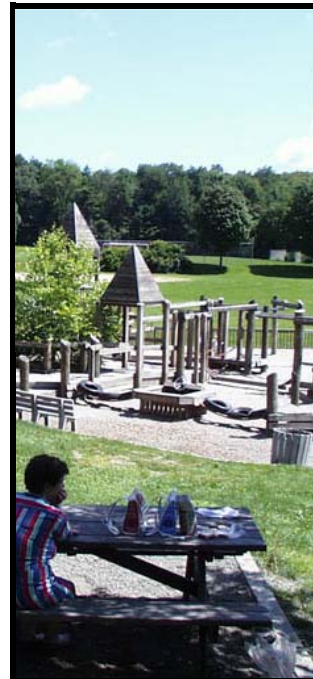


# Valley Council of Governments

Strategic Plan of Conservation & Development

## FOR THE ALL-AMERICAN VALLEY



Prepared by the  
Valley Regional Planning Commission



Valley Council of Governments

## **REGIONAL PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT 2008**

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June 24, 2008

Valley Council of Governments  
12 Main Street  
Railroad Station  
Derby, CT 06418

Dear Board Members,

We are please to submit this revised 2008 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. We have incorporated the growth management principles in your local municipal plans and the 2005-2010 State Plan of Conservation and Development. This Plan Update has been reviewed and found to be generally consistent with all of the referenced plans and principles therein. In addition, this plan represents the responsible growth and conservation-driven vision for the Valley Planning Region.

We look forward to your review and comments to ensure a complete and thorough public process.

Sincerely,

Bartholomew Flaherty III  
*Chairman, Valley Regional Planning Commission*

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## Acknowledgements

The Valley Regional Planning Commission would like to thank the Valley residents and the following individuals for their contributions to the Plan:

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*Note: Special Thanks to  
Planimetrics; portions of this  
Plan are taken partly or entirely  
from the 2002 Regional Plan of  
Conservation and Development,  
originally prepared by  
Planimetrics*

# INTRODUCTION

# 1

## Introduction to the Valley Region

The Valley Council of Governments (COG) is the regional planning organization that serves the communities of Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, and Shelton in south central Connecticut. The 58 square-mile region is located northwest of the City of New Haven and south of the City of Waterbury, midway between Waterbury and Bridgeport. The Census reported that the region had a population of 84,500 people in the year 2000.

In 2000, the Valley region and several neighboring towns were recognized for its regional activities by being chosen to receive an “All American Cities Award” by the American Civic League. The award was based on several projects that illustrated success in planning and implementing projects of a regional scope.

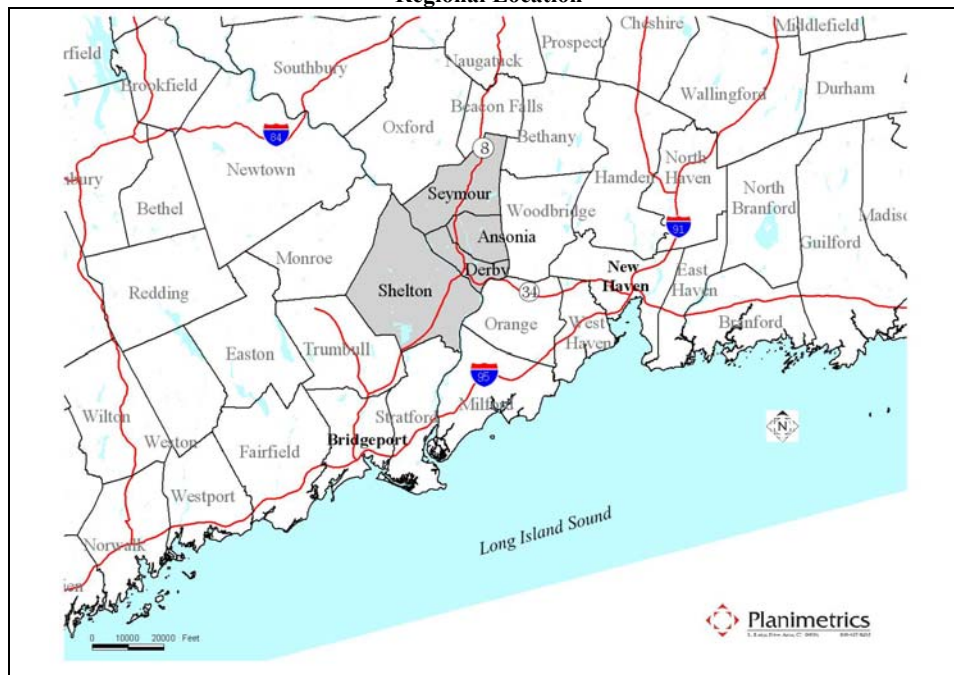
Based on the recognized success of these regional activities, the Valley Regional Planning Agency initiated this Regional Plan of Conservation and Development entitled “Smart Growth for the All American Valley”. Funding assistance for the project was provided by the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.

### Valley COG

This Regional Plan of Conservation & Development has been prepared by and for the Valley Council of Governments (COG):

- The state defined regional planning organization (RPO), and
- The federally defined metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for transportation in the Valley Region.

**Regional Location**



## **Statutory Provisions**

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CGS Section 8-35a states, in part, that:

“Each regional planning area shall make a plan of development for its area of operation, showing its recommendations for the general use of the area including land use, housing, principal highways and freeways, bridges, airports, parks, playgrounds, recreational areas, schools, public institutions, public utilities and such other matters as, in the opinion of the agency, will be beneficial to the area.”

## **Local Plans**

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Plans of Conservation & Development for Ansonia, Derby, and Seymour were updated as part of this planning effort.

The City of Shelton Plan of Development was updated in 2007.

## **Overview of Regional Planning**

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While State Statutes (CGS 8-35a) require that regional planning agencies prepare a regional plan (see sidebar), the best reason for preparing a Regional Plan of Conservation & Development is to recognize that all Valley residents live in a regional community.

Each town and city in the region relies on other communities in the region for employment, housing, entertainment, and other needs and desires. Many issues, including water quality, water supply, and transportation transcend municipal boundaries. More importantly, economic competition is on a global scale and the geographic area for competing on the global stage is the region.

This Regional Plan provides a larger context for addressing development and conservation issues. It will link planning activities between towns and address issues and functions that can be more effectively discussed at the regional level. This Regional Plan of Conservation & Development is an advisory document that is intended to:

- Evaluate conditions, trends, and issues of regional significance,
- Recommend policies that will address regional issues,
- Guide local, regional, and state agencies in setting priorities, reviewing development or other proposals, implementing programs, and assisting member communities in joint efforts, and
- Promote consistent decision-making.

## **Relationship-Local, Regional & State Plans**

Each municipality in the region has a local plan of conservation and development. These plans address local issues and specific initiatives. Municipal implementation is accomplished by land use regulations, operating/capital improvement budgets, and land acquisition. Such plans are typically updated every ten years.

At another level, the State Plan of Conservation & Development is much broader due to its geographic scope. The State Plan is updated every five years. Recommendations in the State Plan guide major state initiatives and projects involving state funding.

The Regional Plan falls between these two. It is, by necessity, more specific than the State Plan and more general than the local plans. Implementation of the Regional Plan must typically rely on consensus and education.

The 2008 Valley Region Plan has been compared to all of the four local municipal Plans and the 2005-2010 State Plan of Conservation and has been found to be generally consistent with the Growth Management Principles therein and the locational guide map policy areas.

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**2002 Goals and  
Recommendations:  
Implemented!**

*Progress has been made in each section and chapter included in the 2002 Plan. Several of the most notable chapters that have seen progress are as follows:*

**Chapter 3: Conserve Important Resources, Recommendation:**

**1. Protect Water Quality**

**2. Preserve Open Space and Create Greenways**

**Chapter 4: Encourage “Smart Growth”:**

**1. Promote Adaptive reuse where appropriate**

**2. Consider Creating Rezoning to Facilitate Reuse**

**Chapter 6: Address Transportation Needs**

**1. Improve Route 8**

**2. Enhance Transit Service**

**3. Make Necessary Improvements on Major Roadways**

**4. Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation**

**Progress and Implementation in the Valley since 2002**

The 2002 Valley Regional Plan of Conservation and Development contained numerous recommendations to encourage a balanced growth approach towards development in the region. Significant progress has been achieved in the six years that have elapsed in that time. Several of these objectives are discussed in detail below and the corresponding recommendations and objectives from the 2002 plan are listed in the side bar to the left:

**Chapter 3 Conserve Important Resources; Progress**

1. Protect Water Quality: The 2002 Plan called for measures to protect water quality. In 2004 the Connecticut State Legislature passed Bill # 6594 to establish Aquifer Protection Area regulations. The Valley Towns of Seymour, Shelton, and Derby all have Aquifers or a portion thereof within their borders. Each of these three Towns have appointed an Agent to oversee the regulated and non-regulated activities and have adopted the Aquifer Protection Area into their maps as a special district.
2. Preserve Open Space and Create Greenways: The 2002 Plan identified preserving open space and creating greenways as a priority to the valley residents. To date, all four of the valley towns have a constructed greenway, except for Seymour’s which is in the design phase. Others are currently seeking additional funding to extend their existing greenways. In addition to the greenways the valley Towns have designated more land as Open Space since 2002.

**Chapter 4 Encourage “SmartGrowth”; Progress**

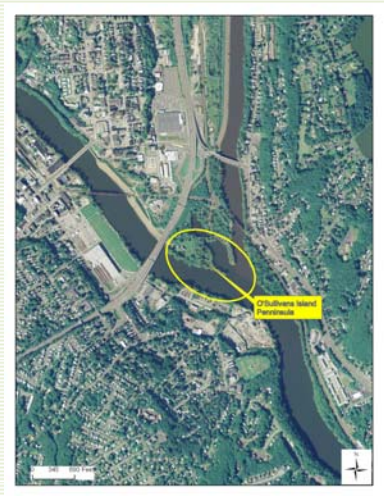
1. Promote Adaptive reuse where appropriate & Consider Creating Rezoning to Facilitate reuse: In the past six years there has been significant progress in this area within the region. Shelton, Derby, and Ansonia have adopted overlay development districts promoting reuse of the historic and downtown areas. Shelton is in the process of completing phase 1 of a major riverfront development that includes the reuse of manufacturing building that includes a section of greenway. Derby has designated one of its oldest sections of the City as a redevelopment zone and is currently evaluating developer proposals. Ansonia has begun a major effort to revitalize its downtown district with the City Center Plan that includes reuse where appropriate to keep business strong in its downtown and attract new business. Seymour established the Economic Development Commission in 2006 which led to the Seymour Master Economic Development plan to help provide a framework to balance the town’s development in

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*In addition to the specific recommendations included in the 2002 Plan there has been progress towards the “smart growth” that was referred to in the 2002 Plan. The regional Brownfields partnership has seen tremendous growth in partnership and successful remediation projects. The partnership has continued to receive Federal and State funds. Many of the regional Brownfields projects have been located in redevelopment projects in the Valley and greater Central Connecticut.*



*Another great success since the 2002 Plan is the effort to clean up and convert the once contaminated O’Sullivan’s Island Peninsula in Derby into a public park with a walkway and fishing pier.*



the next decade. In 2006 this newly formed Commission and hired consultants analyzed data, examined the town’s economic resources, and held meetings with residents and business leaders. The findings resulted in the identification of many strong economic and physical assets and the opportunity for well thought out and beneficial development.

## **Chapter 6 Address Transportation Needs; Progress**

1. Improve Route 8: The Route 8 Interchange Study and Design Project is nearing completion with Final Design almost complete for the Exit 18 North Bound ramp in Ansonia. Exits 15, 16, 17 are being broken into phases and will be treated as separate projects through the final design and construction phases.
2. Enhance Transit Service: The Waterbury Branch Line Study has just begun and the Valley Council of Governments and the Valley Regional Planning Commission will be reviewing the study's progress as well as commenting on the study as it proceeds. Current ridership is up almost 50% from 2002 and based on observations from this increase in ridership, additional parking will be required at all of the Valley Towns with a train stop located therein. Bus service from New Haven and Bridgeport has also increased and there are additional buses for the existing routes as well as entirely new routes throughout the region. The Valley Transit District has increased its para-transit and ADA service to provide complimentary service to both the Waterbury Branch Line and the additional fixed route bus services.
3. Make Necessary Improvements on Major Roadways: There are currently several ongoing projects within the region to improve major roadways. Route 34 received funding from the SAFETEA-LU and a widening project that includes pedestrian enhancements is currently underway. Route 67 in Seymour also received funding through SAFETEA-LU and that project is currently being scoped and reviewed by the VCOG and ConnDOT. There is also a concept plan that is now being studied to connect Route 67 in Seymour with Route 42 in Beacon Falls.
4. Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation: The high volume of users on the multi-use trails that have been constructed since 2002 have created a strong motivation to increase the number of trails in the region. All of the Valley Towns currently have at least one trail constructed or in design and several of the Towns have multiple trails. The region is intending to continue to seek funding for the design and construction of bike/pedestrian trails throughout the region.



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### *Growth Management Principles*

*With recent amendments to CGS Section 8-23, a new set of criteria have been established that Plans of Conservation and Development must be measured against. Plans of Conservation and Development must now be consistent with the following growth management principles.*

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

## **State Plan of Conservation and Development Policies Plan**

The Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, 2005-2010 (C&D Plan) is comprised of two separate, yet equally important, components – the Plan text and the Locational Guide Map. Both components include policies that guide the planning and decision-making processes of state government relative to: (1) addressing human resource needs and development; (2) balancing economic growth with environmental protection and resource conservation concerns; and (3) coordinating the functional planning activities of state agencies to accomplish long-term effectiveness and economies in the expenditure of public funds.

Municipalities and Regional Planning Organizations must note any inconsistencies with the Growth Management Principles when developing their own plans of conservation and development.

The Locational Guide Map plays an important role in coordinating relevant state actions by providing a geographical interpretation of the state's conservation and development policies. The Map comprises the best available digital, standardized, statewide data for each policy's definitional criteria.

### **Development Area Policies (In order of priority)**

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

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*The Valley Region is unique to have the confluence of the Naugatuck and Housatonic Rivers located within its boundaries. In addition, the Valley region also has three large aquifers which are a key water supply source within the Housatonic Watershed Area. The Valley Communities have worked to maintain the environmental stability of region by carefully reviewing development proposals that may affect these water supply resources.*

*The Valley Planning region recognizes the growing connection between dense housing and the need for outdoor recreation to facilitate a high quality of life and to promote healthy living. It is a priority of the Region to continue to encourage revitalization of its downtown areas while also providing those residents with outdoor recreation opportunities.*

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



## **State Plan of Conservation and Development Policies Plan *Continued***

### **Conservation Area Policies (In order of priority)**

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

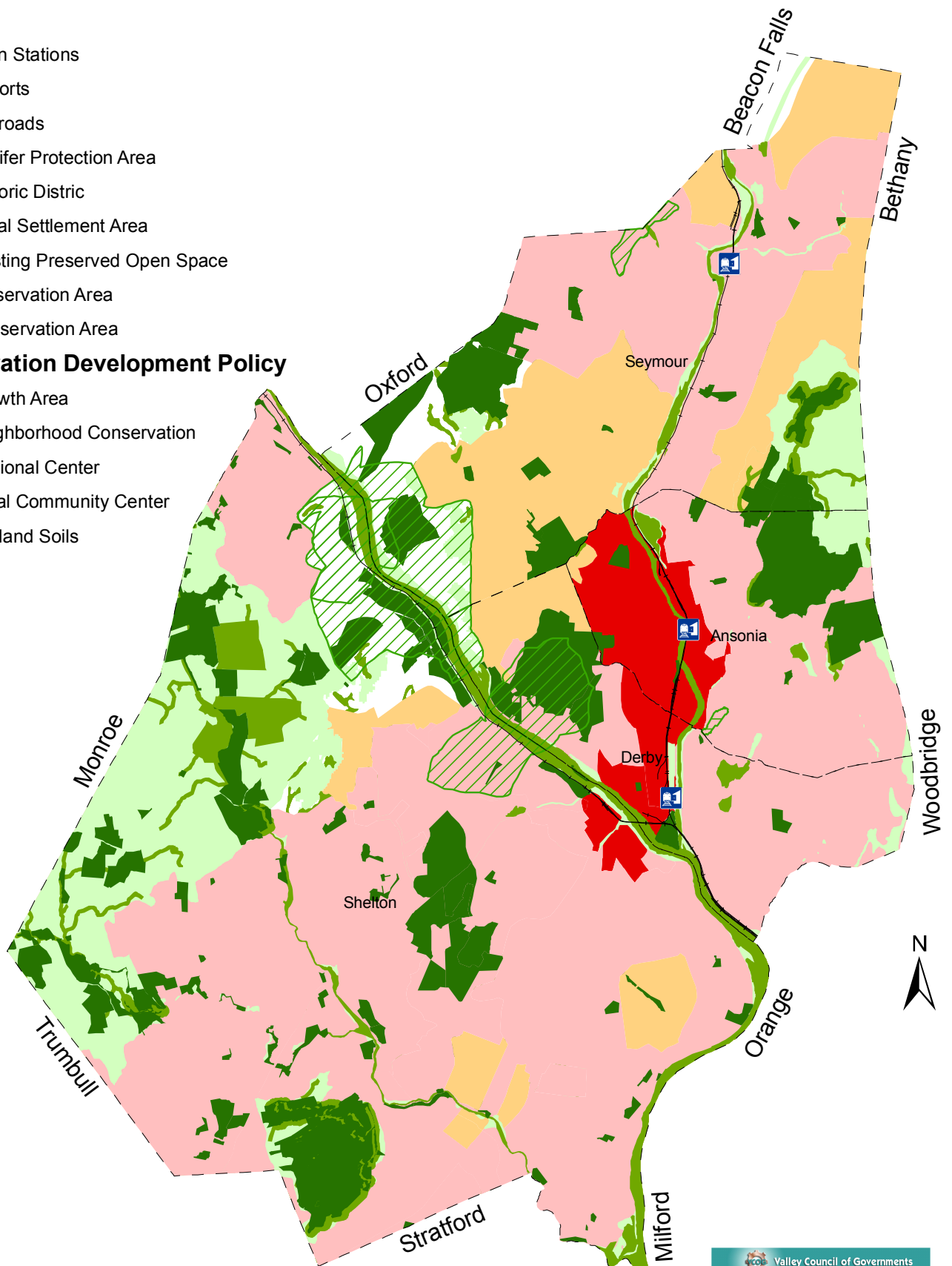
# State Plan of Conservation and Development Locational Guide Map Growth Management Land Use Designations

## Legend

-  Train Stations
-  Airports
-  Railroads
-  Aquifer Protection Area
-  Historic District
-  Tribal Settlement Area
-  Existing Preserved Open Space
-  Preservation Area
-  Conservation Area

## Conservation Development Policy

-  Growth Area
-  Neighborhood Conservation
-  Regional Center
-  Rural Community Center
-  Wetland Soils





# CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

## 2

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### Regional History

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#### **Waterways Attracted Human Settlement**

Prior to the early 1600s, human settlements in the lower Naugatuck Valley region consisted of several Native American tribes (Wepawaugs, Paugassets, and Potatucks). These Native Americans lived as hunters, fishers, gatherers, and farmers in the valleys and hills that comprise the landscape of this area.

With European “discovery” of this area in 1614, trade began between Native Americans in coastal areas and the Dutch and English. This led to European colonization of “New England” after 1620 and settlements in Connecticut after 1633. Between 1620 and 1642, it is estimated that at least 120,000 English people emigrated to the New World (about 20,000 came to Connecticut).

