

# **PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT 2010**

**Town of Voluntown**

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**Effective: January 1, 2010**

Prepared for the Voluntown Planning & Zoning Commission  
By the  
Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments  
5 Connecticut Avenue  
Norwich, Connecticut 06360

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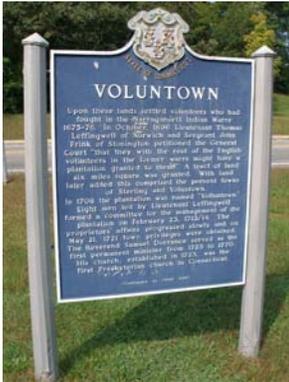
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## INTRODUCTION



Responsibility for preparing a municipal plan of development is vested in the planning and zoning commission by Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The commission last accomplished this task in 2000. Section 8-23 of the statutes also prescribes what is to be included in a plan, and it stipulates that a commission shall review and update its plan at least once every ten years. A plan update will allow the document to reflect the latest information available about the community and the changing attitudes of its citizens. This document is an update of the 2000 plan and, while concise in its layout, should be considered as an amendment to the much of the information in the 2000 Plan. This updated Plan does present both the latest information on Voluntown and its vision for the coming decade.

It should also be noted that a municipal plan of development is a document that presents in narrative and graphic form the way a community would like to grow. It has no real force of law but, rather, serves as a guide for making decisions related to growth and development. The process of preparing the plan involves a close look at the community--its underlying physical form, the way it has developed to date, the characteristics of its population, the institutions and services it provides---to better understand its limitations and attractions, its assets and liabilities.

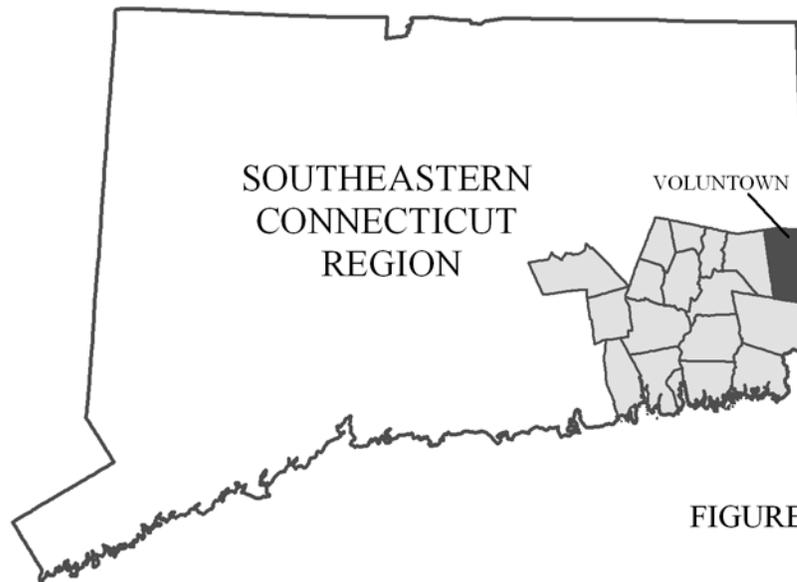


FIGURE 1

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS



The Town of Voluntown covers an area of over 25,000 acres or approximately 39.8 square miles. The topography consists of numerous wetlands and watercourses and broad areas of moderate to steeply sloped land. The Plan of Conservation and Development adopted in 2000 contains detailed descriptions and mapping of the natural features within the town. These development limitations are steep slopes, rock outcrops and shallow-depth-to-bedrock soils, wetlands, and water features. It is estimated that land area, which is outside of both the Pachaug State Forest and the various development limitations, totals approximately 5,000 acres. These are the areas best suited for future development based on the land's physical characteristics. Generally, these areas exist in pockets located along the major state routes in town. Figure 2 shows the combined development limitations.

An example of the extent of the various development limitations in town is as follows:

Slopes of 15% or greater comprise approximately 13.7% of the land area outside of the Pachaug State Forest.

Areas of rock outcrop or shallow-depth-to-bedrock soils comprise approximately 2.9% of the land area outside the Pachaug State Forest.

Wetland soils comprise approximately 26.4% of the land area outside of the Pachaug State Forest.



**INSERT MAP – DEVELOPMENT LIMITATIONS**

## LAND USE

Over the course of the past five decades, the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments and its predecessor, the Southeastern Connecticut Regional Planning Agency have been inventorying land use and land use changes in the southeastern Connecticut Region. The land use information in the Voluntown Plan of Conservation and Development of 2000 represents one of those inventories. This land use data was compiled using aerial photographs and field surveys. This information was then plotted on U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle sheets. This data was tabulated using calculators, planimeters and area-graphs. This process has now evolved to the present use of a computerized geographic information system (GIS). The latest tabulation was conducted in 2005. Now computerized data is overlain with recent air photos on the computer and adjustments made utilizing property line data, where available, or zoning designation and other parcel size information. This technique allows for a more accurate assessment of land use activity and more precise determination of land area. While this tabulated data is now more reflective of land use activity than was the previous land use tabulation efforts, the new information may not be directly comparable to earlier tabulations due to the differences in data collection methods. Nevertheless, the comparison of present and previous data does indicate many proportional similarities. These similarities include the fact that residential land use comprises more than two-thirds of the developed land area in town and that the developed land area is a very small percentage of the towns total area. The 2005 data indicates that the developed land area is 11.4 percent of the total town area. Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional categories each comprises approximately 2 percent or less of developed land with the Transportation and Utility category comprising over a quarter of the developed land area in town. The following Table 1 lists this data while the Land Use Map of Figure 3 graphically depicts this information.

**Table 1**  
**EXISTING LAND USE, 2005**  
**Voluntown, Connecticut**

Use	Acres	Percent of Developed Land	Percent of Total Town Area
Residential Medium and High density	227	7.8	
Residential Low and Very Low density	1,737	59.9	
Industrial	53	1.8	
Commercial	24	1.0	
Institutional	66	2.2	
Transportation & Utilities	792	27.3	
<b>Total Developed Land:</b>	<b>2,899</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>11.4</b>
Open Space	15,369		60.4
Recreation	147		.6
Agriculture	1,095		4.2
Undeveloped	5,947		23.4
<b>Total Town Area:</b>	<b>25,457</b>		<b>100.0</b>

Source: SCCOG

**INSERT LAND USE MAP**

The definitions of the land use categories are as follows:

Residential Medium and High Density: one or more housing units per acre.

Residential Low Density: Less than one housing unit per acre; Very Low Density includes parcels greater than five acres.

Industrial: manufacturing and warehousing includes Extractive activities of sand and gravel operations.

Commercial: retail, wholesale, services, business and professional offices.

Institutional: governmental and institutional buildings and open areas connected with such uses.

