around its intersection with East Main Street.
- Utilize zoning regulations and other land use tools to promote development along Route 5 that minimizes curb cuts and ingress/egress points, promote shared driveways, and guide development in a manner that minimizes the traffic impact of such development along Route 5.
- Build upon the successful completion of a Route 5 study recommending the revision of pavement markings from Ann Street to the Meriden-Wallingford town line to improve traffic flow and driver comprehension.

**GOAL:** The combined roadway of East Main Street and West Main Street is the primary means for local traffic to cross Meriden along its east/west axis, and also provides critical linkages between the interstate highway system and commercial/industrial uses in

Meriden, as well as the Downtown area. Even more heavily traveled than Route 5, portions of this roadway carry between 11,000 and 26,000 vehicles per day. As the economic lifeline of the City, strong emphasis should be placed on this roadway corridor to ensure that commercial establishments continue to grow and thrive along its length.

**Objectives:**

- In conjunction with the City Center Initiative, create a unified streetscape theme along East Main Street from Broad Street to Cook Avenue to tie into the proposed new curbs, sidewalks, pavement and drainage along West Main Street between Cook Avenue and North Second Street.
- In conjunction with CONNDOT, devise strategies to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents along the East Main Street/West Main Street corridor, particularly in the area along West Main Street between Cook Avenue and the Chamberlain Highway.
- Utilize zoning regulations and other land use tools to promote development along East Main Street and West Main Street that minimizes curb cuts and ingress/egress points, promote shared driveways, and guide development in a manner that minimizes the traffic impact of such development along this corridor.
- As part of the City Center Initiative, make the East Main Street/West Main Street connecting point a central part of the redevelopment of the Hub Site. Doing so will solidify this area as the center of Meriden.
- Over the long-term, investigate the potential for realigning and reconfiguring the East Main Street/Broad Street intersection to improve traffic flow and reduce confusion.

**As part of the City Center Initiative, make the East Main Street/West Main Street connecting point a central part of the redevelopment of the Hub Site. Doing so will solidify this area as the center of**

**Complete the I-691/Chamberlain Highway interchange through SCRCOG and CONNDOT to provide enhanced access to the mall, the MidState Medical Center and the Chamberlain Highway corridor.**

**GOAL: Route 70 and Route 71 provide important secondary access to many of Meriden’s western and central neighborhoods, as well as the Downtown area and other commercial nodes. The access that these routes provide should be capitalized on in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.**

**Objectives:**

- Complete the I-691/Chamberlain Highway interchange through SCRCOG and CONNDOT to provide enhanced access to the mall, the MidState Medical Center and the Chamberlain Highway corridor.

- Monitor the Chamberlain Highway section of Route 71 to ensure that additional commercial development along this section of the route does not overburden the roadway's capacity.
- In conjunction with CONNDOT, devise strategies to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents along the West Main Street section of Route 71, between Cook Avenue and the Chamberlain Highway.

**Monitor the Chamberlain Highway section of Route 71 to ensure that additional commercial development along this section of the route does not overburden the roadway's capacity.**

**GOAL:** Interstate 91, Interstate 691, Route 15 and Route 66 will continue to serve the important role of connecting Meriden with the region, the State and the national transportation network. While the City has little direct control over the development and utilization of these roadways, it should continue to be active in working with State and federal departments and officials to ensure that Meriden is adequately and properly served by these roadways.

**Objectives:**

- As mentioned previously, the City should continue to press for the completion of the I-691/Chamberlain Highway, North Colony Street and State Street interchanges.
- As part of the City Center Initiative, pursue strategies to better and more directly connecting I-691 with the Downtown area.
- Work with SCRCOG and CONNDOT to coordinate incident management and traffic advisory services, proposed construction projects and enhancements, and basic maintenance activities.

**As part of the City Center Initiative, pursue strategies to better and more directly connecting I-691 with the Downtown area.**

**GOAL:** Other town-maintained roadways will gradually become in need of maintenance and reinvestment. While they currently are performing up to adequate standards, these roadways should receive some long-term attention.

**Objectives:**

- Maintain adequate funding and staffing levels at the Public Works Department to ensure that resources are in place for periodic and systematic assessments of Meriden's roadway network.

**GOAL:** A growing number of communities are establishing trail networks for pedestrians and bicyclists as an alternative means of transportation and recreation for residents. In Meriden, most existing trails offer opportunities for passive recreation, while very few trails serve as a viable alternative to conventional vehicular trips.

**Objectives:**

- In order to utilize available funds most effectively, the City should first review the findings concerning trails from the recently complete City-wide phone survey to assess the community's attitude and outlook concerning multi-functional trails.
- This initial task should provide officials with a better understanding of the most desirable types and locations of trails, and could then devise an appropriate greenways plan to act upon.
- Continue to pursue the development of a cross-City linear trail as part of the Harbor Brook Flood Control remediation project.

**GOAL:** Several areas across Meriden exhibit a relatively high number of motor vehicle accidents within a small geographic area, particularly along Route 5. Specifically, the 0.63 mile stretch of Route 5 between Ann Street and East Main Street had 215 accidents over the three year study period. Additionally, 137 accidents occurred along the 0.48 mile segment of Route 5 between I-691 and Westfield Road, and 132 accidents occurred along the 0.53 mile segment of Route 5 from the Wallingford town line to Green Road. The high number of accidents on these three portions of roadway justifies efforts directed at curbing such incidents.

**Objectives:**

- A comprehensive strategy to reduce accidents should include traffic calming and access management techniques, along with other site-specific measures.
- The City should coordinate with CONNDOT to support additional study of Route 5 near the Wallingford town line to develop traffic safety improvements, such as the previously noted pavement marking improvements from Ann Street to the Meriden-Wallingford town line.

**GOAL:** Ongoing access management planning and implementation are important tools for promoting traffic safety and maintaining the "carrying capacity" of Meriden's arterial streets.

**Objectives:**

- Techniques such as combining driveways and/or restricting turning movements should be evaluated as opportunities arise.

Ongoing access management planning and implementation are important tools for promoting traffic safety and maintaining the "carrying capacity" of Meriden's arterial streets.

**GOAL:** With the exception of the East Main Street/West Main Street combined roadway, east-west access across Meriden for local traffic is poor. The City should investigate opportunities for improving this access wherever feasible. Doing so would help alleviate the high traffic volume along the East Main Street/West Main Street corridor.

**Objectives:**

- Investigate possible opportunities to extend Hanover Avenue from Old Colony Road across the railroad line to South Broad Street.
- As part of the future use of the NRG Site, investigate the possibility of extending Hicks Avenue into the site for additional access.

**GOAL:** A number of cul-de-sacs and loop roads in the west side of Meriden limit access between West Main Street and southwestern sections of Meriden. An additional north-south connection would provide greater access to Hubbard Park for residents of this area of the City. It would also help alleviate the traffic volume along Route 71.

**Objectives:**

- Investigate possible opportunities to extend Spruce Street from Johnson Avenue to Allen Avenue, and connect with Edgemark Acres.

**GOAL:** Several key roadway intersections in Meriden are confusing and complex. Reconfiguring some intersections can be accomplished in the short-term, while others will require more long-term planning. Reconfiguring these intersections will improve traffic flow and will help simplify the process of moving around the City.

**Objectives:**

- Over the short-term, redesign and reconfigure the Pomeroy Avenue/Cone Avenue/Preston Avenue/East Main Street intersection.
- Over the long-term and as part of the City Center Initiative, redesign and reconfigure the East Main Street/Broad Street intersection and the intersection of East Main Street, West Main Street, Hanover Street, Colony Street, Railroad Avenue and Perkins Street.

Several key roadway intersections in Meriden are confusing and complex. Reconfiguring some intersections can be accomplished in the short-term, while others will require more long-term planning.

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# VIII. Community Facilities

## A. INTRODUCTION

An important component of Meriden's Plan of Conservation and Development is reviewing the distribution, availability, condition and capacity of the City's community facilities and municipal infrastructure to meet the current and projected needs of the city.

## B. COMMUNITY FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

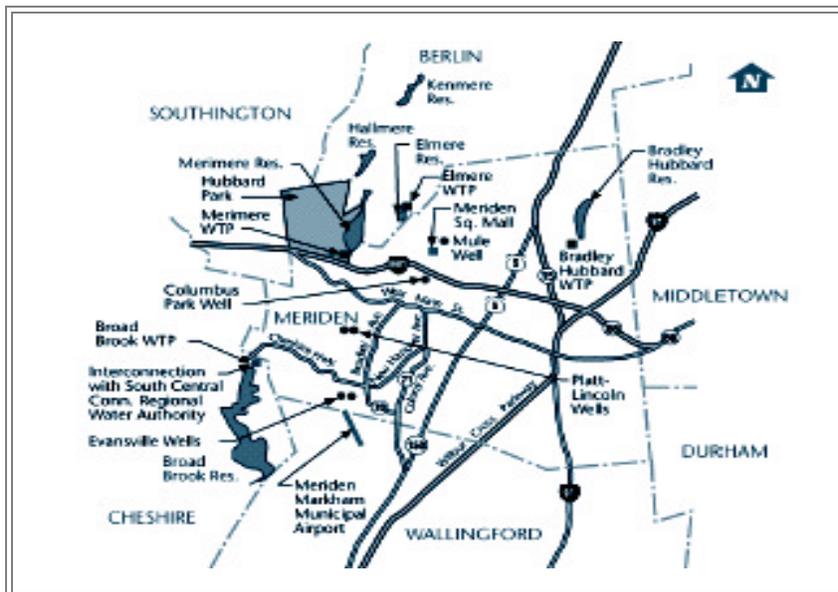
### Public Water Supply

The City's Water Division of Public Utilities is responsible for obtaining, treating, and delivering public water to 99.9% of the residents of Meriden, as well as small portions of the communities of Berlin, Cheshire, Middletown, Southington and Wallingford. The City's average daily demand for water is between 6 and 7 million gallons per day (mgd), and there are approximately 18,000 water service accounts in the Meriden Water Division system.

Current sources of the City's water supply include six reservoirs and six wells. These are identified in Table VIII-1, along with their respective safe yields and the useable storage sizes for reservoirs.

The total safe yield of surface and ground water sources combined is approximately 9.7 million gallons per day. The City's projected water demand for 2007 is 6.5 million gallons per day, which is expected to rise to 6.78 million gallons per day by 2020 and 7.22 million gallons per day by 2050 according to projections by the city's Water Department. Thus, the City of Meriden is projected to have a more than adequate water supply for the foreseeable future.

**The City of Meriden is projected to have a more than adequate water supply for the foreseeable future.**



**Meriden's Water Distribution System**

<b>TABLE VIII-1</b>		
<b>City of Meriden Public Water Sources</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Useable Storage Capacity (in millions of gallons)</b>	<b>Safe Yield (in millions of gallons/day)</b>
Broad Brook Reservoir	869	3.1
Merimere Reservoir	315	0.7
Hallmere Reservoir	134	a
Kenmere Reservoir	105	a
Elmere Reservoir	13.5	1.6 <sup>a</sup>
Bradley & Hubbard Reservoir	167	0.4
Evansville East Well	N/A	b
Evansville West Well	N/A	1.7 <sup>b</sup>
Columbus Park Well	N/A	0.16
Mule Well	N/A	0.45
Platt Well	N/A	c
Lincoln Well	N/A	1.1 <sup>c</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,603.50</b>	<b>9.21</b>
<sup>a</sup> Safe yield for Hallmere, Kenmere and Elmere combined is 1.6		
<sup>b</sup> Safe yield for combined Evansville wells is 1.7		
<sup>c</sup> Safe yield for Platt and Lincoln combined is 1.1		
Source: City of Meriden; compiled by HMA.		

Water from the reservoirs is subjected to physical (filtration) and chemical treatment, while well water is subjected to only chemical treatment. The four surface water treatment facilities in the City have a combined capacity of 10.5 million gallons. The Meriden public water system has a storage capacity of 12.65 million gallons spread among 6 storage facilities. The distribution system for Meriden's water supply consists of approximately 217 miles pipe, four major pumping stations, and two secondary pumping stations.



**Sewage Treatment Plant in South Meriden**

### **Sanitary Sewer System**

The Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF), a division of the Department of Public Utilities is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Meriden sanitary sewer system which consists of approximately 190 miles of piping, three pumping stations, 15,840 individual sewer connections and an advanced wastewater treatment plant. The Engineering Division has the responsibility of sewer system design, design review and inspection of new construction, with the cost of these services being shared with the WPCF.

The wastewater treatment facility, located at 226 Evansville Avenue, employs an activated sludge system for the removal of ammonia and biological oxygen demand (BOD). BOD is a measure of the organic matter present in the wastewater. BOD has traditionally been used to measure of the strength of effluent released from conventional sewage treatment plants

to surface waters or streams. This is because sewage high in BOD can deplete oxygen in receiving waters, causing fish kills and adverse ecosystem changes. The facility has a design capacity of 11.6 million gallons per day, with an average daily flow of 9.2 million gallons per day. This represents approximately 80% of the design capacity flow. Meriden's sewage treatment plant was the recipient of the Environmental Protection Agency's Region 1 award for Operation and Maintenance Excellence in 1986 and 1995.

**Meriden's sewage treatment plant was the recipient of the Environmental Protection Agency's Region 1 award for Operation and Maintenance Excellence in 1986 and 1995.**

The Meriden sanitary sewer system has three pumping stations. The Silver Lake pumping station has recently had two of its original pumps replaced, with the addition of a third pump underway. The Harbor Brook pumping station is scheduled for a complete upgrade as part of an overhaul of the sewage treatment plant. The Cedarwood Valley pumping station had renovations completed two years ago.

**In general, the sanitary sewer system is well-maintained and operated, and only experiences the occasional and normal problems associated with a sewer system of its size.**

An upgrade of the sewage treatment plant and a denitrification project at an estimated cost of \$34 million will upgrade or replace virtually every major pump, motor and piece of equipment at the plant, including the addition of a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system and an additional aeration tank and clarifier. Improvements to the sanitary sewer system as a result of this project will likely reduce the average daily flow experience by the sewer system.

In general, the sanitary sewer system is well-maintained and operated, and only experiences the occasional and normal problems associated with a sewer system of its size.

**Solid Waste Disposal**

The City contracts its solid waste disposal services with the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA), which participates within the Wallingford Project Area. Residential solid wastes are collected once a week and disposed of at the Wallingford Resource Recovery Facility, which consists of a mass-burn solid waste resource recovery, electric generation facility located on South Cherry Street in the Town of Wallingford. The electric generation facility generates 11 megawatts of electricity per hour for Connecticut Light and Power. City sanitation operations include curbside refuse collection, curbside recycling, drop-off bulky waste and drop-off leaf collection. The Wallingford facility provides waste management for four other communities in the region, including Cheshire, Hamden, North Haven and Wallingford.

The Wallingford Resource Recovery Facility is currently operating above processing capacity and at times is forced to divert waste to other facilities.

The City's management of solid waste, through its service contract with CRRA, is an efficient and cost-effective means to provide this municipal service. However, the City is vulnerable to shifts in economy and technology that may affect the costs that the CRRA will face, and inevitably pass on to the communities they service through by means of the rate they

**...the City should focus on its strategies to improve its own waste disposal and recycling efforts.**

charge for their tipping fees. Given these conditions, the City should focus on its strategies to improve its own waste disposal and recycling efforts.

In this vein, the City of Meriden is constructing a new, state-of-the-art recycling facility, combined with a police impound center, to replace the existing recycling center.

The City operates a municipal transfer station located on Evansville Avenue near the airport and the sewage treatment facility. The transfer station is permitted by the DEP Waste Management Bureau to handle up to 100 tons of waste per day.

### **Public Works Garage**

Meriden's Central Maintenance Facility is comprised of three attached buildings located at 55 Michael Drive. The large vehicle repair building is a 9,600 square foot facility with six vehicle bays and three vehicle lifts for repairing and maintaining the larger vehicles in the City of Meriden's fleet. It also includes a welding shop and a bay for washing vehicles. The small vehicle repair building is an 1,800 square foot facility also containing six vehicle bays and three vehicle lifts for small municipal vehicles. The third structure in the complex contains administrative offices and the parts storage area. The building contains 2,160 square feet of space.

The Central Maintenance Facility site also serves as the fueling center for the City of Meriden's vehicles, with two fuel pumping stations for a 10,000 gallon unleaded gasoline tank and two fuel pumping stations for a 10,000 gallon diesel fuel tank. Both tanks are underground storage tanks. In addition, general vehicle storage and snow plow/sander storage occurs on the site.

The repair facilities are currently meeting the demands of Meriden's vehicle fleet. However, the office/parts storage portion of the facility is in need of expansion for additional office space and bulk dry storage. A hazardous materials storage building is also needed, as currently hazardous materials are stored in occupied areas. At the present, office areas are in close proximity to the repair and storage areas; some separation of these uses would be beneficial.

### **General Government Facilities**

In addition to police, fire, education, social service and public works facilities described herein, the City of Meriden has a small number of other governmental facilities. The primary building for City government and service functions is City Hall, a 50,000 square foot facility located at 142 East Main Street. This building houses most of the general government administration offices for the City. The 40,000 square foot Stoddard Building, located at 165 Miller Street, houses the Meriden Health Division as well as a clinic and the State traffic court. The Augusta Curtis Cultural Center at 175 East Main Street has 20,000 square feet of space available for cultural events. The Board of Education offices are housed at 22 Liberty Street, which was built in 1885 and contains 22,628 square feet of space. In



**Meriden City Hall**

addition, the Parks and Recreation Department have numerous small storage buildings located in various City parks.

