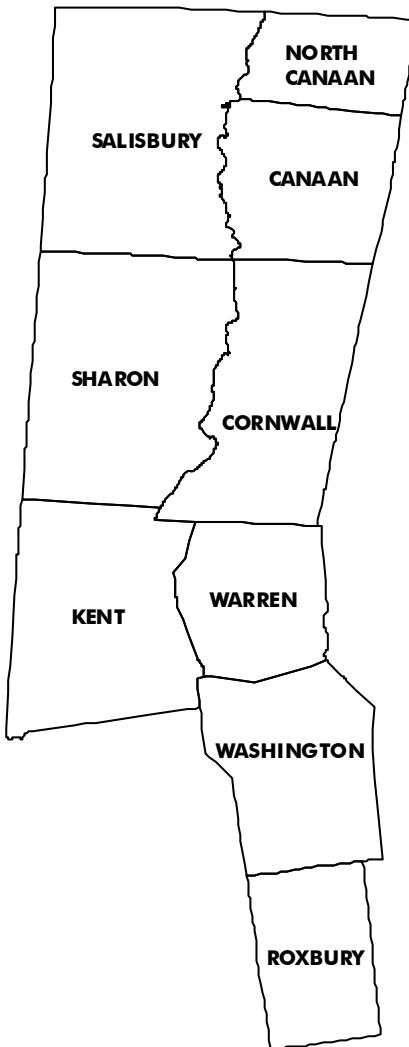


NORTHWESTERN CT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT



**NORTHWESTERN CT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
JANUARY 2009**

NORTHWESTERN CT. COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

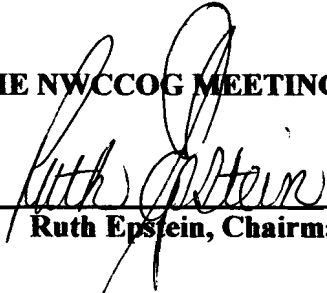
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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STAFF

DAN MCGUINNESS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LOIS PINNEY, FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR

APPROVED AT THE NWCCOG MEETING ON JANUARY 8, 2009



Ruth Epstein, Chairman

**NORTHWESTERN CT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
2009**

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INTRODUCTION

The Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments (NWCCOG) is comprised of nine member towns - Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, North Canaan, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, Warren and Washington. The NWCCOG's Board is made up of the first selectman from each member town. The NWCCOG provides a regional forum for information exchange and cooperation on issues of mutual concern to member communities and delivers technical assistance and information services to the towns. The assistance and services range from organizing workshops for land use commissioners to researching state legislation to providing an administrative umbrella for a prescription drug program.

The NWCCOG is one of fifteen regional planning organizations (RPOs) in Connecticut. Formed in 1985, the NWCCOG succeeded the Northwestern Ct. Regional Planning Agency which was formed in 1972. Although membership in the NWCCOG is voluntary, the boundaries of the State's fifteen RPOs were established by the State more than forty years ago. Of the fifteen RPOs, the NWCCOG is the smallest in terms of total population (23,460 in 2005) and has the lowest population density (271 persons per square mile).

According to State legislation, regional plans of conservation and development are to contain recommendations a wide variety of issues including land use, affordable housing, transportation, agriculture, and public utilities. The regional plan is, of course, strictly advisory. The 2005 legislation also requires that the RPO's plan: "identify areas where it is feasible and prudent (1) to have compact, transit accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed use development patterns and land reuse, and (2) to promote such development patterns and land reuse" as well as note any "inconsistencies with the State Plan's six "growth management principles." This Plan fulfills the State requirements.

From the NWCCOG's 1989 Regional Plan of Development:

There seems to be little question that towns in the region want to maintain their rural character, however differently each town elects to define that.

From the State Plan of Conservation and Development 2004 - 2009: State Growth Management Principles:

(A) Redevelopment and revitalization of regional centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure; (B) expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs; (C) concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse; (D) conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and traditional rural lands; (E) protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety; and (F) integration of planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional and state-wide basis.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

Native Americans lived in the Region approximately 10,000 years prior to the arrival of European settlers. A site along the Shepaug River in Washington is the “earliest dated human occupation site in the State.” The Wawyachtonoc, a tribe of the Mahican Confederacy, and the Schaghticokes were the Region’s principal tribes. The Schaghticokes have a State recognized reservation in Kent.

Incorporation of the Region’s Towns began in the mid-1700s. By 1800, the Towns had, with one exception, assumed their present day shape and size. The exception is that in 1858, what is now the Town of North Canaan split from the Town of Canaan.

Although considered primarily agricultural, the Region had a thriving iron industry throughout the late 1700s and 1800s. North Canaan’s Union Depot was a major rail hub in the late 1800s through the early 1900s. The Region’s varied history and culture continue to influence the ways residents use and enjoy the Region. It is especially evident in the work done to preserve the Region’s historic structures including the iron furnaces and the Union Depot.



- From colonial times through the late 1800s, the Region was a center of the American iron industry. More than twenty iron furnaces operated in the Region. The iron works supplied cannons to American forces during the American Revolution and to Union forces during the Civil War. Today, the Beckley Furnace in North Canaan and the Kent Furnace are probably the best known - and best preserved - remnants of this once important industry.

From Ed Kirby’s *Echoes of Iron in Connecticut’s Northwest Corner*:

“Including cannon captured from the British, and those supplied by France and Spain, the Salisbury Furnace accounted for about 43% of the total used by colonists in the war for independence. But in terms of all cannon made in the colonies (depending on the source quoted) as much as 75% came from the old furnace at Factory Pond.”

- Seven of the Region’s nine towns – Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, North Canaan, Salisbury, Sharon, and Warren – are in the federally recognized Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area (UHVNHA). The UHVNHA consists of twenty-nine municipalities in northwestern Connecticut and western Massachusetts.

The UHVNHA “has been created as a means of heightening appreciation of the region, preserving its natural and historic resources, improving the local economy and quality of life, controlling undesirable growth, and promoting the cleanup of the Housatonic River.” As a result of federal designation, the UHVNHA is eligible to receive federal funding to accomplish its mission. The UHVNHA is in the process of creating a management plan to guide its efforts.

- The State Statutes authorize “historic district commissions” to regulate the buildings’ appearance within specific areas. Two-thirds of the property owners in a proposed district and a majority of the legislative body must vote in favor of a district for it to take effect. Within the Region, the Towns of Kent, Roxbury, Salisbury, Sharon, and Washington have historic districts commissions. Locally created historic district commissions are not to be confused with National Register Historic Districts.
- The Region is fortunate to have numerous buildings, structures and districts on the National Register of Historic Places. While some districts consist of only a half dozen or so buildings, others are quite extensive. The Roxbury Center Historic District, for example, contains seventy-two buildings. While listing on the National Register does provide a limited measure of protection in regards to Federal and State actions, it does not restrict what private owners can do with the property.

From *The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment, 2002:*

A national heritage area is a part of our country’s landscape that has been recognized by the United States Congress for its unique contribution to the American experience. It has a distinctive history and geography, nationally important resources, and a story of broad interest to tell. It brings coherence and meaning to the complex history of a region.

From the US National Parks Service website (<http://www.nps.gov/nr/index.htm>):

Listing in the National Register honors a historic place by recognizing its importance to its community, State or the Nation. Under Federal law, owners of private property listed in the National Register are free to maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose provided that there is no Federal involvement. Owners have no obligation to open their properties to the public, to restore them or even to maintain them, if they choose not to do so.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AND DISTRICTS				
Town	Places and Districts		Town	Places and Districts
Canaan	Falls Village District		Salisbury	Burton Brook Bridge
	Holabird House			John C. Coffing House
	Music Mountain			Lakeville Historic District
	South Canaan Congregational Church			Lime Rock Historic District
Cornwall	Cornwall Bridge Railroad Station			Mount Riga Ironworks Site
	Cream Hill Agricultural School			Salisbury Center Historic District
	Rt. 4 & Rt. 7 Bridge over Housatonic River			Scoville Powerhouse
	Red Mountain Shelter			Scoville Memorial Library
	Rumsey Hall		Sharon	Cream Hill Shelter
	Major General John Sedgwick House			Ebenezer Gay House
	West Cornwall Bridge			George King House
Kent	Captain Phil Beardsley House			James Pardee House
	Bull's Bridge			Sharon Historic District
	Flanders Historic District			Sharon Valley Historic District
	Kent Iron Furnace			Governor Smith Homestead
North Canaan	Beckley Furnace		Warren	Warren Congregational Church
	Canaan Village Historic District		Washington	Calhoun-Ives Historic District
	Samuel Forbes Homestead			New Preston Hill Historic District
	Isaac Lawrence House			St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
	Union Depot			Sunny Ridge Historic District
Roxbury	Roxbury Center Historic District			Washington Green Historic District
	Roxbury Iron Mine and Furnace Complex			

Source: US National Park Service

Place Names

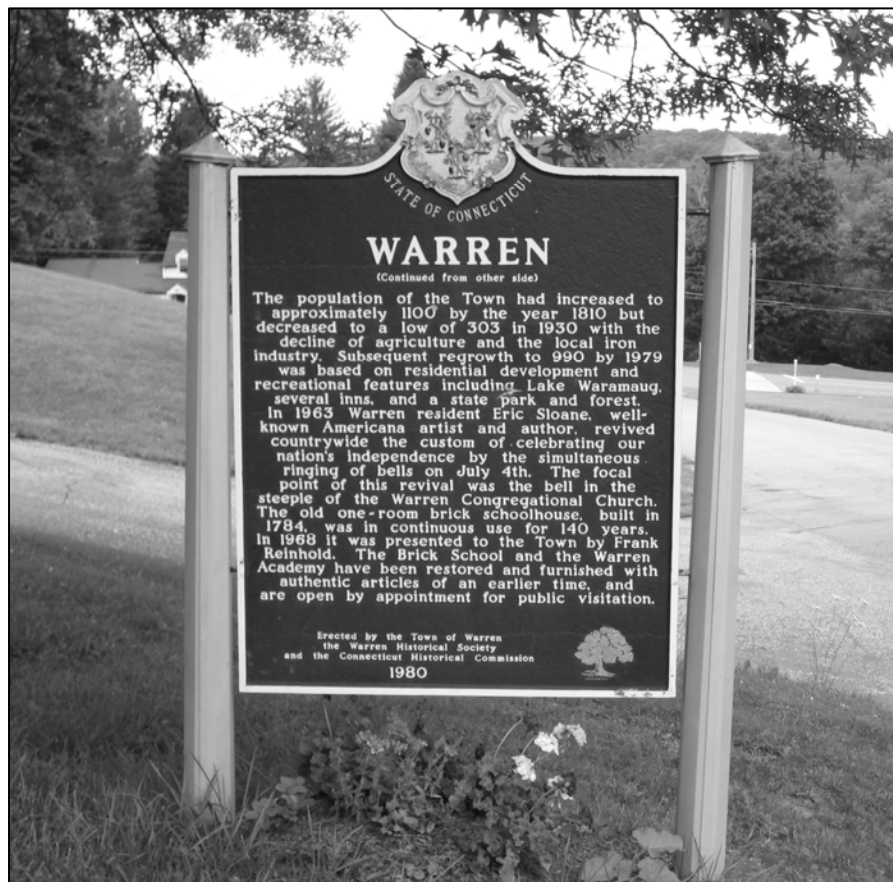
People are routinely baffled by the local place names. A short guide to some of the more confusing local names follows.

The Town commonly referred to as “Falls Village” is officially the Town of Canaan. The post office address for the Town Hall is “Falls Village.”

What is commonly referred to as “Canaan” is officially part of the Town of North Canaan. The post office address for the Town Hall is “Canaan.” The area called “East Canaan” is also part of the Town of North Canaan.

Cornwall’s covered bridge is in the part of Cornwall called “West Cornwall.” The part of Cornwall called “Cornwall Bridge” has a two lane uncovered highway bridge over the Housatonic River.

The post offices of Washington Depot, Washington, New Preston and Marbledale all cover the Town of Washington. The Town of Warren, much to the residents’ chagrin, is without a post office.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

The decennial US Census remains the benchmark for population as well as other demographic characteristics. It is the starting point for all the population estimates and projections done throughout the decade. Although generally reliable, even the US Census Bureau makes errors. In the 2000 Census, significant housing undercounts occurred in Washington and Salisbury. These housing undercounts led to distortions in the population counts and, consequently, in subsequent estimates and projections. The errors also led to doubts about the Census's accuracy in the Region's other towns. But, despite the undercounts and doubts, the 2000 Census remains the most accurate source of demographic data for the Region.

The US Census Bureau also does annual estimates of municipal level population. A key piece of information used in developing these estimates is the number of housing units. The Connecticut Department of Public Health, in turn, uses these estimates as the basis for calculating birth and death rates.

Although changes in total population are important, changes in the age cohorts are, in many ways, even more significant. Age cohorts affect what services are needed - senior citizens' centers or new elementary schools or both - and the ability of the town to provide those services. For example, the 0 to 4 age cohort in 2000 was 22.5% less than in 1990. This would indicate that the pressure for more classrooms could ease in the coming years.

The Region remains overwhelming white (96.5%) and non-Hispanic (98.2%). For the 2000 Census, people were allowed to declare as more than one race. While this is a more accurate assessment of an individual's race, it makes comparisons with previous Census information problematic. Note that Hispanic Origin is not a racial category; a person of Hispanic Origin can be of any race.