Transportation & Utilities: highways, public and semi-public facilities such as gas right-of-ways and communication structures.

Open Space: cemeteries, state forests, public-private preserves, and any water utilities' holdings.

Recreation: public and private parks, playgrounds, camping areas, golf courses, and other outdoor facilities.

Agriculture: agriculture lands such as cropland, orchards, pastures, and dairy, swine, beef, horse farms including land protected under the Connecticut development rights purchase program.

Undeveloped: vacant land including water bodies.



## POPULATION

The census data from 1990 was utilized in the 2000 Plan of Conservation & Development. That Plan discussed decennial census data for the town beginning in 1790. The Plan outlined that it wasn't until the decade of the 1960's that Voluntown's population finally exceeded that of the 19<sup>th</sup> century decennial levels. It also identified that during the 1980's Voluntown had the third highest population growth rate in Southeastern Connecticut.

The census data from 2000 is utilized in this Plan. This census data indicates that while the town's rate of growth during the 1990's has decreased from that of the 1980's its rate is now ranked as the second highest in Southeastern Connecticut. The growth rate during the 1980's was 29.1 percent while during the 1990's the growth rate was 19.6 percent.

Voluntown is now the third smallest populated town in Southeastern Connecticut where in the previous decade it was ranked as the second smallest populated town. The towns of Franklin and Bozrah have smaller populations.



Based upon population estimates from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, since the 2000 census, rates of population growth throughout Southeastern Connecticut have declined. These population estimates indicate that between 2000 and 2007 eight towns in Southeastern Connecticut had higher rates of population growth than Voluntown. These 2007 estimates indicate that Voluntown remains the third smallest populated town of the eighteen towns in Southeastern Connecticut. This information is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2  
POPULATION CHANGE 2000-2007  
Southeastern Connecticut Region**

<b>1990 Census</b>	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2004 Estimate</b>	<b>2007 Estimate</b>	<b>% Change 2000-07</b>
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<b>URBAN TOWNS</b>					
Groton	45,144	39,925	40,522	42,324	6.0
New London	28,540	25,671	26,375	25,923	.9
Norwich	37,391	36,117	36,721	36,432	.8
Urban Total	111,075	101,713	103,618	104,679	3.0

<b>SUBURBAN TOWNS</b>					
Colchester	10,980	14,551	15,334	15,495	6.5
East Lyme	15,340	18,118	18,629	18,690	3.2
Griswold	10,384	10,807	11,194	11,390	5.4
Ledyard	14,913	14,687	15,149	15,097	2.8
Lisbon	3,790	4,069	4,231	4,205	3.3
Montville	16,673	18,546	19,846	19,744	6.5
Preston	5,006	4,688	4,846	4,902	4.6
Sprague	3,008	2,971	3,011	2,981	.3
Stonington	16,919	17,906	18,381	18,343	2.4
Waterford	17,930	19,152	19,089	18,775	-1.9
Suburban Total	114,943	125,495	129,710	129,622	3.3

<b>RURAL TOWNS</b>					
Bozrah	2,297	2,357	2,446	2,444	3.7
Franklin	1,810	1,835	1,927	1,891	3.0
North Stonington	4,884	4,991	5,201	5,212	4.4
Salem	3,310	3,858	4,058	4,102	6.3
<b>Voluntown</b>	<b>2,113</b>	<b>2,528</b>	<b>2,632</b>	<b>2,612</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Rural Totals	14,414	15,569	16,264	16,261	4.4

<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>240,432</b>	<b>242,777</b>	<b>249,592</b>	<b>250,562</b>	<b>3.2</b>
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Source: U.S. Census Bureau and CT Department of Public Health Estimates.

When the population from 1990 and 2000 for Voluntown and its neighboring towns is compared it shows Voluntown's growth rate to be second only to the Town of Sterling. The same was found during the 1980's. However, during the 1980's the change in absolute numbers ranked Voluntown as fifth of the six towns. During the 1990's the change in absolute numbers ranks Voluntown as third of the six towns. This information is shown on the following table 3.

**Table 3**  
**POPULATION**

TOWN	1990	2000	1990-2000 CHANGE	
			NUMERICAL	PERCENT
Voluntown	2,113	2,528	415	19.6
Sterling	2,357	3,099	742	31.5
Plainfield	14,363	14,619	256	1.8
Griswold	10,384	10,807	423	4.1
No. Stonington	4,884	4,991	107	2.2
Preston	5,006	4,688	-318	-6.4

Source: U.S. Census

Census data also shows that the median age in Voluntown continues to increase. Nevertheless, the town remains a relatively “young” community. In 1980, the median age in Voluntown was 30.9 years. By 1990, this figure had increased to 32.5 years. In 2000, the median age in Voluntown was 36.3 years. The following Table 4 compares population by age groups from the 1980 to 2000 census. The table shows that as a percentage of total population, each age group has remained fairly stable. This trend was recognized in the 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development, and is one that continues.

**Table 4**  
**POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 1980-2000**

Year	Total	(0-4)		(5-17)		(18-64)		(65+)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1980	1,637	117	7.2	339	20.1	1,005	61.1	176	10.2
1990	2,113	150	7.1	422	20.0	1,340	63.4	201	9.5
2000	2,528	156	6.2	515	20.1	1,616	63.9	241	9.5

Source: U.S. Census.

Another important data point to note is that the school age children group of 5-17 year olds is larger in the 2000 census than had been projected in the town’s 2000 Plan, which was an estimate. That estimate was 450 children and depicted a decreasing trend for that age group until 2020. The 2000 U.S. Census has 515 children in that 5-17 year old age group. The present (2008/2009) school enrollment for grades pre-kindergarten to eighth is 307 students. The present school enrollment generally shows a decreasing class size in the early grade levels. The total school enrollment including high school is 461 students.

The Connecticut State Data Center projects that the public school population, grades 1 to 12, will decline statewide. This projection is to the year 2020. The State Data Center also found that between 2006/7 and 2007/8 school years, 66% of public school districts had no growth or experienced falling enrollment in grades 1 to 12. The Voluntown Elementary School experienced a decline of 5 students, or -2.0%, during this time period.

With regard to population projections, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) has computed this information for Connecticut municipalities. In the case of Voluntown, a population of 2,780 is forecast for 2010 and, 3,090 for 2020. This increase would represent a growth rate of 22.2 percent between 2000 and 2020. As a comparison, the population of the Southeastern Connecticut Region is forecast to increase at a rate of 12 percent during the same time period.

## HOUSING

The availability of safe, sanitary and affordable housing is widely recognized as a basic need. Housing type, whether owner-occupied, a rental unit, single-family or multi-family, defines a community's character in a variety of ways. Single-family homes continue to dominate in Voluntown. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, single-family units comprised 92.8 percent of the town's housing stock.