Future improvements to these facilities include restoration of woodwork and the parapet wall at City Hall, and new bricks and a new elevator at the Stoddard Building. The map titled *Community Facilities*, which follows this page, highlights the locations of Meriden's various community facility assets.

### **Public Library System**

The Curtis Memorial Public Library is located at 105 Miller Street adjacent to the Board of Education building in the City's civic block. Opened in 1903, the library currently has approximately 41,500 registered borrowers and provides the general public with a variety of educational, informational, public service and reference services. The library's collection contains 159,000 books, magazines and other printed materials, as well as 33,224 videos, recordings, computer disks and other non-printed materials. The library's current circulation is estimated at 406,600 items. The library also offers Internet access for the public from 24 computer terminals and 25 other computer terminals. The 48,000 square foot library facility also contains the Meriden Local History Room and the Rotary Job Information Center, which provides job information resources, employment counseling and job search workshops. The Kiwanis Computer Learning Center at the library offers free computer software instruction and computer access to the public, with 8,000 users in the past year. The library also operates a popular Bookmobile service to senior centers and other locations.



**Meriden Public Library**

The library is also a very popular location for community meetings, with four community meeting rooms on-site, and coordinates public programs with outside organizations; the Community Services department coordinates these activities. The library hosted 800 meetings last year, and more than 20,000 people attended programs or events held at the library.

### **Fire Protection Services**

Fire protection services in the City of Meriden are provided by the Meriden Fire Department and the South Meriden Volunteer Fire Department. The Meriden Fire Department is composed of 98 career firefighters operating out of five stations with five engine companies and one truck company. The stations are listed in Table VIII-4.

Founded in 1908, the South Meriden Volunteer Fire Department consists of approximately 30 firefighters, most of whom are Firefighter II and EMT certified, and four response vehicles. The department's sole fire station is located at 31 Camp Street in South Meriden. The department responds to roughly 700 calls per year and assists the Meriden Fire Department with providing fire protection services in the South Meriden area and other parts of the City when needed.



**Parker Hose Engine Co.**

In 2007, the Meriden Fire Department drafted an Apparatus and Vehicle Replacement Plan and a Station Repair Plan in order to outline future

capital program needs for the department. The Apparatus and Vehicle Replacement Plan provides a matrix showing the future apparatus and vehicle needs for the department through Fiscal Year 2018-19. The plan also shows that while many of the current vehicles and pieces of apparatus in service in the Meriden Fire Department were purchased within the past 10 years, a significant number of vehicles and other equipment are older; Station 4's Engine-104 Hahn Pumper actually dates from 1981.

TABLE VIII-4 Meriden Fire Department Stations and Service Areas			
Unit Designation	Location	Area Served	Vehicles/Apparatus
Engine Company 1	168 Capitol Avenue	South Meriden/West Side	Engine 1; Engine 101; Vehicle repair depot
Engine Company 2			
Truck Company 1	61 Pratt Street	Downtown/City-wide rescue & support	Engine 2; Truck 1; Truck 101; TAC 1
Engine Company 3			
Fire Department Headquarters	561 Broad Street	Uptown/South East	Engine 3; Car 1; Car 3; Car 103
Engine Company 4	260 Sherman Avenue	North End/North East	Engine 4; Engine 104
Engine Company 5	1075 East Main Street	East Side	Engine 5; Engine 105; Decon 1

Source: City of Meriden; compiled by HMA.

### Police Protection Services

The Meriden Police Department is staffed by 119 sworn officers and 14 full-time civilian employees. The department also has 9 part-time reserve officers and 38 part-time school crossing guards under its jurisdiction. Police headquarters is located at 50 West Main Street; while the facility is only 18 years old and in generally good condition, it does have some long-term maintenance and security issues that need to be addressed. The department also operates three active substations at 82 East Main Street, the Stop & Shop supermarket on Parker Avenue, and at the Westfield Meriden Shoppingtown mall on Lewis Avenue. In addition, the West Side substation on South Vine Street is currently being reconstructed and remodeled. Finally, the department has a storage facility located at 880 Paddock Avenue.

The Police Department's Neighborhood Initiative Unit is the departmental subdivision that addresses community policing and quality-of-life issues in the City's central neighborhoods. Begun in 2004, the unit has recently expanded its focus area into the northern end of the City, as well as increasing its focus on the Downtown area. The Unit works extensively with the 28 neighborhood associations in the City to identify neighborhood-level, quality-of-life concerns before they erupt into larger problems. Since its creation in 2004, the staff of the Neighborhood Initiative Unit has increased from one sergeant and five officers to one lieutenant, one sergeant and eight officers. Recently released crime statistics indicate that Meriden's crime rate has dropped by over 9% in the past year.

**Recently released crime statistics indicate that Meriden's crime rate has dropped by over 9% in the past year.**

Going forward, the continued success of the Neighborhood Initiative Unit may necessitate the addition of an additional sergeant position and an additional patrol officer for the Unit.

The Police Department has a small number of capital improvement issues which it is currently in the process of evaluating. The department's Access Control System is under review, and additional security improvements at police headquarters are in the planning phase. Improvements to the radio system are needed, as well as replacement of lavatory facilities in the department's cell block and the repaving of the police headquarters parking lot.

### **Senior Affairs**

Senior Affairs functions as the main resource center for programs, activities, and services for elderly residents. In addition, the department oversees the operation of the Meriden Senior Community Center, a 32,000 square foot air-conditioned and handicap-accessible building located in the heart of Meriden's Downtown. The Senior Center is the hub for activities and services for older people, and a visible symbol of Meriden's concern for its older residents. As a multipurpose senior center, it is a community facility in which older people can meet with one another to fulfill many of their social, physical, emotional and intellectual needs.

Moving into the future, it is expected that the demand for home-delivered meals and transportation for the elderly will increase; this situation may lead to the need for additional staff at the Senior Center. It is also likely that the social work component of Senior Affairs will increase, with a greater need for in-home assessments. Additional parking is also a current and future need for the Senior Center. If financially feasible, the initiation of evening and weekend programs at the Senior Center would likely be popular.

### **Youth Services**

The Meriden Youth Services Division is designated by the City of Meriden to provide for the planning, evaluation, coordination, and implementation of a coordinated network of resources and positive opportunities for all Meriden children and youth ages 0-18 and their families. The City funds two full-time positions (a director and a crisis manager), but most funding for Youth Services programs comes via automatic and competitive grants and funding sources such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).

Youth Services offers short-term counseling and support services to youth and families offered on- or off-site. Case Management coordinates comprehensive service plans in conjunction with other social service agencies.

### **Health Services**

The mission of the Meriden Health Division is to protect and promote the physical and environmental well-being of the citizens of Meriden through direct services, wellness promotion and active support of community efforts. The Health Division operates out of the 40,000 square foot Stoddard Municipal Building located at 165 Miller Street. The Health Division is required by law to enforce both City and state public health codes. This municipal public health agency concerns itself primarily with

the health and well-being of citizens through comprehensive program planning and implementation of programs supporting both disease prevention and health promotion.

**Public School System**

The Meriden Public School system consists of eight elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools. In addition, Meriden sends 595 students to the Thomas Edison Magnet Middle School, which is operated by ACES. There are currently three sections of full-day kindergarten located at Barry Elementary School; the remainder of the kindergarten classes in the school system are only half-day. The Board of Education is planning to add more full-day kindergarten capacity through an expansion of Hanover Elementary School. The 13 school facilities are listed in Table VIII-3.

<b>TABLE VIII-3</b>			
<b>Meriden Enrollment by School, 2007-08</b>			
<b>School</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Grades Served</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>
John Barry Elementary School	124 Columbia Street	PK-5	544
Benjamin Franklin Elementary School	426 West Main Street	PK-5	435
Nathan Hale Elementary School	277 Atkins Street Ext.	K-5	622
Hanover Elementary School	208 Main Street	PK-5	590
Thomas Hooker Elementary School	70 Overlook Drive	K-5	517
Casimir Pulaski Elementary School	100 Clearview Avenue	K-5	737
Israel Putnam Elementary School	133 Parker Avenue	K-5	621
Roger Sherman Elementary School	64 North Pearl Street	PK-5	591
Lincoln Middle School	164 Centennial Avenue	6-8	763
Washington Middle School	1225 North Broad Street	6-8	859
Thomas Edison Middle School*	1355 North Broad Street	6-8	595
Maloney High School	121 Gravel Street	9-12	1,280
Platt High School	220 Coe Avenue	9-12	1,169
Special Education - Placed Out			216
*Regional magnet school operated by ACES.			
Source: Meriden Public Schools, Research Dept.; compiled by HMA.			

Current public school enrollment is 9,407 pupils. Elementary enrollment (K-5) is 4,264, middle school enrollment (6-8) is 2,192 and high school enrollment (9-12) is 2,451. Meriden's Pre-Kindergarten program has 251 students, and there are 249 special education students in the school system. Total school enrollment is 782 pupils greater today than it was in 1997-98.

Over the past decade, the high school enrollment has increased by 24.7% while the middle school enrollment has grown by 20.2%. In contrast, the elementary school enrollment has only increased by 23% over the same time period.

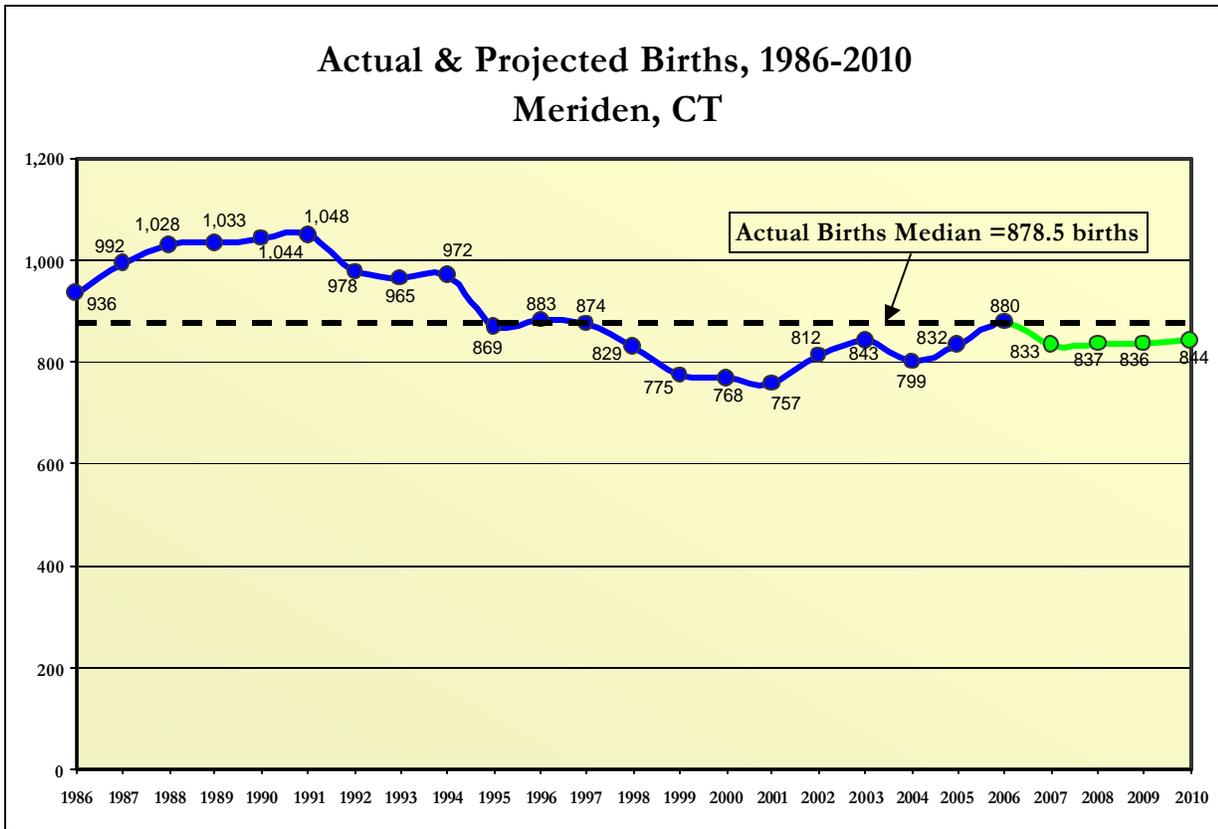
In addition to public and magnet schools, there are four Roman Catholic elementary schools in Meriden: Our Lady of Mount Carmel, located at 115 Lewis Avenue; St. Joseph, located at 159 West Main Street; S. Mary, located at 97 Grove Street; and St. Stanislaus, located at 81 Akron Street. All of these schools are K-8 facilities. Also, Wilcox Tech is a regional vocational high school located at 298 Oregon Avenue.

At the present time, there is no excess school capacity anywhere in the Meriden school system. In a sense, the Meriden school system is operating at peak efficiency; while there is very little unutilized space in the schools, enrollments have not reached a tipping point that would necessitate more extensive school construction or expansions needs. However, the lack of excess capacity also means that were Meriden's school enrollment to rise unexpectedly, class sizes and overcrowding could become an issue that would need to be addressed quickly.

**In a sense, the Meriden school system is operating at peak efficiency; while there is very little unutilized space in the schools, enrollments have not reached a tipping point that would necessitate more extensive school construction or expansions needs.**

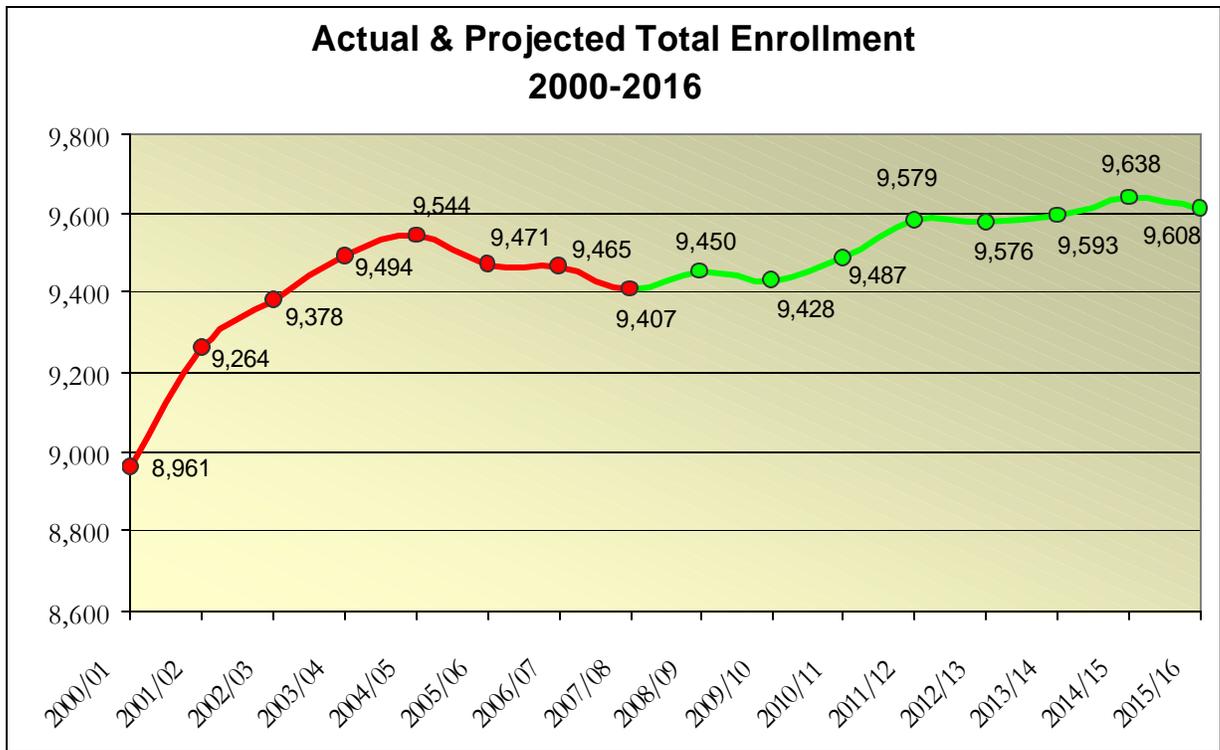
**Birth Trends and Projections**

Birth trends and projections are used to plan for school enrollment. As depicted on the chart entitled *Births, 1986-2010*, resident births in the City of Meriden reached their peak in the early 1990s with a record high of 1,048 births in 1991 and 1,044 births in 1990. Children born in these birth years are now exiting the high school grades. Resident births declined back down to around the 20-year median in the mid 1990s before hitting a 20-year low in 2001. Since 2001, the number of births has once again begun trending upward.



### Future Enrollment Projections

Using a cohort survival methodology and data on the past and projected number of births in the City of Meriden, the Meriden Public Schools projects the 2015-16 school year enrollment for the school district to be 9,608 pupils; this represents an increase of 201 pupils or 2.1% from the 2007-08 enrollment. The grade breakdown of this projected enrollment is 4,485 elementary school students, 2,155 middle school students, 2,468 high school students and 500 pre-kindergarten and special education students. **As compared to the 2007-08 enrollment levels, elementary school enrollment is projected to increase by 5.2% and high school enrollment is projected to increase by 0.7%, while the middle school enrollment is expected to actually decrease by -1.7%.**



### Future Public School Facility Plans and Considerations

The City of Meriden has recently issued an RFQ for the expansion of Hanover School to accommodate full-day kindergarten. The expansion of Hanover School would provide 8 full-day kindergarten classes that would serve the entire City of Meriden. Enrollment in the full-day kindergarten program would likely be determined through a lottery process.