- In four of the six decades between 1940 and 2000, the Region's percentage increase in population was less than the State's increase.

From the US Census

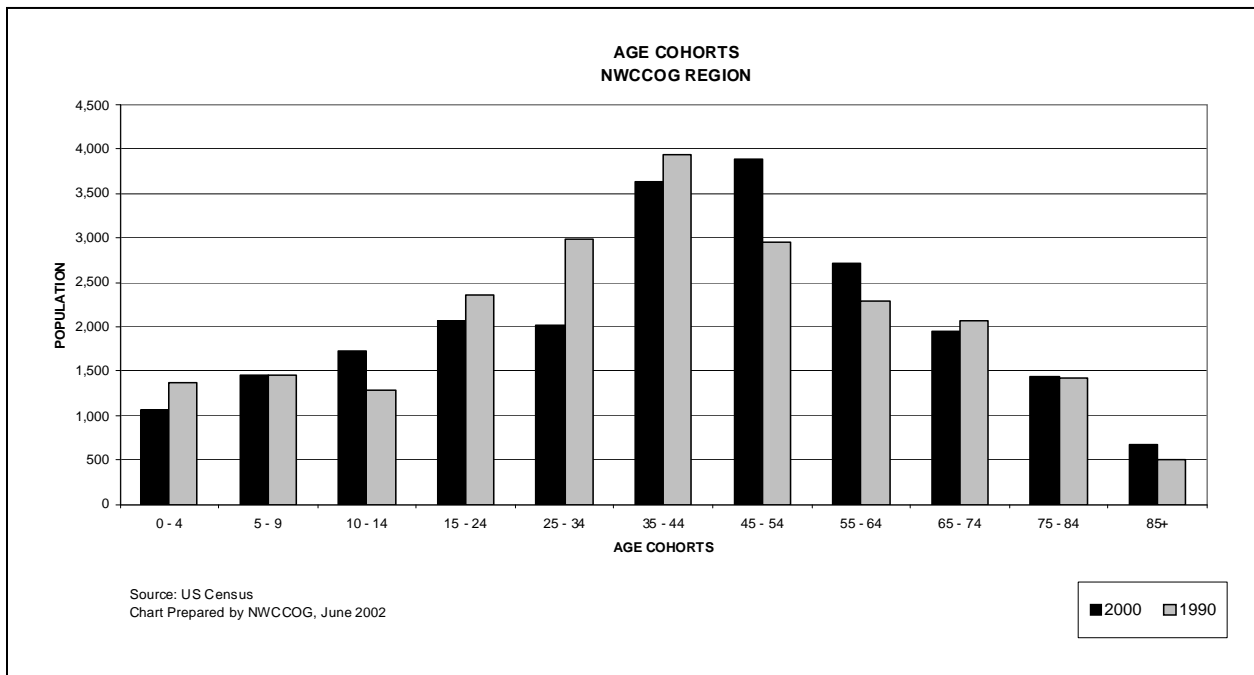
website: www.census.gov

Census 2000 was the largest peacetime effort in the history of the United States.

Information about the 115.9 million housing units and 281.4 million people across the United States will be available in a variety of formats and media, including the Internet, CD-ROMs, DVDs, and printed reports. This brochure provides a brief introduction to the information available from Census 2000, Census 2000 geography, maps, and data products.

- Roxbury is the only town in the Region where the population has increased more than 10% in all six decades between 1940 and 2000.
- Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage increase in population of eight of the Region's nine towns was less than the State's increase.
- The Region's age cohorts experienced dramatic changes in the 1990s. For example, the number of 10 to 14 years olds increased 34.7% between 1990 and 2000 while the number of 25 to 34 year olds decreased 32.1%.
- In 2000, 30% of the Region's population was 55 or older.
- The State was 81.6% white while the Region was 96.5% white.
- Less than 2% of the Region's population was of Hispanic origin.

AGE COHORTS – NWCCOG REGION				
				%
AGES	2000	1990	CHANGE	CHANGE
0 – 4	1,066	1,375	-309	-22.5%
5 – 9	1,464	1,464	0	0.0%
10 - 14	1,725	1,281	444	34.7%
15 - 24	2,072	2,360	-288	-12.2%
25 - 34	2,024	2,981	-957	-32.1%
35 - 44	3,629	3,936	-307	-7.8%
45 - 54	3,880	2,962	918	31.0%
55 - 64	2,711	2,287	424	18.5%
65 - 74	1,953	2,065	-112	-5.4%
75 - 84	1,448	1,423	25	1.8%
85+	682	513	169	32.9%
TOTAL	22,654	22,647	7	0.0%
Source: US Census Bureau				



POPULATION								
		1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
CANAAN	#	555	708	790	931	1,002	1,057	1,081
	% Change		21.6%	10.4%	15.1%	7.1%	5.2%	2.2%
CORNWALL	#	907	896	1,051	1,177	1,288	1,414	1,434
	% Change		-1.2%	14.7%	10.7%	8.6%	8.9%	1.4%
KENT	#	1,245	1,392	1,686	1,990	2,505	2,918	2,858
	% Change		10.6%	17.4%	15.3%	20.6%	14.2%	-2.1%
NORTH CANAAN	#	2,304	2,647	2,836	3,045	3,185	3,284	3,350
	% Change		13.0%	6.7%	6.9%	4.4%	3.0%	2.0%
ROXBURY	#	660	740	912	1,238	1,468	1,825	2,136
	% Change		10.8%	18.9%	26.3%	15.7%	19.6%	14.6%
SALISBURY	#	3,030	3,132	3,309	3,573	3,896	4,090	3,977
	% Change		3.3%	5.3%	7.4%	8.3%	4.7%	-2.8%
SHARON	#	1,611	1,889	2,141	2,491	2,623	2,928	2,968
	% Change		14.7%	11.8%	14.1%	5.0%	10.4%	1.3%
WARREN	#	328	437	600	827	1,027	1,226	1,254
	% Change		24.9%	27.2%	27.4%	19.5%	16.2%	2.2%
WASHINGTON	#	2,089	2,227	2,603	3,121	3,657	3,905	3,596
	% Change		6.2%	14.4%	16.6%	14.7%	6.4%	-8.6%
REGION	#	12,729	14,069	15,929	18,394	20,652	22,648	22,654
	% Change		9.5%	11.7%	13.4%	10.9%	8.8%	0.0%
CONNECTICUT	#	1,709,242	2,007,280	2,535,234	3,032,217	3,107,576	3,287,116	3,405,565
	% Change		14.8%	20.8%	16.4%	2.4%	5.5%	3.5%
Source: US Census Bureau								

Households

The Census Bureau defines households as one or more persons living in a separate housing unit. Households run the gamut from a husband and wife with ten children to a 20 year old with his first apartment.

The number of households in the Region increased by 1.1% between 1990 and 2000. The reason the number of households increased more than the population is that the average household size declined in seven of the Region's nine towns. Small changes in household size have significant impacts on the number of households. For example, average household size in North Canaan declined from 2.42 to 2.38 between 1990 and 2000. This 1.7% decline means that an additional twenty-one housing units were needed in 2000 to house the same number of people as were in the 1990 households.

As you might expect from the decline in household size, the number of one person households increased in eight of the Region's nine towns. In all of the Towns, one person households accounted for at least one out of every five households. In Salisbury, one person households accounted for slightly more than a third of all households.

- Roxbury and Warren had the highest average household size (2.52 persons per household); Salisbury had the lowest average household size (2.12 persons per household).
- Fewer than one-third of the Region's households had a person less than 18 years in age. The percentages ranged from a high of 31.9% in North Canaan to a low of 26.8% in Sharon.
- The percentage of households with persons 65 years of age and older ranged from a high of 32.6% in Salisbury to a low of 25.2% in Roxbury.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE				
	1980	1990	2000	% CHANGE 1990 TO 2000
CANAAN	2.53	2.45	2.43	-0.8%
CORNWALL	2.44	2.27	2.33	2.6%
KENT	2.63	2.42	2.43	0.4%
N. CANAAN	2.57	2.42	2.38	-1.7%
ROXBURY	2.66	2.54	2.52	-0.8%
SALISBURY	2.37	2.25	2.19	-2.7%
SHARON	2.51	2.36	2.26	-4.2%
WARREN	2.77	2.63	2.52	-4.2%
WASHINGTON	2.67	2.57	2.42	-5.8%
Source :US Census Bureau				

From the Ct. State Data Center website

www.ctsdc.uconn.edu

CtSDC, located within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) at the University of Connecticut, serves as the state's official liaison to the U.S. Census Bureau and seeks to develop a single portal for all socio-economic data sets for the State of Connecticut and its municipalities. Prior to its creation in 2006, Connecticut had been without a state data center for more than five years.

The Center's mission is to assist the state in meeting its obligations to provide reliable, timely population estimates and projections, to enable the state to evaluate the accuracy of official federal counts of Connecticut's population, to enhance state and municipal capacity to develop and evaluate policies, and to plan future development.

Population Projections

In 2007, the Ct State Data Center produced population projections at the State and municipal level. These projections cover the period 2000 to 2030 in five years increments. The projections are done by five year age cohorts and by race. Unfortunately, the projections for all of the Region's towns except Warren and Washington are still considered preliminary. The State Data Center anticipates that the final projections will be slightly lower than the preliminary

numbers. The final projections, however, are not expected to be available until late 2008.

- Connecticut’s population is projected to grow slowly between 2000 and 2030 – an 8.6% increase. The Region’s population growth is projected to be even slower (7.1%).
- Between 2000 and 2030, the two towns with the largest projected population growth are Cornwall (15.6%) and Kent (26.2%).
- Roxbury’s population increased by 10% or more every decade since the 1940s. It is, therefore, surprising that the Roxbury projections show a 9.3% decline between 2000 and 2030.
- In 2000, the median age in all of the Region’s towns except North Canaan was at least 4.7 years above the State median of 37.6 years. North Canaan’s median was the same as the State’s median. This trend is projected to continue. By way of comparison, the US median age in 2000 was only 35.3 years.

State Population Projections							
						Change	%
	2000	2005	2010	2020	2030	2000 - 2030	2000 - 2030
Canaan	1,177	1,163	1,148	1,105	1,024	-153	-13.0%
Cornwall	1,432	1,460	1,496	1,586	1,655	223	15.6%
Kent	2,858	2,968	3,126	3,455	3,608	750	26.2%
North Canaan	3,350	3,394	3,437	3,510	3,568	218	6.5%
Roxbury	2,140	2,154	2,119	2,026	1,941	-199	-9.3%
Salisbury	4,032	4,037	4,384	4,907	4,594	562	13.9%
Sharon	2,968	2,994	3,175	3,411	3,231	263	8.9%
Warren	1,244	1,268	1,282	1,327	1,367	123	9.9%
Washington	3,596	3,643	3,630	3,513	3,421	-175	-4.9%
Region	22,797	23,081	23,797	24,840	24,409	1,612	7.1%
State	3,408,029	3,494,925	3,534,086	3,622,774	3,702,400	294,371	8.6%
Source: CT. Data Center							

Income

The Region is typically characterized as a very wealthy rural enclave. Median household incomes, however, should serve to correct that misperception. In 1999, of the Region’s nine Towns, five had median household incomes that differed from

the State's median by less than 2%; one was significantly below the State's median; and three were significantly above the State's median.

Prior to adjusting for inflation, every Town, except North Canaan, had double digit percentage increases in median household income between 1989 and 1999. After adjusting for inflation, only three towns, Roxbury, Canaan, and Cornwall, showed any increase. Roxbury had both the highest median household income and the largest percentage increase between 1989 and 1999. Roxbury's median was more than 30% higher than Washington's, which had the Region's second highest median and more than twice the median in North Canaan, which had the Region's lowest.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
			%
	1999	1989	CHANGE
CANAAN	\$54,688	\$35,950	52.1%
CORNWALL	\$54,886	\$38,937	41.0%
KENT	\$53,906	\$42,029	28.3%
NORTH CANAAN	\$39,020	\$35,922	8.6%
ROXBURY	\$87,794	\$51,633	70.0%
SALISBURY	\$53,051	\$41,141	28.9%
SHARON	\$53,000	\$41,500	27.7%
WARREN	\$62,798	\$46,875	34.0%
WASHINGTON	\$65,288	\$48,704	34.1%
LITCHFIELD COUNTY	\$56,273	\$42,565	32.2%
STATE	\$53,935	\$41,721	29.3%
Source: US Census Bureau			

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION			
			%
	1999	1989	CHANGE
CANAAN	\$40,660	\$35,950	13.1%
CORNWALL	\$40,807	\$38,937	4.8%
KENT	\$40,079	\$42,029	-4.6%
NORTH CANAAN	\$29,011	\$35,922	-19.2%
ROXBURY	\$65,274	\$51,633	26.4%
SALISBURY	\$39,443	\$41,141	-4.1%
SHARON	\$39,405	\$41,500	-5.0%
WARREN	\$46,690	\$46,875	-0.4%
WASHINGTON	\$48,541	\$48,704	-0.3%
LITCHFIELD COUNTY	\$41,839	\$42,565	-1.7%
STATE	\$40,100	\$41,721	-3.9%
Source: US Census Bureau			

LAND COVER / LAND USE

The University of Connecticut's Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) has created a series of "land cover" maps for the years 1985, 1990, 1995 and 2002. The land cover information is based on remote sensing information from the US LANDSAT satellites.