During the 1980's Voluntown's percentage of housing stock growth relative to its existing stock was the fourth highest within Southeastern Connecticut at 26.6 percent. The 2000 U.S. Census details that during the 1990's this housing stock growth rate, while a slightly lower percentage, at 22.6 percent was the third highest within Southeastern Connecticut. This information is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**

<b>Town</b>	<b>1990 Housing Units</b>	<b>2000 Housing Units</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Salem	1,245	1,655	410	32.9
Colchester	4,150	5,407	1,257	30.3
<b>Voluntown</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>1,091</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>22.6</b>
Preston	1,689	1,901	212	12.6
Lisbon	1,400	1,563	163	11.6
No. Stonington	1,858	2,052	198	10.7
East Lyme	6,772	7,459	687	10.1
Waterford	7,357	7,986	629	8.5
Stonington	7,923	8,591	668	8.4
Montville	6,283	6,805	522	8.3
Griswold	4,211	4,530	319	7.6
Franklin	666	711	45	6.7
Bozrah	874	917	43	4.9
Sprague	1,109	1,164	55	4.9
Ledyard	5,250	5,486	236	4.5
Groton	16,598	16,817	219	1.3
Norwich	16,472	16,600	128	.8
New London	11,970	11,932	-38	-.3
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>96,717</b>	<b>102,667</b>	<b>5,950</b>	<b>6.2</b>

Source: U.S. Census, Ct. Department of Economic and Community Development.

Data available from the Connecticut Department of Economic Development indicates that since 2000 the growth rate in Voluntown's housing stock has decreased from the rate of the 1990's. The change in housing stock between 2000 and 2008 has been an increase of 6.6 percent. When compared with its neighbors, Voluntown's housing stock growth rate is fifth out of the six towns during the 2000 to 2008 time period as shown in Table 6.

Between 1990 – 1996 Voluntown’s housing stock growth rate placed second in this group.

**Table 6  
Comparative Housing Stock**

<b>Town</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>Number 2000-08</b>	<b>% Change 2000-08</b>
Voluntown	1,091	1,138	1,163	72	6.6
Sterling	1,193	1,330	1,449	256	21.5
Plainfield	5,676	5,884	5,991	315	5.5
Griswold	4,530	4,727	4,915*	385	8.5
No. Stonington	2,052	2,166	2,229	177	8.6
Preston	1,901	1,990	2,078	177	9.3

Source: U.S. Census, Ct. Economic Resource Center, Inc., The Warren Group, SCCOG.

\*SCCOG Estimate

### Housing Costs

In 1990, the U.S. Census indicated that the median value of an owner-occupied housing unit in Voluntown was \$121,500. The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that this value increased to \$124,200.



Since the 2000 Census housing values have changed significantly. First increasing rapidly until 2007 when prices began to fall. Data available from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center indicates that the median sales price in Voluntown for 2007 was \$245,000. This compares with the median sales price of \$265,000 for New London County and \$295,000 for the State. At present the housing market is volatile. The latest Real Estate information from The Warren Group indicates that the 2008 median sale price of single-family dwellings in Voluntown was \$208,000. The Warren Group information also states that the median sales price of a single-family house in Connecticut declined 9.15% during 2008 when compared to 2007. Neighboring states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island posted larger declines at 11.6% and 13.2% respectively. The decline in the median sales price in New London County was 11.3% for this same time period.

The following Table 7 details the change in the median sales price of single-family residences for Voluntown and neighboring towns between 2007 and 2008. As in the other information detailed in this document, this information is listed to show proportional change and is not intended to reflect absolute change in dollar amounts between these towns.

**Table 7  
Comparative Housing Sales Price, 2007 and 2008**

Town	Median Sales Price		% Change 2007-2008
	2007	2008	
North Stonington	\$297,500	\$267,950	- 9.9
Griswold	\$224,000	\$201,500	-10.0
Plainfield	\$209,000	\$181,200	-13.3
Voluntown	\$245,000	\$208,000	-15.1
Sterling	\$242,450	\$190,722	-21.3
Preston	\$309,000	\$195,000	-36.9

Source: The Warren Group

**Assisted Housing:**

The State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development compiles information on the number of assisted housing units in each Connecticut municipality and the percentage of total housing stock that those assisted units represent. This information is presented in the following table. It is utilized to determine if a municipality is exempt from the “Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure” outlined in Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes. Municipalities in which at least 10 percent of the dwelling units are classified as “assisted” are exempt from this appeals procedure. When a developer appeals a Planning & Zoning Commission denial of an affordable housing application, the General Statutes places the burden on the local commission to prove that the denial is necessary to protect substantial public interests in health and safety.

“Affordable housing development”, as defined, includes certain governmentally assisted housing, as well as any housing development in which 30 percent or more of the dwelling units will be conveyed by deeds containing covenants or restrictions requiring those units to be sold or rented for at least 40 years at prices deemed affordable to persons and families having an income no greater than 80 percent of the area median income, or 80 percent of the state median income, whichever is less. Additionally, of the number of dwelling units conveyed, a number equal to 15 percent of those shall be sold or rented to persons and families whose income is less than or equal to 60 percent of the median income.

In 1996, Voluntown had 5.88 percent of its housing stock classified as assisted. This percentage was the sixth highest in the Southeastern Connecticut Region. At that time there were four of the eighteen municipalities within the region with assisted housing units that exceeded 10 percent and therefore exempt. The 2008 information indicates that 4.12 percent of Voluntown’s housing stock is presently in this category. This percentage ranked Voluntown as ninth of the eighteen municipalities in the region. In 2008 there were three municipalities within the region that are classified as exempt from CGS

Section 8-30g. Given the rapid increase in housing prices during the last several years it is not surprising to see the percentage of affordable housing units decline.

An example of an affordable house price, using the requirements defined by the Connecticut General Statutes and the 2005 median income for Voluntown, is estimated utilizing a FHA mortgage calculator. The median income in 2005 was \$63,364. The mortgage rate used for this example is 5 percent. This results in a housing price of \$175,000 for persons or families at 80 percent of the median and \$120,000 for persons or families at 60 percent of the median income. Corresponding rental rates would be \$1,300 a month for persons or families at 80 percent of the median income and \$1,000 a month for persons or families at 60 percent of the median income. These calculated housing prices and rental rates should not be considered as absolute in order to qualify as affordable housing. They are presented only as an example. Additionally, to be classified as “affordable” a dwelling would have to be deed restricted to be sold using the same affordable methodology.

## ECONOMY

The town's economy greatly influences land use and transportation decisions. A town's economy does not stand-alone. It is integrated into a much broader geographical area. Since the early 1990's, the economy of southeastern Connecticut has undergone a significant restructuring as it continues its transition from one of the nation's most defense-dependent to a more diversified economy. The reduction of defense industry jobs and the growth in the tourism and entertainment industry has presented continuing challenges. Added to these challenges is the recent economic recession, which is a global event, and one that is likely to impact the town, region, state, and nation for the near future. This section reviews several economic indicators that highlight recent trends.