Both Maloney High School and Platt High School are projected to be renovated over the coming years. The complete rebuilding of the high schools would require the City to find two 45 acre developable sites within Meriden, a daunting task given the lack of available land in the City. While

not materially expanding the capacity of either high school, the renovations will help modernize the schools and better fit them to current programmatic needs. The cost of renovating the high schools is estimated at between \$70 million and \$75 million each.

Further out in the future, the City will likely undertake renovation /expansion projects at Hooker Elementary School and Pulaski Elementary School. These two projects, while still only in the discussion phase, will likely expand the capacity of both schools to a certain degree.

Meriden's enrollment projections for the coming years show a much slower rate of increase in enrollment in the school system, with an actual decrease in enrollment projected for the middle school grades. However, toward the end of the projection period, there appears to be another demographic "bubble" entering the elementary school grades, similar to the one that started in the early 1990s and is now exiting the high schools. Due to the lack of excess student capacity in the school system, the City should remain vigilant on the issue of school enrollment so that any unexpected changes in enrollment can be addressed quickly and effectively. Also, should the Board of Education decide to pursue City-wide full-day kindergarten, additional physical space may be needed.

### **C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

For a community of approximately 60,000 people, the City of Meriden provides an extensive range of municipal services. Public and non-profit community facilities provide for the convenience, health and welfare of residents and constitute a significant component of the City's quality of life. Maintaining an adequate array of community facilities in good condition to meet changing needs is an important aspect of local government.

Based upon the information presented and discussed previously in this memorandum, the following goals and objectives for the provision of community facilities and services have been developed.

**Goal: Promote energy-efficient and sustainable patterns of development, practices and operations for the City and its residents.**

**Objectives:**

- Continue a committee to explore the use of energy by the City and recommend measures to improve efficiency and sustainability.

**Goal: Continue to improve and enhance police and fire services to maintain a high level of fire suppression and rescue service, as well as expanding effective community policing initiatives.**

**Due to the lack of excess student capacity in the school system, the City should remain vigilant on the issue of school enrollment so that any unexpected changes in enrollment can be addressed quickly and effectively.**

**Promote energy-efficient and sustainable patterns of development, practices and operations for the City and its residents.**

**Continue to improve and enhance police and fire services to maintain a high level of fire suppression and rescue service, as well as expanding effective community policing initiatives.**

**Continue to meet the health and social service needs of Meriden residents in a coordinated and efficient manner.**

**Objectives:**

- Budget for capital and programmatic improvements for police and fire services in the most cost-effective manner.
- In addition to expanding the Neighborhood Initiative Unit target area into the northern end of the City, examine whether other areas of Meriden could benefit from inclusion in the Unit's target area.
- Build upon the success of the Neighborhood Initiative Unit by securing funding for additional police officer positions within the Unit.

**Goal: Continue to meet the health and social service needs of Meriden residents in a coordinated and efficient manner.**

**Objectives**

**Provide the highest level of educational services to the children of Meriden.**

- In the future, focus additional resources on enhancing the Senior Affairs department's ability to provide home-delivered meals, transportation and in-home assessments for elderly residents.
- Expand efforts to reduce school truancy among Meriden youth.

**Goal: Provide the highest level of educational services to the children of Meriden.**

**Objectives:**

**Provide enhanced waste disposal, sewage treatment, and other public works infrastructure to ensure that the City of Meriden can meet both its current and future waste disposal needs.**

- Create a comprehensive and cost-effective renovation program for both Maloney High School and Platt High School that provides a state-of-the-art learning environment for Meriden's students.
- Continue to pursue the expansion of Hanover Elementary School to provide greater access to full-day kindergarten for Meriden families.
- Comprehensively evaluate the physical and programmatic needs of each of Meriden's school facilities, identify pertinent issues to be addressed, and develop a plan for addressing identified needs through renovations, expansions and programmatic changes over the long-term.
- Continually evaluate the need for additional school system programs such as universal kindergarten and new curriculum programs so that emerging education needs can be addressed quickly and effectively.
- Identify key properties to be acquired for potential future expansion of school facilities.

**Goal: Provide enhanced waste disposal, sewage treatment, and other public works infrastructure to ensure that the City of Meriden can meet both its current and future waste disposal needs.**

**Objectives:**

- Continue to pursue the upgrading of the sewage treatment plant and the denitrification project.
- Move from studying to implementing the Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) removal project to reduce treatment plant loading.
- Continue to pursue the construction of a new recycling facility, combined with a police impound center.

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## IX. Natural Resources

### A. INTRODUCTION

The quality of life in a community is largely determined by the quality, quantity and distribution of its cultural and natural resources. Therefore, the protection of these resources is key in ensuring that the quality of life in Meriden is preserved. The natural resources in Meriden influence the quality of life in the community. However, quantifying this influence is difficult due to the intangible nature of its benefits. Some tangible public benefits can be described and which in part can be attributed to the open space and natural resources in the City. These include the enhancement of real estate values and economic growth due to the residents' proximity to open space, which makes Meriden a desirable community in which to live and work.



**View of Ridgeline of South Mountain**

### B. GEOLOGY

Meriden's geologic landscape is characterized in part by the hills and ridgelines. The Hanging Hills, collectively known as West Peak, East Peak and South Mountain are such formations that are focal points of the landscape. The Hanging Hills are approximately 1,000 foot high broken escarpments of traprock that are part of the Metacomet Ridge that extends northward to Massachusetts.

**The natural resources in Meriden influence the quality of life in the community.**

The bedrock geology in Meriden (illustrated on the map titled *Bedrock Geology*) is made up primarily of brownstone, also referred to by geologists as Arkose. This sedimentary rock most likely originated from the deposits of the many streams that flowed from the Eastern and Western Uplands of Connecticut millions of years ago. Associated with brownstone are bodies of basalt (traprock), which appear as igneous intrusions in the sedimentary rocks. The largest of these traprock features are East Peak, West Peak, and South Mountain. These ridgelines are a dominant physical feature of Meriden and are recognized and protected by the State and City through its Ridgeline Protection Ordinance.

### C. SOILS

Wetlands are defined by many distinguishing features, the most notable of which are the presence of standing water for a period of time during the growing season, saturated soil conditions, and organisms, especially vegetation that are adapted to or tolerant of saturated soils. Wetlands are not easily defined and definitions are variable between regulatory agencies. In Connecticut, wetlands are defined by soil type, specifically saturated or hydric soils, which are classified by the NRCS as either Poorly Drained, Very Poorly Drained, Alluvial/Floodplain or any combination of these. These are considered wetland soils and are protected under the City's inland wetland regulations.



**Wetland Area on Land Trust Property**

Wetlands are important for a variety of reasons including:

- Wetlands are among the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world;
- Wetlands provide habitat that is critical to a variety of plant and animal species, including threatened and endangered species;
- Wetlands often function like natural sponges, storing water (floodwater or surface water) and slowly releasing it thus reducing the likelihood of flood damage to personal property or agriculture by controlling the rate and volume of runoff;
- Wetlands help improve water quality by intercepting surface runoff and removing or retaining its nutrients, processing organic wastes and reducing sediment before it reaches open water;
- Wetlands provide outdoor recreational opportunities (i.e., wildlife viewing/photography, nature study).

Unique wetland types are those found on alluvial and floodplain soils. Due to the excessive permeability of the soil, these areas are very susceptible to rapid infiltration of pollutants. Pollution infiltration can have devastating effects on groundwater drinking supplies. In Meriden, 1,085 acres or 7% of its land consists of wetland-designated soils. The locations of wetland soils are illustrated on the map titled *Environmentally Sensitive Soils*.



**Farm on Westfield Rd.**

### **Prime and Statewide Important Farmland Soils**

Prime farmland is defined by the NRCS as “land that has the best combination of physical and chemical properties for producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses.” Prime farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to modern agricultural methods.

Additionally, statewide important farmland soils are those areas that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops. Some may actually produce as high a yield as prime farmland if conditions are favorable. Meriden has nearly 2,388 acres designated as prime farmland soils and another 1,906 acres listed as additional statewide important farmland soils. Collectively they account for 4,294 acres or 28% of Meriden’s land. As can be seen on the *Environmentally Sensitive Soils* Map, most of these soil areas have been developed over the years

### **Steep Slope Soils**

Areas of steep slopes are important to identify primarily due to their effect on development. While the stability of a slope is dependant on many variables, including vegetative cover and the underlying geology, as a general rule it can be expected that slopes greater than 15% pose significant constraints to development due to the difficulty building foundations and

**Meriden has nearly 2,388 acres designated as prime farmland soils and another 1,906 acres listed as additional statewide important farmland soils.**

siting septic systems. In addition, these areas pose additional hazards such as increased erosion, surface runoff, siltation and flooding of watercourses. Therefore, identifying areas of steep slopes is an important component to the natural resource inventory. The areas identified as steep slope soils cover 1,875 acres and account for 12% of the city's land. These areas are illustrated on the map titled *Environmentally Sensitive Soils*.

## D. WATER RESOURCES

Water resources include watercourses, waterbodies, watersheds, and aquifers. Hanover Pond, Merimere Reservoir, Bradley Hubbard Reservoir, Beaver Pond, Silver Lake, Baldwin's Pond, Mirror Lake, Bishops Pond, and High Hill Pond are major waterbodies within in the city. Quinnipiac River, Harbor Brook, Sodom Brook, Willow Brook, and Spoon Shop Brook are significant watercourses flowing through Meriden. These water features are fed by a network of tributaries and are best defined by the watersheds that supply them.

### Subregional Watersheds

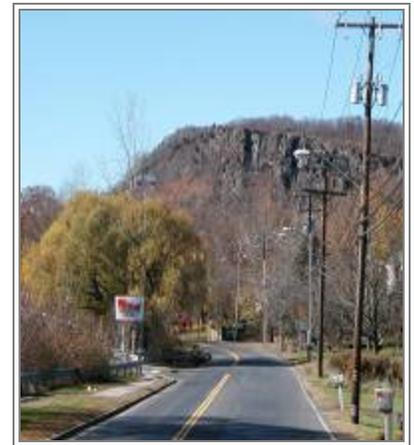
A watershed is defined as all the land and waterways that drain into the same body of water. All the surface water that drains Meriden's 24 square miles begins its flow at the highest point of one of six subregional watersheds. These watersheds are delineated on the map titled *Subregional Watersheds*.

Watersheds define the natural drainage systems in Meriden. Rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands and floodplains are the components of the watershed that contain the attributes to support a variety of plant and animal life and attenuate flood conditions. Managing these watersheds in a sustainable manner is critical to ensure that the attributes they contain and the benefits they provide will be around for years to come. Of the eleven subregional watersheds within the city, three drain 13,629 acres or 89% of the city's land area: the Quinnipiac River, Harbor Brook, and Sodom Brook.

### Floodplains

A floodplain is a broad and relatively flat area of a river or stream valley to either side of the main watercourse. This floodplain is formed by a series of flood events, which spill over the riverbanks and work and rework the sediment. A 100-year flood is a flood that has a one percent probability of occurring in a given year, or is likely to occur once every hundred years.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has determined areas within floodplains and their boundaries. Floodways are those areas within the floodplains that convey the floodwaters. The floodways are subject to water being carried at relatively high velocities and forces. The floodway fringe are those areas of the floodplain outside of the floodway which are subject to inundation but do not convey the floodwaters. Floodplains are delineated on the map titled *FEMA Floodzones*.



**“Hanging Hills”, South Mountain**



**Hanover Pond**



**Broad Brook Reservoir Dam**

### Aquifers

While groundwater can be defined simply as water lying below the surface of the ground, an aquifer is more specifically defined as “any geologic formation that allows for the withdrawal of useable amount of water.”<sup>5</sup> In most cases, the use of this water involves potable water supply, but not always. Groundwater flow in aquifers is dictated by the characteristics of the local bedrock, geology and in part to the properties of the overlying surficial materials.

In Meriden, the Evansville (East/West), Mule, Platt, Lincoln, and Columbus Park well fields are examples of aquifers that have been developed into active water supplies.

### Aquifer Protection Areas

Many aquifers across the state are threatened by contamination due to potentially contaminating land uses. To address this problem, Connecticut has established the Aquifer Protection Program (C.G.S § 22a-354a et. sec.). The purpose of this program is to identify critical water supply areas and to protect them from pollution by managing land use. To satisfy their statutory requirement, the DEP, in conjunction with the local/regional water authorities, have identified over 120 Aquifer Protection Areas (APA) across the State. Two Level A APA s and 4 Level B APAs are located in Meriden.

APAs must meet the criterion of containing a public water supply well that is located in stratified drift and services more than 1,000 people. Meriden is in the process of drafting regulations that would limit the types of land uses that could be sited in the “protection area,” which coincides with the well recharge area of the aquifer.

The protection areas have been delineated by the local/regional water authorities and submitted to the DEP for review. The distribution of the APA and the public water supply wells in Meriden are illustrated on the map titled *Groundwater Resources*. Also included on this map are the locations of the active wells.

**The combination of varied topography, forested tracts, and numerous rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds provides exceptional habitat for a variety of plants and animals.**

In February 2009, the City Aquifer Protection Agency adopted regulations covering specified land use activities within the Level A areas in the City. Development regulations (zoning) must be adjusted to be in compliance with Level A Aquifer protection areas as approved by the State.

### **E. SIGNIFICANT HABITATS AND STATE LISTED SPECIES**

At first glance, Meriden may not seem like the kind of place that would have abundant diversity of plant and animal life. Based on the population density of the city alone, it would appear to those unfamiliar with Meriden

<sup>5</sup> Understanding Groundwater, Protecting a Natural Resource, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, 1998.

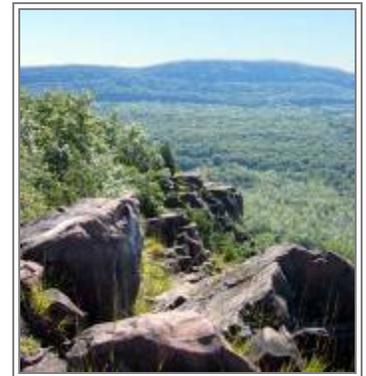
that the city is primarily a developed urban city. While this description may fit some parts of Meriden, other parts support a wide variety of plant and animal habitats. The combination of varied topography, forested tracts, and numerous rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds provides exceptional habitat for a variety of plants and animals. The following describes some of the specialized habitats that warrant special attention. These areas are identified on the map titled *Significant Habitats and State Listed Species*.

### **Talus, Ledge & Rock Outcropping**

Talus slopes generally form underneath ledge or rock outcropping from the fragments of rock that dislodge from these geologic formations. The small crevices between the rocks provide refuge for a variety of animals. In addition, crevices between the rock tend to create a cooler environment which, combined with the rich soils found in these areas, can provide favorable growing conditions for a variety of plant species.

Good examples of this habitat type include the trap rock ridges in Meriden. East Peak, West Peak, South Mountain, as well as portions of Chauncey Peak contain talus, ledge and rock outcrop habitats. These areas are illustrated on the map titled *Significant Habitats and State Listed Species*.

Smaller rock outcrops, though locally important, were not specifically identified. These areas are too numerous to mention and are prevalent in Meriden, particularly along the northeastern and northwestern borders where the topographic relief is the greatest.



**Typical Ledge Habitat**

### **Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Species**

In Connecticut, the protection of unique biological communities is held to a high standard. In support of this, the Connecticut DEP has inventoried sites across the state that contain habitats of endangered, threatened, and special concern species. These habitat areas are perceived as unique and receive special protection status from the state. The state has identified these sites in a special survey called The Connecticut Natural Diversity Database, which is a centralized inventory of these unique habitat locations and represents the findings of years worth of biological surveys.

Information from the state's database was transcribed onto maps, represented by circles of a half mile in radius. These sites, commonly referred to as "blobs," are represented ambiguously because of the many threats they face. These threats include collection, because of their beauty, uniqueness or purported medical or economic values. Even well-intended observers and photographers have been known to accidentally destroy sites.

The location of sites within the city identified by the Connecticut Natural Diversity Database are illustrated on the map titled *Significant Habitats and State Listed Species*. In addition to generalizing the exact location of these sites, the category in which the sites are located has also been removed. This is to further ensure the protection of these unique resources.

### Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife corridors are contiguous segments of land that create a link between animal habitats by providing transportation routes for animals to use to reach breeding grounds or forage areas. Many wildlife corridors include riparian zones that line rivers and streams and include both undeveloped and partially developed areas. In most cases, lands that comprise wildlife corridors are privately-owned and vulnerable to development or activities destructive to wildlife and their ecology.

In Connecticut, there is no formal inventory of wildlife migration routes that could be used to identify existing wildlife corridors. As a result, we must attempt to infer the wildlife migration patterns. This is a difficult assignment due to the many variables involved. However, potential wildlife corridors can be identified based on variables such as land use (undeveloped land), proximity to protected open space, presence of streams, ridge tops, wetlands, and/or forested lands, and proximity to “sensitive areas of special concern.” The caveat is that these potential areas require additional scientific study to further refine their boundaries. Potential wildlife corridors are identified on the map titled *Significant Habitats and State Listed Species* based on the variables listed above.