Land cover is not the same as land use. For example, while a land *use* map may show a ten acre parcel with a single family residence as "residential," the land *cover* map may show most of the same parcel as "deciduous forest" and a small section as "developed."

CLEAR's land cover maps have two major advantages. First, they provide information at four points in time over a seventeen year period. This provides a basis for tracking changes in land coverage over time.

Second, the information allows for a consistent basis of comparison across municipal boundaries. For example, the definition of "turf and grass" is the same in Roxbury as it is in Salisbury. Local land use surveys, although useful, are rarely consistent across either time or municipal boundaries.

Consequently, land coverage provides a useful and reasonable substitute for land use.

For the purposes of this Plan, the most important category is "developed" because it provides the best measure of how much development has occurred in the Region over a seventeen year period.

"Developed" is defined as "high-density built-up areas typically associated with commercial, industrial and residential activities and transportation routes. These areas can be expected to contain a significant amount of impervious surfaces, roofs, roads, and other concrete and asphalt surfaces."

- 6.4% of the Region is classified as developed in 2002; up from 6.0% in 1985. This represents an increase of

University of Connecticut's Center for Land Use Education and Research CLEAR website:
<http://clear.uconn.edu/>

US LANDSAT website:
<http://landsat.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

From the CLEAR website: Curious Trends: Other Grasses and Agriculture Class Grows - Explanation

*Many of us would expect to see a decrease in agricultural area over the 17-year time period. Most of us have witnessed farm fields that are occupied by houses. But remember, this is a **land cover map not a land use map**. A land cover map only describes what is seen from space, not how that land is being used. Thus, to our satellite sensors there is little to distinguish between farmland and other grassy and shrubby areas. Grassy areas, as seen from space, can have many uses including agriculture, meadows, unmowed herbaceous plants along roads, or cleared forested areas that are now growing grass. Although some grassy areas (including agricultural) are being converted to developed land, a large amount of forest has been cleared, resulting in extensive new grassy and shrubby areas (many a precursor to development).*

- By way of comparison, in 2002, developed land accounted for 22.6% of Torrington's land area, 13.5% of New Milford's, and 18.7% of the State as a whole.
- Roxbury had the greatest percentage increase in developed land (12.7%) between 1985 and 2002. Salisbury's 3.9% increase was the smallest in the Region.
- North Canaan is the most developed town at 9.70%; while adjoining Canaan is the least developed at 4.7%.
- In the seventeen year period between 1985 and 2002, the increase in developed area amounted to less than 0.4% of the Region's total land area. In no town did the increase in developed area amount to more than 0.9% of the town's total area.
- Of the 884 acre increase in developed area, the greatest increase (522 acres) occurred between 1985 and 1990.

LAND COVER										
	1985		1990		1995		2002		CHANGE	
	acres	%	acres	%	acres	%	acres	%	acres	%
Developed	13,955	6.0%	14,477	6.3%	14,590	6.3%	14,839	6.4%	884	6.3%
Turf & Grass	2,048	0.9%	2,107	0.9%	2,115	0.9%	2,109	0.9%	61	3.0%
Other Grasses & Agriculture	36,135	15.6%	36,510	15.8%	36,957	16.0%	37,022	16.0%	887	2.5%
Deciduous Forest	129,280	55.9%	128,332	55.5%	127,982	55.4%	127,787	55.3%	-	-1.2%
Coniferous Forest	34,331	14.8%	34,018	14.7%	33,921	14.7%	33,813	14.6%	-518	-1.5%
Water	6,981	3.0%	7,006	3.0%	6,655	2.9%	6,191	2.7%	-790	-11.3%
Non-forested Wetland	425	0.2%	926	0.4%	1,129	0.5%	1,314	0.6%	889	209.2%
Forested Wetland	7,153	3.1%	6,749	2.9%	6,681	2.9%	6,701	2.9%	-452	-6.3%
Barren	635	0.3%	635	0.3%	917	0.4%	1,168	0.5%	533	83.9%
Utility Right-of-Way	261	0.1%	261	0.1%	260	0.1%	260	0.1%	-1	-0.4%
Region	231,204		231,021		231,207		231,204			

Source: University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research

Existing Development Patterns

The NWCCOG is an overwhelmingly rural region that has, to date, escaped the suburban development prevalent elsewhere in the State. The NWCCOG may well be the only Region in the State without a “big box” store. Commercial development, for the most part, is concentrated in well recognized village centers such as West Cornwall. Outside the village centers, residential development is on lots of one acre or more. Only a few suburban style residential developments exist in the Region.

The overwhelming sentiment in the Region is to maintain the Region’s rural feel. There is growing recognition that the Region’s good fortune in avoiding suburban sprawl is not likely to continue without active participation by the Region’s residents. Town efforts have covered a gamut of techniques and programs. Village districts, historic districts, large lot zoning, sewer avoidance, and open space preservation are all being used in the Region. Despite these efforts, past performance is no guarantee of future success.



CLEAR Land Cover Categories

Developed

High-density built-up areas typically associated with commercial, industrial and residential activities and transportation routes. These areas contain a significant amount of impervious surfaces, roofs, roads, and other concrete and asphalt surfaces.

Turf & Grass

A compound category of undifferentiated maintained grasses associated mostly with developed areas. This class contains cultivated lawns typical of residential neighborhoods, parks, cemeteries, golf courses, turf farms, and other maintained grassy areas. Also includes some agricultural fields due to similar spectral reflectance properties.

Other Grasses & Agriculture

Includes non-maintained grassy areas commonly found along transportation routes and other developed areas and also agricultural fields used for both crop production and pasture.

Deciduous Forest

Includes southern New England mixed hardwood forests. Also includes scrub areas characterized by patches of dense woody vegetation. May include isolated low density residential areas.

Coniferous Forest

Includes southern New England mixed softwood forests. May include isolated low density residential areas.

Water

Open water bodies and watercourses with relatively deep water.

Non-forested Wetland

Includes areas that predominately are wet throughout most of the year and that have a detectable vegetative cover (therefore not open water). Also includes some small water courses due to spectral characteristics of mixed pixels that include both water and vegetation.

Forested Wetland

Includes areas depicted as wetland, but with forested cover. Also includes some small water courses due to spectral characteristics of mixed pixels that include both water and vegetation.

Tidal Wetland

Emergent wetlands, wet throughout most of the year, with distinctive marsh vegetation and located in areas influenced by tidal change.

Barren

Mostly non-agricultural areas free from vegetation, such as sand, sand and gravel operations, bare exposed rock, mines, and quarries. Also includes some urban areas where the composition of construction materials spectrally resembles more natural materials. Also includes some bare soil agricultural fields.

Utility

Includes utility rights-of-way. This category was manually digitized on-screen from rights-of-way visible in the Landsat satellite imagery. The class was digitized within the deciduous and coniferous categories only.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Water and Sewer

The two most critical pieces of infrastructure, in terms of land use, are water and sewer – especially sewer. Without access to sewers, development density is limited to what septic systems can support.

Only four of the Region’s towns – Kent, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon - have any sewer systems. In the towns with sewer systems, those systems cover but a small fraction of the town. Kent’s sewer service area, for example, covers less than 5% of the Town’s area.

The systems, for the most part, radiate out from the village centers. Salisbury’s sewer system, for example, serves just the village areas of Salisbury and Lakeville.

Washington has an explicit policy of limiting development to avoid the necessity of building a municipal sewer system.

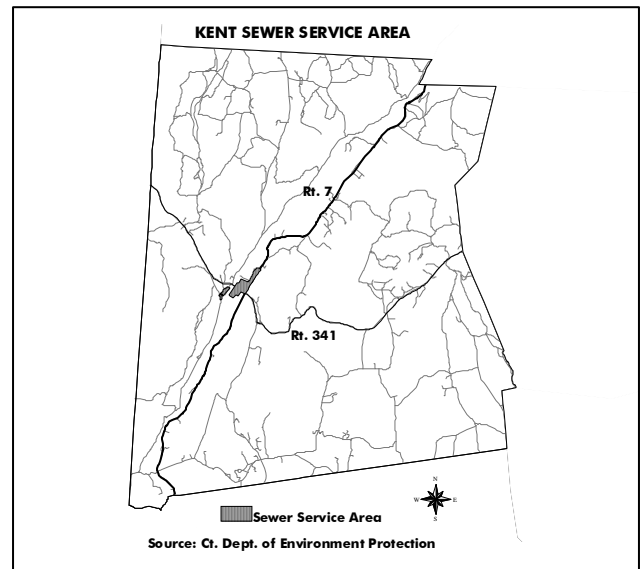
Two towns, Roxbury and Warren, have neither water nor sewer systems.

Small “community septic systems” have been discussed as an alternative to large, traditional systems. The community septic systems would serve a single housing development and would be privately owned. The State of Connecticut has established relatively stringent requirements for these private systems. These requirements, however, may change within the next few years. If that happens, community systems are likely to become more common. This would, in turn, make it feasible for higher density developments in areas that currently cannot support such development.

Transfer Stations

The days of the town dump actually functioning as a dump are over. The towns now operate transfer stations where municipal solid waste is collected and transferred to a facility where the waste is burned, sorted for recycling, and/or taken to a permanent disposal site. Seven of the Region’s towns have their own transfer stations. Sharon and Salisbury jointly operate a transfer station. Warren’s municipal solid waste is taken directly to the waste disposal facility.

TOWN	WATER	SEWER
Canaan	Yes	No
Cornwall	Yes	No
Kent	Yes	Yes
North Canaan	Yes	Yes
Roxbury	No	No
Salisbury	Yes	Yes
Sharon	Yes	Yes
Warren	No	No
Washington	Yes	No



Six towns – Canaan, Cornwall, North Canaan, Roxbury, Salisbury and Sharon – belong to the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority, which operates trash to energy plants, transfer stations, a landfill and a recycling center. Warren and Washington belong to the Bristol Resource Recovery Facility, and Kent belongs to the Housatonic Resource Recovery Authority.

Six of the Region’s towns have their own transfer stations. Sharon and Salisbury, which operate a joint transfer station, have selected a site for a new station. Warren is the only town in the Region without a transfer station.

As town dumps evolved into transfer stations, transfer stations are now becoming recycling centers. The passage of recent legislation on electronic recycling and the escalating costs of solid waste disposal are responsible for accelerating this trend.

In 2006, the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) adopted a Solid Waste Management Plan which set ambitious goals for recycling and composting of municipal solid waste. DEP, for example, estimated that, in 2005, 30% of the State’s municipal solid waste was either recycled or composted. DEP’s objective is to increase that percentage to 49% by 2024. Depending on how these goals are transformed into State actions, more towns may be required to expand and/or modify their transfer station operations.

Telecommunication Towers

As cell phones have become ubiquitous, the demand for telecommunication towers in the Region has grown. Cell phones operate on a line of sight basis. The Region with its many narrow valleys and steep sided hills does not lend itself to line-of-sight technology.

With few exceptions, telecommunication towers

From DEP’s *Solid Waste Management Plan, 2006*

Recycling and Composting – Move aggressively to strengthen Connecticut’s public and private reuse, recycling and composting efforts and infrastructure to increase the quantity and quality of recovered materials and to build resilient, highly efficient and continually improving programs to reduce the amount of solid waste Connecticut disposes, both now and in the future. Therefore, Connecticut needs to maximize recycling and composting for all types of solid waste generated in the state. Throughout the Plan, recycling includes composting and composting efforts refer only to the composting of source-separated organic material.



are regulated by the State Siting Council. While the towns have the right to comment, the Siting Council makes the decision on towers' location, height, and type.

Telecommunication towers are located at roughly a dozen locations in the Region. Each tower commonly contains antennas for more than one service provider; some locations, notably Mohawk Mountain in Cornwall, contain more than one tower.

Despite the existing towers, cell phone coverage, according to the Siting Council, is either weak or non-existent in much of the Region. As a result, applications for additional telecommunication towers can be expected to continue.

The major land use issue with telecommunication towers is their visual impact on the Region. While most people want to use their cell phones throughout the Region, few people want to look at the towers which make that use possible. The challenge is to accommodate the towers without degrading the Region's scenic quality. Ways of meeting this challenge include camouflaging the towers, requiring multiple antennas on a single tower, lower towers and careful site selection. Tower location is intrinsically site specific. A tower location that may provide excellent coverage to an underserved area may also mar one of the Region's many iconic vistas.

Hydro-Electric Facilities

The Region has two hydropower facilities on the Housatonic River. One is at Falls Village and the other is at Bulls Bridge in Kent. The Falls Village facility has three generators with a rating 9.0 megawatts. The impoundment behind the dam stretches for 3.8 miles and covers one hundred acres. The

From the Ct. Siting Council website:

www.ct.gov/csc/site/default.asp

Jurisdiction for New Telecommunications Facility Construction

The Connecticut Siting Council (Council) jurisdiction for new telecommunications facilities is limited to the following:

1. Community antenna television towers and head-end structures; (General Statutes § 16-50i (a) (5)) ([Application Guide](#))
2. Telecommunication towers, including associated equipment:
 - owned or operated by the State;
 - owned or operated by a public service company, as defined in General Statutes § 16-1;
 - owned or operated by a person, firm, or corporation certified by the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) to provide intrastate telecommunications services pursuant to General Statutes §§ 16-247f through 16-247h, inclusive; or
 - used in a cellular system as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 47, Part 22, as amended. (General Statutes § 16-50i (a) (6)) ([Application Guide](#))

Bulls Bridge facility has six generators with a combined rating of 7.2 megawatts. It consists of two dams with a 117 acre impoundment area.