Although the regional economy is somewhat more diverse today than it was in 1990, the region remains highly dependent on a small number of very large employers. Information gathered in 2004 indicated that the five largest employers accounted for 40 percent of the total employment in southeastern Connecticut. These major employers are; Foxwoods Resort Casino, the U.S. Naval Submarine Base, Mohegan Sun Casino, Electric Boat Corporation, and Pfizer Corporation. While the number of employees at

these facilities has been in flux since 2008, it is estimated that they still account for a similar percentage of total employment in southeastern Connecticut.

### Labor Force Characteristics

Southeastern Connecticut has a relatively educated and skilled workforce. The educational attainment of the population has improved during the 1990's, with increases in those persons who have attained high school degrees and those with advanced degrees. The percentage of the population with a high school degree increased from 80.5 percent in 1990 to 85.7 percent in 2000. The percentage of the Southeastern Connecticut population with advanced degrees increased from 21.8 percent to 25.3 percent during that same time period. Even with this improving trend, the percentage of college graduates in Southeastern Connecticut in 2000 is 6 percent behind that of the overall state population. The 2000 U.S. Census data shows that in Voluntown 86 percent of the population held high school degrees, while 17 percent of the population held advanced degrees.

The 2000 U.S. Census information that profiles southeastern Connecticut's employed labor force, indicates that the characteristics of the region's labor force are similar to that of the state as a whole, with a few exceptions. One of the exceptions is in the Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental Leasing category. The region reported 4.1 percent of its workers in this category versus 9.8 percent statewide. The other exception, not surprisingly, is that 15.9 percent of regional workers were classified within the Arts,

Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, and Food Service category. The state reported 6.7 percent of employees in that job category.

### Unemployment

Unemployment data from the 2000 Census Bureau indicate that 4.3% of the total civilian regional labor force in southeastern Connecticut, 16 years and older, were unemployed. Data from previous census years reported higher regional unemployment percentages such as 5.9% in 1990, and 5.6% in 1980. Review of labor force data from the Connecticut Department of Labor since 2000 indicate that the overall rate of regional unemployment has hovered around the 2000 Census percentage until this past year. Data indicates that the 2008 annual average unemployment rate for the Connecticut portion of the Norwich-New London Labor Market Area is 5.6 percent.

The unemployment rate in Voluntown reflects that of the Labor Market Area. At the end of 2007 the annual average unemployment rate was 4.7 percent. Initial data indicates that the unemployment rate for 2008 has increased to 6.5 percent.

### Median Household Income

In 1989, Voluntown had a median household income of \$35,699. This median household income ranked Voluntown 14<sup>th</sup> out of 18 towns in southeastern Connecticut. This figure also represented a 121.5 percent increase when compared to the 1979 median household income. Voluntown's median household income for 1999 is \$56,802. This figure represents a 59 percent increase from 1989 and puts Voluntown's regional ranking at 7<sup>th</sup> out of 18 towns. The estimated median household income for 2005 is \$63,364. This figure would maintain Voluntown's regional ranking at 7<sup>th</sup> out of 18 towns and represent an 11.5 percent increase since 1999.

### Poverty

Between 1989 and 1999, the number of persons living below the federal definition of poverty in the region increased by 2.6 % to a total of 15,349. This represents a change from the previous decade where persons living below the poverty threshold had decreased by 18 percent. The town of Voluntown has followed a similar pattern. The number of persons in the poverty status decreased by 19.1% between 1979 and 1989. Between 1989 and 1999, persons living below the poverty threshold increased by 11% going from 110 to 122 individuals.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The Voluntown transportation system consists of approximately 48.17 miles of road. This is an increase of two-thirds of a mile in road since the last Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted. Of the present road mileage 29.39 or 37.9 percent are state routes. The remaining 29.91 miles or 62.1 percent are town-maintained roads.

### **Functional Classification**

Under the federal-aid highway functional classification system for rural areas, Voluntown's major routes remain in the two categories outlined in the 2000 Plan. They are rural minor arterial and rural major collector.

In Voluntown State Route 138 is classified as a "rural minor arterial road" and State Routes 49 and 165 are classified as "major collector roads". All other roads in Voluntown are classified as "local access roads". These local roads are used primarily to provide access to abutting properties.

### **Traffic**

The 2000 Plan reviewed average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on state highways in town for the years 1988 and 1997. This Plan adds the latest ADT volumes from 2007 for comparison. It should be noted that the 2007 road segments on which counts were recorded, vary from previous years making some direct comparisons impossible, nevertheless the latest volumes do give a sense of traffic volume change along the state roads in town. Average Daily Traffic volumes for selected years are shown in Table 8.

In general the change in traffic volumes on state roads has been modest during the past decade, although certain lengths of road have experienced a larger increase. The Village area contains several of those lengths. One is on Route 138 between the Griswold town line and Church Street; another is on Route 165 between Church Street, Route 49, and Route 138. While over half of this increase seems to be pass through traffic using Church Street to continue through to Routes 49, 138, and 165, the remaining traffic is being generated or attracted by the Village itself. Additionally, traffic volumes on Route 49 between the Wylie School Road area and the Sterling town line have almost doubled since 1997.

**Table 8  
AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC  
1988, 1997, & 2007**

ADT					
Route	Segment	1988	1997	2007	Percent change 97-07
<b>49</b>	N.S./Vol. Town line – Rt. 165	1,000	1,400	1,700	21.4
	End overlap with Rt. 138 – Wylie Sch. Rd./Pachaug Forest	1,500	1,800	2,200	22.2
	Pachaug Forest/Wylie Sch. Rd. – Vol./Ster. Town line	900	1,000	1,900	90.0
<b>138</b>	Gris./Vol. Town line to Church St.			6,600	
	Church St. to Rt.s 49 & 165			5,500	
	Gris./Vol. Town line to Rts. 49 & 165	4,500	5,700		
	Rts. 49 & 165 – Rt. 49	5,200	6,900	7,900	14.5
	Rt. 49 – Rt. 165	2,400	5,000	5,300	6.0
	Rt.165 to state line	900	1,100		
	Rt. 165 to James Rd.			1,400	
	James Rd. to state line			1,100	
<b>165</b>	Gris./Vol. Town line to Rt. 49	1,700	2,700		
	Gris./Vol. Town line to Church St.			2,700	
	Church St. to Rt. 49			3,300	
	Rt. 49 to begin overlap with Rt. 138	2,700	3,500	3,700	5.7
	End overlap with Rt. 138 to James Rd.	2,300	3,500		
	End overlap with Rt. 138 to Forge Hill Rd.			3,800	
	Forge Hill Rd. to James Rd.			3,100	
	James Road to state line	1,300	2,400	2,500	4.2

## Accidents

The last Plan of Conservation and Development contained somewhat detailed information on the number and location of traffic accidents during a three-year period from 1994 to 1997. This type of detailed accident information is no longer available. The generalized data that is available, for 2004 through 2006, indicates that the traffic accident numbers on state roads has remained somewhat constant, and with the slight increase in traffic volumes the latest accident numbers are a positive indicator of safer travel. The following Table 9 lists the accident numbers on state roads for the time periods indicated.

