



# Town of Bethel

## Plan of Conservation and Development

Referred Draft for Review: October 8, 2019

Prepared for:  
The Town of Bethel Planning and Zoning Commission  
with assistance from





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# 1 Introduction

The Town of Bethel (the Town) is a suburban community located in northern Fairfield County, just east of the city of Danbury. Bethel's development patterns and landscapes are shaped by the Town's unique geography and history. The Town was initially settled by Danbury residents in the late 1600s and early 1700s, and the Town has maintained close ties to Danbury throughout its history. Bethel was granted its own Congregational Parish in the mid 1700s and, in 1855, was incorporated as its own municipality. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, Bethel's economy consisted primarily of agriculture and small manufacturers.

The opening of the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad in 1852 connected Bethel to Lower Fairfield County and New York City for the first time and helped solidify the village center as the focal point of the community. Outside of the village center, Bethel remained a largely rural community into the mid-20th century. Bethel became a more suburban community following the construction of the interstate highway system in the middle of the 20th century. Between 1950 and 1980, the population more than tripled as the Town increasingly became a bedroom community for Danbury, Lower Fairfield County, and New York City. Since 1980, population growth has continued but at a slower rate than in the past as vacant land becomes less readily available to support new development.

Between 2010 and 2017, Bethel has experienced significant housing development and was the sixth fastest growing municipality in Connecticut during that time. A renewed focus has been placed on Downtown Bethel in recent years, culminating with the completion of the Bethel Forward Downtown Master Plan in 2016. As Bethel looks to the future it looks to solidify its position as one of the best values in Fairfield County with its reasonably priced housing stock, high quality town services, excellent school system, access to employment opportunities, and vibrant village center.

### **What is a Plan of Conservation and Development?**

A Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is the official statement from a municipality, setting forth its goals and aspirations for the future land use, development, and environment of the community. Typically, these plans include information about current housing stock, utilities, roads, parks and recreational facilities, and natural resources as well as strategies for how those features should be improved or maintained in future years. Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that a town's Planning and Zoning Commission "prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development for the municipality." The recommendations of such a plan are drawn from data, independent analysis, and the knowledge and goals of the community and government. Together, they convey broad ideas about future development, conservation efforts, and the improvement of the Town over the next decade and beyond.

The Plan is intended to direct both public and private development, embodying not only a long-term community vision but also acting as a guide to short-term decision making. Maintaining a current and relevant plan allows land use and development decisions made in a municipality to be consistent with its POCD.

Issues such as water quality, transportation, and economic development cross town boundaries, and it is crucial that a local POCD align with the goals and strategies of neighboring communities as well as larger regional and state entities. Consistency with state and regional plans is summarized in Chapter 8. The POCD identifies action items that can be implemented by the Town of Bethel to achieve larger regional goals.

### **Plan Development Process**

The planning process involves assessing current conditions and trends in order to develop reasonable goals and strategies and engaging the community in a dialogue on its future. The planning process began in spring 2018 with a kickoff meeting with the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC). The PZC oversaw the plan development process and participated in several working meetings throughout 2018 and 2019. The PZC and the Town's Land Use Department staff were responsible for reviewing data, identifying needs, and developing community priorities on a range of topics including housing, demographics, economic development, transportation, and natural resources.

To engage and draw upon the knowledge and priorities of residents, the planning team conducted a community-wide survey from early May to mid June 2018. The survey received 588 responses from a wide cross section of residents. While the survey recorded a variety of concerns, needs, and ideas, it also showed that 84% of respondents rated the overall quality of life in Town as good or excellent. A pop-up event was held at Food Truck Friday in June 2018 to publicize the community survey and build awareness of the larger POCD process.

In addition to the survey, two community workshops were held during the winter and spring 2019. The workshops allowed the community to learn about the planning process and contribute to the overall



*The project team participated in a pop-up event at Food Truck Friday in June 2018 in order to publicize the community survey and POCD process.*

**BETHEL**  
COMMUNITY SURVEY  
The Town of Bethel wants your input as it updates its ten-year Plan of Conservation and Development, or POCD



Please take the Community Survey at  
[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)







## 2 Bethel Today

### **Introduction**

As part of the POCD process, it is important to review and analyze data in order to establish a baseline of where the community is today and how it has changed over the last decade. It represents a point-in-time analysis that provides context for the goals, objectives, and strategies of the Plan. The data can also be used as a benchmark to assess progress over the next decade.

The following chapter presents a summary of the key trends shaping the community. Additional analysis is found in the Appendix.

### **Demographics**

Throughout much of its history, Bethel was a rural community. By 1950, Bethel's population was just over 5,000 residents. From 1950 through 1980, Bethel's population exploded as it transformed into a bedroom community for Danbury and Lower Fair-

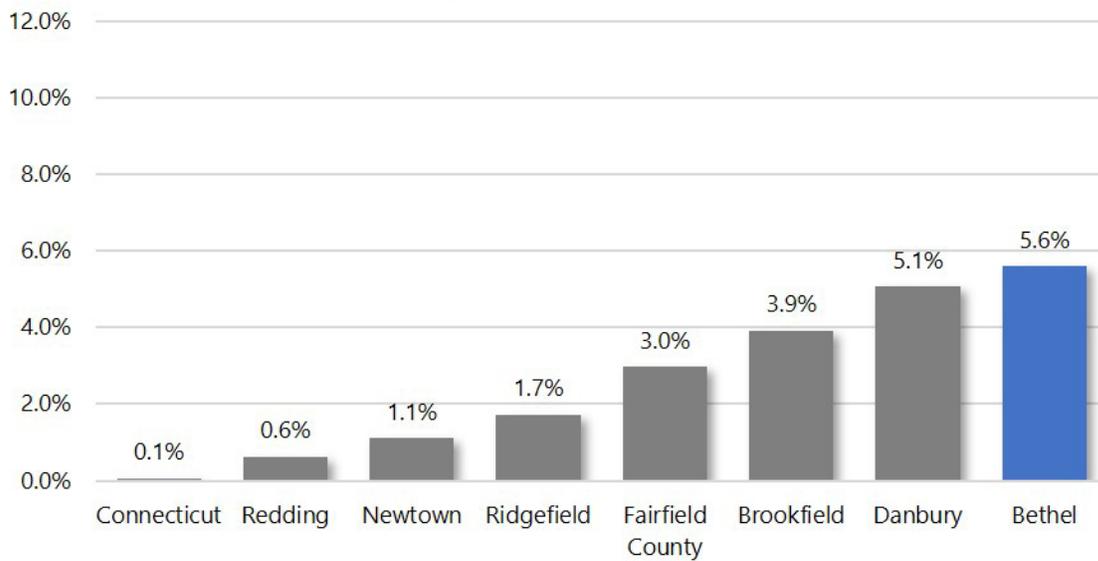


field County. During this timeframe, Bethel's population grew more than three-fold to 16,004 residents. By this time, highway access, rail service, and telecommunications systems were readily available, which helped improve connections between Bethel and employment opportunities in Norwalk, Stamford, and the New York Metropolitan Area. Since 1980, the population has continued to grow, albeit at a slower rate than previously, as vacant land for new development becomes more scarce.

While population growth has stagnated across Connecticut in the years following the Great Recession, Bethel's population has continued to grow at a modest rate. According to 2016 population estimates from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Bethel's population has grown to 19,627 residents, an increase of 5.6% since 2010, making it one of the fastest growing communities in the state during this time period. Much of the Town's recent population growth is tied to new housing construction, particularly in Downtown Bethel and the Route 6 corridor.

Like many communities across the state, Bethel is experiencing demographic shifts within its population, notably a growing elderly population and a smaller young adult and school-aged population. The median age in Bethel is 42.7 in 2016, up from 37.1 in 2000. The 45 to 64 age group has seen substantial growth in recent years, suggesting that many older residents are choosing to age in place after their children are grown. However, there are indicators that the Town is once again seeing an influx of young families. After many years of decline, the student enrollment in Bethel Public Schools increased by 4% between 2015 and 2017.

### Percent Change in Population 2010-2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010. Connecticut Department of Public Health 2016 Population Estimates

### Housing

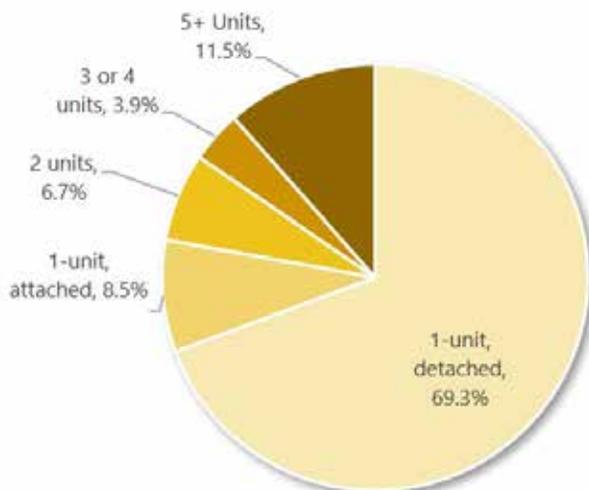
Bethel remains a more affordable alternative to many of its peer towns in Fairfield County and offers a diverse housing stock in a variety of styles, sizes, and price points. Diversity and affordability in the Town’s housing stock will continue to appeal to families migrating to the area, particularly those who seek a more reasonably priced alternative to Lower Fairfield County and Westchester County, New York. The high cost of housing in these areas has “priced out” many middle- and even upper-middle-class families who are seeking reasonably priced communities that offer excellent public school systems, high quality town services, and amenities. Over the next decade, Bethel will continue to be in a position to capture these value-oriented households.

Bethel’s housing stock is comprised of 69% single-family detached dwellings, 9% single-family attached dwellings, and 22% multifamily housing units. Housing is provided at a range of densities, with lot sizes ranging from quarter acre or less in Downtown Bethel to 2 acres or more in southern and eastern Bethel. While Bethel’s housing stock is generally affordable, many residents, notably renters and seniors, pay a disproportionate share of their income toward housing, and the number of protected affordable units is limited. In-migration of higher-income households who are priced-out of communities to the south may put additional strain on the Town’s housing stock over the coming decade, and proactive measures should be taken to ensure that existing Bethel residents are not priced-out of their own community.

Bethel has seen a significant rate of home construction in recent years. Between 2010 to 2017, the town had a net gain of over 450 housing units, which is the 6th highest housing growth rate in the state over this time period. Recent housing developments include a mix of apartments, condominiums, and single-family homes and have been concentrated within and on the periphery of Downtown Bethel and in the Route 6 corridor.

Bethel’s housing market was heavily impacted by the 2008 Great Recession although the market has since stabilized and has since started to recover. While home sales have yet to return to prerecession sale levels, they have made a steady climb from a low of 138 sales in 2011 to an average of 270 total sales per year between 2015 and 2017. Single-family home sales are rebounding more consistently although condominium sales are increasing as well.

**Bethel Housing, by Units in Structure: 2016**



Source: American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates: 2012-2016

**Growth in Housing Units: 2010 to 2017**

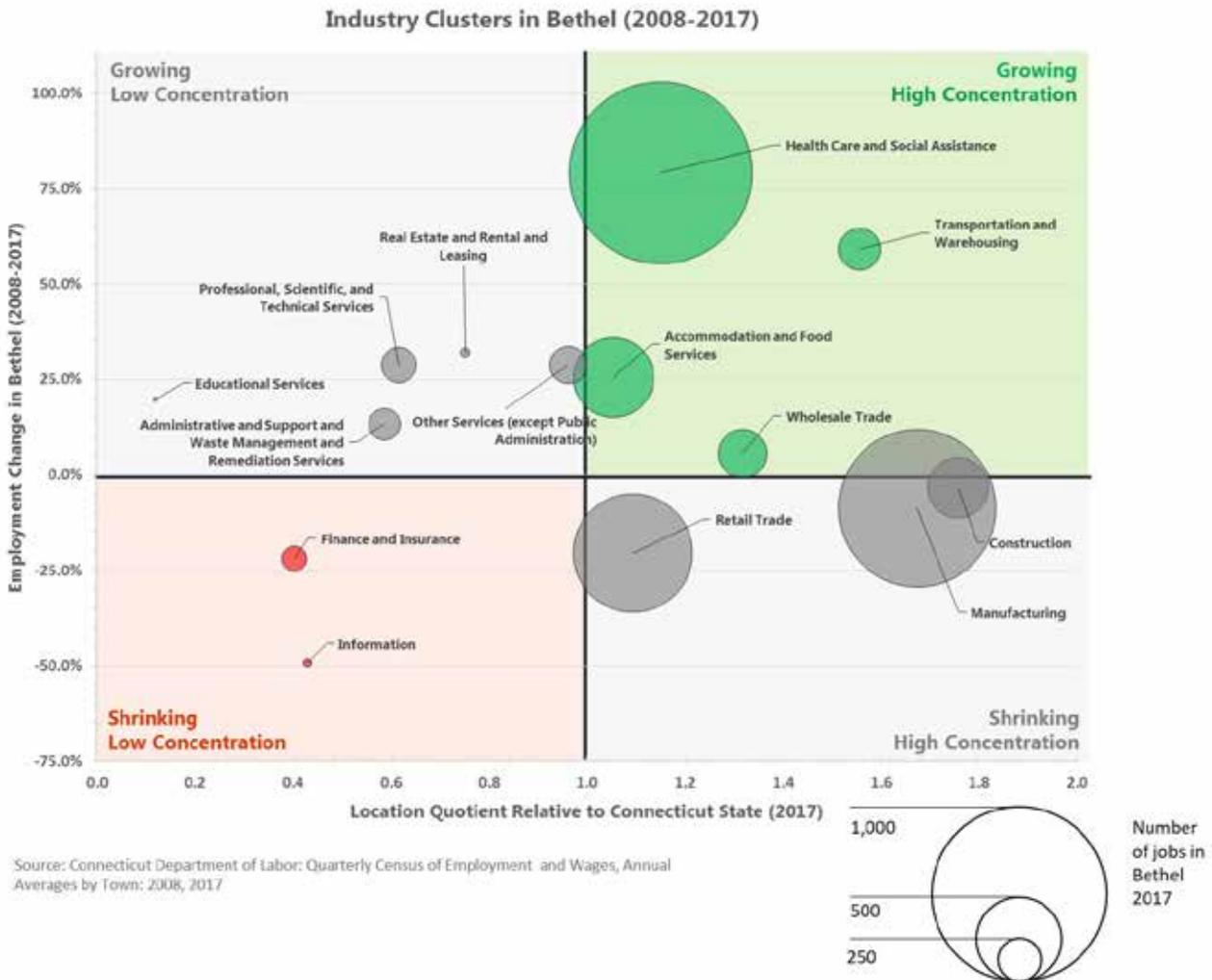
Municipality	Housing Units		
	2010	2017	Change
Bethel	7,310	7,769	6.3%
Danbury	31,154	32,917	5.7%
Brookfield	6,562	6,822	4.0%
Newtown	10,061	10,229	1.7%
Ridgefield	9,420	9,584	1.7%
Redding	3,811	3,813	0.1%
<b>Fairfield County</b>	<b>361,221</b>	<b>371,239</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>1,487,891</b>	<b>1,514,065</b>	<b>1.8%</b>

Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

**Economy**

Bethel's economic profile is typical of a suburban community, with many residents commuting to jobs elsewhere in the region. As of 2017, Bethel has 10,977 residents in the labor force and 7,247 jobs, underscoring the importance of the regional transportation network in connecting residents to employment opportunities elsewhere. Only 14% of employed Bethel residents both live and work in Bethel. About one-quarter of Bethel residents commute to jobs in the city of Danbury while other common commuting destinations include Stamford (5%), Norwalk (5%), Ridgefield (4%), and Wilton (4%). As of 2015, about 2.4% of Bethel residents commute to jobs in New York City, up from 1.7% in 2005.

Bethel contains a diverse employment base for a suburban community with a mix of business types ranging from independently owned businesses to major multinational corporations such as Duracell. The number of jobs in Bethel has increased by 5.2% or 359 jobs between 2008 and 2017 with the fastest job growth in the health care sector. The Town remains focused on economic growth within its existing commercial districts, particularly Downtown Bethel, the Route 6 corridor, Clarke Business Park, Berkshire Corporate Park, and industrial districts.



### Land Use

The Town of Bethel comprises 16.9 square miles, or approximately 11,000 acres. Residential land uses account for about 52% of the Town's total land area. A vast majority of residential lands are used for single-family homes. Open space comprises the next largest percentage of land at about 20% of the Town's total land area. Open space includes state parks, town parks, land trust properties, and water utility lands. However, not all open space land is permanently protected in perpetuity. Industrial uses comprise about 5% of the Town's land area and are concentrated along the Danbury Branch Rail line and in the Berkshire Corporate Park north of Interstate 84. Commercial and mixed-use lands comprise just under 2% of the Town's total land area and are concentrated in Downtown Bethel and on Route 6. The remaining lands are used for institutional purposes (3%) and "other" uses (17%), which includes right-of-way (ROW)/utility/vacant lands. Bethel has approximately 1,000 acres of vacant land, comprising about 9% of the Town's total land area.

### Generalized Existing Land Use: 2018

GENERALIZED LAND USE	PARCELS	LAND AREA (ACRES)	
		TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
<b>Residential</b>	<b>6,620</b>	<b>5,634.4</b>	<b>52.0%</b>
Single-Family Development	4,662	4,742.1	43.7%
Two-Family Development	480	406.4	3.7%
Multi-Family Development	1,478	485.9	4.5%
<b>Commercial/Industrial</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>689.1</b>	<b>6.4%</b>
Mixed-Use	65	28.6	0.3%
Commercial	161	162.2	1.5%
Industrial	165	498.3	4.6%
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>270.4</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
Community Facility	23	224.2	2.1%
Institutional	15	46.2	0.4%
<b>Open Space/Agriculture</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>2,408.9</b>	<b>22.2%</b>
Open Space	179	2,230.2	20.6%
Agriculture	15	178.7	1.6%
<b>Other</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>1,841.0</b>	<b>17.0%</b>
ROW	43	759.8	7.0%
Utility	34	76.2	0.7%
Vacant	398	1,005.0	9.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,718</b>	<b>10,843.8</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Generalized existing land use was developed by Milone & MacBroom, Inc. (MMI) based on Town parcel data. Please note that the 2007 Plan categorized oversized single-family lots as "vacant land." These properties were categorized as residential in 2018.*



### **Zoning**

Like most communities, Bethel manages land use activities in the community by zoning areas for specific uses and intensities. Bethel contains several districts for residential development including five single-family zones (0.25 acre, 0.5 acre, 0.75 acre, 1 acre, and 2 acres), one multifamily zone, one planned residential district. These residential zones account for approximately 88% of the total land area in Bethel. The highest residential densities are in Downtown Bethel and near Route 6, with densities decreasing as you move to the south and east.

Bethel has five commercial zoning districts that account for approximately 4% of the total land area, two industrial zoning districts accounting for approximately 7% of the total land area, and the Educational Park zone in the center of town accounting for 1% of the total land area. Since 2007, the Town has implemented several zoning changes including creating a mixed-use zone in the Route 6 corridor and a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) zone in Downtown Bethel.

### **Buildout**

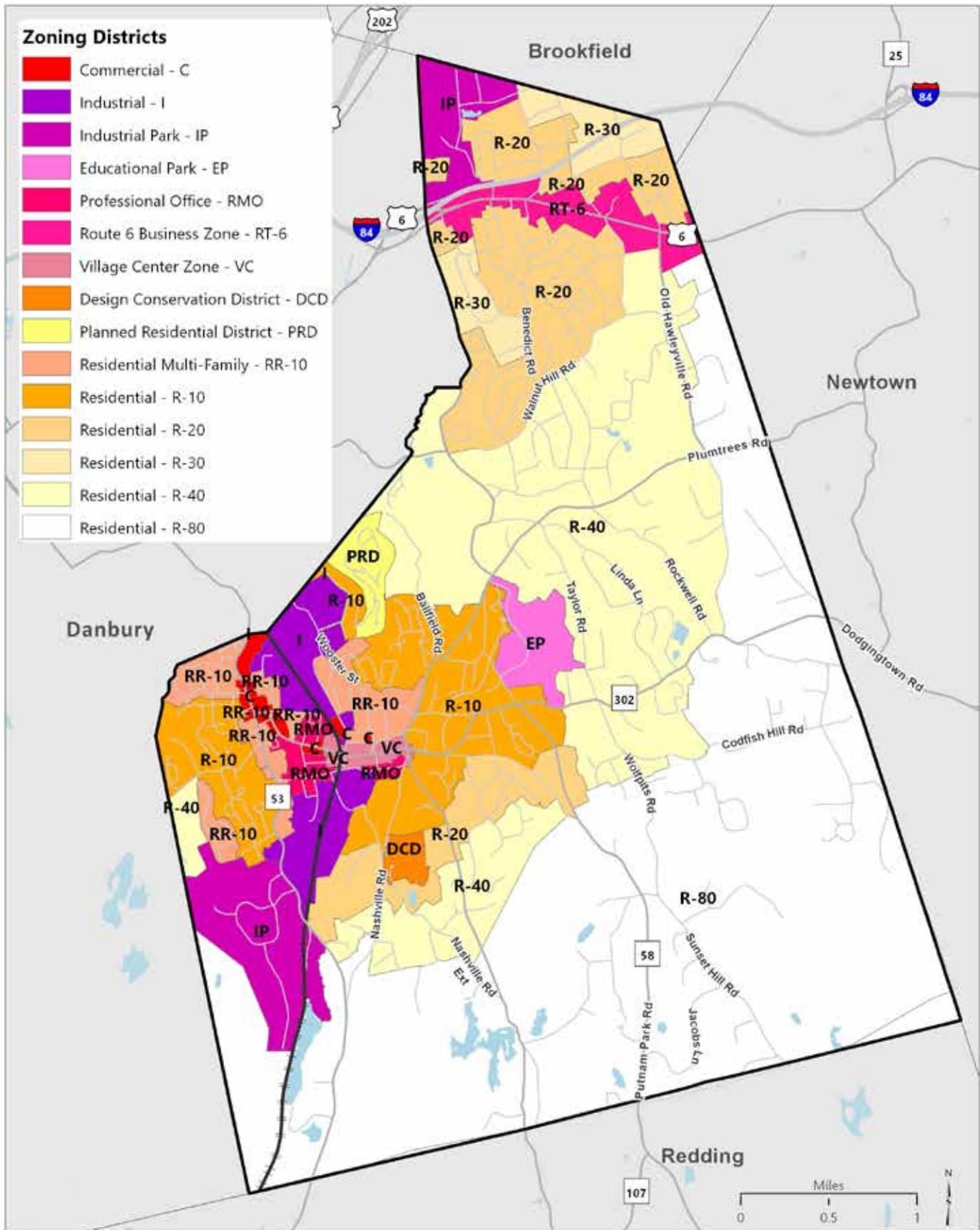
A buildout is a hypothetical planning tool that assesses what a community would look like if all vacant land were developed under current zoning or if underutilized land were redeveloped into more intense uses. About half of all the vacant land in Bethel is encumbered by one or more environmental constraints, limiting development opportunities. The remaining land could support new development should demand exist in the future.

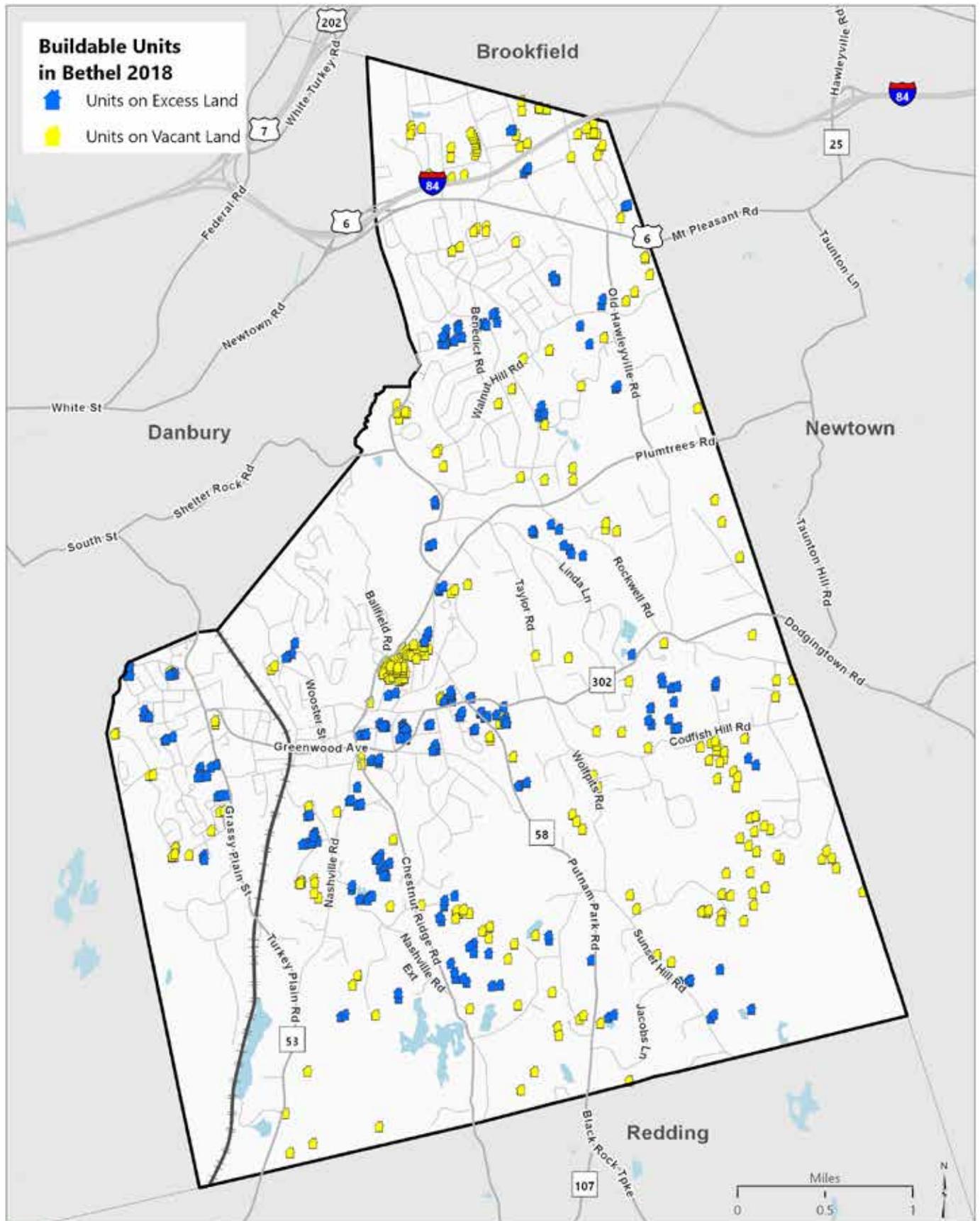
Bethel can support up to 1,660 new housing units under current zoning. Most of the Town's single-family development potential is on vacant land (268 units) or on excess land, which is currently developed but large enough to be subdivided (250 units). The Town also has opportunities to diversify its housing stock through redevelopment or infill development projects in the Route 6 corridor (177 units) and in Downtown Bethel (965 units).

