



KENT CONNECTICUT

2012 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT



KENT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

JANUARY 10, 2013

KENT PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

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The Planning and Zoning Commission also thanks the citizens of Kent who responded to the survey questionnaire, attended workshops, participated on focus groups, and provided comments. The support and assistance of the Board of Selectmen and the input of Kent's boards and commissions is also appreciated.

Kent, Connecticut

2012 Plan of Conservation and Development

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APPENDICES (click here to access Appendices on the Kent website)

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2012 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

WHAT MAKES KENT SPECIAL



"...the shape of the land does indeed affect the course of human events played out in its midst. Kent's expanse of rugged up and down terrain, naturally terraced flood plains, rock strewn soils, and the roiling waters of the Housatonic River that cleave lengthwise through town prove the rule."

From "Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent"
2009

Change is inevitable. The question is: "will change occur by design or by default?"

Quality of Place

Many factors help define a community: people, appearance, natural and cultural resources, businesses, services, and more. These factors combine to create the quality of place that defines the Town of Kent. It is up to the community to evaluate, plan for, and manage the inevitable change in these factors that occurs.

Kent's Character of Community

Three sets of character qualities define the sense of place that Kent imparts: New England small town qualities; rural qualities; and modern qualities. All of these contribute to the Town's character and combine to make Kent a well-rounded and distinctive community. However, these characteristics also need attention and management to ensure their continued contribution to the quality of life in Kent. A compilation of small town qualities and characteristics is provided in Appendix A.

Kent – New England

Kent represents the essence of small town New England, characterized over its recent history by its low population density, relatively slow population growth, a well defined village center, many historic structures, multi-generation families, active agriculture, and active volunteerism, within a diverse and often dramatic landscape.

Kent presents a distinct boundary from the spreading urbanization found to the south and west. This distinction is enhanced by the Town's efforts to keep the village center intact and to keep the entrance gateways to Kent attractive and representative of New England small town qualities.

Kent – Rural

Kent's rural character is highlighted by the valley and ridge topography of the Town's land area, with the dominating Housatonic River valley bisecting the Town diagonally. Open space protection efforts and strong land use controls, including horizonline protection, have helped preserve Kent's rural character and should be continued.

Farmlands and agricultural activities also contribute to the rural sense of place found in Kent. Although commercial farming has declined significantly, local produce is available and many residents preserve farms and farmland components.

With open fields and farm structures at most of the gateway entrances to Town, residents and visitors alike can easily relate to Kent's agrarian past. Kent's farms and farmland resources may support more local food production as the economics of food production change and the demand for fresh and wholesome produce grows.

Kent's historic structures, cultural amenities such as the Sloan-Stanley and other museums, and social and cultural events are also part of our village and rural character, and need to be cared for in our Plan as well.

Kent's rural character is accentuated by its proximity to busier and more intensively developed areas to the south and west, as well as its access from New York City, only two hours away. The challenge to the community is to protect the substance behind these assets so that the appearance of the Town is preserved.

Kent – Modern

Kent is also a contemporary place, with a healthy economic center, a dynamic population of active and involved residents, several private schools that attract people from all over the world, and cultural events of regional significance.

Certainly Kent's favorable location on the primary access route to Northwestern Connecticut and the Berkshire region contributes to the attractiveness of the Town to residents and visitors. Local businesses, and in turn the entire region, benefit from Kent's position as a regional gateway.

Population Density

Town	Persons/ Sq.Mi.
New Milford	463
Washington	97
Salisbury	69
Kent*	61
Warren	53
Sharon	52
Norfolk	37
Cornwall	32
State Average	726

Source: OPM Municipal Fiscal Indicators, 2009

*162 lowest density of 169 State towns

Kent Town is the entire community, including residential and commercial areas; infrastructure and facilities; social and cultural amenities; and the natural landscape.

Kent Village is the social and commercial core of the community, used and maintained as the Town center.

Small Town Characteristics

- 57% of Kent's workforce work in the Town
- Over 240 of Kent's 2000 parcels of land are 25 acres or larger
- Nearly 50% of the houses in Kent were built prior to 1960

Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent

Kent's Cultural Assets

- Sloane-Stanley Museum
- Connecticut Antique Machinery Museum
- Cream Hill Agricultural School Buildings
- Connecticut Museum of Mining and Mineral Science
- Kent Historical Society Seven Hearths Museum
- Kent Memorial Library
- Veteran's Memorials
- Swift House
- Bull's Bridge
- Flanders Historic District

In 2009, the Kent Conservation Commission published a comprehensive inventory of the community assets that define the Town of Kent, along with a set of illustrative maps and a series of recommendations. This report provides the Town with not only a baseline categorization of its defining characteristics but also the guidance necessary to ensure their ongoing protection. This Plan incorporates the Natural and Cultural Riches inventory and recommendations as they apply to the Plan's implementation.

The map below illustrates both the benefits and the risks associated with Kent's geographic location.

Private Schools in Kent

- Kent School
- South Kent School
- Marvelwood School

Protected Open Space

	Acres*	Percent of Town Land Area
Federal	2,360	7.5
State	3,320	10.5
Kent Land Trust	1,378	4.3
Weantinog Heritage	1,737	5.5
Pond Mtn.	774	2.4
Nature Conservancy	316	1.0
Sharon Land Trust	262	0.8
Town of Kent	240	0.8
Other	74	0.2
Total	10,451	32.8

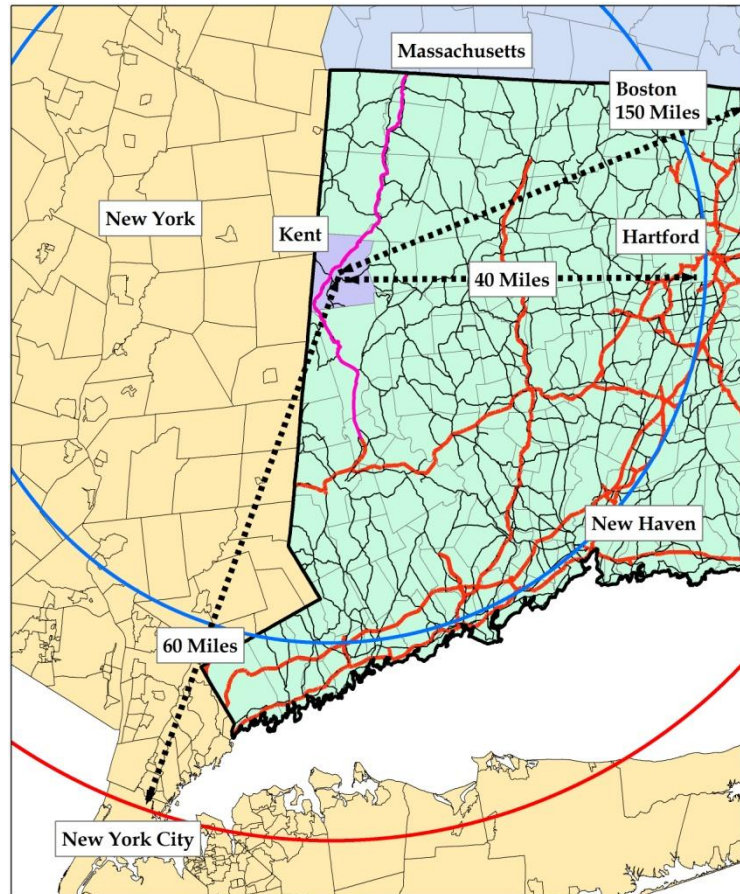
Source: *Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent, ~2009* (Data currently being updated by Conservation Commission for inclusion in the pending Open Space Plan update)

* Fee and easement

Primary Land Cover (2006)

Type	Acres	%
Forest	24793	77.9
Agriculture	3062	9.6
Developed	1809	5.7
Water/Wetland	1092	3.4
Other	1044	3.3
Total	31800	100

Source: Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research



Wood Planning Associates

Where We Are

A VISION FOR OUR COMMUNITY

A combination of old and new, natural and built, and resident and visitor makes Kent a well-rounded community. The challenge for the community is to ensure that the Town's village, rural, and modern assets are protected in the face of local development pressures and regional pressures that are largely beyond the Town's control.

This Plan sets priorities for the future based on community interests, local and regional influences, and community strengths and weaknesses. Throughout the planning process, the Planning and Zoning Commission has sought direct input from the community on the key planning issues and on ideas for how to address them. This outreach effort included a community opinion survey, a public planning workshop, and numerous focus group sessions, in addition to Commission discussions.

A Vision for Kent

The Kent Community will sustain and enhance its New England town character; encourage a diversity of people, housing, and employment opportunities; ensure a healthy and safe living environment; protect its natural and cultural resources and support the economic and cultural value of the village center.

Planning strategies and action steps to support this vision are organized around three general planning themes: Preserve Our Natural and Rural Heritage; Guide Our Community's Development; and Enhance Our Community Assets. This Plan provides recommendations for Town actions in response to each of the planning themes.

Collaboration between local agencies, commissions, and organizations will be vital to the successful implementation of this Plan and will contribute to the continued health and wellbeing of the Town and its citizens.

Community Input

- Community Opinion Survey
- Public Planning Workshop
- Issue Focus Group Sessions

Key Influences

- Regional Development Potential
- Adjacent Towns' Planning
- State Planning (DOT, DEEP, DECD, etc.)
- State and Private Conservation Efforts
- Municipal Budget
- Regional and National Economy

Planning Themes

- Natural and Rural Heritage: Cultural and Natural Resources
- Community Development: Economic Health and Housing Diversity
- Community Assets: Facilities, Services, and Public Involvement

"If Kent is to protect its rural values it must have the active engagement of its land use decision-makers and the citizens whom they represent, both in how we regulate the present and how we plan for the future."

From "Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent"

PLANNING OVERVIEW

This Plan

Kent, Connecticut ***Fast Facts***

Incorporated:
1739

Form of Government:
Selectmen, Town Meeting

Population:
2000 – 2858
2010 - 2979

Median Population Age:
2000 – 43 years
2010 –47 years

Land Area:
49.6 Square Miles

Expenditures (2009):
Education – \$6,340,748
Other - \$2,654,115
Total – \$9,800,316

The Town has recognized how important effective planning is to help preserve the qualities and valued character of our community. Building on the efforts of previous Town Plans and more recent evaluations of Town resources and development options, the Planning and Zoning Commission (“PZC”) undertook to develop a new and comprehensive Plan of Conservation and Development. This effort is based on a clear understanding of the community’s goals and consideration of outside influences and other regional planning. The result is a framework for ensuring that the Town can continue to accommodate growth while retaining the very qualities that attract residents, businesses, and visitors to Kent.

Planning in Kent

Kent developed its first comprehensive Town Plan in 1975. The Plan was updated and revised in 1989 and updated again in 2001. A *Town Character Study and Open Space Plan* was prepared in 1990 as recommended by the 1989 Plan revision, providing guidance for preserving critical elements of the Town’s rural character, including specific open space protection. Endorsed and supported by this Plan of Conservation and Development, the Conservation Commission has recently updated the *Town Character Study*. The updated Study is incorporated by reference into this Plan and is attached as Appendix L.

The Kent Conservation Commission recently developed a detailed evaluation of natural and cultural resources in Kent, providing background information and recommendations for preserving, conserving, and protecting these invaluable Town assets. The *Natural & Cultural Riches* report is incorporated by reference into this Plan as recommended by the Conservation Commission and has been used to guide the updated *Town Character Study*.

To support the development of this Plan, a compilation of data and information about Kent, the *State of Our Town* report, was prepared and used to inform Commission consideration of Plan goals and strategies. (Appendix G)

Why We Plan

The primary reason for planning is to identify and help sustain those qualities and characteristics that define a community. At the same time, the State of Connecticut General Statutes provide guidelines for municipalities to “at least once every ten years...prepare or amend and...adopt” a Plan of Conservation and Development. Statutes also provide a set of “growth management principles” which town plans should consider.

Towns use plans to guide development of land use controls, prioritize resource protections such as open space, support development of municipal facilities and services, and provide the community at large with an overall understanding of the town’s goals and priorities.

