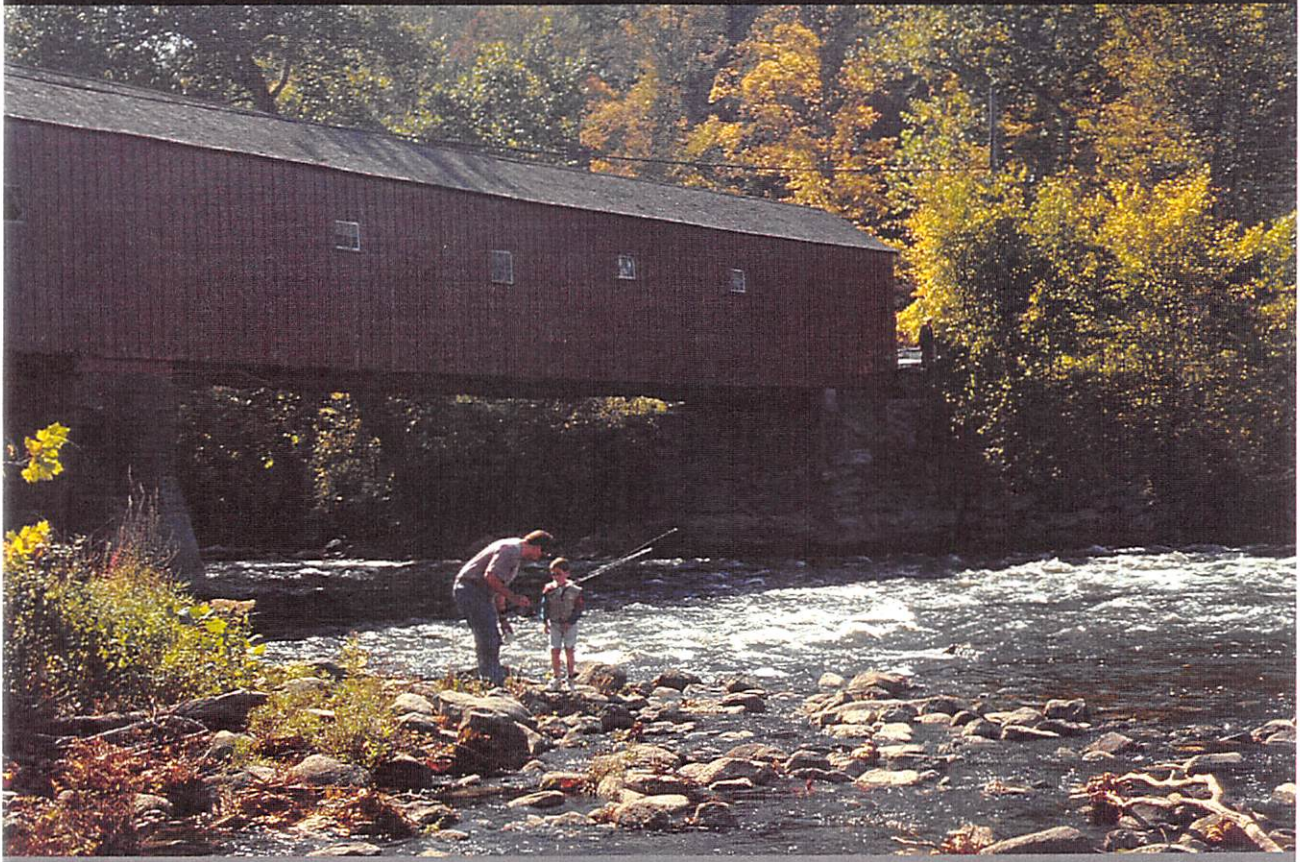


Towns of Kent, Cornwall and Sharon

## **ROUTE 7 SCENIC CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN**



prepared for:

**Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
The Connecticut Department of Transportation**

## ***Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee***

The following individuals have participated in one or more Advisory Committee meetings. The First Selectman of each town was asked to appoint representatives of a cross-section of the community. In addition, representatives of various agency and stakeholder groups were asked to participate, or volunteered to participate in meetings:

Mr. Jonathan Chew, HVCEO  
Ms. Jennifer Clarke, Clarke Outdoors  
Mr. Raul deBrigard, Land Manager Northeast Utilities  
Mr. Dave Fairty, Kent Chamber of Commerce  
Ms. Phyllis Fillow, Sharon Conservation Commission  
Mr. Bob Gates, Manager Housatonic Hydro / CL&P  
Ms. Sabine Gibson, Kent Garden Club  
Ms. Cicily Hajek, Sharon Conservation Commission  
Mr. Jim Knissel, Sharon Land Trust  
Ms. Elaine LaBella, Land Protection Director Housatonic Valley Association  
Mr. Phil Lang, resident of Kent  
Mr. Charles H. Lewis, Housatonic River Commission  
Mr. Arthur Lorch, resident of Cornwall  
Mr. Blaine Matthews, Cornwall Planning & Zoning Commission  
Mr. Tom McGowan, McGowan Associates  
Mr. John McNeely, Weantinog Land Trust  
Ms. Patricia Allyn Mechare, Board of Selectman, Falls Village  
Mr. P. Robert Moeller, First Selectman Town of Sharon  
Mr. C.H. Moore, Chairman Kent Planning & Zoning Commission  
Mr. Paul Moroz, Housatonic River Commission  
Ms. Claire Murphy, Kent Land Trust  
Mr. Gary Nasiatka, Superintendent Macedonia Brook State Park  
Mr. Rob Nicholas, Housatonic Anglers  
Mr. Larry Power, Sharon Land Trust  
Mr. Rick Reynolds, CL&P  
Mr. Mark Rickert, DEP Western Connecticut  
Mr. Gordon Ridgeway, First Selectman Town of Cornwall  
Mr. Ralph Sandmeyer, Jr., resident of Cornwall  
Ms. Dolores Schiesel, First Selectman Town of Kent  
Mr. Tom Sides, Business Manager Kent School  
Mr. Harmon Smith, President Kent Land Trust  
Jos Spelbos, resident of Kent  
Ms. Betsy Valentine, resident of Kent  
Ms. Lynn Werner, Chairman, Kent Conservation/Inlands Wetlands Commission  
Ms. Lisa Wojan, Cornwall Association

*The Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee unanimously endorsed the Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan as amended at their May 20, 1998 Advisory Committee meeting.*

Towns of Kent, Cornwall and Sharon

## **ROUTE 7 SCENIC CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN**

*cover photo: Covered Bridge at West Cornwall, Connecticut*

prepared for:

**Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
The Connecticut Department of Transportation**

prepared by:

**Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C.**

**Hutton Associates, Inc.**

**Mary Means & Associates**

**A-N Consulting Engineers**

**Higgins & Quasebarth**

**Ken Kruckemeyer**

**July 1998**

# **Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan**

## **Project Team**

### **Landscape Architecture:**

Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects

Jim Klein (Project Director)

Jeremiah Bergstrom

Kate Davidson

### **Land Use Planning:**

Hutton Associates, Inc.

Ernie Hutton

### **Community Planning:**

Mary Means & Associates

Mary Means

Leslie Smith

### **Civil Engineering :**

A-N Consulting Engineers

Alan Nafis

### **Historic Preservation:**

Higgins & Quasebarth

Bill Higgins

Anne Covell

Christopher Jenks

### **Design Research:**

Ken Kruckemeyer, MIT

### **Illustrations by:**

Kate Davidson, Jeremiah Bergstrom  
and Jim Klein

### **All Photographs Courtesy of:**

Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects,  
P.C. unless otherwise noted.

### **Digital Data Provided by:**

Connecticut Department of Environ-  
mental Protection

United States Geologic Survey

University of Connecticut, Laboratory  
for Remote Sensing

### **Connecticut Dept. of Transportation:**

Herman Lehlbach, Project Manager

### **Special Thanks To:**

The Towns of Kent, Cornwall and  
Sharon for providing assistance in  
producing a mailing to all property  
owners; the Housatonic Valley  
Association and DEP for identifying  
open space and the Connecticut  
Chapter of the Appalachian Trail  
Conference for mapping of the A.T.

*Preparation of this Corridor Management Plan is  
funded by the Federal Highway Administration  
Scenic Byway Program*



# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
ISSUES AND CONCERNS .....	3
INITIAL GOALS AND PROPOSED PLANNING CONCEPTS FOR THE CORRIDOR PLAN .....	4
EXISTING CHARACTER AND QUALITY .....	5
<b>Existing Conditions .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Driving Along Route 7 .....	5
Additional Scenic Segments of Route 7 Not Designated by Connecticut DOT .....	7
SCENIC LANDSCAPE .....	8
NATURAL LANDSCAPE .....	8
Housatonic Highlands .....	8
Northern Marble Valley .....	13
The River .....	13
Environmentally Sensitive Lands .....	13
AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE .....	13
RECREATION .....	14
State Parks and Forests .....	14
Private Conservation Holdings .....	14
Biking and Hiking .....	14
Appalachian Trail .....	19
EXISTING LAND USE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK .....	19
Historical Context: Traditional Development and Recent Growth .....	19
Open Space .....	20
Residential Development .....	21
Commercial Development .....	22
Institutional Development .....	23
Cultural Development .....	23
Tools .....	24
Potential for Regional Scenic Byway Planning .....	28
Effectiveness of Existing Land Use Framework .....	28
TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT .....	30
Route 7's Participation in Regional Tourism .....	31
ROAD AND RIGHT-OF-WAY .....	31
Data Collection .....	32
Classification .....	32
Design Criteria .....	32
Road and Right-of-Way Characteristics .....	33
Highway Safety Analysis .....	35
<b>Planning Concepts .....</b>	<b>37</b>
STRATEGY #1: ESTABLISH CONSERVATION PRIORITIES .....	38
Critical Scenic, Natural, and Cultural Resources .....	38
Existing Open Space .....	39
Conservation Strategies .....	39
STRATEGY #2: HELP TO CREATE A GREENWAY ALONG THE HOUSATONIC RIVER .....	46
Route 7 Pull-offs .....	46
River Access: Put-ins and Take-outs .....	49
Housatonic River Pathway .....	52
Better and Safer Bicycling .....	59

STRATEGY #3: MANAGING THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM .....	62
Manage Appropriate Visitation through a Regional Framework .....	62
Coordinate Visitor Information .....	63
STRATEGY #4: ENHANCING THE CHARACTER OF THE ROAD AND RIGHT-OF-WAY .....	66
Select Relevant Guidelines .....	67
Utilize Design Strategies that Improve Safety while Preserving Scenic Quality .....	67
Balancing Safety and Aesthetic Issues on Scenic Roads .....	68
Design Elements for Route 7 .....	69
STRATEGY #5: TRAFFIC CALMING .....	79
Traffic Calming Measures .....	79
STRATEGY #6: GROWING THE CENTER OF KENT TO PRESERVE SCENIC VALUES .....	86
Existing Conditions .....	86
Creating Redundancy in the Street System .....	91
Reconnecting Kent Green Village with Main Street .....	93
Connecting South Main with North Main .....	103
STRATEGY #7: GROWING SMALLER HAMLETS TO PRESERVE SCENIC VALUES .....	103
Reinforcing Community and Shopping at Cornwall Bridge .....	103
<b>Implementation .....</b>	<b>111</b>
GROWING A PERMANENT PARTNERSHIP .....	111
How— A Dual-Level Local/Regional Approach .....	112
SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES .....	116
1) Establishing and Acting on Conservation Priorities .....	117
2) Creating a Greenway Along the Housatonic .....	121
3) Managing the Impacts of Tourism .....	122
4) Enhancing Roadside Character .....	125
5) Traffic Calming .....	125
6) Growing the Center of Kent .....	126
7) Growing Hamlets .....	127
IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING TABLES .....	129

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Significant Historic Features
- Appendix B: Soils with Limiting Characteristics
- Appendix C: Evaluation of AT& T Towers
- Appendix D: Evaluation of Existing Pull-off Locations
- Appendix E: Evaluation of Pathway Surfaces
- Appendix F: Community and Roadside Forestry Issues
- Appendix G: Recommended Plant Lists
- Appendix H: Bioengineering Grant Application Package
- Appendix I: Sight Line Calculations for Intersections

**NOTE:** A limited number of technical appendices have been reproduced for distribution. Copies of the technical appendices are located at the Town Halls of Kent, Cornwall and Sharon for public review. A copy is also available at the Connecticut Department of Transportation by contacting the Chairman of the State Scenic Roads Advisory Committee at 860-594-2000.



# Introduction

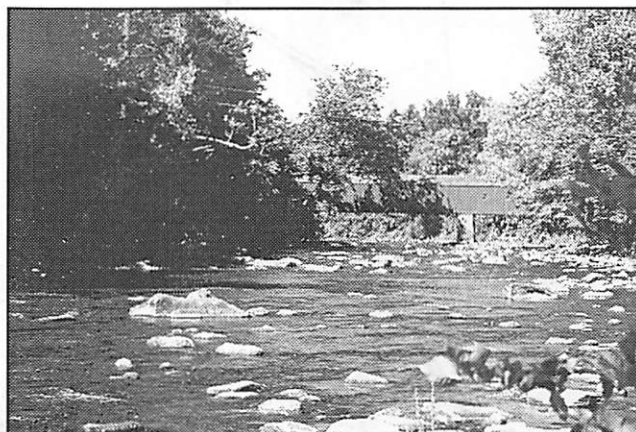
---

Some of the most spectacular views and unspoiled countryside in all of southern New England can be found along Route 7, a state designated scenic road. Route 7 is also a road that is a gateway to many other scenic landscapes and outdoor recreation opportunities in Northwestern Connecticut, with plenty of historic sites, bed and breakfasts, antique shops and art galleries to visit along the way.

However, it would be a mistake to take this wonderful landscape for granted. Large estate homes, cellular communication towers, increasing speed and volume of traffic, especially in villages, and a decline in roadside character are all having an impact on the scenic qualities found along Route 7. This plan is an opportunity to try to guide these and other changes in a more sensitive and appropriate manner. But instead of trying to solve the entire region's problems, this effort can focus simply on how to keep the Route 7 scenic corridor "just the way it is today."

With respect to scenic roads, as with other state highways, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) has responsibility and authority only over the road and right-of-way; land use issues are the purview of local jurisdictions. Thus, the "scenic part" of the equation belongs to many owners. Preparing a corridor management plan is one way to foster the necessary and active collaboration between all of the "owners" who care about a scenic road, and those that are responsible for its day to day stewardship and safety.

An Advisory Committee was appointed by the Board of Selectmen of each town to represent all of the "owners" of the scenery in the development of a collaborative plan aimed at preserving the special qualities of the Route 7 scenic corridor. The committee includes interested residents, property owners and business persons, along with those responsible for maintaining the roadside environment and



*Figure 1-1 Covered bridges are a distinct feature of the Route 7 Scenic Corridor (West Cornwall)*

planning for its future. The Advisory Committee has served as a sounding board throughout the planning process. The planning team has also talked with many people who have expressed a keen interest in the scenic values found along Route 7.

This corridor planning effort has three related parts. First, is a recently completed corridor plan for Routes 4 and 41 in Sharon. Second, is a corridor plan for Route 7, the subject of this report. It primarily involves the Towns of Kent, Cornwall and Sharon. New Milford and Falls Village have sent representatives to some of the Advisory Committee meetings. The third part of the planning effort will be a corridor management plan for Routes 41 and 44 in Salisbury (to be completed in June of 1998).

The purpose of a corridor plan is to coordinate all of the individual and agency actions needed to ensure that a scenic road will stay that way. However, the only way to keep this area scenic over time is to gain the active involvement of the people that live along the road and use it every day. Since it would be difficult to gain the active involvement of all residents and highway users, the Advisory Committee is organized to represent all of the various interests who need to be involved.

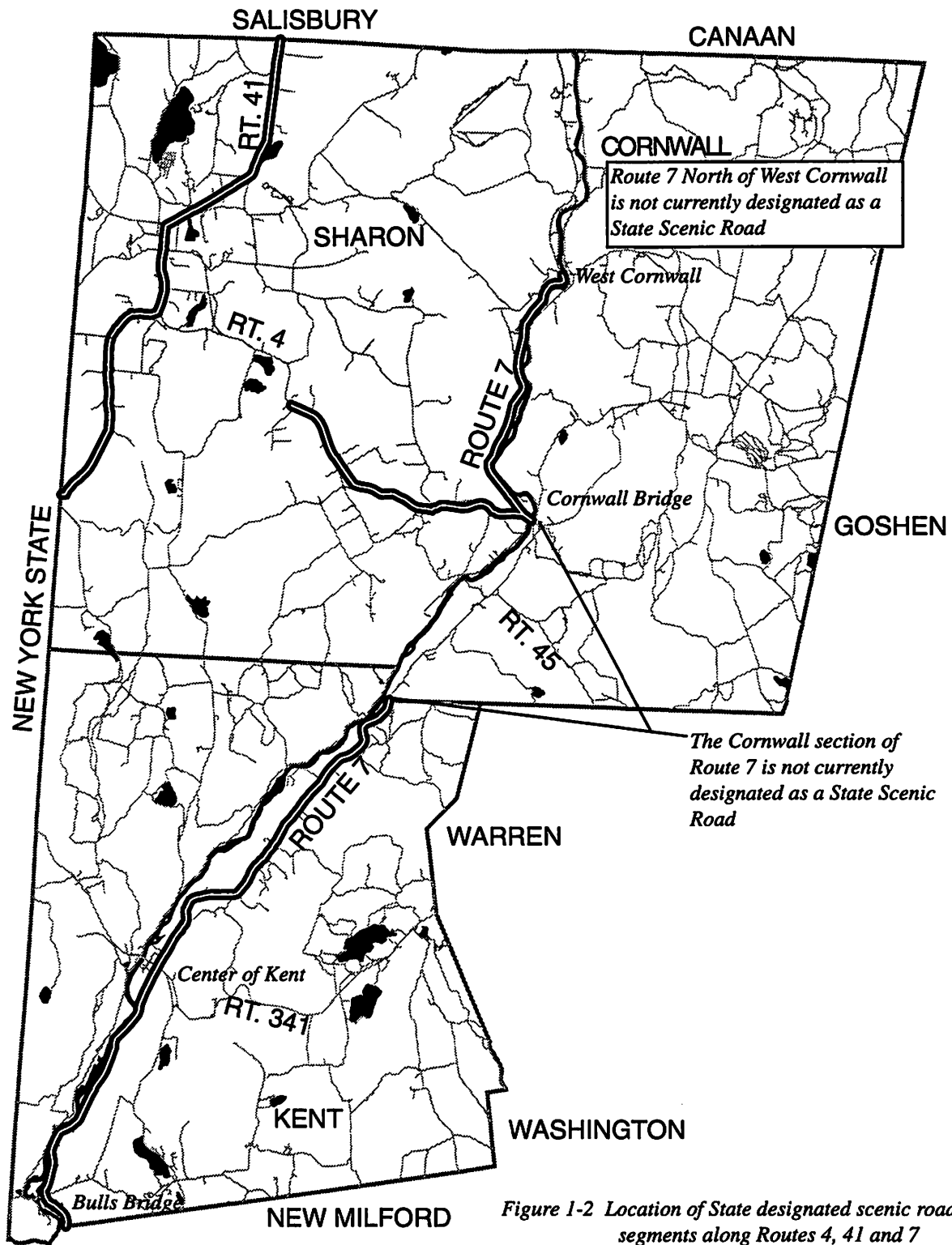
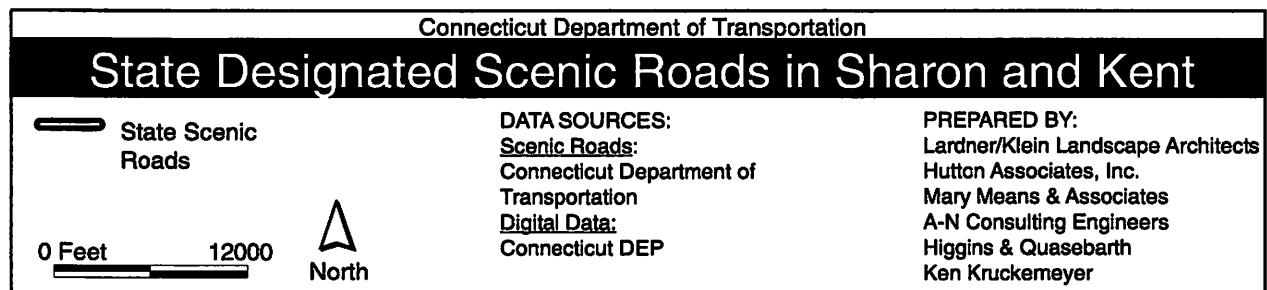


Figure 1-2 Location of State designated scenic road segments along Routes 4, 41 and 7



## ISSUES AND CONCERNS



Figure 1-3 The Town of Kent has worked hard in their efforts to guide development

One of the first steps in preparing a corridor management plan is to identify key issues and concerns to be addressed. The following issues were identified by the Advisory Committee and confirmed by participants at the Fall 1998 public workshop for consideration in the planning process:

### Concerns about preserving the scenic views and rural character:

- How can large tracts of open land be preserved?
- How can existing agricultural land be kept in production?
- Where building does take place, is there a way to guide the siting and appearance of those buildings in rural areas so that they are compatible with the rural and historic character of the region? How have previous efforts to guide rural development performed? How could they be adapted to areas along Route 7?
- Where larger buildings are needed for businesses and manufacturing on rural lands, is there a way to make sure that these uses can be accommodated without altering the rural character?

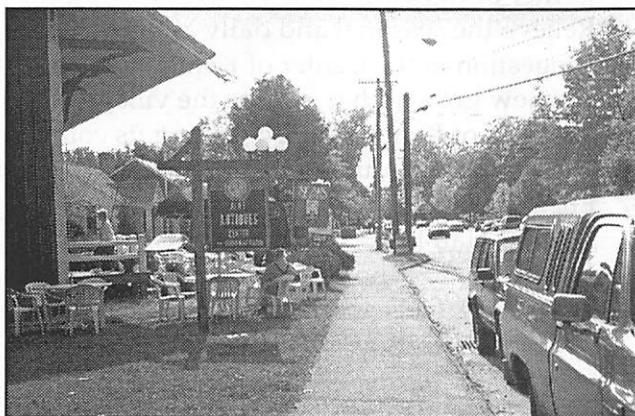


Figure 1-4 Village character and pedestrian safety are two important issues addressed in the Route 7 Scenic Road Corridor Plan

### Concerns about the beauty and safety of the road itself:

- How can the existing wood and cable guiderails be preserved, or if they must be replaced is there a more attractive looking guiderail that would be similar in character?
- Is there a need for environmentally sensitive erosion control measures where the road parallels the Housatonic River? (Greater care needs to be taken.)
- How can the safety and appearance of roadside pull-offs be enhanced?
- Are there ways to solve conflicts between the scenic touring traffic and through traffic?
- How can mature and specimen trees along the roadside be preserved?
- Are there ways to manage roadside vegetation to limit the encroachments on open views (e.g. Kent Land Trust "Adopt-a-View" program)?



Figure 1-5 Long-term strategies for replacement of the wood post and cable guiderail are needed to preserve the roadside character of Route 7

### Concerns about maintaining the pedestrian-friendly scale and character of existing villages:

- How can drivers be encouraged to slow down when approaching villages and settled areas?
- How can pedestrian safety be improved, especially at crosswalks and in business districts?
- How can appropriate infill development be encouraged so that it is attractive and sensitive to the character and scale of the existing village?
- How can the visibility be improved for businesses behind Main Street in Kent, in a manner that is appropriate to the scale and character of the existing village?



## INITIAL GOALS AND PROPOSED PLANNING CONCEPTS FOR THE CORRIDOR PLAN

The following overall goals were developed with the Advisory Committee and have guided the development of the corridor plan:

### **ROADSIDE VIEWS AND VISTAS:**

*Maintain the open, rural quality of the countryside abutting the Housatonic River along Route 7 through Kent, Cornwall and Sharon—the rich agricultural land in the River's floodplain, interspersed with wooded hills, meadows, and fields, and punctuated by dramatic views of the Housatonic's calm expanses and intermittent rapids. Encourage clear distinction between rural countryside and urbanized development in hamlets and villages.*

### **ROAD AND RIGHT-OF-WAY:**

*Through cooperation between ConnDOT and each Town, agree on standards and procedures for stewardship of the Route 7 road and right-of-way, using appropriate safety, design, and management practices to minimize inappropriate changes to the scenic and historic character of the corridor for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.*

### **HISTORIC / TOURISM / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:**

*Define appropriate scenic corridor visitor promotion in the context of a larger regional network of attractions and services. Position this portion of Route 7 as a rural scenic corridor featuring the wide and rocky Housatonic River as an organizing thread, with alternating views of floodplain farmland, foothill woodlands, and open meadows, punctuated by distinct clusters of commercial or residential development and centered about Kent village tourism services. Help make corridor businesses more visible and accessible, consistent with scenic goals.*

### **COOPERATION AND MANAGEMENT:**

*Reinforce partnership efforts between public, private and civic sectors to preserve open space and conserve heritage sites. Focus on potential roadway improvements as well as expanded precedents for permanent open space conservation, involving town-wide, regional and state officials and civic organizations as well as land trusts, interest groups and the public as large.*

### **A REGIONAL APPROACH FOR REGIONAL ISSUES:**

*Complement local efforts by working at a regional level to deal with multi-jurisdictional byway-related issues and to implement larger-scale conservation projects. Communicate the area's attractive ambiance, heritage and environment, using the scenic roadway planning effort as support for appropriately-scaled educational information programs for Kent, Cornwall and Sharon residents and regional visitors.*

In order to implement the goals, it is recommended that the following planning concepts (as described in Chapter 3) be implemented to preserve and enhance the character of the roadside and the beauty of the scenic views found along Route 7:

1. **Establish Conservation Priorities**  
Place a high priority on conserving the most prominent or attractive landscapes along Route 7 while at the same time guide development towards those places that are most suitable – existing villages and hamlets – without infringing upon property owners' right to use and enjoy their land.
2. **Help to Create a Greenway Along the Housatonic River**  
Improve access to and along the Housatonic River so that others may enjoy its beauty and recreational opportunities without despoiling its banks.
3. **Manage the Impacts of Tourism**  
Help visitors find their way around to the most interesting places in a manner that will not destroy the reason people want to visit.
4. **Enhance Roadside Character**  
Balance the often competing demands of a safe transportation route with the beauty of a scenic drive.
5. **Use Traffic Calming Measures to Improve Pedestrian Safety**  
Give drivers better clues about how to behave when approaching more thickly settled and heavily used pedestrian areas.
6. **Encourage Appropriate Growth in the Center of Kent**  
Relieve the seasonal and daily afternoon congestion in the Center of Kent and encourage new growth that retains the village qualities of Kent, while enhancing its compact pedestrian qualities.
7. **Encourage Appropriate Growth in the Smaller Hamlets**  
Encourage new households to settle within existing hamlets and improve the qualities of those hamlets as attractive places to live.



## Existing Conditions



Figure 2-1 Aerial View of Route 7 and the Housatonic River Valley — looking south from Cornwall Bridge.

Traveling Route 7 gives one spectacular views of the Housatonic River Valley and the opportunity to enjoy the rural character and unspoiled countryside of Northwestern Connecticut. Whether hiking the Appalachian Trail or canoeing down the Housatonic River, residents and visitors alike escape into the rugged wooded landscape. Route 7 is the road leading to many scenic landscapes and outdoor recreation opportunities found within the region, with plenty of historic sites, bed and breakfasts, antique shops and art galleries to visit along the way. Route 7 is also home to most of the residents in the Housatonic Valley.

### EXISTING CHARACTER AND QUALITY

Tightly knit historic villages and open vistas of valley farms combine with thousands of acres of protected woodlands to provide a unique experience for residents and visitors alike along Route 7. Public and private interests have combined to conserve much of the surrounding forests and important cultural sites. With large tracts of publicly owned woodlands protected from development, much of the landscape visible from Route 7 will remain as it is for years to come, while some places remain vulnerable.

The character of Route 7 is dominated by wooded valley slopes and intermittent views of the Housatonic River. This dramatic natural landscape is broken only by small villages and open valley farm lands. Michael Bell describes the region in his book, *The Face of Connecticut*:

*The Northwest Highlands, with their wide-open valleys and true mountains, are considered by many to be among the most beautiful areas of Connecticut and all New England... The Northwest Highlands are by far Connecticut's most rugged and dramatic region.*

Route 7 is home to many historic features, panoramic views and specimen trees. National, state, and local historic registers recognize over 60 significant sites along the corridor that have historic value. Important sites include: Bulls Bridge, Kent Furnace, Flanders Historic District, West Cornwall Bridge, and others.

### Driving Along Route 7

The designated scenic highway begins at the Kent/New Milford Town Line. As it continues north, it soon intersects with Bulls Bridge Road with its namesake visible to the west as it crosses the Housatonic River. This state, nationally, and locally recognized historic site gives visitors spectacular views of the river and surrounding valley. Traveling further, woodlands enclose the corridor while opening briefly to offer views of the Housatonic River to the west. The landscape opens just south of the Village of Kent. The book, *Highways and Byways of Connecticut*, a 1947 transcript of radio broadcast vignettes by G. Fox and Com-

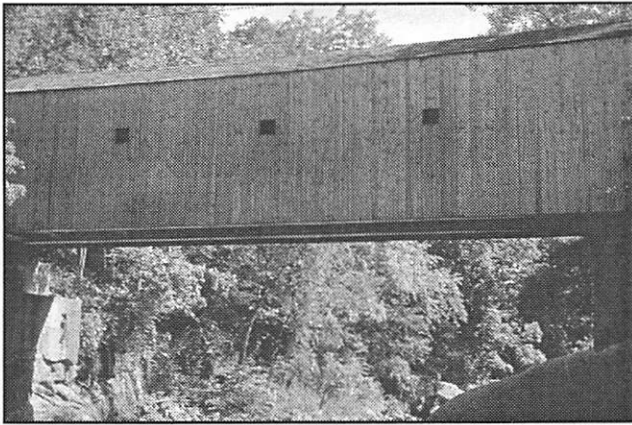


Figure 2-2 Bulls Bridge in the Town of Kent

pany, paints a vivid picture of the town and its history. "Productive lands spread out securely under trim and clean white houses — the neat, symmetrical maple and elm-lined streets." Once through Kent Village, Route 7 passes one of the town's most renowned monuments. Kent Furnace is a well preserved relic of Connecticut's iron mining days. As described in The Highways and Byways of Connecticut, "...the days when roaring forges lit the skies of night with bloody light when Kent produced this country's share of iron..."

Heading north, the corridor continues to wind around, bending with the meanders of the Housatonic River, next encountering the Historic District in Flanders with its many recognized historic homes and buildings. Again entering into the enveloping woodlands of the valley, Route 7 leads toward the Kent/Cornwall town line, passing Kent Falls State Park.

Leaving the Town of Kent, Route 7 passes through the southwest corner of Cornwall. While not designated as a state scenic highway, this section of Route 7 offers one of the most spectacular views of the Housatonic River Valley, seen from a slight elevation and distance from the east side of the River.

When crossing the Housatonic River at the Junction of Route 7 and Route 4 there is a spectacular view of Breadloaf Mountain. Keeping to the right, Route 7 continues up the Housatonic River passing historic St. Bridget's Church and Cemetery. This segment of Route 7

hangs between the river and the steep valley walls. The rugged landscape is covered with mature forest enclosing travelers in its beauty. The majority of land along this section of Route 7 is almost entirely protected through state or federal ownership. Housatonic Meadows State Park provides hiking along the blue-blazed Pine Knob Loop and connections to the Appalachian Trail, beautiful views across the valley (Housatonic State Forest lands), access to the river for trout fishing, and camping facilities. The designated scenic highway ends at its junction with Route 128. Route 128 crosses the Housatonic to the east through the historic West Cornwall Covered Bridge. Recognized on state and national historic surveys, the bridge frames the view entering West Cornwall village.

### The Towns

The Route 7 Scenic Corridor, paralleling the Housatonic River, consists of three jurisdictional segments — from south to north, Kent, Cornwall and Sharon (of which the Cornwall segment is currently not a designated scenic road). The Town of Kent is the major segment within the main study corridor — the Cornwall and Sharon portions are more limited in length.

### The Town of Kent

The Scenic Road is currently designated along the entire diagonal north-south length of Route 7 within the Town, from Bulls Bridge at the southern Town border, along the Housatonic through the 'town center' village of Kent and smaller hamlets of Kent Furnace, Flanders, and North Kent to the Town's northern boundary at

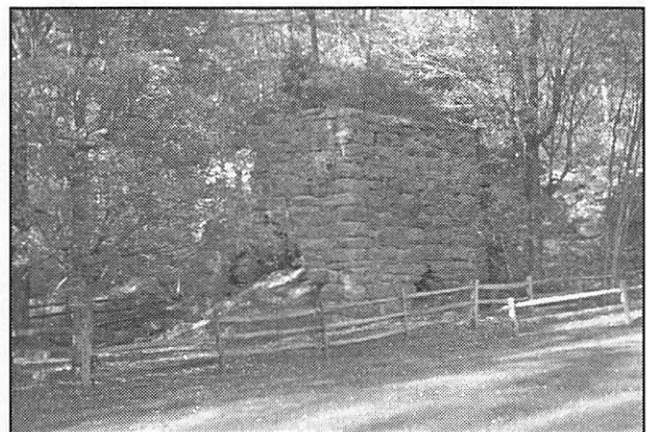


Figure 2-3 Kent Furnace



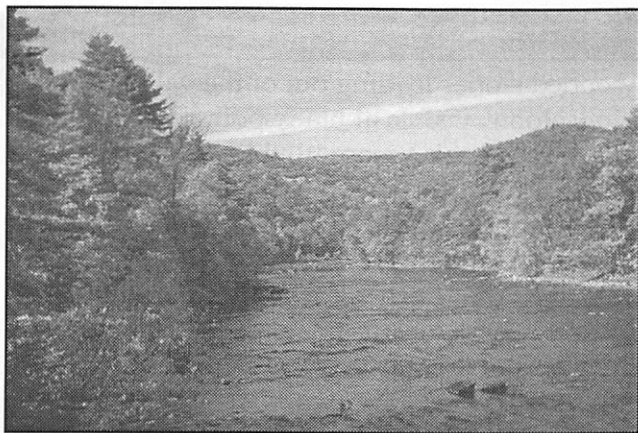


Figure 2-4 The Housatonic River looking north in Sharon

Cornwall. In terms of length (approximately 11 miles) as well as development, this is the major segment of the corridor. Through Kent, Route 7 is characterized by a strong delineation between rural and town land. To the south of the Village, the drive is primarily river-related passing along the east side of the Housatonic, with its valley bottom farm fields and meadows defined by intermittent woodlands. Villages and small hamlets are found along the way at Bull's Bridge, Kent, Flanders, and North Kent.

#### The Town of Sharon

At the opposite and northern end of the study corridor is the designated portion of Route 7 within the Town of Sharon, an approximately 3 mile segment extending from the recent Route 4 Bridge (an attractive structure from the River but more utilitarian in appearance along the highway) north to the picturesque West Cornwall covered bridge. This segment is primarily open space — through state owned park or forest land, with the roadway hard along the west bank of the river and spectacular views of the water framed by trees.

#### The Town of Cornwall

Currently the approximately 3-mile Cornwall segment of Route 7 is not a state designated scenic road, although the Town is participating in this study. The Corridor Management Plan that will evolve as a result of this study will incorporate the Cornwall segment as a potential scenic corridor, linking the already designated sections of Kent and Sharon. The Cornwall section has some of the most dramatic views,

along with the more developed areas approaching the Village of Cornwall Bridge.

#### **Additional Scenic Segments of Route 7 Not Designated by Connecticut DOT**

The approximately 3-mile remainder of Sharon's Route 7 segment to the north of the West Cornwall bridge, although not adjacent to the river, is also scenic, extending into the pine-filled hills of the Housatonic State Forest adjacent to the River. This segment's eligibility as part of a larger Route 7 corridor will also be evaluated in this study.

At the same time, the New Milford portion of Route 7 extending approximately 9 miles to the south of Kent is also particularly attractive. Its close proximity to the more urbanized portions of Route 7 south from New Milford center to Danbury, and the desire of residents to preserve the views and cultural/historic ambiance of this more northern and rural area, lend a particular urgency to its analysis.

Both of these latter undesignated areas — northwest New Milford and northeast Sharon — are outside the scope of this corridor study, although they will be included as part of the study context, in the expectation that local or regional groups (or the Route 7 Scenic Advisory Committee itself) may take on the later task of applying to the State for scenic road designation and supplementing this corridor management plan with additional inventory information and management strategies.

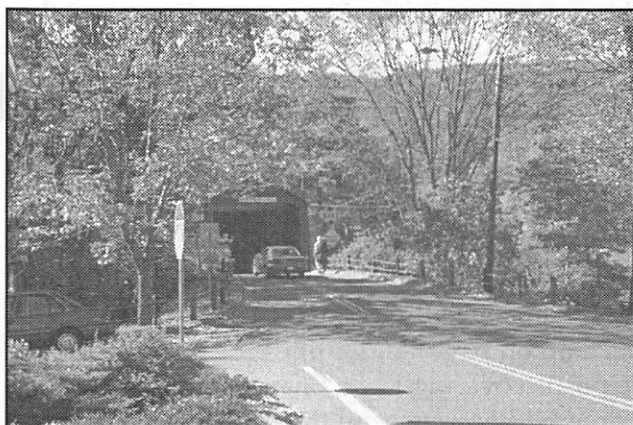


Figure 2-5 West Cornwall Bridge

## SCENIC LANDSCAPE

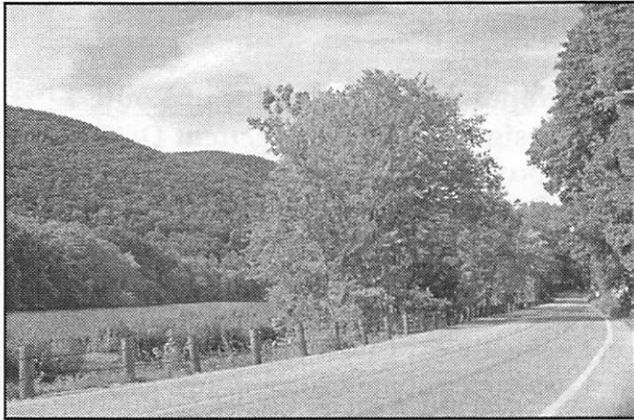


Figure 2-6 Schaghticoke Mountain from Route 7 near Bulls Bridge

Historically, this region and specifically Route 7 has been recognized for its dramatic landscapes and cultural features. Excerpts from Connecticut - A Guide to Its Roads, Lore, and People written by workers of the Federal Writer's Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1938, reveal the beauty of the Region. *"South of Kent, US 7 follows the east bank of the Housatonic River. At a bend in the river, ... Schaghticoke Mountain, across the stream ... rears its shaggy head abruptly from the river's edge ... In the Housatonic State Forest [Sharon], US 7 passes a narrow cleft in the rocks, where a mountain stream, Pine Swamp Brook, tumbles down a narrow hemlock glen in a series of cascades to join the river. [In] West Cornwall ... reached by a covered bridge across the Housatonic River there is an excellent view of the Housatonic River Gorge."*

Many points exist along the corridor offering dramatic views of the Housatonic River and the

wooded slopes leading out of the valley. The Housatonic, visible at many points, reveals itself either as a small stream tumbling over its rocky bed (Cornwall Bridge) or opens up to present itself against a backdrop of wooded mountain tops. The land visible from Route 7 (the viewshed) has been mapped and is considered the study area for this plan. The mountains and hillsides are the most visually prominent features identified in the Viewshed Map on page 9. The lands that can be seen from the most scenic viewpoints through the corridor are mapped on page 10.

The rugged natural landscape is broken only by the small historic villages and hamlets of Bulls Bridge, Kent, Kent Furnace, Flanders, North Kent, Cornwall Bridge, and West Cornwall. These small rural villages built upon early mining and agricultural economies maintain many historic homes and structures visible from Route 7.



Figure 2-7 View from Route 7 in Cornwall

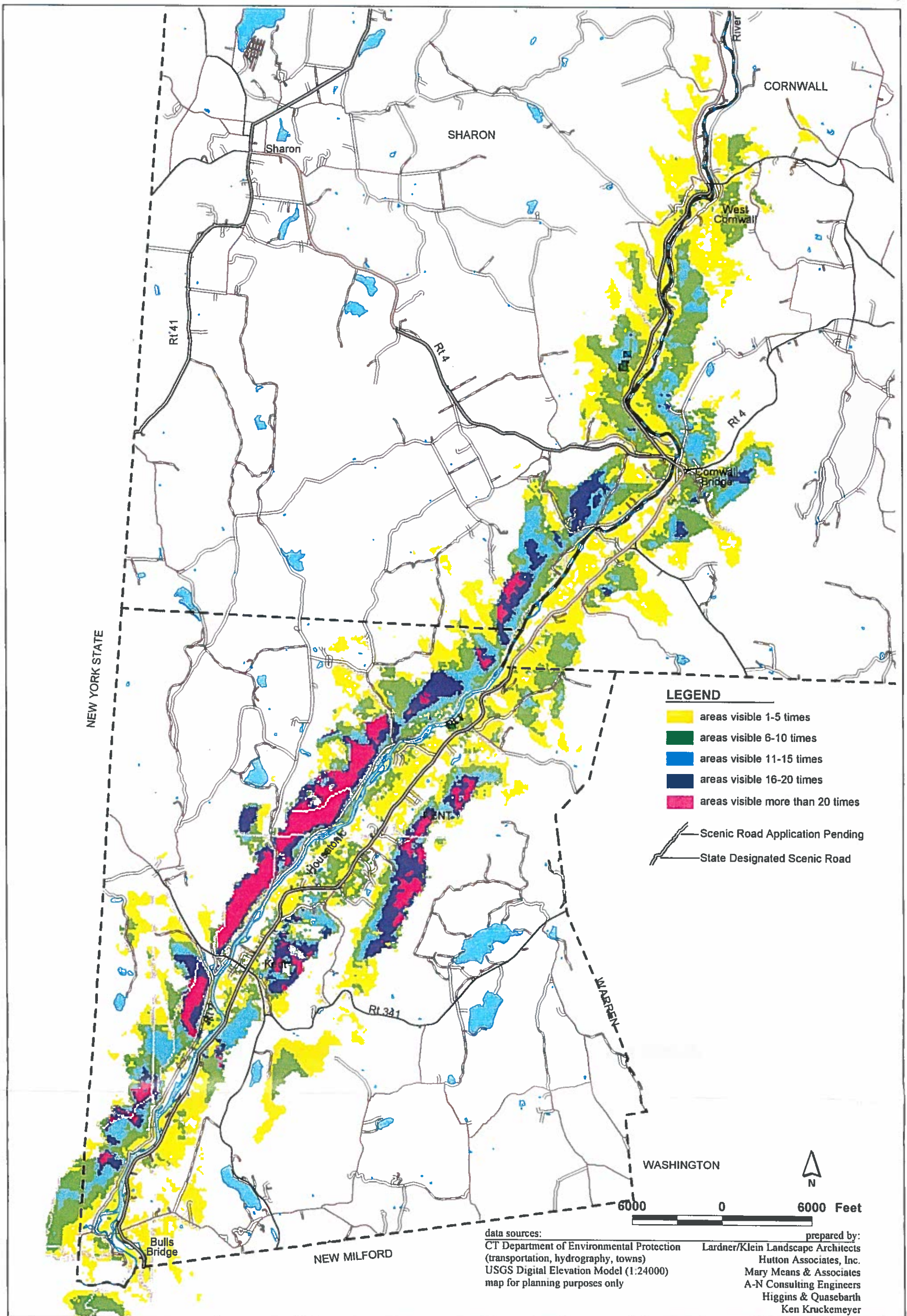
## NATURAL LANDSCAPE

Located in the Northwest Highlands, Route 7 joins two important landscapes and takes advantage of the beauty of the Housatonic River. The Landform map on page 11 shows these dramatic changes in topography as the highlands meet the valley. The Surficial Materials map on page 12 identifies the material deposits covering Kent, Sharon, and Cornwall. Large till deposits from the latest glacier and erosion by the Housatonic River are clearly visible.

### Housatonic Highlands

With a more erosion resistant bedrock core, this plateau passes through the northwest corner of Kent, through Sharon and northern Cornwall. It extends from the New York State line like a finger until it abuts the Northern Marble Valley. The Housatonic River cuts through the Housatonic Highlands for a short distance between Falls Village and the village of Cornwall Bridge.





## Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan

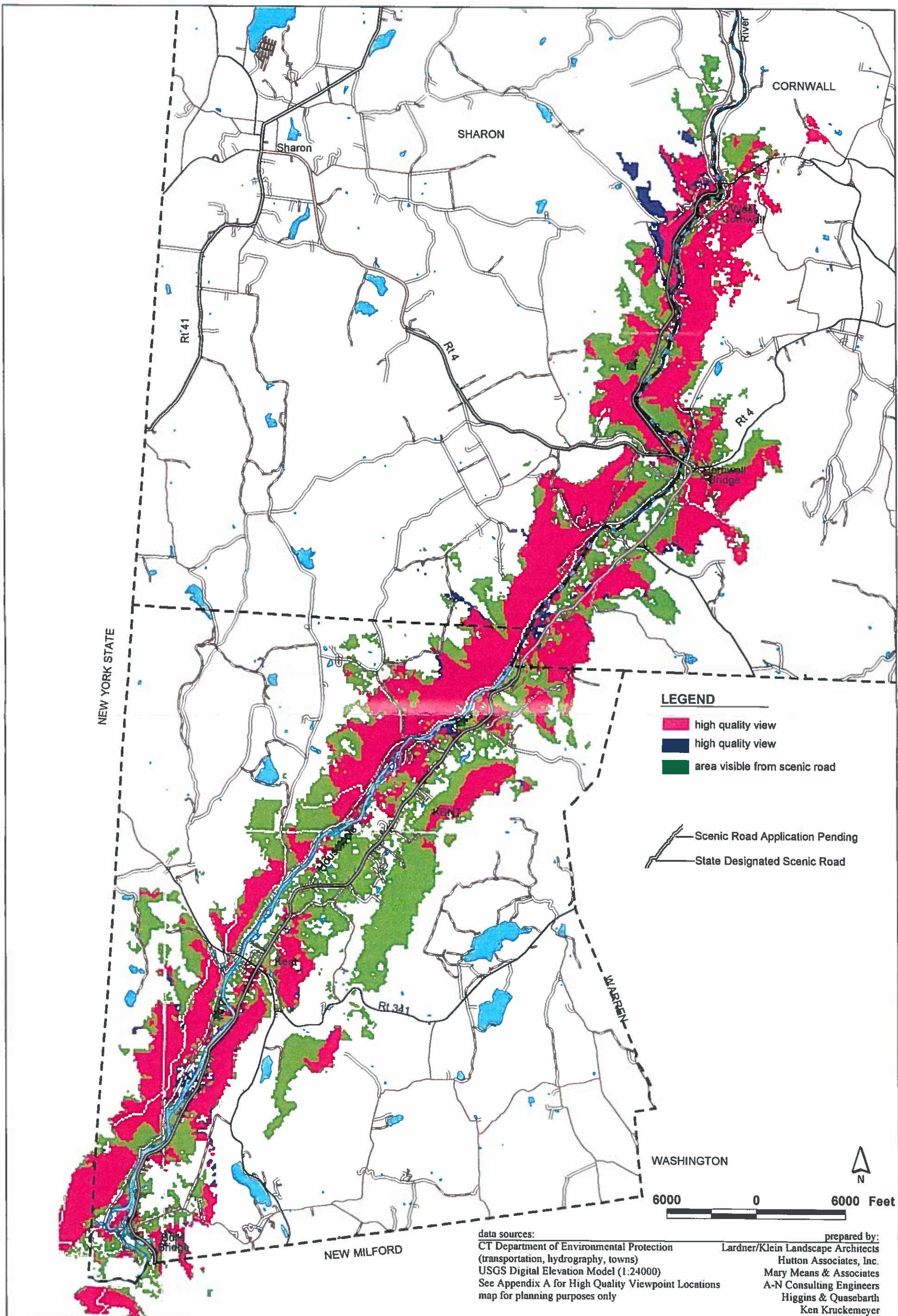
prepared for:  
 Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
 The Connecticut Department of Transportation

## Visually Prominent Areas

June 1998

1





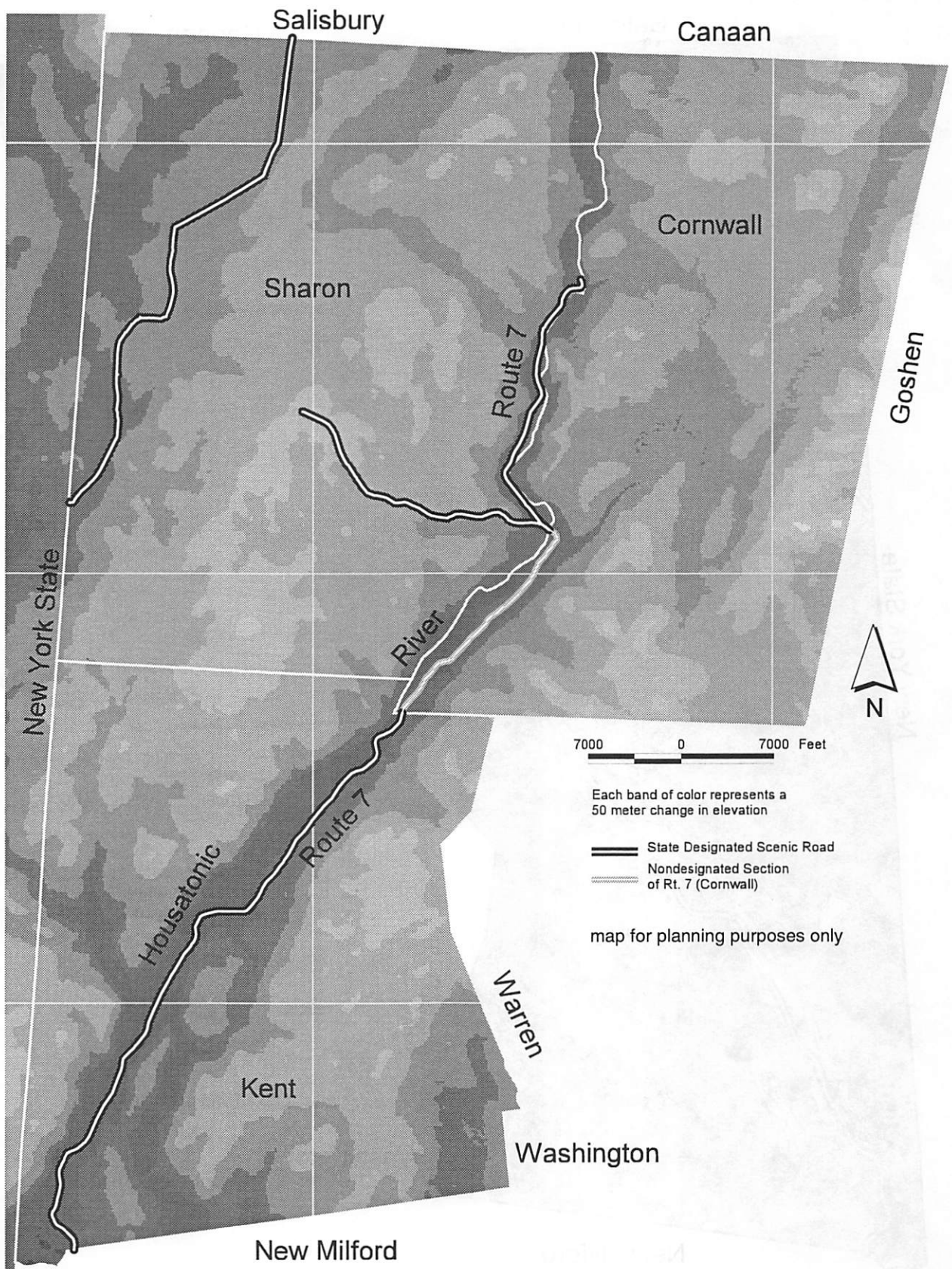
## Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan

prepared for:  
 Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
 The Connecticut Department of Transportation

## High Quality Views

June 1998





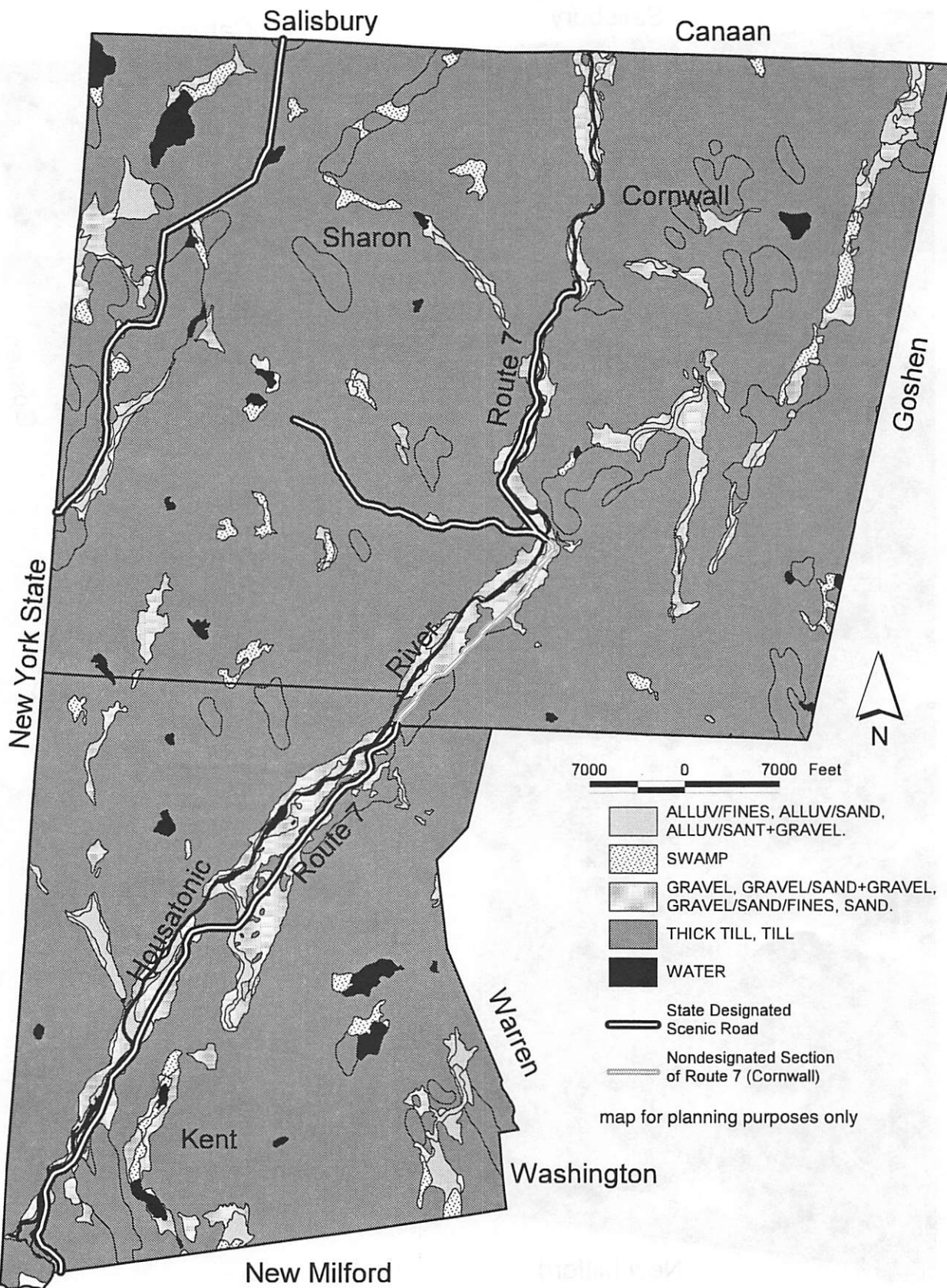
## Landform

3

**Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan**  
 prepared for:  
 Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
 The Connecticut Department of Transportation

data sources:  
 CT Department of Environmental  
 Protection  
 USGS Digital Elevation Model

prepared by:  
 Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects  
 Hutton Associates, Inc.  
 Mary Means & Associates  
 A-N consulting Engineers  
 Higgins & Quasebarth  
 Ken Kruckemeyer



## Surficial Materials

4

**Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan**  
prepared for:  
Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
The Connecticut Department of Transportation

data sources:  
CT Department of Environmental  
Protection

prepared by:  
Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects  
Hutton Associates, Inc.  
Mary Means & Associates  
A-N consulting Engineers  
Higgins & Quasebarth  
Ken Kruckemeyer



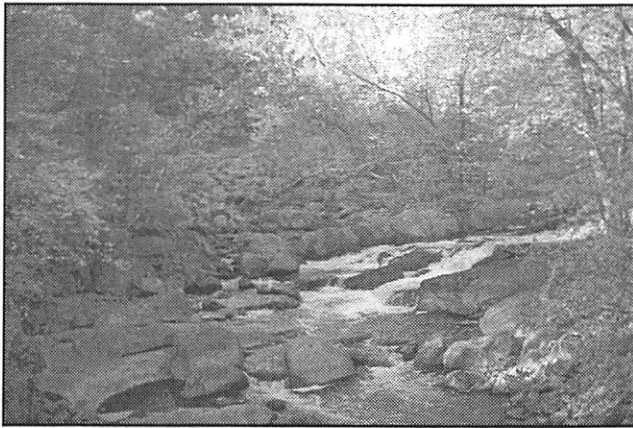


Figure 2-8 Boulder stream section of the Housatonic River near Bulls Bridge

### Northern Marble Valley

This lime-rich bedrock erodes much easier than the schists and gneisses of the surrounding highlands. The landscape is pockmarked with depressions and hollows, many of which fill with water creating numerous lakes and ponds. The ability for water to easily carve the bedrock has created numerous caves and dramatic waterfalls in the region. Kent Falls, which has become a state park, is an important recreational site along Route 7.

### The River

The scenic road parallels the Housatonic River as it passes through Kent and Sharon. The river runs through the Northern Marble Valley from

the village of Cornwall Bridge through Kent to Gaylordsville. Michael Bell, in his book *The Face of Connecticut*, calls the Housatonic "...an excellent example of a river that conforms to the bedrock geology."

### Environmentally Sensitive Lands

The landscape along Route 7 consists of a number of features that are particularly sensitive to human use and adaptation. These lands include steep slopes (greater than 15%), wetlands and watercourses, and those soils that offer limitations for septic tank absorption fields. The locations of sensitive lands within the Route 7 viewshed study area are mapped on page 15.

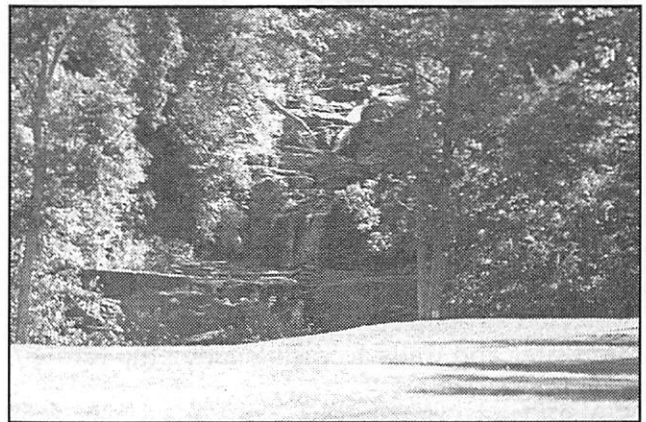


Figure 2-9 Kent Falls

## AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

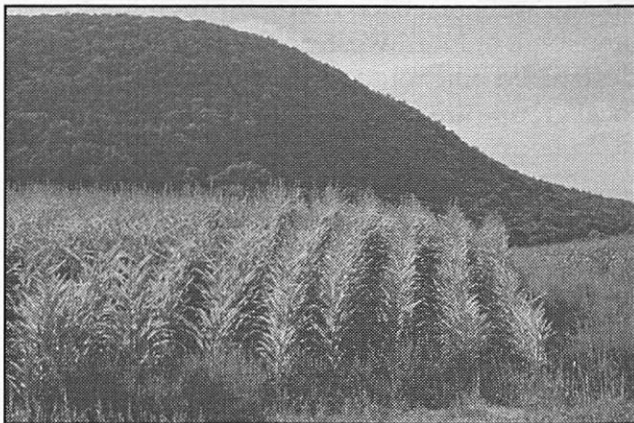


Figure 2-10 Farm along Route 7 south of Kent

Agricultural fields and related buildings provide many of the open vistas that make the corridor scenic. Providing a foreground for the

beautiful mountains and valley walls these remnants of the region's rural heritage are recognized as an important resource in maintaining the beauty of the corridor.

Agricultural activities occur along gently sloping hillsides and the valley bottoms of the Housatonic River and its tributaries. Farming keeps the land open. Many of the prominent views and panoramas cross these properties. The map on page 16 identifies the land used for agricultural purposes within Kent, Sharon, and Cornwall.

The State of Connecticut has made it a priority to protect the remaining important agricultural lands from unchecked development. The Town of Sharon has benefitted from state programs



aimed at preserving farmland. The Town of Kent has benefitted from the activities of the Kent Land Trust. Their earlier corridor planning effort along Route 7 south of the Village of Kent has led to the preservation of additional farmlands. A number of important agricultural

parcels have been protected through the purchase of Development Rights. The property remains in private ownership while the State holds these rights, allowing farming activities to continue.

## RECREATION

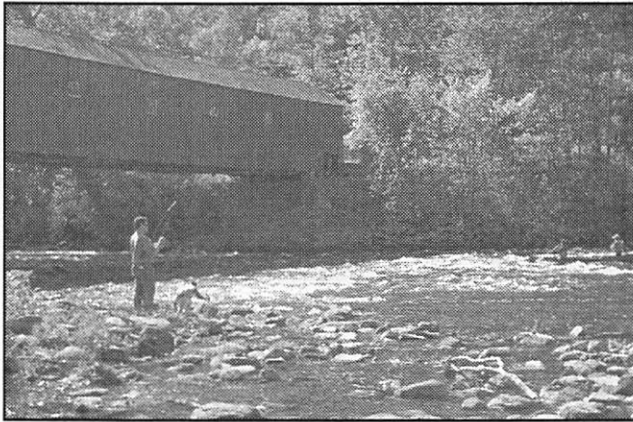


Figure 2-11 Fishing and Canoeing on the Housatonic River near West Cornwall Bridge

The immediate area surrounding Route 7 and the Housatonic River contains numerous opportunities for recreation and outdoor enjoyment. The maps on pages 17 and 18 identify the land protected as open space and the various recreation sites and trails accessible along the Route 7 corridor.

The Housatonic River is one the most important recreation resources in the State of Connecticut. Numerous public and private properties along the river protect its scenic beauty. Organizations such as the Housatonic Valley Association are dedicated to the continued protection of the river's scenic beauty and providing opportunities for low impact recreation activities.

### State Parks and Forests

Numerous state owned properties occur near Route 7. These state parks and forests offer recreation opportunities for local residents and visitors alike. With this land protected from intensive development, the landscape along Route 7 continues to be a scenic treasure for the region. State lands include:

- Wyantenock State Forest;
- Housatonic State Forest;
- Mohawk State Forest;

- Macedonia Brook State Park;
- Housatonic Meadows State Park; and
- Kent Falls State Park.

### Private Conservation Holdings

Local preserves maintained by land trusts and The Nature Conservancy also protect important natural and cultural resources of the area. Important sites include the Kent Land Trust property north of Bulls Bridge, Fuller Pond and Iron Mountain Preserve.

Kent Furnace with the Sloane-Stanley Museum of early farm implements, highlights the many historic sites and attractions along the scenic corridor. Also important, are the covered bridges at the beginning and end of the route, Bulls Bridge in Kent and West Cornwall Bridge crossing the Housatonic between Sharon and Cornwall.

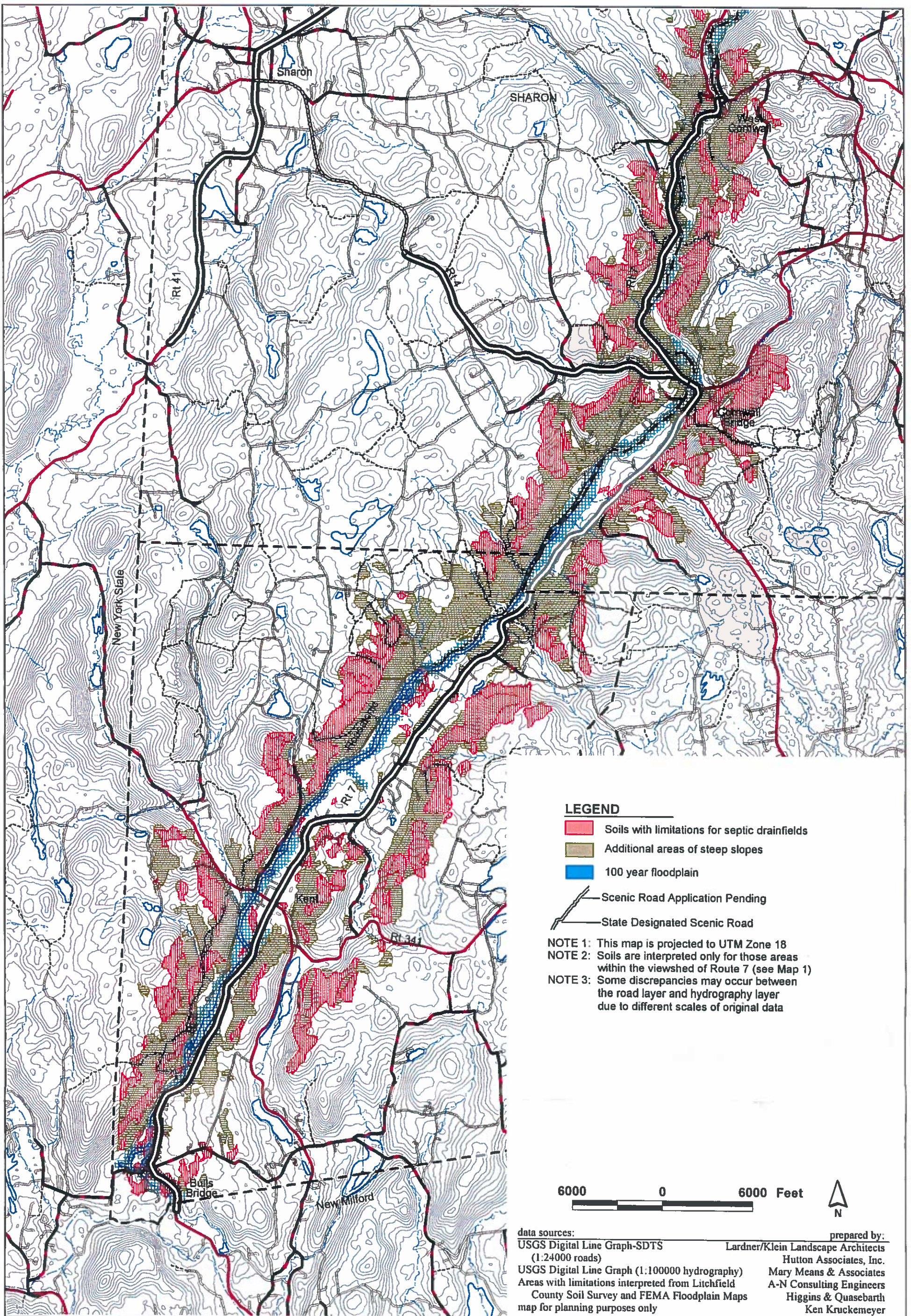
### Biking and Hiking

Recreation trails offer opportunities for hiking, biking, and horseback riding through the scenic landscape of Northwestern Connecticut. State designated bike routes and routes designated by local groups are recognized and published by



Figure 2-12 Housatonic Meadows State Park





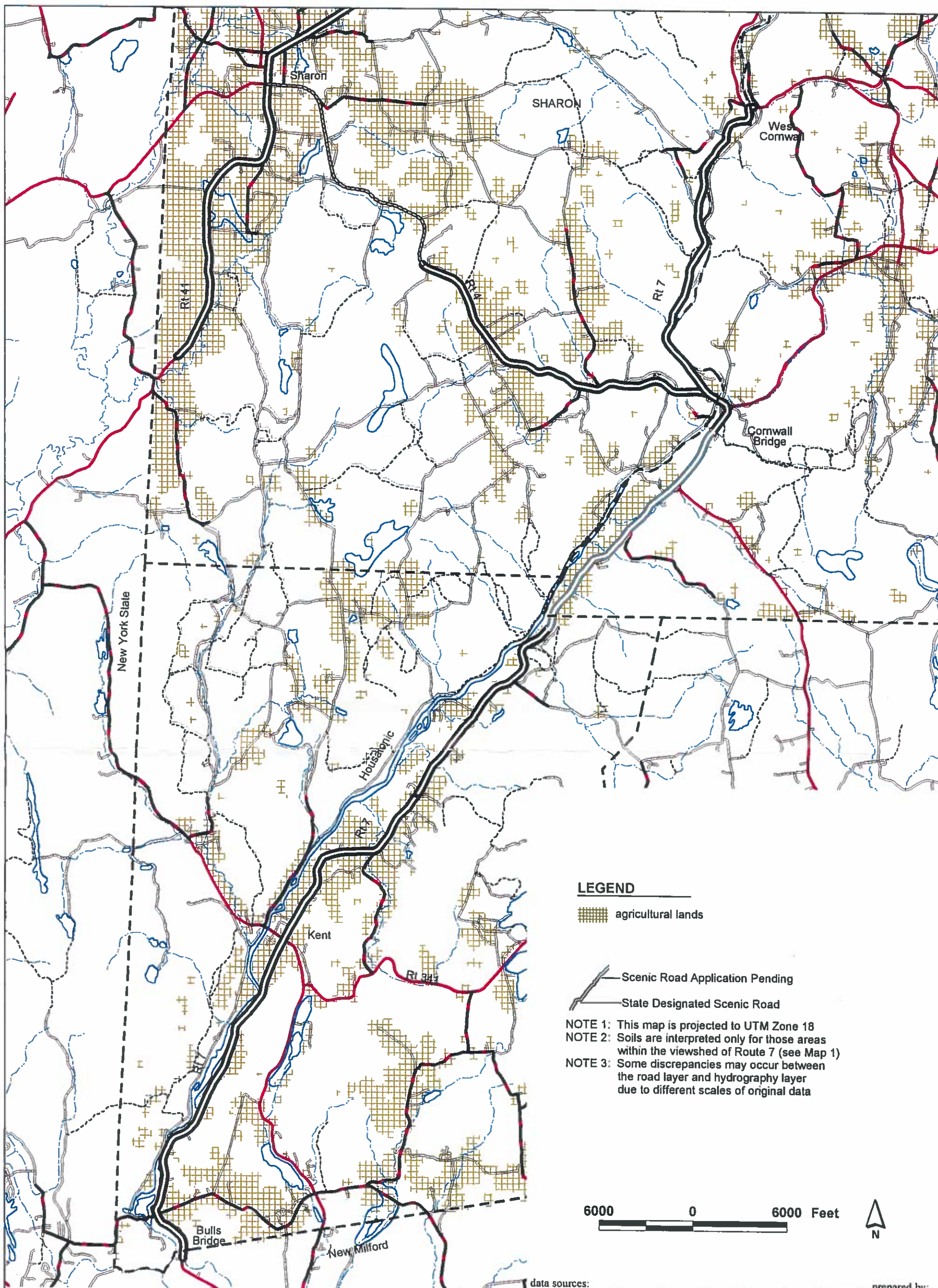
## Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan

prepared for:  
 Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
 The Connecticut Department of Transportation

## Sensitive Lands

June 1998





#### LEGEND

agricultural lands

Scenic Road Application Pending

State Designated Scenic Road

- NOTE 1: This map is projected to UTM Zone 18  
 NOTE 2: Soils are interpreted only for those areas within the viewshed of Route 7 (see Map 1)  
 NOTE 3: Some discrepancies may occur between the road layer and hydrography layer due to different scales of original data

6000 0 6000 Feet



#### data sources:

USGS Digital Line Graph-SDTS (1:24000 roads)  
 USGS Digital Line Graph (1:100000 hydrography)  
 Agricultural Lands identified from Connecticut Land Use Land Cover Data (1987-1990)  
 map for planning purposes only

#### prepared by:

Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects  
 Hutton Associates, Inc.  
 Mary Means & Associates  
 A-N Consulting Engineers  
 Higgins & Quasebarth  
 Ken Kruckemeyer

## Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan

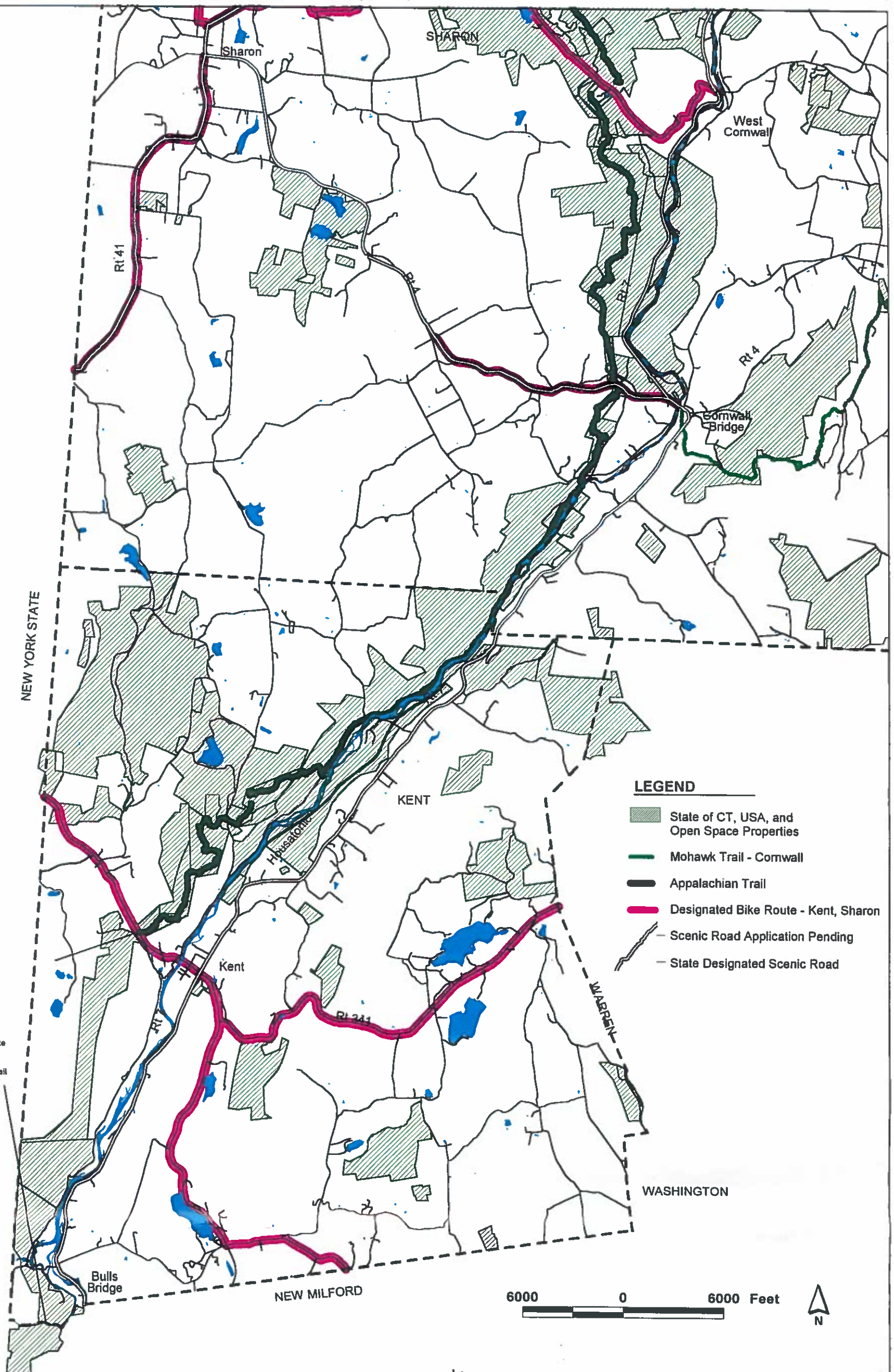
prepared for:  
 Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
 The Connecticut Department of Transportation

## Agricultural Lands

June 1998

6





**data sources:**

USGS Digital Line Graph-SDTS  
(1:24000 roads)  
USGS Digital Line Graph (1:100000 hydrography)  
CT Department of Environmental Protection  
map for planning purposes only

**prepared by:**

Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects  
Hutton Associates, Inc.  
Mary Means & Associates  
A-N Consulting Engineers  
Higgins & Quasebarth  
Ken Kruckemeyer

**Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan**

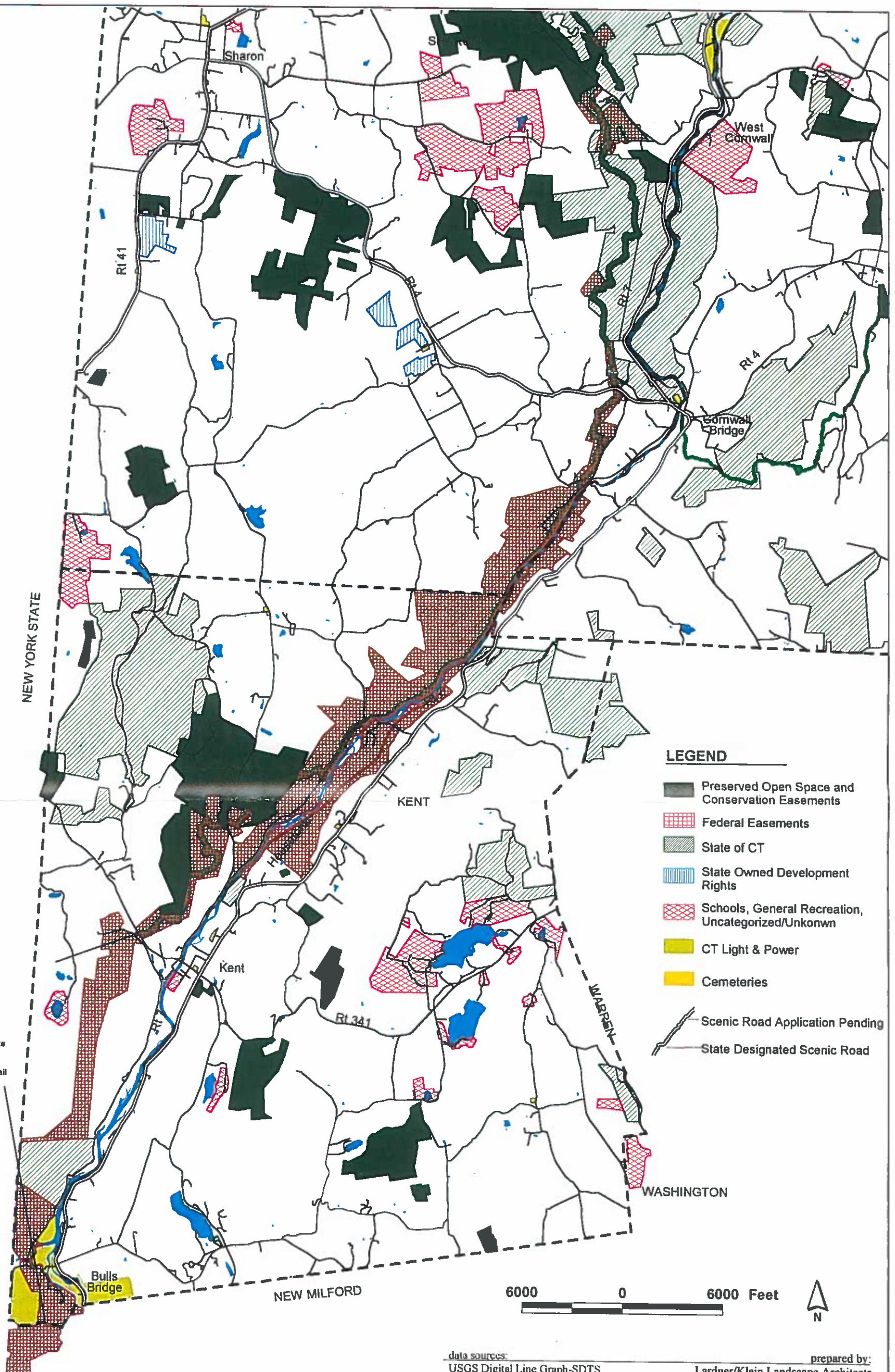
prepared for:  
Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
The Connecticut Department of Transportation

**Recreation Sites and Trails**

June 1998

**7**





**data sources:**  
 USGS Digital Line Graph-SDTS  
 (1:24000 roads)  
 USGS Digital Line Graph (1:100000 hydrography)  
 CT Department of Environmental Protection  
 Town of Sharon  
 Town of Kent  
 map for planning purposes only

**prepared by:**  
 Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects  
 Hutton Associates, Inc.  
 Mary Means & Associates  
 A-N Consulting Engineers  
 Higgins & Quasebarth  
 Ken Kruckemeyer

## Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan

prepared for:  
 Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
 The Connecticut Department of Transportation

**Open Space**  
 June 1998

**8**



the State or through The Coalition of Connecticut Bicyclists, Inc.

### Appalachian Trail

The Appalachian Trail is a unique resource for the area passing through the towns of Kent, Sharon, and Cornwall in its 2000 mile length between Georgia and Maine. The Appalachian Trail provides opportunities for recreation not found anywhere else in Connecticut. Managed and maintained by the Connecticut Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, this national hiking route parallels the Housatonic River through Kent and Sharon, and branches into Cornwall connecting much of the state forest lands in the Town.

Easements and purchases of land by the federal government continue to be negotiated as a permanent right-of-way is being completed. The goal is to eliminate "road walking" and frustrated hikers crossing private property, angering nearby landowners.



Figure 2-13 The Appalachian Trail at River Road in Sharon

## EXISTING LAND USE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Land use planning efforts in Northwestern Connecticut have been ongoing for more than twenty years. Recognized as an important area by state, local and private interests, the region has worked to conserve its rural and rugged character.

### Historical Context: Traditional Development and Recent Growth

Two interrelated and excellent studies have recently defined Northwest Connecticut's (and especially Kent's) historical and recent development context, pointing the way to continuing value-oriented planning to preserve the rural ambiance and steer development into traditional patterns. The two studies are:

- Northwest Connecticut Regional Planning Area Preservation and Conservation Study (1975); and
- Kent, Connecticut: Town Character Study and Open Space Plan (1990).

The first of these reports was prepared in 1975 for the Northwest Connecticut Regional Plan-

ning Area by Dougherty, McGowan and Everett. The 1975 study, which spawned the later Kent Town Character Study/Open Space Plan (described below) preceded the notable 1987 Center for Rural Massachusetts work entitled, "Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley" by Robert Yaro et al.

The Northwest Connecticut report used a values-oriented approach of rating geographic areas with reference to a series of factors and superimposing the results in mapped form to define locations on which to build and areas to preserve — and how. The 1975 report defined primary regional features (lakes and ponds, significant town centers, significant river corridors or related water features, significant farm land, high scenic sectors or scenic roads, significant related wetlands). It also analyzed and graded village centers throughout Northwest Connecticut.

The second report completed in 1990, focused on the Town of Kent. This Kent-based study, applies the value-intensive analytical tools used

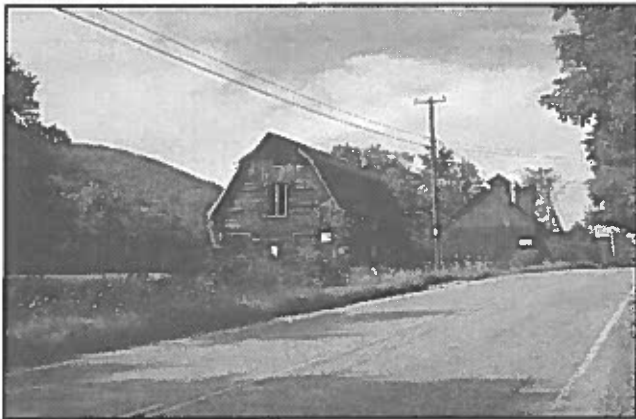


Figure 2-14 Kent Land Trust Preservation Project - an important element of the rural character

in the previous study at a finer grain, to the specific geographic zones within the Town of Kent.

The approach of the Town Character Study portion of the report is to define in detail the elusive 'character' of the larger town area — by looking directly at a series of factors similar to those examined in the regional report described above.

- Kent's landform: a topographically complex area with a major feature in the River Valley, where are found a string of villages and from which branch off a series of smaller valleys. Traditional farmscapes, that give the area its distinctive rural flavor, are analyzed in the context of uplands, wooded slopes and ridges and dedicated open space. The homogeneous appearance of the local landscape that is the result of these factors is therefore a defining characteristic.
- Site Relationships: equally important are building to site relationships as they have grown up over time — historic (early settlement), traditional (19th/early 20th century) and contemporary (modern development). A series of trends and problems with the quality and scale of contemporary development relative to its historic and traditional context are defined and analyzed.

The study then uses these factors to define and rate (on a scale of 1 to 5) various selected areas of the town (both natural and manmade) with respect to their relative 'character' and therefore significance to the town's heritage and culture. The point is made that incremental change has

occurred at an ever-increasing pace, and although Kent has in no way been 'ruined' by such growth, there is a sense that a tipping point may be approaching with respect to certain areas unless defensive actions are taken. Major issues raised by the report include the following:

- the increasing fuzziness (due to commercial or residential sprawl) of traditionally distinct edges of Kent's 'string of villages' along Route 7;
- 'unfortunate' commercial development in the village center; and
- the need to preserve key characteristic farm fields and open space views.

### Open Space

Much of Kent's almost 30,000 acres is undeveloped land, a large proportion of which is wetland, floodplain or steep slopes, the remainder being land used for agriculture or recreation or simply lying fallow.

An estimated 20% of Kent's land area is permanently protected through various techniques, including public ownership and purchase of land or conservation easements by the town or other civic or private organizations. The Town Plan of 1975 made initial estimates and the Update of 1989 undertook a more detailed assessment of existing open space in Kent, refined in the 1990 Open Space Plan (and currently in need of further update).

This inventory deals with two categories of land:

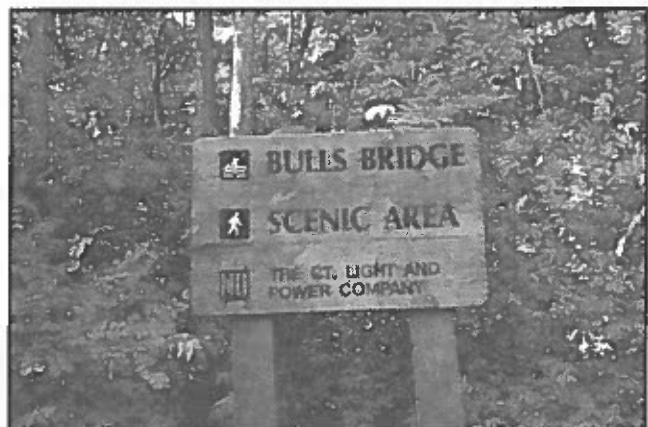


Figure 2-15 Bulls Bridge Scenic Area offers scenic and recreational opportunities



Figure 2-16 Hunting is allowed on some private lands by permit

- Land permanently protected (7,399 acres in 1990) broken down into public land ownership (1,696 acres of National Park Service land adjacent to the Appalachian Trail and other holdings, 3,363 acres of state park and forest lands managed by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and 109 acres of town land), and private ownership (2,231 acres, including purchase of development rights for agricultural use, conservation easements, or land itself);
- Land currently in open space, protected at the option of the owner but potentially subject to development (7,000 acres in 1975 and slightly reduced since then) includes ownership by other miscellaneous private or tax-exempt organizations, unrestricted land trust ownership, or certain other public or protected lands (including the Schaghticoke Indian Reservation, Connecticut Light & Power lands, and holdings by the Kent School and other institutions).

Current open space issues include the long-term use of properties in this second category.

- Major portions of the remaining Stanley Works property not under National Park Service jurisdiction as described above is under an agreement with the Conservation Fund, a national land trust organization that

is apparently treating the property as a partial asset, but are willing to work to find eventual conservation buyers for the property. There is local concern that plans for the property have been developed in isolation rather than in collaboration with the local community. Important to the town are issues concerning controlling growth, appropriate design and planning criteria, and how to preserve views and rural community character as well as environmental habitat. The Conservation Fund is willing to include additional conditions on any resale as long as they are reasonable.

- The land near the Bulls Bridge end of the Route 7 Scenic Corridor is controlled by Connecticut Light and Power. In addition to long-term disposition, with similar issues to those described above, the current maintenance of the property adjacent to the road can be examined in terms of visual improvement as a gateway entrance to the corridor.

### Residential Development

Residential development in Kent and associated areas of Cornwall and Sharon represents (other than agricultural fields, wooded areas, or open space land) the predominant land use. Development has been mostly large lot homes or farmsteads, for various user needs ranging from commuting to nearby employment centers to retirement living, second homes, or rural estates.

Construction and building permit activity, while more static in the Sharon and Cornwall sections of the corridor, represented an approximately 17% increase in residential and commercial construction in Kent since the previous year, four-fifths of that was for housing. Although on the increase, this development still represents a relatively low level of growth. Last year only 19 houses were built compared to 12 in 1991-92.

However, in this portion of the Housatonic Valley and related Northwest Connecticut areas, there is a small but rising increase in activity emanating from the urbanizing areas of Danbury and Waterbury to the south. Kent is on the first fringe of this activity, and is the first to feel its pressure. Regional planners note



Figure 2-17 Example of cluster development along Route 7 in Kent

increased building permit requests on these fringes, an indication of regional demand and pressure for housing sites. As sites are developed in adjacent market generating areas, transportation improvements are constructed, and telecommuting becomes a reality, northern New Milford and Kent will feel the initial impact of this demand. In terms of potential supply, these areas have a number of parcels of large-scale agricultural or open space land well situated for residential development.

As with Sharon, Kent also has a substantial backlog inventory of approved but unbuilt residential sites dating from the development boom of the late 1980s, approved and platted but undeveloped due to economic or other factors. (In Kent's case, over 2,400 acres of subdivided land were approved between 1985 and 1990). Many of these lots are situated on easily developed land (the "Kent Town Character Study" study cited earlier describes these as 'contained' sites). These potential settlement nodes in valleys, plateaus and ridges are by virtue of their location and topography prone to development.

Continuing refinement of subdivision regulations or provision of other siting and design guidelines — especially for parcels located on or near the scenic highways — could help limit environmental and visual impacts if and when approved tracts are eventually built.

### Commercial Development

Commercial development in the Route 7 corridor is focused in the village of Kent, with small convenience or specialty outposts (mostly antique shops, convenience stores or motels) at isolated locations. The village center of Kent is actually a more area-wide center, serving towns along and adjacent to the Housatonic Valley with services such as pharmacies, coffee shops and restaurants, and general merchandise stores. As an urban center for the surrounding rural region, the village has also become a center for office employment — not only day-to-day professional needs for medicine, law, finance, real estate and insurance, but also for small firms relocating from larger urban areas (taking advantage of telecommunications opportunities) or home-grown enterprises such as emerging software companies. This is a continuing economic opportunity for the town.

The village center is also the area's main focus for tourism-related retail — restaurants, gift shops, specialty retail, and galleries. It brings in spending from outside the region, that then circulates in a multiplier effect through the



Figure 2-18 Commercial development is also located behind Route 7 in the Village of Kent





Figure 2-19 The Village of Kent offers services not found elsewhere in the region

regional economy of secondary goods and services. In this sense Kent is an extremely important economic engine for the region, a tourism generator that helps run what is actually Northwest Connecticut's leading industry.

Maintaining the village center's health as a commercial center is a key objective, but is not an easy task. Too much development, especially of the wrong kind and with the wrong impact, can have a negative effect. But appropriate growth — needed services located in well sited buildings with adequate planning for transportation and parking — was a consistent goal among participants in a recent Advisory Committee workshop. A debate now exists, and will likely continue, as to whether recent development has been positive or negative (again, recent Advisory Committee comments indicate that it is probably a little of both). How to correct current problems and avoid future impacts is therefore a challenge to this corridor study and to ongoing planning in the town.

### Institutional Development

The major institutional uses in Kent are the various education campuses — the Kent School, South Kent School, and the Marvelwood School. These well-regarded preparatory schools, with their faculty, staff and administrative personnel, student body and visiting parents, contribute to the Kent economy as well as to its cultural and intellectual life.

The schools also hold large parcels of land for their own use as campus or recreation space, as

buffers for their site, or as an asset. A portion of Kent's open space tabulated in the 1990 Open Space Plan cited elsewhere in this report, is made up of such institutional land, described under the category of 'land currently in open space, protected at the option of the owner but potentially subject to development.'

Creation of the Kent Land Trust grew out of a concern about potential development of some of this property — the apprehensive 'Neighbors of Kent School' became the broader advocacy group 'Citizens for Controlled Growth', that in turn became the proactive 'Kent Land Trust.' With a Kent School representative as part of the Scenic Road Advisory Committee, the issue of long term use of such private land can be further examined.

### Cultural Development

Although not major land users, various cultural institutions in Kent lend vitality and value to the corridor, including:

- industrial heritage artifacts such as the remaining furnaces near Kent Furnace and elsewhere (part of an growing network of similar artifacts in the Northwest Connecticut region);
- the Sloane-Stanley Museum of early American tools and other artifacts and documentation by the well-known artist Eric Sloane (author of many excellent books interpreting traditional rural life); and
- the various galleries and artist studios in the village center and elsewhere, underscoring the area's emergence as a rural arts colony.

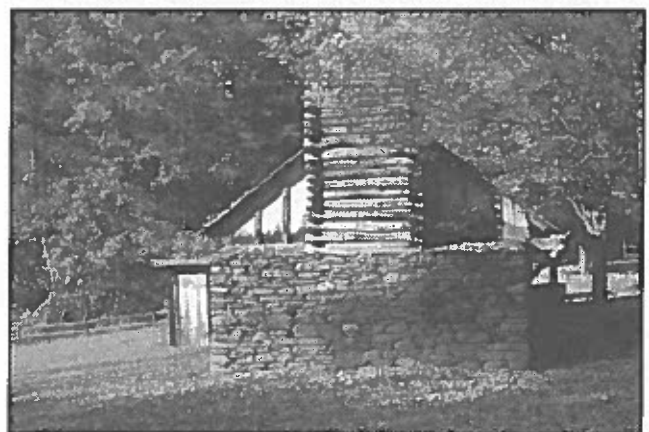


Figure 2-20 Historic structure at Sloane Stanley Museum

## **Tools**

The Route 7 communities have in place a number of tools that have been successful to date in maintaining their heritage and open space, but can be further refined to strengthen its ability to deal with future growth pressures.

Sharon's municipal land use controls and incentives, applicable to its non-publicly-controlled land area along Route 7, have been detailed in the Route 41/4 Corridor Management Plan, a companion study prepared prior to this Plan. Kent's (and to a more limited degree, Cornwall's) public sector tools are described in more detail below.

In addition, all the Route 7 communities share the potential of tapping additional opportunities through the region's enthusiastic not-for-profit organizations dedicated to dealing with environmental and development issues.

### Public Sector Regulatory Techniques

The following describes each Town's land use regulatory framework:

#### Town of Kent Administrative Structure

Kent has the following boards, commissions, or committees (made up of elected or appointed officials) active in planning and administration of its land use and development or enforcement of related regulations (\* indicates elected position):

- Board of Selectmen (3)\*
- Selectmen's Advisory Board (18)
- Planning and Zoning Commission (9)\*
- Zoning Board of Appeals (5)\*
- Conservation/Inland Wetlands Commission (5)
- Housing Partnership Committee (9)
- Historic District Commission (5)
- Kent Center Building Committee (6)
- Sewer Commission (6)\*
- Park and Recreation Commission (6)
- Tree Warden
- Public Works Department

Unlike some Connecticut towns, Kent has a combined Planning and Zoning Commission (rather than separate entities). Kent has a town plan, a zoning code, subdivision regulations and inland wetland regulations.

The Town's Planning and Zoning Commission is responsible for creating the town plan (the plan of conservation and development), advising on the consistency of zoning with reference to the plan, and reviewing land subdivision and municipal improvements. It also both administers and revises the zoning code with reference to the plan of conservation and development, and certifies or approves development within the code.

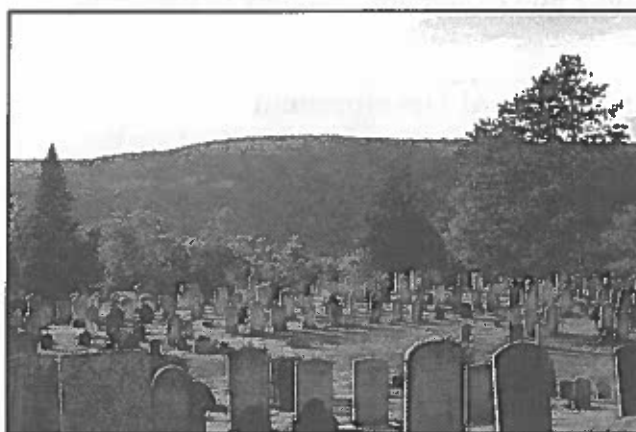
#### Kent's 1989 Town Plan

The Town Plan (the state-mandated plan of conservation and development), was approved in 1989 as a revision of an earlier 1975 plan and is currently about to be updated again. The 1989 plan is primarily a non-physical 'policy plan' document, establishing an agenda for town actions over the next five to ten years.

The 1989 plan (created with the assistance of McGowan Associates) established a set of goals, policies and recommendations as an agenda for future actions. It expressed two overall goals:

- To maintain and enhance Kent's small-town atmosphere, its diversity of people, housing and employment opportunities, especially as found in Kent's village center.
- To preserve Kent's rural character and appearance, especially its open spaces, views and vistas as seen from its system of roads.

The plan put a special focus on the Village Center as a priority policy issue. Recommendations include:



*Figure 2-21 Good Hill Cemetery represents an image of the rural qualities found along Route 7*

- more precisely and permanently defining the Village's boundaries;
- limiting sewer expansion;
- establishing guidelines for new higher-density development within the center;
- refining zoning districts within the Center;
- upgrading parking, signage and lighting in the Center; and
- setting procedures for land use development review.