Bethel has untapped commercial and industrial development and redevelopment potential, with the greatest opportunities in the Route 6 corridor. As of the writing of this Plan, about 85,000 square feet of commercial space has been approved on Route 6. The remaining vacant land in the Route 6 corridor could support an additional 129,000 square feet of commercial development. The Town is expanding Clarke Business Park, which could support an additional 61,000 square feet of industrial space. While there is little vacant land in Downtown Bethel, there are numerous underutilized properties that could be redeveloped into higher-intensity uses. As part of the Bethel Forward Plan, the Town developed an illustrative Master Plan for the Downtown that envisions an additional 52,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space in Downtown Bethel over the next 20 years.



*Much of the Town's commercial development potential is in the Route 6 corridor.*





### **Natural Resources**

Bethel is fortunate to have extensive tracts of forest land, wetlands, and other undeveloped land that remains in a natural state. These natural areas provide residents with clean drinking water, habitat for wildlife, and access to recreational opportunities. Bethel is home to several sensitive water resources, including reservoirs, aquifers, and wellfields. In addition, Bethel is home to areas that contain unique flora and fauna. Several areas in Bethel are listed in the state's Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB), meaning they provide habitat for threatened or endangered wildlife. In addition, Bethel contains a state-listed critical habitat along Limekiln Brook near the Danbury border.

Over the last decade, the Town has balanced its desire for growth with the need to protect sensitive natural resources, which once lost can never be replaced. Since 2007, the Town and its conservation partners have protected over 200 acres of additional open space, most notably the Franc Preserve in 2011 and the Stephenson Preserve in 2013.

### **Community Facilities and Infrastructure**

Bethel has strong fiscal standing, with a AAA bond rating from S&P and Finch. Bethel has tackled several major community investments over the last several years, including the renovation of Bethel Public Library, the construction of a new police station, and the ongoing renovations to Johnson and Rockwell Schools. The Town remains committed to fiscal responsibility while continuing to provide high-quality facilities and services to residents.

The Town has also made significant upgrades to public infrastructure over the last decade. Over 50% of roads have been rebuilt using full-depth reconstruction techniques, ensuring long-lasting improvements. Sewer service has been extended in the Chimney Heights neighborhood, and the Bethel Water Department has made significant upgrades to its water system, including the replacement of the Maple Avenue wells, pump station upgrades, and a new water storage tank adjacent to Eureka Reservoir.

### **Transportation**

As a suburban community, Bethel residents rely on the regional transportation network to access employment, services, and recreational opportunities. Driving remains the predominant mode of travel in Bethel, and about 90% of residents drive to work as of 2016. Interstate 84 connects Bethel to the Greater Danbury Region and provides links to Route 7 and Interstate 684, which connect to Lower Fairfield County and New York City.

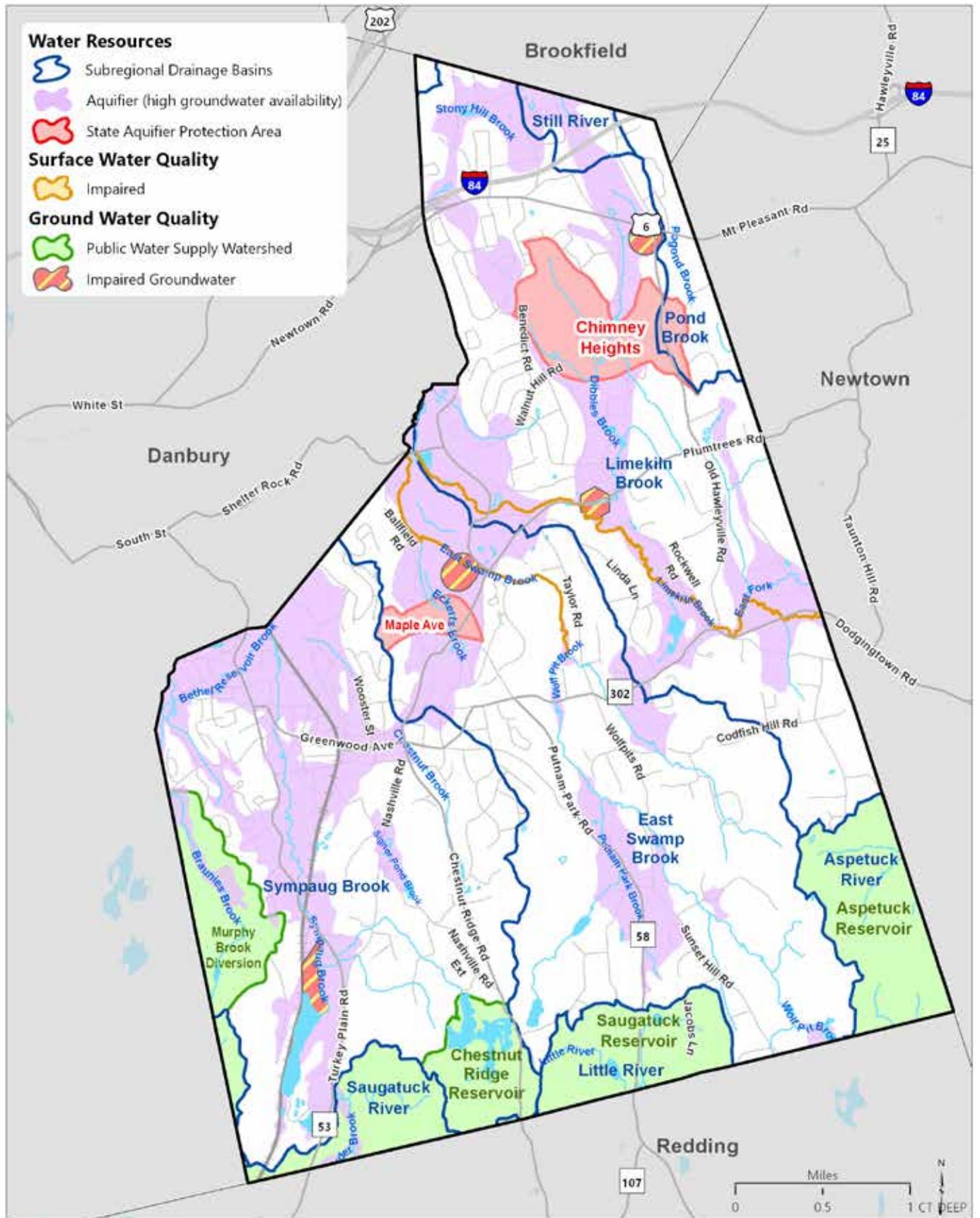
As highway traffic congestion grows, there is a growing interest in improving transit links between Bethel and the larger region. Bethel is served by the Danbury Branch of Metro-North. However, the line remains underutilized due to infrequent levels of service. There are ongoing efforts to improve service on the Danbury Branch line through the installation of signals, passing sidings, and positive train control technology. Bethel is also served by two bus routes operated by the Housatonic Area Regional Transit (HART), which connect to Downtown Danbury.

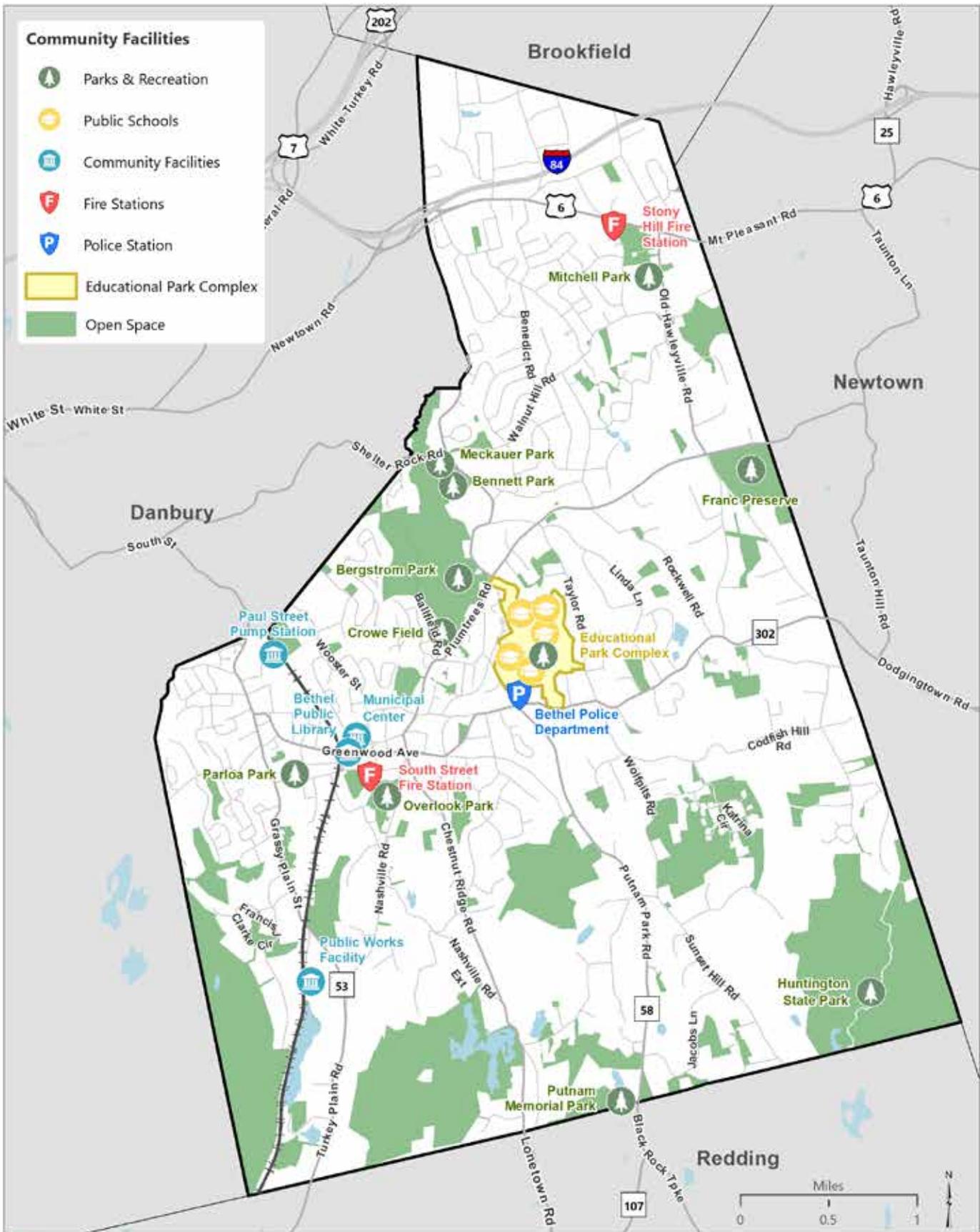


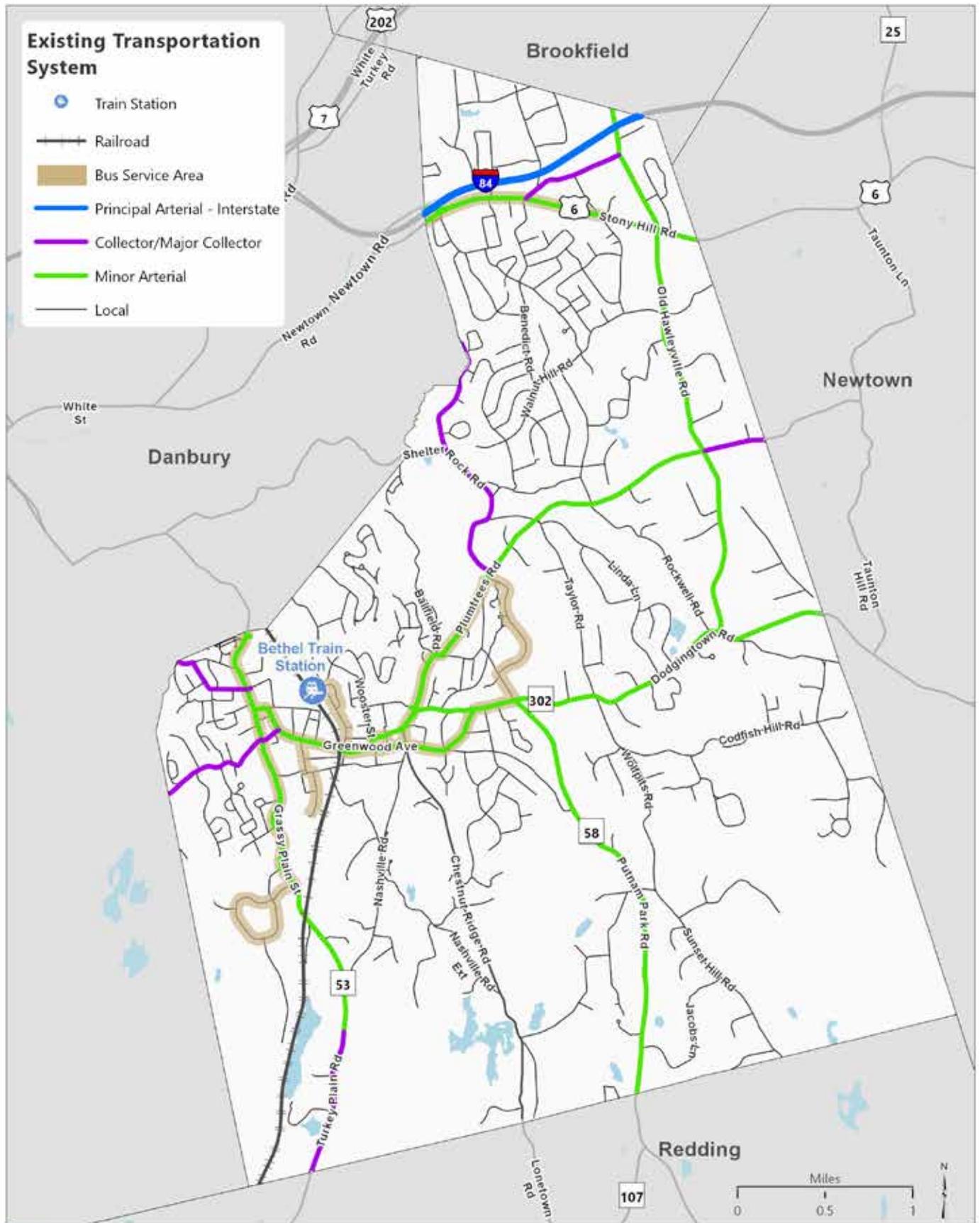
*Bethel Station provides rail access to Lower Fairfield County and New York City. Photo Credit: Bethel Chamber of Commerce*



*A trailhead at the recently protected Stephenson Preserve.*









### 3

## Vision for the Future

“ The Town of Bethel is a thriving community based on village values. At its heart is a flourishing village center that is distinct in Fairfield County for its unique New England architecture, green spaces, and arts and cultural opportunities. The village center and train station area form a fully integrated Downtown that supports diverse housing options within walking distance to shops, restaurants, employment, amenities, and transit facilities. High-quality transportation infrastructure serves the Downtown, allowing residents and visitors to get around on foot, on a bike, or using public transportation.

Bethel continues to pursue responsible economic growth in areas with existing infrastructure. In addition to the Downtown, the Town supports lively mixed-use commercial districts along Route 6 and Grassy Plain Street. The Clarke and Berkshire Business Parks provide diverse employment opportunities for residents and support a range of businesses from small manufacturers to large corporate entities.

The Town is a welcoming community renowned for its excellent quality of life for people of all ages and income levels. Bethel remains the best value in Fairfield County for its combination of schools, town services, location, amenities, and reasonable cost of living. The Town provides a diversity of housing options to support all life stages and income levels, including young adults, families with children, and seniors. Bethel prides itself on its ability to provide high-quality educational, recreational, and social opportunities for all residents.

While the Town recognizes the need to grow and change over the coming decade, it also recognizes that this growth should not occur unchecked. Bethel’s many forests, wetlands, streams, rivers, and rural lands contribute to the Town’s identity and quality of life. Recognizing that these resources are finite, the Town, in conjunction with local conservation partners, continues to work to protect these sensitive lands so that their environmental and recreational benefits can be enjoyed by future generations. The Town’s growth strategy, with its focus on infill development and the redevelopment of underutilized properties, also helps achieve the Town’s conservation goals by steering development away from sensitive natural resources.

”

## Plan Themes

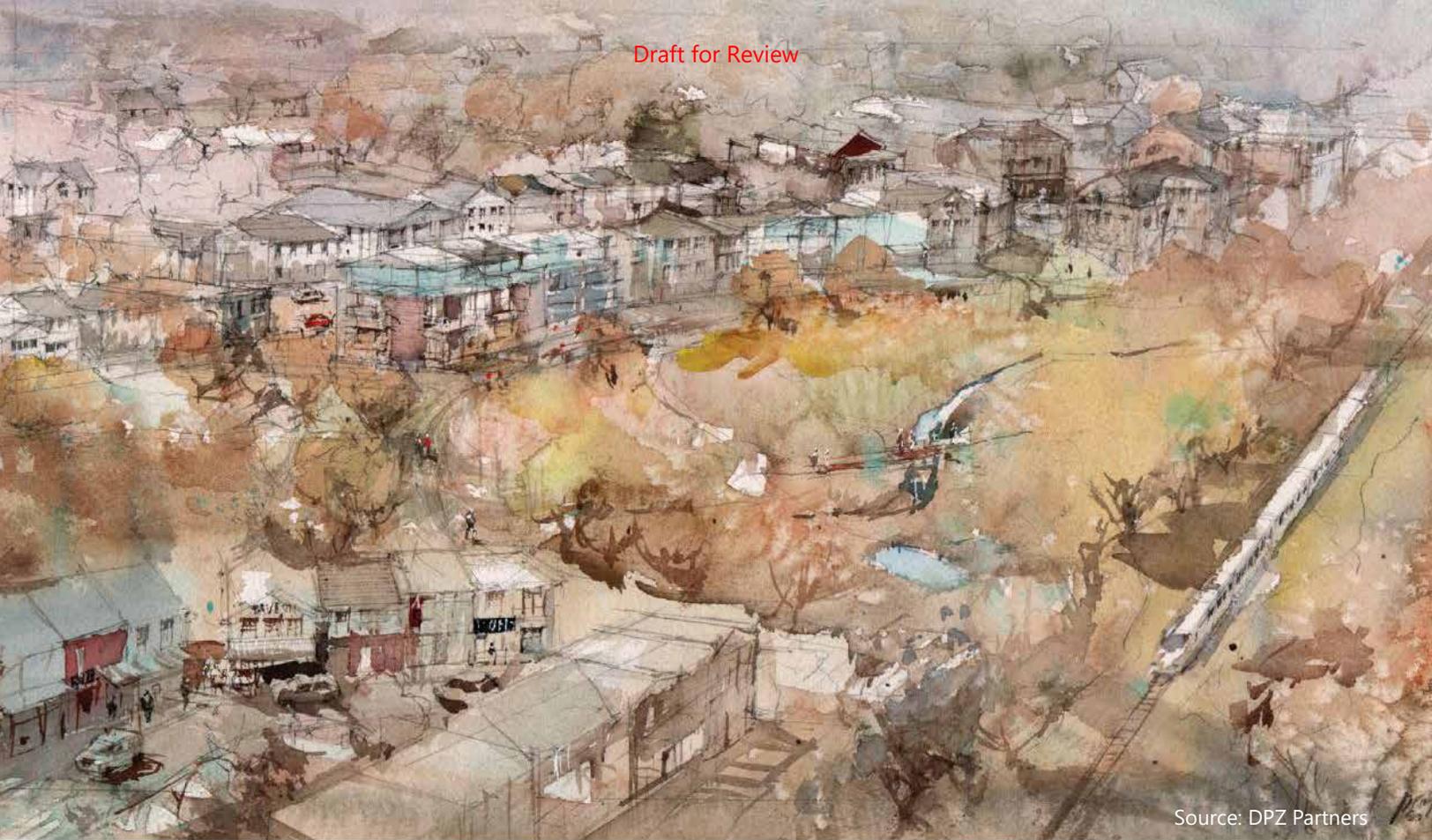
The POCD lays out goals and objectives to help the Town achieve its vision for the future. These goals and objectives are organized under three overarching themes, which form the organizational framework of the Plan. The ensuing chapters are organized around each theme and include relevant goals and objectives as well as supporting data and information.

The three themes of the Plan are:

**Pursue Responsible Growth** – This theme focuses on the Town’s development priorities over the next decade. “Responsible Growth” aligns with smart growth principals that seek to concentrate future development in compact centers as opposed to pursuing sprawling “greenfield” development on vacant land. By focusing on infill development and redevelopment of underutilized properties in areas with existing infrastructure the Town can grow its tax base while minimizing the loss of forest lands and other natural resources. This theme includes specific goals and objectives pertaining to Downtown Bethel, the Route 6 corridor, Clarke Business Park, and workforce development.

**Maintain Bethel’s Quality of Life** – This theme focuses on maintaining the Town’s high standard of living and diverse population by providing housing choices and quality infrastructure and services to all residents, regardless of age or income level. This theme includes specific goals and objectives pertaining to housing, transportation, public facilities, municipal services, and regional cooperation.

**Protect Natural Resources and Community Identity** – This theme focuses on preserving Bethel’s unique natural, historical, and cultural resources, which are integral to the Town’s identity. This theme includes specific goals and objectives pertaining to natural resources, open space, resiliency, sustainability, historic preservation, and arts and culture.



Source: DPZ Partners

## 4 Pursue Responsible Growth

Re-energize the village center as a distinctive healthy, vibrant, dynamic, pedestrian-friendly community while preserving its unique sense of place.

### What we Know:

***The Town has proactively planned for a vibrant Downtown Bethel.***

- The Town completed the Bethel Forward Master Plan in 2016, which contained several recommendations to transform the Downtown, including infrastructure and transportation improvements, visual enhancements, additional housing, and strengthening of the retail market.
- The Bethel Forward Master Plan recommended extending the geographic extent of “Downtown” to include additional areas near the train station and Grassy Plain Street.
- In 2018, the Planning and Zoning Commission adopted a new Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Zone, which encompasses the larger Downtown area and helps implement the long-term land use vision for the area.

***Downtown Bethel is a focal point of community economic and cultural activity and offers high-quality infrastructure, amenities, and events.***

- Community Survey respondents ranked Downtown Bethel as the Town’s top Economic Development Priority Area and ranked Downtown Bethel as the community’s greatest asset.
- Downtown Bethel is the institutional hub of the town and contains Bethel Public Library, the Municipal Center, and numerous private institutions.
- Downtown Bethel is the center for community events, including Bethel Summer Fest, Food Truck Fridays, Bethel Film Festival, Winter Fest, and Sunday Concerts on the Lawn.

***There are opportunities for additional housing development in Downtown Bethel. Building new housing can strengthen Downtown's commercial core and provide residents with better access to services and amenities that Downtown has to offer.***

- Downtown Bethel has a diverse housing stock including single-family homes, duplexes, condominiums, and apartment complexes.
- The Bethel Forward Plan noted there is unmet housing demand in the Downtown for both attached and detached units. The Plan notes that there is market demand for 965 additional housing units in the Downtown over the next 20 years. This market demand can be met through infill development or the redevelopment of underutilized properties. Encouraging affordable housing throughout the Downtown is also a key goal of the Bethel Forward Plan.
- There are several underutilized industrial properties throughout the Downtown, particularly on Durant Avenue and Diamond Avenue, that could be redeveloped into housing.
- There have been several residential developments built on the periphery of Downtown Bethel in recent years, including Bethel Crossing, The Grand, Summit at Bethel, Timber Oaks, and Bethel Meadows.

***Circulation and connectivity within the Downtown can be improved.***

- There is limited rail service on the Danbury Branch, with only seven southbound and eight northbound trains per day. Improved rail frequency could open up additional TOD opportunities.
- HART provides bus service that connects to Downtown Danbury. Service runs every 30 minutes during the peak hours and every 60 minutes during off-peak hours.
- There is a public perception that parking within the Downtown is difficult during peak hours. While on-street parking and public parking lots are often full during peak hours, the Municipal Center parking lot typically has available spaces and remains an underutilized asset that could provide additional overflow parking during peak hours.
- There are no dedicated bike lanes within the Downtown, and bicyclists must share the road with vehicular traffic. Bicycle parking is provided at several locations in the Downtown including the Municipal Center, train station, and Bethel Public Library.
- Downtown Bethel contains a robust sidewalk network. However, there is a need for improved pedestrian crossing in many locations along Greenwood Avenue. In addition, there is a need to upgrade many existing sidewalks in order to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- The rail line currently serves as a physical barrier between the eastern and western portions of Downtown and limits pedestrian circulation. The Bethel Forward Master Plan envisions additional rail crossings to enhance the local street grid and improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the train station.



*Downtown Bethel contains a diverse mix of housing types including single-family homes, duplexes (pictured above on Elizabeth Street), condominiums, and a range of multi-family units.*



*An unsignalized crosswalk on Greenwood Ave. near Dolan Plaza. Heavy traffic volumes, long crossing distances, and vehicles obstructing visibility are some of the issues encountered by pedestrians when trying to cross Greenwood Ave.*



In 2016, the Town completed the Bethel Forward Master Plan for the village center and train station areas - collectively known as Downtown Bethel. The Plan establishes a vision for growth in the Downtown area, including the addition of nearly 1,000 new housing units and over 50,000 square feet of additional commercial space. The Plan of Conservation and Development

fully supports the implementation of the Master Plan and recognizes it as a top community priority over the next decade. The Bethel Forward Master Plan is included as an appendix to this document.