**Table 9**  
**ACCIDENTS ON STATE ROADS IN VOLUNTOWN**

Road	Accident Number	
	4/1/94 – 3/3/97	1/1/04 – 12/31/06
Route 49	26	21
Route 138	45	44
Route 165	25	25
Total	96	90

In a general sense the 1994 – 1997 data indicated that over one-quarter of the traffic accidents occurred in the Village area. The generalized 2004 – 2006 data seems to indicate that the highest number of accidents occurred along the length of road between the overlap of State Routes 49, 138, and 165 on the east side of the Village to the split of Routes 138 and 165. Additionally, the length of Route 49 north of Routes 138 and 165 to the vicinity of Wylie School Road seems to be prone to a higher number of accidents.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Voluntown Historical Society, Inc. has researched and compiled a list of historically significant features in town. This list includes 22 structures and one cemetery dating back to the 1600's and continues through to the 1800's. This information is documented in a volume titled "Voluntown Historic Properties" and is available for review in the Town Library. The primary author of this work is Nan Chapman.



The Historical Society was incorporated in 1971. The Society has worked to obtain recognition of the Wylie Schoolhouse, on Ekonk Hill Road, to the National Historic Register and the Methodist Church, on Main Street, to the State Historical Register.

The Society has documented the following structures in town.

### 1600's

- Fish Home, route 138.
- Gallup Homestead, Gallup road.

### 1700's

- Robbins Tavern, Beach Pond Road.
- Jolin House, 43 Main Street.
- Heikman Place, 71 North Shore Road.
- Emma's Cottage, 39 Main Street.
- Kinne/Davis Home, 224 Kinne Road.
- Dr. Campbell House, 539 Beach Pond Road.
- Alice Young House, 4 North Shore Road.
- Old Tanner Homestead, 426 Wylie School Road.
- House (Kinne), 90 Main Street.
- House, 118 Preston Road.
- Tanner House, Ekonk Hill Road.
- Kinne House, Main Street.
- Lillibridge House, 20 Lillibridge Avenue.
- Kaufman House, Preston and Pendleton Hill Roads.
- Lachapelle House, Lillibridge Avenue.
- Rix House, Main Street.
- Ezra Briggs House, 30 Beach Pond Road.
- Robbins Cemetery, Beach Pond Road.

### 1800's

- Wylie Schoolhouse, Ekonk Hill Road.
- Methodist Church, Main Street.
- Baptist Church, Main Street.

## **MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Municipalities provide many services to residents. Some of these, such as emergency services, are an everyday necessity while others, such as recreational services, enhance a town's quality of life. Providing municipal services requires funding for capital needs, such as town buildings, and for operational needs, such as staff. The town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the fiscal years 2006-2012 is attached as Appendix "A". The CIP is a schedule of anticipated capital expenditures over a period of time. It is a valuable planning tool to determine equipment and facility needs. It is regularly reviewed and updated. The funding for all municipal needs, is provided through tax revenues, state and Federal monies, and through municipal bonds. This section summarizes the various municipal facilities and services.

### **Nursing Services:**

The health needs of Voluntown's elementary school children are administered by a school nurse, under the direction of the Board of Education, from an office in the school building. All of the town's other health services are provided by contract with the Day Kimball Hospital. These services range from monthly general health clinics to home health care. The financial support for these services is derived from local appropriation, various grants, and payments for health services made by third party insurers.

### **Library:**



The town library is located adjacent to the Town Hall on Main Street in the former post office. It provides 1,800 square feet of space for the library's books and electronic media and allows patrons computer access for various programs as well as Internet access. The Library foresees a need for additional space in the near future to allow for program expansion.

The operation of the library is funded by state grant and town appropriation.

### **Elderly Housing:**

The town's elderly housing complex is located on Main Street (Route 138), east of the town hall, on a 4.5-acre parcel of property. This complex was constructed in 1970 utilizing State of Connecticut Elderly Housing Program funds. The complex contains 20 housing unit with a small community/meeting room.

This facility is completely self-sufficient. Greenwood Manor is granted a tax waiver by the town and relies on grants from the state for major re-construction needs, such as re-roofing.

While town appointed board members oversee the daily operation and maintenance of the facility, the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority has oversight authority with regard to items such as rental structure and capital improvements.

### **Elderly Services:**

The Municipal Agent for the Elderly coordinates senior meetings and events utilizing the Town Hall or Firehouse as meeting locations. The lack of a permanent Community Center for seniors is viewed as hampering the number of sponsored events for senior's as well as attendance at the various events that are held.

### **Town Hall:**



The existing town hall building located on Main Street (Route 138) has some 3400 square feet of floor space. This building houses the town's administrative offices and a meeting room.

### **Town Garage:**

The present town garage is located behind the town hall and accessed from Gate Street. It is a structure, which contains some 2,000 square feet of space and is used for vehicle and equipment storage. The building does not have a central heating system or bathroom facilities. Additionally, the building is not large enough to allow for the inside storage of all of the town's vehicles and equipment. This limitation requires equipment such as a backhoe to be stored outside thereby subjecting them to the weather and vandalism.

The town presently stores its road sand and salt at the former landfill site which is located on Route 138/165, a 1/4 miles to the east of the Voluntown garage.

Due to the size limitation of the present garage, the town would like to construct a larger building, which would allow for inside storage of the town's vehicles and equipment as well as providing space for vehicle maintenance. This new building would be, at a minimum, approximately 30' by 50' in size. The site for this building is proposed to be located on the 16-acre parcel behind the school.

### **Waste Disposal:**

The towns of Voluntown and Sterling jointly operate a Solid Waste Transfer Station on Brown Road in Voluntown. A five-member Commission oversees the facility. The Commission is comprised of 2 members appointed from each town with the fifth member being the Chief Elected Official of either Voluntown or Sterling. The Chief Elected Official is also the Commission Chairman. The Chairmanship rotates from one town to the other on an annual basis.

While the Town of Voluntown owns the property the facility is located on, the building and waste equipment are jointly owned. Waste is sent to the Resource Recovery Facility located in Preston. Re-cycleables are source separated.

This facility has been in operation for some fourteen years and is viewed as extremely beneficial for both towns.