**In Meriden, a 100 foot buffer was recommended along watercourse where riparian corridor efforts should be considered.**

### Riparian Corridors

Riparian corridors, or riparian buffers, are undisturbed, naturally vegetated areas contiguous with and parallel to rivers and streams. The benefits of riparian buffers are well-documented. To summarize, riparian buffers protect water resources by improving water quality through filtering pollutants and sediments, stabilizing stream banks and river beds, and improving wildlife habitat by providing travel corridors and improving aquatic habitat.

The recommended buffer width of riparian corridors varies depending on what the goal of the buffer is. There is no single generic buffer width that will keep the water clean, stabilize the bank, protect fish and wildlife habitat, and satisfy human demands on the land. The minimum acceptable width is one that provides acceptable levels of all needed benefits at an acceptable cost. In Meriden, a 100 foot buffer was recommended along watercourses where riparian corridor efforts should be considered. These areas are illustrated on the map titled *Significant Habitats and State Listed Species*.

# X. Parks, Recreation & Open Space

## A. INTRODUCTION

The quality, quantity and variety of parks and open spaces are important attributes that help define the character of a community. The strength of Meriden's community character lies in its stable residential neighborhoods and the parks and recreational facilities that serve these neighborhoods. In addition, the natural "passive" open spaces add to the character and provide a respite from the otherwise urbanized landscape. The benefits of parks and open space are multifaceted in that they provide opportunities for social interaction and healthful activities, help preserve natural features and environments, help improve air and water quality and lower noise pollution, enhance community character, positively affecting property values and the marketability of communities.

Recreation activity has evolved over the years to the point where organized sports and formal recreation programs are the focus of adolescent active recreation. The increasingly high participation and longer length and variety of sport seasons require dedicated facilities, an important consideration when creating capital improvement plans for the community. In addition, providing opportunities for informal recreation activities (i.e. walking, jogging, hiking, biking) is also important to meet the growing needs of the community. Greenways or linear trails, such as the Metacomet Trail, Mattabesett Trail, and Quinnipiac Gorge Trail, help provide this opportunity. When properly planned, greenways can link existing parks and open space areas with neighborhoods and community facilities, including schools, and provide an interconnected network serving City residents.

Open space preservation, in many instances, is a matter not only of maintaining ecological equilibrium but also of economic importance. As consistently demonstrated in the real estate market, people are willing to pay more money for a home in close proximity to parks and open space than a similar home that does not offer this amenity.<sup>6</sup> Open space, if included as a major design component in community development, can help provide for the continuance of an intimate connection between the natural environment and the citizens of the community.

Open space policy is best accomplished through the development of goals and objectives that clearly articulate the open space needs of the community and prioritize the protection of sensitive natural areas and the enhancement of recreational areas. This helps create a focus that is critical in defining and advancing the open space vision of the community. Proper allocation of Meriden's finite natural resources is a balancing act that involves consideration of both the open space needs and the economic development needs of the community.



Hunter Memorial Golf Course

**As consistently demonstrated in the real estate market, people are willing to pay more money for a home in close proximity to parks and open space than a similar home that does not offer this amenity.<sup>6</sup>**

**The existing inventory of parks and open space can be considered one of Meriden's greatest assets as they provide green space that helps break up the development patterns while affording recreational opportunities to the surrounding neighborhoods.**

<sup>6</sup> Crompton, John L., Parks and Economic Development, American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service Report Number 502, November 2001.



**Baldwin Pond Park**

In recent years, a new approach to open space planning has emerged that involves linking or expanding existing open space areas with other protected open space in the region. This approach transcends municipal boundaries and looks more broadly at the regional open space network and tries to find ways to become a part of it. Greenway planning is an example of this approach to open space planning that has been embraced by the State in the formation of the Connecticut Greenways Council, a part of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. This approach not only provides a regional open space network, but also improves the communities' natural infrastructure by providing close-to-home recreational opportunities.

**B. EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

The City of Meriden has long been cognizant of the unique natural resources that help define the landscape of the community. From the traprock ridgelines of Hubbard and Giuffrida Parks to the scenic gorge along the Quinnipiac River, Meriden has a history of protecting its unique natural resources by preserving open space. While the specific interests range from the protection of unique habitats to the need for active recreation facilities exist, the common theme is the importance of open space to the quality of life for Meriden residents.



**Softball Fields at Thomas Edison School**

The inventory compiled in this document was based on a broad definition of open space to include: city and state parks, natural areas; flood control lands, recreational facilities associated with schools, conservation easements, Public Act 490 lands, and private open space. The map titled *Existing Parks, Recreation and Open Space* is included to provide an illustration of the open space and recreation fabric of the community.



**Maloney High School Athletic Field**

The inventory compiled in this report was based on a broad definition of open space to include: city and state parks, natural areas; flood control lands, recreational facilities associated with schools, conservation easements, Public Act 490 lands, and private open space. While the latter two categories may not be open to the public and are not permanently protected open space, their presence affects the visual open space appearance of the community and their loss would represent an erosion of Meriden's community character. Table IX-1 provides a summary of open space lands by active and passive use and ownership category. Meriden's current inventory of open space and recreation areas is 2,324.2 acres, which represents approximately 15% of Meriden's 24 square miles. Please note that this inventory includes open space associated with schools and private organizations such as the YMCA.

**Active Recreational Facilities Overview**

Active recreational facilities are defined as areas that accommodate organized sporting activities such as baseball, basketball, soccer, or tennis. These facilities may also provide playscapes for younger children. For the purposes of this inventory, active recreational facilities have been further categorized by whether they are associated with a school facility.

Table IX-1			
Parks and Open Space Inventory			
Active Open Space		Passive Open Space	
Public Parks	Acres	Public Ownership	Acres
Carroll Park	5.5	Bailey Ave Open Space Area	51.2
Cedar Park	1.7	Baldwin Pond	18.7
Ceppa Field	8.6	Beaver Pond	14.2
City Park	7.2	Brookside Park	11.2
Columbus Park	13.8	Dossin Beach	11
Crescent Park	0.8	Gillman Park	5.1
Falcon Park	26.9	Giuffrida Park	485.4
Habershon Park	17.6	Hubbard Park Passive Area <sup>(2)</sup>	824.4
Hubbard Park Active Area <sup>(2)</sup>	49.2	Ives Park	8.4
Hunter Golf Course	198.4	Quinnipiac Park	31.4
Kogut Memorial Field	3.5	Unnamed Open Space (3)	248.9
Johnson Hill Park	2.7	New Dam / Black Pond (State of CT)	21.6
John Zajac Park	1.4	Subtotal:	1,731.5
Kronenberg Park	14.1		
Nessing Field	11.8		
North End Field	6	<u>Conservation Easements</u>	
Skate Park	0.3	Conservation Easements <sup>(4)</sup>	36
St. John's Park	3.9		
Washington Park	11.3		
Thorpe Ave Softball Complex	44.8		
Subtotal:	429.5		
<u>Public School<sup>(1)</sup></u>			
Hanover School	2.7		
John Barry School	1.2	<u>Private Ownership</u>	
Lincoln School	3.4	Meriden Land Trust	5.6
Maloney School	13.3	Nature Conservancy	15.7
Nathan Hale School	2.8	Misc. Private Open Space (5)	32.1
Platt School	12.6	Subtotal:	53.4
Putnam School	2.5		
Thomas Edison School	4.8		
Thomas Hooker School	5.3		
Wilcox Tech. School	8.3		
Subtotal:	56.9		
<u>Private Ownership</u>			
Legion Field	5.5		
MidState Soccer Fields	6.5		
YMCA	40.9		
Subtotal:	52.9		
<b>Active Total Acres</b>	<b>539.3</b>	<b>Passive Total Acres</b>	<b>1,784.9</b>
<b>Grand Total: 2,324.2 Acres</b>			

<sup>(1)</sup> Acreage represents area used for recreational purposes only.

<sup>(2)</sup> Inclusive of area only within Meriden an additional 930 acres is located outside of Meriden.

<sup>(3)</sup> Unnamed open space includes un-named natural areas and passive open space such as flood control.

<sup>(4)</sup> Not included in the tabulation of open space since the land covered by the conservation easement may be privately held.

<sup>(5)</sup> Deed restricted private open space from subdivisions.



**Fairway at Hunter Memorial Golf Course**

Meriden's diverse array of active recreational facilities is an asset to the City and its residents. The parks, school facilities, and open spaces included in the following inventory represent a broad spectrum of active uses, including a BMX track, public golf course, baseball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts, and playscapes. These parks, schools, and open spaces in total comprise over 539 acres for public active recreational use. Of the 539 acres, 429.5 acres are public parks, 56.9 acres are school associated recreational facilities, and 52.9 acres are privately owned but available to the public.

In addition to the numerous recreation facilities and open spaces owned and maintained by the City of Meriden, a few privately held facilities such as the Midstate soccer fields and Legion ballfields also are open to the public. Although the City exercises no direct control over the use of these facilities, the properties are integral parts of the overall recreation and open space fabric in Meriden. Thus, these properties should be factored into parks policy and planning, as their existence and use are acknowledged in the City's parks system.

Table IX-2 provides a summary matrix of Meriden's freestanding parks, open space, and recreational facilities. Table IX-3 summarizes Meriden's recreational facilities associated with schools.

**Table IX-2**

**Matrix of Meriden's Free Standing Parks, Open Space, & Recreational Facilities**

Facility Name	Acreage	Playscape	Pavilion	Picnic Area Benches	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Baseball Field	Little League /T-Ball	Softball Field	Soccer Field	Football Field	Water Park	Golf Course	Skate Park	BMX Track	Trails	Undeveloped Open Space	Restrooms
Bailey Ave Open Space	51.2																X	
Baldwin Pond	18.7									1							X	
Beaver Pond	14.2	1															X	
Brookside Park	11.2																X	
Carroll Park	5.5	1				1											X	
Cedar Park	1.7	1				1												
Cerro Field	16.3	1				1	1				1							X
City Park	7.2	1										1						
Columbus Park	13.8	1		4					3	1							X	X
Crescent Park	0.8	1																
Falcon Park	26.9									1	1				X		X	X
Gillman Park	5.1																X	X
Gufrida Park	485.4			X												X	X	X
Habershon Park	17.6	2	X	X	2	1	1	3									X	X
Hubbard Park	864.4	1	X	X	2											X	X	X
Hunter Golf Course	198.4												X					
Ives Park	8.4	1								1							X	
Koout Memorial Field	3.9							2										
Johnson Hill Park	2.7					1											X	
John Zajac Park	1.4	1				1												
Kronenberg Park	14.1									2							X	
Legion Field	5.5						1											
Midstate Soccer Fields	6.4									2								
Nessing Field	11.8								2								X	X
North End Field	6					1		3										X
Quinnipiac Park	31.4			X												X	X	
Skate Park	0.3													X				
St. John's Park	3.9	1				1	3		1									
Thorpe Ave Softball Complex	44.8							2	5								X	
Washington Park	11.3	1			2	1			3		1							

Source: HMA Survey

**Table IX-3**

**Matrix of Meriden's Recreational Facilities Associated With Schools**

Facility Name	Parcel Area (Acres)	Rec. Area (Acres)	Playscape	Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Baseball Field	Little League / T-Ball	Softball Field	Soccer Field	Football Field	Swimming Pool	Track & Field	Restrooms / Field House
Hanover School	6.6	2.7	2										
John Barry School	6.2	1.2							1				
Lincoln School	12.2	3.4						2					
Maloney School	26.6	13.3		4		1				1		1	X
Nathan Hale School	8.4	2.8	2						1				
Platt School	25	12.6		4		1		1		1		1	X
Putnam School	5.5	2.5	1										
Thomas Edison School	18.4	4.8						2	1				
Thomas Hooker School	24.3	5.3	1			1	2						
Wilcox School	31.2	8.3		4	1			1					

Source: HMA Survey

**Passive Recreation and Open Space**

Passive recreational facilities are areas that provide low-impact recreation such as hiking or picnicking with minimal development or improvements. If improvements have been made they typically include little more than park benches or picnic areas. Some areas included in this inventory function as natural conservation areas and are generally left as natural, undeveloped open space.

Hubbard Park is located in the Northwest corner of the City and is divided into two distinct sections by Interstate 691. The highway separates the natural area from the developed recreation area. The park is one of the area’s greatest resources and is a regional destination for year-round use.

One of the unique features of the park is the “Hanging Hills” or East/West Peak, which are part of the Metacomet Ridge. The “Hanging Hills” are considered the highest mountain within 25 miles of the coastline from parts of Maine to Florida. Castle Craig sits atop East Peak and offers spectacular views of the Greater Meriden area.

The developed area of the park contains Mirror Lake, tennis courts, pavilion, picnic areas, playscapes, ample parking and other amenities. Mirror Lake is the centerpiece of the south side of Hubbard Park with a man-made waterfall and fountains. The area north of the highway has numerous hiking trails traversing the varied topography and terrain. The most notable trail is the Metacomet Trail, which is part of the statewide blue trail system.

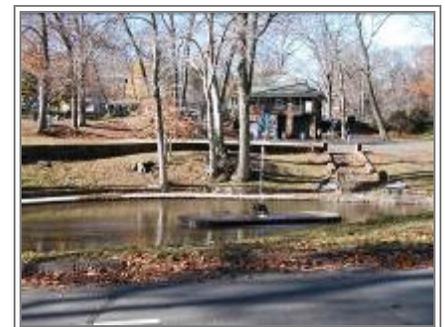
Giuffrida Park is located adjacent to the Hunter Memorial Golf Course in the northeastern corner of the City. This large natural area is a popular destination for hikers and nature lovers. The Mattabesett trail section of the Blue Trail and several local trails skirt around Crescent Lake and ascend Mount Lamentation and Chauncey Peak. The trails have easy terrain particularly around the lake, with much steeper areas along the trap rock ridges approaching Chauncey Peak.

It is important to note that the land included in the inventory of passive recreation and open space is not necessarily land that is protected in perpetuity. While it is reasonable to expect that land owned and maintained by the City of Meriden will remain as open space well into the future, non-



**Hiking Trail at Giuffrida Park**

**The “Hanging Hills” are considered the highest mountain within 25 miles of the coastline from parts of Maine to Florida.**



**Hubbard Park Fountain**

governmental agencies have demonstrated a propensity to divest themselves of excess lands.

### **Future Open Space System**

The City of Meriden is fortunate to have an existing park and open space system that is in relatively good condition, well distributed geographically, and diverse in the types of uses accommodated. In looking to the future, it will be important to maintain parks and open spaces that are adequate in extent, strategic in location and equitable in distribution in order to meet the unique active and passive needs of the City's population. The future of existing parks and open space will depend in part on the efficient use of the existing facilities as well as the maintenance and rehabilitation of facilities requiring improvements.

An important component of the open space plan is identifying locations within the City to focus future open space protection efforts. In order to become proactive in implementing such a policy, it is necessary to develop criteria from which to identify whether a site that becomes available for acquisition possesses unique characteristics that will enhance the City's overall open space network or will provide a significant benefit to City residents in the provision of needed recreational resources. The map titled *Proposed Parks & Open Space Plan* follows this page. The following is a list of objectives that can be utilized in focusing future open space protection efforts:

- Link existing parks and open spaces together to form interconnected greenways within the city or on a larger regional open space network.
- Adjacent to and complementary to existing parks and/or open space owned by the City of Meriden, neighboring municipalities, the State of Connecticut or a private entity.
- Preserves natural drainage areas including waterways and surrounding wetlands and floodplains
- Protects existing and potential public drinking water supplies, including groundwater supplies.
- Protects unique and significant natural features including critical or threatened habitats
- Preserves agricultural land
- Preserves and protects ridgelines
- Has multiple recreational or open space values (i.e., can be used for several different passive and/or active recreational uses).

**The City of Meriden is fortunate to have an existing park and open space system that is in relatively good condition, well distributed geographically, and diverse in the types of uses accommodated.**



**Open Space Along Quinnipiac River**

**Link existing parks and open spaces together to form interconnected greenways within the city or on a larger regional open space network.**



**Mirror Lake at Hubbard Park**

A municipal open space planning publication has outlined factors that a community should consider in order to maximize its funding opportunities.<sup>7</sup> These include the following:

- Invest resources to develop a natural resource inventory of the City and assemble key parcel data for priority sites;
- Work with neighboring municipalities to advance joint preservation projects;
- Develop a clear and accurate map that shows public and private protected open space, and proposed open space acquisition areas and corridors. Include the map with any funding applications;
- Study the goals of the potential funding organizations and assess which goals overlap with those of the City. Also, identify specific sites or areas that may meet a particular organization's goals. For example, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection considers, among other factors, whether a parcel is: significant in size, regionally accessible, contiguous to other state holdings, unprotected by regulation or adjacent to water;
- Creatively integrate volunteer, corporate and non-profit assistance to advance open space protection goals and objectives.

**Creatively integrate volunteer, corporate and non-profit assistance to advance open space protection goals and objectives.**

**Meriden should look towards the future by identifying and prioritizing potential expansion of these existing open spaces, while also looking to create linkages that provide desirable connections amongst them.**

### **Expanding and Linking Existing Open Space through Greenways and Trails**

While the current City parks and recreation facilities offer residents numerous opportunities for active and passive recreation, Meriden should look toward the future by identifying and prioritizing potential expansion of these existing open spaces, while also looking to create linkages that provide desirable connections amongst them. The City should strive to more comprehensively connect the Quinnipiac Trail with other sensitive areas, such as water resource habitat areas adjacent to existing open spaces in south Meriden, working with the State, Wallingford and Cheshire.