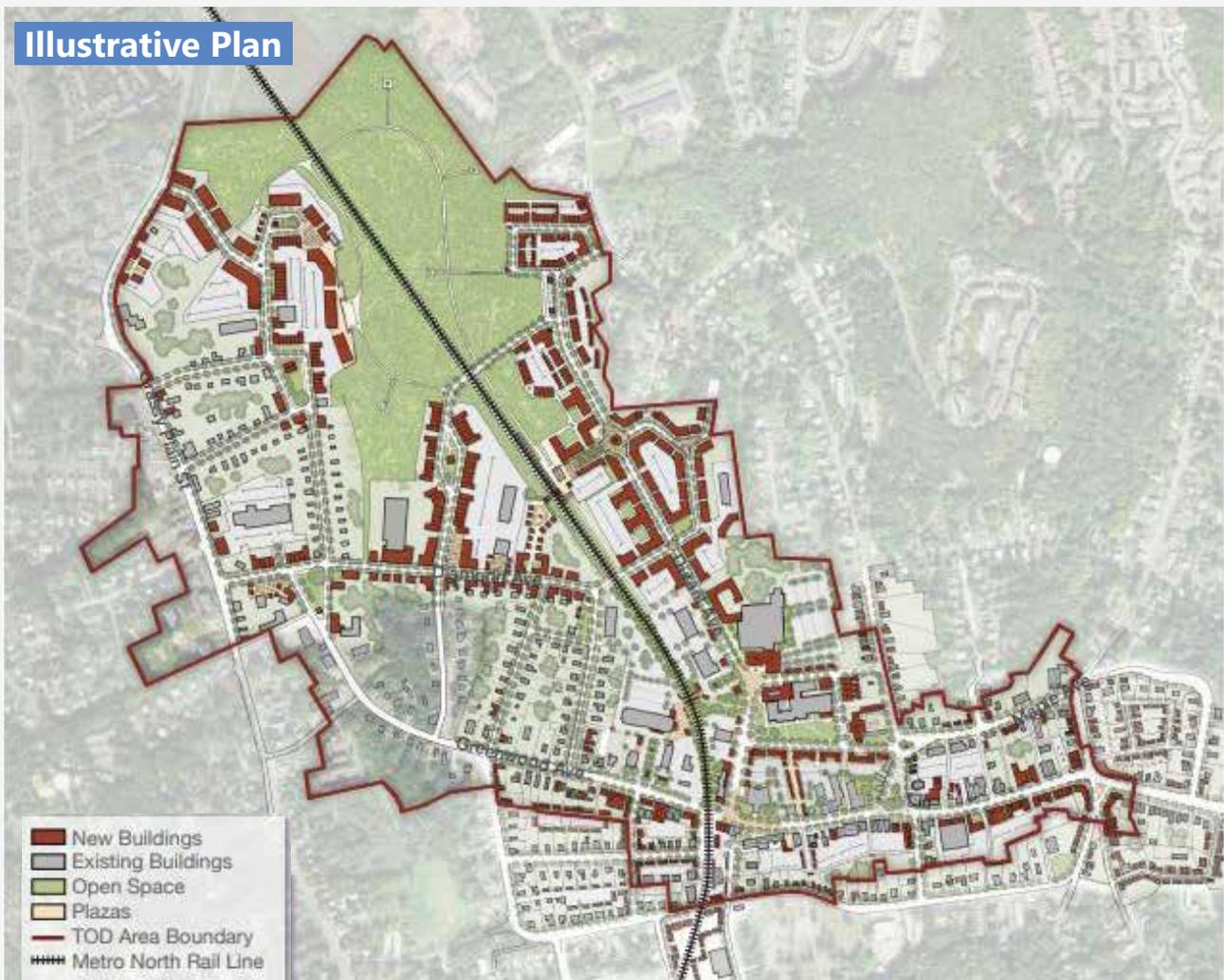
Source: DPZ Partners

Conceptual rendering of a new development along Durant Avenue near the Bethel Train Station



Source: DPZ Partners

Conceptual rendering of a new street between Greenwood Avenue and the Municipal Center



Source: DPZ Partners and Town of Bethel

<b>Re-energize the village center as a distinctive healthy, vibrant, dynamic, pedestrian-friendly community, while preserving its unique sense of place.</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
Leverage the 2016 Bethel Forward Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to implement the recommendations of the 2016 Bethel Forward Master Plan Report.</li> </ul>
Focus on restoring existing historic buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to maintain Town-owned historic properties, such as the Bethel Public Library and the Old Train Station, in a state of good repair.</li> <li>▪ Consider establishing a façade improvement program or local property tax abatement program to encourage the rehabilitation of historic properties in Downtown Bethel.</li> <li>▪ Educate owners of historic properties on other funding opportunities such as state and federal rehabilitation tax credits.</li> <li>▪ Continue to encourage the adaptive reuse of historic residences as commercial or mixed-use buildings, if located on a state road. Consider allowing property owners to develop excess acreage while retaining the historic structure.</li> <li>▪ Continue to explore zoning incentives for reinvestment in historic properties such as density/coverage bonuses and parking reductions.</li> </ul>
Foster cultural and social opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to host Town-wide events at the municipal center and other Town-owned properties in the Downtown.</li> <li>▪ Continue to expand cultural and social programming at the Bethel Public Library.</li> <li>▪ Continue to maintain high quality public green spaces throughout the Downtown, including Barnum Square, in front of the Bethel Public Library, and the Municipal Center lawn. Maintain and enhance infrastructure such as street trees, benches, lighting, plantings, and public art in these spaces.</li> <li>▪ Support the creation of new pocket parks and public green spaces throughout the Downtown as part of the TOD Plan.</li> </ul>

<b>Re-energize the village center as a distinctive healthy, vibrant, dynamic, pedestrian-friendly community, while preserving its unique sense of place.</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
<p>Invest in Infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement the recommendations from the study of the Downtown (Paul Street) sewer service area, prioritizing subareas of the Downtown that have the greatest needs.</li> <li>▪ Implement the transportation recommendations from the Bethel Forward Plan, including the construction of additional rail crossings in Downtown Bethel near Diamond Avenue and Durant Avenue.</li> <li>▪ Implement traffic calming recommendations of the Bethel Forward Plan, including initiating a “20 is Plenty” campaign to encourage slower traffic speeds within the Downtown.</li> <li>▪ Advocate for a pedestrian bridge that connects the Bethel Train Station to Diamond Avenue. Modify the zoning regulations to require public access easements for properties on Diamond Avenue that are adjacent to the rail line in order to preserve land for a future pedestrian connection.</li> <li>▪ Extend Downtown streetscaping from Rector Street to Chestnut Street.</li> <li>▪ Work with CTDOT to identify safe pedestrian crossings of Greenwood Avenue between the rail line and Grassy Plain Street. Consider bump outs and flashing beacons to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and enhance safety.</li> <li>▪ Replace and upgrade the sidewalks in Downtown Bethel to conform with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and provide new sidewalks to improve connectivity.</li> <li>▪ Pursue funding to mitigate flooding in Downtown Bethel caused by the undersized Chestnut Brook culvert system, as recommended in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.</li> </ul>

<b>Re-energize the village center as a distinctive healthy, vibrant, dynamic, pedestrian-friendly community, while preserving its unique sense of place.</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
<p>Build more housing downtown</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to require a 20% set-aside of affordable or incentive housing units for all multi-family residential projects within the TOD Overlay Area.</li> <li>▪ Assist developers who choose to provide more than the minimum set-aside of affordable housing units through incentives and bonuses available through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.</li> <li>▪ Support the redevelopment of industrial properties around the train station to promote mixed-use or multi-family housing development, including industrial properties on Diamond Avenue and Durant Avenue.</li> <li>▪ Work with industrial businesses who are displaced by redevelopment projects to find suitable alternative locations within the Town.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the use of shared parking arrangements for new residential developments within the Downtown.</li> <li>▪ Discourage the elimination of affordable units within the Downtown. In the case of redevelopment, work with property owners to ensure that all affordable units are replaced on site or elsewhere within the Downtown.</li> </ul>

## Encourage Mixed-Use Development in the Route 6 Corridor

### What we Know:

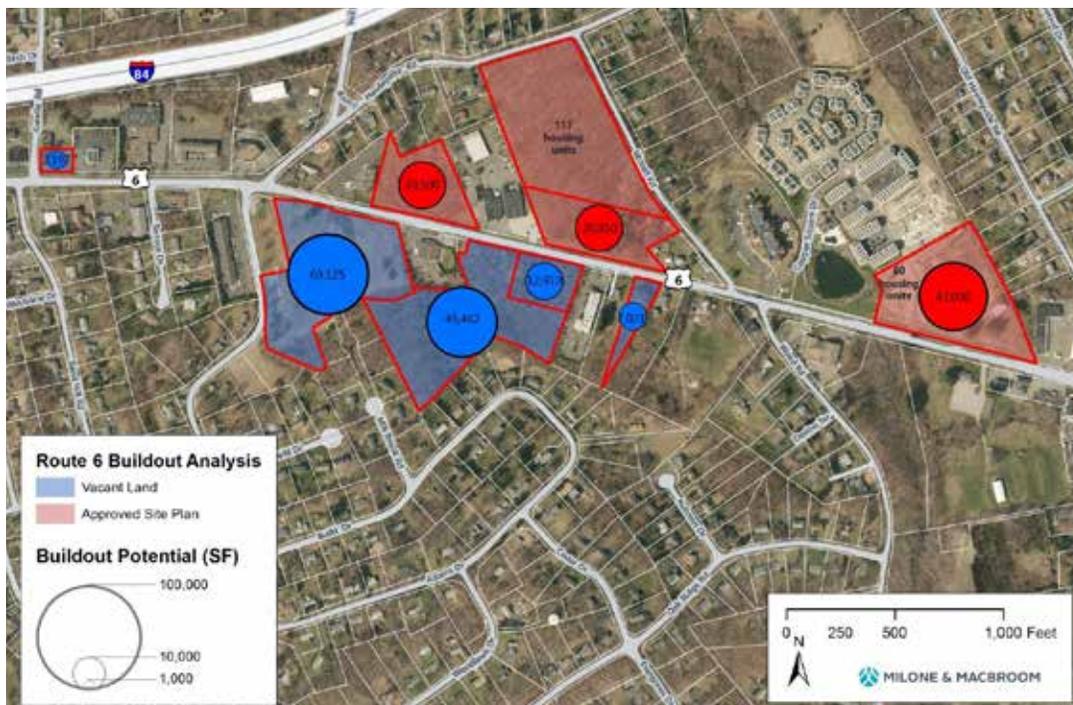
**The Town completed a Corridor Study of the Route 6 corridor in 2007, which established an overall vision for the area. This vision remains relevant today. Recommendations of the Plan include the following:**

- Develop major intersection improvements and realignments at Garella Road, Benedict Road, and Weed Road as well as access management improvements throughout the corridor.
- Retain the existing landscaped setback along both sides of Route 6 in order to maintain green space in the corridor and provide adequate areas for sidewalks.
- Encourage mixed-use development with a focus on retail, professional office, and moderate-density residential development.
- Encourage high-quality roadway, site, streetscape, and architectural design.
- Modify the zoning regulations. The Planning and Zoning Commission has implemented this recommendation by establishing the Route 6 Mixed-Use Zone.

**There have been several major developments within the Route 6 corridor since the last Plan. However, Route 6 contains additional untapped development potential.**

- Major developments in the Route 6 corridor since the last Plan include Big Y, Copper Square, and Maplewood. All three developments are among the top 10 taxpayers in the Town.
- As of 2018, there is 84,350 square feet of commercial space and 177 housing units approved in the Route 6 corridor that have yet to be built.
- The Route 6 corridor contains nearly 90% of the Town’s available vacant, developable land in commercial zones and provides an opportunity for Grand List growth.
- If remaining vacant land were developed, it is estimated that the Route 6 corridor could support an additional 129,000 square feet of commercial development. This is based on an assumed floor-area-ratio (FAR) of 0.2, which is similar to recent commercial developments in the corridor. However, higher density development is permitted under zoning, so actual commercial buildout could be greater.

### Route 6 Corridor Buildout Analysis



***Route 6 has high-quality infrastructure and locational characteristics that make it conducive to commercial and mixed-use development. However, transportation enhancements are needed.***

- Outside of the I-84 corridor, Route 6 has the highest traffic volumes in Bethel, with average daily traffic (ADTs) volumes ranging from 15,100 to 17,500 vehicles per day.
- The area is proximate to Exit 8 and Exit 9 on I-84, making it an attractive location for commercial development.
- Route 6 is fully served by sanitary sewer and water infrastructure. There is excess capacity within the Payne Road sewer service area that can support future development in the corridor.
- There is high crash frequency on Route 6 at Old Hawleyville Road, Garella Road, and Sand Hill Road.
- The sidewalk network in the Route 6 corridor is disjointed. Newer developments have adequate sidewalks as required by current zoning. However, there are gaps in the sidewalk network for older developments, which did not have sidewalk requirements at the time they were approved. In addition, there are no crosswalks on Route 6.

***The Route 6 corridor contains a different business mix than other areas of Town and complements rather than competes with Downtown Bethel.***

- Developments in the Route 6 corridor are generally larger and more auto oriented than those found in Downtown and include big box retail, hotels, chain stores, and offices.
- Workshop attendees showed general support for most commercial uses in the Route 6 corridor, with the exception of automotive-oriented uses.



*Copper Square is one of several new developments built in the Route 6 corridor since 2007.*



*Sidewalks are required for all new development on Route 6 under current zoning. However, developments that were built before the current zoning regulations were not required to have sidewalks. As a result, there are many gaps in the sidewalk network along Route 6.*

<b>Encourage Mixed-Use Development in the Route 6 Corridor</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
Support a mix of land uses and densities and improve the public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work to develop a business mix that complements, rather than competes with businesses in Downtown Bethel. Encourage larger format commercial and retail uses in the Route 6 corridor that are not found in Downtown Bethel or other commercial districts.</li> <li>▪ Continue to require high quality landscaping in new developments. Consider implementing zoning incentives such as parking reductions or density bonuses to encourage existing property owners to upgrade their properties to meet the current regulations.</li> <li>▪ Enhance gateway signage along Route 6 at the Newtown line. Consider installing welcome signage and planters to enhance the aesthetics of the gateway.</li> <li>▪ Work with the Bethel Police Department to identify preferred locations for radio transmitters in the Route 6 corridor to improve emergency telecommunications. Work with property owners to investigate whether transmitters can be installed as part of future development proposals.</li> </ul>
Encourage redevelopment of underutilized or obsolete land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish zoning incentives that encourage the assembly and consolidation of lots under two acres. Appropriate zoning incentives could include an increase in the maximum commercial floor area limits or a parking reduction.</li> <li>▪ Review the zoning regulations in the Route 6 corridor in light of changing market conditions.</li> </ul>

<b>Encourage Mixed-Use Development in the Route 6 Corridor</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
<p>Provide a safe transportation network for all users that aligns with the Plan's land use goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete intersection improvements on Route 6 at Garella Road and Sand Hill Road, Benedict Road, and Weed Road.</li> <li>▪ Consider minor widening or the addition of turning lanes on Route 6 if warranted by future development projects.</li> <li>▪ Consider establishing a sidewalk matching grant fund that matches property owner sidewalk investments up to \$5,000. These funds could be used to fill in gaps in the existing sidewalk network.</li> <li>▪ Work with CTDOT to incorporate safe pedestrian crossings at all signalized intersections on Route 6. Elements that should be considered include dedicated pedestrian signals, marked crosswalks, and installation of proper signage, especially at Old Hawleyville Road.</li> <li>▪ Require the installation of pedestrian connections between the sidewalk system and roadway curb at bus stops to facilitate safe bus boardings.</li> <li>▪ Support the installation of bus shelters at heavily used stops in the Route 6 corridor.</li> <li>▪ Explore opportunities for bus pull-offs in the Route 6 corridor.</li> <li>▪ Advocate for transportation enhancements in the Route 6 corridor in advance of the planned I-84 Danbury Project between Exit 3 and Exit 8.</li> </ul>
<p>Ensure proper transition areas and buffers between commercial uses and residential neighborhoods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to maintain current 50-foot setback requirements for commercial developments that abut residential zones.</li> <li>▪ Discourage the removal of trees within the rear yard of new developments on Route 6 in order to maintain adequate visual screening.</li> </ul>

## Position the local economy and workforce for the 21st century

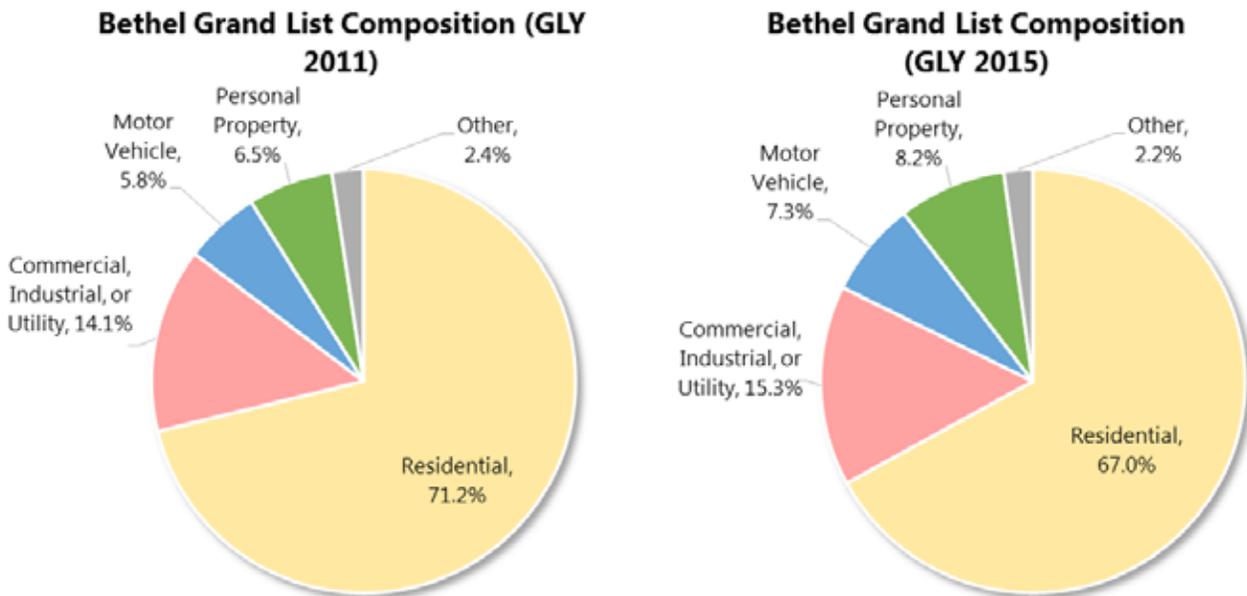
### What we Know:

#### ***Bethel has seen economic conditions improve since the Great Recession.***

- Between 2008 and 2017, the total number of jobs in Bethel increased by 5.2% from 6,888 to 7,247. The health care and transportation & warehousing sectors saw the most growth during this time.
- There has been significant turnover among the Town’s top employers since 2008. Several corporate or manufacturing companies have either left Bethel since 2008 (Cannondale Corporation and Beaver Brook Circuits) or downsized local operations (Eaton and Duracell). However, employment growth among major health care and retail employers has help offset job losses.
- Between Grand List Year (GLY) 2011 and GLY 2015, the commercial, industrial, and utility portion of the Grand List grew from 14.1% to 15.3%. Growth in this portion of the Grand List helps alleviate some of the residential property tax burden.
- As of 2017, four of the town’s top 10 taxpayers are new developments that have been built since 2007. These new developments are in the health care, residential, or retail sectors.

#### ***Clarke Business Park provides opportunities for additional economic growth.***

- Clarke Business Park is a publicly managed business park that contains dozens of light industrial and business tenants.
- The Town is currently expanding Clarke Business Park. The expansion includes roadway extensions, utility extensions, and the creation of four new building lots. Conceptual site plans show that these four lots can support an additional 61,000 square feet of industrial space.
- About two-thirds of Community Survey respondents rated Clarke Business Park as a high or medium economic development priority.



*Bethel has actively pursued Grand List growth over the last decade, particularly in the Route 6 corridor and Downtown Bethel. In recent years, a growing portion of the Grand List is made up of non-residential land uses. As a result, residential property owners pay a smaller share of the town’s tax burden than they have in the past.*

***Bethel's commercial districts are served by high-quality infrastructure.***

- The Town maintains sewer contracts with the City of Danbury Water Pollution Control Facility. There are three sewer service areas within the Town: Paul Street (Downtown), Payne Road (Stony Hill), and Berkshire (Corporate Park). As of 2018, there are 4,403 customers in Bethel served by sewer.
- Berkshire Corporate Park, Clarke Business Park, Downtown Bethel, and the Route 6 corridor are all served by sanitary sewer and water infrastructure. Since 2008, sewer service has expanded in the Stony Hill and Chimney Heights neighborhoods.
- There is ample sewer capacity in the Paul Street and Payne Road sewer service areas to support additional development in the Downtown and Route 6 corridor. However, the current Berkshire sewer service area has no excess capacity.
- Bethel is served by two water utilities. Aquarion Water Company provides service to the Chimney Heights, Stony Hill, and Berkshire Corporate Park areas. The Bethel Water Department provides service to Downtown Bethel, Grassy Plain Street, and the Clark Business Park.
- The Bethel Water Department has completed major upgrades to its facilities over the last decade, including the replacement of the Maple Avenue wells, two new pump stations, a new water storage tank next to Eureka Reservoir, and a water extension to Long Meadow Lane.
- Natural Gas Service is provided by Eversource Energy, formerly Yankee Gas Services Co.
- Bethel's primary telecommunications providers include Comcast and Frontier Communications with at least 96% coverage throughout town.

***Bethel is home to a high-quality and well-educated labor force.***

- According to the 2017 American Community Survey, 43.6% of Bethel residents age 25 years old and over have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- After peaking at 8.1% in 2010, Bethel's unemployment rate has declined to 3.9% in 2017. Historically, Bethel's unemployment rate has remained lower than the Fairfield County and state unemployment rates.



*The privately run Berkshire Corporate Park (left) and publicly run Clarke Business Park (right) are home to dozens of corporate and manufacturing tenants. The Town is working to expand Clarke Business Park to include four new building lots.*

Position the local economy and workforce for the 21st century	
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies
Provide an attractive and supportive business environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to update and maintain a list of vacant land or available commercial buildings. Actively market the sites to prospective businesses in partnership with regional and statewide organizations such as CERC.</li> <li>▪ Complete the expansion of Clark Business Park and recruit tenants for the new properties.</li> <li>▪ Review zoning regulations and parking requirements for the Industrial Park zone and consider increasing density allowances</li> <li>▪ Continue to support the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and Economic Development Department in their outreach efforts to existing and prospective businesses.</li> <li>▪ Continue to assist businesses in navigating the municipal permitting process.</li> <li>▪ Consider developing an e-permit system to allow prospective businesses to fill out permits online to create a more streamlined approval process.</li> <li>▪ Consider hiring a full-time Economic Development Director.</li> </ul>
Invest in infrastructure to support the 21 <sup>st</sup> century economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore opportunities to extend sewer service to businesses on Sympaug Park Road south of the rail line, including the Bethel Public Works facility.</li> <li>▪ Continue to monitor the capacity of the Berkshire Sewer Service Area and evaluate opportunities to expand sewer capacity in this area, should additional development be desired. This could be done by extending service from the Payne Road service area, increasing the capacity of the Berkshire service area, or reducing daily flows from existing properties within the service area as to open additional capacity for new development.</li> <li>▪ Work with telecommunications providers to expand and improve cellular coverage within the Town, especially in the Route 6 corridor and in rural residential areas in order to support home-based businesses or residents working from home.</li> <li>▪ Support extensions of natural gas service throughout the Town.</li> </ul>

Position the local economy and workforce for the 21st century	
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies
Provide a high-quality and well-educated workforce that meets the needs of area businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Through the EDC and Economic Development Department, work with area businesses to identify their workforce or training needs.</li> <li>▪ Partner with Bethel Public Schools, technical high schools, community colleges, universities, and regional workforce investment boards to address workforce and training gaps for area businesses.</li> </ul>



## 5 Maintain Bethel's Quality of Life

### Provide housing opportunities for Bethel's changing demographics

*This section of the Plan is intended to meet the statutory requirements of Public Act No. 17-170, which requires that municipalities prepare or amend and adopt an Affordable Housing Plan for the municipality every five years.*

#### **What We Know:**

***Bethel has a diverse housing stock and lower cost of living that most of its neighboring towns.***

- Bethel's real estate market remains more affordable than most neighboring towns and Fairfield County, with a median home sale price of \$305,000 in 2017. This is lower than all surrounding towns except Danbury. Bethel's median sale price is \$145,000 lower than the median sale price for Fairfield County as a whole.
- Bethel offers a diverse housing stock. 69.3% of units are detached single-family homes, 8.5% are attached single-family homes, and 22.1% are multifamily units.
- 22.2% of housing units in Bethel are rented while 77.8% are owned. Bethel has a larger share of rental housing than all surrounding towns except for Danbury.
- Home sales in Bethel are beginning to recover, reaching 280 sales in 2017. This is the highest number of sales experienced since 2005.
- While the number of sales has recovered, median sale prices for single-family homes are still well below their peak. In 2008, the median home sale price in Bethel was \$357,500. As of 2017, the median home sale price was \$305,000, or just 85.3% of their median price 10 years prior.

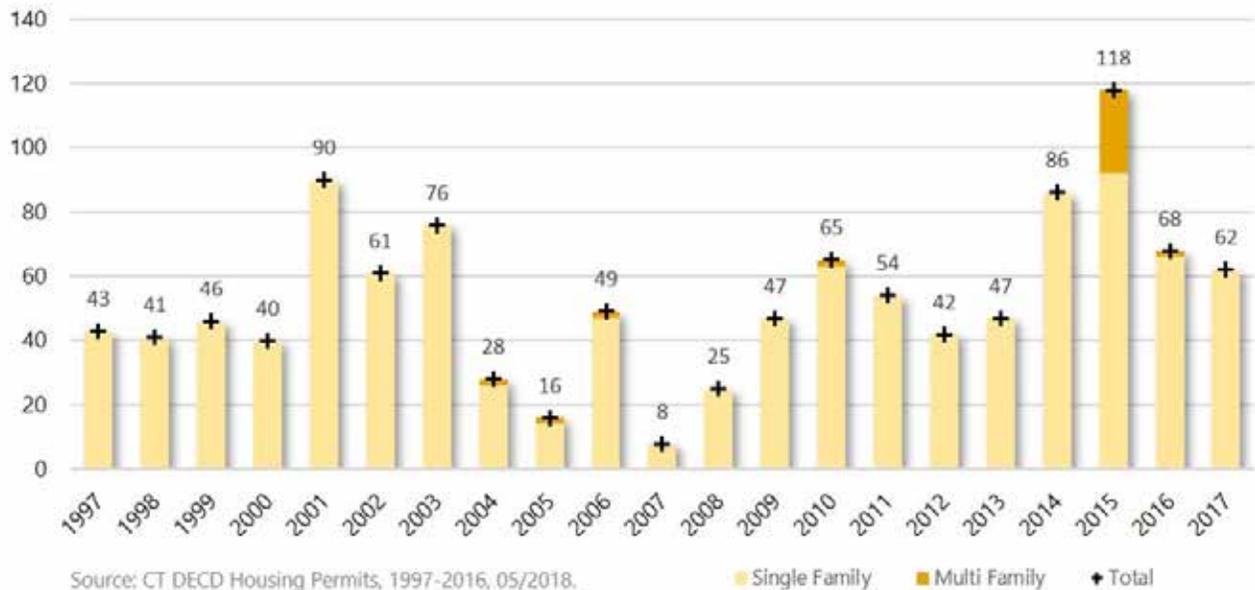
**Bethel has seen significant housing growth over the last 10 years.**

- Bethel has added 450 housing units since 2010, growing 6.3% during that time. New units include a mix of condominium developments, multifamily apartments, and single-family subdivisions.
- Since 2010, most new housing development has occurred within or on the periphery of Downtown Bethel or in the Route 6 corridor.
- Bethel has the 6th highest housing growth rate in the state since 2010, more than double the Fairfield County rate and triple the state rate.