Since waterways were principal transportation routes in colonial times, the Valley Region was first settled by Europeans about 1650. Derby was settled first due to its strategic location at the confluence of the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers and at the head of navigation on the Housatonic River.

#### **Waterways Attracted Industrial Development**

Throughout the 1600s and 1700s, Derby served as a commercial hub for the surrounding settlements and as a center for shipbuilding. Development of turnpikes (early roads typically built by private investors) around 1800 led to the decline of the shipping industry in Derby.

However, with the harnessing of the waterpower from the Naugatuck River in the early 1800s, the Valley became the center of highly organized industrial enterprises. Some companies established “model” industrial villages where a manufacturing company built an entire community for its workers including, churches, schools, libraries, boarding houses, and homes.

Early manufacturing flourished in the Naugatuck Valley, led by the brass industry. The Valley was considered one of the premiere manufacturing corridors in the nation throughout the 1800s as it continued to pioneer new techniques in manufacturing. The construction of railroad lines around 1850 expanded markets for local goods and the industrial importance of the Valley region became even more pronounced.

## **Town Development**

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**Derby**, is the earliest settlement in the region with a trading post established around 1650 at Derby Docks. The Derby settlement was considered part of Milford jurisdiction until 1675, when the former plantation of Paugasset was admitted by the state legislature as the township of Derby. The City of Derby was chartered by the State in 1893.

**Ansonia**, was part of Derby and actually became a borough of Derby in 1863. This arrangement lasted until 1889 when Ansonia became its own City and Borough. After four years of separate government the City and Borough governments merged in 1893.

**Seymour** was originally part of Derby. The people of what was then called Humphreysville wanted to establish their own community and petitioned that a town called Richmond be established. The governor at the time Thomas H. Seymour let it be known that he would immediately accept the petition if the town was named after him. The name was changed and Seymour was incorporated in 1850.

**Shelton**, formerly known as Huntington, was incorporated in 1789 from Stratford, and named for its leading industrialist and citizen Edward N. Shelton. In 1917, the borough and earlier established town government were merged to form the City of Shelton.

## **Technologic Changes Reduced the Locational Advantage of the Region**

The manufacturing prominence of the Valley continued through the turn of the century and much of the early 1900s. However, the Great Depression of the 1930s reduced industrial production in the Valley and population growth slowed. In the following decades, many traditional manufacturing industries in the Valley Region were negatively affected by competition from other areas that benefited from cheaper labor, cheaper transportation, closer materials or markets, more efficient equipment, and changing technologies and products.

Where 50,000 workers were once employed in the brass mills in the Naugatuck Valley, only 2,500 workers jobs remained in the vast mills and foundries by 1980. Many industrial buildings became vacant or underutilized.

## **Transportation Improvements Facilitated Development in Suburban Areas**

During the same period, the expansion of the highway system in Connecticut contributed to the changing fortunes of the Valley region. Highway improvements (such as the Merritt Parkway in the 1930s and the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s and 1960s) made it possible for people and businesses to relocate to outlying areas where there is vacant land available for development and the perception of new or better opportunities. Shelton overtook other Valley communities as residential and then business growth was attracted to the large areas of undeveloped land and the improved access. While redevelopment opportunities exist in the Valley, the need to clean up of former industrial sites hampered business growth and the renewed economic vitality of these areas.

Since 1970, more developed communities such as Ansonia (minus 2,606) and Derby (minus 288) have experienced stable or declining populations. During the same period, communities with more developable land have grown significantly, such as Seymour (plus 2,678) and Shelton (plus 10,936).

The map on the facing page shows the general configuration of development patterns in the Valley region based on aerial photography.

## **Summary**


The decline of industry in the Valley over the last 50 years has had a significant impact on the Valley Region, both economically and historically. Configured as “model industrial villages” for the industrial era, some communities are still adapting to the opportunities in the social and economic landscape of the new millennium.

This Regional Plan of Conservation & Development is intended to help address these issues.

## Valley Region



## Residential

 Residential / Commercial  
 Residential

## Business

Commercial / Industrial

### Existing Open Space

- Dedicated Open Space
- General Recreation
- Schools
- Cemeteries

### Comparative Growth Rate

	Valley	State
<b>1970-80</b>	3%	3%
<b>1980-90</b>	6%	6%
<b>1990-00</b>	5%	4%
<i>2000-10</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>4%</i>
<i>2010-20</i>	<i>2%</i>	<i>5%</i>

Projections in italics

Sources: U.S. Census of Population,  
DOT Population Projections

## Population Conditions & Trends

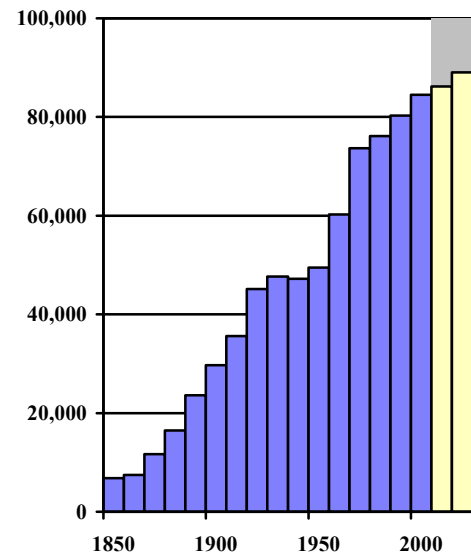
### Regional Growth Is Expected To Slow

The adjacent chart shows different eras in the growth of the Valley. From 1850 to 1930, the availability of abundant waterpower, increasing industrial productivity, and reliance on rail transportation resulted in a population increase from about 7,000 to about 48,000 people.

Through the Great Depression and World War II (1930 to 1950), population was stable as the economy in the Valley underwent structural changes.

Since 1950, the availability of automobile transportation and increasing suburbanization resulted in new growth in the Valley region.

Valley Region Population: 1850-2020



Over the past thirty years, the Valley region has grown at approximately the same rate as the State of Connecticut. However, over the next twenty years, State population projections estimate that the Valley region could grow at a rate roughly half that of the State as the amount of land available for development dwindles.

### Net In-Migration To The Region Has Slowed

Population growth can occur due to natural increase (more births than deaths) and/or net migration (more people moving in than moving out).

As can be seen from the following table, both natural increase and net migration have slowed considerably since 1970.

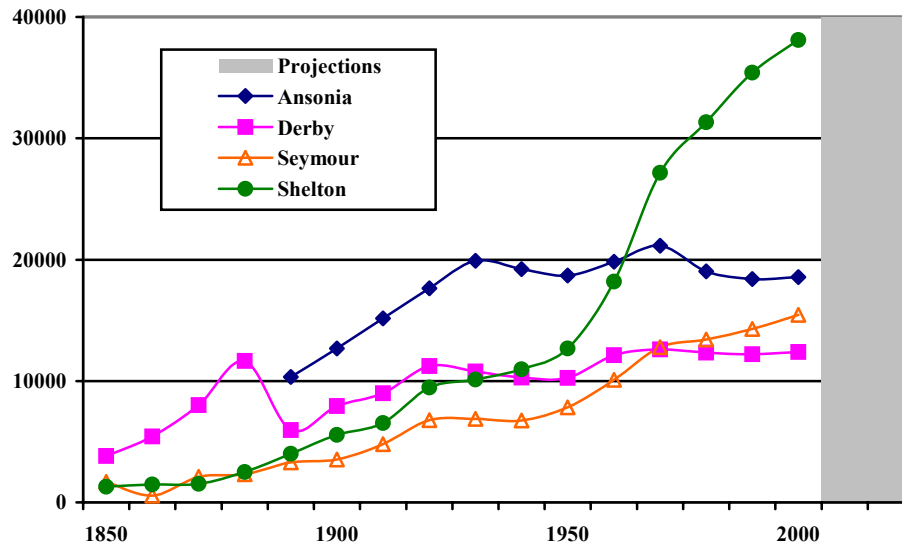
### Sources of Growth: 1950-2000 – Valley Region

	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Total Change
<b>1950 - 1960</b>	6,312	4,433	10,750
<b>1960 - 1970</b>	6,880	6,629	13,509
<b>1970 - 1980</b>	3,394	(1,001)	2,383
<b>1980 - 1990</b>	3,655	530	4,175
<b>1990 - 2000</b>	3,910	282	4,192

CT Department of Health, 1950-98. 1990-2000 data is extrapolated to a full decade.

## Most Growth Is Occurring In Outlying Areas With Available Land

In recent decades, most of the growth in the Valley region has been in outlying communities that have land available for development (Shelton and Seymour). In fact, during the 1990s, Shelton and Seymour accounted for 92 percent of the population growth in the entire region. This trend is expected to continue to the year 2020.



## 1990-2000 Growth Rate

	Amount	Rate
<b>Region</b>	4,192	5%
<b>Ansonia</b>	151	<1%
<b>Derby</b>	192	2%
<b>Seymour</b>	1,166	8%
<b>Shelton</b>	2,683	8%

Source: US Census of Population

## 1990-2000 Growth Share

	Amount	Share
<b>Region</b>	4,192	100%
<b>Ansonia</b>	151	4%
<b>Derby</b>	192	5%
<b>Seymour</b>	1,166	28%
<b>Shelton</b>	2,683	64%

Source: US Census of Population

## There Is Net Out-Migration From Urban Areas To Outlying Areas

Over the past twenty years:

- Net out-migration has been occurring in Ansonia and Derby,
- Net in-migration has been occurring in Seymour and Shelton,
- Net in-migration slowed in Shelton during the 1990s, and
- Net in-migration increased in Seymour during the 1990s.

## Sources of Growth: 1980-2000 – Municipality (ranked by 1990s total change)

	1980s			1990s		
	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Total Change	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Total Change
<b>Shelton</b>	1,828	2,276	4,104	1,938	745	2,683
<b>Seymour</b>	679	175	854	696	470	1,166
<b>Derby</b>	398	(545)	(147)	539	(347)	192
<b>Ansonia</b>	750	(1,386)	(636)	737	(586)	151

CT Department of Health, 1950-98. 1990-2000 data is extrapolated to a full decade.

Note that, since 1980, natural increase was fairly stable in all communities except Derby where there was a noticeable increase during the 1990s.

## Population Projections

The population projections presented on this page were prepared by the Census Data Center of the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management in 1995.

While these projections underestimated the 2000 population for the Valley region, they are the only age specific projections available.

Even though the actual numbers of people in each group may vary, these projections are considered to be useful in identifying demographic trends.

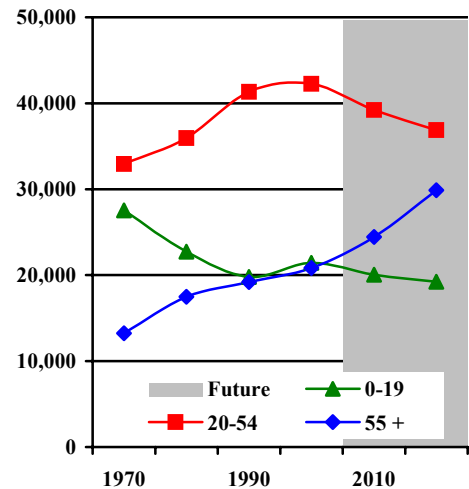
## The Region's Age Composition Is Changing

Natural increase and net-migration also affect the age composition of the region and its communities.

The following table and the adjacent chart show the changing age composition of the Valley region from 1970 to 2020 for:

- children (ages 0 to 19),
- young adults (ages 20 to 54), and
- mature adults (ages 55 and over).

Population By Age Group: 1970 - 2020



Historic and Projected Population by Age Groups: 1970 - 2020

Ages	Actual				Projections	
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
0-19	27,517	22,729	19,797	21,420	20,042	19,252
20-54	32,938	35,920	41,333	42,244	39,198	36,877
55 +	13,245	17,484	19,178	20,836	24,448	29,871
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,700</b>	<b>76,133</b>	<b>80,308</b>	<b>84,500</b>	<b>83,688</b>	<b>86,000</b>

U.S. Census and 1995 Population Projections by Connecticut Census Data Center

The potential changes in age composition within the overall population can then be used to anticipate future needs in the region:

### Population Projections by Age Groups

Description	Age Range	Projection	Needs
<b>Children</b>	0 to 19	Possible peak around 2005 with a slow decrease to the year 2020	Child care, school facilities and recreation.
<b>Young Adults</b>	20 to 54	Peak around 2000 with a slow decrease to the year 2020	Education, training, rental housing / starter homes, family programs, and trade-up homes
<b>Mature Adults</b>	55 and over	Grow by about 50 percent to the year 2020.	Smaller homes, leisure programs and activities, elderly services

Age Projections - 2020

Location	0-19	20-54	55+	Total
Ansonia	4,437	8,268	6,155	18,860
Derby	2,053	5,960	4,275	12,288
Seymour	3,905	5,960	5,068	14,933
Shelton	8,244	16,150	14,375	38,769

## Valley Communities Are Becoming More Racially Diverse

While the Valley Region is still not as racially diverse as the State of Connecticut, the racial diversity of the region has been increasing over the past 20 years. In fact, the growth of the non-white population over the last 20 years has been greater than that of overall population growth for the state, the region, and any of the Valley communities.

**Non-White Population Growth (1980-2000)**  
(ranked by 2000 percent)

	1980	Census Population % of Pop	1990	% of Pop	2000	% of Pop	Increase 1980- 2000	Rate of Increase
<b>Connecticut</b>		<b>10%</b>		<b>13%</b>		<b>18%</b>		<b>84%</b>
<b>Ansonia</b>	1,599	<b>8%</b>	1,841	<b>10%</b>	2,248	<b>12%</b>	649	<b>41%</b>
<b>Derby</b>	293	<b>2%</b>	628	<b>2%</b>	1,004	<b>8%</b>	711	<b>243%</b>
<b>Region</b>	<b>2,399</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3,771</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5,548</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>3,149</b>	<b>131%</b>
<b>Shelton</b>	345	<b>1%</b>	1,022	<b>3%</b>	1,618	<b>4%</b>	1,273	<b>369%</b>
<b>Seymour</b>	162	<b>1%</b>	280	<b>2%</b>	678	<b>4%</b>	516	<b>319%</b>

Source: US Census of Population

Over the same time period, the population of Hispanic or Latino origin has been increasing even faster than the growth of the non-white population (see sidebar).

## Income Growth Is Lagging In Urban Areas

Although per capita income in the region has remained at about 90 percent of the state average for the past twenty years, this masks the fact that only Shelton has experienced growth greater than the State average.

**Per Capita Income 2000**  
(ranked highest to lowest)

	1980	% State Average	1990	% State Average	2000	% State Average
<b>Shelton</b>	\$8,251	<b>97%</b>	\$20,256	<b>100%</b>	\$29,893	<b>104%</b>
<b>Connecticut</b>	\$8,511	<b>100%</b>	\$20,189	<b>100%</b>	\$28,766	<b>100%</b>
<b>Region</b>	<b>\$7,739</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>\$18,095</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>\$25,770</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>Seymour</b>	\$7,548	<b>89%</b>	\$18,031	<b>89%</b>	\$24,056	<b>84%</b>
<b>Derby</b>	\$7,785	<b>91%</b>	\$16,819	<b>83%</b>	\$23,117	<b>80%</b>
<b>Ansonia</b>	\$7,000	<b>82%</b>	\$14,833	<b>73%</b>	\$20,504	<b>71%</b>

US Census

This data likely reflects the availability of developable land in Shelton and the continued movement of more mobile, upper income households away from densely populated urban areas to places where new development is occurring.

## Hispanic Population Growth - 1980-2000

	Number	Rate
<b>Region</b>	2,978	260%
<b>Ansonia</b>	1,134	469%
<b>Derby</b>	647	313%
<b>Seymour</b>	380	422%
<b>Shelton</b>	817	161%

Source: U.S. Census of Population

## Income and Housing

As might be expected, there is a direct link between family income and the definition of affordable housing. Moderate and low income affordable housing is housing which:

- Costs no more than 30% of annual family income. Costs include mortgage, utilities, taxes, and insurance.
- The annual income is calculated at 80% of the area median income for moderate housing, and 50% for low income housing. (State median income may be used if lower.)

Adjustments are made to income figures depending upon family size.

The Valley COG is within the Bridgeport metropolitan statistical area, thus the median family income for that area, \$75,200, applies. Assuming a 6% mortgage with a 30 year term, the following would qualify as affordable:

- Moderate Income: \$194,100 without down payment; \$213,500 with down payment.
- Low Income: \$96,300 without down payment; \$105,500 with down payment.

Note that the above figures will fluctuate over time, varying with interest rates, and other factors.

## 1980-00 Housing Growth

	Percent Change	
	1980-1990	1990-2000
<b>Region</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Ansonia</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Derby</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Seymour</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Shelton</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>13%</b>

## Percent Single Family Units

	2000
<b>State of CT</b>	<b>60%</b>
Ansonia	48%
Derby	47%
Seymour	70%
Shelton	78%

US Census

## Renter Occupancy

	2000
<b>State of CT</b>	<b>33%</b>
Ansonia	44%
Derby	42%
Seymour	29%
Shelton	18%

US Census

## Affordable Housing

Units that presently qualify as “affordable housing” are:

- governmentally assisted,
- financed by CHFA or FHA mortgages,
- deed restricted to prices that meet the statutory definition (CGS 8-30g).

	Percentage Affordable
<b>Region</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Ansonia</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Derby</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Seymour</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Shelton</b>	<b>4%</b>

Source: 2000 Census, CT-DECD

# Housing In The Valley

## Most Housing Growth Is In Suburban Areas

The region had about 35,000 housing units according to the 2000 Census, an increase of nine percent since 1990. This growth rate is a decrease from the 15 percent growth in housing units between 1980 and 1990.

Most recent housing growth occurred in Shelton and Seymour where more undeveloped land was available. As a result, the housing stock in Shelton and Seymour is more likely to be reflective of current demand in the real estate market than in Ansonia or Derby.

## Age of Housing Stock

	1980-2000	1960-1979	1940-1959	1939 earlier
<b>Shelton</b>	36%	32%	19%	13%
<b>Seymour</b>	24%	30%	26%	20%
<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Derby</b>	20%	20%	35%	34%
<b>Ansonia</b>	11%	24%	29%	37%

2000 US Census

## Urban Areas Have Older Housing Stock

The more urban areas of Ansonia and Derby have fewer single family residential units and higher renter occupancy than the outlying areas. In addition, housing prices in these communities have not appreciated as much as other communities due to the age and type of the housing stock.

## Median Housing Value

	1980 Median	1990 Median	2000 Median	Percent Change 1980-2000
<b>Connecticut</b>	\$67,800	\$177,800	\$166,900	146%
<b>Ansonia</b>	\$59,200	\$154,500	\$140,000	136%
<b>Derby</b>	\$60,600	\$152,300	\$136,600	125%
<b>Seymour</b>	\$61,700	\$166,200	\$157,700	156%
<b>Shelton</b>	\$80,600	\$208,600	\$217,717	170%

US Census

Also note that the highest proportion of “affordable housing” units (see sidebar) in the region are located in Ansonia and Derby.

Regional equity in the supply of affordable housing remains an issue despite the State’s Affordable Housing Appeals Act (CGS 8-30g).

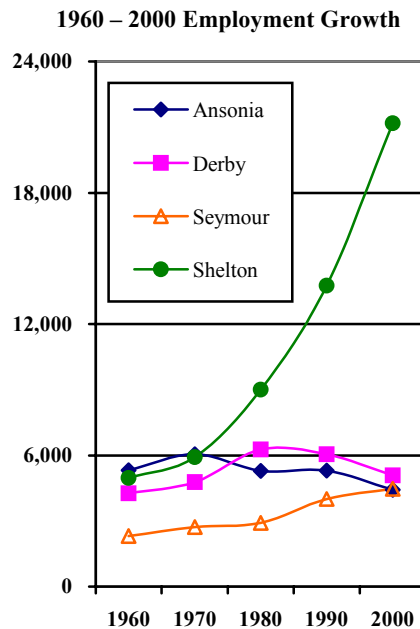


# The Valley Economy

## Employment Growth Has Been Uneven

According to the Connecticut Labor Department, there were 35,160 non-agricultural jobs in the Valley region in the year 2000. This is an increase of 6,030 jobs (21%) since 1990. The adjacent chart shows how employment levels have varied by community since 1960.