In the late 1990s, the facilities' owner, Connecticut Light and Power, submitted an application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for the re-licensing of these two facilities as well as three other hydropower facilities. This application touched off a long running controversy about whether the Falls Village and Bulls Bridge facilities should be operated in either run of the river mode or pond and release mode, which was how the facilities had historically operated. Run of the river simply means that whatever the amount of water flowing into the facility equals the amount flowing out. Pond and release means that the water is stored behind the dam and released through the generators at times when the power is needed.

To oversimplify somewhat, the boaters preferred the pond and release mode because scheduled releases of water provided some assurance that there would be sufficient water to run the River. Fishermen, on the other hand, preferred run of the river because they considered it better for a healthy fish population and the surge of water from pond and release limited the time that they could fish in the River.

Federal law assigned the responsibility for deciding between the two modes to the Ct. Department of Environmental Protection. After a series of public hearings and numerous comments, the Ct. DEP decided in favor of run of the river.

In approving the application in June 2004, FERC imposed a number of conditions including requirements for improvements to the parking areas at Falls Village and Bulls Bridge, the preparation of a Recreation Management Plan and a Shoreline

From the FERC Order on Re- Licensing	
Recreation Site	Proposed Recreation Measures
Upper Falls Village Recreation Area	Completion of the Amersville Historical Interpretive Trail.
Lower Falls Village Recreation Area	Grading the parking area, driveway, and boat launch. ADA-compliant picnic tables and portable toilet. A crushed aggregate path network, and additional use and safety signage.
Lower Falls Village Hiking and Parking Area	An interpretive trail, picnic tables, portable toilet, trash receptacle, and parking area.
Bulls Bridge Scenic Area	An additional parking area. A raft slide to the put-in location. A raft stairway to the put-in location. Upgrading of and additional signage along hiking and portage trails.
Bulls Bridge Bypassed Reach Overlook Platform	Improved parking and trail access. Additional signage.
Bulls Bridge Bypassed Reach Access Area	Additional signage.

Management Plan. Principally because of issues surrounding the Candlewood Lake impoundment, FERC has not given final approval to the Shoreline Management Plan.

Note that the FERC requirement on the raft slide at Bulls Bridge has become moot because of the change from pond and release to run of the river.

The current owner, FirstLight Power Resources, is responsible for preparing and implementing the Shoreline Management Plan.

ECONOMICS

Economic information on the Region is scattered and far from comprehensive. Confidentiality restrictions on Federal and State limit the amount of detailed information that can be released. This is especially true in small towns where a particular industry may have only one or two employers.

Two lenses can be used to view the economic information. The first is information on the employment characteristics of town residents regardless of where they work. The second is information on establishments' workers regardless of where they live – employment by place of work.

The Northwest Ct. Chamber of Commerce and the Tri-State Chamber of Commerce are regional business organizations. In 2003, the Northwest Ct. Economic Development Corporation was formed to focus specifically on the improving the economy in the twenty towns of the NWCCOG and the LHCEO regions.

Employment by Place of Work

The Ct. Department of Labor provides information on the number of employees, number of establishments, total payroll and annual average payroll by place of work. It is important to realize that this information excludes those who are self-employed.

The common image of the Region as a rural bastion with few businesses is simply not born out by the data. More than 1,200 establishments employing more than 9,500 people work in the Region's nine towns. Total annual wages amount to more than \$365,000,000. Manufacturing firms, centered in North Canaan, employ more than 850 people and have an annual payroll of more than \$40,500,000.

Major differences exist in the economic base of the Region's towns. This is illustrated by three adjoining towns – Canaan, North Canaan and Salisbury. While manufacturing is North Canaan's largest sector, educational services are Salisbury's largest and health care is Sharon's largest.

Tourism is commonly cited as the Region's major industry. But, tourism in itself is not a sector. It is made up of part of several different sectors that are virtually impossible to sort out at the small town level. Parts of several sectors especially “art,

From the Northwest Ct. Economic Developments Corporation's website:
www.nwctedc.com/

Mission:
The Northwest Connecticut Economic Development Corporation is organized in order to develop a vehicle for the public and private sectors to channel their resources for the purpose of achieving job creation, strengthening the tax base and improving the economic well being of the region.

entertainment and recreation” and “accommodation and food services” are impacted by tourism.

Information is available on the accommodation and food service sector for four of the Region’s towns and on the manufacturing sector for five of the Region’s towns. The average annual salary for the accommodation and food service sector ranged from a low of \$10,383 in North Canaan to a high of \$24,087 in Washington. For the manufacturing sectors average salaries ranged from a low of \$24,337 in Washington to a high of \$53,813 in Warren.

The most recent labor market information can be found at the Ct. Department of Labor’s website:
www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/research.htm

- The average number of employees in the Region’s establishments is less than eight. North Canaan averages 14.7 employees per establishment. The averages for the remaining eight towns are less than ten employees.
- Health care and social services are an important sector in the Region’s economy with more than 1,400 employees and an annual payroll of more than \$45 million. Forty-four percent of those employees work in Sharon.
- Education services employed more than 1,200 people in the Region and had a total payroll in excess of \$48 million.

Covered Wages and Employment 2005				
	Units	Annual Average Employment	Total Annual Wages	Annual Average Wage
Canaan	78	688	\$25,838,225	\$37,560
Cornwall	98	450	\$11,975,217	\$26,641
Kent	166	1,265	\$41,993,719	\$33,197
North Canaan	148	2,179	\$83,120,735	\$38,154
Roxbury	97	288	\$10,043,065	\$34,892
Salisbury	221	2,041	\$72,153,016	\$35,355
Sharon	162	1,191	\$55,479,126	\$46,569
Warren	46	158	\$7,472,390	\$47,153
Washington	234	1,505	\$57,919,112	\$38,491
Region	1,250	9,764	\$365,994,605	
Source: Ct. Department of Labor				

- Of the Region’s towns, North Canaan has both the greatest number of employees (2,179) and the largest annual payroll (\$83,120,735). More than 45% (787) of

those employed in North Canaan work in manufacturing.

- Warren has both the fewest number of employees (158) and the lowest annual payroll (\$7,472,390).

Region’s Labor Force

The Region’s labor force consists of those who live in Region regardless of where they work. Per usual, the most detailed description of the labor force comes from the 2000 Census.

Labor force is defined as the number of people, sixteen years of age and over, who are either employed or actively seeking work. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of people in the Region’s labor force declined from 12,442 in 1990 to 12,227 in 2000.

The experience of the individual towns was mixed. In three towns – Canaan, Roxbury, and Warren – the number of people in the labor force increased; in six, the number declined.

Another common economic indicator is the percentage of the population sixteen years and older who are in the labor force. This percentage is commonly referred to as the “labor force participation rate.” People 16 years and older may not be in the labor force for a variety of reasons including retirement, education, disabilities, and familial responsibilities.

Again, the experience of the Region’s Towns has been mixed. In Canaan, Kent,

North Canaan and Sharon, the labor force participation rate declined. In the remaining five Towns, the rate increased. But with the exception of Roxbury, which experienced a 6% increase, and Sharon, which experienced a 5.6% decline, none of the remaining seven towns had changes exceeding 4%. Both the State and Litchfield County as a whole experienced declines in their labor force participation rates.

LABOR FORCE DATA 2006				
	LABOR FORCE	EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED	RATE
Canaan	611	588	23	3.8%
Cornwall	836	811	25	3.0%
Kent	1,600	1,552	48	3.0%
North Canaan	1,745	1,679	66	3.8%
Roxbury	1,374	1,340	34	2.5%
Salisbury	2,014	1,948	66	3.3%
Sharon	1,572	1,533	39	2.5%
Warren	736	711	25	3.4%
Washington	1,950	1,889	61	3.1%
Region	12438	12051	387	3.1%
Source: Ct. Dept. of Labor				

In 2006, the State Department of Labor estimated the Region’s labor force to be 12,483 and the unemployment rate to be 3.1%

- significantly below the State's rate of 4.3% and the U.S. rate of 4.6%.

- More than 18.5% of the Region's workers are self-employed in their own business. This is nearly triple the percentage of self-employed workers in the State as a whole. Cornwall has the highest percentage of self-employed workers (26.9%) of the Region's towns.
- In 2000, 55.6% of the Region's employed residents worked in the Region. Nearly 600 of the Region's residents commuted to Manhattan.
- The major occupational category for the Region's workers is management, professional and related occupations (40.4%). Within the Region, the percentage of workers in the management, professional and related occupations ranges from a low of 26.3% in North Canaan to a high of 51.5% in Roxbury.
- All of the Region's Towns have a higher percentage of their work force in construction, extraction and maintenance occupations than does the State. On the other hand, seven of the Region's towns have lower percentages of their work force in the production, transportation and material moving occupations than the State.
- The occupational category "farming, fishing, and forestry" accounts for only 74 of the Region's workers.
- More than 2,700 (23.5%) of the Region's workers are employed in the "educational, health and social services."
- 6.7% of the Region's workers are employed in the "arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services." This is the same percentage as the State as a whole. In view of the Region's tourist industry, one would expect this percentage to be significantly higher than the State's.

HOUSING

The Census Bureau defines a housing unit as a house, an apartment, or a mobile home. A housing unit includes houses that are occupied year round as well as second homes that are occupied only sporadically.

The Region has a large number of what the Census Bureau calls “housing units held for occasional use.” These are more commonly called “second homes.” A key point about housing units is that the person completing the census questionnaire is the judge of whether or not the housing unit is a primary residence or a second home. A person with an apartment in Brooklyn where he stays five nights a week and a house in Sharon can claim on the Census form that his Sharon house is his primary residence.

Given the Region’s rural nature, it comes as no surprise that the majority of the housing units are single family detached units. North Canaan has the lowest percentage of single family detached housing units (70.8%) while Roxbury has the highest percentage (96.7%).

HOUSING UNITS						
					% CHANGE 1970 - 2000	% CHANGE 1990 - 2000
	1970	1980	1990	2000		
CANAAN	455	537	587	610	34.1%	3.9%
CORNWALL	652	705	822	873	33.9%	6.2%
KENT	852	1,017	1,414	1,463	71.7%	3.5%
NORTH CANAAN	1,068	1,220	1,405	1,444	35.2%	2.8%
ROXBURY	484	630	871	1,018	110.3%	16.9%
SALISBURY	1,801	1,992	2,469	2,410	33.8%	-2.4%
SHARON	1,149	1,291	1,595	1,617	40.7%	1.4%
WARREN	349	484	592	650	86.2%	9.8%
WASHINGTON	1,403	1,564	1,856	1,764	25.7%	-5.0%
TOTAL	8,213	9,440	11,611	11,849	44.3%	2.0%
STATE	981,603	1,158,880	1,320,850	1,385,975	41.2%	4.9%
Source: US Census Bureau						

- Between 1970 and 2000 the number of housing units in the Region increased 44.3% (3,636). Most of the

increase (2,171 units), however, occurred during the 1980s.

- In 2000, 17.1% (2,022) of the Region's housing units are second homes. The percentages range from a high of 26.1% in Cornwall to a low of 3.5% in North Canaan.
- The Region has less than 1% of the State's housing but more than 8% of the State's second homes. North Canaan, which had the Region's lowest percentage of second homes, still had more than twice the State's percentage.
- The percentage of owner occupied housing units ranged from a high of 87.4% in Roxbury to a low of 67.1% in North Canaan.
- The Region has developed approximately 190 affordable multi-family units. Of these multi-family units, approximately half are restricted to senior citizens.
- The Region has developed approximately 32 affordable single family units.
- Affordable housing units have been developed in eight of the Region's nine towns.



Housing Prices

For those who put their faith in constantly rising housing values, the 1990s were a severe shock. However, in reviewing the information on the median value of owner occupied units, it should be kept in mind that the information does not include the values of "housing units held for occasional use." In four of the Region's Towns, the median value of owner occupied housing units declined between 1990 and 2000. Of the five Towns where housing values increased, Roxbury had the largest increase at 21%. The increases in Canaan, Cornwall, and Washington were less than 2%.

When adjusted for inflation, the decline in values was significant. In Sharon, which experienced the Region's largest decline, the median value of owner occupied units dropped by nearly a third between 1990 and 2000. In seven of the Towns, the median value dropped by more than 20%.

Despite the declines, in every Town except Canaan and North Canaan, the median value for owner occupied housing was greater than the State's median. Roxbury had, by far, the Region's highest median value; the median value in Roxbury was more than \$120,000 above Washington's median which had the Region's second highest median and more than two and a half times the median in North Canaan which had the Region's lowest median.

MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS				
			CHANGE	% CHANGE
	2000	1990	1990 TO 2000	1990 TO 2000
CANAAN	\$164,600	\$164,100	\$500	0.3%
CORNWALL	\$197,700	\$196,300	\$1,400	0.7%
KENT	\$188,300	\$190,000	-\$1,700	-0.9%
NORTH CANAAN	\$127,700	\$139,600	-\$11,900	-8.5%
ROXBURY	\$355,700	\$293,900	\$61,800	21.0%
SALISBURY	\$228,100	\$210,100	\$18,000	8.6%
SHARON	\$179,400	\$202,600	-\$23,200	-11.5%
WARREN	\$203,700	\$216,500	-\$12,800	-5.9%
WASHINGTON	\$235,500	\$231,300	\$4,200	1.8%
LITCHFIELD COUNTY	\$156,600	\$166,300	-\$9,700	-5.8%
STATE	\$166,900	\$177,800	-\$10,900	-6.1%
Source: US Census				

If the decline in housing prices during the 1990s were a shock to homeowners, the rapid increase in housing prices between 2000 and 2006 was a shock to potential home buyers. In five towns prices did decline between 2006 and 2007, but between 2000 and 2007, the lowest increase – 49.7% in Warren – was still more than the twice rate of inflation (20.4%). The Region as a whole did experience a 15.9% drop in the number of sales between 2006 and 2007.

Note that the housing prices in the Table below are from The Warren Group and only cover actual sales prices.

MEDIAN SALES PRICE FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOUSES							
		1990	2000	2006	2007	% Change 2000 to 2007	% Change 2006 to 2007
Canaan	# of sales	4	25	14	17	-32.0%	21.4%
	median sales price	\$164,500	\$170,000	\$225,000	\$315,000	85.3%	40.0%
Cornwall	# of sales	1	29	20	26	-10.3%	30.0%
	median sales price	\$0	\$200,000	\$331,000	\$446,750	123.4%	35.0%
Kent	# of sales	11	61	38	25	-59.0%	-34.2%
	median sales price	\$180,000	\$215,000	\$358,903	\$340,000	58.1%	-5.3%
North Canaan	# of sales	7	41	45	31	-24.4%	-31.1%
	median sales price	\$130,000	\$115,000	\$210,000	\$195,000	69.6%	-7.1%
Roxbury	# of sales	8	38	24	21	-44.7%	-12.5%
	median sales price	\$413,250	\$397,500	\$700,000	\$605,000	52.2%	-13.6%
Salisbury	# of sales	6	81	54	47	-42.0%	-13.0%
	median sales price	\$355,000	\$215,000	\$425,000	\$500,000	132.6%	17.6%
Sharon	# of sales	3	59	48	41	-30.5%	-14.6%
	median sales price	\$350,000	\$180,000	\$360,000	\$359,000	99.4%	-0.3%
Warren	# of sales	3	18	21	22	22.2%	4.8%
	median sales price	\$140,000	\$233,750	\$435,000	\$350,000	49.7%	-19.5%
Washington	# of sales	19	82	51	35	-57.3%	-31.4%
	median sales price	\$280,000	\$322,500	\$410,000	\$600,000	86.0%	46.3%
Region	# of sales	62	434	315	265	-38.9%	-15.9%
Source: The Warren Group							



Affordable Housing

In 2006, the NWCCOG in cooperation with the Litchfield Hills Council of Governments surveyed the chief elected officials of the two organizations as well as members of the municipal planning and zoning commissions and members of local non-profit housing organizations regarding their opinions on affordable housing. Of the fifty-three respondents, 75.5% said that lack of affordable housing is a severe or moderate problem in their town. Only one of the fifty-three respondents said it was not a problem.

From Donald Klepper-Smith:

A Crisis In The Making: The Need for Affordable Housing in Connecticut, 2005

The “affordability gap”, reflecting the difference between escalating housing prices and income growth, has widened in recent years. Connecticut median prices for single-family homes have risen four times as fast as Connecticut nominal personal income for the period between 2000 and 2005. Median housing prices have jumped 63.6% in Connecticut, whereas personal income has risen just 18.5%. The surge in local housing prices has become more pronounced in Connecticut relative to the nation as the ratio of median single-family housing prices to median household income has spiked at 4.15 as of 2005, vs. 3.96 for the nation as a whole, and well above its long-term average of 3.2.

State Legislation

In 1989, the State created an affordable housing land use appeals procedure aimed at increasing the amount of affordable housing in the State. The housing appeals procedure allows developers to circumvent a town’s zoning regulations if at least 30% of the housing units meet that State’s definition of affordable and there are restrictions that will keep the units affordable for at least forty years.

The appeal procedure allows developers of affordable housing to appeal the denial of an affordable housing application directly to State Superior Court. Unlike other land use appeals, the burden is on the municipality to prove its denial of the application meets one of three tests. The municipality must prove that its denial is necessary to protect “the public interests in health, safety or other matters which the commission may legally consider;” that those public interests “clearly outweigh the need for affordable housing” and that reasonable changes to the application cannot be made protect the public interests. Alternatively, the municipality must prove that the affordable housing would be

From the Ct. General Statutes Sec. 8-2i. Inclusionary Zoning

(a) As used in this section, "inclusionary zoning" means any zoning regulation, requirement or condition of development imposed by ordinance, regulation or pursuant to any special permit, special exception or subdivision plan which promotes the development of housing affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income, including, but not limited to, (1) the setting aside of a reasonable number of housing units for long-term retention as affordable housing through deed restrictions or other means; (2) the use of density bonuses; or (3) in lieu of or in addition to such other requirements or conditions, the making of payments into a housing trust fund to be used for constructing, rehabilitating or repairing housing affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income.

in an industrially zoned district which does not permit residential uses. The third test requires the municipality to prove that the project is not actually “assisted housing” as defined in the statutes.

Towns that have more than 10% of their housing units classified as affordable are exempt from the appeal procedure. None of the Region’s towns meet the 10% threshold. Nevertheless, to date, only one housing project has been developed in the Region using the affordable housing procedure.

Inclusionary zoning is commonly defined as “regulations that increase housing choices by establishing requirements and providing incentives to construct housing to meet the needs of low and moderate income households.” Ct. State Statutes allow towns to adopt inclusionary zoning regulations. To date, more than thirty Connecticut municipalities have adopted some form of inclusionary zoning. Almost all of these inclusionary provisions relate to either the development of multi-family housing or re-zoning for a large scale project.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Region is rich in natural resources. It is also rich in organizations dedicated to the preservation of those resources.

Conservation Commissions

The State authorizes municipalities to establish conservation commissions for “the development, conservation, supervision and regulation of natural resources, including water resources, within its territorial limits.” The conservation commissions are charged with inventorying the town’s natural resources and the commissions may make recommendations to the town’s other land use commissions. With the approval of the town’s legislative body, the commission can acquire and manage land and conservation easements.

All of the Region’s towns except Cornwall have conservation commissions. In Canaan, North Canaan, Salisbury and Warren, the conservation commission is combined with the inland wetlands commission; in the remaining towns the conservation commission is a separate agency.



Inland Wetlands Commissions

Swamps were once considered a convenient dumping ground or an area to be drained. Swamps, or as they are now referred to, wetlands are now recognized as a critical natural resource.

In Connecticut, wetlands are determined by soil type and not simply the presence, or absence, of standing water.

Each municipality is required by State Statute to have an inland wetlands commission (IWC) that is charged with regulating activities in, and adjacent to, the wetlands. The town IWC adopts regulations which are reviewed and approved by the DEP. The town is also responsible for enforcing their own wetlands regulations.

From the Ct. DEP website:

Regulated Activities. Municipal regulations also include the definition of "regulated activity". Regulated activities are broadly defined to mean "...any operation or use of a wetland or watercourse involving removal or deposition of material, or any obstruction, construction, alteration or pollution, of such wetlands or watercourses..."

In addition, construction or other work located in areas adjacent to wetlands, may have an impact on those wetlands. For this reason, many towns regulate activities in designated areas surrounding wetlands. Such non-wetland areas are described variously in town regulations as review, setback or buffer areas.

Depending on its size and location, activity may require state and federal permits in addition to approvals from the town IWC.

Land Trusts and Non-Profit Conservation Organizations

This Region is fortunate to have a number of land trusts and non-profit organizations committed to preserving open space. Seven of the Region's towns have their own local lands trusts that hold conservation easements as well as land in fee simple. Their holdings can be quite substantial. The Roxbury Land Trust, for example, has conserved more than 3,000 acres.

Two regional organizations, the Housatonic Valley Association and the Weantinogue Heritage Land Trust, are also very active in preserving land in the Region.

In addition to the local and regional organizations, a number of national conservation organizations including the Trust for Public Land, the Audubon Society, Trout Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy, are active in the Region.

The Housatonic Valley Association and the Trust for Public Land are cooperating on the "Litchfield Hills Greenprint" which aims at identifying and protecting "the places that sustain and define communities while allowing for appropriate development." The Greenprint Project covers all nine NWCCOG towns in addition to twenty-two others in Litchfield County.

Housatonic River Commission

The Housatonic River Commission (HRC) was created in 1979 by the towns of Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, New Milford, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon to advise the towns on issues concerning the River. In 1981, the River Commission adopted a River Management Plan which included recommendations for an overlay zoning district aimed at providing increased protection for lands along the River. Six of the seven towns incorporated all or part of the overlay zone regulations into their town zoning regulations. In 2006, an updated Management Plan was adopted by the Commission.



**From the Litchfield Hills
Greenprint webpage:**
www.tpl.org/ct_litchfield/

*THE LITCHFIELD HILLS
GREENPRINT, a partnership of The
Trust For Public Land and the
Housatonic Valley Association,
promotes coordinated, long-term and
locally driven conservation to ensure
that the ecological qualities of this
landscape and the character of its
communities endure for generations
to come. Together with local and
regional partners, we share a
conservation vision that prioritizes
our most significant and vulnerable
open space resources for protection
and will increase the pace and
quality of conservation activity
across the Litchfield Hills.*

The River Commission has been an active advocate for the River. It has commented on individual applications, the EPA cleanup of the PCBs and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's relicensing of the hydropower dams at Falls Village and Bulls Bridge.

Open Space

The State of Connecticut has set a goal of preserving 20% of the State as open space. Six of the Region's nine towns – and the Region as a whole – already have more than 20% of their area preserved. At 42.7%, the Town of Canaan has the highest percentage of preserved open space. What is remarkable about the preservation efforts is that the non-profit organizations control more open space than either the State or the Federal governments.

Open Space						
Towns	Federal	State	Non-Profit Organizations (a)	Total Open Space	Total Area	% of Total Area
Canaan	1,808	4,221	3,069	9,099	21,312	42.7%
Cornwall	128	7,779	1,876	9,783	29,632	33.0%
Kent	2,690	2,629	5,319	10,716	31,744	33.8%
North Canaan	0	1,336	698	2,034	12,480	16.3%
Roxbury	0	0	2,991	2,991	16,832	17.8%
Salisbury	2,347	1,604	5,460	9,411	38,464	24.5%
Sharon	768	5,947	4,971	11,685	38,144	30.6%
Warren	0	1,470	1,157	2,627	17,664	14.9%
Washington	0	951	5,007	5,958	24,768	24.1%
Region	7,741	25,936	30,549	64,303	231,040	27.8%
(a) Non-profit Organizations include local and regional land trusts, HVA, The Nature Conservancy, etc.						
Source: Housatonic Valley Association, 2008						

While not all of the preserved open space is open to the public, the Region does contain State Parks and some notable public hiking trail networks.

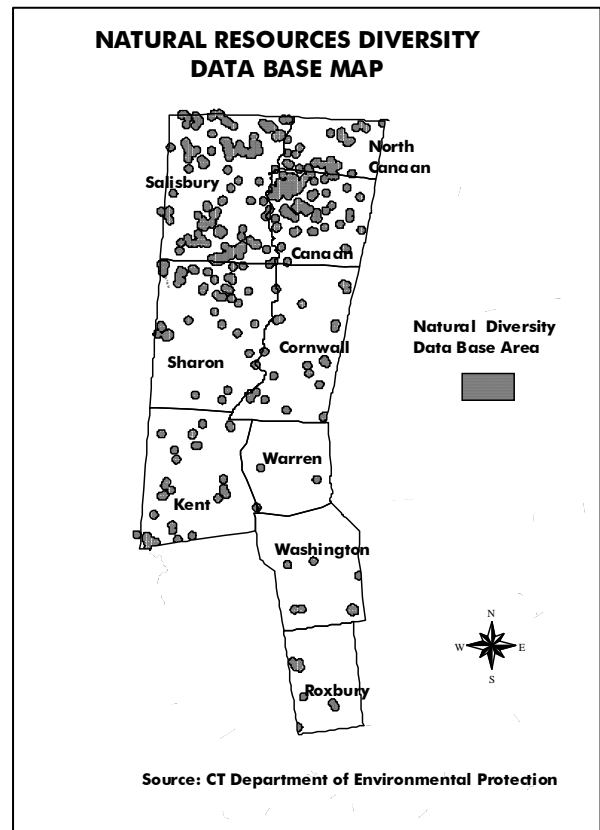
- The 2,167 mile long Appalachian Trail extends more than 50 miles along the west side of the Housatonic River through Kent, Sharon and Salisbury. Except for a 4.9 mile stretch along the River, most of the trail is along the ridgeline. The US National Park Service owns roughly 7, 000 acres of land along the trail corridor.

- The Connecticut Forest and Park Association (CFPA) maintains the 24 mile long Mohawk Trail. Starting at the Appalachian Trail on Breadloaf Mountain in Sharon, the trail crosses the Housatonic River and runs along the eastern side of the River back to the Appalachian Trail on Warren Turnpike in Canaan. Other CFPA “Blue Blazed Hiking Trails” in the Region are the Macedonia Brooks Trails in Kent, the Pine Knob Loop Trail in Sharon, and part of the Mattatuck Trail in Cornwall.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The Ct. Department of Environmental Protection has established a “Natural Resources Diversity Data Base” which maps the “approximate locations of endangered, threatened and special concern species and significant natural communities in Connecticut.” The map is intended to be a tool to alert local land use commissions and others to the presence of a valuable natural resource. It does not identify the species or the exact location so as to avoid having individuals collect or disturb the species. On the map, the areas of concern are shown as a shaded area or “blob.”