**Demographic shifts within the community may lead to new demands for housing.**

- Bethel’s population is aging. Between 2000 and 2016, the median age increased from 37.1 years to 42.7 years old.
- As of 2016, 13.6% of Bethel’s population is age 65 years old or older. Bethel’s senior population is concentrated in the largely single-family neighborhoods outside of the village center, indicating that many are choosing to age in place. Senior households are more likely to live in single-family homes than their nonsenior counterparts.
- Household size has decreased from 2.74 to 2.65 between 2000 and 2010, which may lead to greater demand for smaller housing units.
- Approximately 30% of Community Survey respondents see themselves downsizing into a smaller home over the next 10 years.
- School enrollments have begun to increase over the last few years, signifying an influx of young families with children. Thus, there will continue to be demand for larger single-family homes for families over the next decade.

**Housing Permit Activity in Bethel, by Number of Units: 1997 to 2017**



**Bethel’s housing stock remains affordable relative to its peers. However, housing costs remain a challenge for many residents, especially seniors and renters.**

- The household earning Bethel’s median household income of \$94,292 can afford to purchase a home costing \$316,000. By comparison, the median home value in 2016 is \$335,800.
- About one-third of Bethel households are considered cost burdened, meaning they spend greater than 30% of their household income on housing. Senior households and renters are more likely to be cost burdened compared to their counterparts.
- As defined by state statutes, Bethel has 364 affordable housing units, comprising just under 5% of total housing units. The percentage of affordable housing units decreased slightly in recent years as some affordable units at the Bishop Curtis Homes expired after the property was sold.
- Bethel has provisions in its zoning to encourage affordable housing. The Town requires a set aside of 10% affordable housing in the Planned Residential Development (PRD), allows for an affordable housing density bonus in the Designed Conservation District (DCD) zone, and requires a 20% set aside of affordable units in the TOD Zone for projects with five or more units.
- In 2008, Bethel approved an ordinance establishing an Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) where developers must pay a fee determined by the housing administrator for every unit of affordable housing that they do not build.

**Affordability of Housing, by Tenure: 2016**



**What is “Affordable Housing?”**

According to State Statutes, “affordable housing units” are defined as governmentally assisted units (Section 8 Housing Vouchers, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) or Farmer’s Home Administration (FmHA) mortgages), or set-aside developments, where units are deed restricted for households making less 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI), provided that households spend no more than 30% of their income on housing. A family of four making 80% of the AMI for Bethel would have a household income of \$75,500 per year. Municipalities that have less than 10% of housing units satisfy the statutory definition of “affordable housing units” are subject to the State Affordable Housing Appeals procedure, more commonly referred to as “8-30g.” As of 2017, Bethel has 364 units that meet the state definition of affordable housing, comprising about 5% of the Town’s total housing stock. It should be noted that Bethel contains numerous housing units that are affordable to lower income households but do not meet the State’s affordable housing definition.

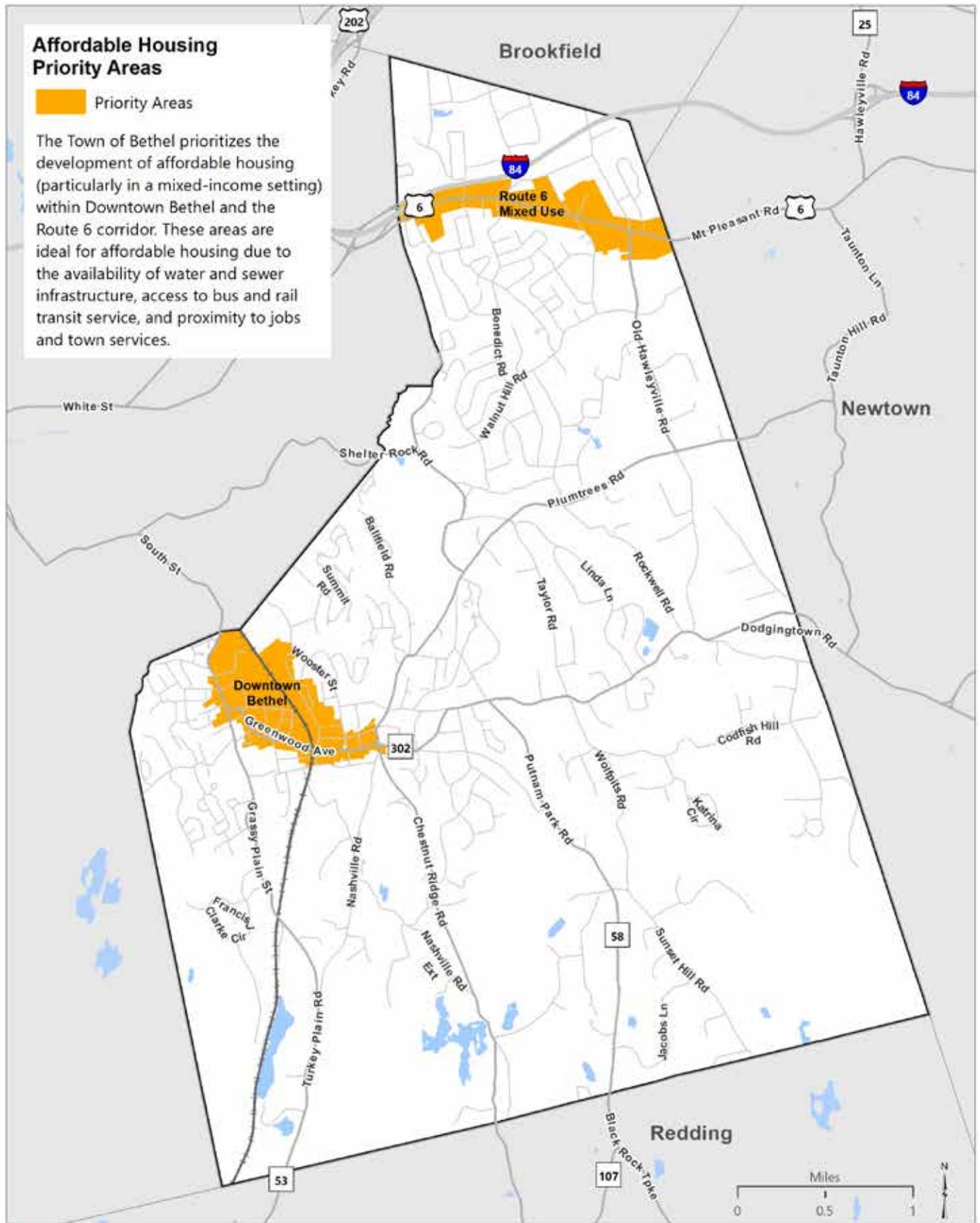
**Affordable Housing Units in Bethel, by Type: 2017**



Source: Connecticut Department of Housing – Affordable Housing Appeals List: 2017  
CHFA – Connecticut Housing Finance Authority  
USDA United States Department of Agriculture

<b>Provide housing opportunities for Bethel’s changing demographics</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
<p>Promote universal design techniques (ensuring the built environment is accessible to anyone regardless of age, disability, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Add a definition of universal design in the Town’s zoning regulations.</li> <li>▪ Incorporate universal design techniques into 50% of future affordable housing units.</li> <li>▪ Provide financial assistance via the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to developers who meet the 50% universal design threshold.</li> </ul>
<p>Provide quality affordable housing for Bethel’s workforce and senior population</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain existing Bethel Housing Authority (BHA) units in a state of good repair. Maintain or increase the number of affordable units in BHA properties if they are redeveloped.</li> <li>▪ Target affordable senior and workforce housing units within the TOD Overlay Zone and Route 6 corridor near business and services (as shown on the Affordable Housing Priority Areas Map).</li> <li>▪ Continue to require an affordable housing set aside in the TOD zone, and consider expanding the requirement to other mixed-use areas, such as Route 6 and Grassy Plain Street.</li> <li>▪ Promote energy efficiency in new housing as a means of reducing overall housing utility costs.</li> <li>▪ Explore tools and incentives to retain existing affordable units with expiring affordability covenants.</li> <li>▪ Lower the minimum parking requirements for efficiency and one-bedroom multi-family units to 1 space per dwelling unit plus 0.25 visitor spaces per unit.</li> <li>▪ Lower the minimum parking requirements for multi-family developments with two or more units to 2 spaces per dwelling unit plus 0.25 visitor spaces per unit.</li> </ul>
<p>Provide housing opportunities for all ages, incomes, and household types</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage multi-family housing in areas with sufficient water, sewer and access to transit and services.</li> <li>▪ Support the development of smaller-scale multi-family projects with ten or fewer units.</li> <li>▪ Continue to support the development of accessory dwelling units.</li> <li>▪ Provide support services to seniors who choose to age in place, particularly those who live in single-family homes.</li> <li>▪ Continue to educate eligible seniors on the local property tax relief program.</li> </ul>

<b>Provide housing opportunities for Bethel’s changing demographics</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
Support a range of housing densities with higher-density housing concentrated in the village center and lower densities in rural neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide a diverse mix of housing types in the Town including large lot single-family developments, small-lot single-family developments, duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and apartments.</li> <li>▪ Maintain large lot zoning (R-80) in southern and eastern Bethel, particularly areas within a public water supply watershed or aquifer protection area.</li> </ul>



## Build a compatible and connected transportation network for all users.

### ***The Town is making investments in the local roadway network.***

- Bethel has 101 miles of roadways. About 88 miles of roadway are maintained by the Town Highway Department.
- Respondents from the Community Survey cited the condition of roadways as a top concern.
- The Department of Public Works (DPW) has made significant upgrades to the local road network through their Full-Depth Reconstruction Program. Using full-depth reconstruction, DPW has rebuilt 50% of local roadways, making lasting investments rather than maximizing coverage by repaving. Recent efforts have been focused on the roadways in the Stony Hill and Chimney Heights neighborhoods and have coincided with streets that have undergone sewer extensions.
- DPW recently completed a realignment of Walnut Hill Road with Hoyt Road to reduce the accident rate at the intersection.
- DPW recently completed the widening of Plumtrees Road Bridge and realignment of the intersection with Whittlesey Drive and Walnut Hill Road near Educational Park.

### ***State roadways provide connections between Bethel and the surrounding communities.***

- The Connecticut Department of Transportation is planning for long-term improvements on I-84 between Exit 3 and Exit 8 to reduce congestion, improve traffic flow, and enhance mobility.
- The heaviest ADT volumes are along I-84 and Route 6 as well as on other state roads such as Routes 302, 53, and 58.
- The bridge on Route 53 has low clearance, and as a result, trucks divert through residential streets such as Nashville Road and Taylor Avenue, causing quality of life issues for residents.



*The low-clearance rail bridge on Route 53 just south of Clarke Business Park is too low to accommodate tractor trailer trucks. As a result, these trucks detour on local streets and utilize one of the at-grade crossings in Downtown Bethel.*

***Bethel's pedestrian and bicycle network is concentrated in the village center.***

- Bethel's sidewalk network is most developed in the Downtown and connects destinations such as the Educational Park, Bethel Public Library, Municipal Center, and train station.
- Bethel's organic, nongridded street pattern combined with its rugged terrain and narrow, winding roads make it difficult to build sidewalks in certain areas of the Downtown.
- Since 2015, there have been 18 crashes in Bethel involving pedestrians, including one fatality and four serious injuries. Pedestrian crashes most frequently occur on Route 302/Greenwood Avenue (eight crashes), Route 53 (two crashes), and Route 58 (two crashes).
- While there is a lack of dedicated bike lanes in the Downtown, there are ample bike parking locations at destinations such as the Municipal Center, train station, and Bethel Public Library.
- Route 53 is a state-designated bicycle route. However, most sections of Route 53 lack wide enough shoulders to allow vehicles to safely pass bicyclists.
- Since 2015, there have been seven crashes involving bicyclists, including one that resulted in serious injury. Three of the crashes occurred on Route 302/Greenwood Avenue.



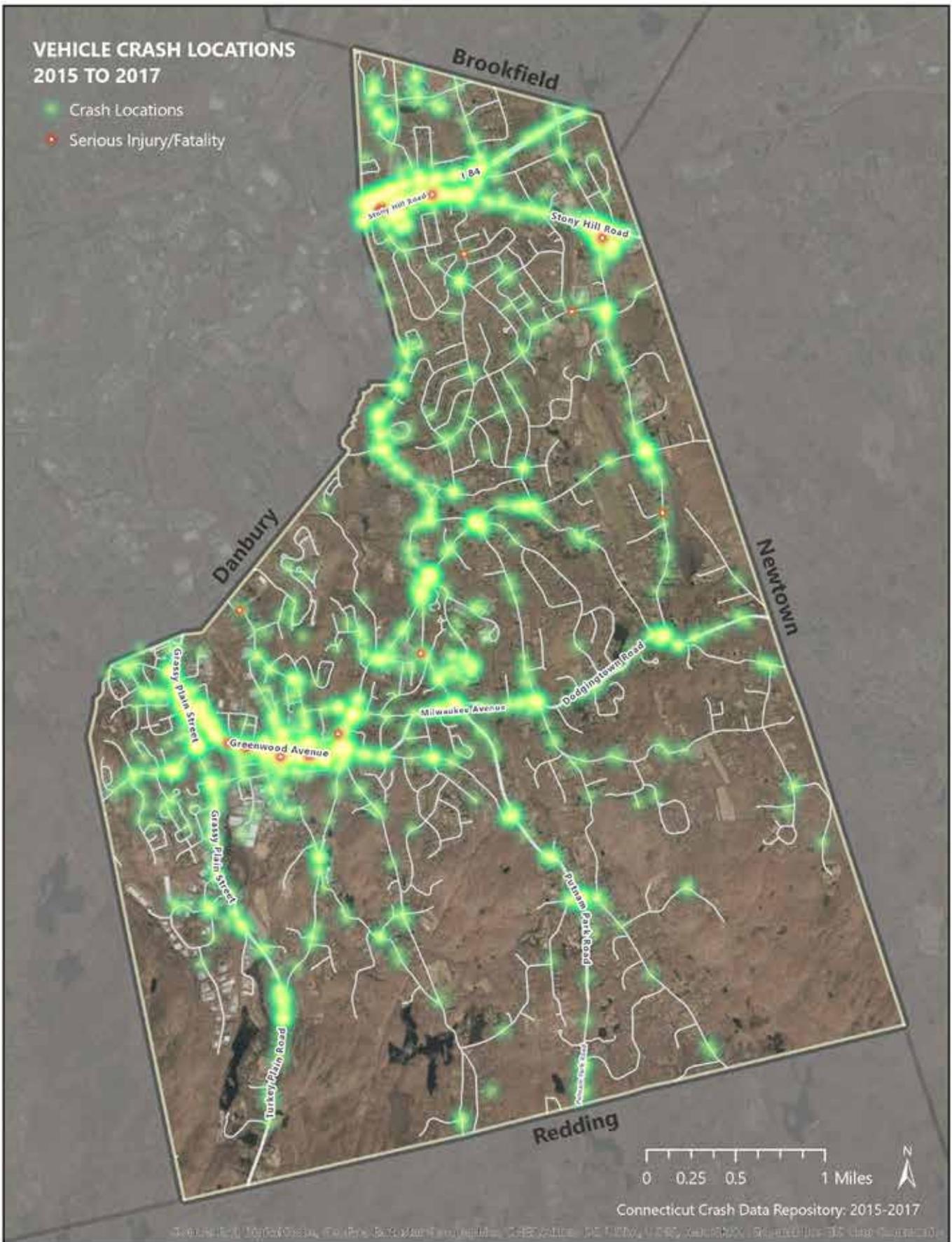
*Bike parking at the Bethel Train Station*



*Greenwood Avenue has high quality pedestrian infrastructure. However, narrow right-of-way, heavy traffic volumes, and the presence of on-street parking make it a challenging road for cycling.*



*Steep terrain within certain areas of the Downtown, such as Hickock Avenue (above) limit the feasibility of sidewalks*



<b>Build a compatible and connected transportation network for all users.</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
Continue to enhance the local roadway network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue full-depth reconstruction program on local roadways to ensure high quality upgrades.</li> <li>▪ Complete drainage improvements on Plumtrees Road.</li> <li>▪ Implement GIS-based asset management system to help track and prioritize local roadway improvements.</li> <li>▪ Work with CTDOT to explore ways to reduce truck traffic on local roadways such as Nashville Road, Taylor Avenue, Hoyts Hill Road, Payne Road, Shelter Rock Road, Wolfpits Road, and Walnut Hill Road.</li> <li>▪ Support increasing the vertical clearance of the Route 53 railroad bridge near Sympaug Park Road so that it can accommodate trucks.</li> </ul>
Enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and improve sidewalk infrastructure in Bethel, particularly in the Downtown, near Educational Park, on Route 6, and on Grassy Plain Street.</li> <li>▪ Develop a Bicycle Master Plan for Bethel that identifies preferred bicycle routes throughout the Town.</li> <li>▪ Consider utilizing South Street as an alternative bicycle route to Greenwood Avenue through the Downtown.</li> <li>▪ Expand bicycle parking at Town facilities such as public schools, parks and open spaces, and Town offices.</li> <li>▪ Improve sidewalk connections between Educational Park and surrounding residential streets such as Maple Avenue Extension.</li> <li>▪ Encourage CTDOT to add bike route signage to state-designated bicycle routes on Route 53 and 58 and provide five-foot shoulders on these routes to properly separate bicycle and vehicular traffic.</li> </ul>
Improve safety for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement the recommendations from the Curb Cut Management Plan for Routes 6, 53, 58, and 302.</li> <li>▪ Continue to monitor safety deficiencies on local roadways, especially unsignalized intersections where local roads meet state roads (such as the intersection of Grand Street and Greenwood Avenue) and pursue funding for safety improvement projects through LOTCIP.</li> <li>▪ Continue to implement the full suite of traffic calming measures including education, engineering, and enforcement. Initiate a “20 is Plenty” campaign to encourage slower traffic speeds within the Downtown and near the Educational Park.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that future bridge and culvert replacement projects on state roadways provide a wide enough crossing to safely accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.</li> </ul>

## Maintain high-quality public facilities and services

***Bethel has made significant investments in its public facilities since the last Plan. Recent and ongoing projects include the following:***

- Renovations to Bethel Public Library were completed in 2011.
- A new police station adjacent to the Educational Park was completed in 2018.
- Johnson and Rockwell Schools are being renovated as new and expanded.

***The Town is planning for future recreation investments.***

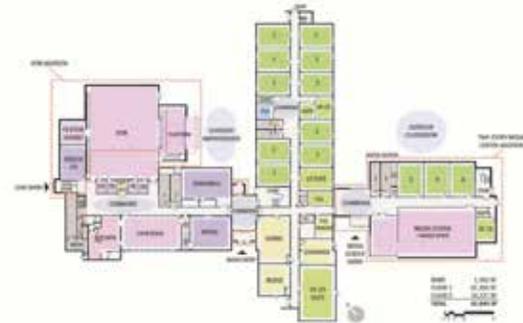
- In 2019, Bethel completed a Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- According to the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, the Town currently has seven large rectangular fields, six small rectangular fields, three large baseball diamonds, and 10 small baseball diamonds across all parks and schools. All fields are natural grass playing surfaces, and five have lights.
- The Parks & Recreation Master Plan determined that the Town has a shortage of three large rectangular fields, one small baseball diamond, and one large baseball diamond based on current field capacity and demand.
- A swimming area was identified as a top recreation priority in the Community Survey.
- A new 48,000-square-foot indoor track and field center is being built adjacent to Bethel High School. The facility is being paid for through private donations.



*Bethel Public Library was renovated in 2011*



*The new Bethel Police Station was completed in 2018*



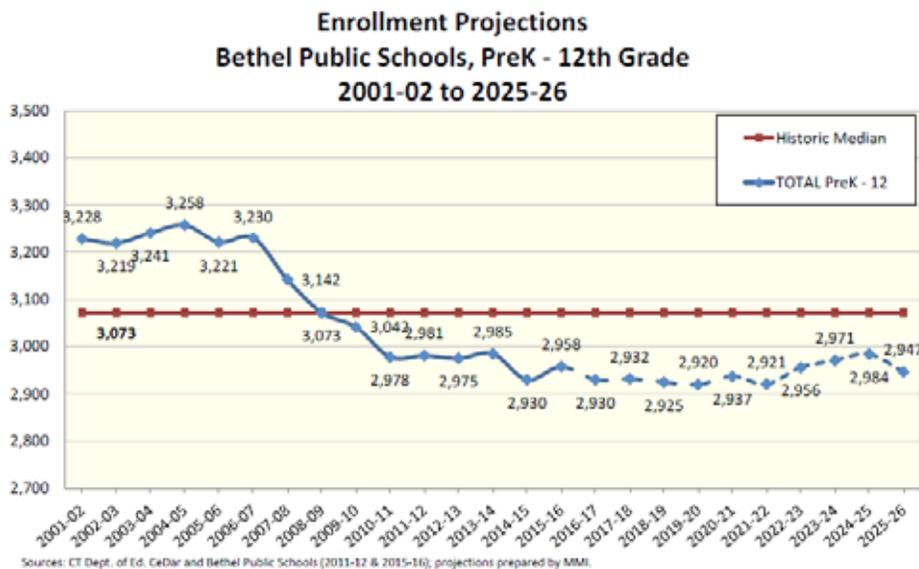
*The Board of Education is currently making renovation to Johnson School and Rockwell School*

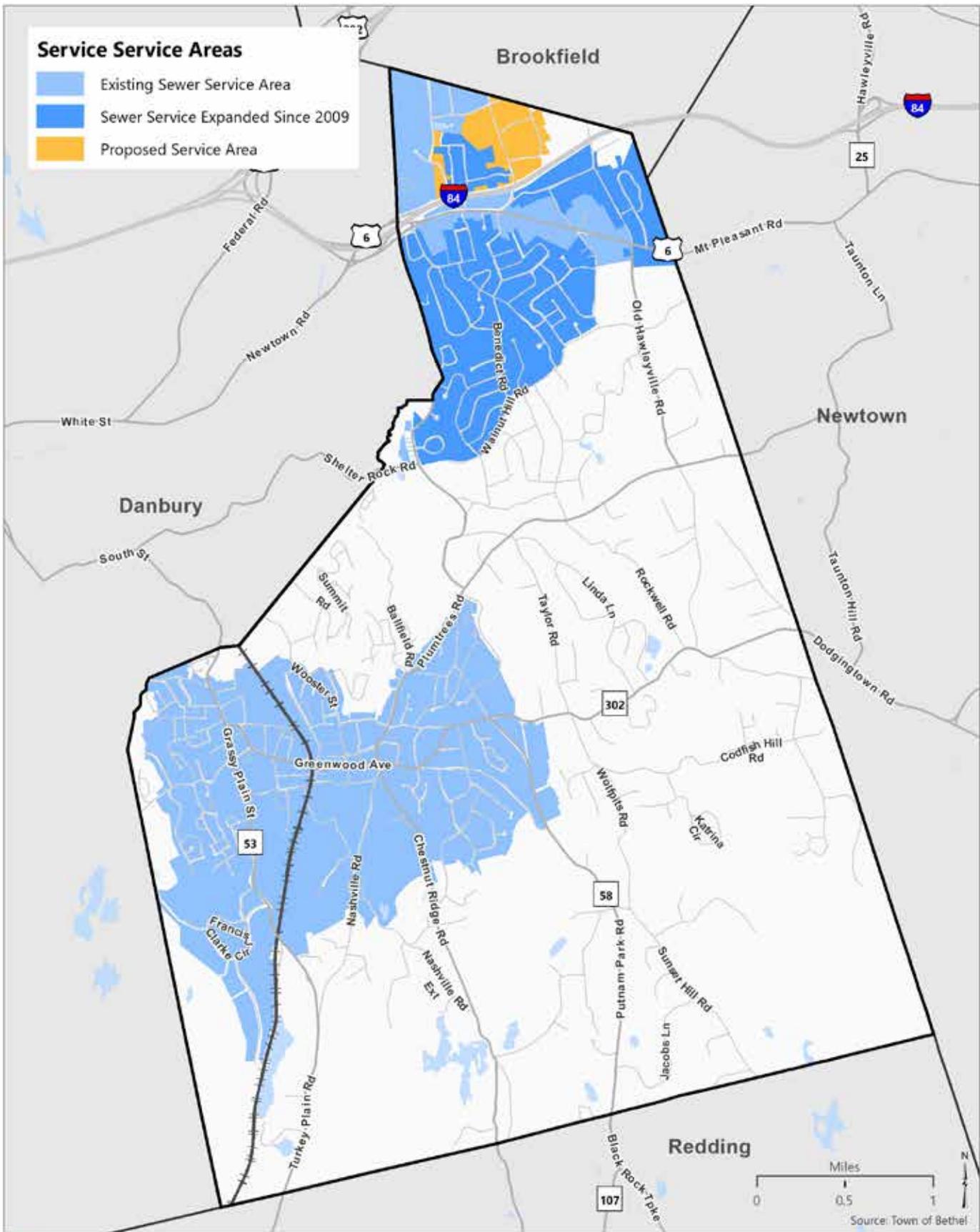
**Bethel maintains high-quality water and sewer infrastructure.**

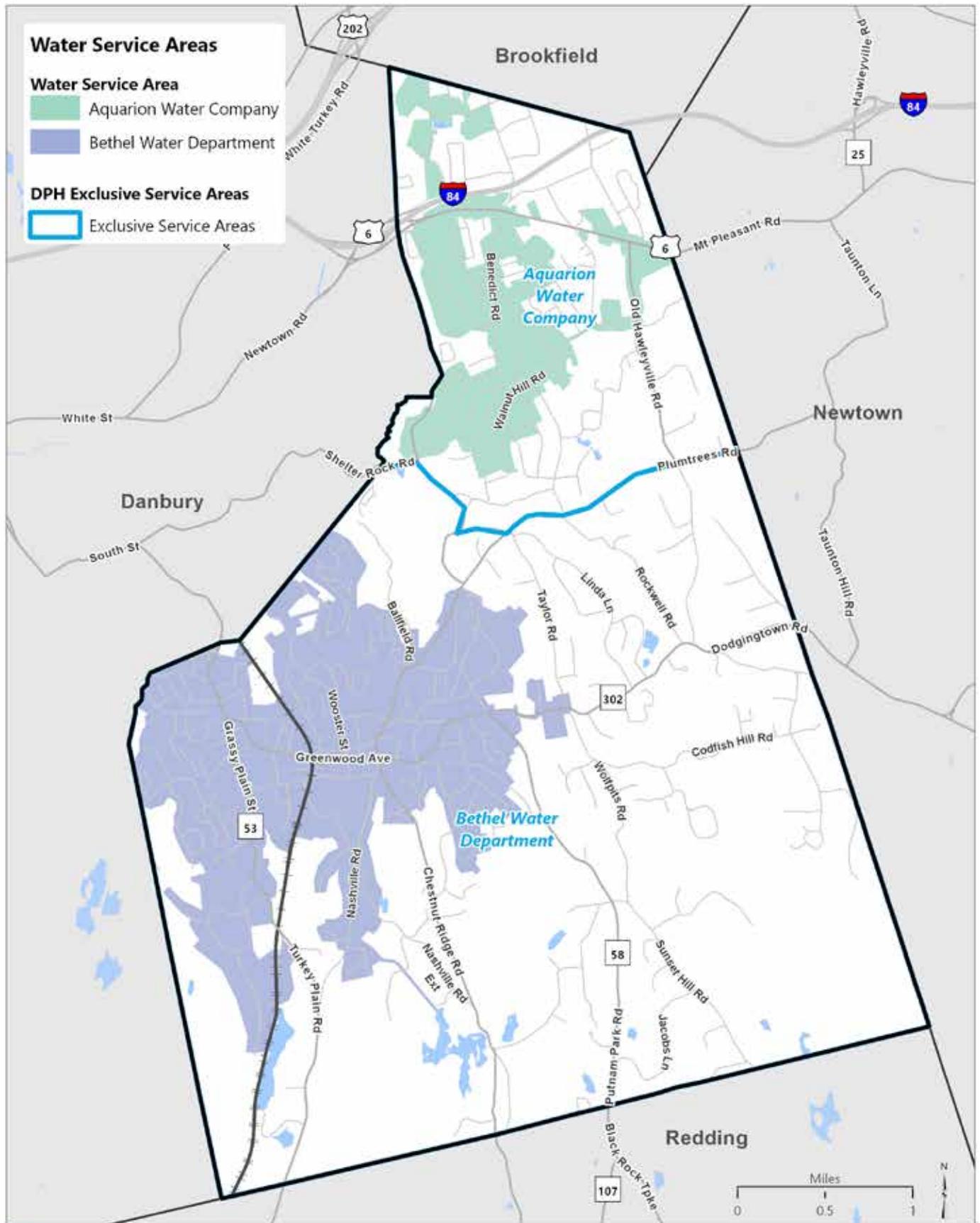
- Sewer disposal is contracted with the City of Danbury while pipe infrastructure is maintained by the Town. The Town maintains 58 miles of sewer lines and 10 pump stations.
- Sewer service has been expanded into the Chimney Heights and Stony Hill neighborhoods since the last Plan.
- Bethel is split into two water service areas and providers. Properties located north of Plumtrees Road are serviced by Aquarion Water Company. Aquarion’s water service area includes most of the Chimney Heights and Stony Hill neighborhood, the Route 6 corridor, and the Berkshire Corporate Park.
- Properties located south of Plumtrees Road are serviced by the Bethel Water Department. Bethel Water Department currently serves Downtown Bethel, Educational Park, and the Clarke Business Park.
- The Bethel Water Department has undertaken major upgrades to its facilities over the last decade, including construction of a new storage tank, replacement of the Maple Avenue wells, and pump station repairs.