Kent has historically made effective use of its planning, as demonstrated by the significant amount of protected land, the implementation of Horizonline and Village District regulations, and the establishment of an active and effective Conservation Commission. All of these actions were recommended in one or more Town Plans.

Growth Management Principles

The State of Connecticut has adopted a series of Growth Management Principles, intended to provide a consistent framework for municipal, regional, and State Plans. The strategies laid out in this Plan of Conservation and Development are consistent with those principles, as well as the policies in the current State Plan, including the land use categories provided on the State Locational Guide Map. This Plan has also considered, and is consistent with, the latest Plan of Conservation and Development by the NW Connecticut Council of Governments.

Regional Concerns

In addition to planning challenges that arise and are addressed locally, Kent faces a unique set of regional threats and opportunities that this Plan also considers. These include environmental, transportation, and economic and residential development conditions that must be monitored and, wherever possible, responded to in order to protect Kent’s interests.

Growth Management Principles (CGS §8-23)

- Redevelopment and Revitalization of Commercial Centers and Areas of Mixed Uses
- Expansion of Housing Opportunities and Design Choices
- Concentration of Development Around Transportation Nodes and Corridors
- Conservation and Restoration of the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources and Existing Farmlands
- Protection of Critical Environmental Assets
- Integration of Planning Across All Levels of Government

Regional Concerns to Kent

- State DEEP actions regarding State Parks and recreational areas
- State DOT and TSB planning and actions regarding State highways
- Appalachian Trail and extensions
- Development of passenger rail service
- Regional tourism promotions
- Dutchess County (NY) development (residential and industrial)
- Bulls Bridge hydro facility (FERC)
- State approval of telecommunications and alternative energy facilities
- State and Regional planning

PRESERVE OUR NATURAL AND RURAL HERITAGE

NOTE: Recommended actions are underlined and summarized in a table at the conclusion of the section



“...it’s never been more important to Kent’s future that we keep that sense of connectedness to the land in our planning.”

From *Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent* 2009

Kent enjoys a diversity of natural, historic, and cultural resources that make it a wonderful place to live, work, and visit. These assets also provide the Town with tremendous opportunity, both for maintaining our high quality of life and for building on the economic and cultural potential of the Town’s location as a gateway to northwestern Connecticut and all of New England.

As the community opinion survey responses demonstrate, Kent residents recognize and value these resources, and agree that they should be a high priority in the Town Plan.

Key elements of these community assets that are evident in Kent are detailed in a report prepared by the Kent Conservation Commission entitled *Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent, Connecticut*. That report is incorporated into this Plan of Conservation and Development for the purposes of providing guidance for planning objectives and actions to preserve and sustain these assets.

Natural and Rural Heritage Strategy

Kent will support and retain its natural and rural heritage by protecting and enhancing natural, agricultural, scenic, cultural, recreational, and environmental resources and promoting sustainable uses of these assets.

Natural resource and open space protection benefit not only from public and private preservation actions but also from growth management tools, which are identified in this section as well as the following section addressing Community Development.



Natural Resources

Water and wetlands, forests, and farmlands dominate the landscape in Kent. These assets, and the diverse ecological habitats they support, are protected by a variety of means including land use regulations, open space protection, and public and private land management. Kent will continue to work with public and private interests to ensure that these resources are protected, properly managed, and, where appropriate, used sustainably.

Kent will collaborate with regional entities on resource conservation, including the Housatonic River Commission, the Lake Waramaug Authority, the Housatonic Valley Association, the Northwest Conservation District, and local land trusts.

Kent will initiate a review of potential land use regulation improvements to address development impacts and other ecological and environmental threats. This review will consider improvements to existing horizonline regulations, mining and extraction limitation regulations, conservation design subdivision standards, and incentives for community goals such as targeted open space protection. The Planning and Zoning Commission will encourage the Conservation Commission to review and comment on subdivision applications.

Wetlands regulations, including upland review areas and lakes and ponds protections, will be maintained and updated as technological and legal options become available. Flood Plain standards will be closely reviewed and updated to incorporate the latest technical standards available. Low impact development concepts, including no net stormwater flow increases, will be integrated into standards wherever appropriate.

Regulations and procedures will be reviewed to ensure that compatible and appropriate land uses, particularly agriculture, are not discouraged or unduly restricted. Kent will continue and refine use of the Horizonline Conservation District standards to help preserve scenic integrity of the Town's landscape. Stone walls add to this scenic quality; PZC should consider regulations to protect these elements.

Natural and Rural Heritage Preservation – Implementation

- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Inland Wetlands Commission
- Conservation Commission
- Board of Selectmen
- Land Trusts
- Historic District Commission
- Kent Historical Society

Natural Resource Protection Regulations – Retain and/or Improve

- Water body upland review areas
- Stream and waterbody bank protection buffers
- Flood Plain
- Aquifer Protection
- Low Impact Development
- Horizonline
- Conservation Subdivisions
- Open Space priorities and Incentives
- Outdoor Lighting
- Mining and extraction controls
- Tree maintenance and replacement programs

Survey Responses

- 87% agree or strongly agree with preserving open space as a high priority
- 94% believe open space will contribute to a positive quality of life
- 52% think open space will keep taxes low
- 97% agree open space will maintain the Town's rural character

The town should encourage and cooperate with efforts to reduce or mitigate eutrophication problems at Hatch Pond (in accordance with the Kent Land Trust's pending Hatch Pond Water Quality study) and other water bodies. The Inland Wetland Commission should promote the use of native vegetative buffers along water bodies and encourage maintenance or reestablishment of native vegetation along the banks of rivers and stream belts.

The Town should also continue efforts to control and eradicate invasive plant species on public and private lands, however, a Town wide process and educational effort should be developed to ensure that State actions to control invasive species and protect water quality include the Town's full review and input.

Open Space

Open Space Priorities

- Town recreational opportunities
- Integrated open space and recreation projects
- Northern Gateway to Kent Village
- High quality farmland
- Roadscapes with scenic features such as mature native vegetation and stonewalls
- Ridgelines and other scenic priorities
- Significant ecological habitat protection
- Significant archeological sites
- Connecting open space corridors and streambelts, including the Housatonic River Corridor
- Town Character Areas
- Stratified Drift Aquifers
- Wetlands and Streambelts

Kent has a significant amount of protected open space. State properties, such as Macedonia Brook State Park and Kent Falls State Park, Federal land associated with the Appalachian Trail, Kent Land Trust holdings, and other private conservation holdings make up about 33% of the Town's land area (see sidebar note page 3). Because of the importance of these resources to Kent and the sensitivity of their ecological and environmental value, additional opportunities to extend natural corridors, permanently protect scenic vistas, and enhance recreational access should be pursued.

In 1990, Kent worked with the Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments and a private consultant to prepare a *Town Character Study and Open Space Plan*. Additionally, the recent *Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent* report provides a detailed resource inventory. The Kent Conservation Commission is currently updating the Town Open Space Plan, which will be incorporated into this Plan and attached as Appendix M.



The Town has supported the work of the Kent Conservation Commission to update the *Town Character Study*, the result of which has been adopted into this Plan of Conservation and Development. This effort has involved representatives of all major land interests, public and private, and should also reach out to the community at large.

The updated *Town Character Study* identifies and prioritizes land protection targets, including those that expand Town holdings and meet the goals listed in the sidebar on the previous page, or where Town participation is necessary for success. Such priorities should be referenced in Kent's subdivision regulations to provide guidance to developers and the Commission for set-aside open space.

To support the Town's open space goals, Kent should establish a Land Acquisition Fund based on the Open Space Plan protection priorities and criteria. At least 31 Connecticut towns have created a land acquisition fund.

The Town has benefitted from the use of statutory provisions, known as the PA 490 program, to abate property taxes on forestland, farmland, and open space, which provides an incentive for property owners to delay development. The 490 program should be continued. Many large parcels remain available for subdivisions or estate development in Kent. This highlights both the threats and opportunities the Town faces with respect to open space planning. The Town should consider additional incentive strategies for open space conservation and preservation.

"Our town's rural character and the natural ecosystems that make up its critical parts are threatened by development that has the potential to bring irreversible changes to the quality of life we hold dear."

From *Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent*
2009

Survey Responses

- 72% agree or strongly agree that Kent should establish a land acquisition fund.
- 62% would be willing to pay \$100 or more in additional taxes for land conservation.
- 89% agree or strongly agree that Kent should promote farming opportunities.



Transfer of Development Rights – CGS §8-2

“Such regulations may provide for a municipal system for the creation of development rights and the permanent transfer of such development rights, which may include a system for the variance of density limits in connection with any such transfer.”

Designated Scenic Roads in Kent

- Cobble Lane (full length)
- Cobble Road (full length)
- Dugan Road (full length)
- Geer Mountain Road (full length)
- Kent Hollow Road (1 mile of the 4.52 miles)
- Skiff Mountain Road (1.52 of 5.69 miles)
- Treasure Hill Road (full length)

Kent will also evaluate incentives and other regulatory concepts to promote natural resource protection and other planning goals. The conservation design subdivision regulations are an example of a density incentive. Others might include a transfer of development rights program which could allow concentrated development in appropriate locations in exchange for the permanent protection of open space and agricultural resources elsewhere in Town.

The primary entrances to Kent and the gateways to the village center display the natural and rural character of the Town, and these assets must be protected. In addition to evaluating additional open space protection in these areas, zoning regulations should be reviewed to ensure that suitable controls over clearing, landscaping, building locations, and other standards protect Kent’s gateways.

Scenic roadscapes also provide a sense of openness and rural character and Kent should retain and encourage use of the Scenic Road Ordinance.



Farms and Farming

Although farming activity has changed in Kent, the remaining farmland and the potential for future farming activity can benefit from the Town's implementation of additional tools to promote agriculture. Although dairy farming has vanished from Kent and most of Connecticut, smaller, specialty farming activities appear to be increasing, supported by interest in fresh local produce.

The scenic qualities of Kent's remaining farmland are obvious, but this Plan recognizes that protecting farmland from development is not enough. Protecting prime agricultural soils is crucial to ensuring the potential for future agricultural production and this should be one of the considerations for the Land Acquisition Fund recommended by this Plan.

In addition to supporting farmland protection through open space programs, Kent will promote sustainable use of agriculture through public/private partnerships to support agri-tourism and eco-tourism, "buy-local" promotional programs, and other sustainable farming and forestry programs.

Kent will also review its land use regulations to ensure "farm friendly" standards, including "right-to farm" provisions, permitting farm markets by site plan review rather than special permit, relaxed residency restrictions for farm workers, adaptive reuse of farm structures for farm related activities, and use of active agricultural properties for related commercial activities.

The Town should consider creating an agriculture advisory group to develop and advocate farm friendly practices and promote farming interests. This could include development of an inventory of agricultural resources and activities in Kent as well as working with regional and State entities.

"...it is the open farm fields and the way of life that farming has imprinted here that give the community important aspects of its character and these make it a resource to cherish and protect in a changing economic environment."

From Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent

"Maintaining the delicate balance between preserving Kent's rural character and respecting property owners' rights is a constant struggle. But...the close-knit community of Kent has adopted standards that promise to retain a good bit of its identity in the face of 21st century pressures."

From Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent
2009



Cultural Resources

Statutory Growth Management Principles

Conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and existing farmlands.

Protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety.

Kent's many historic and cultural resources provide residents and visitors with enjoyable experiences and learning opportunities. Along with ample recreational opportunities, these resources not only help define the community's character, but also create economic benefits by attracting people to Kent and its businesses.

Kent will develop and maintain a current inventory of historic structures and identify any clusters of historic structures that may qualify for Historic District designation as provided in Connecticut statutes. Kent will also continue to apply, and review for possible improvements, the Demolition Delay ordinance to provide opportunity for private or public acquisition of historic structures that an owner may decide to remove.

Kent's New England flavor depends largely on the integrity of its historic assets and the compatibility of new development, especially in the village center. The Village District design review process will continue to be applied to new developments and redevelopments to ensure historic continuity throughout the entire Village area.