All of the Region’s towns contain at least one “blob.” In some Towns, multiple “blobs” cover extensive areas of the Town. The Robbins Swamp area in Canaan, for example, is almost entirely covered with “blobs.”



From the Ct. DEP website:

"Endangered Species" means any native species documented by biological research and inventory to be in danger of extirpation throughout all or a significant portion of its range within the state and to have no more than five occurrences in the state, and any species determined to be an "endangered species" pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act.

"Threatened Species" means any native species documented by biological research and inventory to be likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range within the state and to have no more than nine occurrences in the state, and any species determined to be a "threatened species" pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act, except for such species determined to be endangered by the Commissioner in accordance with section 4 of this act.

"Species of Special Concern" means any native plant species or any native nonharvested wildlife species documented by scientific research and inventory to have a naturally restricted range or habitat in the state, to be at a low population level, to be in such high demand by man that its unregulated taking would be detrimental to the conservation of its population or has been extirpated from the state.

Agriculture

According to the 2000 Census, less than 300 of the Region's residents are employed in agriculture. That is far fewer than are employed in education or retail trade. Viewed from a strict economic perspective – number of people employed, value of products produced, etc. – agriculture has minor impact on the Region. The Region's farms, however, loom far larger than their strict economic impact would indicate.

The Region's concept of itself as "rural" implies working farms. The farm fields, and the vistas they present, are signature features of the Northwest Corner. The iconic views of farm fields along Rt. 341 in Warren or along Rt. 41 in Salisbury and Sharon are two cases in point.



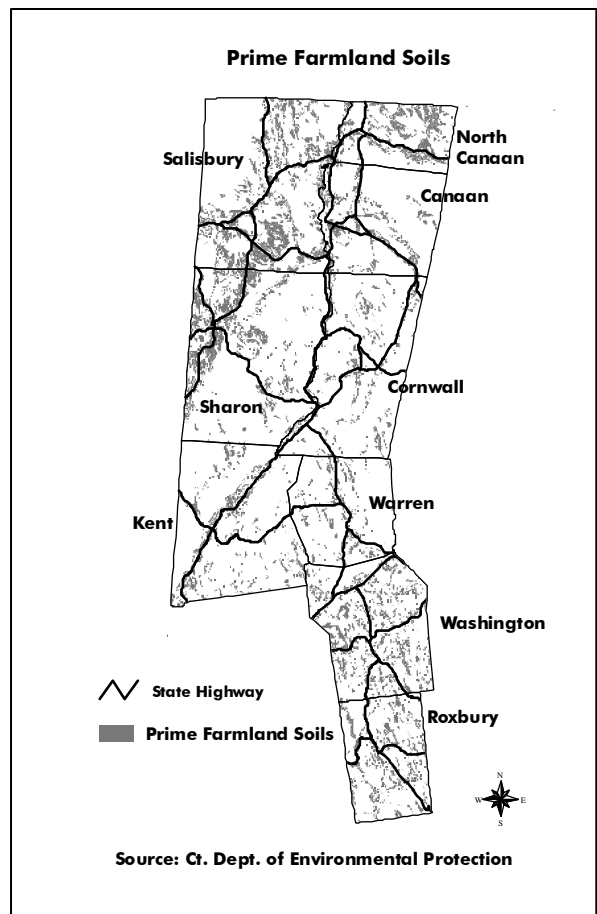
More importantly, land that been cleared for crops is relatively flat and well drained. As a result, farm land is comparatively easy to develop for residences. Farms that become inactive are prime targets for development. Maintaining the Region’s working farms is, therefore, important not only to the Region’s “rural character,” but is also critical in shaping the Region’s development patterns.

Information on agriculture in the Region is scattered and must be pieced together from several sources – primarily the Census of Agriculture. The Census of Agriculture, which is conducted in years ending in 2 and 7, has data at the state, county and the zip code level but not at the town level. By aggregating the Region’s zip codes, a fair approximation of the towns’ and Region’s boundaries are obtained. To compound the problems, however, much of the information at the zip code level is withheld to prevent disclosures about individual farms. There is, for example, no information available for the Cornwall zip code (06753). Consequently, the figures below need to be viewed with a great deal of caution.

- CLEAR’s land cover data classified 37,022 acres (16% of the Regional area) as “other grasses and agriculture.” Because CLEAR is measuring “land cover” and not “land use,” this category includes non-maintained meadows and forest clearings as well as agriculture.
- In 2002, the Region contained more than 220 farms – an increase of approximately 25 farms from the 1997 census.
- The majority of the farms appear to be small, part-time operations. According to the 2002 Census, at 175 of the Region’s 220 farms, the value of all agriculture products sold was less than \$50,000. In 1997, at 92 of the Region’s 195 farms, the value of all agriculture products sold was less than \$10,000.

From the American Farmlands Trust, Conservation Options for Connecticut Farmland:

The CT Farmland Preservation Program, established in 1978, is working toward its goal of protecting 130,000 acres of Connecticut’s most productive farmland. As of October 2006, the program has protected 31,275 acres on 224 farms. Only landowners may apply to the program, and the program may pay up to 100 percent of the appraised value of the development rights. Currently the state adheres to a policy of paying no more than \$10,000 per acre for development rights on farmland. In order to maximize farmland preservation funding the State of Connecticut places a high priority on protecting clusters of farmland that are in close proximity to other active farmland and preserved landscapes.



- In 2002, at all of Kent’s 29 farms (zip code 06757) and at all of Cornwall Bridge’s 17 farms (zip code 06754), the value of all agricultural products sold was less than \$50,000.
- More than sixty-one of the Region’s farms are between one and 49 acres in size and more than 133 are between 50 to 999 acres. At least three are more than 1,000 acres.



Ground Water

The CT DEP has four main ground water classifications. These classifications indicate water quality criteria and designated uses for each class. Most of the Region’s ground water is classified as GA. The CT DEP presumes that the ground water in GA areas is, at a minimum, suitable for drinking or other public uses without treatment. None of the Region’s towns have areas the Ct. DEP classifies as either “possible degradation and not suitable for drinking (GB)” or “impaired (GC).”

All of the Region’s towns, however, have at least one area that is considered “threatened.”

The State has created an Aquifer Protection Program aimed at protecting “major public water supply wells in sand and gravel aquifers to ensure a plentiful supply of public drinking water for

From Ct. DEP Aquifer Protection website:

Municipalities in the program play the most critical role. They are responsible for appointing an aquifer protection agency, inventorying land uses within the aquifer protection area, designating the aquifer protection area boundary, and adopting and implementing local land use regulations. The agency regulates land use activities within the aquifer protection area by:

- *registering existing regulated activities*
- *issuing permits for new regulated activities*
- *overseeing regulated facilities*
- *educating their citizens on ground water protection.*

present and future generations.” Under this program, municipalities are required to adopt State approved land use regulations to protect areas around active well fields in sand and gravel aquifers serving more than 1,000 people. The boundaries of these “Aquifer Protection Areas” must be approved by the State. North Canaan and Salisbury are the only two towns in the Region having areas that fall under this program.

Surface Water

The entire Region is located within the Housatonic River Watershed. Seven of the Region’s towns have frontage on the River’s main stem. The CT DEP has five main surface water classifications. Due to the presence of polychlorinated biphenyls, better know by the acronym “PCBs,” the entire Housatonic River in Connecticut is classified as D/B. The D classification means that the River does not meet one or more of the State designated uses goals such as being suitable recreation or fish and wildlife habitat.



The PCBs in the Housatonic originated from a 254 acre General Electric plant in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. In 2000, a Federal court approved a consent decree between, among other agencies, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the States of Connecticut and Massachusetts, the City of Pittsfield and General Electric Company. The consent decree lays out a lengthy and complex process for the River’s cleanup. To date, a final decision has not been made regarding what cleanup activities, if any, will be done along the

For more information on the clean up of the Housatonic, go to the US EPA website:

www.epa.gov/region01/ge/index.html

From Ct. DEP 2006 INTEGRATED WATER QUALITY REPORT TO CONGRESS:

Waterbody Name *Blackberry River-02a* **Waterbody Segment ID** *CT6100-00_02a*

Location *From confluence with North Canaan WPCF (near old RailRoad grade, currently trail, DS of Route 44 crossing), US to drainage ditch at southwest boundary of Lime Quarry (parallel to Lower Road), North Canaan.*

Waterbody Segment Size *2.75 MILES*

Impaired Designated Use *Fish Consumption*

TMDL Priority Cause Potential Source

H Polychlorinated biphenyls Above Ground Storage Tank Leaks (Tank Farms), Sources Outside State Jurisdiction or Borders

Impaired Designated Use Habitat for Fish, Other Aquatic Life and Wildlife

TMDL Priority Cause Potential Source

H Impairment Unknown Surface Mining, Source Unknown

River in Connecticut.

The State's ultimate goal for the Housatonic River is to achieve Class B water quality which would make the River suitable for recreational use, fish and wildlife habitat, and agricultural water supply.

Other rivers, streams and lakes in the Region rated by Ct. DEP as "impaired for designated use" include the Blackberry River, Hatch Pond (Kent), and Mill Brook (Cornwall). The reasons given for the impaired designations range from agriculture to above ground storage tank leaks to "source unknown."

The Ct. DEP has also raised a "threatened flag" on other waterbodies in the Region. The threatened flag means that the "waterbody currently supports designated use, but may not in the future due to degrading water quality or the existence of threats that may impair water quality." Among those tagged with a threatened flag are some of the Region's best known and widely used waterbodies including Lake Waramaug, Twin Lakes and Mudge Pond.



The Cairns and Shepaug Reservoirs in Warren are a major source of drinking water to the City of Waterbury. The drainage areas for the two Reservoirs are classified as a public water supply area.

Topography

The Region is characterized by rolling hills interspersed with rivers and lakes. The rocky soil and steep slopes combined with extensive wetland areas make large scale development difficult throughout the Region. There is relatively little acreage that is both flat and dry.



The Housatonic River and the Shepaug River are major forces in shaping the Region. The highest peak in Connecticut, Bear Mountain at 2,316 feet, is in Salisbury. The highest point in Connecticut at 2,380 along the flank of Mt. Frissell is also in Salisbury. Mt. Frissell's actual peak is in Massachusetts.

TRANSPORTATION

When the Region's residents think of transportation, they generally think of just one thing – automobiles. Given the dependence of the Region's residents on the automobile, this is hardly surprising. That dependence quickly becomes clear simply by looking at the 2000 Census.

- More than 60% of the Region's households have two or more vehicles available to them. More than 20% have three or more vehicles.
- Less than 4% of the Region's households have no vehicle available.



The commute to work also figures prominently in any discussion of transportation. In this Region, more than half of each town's labor force works in another town.

- Nearly 75% of the Region's workers traveled to work alone by car, van or truck.
- In North Canaan, 47.4% of the Town's labor force worked in the town. In Warren, only 17.6% of the labor force worked in-town.
- For towns along the New York State border, Manhattan is a major draw. More Sharon residents work in Manhattan (126) than work in Hartford (14) or in Fairfield County (37).
- While the majority of the Region's residents work outside the Region, there is also commuting into the Region. For example, more workers from Torrington travel to jobs in Salisbury (81) than Salisbury workers travel to Torrington (34).
- Travel times to work increased significantly between 1990 and 2000. All of the Region's towns experienced increases in travel times of more than 15%. Seven of the nine had increases greater than 25%. In Sharon, for example, the mean travel time went from 17.7 minutes in 1990 to 30.4 minutes in 2000.

MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK (MINUTES)			
			%
	2000	1990	CHANGE
CANAAN	25.5	17.2	48.3%
CORNWALL	33.2	19.5	70.3%
KENT	29.8	21.8	36.7%
NORTH CANAAN	17.3	13.5	28.1%
ROXBURY	35.1	27.6	27.2%
SALISBURY	24.2	17	42.4%
SHARON	30.4	17.7	71.8%
WARREN	30.2	26.2	15.3%
WASHINGTON	28.8	24.6	17.1%
LITCHFIELD COUNTY	26.2	22.2	18.0%
STATE	24.4	21.1	15.6%
Source: 2000 US Census			

Although commuting is a major concern, it is important to recognize that the US Department of Transportation estimates that less than 18% of all trips are to work or work related.