**Demographic shifts and growing population may lead to greater demand for certain Town services.**

- Since 2010, Bethel’s population has been the fastest growing town amongst its peers and one of the fastest growing towns in the state. This can be attributed to net in-migration or more residents moving into Bethel than moving out.
- Bethel also has an aging population, with the median age increasing from 37.1 in 2000 to 42.7 in 2016. The aging of the “Baby Boomer” generation may lead to increases for services at the senior center, senior transportation, and other services that allow seniors to “age in place.”
- Student enrollment in Bethel Public Schools is beginning to rebound at the elementary level and is anticipated to remain stable over the next 10 years.







<b>Maintain high quality public facilities and services</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
<p>Continue to provide high-quality educational facilities and programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete renovations to Johnson and Rockwell Elementary Schools</li> <li>▪ Continue to provide high quality educational programming in the public-school system.</li> <li>▪ Seek ways to improve use of school buildings for community use and recreational programs.</li> <li>▪ Complete the Track and Field Training Center.</li> <li>▪ Continue to maintain other school facilities in state of good repair.</li> </ul>
<p>Provide residents with high quality and diverse recreational opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement the recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The highest priority recommendations are:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New synthetic field at DeSantis Field</li> <li>○ New multi-use natural grass field on the Educational Park campus</li> <li>○ Parloa Park improvements</li> <li>○ Parking improvements at all of the parks, with Meckauer Park, Rourke field and Freebairn fields considered the most important</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Explore opportunities to create pocket parks or tot-lots on Town-owned open space in the Chimney Heights neighborhood. Potential sites include the Chimney Drive Open Space or the Plumtrees School.</li> <li>▪ Establish a committee to evaluate potential locations of and costs for a community/recreation center. The study should also identify which recreational uses should be incorporated into a future community/recreation center facility.</li> <li>▪ Continue to provide high quality recreational programming through the Parks &amp; Recreation Department. Explore opportunities to expand adult recreation offerings for residents age 25 to 40.</li> </ul>

<b>Maintain high quality public facilities and services</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
<p>Align future facility investments with the Town's demographic needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to monitor the adequacy of space at the Senior Center as the senior population grows. Potential areas for expansion include the lower level of the municipal center or expansion into the current Teen Center space.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the Teen Center is relocated to an appropriate location in another facility, if it is displaced by the Senior Center expansion in the future.</li> <li>▪ Implement a GIS based asset management system shared across multiple Town departments.</li> <li>▪ Complete upgrades to the Municipal Center to make it fully compliant with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).</li> <li>▪ Conduct a site feasibility assessment of the old police station site to determine the most appropriate future uses of the property. Future uses should be appropriate for the site's location within the 100-year flood zone.</li> <li>▪ Ensure Town services continue to meet the demands of a growing population through regular evaluation of service levels and expansion as necessary.</li> </ul>
<p>Make investments in public utilities that align with the Plan's land use goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conduct a site feasibility assessment of the former Paul Street Sewage Treatment Plant to determine if any DPW functions could be relocated there. The assessment should also identify suitable new locations for any functions that are displaced from the current facility, such as debris storage.</li> <li>▪ Identify and develop a dedicated wash facility for the Department of Public Works. Ideally, this facility would be in an area served by both water and sanitary sewer infrastructure.</li> <li>▪ Complete upgrades to the Paul Street Pump Station.</li> <li>▪ Support upgrades to the Danbury Water Pollution Control Facility.</li> <li>▪ Continue to monitor the adequacy of sewer contracts with the City of Danbury and modify as necessary. Ensure that the contracts continue to include excess sewer capacity to support future development in the Downtown and in the Route 6 corridor.</li> <li>▪ Consider adopting a Town-wide water main extension policy that requires developers to pay for extensions.</li> </ul>

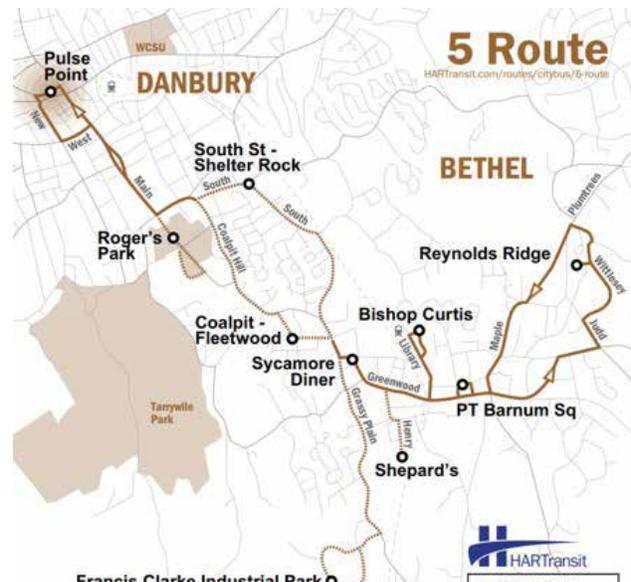
## Participate in cooperative efforts to promote the health and wellbeing of the Region

**Bethel is a part of the larger Fairfield County and New York Metropolitan Area economies and residents rely on the regional transportation network to access employment opportunities in the larger region.**

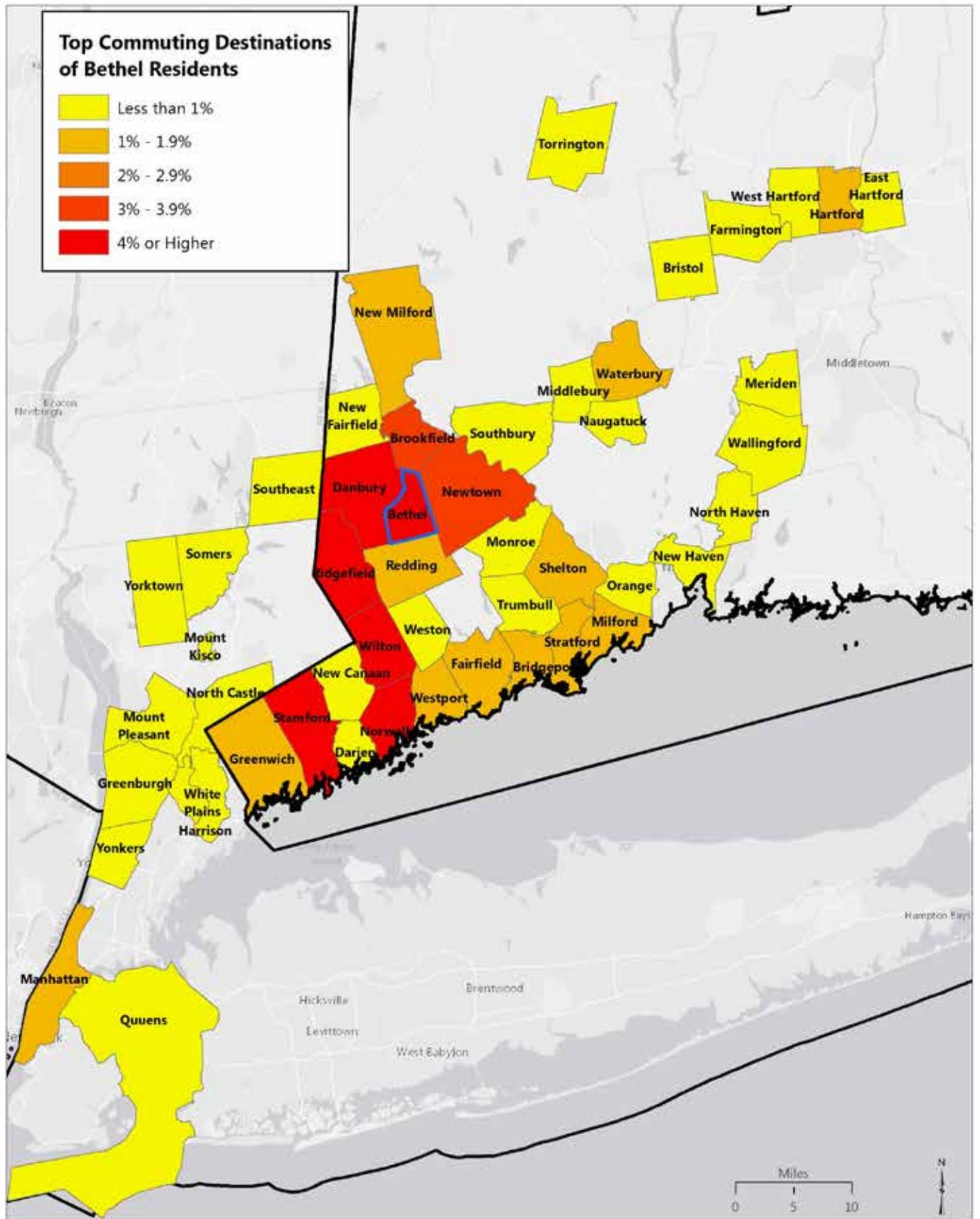
- Bethel residents predominantly commute to jobs outside of Town. As of 2015, just 14% of Bethel residents work in Bethel. Residents most frequently commute to jobs in Danbury (23%), Stamford (5%), Norwalk (5%), Ridgefield (4%), and Wilton (4%).
- The number of Bethel residents commuting to New York City is increasing. As of 2015, about 2.4% of Bethel residents commute to jobs in New York City, up from 1.7% in 2005.
- Bethel is served by Metro-North's Danbury Branch Line. There is limited rail service on the Danbury Branch, with only seven southbound and eight northbound trains per day.
- The state is making investments in the Danbury Branch Line that are necessary in order to support more frequent service. A signal system, centralized traffic control, and a passing siding were installed in 2014. There are also ongoing improvements to install positive train control and improve the Danbury Dock Yard in Norwalk.
- The Bethel Train Station parking area was expanded in 2018 from 188 spaces to 320 spaces. New cameras and electronic payment kiosks were also installed during the expansion. The Town owns and operates the parking lot and currently issues 250 permits annually.
- HART operates two bus routes in Bethel: one in Downtown Danbury and one in the Route 6 corridor. HART services meet at the "Pulse Point" in Downtown Danbury, which allows riders to transfer to other routes that serve Greater Danbury. HART also provides paratransit service for Bethel residents with disabilities.



*The Bethel Train Station. The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) recently installed a new passing siding in Bethel just south of Taylor Avenue.*

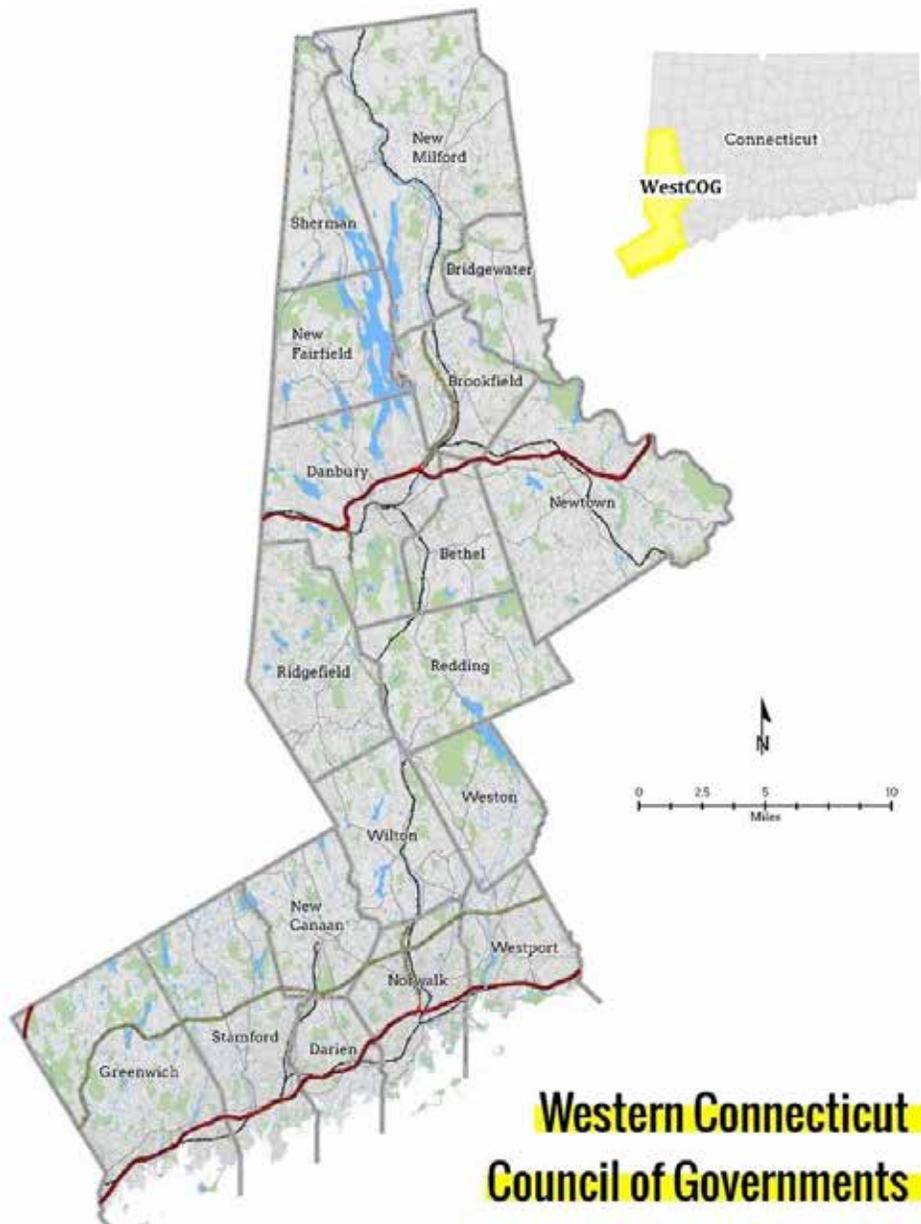


*HART provides bus service in Downtown Bethel and in the Route 6 corridor.*

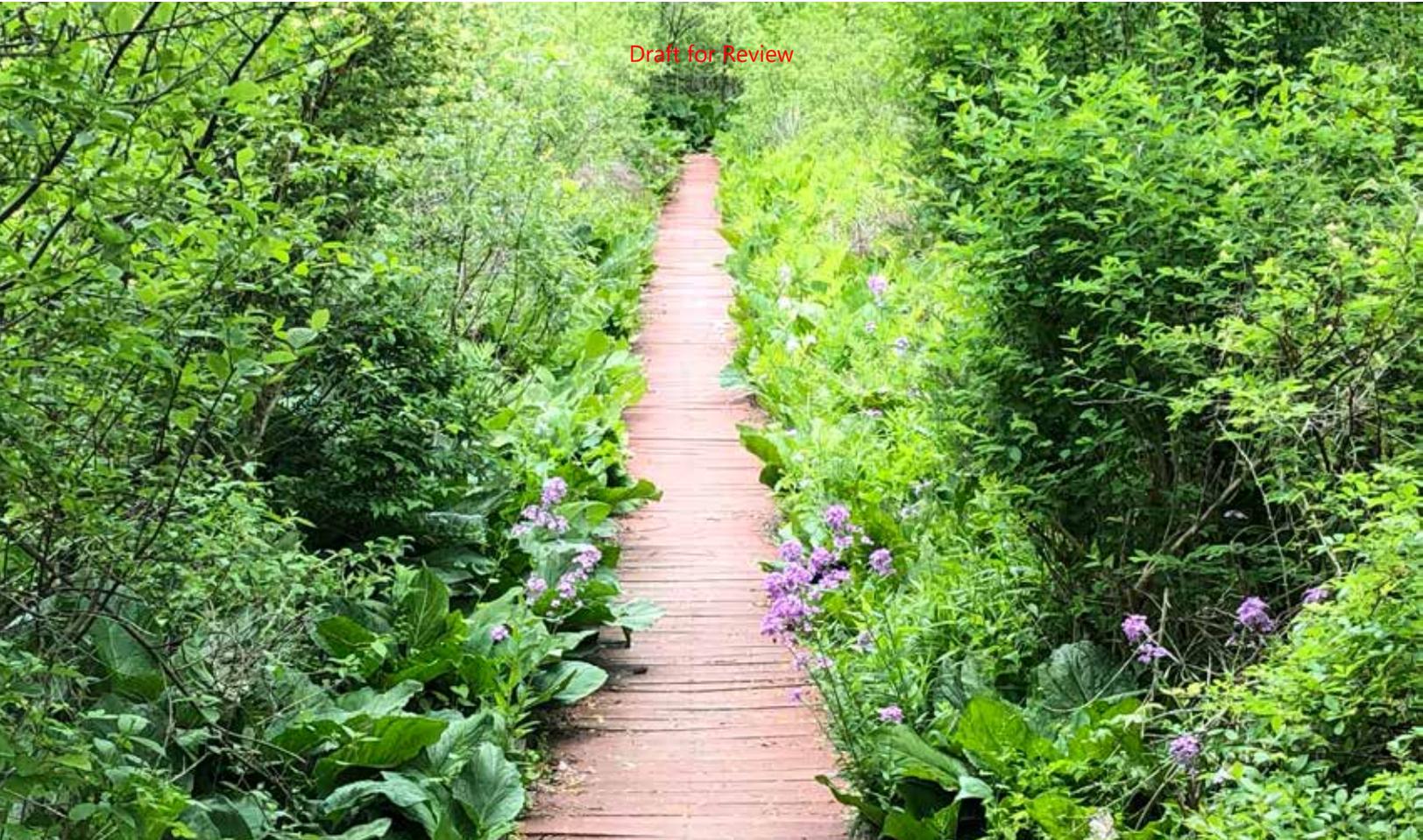


***Bethel is served by numerous regional organizations.***

- Bethel participates in regional waste management and recycling initiatives through the Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority (HRRRA).
- Bethel along with other towns in the Greater Danbury Area have contracts with the City of Danbury to dispose of sewage at the city's water pollution control facility.
- Bethel participates in regional land use, transportation, and economic development planning through the Western Connecticut Council of Governments.
- In 2017, Bethel participated in the Western Connecticut Economic Development Plan through the Western Connecticut Council of Governments. The overall goals of the Plan center on regional planning and cooperation, improving the regional business climate, developing and retaining a strong workforce, improving and maintaining public infrastructure, enhancing sustainability and resiliency, and fostering a positive regional identity.
- Numerous other regional organizations provide services to Bethel residents, including HART, the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce, the Northwest Connecticut Regional Workforce Investment Board, and the Housatonic Valley Association.



<b>Participate in cooperative efforts to promote the health and wellbeing of the Region</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
Work with neighboring towns to enhance transit connections between Lower Fairfield County and Greater Danbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support ongoing enhancements to the Danbury Branch Line including installation of positive train control and improvements to the Danbury Dockyard in Norwalk.</li> <li>▪ Advocate for enhanced rail service on the Danbury Branch and New Haven Line.</li> <li>▪ Provide bus shelters at HART stops, particularly in commercial districts such as Downtown Bethel, Grassy Plain Road, and Route 6.</li> <li>▪ Improve the visual appearance of gateways along the Danbury Branch Line in conjunction with MTA and neighboring municipalities.</li> </ul>
Work with neighboring towns in the area of land conservation, greenways, hiking trails, wildlife corridors, and other conservation issues that cross town boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain strong relationships with local and regional conservation groups such as Bethel Land Trust, Redding Land Trust, Housatonic Valley Association, Trout Unlimited, Still River Watershed Association, and others.</li> <li>▪ Participate in regional planning efforts related to the proposed Western New England Greenway Trail.</li> <li>▪ Work with the City of Danbury to protect environmentally sensitive lands such as the Terre Haute property and lands surrounding the Bethel Water Company reservoirs in the City of Danbury.</li> </ul>
Work with neighboring communities to identify cost-effective shared-services opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore opportunities for cost-effective shared services with neighboring communities through the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG).</li> <li>▪ Continue to participate in regional waste management initiatives through the Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority (HRRRA).</li> </ul>
Continue to participate in regional land use, economic development, and transportation initiatives through the Western Connecticut Council of Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to work with neighboring municipalities to implement the recommendations from the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).</li> <li>▪ Continue to participate in regional land use planning and transportation initiatives through WestCOG.</li> <li>▪ Participate in planning efforts for the I-84 Danbury Project.</li> </ul>



# 6 Protect Natural Resources and Community Identity

Protect, connect, and enhance Bethel’s open spaces and natural areas

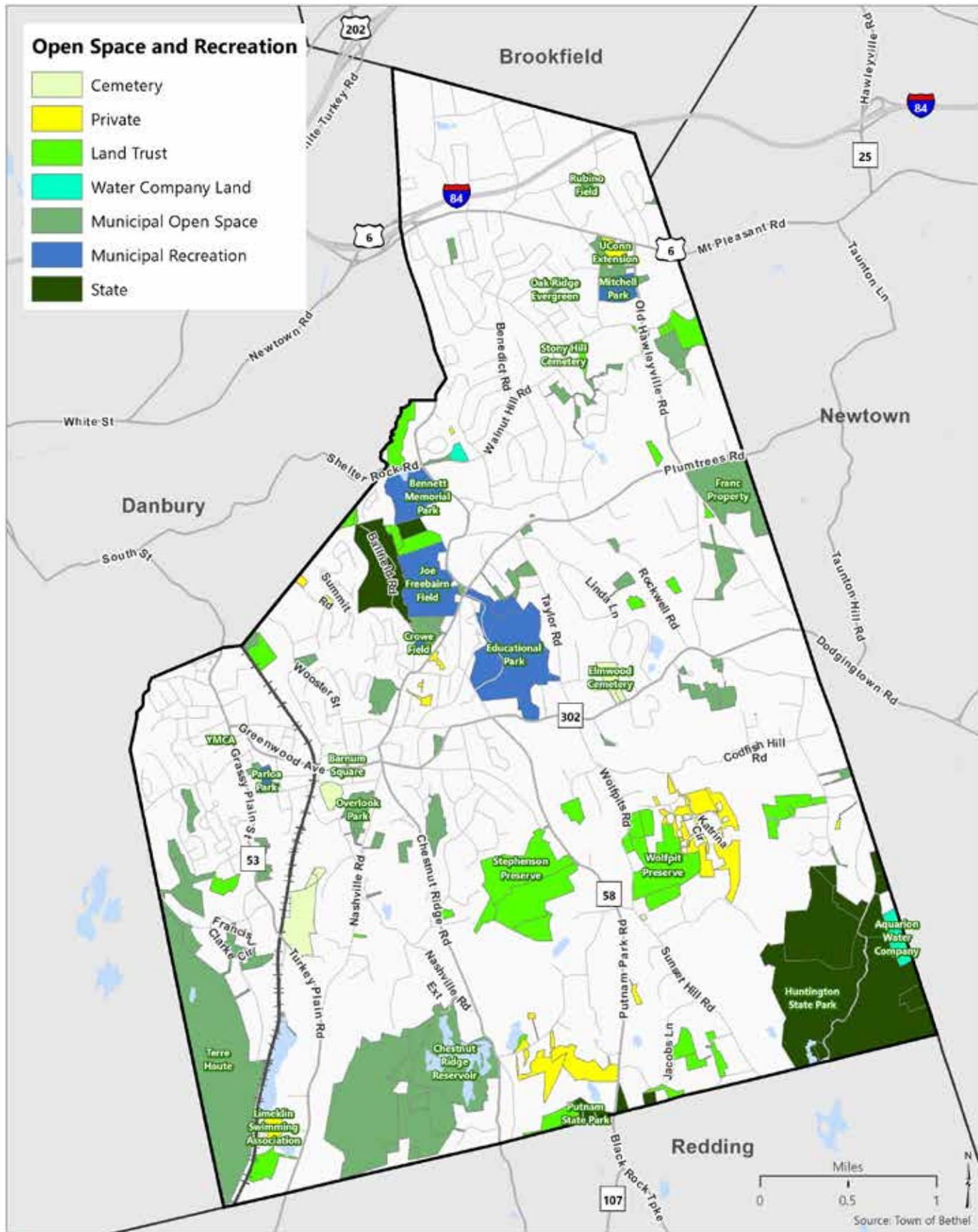
**What We Know:**

***Bethel has extensive open space resources that provide environmental and passive recreational benefits to residents.***

- As of 2018, Bethel has about 2,400 acres of open space and recreational lands, comprising over 20% of the Town’s land area. However, not all open space is protected in perpetuity.
- About half open space lands are Town owned although not all town-owned open space is formally protected. Town-owned land provides opportunities for passive recreation including hiking, bicycling, and camping.
- Since the last Plan, two major properties have been acquired as open space. The Franc Preserve, a 72-acre property, was purchased by the Town in 2011. The Stephenson Preserve, a 130-acre property, was purchased and maintained by the Redding Land Trust.