Other policy issues and recommendations covered in the Plan include:

- housing (refinements to review procedures and regulations dealing with cluster, higher-density, and alternative housing opportunities);
- natural resources and open space (establishing a network of preserved streambelts and improved design review along the Housatonic within 300' of watershed/ridgeline boundaries);
- improved protection of unique and fragile features (including habitats and archeological and historic sites);
- Improved protection of farmland (including establishment of a 'greenway entry overlay zone' as a transition technique at the village center); and
- establishing an ongoing open space committee (including commissioning further analysis and expanding cooperation with private/civic sector land trust organizations).

#### Town of Kent Town Character Study/Open Space Plan

Kent is also fortunate to have as part of its planning tools the 1990 'Town Character Study and Open Space Plan' by Michael Everett and Linda Cardini (identified elsewhere in this report), a more detailed analysis of the town's physical framework and growth issues that was adopted as part of the town plan in 1995.

The main analytic conclusions of the study are described on page 20. A major emphasis of the study, however was to propose new planning tools to be used to help protect Kent's town character and open spaces. Presented as 'planning options' for the future, these tools include:

- protection strategies (planning assistance to landowners and public conservation mechanisms);
- creation of village 'ambient zones' (at village edges, controlling land uses or creating open space buffers);
- negotiated development criteria (farm building and field protection, siting criteria, cluster development, transfer of development rights);
- density increases (in contained areas not visible from the road);
- historic districts (from buildings and groupings to community conservation);
- building siting criteria (spatial standards based on existing land or building context);
- building type criteria (formal characteristics in keeping with traditional area styles); and
- road and roadside protection (scale of roadway, scenic protection, buffer requirements).

#### Town of Kent Zoning Code and Subdivision Ordinance

As in other Connecticut towns, Kent's zoning code is an evolving set of regulations, modified on an as-needed basis. Following the update of the Town Plan, it will be further revised.

Under the current ordinance, the town is divided into a series of zoning districts corresponding to various uses (the Schaghticoke Indian Reservation and various municipal lands are exempt from these districts and regulations):

- RU: a 'rural district', consisting of the bulk of the town, including agricultural and open space lands as well, with various educational, institutional, and recreation uses as a special permit (1 dwelling unit per 1 to 5 acres as a function of soil classes I-III);
- VC-R1 and VC-R2: 'village center residential districts', representing the historic town center as a separate zone, incorporating denser residential provisions, with hospital institutional and multi-family development permitted with special permit (approximately 1 dwelling unit per 1/4 acre for R1, one unit per 3/4 acre for R2, 10 units per acre for permitted multi-family);
- VC-C: a 'village center commercial district' allowing all forms of retail or service in the defined town center category, as well as



Figure 2-22 Flanders National Register Historic District

single family residential, with additional institutional, recreation and upper level residential allowed through special permit approval;

- I: an 'industrial district' allowing light manufacturing, warehousing, and office uses by right and other uses by permit following a public hearing (15% maximum coverage on a 30,000 S.F. lot);
- RC-40: a 'roadside commercial district' consisting of any uses allowed in the rural zone (RU), but also with uses allowed in the VC-C district allowed in this district by special permit (15% maximum coverage on a 40,000 S.F. lot); and
- HRD: a 'Housatonic River District' adjacent to the river, as defined by the Housatonic Corridor Management Plan (no residential or commercial allowed).

The subdivision regulations also make provision for a 'Conservation Development'. This alternative procedure for negotiated application and flexible development standards utilizes site plan review procedure of detailed plans (available for parcels of 50 acres or more in the RU district; where unique or sensitive environmental features are present, such a procedure may be mandatory). The Conservation Development District requires:

- 50 acre minimum site, not including environmentally sensitive lands such as wetlands or streambeds;
- minimum 40% of land conserved as open space and dedicated to a land trust or similar organization; and

- for detached single family homes as per underlying RU density but with lot size at 20,000 S.F. minimum rather than 40,000 S.F. An optional 'Alternative Development Concept' is available for condominium development approaches at the same overall density.

#### *Town of Cornwall Planning and Zoning*

Although not technically a part of the corridor plan (its portion of Route 7 is not now designated as a scenic road), the Town of Cornwall is incorporated in the plan's purview by virtue of its geographic position between Kent and Sharon.

Along Route 7, allowed uses are now primarily residential and agricultural. Recently an 'industrial-residential' zone near Cornwall Bridge was removed as a designation. This action followed a period of concern regarding the lack of control in such a zone over its potential future development and the impact of such development on land use and visual features in that area. (The Town intends to grandfather current uses and to examine future 'industrial' development as part of a 'floating zone').

Cornwall is currently updating its comprehensive plan and will use that work as a basis for further revisiting zoning and land use controls or incentives. This represents an opportunity for working closely with the Corridor Management process to incorporate goals, objectives and strategies into each document.

#### *Town of Sharon Planning and Zoning*

Sharon's land use tools and techniques are described in detail as part of the companion



Figure 2-23 The use of land along Route 7 for commercial uses is an important issue in Cornwall



report, Route 41/4 Corridor Management Plan. Reference should be made to that document for descriptive detail on general programs and regulations.

The 3-mile Sharon portion of the Route 7 scenic corridor is for the most part publicly-owned park or forest land and/or under the 'Housatonic River District' zone described above as part of Kent's zoning (this is a cooperative zone set up with the help of the Housatonic River Commission, featuring common criteria and open space uses, with the intent of protecting the watershed).

There are no major land use issues, except for the need to better control traffic (possibly with the addition of a scenic pull-off) opposite the picturesque West Cornwall covered bridge at the very northern end of the corridor.

#### Private and Civic Sector Land Use Management Techniques

Various not-for-profit organizations are involved in the land use system of the Route 7 corridor including:

- the Weantinogue Heritage Land Trust, based in Kent, is also active in Sharon, and in 1990 held over 675 acres of land in 12 separate parcels;
- the Kent Land Trust represents a useful local vehicle for conservation action through land ownership or purchase of conservation easements (holdings in 1990 were 145 acres and are anticipated to have increased substantially since);
- the Connecticut Nature Conservancy in 1990 held 1,185 acres of open space;
- the Housatonic Valley Association acts as an advocate for open space preservation and sensitive land development; and
- the Sharon Land Trust, under new leadership, is expected to take an increasingly active role in preservation, and will be involved in Route 7 opportunities as well as opportunities along Routes 4 and 41 (as described in that corridor management study).

#### Regional and Statewide Land Use Planning

There are a number of active regional and state planning entities who have been instrumental in

helping encourage scenic efforts along the Route 7 corridor. The following entities providing planning assistance and technical support are described in more detail in the companion Routes 41/4 Corridor Management Plan.

- *Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments (NWCCOG)/Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Commission*

These associated regional nine-town organizations share an executive director, staff, and constituent board. Scenic corridor planning along Route 7 is a related priority effort for the COG and RPA. With experience in scenic byway planning in the Jacobs Ladder and associated projects in the Massachusetts Berkshire region directly to the north, the Executive Director is experienced in developing cooperative regional approaches to coordinated land use/transportation planning that may benefit the Route 7 corridor, from New Milford to the Massachusetts border at Canaan.

- *State of Connecticut Planning*  
Connecticut's OPM is conducting an inventory of statewide open space as part of the State Plan of Development.
- *Connecticut Rural Development Council*  
The Council encourages appropriate economic development for rural areas.
- *Northwestern Hills Partnership for Progress*  
This partnership encourages regional cooperation in tourism and economic activity.

In addition to these planning entities are two organizations specifically focusing their efforts in the Housatonic River Valley.

#### The Housatonic Valley Association

The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) is a multi-state regional organization whose purview is the watershed boundary of the Housatonic River — extending from its headwaters in the Massachusetts' Berkshire mountains and New York's Hudson Highlands through Northwest Connecticut to its Stratford estuary on Long Island Sound.

It is a not-for-profit advocacy organization, focused on protecting the Housatonic River and

devoted to protecting drinking water, tributary rivers and streams, farmland and open space, and ecologically sensitive habitat. Programs of the HVA include:

- creation (through land purchase and easement) of a 'RiverBelt Greenway', linking landscapes along the length of the river;
- 'Urban Rivers Action', helping urban residents monitor and clean up health threats and reclaim riverfronts; and
- maintenance of the "Watershed Environmental Resource Center", a comprehensive library and database of the Housatonic River.

HVA's offices in Cornwall, within the Route 7 corridor area, provide a base of information and assistance that can be invaluable for the project. They are a resource for regional outreach and a potential conduit for grant funding and implementation action. Their focus on the quality of the River itself is an important asset. HVA is currently under contract with the State of Connecticut (OPM) to research locations of conservation easements in the region.

#### The Housatonic River Commission

The Commission meets regularly to monitor and coordinate regional public sector programs focused on the river itself and is another important resource. First Selectmen in each Northwestern Connecticut town appoint representatives to this body, that operates under the purview of the regional Council of Governments.

The innovative 'Housatonic River District' zone common to all riverfront towns is a program of the Commission, designed to prevent unwanted or inappropriate development within the river corridor.

#### **Potential for Regional Scenic Byway Planning**

The Litchfield Hills has a long tradition of scenic touring. Auto tours have been promoted in the area since the WPA guide was published in 1938 and have included the development of touring guides highlighting the features of the area.

There is interest in looking more closely at the region's scenic roads — looking at ways to link these corridors together as part of the corridor planning efforts. Linking together Route 7, Route 4, Route 41, and Route 44 could serve both as a focus for future efforts to conserve the rural character of the region and to continue the region's long tradition of scenic touring. This effort might include extending the state designation of Route 7 south to New Milford and north to the Massachusetts line.

At a larger multi-state jurisdictional scale, there may be long-term potential in extending corridor planning (and possibly scenic road designation) into adjacent states.

- Route 41's northern connection to the Great Barrington/Pittsfield/Lenox area of Massachusetts can be paralleled with an extension of Route 7 (the Berkshire County regional planning purview).
- Similarly, extending Route 41 westward into the Dutchess County (NY) Harlem and Hudson Valleys can create links to additional tourism attractions and resources as well as extending the base of regional planning data and implementation techniques.

Such geographic extensions can strengthen the corridor as a whole, especially in terms of access to funding for project implementation — from Federal sources, from individual programs in each state, and as a framework for joint action with adjacent states.

#### **Effectiveness of Existing Land Use Framework**

Kent has done a good job in dealing with the land use issues it has faced over the last eight years:

- it has commissioned excellent advisory studies and acted upon many of their recommendations;
- the resulting planning and zoning approaches have minimized the visual impact of new development and helped maintain the distinctness of urban and rural areas;
- growth within the village center has been pro-actively sought;

- the Weantinoque Heritage Trust, the Kent Land Trust and the Housatonic Valley Association have succeeded in conserving key properties.

However, these achievements were helped by the fact that growth pressures during this period were relatively modest. Were this not the case, the community would be faced with many more intractable development problems, for which its arsenal of tools is still limited.

That being said, there are additional steps that can be taken to help achieve the vision of rural preservation and appropriate growth that current scenic corridor participants have articulated:

- There are additional recommendations from the Town Character Plan that should be put in place or strengthened. Many of these can be reinforced by the current Corridor Management Plan (and applied in Sharon and Cornwall).
- Priority properties for preservation need to be more closely identified and mechanisms refined to ensure that land trusts or public bodies can act on these opportunities.
- Improvements to the road and right-of-way can include traffic calming measures in the transitional areas leading into villages, increasing safety for pedestrians.
- More detailed urban design ideas for Kent's village center need to be worked out with local stakeholders (merchants, residents, and landowners).
- Efforts need to be made to relieve the pressure from tourists in West Cornwall.

In Sharon much of the land along Route 7 is in public ownership. However, a recently constructed house visible from the road high on the valley wall illustrates the vulnerability of the remaining land to the impacts of rural development.

The confluence of the current Corridor Management Plan and the upcoming updates of the town plans represents a window of opportunity for Kent, Cornwall, and Sharon. The study participants can each play a role in understanding each others' agendas and finding the most complementary path to simultaneously implementing rural preservation and appropriate growth. If development pressures begin to rise again (and there is little doubt that this will occur sometime in the near future), there may need to be additional consideration given not only to preventing change, but to shaping that potential development that may be inevitable.



## TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT

Tourism-related services are the primary industry in the Northwestern Connecticut region. That importance, however, is to some degree by default, and must be understood relative to the overall magnitude of economic development in the region. The Northwest remains a very rural corner of the state with no other major manufacturing or office type industry, save in the larger urbanized centers in the regions just beyond its edges such as Danbury, Waterbury, or Torrington.

Tourism activities in the region are primarily low-scale, "touring" activities — oriented to outdoor recreation, such as biking, hiking, canoeing, riding, fishing, or skiing, or to auto itineraries focused on natural beauty and historical sites (pristine town greens and preserved village centers and historic houses). The fall foliage season is a particularly active time.

Audience attractions during the summer season such as the Lime Rock auto races (in Salisbury directly north of Sharon) draw many visitors to the region. Similarly, local educational institutions — preparatory schools in Lakeville and nearby — provide a strong base of activity for local Sharon meal and lodging establishments. Unfortunately, the combination of low tourism traffic and other competing activities resulted in the closing this year of a local 'straw hat circuit' tradition, the Sharon Stage.

The regional support services for these passive activities are correspondingly low-scale — small 'mom and pop' restaurants, independent motels and bed and breakfast establishments, the occasional gift shop or antique store. There is a refreshing absence of chain commercial development — few national motels or fast food restaurants. A recent major controversy erupted over the introduction of a Talbot's clothing store on the Litchfield Green (even though the initiating landlord, in an interesting fund-raising move, was the Greater Litchfield Preservation Trust).

The tourism pressures that irritate many regional residents (especially on Route 7) have much to do with transportation impact in peak periods. Along major routes and in town centers, problems of increased traffic delays and parking, if not resolved, can affect day to day life unless

carefully mitigated. Luckily Routes 41 and 4 have not yet experienced such pressures.

### The Litchfield Hills Travel Council

The regional tourism agency (part of the state's network of associated districts) is the Litchfield Hills Travel Council. The Council overlaps with and includes portions of five underlying Council of Government/Regional Planning Organization districts, including Sharon's Northwestern Connecticut region described above.

The Council provides coordinating promotional material (with the apt thematic emphasis "Unwind!"), documenting for the region as a whole the specific attractions and support services described above. The promotional material is primarily attractive brochures, both for the region and as part of state-wide marketing, although another recent initiative is to establish web site on the Internet.

Because of the nature of its attractions, the tourism industry in the region is typically seasonal and intermittent — strong in the summer and fall with peaks on weekends, even in the shoulder seasons or in the depths of the winter and early spring.

The Council is attempting to counter where possible these fluctuations with the appropriate economic use of the region's natural and scenic features. For instance, a current emphasis is to encourage the use of the region as a venue for filmmaking. Not so much feature films, which lend themselves to the same peak and valley syndrome as other intermittent tourism and put a strain on local support services, but on commercials and corporate or industrial filmmaking for which rural or village settings are attractive. Production can be more regular and self-sustaining for commercial and corporate film clients.

The Council is also actively participating with other regional entities in ongoing proposals to improve the region's visual and scenic image, including ways to deal with the clutter of much commercial, directional, informational or traffic signage.

(reprinted from Sharon Scenic Corridor Management Plan)

### Route 7's Participation in Regional Tourism

Unlike Sharon or many other Northwest Connecticut communities that rely on attractions in adjacent towns, Kent's tourism services are balanced by its own unique attractions — mostly outdoor activities such as canoeing or fishing as well as fall "leaf peeping", one of the more popular seasonal activities throughout the Housatonic Valley.

Other communities in the region report low interest (or outright disinterest) among citizens or non-tourism oriented business people in the issue of promoting appropriate visitation and sustainable economic activity. In Kent to date, the discussion has been more pragmatic — revolving around how to mitigate negative impacts, rather than how to ignore a major economic engine for jobs and tax revenue. One impact-mitigating approach in Kent, if a concern as to overcrowding of services at certain times of year is seen as valid, is to take advantage of the area's regional location, north of the New Milford/Danbury axis and west of Torrington. Adding more tourism services in Kent — another hotel, for instance — to reduce occasional summer weekend crowding may run the risk of 'building the church for Easter Sunday' — satisfying what is ultimately a periodic

and non-sustainable demand. The alternative is to encourage use (or expansion) of such services in larger and more regionally-accessible areas, such as these more urbanized cities or towns — linking them to the rural areas through scenic touring routes and guides. The scenic road corridor study can help refine such ideas, meeting the expressed objectives of the Route 7 participants — protecting views and open space from unwanted development in rural areas while assimilating appropriate growth in village centers. This must be an ongoing point of discussion with local participants.

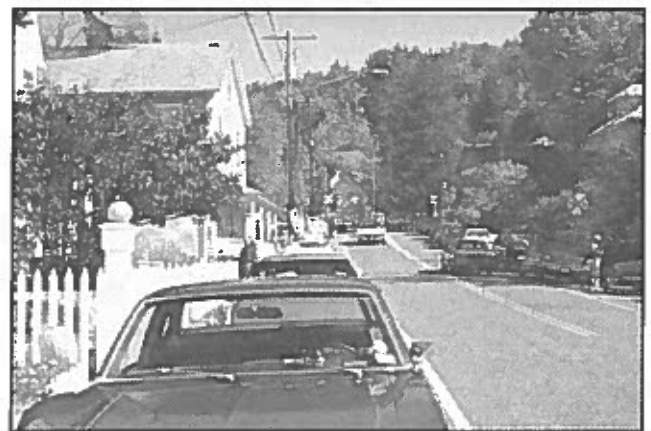


Figure 2-24 West Cornwall is heavily visited during fall weekends

### ROAD AND RIGHT-OF-WAY



Figure 2-25 Route 7 parallel to the Housatonic River

U.S. Route 7 runs north and south through western Connecticut from Interstate Route 95 in Norwalk, Connecticut to the Massachusetts State Line. In Kent, the scenic road begins at the New Milford town line and runs north to the

Cornwall town line, approximately 10.5 miles. In Sharon, the scenic road begins at the Cornwall town line and runs north to State Route 128, approximately 4.3 miles. To the south, U.S. Route 7 provides access to Interstate Routes 84 and 95 and State Route 15: all limited access highways. To the north, U.S. Route 7 provides access to U.S. Route 44 and 4, both principal arterial roads. Route 7 generally serves residential land uses with some concentrations of commercial land use.

The highway and safety analysis provides a technical evaluation of the transportation components throughout the corridor. An examination of the roadway and its associated structures determined the existing physical and service conditions. Traffic operations and safety measures analyzed throughout the corridor identified potentially hazardous travel conditions.



*Figure 2-26 Typical roadside character of Route 7*

Each evaluation conducted during development of the Route 7 corridor management plan was conducted in accordance with generally accepted practices and procedures for measuring facility serviceability.

### **Data Collection**

A detailed field study conducted along Route 7 identified the existing physical conditions. The field review included an extensive inventory of length, width, shoulders, sidewalks, curbing, guide rails, drainage, bridges, intersections, pull-offs, and hazardous areas. This information helped determine the roadway condition.

Traffic Recorder Data obtained from the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation, determined the travel demands and patterns along Route 7. Included in the Data were Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts, year counted, and segments counted.

Accident data for Route 7 was obtained from the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation, Bureau of Policy and Planning. Accident location and frequency were analyzed for a period of three years (1993-1996) to identify areas with high numbers of accidents. The areas were then evaluated to determine if the existing roadway design is a concern and/or what improvements can be made.

Information for bridges located throughout the Route 7 corridor was obtained from inspection reports from the State of Connecticut, Division of Bridge Safety. The inspection reports, dated

1995-1996, included information on sufficiency ratings, condition ratings, structural appraisals, geometric design and proposed improvements.

### **Classification**

The highway classification for U.S. Route 7 in Kent and Sharon is a rural minor arterial. This is according to the definitions of Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) and the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets," 1994 (the "Green Book"). This determination was made because it provides travel between major points in a rural area. Route 7 in Kent and a portion of Route 7 in Sharon is designated as a Connecticut Scenic Road which influences design parameters for any future improvements.

### **Design Criteria**

Design criteria provide a standard for designers to guide the safe development of roadway improvements. The guide is the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 1994 (the green book), that generally is flexible enough to account for the variety of roadway conditions in the country. The design speed for this classification of road, the basis by which all other standards are evaluated, could be a minimum of 40 m.p.h. up to as high as 60 m.p.h. The design speed selected is based on the terrain along the corridor, the adjacent land use, the mix of traffic, and its designation as a scenic road. It could be



*Figure 2-27 Route 4 - Bridge is an attractive structure when viewed from the river*



recommended that a lower speed be considered for this portion of Route 7 to preserve the scenic quality.

With the design speed established, the other design criteria are applied in regard to that speed. The stopping sight and intersection sight distances required for the given design speed provide the basis for the geometric design effecting horizontal and vertical alignment. The higher the design speed the flatter the horizontal and vertical curves need to be in order to provide sufficient sight distance for the driver, and the more disturbance of the surrounding area. Other design criteria such as passing sight distance, width of road and clear zone (the area adjacent to the road kept free of obstructions) are also established. The design speed also effects the vehicle carrying capacity of the road.

### Road and Right-of Way Characteristics

U.S. Route 7 is a two lane bi-directional road through the project limit. The road has bituminous concrete surface with curbing and drainage in few areas. In Kent the width of the shoulder varies from one to eleven feet, generally wider as Route 7 approaches busy areas. There is also sidewalk in the center of Kent, as well as an at grade railroad crossing. In Sharon the width of the shoulder varies from two to six feet, generally wider as Route 7 approaches a major intersection.

In Kent, the terrain through the corridor is rolling and winding. There are areas of sharp horizontal and vertical curves that cut into the surrounding land creating cut and fill sections (areas where the land was reshaped to accommodate the road). Where the terrain warrants it, guide rail is used. The existing guide rail is either metal beam rail or wire on wood posts. Newly installed guide rail is either metal beam rail or wire rail on steel posts. Wood posts are no longer being used. There are a few locations with sharp horizontal curves but the majority of the road is relatively straight. There were four areas to pull-off the travelway, including Kent Falls State Park. The travelway is that portion of the road dedicated to moving vehicles between the white fog line (on the right) and the center line (yellow).

There are areas along Route 7 where objects are located within the AASHTO recommended 10-foot clear zone. These objects create a hazard to errant vehicles, not providing enough of an area for the driver to recover. One of the most significant issues relative to the scenic road corridor is the proximity to the travelway of the mature trees lining the road— an important defining characteristic of the scenic qualities of the road. Recommendations for a flexible approach for addressing the clear zone issue are contained in Chapter 3.

There are four concrete slab structures on this portion of Route 7 in Kent. Three were built in 1924 and one in 1930, that was reconstructed in 1988. All four structures are over brooks and are in fair to good condition. The three structures built in 1924 have an estimated remaining life of 10 years and the structure reconstructed in 1988 has an estimated remaining life of 16 years.



Figure 2-28 Guiderrail along Route 7 in Sharon requires high levels of maintenance

In Sharon, the terrain is rolling. The road traverses the area between the Housatonic River on the east and a mountain on the west. As is the case with roads of this nature it has numerous curves as it follows the river and the rocky terrain. Guide rail is used where the terrain warrants it. The existing guide rail is either metal beam rail or wire on wood posts. Newly installed guide rail is either metal beam rail or wire rail on steel posts. Wood post rails are no longer being used. The Housatonic River parallels Route 7 in several locations. There are 16 pull-off areas, including the Housatonic Meadows Campground.

There are a number of areas where objects are within the 10-foot clear zone; retaining walls, electrical poles, and natural rock formations. As stated earlier, objects should be kept a minimum of 10 feet from the travel lane to maintain an adequate space for errant vehicles to recover (see Chapter 3 for suggestions regarding a more flexible approach for addressing the clear zone issue).

There are four structures on this portion of Route 7 in Sharon. Three were built in the late 1980s and the fourth was built in 1930 and reconstructed in 1994. All four structures are over water and are in good condition. The three structures built in the late 1980s have an estimated remaining life of 42 to 44 years.

As Route 7 is not a limited access facility, there are a number of intersections with local roads as well as commercial and residential driveways. At the majority of intersections with local roads, Route 7 is the through route with stop control on the side streets. There are two signalized intersections in Kent. One is the intersection of Route 7 and Bulls Bridge Road and the second is the intersection of Route 7 and Route 341. Both intersections consist of four legs and are essentially 90 degrees. In Sharon, the major intersection is Route 7 and Route 4 (Route 7 and Route 4 run together for a short distance). Where they separate, is a three leg intersection with stop control on south bound Route 7.

### Capacity

The traffic counts for Route 7 were obtained from ConnDOT and prepared in 1994. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) varies along Route 7 in Kent from 2,400 to 4,100. The higher volumes are between the New Milford town line and Cobble Lane. The ADT of 2,400 vehicles is between Cobble Road and the Cornwall town line. The ADT varies along Route 7 in Sharon from 1,800 to 4,700. The higher volumes are only in the area where Route 7 and Route 4 are together. North of that area to Route 128 the volume is only 1,800 vehicles per day.

The accident data obtained covers the three year period from 1993 to 1996. There were 77 accidents reported during that period for the 10.5 mile stretch on Route 7 in Kent. There were 13 accidents reported during that period for the 4.3 mile stretch on Route 7 in Sharon.

In Kent, on Route 7, the largest concentration of accidents is at the intersection of Bulls Bridge Road. There were 8 accidents over the three year period at this intersection. Many of the accidents on Route 7, about 42% were the result of striking a fixed object, 31% were the result of driving too fast for conditions. Most of the accidents (70%) occurred in clear weather and (61%) on dry roads. Also, most of the accidents (72%) involved passenger vehicles and happened during the day (69%).

As might be expected, the areas with the greater frequency of accidents were at major intersections and areas of higher traffic volumes. The intersection of Route 7 and Bulls Bridge Road was the highest with 8 accidents over three years. There were 7 accidents near the intersection of Route 341, and 4 accidents near Kent Falls State Park. About 64% of the total accidents on Route 7 occurred on the open road. They consisted of driving too fast for conditions, driver inattentive, and driver unable to cope with conditions and lost control.

In Sharon, on Route 7, the largest concentration of accidents at one place is at the intersection of Route 4. There were 4 accidents over the three year period at this intersection. Many of the accidents on this portion of Route 7, about 38%

were the result of striking a fixed object, 23% were the result of driving too fast for conditions or driver failed to grant right-of-way. Most of the accidents (54%) occurred in clear weather and (69%) on dry roads. Also, most of the accidents (90%) involved passenger vehicles and happened during the day (77%).

The areas with the greater frequency of accidents were at major intersections. The intersection of Route 7 and Route 4 was the highest with 4 accidents over three years. About 46% of the total accidents on Route 7 occurred on the open road. They consisted of driving too fast for conditions, driver failed to grant right-of-way, and driver violated traffic control.

### Highway Safety Analysis

Based on the information contained in the preceding paragraphs and numerous field visits to the road, an analysis can be made concerning the overall safety of the road, and areas that may be considered for improvement can be identified. In general, the road has characteristics that meet the standards set forth for a road of this type applying the appropriate design speed.

The horizontal and vertical alignments provide ample sight distance for the majority of Route 7. The sight distance at the intersections is also within the required standard in most cases. There are, however, elements of Route 7 that would not meet standards. The road along the

river in Sharon has many sharp horizontal curves with fixed objects, mostly ledge, in the required clear zone. However the presence of the river and the ledge outcroppings constrain the possibility of major improvement. This area has the lowest volumes in the study area and limited accident history. Safety issues that may need to be addressed include erosion of the road embankment and repair and replacement of the existing guide rail.

Route 7 in Kent has few areas of concern in terms of traffic safety. Sight distance is limited in a few areas by horizontal and vertical geometry, but not to any great extent. The areas that deserve more attention are at the major intersection where the traffic volumes are higher as are the incidents of accidents. Also, safety through the village center where there is on street parking and pedestrian traffic is a concern.

In general, the concern for safety on this scenic road is speed and limited sight distance. The issue of speed on the scenic road can be addressed by enforcing the posted speed limit. The issue of providing the proper sight distance would typically be addressed on a case by case basis should the State decide to make any improvements. Addressing the improvements in the light of the scenic nature of the road would determine the extent of the work to be done. Objects within the clear zone of the road should be removed, also on a case by case.



## Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan

## Planning Concepts

The Housatonic River Valley is a truly unique landscape – unique both to the State of Connecticut and to the Eastern United States with its spectacular views and unspoiled countryside. Route 7 parallels the Housatonic River for much of its length, especially from New Milford to Sharon, where the river is frequently visible. Route 7 plays a major role in providing access to the Housatonic River, and as a gateway to outdoor recreation activities throughout Northwest Connecticut. Route 7 also serves as a rural minor arterial linking larger municipalities and major traffic generators that are capable of attracting travel over long distances.

The Housatonic River Valley from New Milford north to the Massachusetts line and beyond is facing a tremendous challenge. Will the development patterns and cultural changes that have occurred to the south continue northward forever changing the character of Route 7 and the Housatonic River along with the villages, hamlets, farms and homesteads that have grown up along the way? Or, will people who live, work or play in the valley take steps to maintain their rural landscape and way of life?

The Towns of Kent, Cornwall and Sharon have worked hard to preserve the farms, woodlands, historic homes, villages and hamlets that provide the backdrop for such spectacular scenery and distinctive rural character. Yet there is still much work to be done. This report, looking specifically at preserving and enhancing the character of the roadside and the beauty of the scenic views found along Route 7, recommends the following :

### 1. Establish Conservation Priorities

Place a high priority on conserving the most prominent or attractive landscapes along Route 7 while at the same time guide development towards those places that are most suitable – existing villages and hamlets – without infringing upon property owners' right to use and enjoy their land.



Figure 3-1 Route 7 and the Housatonic River are parallel for most of the designated scenic highway

### 2. Help to Create a Greenway Along the Housatonic River

Improve access to and along the Housatonic River so that others may enjoy its beauty and recreational opportunities without despoiling its banks.

### 3. Manage the Impacts of Tourism

Help visitors find their way around to the most interesting places in a manner that will not destroy the reason people want to visit.

### 4. Enhance Roadside Character

Balance the often competing demands of a safe transportation route with the beauty of a scenic drive.

### 5. Use Traffic Calming Measures to Improve Pedestrian Safety

Give drivers better clues about how to behave when approaching more thickly settled and heavily used pedestrian areas.

### 6. Encourage Appropriate Growth in the Center of Kent

Relieve the seasonal and daily afternoon congestion in the Center of Kent and encourage new growth that retains the village qualities of Kent, while enhancing its compact pedestrian qualities.

### 7. Encourage Appropriate Growth in the Smaller Hamlets

Encourage new households to settle within existing hamlets and improve the qualities of those hamlets as attractive places to live.

## STRATEGY #1: ESTABLISH CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

The conservation community in Northwest Connecticut has been very aggressive in preserving open space, especially along Route 7 south of Kent. However, there are a number of locations further north where additional conservation action is needed. In order to retain the rural character along Route 7, decisions must be made about the degree of conservation action needed to preserve the open space within the viewshed of Route 7, as lands come up for sale in the future. In addition, since the Housatonic River Valley contains extensive geographic barriers, there are bound to be future proposals for additional telecommunications towers, utility distribution lines, and other projects with regional impacts. By establishing priorities, efforts can be made to guide these types of activities to the most appropriate locations.

### Critical Scenic, Natural, and Cultural Resources

The location of important resource areas were mapped in Chapter 2, including visually prominent lands, high quality views, environmentally sensitive lands, agricultural lands, recreation areas, and existing open space, as well as existing historic sites and features (in Appendix A). Identifying the most important resources from these maps is the first step in establishing conservation priorities. The following criteria were used in determining priorities:

#### Visually Prominent Landscapes

There are some places along Route 7 that are more visible than others. These are places that are seen every day, forming a rural backdrop for visitors and residents alike. The number of times an area is seen is an indication of how sensitive it might be to any proposed changes. Areas that can be seen from seven or more locations along Route 7 were identified as critical scenic resources. These areas are typically found along ridgetops, steeply sloped hillsides or the "noses" of slopes, and areas visible from long, straight stretches of highway (called focal views).

#### High Quality Views

There are a few places that are recognized for their scenic beauty. These views may only be seen from one or two places, but they are the kind of view where visitors take pictures or stop for a picnic. These views are often captured on post cards, or painted. They can be views of landscapes, covered bridges, the river, homes, farmsteads, or just a beautiful stone wall at the edge of a field.

Particularly scenic viewpoints are often located at the tops of hills, or near a grouping of historic sites, such as the Flanders Historic District, or within an existing village or hamlet. Viewpoints identified along Route 7 come from several sources:

#### Town Character Areas (Kent)

The Town of Kent has identified a number of places of particular scenic quality as part of their "Town Character Study and Open Space Plan." By adopting the study as part of their Town Plan of Development, the people of Kent have placed particular value on these areas.

#### Panoramic Views

An earlier 1975 study of open space prepared by for NWCCOG identified panoramic views from around the region as being an important resource. Panoramic views are particularly fragile, in that they rely on preservation of agricultural land to retain their character.

#### Feature Views

Views of historic sites and unique features are often referenced in guidebooks. In addition, sites listed on the National Register or those determined as eligible for the National Register require special consideration when evaluating the impacts of development which involve federal funds (such as road construction) or other major projects. The context in which these sites (e.g. the view) must also be considered. In order to be ready for future proposals (including the current proposal for a communication tower in Sharon), it is wise to have a record of important historic sites and features so that they can be considered as part of the environmental impact process.



### Agricultural Lands

As described above, agricultural lands are particularly important for preserving rural character. There is not much farmland in this valley, as, for instance, compared with the Marble Valley along Route 41 in Sharon and Salisbury. So the few working farms that remain are really important parts of Route 7's landscape.

The locations of these priority conservation areas are identified on Map 9, Conservation Priorities. The red (or solid tone) indicates high quality views and visually prominent landforms, and brown (cross hatching) indicates agricultural lands.

### Existing Open Space

Some of these areas are already preserved as open space. Others are simply committed to open space use through such mechanisms as deed restrictions, conservation easements (both permanent and temporary) or through various local, state and federal regulations.

### Dedicated Open Space

Dedicated open space includes public lands (federal, state and local) as well as land protected by conservation easement (that is the rights to develop the property have either been purchased or donated for tax benefit). Areas considered to be protected from development are identified in the green diagonal hatching on Map 9, Conservation Priorities. The type of protection offered is explained in more detail on Map 8, Open Space (Chapter 2).

### Existing Regulated Lands

Other areas are simply too expensive to build upon, or are limited from development by regulations (such as wetlands). Areas that are constrained by steep slopes are indicated with a red horizontal hatching. Areas that are constrained by poor soil are indicated with a red vertical hatching. Some of the areas with poor soils are legally protected (wetlands) while others are simply too difficult to build upon (additional soils unsuitable for septic tank drainfields). The floodplain of the Housatonic also presents a limitation for development, although it is not strictly prohibited. The 100



Figure 3-2 View of the west slope of Cobble Hill

year floodplain is indicated with blue horizontal hatching (closer together than the steep slopes). Note that areas with a combination of slope, soil or floodplain constraint will have a cross-hatched pattern. A list of soils with limiting characteristics is included in Appendix B.

### Conservation Strategies

The composite conservation priorities map provides a comparison of the lands that are considered important for conservation purposes with those that already have varying degrees of protection.

### Priority Conservation Areas

Much of the land that can be seen from Route 7 can also be seen from the Appalachian Trail and the Housatonic River and therefore is already considered a conservation priority. In addition, the Kent Land Trust has identified open land south of the Center of Kent as a conservation priority. From the perspective of preserving views from all of Route 7, however, there are a number of key areas that should be identified as conservation priorities. These areas include:

- the west facing slopes of Cobble Hill behind the Center of Kent
- additional areas adjoining Fuller Pond and the Appalachian Trail (east facing slopes not already protected in Kent)
- the southeast facing slopes of Silver Hill and Buck Hill (in Sharon)
- ridgelines in the vicinity of Smith Hill Road and West Cornwall Road (in Sharon)



Figure 3-3 View of the southeast facing slopes of Silver Hill and Buck Hill in Sharon

#### Definition of Sites Vulnerable to Development

As discussed in the public workshop, even though the region is currently in a developmental 'lull', the long view indicates that sooner or later economic conditions will again bring about a resurgence in urbanization pressures, and scenic corridor view preservation will again be challenged. While there are a number of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to managing change in a rural landscape (discussed in Chapter 4), a more pro-active approach to identifying and permanently conserving vulnerable sites can reduce the need for these measures.

The composite map of existing protected lands, superimposed on the locations of visually prominent scenic areas and existing agricultural land, graphically defines those vulnerable sites. These sites therefore represent conservation priorities for the Route 7 scenic corridor – currently unprotected properties with specific characteristics:

- agricultural land which for general or specific economic reasons is vulnerable to development;
- land that for reasons of access, visibility or topography represents prime development opportunities.

Other priority-inducing factors include the potential for linkage to larger regional open space systems:

- Overlapping interests between preserving the character of Route 7 and preserving the wild and scenic character of the Housatonic River;
- Overlapping areas of interest associated

with protecting views from both Route 7 and the Appalachian Trail;

- Potential opportunities to utilize the Route 7 scenic corridor as an integral part of the evolving Housatonic River Greenway;
- Potential opportunities to improve bicycle safety through the development of a separated pathway parallel to Route 7 and the Housatonic River.

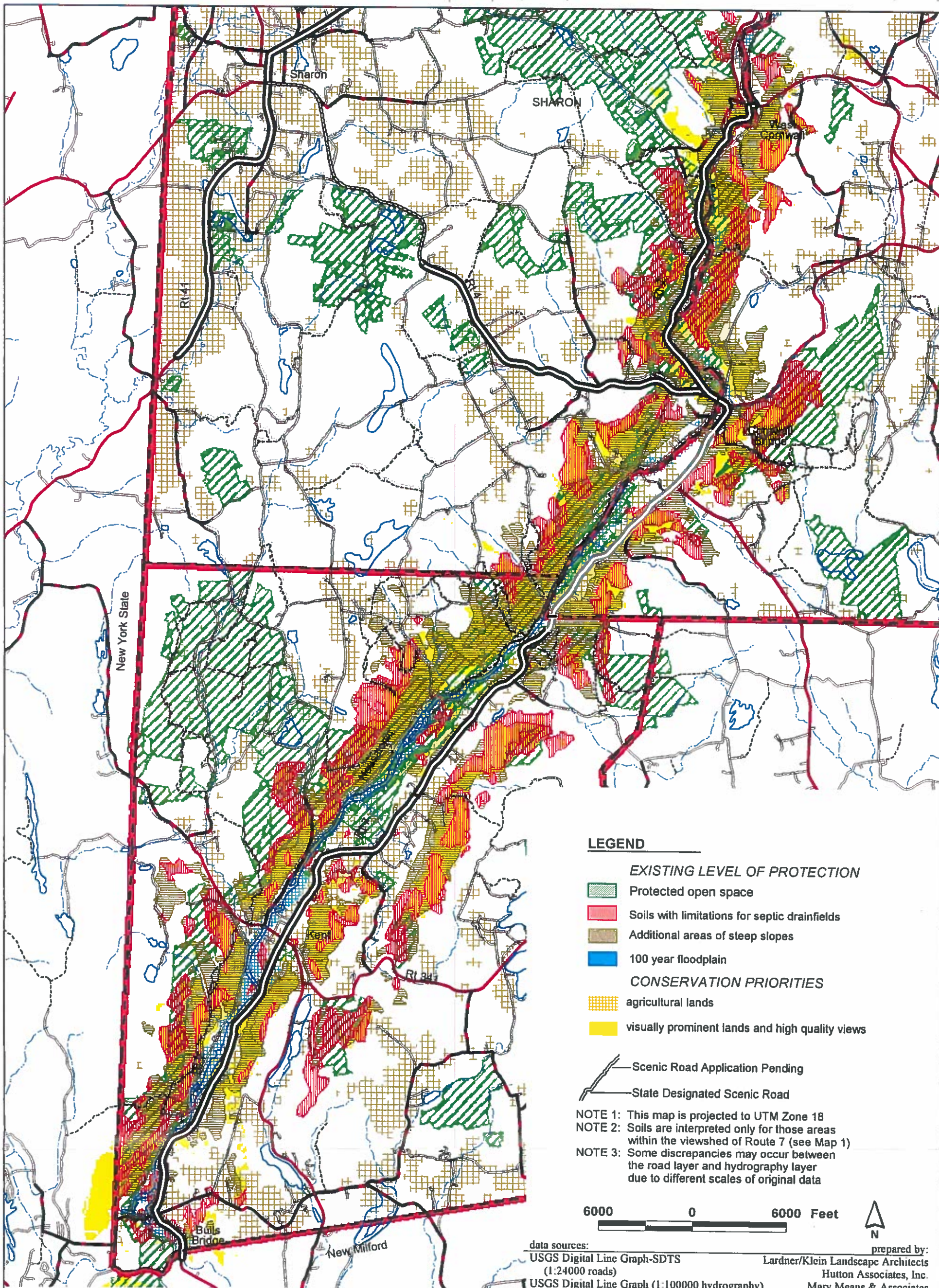
#### Additional Conservation Measures Needed to Guide Development

For those areas that are not visually prominent, not identified as a particularly high quality view, or not agricultural land, some additional conservation measures may be useful. The existing visual character found along Route 7 is predominantly woodland interspersed with farms, villages and hamlets. The following types of development should be given additional attention as part of existing town planning and development review processes:

- New houses are sometimes constructed so that the homeowner can take advantage of a spectacular view. Care needs to be taken to make sure that new homes don't spoil the view for everyone else (Figure 3-4).
- Communication towers are being proposed and constructed based on the need to transmit an unobstructed signal, often conflicting with scenic resource conservation objectives. Towers need to be programmed, designed and sited according to the least visual impact possible.
- New development is being encouraged to locate within existing villages and hamlets. Care must be taken to preserve the village qualities that make these desirable places to live.

Often the construction of a single house can transform the character of an entire hillside. For example, the house in Sharon near West Cornwall Road and Smith Hill Road can be seen from the Cornwall/Kent town line, a distance of several miles. There are a number of simple measures that can be done to reduce the visual impact of new homes, utility lines and development in and around existing hamlets, that will not take away from individual property owners' right to use land as they see fit. These measures include the following:





## Route 7 Scenic Corridor Management Plan

prepared for:  
Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and  
The Connecticut Department of Transportation

## Conservation Priorities

June 1998





Figure 3-4 Efforts to guide the appearance of these homes nearly succeeded (paint color could have reduced the contrast of this home at Saddle Ridge in Kent)

#### New residences in rural areas

Throughout Kent, Cornwall, and Sharon, the majority of new homes are constructed on individual lots, rather than on multiple unit subdivisions. As was noted in Chapter 2, many of the multi-unit subdivisions created in the 1980's are now being reassembled into individual estate lots. While there are a number of large tracts that are now for sale, most are also being used for estate lots. Homes constructed in rural areas are primarily situated on the more gently sloping lands with soils nearby that are suitable for septic tank drainfields. Within these constraints, individual homes can be sited according to the following simple guidelines to reduce visual impact (as illustrated in Figure 3-5):

- Site homes away from the edge of a steep hill, often called the "military crest" of the hill. By setting the home back away from the slope a homeowner can reduce the amount of area that can be seen from Route 7, while at the same time retaining the panoramic view – being able to see out without being seen!
- For ridgeline sites, locate the home slightly below the top of the hill so that the roofline does not stand out above the trees. Clearing trees for a ridgeline home will create a "notch" in the hill when seen from a distance. Care should be taken to preserve trees close to the home to reduce visual contrast.
- Selectively remove vegetation, rather than

clear cutting to improve the view. The picturesque qualities of a view can actually be improved by framing the view with nearby trees. Such foreground elements (leaves and branches) provide a scale reference, increasing the depth of the view.

- Site driveways so they are parallel to the slope, winding up a hill rather than perpendicular to the hill. This reduces the cost of grading the road, makes it easier to traverse in winter, and reduces the amount of tree clearing that is required.
- Site homes so the long dimension of the house is parallel to the slope. When building on slopes, houses should be designed with multiple levels with one wall buried into the slope, thus reducing the amount of grading required to accommodate the house. Houses designed to be on more gentle slopes (such as a Colonial-style home) should be built on flat sites, not remote hillsides.
- Use paint colors that minimize contrast with the surrounding landscape. Dark colored roofs and siding left to weather normally (protected by transparent stains) will have much less contrast in a woodland setting than a house painted white.

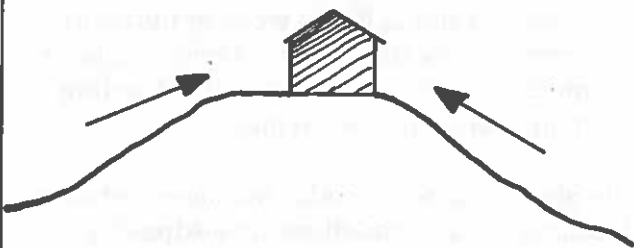
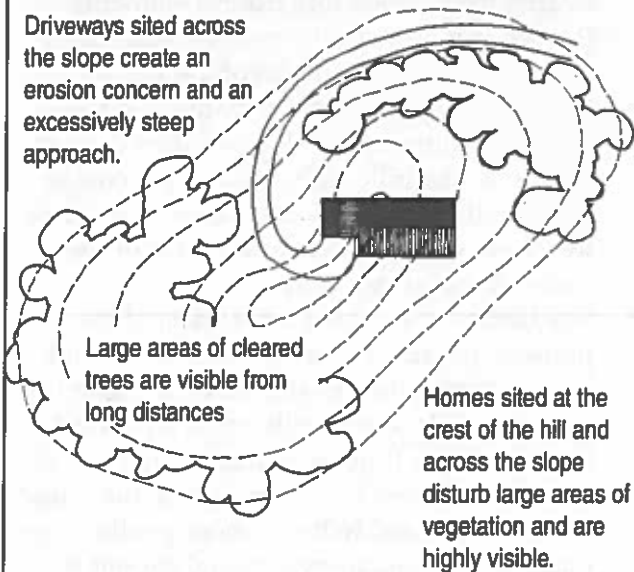
The Sharon Scenic Corridor Management Plan describes recommendations for addressing multiple home subdivisions, with before and after illustrations comparing standard practices with alternative practices designed to preserve scenic and rural values. The Towns of Kent and Sharon have had several subdivisions constructed using cluster or open space design and are well-versed in using these techniques.

#### Utility and communication towers

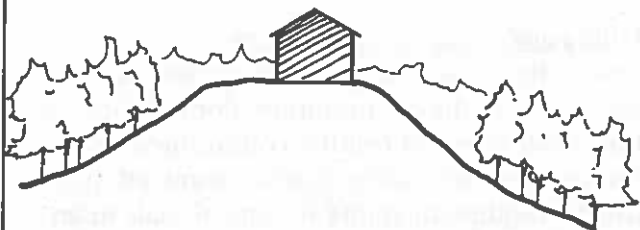
One of the most critical scenic conservation issues facing the communities along Route 7 is the construction of cellular communication towers. Unfortunately, telecommunication towers require an ability to send signals in an unobstructed straight line. The result is that the preferred sites are usually located on ridgelines. The companies desiring to construct these towers wish to do so at the least economic cost, resulting in the construction of a few taller towers, rather than more frequently spaced lower height towers (at the tree line for example).

## Business as Usual

Driveways sited across the slope create an erosion concern and an excessively steep approach.



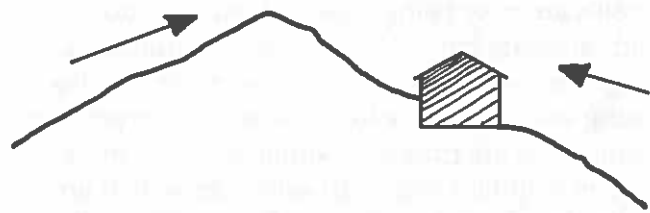
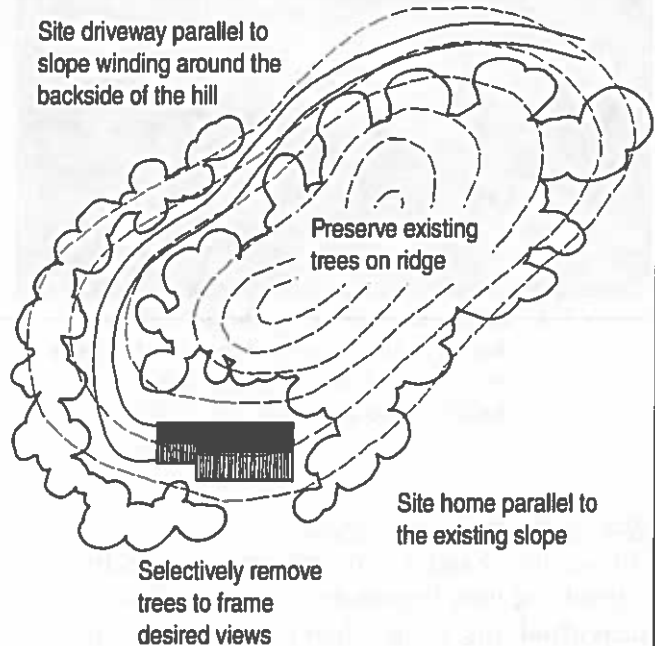
Buildings sited on the crest of the hill are highly visible. This location may disturb pristine vistas and block the view of others.