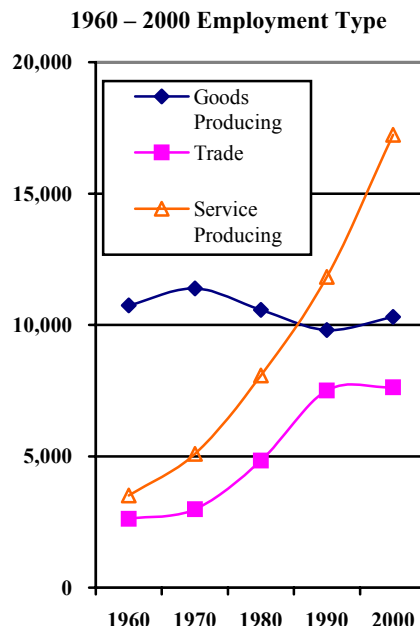
As can be seen, Shelton is the major employment center in the Valley region and, in fact, it was the substantial employment growth there in the 1990s that masked flat or declining employment in Ansonia and Derby. It should come as no surprise that the communities with the most land available for business development saw the highest increases in employment.



## Employment Is Shifting From Manufacturing to Service Industries

On an overall basis, the Valley economy has mirrored state and national trends in the shift from manufacturing businesses to service businesses over the past 40 years.

Interestingly, manufacturing businesses in Ansonia and Derby have been particularly affected since 1960 (decline of 66%) while Shelton has seen recent increases in goods-producing employment. This is likely due to the availability of land that is available for newer and more efficient manufacturing operations (one-story buildings designed for modern operations).



## Industry Groups

In terms of the industries employing residents, goods producing industries include:

- Agriculture forestry, fishing, and mining,
- Construction
- Manufacturing

Trade industries include:

- Wholesale trade
- Retail trade

Service producing industries include:

- Transportation
- Communications
- Utilities
- Finance, insurance and real estate
- Health services
- Educational services
- Public administration

## Other Considerations

The 1998 *Naugatuck Valley Corridor Study* examined economic performance and economic potential in the Valley Region and found:

- Shelton is an economically strong area in terms of earnings, the quality of workforces and the education and employment status of the population,
- Ansonia, Derby, and Seymour have the least educated labor force, older populations and fewer workers employed in high status jobs.

## Summary Of Findings

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The overall picture of moderate population, housing, and employment growth in the Valley Region masks some significant differences between Valley communities.

Shelton and Seymour have been experiencing growth due to the availability of developable land. On the other hand, Ansonia and Derby have not experienced growth due to the lack of available land and the available housing stock and business sites that are not well-configured for current market demands.

In many respects, there is a growing disparity between urban and suburban areas in the Valley region. This disparity is reflected in the data on income, housing values, affordable housing units, employment growth, business tax base, and municipal revenues and expenditures.

Poorer, more densely developed communities tend to have lower median incomes and may have difficulty generating additional tax revenues. These communities have limited land to generate new housing and employment and produce tax revenue to support municipal services that could attract residents with higher incomes.

In turn, as those with higher incomes relocate to other communities with desired services or amenities, this may result in fewer dollars to provide community services for remaining residents that may have an increasing reliance on them. Residents that, based on projected demographics, will be older and less affluent. Over time, this disparity can lead to racial, ethnic, and social barriers between communities and may result in policy differences that do not share common concerns.

The purpose of this Regional Plan is to continue to bring together communities that are moving apart, by strengthening regional cooperation around common goals that will benefit all communities. Although Shelton and Seymour have been fortunate in having land to develop in the last several decades, they also have urbanized centers that share the common problems of the highly urbanized Ansonia and Derby.

Regional cooperation can promote changes that create diversity of housing and economic opportunity in every community. Regional cooperation can also create economies of scale that can create more efficient and economic public services.

At both the regional and inter-town level, creative approaches to education can be beneficial to the Valley communities. Through such cooperation, more varied programs are possible and cost savings can result.

# CONSERVE IMPORTANT RESOURCES

# 3

## Overview

Conservation issues in the Regional Plan include such things as natural resources and open space. Evaluation of these issues resulted in the following strategies:

- **Protect Natural Resources**
- **Protect Water Quality**
- **Preserve Open Space & Create Greenways**
- **Promote Historic & Agricultural Preservation**
- **Protect Scenic Resources**

**Housatonic River**



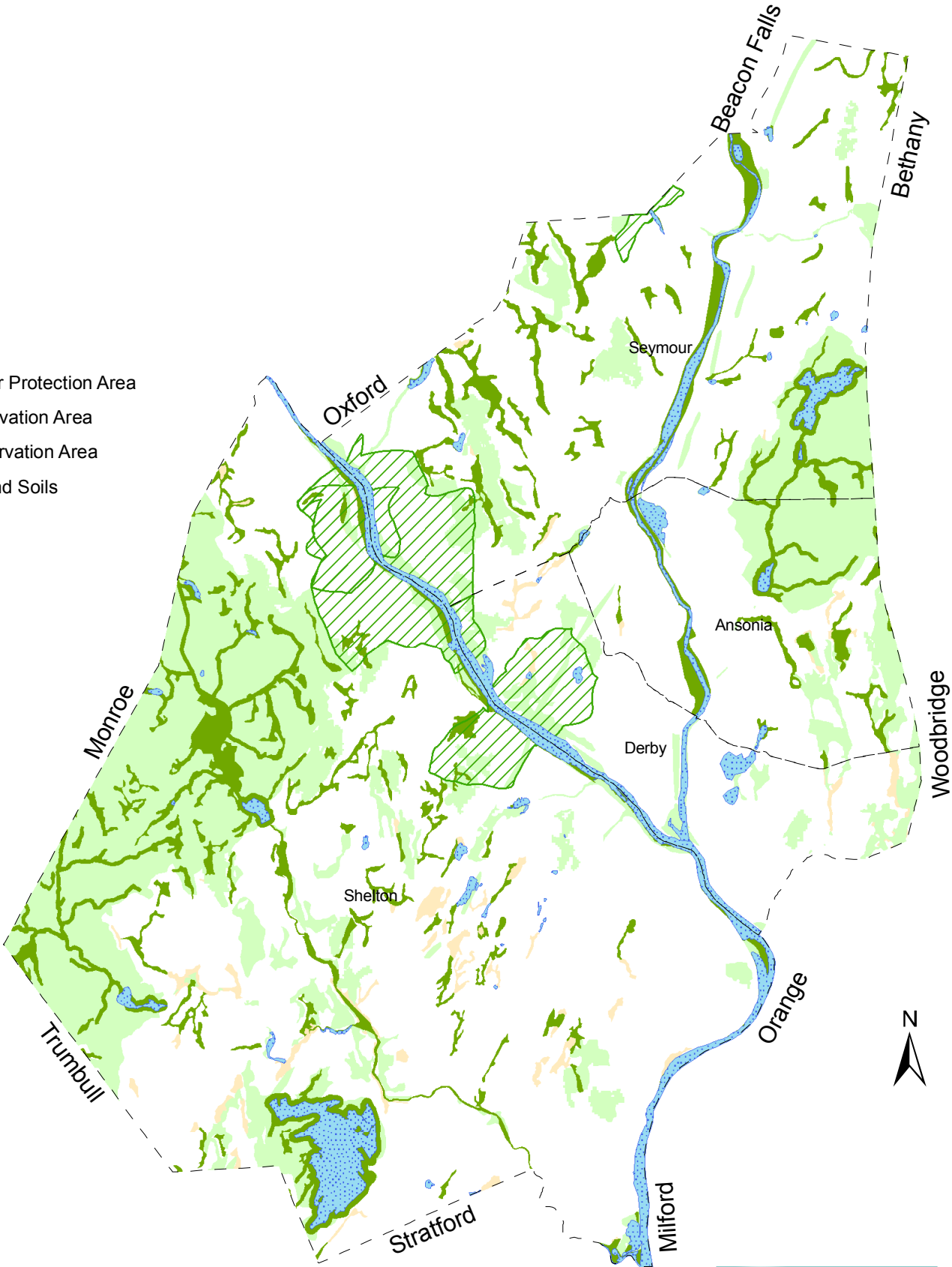
**Historic Character**



Regional Conservation and Preservation Areas

Legend

- Water
- Aquifer Protection Area
- Preservation Area
- Conservation Area
- Wetland Soils



## **Preserve or Conserve?**

Preservation means:

- to protect from harm
- to maintain intact or unchanged.

Conservation means:

- to save from loss or depletion
- to avoid wasting.

Webster's Dictionary

## **Unique Habitats**

Unique habitats and special areas are sites that have been identified in the Natural Diversity Database prepared by the State Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) for:

- known occurrences of state or federal endangered or threatened species
- state special concern species
- significant natural communities
- unique natural or cultural areas

When development or other activities are proposed in these areas, the applicant and/or the Town should contact CTDEP for additional information.

# **Protect Natural Resources and Agricultural Land**

**Continue to promote activities that protect the region's natural resources.**

Even though many parts of the Valley region are already developed, protecting natural resources is still important for preserving vital natural functions and guiding development in harmony with the natural environment.

Some resources are so significant for preserving environmental quality that efforts must continue to ensure that these resources are *preserved*. On the other hand, the important functions of some natural resources can be *conserved* while compatible activities take place nearby.

### **Resources For Preservation**

- Watercourses
- Inland wetlands
- Floodplain (100-year, 1.0% probability)

### **Resources For Conservation**

- Slopes exceeding 25 percent
- Floodplain (500-year, 0.2% probability)
- Watersheds for public water supplies
- Areas of high groundwater availability
- Unique or special habitat areas

The map on the facing page identifies the general location of these resources in the Valley Region.

## **Promote Natural Resource Planning**

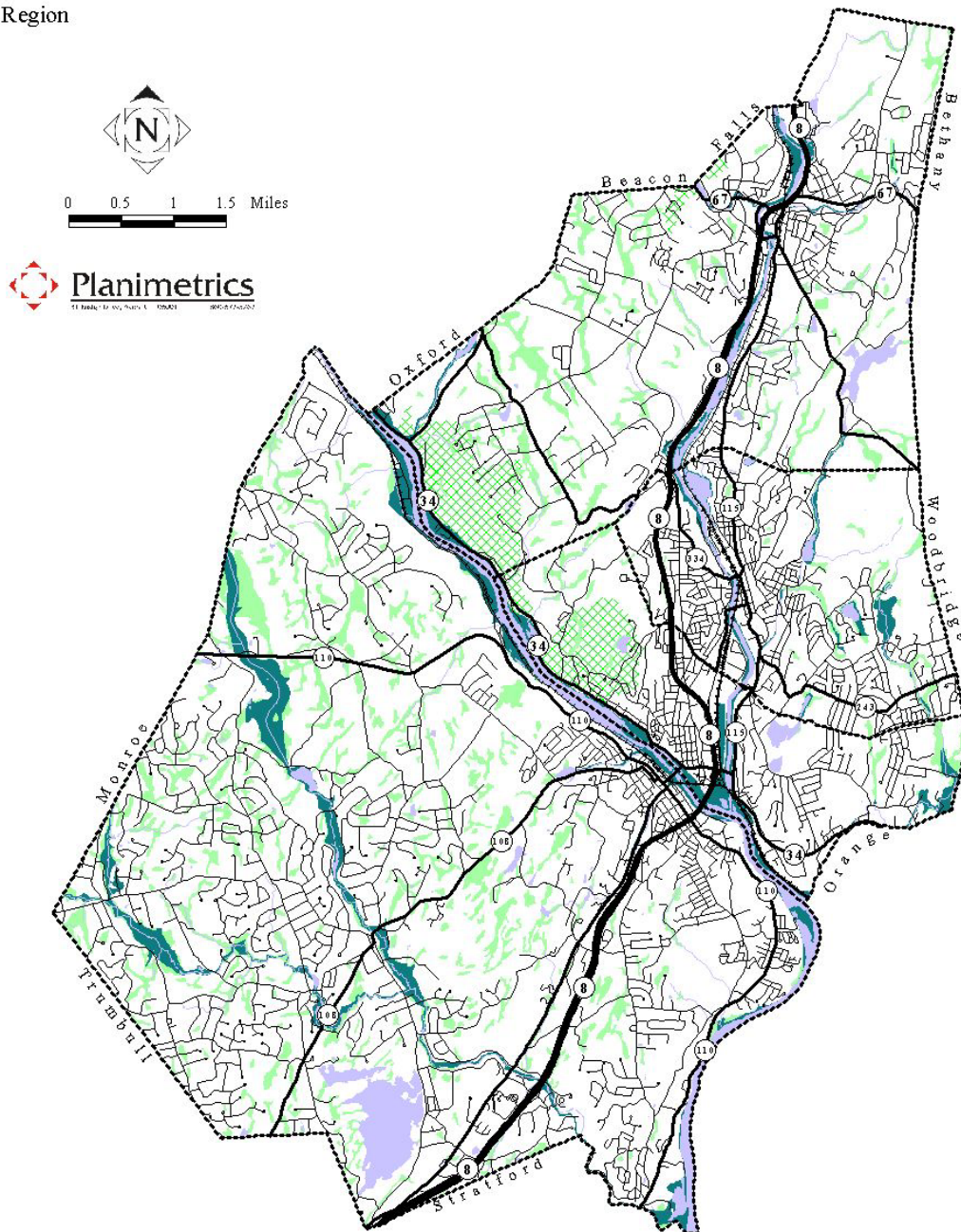
With the geographic information science (GIS) recently established by the Council of Governments, the tools are in place to help communities undertake more careful planning for natural resource protection. Valley communities should be encouraged to map, review, and adopt local ordinances and regulations and ensure they provide adequate protection for these resources.

## **Strategies**

1. Assist communities in the region in identifying significant natural resources through the Geographic Information Science (GIS).
2. Encourage communities to protect important natural resources at time of development through appropriate regulations and careful plan review.
3. Provide or promote education for residents about natural resource protection and the importance of conservation activities to the health and character of the community.

# Natural Resources Plan

Valley Region



## LEGEND

### Significant Conservation Areas

- Wetland Soils
- Floodplain (100 - year , 1.0% probability)
- Water

### Important Conservation Areas

- Areas of High-Potential Groundwater Yield



## **Non-Point Pollution**

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For many years, water quality protection focused on eliminating “point” sources of pollution (such as industrial discharges).

With the progress that has been made in reducing or eliminating pollution from these sources through various governmental regulatory programs, attention has now turned to “non-point” sources.

This includes storm drainage discharges, lawn fertilizer, septic systems, agricultural runoff, and similar sources.

## **NEMO Programs**

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The NEMO program (*Non-Point Education for Municipal Officials*) provides technical assistance in:

- linking land use to water quality,
- mapping and examining the issue of “impervious surfaces”,
- natural resource based planning for land use,
- conducting a natural resource inventory,
- open space planning, including preservation of wetlands, farmlands and forests, and
- protecting water resources through limiting non-point pollution from common home activities such as lawn care.

## **Protect Water Quality**

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**Promote continued improvement of water quality in the region by providing education and technical assistance to member communities.**

Protection of water quality should be the Valley’s most important natural resource conservation priority. While this strategy is especially important given the need to protect the drinking water supply for residents, it is also significant in terms of protecting overall environmental health.

Each of the region’s water resources (rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, water supply reservoirs, wetlands, swamps, marshes, vernal ponds, aquifers and bedrock fractures) plays an important role in the environment.

While the Council of Governments has no regulatory authority in this area, it can be a leader in educating local communities and residents about actions they can take to improve water quality. There are a number of areas related to improving water quality that can be guided by regional efforts.

## **Continue Educational Programs**

The Council of Governments should continue to promote water quality protection through educational programs such as those offered by the University of Connecticut Agricultural Extension Center NEMO Program (see sidebar). These programs help communities determine how water quality can be protected and improved through a variety of strategies (see sidebar).

## Assist Communities With Regulations

The Council of Governments can also help municipalities by promoting local regulatory tools that will help protect water quality. Some examples include:

<b>Regulatory Setbacks and Buffers</b>	The Valley Council of Governments should assist each community in the region in adopting regulations that establish regulatory setbacks and buffers to protect waterbodies and wetlands areas. The width of the buffers should depend on the function of the resource to be protected.
<b>Erosion and Sediment Control</b>	Zoning regulations can regulate development activities in order to minimize earth disturbance and require proper grading, seeding, and planting to prevent erosion especially in sensitive areas.
<b>NPDES Phase II Program</b>	The NPDES program will require Valley communities to prepare storm-water management plans addressing identified issues (see sidebar).
<b>Permitted Uses (Zoning)</b>	Zoning can prohibit (or allow by special exception) certain uses that may pose a risk to water quality, especially in sensitive areas. In addition, site plan review procedures can address storm water runoff practices and other activities in sensitive aquifer recharge areas.
<b>Lot Coverage (Zoning)</b>	Research has found that water quality can be adversely affected when impervious surfaces cover more than 10-15% of a watershed. Addressing lot coverage and incorporating “best management practices” (such as grassed swales or porous pavement, which permit natural infiltration of ground water at time of construction) can reduce polluted runoff into waterbodies, rivers, and streams.
<b>Aquifer Protection Program (Zoning)</b>	The State Department of Environmental Protection’s <i>Aquifer Protection Program</i> will require at least three of the Valley towns to designate a local “Aquifer Protection Agency” and adopt regulations for certain identified commercial and industrial activities (such as gas stations, dry cleaners, etc.).

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## Strategies

1. Promote efforts to protect and improve water quality.
2. Continue to promote and provide educational programs on protecting and improving water quality.
3. Encourage and assist communities in updating their regulations to protect and improve water quality.

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## NPDES Phase II

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) is a series of regulations to address storm water runoff.

Phase I of the program involved permits issued directly by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) to:

- large municipal storm water systems, and
- construction activities exceeding 5 acres of land.

Phase II of the program will regulate discharges from:

- small municipal storm water systems in “urbanized areas”, and
- small construction activities that disturb 1-5 acres of land.

About 125 municipalities in Connecticut, including all communities in the Valley Region, will be required to regulate storm water discharges under the NPDES Phase II program.

The permitting process is expected to require municipal storm water management plans addressing six program elements:

1. Public information and outreach
2. Public participation and involvement
3. Illicit discharge detection and elimination
4. Construction runoff controls
5. Post-construction runoff controls
6. Pollution prevention such as Aquifer Protection Area Regulations



## **Open Space Importance**

At public meetings, held as a part of this planning process, Valley residents indicated that increasing the amount of preserved open space was one of the top issues they would like to see addressed.

The Valley Region already has several state and local park areas, but the utility of these areas and distribution of open space throughout the region are issues to be addressed.

## **Greenbelts and Greenways**

A greenbelt or a greenway is a corridor of open space that:

- may protect natural resources, preserve scenic landscapes and historical resources, or offer opportunities for recreation or non-motorized transportation
- may be located along a defining natural feature, such as a waterway, along a man-made corridor, including an unused right-of-way, traditional trail routes or historic barge canals
- may be a green space along a highway or around a village.

General Assembly  
Public Act 95-335

## **Greenway Opportunities**

There are three major greenbelt opportunities in the Valley Region:

- Naugatuck River Greenway (under design in Derby and completed in Seymour).
- Housatonic River Greenway (partially complete in Shelton).
- East Coast Greenway (through the southern portion of Shelton).