**Existing Open Space and Recreation Land: 2018**

Open Space Category		Number of Parcels	Area (Acres)
	Cemetery	8	61.6
	Private	30	141.5
	Land Trust	45	396.1
	Water Company Land	2	22.5
	Municipal Open Space	78	978.3
	Municipal Recreation	10	283.8
	State	14	525.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>187</b>	<b>2,409.5</b>



***Private organizations help preserve and maintain Bethel's open spaces and natural areas.***

- The Bethel Land Trust owns and maintains 40 properties totaling over 242 acres including the Wolfpit Preserve, Walnut Hill Preserve, and the Enchanted Boardwalk Trail
- The Redding Land Trust owns and maintains five properties in Bethel totaling over 142 acres, including the Stephenson Preserve.
- The Bethel Garden Club maintains planter boxes throughout the Downtown as well as public gardens at the Municipal Center, Barnum Square, Parloa Park, and the Bethel Public Library.

***Bethel contains sensitive natural resource areas.***

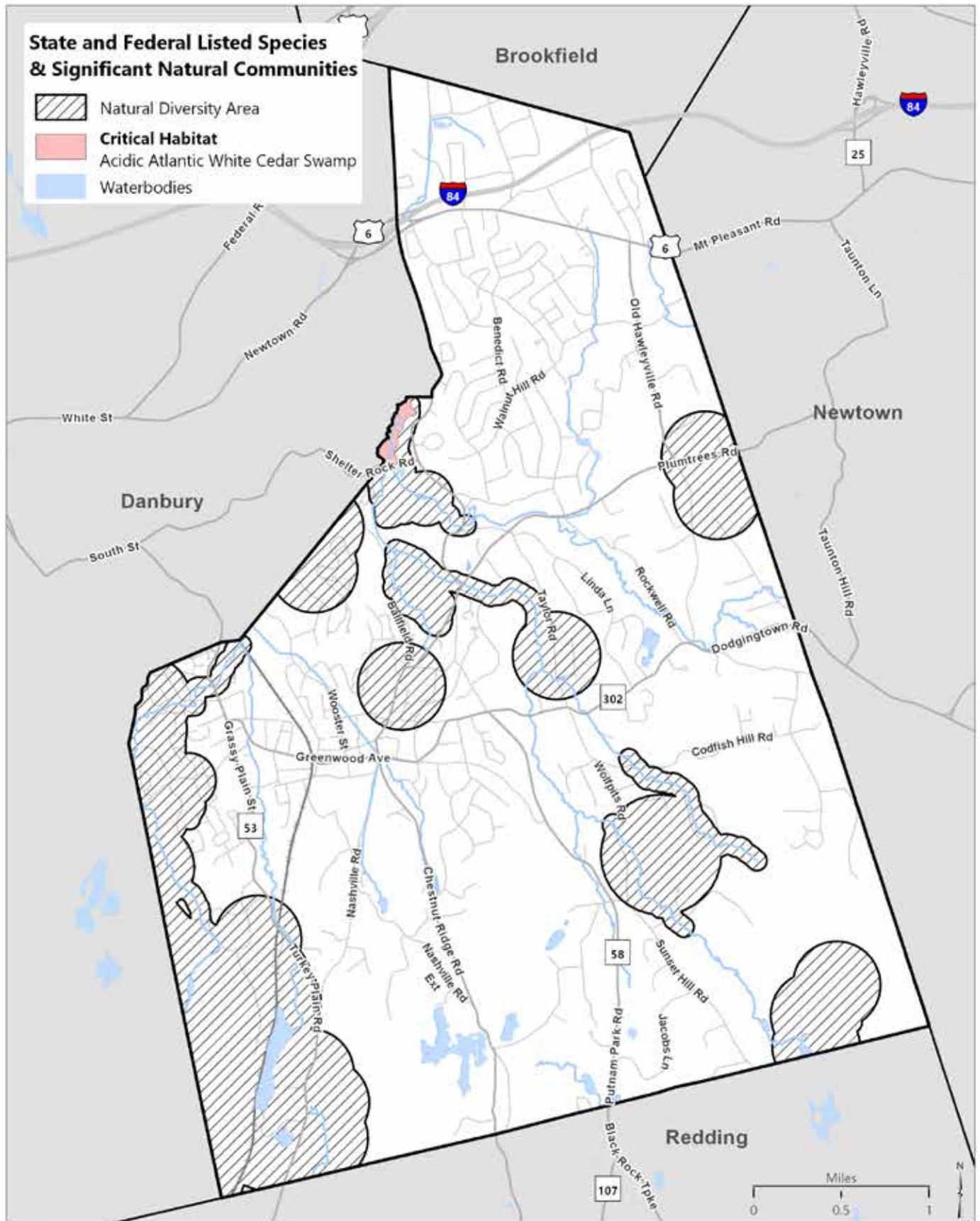
- Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) areas are located along the interior of Bethel's western boundary as well as along East Swamp Brook. These areas are home to threatened or endangered species or significant natural communities.
- The Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) identifies 25 critical habitats statewide, which are rare or specialized wildlife habitats. Bethel is home to one statewide critical habitat: an Acidic Atlantic White Cedar Swamp located on the Bethel/Danbury boundary northwest of Payne Road.
- Bethel has two Class A aquifers surrounding the Maple Avenue wellfield and Chimney Heights wellfield. These areas contribute to groundwater and active public water supply wells or well fields.
- DEEP classifies East Swamp Brook and Limekiln Brook as "impaired" waterbodies, likely tied to illicit discharges and failed septic systems. Recent sewer extensions in the Chimney Heights and Stony Hill neighborhoods (which are in these watersheds) may help improve water quality of these waterbodies.
- Bethel has adopted a stormwater management plan to address the statewide MS4 requirements. Goals of the plan include public outreach and participation, detecting illicit discharges, construction runoff control, pollution prevention, and more. However, the lack of state funding remains a challenge to fully implementing the MS4 Plan.



*The Bethel Land Trust maintains the Enchanted Boardwalk Trail along East Swamp Brook.*



*The Redding Land Trust owns and maintains the Stephenson Preserve on Putnam Park Road.*



Protect, connect, and enhance Bethel’s open spaces and natural areas	
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies
Work with public and private partners to protect environmentally sensitive areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a Conservation Commission to evaluate and monitor open space opportunities and priorities and provide guidance to land use boards on conservation issues.</li> <li>▪ Utilize a range of funding sources for future open space acquisition, including state funds, local bonding, open space trust funds, and private donations.</li> <li>▪ Continue public education and stewardship efforts in partnership with local and regional conservation groups.</li> <li>▪ Support the use of the P.A. 490 program on privately owned forest or open space lands. Identify property owners who would qualify for the program and provide informational materials on the program benefits.</li> </ul>
Improve the quality and utility of existing open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain existing Town-owned open space properties and trails in a state of good repair and better advertise existing open space assets to the public.</li> <li>▪ In conjunction with local land trusts, develop additional passive recreational opportunities on the Overlook Property, Franc Preserve, Stephenson Preserve, and other open space areas.</li> <li>▪ Update, maintain and promote local open space and trail maps in user-friendly formats for the public.</li> <li>▪ Seek permanent protection of the Terre Haute property once the expansion of Clarke Business Park is complete.</li> <li>▪ Develop a Passive Recreation Plan for the Terre Haute property. The Plan should identify preferred recreational activities for the property and appropriate locations for public parking and trail heads.</li> </ul>
Foster open space connectivity and wildlife corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop an Open Space Plan that identifies priority lands and priority corridors for future open space acquisition. The Open Space Plan should evaluate opportunities to connect larger open space properties in southern Bethel (Stephenson Preserve, Wolfpits Preserve, Chestnut Ridge Reservoir, Bald Rock, and Huntington State Park).</li> <li>▪ Prioritize open space acquisition or dedication in areas with high conservation value, properties that are adjacent to existing open space parcels, and unprotected open space properties. Encourage the use of deed restrictions to protect these properties in perpetuity.</li> <li>▪ Continue to protect areas listed in the State’s Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) or Critical Habitat database.</li> </ul>

<b>Protect, connect, and enhance Bethel’s open spaces and natural areas</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
<p>Reduce stormwater runoff and non-point-source pollution to preserve and improve water quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider adopting regulations that would mitigate peak flows leaving development sites.</li> <li>▪ Continue to update and implement the Town’s Stormwater Management Plan in compliance with state MS4 requirements.</li> <li>▪ As part of the MS4 plan, educate the residents on practices they can do to reduce stormwater runoff to improve water quality. Direct them towards additional educational resources from organizations such as the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR).</li> <li>▪ Educate landowners on water quality issues and techniques for protecting water quality – removal of invasive species; maintenance or creation of vegetated buffer strips along lakes and streams; use of non-chemical fertilizers and pesticides; septic design and maintenance.</li> <li>▪ Maintain stream buffers, especially for East Swamp Brook and Limekiln Brook, which are listed as “impaired waterbodies” by CTDEEP.</li> <li>▪ Continue to work with the HVA implementing Best Management Practices (BMP) based on recommendations in the Still River Watershed Action Plan.</li> </ul>

## Improve Bethel's Resilience and Sustainability

### ***Bethel has taken steps to improve sustainability and energy efficiency.***

- Bethel joined the Sustainable CT initiative in June 2018. Sustainable CT's mission is to provide coordinated, voluntary actions as well as resources to assist municipalities in implementing sustainability actions and recognize their resilient efforts.
- The Town installed a 2,900-panel solar array on the Sympaug Park Road landfill in 2018. On a sunny day, it can generate enough electricity to power 140 homes.
- In November 2016, Bethel implemented a Renewable Energy Overlay Zone to promote large-scale solar power installations. This also sets standards for the placement, design, construction, operation, monitoring, modification, and removal of these installations.
- The renovations to Johnson and Rockwell Schools are being completed following the LEED Silver Standards. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is the international guideline for sustainable green building practices.
- Bethel's Transfer Station and Recycling Center accepts a range of items for proper disposal, including paper products, plastics, metals, mattresses, electronics, textiles, and leaves. Curbside trash and recycling collection is provided by private haulers.



*The Town has installed two electrical vehicle charging stations at the train station parking lot.*



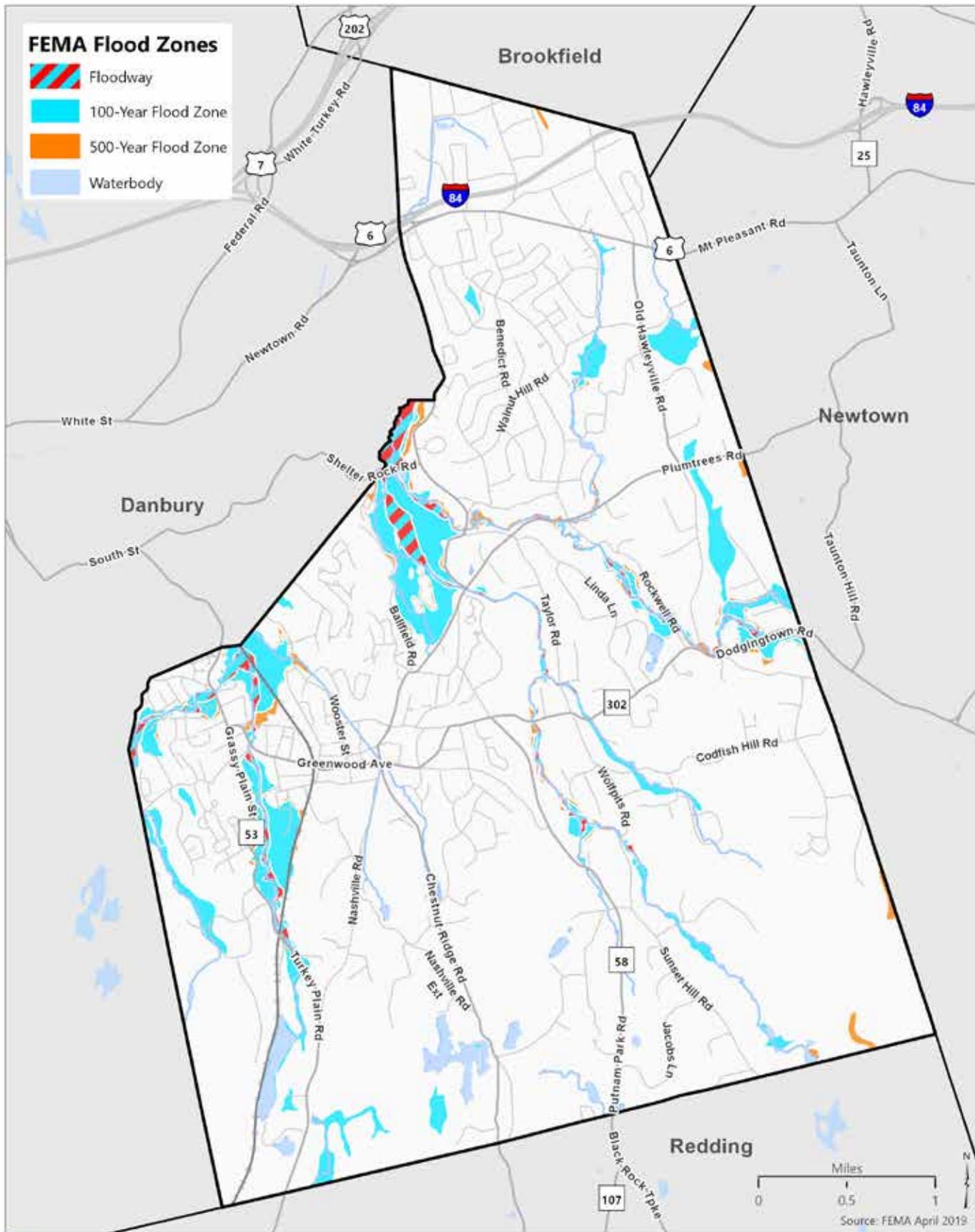
*The Sympaug Solar Farm developed on the old Bethel landfill.*

***The effects of climate change are impacting Connecticut, which has seen increasing frequency of droughts, heavy rainfalls, and extreme weather events. The Town needs to continue to build its capacity to respond to these events.***

- According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, precipitation from extremely heavy storms has increased by 70 percent since 1958. Over the next decade, average annual precipitation and the frequency of heavy downpours are likely to keep rising.
- Bethel completed a Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2015. The Plan notes that flooding remains the Town's greatest hazard risk, particularly areas within the Sympaug Brook watershed, which encompasses most of Downtown Bethel.
- The Hazard Mitigation Plan noted that flooding in the Downtown is primarily the result of an undersized culvert system, which conveys portions of Chestnut Brook underground between Chestnut Street and Keeler Street. This has led to repeated overflows of Seeley Street and subsequent flooding along Main Street and Barnum Square.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) updated its flood zone mapping in 2010. The amount of land impacted by the 100-year flood zones and floodways increased by 5.8%, representing a more accurate account of waterbodies and streams. Bethel has no critical facilities located within the 100-year flood zone.
- The new police station was recently completed adjacent to the Educational Park Campus, replacing the old police station, which was located within a 100-year flood zone.
- The Municipal Center is used as a refuge during storms. Modernization of the locker room facilities would help better support its function as an emergency shelter.



*The Municipal Center serves as an area of refuge during emergencies. Facility upgrades to core facilities such as locker rooms can help improve the function of the building during extreme events.*



<b>Improve Bethel’s Resilience and Sustainability</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
<p>Strengthen resiliency to climate change and improve disaster preparedness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement recommendations from Hazard Mitigation Plan to be best prepared for future natural disasters.</li> <li>▪ Upgrade the locker room and bathroom facilities at the Municipal Center to enhance its function as an emergency shelter.</li> <li>▪ Support periodic tree limb inspection and maintenance programs to minimize potential for downed power lines.</li> <li>▪ Maintain current Emergency Operations Plans, evacuation plans, supply distribution plans, and other emergency planning documents for the community as appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Develop a phased approach to replacing aboveground utility lines with underground utility lines, taking advantage of opportunities such as streetscaping projects.</li> </ul>
<p>Encourage sustainable waste management practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to participate in the state product stewardship initiatives for mattress recycling, which gives residents access to free mattress recycling at the transfer station.</li> <li>▪ Continue to educate residents on paint recycling and programs. While the transfer station does not currently accept paint, they can be recycled at participating local hardware stores.</li> <li>▪ Continue to participate in regional household hazardous waste collections through the Housatonic Resources Recovery Agency (HRRRA).</li> <li>▪ Explore opportunities to increase transfer station hours and expand the materials accepted for recycling.</li> <li>▪ Develop a Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy (CMMS) for the Town to help divert solid waste from disposal. The strategy should align with the State CMMS strategy and should evaluate the feasibility of different diversion strategies such as waste reduction, composting, and expansion of recycling programs.</li> </ul>

<b>Improve Bethel’s Resilience and Sustainability</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
<p>Encourage energy efficiency and green energy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to participate in the Sustainable CT program and pursue certification points.</li> <li>▪ Explore opportunities to install solar panels and other renewable energy sources at Town buildings and/or Town-owned parking areas.</li> <li>▪ Complete energy efficiency upgrades at Town buildings and schools.</li> <li>▪ Promote energy conservation techniques for the design and construction of public improvements and infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Encourage the development of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations, especially in Downtown and in the Route 6 corridor. Evaluate the feasibility of using Town-owned land or facilities for charging stations.</li> </ul>

## Capitalize on Bethel's sense of community, character, amenities, and quality of life

### ***Bethel has a strong tradition of cultural programming and community events.***

- The Town and other local organizations host numerous community events throughout the year including Food Truck Friday's, the Connecticut Film Festival, Bethel Beer Fest, Summer Concert Series, Summerfest, and Winterfest.
- The Bethel Farmer's Market operates out of the University of Connecticut Agricultural Extension building on Stony Hill Road. The Farmers Market, which has operated since 1981, operates every Saturday between June and December.
- Bethel Arts is a community-based volunteer organization that promotes and supports the arts and creative culture of the Town. Bethel Arts hosts educational series and workshops and has developed a sculpture walk in Downtown Bethel.
- Discover Bethel website, established through the Bethel Chamber of Commerce, markets Bethel events, services, shopping, and dining to residents and visitors.

### ***The Town's unique historic resources contribute to its character and identity.***

- The Greenwood Avenue National Historic District encompasses the commercial core of the Downtown between P.T. Barnum Square and Depot Place and remains at the heart of the Downtown's identity. Buildings in the historic district date from the mid-19th to early 20th centuries and include a range of architectural styles such as Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and Italianate.
- Two additional properties are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Reverend John Ely House on Milwaukee Avenue and the Seth Seelye House on Greenwood Avenue, which is now part of the Bethel Public Library.
- The Bethel Historical Society and Museum is located at 40 Main Street in the old Second Meeting House building. The Historical Society runs several exhibits throughout the year, archives historical photographs, print materials, and other local artifacts, and hosts kiosks located in Downtown Bethel.



*Bethel is home to numerous historic and cultural landmarks, including the Greenwood Avenue National Historic District (top left), the P.T. Barnum birthplace (bottom left), and public art installations in the Downtown (right).*

<b>Capitalize on Bethel’s sense of community, character, amenities, and quality of life</b>	
<b>Where We're Going: Objectives</b>	<b>How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies</b>
Market Bethel’s sense of community and quality of life to prospective residents and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue the “Discover Bethel” marketing initiative in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.</li> <li>▪ Work with the local real estate community to market Bethel’s community events, quality of life, and sense of community to prospective residents.</li> </ul>
Preserve Bethel’s historical, scenic, and cultural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider establishing a local scenic road ordinance to preserve the character of rural roads such as Chestnut Hill Road, Dittmar Road, and Sunset Hill Road.</li> <li>▪ Consider establishing a Municipal Cultural District in Downtown Bethel pursuant to Public Act 19-143.</li> <li>▪ Through the Municipal Cultural District, work with state and regional organizations to market and advocate Downtown Bethel’s cultural resources and tourism opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Maintain strong relationships with local and regional arts organizations such as Bethel Arts and the Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut.</li> </ul>
Promote and encourage community events and civic opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain a Community and Civic Events calendar on the Town website.</li> <li>▪ Continue to host community events such as Food Truck Friday, Summer Concert Series, Bethel SummerFest, Winterfest, and the Connecticut Film Festival.</li> </ul>



# 7 Future Land Use Plan

## *Future Land Use*

The Future Land Use Map reflects the POCD’s vision and goals for desirable future development across the Town of Bethel over the next decade. The map depicts appropriate locations for and relationships between general categories of use and their intensity, ranging from land to be conserved as open space or low-intensity use, to priority development areas such as Downtown Bethel or the Route 6 corridor.

The Future Land Use Plan is informed by existing uses and zoning designations; the boundaries of the Town, and its current zone boundaries taking note of special overlay districts; the visions and goals expressed in POCD outreach efforts; and the goals and strategies enshrined in this Plan. The Future Land Use Plan graphically represents the desired outcomes of many of the Plan’s recommendations and illustrates how those strategies may interact with the Town’s existing land uses. Due to its generalized nature, there may be inconsistencies between the uses shown on this map and the actual use of individual properties.

The Future Land Use Plan describes these desired land use outcomes in the following categories:

**Downtown Bethel** encompasses both the Village Center along Greenwood Avenue, the Bethel Train Station area, and portions of Grassy Plain Street. It aligns with the Bethel Forward Master Plan Study Area and Transit-Oriented Development Overlay Zone. Downtown Bethel is the Town’s top development priority area over the next decade. Downtown Bethel is the highest density area of Town and will continue to maintain a diverse mix of commercial, institutional, and residential uses, including affordable



*A proposed mixed-use project on the corner of Greenwood Avenue and Chestnut Street is consistent with the vision of the Bethel Forward Master Plan.*

and mixed-income housing. Over the next decade, the Town will implement the recommendations of the Bethel Forward Master Plan and will pursue the growth of the Downtown's residential and commercial base through infill development and the redevelopment of underutilized properties. The Town has adopted zoning regulations in order to enable the vision for the Downtown area and should continue to invest in public infrastructure in order to spur private-sector development.

The **Route 6 Mixed-Use** area extends across northern Bethel from Danbury to Newtown, just south of I-84. Availability of water and sewer infrastructure, high traffic volumes, and proximity to I-84 make this area conducive to moderate-density commercial and mixed-use and mixed-income development. Route 6 contains a majority of the Bethel's vacant, commercially zoned land, making it one of Town's development priority areas over the next decade. New development should be consistent with the recommendations of the Route 6 corridor study and should include quality architectural and site design, landscaped setbacks, and sidewalks. The Town should work with the state to support transportation enhancements in the corridor, notably intersection safety improvements and pedestrian upgrades that align with the Town's mixed-use vision for the area.

**Business Parks** are found in the Berkshire Corporate Park north of I-84 and in the Clarke Business Park south of Downtown Bethel. Business Parks are similar to industrial areas but have larger landscaped setbacks and offer a more "campus-like" setting. In addition to industrial activities, business parks are also suitable for professional or corporate offices. The Town's business parks are served by water, and sewer infrastructure will continue to be an important component of the local tax base. The Town's short-term priority is to complete the four-lot expansion of the Clarke Business Park.

**Industrial** areas include land that is appropriate for light manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, automotive uses, and contractor storage. Compared to business parks, industrial areas tend to have smaller lots and smaller buildings, and thus are crucial to supporting the Town's small business economy. The Future Land Use Plan depicts industrial areas along Henry Street, Taylor Avenue, and Wooster Street north of Passage Road, which are all currently zoned for industrial use. These areas are either currently served by water and sewer service or proximate enough to sewer and water where utility extensions could be made in the future.



*The Town will continue to encourage mixed-use development in the Route 6 corridor with a focus on high quality architecture, landscaping, and site design, and enhanced transportation options for pedestrians.*



*Business parks will serve as the Town's employment centers for Bethel over the next decade and will continue to maintain a diverse mix of tenants including manufacturers, distribution centers, and offices.*



*Industrial areas are located along the rail line to the north and south of the Downtown and will continue to function as incubators for numerous small businesses.*

**Residential – Village Density** areas encompass the residential neighborhoods directly surrounding and within walking distance of Downtown Bethel. Along with the Downtown, these areas contain the highest density and most diverse housing options in Town, including single-family homes on small lots, duplexes, multifamily apartments, and condominiums. Zoning districts within this area include R-10, RR-10, and RMO zones. Growing the residential base within village residential areas will help support and grow the Downtown commercial base. Sanitary sewer and water infrastructure is available throughout the entire area, allowing residential densities in excess of five units per acre. Village residential neighborhoods are development priority areas over the next decade. The Town should reserve excess sewer capacity in the Payne Road (Downtown) sewer service area to support infill development within the village residential neighborhoods and the Downtown itself rather than new development in lower-density areas on the Downtown periphery.