Additionally, the Historic District Commission and private interests, particularly the Kent Historical Society, should evaluate the current Flanders Historic District boundaries and identify potential expansions. Opportunities for additional Historic Districts, such as East Kent, should also be evaluated. Such evaluations should include consideration of historically scenic landscapes.



Historic and cultural resources provide recreational and tourism opportunities to residents and visitors. Kent should actively partner with private interests that attract tourism and provide local cultural opportunities. Museums and historic sites should be included in future tourism and recreational programs.

Kent also benefits from the social and cultural stimulus provided by the presence of several private schools. The Town should continue to work closely with these schools and support specific projects that will benefit the entire community as well as the respective school.

Environmental Issues

Much of the high quality rural character in Kent can be attributed to its healthy environmental condition. This Plan's goals to protect farmland, open space, water and natural resources will also sustain environmental qualities, but other specific actions are necessary.

As the *Riches of Kent* report notes "water is truly a defining characteristic of Kent today..." The importance of surface and ground water resources for drinking water supply, recreation, habitat, and scenery is evident as is the sensitivity of those resources to environmental degradation. Kent's Inland Wetlands Commission provides the first line of defense for these assets. As previously noted, that Commission should regularly review and update its regulations as technological and legal options become available. This should include evaluation of the potential for additional lake protections.

Kent will identify additional protections such as the Connecticut DEEP *Stormwater Quality Manual* and *Erosion and Sedimentation Controls* guidelines, which incorporate state-of-the-art low impact development standards, and revise zoning and subdivision regulations accordingly.

To ensure that future residential developments have minimal environmental impact, as discussed in the next section of this Plan, the PZC will also revise Conservation Development subdivision standards to help address environmental impacts and promote the Town's open space and scenic protection goals.

Low Impact Development Principles

- uses site design principles and small-scale treatment practices
- employs site design techniques to conserve natural hydrologic functions
- provides retention, detention and filtration of runoff in a manner that more closely mimics the natural water balance

From Connecticut DEEP Stormwater Quality Manual

***NW Connecticut Council
of Governments 2008
Plan Recommendations:***

- Promote the use of zoning regulations such as cluster zoning...that minimize the impact of development.
- ...make use of open space provisions in subdivision regulations.
- Continue to support the preservation...of open space and active agriculture.
- Support the continued use of open space for agriculture.
- Support efforts to improve the region's ground and surface waters.

With limited access to public water supplies, protection of groundwater is a high priority for the Town. Underground oil storage and subsurface sewage treatment facilities pose the most significant risk, other than catastrophic spills or contamination. In addition to the monitoring program recommended above, Kent should investigate and consider an underground oil storage ordinance to prohibit or restrict future such installations and require regular inspections of existing tanks.

The Sewer Commission, acting as the Town's Water Pollution Control Authority, is monitoring and will develop contingency plans for several community sewage treatment facilities in case of failure. The Town, through the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission, should support this effort.

The Town should monitor the use of outdoor wood furnaces and other localized air quality threats, as well as any State level action to regulate such uses, and be prepared to implement regulatory controls if determined necessary. Similarly, the Town should consider establishing monitoring programs for underground oil storage and subsurface septic treatment systems.

The historic qualities and appearance that Kent has worked hard to maintain in the Kent Village Center are disrupted by the necessary, but intrusive, utility infrastructure that brings electricity and communications services. However, the impacts of these facilities can be mitigated by placing at least portions of them underground. A private group of volunteers is working on this with the utilities and the Town should support the effort to bury utility lines where feasible in the Village Center.

Kent also faces exposure to environmental threats well beyond the Town's borders. The PCB contamination of the Housatonic River is a well-known example, but others include possible air quality impacts from new industrial developments in New York State (up-wind). Increased traffic in western Connecticut may also arise from new developments nearby, such as the potential creation of a new community on the grounds of the former Harlem Valley Hospital in Dover, New York, only 13 miles from Kent. The Town should carefully monitor regional developments and be prepared to evaluate and propose responses or participate in public considerations of such proposals.

As energy costs climb and as alternative energy technologies improve, more opportunities arise for businesses and private individuals to install such facilities as wind generators and waste to energy generators. Kent should identify potential risks and environmental issues and develop regulations, based on the potential scale of development, to ensure that neighborhoods and the Town generally are protected from potential environmental impacts of such facilities. Kent should seek to work collaboratively with other towns and interests throughout the region and the NWCCOG to develop consistent approaches to siting and regulating alternative energy facilities. The PZC is generally in favor of developing alternative energy resources contingent upon enforcement of proper environmental controls and regulations.

Kent has proactively recognized the need to address energy efficiency through the formation of a volunteer Energy and Environmental Task Force. The Town should carefully consider options including recommendations from the Task Force and other sources and provide support for their efforts. Examples include regulatory incentives to encourage conservation retrofits and high efficiency (“green”) building construction. Kent should also consider adopting ordinances exempting renewable energy systems from property tax, in accordance with CGS §12-81.

Quiet and dark are defining characteristics of rural areas and despite busy main roads and an active village center, those qualities remain dominant throughout most of Kent. Light pollution is controlled by specific commercial development standards in Kent’s Zoning Regulations but no such controls apply to residential areas outside of the Horizonline Conservation District.

The PZC or the Conservation Commission should consider adopting regulations for residential area lighting such as have been developed in the Town of Washington and elsewhere. The PZC should also review current lighting regulations to identify possible improvements or strengthening, such as reducing the minimum required and the maximum allowed lighting intensity in the Village Center District.

The PZC should also consider adopting regulations for residential and commercial area noise control. Temporary private property noise should be addressed along with mechanical and commercial operation noise.

Dark Skies

“The mission of the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) is to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies through environmentally responsible outdoor lighting.”

The IDA provides technical guidance, model codes, and support information, available on its website <http://www.darksky.org/>

Rural and Natural Heritage Goals - Summary

Immediate Actions

1. Review Kent's zoning and wetlands regulations to identify and implement improvements to protect water quality, address development impacts, and address other ecological and environmental threats.
2. Review Kent's land use regulations to identify and remedy potential impediments to agricultural activities or provide support for agriculture.
3. Incorporate recommendations of the revised *Town Character Study* into subdivision regulations.
4. Establish a Land Acquisition Fund to support priority open space acquisitions.
5. Update Flood Plain standards to incorporate the latest technical standards.
6. Create a Historic Buildings Task Force to catalog historic features and identify potential threats to historic structures.
7. Review Conservation Development subdivision standards to ensure effectiveness and applicability, particularly in high priority conservation areas.
8. Support the Sewer Commission's efforts to develop contingency plans for several community sewage treatment facilities in case of failure.
9. Create a task force to catalogue all buried oil storage tanks.
10. Investigate and consider an underground oil storage ordinance to prohibit or restrict future such installations and require regular inspections of existing tanks.

Near Term Actions

11. Consider development of guidelines and supplemental zoning regulations to minimize light pollution, particularly outside of the Village Center area.
12. Update zoning and subdivision regulations to integrate low impact development standards from the State of Connecticut DEP Stormwater Quality Manual and DEP Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control.
13. Refine and implement Historic District Regulations and evaluate expansion of the Flanders Historic District and creation of additional historic districts where appropriate.
14. Support development of a Town wide process and educational effort to ensure that State actions to control invasive species and protect water quality are made with the Town's full review and input.
15. Identify and pursue opportunities to extend natural corridors, permanently protect scenic vistas, and enhance recreational access through additional open space protection.
16. Consider creation of an agriculture commission or other advisory group to counsel Town agencies on agricultural matters.

Evaluation for Future Action

17. Evaluate incentives and other regulatory concepts to promote natural resource protection and other planning goals.
18. Review zoning regulations to ensure that suitable controls over clearing, landscaping, building locations, and other standards protect Kent's gateways.
19. Monitor the use of outdoor wood furnaces and other localized air quality threats, as well as any State level action to regulate such uses and be prepared to implement regulatory controls.
20. Consider development of additional zoning regulations, or amendment of existing regulations as appropriate, to control the development of private alternative energy generating facilities and to provide guidance for State or Federal regulators with authority for commercial generating facilities.
21. Consider adopting ordinances exempting renewable energy systems from property tax, in accordance with CGS §12-81.

Continuing Policies

22. Preserve Town and Village gateways and other scenic assets.
23. Integrate historic resources, including the Sloan - Stanley Museum and other museums, into planning for future trails and other tourism and recreational programs.
24. Work with public and private interests and regional conservation entities to ensure that natural resources are protected, properly managed, and used sustainably where appropriate.
25. Continue use of, and refine as necessary, the Horizonline Conservation District standards to help preserve scenic integrity of the Town's landscape.
26. Continue and promote the tax abatement (PA 490 program) for forestland, farmland, and open space meeting the applicable criteria; consider reducing the tax rate for qualifying open space to encourage greater participation.
27. Retain and encourage use of the Scenic Road Ordinance.
28. Promote appropriate and sustainable uses of natural and agricultural resources.
29. Apply the Village District design review process to new developments and redevelopments in the Village District; maintain and improve the Village District standards and design guidelines as appropriate.
30. Continue use of the Demolition Delay Ordinance and revise or update as necessary.
31. Work closely and, where appropriate, collaborate with private schools on projects with cultural benefits.
32. Support private efforts to remove overhead utility lines from portions of Kent Village Center.
33. Carefully monitor regional developments and be prepared to evaluate and propose responses or participate in public considerations of such proposals.
34. Maintain and update Inland Wetlands Regulations as technological and legal options become available.

GUIDE OUR COMMUNITY'S DEVELOPMENT

NOTE: Recommended actions are underlined and summarized in a table at the conclusion of the section

"The past must be deferred to where its features are still readily recognized and where modern land use demands can be integrated with these older elements."

From "Kent Town Character Study" (1990)

The vitality of a community depends on its people, who in turn rely on businesses for goods, services, jobs, and the taxes they generate. People also need housing, and the availability of a diverse housing stock, in terms of size, style, and cost, promotes a diverse and socially strong community.

Therefore, this Plan addresses the related needs and opportunities for economic activity and housing availability, as well as the challenges to community character and existing neighborhoods that new development and growth bring.

Community Development Strategy

Kent will promote sustainable economic health, encourage a diversity of available housing throughout the community, and successfully integrate future development into existing neighborhoods and the community at large.

Economic Health

Kent's Village Center constitutes the economic hub of the community, and this Plan continues the policies of strengthening the Village as the Town's economic, cultural, civic, and social center. Future development will be guided not only by the small town character priorities defined in this Plan, but also by the need to provide goods and services, local jobs, and tax base that are critical to the Town's economic health.

Other economic assets that the Town should continue to benefit from are its Industrial District, home-based entrepreneurship, specialty agriculture, private schools, and tourism.

Grand List Assessment

Category	% of Total Assessment
Residential	78.8
Commercial/Industrial	6.9
Personal Property	2.1
Motor Vehicle	3.6
Other	8.7

Connecticut OPM Municipal Fiscal Indicators 2010



Kent Village Center

Kent has implemented effective regulations addressing development in the Village Center, most notable the creation of a Village District as authorized by CGS §8-2. The establishment of an Architectural Review Board (“ARB”) and the recent overhaul of its standards have helped ensure that the Village Center will retain its New England village character while accommodating economic activities.

As conditions change and additional statutory options are adopted, the Town needs to consider additional opportunities to promote economic health. The Planning and Zoning Commission should undertake a complete evaluation of zoning regulations to identify revisions of standards and district boundaries that may enhance the town’s economic health. Regulations should be revised accordingly. This review should include consultation with business interests and the Economic Development Commission (“EDC” – see page 27).

The PZC will continue to refine the Village District Regulations to emphasize design standards and examine permitted uses in the Village Center. Examples of uses that could be promoted by zoning standards include medical, technology, mixed commercial/residential, and hospitality.

Future economic activity may be encouraged by improvements to traffic circulation throughout the Town’s Commercial and Industrial Districts. Village Center regulations should ensure that new development or redevelopment incorporates master planning to promote connecting street grids, shared parking and access, and overall design consistency. Existing cul-de-sacs should be integrated into such connecting grids whenever possible.