These trail networks coupled with other local trails and sidewalks provide a solid foundation toward achieving an interconnected and accessible greenways and trail system. When properly planned, greenways can link existing parks and open space areas with neighborhoods and community facilities such as schools, and provide a pedestrian friendly environment to serve residents. Greenways greatly influence the natural landscape by providing a natural or open space edge to an otherwise developed area. It is at this edge that open space contrasts with development and is so much more inviting by virtue of this contrast. Open space edges and borders can serve to enclose and define development and prevent a continuous

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<sup>7</sup> Techniques, Report #28 Municipal Open Space Planning, Capitol Region Council of Governments, Spring 2000.

**The City has a wonderful opportunity to develop, over time, an integrated system of open spaces, parks, and recreational facilities linked by a network of greenways.**

unattractive sprawl. The maintenance of vegetative buffers along roads and stream corridors are particularly useful in this regard.

### **Riparian Corridor Focus Areas**

The protection of land directly adjacent to the City's watercourses, including wetlands and floodplains, is an important focus of the City's future open space plan. Continued implementation of the wetland and floodplain regulations to ensure that the watercourses are properly protected from development and storm water runoff is recommended. In addition, protection or acquisition of parcels adjacent to watercourses susceptible to flooding or parcels that contain important natural resources will help preserve the City's riparian habitats and water quality.

The protection of riparian corridors is an important component to the implementation of future open space protection efforts. These corridors, and their associated tributaries and waterbodies, form a network that can potentially link with the City's open space and recreation resources. The City has a wonderful opportunity to develop, over time, an integrated system of open spaces, parks and recreational facilities linked by a network of greenways. Riparian corridors offer another option to form these important linkages within this interconnected system of greenways.

**The preservation of the remaining farmland in Meriden would help retain a sense of the former rural heritage of the City.**

### **Farmland Protection**

The preservation of the remaining farmland in Meriden would help retain a sense of the former rural heritage of the City. To assist municipalities in the preservation of farmland, the Connecticut Department of Agriculture has established a joint State-Town Farmland Preservation Program as a means to limit the conversion of prime farmlands to nonagricultural uses. Because this program is rarely instituted in the south-central area of the State, in order for farmland preservation to be successful in Meriden it will have to be part of a locally-led effort. Due to existing market conditions, there is increasing pressure to develop farmlands. The City has to make a decision on whether to actively pursue the preservation of these lands.

### **Unique Habitat Protection**

The protection of those portions of Meriden that are identified as possessing unique habitat areas, potential wildlife corridors, and potential riparian corridors would help ensure that species that depend on these resources are not threatened by intense development or incompatible land uses. In the Connecticut Natural Diversity Database, the Connecticut DEP has identified sites in the City that contain habitats of endangered, threatened and special concern species. Some of these areas fall within existing protected lands. These natural resources are assets that contribute to the character and uniqueness of the City and care should be taken towards the further protection of important habitat areas.

**The protection of riparian corridors is an important component to the implementation of future open space protection efforts.**

The City should more comprehensively protect the Black Pond recreation and water resource habitat areas and the adjacent forested Mattabesett

National Scenic Trail along east Meriden's ridgetop, working cooperatively with the State, CT Forest & Park Association, Middlefield and Middletown. In addition, a portion of the "Westvaco" parcel (owned by the City) bordering Berlin is a desirable addition to open space. The parcel includes significant water resources and steep slopes, is said to provide a significant habitat area, and is connected to other open space lands (including land in Berlin). At the northern half of the parcel and the western slope, a specific mapped area will be dedicated as permanent open space by the City Council.

### **C. IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES**

It is difficult to predict when a property will become available for incorporation into the City's inventory of open space. Anticipation and preparation is key to the City's ability to respond quickly when a property possessing the characteristics identified as important for protection or acquisition becomes available for sale. Identifying implementation tools can help prepare a city to become more proactive in open space protection efforts.

#### **Implementation Tools**

Implementation tools commonly used to protect open space can be divided into two general categories: regulatory and non-regulatory. Regulatory tools are land use regulations established to control what activities a landowner can conduct on their property. The City of Meriden has an opportunity during the development process to implement regulatory controls to protect natural features or to establish open space. Examples of regulatory tools include the following:

**Inland Wetland Regulations** – The City's Inland Wetlands Commission currently regulates wetland soils in Meriden. Watercourse Focus Areas, delineated by a 100 foot buffer radius around all watercourses in the City of Meriden (not including intermittent watercourses), could fall under the review and consideration of the IWC.

**Zoning** – Special districts zones and regulations can be established to allow for more control over the types of use and site plan design within sensitive natural resource areas. Examples include overlay districts for sensitive natural resource, open space subdivision regulations and creating open space zoning districts.

**Subdivision Regulations** – Open space dedication requirements can be incorporated into these regulations that define what percentage of development must be dedicated as open space. In addition, the Commission may require the subdivider to submit additional documentation including an environmental impact statement evaluating the significant environmental effects expected as a result of the construction project.

Non-regulatory tools used to protect open space usually involve some type of ownership status. The following are examples of some of the more common techniques:

**Fee Simple Purchase** – Involves the outright purchase of land where the City or designated non-profit (i.e. land trust) has full control over the land title. This method allows for permanent protection; however, the land is removed from the tax rolls. The City may use grants, general appropriation funds, fees collected in lieu of open space dedication, or may bond for the land purchase.

**Purchase of Development Rights** – Purchase of development rights (PDR) programs are one viable approach that state and local governments are using to preserve farmland and open space. PDR programs provide a means to financially compensate participating landowners for not developing their land. When buying development rights, the community obtains a legal easement, sometimes referred to as a conservation easement, that permanently restricts development on the land. The landowner, however, still owns the land and can use or sell it for purposes specified in the easement, such as farming. PDR programs are increasing in popularity because they offer substantial benefits to both communities and landowners. By selling only development rights, owners can convert some of the wealth tied up in their land into cash, without relinquishing ownership of the land or use of its productive capacity. For the landowner, the restricted use of the land provides a lower tax rate and may lower the resale value of the property. For communities, PDR programs are an avenue to manage growth and provide the benefits of open space without the expense of purchasing, maintaining, and policing publicly-owned land. Land preservation can also save communities in the long run, since residential development sometimes costs more in public infrastructure and community services than the tax revenue generated from development.

**Easement** – Easements are defined as a partial interest in property conveyed by the landowner to the city or a non-profit, such as a land trust, with specific restrictions on land development or access privileges. Typically easements are less expensive than fee simple purchase because the landowner retains ownership and property remains on the tax rolls, albeit at a lower rate because of restricted use. This technique can prove useful in establishing walking trails or greenways. Permanent easements may need to be acquired for the proposed cross-City linear trail.

**Land Trust** – Private, non-profit organizations that acquire land for recreation or conservation. A land trust may work cooperatively with the City by sharing costs and maintenance of the property. Land trusts often enter real estate market more quickly and easily than government agencies.

#### **Funding Sources:**

**Fees-In-Lieu of open space dedication requirement** – In cases where the Planning Commission determines that the open space dedication mandated by the subdivision regulations should not be required, the City

may accept a fee not to exceed 10% of the value of the subdivided land, or a combination of fee and land. This fee can be used to purchase priority open space elsewhere in the community that may have higher open space value. Open space exactions are a cost-efficient and rather straightforward means of ensuring that pockets of undeveloped land will remain in their natural condition.

**Donations, Gifts, and Estate Planning** – Donations of all or partial interest in land allows permanent protections at no public cost to the community while providing a tax benefit to the donor. If land is given for conservation purposes the receiving organization is required to maintain the land in its natural state in perpetuity. However, the donor may make specific stipulations as to the use of the land such as "forever wild" or for passive recreational use only. The tax benefits of gifting land are numerous and donors are entitled to an income tax deduction of the value of the property. The deduction is allowed to be up to 30% of the donor's taxable income each year for a period of five years, up to the value of the donation. In addition, both property taxes and estate taxes on the land are eliminated. Land donation is a simple and highly effective means of conserving land. However, the receiving agency must be willing and capable of managing the land. Also, a landowner can convey land to a community or land trust in their will. A deduction from the value of one's taxable estate is allowed for land bequeathed for public purposes.

**The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (CGS § 7-131d to 7-131k)** – This grant provides financial assistance to municipalities or non-profit land conservation organizations to acquire land for open space. Grants may be for the purchase of land that is: 1) valuable for recreation, forestry, fishing, conservation of wildlife or natural resources; 2) a prime natural feature of the state's landscape; 3) habitat for native plant or animal species listed as threatened, endangered or of special concern; 4) a relatively undisturbed outstanding example of a native ecological community which is uncommon; 5) important for enhancing and conserving water quality; 6) valuable for preserving local agricultural heritage; or 7) eligible to be classified as Class I or Class II watershed land. This grant program provides matching grants to communities like Meriden for up to 65% of the property's fair market value. It is recommended that the City submit applications to this grant program to acquire future open space.

**Maximize the value and utility of the existing system of parks, recreational facilities and open space resources throughout Meriden and add to the open space and recreation system as resources and opportunities permit.**

#### **D. POLICY, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES**

##### **Policy: Maximize Existing Recreational and Open Space Resources**

Encourage enhancements, improved use, maintenance, and rehabilitation of the existing park and open space system to ensure they are adequate in extent; strategic in location and equitable in distribution in order to meet the unique active and passive needs of the Meriden's residents as well as the protection of important natural resources.

**Promote open space to maximize the amenity value of Meriden's extensive open space/recreation system.**

**Goal:**

- Maximize the value and utility of the existing system of parks, recreational facilities and open space resources throughout Meriden and add to the open space and recreation system as resources and opportunities permit.
- Provide a system of linking public and private open space throughout Meriden and the region. Open space should provide passive and active recreation opportunities and preserve environmentally sensitive areas.
- Promote open space to maximize the amenity value of Meriden's extensive open space/recreation system – Hunter Memorial Golf Course, Hubbard Park, Giuffrida Park, Blue Blazed Trails, Quinnipiac Gorge, and other assets.

**Encourage greenways linking neighborhoods, public facilities and employment areas to existing open space areas as a focus for recreational activity.**

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Continue the efficient utilization of existing parks and recreation facilities, including extended hours and creative scheduling;
- Strengthen the existing cooperative relationship between the Parks Department and the Board of Education to maximize the use of all school associated recreational resources to the benefit of Meriden's residents;
- Parcels for open space and or recreational use should be acquired in neighborhoods presently lacking such facilities;
- Wherever possible, existing parks and open space should be linked together to form interconnected greenways;
- Encourage greenways linking neighborhoods, public facilities and employment areas to existing open space areas as a focus for recreational activity;
- Maximize accessibility to all open space resources;
- Establish an acquisition funding committee as a subcommittee of the Planning Commission and the Conservation Commission that is dedicated to securing funds from state, federal and private and non-profit organizations and agencies for the acquisition and protection of open space;
- Continue to provide a variety of municipal protections for open space resources;

- Investigate how a future cross-City linear trail system could connect to existing trails in the City of Middletown, as well as connecting to Hubbard Park;
- Review the existing zoning of environmentally-sensitive lands to ensure that the zone designations for such parcels do not promote unnecessarily intensive development;
- Establish regulations that limit impervious surface coverage to levels appropriate for each zoning district;
- Encourage new development to include trails where they can logically connected to the City's existing or planned trail and sidewalk network;
- Market Meriden's open space system and recreation programs as a major quality of life amenity;
- Examine all parcels acquired by the City through tax foreclosure, donation, etc. for their potential to be added to the open space and parks inventory;
- Conduct a fiscal impact analysis to determine the fiscal consequences of balancing open space preservation with residential development for Meriden;
- Consider creating Open Space zoning districts to protect the open tracts of land in the City;
- Consider forming a study team to work with the State for potentially utilizing part of the Undercliff property as a park or for open space;
- Consider forming a study committee to look at the potential re-use of part of the landfill for open space;
- Consider a local-based fee associated with property transfers to be used for open space protection.
- Restore Hanover Pond as a recreational amenity. Potential dredging of Hanover Pond is an initial step in the effort to restore the pond as a recreational asset.

**Market Meriden's open space system and recreation programs as a major quality of life amenity.**

**Consider creating Open Space zoning districts to protect the open tracts of land in the City.**

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# *XI. Future Land Use Plan*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The Generalized Future Land Use Plan illustrates the proposed pattern of conservation and development for the City of Meriden. It recommends the most appropriate locations for and relationship between major land uses, including residential development; commercial development; industrial development; mixed use development; special area districts; areas for community facilities and areas for conservation and open space. The Generalized Future Land Use Plan is both a narrative and graphic presentation of the City's vision for the future. The *Generalized Future Land Use Plan* map provides a broad illustration of desired development patterns based largely on existing land use and development patterns, environmental and natural features, physical features, current and potential zoning designations and planning analysis conducted as part of the overall drafting of the Plan of Conservation and Development. As public meetings and workshops are conducted, the desires and vision of citizens and community stakeholders will be incorporated as the Planning Commission deems appropriate.

Due to the generalized nature of the Generalized Future Land Use Plan, there may be individual properties within a given area with an actual land use that differs from the Plan's land use designation. As described above, the purpose of the Generalized Future Land Use Plan is to illustrate broad proposed land use patterns and relationships between uses.

## **B. MERIDEN'S GENERALIZED FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

As a mature community that has been largely developed, the majority of Meriden's land not designated as open space or containing environmentally sensitive areas has already been developed. There are a few exceptions to this fact, most notably the former 320 acre NRG site, which until recently was held in private ownership. However, development of the remaining vacant land, infill development at strategic locations, and the redevelopment of several key sites, including the Hub site in Downtown, can significantly impact the City's future development pattern. In order to support and protect the quality of life envisioned as part of Meriden's future, a balance between development, the conservation of open space and natural resources, and the preservation of the City's historical and cultural resources is necessary. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas and the conservation of open space have been a major focus in the development of this Plan update.

It is recognized that commercial investment and certain forms of residential development are necessary to expand Meriden's tax base and improve the financial well-being of both the City and its residents. Striking a balance between conservation, preservation and development should be a central

**A balance between development, conservation of open space and natural resources, and the preservation of the City's historical and cultural resources is a primary focus of future land use issues across Meriden.**

goal in any Plan of Conservation and Development, and should form the basis of a community's future land use goals and policies. The achievement of a balance between these policy objectives can occur with the development and implementation of both broad policies and specific goals and objectives. These policies, goals and objectives must guide Meriden's development and revitalization over the next decade and beyond.

### **C. MAJOR PLAN GOALS**

The Generalized Future Land Use Plan, although comprised of numerous land use categories, recognizes the interdependence of uses and areas. There are several broad principles that guide this Plan. These include:

- Respect for the natural resource system of rivers, streams, brooks and wetlands that exist in Meriden through the identification of Watercourse Focus Areas. Emphasis on these areas is particularly important due to Meriden's history of flooding problems. While a variety of land uses fall within these focus areas, all future development should be reviewed with respect to the impact on this natural resource system.
- Respect for the existing built environment of the numerous residential neighborhoods that comprise the core of Meriden's community character. The Generalized Future Land Use Plan recommends a range of residential densities that are consistent with the current character of Meriden's neighborhoods. Density, type and characteristic standards for new residential development need to be well-defined to promote compatibility, presence of homeownership, quality of living environment and fiscal sustainability. Proper implementation of the Plan requires zoning changes to guide and balance housing and to better control multifamily development to ensure development is high in quality/is beneficial.
- Respect for the infrastructure capacity and future development capacity of the City. By identifying selected areas and sites that can support additional development in a manner that is consistent with both currently available infrastructure and the physical constraints of each area or site, the Generalized Future Land Use Plan does not propose a level of development that is inappropriate or unsustainable.
- Respect for the need for continued investment in economic development to sustain the tax base. The Generalized Future Land Use Plan focuses the economic development land uses in a manner similar to the 1985 Plan. This includes such areas as Research Parkway, Downtown, East Main Street, West Main Street, Broad Street, South Broad Street and the area around the Westfield Meriden Shoppingtown mall. Other important economic development areas include the Berlin Turnpike, North Colony Street, the former NRG site and Old Colony Road. Within these areas, mixed use land use designations will allow development to occur that is compatible with natural resources,

**Respect for the existing built environment of the numerous residential neighborhoods that comprise the core of Meriden's community character.**

**Respect for the infrastructure capacity and future development capacity of the City.**

**Respect for the need for continued investment in economic development to sustain the tax base.**

existing infrastructure, adjacent residential neighborhoods and the community character of the City of Meriden.

The Generalized Future Land Use Plan contains a variety of land use categories that address location, density and current conditions. These categories and their general locations are described in more detail in the following section. It should be noted that there are individual properties that have a land use different than the category on the map. This is unavoidable in a built-out community with small parcels. The intent of the Generalized Future Land Use Plan is to present desirable land use patterns to guide future change. Existing land uses are not affected by the map.