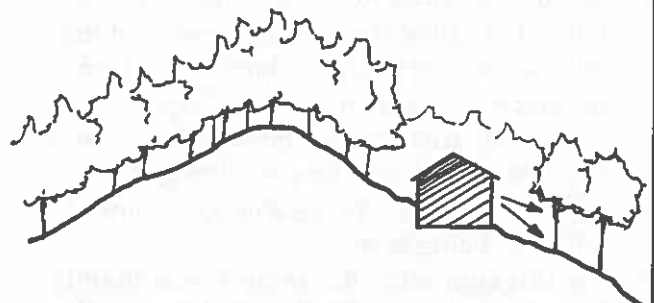
Ridgeline homes create a "notch" in the hill by removing the highest trees. The visual contrast disturbs long vistas from nearby areas.

## Simple Guidelines to Preserve Scenic Quality

Site driveway parallel to slope winding around the backside of the hill



Set buildings back into hill with back wall buried into the slope. Buildings below the ridge line are no more visible than need be.



Preserving the ridgeline trees preserves long vistas and provides a background to minimize visual contrast. Frame views from the home by selective cutting and trimming of nearby trees.

Figure 3-5 Simple guidelines for rural residences

The request by AT&T to construct towers to service Route 7 presents an opportunity to demonstrate comparative differences between sites. In a letter sent to First Selectman Bob Moeller in Sharon (see Appendix C), a comparison was made between two different sites at two different heights. The analysis shows that using lower tower heights and careful placement (using a secondary ridge, rather than a primary ridge) will reduce (although not eliminate) visual impacts.

For future siting issues, whether it is a communication tower, or for a high-voltage or gas transmission line, a simple process can be used to ensure that visual impacts are minimized to the extent possible:

1. Identify alternative locations, alternative heights, and/or alternative transmission routes. Encourage the sharing of facilities by service providers (saving installation costs, time, and potential legal fees).
2. Describe the visual characteristics of the project for each alternative (such as the height of the tower and the clearances required for removing vegetation).
3. Determine, for each alternative, the extent of the geographic area from which the proposed facility can be seen (using viewshed analysis software and existing digital elevation models, readily available for all of Connecticut).
4. Use balloon tests to demonstrate the location of towers. Balloons should be flown at the height of the proposed tower and photographs should be taken from the most visually sensitive locations (as demonstrated in step 2).
5. For areas where there is a high degree of concern for the potential visual impacts, such as a panoramic view, use digital editing to superimpose a photograph of a similar type of tower onto the photograph of the balloon taken from the scenic viewpoint (using the balloon for a scale reference).

This five step approach will provide clear and factual information about both the geographic extent and significance of the visual impacts. By comparing viewshed maps and simulations the site with the least visual impact can be recommended.

#### Forest Practices and Ridgeline Protection

Forest management in New England is primarily based on selective harvesting methods. These methods are typically compatible with scenic conservation goals. However, on occasion a property owner will clear cut a stand of timber for immediate economic gain. Clear cutting is often incompatible with scenic conservation goals. Public Act 98-228 was recently enacted to authorize certain towns (as named) through their Inland Wetlands Agency to adopt regulations as necessary to protect forest land. However, the regulations must be consistent with the regulations adopted by the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection. (See Chapter 4 for implementation).

#### Residential and commercial infill in hamlets and village

Guiding new development within existing hamlets and villages is already a goal of the Town of Kent, and has been adopted as a goal by the advisory committee as part of this planning effort for Route 7. Making sure that infill development is compatible with the character of existing development is a very important part of this goal.

To accomplish this goal requires the creating of a 'seamless' pattern of development. New buildings should have a high degree of 'fit' with their existing context. New infill development can actually enhance some of the pre-existing situations where the construction of new buildings has resulted in a high degree of contrast with adjoining historic properties.

Retaining a desirable quality of life within existing settled areas must be accomplished as part of an overall infill development strategy if it is to work as a long-term scenic conservation strategy. Strategies #6 and #7 (starting on page 86) address this issue in detail with examples from the Center of Kent and Cornwall Bridge. Route 7 serves as a gateway to "human-powered" outdoor recreation opportunities in Northwestern Connecticut – including hiking, backpacking, rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, bicycling, walking, jogging, nature appreciation, and a variety of winter sports activity.



## STRATEGY #2: HELP TO CREATE A GREENWAY ALONG THE HOUSATONIC RIVER

Access to the Appalachian Trail, one of the country's earliest and longest "greenways", is managed through the efforts of the Connecticut Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club as part of the Appalachian Trail Conference. There is no similar coordinated effort at managing and maintaining access to the Housatonic River from Route 7, although the Housatonic Valley Association has been working on these issues for many years. The Connecticut Light and Power Company is trying to improve access to and from the river, from its properties. The Mountain Laurel Trail Association has also been working to "preserve, protect, integrate and enlarge a network of trails in Kent and the surrounding towns."

A recurring theme among participants in the November 1997 public workshop was the need to improve public access to the river (including non-motorized boat put-ins and take-outs) and finding ways to create a network of trails. Looking at Route 7 as part of an overall regional strategy to create a greenway along the Housatonic River can play an important role in both enhancing access to the Housatonic River and improving opportunities to link trails together.

The following strategies are recommended relative to Route 7:

### Route 7 Pull-offs

With the Housatonic River in view much of the way, there are a significant number of places where travelers stop along the road to fish, take photographs, let faster drivers pass, or just enjoy the view. Most of these pull-offs were never intended to be formalized. The soils are now compacted and there is usually enough room to maneuver a car on and off the road. Some of the sites are there simply because of the fishing, such as 'the cellar hole' between Cornwall Bridge and West Cornwall.

The following strategies are intended to provide some overall management of these pull-offs – improving access to some locations and limiting



Figure 3-6 Existing informal pull-off (the Cellar Hole) at a popular fishing spot

access to other more dangerous or environmentally sensitive locations.

### Existing Pull-offs

The locations of existing pull-offs, both formal and informal, are listed and mapped in Appendix D. Each location was identified and examined for sightlines, surface conditions, and access to specific features. As a result of this analysis, two pull-offs are recommended as high priorities for enhancement, two sites are recommended for 'gateway pull-offs' (discussed on pages 74-76), and one site is recommended for a river take-out point (see pages 60-62). The two sites recommended for enhancement as pull-offs are:

- The Cellar Hole (the popular fishing spot 2.5 miles north of Cornwall Bridge)
- A parking area 3 miles north of Cornwall Bridge on the southbound side near Carse Brook (to provide a suitable place for southbound traffic to let through-travelers pass, as well as to provide a place to turn around and go back to the covered bridge).

All existing pull-offs with good sightlines (identified in Appendix D) require new aprons to alleviate the problem of recent asphalt lifts added to Route 7. There is a lip of several inches of asphalt, sometime more, creating a hazard for cars that do pull off. These should be immediately improved.

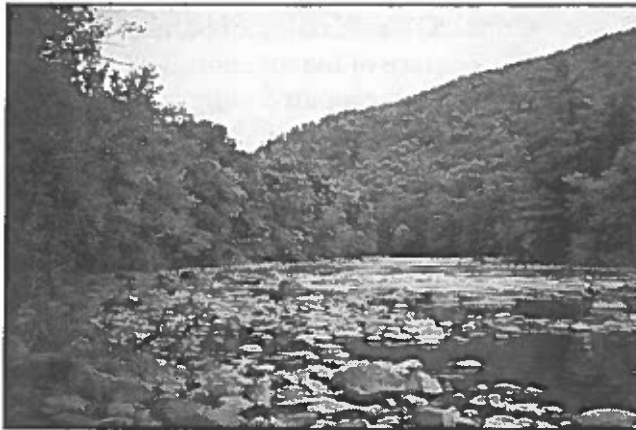


Figure 3-7 View of the Housatonic River from the Cellar Hole

Other pull-offs may be enhanced in the future utilizing the guidelines on the following pages as exemplified by the proposed improvements to the Cellar Hole Pull-off and the southbound pull-off near Carse Brook.

#### Pull-off on River Side of Route 7: Cellar Hole Example

This popular fishing spot has attractive views of the river (Figure 3-7) and is accessible from a point approximately 2.5 miles north of Cornwall Bridge. The sightlines are good. The surface is primarily compacted earth. Currently visitors park parallel to the river in both directions from the pull-off. Figures 3-8 and 3-9 illustrate proposed enhancements to more clearly mark the parking area and limit the future growth of compacted surfaces. The following improvements are recommended:

- Extend the apron from Route 7 for a minimum distance of 16 feet with a maximum pitch of 3%. The driveway access can then be pitched more steeply to meet existing grade.
- The parking surface should be improved so that surface runoff will not go directly into the river. This means crowning the surface from the driveway so that water pitches parallel to the river. Asphalt is not needed or recommended. Instead, a more porous surface should be used such as crusher run, as long as the sub base is adequately prepared and is well-drained as described above.

- The layout of the parking area can be extended to accommodate additional cars by tucking the spaces in between existing trees and rock outcrops, as shown in Figure 3-8.
- The surface of the parking material needs to be contained with some kind of edging, such as a split-face granite slab or creosote log parking bumper (recommended for durability). Parking bumpers or post bollards are not recommended since they will trap debris in the event of a flood (Figure 3-10).

#### Guidelines for Pull-offs: Upland Side of Route 7

There are a number of existing pull-offs located on the upland side of Route 7 that would benefit from safety improvements as well as environmental and aesthetic enhancements. The following general guidelines can be used to make those improvements on upland sites, where Route 7 is between the river and the pull-off.

- Typical dimensions and layout of the parking area are shown in Figure 3-11. Some separation between ingress and egress is desirable to prevent cars from backing out directly onto the roadway. This separation can be as simple as a grassed median with a raised curb (as detailed in Figure 3-10 and as illustrated in section, Figure 3-12).
- The actual design of vehicle control at pull-offs should respond to clear zone requirements for the appropriate design speed for that section of the scenic road. Should vehicle control be required within the required clear zone, then use of "break away" bollards or other means of vehicle control such as curbing should be used that will not result in the creation of a fixed object in the clear zone (as shown in Figure 3-12).
- For Route 7, an intersection sight distance with a design speed of 55 miles per hour should be considered, resulting in a desirable sight distance of 935 feet in both directions, where possible. The minimum intersection sight distance at this design speed is 690 feet (Figure 3-13).
- An identification sign should be placed at 500 feet from the pull-off area to warn motorists of the upcoming opportunity to park, or let faster traffic pass by.

PLAN FOR CELLAR HOLE PULL-OFF (SCALE: 1"=50'-0")

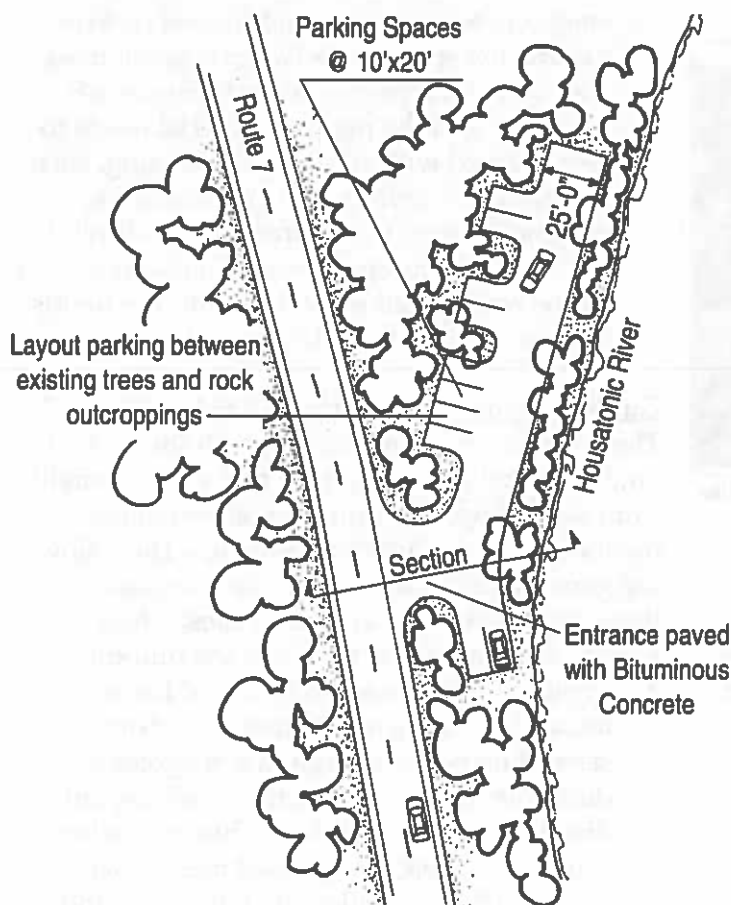


Figure 3-8 Concept plan showing enhancements to the Cellar Hole Pull-off

- Pull-off signing should conform to guide and informational or recreational and cultural interest sign details contained in ConnDOT's "Catalog of Signs."
- The surface of the lot should be gravel with a well-prepared subgrade. Care should be taken to make sure that surface drainage does not cross the road. Many of the culverts that direct drainage from the upland side to the river are no longer functional. Since many of the areas used for pull-offs in an informal area collect surface water (the only flat area around) there are often culverts nearby. Improving the drainage system as part of the pull-off enhancement is strongly recommended.
- On upland sites out of the floodplain, timber post and log rail parking bumpers can be used to limit the de facto extension of the parking area, as shown in Figure 3-14 to Figure 3-16.
- The apron of the driveway should be constructed of asphalt to minimize future maintenance problems.

The southbound pull-off located 3 miles north of Cornwall Bridge would benefit from the immediate application of these guidelines. This site is often used as a de facto "U-turn" for travelers that missed the turn at the West Cornwall Covered Bridge. The site would also work well as a place for more leisurely paced drivers to pull-off, allowing business and commuting drivers to pass.

SECTION FOR CELLAR HOLE PULL-OFF

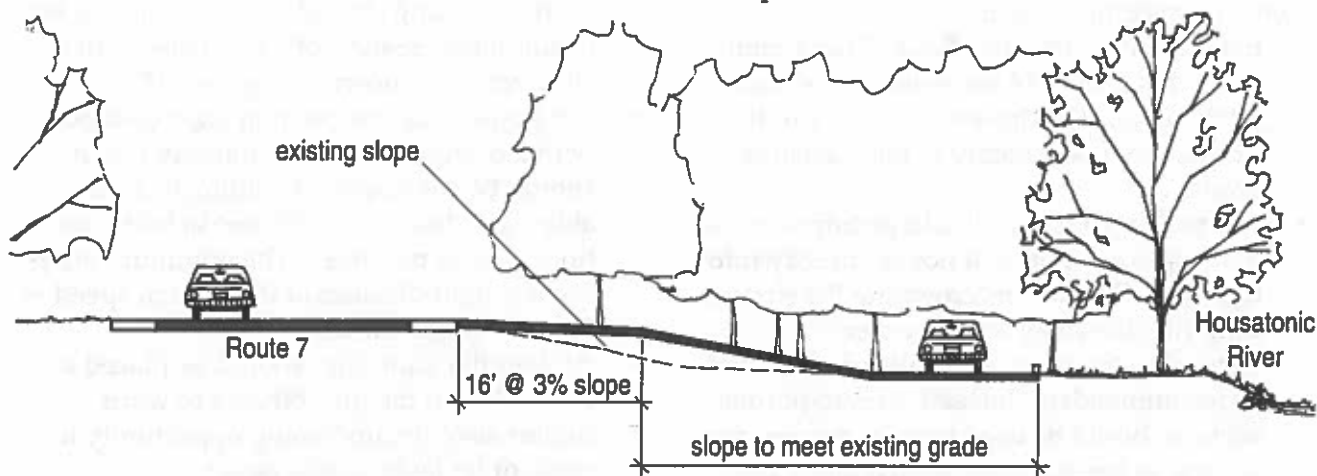


Figure 3-9 Section illustrating access improvements to the Cellar Hole Pull-off



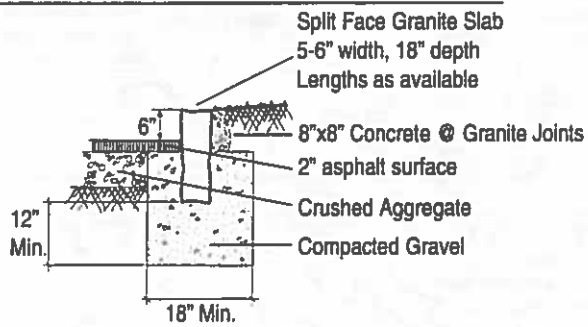
**GRANITE PARKING BUMPER**

Figure 3-10 Suggested edge detail to retain gravel surface pull-offs

**River Access: Put-ins and Take-outs**

Route 7 can play an important role in improving access to the Housatonic River. For many miles the river and road are parallel. There are a number of locations already in use as informal

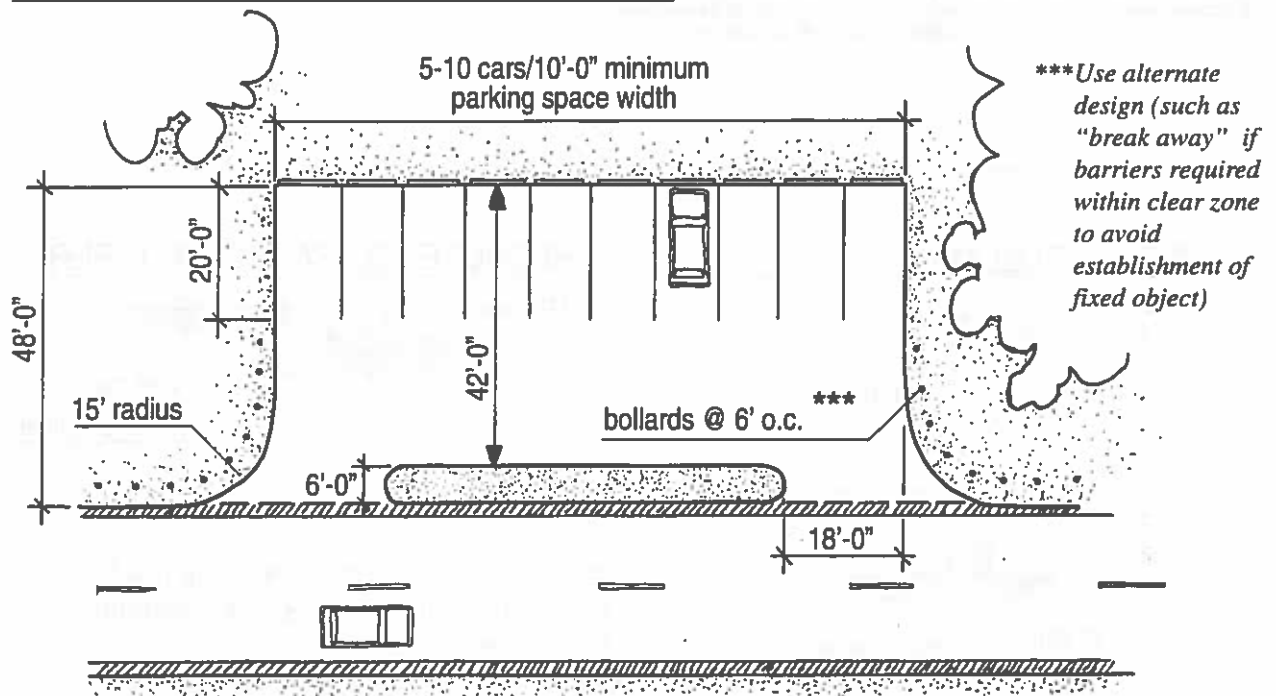
**TYPICAL PLAN (SCALE: 1"=20'-0")**

Figure 3-11 Typical dimension and layout for a small pull-off

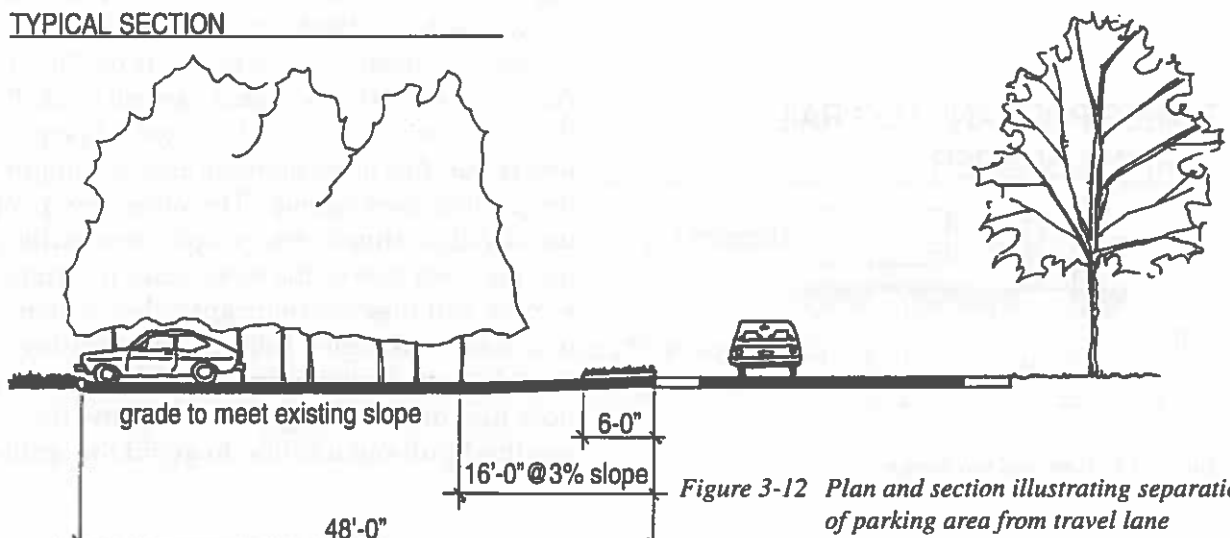
**TYPICAL SECTION**

Figure 3-12 Plan and section illustrating separation of parking area from travel lane

### CONTEXT PLAN

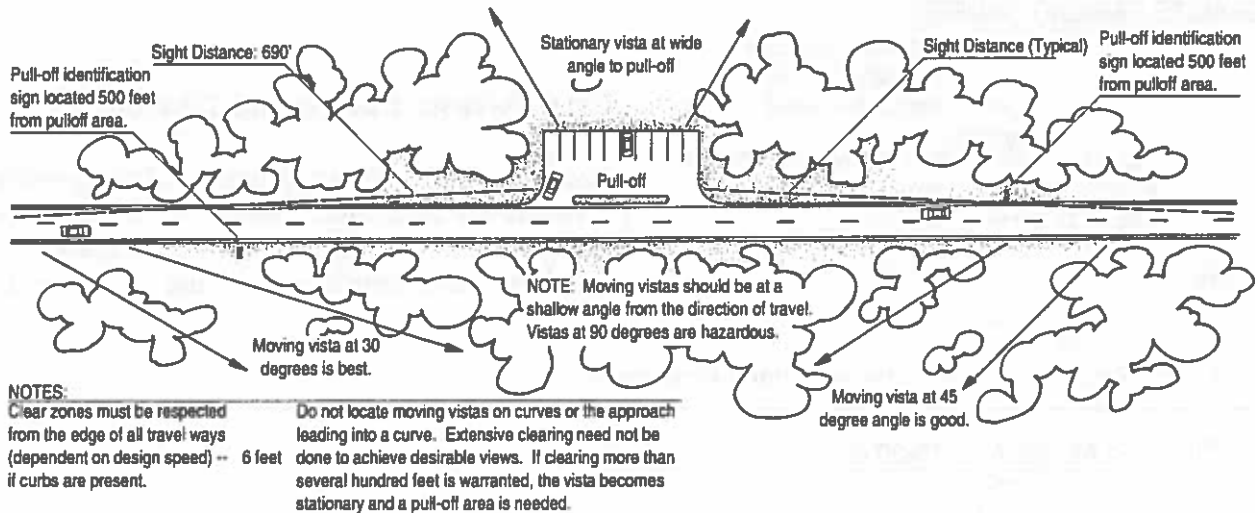


Figure 3-13 Sightline and other considerations for pull-offs and vistas

### WOOD POST BOLLARD

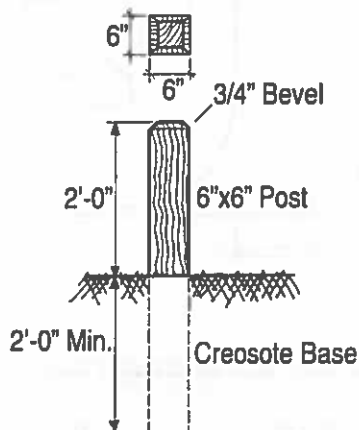


Figure 3-14 Post bollard

### CREOSOTE LOG PARKING BUMPER

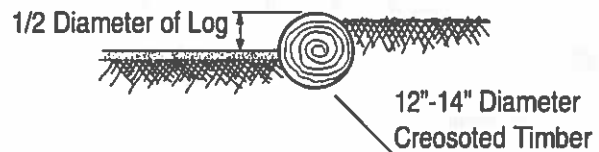


Figure 3-16 Log car stop

access points. The most pressing need is for a better take-out for car-top watercraft just above Bull's Bridge .

### Take-out Above Bull's Bridge

Connecticut Light and Power is currently looking at ways to improve access to and from the river. The Bull's Bridge take-out point is a big concern. Currently the take-out is on the island. A rafter, canoeist or kayaker can call CL & P and they will come and unlock the gate. The problem is that this takes an hour and the length of the portage is extensive. Therefore, few people use it. Alternatively, few people seem willing to use the west side of the river, since it is more remote and they are reluctant to leave their car in a place with little visibility. The existing Appalachian Trail parking area (across the river near the covered bridge) is well below the required pull-out location to avoid the spillway.

### TIMBER POST AND LOG RAIL PARKING BUMPER

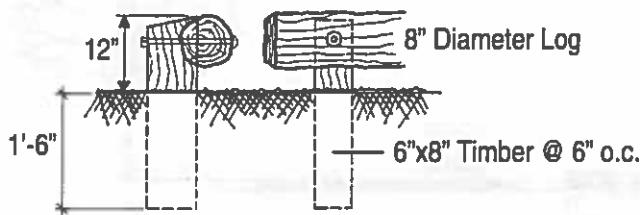
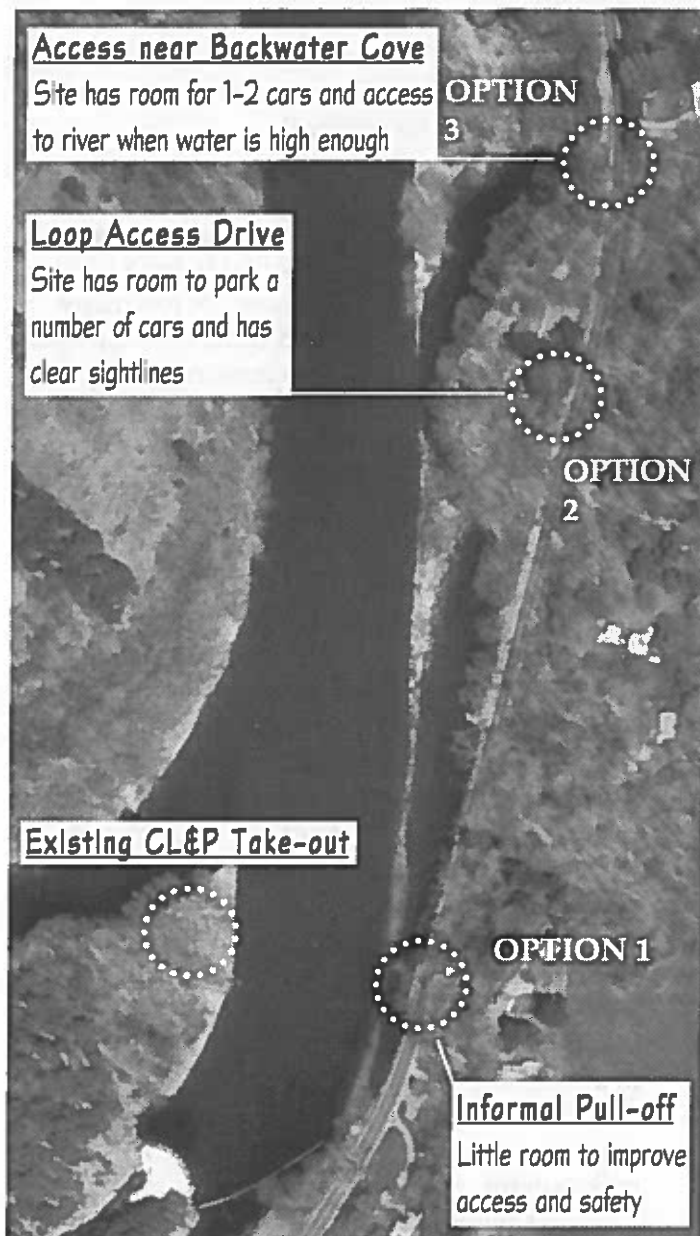


Figure 3-15 Post and rail bumper



River enthusiasts seem to use the land between Route 7 and the river, parking their car on the side of the road, creating an informal vehicle pull-off and canoe take-out point. Some of these informal pull-offs have bad sight lines and not enough room to maneuver the car to get in and out safely. Instead, one specific site should be enhanced. Three options, the locations of which are further illustrated in Figure 3-17, include:

**Option 1: Across from the existing island take out point**

This site has room for perhaps one car at the most. The sightlines are constrained by a curve and some exposed rock outcrops. There is little or no room to improve the sightlines.

**Option 2: Loop access drive**

North of the first site is a loop drive accessing two homes. There are slightly better site distances here and plenty of room to park numerous cars if an agreement could be made to use the private lane. This would need to be a one-way in and one-way out system, unless the southern entry were to be widened to accommodate in and out traffic, parallel parking, and a turnaround. One of the two houses is currently for sale.

**Option 3:**

**Across from a small cove created by backwater**

This site has room for only one or two cars. The sightlines are constrained by a slight rise in the roadway. This site would have the advantage of being able to use the backwater area to paddle very close to the shore (when there is enough water). However, access to the water is difficult (marsh turning to muck during low water). Although few people will use a take-out point during low water, access to the water from this location is too unreliable to justify additional investments to make the pull-off more usable.

**Figure 3-17** Locations of options evaluated for use as a car-top boat take-out point north of Bull's Bridge (above) and possible Gateway pull-off areas for Bull's Bridge (below)



The Kent Land Trust is improving their property north of Bull's Bridge and will be allowing limited public access. However, this site is too far north to serve as a useful take-out point.

### Recommendation

Connecticut Light and Power prefers to continue the use of the island as a take-out point for groups. With regard to Route 7 take-out points, and the resulting informal use of the adjoining areas as an informal pull-out for vehicles, there is a need to control the location of where cars are pulling on and off the road.

The pull-offs with the best sight lines have poor access to the river. The take-out point with the best access to the river has poor sight lines. Improving the sight lines for the option 1 site should be explored if the site shows increased use as a vehicular pull-out. Further enhancement to these pull-offs is not recommended due to limitations of site distance. Information about the CL & P take-out point and policy should be distributed widely within the river user community.

### **Housatonic River Pathway**

The goal of a greenway along the entire length of the Housatonic is a dream of many people in Kent, Cornwall and Sharon (as well as other towns along the river) and a major project of the Housatonic Valley Association. Although the Appalachian Trail serves this purpose for foot travelers and cross-country skiers, there are no reasonably safe, continuous, alternative routes for north-south travelers along the Housatonic who want to travel by bicycle or horseback, or active senior citizens and families with young children who may be looking for a more gentle grade and smoother surface for walking or riding a bicycle.

A large number of residents attending the Fall 1998 public workshop expressed a desire to develop a separated pathway for non-motorized travel. The approaches to the Center of Kent were identified as particularly important priorities for creating a separated pathway, as there are not any reasonably safe, non-motorized ways for families to travel between Bull's Bridge or North Kent towards the Center of Kent. At the same time, there is no reasonably safe, non-

motorized way for families to travel between the Kent School and the Town Park (east to west through the Center of Kent).

The land between the river and Route 7 provides many opportunities for creating a pathway along the Housatonic suitable for a wider range of users. However, there are too many topographic constraints and other limitations at key points along the way to construct a separated pathway along the entire length of Route 7 through the Town of Kent. While Route 7 will need to play a role in accommodating the more experienced users, efforts to construct a separated path oriented towards families should focus on the area north of Birch Lane and south of the Sloane Stanley Museum.

Maps 10 to 12 provide an analysis of the trail route opportunities and constraints for the section of Route 7 between Bulls Bridge and Kent Falls State Park. Shared bicycle lanes (a marked lane along the road's shoulder) would be required along Route 7 for extensive lengths between Bulls Bridge and Saddle Ridge south of the Center of Kent, and for much of the distance north of the Center of Kent.

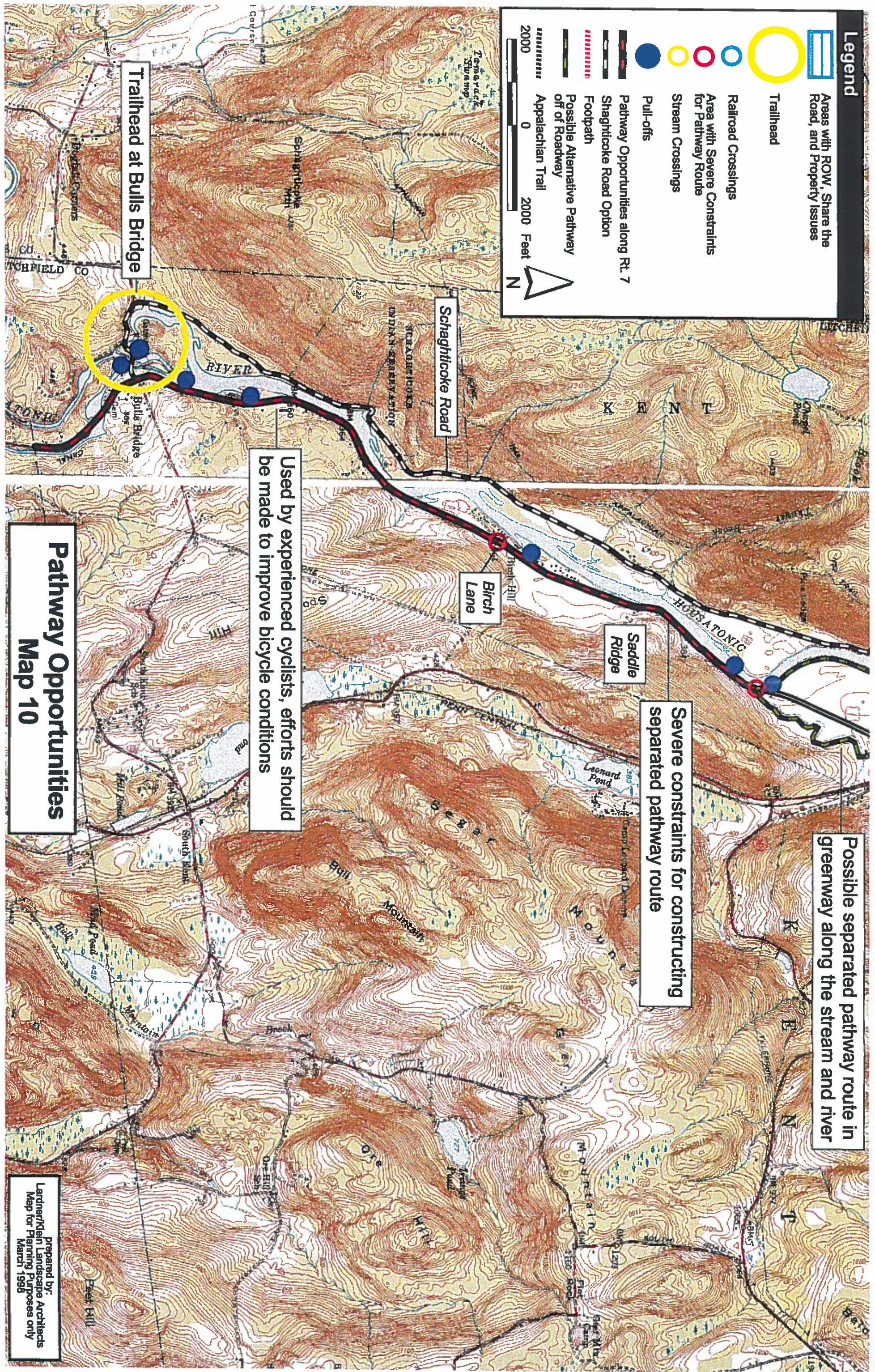
This implies widening the shoulders of Route 7 to a minimum of four and preferably five feet. This will be very difficult when Route 7 rises above the river with a bluff on one side and a rock outcrop on the other. There are other locations where a boardwalk will be needed to cross a wetland area or a tributary stream. These locations are marked on the Pathway Opportunities and Constraints map.

The Opportunities and Constraints map can be used to define reasonable options for creating separated pathways. The three options worthy of future consideration include the following:

- 1) Provide a separated path where feasible along the entire length of Route 7 and use shared lanes where not enough room exists for a separated path.
- 2) Alternatively use the Shaghticoke Road on the west side of the river to connect Bulls Bridge to the Center of Kent, and use a separated path from the Center of Kent to the Sloane Stanley Museum. However, it

*(continued on page 59)*





# Legend

- Areas with ROW, Share the Road, and Property Issues
  - Trailhead
  - Railroad Crossings
  - Area with Severe Constraints for Pathway Route
  - Stream Crossings
  - Pull-offs
  - Pathway Opportunities along Rt. 7
  - Schaghticoke Road Option
  - Footpath
  - Possible Alternative Pathway off of Roadway
  - Appalachian Trail
- 2000 0 2000 Feet
- N

Possible separated pathway route in greenway along the stream and river

Severe constraints for constructing separated pathway route

Used by experienced cyclists, efforts should be made to improve bicycle conditions

## Pathway Opportunities Map 10

Prepared by:  
Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects  
Map for Planning Purposes only  
March 1998



## Areas with ROW, Share the Road, and Property Issues

## Areas with ROW, Share the Road, and Property Issues



2000 0 2000 Feet



Potential route for  
pathway; an  
alternative to using  
State Route 341

### Possible use of existing school road for pathway route

## Fuller Pond

Stanley Works

Flanders-Mountain

**River access from North Kent Road**

**Negotiations with adjacent property owners may be necessary if crossing RR is not an option.**

Footpath should generally follow the RR ROW avoiding wetlands, and the 100 year floodplain at the 400 ft. contour. Not recommended for bicycle use.

**Deed restrictions and difficult conditions along Route 7 limit opportunities for trail in this section.**

Pathway to cross Rt. 7 at appropriate point providing adequate site distances for pedestrians and vehicles; Negotiations with adjacent landowners may be necessary if crossing is not on conservation property.

Pathway route to cross Rt. 7 and share the ROW to Cobble Lane; Negotiations with adjacent property owners may be necessary to widen the shoulder or an alternative route explored between the Congregational Church and Cobble Lane.

**Possible separated pathway route in greenway along the stream and river**

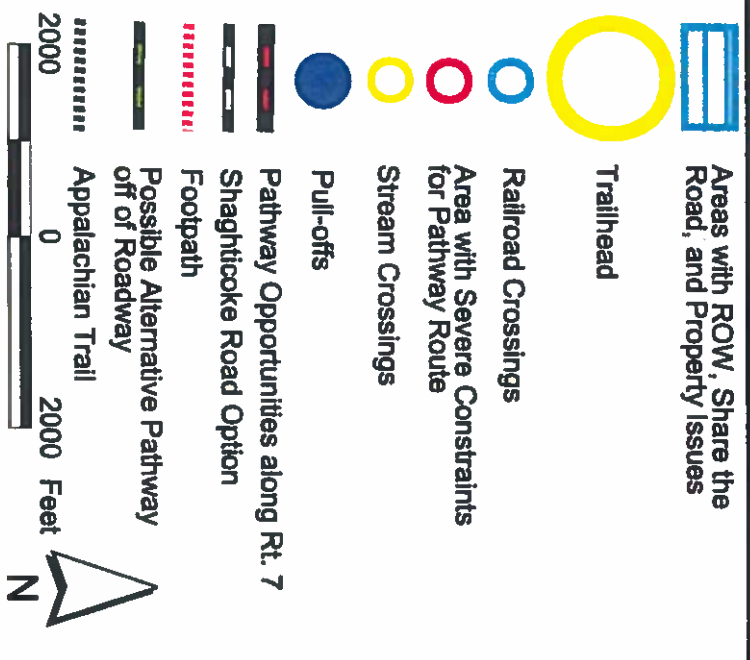
# Pathway Opportunities

## Map 11

**prepared by:**  
**Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects**  
**Map for Planning Purposes only**  
**March 1998**



# Legend



prepared by:  
Lander/Klein Landscape Architects  
Map for Planning Purposes only  
March 1998

## Pathway Opportunities Map 12

Macedonia Brook  
State Park

Potential for pathway to use  
local roads on conservation  
property; would be a challenging  
route for experienced cyclists

Pathway to cross Rt. 7,  
Kent Falls Brook, and  
potentially the RR.

Trail Head at Kent Falls State Park

Kent Falls  
State Park

Negotiations with adjacent property  
owners may be necessary if crossing  
RR is not an option.

River access from North Kent Road

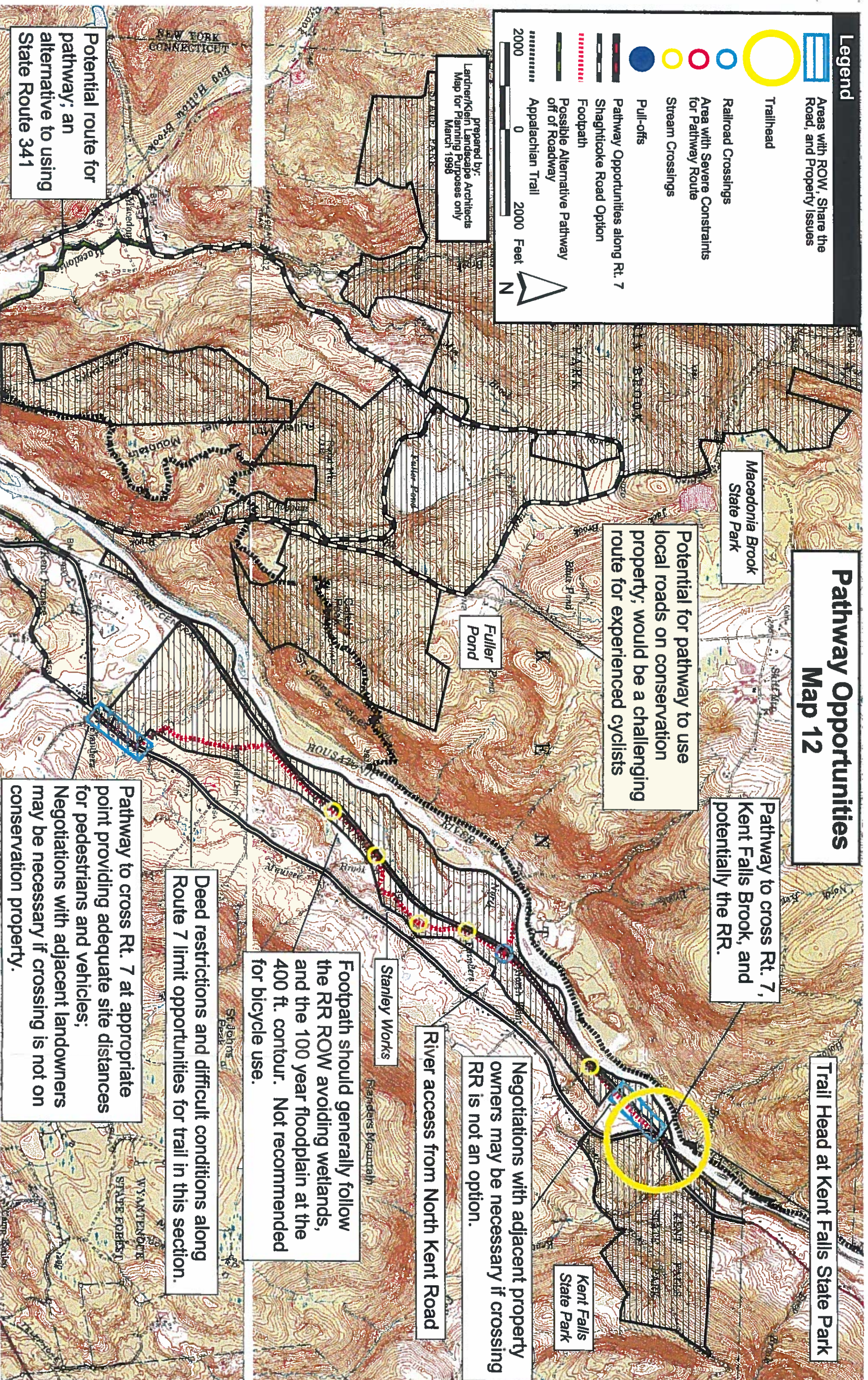
Stanley Works

Footpath should generally follow  
the RR ROW avoiding wetlands,  
and the 100 year floodplain at the  
400 ft. contour. Not recommended  
for bicycle use.

Deed restrictions and difficult conditions along  
Route 7 limit opportunities for trail in this section.

Pathway to cross Rt. 7 at appropriate  
point providing adequate site distances  
for pedestrians and vehicles;  
Negotiations with adjacent landowners  
may be necessary if crossing is not on  
conservation property.

Potential route for  
pathway; an  
alternative to using  
State Route 341







*Figure 3-18 Constraints of rock and riverbank limit the southern end of the corridor for bicycle use to only experienced riders.*

should be noted that the lands of the Schaghticoke Indian Reservation are held in trust by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection for the benefit of the tribe. Use of the road for increased bicycle use must take this into account. North of the Sloane-Stanley Museum construct only a modest footpath along the property owned by the Conservation Fund (consistent with deed restrictions on the property).

- 3) Focus all efforts on creating a separated path from Birch Hill to the Sloane Stanley Museum, suitable for use by all forms of non-motorized travel.

If it is the desire of the Town of Kent to make it easier for people to use non-motorized forms of travel, then Route 7, must play a role in improving bicycle and pedestrian safety. The following analysis describes the role that Route 7 must play in each of the alternatives, with an emphasis on bicycling. Pedestrian safety and crossings within the Center of Kent are discussed as part of Strategies #5 and #6.

The following recommendations, based on the recent Federal Highway Administration publication "Selecting Roadway Treatments to Accommodate Bicycles," should be used to make these enhancements over time.

### **Better and Safer Bicycling**

The portion of Route 7 within the study area is not a designated 'Bicycle Route' by the State of

Connecticut. However, Route 7 is currently used by experienced cyclists and bicycle commuters. Closer to the Center of Kent, there is increased bicycle use by less experienced riders.

### Planning Criteria for Bicycle Facilities

Representatives from Kent on the Advisory Committee have expressed a desire to create a separated pathway from Bulls Bridge to Kent Falls, and perhaps beyond that includes use by bicycles. The NWCCOG Regional Transportation Plan indicates that the First Selectman from Cornwall expressed a concern about bicycle use of Route 7 due to safety concerns related to the winding and hilly road conditions. The Regional Transportation Plan does not include such a pathway as of the Fall of 1997. However, the significant public interest in such a facility expressed at the November public workshop indicates extensive support for a separated path.

Given the condition of some sections and the potential cost of a separated pathway along the entire length of Route 7 in the Town of Kent, implementing Option 1 will require the enhancement of conditions for safer and more convenient cycling along portions of Route 7. For Option 1 to be implemented, even though Route 7 is not officially designated as a bicycle route, guidelines should be developed to gradually improve bicycle safety. If parts of the path system were to be built on Route 7, and parts separated from Route 7 (non-Route 7), then it would be difficult to phase the improvements.

If the separated path is built first, and it requires the cyclist to use portions of Route 7 to connect to the next section of separated path, then it might attract more bicyclists to sections of Route 7 which presently do not have characteristics conducive to safe bicycle travel (for less experienced riders). Therefore, Option 1 would require the construction of the entire length of trail from a logical beginning to a logical end point.

Option #2, designating Schaghticoke Road from Bulls Bridge to Macedonia Road as a bicycle route, and improving east-west bicycle conditions on Route 341 as a priority, may result in a more continuous and safer route for the segment south of the Center of Kent. Taking this ap-



proach may give novice riders and families a safer alternative much sooner at a much lower cost.

Option #3, focusing on the creation of a separated path in the areas closest to the Center of Kent where there are the highest potential number of basic adult users and children could help to connect the primary generators of pedestrian and bicycle travel (Kent School, the Town Park, the Center of Kent, and possibly to a destination, the Sloane-Stanley Museum to the north). Creating separated paths close-in to the Center of Kent may be more easily constructed in a continuous fashion.

#### Recommended Appropriate Design Treatments

Based on an evaluation of the options outlined above, the following is recommended with regard to enhancements to Route 7 to improve bicycling conditions.

#### The "Design Bicyclist"

FHWA recommends establishing a classification system for bicycle users (called the "design bicyclist") that allows for accommodating experienced riders and encouraging novice riders. For the area south of Birch Lane, only experienced riders are likely to use Route 7 for bicycle use and therefore should be considered as the design bicyclist. North of Birch Lane, less-experienced adult and children are more likely to need bicycle facilities, and appropriate standards should be selected to accommodate novice users. The following design treatments are recommended.