The most obvious example of street patterns that restrict access as well as development potential is the Kent Green area, which has limited access only from Route 7. The Town should work with private property owners to design and incorporate into future development plans and Town capital improvement plans a Main Street bypass road connecting the Kent Green shopping area to the area’s existing road network.

Kent Village forms the Town’s economic, cultural, municipal and social center. Sustaining its vitality is a critical Plan objective.

Economic Development - Kent’s Strengths and Weaknesses

- + Engaged business owners and active Chamber of Commerce
- + Diverse and unique mix of businesses
- + Adequate parking
- + Village District zoning regulations
- + Village Center clustered retail
- + Attractive main street
- + Pedestrian friendly commercial center
- + Convenient vehicle access from regional population centers (strength and weakness)
- Inconvenient pedestrian access in some areas
- Limited light industrial development area and potential
- Intrusive and potentially hazardous traffic conditions
- Limits on home based occupations

***NW Connecticut Council
of Governments 2008
Plan Recommendations***

- Encourage efforts to provide affordable housing.
- Encourage the use of accessory apartments as part of an overall effort to increase affordable housing.
- ...recognize the importance of small, home based businesses to the local economy.
- Encourage increased support for local tourist businesses and home based businesses.
- Support regional economic development efforts.

***Statutory Growth
Management Principles***

- Redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.
- Expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.
- Concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.

Appendix B provides maps from the Connecticut DOT Route 7 Scenic Corridor Plan illustrating a potential Village Center build-out scenario that incorporates these concepts. Additionally, Appendix B provides a series of illustrations of the physical layout of the Kent Village Center, which may be used to help design and coordinate future improvements.

Other physical and structural improvements that are necessary to enhance the economic environment of Kent Village include pedestrian access, sidewalk and road improvements or additions, and better signage throughout the Village Center. Such improvements should be integrated into development plans where possible, in conformance with ARB standards. The Town should consider the recommended improvements in its capital improvement planning as appropriate.

Legislation adopted in the October 2011 Special Session of the State General Assembly includes additional financial support specifically for small town economic development. The Kent EDC, or other Town officials, should pursue this and other potential funding to support structural and aesthetic improvements in the Village Center.

The Town should initiate a study of traffic, existing road conditions, and improvement options and request DOT consideration of improvements within the State highway right of way such as traffic calming measures, alternative parking options, safe pedestrian crossings, and bicycle lanes. The Town should monitor and, whenever possible, ensure that Kent's interests and concerns are represented in future planning for State highway improvements by the Transportation Strategy Board and the State DOT.

The PZC should provide Village Commercial standards and incentives to promote open space, public infrastructure improvements, shared parking and parking access, interconnecting pedestrian access, and other public benefits. Incentives might include increased coverage, reduced parking, reduced fees, and relaxed signage standards.

Kent officials and businesses have been leaders in recent efforts to promote economic vitality in Kent and regionally. This has included the Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative (“RPC”) Village Center Economic Development Initiative (“Village Initiative”), designed to promote the individual village centers in northwestern Connecticut as well as promote economic collaboration among towns.

As one of the most prominent and accessible of the region’s village centers, Kent Village is well-positioned to benefit from these efforts. The Town should continue to support and participate in the Village Initiative program and other regional economic development activities.

The regional Village Initiative includes an informational and directional signage plan that includes prospective sites in Kent for gateway welcoming signs and an informational kiosk. The kiosk would be located in the Village Center and would include information about shopping and amenities as well as promotion of museums, recreational opportunities, and events throughout Kent. If pending funding is received, the Town should work with the RPC to finalize sign locations and installation.

The Town should also support the Streetscape Improvement planning currently in progress by local volunteers, which is evaluating removal of utility poles and wires, improved sidewalks, landscaping, and stormwater infrastructure.

Additionally, the Town should prepare plans for ensuring that adequate overflow parking is available for special events and Village Center activities. The Kent Volunteer Fire Department should be approached to discuss the use of available parking on the Emergency Service site and access to existing municipal parking should be facilitated with signage and pedestrian access. Such planning can help minimize the total area of the Village that is committed to vehicle parking.

This Plan proposes consideration of several significant projects and actions pertaining to the future of Kent’s Village Center, including connector roads, visitor center, utility facilities, open space acquisition, pedestrian enhancements, and more. The Town should undertake a comprehensive planning study of these and other options for enhancing the important contributions of the Village Center to the character and vitality of the entire Town.

Main Street Investment – PA 11-1

Projects eligible for funding under the Main Street Investment Fund will develop or improve commercial centers to

- (1) attract small business,
- (2) promote commercial viability, and
- (3) improve aesthetics and pedestrian access.

An effort is underway to reestablish passenger rail service on the Housatonic line. While such service would bring potential benefits to Kent residents and businesses, Kent must carefully monitor rail service developments. The Town must ensure that locations and management of physical developments, such as parking areas, rail stations, and grade crossings properly consider pedestrian access, safety, traffic impacts, aesthetic impacts, and other Village Center goals.

The Board of Selectmen should recruit and appoint a task group to work with the Department of Public Works, the PZC, the Kent Chamber of Commerce, and other potential stakeholders to develop and promote the Town's preferences for development and implementation of additional rail service through Kent.

Other commercial uses along Route 7, outside of the established commercial zones, have continued while avoiding the creation of sprawling strip developments. Kent should ensure that future uses and improvements of such properties continue to be consistent with the overall goal of retaining Kent's New England small town character, with special consideration for protection of the northern gateway to the Village. The open fields surrounding and within the Village Center are of prime concern for the Town's rural and scenic character.

The PZC should closely monitor the Bulls Bridge area and develop plans to coordinate future development and uses with existing conditions. In particular, the Town should work with the Connecticut DOT and DEEP and the Connecticut Light and Power Company and First Light Hydro Generating Company to properly maintain the area and accommodate the various commercial and recreational uses, including safe and convenient pedestrian access.



Industrial District

The established Industrial District has historically been limited to a few specified industrial uses and has been underused. The pending extension of the sewer service to the Industrial Zone will expand development opportunities and the existing rail service offers another transportation option that may be attractive to developers and businesses. The Town should continue to support enhancements of infrastructure improvements including the sewer extension project and private efforts to install three-phase electrical service and provide access to the existing rail line.

The PZC will review the existing zoning regulations and monitor conditions in the Industrial District. As determined appropriate, the PZC will consider revising the permitted uses and standards to encourage future economic activity. Such changes, including the possible street connection to Kent Green, may increase the potential for new developments and uses of the Industrial District properties. The PZC should monitor development trends in the Industrial District to determine if expansion of the District boundaries is appropriate.

Community Development – Implementation

- Board of Selectmen
- Board of Finance
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Historic District Commission
- Economic Development Commission
- Conservation Commission
- Chamber of Commerce
- Department of Public Works
- Sewer Commission
- NW Connecticut Council of Governments
- Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative



Other Economic Opportunities

Kent Occupation Categories (2000)

Management, Professional	590
Service	213
Sales and Office	389
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	5
Construction, Extraction, Maintenance	144
Production, Transportation	169

Source: US Census 2000

Eco-tourism, agri-tourism, entertainment events, and commercial recreational activities are all potential economic opportunities for Kent. Town officials and businesses should cooperate with and assist the public museums, events, and other cultural assets that contribute to the Town's social and economic vitality.

Kent's land-use standards should evaluate current regulations for home occupation uses in residential districts and monitor such uses as well as possible additional home based commercial uses that may be accommodated with proper safeguards for neighborhoods.

Adequate access to telecommunications services and broadband infrastructure is necessary for business to develop, grow, and compete. The Town should support enhancement of these services whenever possible. However, the Town should carefully evaluate proposed locations and siting of telecommunications towers or other major facilities to prevent or mitigate environmental and scenic impacts.

Kent benefits from the presence of several private schools that attract students and visitors from all over the world. The schools also constitute a cultural presence that enhances the community. The Town should continue to cooperate with and seek appropriate partnerships with these private schools to advance mutually compatible goals.



Economic Development Commission

To implement Kent's economic development goals, the Town should establish and support an Economic Development Commission (EDC) which would be responsible for identifying, together with the Planning and Zoning Commission, prime economic development opportunities, recruiting businesses, providing support and local input to grant and other funding applications, and coordinating with regional economic development activities. The EDC would be expected to collaborate and cooperate with the Kent Chamber of Commerce.

A pending program of the Regional Planning Collaborative's Village Initiative intends to provide organizational and technical support to local economic development functions. Kent should take advantage of this program. The EDC should specifically work with the Village Initiative to market business opportunities in Kent Village, focusing first on filling vacant commercial spaces.

The EDC should monitor vacancy rates and other conditions in the Industrial District and identify development priorities, such as medical facilities, hospitality facilities, and light manufacturing or industrial activities appropriate for the Industrial District. The EDC should also identify and, if qualifying sites are located, apply for brownfield remediation funding.

The EDC should evaluate and recommend regulatory incentives to promote development of necessary professional services, including expedited land use approvals and alternative development standards that encourage medical, legal, and financial businesses.

The EDC should also evaluate the potential for enhancing the business environment in Kent through the application of tax incentives as authorized by Connecticut General Statutes.

As discussed in the previous section, Kent is vulnerable to potential impacts, including economic impacts, from development activities beyond its borders. The EDC should monitor major regional development projects to identify and respond to potential economic impacts on Kent businesses. This should include establishing communications with officials and business interests throughout northwest Connecticut and in Dutchess County, New York.

CGS §7-136: Economic Development Commissions

- Conduct research into the economic conditions and trends in its municipality.
- Make recommendations to appropriate officials and agencies of its municipality regarding action to improve its economic condition and development.
- Seek to coordinate the activities of and cooperate with unofficial bodies organized to promote such economic development.
- Advertise and prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts and pamphlets.

Residential Housing Development

The large amount of available and developable land in Kent indicates that further development of residential subdivisions is inevitable (see map Page 12 and Appendix C), but the Town can prepare for and minimize the potential impacts of such developments.

As discussed in the previous section, Kent will evaluate and adopt low impact and other regulatory standards to minimize environmental and ecological impacts of development.

The PZC will evaluate statutory options, recent development trends, and the Kent Build-Out Analysis (Appendix C) to identify potential improvements to residential development regulations consistent with the objectives of this Plan. This review will include consideration of mandating cluster type (conservation design) development in specified rural residential areas.

Many Connecticut towns have required conservation design subdivisions, most commonly based on the size of the property or the number of lots proposed. Other factors may include the location of the subdivision relative to priority conservation targets or other resources (see Future Land Use Plan discussion, below). Regulations could provide that conservation style subdivisions be permitted by right, subject to regulatory standards.

Kent Housing Characteristics

	2000	2010
Occupied Units	1,143	1,246
Owner Occupied	836	907
Renter Occupied	307	339
Average Household Size	2.43	2.25
% Single Occupant	28.3	30.8

Source: Us Census

CGS §8-18

Conservation design subdivisions (statutory "Cluster development") means a building pattern concentrating units on a particular portion of a parcel so that at least one-third of the parcel remains as open space to be used exclusively for recreational, conservation and agricultural purposes...

Kent Housing Sales

Year	# of Sales	Median Price
1990	74	\$148,500
2000	110	\$205,000
2005	93	\$346,800
2008	59	\$310,000
2010	49	\$250,000

Source: The Warren Group 2011



Housing Diversity

The high cost of housing precludes many from living in Kent, threatening the long term social and economic vitality of the community. Several statutory options (see sidebar) are available to Connecticut municipalities to encourage or facilitate the availability of housing that can be afforded by working families, seniors on fixed incomes, and young people just starting out.

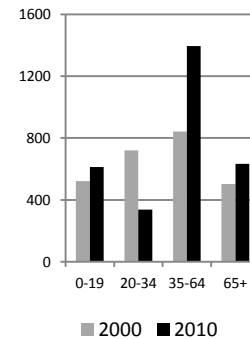
Additionally, lower cost housing options such as rental units are very limited in Kent. It is important, therefore, to closely monitor housing conditions and pursue strategies to address these and other related issues.