# **Preserve Open Space & Create Greenways**

**Assist Valley communities in preserving open space.**

Open space can help protect community character, enhance the quality of life for residents, conserve natural resources, provide wildlife habitats, provide fiscal benefits, shape development patterns, and preserve lands for recreational uses.

## **Help Establish Priority Areas For Open Space Preservation**

The Council of Governments should help local communities identify and prioritize desirable open space areas. The GIS system recently established will be an effective tool to promote local and regional open space priorities.

One area for investigation might be “excess” water company lands (land not used for protecting an active public water supply). Another area might be in the creation of “pocket parks” (small parcels in more densely developed areas). Connecting open spaces, as discussed in the following section, should also be a priority.

## **Promote Greenways With Trails**

While the amount of preserved open space is important, the configuration of the open space system should be the critical consideration in open space planning by the Region. If parcels of open space can be *interconnected* into a cohesive overall “greenbelt” system with a trail system, the value of the open space to residents and the impact on community character will grow exponentially.

## **Provide Education On Mechanisms To Preserve Open Space**

The Council of Governments should also help local communities identify mechanisms to acquire and maintain open space. Typical mechanisms include:

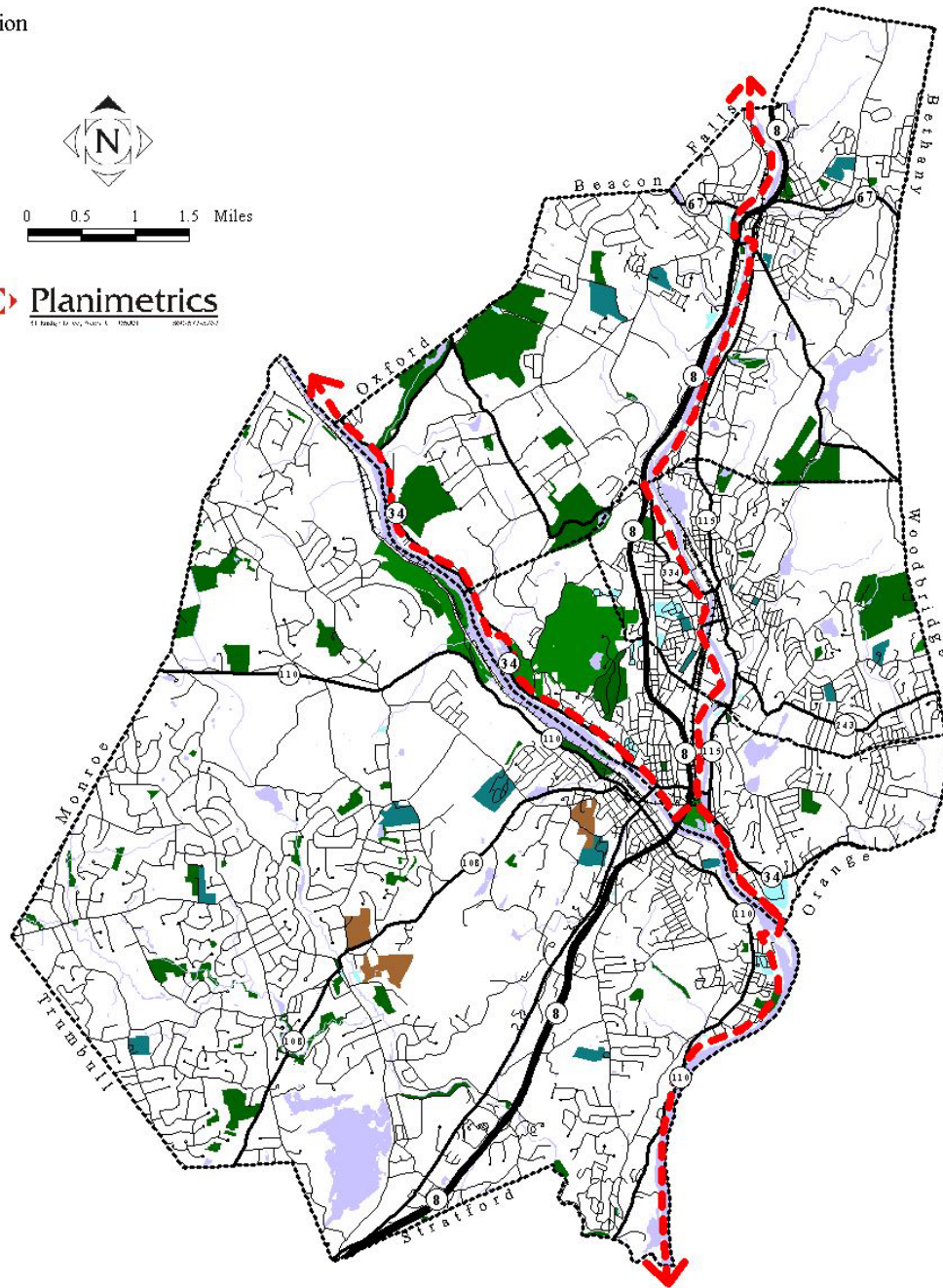
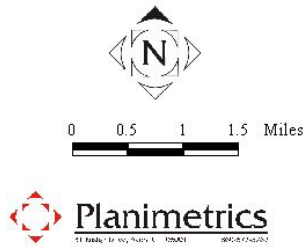
- public acquisition,
- private land trusts,
- state and federal grants,
- philanthropy,
- community fund-raising efforts,
- open space “set aside” in a development,
- “fee-in-lieu of” open space requirements,
- purchase of development rights, and
- requiring conservation easements.

## **Strategies**

1. Help each community prepare an Open Space Plan.
2. Promote greenways with trails as the overall open space vision.
3. Work with communities to ensure that appropriate open space preservation tools are available.

# Open Space Plan

Valley Region



## LEGEND

### Existing Open Space

- Dedicated Open Space
- General Recreation
- Schools
- Cemeteries

### Possible Future Open Space

- Desirable Regional Greenways

## Promote Historic Preservation

**Help communities identify and protect historic resources.**

Preservation of historic resources is an important way for the Valley Region to provide a sense of identity and stability, preserve community character, and recognize an illustrious heritage.

### Identify and Recognize Historic Resources

Identification of historic resources is the first step in protecting them. Even though some historic resource studies have been done in the Valley region, it may be time to complete and update surveys in each community.

While there are some properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the State Register of Historic Places (SRHP), these designations are largely ceremonial and provide little protection to historic resources. Still, since recognition can promote preservation, properties eligible for listing on the National or State Registers should be nominated.

Districts contain a collection of notable resources while sites are prominent in their own right. Listings on the NRHP are automatically on the SRHP.

Community	National Register Districts	State Register Districts
<b>Ansonia</b>	Elm Street Historic District Upper Main Street Historic District	
<b>Derby</b>	Birmingham Green Historic District	
<b>Seymour</b>	Downtown Seymour Historic District	
<b>Shelton</b>	Huntington Center Historic District	

Community	National Register Sites	State Register Sites
<b>Ansonia</b>	Mansfield House Humphrey's House U.S. Post Office	Cliff Street Funeral Parlor Residence State St. @ Cliff St.
<b>Derby</b>	Howe House Kraus Corset Factory Osbornedale Sterling Opera House Harcourt Memorial Library	
<b>Seymour</b>	Sanford-Humphreys House Seymour High School & Annex	
<b>Shelton</b>	Commodore Hull School Plumb Memorial Library	Dam at Shelton DeForest, Benjamin House. Mills, Rev. Jedehiah House St. Paul's Church Shelton Canal (sections left) Huntington Windmill

## **Protect Historic Resources**

Each of the Valley communities may wish to select a different approach to protecting historic resources. This is to be encouraged provided that historic resources are protected in a way that is appropriate.

An effective tool for protecting historic resources is through establishment of a local historic district. Currently, there is one established district in the Valley Region, that of the Ansonia Historic District on Elm Street. Local districts provide the most protection for historic resources since they require a Certificate of Appropriateness from a local Historic District Commission before exterior alterations can be performed. Establishment of a local historic district requires the consent of a majority of the property owners and adoption of an ordinance by the local legislative body. Local historic district commissions that operate in accordance with State guidelines can receive financial assistance through the State Historical Commission's Certified Local Government Program.

Another potential tool for protecting historic resources is through establishment of a Village District. A village district, which can be established by the local zoning commission, can also require approval of exterior improvements. Village District designation must be in accordance with the enabling legislation (Public Act 00-145).

A local historical society can also be an important tool for increasing the knowledge and awareness of historic resources in each community. Some societies (such as the Derby Historical Society) actually own historic properties, which they work to support. Continued support of these organizations is essential in maintaining the historic character of Valley Communities.

## **Strategies**

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1. Assist each Valley community in identifying and formulating a program to recognize important historic resources.
2. Provide technical assistance to local communities in establishing local historic districts or implementing Village District zoning, where appropriate.

## Scenic Roads

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Scenic roads are one element that significantly contribute to the Valley's character. As development of the region continues, scenic roads may be increasingly threatened by adjacent development or increasing traffic volumes.

Communities can adopt a scenic road ordinance and designate scenic roads under Section 7-149a of the Connecticut State Statutes. The Electronic Valley Web Site polled residents as to whether CT Route 34 should be designated a Scenic Road. Of 80 residents who voted 60 said yes!

For a local road to be designated as a scenic road, it must not have intensive commercial development or high volumes of traffic and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- unpaved
- bordered by mature trees or stone walls
- no more than 20 feet in width
- have scenic views
- blend naturally into the surrounding terrain
- parallel or cross over brooks, streams, lake or ponds.

## Protect Scenic Resources

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**Help communities identify and preserve scenic resources.**

### Identify Scenic Resources

Scenic resources include scenic areas (areas that are viewed from elsewhere), scenic vistas (locations that afford scenic views), ridgelines river valleys, and scenic roads. These resources enhance the character of the Valley Region.

The first step in protecting such resources is to identify them. The Council of Governments should encourage each community to identify its local scenic resources. Then, efforts can be devoted to protecting those resources.

### Preserve Undeveloped Land

Communities can preserve farm, forest, and undeveloped land through the use assessment program (also known as Public Act 490). By reducing the cost of owning undeveloped land, such land may be left undeveloped for a longer period and contribute to the scenic nature of a community.

The Council of Governments could work with each community to adopt an open space assessment policy (CGS 12-107e) that could expand this program to other lands in each community.

### Agricultural Features

The Valley Region contains some remaining farms with stone walls, barns, and other features that contribute to community character. The Council of Governments could help local communities investigate the purchase of development rights to key farmlands (funded locally or through grants from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture).

### Strategies

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1. Encourage local communities to identify scenic views, vistas, ridgelines and roads.
2. Work with each community to adopt an open space assessment policy, if considered desirable.
3. Assist communities in considering the acquisition of agricultural development rights.

# ENCOURAGE “SMART GROWTH”

# 4

## Overview

The term “smart growth” has been coined to reference development patterns that encourage conservation of land and emphasize high utilization of existing infrastructure. In the Valley region, there are certain strategies that will contribute to “smart growth”:

- **Promote Development / Redevelopment In Centers**
- **Address Housing Needs**
- **Guide New Development**

**Community Centers**



**Housing Needs**



## Transit Oriented Development (TOD)



Transit systems (including rail or bus service) can provide a convenient transportation option and play a significant role in reducing traffic congestion. Successful transit systems require development patterns and community design that support transit use. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) focuses a mix of land-uses, such as residential, office, shopping, personal services, civic uses and entertainment within easy walking distance from a centrally-located transit station (about 1/4 mile, 5-10 minutes). TOD is designed to increase the number of residences and potential transit riders that have convenient access to transit. A variety of moderate and higher density housing options are typically a part of the mix. In addition, a complementary mix of uses, activities, and services located in close proximity makes it easier for TOD residents to commute to work, run errands, socialize and meet basic needs without always needing a car. Transit riders generally begin and end their trips by walking. As a result, a network of safe and convenient walkways that connect transit, residences and other uses, and an attractive pedestrian environment are a hallmark of TOD development. A well-designed bicycle system and facilities can increase the radius that people will travel to access transit. Community spaces, plazas, activities and attractive design are also important components in drawing people to TOD development.

The Valley region is fortunate to have the Waterbury Branch Line, Operated by Metro North provide service through the entire area. All of the downtown areas of the four Valley municipalities are served and accessible by the transit system. In addition, the combination of the municipalities efforts in revitalizing downtown with mixed use developments are already encouraging and fostering Transit and pedestrian oriented developments.

The Valley region will continue to encourage and seek these types of developments that utilize the transit system.



## Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ)

Public Act 95-340 enables neighborhood planning committees to create strategic plans for the revitalization of designated areas.

A strategic planning process involves interested persons in guiding the future of their area or organization. In a neighborhood context, it involves residents in outlining their vision for the future of the neighborhood.

A strategic plan differs from a land use plan in that it may also look at social or administrative issues that are typically outside the realm of a land use plan.

### Public Comments

- *Downtown* has to create a destination for people to come to and linger.
- *Downtown* has to have more mixed-use development to promote vitality and pedestrian traffic.
- *Downtown* has to be come inviting. It has to be scenic, safe, and comfortable to become a focal point for the community again.

## Promote Development / Redevelopment in Regional Centers

**Continue to focus on urban centers by encouraging creative reuse of older facilities.**

### Promote Adaptive Reuse Where Appropriate

Adaptive reuse is the term applied to taking older buildings that may be functionally obsolete and renovating them for a use that is more viable in today's economy. Adaptive reuse is a vital component of smart growth. It encourages more productive use of underutilized sites, "recycling of land", and use of existing infrastructure found in the Valley's urban centers.

Older buildings, especially larger industrial facilities, may require public participation to permit adaptive reuse to happen because of the expense involved. Communities could be educated and assisted by the Council of Governments as to how to set the stage for successful redevelopment efforts.

Brownfield mitigation may be an essential first step in permitting adaptive reuse of some properties. The Valley Region must continue to seek funding to finance identification and clean-up of contaminated sites.

Improving the basic infrastructure in areas where reuse is a priority may also be necessary. It may be important to reconstruct streets, build sidewalks, create unifying streetscapes, or a park area to enhance the setting of the immediate neighborhood of a targeted facility.

Communities committed to revitalization can consider being partners in financing and sometimes managing adaptive reuse projects. Educating Valley communities as to the forms that this partnership can take may be an important function for the Council of Governments. There are a variety of mechanisms that can be employed (some already used by Valley communities) including:

- tax incentives
- tax increment financing
- development partnerships
- lease back agreements
- use of a Development Authority
- grantsmanship activities

### Undertake Neighborhood Planning To Facilitate Reuse

Reuse of buildings, land, and public facilities in Valley communities may be facilitated through a planning process that emphasizes neighborhood revitalization. Public Act 95-340 recognizes this and provides funding to create strategic neighborhood plans. (See side bar) Local officials are encouraged to meet with neighborhood residents and other community stakeholders to develop ideas to improve the safety, appearance, and economic vitality of a target area.



A target area is referred to as Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZ). Designation of NRZs by communities is an important tool to foster community rehabilitation. Eligible neighborhoods should be identified and funding for strategic plans should be obtained.

### Consider Creative Rezoning To Facilitate Reuse

Former industrial or commercial areas may have a different “highest and best” use at the present time. Such areas may be more appropriate for residential or institutional use or some type of mixed-use facility. However, such uses may not be feasible since the zoning regulations continue to designate the area for industrial or commercial use. Similarly, higher density residential areas may be better configured as a lower density area (or vice versa).

As a result, it may be necessary or desirable to modify local zoning to allow more flexibility in uses as an area undergoes a transition. Having a study that identifies the desirable land uses in a specific reuse area will help to guide the proposed reuse and recommend specific zoning solutions to address issues.

Zoning techniques to facilitate desired land use changes as well as guide the character and quality of redevelopment can include:

- **Overlay Zoning** can allow flexibility for “recycling” of certain older properties, which may be rendered obsolete because they cannot meet current zoning standards.
- **Special Waterfront Zones** can encourage more environmentally appropriate water related uses along riverfronts.
- **Village District Zoning** (as allowed by Public Acts 98-116 and 00-145) calls for design review standards to be developed to improve and preserve the character of mixed-use types of centers.
- **Design Review Standards** enable local communities to promote good design needed to enhance character and revitalize local commercial districts. Different design standards may be appropriate in each commercial district in a community.

The Council of Governments can assist communities with these techniques and encourage adaptive reuse where it will assist revitalization efforts.

### Strategies

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1. Continue to provide leadership in mitigation of brownfield sites.
2. Assist communities in planning for improved infrastructure in older areas.
3. Promote financing mechanisms that can provide a public and private partnership in adaptive reuse.
4. Provide assistance to Valley communities in designating NRZ’s and other techniques to promote neighborhood and community revitalization.

### Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ)

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Public Act 95-340 enables neighborhood planning committees to create strategic plans for the revitalization of designated areas.

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A strategic plan differs from a land use plan in that it may also look at social or administrative issues that are typically outside the realm of a land use plan.

## **Address Housing Needs**

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**Assist communities in planning for housing development that meets the needs of a variety of age and income groups.**

### **Anticipate Housing Needs Of An Aging Population**

The population of Valley residents aged 55 and over is expected to increase by about 50 percent in the next twenty years. While many of these people might be expected to stay in their existing housing units, others will be attracted to housing units more conducive for “empty-nesters” (families without children) and elderly people seeking services (congregate housing or assisted living).

This demographic trend provides an opportunity for Valley communities to redevelop some of their downtown areas for housing in a way that will meet residents needs and revitalize the historic downtown areas.

### **Consider Rental / Starter Housing Opportunities**

There is also expected to be a demand for rental housing and starter housing due to the continued growth of the Fairfield County economy. With rail service and highway access, there is significant potential for addressing these needs in the Valley Region.

The Valley communities have an opportunity to encourage or allow new developments or redevelopment of existing buildings with rental apartments or condominiums. Such developments should be located in or near downtown areas to promote the revitalization of these areas.

### **Consider Redevelopment Where Desirable**

When or where rehabilitation is not feasible, communities should consider exploring, with private developers, the possibility of designating concentrated areas of sub-standard housing for redevelopment.

As part of a Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Strategic Planning Process (see page xx for details on Neighborhood Revitalization Zones), demolition may be considered when housing cannot meet modern standards because of lack of parking facilities, lack of adequate yard space, or other inadequacies.

The City of Derby is already embarking on redevelopment efforts in a five block area north of Downtown. The Council of Governments may assist other communities in establishing strategic neighborhood plans. Plans that identify areas where redevelopment efforts are a solution to eliminating obsolete housing, and new housing can meet identified community needs.

## Promote Programs that Improve Housing Condition

Improving existing housing in the Valley is good public policy. Communities serious about improving housing conditions should strictly enforce building and zoning codes and consider adopting a “blighted building” ordinance to address properties where owners refuse to meet housing standards.