#### South of Birch Lane

The current pavement width in this area includes 11-foot lanes with 2-foot shoulders. Efforts should be made to simply improve bicycle conditions as follows:

- improve sight lines on curves to give drivers better visibility of upcoming cyclists utilizing the travel way (if speeds are less than or equal to 40 m.p.h., then some widening of the outside lane of the curve is possible to remedy the problem);
- consider reducing the speed limit in areas should bicycle use increase beyond current levels, and enforcing existing vehicular speed limits. It should be noted, however,



Figure 3-19 Limitations for a separated pathway near Saddle Ridge development between the road and the river

that the State Police are responsible for enforcement in Kent and may not be able to effectively enforce speed limits given all of their other responsibilities;

- place "share the road" signs for motorist awareness indicating that there could be bicyclists on the roadway;
- use "bicycle friendly" drainage grates where needed (with slots oriented perpendicular to the road, rather than parallel);
- at the next repaving, make sure that there is a minimum of 12 feet of lane and shoulder width where there are good sight distances, and 14 feet in situations where the sight distances are obstructed.

Note that it may be possible to construct portions of a separated pathway south of Birch Lane. However, this would result in creating several discontinuous segments requiring numerous road crossings and places where less experienced riders will need to share the road – and will not necessarily improve bicycle safety in this area. It is advisable not to designate this section (or any section) of Route 7 as a signed or designated bicycle route. Rather efforts should be made to use local roads as signed and designated routes.

#### North of Birch Lane

Efforts should be made to construct a separated pathway suitable for use by less experienced riders (adults and children) as part of the overall pathway effort. A possible route worthy of additional study is identified on Maps 10 to 12. Separated lanes are possible for the entire length with one exception. Near the Saddle Ridge



Figure 3-20 Existing pavement can be restriped to accommodate bicycle use on shoulders

development, the Housatonic River and Route 7 converge with little or no room for any lanes. Blasting of rock would be required to create enough room to pass through this section. Should this prove infeasible, then the shared lane guidelines as described above should be followed (no designation or signage) and the alternative Schaghticoke Road option should be aggressively pursued as a viable option. Should the Town wish to pursue a combination of separated path and shared lane to connect Birch Lane with the Center of Kent, then appropriate signage should be placed on the separated path warning novice and family users of the upcoming shared lane facility.

#### Center of Kent

Through the Center of Kent bicycle facilities should be provided for less experienced users from the Kent School to the Town Park along Route 341 as well as north through the commercial area. Given the number of cars and congestion within the commercial area, an on-street bicycle route is recommended for Elizabeth Street for those coming from the Kent School. For those coming from the southeast, an on-street bicycle lane can be provided in association with the proposed extension of Kent Green Boulevard through the Kent Green Village and using the existing pavement surface from Route 7's intersection with Kent Green Boulevard north to the start of the uphill section (just past the Congregational Church).

From this point (just north of the Congregational Church), there may be a need for shoulder widening to accommodate increasing average

automobile travel speeds. The FHWA booklet recommends that five foot shoulders should be utilized in this situation (obstructed sight distances and travel speeds between 30 and 40 miles per hour). In combination with the existing 11 foot travel lanes, this would result in a substantial increase in pavement width. Alternatively, a separated path could be built behind the Fife 'n Drum (requiring an easement over private land).

#### Sloane Stanley Museum to Kent Falls State Park

Existing conservation easements appear to prohibit the types of construction that would be necessary to construct a separated path along the former Stanley Works property. A separated pathway outside of these easements would be difficult along Route 7. There is not enough room to run a separated pathway parallel to the railroad, since a minimum setback would be needed for the safety of pathway users. A fence would most likely be required as well which would be a detriment to wildlife.

However, a modest footpath would complement the more developed routes to the south, if the Conservation Fund and other private property owners would be willing to participate. Map 12 illustrates the suggested location for a separated footpath along these lands. A crossing of Route 7 might be required at Kent Falls State Park, although there is a large culvert under the railroad and Route 7 near this location.

A suggestion was also made by an Advisory Committee member that a pedestrian bridge be constructed across the Housatonic at the location of the former bridge on North Kent Road. The piers are still there. A feasibility study would be needed to determine additional regulatory and physical constraints.

#### Surfaces

Appendix E includes a table evaluating the pros and cons of various pathway surfaces as well as a general statement of probable cost on a lineal foot basis for extending pavement to accommodate bicycles on Route 7 (for a cut section, a level section, and a fill section).



### STRATEGY #3: MANAGING THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM



Figure 3-21 Congested streets in Kent on Columbus Day weekend

The implicit tourism approach for the towns along Route 7 is to encourage appropriate tourism activity as an important component of the area's economic base, participating where relevant in regional tourism efforts, but at the same time minimizing negative visitor and traffic impacts on the hamlets and roadway.

#### Manage Appropriate Visitation through a Regional Framework

Many of the positive tourism benefits come from the draw of Route 7 as a series of attractive views and hamlets along the corridor. One of the purposes of this project is to define ways in which these scenic qualities which add value to the area can be preserved and not destroyed by the very activity they tend to attract. Both the public meeting and the advisory committee workshops have highlighted the concern of Kent, Cornwall and Sharon citizens to maintain the continuing quality of life, defining and encouraging 'appropriate' and not destructive visitor activity. The spending that flows from this visitor activity is important to the livelihood of a variety of retail merchants – and at the same time, in terms of secondary spin-off activity, to the livelihood of a further network of local service providers and goods purveyors. Tourism is the largest industry in the Northwest Connecticut region, and the Route 7 area's share (especially that of the Center of Kent) is an important proportion of that, based on its varied food, lodging and retail services.

#### Minimize Tourism Impacts

Equally important is dealing directly with some of the negative impacts of tourism as a pre-emptive action to protect the town from undesired implications of regional visitation, including:

- Traffic congestion and speeding in the villages and hamlets (see Strategies 5 through 7).
- Dealing with possible development pressures that go along with being a desirable place to either visit or live – this report suggests a number of approaches for public, private and civic participants to help reduce growth impacts along the corridor (see Strategies 1 and 6, and Chapter 4).

#### Establish a Regional Framework: Northwest Connecticut's 'Cultural Heritage Tourism'

As in the adjacent Towns of Sharon, Salisbury and others, the Route 7 corridor can also promote, as part of the tourism experience, interpretation of its heritage, cultural institutions, and natural setting. Such educational efforts are valuable in two ways:



Figure 3-22 Brochures publicizing heritage tours through Northwestern Connecticut



*Figure 3-23 A community bulletin board in Kent is one of the few sources of information about visiting the area*

- for those visitors, solicited or unsolicited, who will stop to experience each town's historic architecture and town character as well as its natural beauty;
- for each town's own residents as a way of learning how the past can improve their understanding of present preservation efforts and future carefully-planned development objectives.

This interpretation and preservation should focus on the corridor as part of the rich history and environment of Northwest Connecticut. However, the various Towns' local attractions along the corridor are also a key part of an evolving regional tourism strategy. This program would build on the previously-described existing efforts by the Litchfield Hills Tourism Council, as well as existing efforts of regional groups, which include the following:

- The Tri-Corners History Council is currently promoting a regional tour and interpretation of linked iron mining industry sites in northwest Connecticut (including sites in Sharon, Salisbury and Canaan). Incorporating sites such as the Sloane-Stanley Museum's furnace site and artifacts and the Roxbury Land Trust's Mine Hill Preserve can reinforce this unique regional history as yet one more low-key network of attractions for visitors, complementing other features such as antique stores, outdoor activities, or simple scenery appreciation.
- Another regional effort is the delineation (or 'resurrection') of the 'Ethan Allen Trail', a driving tour started in the 1950's which focuses on a history-based story line as a

means of highlighting the Northwest region's unique network of historic sites and cultural facilities.

In addition, as suggested in other scenic corridor towns in the Northwest, a similar program could focus on the comparative interpretation of historic village centers in Northwest Connecticut – a rich history and fascinating on-site 'living museum.' This approach would dovetail especially well with an itinerary of linked scenic roads and could reinforce existing efforts to establish a valuable 'cultural heritage tourism' framework for the region.

Such a program could establish touring routes that focus on comparison and contrast of various town centers and greens in the context of regional history, incorporating historic sites important to the region's industrial and social past, important architectural and urban design examples, and various local historic museums and interpretive exhibits. It could incorporate, but expand and deepen, the excellent tour itineraries prepared by the regional Travel Council as well as the Ethan Allen Trail framework.

See Chapter 4 for recommendations on how to expand cultural heritage tourism opportunities in the region as a means of spreading out the impacts of the more seasonally based tourism activities.

### **Coordinate Visitor Information**

An important message from the Advisory Committee and public workshops regarding Route 7 tourism is to control visitor traffic by providing information about how best to visit the area at key locations (minimizing environmental and traffic impacts, and maximizing orientation of visitors not only to attractions but even more importantly to services and parking).

The Route 7 Corridor's scenic attributes are best appreciated through leisurely investigation – not only by auto, but also by bicycle or on foot. And the towns' historic and recreational features are not all found along the state-designated scenic road, but also along a variety of local roads.



A recommended approach that can involve the Scenic Roads Advisory Committee, local officials, and the regional visitors council, is to orient the visitor to the 'Between the Bridges' corridor as a whole. Using a hierarchy of tourist-oriented destination signs and gradually upgrading the roadside character through a family of design details (see Strategy #4) visitors will easily recognize that they are in a different and special place. Gateways at each bridge can orient the visitor to the features and services found 'Between the Bridges' using a simple outdoor kiosk. Additional visitor information can be provided in the Center of Kent at an indoor location that would have more material.

It should be noted that the use of tourist-oriented destinations signs will require legislative authority to install. As a result of the state legislatures' PA 95-318, the Connecticut Tourism Council and the Department of Transportation established a tourist information kiosk program. The intent of the program was to preclude a proliferation of tourist information signs, which would compete for physical space and motorist attention, rendering more essential regulatory, warning and guide signs less effective. Apparently, according to ConnDOT, the Vermont-type of directional signs (see page 66) should not be allowed on a state highway.

A central location in Kent, such as the library, Town Hall, or related tourist site can serve as a source of advice and printed material about food and lodging services, historic, cultural and recreation features, and walking, biking, or auto tours. If such a center were placed at the library

it may provide visitors with an opportunity to visit the local history section to learn more about the place they are visiting. On the other hand, using space at a bed and breakfast or other tourist facility would not require a change in hours of operation to handle weekend visitors, and could be organized by the local chamber of commerce.

#### Gateway Pull-offs

Visitors would be welcomed by landscape improvements around 'gateway' pull-offs at either end of the corridor. Visitors could get information about the nature, history and culture of the region they are about to enter, as well as information about available services (bed and breakfasts, historic inns, restaurants, etc.). Visitors should also be able to find out about how to see the area on foot, by bicycle, by paddle, or by car. The two proposed locations for gateway pull-offs are in the vicinity of the two covered bridges – Bulls Bridge and West Cornwall Covered Bridge.

#### Bulls Bridge

Figure 3-17 (page 51) identifies two sites, both on private property, worth considering. The first site is the area just east of the Canal Bridge on CL & P property. The area is currently used for parking and stopping on an ad hoc basis, causing the soil to be compacted and some erosion to occur. A parking area for five or six cars could be built in such a manner that it would be slightly depressed and screened from view by native shrubs (as shown in Figure 3-24 and 25). The open character of the nearby field could still be preserved. Alternatively a site

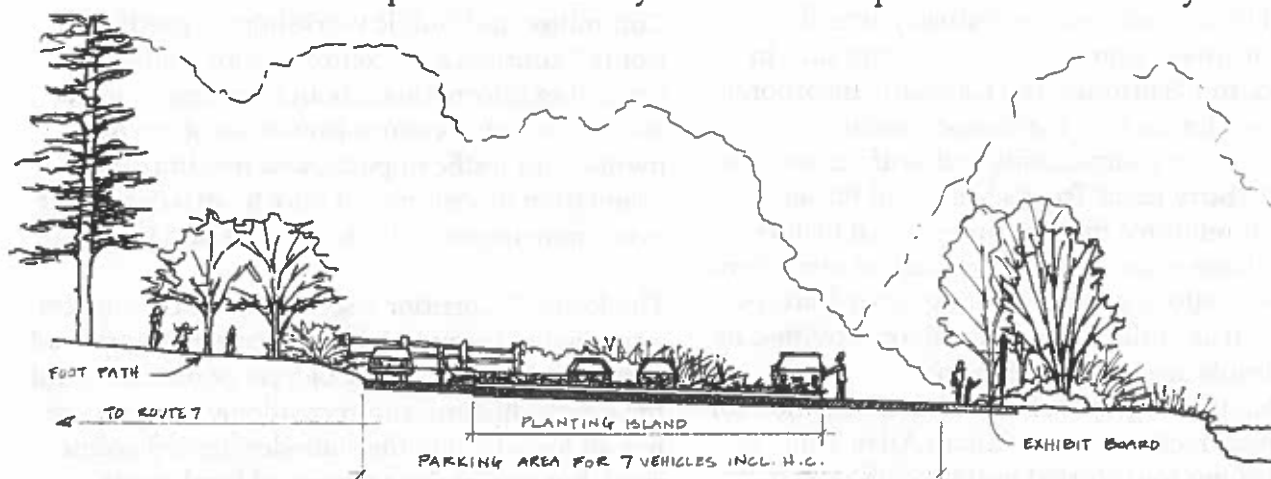


Figure 3-24 Section illustrating the proposed character of the Bull's Bridge Gateway Pull-off

could be built directly off Route 7 in the open field. This is not preferable since it will alter an attractive view and create additional turning movements on Route 7. The use of private land may have implications for funding (Federal funds would require the use of public land). Connecticut Light and Power is supportive of the gateway concept, but further study is required to evaluate the feasibility of any sale or long-term lease for lands in their control.

The second site would be at the existing Gas Station. There is less room here and the sight lines are inadequate if a new driveway access were built off Route 7 south of the gas station.

#### West Cornwall

A similar information kiosk could be placed near the existing 2-3 car pull-off within the triangle of land at the intersection of Routes 7 and 128 (west side of the covered bridge). This site is often used by people that want to get out of the car after they have crossed the bridge from Route 128 – providing an excellent opportunity to give information to visitors about how best to visit the area, and making it easier to visit the covered bridge nearby.

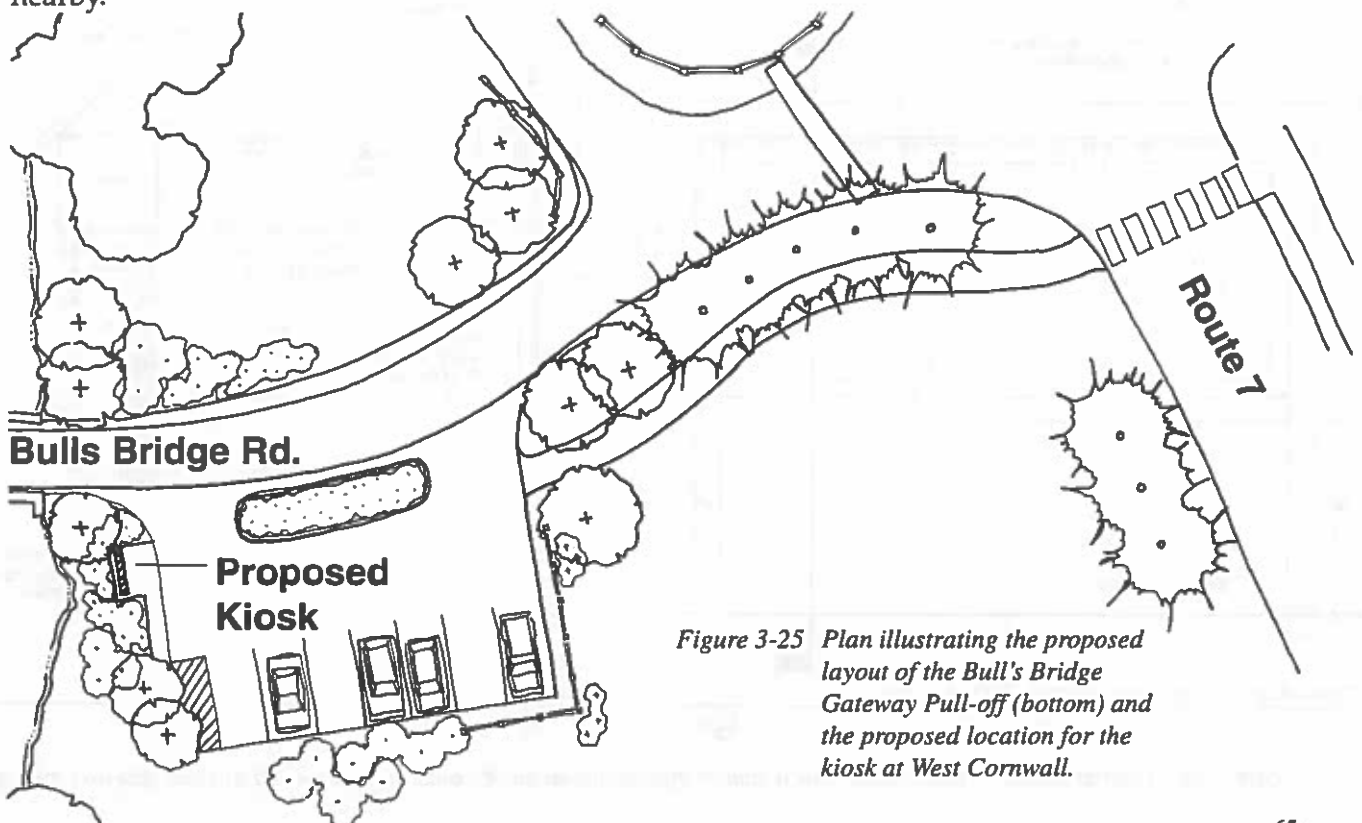
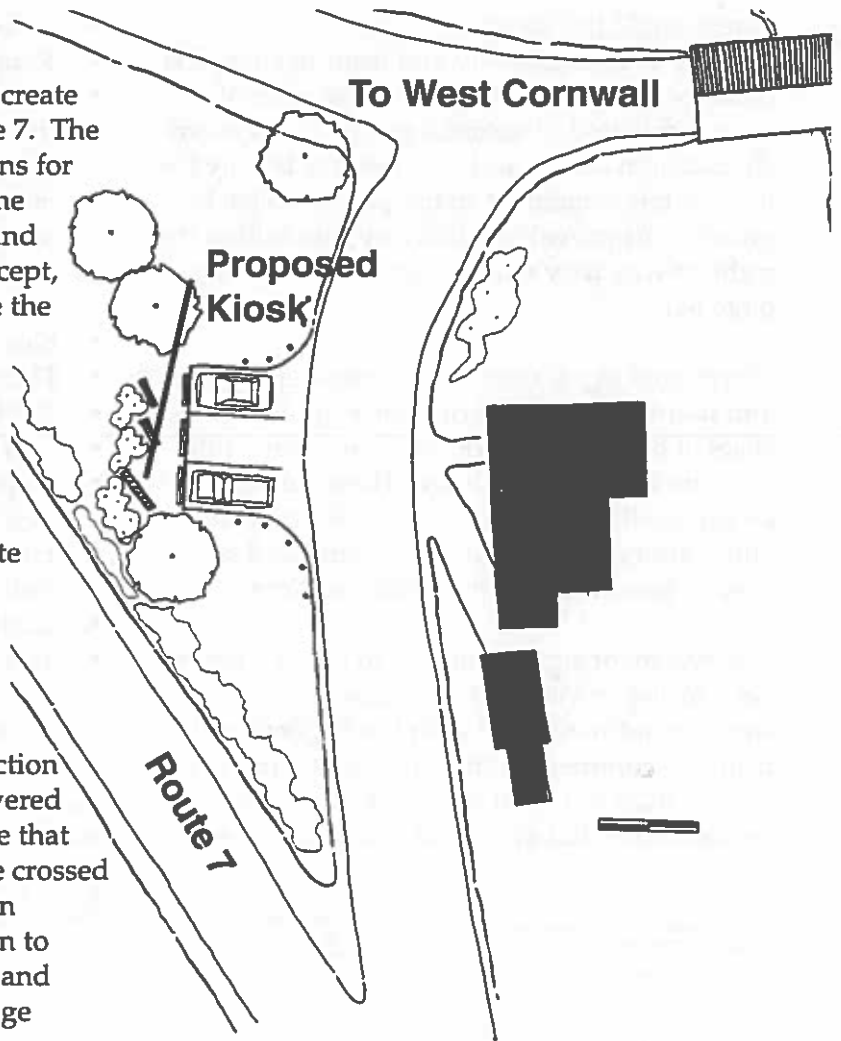


Figure 3-25 Plan illustrating the proposed layout of the Bull's Bridge Gateway Pull-off (bottom) and the proposed location for the kiosk at West Cornwall.



### Directional / Information Signs

Starting at each gateway and leading along the corridor, the plan recommends a system of tourist-oriented directional signs. This system should both define and interpret the byway for users while remaining in the perceived background. Approval for such a system within the right-of-way may require legislative action (see page 64).

Directional signs, featuring a consistent color and identity, are to inform motorists and bicyclists of both the location of features and intersections along the roadway. These can also be an especially important way to inform residents and visitors about off-street parking and shopping opportunities in the Center of Kent.

The system of signs is similar to the one that has been in-use in Vermont for many years. The signs are administered with funds generated from the commercial sites that use them. The system does not need to be extensive. Signs would be needed at the following locations:

- Bulls Bridge
- Kent Land Trust property
- Approaching the Center of Kent from both directions - with a smaller sign or signs leading to parking and information points
- Side trips to Macedonia Brook State Park and Lake Waramaug State Park (requires additional wayfinding signs on state and local roads)
- Sloane Stanley Museum
- Flanders National Register Historic District
- Kent Falls State Park
- Route 45 (side trips)
- Approaching Cornwall Bridge (in all directions)
- Housatonic Meadows State Park
- Pull-off at the Cellar Hole
- Clark Outdoors
- West Cornwall

Additional signs may be needed when and if future pull-offs are developed for stationary vistas, canoe put-in and take-out points, trailhead parking, and other recreational sites.

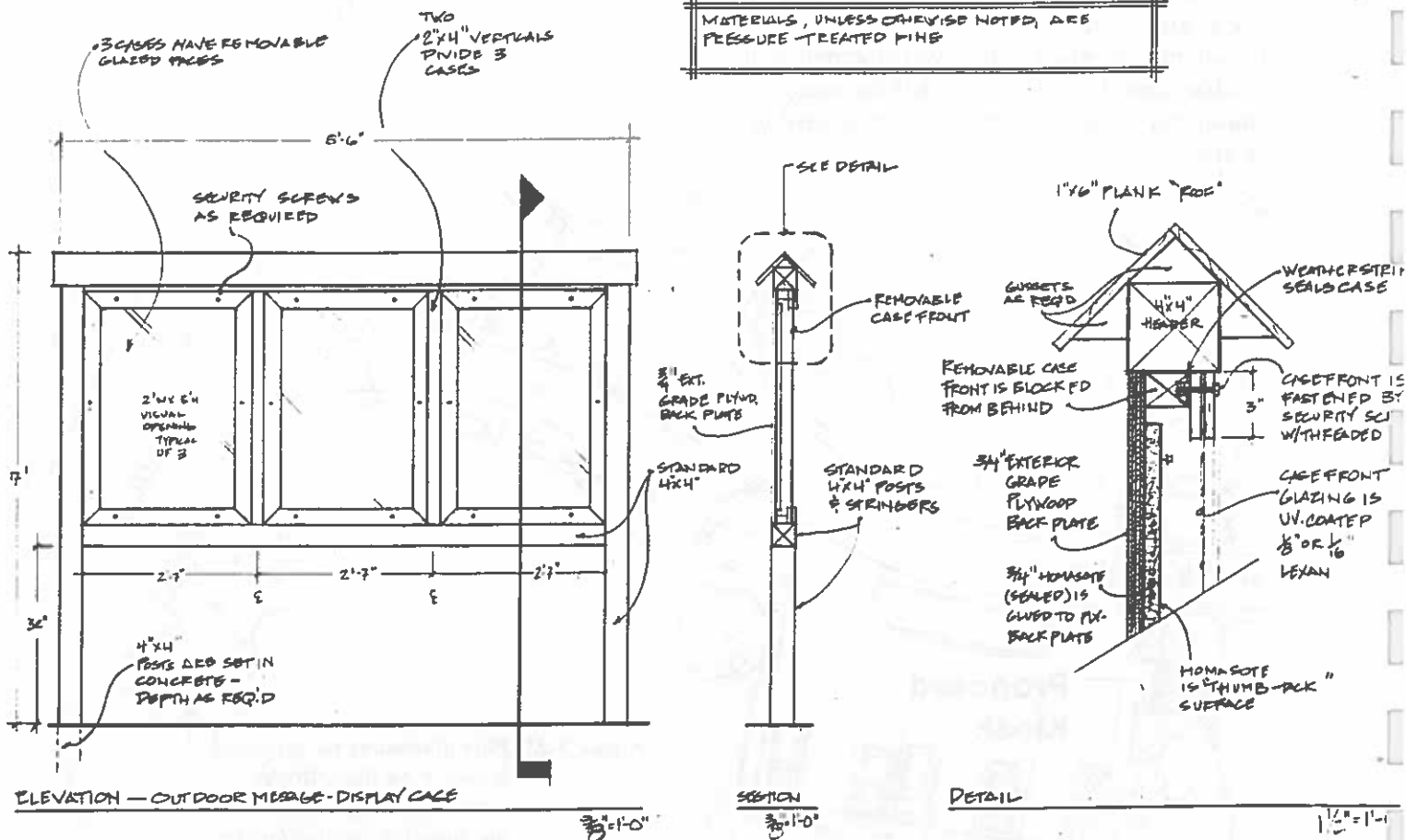


Figure 3-26 Plan and section illustrating how a simple informational kiosk could be constructed at each gateway pull-off

**STRATEGY #4: ENHANCING THE CHARACTER OF THE ROAD AND RIGHT-OF-WAY**

The roadside character of Route 7 is particularly important since it parallels the Housatonic River for much of its length. The land between the road and the river is an essential part of the visual experience (as well as serving an important environmental function).

Conserving roadside character is another difficult task. Care must be taken to ensure driver safety, pedestrian safety, good sight lines, a reliable system of utilities (electric, cable and telephone) and safe winter driving conditions. There are, however, a number of simple strategies that can be employed to help retain the character of the existing road and right-of-way:

- select relevant guidelines for 3R (Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation) work;
- develop a cooperative working relationship between those responsible for managing the scenic road's right-of-way and those that live along it;
- adopt roadside details that have less visual contrast (matching cut slopes with the shape of the adjoining topography, using different colored aggregate in shoulders; using more attractive bridge rails and guiderails such as a color galvanized box beam or steel-backed wood guiderail, painting the backs of signs brown);
- work with ConnDOT and adjoining property owners to control invasive species along roadsides;
- continue working with the utility companies to improve pruning techniques near overhead utility lines;
- work with ConnDOT to use less road salt in particularly sensitive areas
- work with adjoining property owners to improve litter control and enforce penalties for littering;
- establish a maintenance trust fund for scenic roads (see Chapter 4).

**Select Relevant Guidelines**

Most work on scenic roads will fall into the category of maintenance or rehabilitation — usually referred to as 3R (Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation). The AASHTO "Green

Book," the standard reference for design guidance on highways, "is not intended as a policy for resurfacing, restoration, or rehabilitation (3R) projects" according to its own forward. Instead, the forward refers to Transportation Research Board Special Report 214, "Designing Safer Roads: Practices for Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation" This report describes procedures for 3R projects, and the relationship between safety, cost, tort liability and geometric design.

ConnDOT has been using reduced standards on most scenic road projects to minimize roadside impacts, especially since the passage of ISTEA in 1991. Therefore it is incumbent on both the residents of the corridor and on ConnDOT to maintain clear lines of communication as to the degree of impact that is acceptable for any particular project. ConnDOT uses the waiver process when they need to make an exception to design standards to achieve scenic or historic conservation goals. This ensures that sound judgement is used when using more flexible design standards for particularly sensitive areas.

**Utilize Design Strategies that Improve Safety While Preserving Scenic Quality**

The intent of the guidance of Transportation Research Board (TRB) Special Report 214 is to begin with the existing conditions and performance of the road, rather than to design by attempting to meet the numerical design guidelines of the AASHTO green book. According to ConnDOT designers, they address the impacts of highway upgrades on scenic roads by using the "careful fit" approach and they seek to ensure that the proposed cross section of a highway improvement "will not look substantially different from the match of the project limits." The following pages outline some techniques that expand upon the careful fit approach as it might be applied to Route 7. Note that ConnDOT designers will look at each situation independently. There are no specific design guidelines for use on scenic roads. (AASHTO and FHWA have been looking at developing some guidance in this area).



## Balancing Safety and Aesthetic Issues on Scenic Roads

There are a few locations along Route 7 where safety has been raised as a concern by citizens who use or live along this route. The intersection of Route 4 and Route 7 is one example. Because of the diversity of needs and users, the challenge to making any improvements to a scenic road is even greater than for other roads. A sensitive design that will achieve agreement and be successful will, therefore, address the psychology of driving as well as the physical requirements of the road. Safety improvements can be accomplished by working in a cooperative and iterative fashion.

The result will be a complete description of the work to be done, including both safety measures and the necessary enhancements and/or design exceptions to ensure that the project will be both safe and attractive. The following process is recommended for use on projects proposed for Route 7 (and on scenic roads in general):

### Step 1:

#### **Preliminary Identification of Issues**

When roadway or roadside work is necessary along Route 7, ConnDOT will endeavor to candidly and realistically identify the specific issues or problems to be solved, from all points of view.

*ConnDOT prepares an initial draft needs statement listing issues to consider and problems that may arise.*

### Step 2:

#### **Development of Project Descriptions and Goals (Scoping Statement)**

Work must begin with a commonly understood (even if not agreed upon) set of goals for the project that fairly represent the aspirations of all participants. Enumerating the full set of design constraints is also an important step in securing federal funding, particularly for "non-highway" expenses or enhancements, and becomes the basis for any "design exceptions" or "waivers" that may be required.

*ConnDOT meets with the Route 7 Scenic Roads Advisory Committee (or a subcommittee of NWCCOG) to review draft needs statement and agree upon the scope of the project. ConnDOT and the Route 7 Scenic Roads Advisory Committee then hold a joint informal workshop targeted to nearby landowners, interest groups, and town officials.*

### Step 3:

#### **Developing Design Alternatives**

Based on the results of the initial scoping meeting, ConnDOT can then prepare preliminary design alternatives, with one that identifies what types of design exceptions and enhancements will be necessary to address the issues and concerns raised by the Route 7 Scenic Roads Advisory Committee and citizens at the public workshop session, and one that shows the design without the exceptions or enhancements. ConnDOT will consider the use of the more aesthetically pleasing design techniques and details as shown on the following pages where appropriate.

*ConnDOT then meets with the Route 7 Scenic Roads Advisory Committee, and holds a second public workshop to review the preliminary design alternatives and the criteria to be used to select the recommended design.*

### Step 4:

#### **Field Review with the Committee and Neighbors**

Prior to developing final design plans, ConnDOT will, if practical, mark in the field with flags or paint the proposed improvements and verify the recommended design proposals with the Committee and neighbors. Should extensive revisions prove necessary, this step may need to be repeated.

*Reprinted from Route 169 Corridor Management Plan*

### Design Elements for Route 7

The regulations governing State designated scenic roads specify that "any alteration to a scenic road shall maintain these characteristics [at the time of designation], if practical." While the regulations offer some general guidance as to how any improvements should be made if they are proven to be necessary, they do not offer specific guidance for ways to enhance the character of the roadside environment over a longer period of time by altering some of the maintenance and design practices to include a specific family of details.

Preserving and enhancing the roadside character is a particularly important strategy for Route 7 and should be pursued with vigilance. It should be noted that the Connecticut Department of Transportation has no funding to implement these measures. It will be up to the localities to work closely with ConnDOT to find a reasonable and affordable way to preserve roadside character within existing budget constraints or to find alternative sources of funding (see Chapter 4).

The following recommendations are intended to supplement the existing state regulations guiding scenic roads as described in Public Act 87-280, Sec. 13b-31e-3, in order to gradually enhance the overall character and quality of the scenic road over time.

#### Guardrails

According to the State regulations, guardrails are to be replaced in kind in accordance with current Department standards unless the commissioner determines that another type of guardrail system is necessary for safety purposes. When a guardrail is damaged it is up to the District Engineer to evaluate the overall structural integrity of the entire length of the system and to decide if only those posts and cables that were damaged need to be replaced, or if the entire section needs to be replaced. When an entire section needs to be replaced, ConnDOT has been using standard galvanized W-beam guardrails to replace the wood post and cable guardrails.

The wood post and cable guardrails are an



Figure 3-27 W-Beam Metal Guardrail blocks the views of the Housatonic River

integral part of the roadside character of Route 7. In those locations where standard galvanized W-Beam guardrails on steel posts have replaced wood post and cable, there has been a loss of the traditional roadside character. Taken cumulatively, the loss of roadside character could have both environmental and economic impacts on the region.

As discussed in Chapter 2, tourism is the leading industry in the region. The types of tourism activities found in Northwest Connecticut are highly dependent upon natural and historic resources and their preservation. Since many people see the region for the first time along Route 7, it is important to retain the distinctive character of the area. The use of W-beam guardrails along Route 7 will eliminate this distinctive character (often blocking views of the river as shown in Figure 3-27) and make this area not unlike the places they just left.

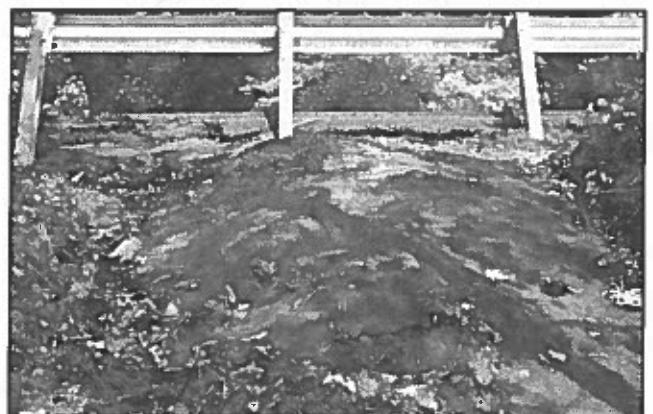


Figure 3-28 Excessive asphalt used to stabilize a failing fill bank on Route 7



The condition of the existing wood post and cable guiderails varies tremendously. In some locations, runoff from adjoining hills appears to be bypassing blocked culverts designed to carry the water, and either running under the road or across it. In both cases the result has been the erosion of the bank and in some cases the edge of the road. Figure 3-28 illustrates one location where excess asphalt was simply placed to hold the bank. The photograph also shows the depth of the existing asphalt lifts showing the cumulative nature of this problem.

Rather than address these problems in an ad hoc manner, a long-term solution is needed that will solve the drainage, erosion, and guiderail problems that would be compatible with scenic and roadside character.

#### Comparison of guiderail types

Alternative guiderail types were evaluated by the Connecticut Department of Transportation in 1993 in multiple locations in the vicinity of the Merritt Parkway. Figures 3-29 to 3-32 illustrates the standard W-beam guiderail and three alternative types of guiderails. The drawings are at the same scale allowing easy comparison. The cost of each type of guiderail is identified on a lineal foot basis for further comparison.

While the Department has permitted the use of steel-backed wood guiderails on the Merritt Parkway, they are currently not allowing alternative types of guiderails for use on scenic roads. Use of alternative systems will require Department approval as well as a source of funds to pay for any additional costs over and above the standard W-Beam including the installation, maintenance and stocking of spare parts.

#### ConnDOT Standard Guiderail

Metal Beam Rail (Type R-B)  
Steel "W" Section  
Cost per LF - \$15  
End Anchorages \$550 each

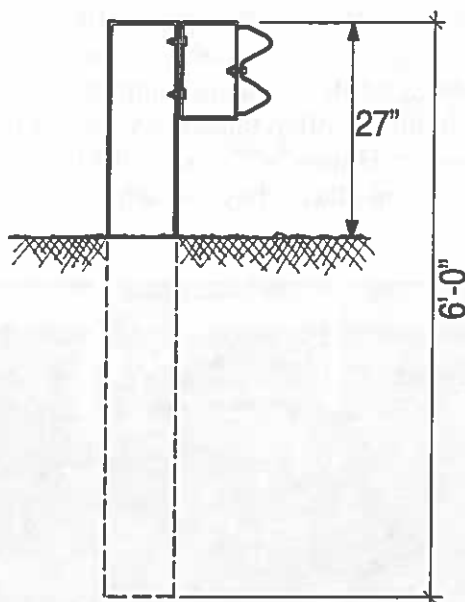


Figure 3-29 Metal Beam Rail, Steel W-section

#### ConnDOT 1993 Alternative Guiderail

Metal Beam Rail  
8"x6" Box Beam  
Cost per LF - \$24  
Cost for End Assembly - \$450 each

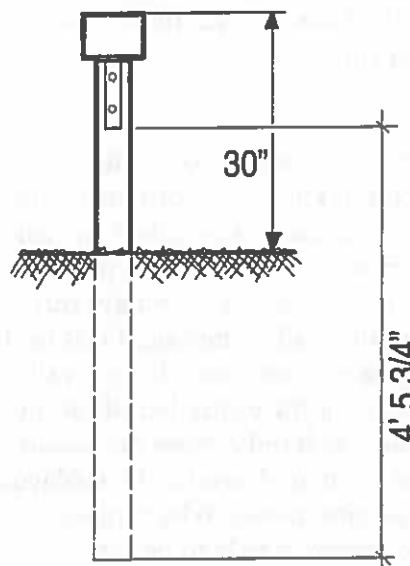


Figure 3-30 Metal Beam Rail, Box Beam

General principles for guiderail replacement

Given the importance of retaining the scenic character of Route 7 for the local economy, coupled with the additional costs associated with using an alternative system, the following general principles are recommended as a long-term strategy for guiderail replacement:

- 1) Try to preserve the wood post and cable guiderail
- 2) If the section of wood post and guiderail cannot be retained, replace with the 3 cable system with metal I-beam posts. This typically requires an 8' flat area behind for vehicle recovery. If feasible, try to utilize dark gray color galvanized posts (if readily available).
- 3) If the 8 foot area is not available behind the 3 cable guiderail, then compare the cost and

benefits of using bioengineering to stabilize the slope and an 8 foot grassy area (serving as a way to spread out the drainage flow) versus using a steel-backed wood guiderail (which requires approval from ConnDOT and additional outside funding sources).

- 4) If bioengineering is used, plants should be selected that are native, with fibrous root systems, and that will not block the view of the river (see next section for discussion of bioengineering).

Figures 3-33 and 3-34 illustrates the roadside character before and after the application of the use of both the 3 cable guiderail along with bioengineering to stabilize the slope.

**ConnDOT 1993 Alternative Guiderail**

Steel-backed Wood Guiderailing  
Cost per LF - \$79

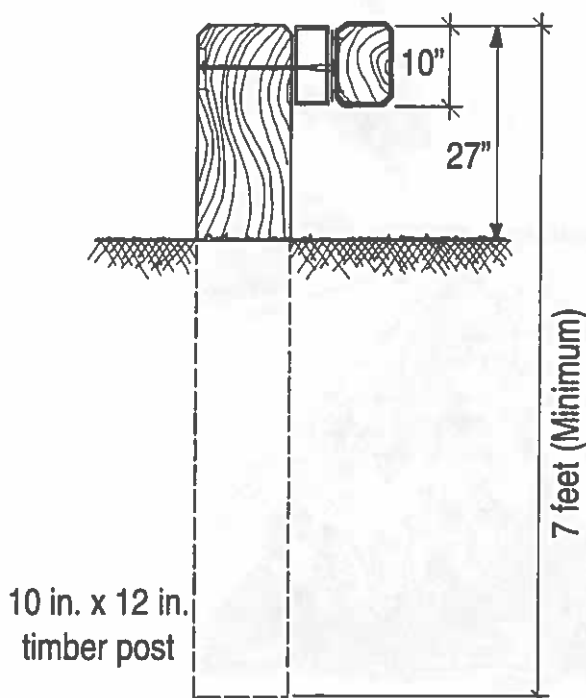


Figure 3-31 Steel-backed Wood Guiderail

**Recommended Alternative Guiderail**

Three Cable Guide Railing  
w/ I-beam post (S6R 01)

3/4 in. steel cables

Cost per LF - \$9

Cost for End Anchorages - \$550 each

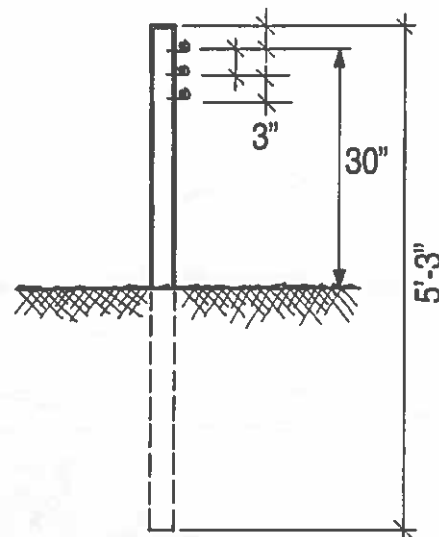


Figure 3-32 Three Cable, Metal Post



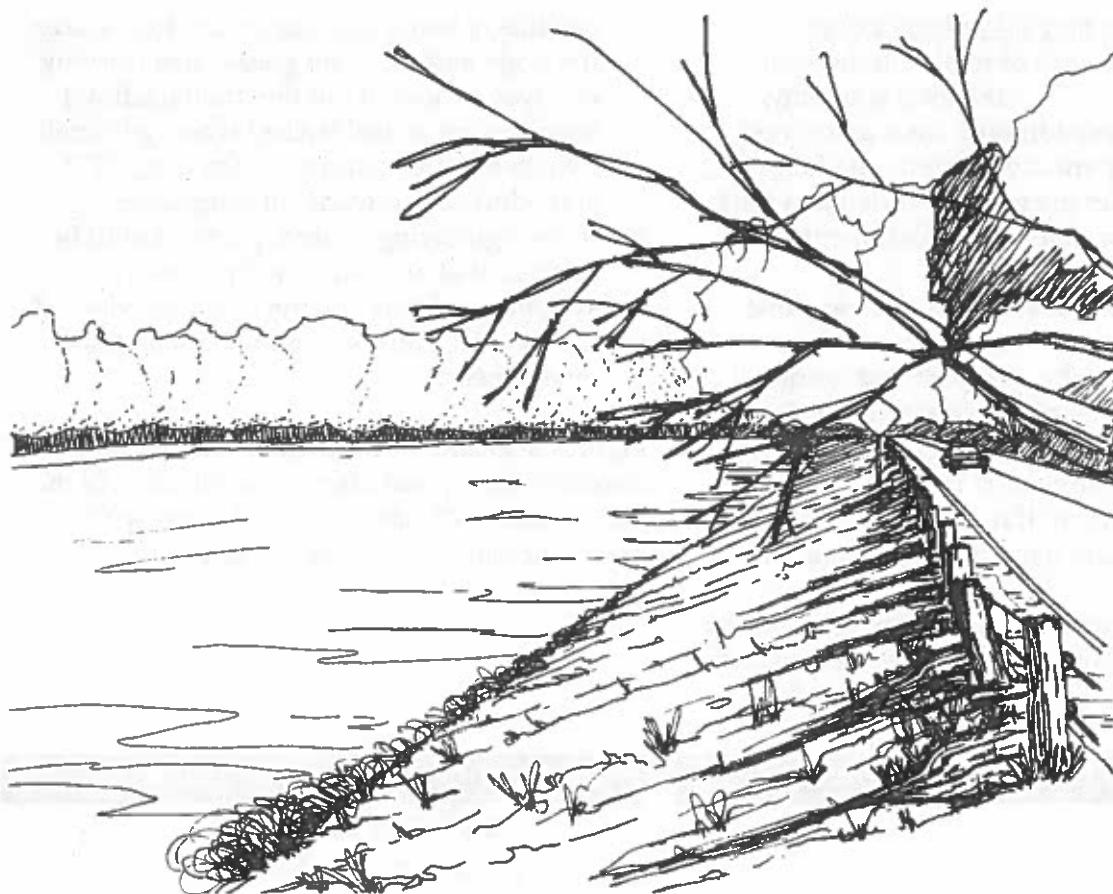


Figure 3-33 Existing view of failing wood post and cable guiderail section

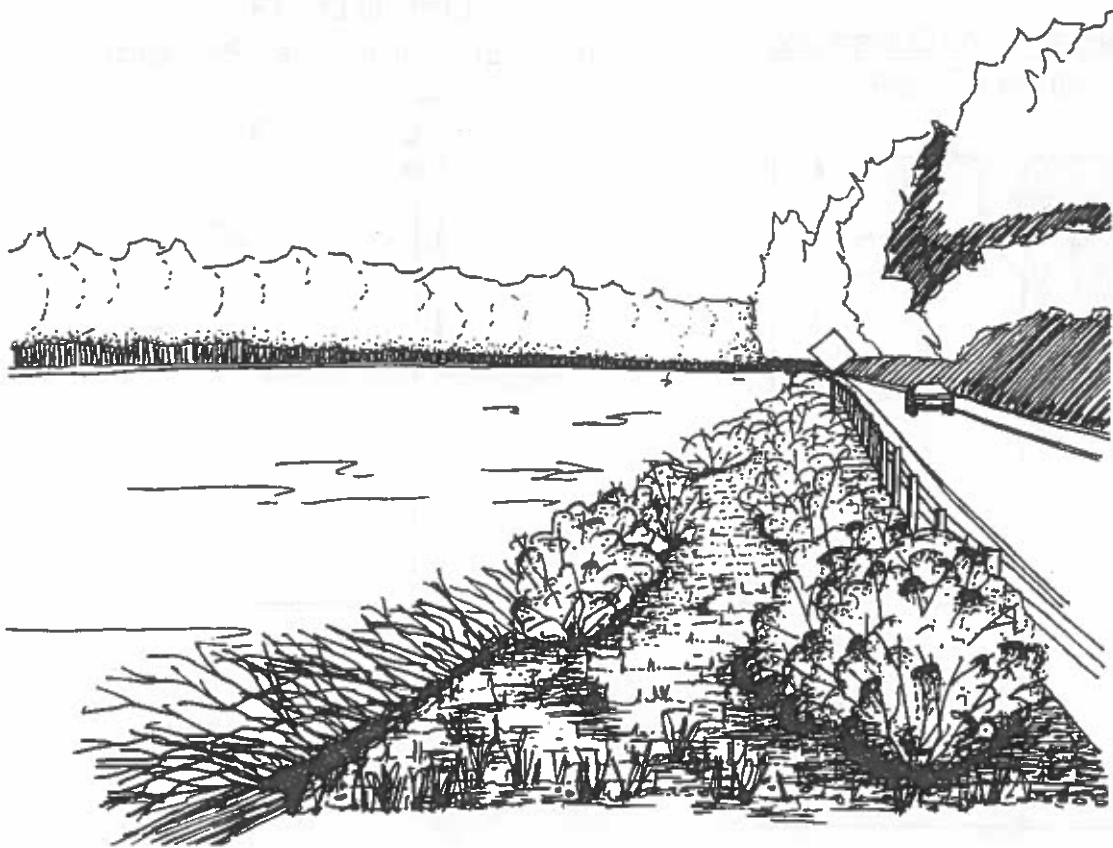


Figure 3-34 Proposed use of bioengineering to stabilize the slope and allow for use of 3-cable guiderail

### Route 7 Slope Erosion and Soil Bioengineering

The roadside between Route 7 and the Housatonic River warrants special attention for two reasons: the quality of the view of the river from the road is an essential part of the scenic experience, and the erosion of the bank is causing obvious distress to the structural integrity of the road as well as aesthetic, water quality and habitat losses. The former is seen in the leaning posts of the guiderail and in longitudinal cracking of the road surface.

A soil bioengineering strategy for resolving these issues is proposed. The purpose is to stabilize the bank so as to properly support the roadway and to allow the use of new cable guiderail that will preserve the view of the river.

Several issues can be addressed through this process, as illustrated in the accompanying drawing. The runoff from the road is currently concentrated at low points causing severe erosion at those locations. This can be diffused to reduce erosion. The dynamic deflection of a cable guiderail system is greater than that of steel W-beam guiderail. Thus additional level area on the far side of the rail is provided to enable a cable system to be used.

Several different types of soil bioengineering systems may be employed along this stretch of the Housatonic River, depending upon the nature and severity of the erosion, height of slopes, and width of available area between the river edge and the required safety zone beyond the cable guardrail. Figure 3-35 illustrates a conceptual example of a system which combines brushlayers and geotextile materials, known as a vegetated geogrid, to address a typical slope height of 10-15 feet, with a slope ratio which may be constructed as steep as 1:4 (H:V), though would ideally be on the order of 1 1/2: 1.

### Soil Bioengineering Techniques

The base of the soil bioengineering system would be formed by an initial layer of rip rap one foot above the ordinary water level of the river bed, if possible. This armored toe would be placed from the above road grade to establish a proper foundation for the subsequent geotextile/brushlayers. The second level would consist of trap rock (avg. 6" dia.) below ordinary high water, wrapped in a non-biodegradable geotextile such as Tensar geogrid. The third layer would consist of gravel material with a low percentage of trap rock or crushed

#### Grassed Spreader/Swale

- Highly to moderately well drained soil
- Level length of 20-50 ft.
- Maximum slope of 0.5% to ensure sheet flow
- Lip protected by fiberglass mat
- Depth and length to be determined on-site by calculating quantity of runoff

#### Live Fascines

- Bundles of live brush cuttings assembled as sausage-like structures

#### Brush Cuttings

- Live cuttings between lifts. Cuttings 1-2 ft. longer than terrace with base of branches against existing slope.