Kent has already employed some of the statutory tools to promote housing options, including special zoning regulations for town-sponsored affordable housing. The PZC and other Town agencies should continue to evaluate options for promoting affordable housing. Considerations include zoning standards for conversion of single family to multifamily residences, standards for creation of accessory apartments, and mixed-use development options in the Town's commercial and industrial areas.

The *Natural and Rural Heritage* section of this Plan calls for regulations to provide that agricultural activities and accessory uses are permitted as of right in the rural residential areas. The PZC should consider providing additional flexibility for farm worker housing, such as allowing more than one accessory apartment and permitting use of temporary or mobile housing on any active farm property.

Kent Village Housing for the Elderly, a long standing partner with the Town, is a major housing resource providing subsidized, low cost housing for elders in Kent. The Town receives annual reimbursement from the State for a tax abatement agreement set up for the KVHE-owned Templeton Farm, and has collaborated with KVHE on two Small Cities Bock Grants. Through support and advocacy for ongoing funding, the Town should continue to support Templeton Farm in its efforts to maintain the 24c unit facility as a housing option for low to moderate income elders.

Kent's Changing Age Composition



Affordable Housing – Statutory Options

- §8-19(b) – exempt first subdivision lot if restricted as affordable
- §8-25 – do not require open space if 20% of subdivision restricted as affordable
- §8-2g – exemption from density limits for affordable housing
- §8-2i – inclusionary zoning incentives for affordable housing
- Chapter 124b – Incentive Housing Zones

To support these efforts, the Town should create a permanent housing oversight group, as recommended in the 1989 Plan and 2001 update. Tasks for this oversight group would include, but not be limited to, the undertaking of a survey to determine Kent's moderate and lower cost rental and home ownership needs and to investigate what inclusionary zoning regulations could be adopted. Kent should also consider collaboration with neighboring towns on efforts to provide additional affordable and senior housing.

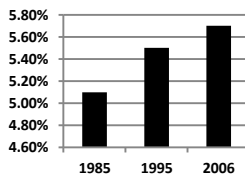
Future Land Use Plan

The Planning Overview map on Page 31, while general and schematic in nature, illustrates areas of the Town approximately delineated by their contribution to the Town's rural character. The protected open space coupled with the Horizonline Overlay Zone represent areas of significant natural and scenic value that are already protected or regulated.

However, large areas of Kent, delineated on the map as Forest and Ridge Preservation and Farm and Forest Preservation areas, include significant rural assets that are protected only by existing zoning, wetlands, and subdivision standards. These areas encompass large undeveloped or underdeveloped property parcels (see also map page 12), which are, therefore, candidates for large scale residential development, within the respective preservation areas.

The PZC and the Conservation Commission should review and refine these preservation area delineations based on the *Kent Riches* report, the Kent Build-Out Analysis, and the updated Open Space Plan to guide future land use controls.

Developed Land in Kent - % of Town Land Area



Source: CLEAR

Land Use Regulations – Retain and/or Improve

- Village District
- Conservation Subdivisions
- Open Space Priorities
- Parking and Lighting
- Industrial and Commercial District Uses
- Home Occupations
- Accessory Apartments and Adaptive Reuse



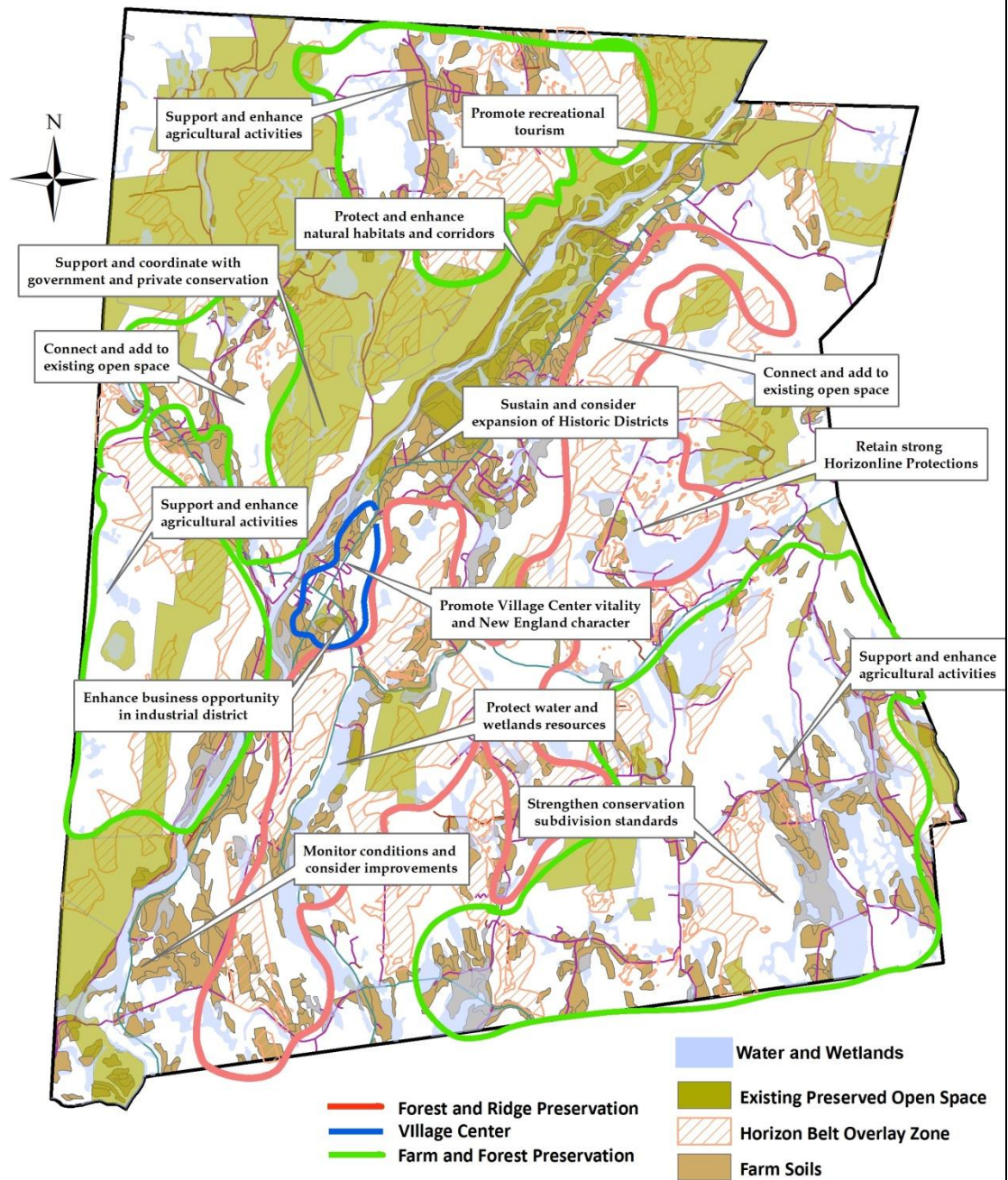
The Planning Overview Map also highlights key Plan land use objectives, based generally on applicable locations in Town. However, these objectives may apply at various locations or throughout the entire Town.

All of the Town's land use regulations will be reviewed to ensure they are up to date and take advantage of all of the protections authorized by Connecticut General Statutes. In particular, the PZC should consider requiring conservation subdivision design concepts in the designated preservation areas.

As noted above, the PZC will continue to monitor commercial activities around Bulls Bridge and along Route 7 to ensure that such uses remain compatible with surrounding properties and the overall goals of this Plan.

This Plan also supports the general zoning plan for the Town, as currently delineated on the Zoning Map (Appendix E), with revisions as appropriate based on the recommendations of this Plan.





Planning Overview **Kent 2012 Plan of Conservation and Development**



Community Development Goals - Summary

Immediate Actions

1. Provide in zoning regulations that new development or redevelopment in the Village Center incorporates master planning.
2. Undertake a comprehensive planning study of infrastructure needs and options, open space acquisition, municipal and other public facilities, vehicle and pedestrian traffic management, and other factors to guide the future development of the Village Center.
3. Work with the Regional Planning Collaborative to install Village Center directional and informational signage.
4. Initiate a study of traffic, existing road conditions, and improvement options on Route 7 through the Village Center and request DOT consideration of improvements.
5. Establish and support an Economic Development Commission.
6. Create a permanent housing oversight group.
7. Work with private property owners to design and incorporate into future development plans and Town capital improvement plans a Main Street bypass road connecting the Kent Green shopping area to Maple Street and the Industrial District (see also Community Needs section).

Near Term Actions

8. Provide incentives in zoning regulations to provide open spaces, public infrastructure improvements, shared parking and parking access, interconnecting pedestrian access, and other public benefits.
9. Review Village Center and Village Commercial District zoning regulations to address economic development opportunities, including consideration of commercial district boundaries, additional permitted uses, and allowing more permitted uses by site plan approval.
10. Review statutory options, the Kent Build-Out Analysis (Appendix C), and recent development trends to identify potential improvement to residential development regulations including mandated conservation developments in specified rural residential areas.
11. Review the existing zoning regulations for the Industrial District and consider adding to the permitted uses to include commercial, professional, medical, and mixed uses.
12. Develop plans and work with other interests to coordinate future development and uses with existing conditions in the Bulls Bridge area.
13. Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to require application of state-of-the-art low impact development and storm water management techniques.
14. Identify and promote the Town's preferences for development and implementation of additional rail service.
15. Evaluate regulatory revisions to promote more affordable housing opportunities in Kent.

Evaluation for Future Action

16. Consider necessary public improvements to Village Center infrastructure and include in future municipal capital plans and grant proposals as appropriate.
17. Prepare plans for ensuring that adequate overflow parking is available for special events and Village Center activities.
18. Evaluate the commercial potential for additional professional services and identify appropriate regulatory revisions to encourage such uses.
19. Monitor use and development trends in the Industrial District and evaluate potential expansion of District boundaries as warranted.

20. Evaluate regulations controlling home occupation uses and monitor such uses for possible regulatory improvements.
21. Review and refine preservation area priorities and delineations, consider requiring conservation subdivision designs in designated preservation areas.

Continuing Policies

22. Support and participate in regional economic development activities including the Regional Planning Collaborative's Village Center Economic Development Initiative.
23. Support the private Streetscape Improvement project.
24. Ensure that future uses and improvements of commercial use properties outside of commercial and industrial districts continue to be consistent with the overall goal of retaining Kent's New England village character.
25. Support and consult regularly with the Architectural Review Board.
26. Continue to support the sewer extension project and enhancements to rail and utility services to support the Industrial District.
27. Support enhancement and improvement of telecommunications services.
28. Cooperate with and assist the public museums, events, and other cultural assets that contribute to the Town's social and economic vitality.
29. Cooperate and seek partnerships with private schools in Kent to advance mutually compatible goals.
30. Monitor major regional development projects to identify and respond to potential economic impacts on Kent businesses.
31. Continue to support Templeton Farm in its efforts to maintain the 24c unit facility as a housing option for low to moderate income elders.

ENHANCE OUR COMMUNITY ASSETS

NOTE: Recommended actions are underlined and summarized in a table at the conclusion of the section

A Plan of Conservation and Development provides guidance for decisions regarding municipal facilities and properties, such as roads, water and sewer systems, stormwater management structures, libraries, schools, municipal offices, recreational facilities and parks, and public safety facilities. This includes guidance for Planning and Zoning Commission reviews and reports on proposed municipal improvements, as required by CGS §8-24.

Community Assets Strategy

Kent will provide efficient and effective services and necessary facilities to meet community needs and sustain the quality of life in Kent.

Kent has worked to provide necessary municipal services, as called for by Town Ordinances and State Statutes. Going forward, as both costs and demand for services increase, Kent will need to look for creative and cost-effective approaches to meeting the community's needs. This should include consideration of agreements with other towns to share assets and staff for provision of necessary services, as authorized and encouraged by Connecticut General Statutes (see sidebar).

In addition to direct cooperation with adjoining towns, Kent should continue to take advantage of regional efforts to address contemporary municipal challenges through the Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments and the Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative.