### **Recreation:**



The Voluntown Recreation Commission manages the town's recreation facilities and various recreation programs in town. One of the facilities is Constitution Field. This is a multi-purpose recreation field located adjacent to the Voluntown Elementary School. The elementary school, Little League, and Men's League use this field. This property, which is 5.9 acres in size, was given to the town with the restriction that it be used for recreation purposes.

Another parcel, also given to the town with use restrictions, is the property located to the west of Constitution Field behind the Town Garage. This property fronts on Saw Mill Pond. The Recreation Commission has improved this property with walking paths to Saw Mill Pond, a pavilion, and an area for vehicle parking. The overall size of this parcel, which also contains the town garage, is 6 ½ acres.

Another major town recreation facility that the Commission oversees is the beach facility, called Finn Beach. Finn Beach is located on the western shore of Beach Pond. This small sandy beach is located on State of Connecticut property and, by agreement, maintained by the town. Parking for town residents is provided on property located on the north side of North Shore Road, generally across the road from the beach. The parking area is located on private property rented by the town.

The Recreation Commission also sponsors men's basketball and coordinates, and supports, youth soccer and a little league program, which includes the towns of Griswold and Lisbon. The Commission is also exploring the potential for other venues, such as activities with the senior citizens or local fairs.

The Recreation Commission is funded through the town budget for operating expenses and charges user fee's to offset costs of the various programs.

### **Police Protection:**

The town does not have its own police department or utilize the resident state trooper program available from the State of Connecticut. The State of Connecticut Department of Public Safety "Troop E" out of the Montville Barracks provides police protection.

### **Ambulance Services:**

The town ambulance service has been incorporated with the Fire Department and utilizes the Firehouse on Preston City Road (Route 165) for office and garage facilities. Co-locating emergency services is a practical approach to providing separate but same category services. The ambulance service is funded through an annual appropriation from the town budget and public contributions.

The service maintains one ambulance. This ambulance was purchased as a new vehicle two years ago. Volunteers staff the service. Presently there are 16 trained technicians and five other individuals in training.

At present the service responds to some 200 calls a year. Not surprisingly, the number of calls increases during the summer months with the increase in the number of visitor's to town. The service has also noticed a general increase in automobile accident calls over the past few years. This can be attributed to the increased pass-through traffic traveling to the region's gaming facilities.

The present arrangement for providing emergency ambulance service in Voluntown should be satisfactory for the near future. This is provided that emergency equipment is regularly updated and an adequate number of trained volunteers are available. Presently, off-work hours (5P.M. to 6A.M.) are staffed well. Maintaining off-work hour and daytime work hour coverage is the constant challenge of this much-needed volunteer service. Volunteer availability will, to a large extent, define the viability of this present form of service.

### **Fire Protection:**



Voluntown has one volunteer fire company that responds to fires and accidents. The Voluntown Volunteer Fire Company is located on Preston City Road (Route 165). This fire station also houses the town's ambulance service. The firehouse was built in the late 1970's with an addition constructed in the 1980's. The fire company has a variety of equipment, which includes 2 tanker trucks, a forestry unit, a rescue truck, a Humvee, a boat, and a pick-up truck. The facility and equipment is adequate to meet the town's needs in the near future.

The company presently has 50 volunteer's whom are able to respond as needed. In Voluntown, as in other towns throughout Connecticut, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find people available in the town during weekdays to respond to emergencies. At some point in the future this is likely to lead to the need for paid full- or part-time personnel. For the present and near future volunteer staffing is meeting the town's needs.

An important component of fire protection is the company's ability to access water sources. As growth occurs, it is important for the town to keep in mind the need for

water sources within reasonable distances of development. Requiring fire ponds and fire lanes should be considered in the review of all development proposals.

### **Education:**



The Voluntown Elementary School, located on a 10.4-acre parcel on Main Street (Route 138) is the town's only educational facility. It is here that 307 children in grades pre-kindergarten through 8 currently receive formal class instruction. The Town's total student enrollment, including high schools, is 461.

The last few years have seen the student enrollment figures maintain a consistent rate.

Voluntown's high school enrollment currently totals 154 students. They attend a variety of regular and vocational high schools in neighboring towns, with the majority enrolled at the Norwich Free Academy. No significant change is expected in these arrangements in the foreseeable future.

As reviewed in the Population Background Study, the growth in the 5-17 year old age group has exceeded projected growth rates, based on 1990 census data, made by various sources including the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management. The evidence of this discrepancy is the present school enrollment figures.

At present there is one portable building, which houses the Central Office (Superintendent's Office and Board of Education).

The present student enrollment utilizes all existing spaces and there are no students—age 3 through 8<sup>th</sup> grade—in special education outplacements. This has resulted in significant cost savings in the tuition and transportation costs for special education, but all space is now in full use.

Norwich Free Academy, as part of a long-term planning process, has completed a "Projected Enrollment Report by Grade to 2017" for each of the sending towns. Voluntown's PreK to 8<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment remains constant and gradually increases from the current 307 to a projected 322 in 2017.

## SUMMARY

- Land area without significant development limitations typically exists in pockets along state routes in town. This characteristic was identified in the 2000 POCD and remains constant.
- Developed land area comprises approximately 11.4% of the town's total land area.
- The 2000 population figure for Voluntown is 2,528. The population is projected to increase to 3,090 by 2020. If reached, this increase would represent a 22.2% increase from 2000.
- The population growth rate has decreased during the 1990's compared with the 1980's, although this rate remains high within southeastern Connecticut.
- The population growth rate estimates for the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century indicate a continuation of a decreasing rate of population growth.
- During the 1990's Voluntown had the third highest growth rate in housing stock in southeastern Connecticut.
- When compared with its' neighbor towns and the 1990's, the growth rate in housing for the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has decreased.
- During the 1990's the median value of owner-occupied housing increased modestly, at 2.2%, while the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century saw this value double. Since 2007 the median housing value has decreased by 15.1 percent.
- With increasing housing values the percentage of "affordable housing" units, in town, continues to decline.
- Initial data indicates that the unemployment rate in town for 2008 has increased to 6.5 percent.
- Between 1989 and 1999, the number of persons living below the poverty threshold increased by 11% in town.
- The estimated median household income in town for 2005 is \$63,364, which is an increase from the 1999 figure of \$56,802.
- The change in traffic volumes on state roads has been modest during the past decade.
- The traffic accident numbers on state roads has remained somewhat constant when comparing the 1994-1997 and 2004-2006 data.
- The latest traffic accident data indicates that over one-quarter of the traffic accidents occurred in the Village area.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Retain Voluntown's rural character throughout as much of the town as possible.

Protect the natural resources of Voluntown, particularly the quality of surface and ground waters.

Promote energy conservation in all public and private development in the town.