Gravel layer wrapped in non-biodegradable geotextile

Trap rock layer (avg. 6" dia.) wrapped in non-biodegradable geotextile

River Bed

Rip rap layer supporting bioengineering construction

8' Minimum

Scenic Road

3-cable guiderail w/ I-beam post

Existing slope

Fiberglass mat

Bank Stabilization/Restoration

- soil lifts with inner and outer geotextile wraps; e.g. Burlap for inner wrap and Tensor Geogrid @ lower levels which may be subject to wave/high water flows; or coir blanket for upper layers used as outer wrapping

Strip Drain @ 5ft. O.C.

Geotextile to prevent migration of fines through rip-rap/gravel base( wrap base with geogrid, if possible)

Figure 3-35 Example of using bioengineering techniques



stone within the flood stage zone, wrapped in a non-biodegradable material. These three layers would be backed by a geotextile material to prevent migration of fines from the parent slope through the coarser materials. Depending upon typically anticipated flood volumes (e.g. spring thaw), it may be possible to omit the trap rock layer in certain areas.

Brushlayers would be installed beginning at the third (or second, if trap rock is omitted) level. These live, cut, unrooted branches would be collected from a nearby source, and should be four to seven feet in length. The base of the cut branches is immediately adjacent to the parent slope. This will encourage root reinforcement to bind the constructed soil bioengineering system to the native soil. Soil between the brushlayers would be wrapped in geogrid material, which will not biodegrade. The face of the wrapped soil layers (and lower gravel layer) would be provided with a strip of fabric such as burlap to contain fines simply during the initial establishment of the soil bioengineering system.

The top level of the constructed slope would be dressed with a double row of live fascines, which are bundles of cut brush assembled in a sausage-like structure. The live fascines would serve to intercept sheet flow, slow its velocity and redistribute the runoff to hinder the formation of rills and gullies. Finally, a grassed swale would capture the most frequent storm events, or the so-called 'first-flush'. This swale would be designed to be as broad and flat as possible to slow runoff velocity, and provide an adequate safety zone behind the cable guiderail. The brushy growth from live fascines within this zone would add a safety factor, as it would slow an errant vehicle, but not be large enough to be a hazard in itself.

Care must be taken to avoid the development of a slip plane between the natural slope and the bioengineered slope. A slip plane would cause the slope to "slide" down when it gets lubricated with water. Strip drain placed over the natural slope at 5' on center intervals will

help to prevent the development of such a slip plane.

#### Benefits of Soil Bioengineering Systems in Conjunction with Slope Stabilization

While the application of soil bioengineering techniques may assist in stabilizing steep slopes to augment the width of the upper terrace at road level, soil bioengineering furthermore serves to enhance the health of the river.

As opposed to using conventional engineering systems alone (such as concrete walls or rip-rap), soil bioengineering systems provide cleansing of roadways runoff through water filtration and biological uptake of certain nutrients. Moreover, a mature soil bioengineering system provides shade for the streambed, thus buffering water temperature and enhancing fish habitat.

Finally, soil bioengineering systems are sufficiently flexible to withstand deflection caused by settlement or dynamic water action, and they grow stronger with age as root systems mature. Where and when conventional engineering systems are used alone, they typically weaken over time.

#### Roadside Vegetation

Preserving roadside character can often be accomplished through the cooperation of both those who are responsible for the maintenance of the road right-of-way (ConnDOT and the utility companies) and those hundreds of property owners who live along the way. The following strategies are recommended to both conserve and enhance roadside vegetation as a means of accomplishing other corridor management goals and objectives.

#### Preserving Woodland Canopy and Extensive Roadside Forests

Many areas along Route 7 are framed by dense woodland canopies; the mature trees and understory are important features of the scenic road. Woodland patches extend far beyond the scenic road and contribute to both wildlife habitat values and woodland management objectives. Many of these woodlands provide the backbone for Connecticut and southern New England's

forest products industry.

In most cases the multiple objectives of forest productivity, wildlife habitat and scenic conservation are easily obtainable through careful forest management planning. Conservation of these areas is important to maintaining the existing roadside character. Promoting healthy, economically viable woodlands is a much preferred goal of rural residential uses along a scenic road.

Existing woodlands of 100 acre size or greater are mapped in Figure 3-36. The locations of where these woodlands intersect with Route 7 are important conservation areas. Some habitat values can be conserved if the canopy remains somewhat closed along the roadside.

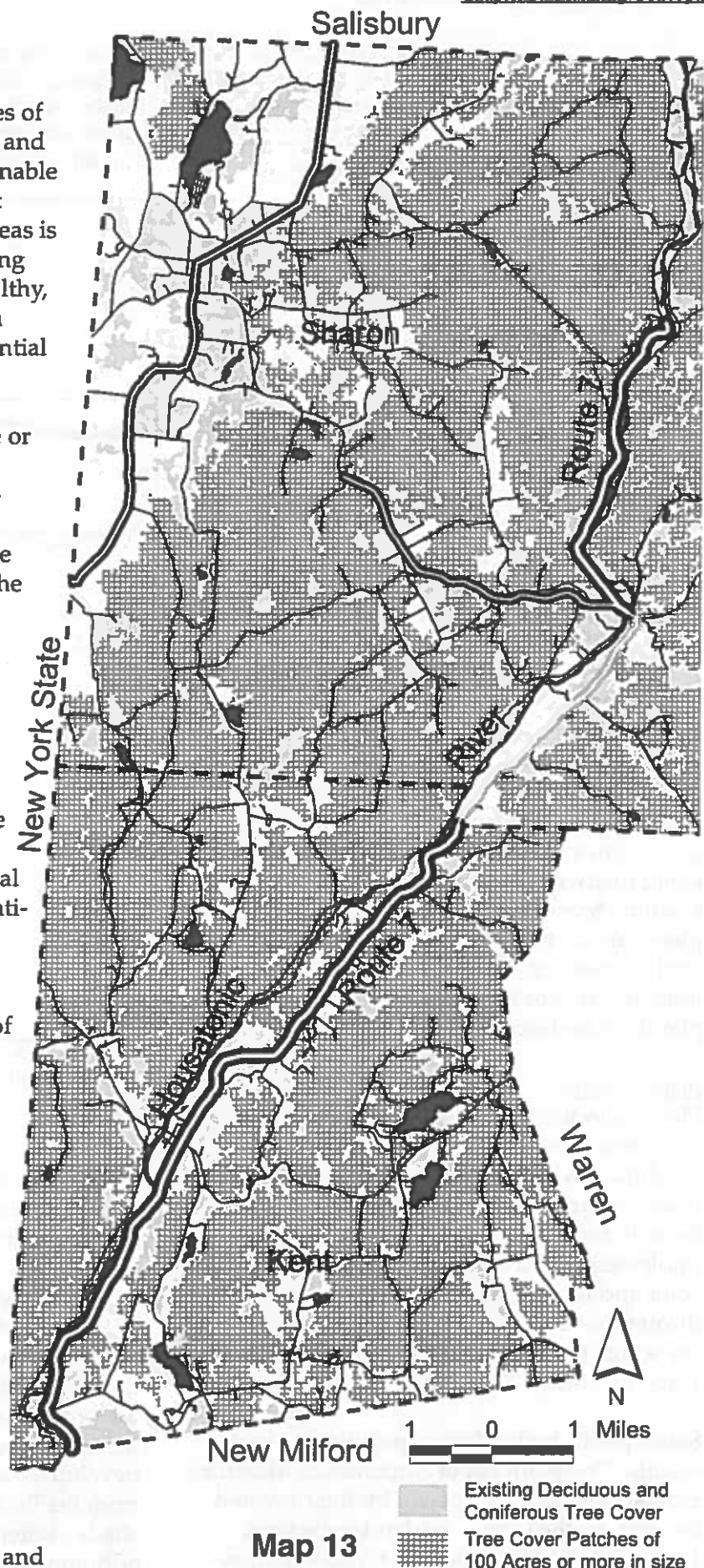
All opportunities to minimize disturbance of existing vegetation should be taken when new construction occurs. One major disturbance to existing canopies is routine maintenance along utility lines. Pruning and control of plant material within utility easement areas dramatically impacts both the aesthetic and habitat value of forest patches.

Careful pruning and management of utility right-of-ways along Route 7 can help to mitigate some of the aesthetic and habitat impacts.

Management activities along the right-of-way might include:

*Enhancing the woodland edge with flowering trees and shrubs*

Plant flowering trees and shrubs to add color and variety along the scenic road where large canopy trees stand alone. Layer plantings (shrubs, understory trees, and large canopy trees) to mimic natural occurrences in the landscape while enhancing wildlife values. Many flowering trees are smaller growing and



**Map 13**



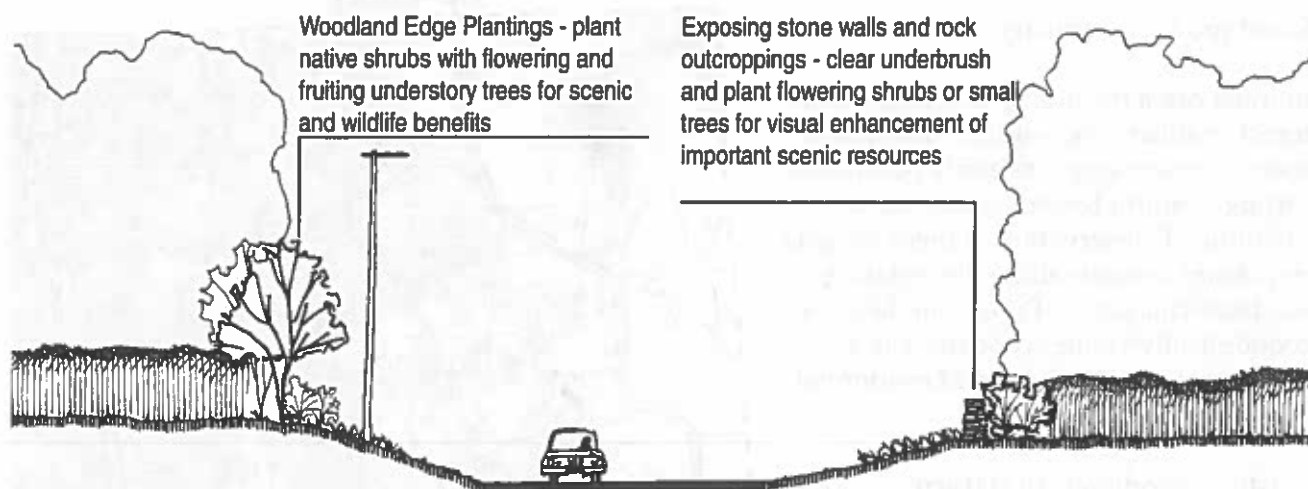


Figure 3-36(a) -Examples of roadside planting and maintenance

can be safely planted near utility lines. Plant shrubs in masses for greatest effect. Refer to the plant lists for characteristics about recommended plant species. Figure 3-36(a) illustrates how woodland edge plants can be done.

#### *Enhancing stone walls, rock outcroppings and other scenic resources*

Where existing stone walls are overgrown, clean out underbrush and plant low-growing groundcovers. The plant lists identify groundcovers that will tolerate harsh conditions along roadways as well as protect slopes from erosion. Stone walls will remain visible as these plants are no taller than one foot in height. To further enhance stone walls, plant flowering trees and shrubs behind them, layering plantings as described above.

#### *Plant Materials*

Plants selected for use along a road right-of-way must be adapted to the harsh and variable conditions which occur in these areas. Where possible native plants purchased locally should be included in revegetation efforts. When implemented with care, plantings will provide color and texture, and enhance wildlife habitat throughout the year. Enhancement efforts along the scenic road will provide a dynamic landscape for travelers on Route 7.

Select plants by landscape position for best results. The plant list in Appendix G identifies recommended plant species by their favored location on the land— the landscape type. Figure 3-36(b) illustrates the typical relation-

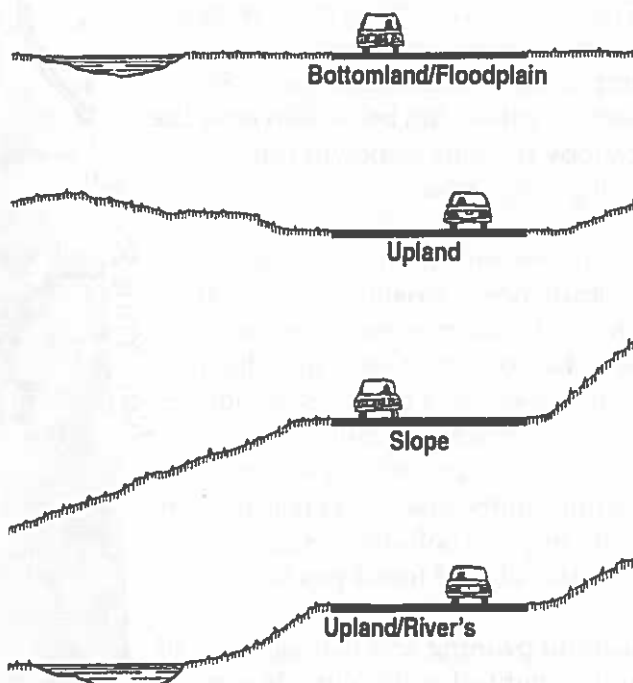


Figure 3-36(b) Typical Profiles of Landscape Positions along Route 7

ships of the land, road, and river for each landscape type. Appendix G also includes a map illustrating the locations of each of these landscape types. Identify whether the planting site is in the floodplain along the river, upland areas, or somewhere in between. Some trees need more water while others need less. Some prefer thin soils and others prefer heavy loam. Once the position of the site is determined use the recommended plant species from that list to develop a planting plan. When selecting plants from the list be sure to account for sunlight and shade. Refer to the list or a local nursery for additional information about which plants are

best for sunny and shady locations.

#### Implementation

Any proposed planting should be well thought out, with care given to specific site conditions. Small planting projects should be the first step in enhancing views and the roadside along Route 7. As these projects mature, successful plantings can be duplicated and poor plantings can be reevaluated and improved.

Planting in the right-of-way will require a permit from ConnDOT, including a review of the proposal by District office staff. When working under powerlines, consult with the local office of Connecticut Light and Power, or other utility lines to ensure that trees planted are appropriate for use in and around power and other utility lines, and that underground utility lines will not be disturbed. Property owners can undertake planting projects on their properties taking their own responsibility to maintain adequate intersection sight distances from their driveways. Refer to the accompanying drawings illustrating examples and guidelines for planting enhancements along Route 7.

#### Re-open Vistas

There are certain areas where open views of farmland and the surrounding hills have been obscured by successional growth of shrubs and trees that extend beyond the reach of the ConnDOT mowers and before the stone wall or farm field begins. These narrow strips of vegetation have obscured many fine views.

Selective opening of these vistas can be accomplished through cooperative efforts between the landowner and ConnDOT. However, maintenance of these areas to retain open vistas is a very labor intensive operation. Typically woody materials that can no longer be mechanically removed start to form after one year. Spraying herbicides near the river is not recommended. Instead, selective openings should be maintained according to the following guidelines, as illustrated in Figure 3-13, page 50:

- Vistas should be opened at a shallow angle to the highway (30-45 degrees is preferred);
- Vistas should be completed before passing warning signs approaching curves or other warning signs;

- Vistas should not be located on a curve, on a tangent end leading into a curve or at right angles to tangents;
- Clearing need not be extensive – if the view is worthy of several hundred feet of clearing, then a pull-off should be constructed.
- Mature trees can be pruned up to frame a view (looking underneath the lower branching habit of the tree).

The Kent Land Trust has started an adopt-a-view program to find volunteers to help clear and maintain some of the most desirable vistas (see Chapter 4).

#### Wildflowers and Perennials

Enhancement plantings along the road and right-of-way create visual interest at important points along the corridor, as well as providing for weed control and soil stabilization. Native wildflowers are a low maintenance planting alternative, providing color at strategic points. Use colorful plantings to attract drivers' attention at town entries, along steep embankments of bridges, or at important points of interest to visitors. Direct seeding of an annual/perennial wildflower mix will provide years of color in seeded areas.

Existing native wildflowers such as Bachelor's Buttons are a spring and summer delight along Route 7. Some wildflowers (any that respond to deadheading) may also respond well to carefully-timed mowing allowing plants to repeat bloom if mowing is done before all bloom color is lost and plants have gone dormant. Mowing at a height of 4-6 inches will keep weeds from invading plantings and preserve basal leaves of the wildflower plants allowing them to rejuvenate and bloom again.

#### Cornwall Bridge Test Site

The use of wildflowers within non-interstate state-owned right-of-ways has not been extensively examined. Prior to utilizing wildflowers to accomplish roadside conservation and enhancement goals, it is recommended that a test site be developed to determine optimum seed mixtures, mowing regimens, and other maintenance or management requirements.



The triangular green of open space at Cornwall Bridge is an excellent test location. The Cornwall Bridge Association is willing to adopt and implement the project, including funding and maintenance. The site is highly visible and will also serve to encourage others to participate in similar projects. See Chapter 4, Implementation for specific steps recommended to implement this project. Design parameters for further consideration (sightlines and recommended planting areas) are included in Figure 3-68, page 105.

### Preserving Specimen Trees

The Significant Features maps in Appendix A identify the locations of specimen trees found along Route 7. The legacy of these trees is an important part of the roadside character of Route 7 and they should be preserved. One of the best preservation methods is the establishment of a "Big Tree Registry," accompanied with a local tree preservation ordinance. The "Big Tree Registry" provides each town with the geographic location of existing trees recorded for each tax parcel. The ordinance can then specify that a permit is required to remove trees over a specific size, expressed as a diameter at breast height (dbh). The minimum size should truly reflect the size of most of the large specimen trees to reduce the regulatory and administrative burden that would accompany such an ordinance. (The smaller the tree size the greater the burden).

The tree ordinance may also be limited in geographic scope to reduce the potential enforcement burden – for example, only for properties with road frontage along designated scenic roads (state and local). An example of a tree ordinance and "Big Tree Registry" is included in Appendix F. Chapter 4, Implementation, discusses specific measures that should be



*Figure 3-37 Specimen trees require special care when pruning to maintain required utility line clearances*

taken to implement such an ordinance and registry, including any role that a permanent scenic road advisory committee might play in actually making it easier for ConnDOT and the utility companies to ensure adequate public notice and town approval of those normal practices required to maintain public safety and reliability of utility distribution systems.

### Utility Lines

In some cases, it may be desirable to improve roadside character by placing utility lines underground. The cost associated with placing utilities underground varies with the complexity of the systems involved – generally higher in more densely developed areas. In some cases, utility lines can be slightly relocated to improve the view – for example, relocating utility poles to the opposite side of the street from a panoramic view. There are several locations where underground utilities may be desirable:

- Flanders National Register Historic District
- The 2-block area on either side of the intersection of Route 7 with Route 341 - The NWCCOG Regional Transportation Plan identifies a pole at the southeast corner of the intersection that causes problems with turning movements of larger vehicles. Underground locations should be evaluated for this area to determine the feasibility of placing utilities underground. A recent pedestrian accident in this section of Route 7 also highlighted the need for additional pedestrian scaled lighting. Should such a lighting project be pursued, then undergrounding utility lines should be considered at the same time. Figures 3-44 and 3-45 (page 82) illustrate the appearance of the south approach to the Center of Kent if wires were to be placed underground or relocated.
- Locations associated with the Kent Land Trust "adopt a view" program. If adopted, these areas represent a high priority for scenic value and should be considered for spot undergrounding or relocation of utility lines.

## STRATEGY # 5: TRAFFIC CALMING

In the past, highway designers thought predominantly about through traffic, often at the expense of local access, pedestrian needs, and the local environment. In an effort to provide continuity of driver expectation and uniformly high speeds, the geometry of the highway as it passed through small towns was often modified to be as similar as possible to the geometry of the highway in the countryside. Driver behavior, perhaps predictably, has reflected the highway geometry, and has increasingly disregarded the need to behave differently in town.

Concurrently, the growth of towns has often been concentrated along the highway, and the distinction between built-up and rural sections of a roadway have become blurred.

Nevertheless, the need to behave differently as a driver in town—to drive more slowly in order to accommodate turning movements, parking, pedestrians, and to reduce the impact on the concentration of people working and living near the roadway—have not changed. Perhaps they have become even more important. The distinction between driver behavior in the countryside, and behavior in town, should be reinforced by both the nature of roadside development, and the detailing of the highway, so that the quality of life, as well as driver behavior, will be different in each case.

“Traffic Calming” is the contemporary name given to the effort to peacefully integrate the automobile and the built environment. It does not attempt to eliminate the automobile, but does utilize methods to reduce its adverse impacts on the local environment. It is a particularly important technique for application to the management of scenic corridors with historic villages and towns.

### Traffic Calming Measures

There are several locations that may benefit from traffic calming measures. These areas include Bull’s Bridge, the Center of Kent, and Cornwall Bridge. Some areas such as Flanders and West Cornwall are fortunate to have natural limitations on speed related to the existing

geometry of the road. Typically, drivers will travel as fast as they are physically comfortable.

Travel speed is a function of the regulated speed limit, perceived level of enforcement, sight distances, the road alignment, the road surface, and the amount of “visual friction” that a driver perceives when traveling (such as vegetation, adjacent cut and fill slope sections, stone walls, houses and driveways, and the presence of pedestrians and bicyclists).

While the most effective technique for reducing travel speeds when approaching settled areas is through enforcement, this is not always possible in rural communities. Radar devices that flash travel speed on a portable sign are very effective and can be purchased by two towns willing to share the devices (if the towns have a resident state trooper). Salisbury recently purchased such a device.

The issue of traffic speed on Route 7 approaching the Center of Kent, Bull’s Bridge and Cornwall Bridge is an important issue. However, within these settled areas, there is also the need to consider pedestrians, bicycle use, frequently turning vehicles into and out of driveways and businesses, and (in the Center of Kent) on-street parking. In the absence of adequate funding for enforcement, traffic calming measures can be used to give drivers more clues that they are entering a settled areas. The following measures are recommended, with selected examples showing what these techniques might look like:

### Reinforcing Gateways

Traffic calming measures can be used to provide drivers with more clues that they are entering a settled area and they should slow down. The following examples illustrate the techniques that can be used in the Center of Kent to reinforce this message.

Approaching from the north, drivers are first welcomed to Kent by a sign at the Sloane Stanley Museum (Figure 3-38). This is the first indication that a driver should slow down. The





Figure 3-38 Route 7 at Sloane Stanley Museum

first actual warning sign for speed limit reduction is just south of Cobble Lane (Figure 3-39). The green village identification sign (Figure 3-40) is located just at the point where Route 7 begins its descent into the commercially built up areas. Finally, the first glimpse of the built up area along North Main is achieved near 80 N. Main (Figure 3-41).

The distances separating each of these clues is great enough that drivers tend to accelerate again when no further visual evidence is found that they really are approaching a settled area. Some consolidation of these signs (the "Welcome to Kent" and the green village identification sign, for example), coupled with pavement markings reinforcing the location of the speed limit sign, would help give a more clear message as to where drivers should slow down because they are approaching a settled area.

Approaching the Center of Kent from the south is more defined, both through the preservation of existing farm fields and by the closer placement of the existing warning and speed limit signs (Figures 3-42 and 3-43). Reinforcement of this southern approach can be achieved using the following strategies:

- Install a "Kent Welcomes You" sign in front of the mature trees (near the entrance to the fairground site) as shown in Figure 3-44.
- Plant new trees along the west side of the road (starting at the "Kent Welcomes You" sign), using relatively wide spacing to frame broad views across the farm fields, while at the same time increasing the "visual friction" approaching the Center of Kent. Note that the illustrations of new tree planting in



Figure 3-39 The first sign alerting drivers about the upcoming speed limit reduction is difficult to see

Figures 3-44 and 3-45 illustrate tree planting with utility lines relocated or placed underground to improve the appearance. Appropriately sized trees could also be selected to plant under the utility lines if they are not placed underground (coordinated with Connecticut Light and Power).

- Relocate the southbound speed limit sign (increasing from 30 to 45 m.p.h.) at the same location as the northbound sign (decreasing from 45 to 30 m.p.h.) and extend the double yellow line to this location. Moving the southbound speed limit sign to this location will extend the 30 m.p.h. zone beyond the entrances to the Kent Greenhouse located on the west side of Route 7.
- Use speed limit pavement marking to reinforce the sign located just as the pavement rises (see Figure 3-45). Note that the markings need to be placed according to the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. [ConnDOT's Manager of Traffic Engineering stated that they do not use pavement markings since they are labor intensive and costly as opposed to the benefit they may provide and he does not support "such a precedent-setting proposal."]

#### Reallocating Pavement Use

Once the driver has descended into the more thickly settled section of Kent, at the beginning of the commercial properties the pavement widens to 12 foot lanes with broad shoulders. These lanes should be narrowed to 11 foot lanes with the remaining pavement striped for bicycle use (see Strategy #2, Greenways and Linkages).



Figure 3-40 The green Kent village identification sign is just beyond the speed limit sign

#### Using Landscape to Enhance Driver Awareness of Travel Speed

As discussed above, awareness of travel speed is partly a function of the amount of "visual friction" that a driver perceives at the edge of the right-of-way. Roadside trees can be spaced to gradually increase the amount of "visual friction" approaching town.

#### Rhythmic tree planting

Approaching Bull's Bridge from the south, there is a need to give drivers more clues that they are coming up to a settled area and a traffic light. South of Bulls Bridge, Route 7 has more of a wide open feel to the landscape, including views of the aqueduct for the hydroelectric facility – the banks of which are not particularly attractive. New tree planting, as shown in Figures 3-46 and 3-47, can be used to reduce the road's wide open look and feel, screen less desirable views and frame the good views.

At the same time the tree planting, if spaced at decreasing frequencies, can give drivers the



Figure 3-42 Speed limit 30 warning sign from the south



Figure 3-41 Descending into the Center of Kent

illusion that they are going faster than they actually are – making them feel the need to slow down. Spacing of the trees can decrease according to the desired speed limit – which in this case is decreasing from 45 to 40 to 35 m.p.h.

Any new planting should respond to clear zone requirements (see Appendix I). Permits are required to plant within the right-of-way by District IV of ConnDOT. Maintenance responsibilities will also need to be defined through a formal agreement with ConnDOT.

#### Enclosure

Making a road look and feel more narrow will give drivers yet another clue that they should slow down. In addition to large canopy trees, hedges, fences, buildings themselves can be used to narrow the look and feel of the road in the approach areas to the Center of Kent. A number of properties already have fences, and these could be extended to adjoining properties.



Figure 3-43 Speed limit 30 starting point





Figure 3-44 Proposed entry sign and tree planting (south approach)



Figure 3-45 Pavement marking sign to reinforce speed limit

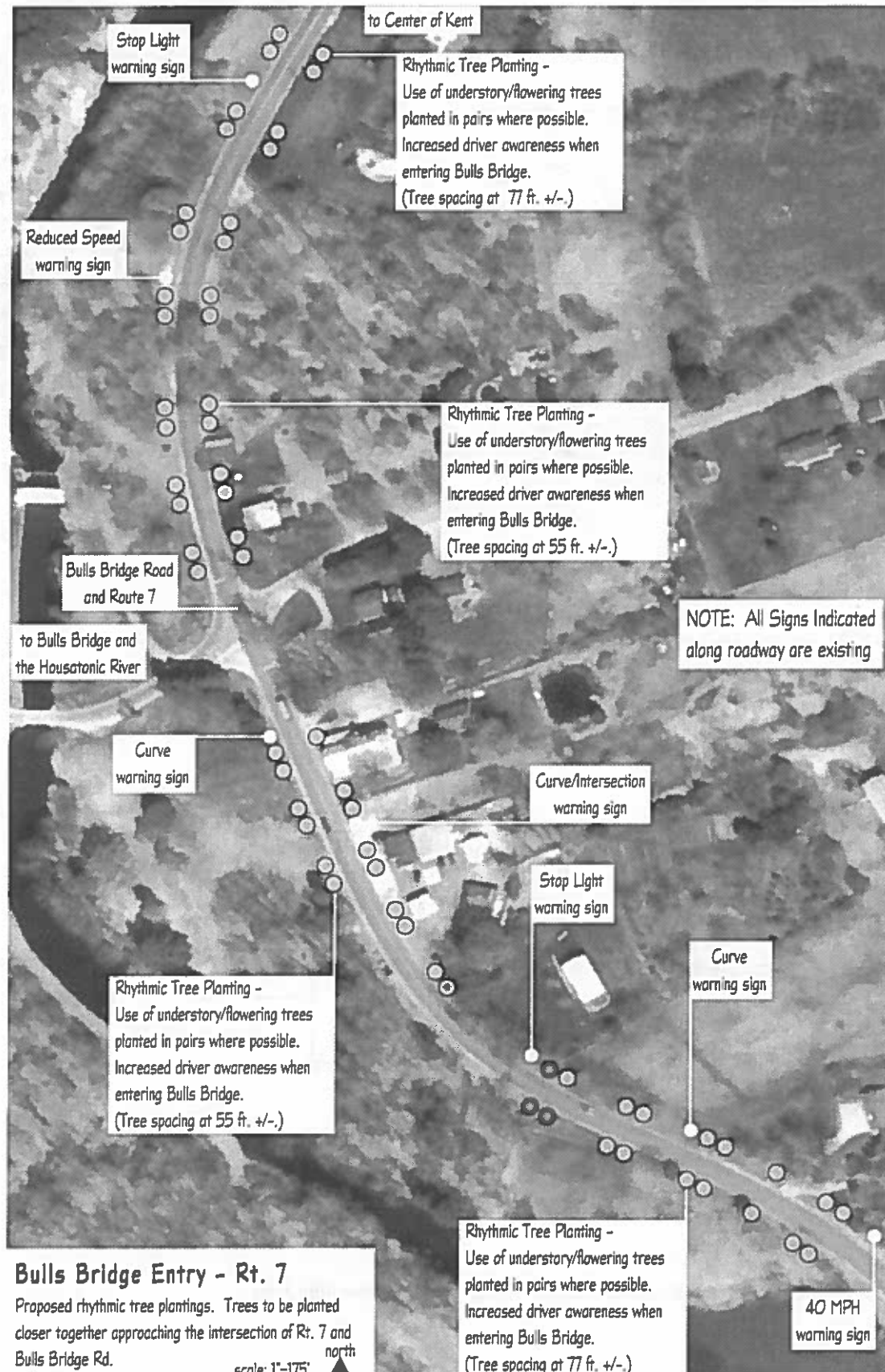


Figure 3-46 Proposed planting approaching Bulls Bridge from the south



Figure 3-47 Sketch showing character of proposed planting and enhancements at Bulls Bridge

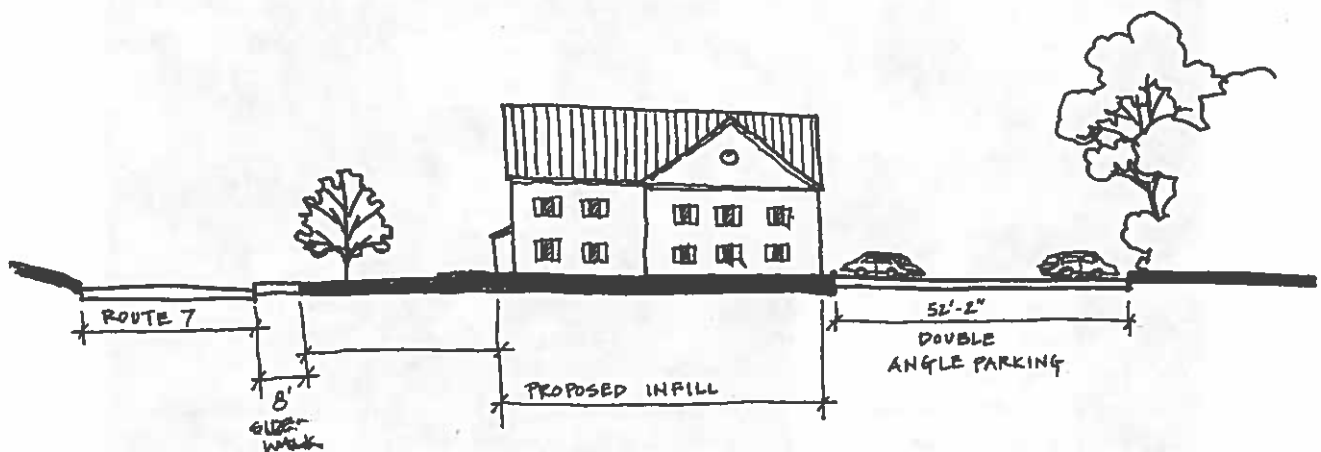


Figure 3-48 Desired character of infill sites south of Route 341 approaching Kent



The south approach to the Center of Kent represents an excellent opportunity. Two vacant infill sites are available. Building new structures close to the street (using the guidelines described in the next section, as illustrated in Figure 3-48) can not only narrow the look and feel of the road, but can also improve the appearance by effectively screening the more utilitarian gas station.

#### Improving Pedestrian Safety and Pedestrian Crossings

In addition to slowing the speed of vehicles as they approach the Center of Kent and other settled areas, there is a need to enhance pedestrian safety, especially along North Main Street. A recent accident involving a vehicle and a pedestrian (who was opening a car door after crossing the street at the Kent Market) highlights the need for some pedestrian safety improvements. Two ideas are worth pursuing:

##### Extended curb lines at crosswalks (bumpouts)

First, bumpouts should be constructed at existing crosswalks (and any future crosswalks) where there are parked cars. Figure 3-49 illustrates the bumpout proposed along North Main at crosswalks south of the railroad. The purpose of constructing the bumpout is to place the pedestrian at the edge of the parking lane giving drivers a clear indication that they are desiring to cross the street. In Kent vehicles are required

to stop when a pedestrian is in the crosswalk. Often it is hard to see the pedestrian over parked cars, especially with the increasing use of sport utility vehicles, mini-vans, and extended cab pickups which are taller than the normal person.

Adding additional cross-walks, as well as changing pavement color or type within the center district, are also ways to improve awareness of the need to drive slowly.

##### Lighting

Currently, there is a standard highway cobra fixture on every other utility pole. The State Trooper investigating the pedestrian accident near the Kent Market indicated that poor lighting may have been a factor. Additional cobra fixtures could be placed so that the area between the Fife 'n Drum and the Route 341 intersection had better lighting. Alternatively, pedestrian scaled lighting could be installed to provide direct illumination of the sidewalk and parking area, rather than increasing the overall ambient light level with additional cobra fixtures.

A detailed study of the existing light levels along with a schematic plan for any improvements is beyond the budget for this study. However, Connecticut Light and Power will often generate a schematic lighting plan at no cost to the Town.

Note: bumpouts should be designed in consultation with emergency vehicle operators and snow plow operators to ensure compatibility

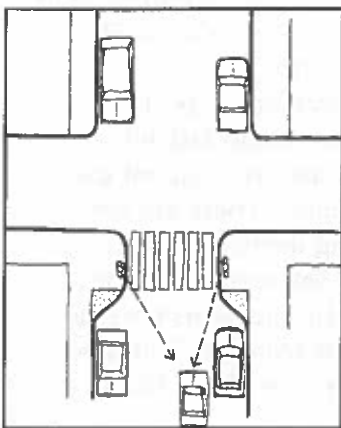


Figure 3-49 Proposed 'bumpout' for pedestrian crossings in the Center of Kent

**STRATEGY #6: GROWING THE CENTER OF KENT TO PRESERVE SCENIC VALUES**

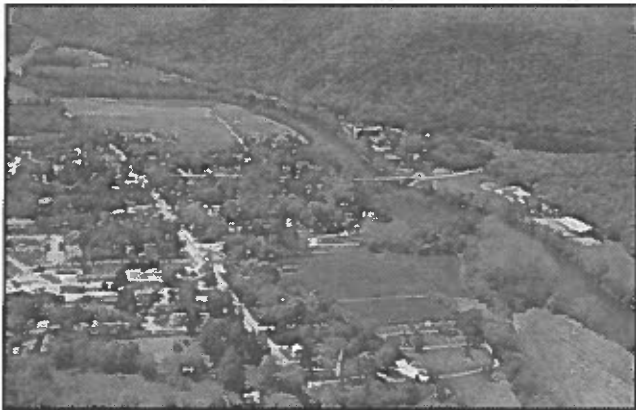


Figure 3-50 Aerial view of the Center of Kent

One of the most important rural conservation strategies is actually an economic development tool. The concept of “building in town” is an often suggested approach to preserving open countryside, but is just as often hard for residents and neighbors to imagine what it might be like. The Center of Kent is blessed with some excellent opportunities for new development nestled into the existing fabric of the town. New houses can be built with great views to the surrounding hills while at the same time being within walking distance to schools, shopping, restaurants, or other town amenities. At the same time, there are opportunities for new office construction that would accommodate growing businesses such as Cyberion, or others who can be fortunate enough to capture a part of the burgeoning electronic commerce marketplace.

Rural small town values are attracting a new migration of population around the country, highlighted by a recent *Time* magazine cover story. Electronic commerce has enabled a whole new generation to live in more affordable rural areas and compete with their big city counterparts.

How the Center of Kent grows over the next decade to accommodate these trends will perhaps have more impact on the scenic values of Route 7 than new cellular towers. Will new residents choose to live on rural ranchettes – and leading to a kind of rural counterpart to sprawl

– carving up the countryside? Or can this new rural migration be directed towards the villages and hamlets where there are already existing services and amenities? The following pages are intended to demonstrate the latter – avoiding rural sprawl by encouraging appropriately scaled infill development within the existing infrastructure of the town.

### Existing Conditions

Kent is organized along a grid-like pattern, with the original section of town at the intersection of Routes 7 and 341, and the later section built around the Depot. The library and volunteer fire department are the only public buildings left with frontage along Route 7. Figure 3-51 illustrates the organization of this grid and the pattern created by the existing built environment. The Center of Kent has had two major episodes of growth in the last 30 years: the addition of the Kent Towne Center, a more vertical, 2 -1/2 story expansion of the town on the west side of North Main St.; and, the addition of the Kent Green Shopping Village, a more horizontal expansion of the town fabric to the east.

Figure 3-52 illustrates the organization of the major circulation through town. The railroad creates a distinct barrier between North Main Street businesses and the Kent Green Shopping Village. The result is that the private shopping village access road, called Kent Green Boulevard, is essentially a long cul-de-sac with only two places to get in and out, both returning to one block of each other on North Main St. Congestion along the North Main St. section of Route 7 is a continual problem, especially during late spring, summer and fall, when seasonal residents and visitors frequent the commercial establishments. There are few alternatives for traveling north and south (or east and west) to avoid this congestion or to spread it out. This has implications for emergency vehicles that come from the Volunteer Fire Department building on North Main.

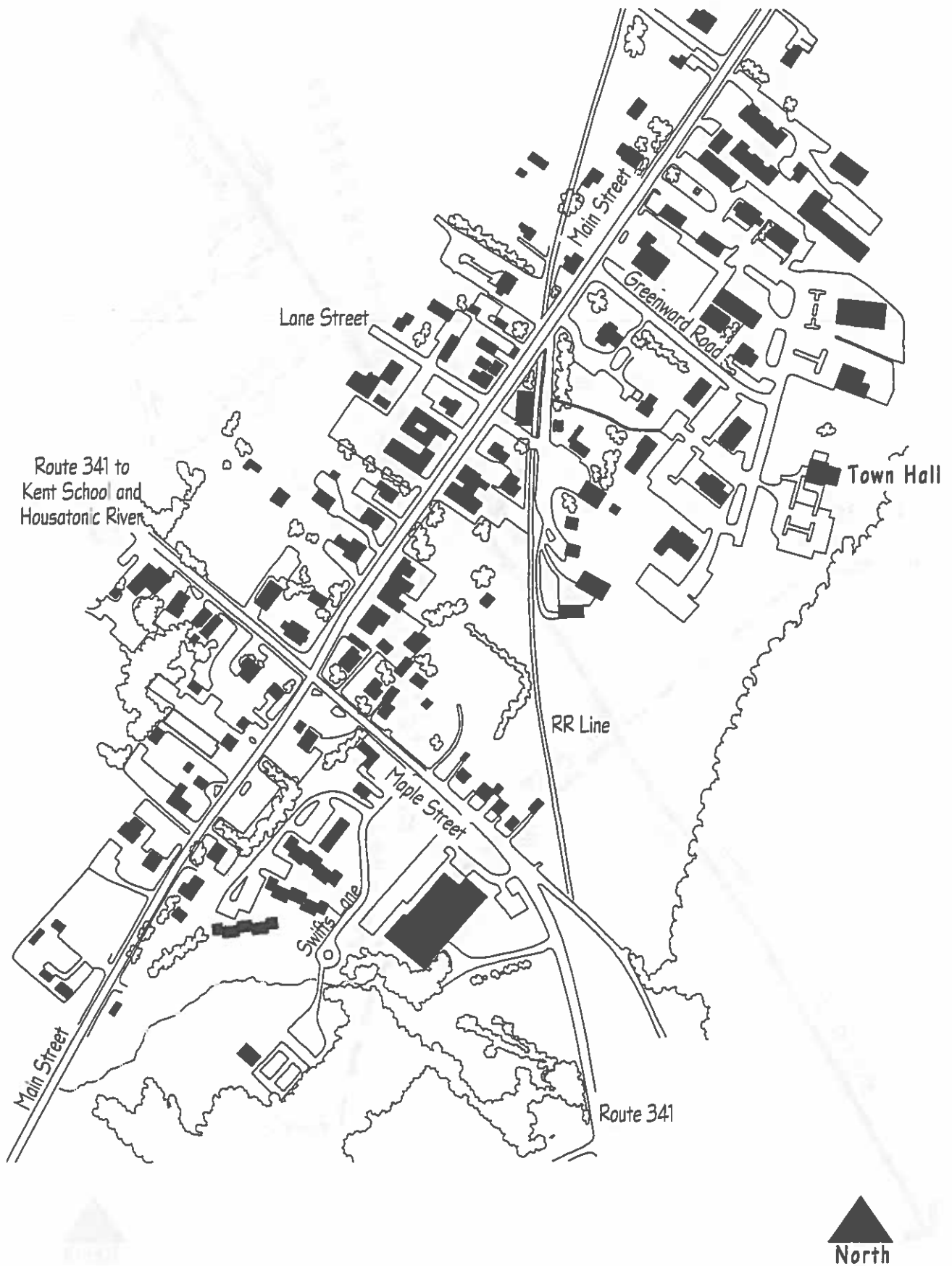


Figure 3-51 Existing Center of Kent pattern of buildings and streets



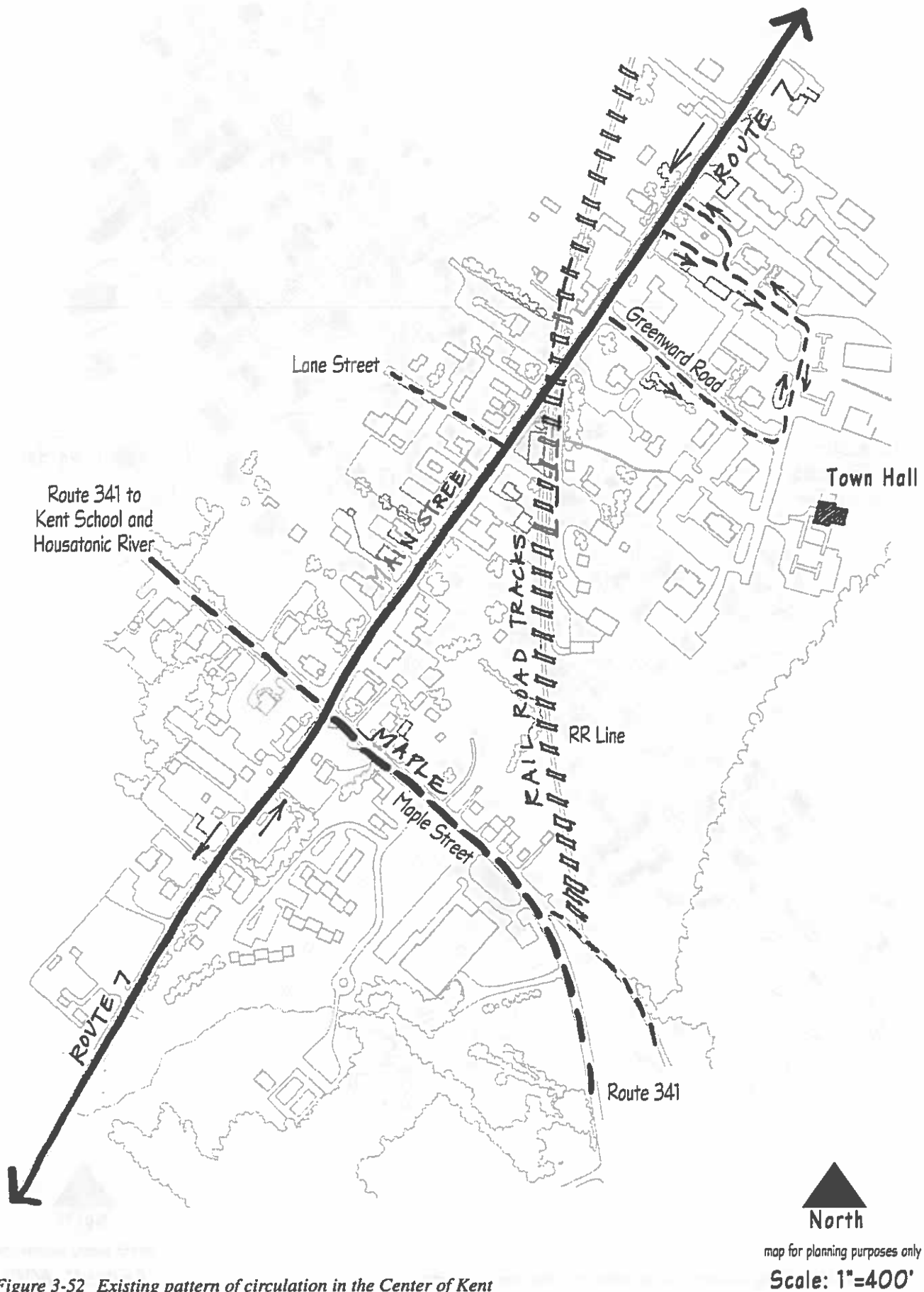


Figure 3-52 Existing pattern of circulation in the Center of Kent



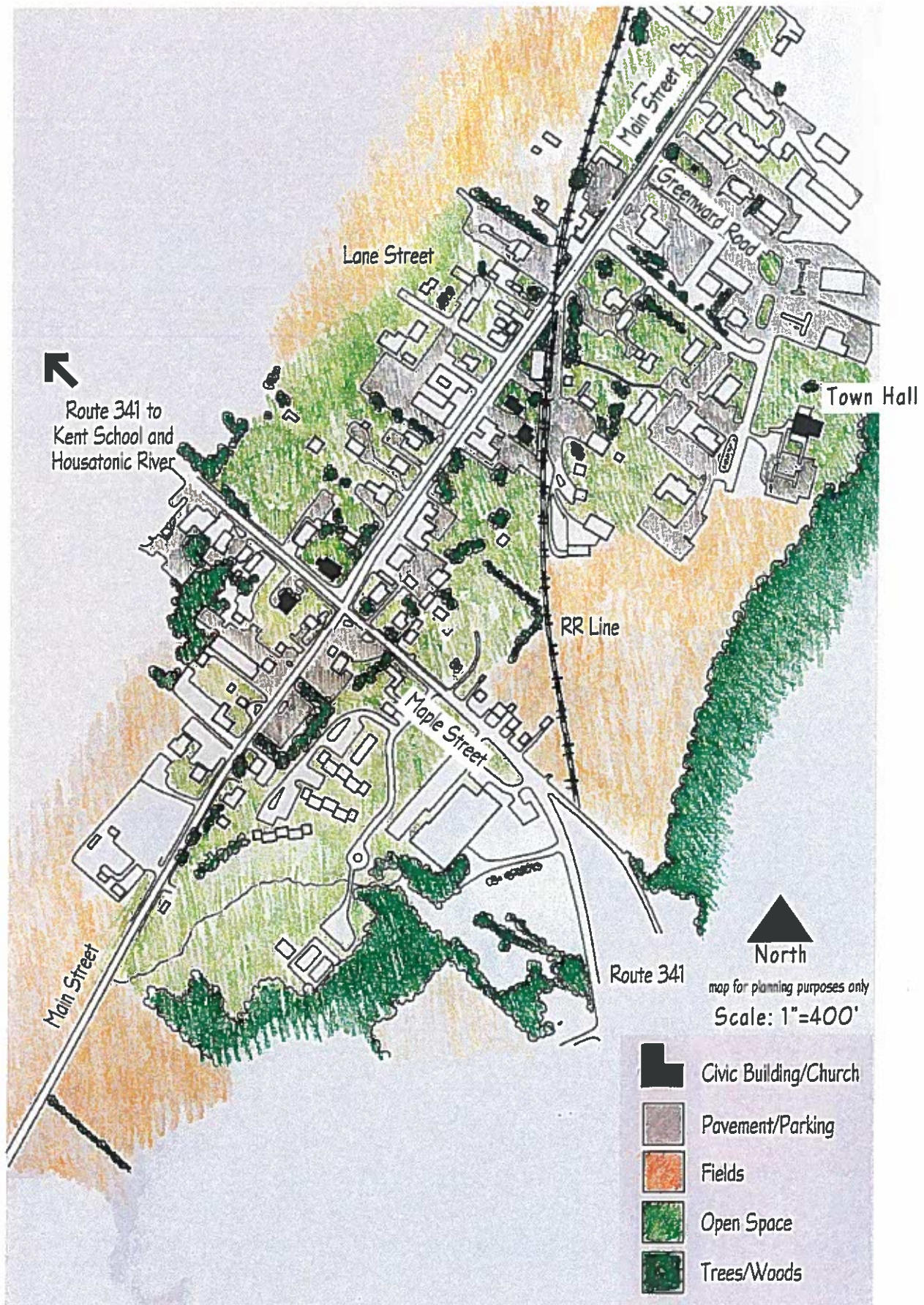


Figure 3-53 Existing pattern of open space in the Center of Kent



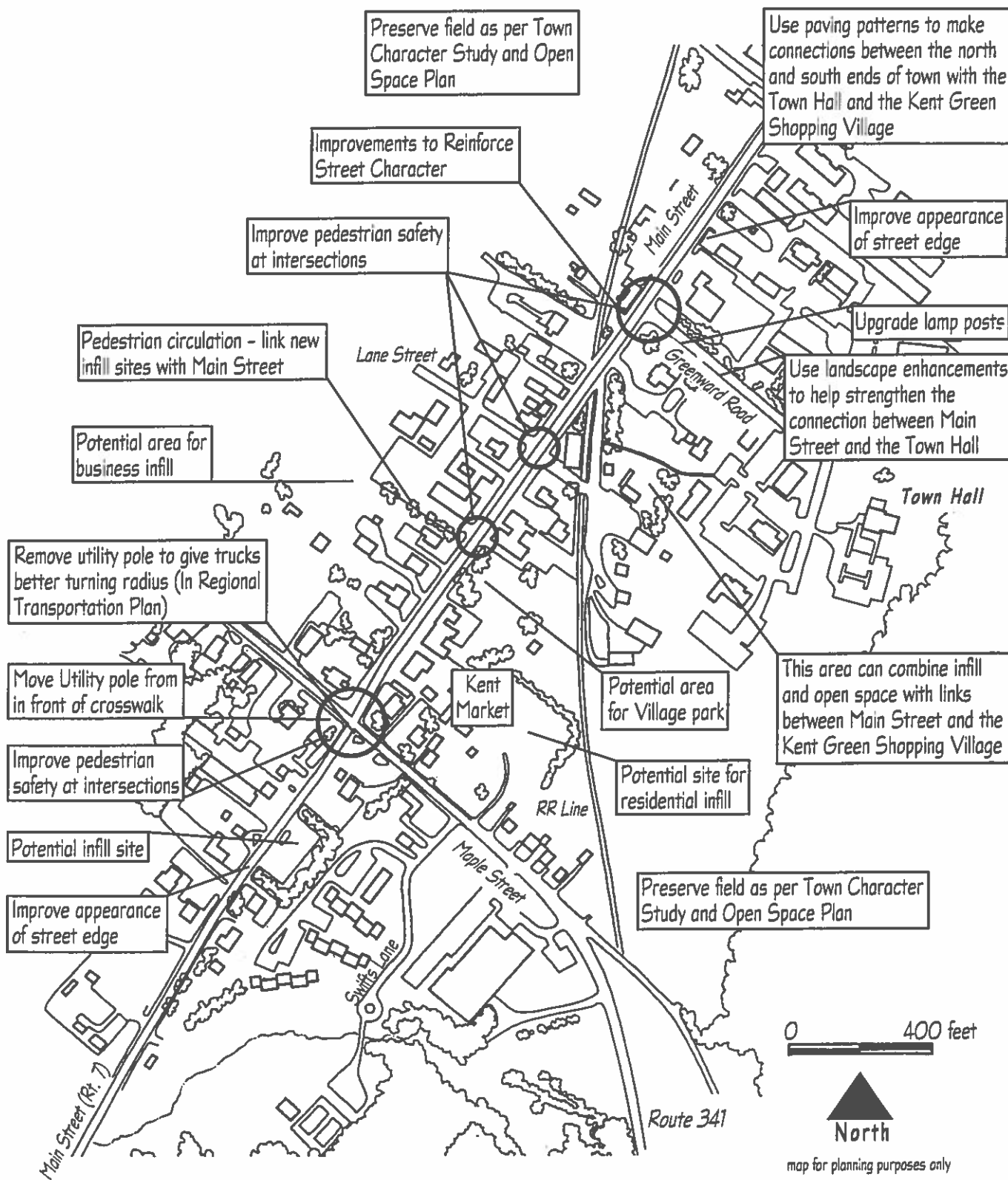


Figure 3-54 Specific issues and problems facing the Center of Kent



Figure 3-53 illustrates the existing patterns of open space. The Center of Kent is fortunate in that it continues to be surrounded by open space on all four sides. Existing agricultural fields are permanently preserved to the south. Agriculture fields to the west are still being used for that purpose. The surrounding hillsides to the southeast are also an important visual element in contributing to the character of the Center of Kent – serving as an attractive amenity for future development

There are also a number of other issues that need to be addressed over time in the Center of Kent raised through discussions with merchants, at the public workshop in November, by residents, and town officials. These issues are identified in Figure 3-54.