Community needs go beyond infrastructure and programs. Residents, businesses, and Town management all rely on a high level of volunteer commitment and participation in community activities and government. Behind the spirit of participation is the individual bond with the Town, nurtured by neighborliness, community spirit, and social stability, as well as the preservation of the community's character and economic health as discussed in previous chapters. The Town needs to recognize and strengthen these community spirit assets as well.

NW Connecticut Council of Governments 2008 Plan Recommendations

- Support efforts to upgrade infrastructure
- Support local efforts to use traffic calming techniques
- Support expansion of bicycle and pedestrian networks
- Ensure State highway projects meet local needs and character
- Support efforts to upgrade Housatonic Rail line tracks

Statutory Growth Management Principles

- Redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers and areas of mixed land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure
- Concentration of development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse
- Integration of planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and state-wide basis

Public Safety

Interlocal Agreements ***CGS §7-148cc***

“Two or more municipalities may jointly perform any function that each municipality may perform separately under any provisions of the general statutes or of any special act, charter or home rule ordinance by entering into an interlocal agreement...”

Sharing Examples

- Animal Control
- Highway equipment
- Emergency response
- Winter road maintenance
- Fuel and supplies purchases

Currently Kent relies on the State Police barracks in Litchfield for emergency response. As Kent continues to grow and deals with regional influences, the Town should continue to evaluate the alternative public safety options available, including the Resident Trooper Program, shared police services with adjoining towns, and creation of a local police force.

Kent relies on the Kent Volunteer Fire Department (KVFD) which provides fire, rescue, and emergency medical services. The KVFD operates out of its new state-of-the-art facility in the Village Center, which the Town funded. Continued fiscal support of the Fire Department is essential.

The KVFD is continually recruiting new volunteers and, particularly, is in need of qualified ambulance crews. The Town should continue to support the volunteer recruitment efforts of the Department using the Town website, newsletter and other communications. Additionally, the town should continue the tax abatement program for KVFD volunteers and seek other possible incentives to ensure adequate numbers of volunteers.

Roads and Bridges

Town roads and bridges, and related infrastructure, are well-maintained by the Department of Public Works (KDPW) and meet the Town’s needs according to community opinion survey respondents. The Town should continue to support the road system in its capital plan. The KDPW should continue to work with neighboring towns to coordinate routine and winter maintenance, and look for further opportunities to share equipment and staffing through interlocal agreements.



Streets and the associated stormwater facilities have significant impacts on the landscape and water resources and maintenance of such facilities is a major municipal expense. Incorporation of conservation design subdivision standards and low impact development standards for new roads and driveways and maintenance of existing roads, as discussed elsewhere in this Plan, will reduce the Town's future maintenance and management costs, while also reducing environmental impacts of new infrastructure.

Vehicle access and road maintenance efficiency, particularly winter maintenance, can be improved by minimizing cul-de-sac streets. Wherever possible and appropriate, the Planning and Zoning Commission should require that new roads connect existing roads or provide two routes of access. The Town should consider adopting a policy that no new cul-de-sac street proposed as a private road will be accepted into the Town road system, and require annotation on land deeds to ensure that property purchasers understand all future obligations.

In the event of discontinuance of any road, the Town should retain access rights to complement or contribute to open space corridor planning and passive recreational access.

Consideration of a new road providing an alternative route from Route 7 or Route 341 through the Village Center, as discussed earlier in the Plan, would not only improve the commercial potential of the village area but also alleviate traffic congestion on Route 7. The design of such a project should involve the KDPW as well as property owners and other Town officials to determine the appropriate ownership, maintenance, design, and other factors.

Additionally, future development in the Village Center should rely on master planning that incorporates street designs and layouts that facilitate traffic, connect street grids, and eliminate existing dead end streets wherever possible. Appendix B provides illustrations of existing and possible future layouts of streets and pedestrian access throughout the Village.

CGS §13a-49

"The selectmen of any town may, subject to approval by a majority vote at any regular or special town meeting, by a writing signed by them, discontinue any highway or private way, or land dedicated as such, in its entirety, or may discontinue any portion thereof or any property right of the town or public therein..."

Education

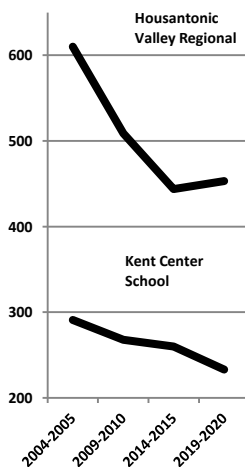
Private Schools in Kent

- Kent School
- South Kent School
- Marvelwood School

In Kent, planning for educational facilities and programs falls to two separate authorities, the Kent Board of Education, which oversees the Kent Center School, and the Region 1 School District, responsible for the Housatonic Valley Regional High School.

Although schools and educational planning are the responsibility of these separate agencies, this Town Plan encourages school and Town officials to identify opportunities for sharing and coordination of facilities, such as recreational facilities and meeting rooms. Kent is home to three excellent private schools and the Town should continue to coordinate opportunities to share facilities and cultural and recreational activities with those institutions also.

Current and Projected School Populations



Source: NESDEC Projections 2010

Additionally, the Town must remain aware of future educational system needs and integrate school system and municipal planning wherever possible. For example, planning for any future land acquisitions for open space, recreation, or other municipal uses should consider the potential for shared use of future Town property acquisitions by the school systems and the Town.

The Town must also recognize and prepare for declining enrollment in the public school system, particularly at the Kent Center School. The Town should work with the Board of Education to consider options to meet elementary educational needs of residents if Kent Center School becomes unsustainable.

Educational excellence is a major part of the quality of life that is offered by a community, and the Town should continue to support efforts to maintain that excellence. This should include working with the schools' administrations to identify creative ways to control educational costs as school populations decline.



Other Amenities

Municipal Buildings

A Municipal Building Committee prepared an inventory of building conditions and recommendations for further improvements and use of municipal buildings. These recommendations should be reviewed by appropriate Town officials and implemented as appropriate.

With the relocation of the Historical Society from the Swift House to the Flanders area, opportunities for future uses of this facility need to be evaluated and pursued. The potential to use an existing municipal building, such as the Swift House or the former ambulance barn, as a visitors' center could help promote many of the goals in this Plan. The proposed Economic Development Commission and other Town officials should work with the Kent Chamber of Commerce and other interested parties to identify an appropriate site and develop a plan for funding necessary improvements and staffing to create a functional visitors' center.

Recent renovations of the Community House enhance its potential as a venue for meetings and civic, social, and other events. Additional improvements, including new furniture, landscaping and lighting, and technological facilities, should be pursued to encourage such uses. The Town should maintain and update policies and procedures for allowing and encouraging use of this facility.

The Town should continue to cooperate with Kent Village Housing for the Elderly on the use of their Templeton Barn building at Templeton Farm building as a Senior Center.

Many social services are available to Kent residents, as listed in the sidebar. The Town should continue to provide financial, administrative, and logistic support and Town residents should continue providing volunteer support where appropriate.

Social Services Available in Kent

- Dial A Ride
- Friends in Service Here (FISH)
- Western CT Mental Health Network
- The Chore Service
- Greenwoods Counseling Referrals
- Kent Children's Center
- Kent Community Nursery School
- Kent Affordable Housing (KAH)
- Women's Support Services
- Northwest Elderly Nutrition Program
- Kent Food Bank
- Kent Community Fund
- New Milford Visiting Nurses Association
- Kent Memorial Library
- Habitat for Humanity
- Kent Nursing Association
- Kent Nutrition Center (Meals on Wheels)
- Kent Village Housing for the Elderly

For more information and contacts, see Appendix F.

Kent Memorial Library

The Kent Memorial Library is a private association that receives some financial assistance from the Town. This important community institution provides not only typical library services but also serves as a civic anchor in the Village Center. The Library acts as an informal information center for visitors, an educational and cultural resource, and a center for social events. All of these tasks strain the limited physical, financial, and human capacity of the Library.

The Library Association prepared a Long Range Plan in 2008 that recognized these constraints and called for expanding or relocating the Library to provide adequate space for its services. Physical layout planning in the Village Center should consider, and address where consistent with the overall Village Center goals of this Plan, the physical and regulatory constraints to expansion. Concurrently, the Town should work with the Kent Library Association and other private property owners in the Village Center to identify potential alternative sites or redevelopment options.

Recreational Opportunities

The natural and cultural resources described in the Natural and Rural Heritage section of this Plan support a wide range of recreational opportunities. The State of Connecticut, the Town of Kent, and private conservation organizations offer outdoor experiences at many parks, preserves, and trail systems in Kent.

These resources offer the Town more than recreational opportunities for residents. They are also a significant attraction that helps make Kent a favored destination of tourists, casual visitors, and new residents. As noted in the Community Development section of this Plan, tourism and commercial recreational activities will help support the Town's economic health.

Kent will need to participate fully in the promotion and management of these recreational resources such as by providing comprehensive information on the Town website. The Town should also support or participate in the development and distribution of a Kent Trail Guide.

The Town can also help ensure the continued availability of these resources by working with local land trusts and the Conservation Commission to install trail access signs where feasible. The Town should support efforts to extend and link existing and new trails involving the Conservation Commission, the land trusts, the State and Federal agencies and conservation organizations with land holdings in Kent, and other private property owners. Promotion of year-round use of trails and other outdoor recreational assets would bolster the Town's image as a recreational destination.

In addition to the outdoor recreational programs provided by the State, the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area develops and sponsors programs to encourage use of historical, cultural, and natural resources. These include the ongoing development of a regional bike and hike trail system that includes routes and connections in Kent. Kent should participate in the regional development of the HouBike trail and other recreational trail developments. If the railroad line is abandoned at some point in the future, the town should make the acquisition of this corridor for recreational use a high priority.

Water access plays a very important recreational role in Kent. The Town should continue to work with the State and private property owners to develop additional recreational access to these resources. The Town's relationship with the State Park at Lake Waramaug should be continued in the future. Additionally, the Town should investigate new or improved recreational opportunities at North and South Spectacle Lakes as well as Beaman Pond. The Town should follow through with the plan to build a car top boat launch on the Housatonic River which has been approved for full funding through a grant from the State.

Kent is the southern anchor of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area. This special designation underscores the national environmental, historic and cultural importance of this region and makes federal dollars available for conservation. The Town should partner with the Housatonic Valley Association to consider additional strategies to enhance river access and conservation.

Parks and Trails in Kent

1. Kent Common Park
2. Emery Park
3. Macedonia Brook State Park
4. Kent Falls State Park
5. Housatonic River State Wildlife Management Area
6. Appalachian Trail
7. Pond Mountain Natural Area
8. Iron Mountain Preserve
9. Currie Preserve
10. Skiff Mountain South
11. Cobble Vista
12. McAllister Preserve
13. Claire Murphy Riverwalk
14. Bulls Bridge Area
15. Lake Waramaug State Park

Community Assets – Implementation

- Board of Selectmen
- Board of Finance
- Park and Recreation Commission
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Inland Wetlands Commission
- Historic District Commission
- Conservation Commission
- Kent Board of Education
- Community House Commission
- Economic Development Commission
- Chamber of Commerce
- Department of Public Works
- Sewer Commission

HouBike Trail Plan



Park and Recreation

The Park and Recreation Department (www.kentctparkandrecreation.com) is responsible for managing and maintaining the Town's playgrounds, parks, and athletic facilities. The Park and Recreation Department should develop a Town Park Master Plan with input from the community and other Town agencies. This plan should address both Emery Park and Kent Common Park to determine each property's highest-and-best use, what role they will play in Kent's future, as well as investigate possible future areas for recreational opportunities.

The Town should support the Department's plan for maintenance, upkeep and assessment of need for the Town's existing recreational assets, such as the leased playing fields adjacent to Kent Center School. When appropriate, the Town should continue to work with the private schools to coordinate programs and share facilities.

The Park and Recreation Department also organizes many programs and activities for the Town's residents. As the demographic composition of the Town ages, it will become necessary to provide an appropriate mix of recreation options as the Town's needs change.

At the same time, to keep the Town attractive to young families, well organized and coordinated youth programs should continue to be an essential part of the Town's recreational plan. The Town should ensure that the Park and Recreation Department is provided with the resources necessary to provide these important community services.