The Council of Governments should take a lead role in ensuring that all Valley communities take advantage of programs available to improve housing condition. Information and technical assistance can also be obtained from the Connecticut Department of Housing and Economic Development for:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • <b>Rental Certification</b>                   | Periodic inspection of rental units is done by the building inspectors and certificates of apartment occupancy is issued. |
| • <b>Urban Homestead Program</b>                | Transfers abandoned houses to residents with proof of ability to rehabilitate the property.                               |
| • <b>First Time Buyer Program</b>               | Provides funds to assist first time buyers in purchasing a house.   |
| • <b>Lead Paint Abatement</b>                   | Provides funding, contractors, and technical assistance in remodeling residences with lead paint problems.                |
| • <b>Property Rehabilitation Program</b>        | Provides financial assistance to homeowners with building and fire code compliance issues.                                |
| • <b>Energy Conservation Loans</b>              | Provides low interest loans to homeowners who fall within income guidelines for energy conservation rehab.                |
| • <b>Home Investment Partnership (HOME)</b>     | Program participants must meet income guidelines and housing must meet affordability guidelines.                          |
| • <b>Homeowner Emergency Repair for Seniors</b> | Provides grants and low interest loans to persons age 62+ to repair home damage.  |
| • <b>Housing Code</b>                           | Establish standards for occupancy, condition, and maintenance of housing.   |

## Strategies

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1. Focus planning activities on increasing awareness of the need for a variety of housing types in the region.
2. Encourage implementation of local inspection programs that target blighted properties.
3. Provide information to all Valley communities about special programs available to fund and promote housing rehabilitation efforts.
4. Assist in the formation of strategic neighborhood plans that focus on redevelopment in appropriate urban neighborhoods to address obsolete housing.
5. Encourage stringent enforcement programs regarding housing, zoning, and environmental resources so as to protect established residential neighborhoods and maintain a high quality of life.

## Guide New Development

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**Foster reliance on managed growth principles in planning for future development in the region.**

Since new development will continue to occur, the goal at the regional level should be to encourage new development is planned in such a way as to contribute to community character and meet the needs of the community. Building the capacity in each community for land use planning that relies on managed growth principles is important to the Valley Region as a whole.

What are these principles? They are principles that involve the building of new “places”(nodes) or expanding and improving existing ones including:

- **Guiding New Multi-Family Development**, to support nodes and to form transitions between commercial and residential areas, where there is existing infrastructure.
- **Zoning Commercial Development** in nodes or centers rather than in beltways along highways.
- **Clustering Single Family Development** to limit infrastructure improvements and retain open space and natural resources.
- **Retaining open space and public land** in necessary places to support nodes.

### Strategies

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1. Assist Valley communities in reviewing and revising land use regulations to create incentives for appropriate development of commercial areas:
  - Encourage local communities to consider allowing more mixed-use areas in the community.
  - Encourage local communities to plan future business developments in “nodes” and discourage “strip” type business development patterns.
2. Promote multi-family developments on sites where they can provide a transition from activity centers to adjacent residential neighborhoods and support commercial districts.
3. Discourage extensions of infrastructure and services to new developments at inappropriate densities, especially in outlying areas.

# PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# 5

## Overview

During the last century, the economies of the Valley region and the State of Connecticut have gone through some substantial changes. Most significantly, the trend away from manufacturing businesses has accelerated in the last several decades and this has impacted the Valley since it was configured to support a manufacturing-based economy.

However, the changing economy also provides the opportunity for new economic growth in the Valley region. The Valley region is strategically located near growth corridors and can attract new growth of a different nature.

The strategies recommended in the Plan include:

- **Seek Business Diversification**
- **Providing for “Business Ready” Sites**
- **Promote A Trained Workforce**
- **Market the “All American Valley”**
- **Support “Smart Growth” And A “Sense of Place”**

## Greater Valley

This section of the Regional Plan considers the seven communities that form the Greater Valley Alliance for Economic Growth:

- Ansonia
- Derby
- Seymour
- Shelton
- Beacon Falls
- Naugatuck
- Oxford

These communities are working together to promote economic growth in the region and share the locational opportunities in the lower Fairfield County and Naugatuck River corridors.

Local Business



Local Business



## Seek Business Diversification

**Promote activities that target bringing businesses in growing sectors of the economy to the region, and support emerging small businesses.**

Although manufacturing has been a major source of employment in the past, economic growth in Connecticut is not expected to occur in this sector of the economy. Although nurturing the existing manufacturing base in the Valley is important, other industry clusters must be developed to fuel economic growth. Small business development should not be ignored as another area where community efforts can lead to increased employment and economic diversity.

### Configure To Attract Businesses That Are Growing

In the regional economy, there are businesses that are growing more aggressively than others. These “industry clusters” (firms engaged in similar business activities) provide the greatest opportunity to expand economic development in the region and provide employment, provide goods or services, and expand the tax base. The following chart identifies the fastest growing businesses in New Haven County between 1992 and 2000.

**Figure 8: Top Growth Momentum Industries in New Haven County**

SIC	Industry	Emp 1992	Emp 2000	Abs Gr 92-00	% Gr 92-00	Growth Momentum
73	Business services	17.02	24.45	7.43	43.7	324,353.1
67	Holding and Other Investment Offices	0.4	1.29	0.89	222.5	198,025.0
17	Special trade contractors	7.85	11.59	3.74	47.6	178,186.0
83	Social services	7.34	10.01	2.67	36.4	97,124.0
80	Health services	38.91	45.01	6.1	15.7	95,630.9
82	Educational Services	15.96	19.29	3.33	20.9	69,479.3
45	Transportation by air	0.12	0.39	0.27	225.0	60,750.0
87	Engineering & management services	4.66	6.31	1.65	35.4	58,422.7
27	Mfg. - Printing and publishing	5.69	7.33	1.64	28.8	47,268.9
59	Miscellaneous retail	9.41	11.29	1.88	20.0	37,560.0

2001 Economic Development Plan for the Borough of Naugatuck prepared by Mt. Auburn Associates, CT-DECD

The growth momentum calculation in Table 8 is an indication of how well an industry is performing. This calculation takes into account both numerical and percent change in employment. Numerical change, when used alone, tends to overlook growth in smaller industries. Percent growth can overemphasize growth in smaller industries. The growth momentum calculation multiplies the numeric growth by the percent growth and thereby presents a more reliable index of performance.

Of particular interest is that there is only one manufacturing industry group included. This reinforces the need to think about a more diverse economic base in planning for the Greater Valley area.

## Target Specific Sectors

Major areas identified as targets for business diversification in the area include:

Business Cluster	Description	Requirements
Information Technology	Back-office and administrative processing operations connected to corporate headquarters	Modern telecommunication infrastructure
Warehousing / Distribution	Support activities with larger regional facilities and more computerized operations	Sites with transportation and telecommunications infrastructure

To attract such businesses (and other growing business sectors), the Valley region should undertake programs to enhance the telecommunications infrastructure in the Valley Region. Gaps in high speed access is a particular technology shortcoming that needs to be addressed.

## Support Small Business Development

Nurturing small businesses can pay future dividends since much of the employment growth in recent years has occurred in small businesses. The Valley Chamber of Commerce, with assistance from the Greater New Haven Foundation, is beginning to make resources available in the Valley for small businesses.

Prior studies have recommended the establishment of a high-profile Small Business Development Center to serve the Valley region (rather than relying on existing centers in Waterbury, New Haven, and Bridgeport that do not adequately serve the Valley area).

While funding to establish a Small Business Center has not been provided, emphasis is currently on identifying what small businesses need and on making information available in a central location, as well as electronically.

## Strategies

1. Promote regular updating of information about emerging business sectors in the region.
2. Encourage business diversification in the region while nurturing existing manufacturing businesses.
3. Support regional economic development efforts to solicit new businesses in the information technology and warehousing sectors.
4. Assist the Valley Chamber of Commerce in establishing a "Small Business Development Center" in the region.

## Small Business Assistance

Assistance that can be provided by a Small Business Development Center can include:

- business plan preparation,
- loans packaging (including technical assistance in applying for federal small business administration loans),
- technology technical assistance, and,
- accounting and tax advice.



## Critical Attributes

Attributes critical to attracting economic development include:

- Timing (the ability to produce decisions and supporting materials quickly, expedited permit and approval procedures)
- Locational Advantages (adequate labor supplies and skills, good transportation availability)
- Site/Building Availability (an inventory of available, fully serviced sites and buildings).
- Documentation (data on the community)
- Incentives (tax abatement and business assistance programs).
- A positive business climate that shows the community is seriously interested in the project.

## Business-Ready Sites

Companies looking for a business location typically want to buy an existing lot, on an existing street, with existing utilities, and be reasonably certain that the site development costs will not be excessive.

While there are some companies that have the time and budget to install their own roads and utilities, they are increasingly rare.

**Complementary Business Sites** In addition to the above sites, it should be noted that Oxford has in excess of 35 industrial lots available, and Naugatuck has 10 lots in its industrial park.

## Provide For “Business Ready” Sites

**Seek to identify and prepare business sites to take advantage of economic development opportunities, such as the continued expansion from the Lower Fairfield County Area.**

Business-ready sites are important for providing opportunities for economic growth in the region. Providing for “business-ready” sites requires having adequate land or buildings ready for business development.

Shelton has experienced significant business growth over the past 20 years because of the availability of undeveloped land zoned for business. In the older urban parts of the region, however, some buildings are not well configured for the needs of modern businesses and some of the sites have issues related to contamination from prior activities (called “brownfield” sites). Thus, the region needs to ensure that adequate sites (land and buildings) are available for business development by:

- Providing for business-ready sites for new development,
- Encouraging rehabilitation of existing buildings / sites for new uses.

## Sites For New Development

As shown in the following table, the communities in the Valley region have business and industrial parks available for new development. However, some of these areas are not “ready” for development, since they are not serviced by roads and utilities or, in some locations, remaining sites have severe topography or soil constraints. Ensuring that sites are, in fact, “business-ready” will facilitate the economic development of the Valley region.

**Business & Industrial Lands Summary**

Town	Industrial/Business Park	Acreage	Available		
			Sites	Sewer	Water
Ansonia	Fountain Lake Industrial Park	72	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Hershey Industrial Park	8	No	Yes	Yes
	Former Latex Site	10	Yes	Yes	Yes
Derby	Fountain Lake Industrial Park	117	Proposed		
Seymour	Silvermine Industrial Park	115	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Kerite Industrial Park	72	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Hanes Property	100+	No	Yes	Yes
Shelton	Downtown Redevelopment	50	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Route 110 South		Yes	Yes	Yes
	Route 8 Corridor		Yes	Yes	Yes
Oxford	Industrial Park	300	Yes		Yes
Naugatuck	Industrial Park	20+	Yes	Yes	Yes

## Rehabilitate Existing Sites (“Brownfields”)

Densely developed areas in the Valley (such as Derby, Ansonia, and parts of Seymour and Shelton) have the most need to depend upon reuse of existing business and industrial sites to foster economic development. However, these sites typically contain existing buildings that may be functionally obsolete or may have real or perceived issues of contamination from prior uses. Remediation of “brownfield” sites promotes use of existing infrastructure and can assist in revitalizing older downtown areas and riverfront property.

The Naugatuck Valley Brownfields Program was established in 1996 (with state and federal funding) to bring expertise and financial resources to communities dealing with brownfield mitigation. This program, which is administered by the Valley Council of Governments, provides assistance for sites owned (or about to be acquired) by a municipality and for private sites in which the chief elected official has indicated a public interest.

There are an estimated 100 underutilized or abandoned “brownfield” sites in the Naugatuck Valley area. The Brownfields Program works with the Non-Point Education For Municipal Officials (NEMO), sponsored by the UConn Extension Center, to establish best management practices to prevent any future contamination of sites or nearby water resources.

The Pilot Project has been called upon for assessment and in some supervision of clean-up activities in 14 sites in the seven town Greater Valley area:

### Brownfield Pilot Program Sites 2001

<b>Ansonia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Haddad Park</li><li>• Incinerator Assessment</li><li>• 74 Grove Street</li></ul>	<b>Derby</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• O’Sullivan’s Island</li><li>• Downtown Revitalization</li><li>• Hines Farm</li></ul>
<b>Seymour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Silvermine Landfill</li></ul>	<b>Shelton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Axton Cross</li><li>• Downtown Revitalization</li><li>• Riverdale Avenue Site</li></ul>
<b>Beacon Falls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nutmeg Bakery</li></ul>	<b>Naugatuck</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parcel B Downtown</li></ul>

### Services provided by the Brownfields Pilot Program

- Site assessment grants
- Clean-up loans
- Brownfields site evaluations
- Consultation on tax foreclosure environmental considerations
- Site assessment management
- Community outreach and educational seminars
- Regulatory interface and coordination
- Information and access to CT DEP, DECD and US HUD
- Links to developers
- Anti-blight management assistance on abandoned sites

## Strategies

1. Continue regional efforts to identify and prepare appropriate sites for business use in the Greater Valley, including industrial park sites.
2. Promote “vision” plans for potential economic development areas to obtain conceptual ideas that will help guide potential businesses and developers.
3. Continue to administer the Naugatuck Valley Brownfields Program to promote cleanup and reuse of abandoned industrial sites.

## **Training For Clusters**

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The following clusters have been identified as business sectors will need better trained workers and where training resources must be channeled:

- Manufacturing
- Information Technology
- Service Industries

## **Employment Regions**

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Establishing coordinated and effective employment and training programs is difficult in the Valley communities since it is in the middle of three economic regions (Bridgeport, New Haven and Waterbury).

An education/training workforce sub-committee has been formed by the Valley Chamber of Commerce to help address this issue.

## **Promote A Trained Workforce**

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**Encourage organizations and programs that improve the skills of the Valley labor force and address new skill requirements.**

A skilled workforce is a key component for attracting economic development. This section of the plan highlights recommendations from reports that outline what is needed to improve the skill level of the region's workforce.

### **Skill Mismatch**

Several reports (Naugatuck Valley Corridor, Economic Development Strategy Report) have identified a fundamental "mismatch between worker's skills and the local economy's new skill requirements". This includes such things as a "good basic high school education, computer skills and work ethic basics such as time-liness, attendance, dress, and communication skills".

The success of training and employment programs are made more difficult by the lack of affordable child care and the lack of public transportation to outlying areas where new jobs are being created (especially for evening or night shifts).

### **Integrate Education**

The challenge for the Valley is to match resources of many government agencies, local school systems, community colleges, and technical schools with business needs. A 1998 business survey indicates that employers in the Region rank education and labor training as their highest economic development priority.

Local school systems are the fundamental training ground for employment. The WorkPlace Inc. *2000 Needs Assessment* indicates that in general "educators lack awareness of basic skills needed in today's economy". School systems have been targeted by WorkPlace Inc. for training to improve their efforts in providing computer and other skills that will enhance employment opportunities. A "School to Work Initiative" is planned, that targets secondary schools and post-secondary schools, to increase communication between businesses and schools.

Improving communication between major employers in the region and schools is a fundamental step in ensuring a trained workforce is available. Involving superintendents of schools in local and regional economic development activities is a start in forging a new line of communication between business and education.

With no college in the Valley area, relationships should be explored with Naugatuck Community College in Waterbury Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, and Sacred Heart University in Bridgeport (which is already making classes available in the Valley).

## Entry Level Employment

*The 1997 Strategic Plan For The Central Naugatuck Valley*, by Mt Auburn Associates, urges the region to “develop strategies to capitalize on the growth of the retail and construction sectors”. The major rationale for targeting these industries is the large number of jobs that do not require a highly skilled labor force.

Workforce productivity is a major concern for such industries. Training that offers basic skills and creative approaches in programming are necessary. Incentives that lower employee turnover and promote stability within the job environment are needed to attract prospective businesses. Identifying a career ladder, and providing more incumbent worker training, to allow for advancement from entry level employment would help ensure better workforce stability and encourage expansion of these business sectors.

## Training Programs

WorkPlace Inc. is the CT Department of Labor’s sponsored agency primarily responsible for this effort in the Southwestern Area of Connecticut. The Greater Valley area must work together with WorkPlace Inc. to ensure programs and funding meet the region’s needs and build on the resources already available.

## Strategies

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1. Promote programs that provide basic job skills and education.
2. Plan for improved day care and mass transportation services for the regions workers.
3. Encourage special training programs to support areas of employment that are important in the region: manufacturing, information technology, and service businesses.
4. Develop ways to better integrate local educational systems and economic development activities.
5. Encourage colleges in the southwestern Connecticut area to develop a presence in the Valley which would include offering classes locally.
6. Assist in efforts to develop career ladders for service sector workers and incumbent worker training programs.
7. Promote efforts to coordinate programs that provide employment, education, and special training programs in the region.

## Regional Resources

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Tools and approaches that can help to make a better trained workforce include the following:

**Adult Education** - Through GED, English as a second language and other specialized training programs this is an essential provider of basic skills.

- **One Stop Career Center, Ansonia** - Workplace, Inc’s local office provides the unemployed with training and employment guidance.
- **TEAM** - Is the Workplace Inc’s major provider of programs available to assist welfare clients transition to work in the Valley Region.
- **Greater Valley Alliance/Chamber of Commerce** - The Chamber has taken a leadership role in working with Valley businesses to identify work skills needed. Emphasis has been on “incumbent worker training”, providing new skills to existing workers to fill jobs in specific industries.
- **Emmett Vocational Technical School**. - Provides technical secondary education aimed at producing work skills and is also involved in special adult programs offered through Adult Education.

### **The Electronic Valley**

The “Electronic Valley” is a web site that provides link-ages to individual community web pages and highlights important information about the area.

This site could also be used as an economic development tool to promote industrial and business parks, as well as other regional economic development initiatives.

### **Enterprise Corridor Zone**

The Valley region is part of a state-sponsored Enterprise Corridor Zone that provides special incentives for business expansions and relocations.

Providing greater publicity about the Corridor is important in attracting new businesses to the area. The corridor provides:

- up to 80% property tax abatement for five years,
- up to 50% state corporate business tax credit for ten years, and
- up to \$2,250 grants for new permanent jobs created.

### **Greater Valley Marketing**

Marketing the Greater Valley gives all municipalities a competitive edge:

- the employee base increases by 31% through the addition of Beacon Falls, Oxford, and Naugatuck.
- the Greater Valley allows for a wider choice of home and business locations.
- the transportation network, especially Route 8, reinforces multi-town marketing above and beyond the COG municipalities.
- Oxford Airport provides a strong competitive element to the alliance.

## **Market The “All American Valley”**

**Expand and support efforts to professionally market business sites, initiated by the Greater Valley Economic Alliance.**

Professional marketing of business sites is best done at the regional level. Initial efforts in this area were directed through the Greater Valley Economic Alliance. However, this entity is no longer functioning and new regional marketing efforts need to be initiated.

The 1997 marketing plan, prepared by The Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), outlined a number of strategies which should be reviewed and updated.

As the following statistics and observations demonstrate, adding Naugatuck, Beacon Falls, and Oxford to the regional marketing of V.C.O.G. provides for a larger and more diverse economic presence:

- Employment and housing units within the 7 Town area are as follows:

<b>Town</b>	<b>Jobs</b>	<b>Housing Units</b>
Shelton	21,180	14,707
Derby	5,080	5,568
Naugatuck	9,210	12,341
Seymour	4,470	6,356
Ansonia	4,430	7,937
Oxford	1,870	3,420
Beacon Falls	960	2,104

- Oxford has three industrial parks at various levels of completion. These parks, when completed, will contain 35+ lots ranging in size from 2 to 20 acres.
- Naugatuck has 10+/- lots remaining in its industrial park adjacent to the Waterbury boarder. Although constrained by topography, their excellent location relative to Route 8 marks them as an important economic resource

There is a need to provide a more formal organizational structure to on-going efforts to market at the greater Valley. Consideration should be given to having the COG act as the lead agency in regional marketing efforts.

The use of COG for administration of regional marketing efforts makes sense from the following perspectives:

- the majority of funding for such regional efforts originates with government organizations. The COG is proficient at dealing with such organizations and securing government grant funds.
- the COG truly operates at a regional level and has a sensitivity to providing regional assistance while allowing local efforts to proceed on local issues.

- the COG, through its membership of elected officials, has access to leadership and decision making that can be very effective in bringing marketing efforts to fruition.

Budget and staffing implications are an important consideration in the COG's taking on this new role. Certainly they need to be explored prior to any final decision on this matter.