**Residential – Medium Density** encompasses the residential neighborhoods on the periphery of the Downtown and in the Chimney Heights neighborhood. Medium-density residential areas are predominantly zoned R-10, R-20, or R-30 and contain a mix of single-family homes, duplexes, and condominiums. Sanitary sewer and water infrastructure is available throughout most of the area, allowing for residential densities ranging from one to five units per acre. The Town should continue to encourage a diverse mix of housing types in this area. While most of this area is “built out,” there may be opportunities for small-scale infill or subdivision projects. Sewer extensions should be considered on a case-by-case basis in order to address public health goals. However, sewer extensions should generally not result in an increase in residential density.

**Residential – Low Density** refers to the transition areas between rural residential areas and higher density neighborhoods in the Downtown and Route 6 corridor. This area is predominantly zoned R-40 and consists of single-family homes, with densities ranging from 0.5 to one unit per acre. Homes are typically served by wells and on-site septic systems. Due to its transitional nature, future development proposals in this area should include a balanced assessment of the Plan’s conservation and development goals. Conservation subdivisions should be encouraged in this area as a way to achieve the proper balance between development and natural resource conservation goals. New development should continue to be at a density that can be served



*Village density residential neighborhoods are ideal for a mix of housing types, including small single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes, and apartments. These areas are within walking distance to the Downtown and provide opportunities to further solidify the Downtown commercial base.*



*Medium density residential neighborhoods are found on the periphery of the Downtown and Route 6 corridor and are primarily single-family homes on smaller lots ranging from 1 acre to 0.25 acres in size.*



*Low density residential neighborhoods are found in the transitional areas between Bethel’s more highly developed areas and rural neighborhoods. These areas are predominantly single-family homes on large lots ranging from 1 to 2 acres in size.*

by on-site septic systems. Sewer extensions should only be considered in this area to address public health goals and should not result in an increase in residential densities. Open space acquisition should be considered in this area, particularly for properties that contain sensitive natural resources such as stream corridors, wetlands, and forests.

**Educational Park** will continue to be a hub of community activity over the next decade. Institutional or other community facility uses may also be found within other Future Land Use categories. Over the next decade, the Town will complete upgrades to Johnson and Rockwell Schools and will explore other improvements to community spaces and recreational facilities on the campus.

**Residential – Rural Density** areas encompass the neighborhoods in southern and eastern Bethel and are characterized by a mix of low-density residential uses, undeveloped land, agricultural lands, and open space lands. This area is predominantly zoned R-80, with residential densities of 0.5 dwelling units per acre or less. Rural areas are not served by water or sewer infrastructure, and future development should be at a density that can be served by well water and on-site septic systems. Rural residential neighborhoods are conservation priority areas. Future open space acquisition and use of the P.A. 490 program should be prioritized in this area while large-scale residential subdivisions should be discouraged.

**Protected and Unprotected Open Space** is made up of existing open space lands, including state and Town parks, water company lands, and land trust properties. Some of these properties are formally protected through deed restrictions while others are unprotected and could potentially be developed in the future. Most town-owned open space properties are unprotected. Over the next decade, the Town will focus efforts on improving active and passive recreational opportunities on existing open space lands. In addition, the Town will work with private and non-profit conservation partners to grow the amount of protected open space in the Bethel.



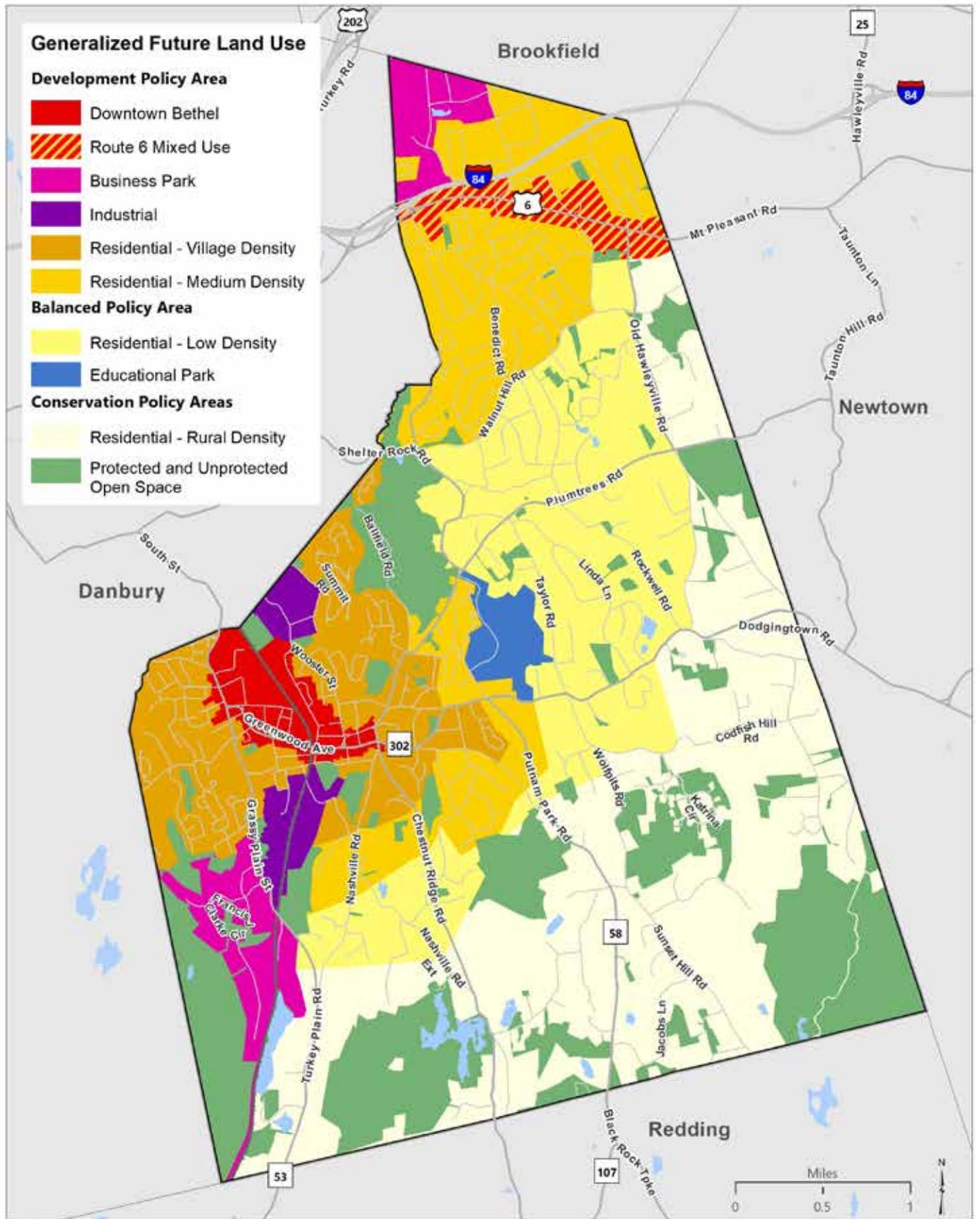
*Ongoing recreational and facility improvements to the Educational Park will solidify its place as a hub for student and community activities.*



*Rural neighborhoods contain very low-density residential uses (2+ acres) as well as forested lands, wetlands, and agricultural lands.*



*Improving community access to and use of existing open space properties such as the Franc Preserve (above) will be a conservation priority over the next decade.*



## Sewer Plan

As per CGS Section 8-23, municipal POCDs adopted after July 1, 2015, must identify the general location and extent of areas served by the existing sewerage system, areas where sewer systems are planned, and areas where sewers are to be avoided. Bethel currently contracts with the City of Danbury's Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) for waste disposal. There are three sewer service areas within the Town: Paul Street (Downtown), Payne Road (Stony Hill), and Berkshire (Corporate Park). As of 2018, there are 4,403 customers in Bethel served by sewer. The table below presents Bethel's current sewer contract limits and remaining capacity. Currently, there is ample capacity within the Payne Road and Paul Street sewer service areas to support the growth envisioned in the Downtown, Route 6 corridor, and surrounding higher-density residential neighborhoods.

**Town of Bethel Sewer Service Contract Limits and Capacity, in Gallons per Day: 2016**

Service Area	Average Daily Contract Limits	Average Daily Flow: 2016	Estimated Remaining Capacity: 2016	Estimated Allocations: 2016 <sup>1</sup>
Berkshire (Corporate Park)	80,000	68,806	11,194	0
Paul Street (Downtown)	1,330,00	928,84	401,159	200,000
Payne Road (Stony Hill)	590,00	340,330	249,670	125,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>	<b>1,337,977</b>	<b>662,023</b>	<b>325,000</b>

Source: Town of Bethel Public Utilities Commission. Sewer Capacity Management Program: 2016

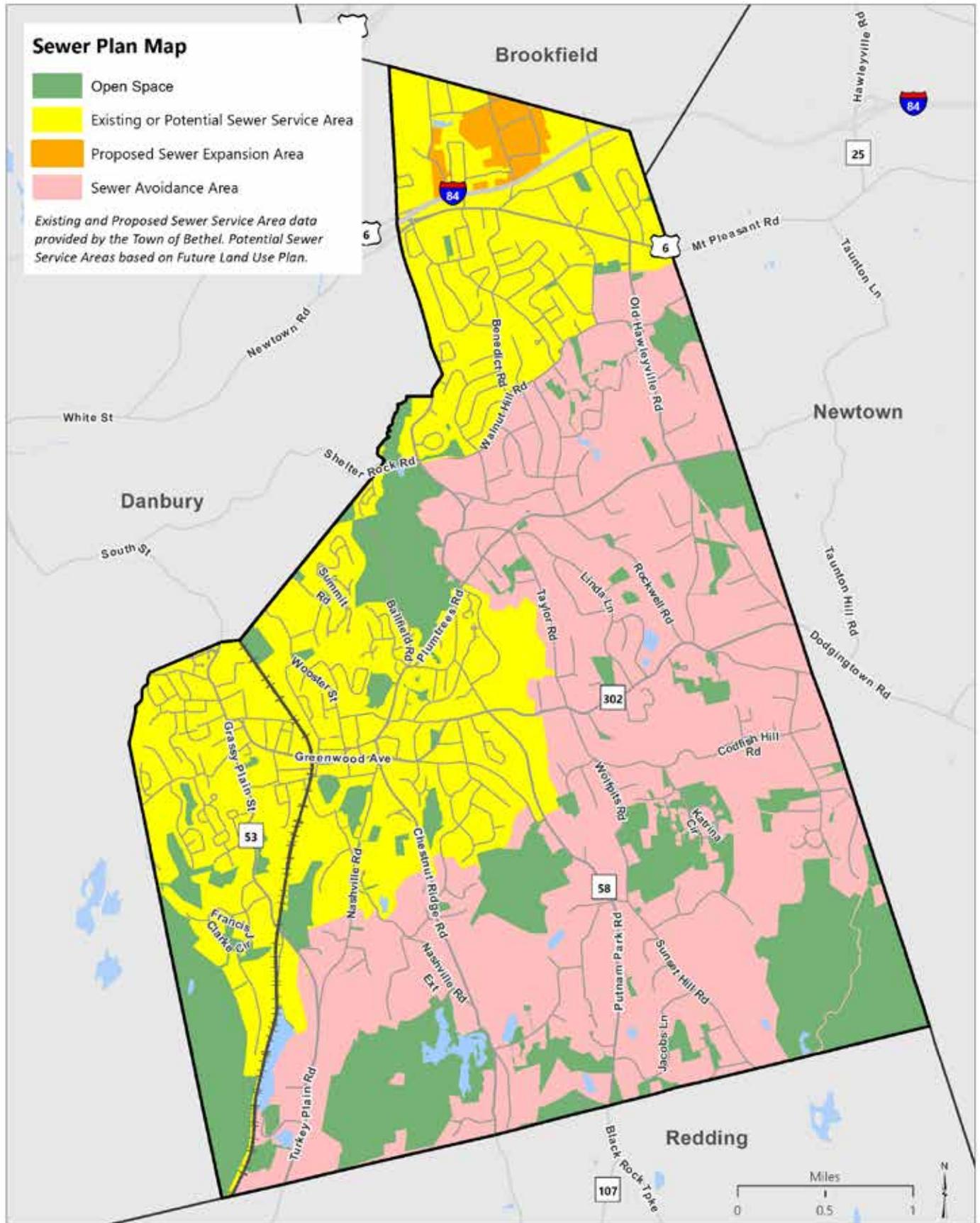
1. Estimated allocations assume that 50% of the remaining capacity is reserved for existing sewer connections (including extraneous flows, changes in existing connection use, and changes in population/demographics). The remaining 50% can be allocated to support new development

Since the last Plan, there was a major sewer expansion in the Chimney Heights neighborhood, which is in the Payne Road service area. The Town has proposed further sewer expansions in northern Bethel on Garella Road, Vail Road, Meadow Lane, Ridge Road, and Long Hill Road.

The Sewer Plan Map aligns with the underlying Future Land Use Plan categories. It is recommended that the Town continue to use its remaining sewer capacity to support new development within existing high-intensity areas rather than extending sewer service into low-density areas on the periphery. The following Future Land Use categories are within an existing sewer service area or have the potential to be sewerred in the future based on their Future Land Use classification:

- Downtown Bethel
- Route 6 Mixed-Use
- Business Park
- Industrial
- Residential – Village Density
- Residential – Medium Density

Sewer avoidance areas correspond with areas categorized as Residential – Rural Density and Residential – Low Density on the Future Land Use Plan. Because excess sewer capacity is limited, the Town does not wish to extend service into these lower density areas.



## Future Open Space Acquisition Criteria

While the Plan does not recommend specific properties for future acquisition by the Town, it establishes criteria that can help the Town and its conservation partners assess potential future acquisitions. The criteria are the following:

**Conservation Status** – Several open space properties currently function as open space but do not have formal protections such as a deed restriction. The Town should work to formally protect “unprotected” open space lands that it already owns such as the Terre Haute property, Bald Rock, and lands surrounding the Chestnut Ridge and Eureka reservoirs. Privately held lands that are temporarily protected through P.A. 490 status should also be considered for acquisition should they come under threat of development.

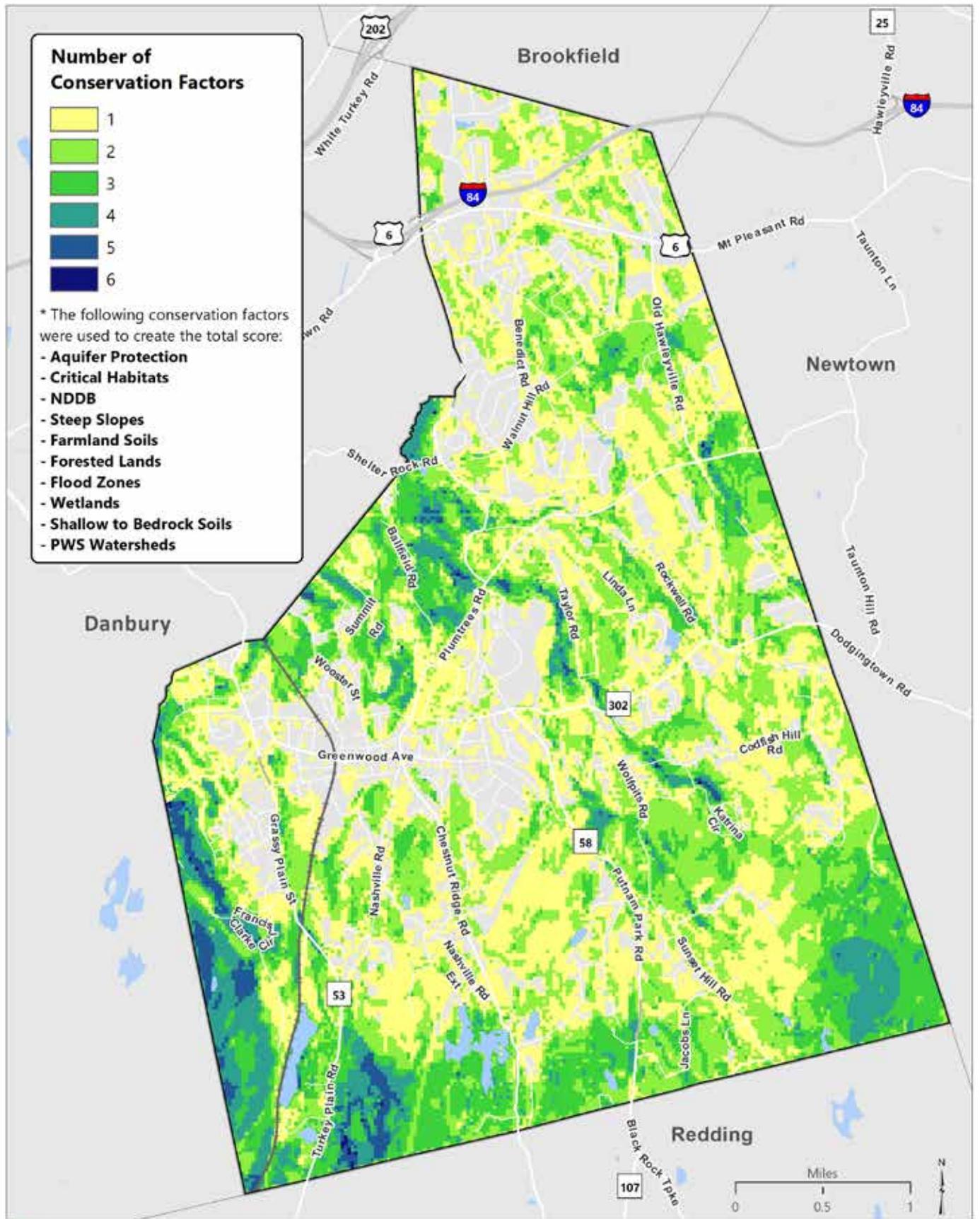
**Contiguous Corridors** – The protection of properties that are adjacent to existing open space lands should be encouraged in order to develop larger and more contiguous open space corridors. This can be achieved through the purchase of land (should it become available) or the purchase of smaller conservation easements along streams. Two priority open space corridors were identified as part of the POCD as follows:

Wolfpits Preserve to Educational Park, including areas along Wolf Pit Brook and East Swamp Brook

Chestnut Ridge Reservoir to Huntington State Park. This corridor would connect to several large open space properties including Wolfpits Preserve and Stephenson Preserve,

**Conservation Factors** – Lands of high conservation value provide residents with a range of environmental benefits including drinking water protection, flood mitigation, and wildlife habitat and also contribute to the Bethel’s quality of life.

A conservation factor index map was created overlaying natural resources including aquifer protection areas, critical habitats, natural diversity database areas, steep slopes, farmland soils, forested lands, flood zones, wetlands, shallow-to-bedrock soils, and public water supply watersheds. Areas that contain the largest number of overlaying conservation factors include the Terre Haute Property, lands surrounding Chestnut Ridge Reservoir, lands along East Swamp Brook, and parts of Huntington State Park.





## 8

# Consistency with State and Regional Plans

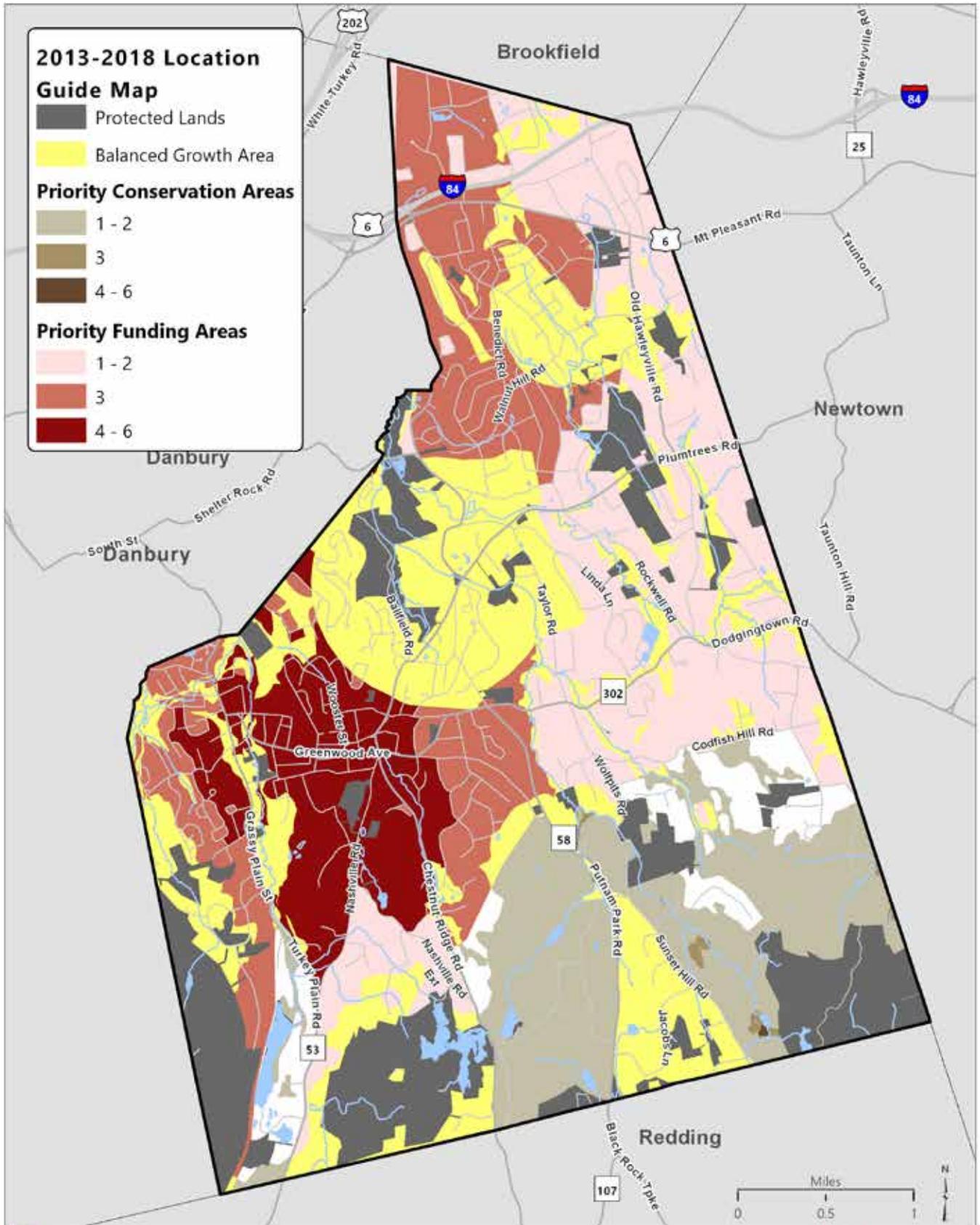
Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that local POCDs take into account the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan and note any inconsistencies. While a draft update to the state Plan was completed in 2018, it has not yet been adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly. Therefore, the 2013-2018 State Plan was reviewed. Generally, the Town of Bethel's plan is consistent with the state's six growth management principles as described in the table on the following page.

State statutes require that regional Councils of Government (COGs) review local POCDs for consistency with their Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. The most recent Regional Plan of Conservation and Development for the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) was completed in 2009. The HVCEO has since integrated into the larger Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG). A new Regional Plan is currently in development. The 2009 Plan will remain in effect until a new Plan is adopted. The HVCEO Plan has similar goals to the state Plan and prioritizes development near existing centers that are well-served by public infrastructure. The Plan classifies Downtown Bethel, the Route 6 corridor, and Chimney Heights as "Near Central Areas" that have the potential for mixed-use development at higher densities. Primary growth areas are identified on the periphery of Downtown Bethel.

<p><b>State of Connecticut Growth Management Principals</b></p>	<p><b>The Town of Bethel POCD Consistency Analysis</b></p>
<p>Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure.</p>	<p>The Plan prioritizes infill development and redevelopment in areas with existing sewer and water infrastructure, particularly Downtown Bethel, the Route 6 corridor, and business parks.</p>
<p>Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs.</p>	<p>The Plan contains several action items pertaining to the diversification of the Town’s housing stock, including incorporation of universal design standards, expansion of affordable housing units and mixed-income housing in the Downtown Area and Route 6 corridor, and the development of a range of housing types from apartments to single-family homes on large lots.</p>
<p>Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options.</p>	<p>The Plan prioritizes development in areas that are served by mass transit infrastructure. Downtown Bethel is served by Metro-North and HART bus service. HART also provides bus service to other priority development areas including the Route 6 corridor, Berkshire Corporate Park, and Clarke Business Park. The Plan also recommends expanding bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, particularly in Downtown Bethel and in the Route 6 corridor.</p>
<p>Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands.</p>	<p>The protection of Bethel’s unique natural, scenic, and cultural resources is one of the cornerstones of this Plan. The Plan identifies priority open space corridors and establishes criteria that the Town can use to assess future open space acquisition. Conservation is a priority in rural residential neighborhoods found in eastern and southern Bethel. The Plan also contains recommendations on how to preserve Bethel’s unique cultural resources including renovation of historic buildings and expansion of arts and cultural opportunities in the Downtown.</p>
<p>Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety.</p>	<p>The Plan contains specific recommendations on range of environmental topics, including reduction of stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution, the development of open space corridors, and increasing the Town’s capacity to respond to extreme weather events.</p>
<p>Promote Integrated Planning across all Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional, and Local Basis.</p>	<p>One of the goals of the Plan is to participate in cooperative efforts to promote the health and wellbeing of the region. There are specific recommendations pertaining to issues that cross town boundaries, including transportation, environmental management, shared services, and economic development.</p>

## State Plan Locational Guide Map

The state Plan classifies land into priority funding areas, protected lands, conservation areas, and balanced priority-funding areas. These land use categories are shown on the following “Locational Guide Map.” Overall, the Locational Guide Map aligns well with the Future Land Use Plan in this POCD. The state-identified priority funding areas generally align with the Plan’s development priorities. Downtown Bethel is listed as satisfying the highest number of “priority funding area” criteria. The Route 6 corridor, Berkshire Corporate Park, and Clarke Business Park are also listed as priority funding areas. Southern Bethel is listed as a Priority Conservation Area and generally aligns with conservation priority area identified the Plan. There are minor inconsistencies between the Future Land Use Plan and Locational Guide Map – the state plan is built on Census Tract data and thus shows larger and more generalized policy areas. This may overestimate the development capacity for transitional neighborhoods that are partially but not fully served by infrastructure. For example, eastern Bethel is classified as a priority development area. However, most of this neighborhood lacks sewer and water infrastructure needed to support higher-density development. The Future Land Use Plan provides more localized and specific information than the state Plan.



# 9 Implementation Plan

The following tables are a summary of the goals, objectives and strategies of this Plan. The Implementation Plan is meant only as a guide for the various boards and commissions responsible for implementation. The Implementation Plan lists the lead and support entities responsible for executing each particular action item. In addition, it notes the timeframe for completion of each action item.