Public Transportation and Pedestrian Access

Public transportation options are limited in Kent, as they are throughout Northwestern Connecticut. However, the owners of the Housatonic Railway have indicated interest in and are studying restoration of passenger service on the existing rail line. Passenger rail service could complement the Town's efforts to encourage economic activity such as tourism. The development of this additional service could have significant impacts on the village character, commerce, and traffic flow due to increased train traffic. Therefore, Kent should ensure that planning for such improvements engages Town as well as private interests.

The Town should closely monitor rail service plans and develop and promote preferences for passenger stations, grade crossings, parking facilities, and other related facilities. The potential public benefits of increased access to public transportation, as well as increased economic activity, should be considered and factored into any position the Town may take on the restoration of passenger service.

Along with efforts to enhance the appearance of the Village, the Town should ensure that all sidewalks and public parking areas are maintained and improved to provide safe and convenient access throughout the Village. Regulations should require that pedestrian access be provided with new developments and be integrated with existing pedestrian access.

The Town should continue to work with regional efforts to facilitate visitor access through improved directional and informational signage. The PZC should ensure that its regulations for signage address Village Center goals and appropriate design standards and consistency.

As discussed in the Community Development section of this Plan, parking in the Village Center currently appears to be adequate, although better coordination of private parking and potential municipal parking and the availability of overflow parking should be assured. The PZC should conduct a study of parking use and availability in the Village Center and identify future needs and alternative options.

Fee in Lieu of Parking CGS §8-2c

"...any town, city or borough having zoning authority pursuant to this chapter or any special act or planning authority pursuant to chapter 126 or any special act may, by regulation of the authority exercising zoning or planning power, provide that an applicant may be allowed to pay a fee to the town, city or borough in lieu of any requirement to provide parking spaces in connection with any use of land pursuant to any zoning or planning regulations adopted by such zoning or planning authority..."

The Town should also consider adopting a fee-in-lieu of parking provision. Such an option would provide funding to develop and maintain municipal parking, allowing private owners to minimize the need for additional parking. As previously noted, regulations should be revised to promote shared parking and access to reduce overall parking requirements in the Village Center.

In addition to supporting private streetscape improvement efforts, Town officials should work with property owners, the State DOT, and other interests to coordinate appearance, connections, and maintenance of municipal and privately owned sidewalks and streetscapes. (See Appendix B showing existing sidewalk configuration.)

Although public transportation is limited in northwestern Connecticut, the Northwest Connecticut Transit District does provide limited bus service to Kent. Additionally, private volunteer services, such as Friends in Service Here (“FISH”) provide transportation assistance to seniors in Kent. The Town should support these programs and seek ways to enhance such public transportation options.

Utility Services and Infrastructure

The Sewer Commission’s system extension project to provide service to the Industrial District has been strongly supported by the Town and has been completed along with a new sewage pump station. The Commission continues to monitor several community sewage treatment facilities and other areas of the Town where septic problems may cause concern. The municipal sewer system is vital to the Village Center; efforts by the Sewer Commission to maintain and enhance the system should continue to be supported by the Conservation Commission, PZC, and the Board of Selectmen.



The Town should also support efforts by private property owners in the Industrial District to install rail sidings where such a facility may lead to development or redevelopment of industrially zoned property. Similarly, installation of three-phase electricity service in the Industrial District may open additional development options.

Kent, ideally through an Economic Development Commission, should support private efforts to promote these and other utility service enhancements to improve development potential.

As noted above, the Town should also support the Streetscape Project underway by local volunteers to reduce utility pole and wire clutter on sections of Main Street and Bridge Street and improve sidewalks and other amenities.

Although the Village Center area is served by a water supply company, most Kent residents rely on private wells for water supply. Recent weather history has shown that ground water levels can fluctuate and that even public supplies can be unreliable. The Town should carefully monitor water supply conditions and prepare for responding to possible drought conditions in the future.

Kent should evaluate additional energy options, especially for the Town's commercial center, including the feasibility of extending gas service to Kent from the south. The area's natural gas utility should be approached about preparing a feasibility study of such service extension.

The Town should also study the feasibility of a public/private partnership with wireless service providers and local businesses to establish a WiFi network in the Village Center.



The Town should continue to monitor state regulations regarding cell towers in order to ensure inclusion in siting discussions of possible future installations. Cell tower locations should not be approved without comment by PZC and Town Officials.

The Town maintains a recently upgraded and enhanced refuse transfer station. The transfer station accepts all household trash and recyclable items as well as a wide variety of bulky items, e-waste and residential appliances. Annual permits are available for sale to residents. The Town should continue to encourage residents to make use of this resource.

Town Planning Needs

- Economic development
- Regional planning coordination
- Plan of Conservation and Development objectives and updates
- Geographic Information System
- Monitoring regional developments and impacts
- Revising and updating regulations
- Coordination and integration of all land use board and commission actions
- Land use application processing
- Public information and assistance

Land Use Planning and Regulation

As noted throughout this Plan, many options are available to implement Plan objectives through more detailed planning and revision of land use regulations. While such tasks generally fall to the Planning and Zoning Commission and other Town agencies, public and private leadership is also necessary to ensure that growth management is effective and efficient.

In addition to the specific regulations revisions detailed throughout this Plan, Kent's land use commissions will evaluate all regulations to ensure consistency with this Plan and State Statutes. Additionally, all Town Boards and Commissions will evaluate this Plan and identify further detailed analyses and planning that may be necessary to implement planning objectives. As necessary, Commissions will request Town support for such further studies and plans.

To ensure effective implementation of the goals and objectives of this Plan, the Town should strengthen the planning capacity of the Land Use Office and distinguish land use enforcement and land use planning responsibilities. This may include revision of current job descriptions and/or addition of staff positions such as a separate zoning enforcement officer, enhancement of technical capacity such as geographic information systems, preparation of procedural guides, and maintenance of land use information on the Town website.

As part of the overall review of Kent's land use regulations and consideration of revisions as detailed throughout this Plan, all regulations should be revised for consistent format and organization and published with interactive capabilities on electronic media and on the Town website.

Community Involvement

Most of the strategies of this Plan, while directed to specific objectives, will also serve to sustain the community bond that fosters volunteerism, participation, and civic pride. Kent needs to continue nurturing the involvement of community members as volunteers, participants in events and activities, and as members of religious, social, and civic organizations.

Kent depends heavily on dedicated volunteers who undertake many of the Town's public safety and government administration functions, in addition to supporting cultural, recreational, and other social activities that contribute to the quality of life in Kent. Kent must maintain a culture of participation by the Town's residents by reaching out to the community and by recognizing such volunteer contributions. As noted previously in this Plan, the Town will maintain its current tax abatement program for emergency services volunteers and look for additional incentives for volunteer service. The town should prepare and publicize a list of volunteer opportunities.

The Town benefits from the many festivals, carnivals, village center events, conferences, and other educational and cultural events staged in Kent every year. These activities support community spirit and provide economic benefits to the community. The Town should continue to attract and support these and similar events, including those sponsored by the private schools in Kent. This task may be appropriate for an Economic Development Commission, if one is created as recommended by the Plan.

Maintaining strong civic pride will require implementation of all of the goals of this plan to protect our natural and historic heritage, sustain a healthy economy, meet housing needs, and provide necessary services and facilities.

Preapplication Review CGS §7-159b

"...such authority, commission, department or agency or authorized agent thereof may separately, jointly, or in any combination, conduct a preapplication review of a proposed project with the applicant at the applicant's request. Such preapplication review and any results or information obtained from it may not be appealed under any provision of the general statutes, and shall not be binding on the applicant or any authority, commission, department, agency or other official having jurisdiction to review the proposed project."

Volunteer Opportunities in Kent

- Town Boards and Commissions (contact Selectman's Office)
- Fire and Ambulance (Contact [Kent Volunteer Fire Department](#))
- Social Services Agencies (see Appendix F)

Community Assets Goals – Summary

Immediate Actions

1. Incorporate low impact development standards for new roads and driveways and maintenance of existing roads into land use regulations where appropriate.
2. Require that new roads connect existing roads or provide two routes of access where feasible.
3. Require that safe and convenient pedestrian access be provided with all new developments.
4. Ensure that signage regulations address Village Center development and design standards goals.
5. Anticipate growing demand for services targeted to seniors as the Town's population ages and adjust Park and Recreation, Public Safety, Public Works, and other programs and budgets accordingly.
6. Develop a Town Park Master Plan with input from Town agencies and the community at large.
7. Evaluate all land use regulations to ensure consistency with the Town Plan and Connecticut General Statutes.
8. Refine and clarify regulatory controls on private roads and shared driveways.
9. Revise land use regulations for consistent format and organization and publish with interactive capabilities on electronic media and on the Town website.

Near Term Actions

10. Consider and consult with neighboring towns on interlocal agreements to share services and assets where economical.
11. Continue to take advantage of regional efforts to address municipal needs through the Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments and the Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative.
12. Work with the Kent Chamber of Commerce and others to develop plans for a Kent Village visitors' center.
13. Closely monitor rail service plans and, when appropriate, develop and promote the Town's preferences for passenger platforms, parking facilities, and other related facilities.
14. Support improved parking access for Library visitors through shared parking incentives, improved pedestrian access, and other means.
15. Work with the State and private property owners to develop additional recreational access to lakes and rivers in Kent.
16. Follow through with the plan to build a car-top boat launch on the Housatonic River.
17. Work with regional efforts to facilitate visitor access through improved directional and informational signage.
18. Support private efforts to promote utility service enhancement and infrastructure improvements in the Industrial District and Village Commercial District.
19. Strengthen the planning capacity of the Land Use Office and distinguish land use enforcement and land use planning responsibilities.
20. Develop a Guide to Land Use Requirements and Procedures.
21. Work with the Kent Library Association and other private property owners in the Village Center to identify potential alternative sites or redevelopment options for the Kent Memorial Library, consistent with the goals for the Village Center.

Evaluation for Future Action

22. Evaluate the alternative public safety options available and be prepared to address police and other public safety needs.
23. Consider adopting a policy that no private cul-de-sac road will be accepted into the Town road system.
24. Consider the potential for shared use by the school systems of future Town property acquisitions.
25. Work with the Board of Education to consider options to meet elementary educational needs of residents if Kent Center School becomes unsustainable.
26. Review and implement, as appropriate, the recommendations of the Municipal Building Committee.
27. Evaluate and pursue opportunities for future use of the Swift House.
28. Survey the community and develop plans for future uses, improvements, and acquisitions of Town parks.
29. Participate in and support the promotion and management of Town, State, and private recreational resources including preparation of a Kent Trail Guide.
30. Conduct a study of parking use and availability in the Village Center.
31. Consider adopting a fee-in-lieu of parking provision for the Village Center Commercial District.
32. Monitor water supply conditions and prepare for responding to possible drought conditions in the future.
33. Approach the area's natural gas utility about preparing a feasibility study of gas service extension to Kent Village.
34. Study the feasibility of a public/private partnership with wireless service providers and local businesses to establish a wide-area WiFi network in the Village Center.

Continuing Policies

35. Encourage pre-application reviews of development proposals coordinated by the Land Use Office.
36. Continue to take advantage of regional efforts to address contemporary municipal challenges.
37. Support efforts of the Kent Volunteer Fire Department to recruit volunteers.
38. Continue Town fiscal support for the Kent Volunteer Fire Department.
39. Continue the tax abatement program for KVFD volunteers and seek other possible incentives to ensure adequate numbers of volunteers.
40. Continue to support the Town road system in capital planning and budgets.
41. Work with neighboring towns to coordinate and share road maintenance assets where feasible.
42. In the event of discontinuance of any road, the Town should retain pedestrian access rights to complement or contribute to open space corridor planning and passive recreational access.
43. Coordinate with the Kent Center School and the Regional School District for use of facilities for recreational activities by Kent residents.
44. Continue to coordinate opportunities to share facilities and cultural and recreational activities with private schools in Kent.
45. Maintain and update policies and procedures for allowing and encouraging use of the Community House.
46. Continue renting available spaces in municipal buildings for private uses wherever feasible.
47. Support efforts to extend and link existing and new trails.
48. Cooperate with public and private efforts to enhance Kent's tourism potential, including participation in regional development of the HouBike trail system.
49. Provide necessary resources and other support to the Park and Recreation Department.
50. Work with property owners, the State DOT, and other interests to coordinate appearance, connections, and maintenance of municipal and privately owned sidewalks.
51. Support the private volunteer Village Center Streetscape Improvement project.