### **Strategies**

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1. Promote the use of the "Electronic Valley" web site as a tool for marketing the region as a good place to do business.
2. Continue efforts to develop a logo and theme to market the area as a desirable place to do business.
3. Participate in activities aimed at marketing available Greater Valley business sites outside the region.
4. Initiate regional efforts to contact local businesses to encourage retention of existing businesses in the area.
5. Develop a campaign to advertise the advantages to businesses of locating within the area's "Enterprise Corridor Zone".
6. Examine the feasibility of COG acting as the lead agency for collaborative regional marketing efforts.

## Support “Smart Growth” And A “Sense of Place”

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**Encourage communities to support growth and revitalization efforts that enhance “smart growth” and a “sense of place”.**

### **Downtown Redevelopment As “Smart Growth”**

If feasible, economic development should also be used to support the overall structure of the Valley region with its strong downtowns served by highways, transit and infrastructure. At public hearings held in Valley Region, improving the character and vitality of downtown areas was considered a high priority by Valley residents.

The Main Street Program established by the National Trust For Historic Preservation has been used successfully throughout the country to revitalize downtown areas. The Main Street Program builds on areas with inherent assets:

- Rich architecture
- Connection with the past
- Small businesses
- Sense of place.

An alternative to the Main Street Program would be a variation of the non-profit economic development corporation modeled on Shelton’s approach. The Shelton Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) acts as a catalyst for growth within Shelton by providing direct links to all local government and business leaders, as well as coordinating between city and civic organizations. The success of SEDC over its 20 year history suggests that its approach is effective.

### **“Sense of Place”**

If feasible, economic development should also contribute to community character and “sense of place”. For example, building a monolithic glass office building in a downtown area would not be sensitive to the historic character and fabric of these areas. On the other hand, building a brick building with appropriate details that orients to the street and is pedestrian-friendly would help enhance the “sense of place” in these areas.

### **Strategies**

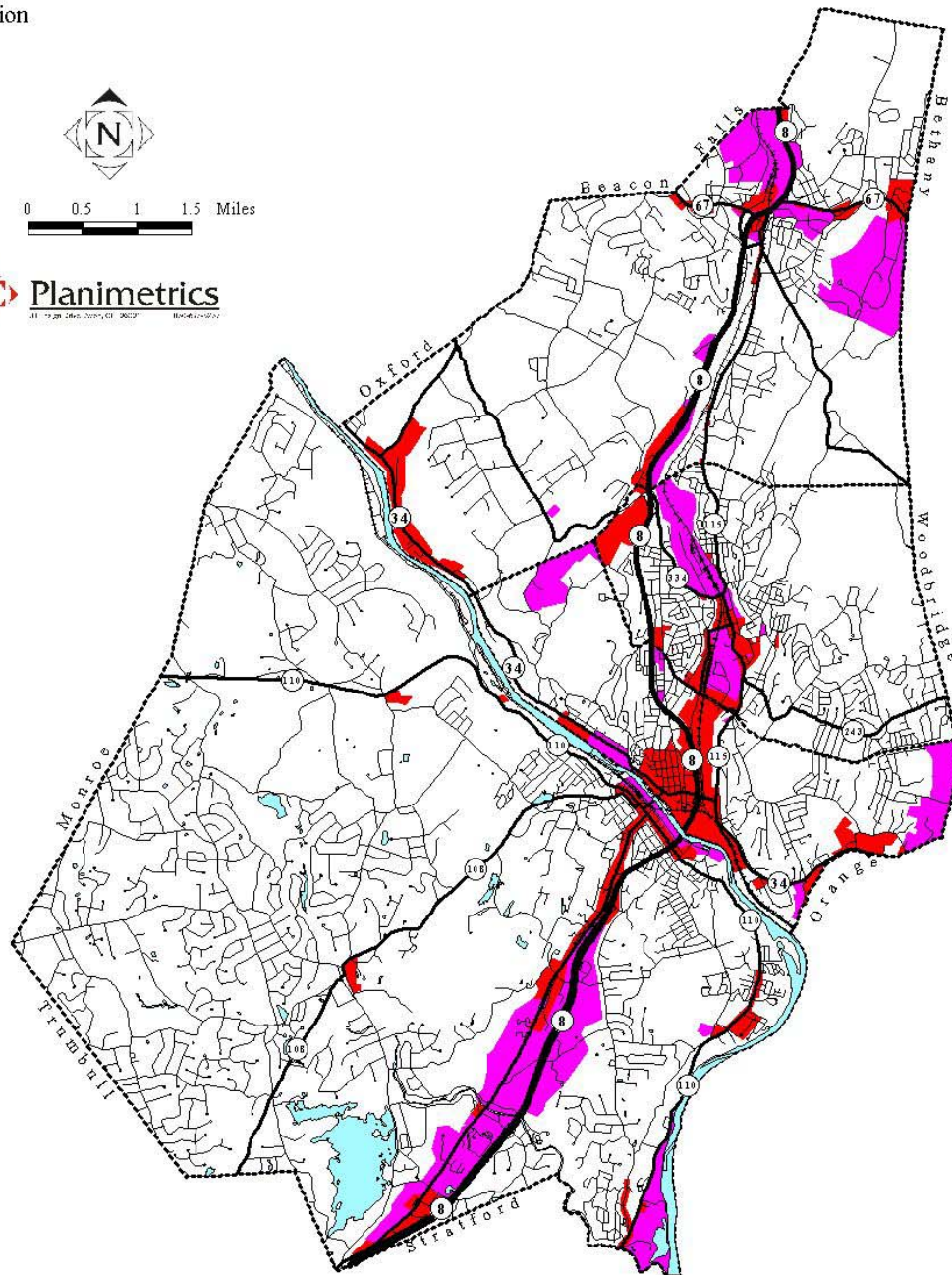
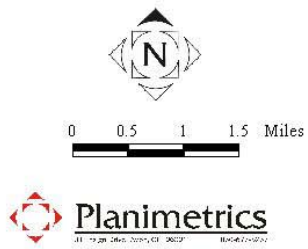
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1. Encourage activities that support the overall structure of the Valley region with its strong downtowns served by highways, transit and infrastructure.
2. Promote activities, such as the Main Street Program, that help revitalize downtown areas.
3. Encourage activities that contribute to the overall “sense of place” in Valley communities.






# Economic Development Plan

Valley Region



## LEGEND

### General Zoning

-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial

# ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

## 6

### Overview

For the Region to achieve its smart growth strategies, the desired growth and economic development initiatives must be supported by the transportation system. This includes vehicular transportation as well as transit services (rail and bus) and pedestrian/bicycle facilities.

- **Improve Route 8**
- **Enhance Transit Service**
- **Make Necessary Improvements on Major Roadways**
- **Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation**

**Access Management**



**Bicycle Facilities**



## **Transportation Planning**

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The Valley and Greater Bridgeport Planning Regions have joined together to form the Greater Bridgeport & Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

That agency is responsible for transportation planning and assigning transportation priorities in the region.

## **Improve Route 8**

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**Make improvements to Route 8 to improve access and service within and between local communities and other areas .**

Route 8 is the primary transportation spine in the Valley Region. Improvement of the traffic flow at Route 8 interchanges is essential to reducing congestion and improving service, safety, efficiency of traffic flow, and ultimately air quality in the Valley.

Significant planning work has already been undertaken and the main priority is to complete any additional planning work and have the roadway improvements funded and built.

### **Strategies**

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1. Promote efforts, to obtain designation of Route 8 as a federal interstate, to improve highway design, condition, and funding.
2. Continue to work with CT DOT to obtain funding to implement the changes designed for Route 8 interchanges.

## Enhance Transit Service

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### Enhance transit services in the region.

The Valley is fortunate to have bus and rail transit services provided by:

- Valley Transit District (VTD),
- Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority (GBTA),
- CT Transit, and
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro North).

However, most of the service routes are configured for commuters and the quantity and quality of transit service for residents is modest. The fixed route services, both bus and rail, are infrequent. In addition, the Valley Transit District is struggling with limited resources to meet the needs of the ever increasing number of residents using dial-a-ride transportation.

Regional planning efforts need to be devoted to supporting increased transit service and improving coordination between different transit modes.

### Strategies

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1. Create, support, and enhance local bus transportation that helps achieve the region's housing, employment, and economic development objectives.
2. Encourage preparation of a regional multi-modal transportation study.
3. Continue to work with Valley Transit to enhance local bus service.
4. Explore the feasibility of expanded employment shuttle service to serve more residents and destinations.
5. Continue to develop and encourage marketing efforts to increase mass transit use in the region.

### Transit Issues

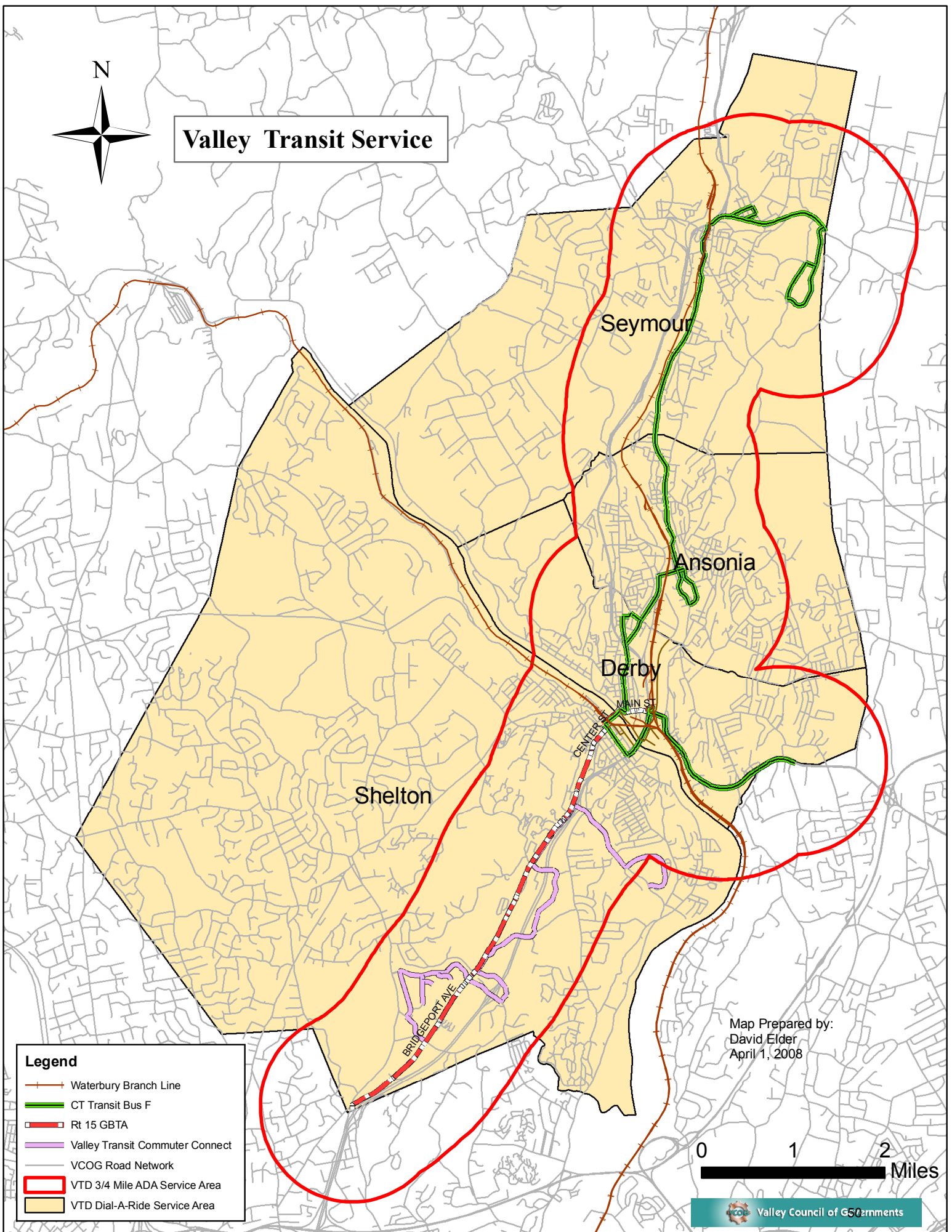
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A July 2000 report done by Urbitran Associates for the CT Department of Transportation outlines the following strategies for improving transit operation in the Valley Region:

- Better coordination and marketing of existing services.
- Implementation of an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) System.
- Expansion of employment based commuter shuttle services.
- Increased headways during peak commuter hours on the CT Transit fixed route system.
- Enhancement of railroad service to encourage more usage for trips within the Valley Corridor.
- Implementation of new bus service between the Valley Corridor and the Merritt Parkway Corridor as far as Stamford.



## Valley Transit Service



## **Access Management**

Access management is an approach based on the premise that since road capacity is limited and driveways and streets can reduce road capacity, access to arterial roadways should be managed in order to preserve the capacity of the roadway

Access management techniques can include:

- interior connections between parking lots
- access from secondary streets
- shared parking
- sidewalks
- driveway alterations.

Access management techniques should continue to be promoted in commercial areas. The CT Department of Transportation has funded Access Management Plans on State Arterial Roadways in the past.

## **Make Necessary Improvements on Major Roadways**

**Make necessary improvements on other major roadways in the region in order to enhance level of service, improve safety, and support desired growth patterns.**

### **Route 34 (Derby)**

About 86% of the accidents along Route 34 occurred in Derby, with most happening along the section between downtown Derby and the Orange Town Line. Redesign of this section of Route 34 should be a state and regional priority.

### **Route 67 (Seymour)**

Route 67 is a major highway that is adversely affected by the conflicts between through traffic and property access. This situation is expected to get worse as traffic grows in the corridor and this will impair economic development. Preparing a corridor study for Route 67 (with emphasis on an access management program) will help to preserve capacity on the roadway while providing appropriate access to existing and planned uses along the corridor.

### **Route 115 (Ansonia)**

A circulation plan should be a key part of a Downtown Enhancement Plan for Ansonia Main Street (Route 115). The plan should incorporate parking needs in the downtown area to enhance revitalization efforts.

### **Route 110 (Shelton)**

Route 110 is the major route in downtown Shelton and the Regional Transportation Plan and Shelton's own Plan of Development recognize that redevelopment of this area will require intersection improvements, selected widening, and completing the Howe Avenue Interchange.

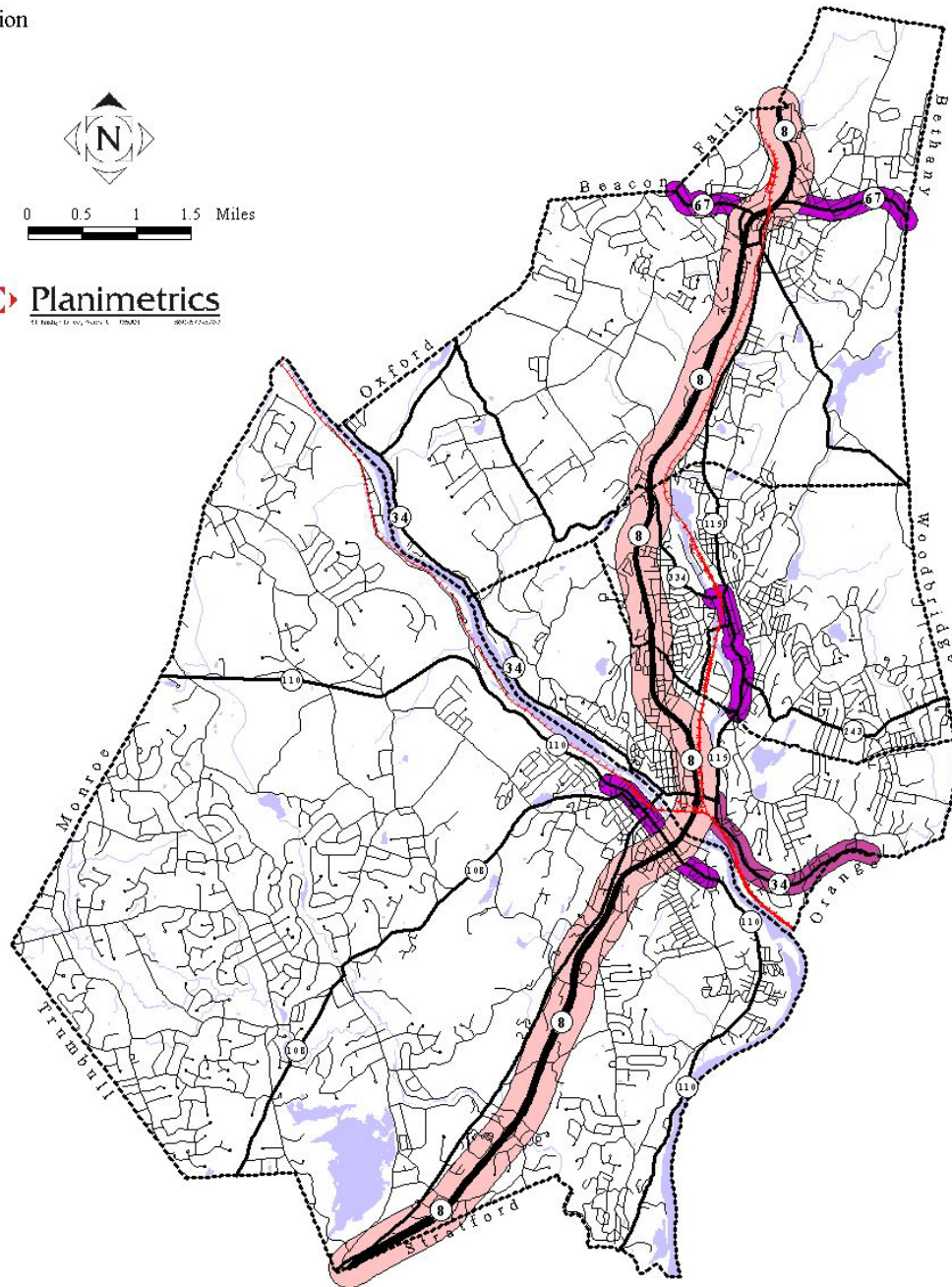
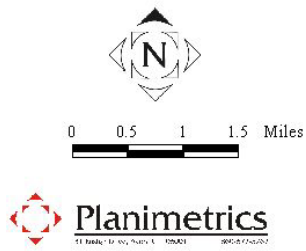
### **Pershing Drive (Derby)**

Pershing Drive, a major roadway in Derby, terminates at Route 8 with no connection to Downtown (Main Street). Construction of an access road paralleling Route 8 will help alleviate traffic at the Route 8/34 interchange area, improve accessibility, reduce congestion along alternate routes, and improve safety.



# Transportation Plan

Valley Region



## LEGEND

	Expressway		Route 8 Priority Improvement Area
	Arterial		Arterial Road Priority Improvement Area
	Collector and Local		Railroad (service to be enhanced)



## **Minor Arterial Roads**

Unlike many other less urbanized regions in the state minor arterial roads in the Valley Region carry fairly high amounts of traffic. The 1997 Consolidated Traffic Plan for the Region indicates that the following roadways carry very high traffic volumes:

- Bridgeport Avenue,
- Commerce Drive, and Huntington Street in Shelton, and
- Division Street on the Derby/Ansonia line.

Various transportation plans have called for intersection improvements and, in some cases, widening of these routes. Access management plans are a good method to ensure efficient traffic flow, and alleviate accident conditions, on these generally commercial roadways. The Shelton Route 8 Corridor Study calls for the widening of Bridgeport Avenue to four lanes and this is supported by the Valley Regional Transportation Plan.