To the extent possible, promote community water systems to serve the dense development along the shore of Beach Pond, Bailey Pond, and the Voluntown Village.

Maintain a safe, attractive, and socially sound living environment for present and future residents of all ages.

Encourage a variety of housing types, designs, and settings to accommodate present and future residents of all age groups and economic levels.

Protect residential property values by avoiding the addition of incompatible land uses in established residential areas.

Promote a concentration of land development to occur within the Village area as outlined on the future land use plan.

Preserve and enhance those features in the town that have historical and architectural significance.

Provide municipal facilities and services adequate to meet the needs of all Voluntown's residents.

Promote efficient location for the town's municipal buildings, including storage areas associated with public works functions and education facilities.

Encourage opportunities for more economic development.

Avoid strip commercial development along the frontage of the town's highways.

Confine major new economic development to lands directly accessible to state highways.

Promote access management techniques through land use regulation to the maximum extent possible.

Promote architectural design standards which have styles typical of New England and which are harmonious within each locational setting for commercial development.

## **PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

This Plan is based on the analysis of the physical, social, and economic conditions in Voluntown and input from the public. The Planning & Zoning Commission distributed the Plan to key locations in town, such as the library and town hall, to the Board of Selectman, the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, and posted notification of its availability for review to residents by town newsletter. The proposed plan update was also posted on the town's website. The Plan was adopted after conducting a public hearing.

The framework within which future development will take place in Voluntown continues to be fragile. Approximately two-third's of the town's 39.8 square mile area is dedicated to the Pachaug State Forest. Approximately one-quarter of the town's land area, outside of the Pachaug State Forest, is undeveloped and is located in pockets scattered throughout town. Many of these areas will require the construction of new roads to allow for appropriate access. Some of these areas are also intersected by wetland soils and rock outcrops. No area in Voluntown is served by municipal or other community sewer systems. Groundwater wells are the source of water supply, with the vast majority of these being individual on-site wells. These are the areas where, and conditions under which, development pressures will continue.

The Plan promotes a pattern of future growth that radiates outward from the village center in density and intensity of land uses. At the same time, it acknowledges the limitations imposed by the natural resource base and strives to preserve and protect these features as much as possible.

The Plan assumes that Voluntown will continue to experience a slow but steady increase in population during the next decade. The attractiveness of the town, in terms of both its residential settings and its accessibility to major employment centers, will not change. Voluntown will continue to be known as a desirable place to live. This additional growth will place increased demand on public facilities. It is estimated that with few exceptions, the towns present public facility framework will be able to meet this new demand during the coming decade. A major challenge the town faces will be in attracting new businesses to serve the towns population. This challenge is heightened due to the typical requirements of many retail and service developments. Such developments require proximity to a large population via, at a minimum, arterial highway access. In most situations Voluntown may have to face the fact that travel to larger shopping areas are required to meet most retail and service needs of residents. Nevertheless, Voluntown can be home to various small retail and service businesses such as automotive services, restaurants, or similar convenience activities and should strive to promote the village area for those types of uses. This strategy enhances the town's sense of community. The remainder of the town is designated primarily for residential development. The Planning & Zoning Commission will consider amending the zoning regulations to allow residential development at various densities in town as physical characteristics warrant. Presently the town requires a minimum lot size of 120,000 square feet in the Rural District with

300 feet of road frontage. This requirement could be reduced in various areas of town. The Development Limitations map in this Plan can assist in guiding that evaluation. The Plan also provides for large-scale non-residential development along State roads, which would be compatible with specific site and area characteristics appropriate for such development.

Additionally, the towns' Capital Improvement Program is an integral component of this Plan and reflects additional priority items. It is envisioned that future amendments to the Capital Improvement Program continue to be considered as such.

Specific community ingredients and further recommendations are as outlined in this section. The Future Land Use Map, shown on Figure 4, depicts a generalized summary of proposed uses and locations.

## **TOWN CENTER**

Routes 138 and 165 traverse Voluntown Village, located on the western edge of town. This area fits the mold of a traditional New England town center. This area includes the elementary school, the public library, the town hall, the town's public works building, the town recreation field, the town green, churches and stores.

The Plan recommends a continued strengthening of the town center. To this end the Planning & Zoning Commission could consider permitting the various commercial and residential uses allowed in the Village and Village Commercial Overlay District to be located together on the same parcel where all requirements addressing parking, on-site utilities and other zoning standards can be met. Such mixed-use settings could add to the Village Center both functionally and esthetically. If this concept is considered, further consideration should be given to expanding the Village District boundaries to replace those of the Village Commercial Overlay District. In this scenario the Village Commercial Overlay District would be deleted.

It continues to be important to incorporate into the zoning regulations requirements, which address street landscaping, pedestrian access, traffic and vehicle access standards and architectural standards for the Village Center. These requirements should not be excessive but clear and manageable, as they will set the tone for the operation and esthetics of the Town Center.

## **RESIDENTIAL**

Outside of Voluntown Village, the town's evolving pattern of residential settlement can be described as "dispersed." During the 1980's, Voluntown had a housing stock growth rate which was 26.6 percent making it the fourth highest in southeastern Connecticut. Census data for this same time period also indicates that the number of vacant housing units decreased by 13 percent, which had the effect of increasing the occupied housing stock by 29.1 percent. Virtually all of the new homes were built along the frontage of

existing town roads and state highways. There were only two new cul-de-sac roads constructed.

In spite of numerous development limitations caused by wetlands, steep slopes and shallow-to-bedrock soils throughout much of the town, Voluntown's housing stock continued to grow at a steady pace during the 1990's. There have been two additional new cul-de-sac roads constructed during the 1990's.

The minimum lot size for residential development varies from either 40,000 square feet in the area of Voluntown Village or 120,000 square feet throughout the rest of the town. The requirement for a 120,000 square foot lot size was adopted in 1998. Prior to 1998, the minimum lot size for residential development outside of the Village was 80,000 square feet. As noted above the Planning & Zoning Commission will consider amending the minimum lot size for residential development to that which existed prior to 1998, at least in the areas of town found suitable, due to soil conditions suitable for non-engineered on-site sewage disposal systems.

Two-family dwellings are permitted throughout town. Multi-family and Elderly housing developments are permitted in the Village area.

Other important uses in the Rural District are agricultural and forestry activities. While these are permitted uses in the zoning regulations, along with Specialized Agricultural Buildings listed as a Special Exception, a clarification of these uses through definition in the regulations would go a long way to minimize confusion. Such clarification can also be added to the Specialized Agricultural Building definition. Agriculture is typically defined as land used for the cultivation of plants, the production of human food and fiber or other useful and valuable plant products, the production of animals, livestock and poultry useful to man and the environment. Forestry typically means the practice of creating, managing, using, and conserving forests for human benefit. These practices typically yield commercial forest products or new forest growth.