52. Support efforts of the Sewer Commission to upgrade and extend the systems as necessary to provide service and to promote appropriate development consistent with this Plan.
53. Support and seek ways to enhance transportation options.
54. Continue to support and enhance the Kent Land Use Office's capacity to manage and administer land use regulations.
55. Continue nurturing the involvement of community members as volunteers, participants in events and activities, and as members of social and civic organizations.
56. Prepare and publicize a listing of volunteer opportunities.

2012 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A Plan of Conservation and Development is only as good as the commitment to its implementation. Town officials, local organizations, and even individual citizens may assume responsibility for implementation tasks. This section of the 2012 Kent Plan provides an implementation task list, responsibilities, priorities, and schedules. The PZC should regularly revisit this implementation program and encourage responsible entities to complete the necessary tasks.

Tasks are categorized as *Immediate Action*, *Near Term Action*, and *Future Action*. *Ongoing Policies* are not re-listed here.

Implementation Participants

AAC: Agriculture Advisory Commission (proposed)
BOE: Kent Board of Education
BOF: Board of Finance
BOS: Board of Selectmen
ChCo: Kent Chamber of Commerce
COG: Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments
CC: Conservation Commission
DPW: Department of Public Works
EDC: Economic Development Commission (proposed)
HDC: Historic District Commission
HS: Historical Society
IWC: Inland Wetlands Commission
LTs: Land Trusts
PRD: Park and Recreation Department
PZC: Planning and Zoning Commission
RPC: Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative
Reg1: Region 1 Board of Education
SC: Sewer Commission
LAC: Land Acquisition Committee
KEETF: Kent Energy and Environmental Task Force
KAH: Kent Affordable Housing
ARB: Architectural Review Board

Kent, Connecticut 2012 Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Tables

	Goal/Action	Responsibility	Complete
Preserve Our Natural and Rural Heritage			
Immediate Actions	1. Review Kent's zoning and wetlands regulations to identify and implement improvements to protect water quality, address development impacts, and address other ecological and environmental threats.	PZC; IWC; CC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Review Kent's land use regulations to identify and remedy potential impediments to agricultural activities or provide support for agriculture.	PZC; AAC; CC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Incorporate recommendations of the revised Town Character Study into subdivision regulations	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Establish a Land Acquisition Fund to support priority open space acquisitions.	BOS; BOF	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Update Flood Plain standards to incorporate the latest technical standards.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Create a Historic Buildings Task Force to catalog historic features and identify potential threats to historic structures.	BOS; PZC; HS; HDC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7. Review Conservation Development subdivision standards to ensure effectiveness and applicability, particularly in high priority conservation areas.	PZC; CC; AAC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8. Support the Sewer Commission's efforts to develop contingency plans for several community sewage treatment facilities in case of failure.	BOS; SC; PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9. Create a task force to catalogue all buried oil storage tanks.	BOS; CC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10. Investigate and consider an underground oil storage ordinance to prohibit or restrict future such installations and require regular inspections of existing tanks.	CC; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Near-Term Actions	11. Consider development of guidelines and supplemental zoning regulations to minimize light pollution, particularly outside of the Village Center area.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12. Update zoning and subdivision regulations to integrate low impact development standards from the State of Connecticut DEP Stormwater Quality Manual and DEP Guidelines for Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control.	PZC; CC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13. Refine and implement Historic District Regulations and evaluate expansion of the Flanders Historic District and creation of additional historic districts where appropriate.	PZC; HDC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14. Support development of a Town wide process and educational effort to ensure that State actions to control invasive species and protect water quality are made with the Town's full review and input.	CC; IWC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	15. Identify and pursue opportunities to extend natural corridors, permanently protect scenic vistas, and enhance recreational access through additional open space protection.	PZC; CC; LTs	<input type="checkbox"/>
	16. Consider creation of an agriculture commission or other advisory group to counsel Town agencies on agricultural matters.	CC; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation for Future Action	17. Evaluate incentives and other regulatory concepts to promote natural resource protection and other planning goals.	PZC; CC; LTs	<input type="checkbox"/>
	18. Review zoning regulations to ensure that suitable controls over clearing, landscaping, building locations, and other standards to protect Kent's gateways.	PZC; CC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	19. Monitor the use of outdoor wood furnaces and other localized air quality threats, as well as any State level action to regulate such uses and be prepared to implement regulatory controls.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	20. Consider development of additional zoning regulations, or amendment of existing regulations as appropriate, to control the development of private alternative energy generating facilities and to provide guidance for State or Federal regulators with authority for commercial generating facilities.	PZC; KEETF; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>

Guide Our Community's Development			
Immediate Actions	1. Provide in zoning regulations that new development or redevelopment in the Village Center incorporates master planning.	PZC; ARB	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Undertake a comprehensive planning study of infrastructure needs and options, open space acquisition, municipal and other public facilities, vehicle and pedestrian traffic management, and other factors to guide the future development of the Village Center.	PZC; LAC; EDC	
	3. Work with the Regional Planning Collaborative to install Village Center directional and informational signage.	PZC; ARB	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Initiate a study of traffic, existing road conditions, and improvement options on Route 7 through the Village Center and request DOT consideration of improvements.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Establish and support an Economic Development Commission.	BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Create a permanent housing oversight group.	KAH; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Near-Term Actions	7. Provide incentives in zoning regulations to provide open spaces, public infrastructure improvements, shared parking and parking access, interconnecting pedestrian access, and other public benefits.	PZC; LAC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8. Review Village Center and Village Commercial District zoning regulations to address economic development opportunities, including consideration of commercial district boundaries, additional permitted uses, and allowing more permitted uses by site plan approval.	PZC; ARB; EDC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9. Review statutory options, the Kent Build-Out Analysis (Appendix C), and recent development trends to identify potential improvement to residential development regulations including mandated conservation developments in specified rural residential areas.	PZC; CC; LAC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10. Work with private property owners to design and incorporate into future development plans and Town capital improvement plans a Main Street bypass road connecting the Kent Green shopping area to Maple Street and the Industrial District (see also Community Needs section).	PZC; EDC; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Review the existing zoning regulations for the Industrial District and consider adding to the permitted uses to include commercial, professional, medical, and mixed uses.	PZC; EDC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12. Develop plans and work with other interests to coordinate future development and uses with existing conditions in the Bulls Bridge area.	PZC; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13. Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to require application of state-of-the-art low impact development and storm water management techniques.	PZC; CC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14. Identify and promote the Town's preferences for development and implementation of additional rail service.	PZC; BOS; CC; EDC; ChCo	<input type="checkbox"/>
	15. Evaluate regulatory revisions to promote more affordable housing opportunities in Kent.	KAH; PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation for Future Action	16. Consider necessary public improvements to Village Center infrastructure and include in future municipal capital plans and grant proposals as appropriate.	PZC; ARB; EDC; ChCo	<input type="checkbox"/>
	17. Prepare plans for ensuring that adequate overflow parking is available for special events and Village Center activities.	EDC; ChCo	<input type="checkbox"/>
	18. Evaluate the commercial potential for additional professional services and identify appropriate regulatory revisions to encourage such uses.	EDC; ChCo	<input type="checkbox"/>
	19. Monitor use and development trends in the Industrial District and evaluate potential expansion of District boundaries as warranted.	PZC; EDC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	20. Evaluate regulations controlling home occupation uses and monitor such uses for possible regulatory improvements.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	21. Review and refine preservation area priorities and delineations, consider requiring conservation subdivision designs in designated preservation areas.	PZC; CC; LAC	<input type="checkbox"/>

Enhance Our Community Assets			
Immediate Actions	1. Incorporate low impact development standards for new roads and driveways and maintenance of existing roads into land use regulations where appropriate.	PZC; DPW	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Require that new roads connect existing roads or provide two routes of access.	PZC; DPW	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Require that safe and convenient pedestrian access be provided with all new developments.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4. Ensure that signage regulations address Village Center development and design standards goals.	PZC; ChCo; ARB	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5. Anticipate growing demand for services targeted to seniors as the Town's population ages and adjust Park and Recreation, Public Safety, Public Works, and other programs and budgets accordingly.	PRD;PZC; KAH;BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6. Develop a Town Park Master Plan with input from Town agencies and the community at large.	PZC; CC; PRD	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7. Evaluate all land use regulations to ensure consistency with the Town Plan and Connecticut General Statutes.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8. Refine and clarify regulatory controls on private roads and shared driveways.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9. Revise land use regulations for consistent format and organization and publish with interactive capabilities on electronic media and on the Town website.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
Near-Term Actions	10. Consider and consult with neighboring towns on interlocal agreements to share services and assets where economical.	PZC; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11. Continue to take advantage of regional efforts to address municipal needs through the Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments and the Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative.	PZC; DPW	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12. Work with the Kent Chamber of Commerce and others to develop plans for a Kent Village visitors' center.	ChCo; EDC; PZC; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13. Closely monitor rail service plans and, when appropriate, develop and promote the Town's preferences for passenger platforms, parking facilities, and other related facilities.	BOS; PZC; ARB; ChCo	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14. Support improved parking access for Library visitors through shared parking incentives, improved pedestrian access, and other means.	PZC; ARB	<input type="checkbox"/>
	15. Work with the State and private property owners to develop additional recreational access to lakes and rivers in Kent.	PZC; CC; LTs; LAC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	16. Work with regional efforts to facilitate visitor access through improved directional and informational signage.	PZC; ARB	<input type="checkbox"/>
	17. Support private efforts to promote utility service enhancement and infrastructure improvements in the Industrial District and Village Commercial District.	PZC; BOS; EDC; SC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	18. Strengthen the planning capacity of the Land Use Office and distinguish land use enforcement and land use planning responsibilities.	PZC; BOS; BOF	<input type="checkbox"/>
	19. Encourage pre-application reviews of development proposals coordinated by the Land Use Office.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	20. Develop a Guide to Land Use Requirements and Procedures.	PZC; IWC	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation for Future Action	21. Evaluate the alternative public safety options available and be prepared to address police and other public safety needs.	BOS; ChCo;	<input type="checkbox"/>
	22. Consider adopting a policy that no private cul-de-sac road will be accepted into the Town road system.	PZC; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	23. Consider the potential for shared use by the school systems of future Town property acquisitions.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	24. Work with the Board of Education to consider options to meet elementary educational needs of residents if Kent Center School becomes unsustainable.	PZC; BOS; BOF; LAC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25. Review and implement, as appropriate, the recommendations of the Municipal Building Committee.	KEETF; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>

	26. Evaluate and pursue opportunities for future use of the Swift House.	BOS; EDC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	27. Survey the community and develop plans for future uses, improvements, and acquisitions of Town parks.	PZC; LAC; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	28. Work with the Kent Library Association to identify potential alternative sites or redevelopment options for the Kent Memorial Library, consistent with the goals for the Village Center.	PZC; ARB; EDC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	29. Participate in and support the promotion and management of Town, State, and private recreational resources including preparation of a Kent Trail Guide.	PRD; LTs, CC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	30. Conduct a study of parking use and availability in the Village Center.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	31. Consider adopting a fee-in-lieu of parking provision for the Village Center Commercial District.	PZC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	32. Monitor water supply conditions and prepare for responding to possible drought conditions in the future.	CC	<input type="checkbox"/>
	33. Approach the area's natural gas utility about preparing a feasibility study of gas service extension to Kent village.	PZC; EDC; CC; BOS	<input type="checkbox"/>
	34. Study the feasibility of a public/private partnership with wireless service providers and local businesses to establish a wide-area WiFi network in the Village Center.	PZC; BOS; EDC	<input type="checkbox"/>