In the Implementation Plan:

- **Short-term actions are marked with an “S”**  
Short-term actions are those that should be implemented within the first year and include those that are less complex, or higher-priority items that need to be completed prior to other actions.
- **Medium-term actions are marked with an “M”**  
Medium-term actions are likely to be completed within 1 to 5 years.
- **Long-term actions are marked with an “L”**  
Long-term actions are those that are likely to be completed in the last five years of the POCD horizon.
- **Ongoing efforts are marked with an “O”**

Sustainable initiatives are noted in the final column of the Implementation Plan. Sustainability is defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Sustainable initiatives span numerous the topical areas of the Plan and align with the overall goals and objectives of the *Sustainable CT* program. They include strategies that protect the natural environment; reduce energy consumption and waste generation; encourage bicycling, walking, and transit use; and provide equitable public services and housing choices for residents.

- **Sustainable initiatives are marked with the following symbol:**



It is highly recommended that a Plan Implementation Committee be established. The entities assigned responsibility for pursuing the goals in this Plan would be accountable to the ongoing decisions and priorities expressed by the Plan Implementation Committee, its member Commissions, and the Town as a whole. In addition to driving specific objectives forward, the Plan Implementation Committee would also be responsible for periodically taking stock of the progress achieved so far, facilitating communication between involved parties, recognizing changes in conditions that may render some objectives infeasible or inappropriate, and refocusing the efforts of all major responsible entities to ensure continued progress towards the Plan’s goals.

**Implementing Agency Key**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Bethel Emergency Manager	BEM
Bethel Housing Authority	BHA
Bethel Land Trust	BLT
Board of Selectman	BOS
Board of Finance	BOF
Bethel Police Department	BPD
Conservation Commission	CC
Connecticut Department of Transportation	CTDOT
Department of Public Works	DPW
Economic Development Commission	EDC
Economic Development Director	EDD
Housatonic Area Regional Transit	HART
Parks and Recreation Commission	PRC
Parks and Recreation Department	PRD
Planning and Zoning Commission	PZC
Planning and Zoning Department	PZD
Redding Land Trust	RLT
Senior Center Director	SCD
Town Engineer	TE
Utilities Department	UD
Western Connecticut Council of Governments	WestCOG

**Re-energize the village center as a distinctive healthy, vibrant, dynamic, pedestrian-friendly community, while preserving its unique sense of place.**

Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Leverage the 2016 Bethel Forward Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the recommendations of the 2016 Bethel Forward Master Plan Report.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD, DPW, TE, CTDOT	O	
Focus on restoring existing historic buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to maintain Town-owned historic properties, such as the Bethel Public Library and the Old Train Station, in a state of good repair.</li> </ul>	DPW	BOS, BOF	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider establishing a façade improvement program or local property tax abatement program to encourage the rehabilitation of historic properties in Downtown Bethel.</li> </ul>	EDC	BOS	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate owners of historic properties on other funding opportunities such as state and federal rehabilitation tax credits.</li> </ul>	PZD	PZC	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to encourage the adaptive reuse of historic residences as commercial or mixed-use buildings, if located on a state road. Consider allowing property owners to develop excess acreage while retaining the historic structure.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to explore zoning incentives for reinvestment in historic properties such as density/coverage bonuses and parking reductions.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	S	
Foster cultural and social opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to host Town-wide events at the municipal center and other Town-owned properties in the Downtown.</li> </ul>	PRD	PRC, DPW	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to expand cultural and social programming at the Bethel Public Library.</li> </ul>	Library	BOS, BOF	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to maintain high quality public green spaces throughout the Downtown, including Barnum Square, in front of the Bethel Public Library, and the Municipal Center lawn. Maintain and enhance infrastructure such as street trees, benches, lighting, plantings, and public art in these spaces.</li> </ul>	DPW	PRD, PRC, PZC, BOS	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the creation of new pocket parks and public green spaces throughout the Downtown as part of the TOD Plan.</li> </ul>	PZC	DPW, PRD, PRC, BOS	M	

**Re-energize the village center as a distinctive healthy, vibrant, dynamic, pedestrian-friendly community, while preserving its unique sense of place.**

Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Invest in Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the recommendations from the study of the Downtown (Paul Street) sewer service area, prioritizing subareas of the Downtown that have the greatest needs.</li> </ul>	UD	TE	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the transportation recommendations from the Bethel Forward Plan, including the construction of additional rail crossings in Downtown Bethel near Diamond Avenue and Durant Avenue.</li> </ul>	TE, DPW	CTDOT, WestCOG	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement traffic calming recommendations of the Bethel Forward Plan, including initiating a "20 is Plenty" campaign to encourage slower traffic speeds within the Downtown.</li> </ul>	BPD, TE, DPW	PZC	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for a pedestrian bridge that connects the Bethel Train Station to Diamond Avenue. Modify the zoning regulations to require public access easements for properties on Diamond Avenue that are adjacent to the rail line in order to preserve land for a future pedestrian connection.</li> </ul>	PZC	TE, DPW, PZD	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend Downtown streetscaping from Rector Street to Chestnut Street.</li> </ul>	DPW	PZC, CTDOT	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with CTDOT to identify safe pedestrian crossings of Greenwood Avenue between the rail line and Grassy Plain Street. Consider bump outs and flashing beacons to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and enhance safety.</li> </ul>	TE	CTDOT, DPW, WestCOG	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace and upgrade the sidewalks in Downtown Bethel to conform with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and provide new sidewalks to improve connectivity.</li> </ul>	DPW	CTDOT	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue funding to mitigate flooding in Downtown Bethel caused by the undersized Chestnut Brook culvert system, as recommended in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.</li> </ul>	TE		M	

**Re-energize the village center as a distinctive healthy, vibrant, dynamic, pedestrian-friendly community, while preserving its unique sense of place.**

Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Build more housing downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to require a 20% set-aside of affordable or incentive housing units for all multi-family residential projects within the TOD Overlay Area.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist developers who choose to provide more than the minimum set-aside of affordable housing units through incentives and bonuses available through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the redevelopment of industrial properties around the train station to promote mixed-use or multi-family housing development, including industrial properties on Diamond Avenue and Durant Avenue.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with industrial businesses who are displaced by redevelopment projects to find suitable alternative locations within the Town.</li> </ul>	EDD	EDC, PZD	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the use of shared parking arrangements for new residential developments within the Downtown.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourage the elimination of affordable units within the Downtown. In the case of redevelopment, work with property owners to ensure that all affordable units are replaced on site or elsewhere within the Downtown.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	O	

Encourage Mixed-Use Development in the Route 6 Corridor					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Support a mix of land uses and densities and improve the public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work to develop a business mix that complements, rather than competes with businesses in Downtown Bethel. Encourage larger format commercial and retail uses in the Route 6 corridor that are not found in Downtown Bethel or other commercial districts.</li> </ul>	PZC	EDC, EDD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to require high quality landscaping in new developments. Consider implementing zoning incentives such as parking reductions or density bonuses to encourage existing property owners to upgrade their properties to meet the current regulations.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance gateway signage along Route 6 at the Newtown line. Consider installing welcome signage and planters to enhance the aesthetics of the gateway.</li> </ul>	EDC	EDD, PZC, PZD	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the Bethel Police Department to identify preferred locations for radio transmitters in the Route 6 corridor to improve emergency telecommunications. Work with property owners to investigate whether transmitters can be installed as part of future development proposals.</li> </ul>	BPD, PZC	PZD	S	
Encourage redevelopment of underutilized or obsolete land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish zoning incentives that encourage the assembly and consolidation of lots under two acres. Appropriate zoning incentives could include an increase in the maximum commercial floor area limits or a parking reduction.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the zoning regulations in the Route 6 corridor in light of changing market conditions.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	S	

Encourage Mixed-Use Development in the Route 6 Corridor					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Provide a safe transportation network for all users that aligns with the Plan's land use goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete intersection improvements on Route 6 at Garella Road and Sand Hill Road, Benedict Road, and Weed Road.</li> </ul>	CTDOT	DPW, TE, PZC, WestCOG	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider minor widening or the addition of turning lanes on Route 6 if warranted by future development projects.</li> </ul>	CTDOT	DPW, TE, PZC	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider establishing a sidewalk matching grant fund that matches property owner sidewalk investments up to \$5,000. These funds could be used to fill in gaps in the existing sidewalk network.</li> </ul>	BOS	BOF, DPW, TE, PZC	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with CTDOT to incorporate safe pedestrian crossings at all signalized intersections on Route 6. Elements that should be considered include dedicated pedestrian signals, marked crosswalks, and installation of proper signage, especially at Old Hawleyville Road.</li> </ul>	TE	CTDOT, DPW, PZC	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require the installation of pedestrian connections between the sidewalk system and roadway curb at bus stops to facilitate safe bus boardings.</li> </ul>	PZC	DPW, CTDOT	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the installation of bus shelters at heavily used stops in the Route 6 corridor.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities for bus pull-offs in the Route 6 corridor.</li> </ul>	PZD	TE, CTDOT	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for transportation enhancements in the Route 6 corridor in advance of the planned I-84 Danbury Project between Exit 3 and Exit 8.</li> </ul>	BOS	WestCOG	M	
Ensure proper transition areas and buffers between commercial uses and residential neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to maintain current 50-foot setback requirements for commercial developments that abut residential zones.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discourage the removal of trees within the rear yard of new developments on Route 6 in order to maintain adequate visual screening.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	O	

Provide housing opportunities for Bethel’s changing demographics					
Where We’re Going: Objectives	How We’ll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Promote universal design techniques (ensuring the built environment is accessible to anyone regardless of age, disability, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add a definition of universal design in the Town’s zoning regulations.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate universal design techniques into 50% of future affordable housing units.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	M-L	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide financial assistance via the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to developers who meet the 50% universal design threshold.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	M-L	
Provide quality affordable housing for Bethel’s workforce and senior population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain existing Bethel Housing Authority (BHA) units in a state of good repair. Maintain or increase the number of affordable units in BHA properties if they are redeveloped.</li> </ul>	BHA	BOS, BOF	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target affordable senior and workforce housing units within the TOD Overlay Zone and Route 6 corridor near business and services.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to require an affordable housing set aside in the TOD zone, and consider expanding the requirement to other mixed-use areas, such as Route 6 and Grassy Plain Street.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote energy efficiency in new housing as a means of reducing overall housing utility costs.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore tools and incentives to retain existing affordable units with expiring affordability covenants.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower the minimum parking requirements for efficiency and one-bedroom multi-family units to 1 space per dwelling unit plus 0.25 visitor spaces per unit.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower the minimum parking requirements for multi-family developments with two or more units to 2 spaces per dwelling unit plus 0.25 visitor spaces per unit.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	M	

Provide housing opportunities for Bethel’s changing demographics					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Provide housing opportunities for all ages, incomes, and household types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage multi-family housing in areas with sufficient water, sewer and access to transit and services.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD, UD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the development of smaller-scale multi-family projects with ten or fewer units.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support the development of accessory dwelling units.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support services to seniors who choose to age in place, particularly those who live in single-family homes.</li> </ul>	SCD	BOS, BOF	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to educate eligible seniors on the local property tax relief program.</li> </ul>	SCD	Tax Assessor	O	
Support a range of housing densities with higher-density housing concentrated in the village center and lower densities in rural neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a diverse mix of housing types in the Town including large lot single-family developments, small-lot single-family developments, duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and apartments.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain large lot zoning (R-80) in southern and eastern Bethel, particularly areas within a public water supply watershed or aquifer protection area.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	O	

**Build a compatible and connected transportation network for all users.**

Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Continue to enhance the local roadway network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue full-depth reconstruction program on local roadways to ensure high quality upgrades.</li> </ul>	DPW	TE	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete drainage improvements on Plumtrees Road.</li> </ul>	DPW	TE	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement GIS-based asset management system to help track and prioritize local roadway improvements.</li> </ul>	DPW	TE	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with CTDOT to explore ways to reduce truck traffic on local roadways such as Nashville Road, Taylor Avenue, Hoyts Hill Road, Payne Road, Shelter Rock Road, Wolfpits Road, and Walnut Hill Road.</li> </ul>	BPD, TE	CTDOT, WestCOG	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support increasing the vertical clearance of the Route 53 railroad bridge near Sympaug Park Road so that it can accommodate trucks.</li> </ul>	BOS	WestCOG	L	
Enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and improve sidewalk infrastructure in Bethel, particularly in the Downtown, near Educational Park, on Route 6, and on Grassy Plain Street.</li> </ul>	DPW		M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Bicycle Master Plan for Bethel that identifies preferred bicycle routes throughout the Town.</li> </ul>	DPW, PZD	TE, WestCOG	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider utilizing South Street as an alternative bicycle route to Greenwood Avenue through the Downtown.</li> </ul>	DPW		S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand bicycle parking at Town facilities such as public schools, parks and open spaces, and Town offices.</li> </ul>	DPW		S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve sidewalk connections between Educational Park and surrounding residential streets such as Maple Avenue Extension.</li> </ul>	DPW		M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage CTDOT to add bike route signage to state-designated bicycle routes on Route 53 and 58 and provide five-foot shoulders on these routes to properly separate bicycle and vehicular traffic.</li> </ul>	BOS	DPW, WestCOG	L	

Build a compatible and connected transportation network for all users.					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Improve safety for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the recommendations from the Curb Cut Management Plan for Routes 6, 53, 58, and 302.</li> </ul>	DPW	CTDOT	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to monitor safety deficiencies on local roadways, especially unsignalized intersections where local roads meet state roads (such as the intersection of Grand Street and Greenwood Avenue) and pursue funding for safety improvement projects through LOTCIP.</li> </ul>	DPW	TE	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the full suite of traffic calming measures including education, engineering, and enforcement. Initiate a "20 is Plenty" campaign to encourage slower traffic speeds within the Downtown and near the Educational Park.</li> </ul>	BPD, DPW		O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that future bridge and culvert replacement projects on state roadways provide a wide enough crossing to safely accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.</li> </ul>	DPW	TE	M	

Maintain high quality public facilities and services					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Continue to provide high-quality educational facilities and programs	▪ Complete renovations to Johnson and Rockwell Elementary Schools	BOE	BOS, BOF	S	
	▪ Continue to provide high quality educational programming in the public-school system.	BOE	BOS, BOF	O	
	▪ Seek ways to improve use of school buildings for community use and recreational programs.	BOE	PRD	M	
	▪ Complete the Track and Field Training Center.	BOE		S	
	▪ Continue to maintain other school facilities in state of good repair	BOE	DPW	O	
Provide residents with high quality and diverse recreational opportunities	▪ Implement the recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The highest priority recommendations are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ New synthetic field at DeSantis Field</li> <li>○ New multi-use natural grass field on the Educational Park campus</li> <li>○ Parloa Park improvements</li> <li>○ Parking improvements at all of the parks, with Meckauer Park, Rourke field and Freebairn fields considered the most important</li> </ul>	PRC, PRD	BOS, BOF	S	
	▪ Explore opportunities to create pocket parks or tot-lots on Town-owned open space in the Chimney Heights neighborhood. Potential sites include the Chimney Drive Open Space or the Plumtrees School.	PRC	PRD	M	
	▪ Establish a committee to evaluate potential locations of and costs for a community/recreation center. The study should also identify which recreational uses should be incorporated into a future community/recreation center facility.	BOS	PRD, PRC	S	
	▪ Continue to provide high quality recreational programming through the Parks & Recreation Department. Explore opportunities to expand adult recreation offerings for residents age 25 to 40.	PRD	PRC	O	

Maintain high quality public facilities and services					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Align future facility investments with the Town's demographic needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to monitor the adequacy of space at the Senior Center as the senior population grows. Potential areas for expansion include the lower level of the municipal center or expansion into the current Teen Center space.</li> </ul>	SCD	BOS, BOF	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the Teen Center is relocated to an appropriate location in another facility, if it is displaced by the Senior Center expansion in the future.</li> </ul>	BOS	BOF	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a GIS based asset management system shared across multiple Town departments.</li> </ul>	BOS	All Town Departments	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete upgrades to the Municipal Center to make it fully compliant with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).</li> </ul>	DPW	BOS	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a site feasibility assessment of the old police station site to determine the most appropriate future uses of the property. Future uses should be appropriate for the site's location within the 100-year flood zone.</li> </ul>	BOS	PRD, DPW,	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Town services continue to meet the demands of a growing population through regular evaluation of service levels and expansion as necessary.</li> </ul>	BOS	All Town Departments	O	

Maintain high quality public facilities and services					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Make investments in public utilities that align with the Plan's land use goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a site feasibility assessment of the former Paul Street Sewage Treatment Plant to determine if any DPW functions could be relocated there. The assessment should also identify suitable new locations for any functions that are displaced from the current facility, such as debris storage.</li> </ul>	DPW	BOS	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and develop a dedicated wash facility for the Department of Public Works. Ideally, this facility would be in an area served by both water and sanitary sewer infrastructure.</li> </ul>	DPW		M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete upgrades to the Paul Street Pump Station.</li> </ul>	UD	DPW, TE	L	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support upgrades to the Danbury Water Pollution Control Facility.</li> </ul>	BOS	UD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to monitor the adequacy of sewer contracts with the City of Danbury and modify as necessary. Ensure that the contracts continue to include excess sewer capacity to support future development in the Downtown and in the Route 6 corridor.</li> </ul>	UD	TE, PZC, PZD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider adopting a Town-wide water main extension policy that requires developers to pay for extensions.</li> </ul>	BOS	UD	M	

Participate in cooperative efforts to promote the health and wellbeing of the Region					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Work with neighboring towns to enhance transit connections between Lower Fairfield County and Greater Danbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide bus shelters at HART stops, particularly in commercial districts such as Downtown Bethel, Grassy Plain Road, and Route 6.</li> </ul>	PZC	HART	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for enhanced rail service on the Danbury Branch and New Haven Line.</li> </ul>	BOS	WestCOG, Legislators	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support ongoing enhancements to the Danbury Branch Line including installation of positive train control and improvements to the Danbury Dockyard in Norwalk.</li> </ul>	BOS	WestCOG, Legislators	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the visual appearance of gateways along the Danbury Branch Line in conjunction with MTA and neighboring municipalities.</li> </ul>	PZC	WestCOG, CTDOT	L	
Work with neighboring towns in the area of land conservation, greenways, hiking trails, wildlife corridors, and other conservation issues that cross town boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain strong relationships with local and regional conservation groups such as Bethel Land Trust, Redding Land Trust, Housatonic Valley Association, Trout Unlimited, Still River Watershed Association, and others.</li> </ul>	PZD	PZC	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in regional planning efforts related to the proposed Western New England Greenway Trail.</li> </ul>	PZD	WestCOG	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the City of Danbury to protect environmentally sensitive lands such as the Terre Haute property and lands surrounding the Bethel Water Company reservoirs in the City of Danbury.</li> </ul>	UD	PZD, PZC, WestCOG	O	
Work with neighboring communities to identify cost-effective shared-services opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities for cost-effective shared services with neighboring communities through the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG).</li> </ul>	BOS	WestCOG	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to participate in regional waste management initiatives through the Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority (HRRRA).</li> </ul>	BOS		O	

Participate in cooperative efforts to promote the health and wellbeing of the Region					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Continue to participate in regional land use, economic development, and transportation initiatives through the Western Connecticut Council of Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with neighboring municipalities to implement the recommendations from the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).</li> </ul>	EDD	EDC, WestCOG	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to participate in regional land use planning and transportation initiatives through WestCOG.</li> </ul>	PZD	DPW, TE, WestCOG	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in planning efforts for the I-84 Danbury Project.</li> </ul>	BOS	PZD, WestCOG	O	

Protect, connect, and enhance Bethel’s open spaces and natural areas					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Work with public and private partners to protect environmentally sensitive areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Conservation Commission to evaluate and monitor open space opportunities and priorities and provide guidance to land use boards on conservation issues.</li> </ul>	BOS		S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize a range of funding sources for future open space acquisition, including state funds, local bonding, open space trust funds, and private donations.</li> </ul>	BOS	CC, BOF	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue public education and stewardship efforts in partnership with local and regional conservation groups.</li> </ul>	CC	PRD, BLT, RLT	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the use of the P.A. 490 program on privately owned forest or open space lands. Identify property owners who would qualify for the program and provide informational materials on the program benefits.</li> </ul>	Tax Assessor	CC	O	
Improve the quality and utility of existing open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain existing Town-owned open space properties and trails in a state of good repair and better advertise existing open space assets to the public.</li> </ul>	PRD	PRC, CC	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In conjunction with local land trusts, develop additional passive recreational opportunities on the Overlook Property, Franc Preserve, Stephenson Preserve, and other open space areas.</li> </ul>	PRD	PRC, BLT, RLT	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update, maintain and promote local open space and trail maps in user-friendly formats for the public.</li> </ul>	PRD	BLT, RLT	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek permanent protection of the Terre Haute property once the expansion of Clarke Business Park is complete.</li> </ul>	CC	PRD, PZD	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Passive Recreation Plan for the Terre Haute property. The Plan should identify preferred recreational activities for the property and appropriate locations for public parking and trail heads.</li> </ul>	PRD	PZD, CC	L	

Protect, connect, and enhance Bethel’s open spaces and natural areas					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Foster open space connectivity and wildlife corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an Open Space Plan that identifies priority lands and priority corridors for future open space acquisition. The Open Space Plan should evaluate opportunities to connect larger open space properties in southern Bethel (Stephenson Preserve, Wolfpits Preserve, Chestnut Ridge Reservoir, Bald Rock, and Huntington State Park).</li> </ul>	CC	PRD, PRC	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize open space acquisition or dedication in areas with high conservation value, properties that are adjacent to existing open space parcels, and unprotected open space. Encourage the use of deed restrictions to protect these properties in perpetuity.</li> </ul>	CC	BOS	L	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to protect areas listed in the State’s Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) or Critical Habitat database.</li> </ul>	CC		O	
Reduce stormwater runoff and non-point-source pollution to preserve and improve water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider adopting regulations that would mitigate peak flows leaving development sites.</li> </ul>	PZC	PZD	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to update and implement the Town’s Stormwater Management Plan in compliance with state MS4 requirements.</li> </ul>	DPW	TE, CC, PZD	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the MS4 plan, educate the residents on practices they can do to reduce stormwater runoff to improve water quality. Direct them towards additional educational resources from organizations such as the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR).</li> </ul>	DPW	TE	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate landowners on water quality issues and techniques for protecting water quality – removal of invasive species; maintenance or creation of vegetated buffer strips along lakes and streams; use of non-chemical fertilizers and pesticides; septic design and maintenance.</li> </ul>	CC		O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain stream buffers, especially for East Swamp Brook and Limekiln Brook, which are listed as “impaired waterbodies” by CTDEEP.</li> </ul>	CC		O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with the HVA implementing Best Management Practices (BMP) based on recommendations in the Still River Watershed Action Plan.</li> </ul>	PZD	CC	O	

Improve Bethel's Resilience and Sustainability					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Strengthen resiliency to climate change and improve disaster preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement recommendations from Hazard Mitigation Plan to be best prepared for future natural disasters.</li> </ul>	BEM	BOS, BOF	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade the locker room and bathroom facilities at the Municipal Center to enhance its function as an emergency shelter.</li> </ul>	BOS	BOF	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support periodic tree limb inspection and maintenance programs to minimize potential for downed power lines.</li> </ul>	BEM	DPW, TE	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain current Emergency Operations Plans, evacuation plans, supply distribution plans, and other emergency planning documents for the community as appropriate.</li> </ul>	BEM		O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a phased approach to replacing aboveground utility lines with underground utility lines, taking advantage of opportunities such as streetscaping projects.</li> </ul>	DPW, UD	BEM	L	
Encourage sustainable waste management practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to participate in the state product stewardship initiatives for mattress recycling, which gives residents access to free mattress recycling at the transfer station.</li> </ul>	DPW		O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to educate residents on paint recycling and programs. While the transfer station does not currently accept paint, they can be recycled at participating local hardware stores.</li> </ul>	DPW		O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to participate in regional household hazardous waste collections through the Housatonic Resources Recovery Agency (HRRRA).</li> </ul>	BOS		O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to increase transfer station hours and expand the materials accepted for recycling.</li> </ul>	DPW		M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy (CMMS) for the Town to help divert solid waste from disposal. The strategy should align with the State CMMS strategy and should evaluate the feasibility of different diversion strategies such as waste reduction, composting, and expansion of recycling programs.</li> </ul>	BOS	DPW	L	

Improve Bethel's Resilience and Sustainability					
Where We're Going: Objectives	How We'll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Encourage energy efficiency and green energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to participate in the Sustainable CT program and pursue certification points.</li> </ul>	BOS		O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to install solar panels and other renewable energy sources at Town buildings and/or Town-owned parking areas.</li> </ul>	DPW	BOS	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete energy efficiency upgrades at Town buildings and schools.</li> </ul>	DPW	BOS, BOF, BOE	S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote energy conservation techniques for the design and construction of public improvements and infrastructure.</li> </ul>	DPW	BOS, BOF	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the development of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations, especially in Downtown and in the Route 6 corridor. Evaluate the feasibility of using Town-owned land or facilities for charging stations.</li> </ul>	BOS		M	

Capitalize on Bethel’s sense of community, character, amenities, and quality of life					
Where We’re Going: Objectives	How We’ll Get There: Recommended Strategies	Lead Entity	Support Entity	Timeframe	Sustainable Initiative
Market Bethel’s sense of community and quality of life to prospective residents and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue the “Discover Bethel” marketing initiative in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.</li> </ul>	EDD	EDC, Chamber of Commerce	O	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the local real estate community to market Bethel’s community events, quality of life, and sense of community to prospective residents.</li> </ul>	EDD	EDC, Chamber of Commerce	S	
Preserve Bethel’s historical, scenic, and cultural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider establishing a local scenic road ordinance to preserve the character of rural roads such as Chestnut Ridge Road, Codfish Hill Road, and Sunset Hill Road.</li> </ul>	BOS	CC	M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider establishing a Municipal Cultural District in Downtown Bethel pursuant to Public Act 19-143.</li> </ul>	BOS		M	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through the Municipal Cultural District, work with state and regional organizations to market and advocate Downtown Bethel’s cultural resources and tourism opportunities.</li> </ul>	BOS		L	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain strong relationships with local and regional arts organizations such as Bethel Arts and the Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut.</li> </ul>	PRD	Library	O	
Promote and encourage community events and civic opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a Community and Civic Events calendar on the Town website.</li> </ul>	BOS		S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to host community events such as Food Truck Friday, Summer Concert Series, Bethel SummerFest, Winterfest, and the Connecticut Film Festival.</li> </ul>	PRD	PRC, BOS, BOF	O	