#### **D. RESIDENTIAL LAND USE CATEGORIES**

##### **Low Density Residential – Single Family**

Low Density Residential areas are divided into two subcategories: Low Density-1 and Low Density-2 single family residential areas. The Low Density-1 single family areas with lots of 40,000 square feet or greater generally follow the boundaries of the City's R-R "Rural Residential" zones, where the minimum lot size allowed is 40,000 square feet. These areas are generally located in the western end and southeastern corner of the City, as well as the area around the Exit 19 interchange off I-91. The Low Density-2 single family areas with lots less than 40,000 square feet in area generally follow the boundaries of the S-R "Suburban Residential" and R-1 "Single Family Residential" zones, where minimum allowed lot sizes mostly range from 11,250 square feet to 34,000 square feet. These areas comprise a large percentage of the land in Meriden that is devoted to residential uses, and they are found in a large ring surrounding the central core of the City. The purpose of both types of Low Density Residential – Single Family uses is to preserve the established neighborhood residential character of a large portion of the City of Meriden, a characteristic of the City which provides stability and support for civic life in Meriden and for other types of land uses.

##### **Medium Density Residential – One, Two and Three Family**

Medium Density Residential areas are comprised of older housing on lots of varying size, generally in one-family, two-family and three-family typologies. These areas also include portions of Meriden that provide Planned Elderly Housing, a continuum of care including detached and attached residential units, with convalescent homes and assisted living with nursing supervision (intermediate care facility) or chronic and convalescent nursing home (skilled nursing facility) as licensed by the State of Connecticut. Medium Density Residential areas are found immediately to the west, south and east of the Downtown area, along with other smaller pockets of properties in various locations around the City. They generally encompass much of the R-2 "Two- and Three-Family Residential" zones in Meriden.

##### **High Density Residential – Multi-Family**

High Density Residential areas are divided into two subcategories: Limited High Density areas and High Density Multi-Family residential areas. High

Density Residential areas in the Generalized Future Land Use Plan generally reflect existing higher density housing such as that found in several Planned Residential Development Districts scattered throughout Meriden, as well as land located in the R-3 “Multiple-Family Residential” and R-4 “Multiple-Family Residential” zones that are currently primarily multifamily or are appropriate to be redeveloped as such. Limited High Density reflects development not exceeding three stories or eight units in a structure. Besides existing areas at or near full development at higher density, other identified higher density areas are within walking distance to a wide range of necessary services.

## **E. MIXED USE LAND USE CATEGORIES**

### **Neighborhood Commercial**

This land use designation relates to areas where there are nodes of small-scale commercial establishments that service the residential neighborhoods immediately surrounding them. Examples include the Newton Street/Liberty Street intersection; the Hall Avenue/Gale Avenue intersection; the Spruce Street/West Main Street intersection; and Grove Street between Foster Street and Washington Street. Neighborhood commercial districts play an important role in providing goods and services to neighborhood residents without the need for vehicular transportation. A maximum of three residential units may be compatible on larger parcels. Due to the limited number and scattered nature of these land use types, they are not indicated on the *Generalized Future Land Use Plan* map. However, recognition of their current existence and their important role within the economy of the City of Meriden warrants discussion.

### **Mixed Use: Residential/Commercial/Office**

This type of mixed use land use pattern envisions medium density residential uses combined with, or interspersed among, a mixture of retail, office and other types of light commercial uses. Areas for this type of mixed use development include Broad Street between Hall Avenue and Silver Street; West Main Street between Cook Avenue and Bradley Avenue; Bradley Avenue between Hillcrest Avenue and Prospect Avenue; the northeast corner of the Pratt Street/Center Street intersection; and Center Street north of I-691.

### **Mixed Use: Office/Residential**

This mixed use district designation is intended for areas where medium density residential uses (maximum of three units) combined with small offices are appropriate. Such locations include Broad Street between Charles Street and Silver Street; Broad Street and North Broad Street between Liberty Street and Broadview Terrace; Lewis Avenue between West Main Street and Columbus Park; and the north side of East Main Street between Parker Avenue and Clinton Street.

It should be noted that in the area along Lewis Avenue between West Main Street and Columbus Park, an additional appropriate land use would be limited retail development. While this use would be appropriate along Lewis Avenue, it should not be allowed in the other areas designated above.

In addition, no changes to the existing zoning along Lewis Avenue should occur until land parcel consolidation to create larger development sites has occurred.

## **F. COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LAND USE CATEGORIES**

### **Regional Commercial Development District**

This land use district is anchored by the regional shopping mall Westfield Meriden Shoppingtown. It also includes the Undercliff property, MidState Hospital, and numerous other properties along Chamberlain Highway and Kensington Avenue. These areas are either currently, or envisioned as being, the highest property tax-generating areas in the City. Focus is needed on maintaining and expanding high-ratable commercial development. The land uses should be in keeping with the previously completed Kensington Avenue/Chamberlain Highway Corridor Study drafted by the City's Planning Department.

### **City Shopping Centers and General Commercial**

The General Commercial districts encompass the areas of Meriden that provide general commercial, retail, office and service sector space. This land use district includes the other large commercial shopping areas used by the residents of Meriden and partially by surrounding communities. It includes the Townline Plaza area, the Centennial Plaza area and the Meriden Parkade area. These are also important property tax-generating areas. Maintaining and expanding high ratable commercial uses in shopping center areas can be promoted by clarifying preferred commercial uses and discouraging further residential uses and parcel fragmentation. Other key issues in these districts will be mitigating conflicts between commercial uses and adjacent residential neighborhoods, addressing traffic and circulation issues and encouraging reinvestment in the building stock.

### **Broad Street/East Main Street Commercial Development District**

This designation encompasses the area around the intersection of Broad Street and East Main Street, anchored by the Stop & Shop plaza. The area is bounded by Charles Street to the south, High Street and Center Street to the west, Liberty Street to the north and Parker Avenue to the east. This area is envisioned as a center for retail and other commercial uses with a high level of design and construction. As this area is a central focal point in the City of Meriden, as well as a gateway into Downtown, emphasis should be placed on good building and site design coupled with traffic and streetscape improvements. Current land uses in this area include retail, offices, two-family residences, multifamily housing, institutional uses and industrial uses. At present, the zoning in this area is primarily C-1 "Central Commercial" with a small area of R4 "Multifamily Residential" in the northwest corner of the area. The intent of this District should be to expand the mass of commercial uses in this area with additional design emphasis.

### **Industrial**

The Industrial land use designation is intended for parts of Meriden where a variety of manufacturing, fabrication, distribution and warehousing uses are appropriate. This designation generally reflects the current manufacturing usage of the land in Meriden. Designated industrial areas include the area around Chamberlain Highway and Pasco Street; Charles Street between Elm Street and High Street; Vine Street between Johnson Avenue and Carl Street; portions of Center Street and Pratt Street; properties along North Colony Road; the area around the Suzio quarry along Westfield Road; and the area around the sewage treatment plant and Meriden-Markham Airport.

### **Heavy Commercial/Industrial**

This form of mixed use would encompass a number of different heavy commercial and industrial uses either in combination or on separate properties, including light manufacturing; warehousing and storage; automotive businesses; construction contractors and related services; and wholesale/distribution establishments. Areas of Meriden that are given this land use designation include Old Colony Road from Prospect Avenue to the Wallingford town line; the neighborhood around Colony Road, Cooper Street and the railroad line; around the Exit 8 interchange off I-691; and the Colony Street/Gracey Avenue neighborhood north of I-691. At the present time, these areas are predominantly zoned M-3 "Industrial" and C-3 "Highway Commercial".

### **Research Parkway Development District**

This land use designation is intended to continue the development success of the Research Parkway area, which was identified in the City's previous Plan of Development completed in 1985. This area was intended to help provide the City with "appropriate locations and quantities of office/research facilities to enhance the City's tax base and provide additional employment opportunities"; it should continue to serve this function for the foreseeable future. Physical extensions of the existing Research Parkway Development – Planned Industrial M-4 District are included on the Future Land Use Map. This district and change expressly excludes heavy commercial uses such as vehicle or heavy equipment storage, sales and maintenance.

## **G. SPECIAL LAND USE AREAS AND DESIGNATIONS**

### **South Meriden Village District**

This future land use designation envisions the highlighted portion of South Meriden receiving a "Village District" designation per Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes. This designation by the Zoning Commission would allow for greater control over design elements such as building placement, protection of public views, landscaping, and protection of the historic community character of the South Meriden area. The designation is centered around Main Street (South Meriden) from Hanover Avenue to Cheshire Road, along with a portion of Hanover Avenue south of Main Street (South Meriden) and a small portion of River Road near Cutlery Avenue. It also extends south of Main Street (South Meriden) to

encompass properties along Camp Street, Webb Street and Milk Street. At present, this area has a wide variety of land uses, including single family and multifamily residential, retail businesses, private institution uses, and educational uses. This area is currently zoned NCDD “Neighborhood Commercial Design District”, C-2 “General Commercial” and R-1 “Single Family Residential”.

### **South Mountain Road Area: Light Industrial / Office / Residential / Open Space**

This special use designation envisions a mixture of uses that will generate economic benefits for the City of Meriden along with residential development of an appropriate scale in a development pattern that maximizes the retention of undisturbed open space and protects natural resources. The former NRG site, with the exception of the electric generation plant parcel itself, is the area of Meriden designated for this type of mixed use. City ownership of most of the land, and the size and topography of the area, make this particular area of Meriden unique.

From the 289 acres of City owned land:

- **There shall be a minimum of 144.5 acres (50%) of natural legally protected open space to remain in City ownership.**
  - ✦ To ensure that high natural values of the site are conserved, approximately two thirds of total natural undisturbed lands (about 100 acres) should be dedicated as open space prior to lease, sale or further development of any part of the site.
    - The areas that should be dedicated are generally exterior areas to include ridgeline/ridgeline setback areas, forested boundary areas with high visibility, and habitat and trail corridors; also to include riparian wetland and floodplain corridor areas that extend to the interior.
    - Such land will remain undisturbed except for trails or limited road crossings/infrastructure, if necessary, in pre-identified locations.
    - An open space map is to be prepared delineating specific areas to be deed protected for approval by the City Council.
  - ✦ The remainder of the projected protected open space (approximately 45 acres) would be determined and dedicated, in part or in whole, after a substantial amount of land is leased or sold or when approved to be developed.
    - Generally, large interior locations such as steep sloped areas that can be added to enhance contiguous dedicated open space or to create a limited number of substantial additional protected areas.
    - Not to include portions within or directly adjacent to development such as landscaped areas, areas with utility easements, thin strips or smaller isolated undeveloped pieces.

- To ensure that the projected grand total of dedicated high quality open space is met, the total acreage leased or sold for development cannot exceed the total acreage dedicated as open space, nor can any land disturbance be approved that would negate the intent of conserving natural open space as identified herein.
- ✦ To ensure that high natural values of the site are comprehensively conserved, the following guidelines for protected open space are provided:
  - Generally, exterior site areas with substantial corridors (at least 250 feet in width) that will promote habitat viability.
  - Habitat and trail corridors along the northern and western boundaries of the site.
  - Riparian corridors and an enlarged area north/south/west of the vernal pool.
  - A northern corridor open space would allow for trail linkage to open spaces located adjacently in Berlin, and to the Boys Club and the western portion of the City owned former Westvaco site.
  - A western corridor open space would maintain natural linkage to the regional “blue” Metacomet trail and link to the other described projected open spaces on the site.
  - Generally, areas on the south side of South Mountain Road.
- **Approximately 144.5 acres (50%) of land should be part of developed taxpaying projects.**
  - ✦ Any development will be strictly regulated per design standards to be adopted by the City Council. These standards are to ensure preservation of the natural environment, and to ensure compatibility and minimize visual impacts.
    - Such standards will include restrictions on height and the requirement of locating structures in areas that due to elevation, ground cover, fauna are not visible off site. If visibility of any proposed development is ever an issue, techniques such as visual simulation or other modeling of a proposed building could be utilized.
  - ✦ Generally, development areas will be located within the interior of the site. Areas on the north side of South Mountain Road and within the center of the site are envisioned for industrial/office flex building space, and residential development is envisioned for the northeastern development part of the site.
    - The use and density of the entire development area, any new lot or Master Plan subarea, would be City Council approved.
    - While encouraging private investment and responsibility, due to present ownership, the City has an opportunity to retain

some control to ensure only future beneficial, taxable land uses.

### **North I-91 Preston Avenue Area**

This land use designation is given to the area along Preston Avenue bounded by I-91 and I-691/Route 66. This area is envisioned as a “smart growth” mixed use development, utilizing traditional neighborhood design principles, of office space, retail development, residential uses and open space preservation. The area’s excellent access to the interstate highway system and other state and local transportation routes make it a sensible site for regionally-oriented mixed use development. This area is presently zoned S-R “Suburban Residential” and PEOD “Planned Executive Office District”.

### **Berlin Turnpike**

This classification encompasses properties along both sides of the Berlin Turnpike from the Route 5/Route 15 merge to the Berlin town line. At the present time, the Berlin Turnpike area is a mix of retail, office, automotive, food service and general commercial uses, as well as industrial properties and several residential properties. This area has changed and developed in a piecemeal manner over an extended period of time. The intention of this future land use designation is to encourage the City to apply for a grant to study and plan for development that is cohesive, well-designed and economically beneficial to the City of Meriden.

### **Downtown District**

The Downtown District future land use designation contains the uses and areas that define the center of Meriden. The core of this designation is the stretch of East Main Street and West Main Street from the City Hall/Meriden Public Library/Board of Education offices “municipal complex” west to the Hub site and the railroad station, and turning southwest to encompass the “Factory H” property. These features define the area’s development and circulation patterns.

In addition to serving as the governmental and cultural center of the City, the Downtown District is envisioned as a transit-oriented area, centered around the redeveloped Hub site and an enhanced multi-modal transportation facility at the current railroad station. Future land uses in the Downtown District should include ground floor retail and office space coupled with high-quality residential units on upper floors. Development should be done at a scale appropriate for the built environment of Downtown Meriden, with buildings being held to six stories or fewer, with green space and adequate additional parking provided by any residential developers. Improving linkages to surrounding neighborhoods and enhancing the physical environment of Downtown through landscaping, urban design elements, façade improvements, and improvements to the traffic circulation system should be emphasized. The investment being made in this area, coupled with the density and mix of uses, makes stronger review of development in this area very important.

### **Public Facilities**

This land use category includes City-owned facilities such as schools, fire stations and other municipal facilities, state facilities and land holdings, libraries, senior centers, the historical society and public infrastructure such as the sewage treatment plant.

### **Private Institutional**

This category includes cemeteries, churches, fraternal organizations, and other private institutional properties and holdings.

### **Existing Open Space**

This designation is assigned to all properties that are currently held as open space, in either private or public ownership. Existing open space includes active and passive recreation and open space areas, parks, playgrounds, ball fields, flood control properties, land trust-owned properties, and open space areas.

### **Desirable Open Space**

This land use designation is assigned to properties identified in the draft Plan of Conservation and Development's "Parks, Open Space and Recreation" section as logical extensions of existing open space assets and/or provide unique opportunities to preserve and protect important natural features within the City of Meriden, or will enhance the City's ability to control flooding. The City should not encourage more than very low density residential development in such areas that are privately-owned.

### **Ridgeline Protection Area**

This designation highlights the areas of Meriden where specific zoning regulations have already been adopted to protect the basalt (traprock) ridgelines within the City. These areas include Beseck Mountain, Lamentation Mountain, Cathole Mountain, South Mountain, East Peak and West Peak.

### **Aquifer Protection Area**

This designation identifies critical water supply areas requiring protection from pollution by managing land use. The State of Connecticut DEP has drafted regulations that limit the types of land uses that can be sited in a protection area that coincides with a well recharge area of an aquifer. The City of Meriden is in the process of drafting aquifer maps, and will likely model future aquifer protection regulations off of the DEP regulations.

### **Existing Trails and Proposed City-Wide Trails**

These designations illustrate the locations of current trail systems within the City, as well as proposed trails recommended for creation in the future.

### **Watercourse Focus Areas**

Watercourse Focus Areas are delineated by a 100 foot buffer radius around all watercourses in the City of Meriden, not including intermittent watercourses. Within these areas, development along waterways should be regulated to ensure the protection of groundwater and surface water resources in addition to and in conjunction with protection provided

through the Inland Wetlands Regulations. As opportunities arise, efforts should be undertaken to provide open space corridors and/or linkages to existing open space areas. Designation of a property within these Watercourse Focus Areas does not indicate intent to acquire or to provide public access on private property as part of a greenway. A variety of approaches to natural resource protection and open space enhancement should be used to meet overall conservation goals. It should be further noted that the underlying land use designation determines the use of the property. Inclusion in a Watercourse Focus Area provides guidance to municipal boards, commissions and agencies in the review of proposals for properties within these areas in order to achieve the natural resource protection goals of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

## **H. RELATIONSHIP TO THE STATE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES PLANS**

### **Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut: 2005-2010**

Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes sets the standards for municipal Plans of Conservation and Development. One provision of the State Statute is that municipalities take into account the State Plan of Conservation and Development and note any inconsistencies. The map titled *2005-2010 State Plan of Conservation & Development* illustrates the Land Classifications for Meriden according to the Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut: 2005-2010.