The following strategies are recommended as a way to encourage appropriate economic development in the Center of Kent, while preserving the surrounding fields and open spaces.

### **Creating Redundancy in the Street System**

The street pattern of recent development in the Village of Kent have followed a pattern that is typical of post-World War II development. Each project is located on a cul-de-sac with entrance and exit from the main street. This is true of the attractive multi-family housing development built to the north of the Kent Green Shopping Village. It is also true of the Kent Green shopping and Town Hall development. The only new project to break the mold is the Kent Towne Center which connects to Elisabeth Street, as well as to Main Street (Route 7) through an alley.

The difficulty of this cul-de-sac street pattern, from a traffic standpoint, is that every movement from one development to another, from one part of town to another, must be accomplished by way of the main street. In Kent, this puts more traffic and turning movements on Route 7, which conflict with parking and through movements that must be there.

Prior to World War II, it was typical for developments to build parts of a larger street network concurrent with construction of the project, or for cities or towns to build the streets in prepara-

tion for development. These streets were most often part of a grid pattern that had been conceived for the entire anticipated built-up area of the town. While certain streets would be more important than others, they were all connected with each other, providing a redundancy in the street system that allowed multiple paths to go from any one place to another.

Redundancy in the road system of a town center is very helpful. It reduces the impact of traffic by spreading it out, rather than concentrating it on only one street. It is also of special importance in emergencies, as it allows more than one path for emergency vehicles.

### **Extend Kent Green Boulevard to Route 341**

When the Kent Green Shopping Village was initially laid out, there were plans set aside to extend Kent Green Boulevard through to Route 341. An apron was built for such a purpose. Other ideas have been proposed to link the development by extending Library Avenue along a narrow right-of-way, though not specific as to how or whether it could be used for commercial purposes. Neither of these routes were ever built.

For the Center of Kent, it is possible to think about the benefits to the way the town works that adding redundancy, a connectivity between existing developments, might provide. Such a connection is particularly important for the “Kent Green” area, and for the relief it could provide for the most developed section of Main Street, from the intersection with Route 341 to the Kent Green entrance. Figure 3-55 illustrates a long-term concept for growing the Center of Kent, based around the assumption that Kent Green Boulevard could be extended to Route 341.

Critical to the success of such an extension is the ability to keep the route close to the existing structures on N. Main, creating a series of blocks similar in size and scale to those on the west side of Main Street. The route should meet 341 at Swifts Lane, then extend parallel to Main Street until it crosses the railroad. A small “traffic square” could be constructed that would allow through traffic to proceed without stopping but force vehicles to maintain a slow

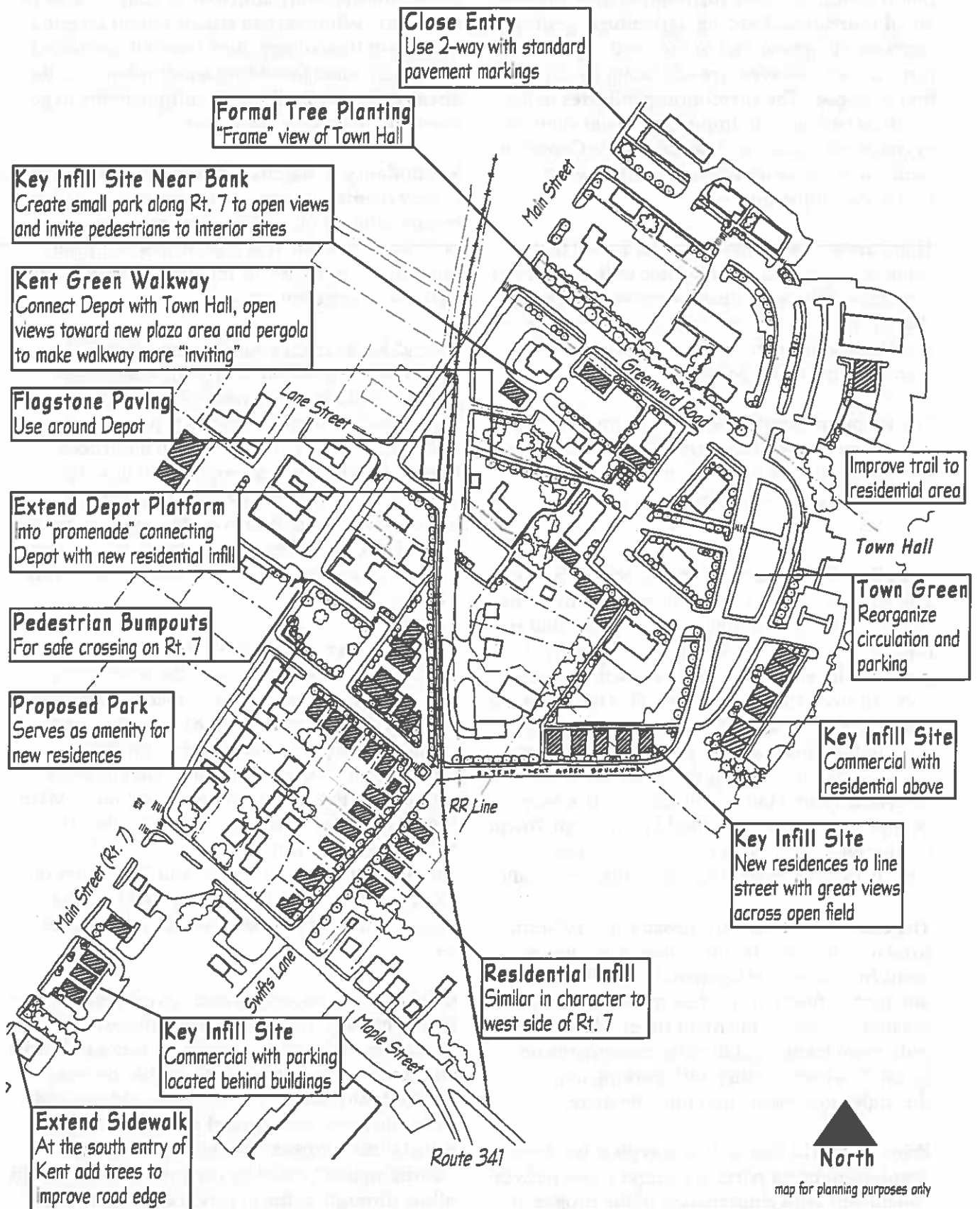


Figure 3-55 Option A: Planning concepts for the Center of Kent

operating speed. The route would then cross the railroad perpendicular to the tracks and reconnect with the current end of Kent Green Boulevard.

Such a configuration would also discourage cut through traffic between Route 341 and Route 7. These new streets west of the railroad could be the focus for a grouping of residential structures which would provide additional housing not unlike the homes behind the west side of Main Street. Additionally, multi-way stop signs and other enhancements should be included in the construction of the street (see next section).

The extension of Kent Green Boulevard as shown in Option A would require a second railroad crossing. This may in the long run prove to be difficult, but not insurmountable. However, it is worth pursuing, given the increasing level of traffic and vehicular/pedestrian accidents on Route 7.

An alternative alignment for a parallel street, discussed with the Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee, would not require a second railroad crossing. Kent Green Boulevard could be constructed through the open land to the south connecting with Maple Avenue Extended. This alternative, while not requiring the second railroad crossing, would have several disadvantages:

- There is no logical place to connect back to Route 341 - Maple Street Extended is a small road that would require significant sight line improvements. Although there is an existing railroad crossing here, the vertical alignment of the road is substandard and would require major upgrading to improve sight distances.
- Constructing such a road would create new development sites - the further the new road is away from existing businesses, the more spread out future development patterns would become. This would de-emphasize pedestrian compactness and exacerbate the problem of driving from one business or residence to another.
- An alignment across the open field would be a more direct cut-through between Route 341 and Route 7 heading northbound.

#### New Side Street

The open area south of the Kent Wine and Spirits store represents another opportunity to improve the redundancy of the street system. In this case a side street could be constructed to connect with the small square and the extended Kent Green Boulevard. The side street would then form a block similar in size to the block on the west side of Main Street.

#### Extending Library Street to Kent Green Boulevard (Option B)

In order for the Town of Kent to evaluate the economic benefits of creating a more redundant street system, a second street connection option (Figure 3-56) was developed to accommodate a more concentrated development pattern. In this case, Library Street would be extended on the north side of the Kent Pizza Garden through to Kent Green Boulevard. New development would be accommodated on infill sites here and additional sites along Kent Green Boulevard. (This would require moving the outdoor eating area of the Pizza Garden to the other side of the street).

#### Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathways

Alternate modes of travel should also be considered for bicycles and pedestrians, as they can encourage people to leave their cars in one location, or even at home. Two prime examples in Kent would be to improve walking connections between the housing development north of the Kent Green Shopping Village, and to improve the pathway from the North Main Street to the Town Hall (discussed in the following two sections).

#### Reconnecting Kent Green Village with Main Street

Based on the options being considered for improving vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, there are a number of other strategies that should be considered to connect North Main with the Kent Green Village with the following mutual benefits:

- Making it easier to park at Town Hall and walk to Main Street



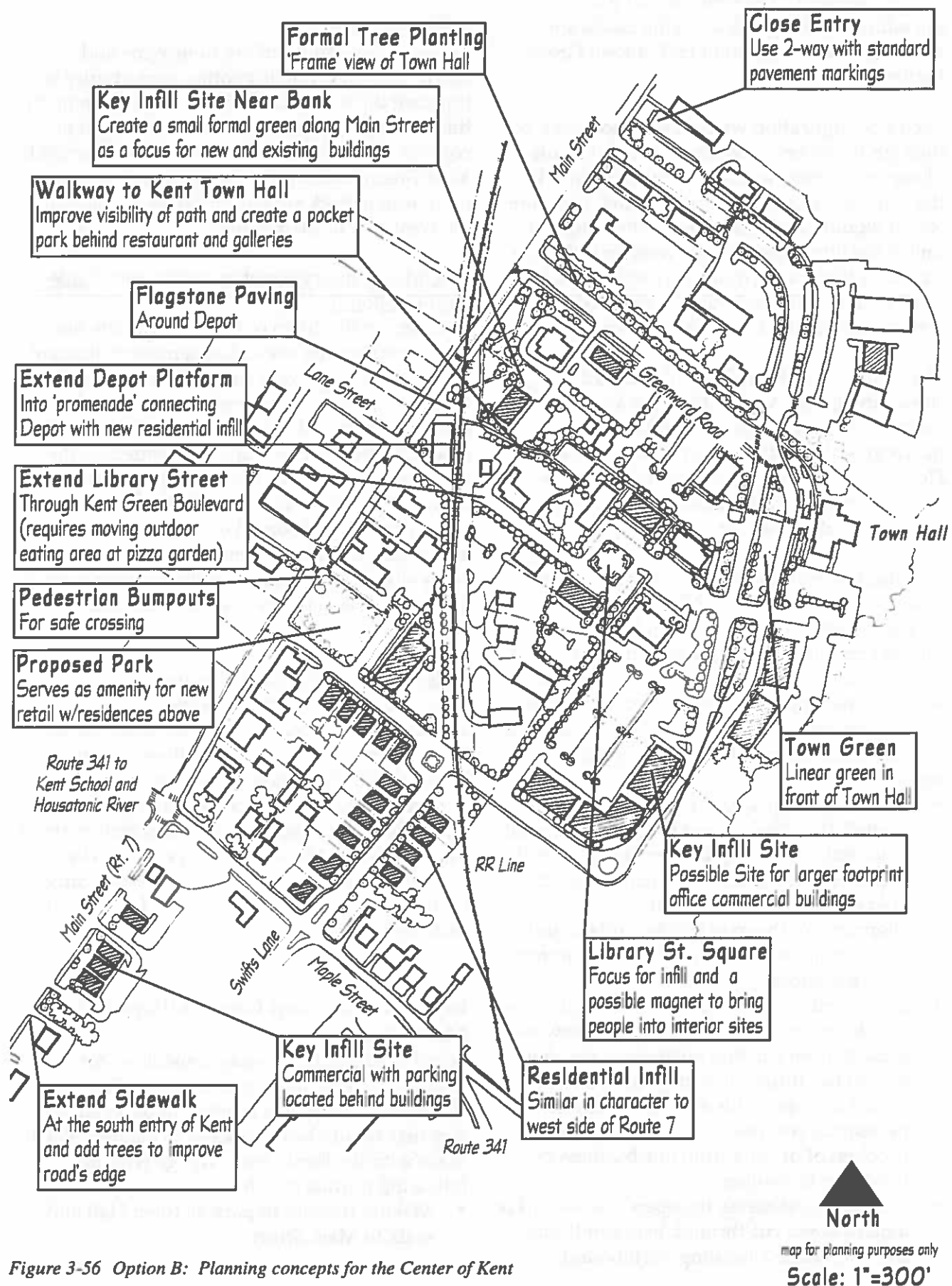


Figure 3-56 Option B: Planning concepts for the Center of Kent

- Relieving parking and congestion problems on Main Street
- Increasing traffic for businesses in Kent Green Village
- Providing new sites for commercial or residential use in town

The following concepts are recommended:

#### Enhance Kent Green Boulevard

Kent Green Boulevard plays an important role in making the expansion of the town center work. It will only become a compatible part of the existing center when it takes on the traditional aspects of a normal town street, and sheds its private-access road, suburban, shopping-mall character. The normal characteristics of town

streets (curbs, sidewalks, trees, on-street parking, and buildings close to the street) could all be applied to the Boulevard, and could give the Boulevard a sense of belonging to the rest of the Village. Figures 3-57 and 3-58 illustrate the application of these ideas to the Kent Green Boulevard.

#### Improving Pedestrian Connections

In most New England towns the public buildings are usually grouped around a common, or town green. In Kent, the post office and town hall were moved to their present location as part of the development of the Kent Green Shopping Village. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the



Figure 3-57 Perspective illustrating the proposed character of Greenward Road

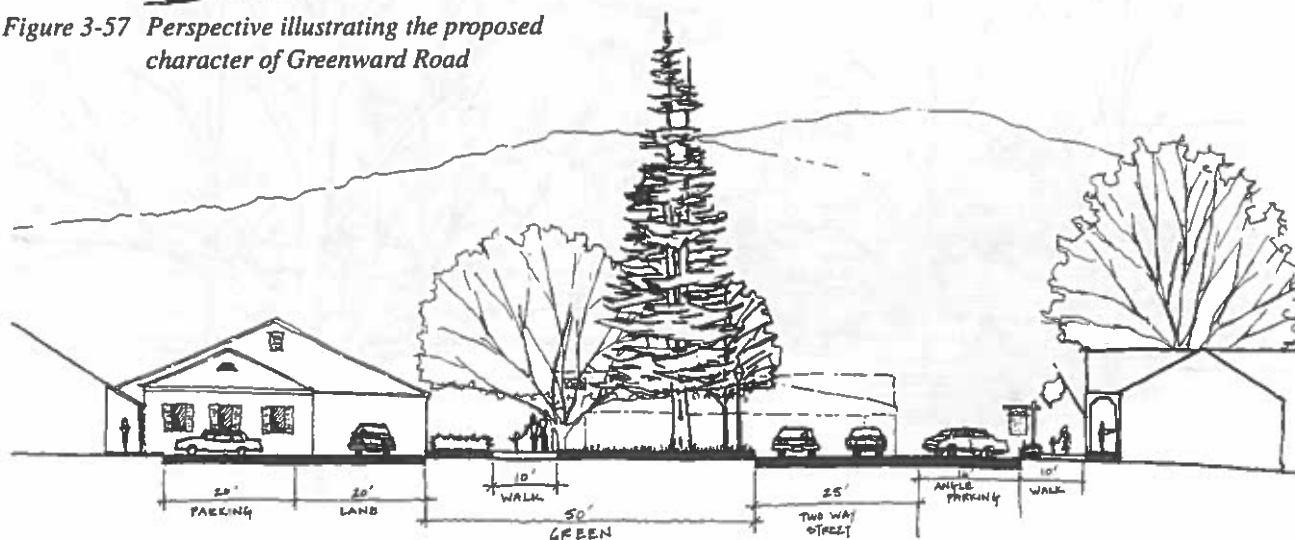


Figure 3-58 Section illustrating the proposed character of Kent Green Boulevard

need for most people to drive to the Town Hall or Post Office, even after parking on Main Street to shop, or even stopping at other commercial establishments such as the pharmacy. The result is that there are 2 or 3 additional car trips every time a resident goes out on an errand.

Realign the Pedestrian Walkway to Kent Green Village

In order to remedy this situation, a pedestrian walkway to the Town Hall was constructed and public parking was made available there. However, the walkway and the parking area have failed to serve their intended purpose.

Option A (and Figures 3-59 to 3-62) illustrate a new pedestrian spine that would seek to improve the pedestrian connection between Main Street and the Town Hall. It would build upon traditional town planning principles by establishing a direct axis between the Depot area and the Town Hall. In order to improve visibility, the walkway would be built in a straight line, would be well lit, nicely landscaped and it would include a terrace at a halfway-point that could be used by the Chinese restaurant as an outdoor eating area.

The pedestrian spine would then continue along a new street, utilizing an existing parking lot, towards the Town Hall. On street angle-parking would be included on this street, transforming the parking lot into a street, and changing its geometry slightly to continue the direct visual line between the Depot and Town Hall.

Extend the Railroad Depot Platform as a Pedestrian Promenade

The old platform at the depot could be extended southward along the rail line to connect up with the small "traffic square" at Kent Green Boulevard. This would provide a way to walk or ride a bicycle in a direct route from Swifts Lane to the Depot and then north along Route 7.

Improve Visibility and Increase Foot Traffic to Interior Parcels

One of the problems with encouraging pedestrian connections from Main Street to Kent Green Village is the lack of visibility to interior parcels. Those that are unfamiliar with the area may be unwilling to walk when they do not



Figure 3-59 Proposed character of the Kent Green Walkway looking towards the Depot



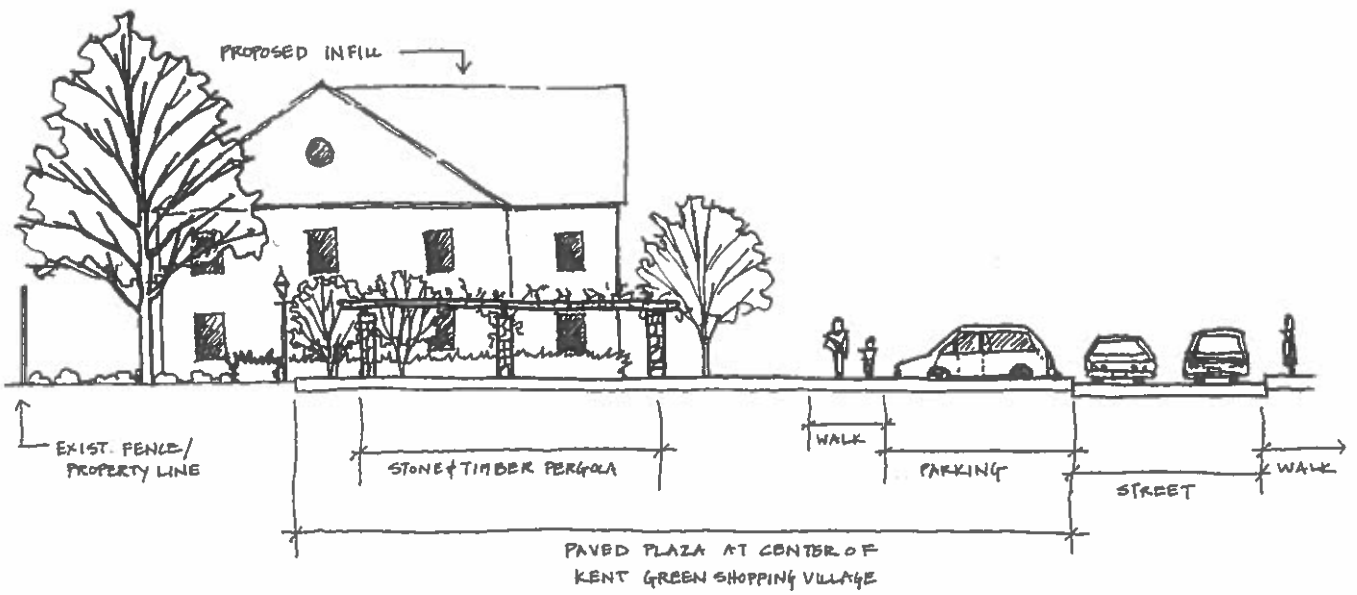


Figure 3-60 Proposed character of outdoor terrace along pedestrian walkway

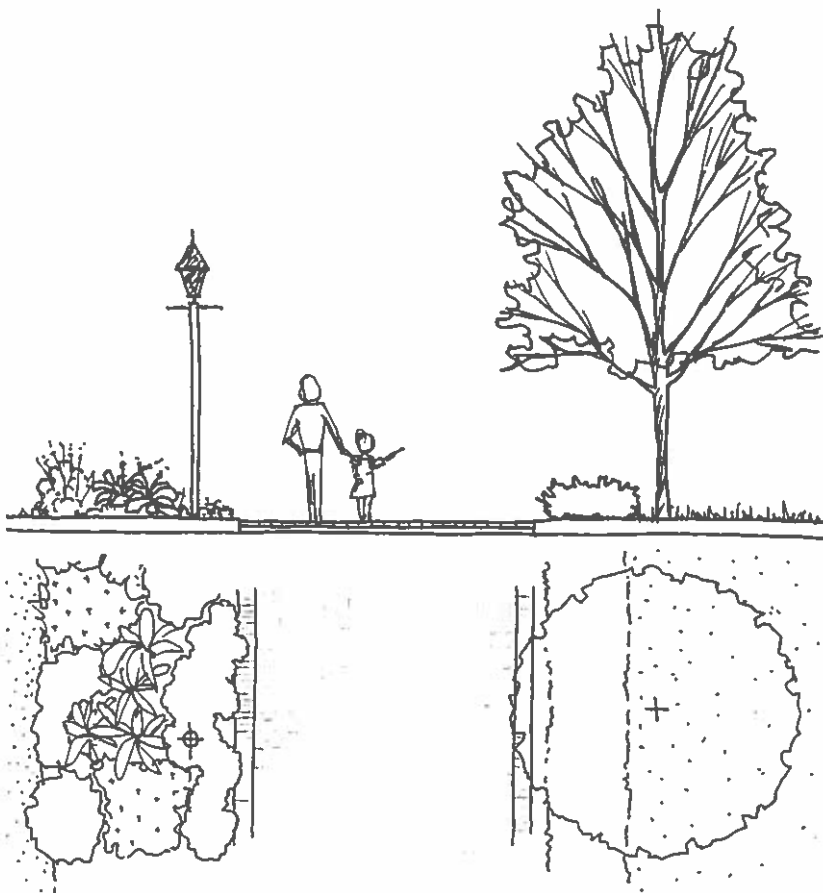


Figure 3-61 Planting concept to encourage strolling along Kent Green Walkway

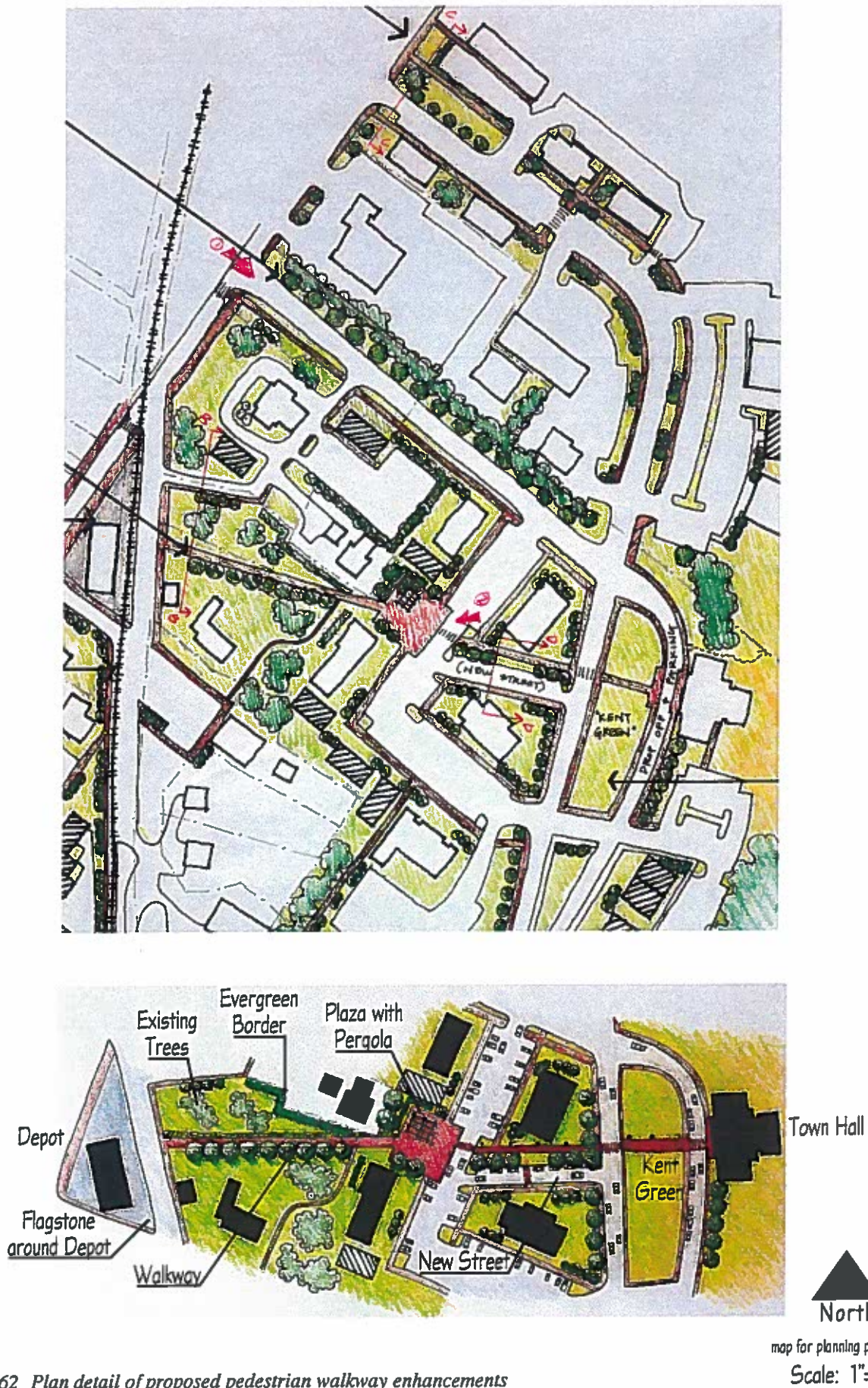


Figure 3-62 Plan detail of proposed pedestrian walkway enhancements



Figure 3-63 *Fir trees block the view of interior parcels and should be replaced*

know what they might find there. In addition to enhancing existing streets in Kent Green Village as described above (with sidewalks and on-street parking) there are several strategies that could be used to improve visibility and increase foot traffic.

#### The Depot Area

The area around the Depot is perhaps one of the more pedestrian friendly areas with places to sit, a bulletin board, and pedestrian scaled lighting. However, the three fir trees at the north end of the Depot have outgrown their usefulness. Removing these three trees would increase the visibility of the pedestrian walk to the Town Hall making it more inviting.

#### A New Green Along Main Street

The vacant parcel south of the Kent Wine and Spirits store also represents an excellent opportunity to create a new public space along Main Street. This attractive space could be enhanced if commercial uses were constructed facing the public space, served with parking spaces around the green.

To accomplish this would require that the Town provide enough incentives to the owner of the parcel (higher density for the rear of the parcel, for example), that the creation of a park will enhance property value, rather than detract from it. The net effect would be that visibility would be increased to interior parcels and foot traffic would be retained, if not increased.

#### A Town Green on Kent Green Boulevard

Creating a more traditional appearing Town Green in front of the Town Hall would be an important strategy for better making this facility a more symbolic center for Kent. Currently this space is not a usable or desirable place to sit down, have a picnic, have a concert or other things that New Englanders love to do on their Town Greens.

#### Infill Development

Attracting more people to the interior sites can also be accomplished by the magnet of commercial and/or residential infill. The existing suburban layout and density of Kent Green Village is not comparable to the density of the existing town. Attendees at the public workshop were supportive of finding ways to increase the density of the Kent Green Village so that it will be more in character with the Town and look more like its logical extension, rather than a separated area. Based on the circulation improvements proposed above, there are four additional infill sites that could be utilized:

#### New Residential Infill

The proposed extension of Kent Green Boulevard to 341 at Swifts Lane, coupled with the new side street that connects to Main Street forming a block, creates an opportunity to develop 16 additional residential lots. The 4 lots on the east side of the new Kent Green Boulevard would have nice views towards the surrounding hills to the east. The remaining 12 lots would be similar in size to those fronting on Elisabeth Street and Lane Street.

#### Mixed-use Infill

The new public space on Main Street would provide an opportunity to create 4-6 commercial sites with parking in the rear and on-street parking around the green (a 1-way loop is recommended). Mixed use should be encouraged with retail or office on the first floor and residences above.

#### Office or Other Infill Near Town Hall

The extension of Kent Green Boulevard would open additional sites for commercial development. Depending upon the design and alignment of Kent Green Boulevard these parcels could be used for businesses requiring larger



floor plans. Option B illustrates how fifty six thousand square feet of office space could be accommodated with 3 cars per 1000 GSF of floor area. Alternatively, these sites could be used for residential purposes if the market for in-town lots with nice views were to prove valuable.

Traditional development economics would suggest that both sides of the Kent Green Boulevard be utilized for development site frontage. Although, the open field should continue to be set aside as a development reserve. Keeping open views to the adjacent hillsides increases the amenity value of adjoining lots. An office with a view of an open field and hillside is more in keeping with why someone would choose to be in the Center of Kent rather than in a city or further out in a rural location.

#### Interior commercial (retail or office) infill

The remaining interior parcels need to be developed at a greater density than is there now. This can be accomplished by siting buildings between existing buildings, increasing the heights to 2 1/2 stories, and using the infill sites to better organize the visual and spatial structure of the area. Two options should be considered:

##### *Option A*

In conjunction with the proposed circulation and open space improvements of Option A, new interior commercial sites could be built and organized that turn the existing parking lots into side streets with parking. The infill sites would also reinforce the traditional geometry that runs either parallel to or perpendicular to Route 7, thus reinforcing the idea that the buildings are

part of the town rather than an isolated development.

##### *Option B*

In conjunction with the proposed circulation and open space improvements of Option B a more dense development pattern could be accommodated with opportunities for creating larger footprint sites than would be possible with Option A. The infill sites would be organized around the new extension of Library Street, creating a pattern similar in scale and use to the Salisbury Marketplace.

#### Recommended Design Principles for Infill

The insertion of new development into the fabric of the village center requires sensitive care. Recent development over the last fifteen years has resulted in what some have described as a hodgepodge of building types and styles, surrounded by often poorly-defined parking, circulation and open spaces. (In some other communities, central areas are often the focus of an historic district, administered by an architectural review committee; such a district often incorporates mandatory review criteria).

However, even in the absence of such a district or criteria in Kent, the situation is not irreparable – on the contrary, there is great potential for defining design principles by which new infill buildings can fill missing teeth, create new nodes or neighborhoods, and strengthen the existing unique pattern of development.

Such design principles need to start with the premise that the existing character of the village

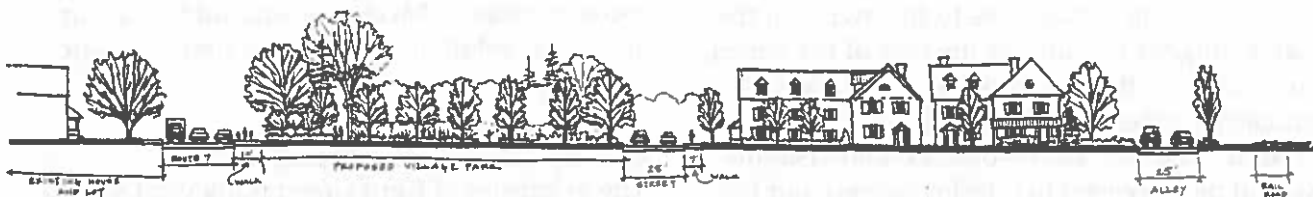


Figure 3-64 Detail of proposed new public space on Main Street with retail uses facing the square

should be reinforced, rather than changed – that infill development should take its cues from its context.

Building on that premise, the following are preliminary suggestions for voluntary village center design principles or development guidelines – which, if incorporated into building design, can trigger corresponding incentives to the owner or developer (as described in more detail in Chapter 4). These suggested guidelines can assist local land and property owners, public officials and others in proposing, reviewing and pro-actively facilitating appropriate new development. They would be allowed only by special permit, as part of a total package of reviewed and approved development.

- The massing and scale of new buildings should match their neighbors:
  - Maximum height should be 35'-0" (2-1/2 to 3 stories), but minimum height of new buildings should be no lower than the average height of adjacent buildings on either side (to avoid buildings too low in height to relate to their neighbors);
  - Building widths can vary, but rather than long, monotonous facades, massing should provide for pedestrian-scaled rhythms – modules of no more than 30'-0" width, distinguished by a change in setback from building line.
  - Minimum residential lot areas in specific areas of the village center (such as new residential areas within the commercial district) should allow for 5,000 SF lots with 50'-0" minimum lot widths, in order to increase the allowable density in already built-up areas.

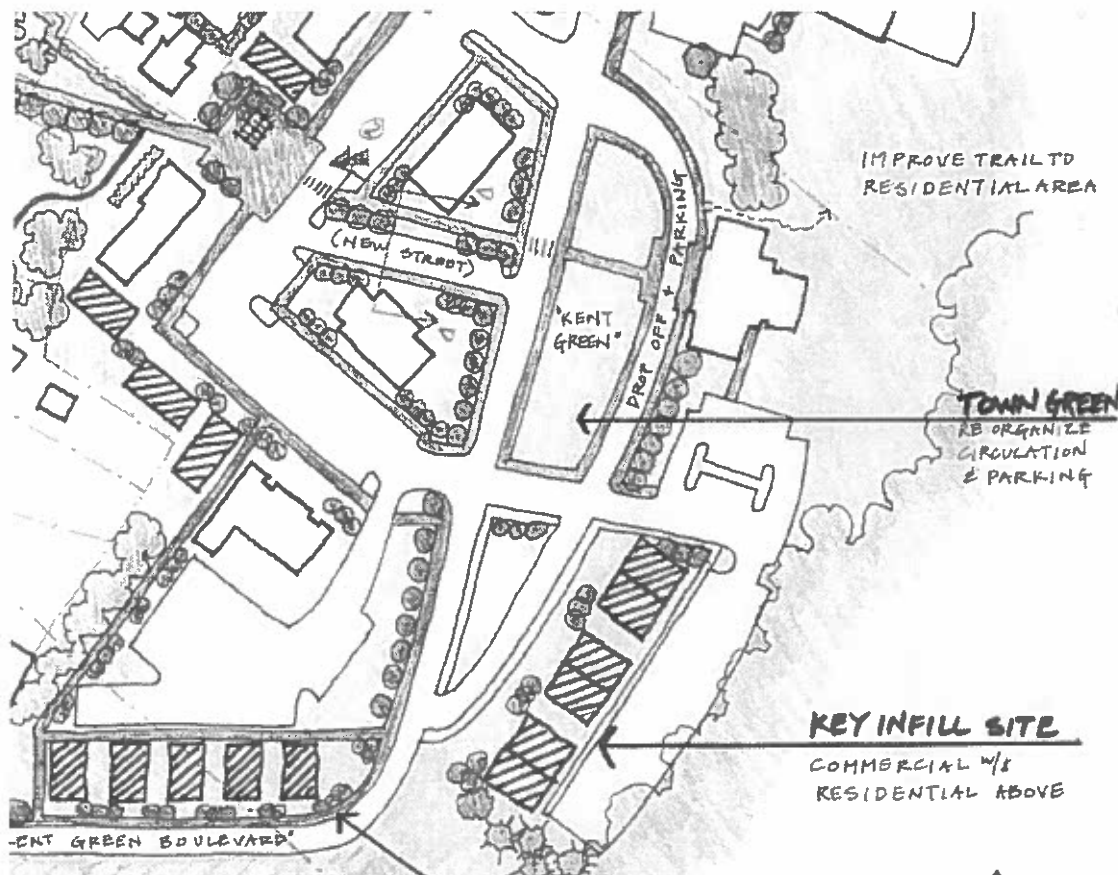


Figure 3-65 Plan detail showing area around Town Hall

North  
map for planning purposes only

- *The setback of new buildings should reinforce the street context:*
  - There should be a build-to line (as well as a minimum setback line), established as the average of adjacent buildings on either side or at the minimum distance described below. (This will define a consistent street frontage and avoid buildings set too far back from the street).
  - In specific areas in the village center (such as for new residential areas within the commercial district), the maximum setback should be reduced to 20'-0" from the street line, in order to allow for a more intimate semi-public street area, while still allowing for front yard open space and/or auto parking/circulation.
- *Materials should exhibit both consistency and variety.*
  - Consistency is the thread which links buildings, based on the relatively limited palette of materials available to traditional builders. New buildings should reflect this palette, relating to materials of adjacent buildings typical of the village heritage.
  - Variety represents the variations on this theme which add intimacy and visual distinctiveness to individual buildings. New buildings should not slavishly copy adjacent buildings.
- *Parking and auto circulation should also provide for pedestrian ambiance:*
  - Village center residential parking should require only one on-site parking space, while permitting additional on-street or common-lot parking.
  - Residential parking or garages should be at the rear or setback on the side of houses.
  - Commercial parking should allow for a portion of required parking to be satisfied by off-site parking in a nearby common lot.

#### Improving Visual Communication

Knitting together the Kent Green Village and Main Street also requires that visitors have better and more inviting information about why they might want to venture behind Main Street.

If the streets of Kent Green Village took on the character of regular public streets of a small town – not unlike the character of Bridge Street or Lane Street, then the merchants of Kent Green Village might be able to begin to organize the sign directory to reflect the desired character of the street. One example is simply to organize the stores into colors that reflect the makeup of the block. Street signs can be framed with the color of the street to make it easy to find a business. Figure 3-66 illustrates how this simple bit of organization can help to make it easier to find your destination.



Figure 3-66 Example of more effective visual communication using existing sign sizes



### **Connecting South Main with North Main**

More than just connecting the Kent Green Shopping Village, there is also a need to connect South Main to North Main. There are several businesses to the south, yet there are no sidewalks. There are also several vacant parcels that if developed appropriately could help link South Main to North Main as well as help to achieve traffic calming goals as described on page 79.

#### **Commercial Infill**

Figure 3-48 illustrates how new commercial infill development, utilizing the guidelines described on page 99, can improve the overall appearance of the south approach to the Center of Kent. This will also contribute to the overall traffic calming goals by narrowing the look and feel of the road (enclosing the space with vertical elements).

#### **Pedestrian Circulation**

Business owners south of 341 are interested in improving pedestrian connections to North Main. There is a restaurant and new organic produce market on the west side of the street. The Kent Art Association is on the east side of the street. Extending sidewalks, planting street trees and extending any pedestrian scaled lighting south to include the infill sites and existing commercial structures will help to knit South Main together with North Main to further enhance the overall character of the Center of Kent.

### **Improve the Appearance of Convenience Store**

The Patco Mobil Station serves an important function in Kent, providing convenience shopping and gas for residents and visitors alike. This prominent location, however, deserves some additional efforts to improve its appearance. There are a number of simple things the owners of this property could do to improve its appearance:

- reduce the size of access and egress points to the minimum necessary to accommodate all types of vehicles
- plant new trees to narrow the look and feel of the road at this intersection (small to medium height trees can be planted in such a manner as to fit under utility lines and not obscure the business sign)
- Over the long term, the appearance of the sign could be improved by placing it in a location that is prominent but fits more carefully with the size and scale of signs on adjoining properties to the north.
- The appearance of the building could also be improved the next time a remodeling is contemplated. The form and appearance of the building can take its cues from other nearby buildings both in terms of height and roof pitch, with the canopy carefully integrated into the design of the building. Many gas stations and convenience stores in areas with similar economic and market conditions as are found here, have been able to increase their profits by improving the appearance of the store.

## **STRATEGY #7 GROWING SMALLER HAMLETS TO PRESERVE SCENIC VALUES**

Smaller villages and hamlets can also play a role in accommodating additional development that might otherwise end up in rural areas or as strip development extension of existing communities. Cornwall Bridge provides a good example of how a few minor improvements can define community character and a sense of place in smaller villages and hamlets.

### **Reinforcing Community and Shopping at Cornwall Bridge**

One passes through Cornwall Bridge without paying attention to it as a place. In spite of the generous legacy of triangular green space, a place that in the past provided a focus for community activities, the geometry of the peripheral roads and the speed of traffic passing by have turned this pleasant spot into only a minor event along the highway.

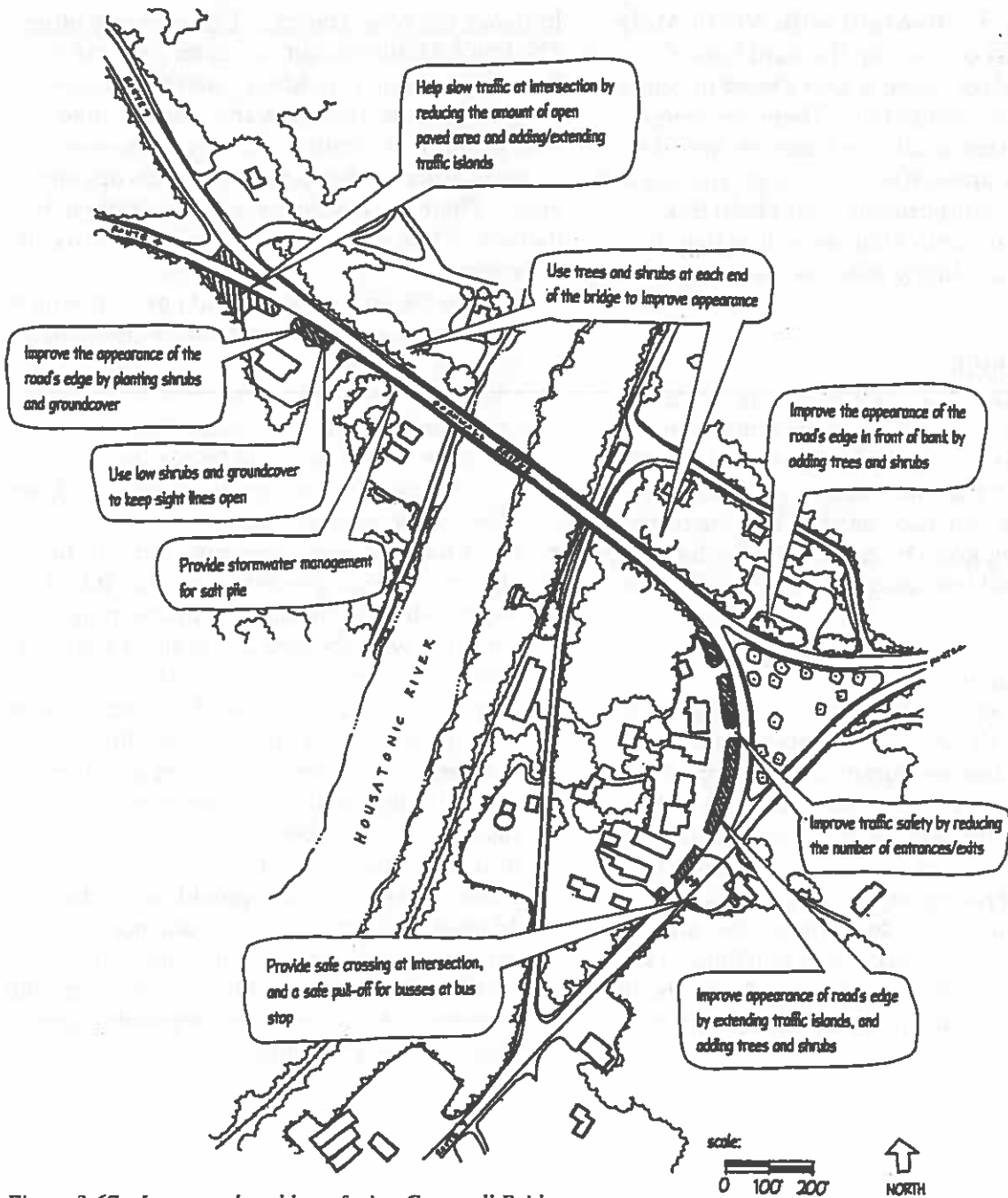


Figure 3-67 Issues and problems facing Cornwall Bridge

For the through driver and those using the commercial services at Cornwall Bridge, the intersection presents a sense of hazard, even though statistics of accidents are not exceptionally high. This sense of hazard is created by the considerable differential between high-speed through movements, and turning movements (left-turns and local access).