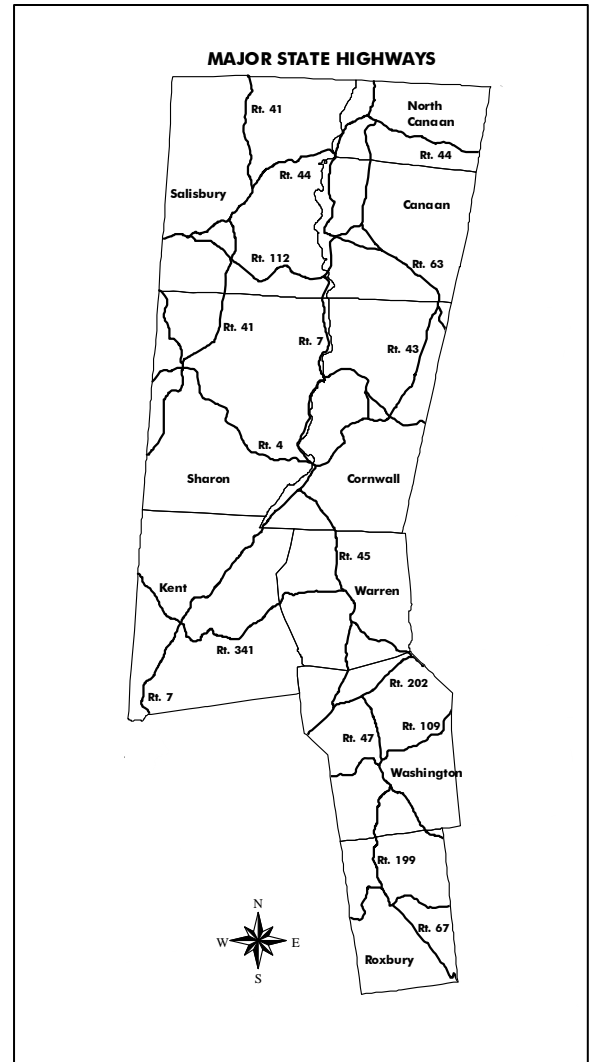
Family/personal business trips, on the other hand, account for nearly 45% of all trips.

Highways

This Region is unique in that it is the only one of the State’s fifteen Regions that contains no limited access highway. The main State Routes are Routes 4, 7, 44 and 202.

The Region contains approximately 738 miles of roads. Of these, 211 miles (28.6%) are State highways and 527 miles (71.4%) are town roads. Unlike many areas of the State, none of the State highways operate anywhere near their estimated capacity. According to the Ct. Department of Transportation (Ct. DOT), in 2005, the highest State highway segment in the Region operated at 60% of capacity. Most State highway segments operate in the 25% to 45% range. Perhaps more importantly, the Ct. DOT projects that, even in 2025, no State highway in the Region will operate at more than 75% of capacity.

The main concern, therefore, has less to do with the State highway network’s capacity and more with its impact on the towns. Excessive speeds on existing highways raise concerns not only for automotive safety but more particularly for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.



State highways either border or go directly through all of the Region’s village centers. And the State Department of Transportation makes the decision on where and when changes are made to existing State highways. Town residents have expressed concerns about improvements that would adversely impact the highway’s scenic qualities and contribute to speeding.

In response to these concerns, the Towns have embraced the idea of scenic roads. Under Connecticut law, the State Department of Transportation is authorized to designate State highways as scenic. The legislation spells out criteria for this designation as well as requiring a heightened level of scrutiny for changes to State scenic highways. The intent, of course, is to



avoid highway improvements that are not in keeping with the highway's scenic character. The designation applies only to the highway improvements and does not affect properties along the scenic highway.

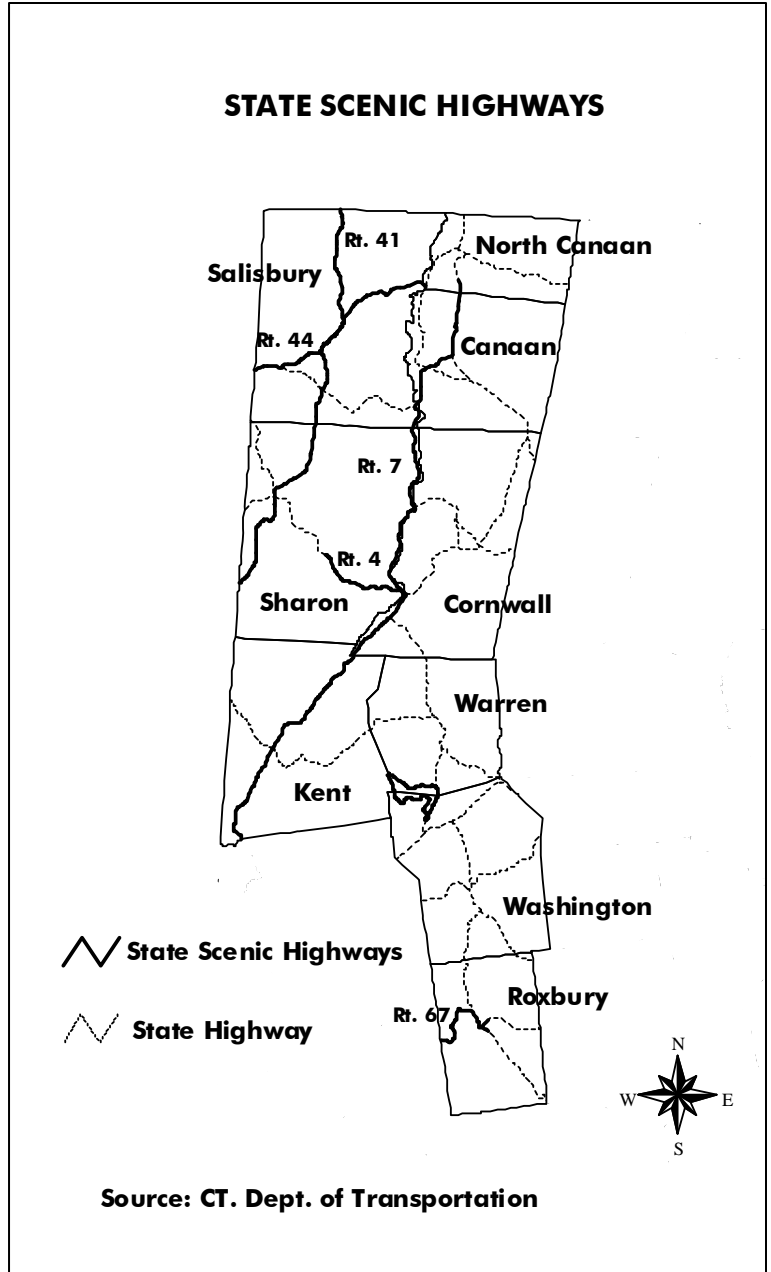
Since 1990, 69.8 miles of the Region's State highways, roughly one-third of all the State highway mileage in the Region, have been designated as "scenic." The State legislation also allows for towns to designate their own roads as scenic and a number of towns have done this.

**From the Ct. General Statutes,
Sec. 13b-31c-5. Qualifications for
a scenic road**

(a) In order to qualify for scenic road designation, the state highway under consideration must have significant natural or cultural features along its borders such as agricultural land, an historic building or structure which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the state register of historic places or affords vistas of marches, shoreline, forests with mature trees or notable geologic or other natural features which singly or in combination set this highway apart from other highways as being distinct.

(b) The proposed scenic road shall have a minimum length of 1 mile.

(c) The proposed scenic road shall have development which is compatible with its surroundings and must not detract from the scenic, natural character and visual quality of the highway area.



STATE DESIGNATED SCENIC HIGHWAYS				
Route	Town	Date Designated	Miles	Location
4	Sharon	July 1990	3.10	From Route 7 west to Dunbar Road
4	Sharon	Oct. 1992	0.80	From Dunbar Road, west to Old Sharon Road
7	Sharon	July 1990	4.29	From the Cornwall Bridge crossing of the Housatonic River, north to Route 128 at the Cover Bridge
7	Kent	Oct. 1991	10.50	From the New Milford Town line north to the Cornwall Town line
7	Cornwall	Jan. 2002	3.56	From the Kent Town line, north to Route 4
7	Sharon, Salisbury, Canaan	Jan. 2002	10.26	From Route 128, north the North Canaan Town line
41	Sharon	July 1990	4.00	From Boland Road, north to Cole Road
41	Sharon	Oct. 1992	2.20	From Cole Road, north to the Sharon/Salisbury Town line
41	Sharon	Oct. 1992	2.20	From Boland Road, south to the New York State line
41	Salisbury	Dec. 1993	8.01	From the Sharon/Salisbury Town line, north to the Massachusetts State line
44	Salisbury	Dec. 1993	8.83	From the New York State line, east to the Salisbury/North Canaan Town line
45 & SR478	Washington, Warren	Dec. 1996	6.90	From the Washington/Kent Town line on SR478, east to Route 45, north on Route 45 to the northern junction of SR478 and west on SR478 to the Warren/Kent Town line
SR478	Kent	Dec. 2000	1.0	From the Washington/Kent Town line, north to the Warren/Kent Town line
67	Roxbury	Nov. 1990	.87	From Ranny Hill Road, south to 0.30 miles south of Route 317
67	Roxbury	Aug. 1996	2.90	From the Roxbury/Bridgewater Town line east to Ranny Hill Road.
317	Roxbury	Nov. 1990	0.40	From Painter Hill Road, west to Route 67

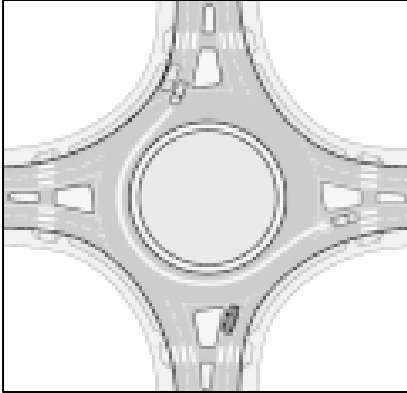
Source: Ct. Department of Transportation

An alternative that has been much discussed in the Region is a set of strategies collectively referred to as traffic calming. The concept is to slow down – or reduce – vehicular traffic to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Traffic calming strategies are particularly appropriate in urban areas and villages where high speed traffic is not appropriate.

Among the engineering measures used in traffic calming are chicanes, speed humps, roundabouts, and raised crosswalks. But traffic calming also includes such simple measures such as planting street trees to change the “feel” of the road for motorists.

From www.trafficcalming.org

*Definitions of traffic calming vary, but they all share the goal of reducing vehicle speeds, improving safety, and enhancing quality of life. Some include all three "Es," traffic **education**, **enforcement**, and **engineering**. Most definitions focus on engineering measures to change driver behavior. Some focus on engineering measures that compel drivers to slow down, excluding those that use barriers to divert traffic.*



Although the focus is generally on the State highways, it is important to recognize that towns' roads are a critical part of the road network. There is increasing concern that the combination of limited State aid, escalating costs and increased State regulation will result in the degradation of town roads.

Anonymous:

We don't get much traffic by our house. We live on a one-way, dead-end street.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Even in a rural area like the NWCCOG, walking and cycling can be important modes of transportation. Many trips are not work related and many are of a relatively short distance.

Sidewalks are found within several of the Region's village centers such as Salisbury, North Canaan and Kent. It is worth noting that the State's policy – and attitude - on sidewalks along State highways has been less than supportive. But, that policy may be improving.

Considering the Region's rural nature it is somewhat surprising that 4.7% of the labor force walked to work in 2000. This compares favorably with the State as a whole with only 2.7% of the labor force walking to work.

From Kevin Lynch, *Site Planning, 2nd Ed.*

Sidewalks ... are a more important recreation facility than playgrounds and should be designed with that use in mind.

Website for Ct. Dept. Transportation's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update

www.ctbikepedplan.org/index.html

The Ct. Department of Transportation has produced a State bicycle map. In this Region, the State map recommends a number of routes for cyclists including Routes 41, 112, and 67. Although most of the recommended routes are State highways, a few local roads such as Calkinstown Road and Painter Hill Road are included. The State map, however, does not give any indication of elevations which, in this Region, would be especially useful. In addition, the recommended bicycle routes contain no signage to alert motorists or direct cyclists along the routes. Ct. DOT is undertaking an update of the bicycle and pedestrian plan that is scheduled to be completed in 2009. The update will include a new bicycle map.

The Region's only off-road bicycle trails are a 2.5 mile unpaved trail in Salisbury and an unpaved trail in North Canaan.



Public Transportation

Providing public transportation service in a lightly populated rural region is a challenge. In this Region, the primary users of public transportation are the elderly and disabled who are unable to drive. As the median age of the Region’s residents continues to creep upwards, the need for public transportation can only increase.

Six of the Region’s towns – Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon are served by the Northwestern Ct. Transit District (NWT D), which is based in Torrington. The NWT D offers limited times and routes and requires riders to call to make a reservation. The NWT D, for example, provides regular service to Kent only on Mondays and Wednesdays.

The NWT D also operates a “Joblinks” program that provides Monday through Friday service between North Canaan and Torrington. The aim is to provide workers with transportation to and from their place of work.

The Geer Nursing and Rehabilitation Center offers services to the elderly and the disabled in the towns of Canaan, Cornwall, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon. The NWCCOG contracts with Geer to provide additional service using funds from the State’s Matching Grant for Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Transportation.

A number of other organizations including town senior centers, the American Cancer Society and FISH of Kent, provide specialized transit services to the Region.

There is also work being done to create an “Independent Rural Transportation System” (IRTS) that would fill transportation gaps in the NWCCOG and LHCEO regions. The IRTS is

From the NWT D website:

www.nwcttransit.com

The Rural Transit Dial-A-Ride is a paratransit van, curb-to-curb transportation service provided by Northwest CT Transit District. Available to people of all ages, in the (16) towns throughout Northwest CT. Anyone under (12) years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

Transportation is provided to nutrition programs, medical appointments, shopping and for other social and personal purposes. Group excursions may also be arranged.

All vehicles are wheelchair accessible.