According to the State Plan:

- Regional Centers encompass land areas containing traditional core area services and facilities of inter-town significance, and contiguous to built-up residential areas with either very high population density or high concentration of pre-1940 or multi-family structures. The state's intent of this designation to revitalize economic, social, and physical environment of the state's traditional centers of industry and commerce. These areas are the state's top ranked development priority.
- Neighborhood Conservation Areas are significantly built-up and well populated. NCAs are the state's second ranked development priority following Regional Centers and can entail a wide variety of development, such as commercial, industrial, and urban-scale density residential land uses. The state's intent of this designation is to maintain the overall character and vitality of the area by promoting infill development and maximum use of existing infrastructure. These areas generally reflect stable, developed neighborhoods and communities and are many times contiguous to Regional Centers.

- Growth Areas are land near neighborhood conservation areas that provide the opportunity for staged urban expansion generally in conformance with municipal or regional development plans.
- Existing Preserved Open Space areas represent areas in the state with the highest priority for conservation and permanent open space.
- Preservation Areas are lands that do not reflect the level of permanence of Existing Preserved Open Space but which nevertheless represent significant resources that should be effectively managed in order to preserve the State's unique heritage. This designation is intended to protect significant resource, heritage, recreation, and hazard-prone areas.
- Conservation Areas represent a significant area of the state and a myriad of land resources. Proper management of Conservation Area lands provide for the state's future need for food, fiber, water and other resources.

The Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan: 2005-2010 identifies six growth management principles that shall guide land use change and preservation. These principles include:

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

Many of the elements included in this Plan of Conservation and Development update for the City of Meriden are consistent with the key growth management principles outlined in the State Plan. There are several areas of the state's plan that should be addressed for consistency with existing conditions within Meriden as well as the City's plans for its future. Please refer to the map titled 2005-2010 State Plan of Conservation and Development. A concise description of each key area follows.

The state's POCD designates the majority of the City as a Neighborhood Conservation Area (NCA) with a Regional Center designation comprising the general Downtown area. The NCA designation includes Research Parkway, East and West Main Street corridors, Broad Street corridor, South Meriden Village, and the established residential neighborhoods of the City. Please note that the NRG site is included in the Neighborhood Conservation designation. The proposed future land use for this area is consistent with the state's definition of "intensification of development when supportive of community stability and consistent with the capacity of available urban services."

The Regional Center roughly includes the downtown and surrounding higher density residential neighborhoods. The state's Regional Center designation should be extended to Chamberlain Highway to the west and Kensington Avenue to the north to include the Midstate Hospital and the Westfield Shopping Center.

The state-defined Growth Areas include the Undercliff Property, the western side of Chamberlain Highway to the Berlin townline, Westfield Road east of the Hunter Memorial Golf Course including Bilger Farm and Suzio Quarry, Preston Avenue between Route 66 and I-91 including the Hall Farm and the existing office park.

Conservation areas are designated at Hubbard and Giuffrida Parks, Hunter Memorial Golf course, Hub Site, and along surface waterways throughout the city. The state's designation for Giuffrida and Hubbard Parks should be modified as Existing and Preserved Open Space to reflect the existing land use future land use plan designations.

The area along the east side of the Berlin Turnpike and an interior area between Berlin Turnpike and Colony St are long-established commercial and industrial areas. While recognizing that this area of the City contains environmentally sensitive areas, these areas are already developed or are areas appropriate for development. Given these conditions, the state should reclassify this area as a Neighborhood Conservation Area.

The Hub site is listed as a conservation area. However, the future use of the site may include ancillary development in addition to extensive flood control measures. Even with some development on the site, the primary use of the site is for flood attenuation and therefore is compatible with the identified conservation values.

Aside from the above exceptions, the state's POCD is consistent with existing conditions and the City's outlook for its future.

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## *XI. Action Agenda*

In order to implement the various recommendations contained in this Plan of Conservation and Development, the following Action Agenda is proposed. The Action Agenda identifies goals, objectives, recommendations and actions; the lead agencies proposed for implementation; and the priority for implementation during the timeframe of this Plan.

The lead agency is the agency which, by the nature of its mission and authority, is the logical party to spearhead the implementation of a particular proposal. Many proposals will of course involve multiple agencies. The nature of activity required of a lead agency will vary depending on the type of recommendation. Some activities involve budget commitments and capital expenses and some require advocacy and promotion, while others call for administrative action.

Priorities are classified as ongoing, short term (1-3 years), mid-term (4-6 years) and long-term (7-10 years). Many of the short-term items may already be scheduled into the City's Capital Improvement Program or may be activities and policies that are in place and need to be continued. Some short-term recommendations may have evolved as part of the planning process and need to be inserted into the Capital Improvement Program.

Mid-term and Long-term priorities are activities which are considered important, but placed "down the road" in recognition of the fact that limited resources are available both in terms of time and money to implement the Plan. Mid-term and long-term capital projects may also require some intermediate planning and design activity before project implementation can take place.

The implementation schedule is presented in the form of a "To Do" list. This form will make it easy for the Planning Commission to review and report on implementation progress as a component of their annual report. The Director of Development and Enforcement shall prepare annually by September 30<sup>th</sup> a report that will be submitted to the Mayor, City Manager, City Council, and the Planning Commission summarizing the implementation status of the Action Agenda of the adopted Plan of Conservation and Development. The report shall discuss the status of each of the Action Items and recommend actions that need to be taken to assure implementation of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

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# ACTION AGENDA

<b>IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:</b> BOE - Board of Education; Council -City Council; CD - Community Development Division; CTDEP - Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection; CTDOT - Connecticut Department of Transportation; DPW - Department of Public Works; ED - Economic Development Division; Elderly - Agent for the Elderly; HA - Housing Authority; MFD - Meriden Fire Department; MPD - Meriden Police Department; IWC - Inland Wetlands Commission; FC - Flood Control Commission; LB - Library Board; MH - Meriden Historical Society; CC - Conservation Commission; PR - Parks & Recreation Division; DE - Development & Enforcement Department; PC- Planning Commission; SCRCOG - South Central Regional Council of Governments; CM - City Manager; LT -Land Trust; MFD - Meriden Fire Department; DRB - Design Review Board; PU - Public Utilities	PRIORITY			
	Lead Agency	On-Going	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (4-6 Years)
<b>Community Character &amp; Historic Resources</b>				
<b>GOAL: Enhance the Visual Appearance and Vitality of Meriden's Neighborhoods.</b>				
<b>Action:</b>				
Encourage new commercial and residential development to occur in the established centers of individual neighborhoods, including Downtown, in order to reinforce the economic and social vitality of these centers and to keep development where infrastructure is in place to support it.	Council / PC	✘		
Encourage infill development of uses that are compatible with the existing fabric of each area using neighborhood-specific criteria and zoning designations.	PC / Council		✘	
Consider the implementation of village district zoning regulations for South Meriden	PC / Council		✘	
Encourage actions that will enhance the cohesiveness and appearance of neighborhood centers, such as signage, landscaping, lighting and other urban design features such as revised land use regulations, West Main Street streetscape and infrastructure improvements.	DPW		✘	
Maintain the successful neighborhood code enforcement effort and the neighborhood initiative areas program in conjunction with the Police Department.	MPD /CM/ DE	✘		
<b>GOAL: Maintain and Enhance the Contributions of Historic Resources and Open Space to Meriden's Community Character.</b>				
<b>Action:</b>				
As the historic inventory of Meriden is a key element in defining the character of the City,a study should be made and strps taken to maintain, enhance and promote the historic assets of the community.	MH / CD		✘	
New development should be consistent with and sensitive to the historic nature of the community, particularly in the Downtown and other neighborhood centers. Emphasis on quality physical design and site planning that is in keeping with the nature of the surrounding environment should be a high priority.	DE/PC/ DRB	✘		
Promote the use of historic tax credits to preserve historic structures.	ED / CM / Council	✘		

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	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Short Term (1-3 Years)</b>	<b>Mid Term (4-6 Years)</b>	<b>Long Term (7-10 Years)</b>
Consider relocating two key historic structures located in Meriden, the Andrews Homestead on West Main Street and the Solomon Goffe House on North Colony Street, to a consolidated site in the general Downtown area. These two structures could then be used as the anchors for an historic corridor that would run through Downtown.	<b>CM / Council / MH</b>				<b>✘</b>
Create a distinct “Civic Block” designation for the area around Main Street in the center of Downtown, and highlight the historic nature of this particular area through lighting, streetscape and other urban design elements.	<b>DE / DPW / Council</b>			<b>✘</b>	

## Housing & Population Density

**GOAL: Provide appropriate uses for undeveloped residential land so as to maintain and complement the character of existing residential areas.**

**Action:**

Maintain stable residential areas by improving the quality of life through mitigation of blighting influences.	<b>DE</b>	<b>✘</b>			
Provide areas for new residential development at appropriate densities per the special studies undertaken as part of the POCD update.	<b>PC / Council</b>		<b>✘</b>		

**GOAL: A variety of housing types (with respect to both lot size and single-family homes versus apartments) should be available to reflect the housing needs and desires of all Meriden residents.**

**Action:**

Promote the development of larger single family homes to further diversify Meriden’s housing stock. Stronger emphasis should be incorporated into regulations to improve lot standards that minimize site disturbance and protect the character of the surrounding properties and neighborhood.	<b>DE / PC / Council</b>		<b>✘</b>		
Per the findings of the telephone survey of Meriden residents conducted by the Center for Research and Public Policy (CRPP), encourage the development of reasonably-priced single family housing developments in the City targeted to families and young professionals.	<b>DE / PC / Council</b>	<b>✘</b>			
Also per the CRRP survey, promote more age-restricted or “active adult” housing to provide substantial net tax revenue and counter-balance the municipal expenditures that may arise from the development of single family homes.	<b>PC / Council</b>		<b>✘</b>		

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	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Short Term (1-3 Years)</b>	<b>Mid Term (4-6 Years)</b>	<b>Long Term (7-10 Years)</b>
<b>GOAL: The need for a variety of housing types in Meriden must be carefully balanced against the municipal fiscal implications of housing development and the preservation and conservation of the City's character.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Review the City's zoning regulations and other land use regulatory documents and instruments and revise as necessary to ensure that residential development will occur in the areas desired and in forms and densities that are appropriate.	Council/ PC/ DE		✘		
Maintain a balance between residential growth, open space conservation and natural resource protection and economic development by monitoring development trends and considering options.	PC	✘			
Conduct an audit of the fiscal effects of the City's land use regulatory controls.	PC / DE	✘			
<b>GOAL: In certain identified areas of Meriden, new housing should be developed at different densities than in the more suburban residential neighborhoods. Housing unit density in areas such as the Downtown and along primary transportation routes will be a component in revitalizing and strengthening the development of these areas.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Guide residential development pressure away from sensitive natural areas and into parts of Meriden that have existing infrastructure capable of supporting new development or redevelopment of lots.	PC			✘	
Capitalize on the planned New Haven-Springfield commuter rail service that would stop in Meriden, an expanded rail station and the redevelopment of the Hub site as an asset that could spur additional residential/mixed use development in the Downtown area.	PC/ED / Council			✘	
Examine established transportation corridors and developed areas such as Route 5 and East Main Street as potential areas for combining secondary residential development with economic development in mixed use formats.	PC / Council			✘	
<b>GOAL: Given the limited amount of readily buildable residential land in Meriden, the sensitive environmental nature of many remaining open land parcels, and the availability of small previously developed vacant lots within the core neighborhoods of the City, infill housing character should be a primary strategy for meeting the housing needs of Meriden's residents.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Strategically utilize selected City-owned vacant lots in the established neighborhoods immediately surrounding Downtown as opportunities for new housing and enhanced neighborhood cohesion.	ED/ DE		✘		
Where vacant lots cannot be combined to create larger developable sites, offer for sale to abutting owners to increase yard sizes.	CD / ED		✘		

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	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Short Term (1-3 Years)</b>	<b>Mid Term (4-6 Years)</b>

**GOAL: Encourage increased reinvestment in residential properties, particularly in Meriden’s core neighborhoods, through residential building, renovations and timely maintenance. This should be a primary strategy for strengthening existing residential areas while adding value to the City’s Grand List.**

**Action:**

Encourage reinvestment in homes by continuing to offer financial incentives such as reduced home improvement loan rates, façade grants for targeted areas or tax abatements for set periods of time.	CD	✘			
Create a “Home Improvement Recognition Program”, in which homeowners who complete substantial renovations/improvements to their property are publicly recognized for their efforts and investment through local media outlets and by way of congratulatory signage placed on their property by the City.	CD/Council/DE		✘		
Continue to support and promote the City’s Neighborhood Preservation Loan Program.	Council/CM	✘			

**GOAL: Through revision of the zoning ordinance, delineate limits of expansion of nonresidential areas where adjacent to residential areas.**

**GOAL: Establish a high standard for innovative approaches to infill development in order to minimize potential adverse impacts to established neighborhoods while promoting new economic vitality for under-utilized properties.**

**Action:**

Identify the best opportunities for infill development and review land use patterns, existing zoning and financing programs to determine the most appropriate measures to ensure infill residential development occurs in harmony with surrounding property uses.	PC				✘
Consider establishing an Infill Regulation, to retain more public control in assuring new investment is respectful and representative of the surrounding environment.	PC/Council			✘	

## Economic Development

**GOAL: Identify, market and, in some selected cases, acquire vacant or under-utilized industrial and commercial properties.**

**Action:**

Work with individual property owners to identify and overcome land use or other issues which may impede the development of vacant parcels. Issues of focus should be those the City may impact through the change of municipal policies or through the use of public programs and subsidies to spur development.	ED / CM	✘			
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	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Short Term (1-3 Years)</b>	<b>Mid Term (4-6 Years)</b>	<b>Long Term (7-10 Years)</b>
Continue to investigate properties that may become available for development and explore any brownfields-related issues. If existing, the City should assist owners and developers in using public programs for remediation.	ED / DE	✘			
Assist developers in conducting site assemblage of smaller vacant and underutilized parcels to create larger, more marketable development sites in areas such as along East Main Street, South Broad Street and the Berlin Turnpike.	ED	✘			
<b>GOAL: Strengthen and enhance the commercial corridors in Meriden to create critical densities of economic development in established corridors and build the City's Grand List by continuing to aggressively promote and encourage commercial infill development in these areas.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Corridors of particular focus should be East Main Street, West Main Street, South Broad Street and Chamberlain Highway, where planning analysis has already been conducted.	ED / DE	✘			
Coordinate design and access management for infill development along commercial corridors. Build upon existing clusters of uses in specific areas (retail, office, hi-tech) when marketing the corridors and recruiting new businesses. Ensure that quality development occurs in these areas.	ED / PC	✘			
Prevent the fragmentation of existing commercial corridors by non-commercial uses to preserve as much land as possible for economic development.	PC		✘		
Consider modifying the City's zoning regulations for older industrial areas to permit a wider array of commercial uses to help maintain existing industrial properties as sites for economic development.	ED / PC / Council		✘		
<b>GOAL: In addition to efforts geared toward attracting businesses and jobs to the City, place emphasis on attracting skilled workers to Meriden and, via the Meriden school system, producing future workers with the skill sets needed to flourish in the 21st century global economy.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Encourage and expand current linkages between educational institutions and local businesses to tie students' educational experience to real-world employment and economic situations.	ED / BOE	✘			
Reassess the target area of Meriden's IT Zone to include additional areas that lie outside of the Enterprise Zone boundaries. Expand boundaries to include areas where IT clusters are already located. Aggressively market the IT Zone tax benefits and the City's loan financing to lure high-tech firms to Meriden.	ED / Council			✘	

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		On-Going	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (4-6 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Consider expanding the City’s MAP loan program to include IT companies.	ED / Council			✘	
Utilize Meriden’s affordable housing stock, access to regional transportation networks, proximity to prestigious colleges and universities and central geographic location as salient points for marketing Meriden as an attractive place for hi-tech businesses.	ED / Council /SCRCOG	✘			
Work with other cities and towns in south central Connecticut to further strengthen a regional market for high-tech firms.	ED / Council	✘			
<b>GOAL: Place strong emphasis on developing the “creative economy” in Meriden, centered around arts, culture, education, the non-profit sector and entrepreneurship.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Promote the continued development and expansion of community assets such as Middlesex Community College.	ED	✘			
Support the development of a Phase I Arts Facility, as proposed and discussed in the Meriden Arts Study conducted by Hunter Interests, Inc., offering space for a variety of different art media, to further develop the nascent Meriden arts community.	CM / ED / DE	✘			
Encourage additional development of loft-style housing units, gallery space and studio space in Meriden, particularly in the Downtown or in the future redevelopment of the Hub site and the City Center Initiative target areas, to promote the growth of the arts community and young business professionals.	ED / PC	✘			
Work with local arts, music, cultural and philanthropic organizations to coordinate the existing assets and needs of the creative community to develop a framework for action for expanding the creative community and economy in Meriden.	ED / Council	✘			
<b>GOAL: Pursue economic development objectives for already identified potential development sites to create sustainable, high-quality commercial, office and industrial space that is designed in a manner that maximizes tax revenue while being sensitive to surrounding neighborhoods and environmental assets.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Continue the process of acquiring the Undercliff site from the State of Connecticut for economic development purposes, as well as the redevelopment of the Hub site and the larger area to the north as specified in the City Center Initiative.	Council	✘			
Change the zone for economic development sites, such as the Hall property and the NRG site etc.,	PC		✘		
Require high-quality, innovative physical design of the special study sites that maximizes tax revenue, limits traffic impacts, protects and retains important natural features and blends harmoniously with the surrounding neighborhood via zoning regulations.	PC / Council	✘			