The Commission should also consider density bonuses for residential developments, which would set aside that increase in the number of lots for affordable housing development as defined by Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes.

## **COMMERCIAL**

The plan does not envision Voluntown as becoming a major focus of commercial development. Voluntown is, and will continue to be, a rural residential community. Other communities in southeastern Connecticut have already attracted large commercial activities, which serve the major shopping needs of their residents as well as neighboring towns like Voluntown. In addition, the major commercial concentrations in the neighboring towns are served by public water and, in most cases, community sewage disposal systems, features that are necessary to support intensive commercial development.

Voluntown's present commercial uses cover all the general categories, from businesses that primarily serve Voluntown residents, to businesses that serve people that pass through town, to specialty establishments that attract customers from outside of town. The size and scale of these businesses are small and reflect the rural nature of the town and immediate surrounding area.

An objective of the Plan is to continue to provide opportunities for growth in commercial activities, which are typically needed to serve the basic needs of residents as well as to provide an expanded tax base. It is envisioned that some opportunity exists for the location of small offices in the Village area. This should occur while minimizing any adverse impacts on residential properties. The existence of the town's well-defined center is an asset to this objective.

Finally, in areas outside of the village center, certain types of commercial activities such as automotive services, motels and camping supply stores are presently permitted by special permit. This process will continue to allow the town to regulate the expansion of commercial activities.

## **INDUSTRIAL**

There are two areas in town where intensive industrial-type uses have been approved. One is on Pendleton Hill Road at the intersection of Green Falls Road and the other is on Brown Road. Only the Pendleton Hill Road location is designated as a Major Development District.

The town zoning regulations presently permit major commercial, industrial, or institutional uses to locate anywhere in town, as a special permit, provided certain environmental and site conditions are met. These large-scale activities may occur in special zones called Major Development Districts. This zoning designation is not intended for small retail and business establishments. The minimum lot size for these proposals is 10 acres. The regulations also require such activities to have direct access to a state highway. The Plan recommends maintaining this "floating zone" form of regulatory review for large-scale intensive non-residential activities. While this procedure allows the town a great amount of flexibility with regard to land utilization for intensive uses, it does pose some long-term concerns. In the long-term, as residential development expands, there will be fewer areas left that will not present compatibility problems with a Major Development District proposal. The zoning regulations should require buffers between residential areas and Major Development Districts such that the composition and distance of the buffer is based on the specifics of the proposed activity. The more intensive the major development use, the greater the buffer requirement.

## **MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

It is anticipated that in the coming decade, the town will need to expand, or otherwise improve, several facilities that serve the public. It should be noted that this assessment is

based on the present zoning plan. Significant changes to the present zoning plan may result in changes in population growth and accordingly on the demand for various services. The following is intended to provide a general discussion of those facilities, which are to be considered in addition to the items listed in the town's Capital Improvement Program.

Town Garage. The present town garage, located behind the town hall, is inadequate to meet the present needs of the town's public works operation. The building is small and without central heat or bathroom facilities. A larger building would allow for inside storage of equipment and for building maintenance. Such a building is greatly needed.

This new building would be, at a minimum, approximately 30' by 50' in size. The site for this building is proposed to be located on the 16-acre parcel behind the school.

Community Center. The lack of a permanent Community Center continues to hamper the number of events for seniors in town, as well as services for teenagers and young adults. A building that can address the social and indoor recreation needs of various segments of the community is a growing need. Such a facility would be appropriately located in the Village in proximity to governmental offices, the public library, and outdoor recreation opportunities. A Community Center would be a good fit in a town complex which could include a town garage, as discussed under that heading.

Library. The town library located on Main Street adjacent to Town Hall provides 1,800 square feet for various programs. The Library foresees a need for additional space in the near future to allow for program expansion. This could be accomplished with an addition to the present building.

Highways. No new town roads are recommended by the Plan. The town needs to systematically upgrade the local road system as necessary and as funds allow. This should satisfy Voluntown's local road needs in the decade ahead. There are traffic control measures, which the town has been promoting, which must be completed. These measures primarily involve state roads in the Village area. They are:

- a) Re-alignment of the intersection of Routes 138/165 and Shetucket Turnpike. Presently Shetucket Turnpike intersects with Routes 138/165 at an odd angle adjacent to the Cemetery. The proposal is to have Shetucket Turnpike turn into Routes 138/165 at more of a right angle to create a "T" intersection. This will result in better sight line clearance and a safer access. Even with this re-alignment, the Shetucket Turnpike/Routes 138/165 intersection will still be some 300 feet east of the Route 49 intersection with Routes 138/165. A safer long-term road layout, which

should be promoted, is to have Shetucket Turnpike continue west above the Cemetery until it intersects with Route 49 some 750 feet north of Route 138/165.

- b) Better definition of the intersection of Route 49 and Routes 138/165. Re-grading of the shoulders and re-paving the travel-way are necessary at this intersection.
- c) Re-alignment of Route 165 with Route 138 to allow for better traffic flow. While creating a signalized “T” intersection was under consideration in the past presently this idea has evolved to creating a roundabout at this location. This could combine the two travel-ways presently on Route 165, the east and west bound travel on Route 138 as well as the possibility of local road access to Beachdale Road. This will allow for better sight line and controlled traffic movements. It will also assist in defining the Village area and aid in traffic calming as traffic enters the Village from the east.
- d) The town should also continue to work with The State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, to pursue other traffic calming measures (signage, landscaping, etc.) in the Village area.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP

## **Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor**

In 1994, the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley was officially designated by Congress as a National Heritage Corridor. This designation recognizes the unique historic and natural assets of the 25 towns within the corridor. This area is often referred to as the “Last Green Valley” in the sprawling coastal megalopolis engulfing the eastern seaboard from Boston to Washington, D.C.

In March of 1996 Connecticut Governor John G. Rowland designated Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc., (QSHC, Inc.) as the “suitable administering organization” to manage projects and funds from the federal legislation. QSHC, Inc., has no regulatory authority. Its mission is to assist in the development and implementation of integrated cultural, historical, and recreational land resource management programs that will retain, enhance, and interpret the significant features of the Corridor.

The Town of Voluntown is proud to be part of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, and supports the vision of its management plan:

Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor will preserve its natural, historic and cultural assets while its residents enjoy a quality of life based on a strong, healthy economy compatible with its character. This will be accomplished through local, regional and state cooperation, and partnerships with business, organizations and residents. Town government will play the pivotal role, as land use decisions will remain, as they historically have been, at the local level.

### **PLAN CONSISTENCY**

This Plan was compared with the Locational Guide Map in the 2005-2010 State Plan of Conservation and Development and found to be generally consistent with that Plan.

In addition, this Plan was compared with the 2007 Regional Plan of Development for the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments and found to be generally consistent with that Plan.

## **APPENDIX**