## **Strategies**

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1. Work with CTDOT to design improvements (as necessary) to Route 34.
2. Work with CTDOT to prepare a corridor study for Route 67 (with emphasis on an access management program).
3. Develop a circulation plan for Main Street in Ansonia (Route 115) as a key part of a Downtown Enhancement Plan for this area.
4. Work with CTDOT to design improvements (as necessary) to Route 110.
5. Work with CTDOT to extend Pershing Drive to connection to downtown Derby.
6. Work with the local communities and CTDOT to address needed improvements on major roadways in the region.
7. Support access management planning for Huntington Street & Commerce Drive in Shelton and Division Street on the Derby/Ansonia Line.
8. Assist in obtaining state funding to implement plans to widen Bridgeport Avenue in Shelton to four lanes.

## Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation

**Continue to plan for pedestrian and bicycle facilities that provide alternatives to automobile use.**

In recent years, there has been increased emphasis at the State and Federal levels on supporting alternatives to automobile transportation. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities have been significant components of these efforts.

Planning for transportation alternatives is an important activity of the Council of Governments as the designated transportation planning agency for the Valley Region.

### Sidewalks & Trails

Sidewalks (on-street pedestrian facilities) provide for safe pedestrian movement, an important element in creating and maintaining an active and vital community. Trails (off-street pedestrian facilities) provide additional opportunities for pedestrian circulation and opportunities for recreation. In addition, both types of routes can provide an alternative to vehicular transportation. With more sidewalks and trails, the number of trips that require automobiles may be reduced and the opportunities for recreational use increased.

Sidewalk requirements vary in each community in the Valley, but what is essential is that they be examined against a regional standard in recognition of their importance. Recent plans for revitalization of downtown areas have generally made attractive sidewalk areas a priority. Interest in sidewalks should not stop in downtown areas.

There has also been increasing interest in creating trails. Trails can significantly extend and expand the opportunities for pedestrian movement.

The Council of Governments, as part of future transportation planning activities, should work with communities to create an inventory of where sidewalks and trails exist in each community and develop strategies to extend and interconnect them.

### Sidewalk Guidelines

Suggested guidelines for sidewalks include the following:

- Sidewalks of generous width should be provided and maintained throughout downtown areas.
- Sidewalks should be required in commercial areas.
- There should be sidewalks on most arterial roads.
- Sidewalks should connect commercial and neighboring residential areas.
- Sidewalks should be considered in multi-family areas.
- Sidewalks should link to open space trails.

### Trail Guidelines

Suggested guidelines for trails include the following:

- Trails should interconnect open space areas.
- Trails should allow for multiple non-motorized use (including bicycles).
- Trails should connect activity areas.
- Trails should connect to sidewalk areas.
- Trails should be of generous width to accommodate anticipated usage.

## **Bicycle Circulation Goals**

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The 2001 *Regional Transportation Plan: Valley Region* outlines three goals for pedestrian and bicycle programming:

1. Accommodate current bicycle use on existing highway system in a safe manner.
2. Encourage and promote the increased use of bicycling and walking as a mode of transportation while enhancing safety.
3. Retain, maintain, and rehabilitate existing pedestrian ways including staircases and sidewalks.

## **Bicycle Facilities**

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Bicycle routes can include “transportation” routes (for specific trips) and “recreational” routes. While there may be more initial interest in recreational routes, focus should also be directed towards establishing transportation routes.

The types of bicycle facilities that may be appropriate in the Valley are:

- shared roadway
- wide curb lane
- shoulder bikeway
- bike lanes
- multi-use path.

Better signage and marking of bicycle routes is an important step towards reducing conflicts and encouraging more bicycle use.

## **Bicycle Routes and Multi-Use Trails**

The Consolidated Transportation Plan (for the Greater Bridgeport & Valley Regions) talked about the need to establish priorities for a network of on-street bicycle routes and special trails located on a separate right-of-way. Concept plans were incorporated including both a network of interconnected on-street bicycle routes and special trails. Further refinement of this mapping could and should be done as part of the GIS Mapping Program being implemented by the Council of Governments.

State, federal, and local resources must be mobilized in a coordinated fashion in order to realize the regional goals for non-vehicular transportation. Current federal funding programs reflect these goals and projects in the region that will be funded under these programs include:

- recreational trails in open space areas in all four municipalities, and
- sections of multi-use trails in Ansonia, Derby, and Seymour that are part of the Naugatuck River Greenway.

Of even more importance, however, is a commitment on the part of local and state governments. Adequate shoulder widths, smooth clean, riding surfaces and a suitable type of bicycle facility (as indicated in the sidebar) should be provided, where appropriate, along roadways when road construction and maintenance is done. Priority consideration should be given to establishing bike trails along major roads that service areas of local activity (business areas, schools, parks, etc.).

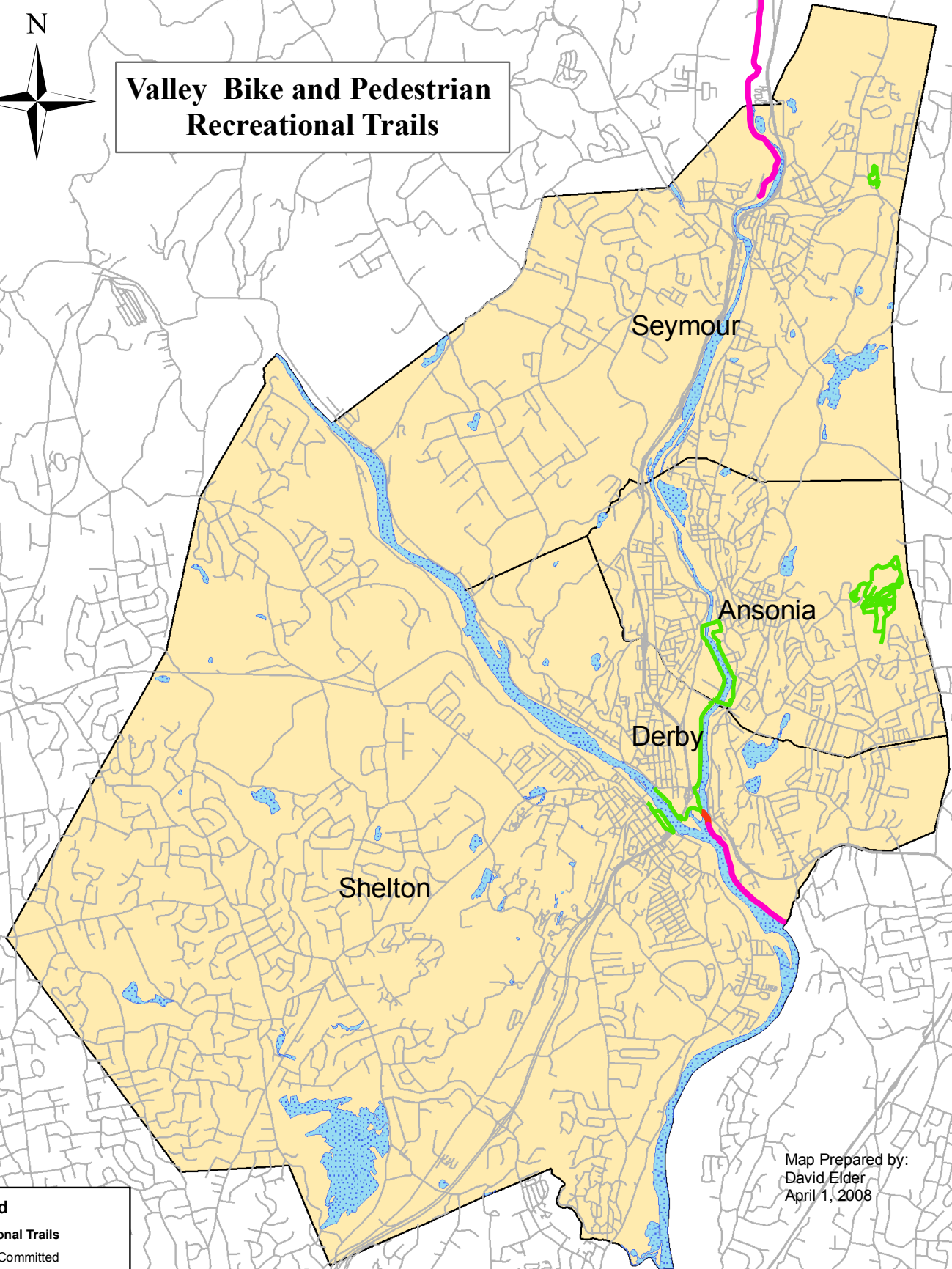
## **Strategies**

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1. Conduct an inventory of where sidewalks and trails exist in each community and develop strategies to extend and interconnect them.
2. Assist communities seeking funding for sidewalks and trails in open space/recreational areas.
3. Continue to plan for multi-use trails within open space and recreation areas that accommodate both pedestrian and bicycle traffic.
4. Provide improved mapping for the Bicycle Route Concept Plan developed for the Region, as part of the Consolidated Regional Transportation Plan.
5. Encourage provision of safe, convenient bicycle facilities (including signage, pavement marking, etc.) when improvements are undertaken on major roads.
6. Support provision of public facilities such as bicycle racks, where appropriate, to encourage bicycle use.



## Valley Bike and Pedestrian Recreational Trails



### Legend

#### Recreational Trails

- Committed
- Constructed
- Potential

VCOG Road Network

Valley Towns

Water Body

Map Prepared by:  
David Elder  
April 1, 2008

0 1 2 Miles



Valley Council of Governments

# ADDRESS INFRASTRUCTURE

7

## Overview

Infrastructure is also an important ingredient in the Region's smart growth strategies. Since infrastructure (such as public water and public sewer) can be used to support and guide desired land use and development patterns, it is an important part of the Regional Plan.

- **Improve Public Water Service**
- **Upgrade Existing Sewage Service Facilities**

**Public Water Service**



**Public Sewer Service**



## **Improve Public Water Service**

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### **Improve public water service in the region.**

Public water service can supply adequate potable water for fire protection, residential, and business needs, and support the desired development patterns.

South Central Regional Water Authority (RWA) services close to 100% of the population in Derby and Ansonia and the 2000 Water Supply Plan indicates that there is more than adequate supply to meet current demand and the projected population through the year 2040.

Aquarion Water Co. services 67% of the population in Seymour and 76% of the population of Shelton. The 2000 Water Supply Plan for Aquarion indicates that supply sources are considered adequate until 2040 for the Main System (servicing Shelton) and the Valley System (servicing Seymour).

Both systems have emergency back-up service through interconnections with each other and other nearby water systems.

Although there does not seem to be issues related to water supply there are issues related to water quality in the region. Protecting the quality of the water supply has been a long-standing priority in the region and much has been done to reduce specific agricultural and industrial pollution problems. As attention is directed in the future to non-point pollution sources (see the Conservation section of the Plan), this will also pay dividends in protecting the quality of the public water supply as well.

The Council of Governments should encourage continued efforts to improve water supply protection in the region.

### **Strategies**

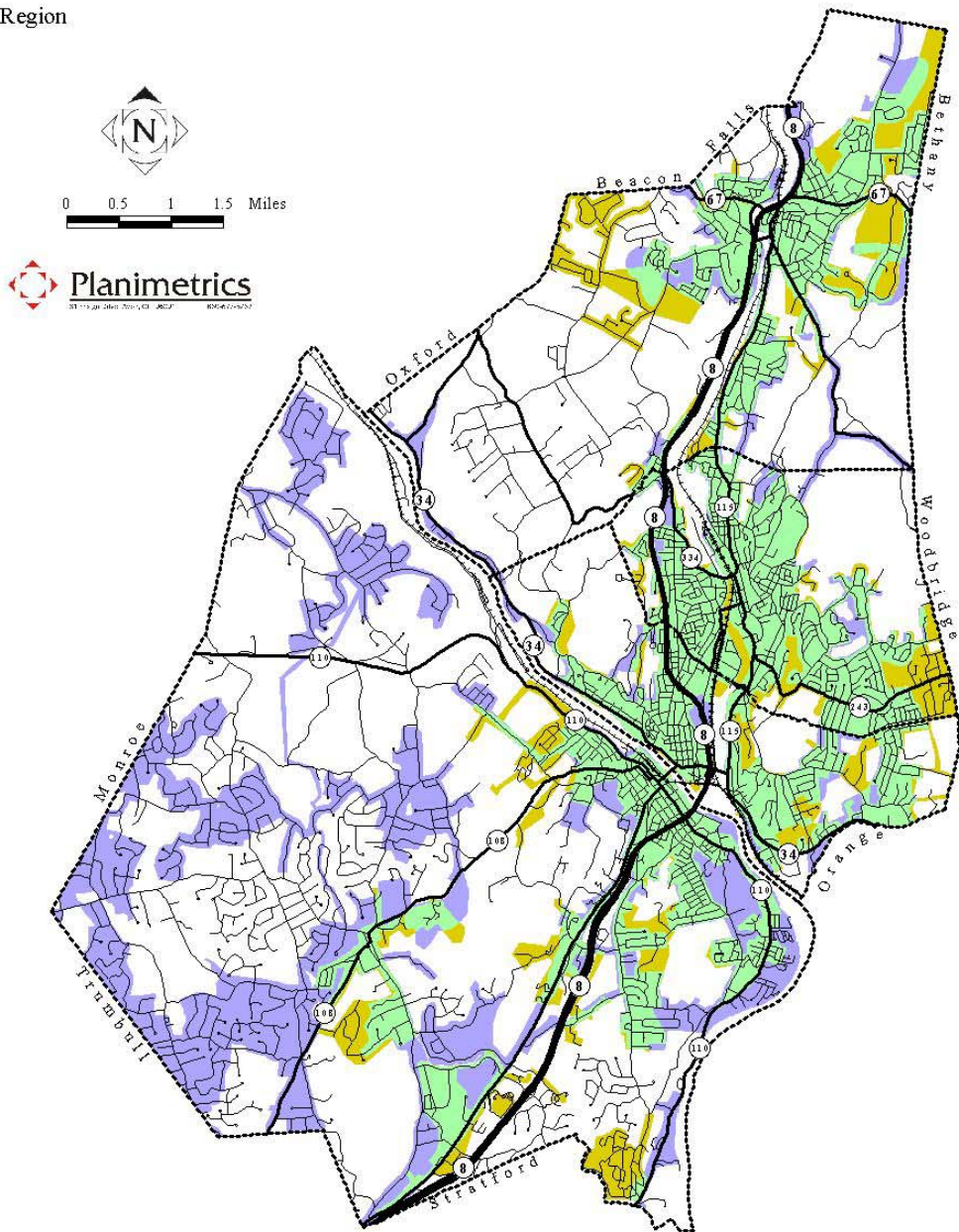
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1. Encourage communities to monitor maintenance of private septic systems that can cause pollution of watershed areas feeding public wells.
2. Educate local communities about the ongoing need to protect water quality from non-point pollution, stemming from urban runoff, especially in densely developed areas of the Valley.
3. Assist with implementation of state mandated aquifer protection regulations, in the vicinity of public wells.
4. Continue to review water utility plans as submitted.



# Utilities Plan

Valley Region



## LEGEND

- Water Service Only
- Sewer Service Only
- Both Water and Sewer Service



## Upgrade Existing Sewage Service Facilities

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**Concentrate sewer activities on upgrading existing facilities and expanding service area to meet economic development and housing priorities.**

Each town in the region has a wastewater treatment plant and approximately 73% of the households in the Valley Region are served by sewers:

- Ansonia and Derby have more than 95% of housing units served by sewer,
- Seymour has 70% served, and
- Shelton has less than 50% served.

In Valley communities, issues relating to sewer have mainly to do with upgrading inadequate and/or aging pipes, upgrading pumping stations, and eliminating combined storm water and sanitary sewer lines.

Ansonia, Derby, and Seymour have each identified areas where limited sewer expansion is desired.

Shelton, on the other hand, is evaluating a significant sewer expansion that could result in a \$13,000,000 expansion of the Shelton Sewage Treatment facility and over \$6,000,000 in improvement that are needed to the collection system.

Valley communities must continue to emphasize reuse of brownfield sites and downtown revitalization efforts to promote “smart growth”. Utility plans that support reinvestment in older areas should be given the highest priority for public investment. Sewer expansion plans should be targeted to help implement economic development and housing diversity priorities.

### Strategies

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1. Continue to encourage the provision of safe and efficient sewage disposal to protect public health and water quality.
2. Encourage each community in the region to have a program to address capacity issues related to inflow, pipe cleaning, and pump stations.
3. Encourage future sewer expansion to help implement the economic development and housing diversity priorities of the region.

# PROMOTE REGIONAL PROGRAMS

8

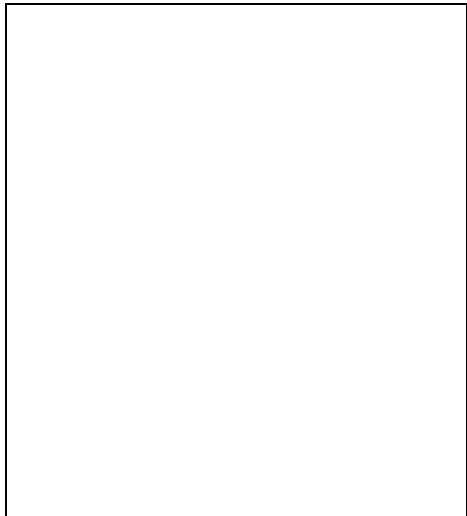
## Overview

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Of the thirteen planning regions in Connecticut, the Valley Region is the smallest. This provides the Valley Region with a unique opportunity to foster good communication and achieve important regional goals.

Better coordination and cooperation within the region and between communities, can fuel economic vitality by more efficient use of limited resources such as vacant land, infrastructure improvements, municipal expenditures and others. Regional cooperation can be aided by activities that:

- **Strengthen the Council Of Governments**
- **Promote Regional Magnet Schools**
- **Support Regional Agencies**



## Duties of Regional Councils

Section 4-124d of the CT Statutes outlines the general mandate of Councils of Elected Officials and Councils of Governments:

*The council shall consider such matters of a public nature common to two or more members of the council as it deems appropriate, including matters affecting the health, safety, welfare, education, and economic conditions of the areas comprised of the members*

## Inter-Municipal Services

The *Local Government Co-operative Venture in Connecticut Report*, published by the CT Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, in June 2000, lists the following municipal service functions that are most often shared by communities:

- Information Technology
- Financial Services
- Assessment
- Building Codes Enforcement
- Education
- Civil Preparedness
- Sanitation
- Water Pollution Control

## Strengthen the Council of Governments

**Provide the committed leadership and resources necessary to implement strategies that can unite local communities around common interests.**

The Valley COG is poised to become a strong source of leadership in the region and benefit from the direct involvement of chief elected officials. This leadership will be effective if based on implementing strategies that will unite communities around common interests.

### **Regional Strategies**

Connecticut's municipal leaders have a strong commitment to regional approaches if they provide cost-effective solutions to local problems and address initiatives that go beyond municipal boundaries. This plan outlines strategies in areas where regional cooperation can be most effective.

### **Regional And Local Capacity**

Establishing an appropriate staffing structure and providing adequate financial resources will be essential to implementing the recommendations of the Regional Plan and addressing other regional issues.

The Council of Governments could also identify areas where shared staff can increase the effectiveness, efficiency, and level of service provided by individual municipalities.

### **Resource Strategies**

Budgets for Council of Governments vary depending on the size of the area they incorporate and the activities they oversee. In addition to federal, state, and local funding, the following methods of funding activities can be utilized:

- **User Fees** can be levied for services provided such as waste collection operations and special educational programs.
- **Private Contributions** from foundations and corporations can be utilized to support staff to initiate specific programs.
- **In-Kind Contributions** can be solicited from municipalities, private organizations, and businesses in the form of donated staff services, meeting rooms, postage, and other resources to assist in regional efforts.
- **Partnerships** with other agencies and businesses may be a good way to capture resources needed to implement common strategies.