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		On-Going	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (4-6 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
<b>GOAL: Continue to strengthen efforts in the areas of business recruitment, business retention and expansion of existing businesses in Meriden.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Continue to provide the resources to maintain a vibrant economic development marketing and promotion effort via the Economic Development Office.	CM / ED / Council	X			
<b>GOAL: Enhance the physical attractiveness of Meriden's commercial and industrial areas.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Review existing applicable regulations, such as signage and landscaping requirements, to gauge their impact on the physical design and appearance of Meriden's economic generation areas. Make appropriate changes to these regulations where necessary.	PC / Council		X		
Create a new City program similar to the existing C.I.D.E.W.A.L.K. program to focus on improving sidewalks in commercial and industrial areas, where needed.	CM / Council		X		
<b>Downtown Meriden / Transit Oriented Development (TOD)</b>					
<b>GOAL: Develop the Downtown area as the location for new employment, high-density housing and other transit-oriented development (TOD).</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Add a Transit Oriented Development section to the City's zoning regulations to guide mixed use development within a designated downtown area.	PC / Council		X		
<b>GOAL: When the commuter rail service from New Haven to Springfield, MA is completed, it will become an important component of Meriden's transportation network. It is critical that the City capitalize on this asset to garner the most benefit in terms of ridership, ancillary economic impacts, and the drawing of visitors into the Downtown.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Redevelop of the Hub site in a manner that addresses flood control, creates a central public open space for the Downtown and develops land uses that will have a symbiotic relationship with the Meriden rail station, such as housing, offices and commercial uses.	ED / DE / PC /Council	X			
Promote TODs for the area around the Hub Site.	ED / CM	X			

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	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Short Term (1-3 Years)</b>	<b>Mid Term (4-6 Years)</b>	<b>Long Term (7-10 Years)</b>
Utilize enhanced rail service to draw visitors to Meriden’s Downtown by creating a business recruitment program to establish new dining, entertainment and cultural attractions around the rail station.	ED			✘	
Market Meriden’s Downtown as a single “transit-oriented development”, with an emphasis on the reasonably-priced housing options in the area and the ease of commuting to Hartford or New Haven or Fairfield counties via the commuter rail service.	ED	✘			
<b>GOAL: Make redevelopment and reinvestment in Downtown Meriden the cornerstone of the City’s economic development efforts.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Continue to pursue the City Center Initiative, the redevelopment of the Hub site, and other on-going projects in the Downtown area that will strengthen the built environment as well as draw in residents, shoppers, visitors and commuters.	ED / DE / Council	✘			
Redevelopment of the Hub site should focus first and foremost on solving the Harbor Brook flood control issues, followed by solidifying the Downtown center through the creation of a central green space/public use area, positioning the Downtown to capitalize on multimodal transportation opportunities by way of rail access and the development of new transit facilities, and creating development “pads” that will provide space for new economic development opportunities in the center of Downtown.	FC / ED / Council			✘	
<b>GOAL: Work with Downtown property owners and merchants to focus on upgrading the appearance, safety, and vitality of the Downtown as part of the process of business retention and development.</b>					
Develop a façade improvement program for the Downtown business district utilizing a combination of loans and grants to improve the physical appearance of Downtown properties while spurring individual owners to invest in their respective properties.	DE / CM			✘	
Develop design guidelines to address storefront improvements, signs, window and door types, approved siding materials, masonry repair, replacement or highlighting of trim, cornices, appropriate colors and other architectural details.	DE / PC / DRB / Council			✘	
Encourage the conversion of vacant upper floor commercial space to market rate residential uses, which can bring pedestrian activity, vitality, and buying power to the Downtown.	ED	✘			
Establish a low-interest rate revolving loan program to enable Downtown property owners to make needed repairs to their buildings, as funding resources permit.	Council / ED / CM				✘
Encourage and provide regulations for the locations of retail uses at the ground floor level in Downtown to develop more visual interest for shoppers, pedestrians and visitors to the area.	DE /ED / PC / Council				✘

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	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Short Term (1-3 Years)</b>	<b>Mid Term (4-6 Years)</b>

## Transportation & Circulation

**GOAL:** Route 5 serves the City as the most critical north-south roadway for local traffic and business access, and its segments accommodate anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day. Addressing the current needs of this roadway and planning for future impacts from development along its length should be a high priority for the City to ensure that Route 5 does not become overburdened.

**Action:**

Work with SCRCOG and CONNDOT to improve the drainage system along Route 5.	DPW		✘		
Devise strategies to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents along Route 5, particularly in the area around its intersection with East Main Street.	CTDOT / MPD / DPW			✘	
Utilize zoning regulations and traffic management techniques to promote development along Route 5 that minimizes curb cuts and ingress/egress points, promote shared driveways, and guide development in a manner that minimizes traffic impact.	PC/DE			✘	
Build upon the successful completion of a Route 5 study recommending the revision of pavement markings and minor geometric changes between Ann Street and the Meriden-Wallingford town line to improve traffic flow and driver comprehension.	DPW			✘	

**GOAL:** The combined roadway of East Main Street and West Main Street is the primary means for local traffic to cross Meriden along its east/west axis, and also provides critical linkages between the interstate highway system and commercial/industrial uses in Meriden, as well as the Downtown area. As the economic lifeline of the City, strong emphasis should be placed on this roadway corridor to ensure that commercial establishments continue to grow and thrive along its length.

**Action:**

In conjunction with the City Center Initiative, create a unified streetscape theme along East Main Street from Broad Street to Cook Avenue to tie into the proposed new curbs, sidewalks, pavement and drainage along West Main Street between Cook Avenue and North Second Street.	DPW / DE		✘		
In conjunction with CONNDOT, devise strategies to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents along the East Main Street/West Main Street corridor, particularly in the area along West Main Street between Cook Avenue and the Chamberlain Highway.	MPD / CTDOT / DPW / SCROG		✘		
Utilize zoning regulations and other land use tools to promote development along East Main Street and West Main Street that minimizes curb cuts and ingress/egress points, promote shared driveways, and guide development in a manner that minimizes the traffic impact of such development along this corridor.	PC/DE / CTDOT / DPW		✘		

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		On-Going	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (4-6 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
As part of the City Center Initiative, make the East Main Street/West Main Street connecting point a central part of the redevelopment of the Hub site. Doing so will solidify this area as the center of Meriden.	DPW			✘	
Over the long-term, investigate the potential for realigning and reconfiguring the East Main Street/Broad Street intersection to improve traffic flow and reduce confusion.	DPW / CTDOT				✘
<b>GOAL: Route 70 and Route 71 provide important secondary access to many of Meriden’s western and central neighborhoods, as well as the Downtown area and other commercial nodes. The access that these routes provide should be capitalized on in a manner that is sensitive to the character of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Monitor the Chamberlain Highway section of Route 71 to ensure that additional commercial development along this section of the route does not overburden the roadway’s capacity.	DPW			✘	
In conjunction with CONNDOT, devise strategies to reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents along the West Main Street section of Route 71 between Cook Avenue and the Chamberlain Highway.	MPD / CTDOT / DPW				✘
<b>GOAL: Interstate 91, Interstate 691, Route 15 and Route 66 will continue to serve the important role of connecting Meriden with the region, the State and the national transportation network. While the City has little direct control over the development and utilization of these roadways, it should continue to be active in working with State and federal departments and officials to ensure that Meriden is adequately and properly served by these roadways.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Complete the I-691/Chamberlain Highway/ N. Colony/ State St. interchange through SCRCOG and CONNDOT to provide enhanced access to the mall, the MidState Medical Center and the Chamberlain Highway corridor.	SCRCOG / CTDOT / DPW	✘			
Work with SCRCOG and CONNDOT to coordinate incident management and traffic advisory services, proposed construction projects and enhancements, and basic maintenance activities.	SCRCOG / CTDOT / Council	✘			
<b>GOAL: Other town-maintained roadways will gradually require maintenance and reinvestment. While they currently are performing up to adequate standards, these roadways should receive some long-term attention.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Maintain adequate funding and staffing levels at the Public Works Department to ensure that resources are in place for periodic and systematic assessments of Meriden’s roadway network.	Council / CM / DPW	✘			

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	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Short Term (1-3 Years)</b>	<b>Mid Term (4-6 Years)</b>	<b>Long Term (7-10 Years)</b>
Inventory the condition of streets and sidewalks and update the inventory utilizing GIS.	DPW		✘		
<b>GOAL: Establish trail networks for pedestrians and bicyclists as an alternative means of transportation and recreation for residents. In Meriden, most existing trails offer opportunities for passive recreation, while very few trails serve as a viable alternative to conventional vehicular trips.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Continue to pursue the development of the city-wide trail system.	CC / PR / DPW	✘			
<b>GOAL: With the exception of the East Main Street/West Main Street combined roadway, east-west access across Meriden for local traffic is poor. The City should investigate opportunities for improving this access wherever feasible. Doing so would help alleviate the high traffic volume along the East Main Street/West Main Street corridor.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Investigate possible opportunities to extend Hanover Avenue from Old Colony Road across the railroad line to South Broad Street.	DE / DPW				✘
As part of the future use of the NRG Site, investigate the possibility of extending Hicks Avenue into the site for additional access.	DPW				✘
<b>GOAL: A number of cul-de-sacs and loop roads in the west side of Meriden limit access between West Main Street and southwestern sections of Meriden. An additional north-south connection would provide greater access to Hubbard Park for residents of this area of the City. It would also help alleviate the traffic volume along Route 71.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Investigate possible opportunities to extend Spruce Street from Johnson Avenue to Allen Avenue, and connect with Edgemark Acres.	DE			✘	
<b>GOAL: Several key roadway intersections in Meriden are confusing and complex. Reconfiguring some intersections can be accomplished in the short-term, while others will require more long-term planning. Reconfiguring these intersections will improve traffic flow and will help simplify the process of moving around the City.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Redesign and reconfigure the Pomeroy Avenue/Cone Avenue/Preston Avenue/East Main Street intersection.	DPW			✘	
Redesign and reconfigure the East Main Street/Broad Street intersection and the intersection of East Main Street, West Main Street, Hanover Street, Colony Street, Railroad Avenue and Perkins Street.	DPW		✘		

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	Lead Agency	On-Going	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (4-6 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
<b>Community Facilities</b>					
<b>GOAL: Promote energy-efficient and sustainable patterns of development, practices and operations for the City and its residents.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Continue a committee to explore the use of energy by the City and recommend measures to improve efficiency and sustainability.	Council / DPW	✘			
<b>GOAL: Continue to improve and enhance police and fire services to maintain a high level of fire suppression and rescue service, as well as expanding effective community policing initiatives.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Budget for capital improvements for police and fire services in the most cost-effective manner.	CM	✘			
Continue to study whether there is a need to add additional paramedic services, and implement if necessary.	MFD / CM		✘		
In addition to expanding the Neighborhood Initiative Unit target area into the northern end of the City, examine whether other areas of Meriden could benefit from inclusion in the Unit's target area.	DE / MPD			✘	
Build upon the success of the Neighborhood Initiative Unit by securing funding for additional police officer positions within the Unit.	CM / Council		✘		
<b>GOAL: Continue to meet the health and social service needs of Meriden residents in a coordinated and efficient manner.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
In the future, focus additional resources on enhancing the Senior Affairs department's ability to provide home-delivered meals, transportation and in-home assessments for elderly residents.	CM / Council		✘		
Expand efforts to reduce school truancy among Meriden youth.	BOE	✘			
<b>GOAL: Provide the highest level of educational services to the children of Meriden.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Create a comprehensive and cost-effective renovation program for both Maloney High School and Platt High School that provides a state-of-the-art learning environment for Meriden's students.	BOE		✘		

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	Lead Agency	On-Going	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (4-6 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Continue to pursue the expansion of Hanover Elementary School to provide greater access to full-day kindergarten for Meriden families.	BOE			✘	
Comprehensively evaluate the physical and programmatic needs of each of Meriden's school facilities, identify pertinent issues to be addressed, and develop a plan for addressing identified needs through renovations, expansions and programmatic changes over the long-term.	BOE		✘		
Continually evaluate the need for additional school system programs, such as universal kindergarten and new curriculum programs, so that emerging education needs can be addressed quickly and effectively.	BOE	✘			
Identify key properties to be acquired for potential future expansion of school facilities.	BOE / DE	✘			
<b>GOAL: Provide enhanced waste disposal, sewage treatment and other public works infrastructure to ensure that the City of Meriden can meet both its current and future waste disposal needs.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Continue to pursue the upgrading of the sewage treatment plant and the completion of denitrification project.	PU	✘			
Move from studying to implementing the Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) removal project to reduce treatment plant loading.	PU			✘	
Continue to pursue the construction of a new recycling facility, combined with a police impound center.	DPW / MPD	✘			
Complete necessary repairs and upgrades to the Public Works Complex.	DPW		✘		
Develop a program of property identification and acquisition to protect the watersheds and aquifers that provide the City of Meriden with its drinking water.	PU			✘	
Secure cost effective means for disposal of excavations, catch basin cleanings, and street sweepings	DPW		✘		
Pursue water treatment plant upgrades and modernization.	PU			✘	
Study the drainage patterns of the minor brooks and streams within the City of Meriden to identify any potential future flooding problems before they occur.	FC / DPW			✘	
<b>Natural Resources</b>					
<b>GOAL: Protect Meriden's landscape and unique topography while still permitting future development.</b>					

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	<b>Lead Agency</b>	<b>On-Going</b>	<b>Short Term (1-3 Years)</b>	<b>Mid Term (4-6 Years)</b>

<b>Action:</b>					
The Conservation Commission, in conjunction with the City and cooperating conservation organizations, should identify priority conservation areas and develop a strategy for the conservation and preservation of undeveloped land as it becomes available. Open space acquisitions should be ones that enable the City to connect the existing parks and open space assets into a cohesive system should be given high priority.	PC / CC / PR		✘		
Identify priority areas and individual parcels for conservation and preservation actions, as well as areas that should be designated as prime development areas.	DE	✘			
Create a list of Open Space Criteria with weighted factors to serve as a base for decision-making in terms of future open space acquisitions.	PC / CC / Council / PR		✘		
Support actions that protect floodplains and limit the development of flood prone areas.	DE/FC / DPW	✘			
Develop regulations that protect areas containing slopes that exceed 15%.	PC / Council		✘		
Enforce proper soil conservation practices to guard against soil erosion and stream sedimentation resulting from future land development activities.	DE / IWC	✘			

### Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

**GOAL:** Maximize the value and utility of the existing system of parks, recreational facilities and open space resources throughout Meriden and add to the open space and recreation system as resources and opportunities permit.

<b>Action:</b>					
Continue the efficient utilization of existing parks and recreation facilities, including extended hours and creative scheduling.	PR	✘			
Strengthen the existing cooperative relationship between the Parks Department and the Board of Education to maximize the use of all school-associated recreational resources to the benefit of Meriden’s residents.	PR / BOE	✘			
Establish an acquisition funding committee as a subcommittee of the Planning Commission and the Conservation Commission that is dedicated to securing funds from state, federal and private and non-profit organizations and agencies for the acquisition and protection of open space;	Council / CM / CC / LT		✘		
Designate the City Planner as the staff person to coordinate open space acquisitions for the City.	DE	✘			
Continue to provide a variety of municipal protections for open space resources.	CM	✘			
Review the existing zoning of environmentally-sensitive lands to ensure that the zone designations for such parcels do not promote unnecessarily intensive development	PC / DE		✘		

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		On-Going	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (4-6 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Establish regulations that limit impervious surface coverage to levels appropriate for each zoning district	PC / DE		✗		
Target properties to acquire for open space or recreational use in neighborhoods presently lacking such facilities.	DE / PR			✗	
Consider forming a study committee to work with the State for potentially utilizing part of the Undercliff property as a park or for open space.	Council			✗	
Investigate how a future cross-City linear trail system could connect to existing trails in the City of Middletown, as well as connecting to Hubbard Park	CC/ PR /DE		✗		
Consider forming a study committee to look at the potential re-use of part of the landfill for open space.	Council			✗	
Consider creating Open Space zoning districts to protect the open tracts of land in the City.	DE / PC		✗		
Consider a local based fee associated with property transfers to be used for open space protection.	Council				✗
Conduct a fiscal impact analysis to determine the fiscal consequences of balancing open space preservation with residential development for Meriden	DE		✗		
Examine all parcels acquired by the City through tax foreclosure, donation, etc. for their potential to be added to the open space and parks inventory;	PR/CC/DE	✗			
Maximize accessibility to all open space resources.	PR/CC	✗			
Continue study committee to investigate and pursue potential restoration of Hanover Pond as a non-motorized recreational amenity surrounded by preserved undeveloped land.	MAYOR'S Recreation Task Force, PR	✗			
<b>GOAL: Provide a system of linkages connecting public and private open space throughout Meriden and the region. Open space should provide passive and active recreation opportunities and preserve environmentally sensitive areas.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Wherever possible, link existing parks and open space assets should be linked together to form interconnected greenways.	PR / DE	✗			
Encourage greenways that link neighborhoods, public facilities and employment areas to existing open space areas as a focus for recreational activity.	PR / DE	✗			
<b>GOAL: Promote open space to maximize the amenity value of Meriden's extensive open space/recreation system – Hunter Memorial Golf Course, Hubbard Park, Giuffrida Park, Blue Blazed Trails, Quinnipiac Gorge, and other assets.</b>					
<b>Action:</b>					
Market Meriden's open space system and recreation programs as a major quality of life amenity.	ED		✗		