From IRTS Building Blocks:

Service Structure

The IRTS will build upon existing services, seeking to bridge gaps. The biggest gaps in services are:

- *Temporal gaps (certain days of the week in some towns, early morning, late afternoon, evenings, weekends, and holidays)*
- *Geographic gaps (town-to-town, region-to-region)*
- *Service for those trips that cannot be planned long in advance*
- *Non-medical trips*
- *Medical trips for those who need to go straight to a medical appointment and home again without stopping along the way*

envisioned being a non-profit organization that relies on a mix of paid staff and volunteers. The service would be coordinated with the North West Transit District and other area providers.

Rail

The Housatonic Railroad Company provides freight service along a line extending from Pittsfield, Massachusetts to Fairfield County. In this Region, the rail line runs along the east side the Housatonic River through the Towns of North Canaan, Canaan, Cornwall and Kent. Although the Housatonic Railroad operates the trains, the track is owned by the State of Connecticut. Much of the existing track needs to be upgraded to meet current standards. Along several sections, the condition of the track limits the trains to speeds of only ten miles per hour. Train derailments in 2006 and 2008 have raised safety concerns.



PLANS, ZONING REGULATIONS AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Plans of Conservation and Development

The Connecticut State Statutes require town planning commissions to update their plans of conservation and development at least once every ten years. For some Connecticut towns, the “every ten year” time frame has stretched to fifteen or twenty years. In 2007, the State Statutes were amended to state that unless the town plan is amended every ten years, the town will be “ineligible for discretionary state funding unless such prohibition is expressly waived by” the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). No definition of “discretionary state funding” is included in the bill. Similarly, the bill does not spell out the conditions under which the OPM Secretary would waive the prohibition.



The Statutes also lay out a laundry list of factors that the town planning commission is expected to consider in the plan’s preparation. These include the need for affordable housing, the protection of public drinking water supplies, the use of cluster development, the state and regional plans of development, the needs of the municipality, energy conservation, and the “protection and preservation of agriculture.”

Having laid out what the town planning commission is expected to consider, the Statutes go on to describe what the plan is expected to be. A few of these expectations are that the plan will:

- “be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality;”
- “recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and include a map showing such proposed land uses;”
- “promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households...;”
- note any inconsistencies with the “growth management principles” in the State’s Plan of Conservation and Development.

The theory, if not always the practice, is that the plan of conservation and development provides the basis for the town

From the Town of Washington’s Plan of Conservation and Development, 2003:

The identification of strengths, concerns, and priorities led to the development of the following community objectives. These are the basic themes of this Plan of Conservation and Development

- *Preserve Washington’s rural character,*
- *Enhance the community’s village centers,*
- *Guide and manage housing development,*
- *Address other community issues.*

zoning regulations and subdivision regulations as well as provides direction for the town’s capital improvement projects and expenditures. Although recent State legislation has strengthened the links between town zoning regulations and the town’s plan, the plan remains strictly advisory

Towns are required by State Statute to submit their plan to the regional planning agency for review. The regional planning agency is to comment on the consistency of the town plan with the regional plan, the State plan and the plans of the other municipalities in the immediate area. The regional planning agency’s comments are strictly advisory. Interestingly enough, despite all the town plan requirements found in the State Statutes, no State agency actually reviews or comments on a town’s plan.

The Table shows the status of the plans of conservation and development for the Region’s nine towns.

- The overarching theme of all the towns’ plans is the preservation of the town’s existing character. To do this, virtually all of the plans explicitly mention the importance of preserving open space, natural resources, agriculture and village centers.
- Although the importance of economic development is frequently mentioned, there is also concern that any economic development be small scale and “compatible” with a town’s existing character. None of the plans advocate that the town make major efforts to attract economic development or re-zone large areas for industrial or commercial development.
- Most plans mention the importance of encouraging housing diversity. The emphasis on affordable housing varies between the towns.
- The importance of maintaining and enhancing the village centers is a common theme in all of the plans.

STATUS OF TOWN PLANS		
TOWN	YEAR ADOPTED	COMMENTS
Canaan	2002	
Cornwall	1998	currently working on update
Kent	2001	
North Canaan	2006	
Roxbury	1999	currently working on update
Salisbury	1999	
Sharon	2006	
Warren	1999	currently working on update
Washington	2003	
Source: NWCCOG, 2008		

Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

All of the NWCCOG towns have adopted zoning regulations and subdivision regulations.

As is the case in most rural towns, the overwhelming majority of the land in the Region is zoned for single family houses on lots that are one acre or more. Non-residentially zoned land tends to be around existing village centers and long established businesses and industries.

The subdivisions tend to small affairs – a property owner splitting off a few lots. In the past decade, no subdivision has resulted in the construction of a new public road and few have involved more than half a dozen lots.

Of the Region’s nine towns, only two have full time land use administrators / zoning enforcement officials. The rest have part-time land use administrators / zoning enforcement officers. None of the towns have a full or part-time town planner. In 2008, Northwest Regional Planning Collaborative was created by the NWCCOG and LHCEO to provide technical planning services to two Regions’ member towns. Initially, the Collaborative’s focus will be on eight towns – Canaan, Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Norfolk, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon. OPM has provided the Collaborative with a one year grant to hire additional staff and to establish a website.

The NWCCOG in cooperation with the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials (LHCEO) sponsors training workshops for land use commissioners. The workshops cover topics such as “Roles and Responsibilities of Land Use Commissioners” and “Lot Size, Net Buildable Area and Cluster Regulations.” For many commissioners, the workshops are the only formal training they receive. The NWCCOG, again in cooperation with LHCEO, also sponsors an e-mail list serve for land use commissioners aimed at promoting the exchange of information between commissioners throughout the two Regions.

- Most of Cornwall has a minimum lot size of five acres – the largest in the Region. In Roxbury and Salisbury, the largest minimum lot size is three acres; in Sharon and Warren, it is two acres. In Canaan and North Canaan, it is less than two acres. Several of the towns exclude wetlands from the calculation of minimum lot size.
- Where water and sewer are available, Kent, North Canaan, and Salisbury allow lots as small as 10,000 square feet.

A Definition of Cluster Subdivisions:

A form of development that allows a reduction in the minimum lot area and yard requirements provided that there is no increase in the number of lots that would have been permitted with a conventional subdivision. The excess land that would have been part of individual lots is instead used for open space, recreation or agriculture.

The website for the Northwestern Ct. Regional Planning Collaborative is

<http://www.nwctplanning.org/>

- Washington is one of the few towns in the State to use soil based zoning which, in addition to a minimum lot size, imposes density limitations based on soil types.
- Cluster – or open space – subdivisions are permitted in six of the Region’s towns. No town permits them by right. Instead, depending on the town, the zoning regulations require the applicant to obtain either a special exception or a zone change. Consequently, cluster subdivisions are rarely used despite the clear benefits this type of development offers.
- Because of steep slopes and /or poor drainage, many parts of the Region are difficult to develop. In an effort to ensure that lots are indeed “buildable,” two towns, Cornwall and Warren, have adopted “buildable area” regulations. These regulations state that each lot must have a minimum area that is relatively flat and free of wetland soils and that all structures be located within this buildable area.
- The State Statutes enable towns to adopt “village district regulations” which allow the planning and zoning commissions to regulate buildings’ appearance. Although much discussed, only Kent has adopted village district regulations for its town center.
- In 2002 - 2003, the NWCCOG and the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials hired Fitzgerald and Halliday to conduct a study of parking requirements and prepare model parking regulations. The reports contained a detailed series of recommendations aimed at reducing the impact of parking lots on the environment. To date, only Washington has used parts of this study to amend its zoning regulations.
- The Region is fortunate to have numerous scenic vistas which commonly include undeveloped ridgelines.

From Warren Zoning Regulations:
15.24 Buildable Area – a rectangular area of a lot that contains no wetland soils, waterbodies, watercourses, utility, conservation or access easements, rights of way or any naturally occurring slope exceeding 25% as measured using 2 foot contour intervals.

**Northwestern Connecticut Parking Study – Phase II
 Model Zoning Regulations for Parking
 for Northwestern Connecticut**
The central business zone or village center in most communities presents unique issues for provision of parking. In these locations, the establishment of minimum and maximum number of spaces may not be sufficient to fully guide the amount, location, and design of parking. Therefore, it is appropriate to provide for an automatic reduction in parking requirements for these zones where municipal and on-street parking options exist and where innovative parking solutions should be encouraged. The allowance for an automatic reduction in parking spaces for the Central Business Zone and/or Village Center Zone has the added benefit of providing an incentive to businesses to locate in the downtown, thus contributing to the sustainability of community character.

There is widespread concern that development along important ridgelines will mar the Region's appearance and several town plans have protection of ridgelines as a goal. Kent has adopted a "horizon line conservation district" aimed at limiting development along selected ridgelines. Taking a different tact, Canaan has adopted a "steep slope overlay" zone aimed principally at protecting ridgelines.



- In the 1980s, the Housatonic River Commission, which covers the towns of Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, New Milford, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon, recommended that towns create an overlay zone to enhance the protection of the River. All of the towns, except North Canaan, adopted the recommended zoning regulations. The Commission has recently modified its recommendations and is discussing the modifications with the town planning and zoning commissions.
- The State has mandated that towns with public water supply wells in sand and gravel aquifers regulate the land uses in areas around these aquifers. North Canaan and Salisbury are the Region's only towns that are required to adopt aquifer protection regulations.
- The State Statutes enable towns to include in their subdivision regulations requirements for setting aside land for recreation and/or open space. All of the Region's towns have provisions for setting aside open space in their subdivision regulations. There are, however, significant differences. In four towns, an open space set aside is mandatory; in five towns, the planning commission *may* require open space. In all of the towns except Salisbury, the maximum amount that can be required is 15% of the parcel to be subdivided. The Salisbury subdivision regulations contain no percentage requirement.

Excerpt from Housatonic River Commission's 2006 River Management Plan:

Land Use Recommendation

1. Impervious Surface Coverage

Impervious surfaces are primarily paved areas, buildings, and compacted earth or stone that creates a barrier to the percolation of rainfall into the soil. These surfaces disrupt the natural water cycle by increasing surface runoff and decreasing the infiltration of precipitation into the groundwater.

Studies have shown that water quality is significantly related to the amount of impervious surface in a watershed.

Change zoning regulations to reduce impervious surface coverage within their communities through site design guidelines and Best Management Practices for storm water system design and maintenance.

Information on planning and site design as well as Best Management Practices can be found in the "2004 Connecticut Storm Water Quality Manual." A town zoning regulations can, for example, establish a limit on the ratio of impervious surface coverage to total lot area.

- The State Statutes also allow towns to accept fees in lieu of open space. Six of the Region's towns have taken advantage of this provision.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Northwestern Ct. Council of Governments' role is to support the efforts of its member towns. The NWCCOG has no regulatory or enforcement authority. This Plan's goals, therefore, are relatively modest.

The following are the programs and policies that the NWCCOG will support and encourage.

Land Use

- Continue to support the efforts of the Regional Planning Collaborative.
- Promote the use of zoning regulations such as cluster zoning and buildable area regulations that minimize the impact of development
- Encourage town planning and zoning commissions to make use of the open space provisions in their subdivision regulations.
- Continue to provide training workshops for town land use commissioners.
- Provide research on topics of interest to local land use commissions.
- Provide information on best practices in zoning and land use to towns.
- Support local efforts to preserve open space and agricultural land.
- Continue to monitor State Legislation related to land use.

Housing

- Continue to provide staff support to the Northwestern Ct. Regional Housing Council.
- Encourage local efforts to provide affordable housing.
- Encourage the use of accessory apartments as part of an overall effort to increase affordable housing.
- Monitor the status of housing – especially affordable housing – through surveys and research;
- Provide information to local housing groups on affordable housing strategies and opportunities for State and Federal funding
- Support State legislation that addresses the affordable housing needs of rural towns.

- Provide information and support on the opportunities for towns to adopt inclusionary zoning regulations.

Infrastructure

- Support towns' efforts to upgrade their infrastructure.
- Support changes in State legislation and regulations to make community septic systems more readily available.
- Continue to support recycling efforts in the Region.
- Support legislative efforts to maintain the Small Town Economic Assistance Program, Town Aid Road, and Local Capital Improvement Program.
- Monitor State legislation dealing with telecommunications towers.

Economic Development

- Encourage towns to recognize the importance of small, home based businesses to the local economy.
- Support efforts by the State and others to improve high speed internet service throughout the Region.
- Encourage increased State support for local tourist businesses and for home based businesses.
- Support the economic development efforts of the Northwest Ct. Economic Development Corporation.

Natural Resources

- Continue to support the preservation of the Region's open space and active agriculture.
- Support the continued use of open space lands for agriculture.
- Continue to provide staff support to the Housatonic River Commission.
- Support the cleanup of the PCBs in the Housatonic River.
- Support efforts to improve the Region's ground and surface waters.

Transportation

- Support local efforts to use traffic calming in the Region.
- Support efforts to increase the number of State highways that are designated as scenic.
- Support the expansion of bicycle and pedestrian networks in the Region.

- Monitor State highway projects to ensure that the projects are in keeping with the Region's needs and character.
- Support the North West Transit District's efforts to construct a new maintenance facility and to expand its services to NWCCOG towns.
- Support Geer Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and the Region's other non-profit organizations that provide transportation the Region's residents.
- Support efforts to create an Independent Rural Transportation System to serve the LHCEO and the NWCCOG Regions.
- Support efforts to upgrade the tracks on the Housatonic Rail line.