## Multi-Regional Jurisdictions

In the absence of county government and mandatory regional organizations many single purpose inter-municipal and regional bodies have been established. A study prepared by the Connecticut Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations reported that approximately 300 new local government joint ventures were started since 1996 and there are currently over 1,000 joint ventures.

The great number of regional interests in the state creates a jurisdictional issue for the Valley Region. Each cooperative effort seems to involve the Valley Region in a different jurisdiction. As an illustration consider the following:

- **Regional Education** ventures are jointly administered with New Haven County Communities.
- **Transportation** funding and planning is done jointly with the Greater Bridgeport Area.
- **Economic Development Activities** are shared with other towns in the Central Naugatuck Region, and the Naugatuck Valley Community Development Corporation encompasses the Valley Towns.

The ability of the Council to implement regional strategies will depend on having the ability to effectively coordinate and advocate on behalf of the Valley Region on a multi-regional scale. Providing the structure and resources to do this is essential to consider as the Council of Governments is organized.

## Strategies

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1. Consider the level of staffing and financial resources needed to make the Valley Council of Governments an effective organization.
2. Identify regional strategies that can unite communities and the resources that can be used to implement these strategies.
3. Evaluate what local municipal functions can be enhanced by sharing staff and other resources through regional efforts.
4. Determine how to best achieve linkages with organizations that serve more than the Valley Region.

## Promote Regional Magnet Schools

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**Promote creative programming through regional magnet schools to provide for improved education and support economic development activities.**

It may be difficult for the region to address some of its educational and workforce issues with different school districts. The Council of Governments may wish to consider encouraging a regional strategy for education that could:

- lessen the education financing burden of individual communities,
- provide better coordination between education and workforce needs, and
- improve the quality of education.

Magnet schools can be a large part of this strategy. Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) in New Haven has been the regional organization responsible for establishing magnet schools for the Greater New Haven Area, which includes some magnet school projects in the Valley Region:

- Shelton participates in a magnet arts school located in New Haven.
- Ansonia and Derby are involved in planning a magnet grade school with four other communities.

The inter-district magnet school approach is a way of stimulating academic achievement, coordinating academics with work related skills, and providing for a more diverse student population. Schools are usually organized around a particular academic theme such as cultural activities or math & technology.

Planning should be done to determine what school needs could be met by magnet schools. Grants are given by the State for magnet school planning. State financing facilitates the development of magnet school programs and State bonding has helped pay the cost of building facilities. Incorporating regional magnet education can be an important element in providing increased educational capacity without making large local investments.

### **Strategies**

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1. Formulate a plan to enhance local education through the establishment of regional magnet schools in the Valley.
2. Support economic development goals, for a better trained workforce, by identifying skills that can be the focus for regional educational efforts.

## Support Regional Agencies

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**Continue to support regional organizations, promote coordination of their efforts, and pursue funding for regional interests.**

The “*All American City*” award given to the Lower Naugatuck Valley celebrated the Region’s recent accomplishments in uniting around common goals. The Valley Council of Governments can be the coordinating body for the many organizations serving the Region and surrounding communities (some are listed below):

<b>Alliance for Economic Growth (Shelton)</b>	The Valley Chamber of Commerce brings together public and private economic development interests in the Lower Naugatuck Valley and sponsors special programs.
<b>Brownfield Pilot Project (Derby)</b>	Administered by the Council of Governments, environmental contamination identification and remediation assistance is available to 10 towns in the Naugatuck Valley.
<b>Electronic Valley</b>	The <i>Electronic Valley</i> is the Valley’s link to the world-wide web ( <a href="http://www.electronicvalley.org">www.electronicvalley.org</a> ).
<b>Valley Transit (Derby)</b>	Provides commuter shuttle service and paratransit services to the Valley Region.
<b>Valley Arts Council (Shelton)</b>	Administered through the Valley Chamber of Commerce to initiate and support art programs in the Valley.
<b>Valley Council of Health &amp; Human Service Organizations</b>	Identifies priorities for social service funding and coordinates programming in the Valley.
<b>Valley Needs &amp; Opportunities Project (Ansonia)</b>	This project is directed at bringing together common interests and determining priorities for future private foundation funding in the Valley.
<b>Workplace, Inc (Ansonia)</b>	The Valley’s federally funded one-stop center for employment and job training needs with a local center in Ansonia.
<b>Lake Housatonic Authority (Derby)</b>	Provides environmental control, water management, and boating laws for this water body located in the Valley.
<b>Southwest Conservation District, Inc. (Wallingford)</b>	Advises the DEP and provides local assistance regarding soil erosion and water conservation problems. These districts are being reorganized around watersheds.
<b>Naugatuck Valley Health District (Seymour)</b>	Is the local health district for six towns in the lower Naugatuck Valley.

### Strategies

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1. Strive to find effective regional solutions to significant governance issues and establish funding priorities to implement needed strategies.
2. Reduce or minimize duplication of services by encouraging regional organizations to coordinate activities.
3. Support regional organizations necessary to achieve the goals and priorities established by the Council of Governments.

## Enhance Cultural Resources & Facilities

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**Promote a sense of vitality in the region, and enhance community character, by supporting the expansion of cultural and arts facilities.**

The recently completed *Lower Naugatuck Valley Arts & Cultural Assessment*, found that “most people were unable to identify the region as having an arts or cultural identity, and admit that they travel to New Haven, Waterbury, Bridgeport or New York City to enjoy...arts activities”.

In response to this study, The Valley Arts Council was established with funding made available by a Matthies Foundation Grant. The Council will lead efforts to revitalize cultural and art facilities and prepare a two year strategic plan. Suggested activities include:

<b>Performing Arts Center</b>	The Sterling Opera House (Derby), the Strand Theater (Seymour), and Center State on Center Street (Shelton) have been identified as two facilities with the potential of housing community and major performances and rejuvenating the arts presence in the Valley.
<b>Visual Arts Facilities</b>	Establishment of a large gallery would allow for the display of works by the region’s visual artists on a consistent basis and also highlight the Valley’s art community.
<b>Arts Districts</b>	An Arts District where a local building is redeveloped as studio / living / gallery space for artists can help to rejuvenate neighborhoods and communities.
<b>Arts Education</b>	Establishment of an arts magnet school, where arts performances and classes could be coordinated, would enhance visibility and impact of an arts movement in the Valley.

### Strategies

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1. Support priorities established by the Valley Arts Council.
2. Promote establishment of a performing arts facility in the Valley.
3. Promote a permanent location for visual arts to be displayed in the region.
4. Assist the Valley Arts Council in identifying areas where adaptive reuse of historic buildings, for arts related uses, can launch an art district.
5. Work with local communities to establish an arts magnet school to improve arts education in the region.

# FUTURE REGIONAL FORM

# 9

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## Overview

The recommendations of the preceding chapters are combined in this chapter to present the overall future regional form for the Valley Region.

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## The Concept Of Regional Form

The future regional form was developed by considering:

- existing land use patterns, environmental constraints, and existing and proposed infrastructure (water and sewer),
- local desires (as evidenced by local Plans of Conservation & Development and local zoning regulations and maps),
- State guidelines (as presented in the State Plan of Conservation & Development), and
- regional considerations (such as regional land use issues, regional goals and policies, and a concept of the desirable regional form).

The basic concept of the regional form is to focus development in established community centers along the Naugatuck River. Additional development to serve the needs of residents should be located in growth areas where indicated in the Region.

Other areas are anticipated to be developed as primarily residential areas with some institutional uses and neighborhood trade and service establishments, typically restricted to major intersecting roads. Areas of desirable open space or significant natural resources are avoided.

Under the Plan, land use intensity should be highest in the regional centers. Land use intensity will also be high in areas served with adequate infrastructure (water, sewer, transportation) and in community centers and employment centers.

Land use intensity should decrease outward from the regional center and from the sub-regional centers. Future development in the rural areas should be at lower densities. Major infrastructure investments (water, sewer, transportation) are not anticipated.



## **OVERVIEW OF LAND USE CATEGORIES**

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### **DEVELOPMENT AREAS**

#### **Regional Cores**

Areas of mixed uses that are the primary focus of employment, commercial, institutional, and cultural activity in the Region because of the significant investment in infrastructure, facilities, and services. These areas have the intensity of development to warrant local bus service.

The Regional Cores include the various downtown areas.

#### **Major Economic Areas**

Areas outside the regional cores that have developed, or are intended, as major economic development locations in the Region. These areas may support limited transit (such as commuter buses and/or para-transit). Water and sewer infrastructure are typically available.

Major Economic Areas include industrial parks and other economic development areas.

#### **Growth Areas**

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Growth areas are intended to accommodate the bulk of future regional growth. Water or sewer infrastructure is, or could be, provided and transit service may be available.

### **CONSERVATION AREAS**

#### **Rural Areas**

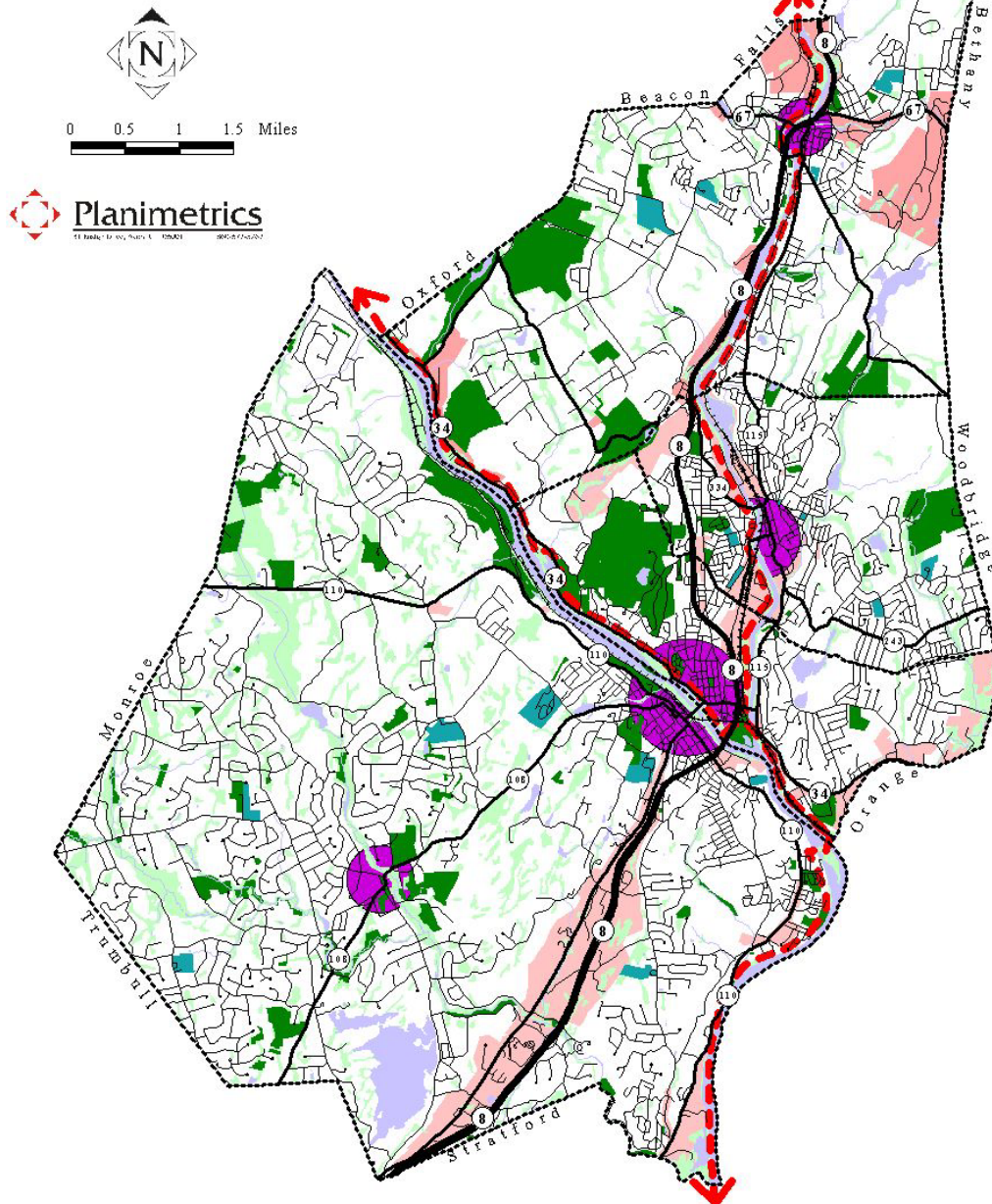
Areas where rural character should be preserved. Any development should respect natural resource and environmental constraints. May contain farms, residential uses, and small, interspersed community service areas. Intensity will depend on the availability of infrastructure and other appropriate support services.

#### **Open Space**

Areas intended to be preserved as open space or recreational uses (such as local, state, or federal parks, land trust preserves, or recreation facilities). May also include some areas perceived as open space that are in private ownership or use (such as water companies, golf courses).

# Future Regional Form

Valley Region



## LEGEND

### Development Areas

- Regional Cores
- Major Economic Areas
- Growth Areas

### Conservation Areas

- Rural Areas
- Open Space
- Natural Resource Areas

Desirable Regional Greenways

## **OVERVIEW OF INTENSITY**

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Land use intensity is highest in the urban areas due to the availability of adequate infrastructure (water, sewer, transportation) and compatibility with existing development. Moderate land use intensity will occur in areas with adequate existing or planned infrastructure. This intensity pattern will promote public transportation, energy conservation and air quality goals.

Land use intensity should decrease outward from the regional core and sub-regional centers. Future development in rural areas should be at lower densities. Major infrastructure investments (water, sewer, transportation) are not anticipated in conservation areas.

The lowest densities in the Region will occur where there is no infrastructure and where natural resource constraints are elevated. These areas will retain an open space character with limited development except in pockets of good soils.

## **RELATION TO OTHER PLANS**

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This Plan was compared with local Plans of Conservation & Development, the existing 2005-2010 State Plan of Conservation & Development. This Regional Plan was found to be generally consistent with those plans. Any inconsistencies can be generally attributed to:

- the scale of the mapping,
- differences in definitions of desirable uses or development densities, or
- regional (as opposed to local or state) perspectives about how the Valley Region should grow and change in the coming years.

# IMPLEMENTATION

# 10

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## Overview

The Valley Council of Governments will have the primary responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

Some of the recommendations in the Regional Plan can be implemented by the COG through funding requests, regional referrals, application reviews, and other means. Other recommendations require the cooperation of, and actions by, local boards and commissions in each community.

Still other recommendations will be implemented with the assistance of state or federal agencies that will consider the recommendations of this Plan in their reviews and proposals.

If the Plan is to be realized, it must serve as a guide to all residents, communities, commissions, boards, agencies, regional organizations, and individuals interested in the orderly growth of the Valley.

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## Regional Tools

Due to the unique circumstances in Connecticut (small state, no county governments, regional planning organizations with advisory powers), limited tools are available at the regional level to implement the Plan.

Most implementation efforts involve consensus building among local, state, and/or regional agencies in order to accomplish objectives. As a result, this Plan will serve as a guide in setting priorities, reviewing state, regional and local proposals, implementing programs, and assisting member communities.

Situations where the Regional Plan will be used by the Regional Planning Organization include review of:

- projects that request federal or state funding,
- proposed inter-local agreements (CGS 8-35d),
- developments with inter-municipal impacts (CGS 8-3b and 8-26b),
- funding of municipal economic development projects (CGS 32-224),
- review of local Plans of Conservation & Development,
- review of proposals requested by member municipalities, and
- as a source of information, both locally and nationally.

## **Community Tools**

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Several tools are available to implement the Plan's recommendations at the community level. These tools can influence the pattern, character, and timing of future development in the Valley Region - either public or private - so that it is consistent with and promotes the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the Regional Plan of Conservation & Development. Available tools include:

- the local Plans of Conservation and Development,
- Zoning and Subdivision Regulations,
- Capital Improvements Program, and
- Referral of Municipal Improvements (CGS 8-24).

### **Plan of Conservation & Development**

The local Plan of Conservation & Development should be the basis for land use decisions by the local Planning and/or Zoning Commission. Provided that the local Plan considers the recommendations of the Regional Plan, this will help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Regional Plan. Three local plans were prepared in conjunction with the regional planning process as part of the “Smart Growth for The All American Valley Initiative”. This joint planning process will hopefully only be the start of local and regional efforts to work together on planning issues.

### **Zoning and Subdivision Regulations**

The Zoning and the Subdivision Regulations provide specific criteria for land development at the time of applications. As a result, these regulations are important tools to implement the recommendations of the Plan. However, this is only true if the regulations reflect the recommendations of the Plan.

### **Capital Budget**

The Capital Budget is a tool for planning major capital expenditures of a municipality so that local needs can be identified and prioritized within local fiscal constraints that may exist. The Plan contains several proposals that may result in the expenditure of town funds. The Plan recommends that these (and other) items be funded as part of the Capital Budget.

### **Referral of Municipal Improvements**

Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that municipal improvements (defined in the statute) be referred to the Planning & Zoning Commission for a report before any local action is taken. A proposal disapproved by the Commission can only be implemented after a two-thirds vote by the Representative Town Meeting. All local boards and agencies should be notified of Section 8-24 and its mandatory nature so that proposals can be considered and prepared in compliance with its requirements.

## State Tools

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The Office of Policy & Management (OPM) is responsible for preparing the State Plan of Conservation & Development (C&D Plan). The C&D Plan is considered by state agencies when undertaking projects in Connecticut. The Regional Plan will be considered by the Office of Policy & Management in preparing future C&D Plans and in considering Valley projects.

State actions that must consider the C&D Plan include:

- Acquisition / development / improvement of real property (when more than \$100,000),
- Acquisition of public transportation equipment or facilities (when more than \$100,000), and
- The authorization of any state grant (when more than \$100,000) for the above activities.

## Federal Tools

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The Regional Plan may be referred to by federal agencies when considering major projects in the Region. The Regional Plan has the greatest influence on transportation projects. Since The Valley Regional Planning Agency is the transportation planning agency for the Region, the Regional Plan of Conservation & Development, the Regional Transportation Plan, any special studies, and the Regional Transportation Improvement Program provide important information to the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, and other transportation agencies.

## Summary

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In summary the regional planning process will be most successful when it serves as the foundation for implementation of the Plan's recommendations. This can be encouraged by:

1. Keeping local officials familiar with the Regional Plan by providing a copy to newly elected or appointed officials in the Region.
2. Keeping the Plan current, relevant, and "user-friendly" in order to promote its effectiveness at the local and regional level.
3. Working to educate local officials and agencies about how the Plan can be of value to their community.
4. Demonstrate the value of the Regional Plan by showing how its recommendations have been implemented to guide local and regional action.

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## CONCLUSION

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

In preparing this Plan, a great deal of information was collected, presented, reviewed, and discussed. Local plans of conservation and development were prepared for Ansonia, Derby, and Seymour in order to update plans that were quite dated and develop an understanding of issues facing the communities in the region. The Plan of Conservation and Development for Shelton was also reviewed to help understand the issues that they face. Public meetings were held to assess issues in the region and local communities. Through this work, an overall vision and general goals and policies were developed. Finally, specific strategies were prepared and refined. This information is summarized throughout this Plan.

However, it is important to realize that the most important step of the planning process is implementation of the recommendations. While the task of implementation rests with all residents of the region, the realization of the Plan is orchestrated by the Council of Governments.

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

During the next few years, some of the goals will hopefully be achieved, some circumstances will undoubtedly change, and some conditions will certainly arise that will suggest that it is time to reconsider the Plan or some of its elements. Such situations are to be welcomed since it will mean that the Plan is being used.

Programs that help achieve consensus, establish regional goals, and promote community welfare will all turn out to be positive steps in the history of the lower Naugatuck Valley region.