It would be a benefit to all concerned: safety for through traffic and local access, prosperity of local merchants, and a positive sense of commu-

nity for the scenic corridor, if through traffic were slowed down at Cornwall Bridge. Specific issues and problems are summarized in Figure 3-67

There are three options to consider in trying to recapture a sense of place for Cornwall Bridge:

- Option A - improves safety by reducing the number of curb cuts to 1 per property
- Option B - establish 'T' intersections making stop signs more visible for Route 7 north-bound traffic and Route 4 west to Route 7

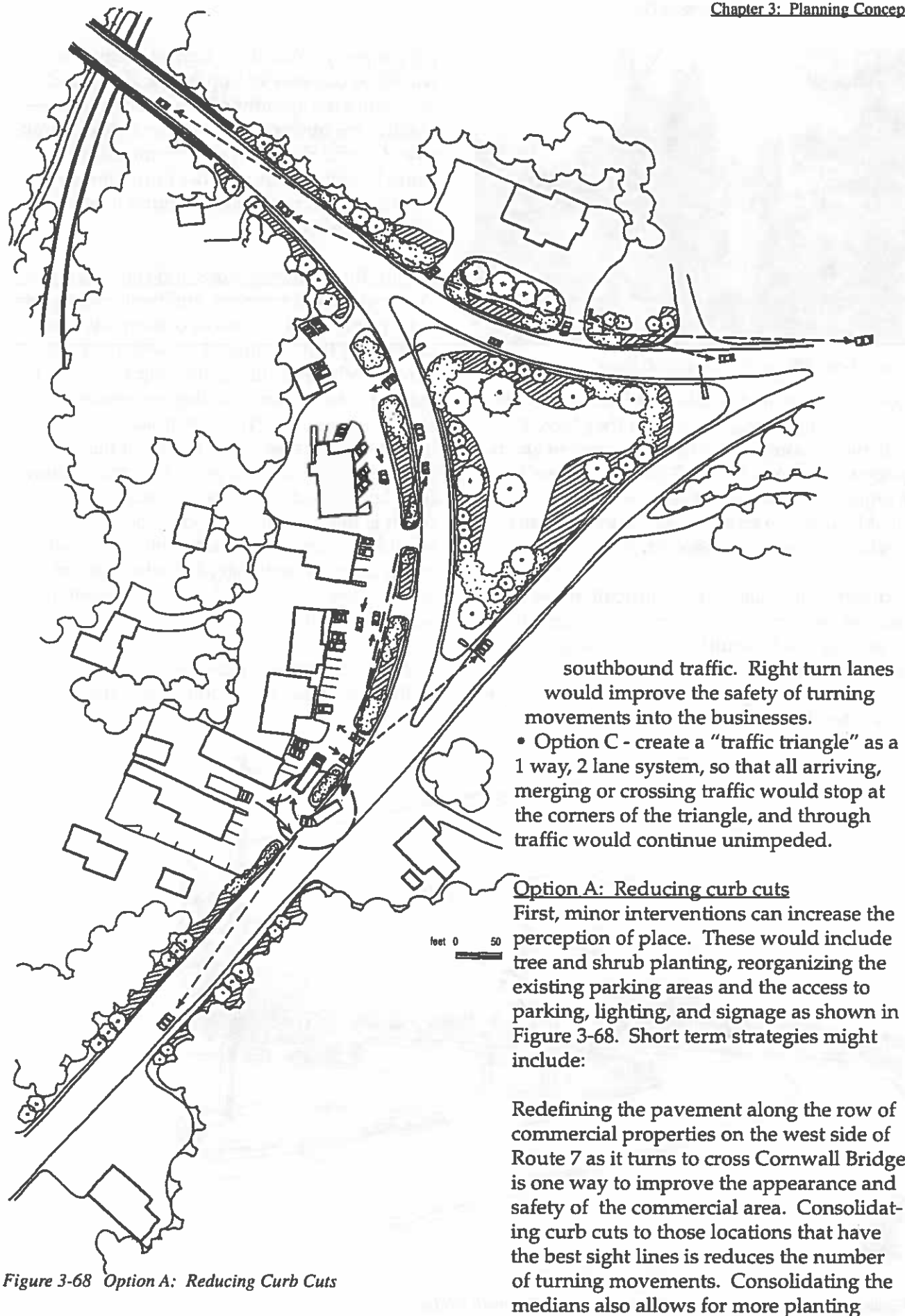


Figure 3-68 Option A: Reducing Curb Cuts





Figure 3-69 Character of Sheffield, Mass.

areas. The Town of Sheffield, Mass. has a very similar group of stores (granted they have a little more room) and made an attractive green space as shown in Figure 3-69. In Cornwall Bridge, since there is not as much room, care must be taken to ensure that trucks and vans servicing these businesses can get in and out.

Reducing curb cuts may be difficult, however, because each business owner is reluctant to give up access, and it would be difficult to gain outside funding to implement, putting most of the burden on the property owners. Figure 3-68 illustrates the retention of at least one driveway

per property. As a short term strategy this would be one way of improving safety and increasing the amount of room for planting—making the business environment more attractive. Careful design of short term planting could be done to ensure that future improvements will not require the digging up of new landscape efforts.

Option B: 'T' intersections and right turn lanes

At a meeting of property and business owners in Cornwall Bridge, a second alternative was developed that attempted to solve the problems of vehicles running the stop signs and to make it safer to turn into the businesses. As shown in Figure 3-71, this was accomplished by a slight increase in the radius of the curve in front of the businesses, providing more room for a larger median and a right turn lane. The result is that a small portion of the green would be utilized for the northbound Route 7 travel lane. In exchange, a similar amount of green space would be added to the median between the stores and Route 7.

The 'T' intersections provide a more direct clue to the driver that they should stop ahead. In

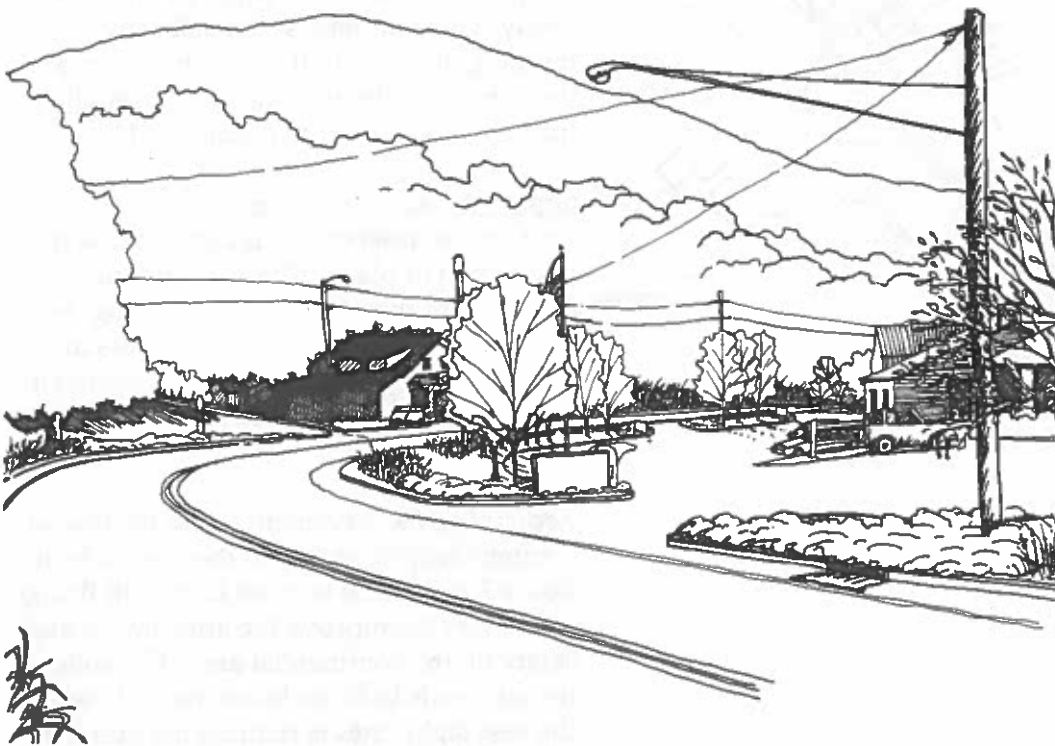


Figure 3-70 Proposed character of plantings at Cornwall Bridge

addition, it allows for driveways to line up better with the intersections. Right turn lanes would be provided to reduce the conflicts with through traffic. Curb cuts would be reduced to one per property in exchange for the turn lanes.

Additional parking space would also be achieved. However, it should be noted that even though there are fewer curb cuts, it would be much easier to access each property. The landscaped medians (gray areas on Figure 3-71) would also make the properties more attractive.

#### Option C: Traffic Triangle

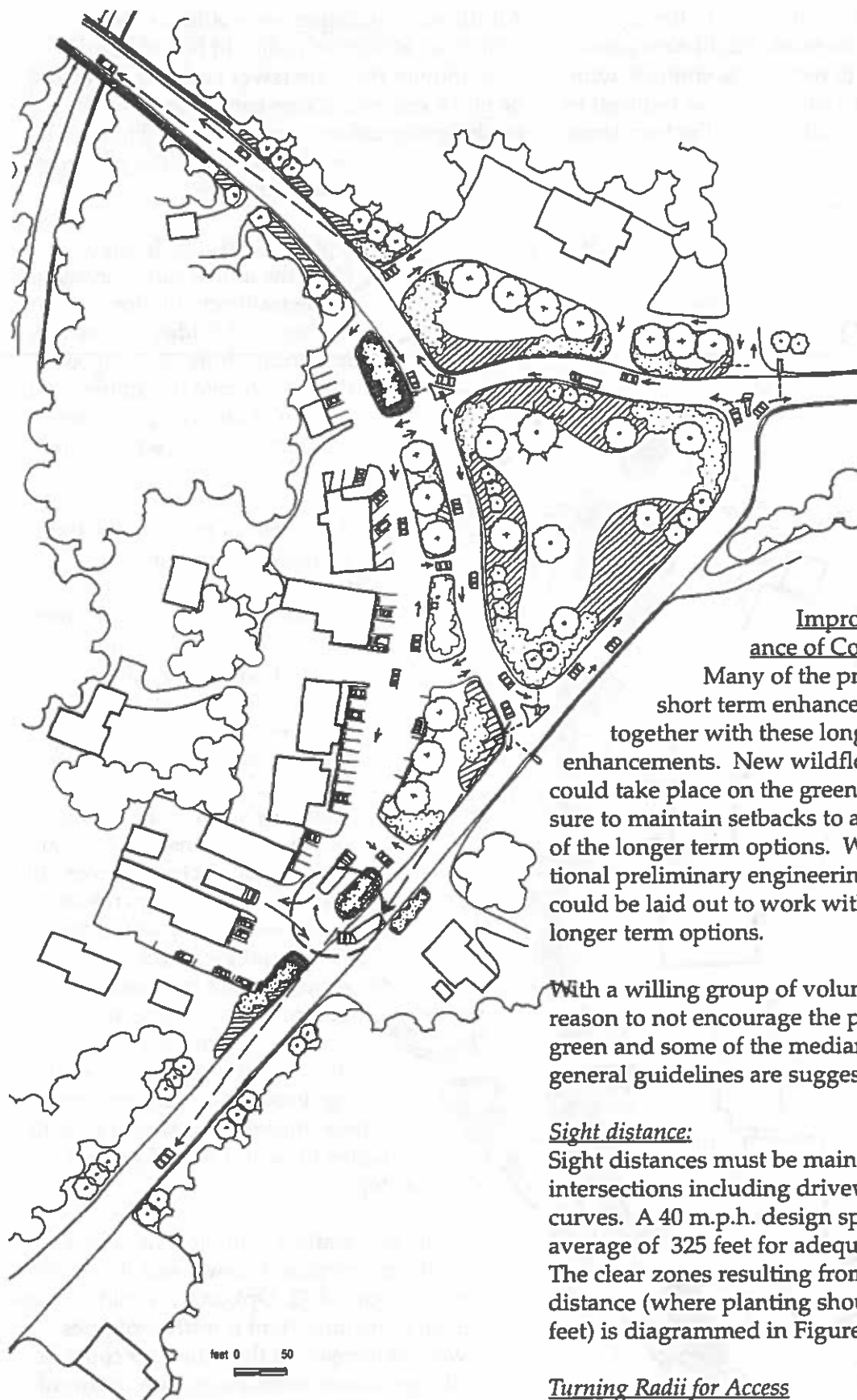
Over the longer term, revisions to the traffic circulation system in Cornwall Bridge are the most important thing that can be done to change perceptions and the use of this village center along the Route 7 scenic corridor.

A number of traffic circulation systems have existed in Cornwall Bridge over the years, and more have been considered that have not been implemented. A strategy that should be considered would be a modified triangle, where all traffic would circulate in a counter-clockwise direction along the sides of the triangle (Figure 3-72). Instead of creating a traffic circle, however, all arriving, merging or crossing traffic would stop at the corners of the triangle. Access to shopping and businesses would be from these intersections, providing increased convenience and safety. The continuing through (left) movement at these intersections would be a 90 degree turn, and would not require a stop.

A revised traffic circulation strategy such as the one proposed above, and illustrated in the Figure 3-72, Option C, would become even more important if traffic volumes were to increase in the future. It could be of significance, even today, as a means of increasing the awareness of Cornwall Bridge as a community focus and commercial node.



Figure 3-71 Option B



### Improving the appearance of Cornwall Bridge

Many of the previously described short term enhancements will work together with these longer term traffic enhancements. New wildflower planting could take place on the green as proposed, being sure to maintain setbacks to accommodate either of the longer term options. With some additional preliminary engineering work, medians could be laid out to work with either of the longer term options.

With a willing group of volunteers, there is no reason to not encourage the planting of the green and some of the medians. The following general guidelines are suggested.

### Sight distance:

Sight distances must be maintained for all intersections including driveways as well as for curves. A 40 m.p.h. design speed requires an average of 325 feet for adequate sight distance. The clear zones resulting from such a sight distance (where planting should not exceed 2-3 feet) is diagrammed in Figure 3-68.

### Turning Radii for Access

A minimum outside turning radius of 47' for trucks entering and exiting the group of businesses on the west side of Route 7 can readily be

Figure 3-72 Option C: "Traffic Triangle"



achieved with the available pavement. The radius is diagrammed on Figure 3-68.

#### Guidelines for Planting:

Tree, shrub and flower planting is an excellent way to signal to drivers that there are people living and working here who care very much for the quality of life. The Cornwall Bridge Association is willing to adopt some of the public areas, including the planting and maintenance of a test site for a wildflower demonstration project.

There are a number of talented plant and landscape enthusiasts that are willing to contribute. The following general guidelines should be followed, along with those in Appendix G (which include information about sight lines and other requirements about planting in the right-of-way and guidelines for organizing a community planting project).

1. New trees and ground signs must be placed outside of required sight lines.
2. Verify locations of utility lines with utility companies (both above and below ground).
3. Any plantings within sight lines, such as low shrubs, groundcovers and wildflower plantings, should not exceed 2.5 feet in height.
4. Shade and flowering trees should be planted in groupings of twos and threes to provide massing.
5. Low evergreen shrubs and groundcover should be used at entrances and corners, and to frame ground signs.

#### Wildflower Planting

The use of wildflowers along roadways has become a popular alternative to traditional grasses and lawns. Wildflowers provide attractive and visually stimulating landscapes for travelers. Naturalized areas of carefully planted wildflowers can provide color throughout the year and once established require less routine maintenance than conventional grasses and lawns.

To plant and maintain wildflowers successfully requires planning. Site selection, soil preparation, planting, watering, weeding, and maintenance are all concerns that need to be addressed when preparing a wildflower planting. Wild-

flowers can be annual, biennial, and perennial. Flowers bloom at different times of the year and require different conditions for best growth. Selection of a plant species mix suitable to existing site conditions is necessary for a healthy wildflower planting.

#### Site Selection

The environmental conditions of the site will determine what wildflowers are suitable to plant. Important factors to consider are:

- Soils—heavy, wet soils vs. sandy, dry soils
- Light—hot, dry sunny site vs. shady, moist site
- Moisture—low-lying marshy site vs. drier upland or slope site

ConnDOT guidelines require that wildflower plantings exceeding 2 feet in height be located a minimum of 40 feet from the travelway. Consult ConnDOT for additional information regarding installation and maintenance of wildflower plantings in the right-of-way.

#### Soil Preparation

Planting sites must be free of grasses and weeds before planting wildflowers. For larger plantings along a roadway a low-toxicity glyphosate herbicide (Roundup) will need to be used. This herbicide will quickly breakdown and will not pose an environmental hazard. The herbicide should be applied by a licensed applicator and care should be taken to avoid using near surface water (streams, ponds and wetlands). Closely mow the site and after slight regrowth, apply the herbicide according to label directions. Wait several weeks and if no regrowth is present, lightly till the soil. If persistent regrowth of weeds continues a second herbicide application may be necessary. Be sure not to apply herbicides to sites next to a river or stream. Also, it is important to protect against erosion. Tilling on steep slopes which easily erode should be avoided.

#### Planting

Spring and fall are the ideal seasons to plant wildflowers. Seed is generally broadcast over large areas or planted with a seed drill if equipment is available. Application rates vary for each species mix. Refer to the seed source for application rates. Generally a rate of 4-5

ounces/1000 square feet can be used for small areas. Seed should be mixed with clean sand for easy and uniform application. Lightly rake and tamp the soil after seeding for good soil contact.

A recommended plant species list is included in Appendix G. Also included are recommended seed mixes for shady locations and attracting butterflies. These lists identify native and non-native species. When selecting wildflowers avoid planting aggressive non-native species near natural areas.

#### Watering

Seeds need moisture for the first 4-6 weeks to properly germinate. If possible plant when seasonal rains are expected. Avoid planting if dry conditions are expected to persist as this will encourage weed growth and inhibit germination of wildflower seeds.

#### Weeding

Proper site preparation is the best defense against weeds. If possible it is best if weeds are removed by hand. Care should be given to not disturb tender wildflower seedlings. If tall weeds persist, a careful application of Roundup can be used for weed control. Apply with a wick application over the tops of tall weeds or a direct spray for isolated weeds. Note that Roundup is toxic to all plants and should be applied only to target weeds to avoid killing wildflowers.

#### Maintenance

Wildflowers are low-maintenance not no-maintenance. Routine weeding will be needed in the first several growing seasons. In late fall after seed heads have matured, mow the site to scatter seeds. Shaping wildflower beds can be done by mowing around seeded areas during the growing season. This will reduce weedy invasion and also spreading of aggressive wildflowers.

# Implementation

The successful public workshop held in the late fall of 1998 reinforced the importance of a broad base of involvement for the Route 7 Scenic Corridor. Participants at the workshop built upon the initial efforts of the Route 7 Scenic Corridor Advisory Committee to bring out ideas for conserving and enhancing the Route 7 Scenic Corridor. As a result, the conservation and enhancement strategies outlined in Chapter 3 fit squarely within the long-range goals and aspirations of the community. What is needed now is a clear framework for implementation that continues to build upon these initial planning efforts.

Following is a description of how to continue to organize participation in the scenic byway program including all sectors of local govern-

ment, community and civic organizations, property owners, and the users of Route 7, as well as regional and state entities. While Chapter 3 focuses on the 'what' and 'why' of scenic conservation along the Route 7 Corridor, Chapter 4 focuses on the who, when and where. A list of specific steps is included as a road map for implementing the plan.

Some of the recommendations in this section have evolved from similar suggestions for scenic corridor plans in adjacent towns. A consistent organizational framework is key to the long-term strategy of structuring a regional approach to scenic byway issues that are common among towns. At the same time, many specific suggestions represent new implementation techniques proposed that are particular to the unique conditions along Route 7.

## GROWING A PERMANENT PARTNERSHIP

One of the main messages of the Fall 1998 public workshop was the overall similarity of purpose and goals among the represented groups and individuals:

- The first two advisory committee meetings brought out many of the concerns of various public, private and civic groups. These groups included representatives from each town's elected and appointed Boards and Commissions, ConnDOT, the Kent Land Trust, the Sharon Land Trust, the Weantinogue Land Trust, the Housatonic Valley Association, residents and property owners such as the Kent School and Connecticut Light and Power, and farming interests in the corridor. Keeping Route 7 just the way it is today was an overriding vision of the assembled group.
- Extending the scenic designation was another overriding vision of a broad range of constituents in the Route 7 corridor from New Milford to North Canaan (Canaan). Several sections of Route 7 are currently not designated as a state scenic road, yet interest in extending the scenic road designations to New Milford to the south, Cornwall in the central section, and the undesignated section of Sharon north of West Cornwall was strongly expressed during the advisory committee meetings and at the public workshop. The Town of Cornwall officially appointed three members to the Route 7 Scenic Road Advisory Committee and will look closely at applying for scenic road designation based on the results of the plan. A member of the Board of Selectmen from Falls Village has consistently attended meetings and has indicated a strong interest in pursuing state scenic designation.
- At the Fall 1998 public workshop more voices were heard—landowners, the Kent Garden Club, the Cornwall Association, business owners, bicycling and walking enthusiasts and interested town residents that use the road but that may not live along it. The Kent Garden Club, which recently completed the planting of 2100 flowering bulbs in the community, volunteered their enthusiasm for beautifying the Center of Kent with new trash receptacles, benches, and paving. A group from the Cornwall Association expressed an interest in wildflower gardening and later suggested the use of the triangular green at Cornwall Bridge for a test site to determine how best to manage the planting of wildflowers along Route 7.



At the workshop, through an organized presentation and wide ranging discussion of potential action projects and longer-range strategies, it became apparent that there was a high degree of congruency regarding objectives for preserving views and open space, enhancing the appearance of the road and right-of-way, and improving safety throughout the corridor by reducing travel speeds and pedestrian/vehicular conflicts within the Center of Kent, Cornwall Bridge and the smaller communities all along Route 7.

The extension of the current broad-based project advisory committee as a permanent partnership to reflect these diverse interests was discussed as a key implementation recommendation. Such a permanent advisory body has a number of advantages:

- it provides an ongoing forum for reviewing scenic road issues at the local level;
- it is a point of contact for adjacent towns and other organizations which share the responsibility for land use along the Route 7 right-of-way;
- it establishes a set of common objectives on which everyone can agree to cooperate;
- it provides one voice with which to speak to ConnDOT, other state agencies, utility companies, and others.

### **How— A Dual-Level Local/Regional Approach**

Based on work with other scenic road corridor communities in Northwest Connecticut, it has become clear that a dual-level strategy of both local and regional focus is needed that includes:

- a town-oriented advisory committee whose focus is on preserving the view and addressing enhancement issues at a local level;
- a larger multi-town and multi-corridor group that can address issues of common concern requiring regional or statewide action to be implemented.

The reasons for this dual-level approach lie both in the size and capacity of the individual communities and in the similar nature of their common concerns:

- Kent, Cornwall and Sharon, like other rural towns, do not have a large reservoir of

volunteers and human capital. The towns are all remarkable for the amount of volunteer effort expended per capita— much of it originating with the same people serving on multiple committees and boards, often stretched to practical limits.

- Similarly, their size also limits the volume of their voice with state agencies such as ConnDOT. Rural areas have historically had little political clout with the State Legislature based on sheer numbers alone. Other scenic corridor communities, such as the more populated towns of Branford and Guilford (Routes 146 and 77), or the five northeastern towns along Route 169, represent larger political bases.
- The Northwest Connecticut Council of Governments (NWCCOG) and its associated Regional Planning Association provide a cooperative framework representing nine Northwest Connecticut towns (whose First Selectmen constitute its board). It can help coordinate a common voice on issues of mutual concern for all or some of its constituent members.

### **Establishment of Individual Town Scenic Road Committees**

The building block of scenic road conservation and enhancement activities in Northwest Connecticut is that of the local municipality. Projects such as beautification efforts, small scale community development efforts, and working with landowners to conserve views and preserve and replant roadside trees are examples of the types of things that are best done at a local level— neighbor to neighbor. A Town Scenic Road Committee should be formed in each Town throughout the Route 7 Scenic Corridor to help coordinate these activities.

The focus of the local town committee will be on internal local town issues of road and right-of-way enhancements and land use guidance— issues which overlap and reinforce other local efforts in economic development or conservation and open space planning. By limiting its purview to these local issues, the committee can preserve and focus the energy of its volunteer participants.

From the administrative point of view, the committee could be established and appointed by the towns' Board of Selectmen—possibly under the jurisdiction of each town's Planning or Conservation Commission or other designated body—ensuring cooperation on ongoing local development issues and for long-term planning.

The role of the overall Committee would consist of two major streams of work:

- *Road and Right-of-Way: Coordination with ConnDOT and Other Entities*  
All communication about roadside maintenance such as tree pruning, repaving and other day to day activities that normally are coordinated through the First Selectman would be coordinated through this committee. Future designations of local scenic roads, as allowed by the Connecticut Legislature could also be accomplished through the Town Scenic Road Committee.

The intent is to prevent 'things happening without prior knowledge', such as tree trimming or road maintenance, which many residents along Route 7 (and most other scenic roads) feel often occur with insufficient public review. The Committee would be charged with the local responsibility of overseeing the provisions of the state scenic road statute restricting road improvement or maintenance practices that may be detrimental to scenic preservation objectives. These can include open public meetings when appropriate to deal with key issues as they apply to the specific Town.

- *Views and Vistas: Advisory Oversight of Overall Policies and Programs*  
The committee would also act as a watchdog organization to coordinate policies and programs that are needed to preserve views and vistas adjacent to the scenic roads—for example, working with the local conservation commission or other government agencies, land trusts, farm bureaus, or forestry organizations to provide incentives and/or regulations for preservation of agricultural land and open space.

The intent here is to be not only reactive but proactive, proposing guidelines and concepts that represent community objectives, and working with participants to ensure appropriate development.

#### Northwest Connecticut Scenic Road Advisory Committee

There is a desperate need for a coordinated voice on scenic preservation issues in Northwest Connecticut. Northwest Connecticut is one of the last relatively unspoiled places in the state. In the recent past several issues of regional importance have emerged that would benefit from a coordinated effort—new cellular communication towers, recent land sales on particularly prominent and beautiful landscapes, the need for more flexible design standards and more attractive design details in rural areas (including the issue of guiderail replacement along Route 7), and much more. It is beyond the capability of each town to address these regional issues in addition to each town's specific road and right-of-way and view preservation issues along Route 7.

Instead, a committee should be formed, possibly as a subcommittee of the Northwest Connecticut Council of Governments, to coordinate all corridor management and rural preservation efforts along scenic roads. From an administrative point of view, the committee could simply be composed of representatives from each town's scenic road committee (or conservation commission or planning and zoning commission) plus advisory members from private regional conservation groups (e.g. Housatonic Valley Association and the Weantinogue Land Trust), state agencies and private utilities with responsibilities for managing the road and right-of-way.

A regional coordinating committee is needed for the following reasons:

- a regional committee—if appointed by the NWCCOG—can represent common local concerns from all towns regarding scenic road and viewshed preservation issues and it could act with authority on regional issues

of concern (such as cellular towers). It could serve as a coordinating, rather than duplicating, body to help the many enthusiastic volunteers in the region with their efforts for conserving rural open space and village quality of life;

- it can act in a stewardship role to preserve rural Northwest Connecticut's attractive rural landscape, for example, helping to prioritize regional efforts for view conservation, or promoting preservation of pedestrian-friendly villages and hamlets.
- acting as a joint group, rather than as separate municipal bodies, committee participants can exert the maximum level of influence on state and local agencies and officials, as well as provide leverage with interest groups and private landowners;
- a single committee can make sure that the efforts of one town build upon the efforts of others to create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts;
- it can coordinate grant funding efforts and if successful provide a mechanism to administer the grants (one of the most difficult problems facing rural Towns without professional planning or engineering staff).

In each of these overall roles, both the Regional Committee and Town Committee have the opportunity to be not only reactive but proactive, proposing guidelines and concepts that represent community objectives, and working with highway engineers, maintenance personnel, town planning staff and commissions, landowners or builders to ensure appropriate development. Finding a way to fund technical planning and design assistance for corridor communities should be a high priority of this group.

The initial impetus for forming such a committee is the upcoming decision for whether or not to apply for "National Scenic Byway" designation from FHWA and to coordinate scenic road applications from the missing pieces of the "Housatonic Highlands Scenic Byway." (Picking a name is also an important part of this effort!) With the exception of Warren, all the towns in the Northwest Connecticut Council of Governments have a designated state scenic

road, or have expressed a sincere interest in gaining designation for Route 7, Route 4, Route 41, Route 44, and Route 126 as a continuous scenic byway loop through Northwest Connecticut.

This regional committee could be established, similar to the Route 169 Scenic Byway Committee in the northeastern part of the state, with the sponsorship and volunteered administrative support of the regional agency—in this case, the Northwest Connecticut Council of Governments. This committee would aggregate the participating towns' political bases into a unified voice and provide a single point of contact, thereby improving the potential for communication with state entities such as the Department of Transportation and various utility companies. It will also simplify and facilitate internal dialogue between the towns on common issues.

#### Specific Role of the NWCCOG Subcommittee

In summary, this regional Northwest Connecticut Scenic Roads Committee should focus on the following issues:

- coordinate scenic road applications and possible National Scenic Byway designation;
- actively pursue in conjunction with all other rural towns in Connecticut, the adoption of appropriate and flexible rural road standards;
- work closely with ConnDOT to resolve the issue facing guiderail replacement, and pedestrian safety in hamlets and villages;
- pursue the establishment of a conservation trust fund to be used to for emergency preservation activities along scenic roads within the region and work closely with local and regional land trusts to secure their preservation;
- pursue outside funding for high priority enhancement projects (one in each of the corridor Towns — see Table I, in this chapter);
- pursue the establishment of a maintenance trust fund, the proceeds of which would be used to pay for any additional maintenance costs for using special details, planting of wildflowers, etc.
- pursue outside funding for a regional "Heritage Tourism" initiative to study the feasibility



ity of establishing a “national heritage area” in Northwest Connecticut.

#### Specific Role of the Town Scenic Road Committees

At the same time, each Town’s scenic road committee will continue to deal with those scenic-byway-related issues within its purview or coordinating efforts within each participating town:

- gaining endorsements for the plan from Town Boards and Commissions and private groups;
- formalizing the relationship of the Town Scenic Road Committee with the District IV office of ConnDOT, the State Scenic Road Advisory Committee, utility companies or others regarding road construction (notification as to repaving, shoulder reconstruction, emergency repair, etc.), road maintenance (tree cutting, shoulder mowing and sight line improvements, lane restriping, etc.), or utility maintenance (tree cutting, pole or wire replacement, etc. – with careful review of the existing regulations, laws and general practices currently governing tree trimming);
- working with individual property owners to guide land use in an appropriate manner (which only each town— not DOT or regional bodies— can control);
- finalizing plans for and pursuing the necessary public-private partnerships to implement specific town enhancement projects such as the proposed gateways at Bulls Bridge (Kent) and West Cornwall (Sharon), the pull-off at the Cellar Hole (Sharon), enhancements to Cornwall Bridge (Cornwall), and pedestrian safety, circulation and access improvements in the Center of Kent.

#### Promoting Cooperation Between the Connecticut Department of Transportation and Municipalities

An advantage of the combined local and regional approach to implementing the plan, is that it establishes a mechanism for ConnDOT and participating towns to identify opportunities where it is in all their interests to cooperate. At the same time, issues which need to be

coordinated at the regional level can fit within the same type of framework that already exists for regional transportation planning. The following summarizes the opportunities for such cooperation,

#### An Agenda for Cooperative Actions

This corridor management plan, when accepted by ConnDOT and approved by participating towns as part of their Plans of Conservation and Development, represents a blueprint for cooperation between the Connecticut Department of Transportation and local byway participants—local landowners, town officials and staff, civic groups and land trusts. The corridor management plan identifies the benefits for all concerned. While the plan is not permanently cast in stone, it sets out an agenda for cooperation whose success depends on the mutual benefits to all parties.

As part of the plan, the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Towns of Kent and Sharon (and potentially Cornwall should it choose to pursue state scenic road designation) have recognized that:

- It is in the best interest of the citizens of the respective municipalities to agree to work cooperatively on creating the kinds of incentives and programs that will help preserve the corridor’s scenic views and its historic and cultural context,  
*and*
- that it is in the best interest of the citizens of the respective municipalities and the Connecticut DOT to work cooperatively on finding ways to adopt and undertake appropriate maintenance standards and improvements to the road and right-of-way that reflect its special standing as a state designated scenic road.

As its part of the corridor management plan, the Connecticut Department of Transportation would:

- ensure that all Department personnel who are responsible for the day to day management and maintenance of the scenic road are familiar with the goals and strategies presented in the plan;
- adopt, where feasible, special maintenance standards and design practices that reflect its

special standing as a state designated scenic road;

- fully participate in the establishment of an entity to serve as a permanent link between Connecticut DOT and relevant regional towns, to address issues of common concern;
- foster open, early and direct communication with key stakeholders.

As its part of the corridor management plan respective municipalities would:

- adopt the goals and objectives identified in this report as part of the town's Plan of Conservation and Development and as its input into regional plans of development;
- adopt appropriate planning concepts for the scenic road viewshed that will provide incentives to property owners to conserve its scenic quality and/ or manage growth in such a way as to minimize expansion pressure on the roadway capacity and geometry;

- agree to fully participate in the establishment of an entity to serve as a permanent link between the Connecticut DOT and the town and associated entities, to address issues of common concern.

In addition, both parties would agree to work together to:

- identify cost-effective ways to manage and maintain the road and right-of-way in a more sensitive manner, including finding alternative sources of funding to pay for any added associated costs, and encouraging the local adoption of those road maintenance practices that exceed the available funds;
- find the most cost effective way, including coordination of volunteer efforts, to implement proposed improvement projects including landscape and pedestrian safety enhancements.

## SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Route 7 from Bulls Bridge to West Cornwall is one of the most beautiful stretches of highway in the entire Connecticut scenic byway program. The stewardship of these qualities by preserving the view and context of the scenic byway is equally as important as the maintenance and management of the road and right-of-way.

Unlike the road and right-of-way, however, the view and context belongs to the individual or entity— private, not-for-profit or public— who owns or controls the property adjacent to the road. As in other Connecticut towns, controls over use of the land are vested solely in the town's zoning or subdivision ordinances, which offer at best a limited degree of influence.

However, one of the philosophies of scenic road corridor management is that regulation is only one technique of preserving views and context— and for that matter, the technique of last resort rather than the preferred initial approach. Refinements to public regulations can be very helpful, especially as they offer incentives as well as controls. Such approaches should be built into any upcoming update of the town's

master plan (its plan of conservation and development) and eventual zoning refinements to follow.

But the use of other voluntary view preservation techniques (discussed in Chapter 3) can be equally effective— for instance:

- the role of local land trusts in acquiring conservation easements, to the tax benefit of the landowner as well as the conservation benefit of the scenic corridor;
- similar use of farm land or forest land preservation programs or park/open space acquisition (from the state of Connecticut or others);
- technical assistance to landowners in such areas as estate planning to avoid undesired land sale for tax purposes, or design assistance in development site and building planning;
- or even proactive participation by outside partners in land development, to assist in implementing feasible approaches combining development and open space/view conservation.

Following is a discussion of “how” to implement the recommended strategies discussed in Chapter 3, incorporating where necessary not only existing but new tools and techniques for achieving these objectives.

### **1) Establishing and Acting on Conservation Priorities**

The sites thus identified should be the priority sites for various conservation actions by the Town and other land preservation entities, using the existing programs outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. These actions should be coordinated at the regional level through a regional Northwest Connecticut Scenic Roads Committee to avoid multi-Town duplication of effort.

However, these programs are limited by the availability of resources— funding and energy— as well as by the need to allocate these resources equitably to a number of competing demands— of which scenic byway corridor preservation is just one of many potential priorities.

#### **Public Sector Conservation Action**

From the Town’s public sector perspective, the political process of creating priorities from competing demands is a twofold function:

- leadership (positioning items in a defensible strategic agenda), and
- support (the expressed response of the voting constituency).

The agreed-upon scenic byway corridor management plan can help local leadership by providing a rationale for priority action, putting issues on the table in a comprehensive framework.

And the process by which the plan was created can help supply the support— building on the network of involved groups and individuals whose common agendas form the basis for the plan.

#### **Revolving Open Space Acquisition of Key Parcels**

The most direct public approach to conservation is facilitating the actual acquisition, through the town or associated partners, of key parcels of

land. In such an approach, an important piece of land along the scenic corridor may come up for sale, with an initial payment needed to hold it until an appropriate conservation-minded buyer can be found. Revolving open space acquisition funds are sometimes used as an emergency source of funding in just such a situation.

The success of such a technique depends upon the presence of a willing seller who offers the property voluntarily (or with a right of first refusal) at a below-market price that takes into consideration potential tax benefits that can be granted by the Town or other governmental body. (If a mandatory program, this would run counter to traditional property rights, but as a voluntary program, it is similar to approaches currently in place in other Northeastern states, and gives property owners within the corridor a potential built-in buyer).

Success also depends on the ability of the Town or interest group to quickly put in place a buyer— known as a conservation buyer. This buyer may be a single entity, or a partnership of participants and funding sources. In addition to the Town itself, such participants may also include other state agencies or another non-profit (such as a land trust) that is capable of managing the land in its rural use, or even a private development entity.

Such a buyer can eventually turn around and resell the property with conservation easements and development guidelines in place on the most scenic and most sensitive lands. (In times of rising property values, the land can often be sold sooner rather than later for the same or greater value, yielding a return to the investor, which can be immediately returned to the revolving fund for use on other properties— a win-win situation for all parties. Most of the open space system in Lincoln, Massachusetts was created in this way).

Creating a start-up fund could come directly from town budget allocations, or from devices such as a real-estate transfer tax (which has been used with great success on Nantucket Island, for instance). As an example, the Town of Brooklyn



CT has budgeted a small fund for these purposes (developed as an outgrowth of its Town Conservation Plan, developed by its conservation commission). The fund could be administered through one of the existing regional land trusts or through the proposed regional Northwest Connecticut Scenic Roads Committee.

#### Land Trust and Non-Profit Conservation Organizations

As in other nearby scenic roads, Route 7's corridor communities have been extremely fortunate in the benefits they have received from the voluntary civic actions of not-for-profit conservation groups such as the Kent, Weantinogue and Sharon Land Trusts, the Housatonic Valley Association, the Conservation Fund, and the Nature Conservancy. The conservation-oriented actions of these groups—purchasing land or conservation easements, holding conservation easements for tax benefit, and educating others to the benefits of conservation—have been critical in the preservation of the open space, environmental and agricultural heritage of the Route 7 corridor.

However, as in other Northwest communities, different land trusts have different mission statements:

- viewshed protection for aesthetic reasons;
- wildlife or plant habitat, wetland or other critical environmental preservation;
- agricultural preservation, to support the economic feasibility of family farms;
- open space preservation for general ecological or growth management reasons.

In addition, different land trusts have different geographic areas of interest. Some are focused on an individual town while others are more regional in nature. Their actions may take place on sites of great access and visibility, or on internal sites accessible only by foot or jeep trail.

With reference to Route 7 (as well as to other scenic byway corridors in the region), the objective is to visually and functionally preserve the roadside character and views as they now exist. Within the Route 7 Scenic Corridor, land trusts will be most interested in specific parcels with other environmental, agricultural or growth management objectives described above.

#### A Northwest Connecticut Scenic Alliance

In order to focus appropriate conservation activity on scenic roads, it may be necessary and useful to form cooperative relationships between various land trusts and conservation organizations operating in Northwest Connecticut.

This voluntary consortium of existing land trust institutions would focus on the priority sites and projects identified through corridor management plans. Such a broad-based organization that focuses specifically on scenic conservation would have a number of advantages over the current, more ad-hoc approach:

- it can consolidate a selective part of its member institutions' resources and energy into a more substantial fund earmarked for a specific agreed-upon purpose (for example a ridgeline protection fund, rather than ad hoc purchase of mountain tops);
- it can leverage member funding commitments with matching grants from other public or philanthropic entities;
- it can pro-actively implement its objectives, rather than waiting for crises to occur or requests for intervention to emerge.

Although independent, this group should participate in the proposed regional scenic road committee.

#### Guiding Land Use and Growth

The growth management tools available to the Towns of Kent, Cornwall and Sharon can be supplemented by new refinements or by approaches involving associated partners.

Zoning, the system of legal regulation that allows or controls the type and intensity of land use, is the town's primary public growth management tool. As described in Chapter 2, the towns' cluster ordinances (in Kent, 'conservation development', in Cornwall a special use, and in Sharon, 'planned conservation zone') allow relaxation of regulations if a proportion of the buildable site (40% in Kent, 50% in Sharon and Cornwall) is set aside for open space. In addition, in Sharon a 20% density increase is allowed if this open space is set aside for active farmland preservation (on prime and important

agricultural soils). This bonus acts as an incentive to the extent that it generates an economic surplus over any additional legal and management costs deriving from common septic fields or other issues in such a development. (In Kent and Cornwall there is no such bonus at present).

#### A Scenic Overlay District

A possible approach to refining zoning and development controls and incentives within the scenic corridor viewshed attracted interest when presented in the Fall 1998 public workshop.

This approach involved three suggested steps:

- First, creation by each of the three towns of a 'scenic overlay district', comprising the 'viewshed' of the scenic road (areas that can be seen from the road), detailed with a survey of priority vistas from the road.
- Second, fleshing out this overlay district with a new voluntary development approach common to all towns— which would supplement, without changing or replacing, the underlying existing zoning provisions of the three individual towns. The objective of this additional and alternative set of development guidelines to the existing 'as-of-right' zoning would be the preservation of priority views and conservation of open space through careful siting, clustering and/or easements.
- Third, putting in place agreed benefits to landowners or developers for voluntarily participating in these optional guidelines. Their benefits would be trade-offs available from the towns, through their zoning processes or through coordination of state or local programs and participation of land trusts, environmental, historic or philanthropic organizations, or from private entities such as utility companies.

These trade-offs or incentives would remain completely optional, and would apply only to qualifying projects within the Route 7 scenic viewshed. In order to qualify, a developer would have to participate in site plan/design review as well as meet the goals and objectives of the Corridor Management Plan and basic environmental criteria already mandated through state or federal regulation.

The trade-offs should apply both to siting and design of single-lot developments (which ultimately have as much effect on scenic quality as do larger developments) and to traditional subdivision development. A major objective is making cluster development more feasible within this overlay district.

They would vary with location, with certain approaches appropriate for rural areas within the viewsheds and other approaches appropriate for more urbanized hamlet or village areas.

In summary, these 'Option B' voluntary guidelines for property owners and developers (as opposed to 'Option A' as-of-right development) would include the following:

- working with town planning and zoning officials, and (should future technical assistance and funding be provided through the NWCCOG) using professional planning assistance from the earliest conceptual stage of development to ensure that any development proposal will have minimum impact to the scenic corridor;
- preservation of existing trees (with new landscape planting to better define views and buffer new development);
- preservation of defined open space and views (including ridgelines and steep slopes) through easement, dedication, sale or participation in open space, environmental, agricultural or forest land conservation program;
- siting of units to preserve these defined open spaces and/or views, including clustering and utilizing tighter groupings of houses;
- "build-to" lines— similar but opposite to setback lines— within certain built-up areas (such as within the Kent village center or other hamlets), to better define roadway and public spaces with building edges (reinforced with simple design guidelines as appropriate, regarding building height and proportion, roof type and pitch, and treatment of parking);
- reducing the number of curb cuts by sharing driveways;
- defining the location and design of curb cuts and intersections for maximum safety and minimum visual impact.

In return, following is a summary list of possible trade-offs and incentives which would be made available to the landowner or developer within the overlay zone, for using these 'Option B' creative approaches rather than 'Option A' as-of-right:

*incentives in rural areas:*

- allowing a 20% building density increase for overlay zone cluster development as a reward for preservation of 50% of land as open space—incorporating priority views as well as prime agricultural land or environmental features (an expanded tool for Kent, a new tool for Cornwall, and a supplement to Sharon's existing bonus program, which rewards only preservation of agricultural uses);
- flexibility in yard requirements, frontage requirements, etc. to allow siting with respect to open space and views;
- flexible standards for building internal roads or utilities (minimizing pavement, runoff, and reducing up-front costs of development);
- priority access to conservation easement acquisition and open space, agricultural and forest land programs (facilitated by the proposed Northwest Connecticut Scenic Roads Committee and the proposed alliance of land trusts around scenic conservation issues).

*incentives in urbanized areas:*

- allowing density increase (in Kent for instance, to 1 unit per 1/8 acre or 8 units/acre) as incentive for reinforcing village and hamlet areas with more traditional pedestrian-scaled town densities and scale of development;
- allowing flexibility in mix of uses, including residential on second floor over retail or office development.
- assistance with infrastructure—roads and utilities—through public or civic sources to help make development feasible.

*incentives for all areas:*

- streamlined approvals process (faster approvals save money);

- site planning, design technical assistance (should funding become available);
- technical assistance and facilitation of increased legal or administrative requirements involved with clustering or other development issues;
- subsidized landscape material and installation assistance.

As noted above, the aggregation and coordination of these benefits will require the continuing partnership of public, civic and private participants now represented on the advisory committee, supplemented as feasible with other resources:

- Some of the benefits derive from the judicious use of existing public powers (timing of review and approvals and discretionary aspects of zoning) and some require coordination of a variety of local, state or federal programs such as open space acquisition or agricultural preservation;
- Some come from civic/not-for-profit sector programs—the participation of land trust and other philanthropic or service organizations by including scenic viewsheds in their list of priority projects;
- Some come from private sources such as utility or other companies which can help with landscaping, maintenance or other actions.

The detailed definition of new development guidelines should be prepared in conjunction with these participants, to set the stage for a future town plan update/zoning revision (now underway in all three towns).

*Relationship to Appalachian Trail and Housatonic River Conservation Efforts*

In addition, the rationale and available conservation techniques of the 'Scenic Overlay District' itself should be examined for its applicability for conservation of lands related to the Appalachian Trail and the Housatonic River.

Efforts to protect the view from the Appalachian Trail have been ongoing for many years. A review of priority conservation areas with the Connecticut Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club would be worthwhile to focus conser-



vation efforts where benefits for scenic conservation would accrue to the Appalachian Trail viewshed as well as the Route 7 viewshed.

Similarly, efforts to protect the Housatonic River have been ongoing for many years. A review of priority conservation areas with the Housatonic Valley Association, the Housatonic River Commission, and other river enthusiasts would be worthwhile to focus conservation efforts where the benefits would accrue to both the Housatonic River and the Route 7 viewshed.

Twenty years ago, a 'Wild and Scenic River' designation was sought for the Housatonic River. The designation was not adopted in part because of fears of undue Federal control. Other rivers in New England were designated and the 'feared' Federal control did not materialize. In fact, the designation has helped many of these river communities protect themselves against large-scale federally funded or regulated projects such as new highways, transmission lines, flood control, etc. The two decades' worth of experience with wild and scenic river designation should be evaluated.

Re-examining designation at this time might be an excellent way to continue to protect the Housatonic at little cost to adjacent landowners and local municipalities, while at the same time increasing protection for the river and its environment (which also includes the Route 7 and Appalachian Trail viewsheds).

The recently-enacted Rivers Heritage program, coordinated by the Federal Council on Environmental Quality, is another long-term opportunity worth further consideration, especially for joint regional action.

In addition, the HVA is participating in the joint Regional Plan Association- sponsored 'Appalachian Hills' program, coordinating a land planning committee to examine issues and opportunities for managing growth.

## 2) Creating A Greenway Along the Housatonic

As described in Chapter 3, there are a number of existing groups who are interested in creating a greenway along the Housatonic River. The Housatonic Valley Association has been spearheading the creation of continuous greenways throughout the Housatonic River watershed.

In the Town of Kent, an ad hoc coordinating group has been formed to advance the development of pedestrian and bicycle pathways throughout the Town. The primary focus of this group is to find ways to improve walking and bicycling conditions from all four directions into the Center of Kent. They are building on ongoing efforts by the Housatonic Valley Association to establish a greenway along the Housatonic River and the Mountain Laurel Trail Association, a group organized to promote trails in the Town of Kent. They will also need to address the concerns of the Connecticut Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club to preserve the wilderness experience where pathways may need to intersect.

The following short-term actions are recommended:

- Establish the Kent Pathways Committee as a subcommittee of the Town of Kent's Scenic Road Advisory Committee (since much of the length of the proposed pathway will be directly related to Route 7). Representatives from the Housatonic Valley Association, the Connecticut Chapter of the Appalachian Club, and the Mountain Laurel Trail Association should be included on this committee.
- Amend the Town of Kent's Plan of Development and the Northwest Connecticut Regional Transportation Plan to include a separated pathway along Route 7 connecting the small residential community of Birch Hill with the Center of Kent and connecting the Sloane-Stanley Museum with the Center of Kent. A similar East to West pathway should also be designated.
- Pursue funding from the Greenways for America program of the Conservation Fund to conduct a feasibility study for creating trails along Route 7 in the vicinity of the Center of Kent. The result of the feasibility

study should be a clear identification of the locations and types of trails that should be part of the greenway, and the locations of sensitive areas where no trails should be constructed. A budget should be established for specific trail segments.

- Pursue funding to improve safety and enhance the pull-off at the Cellar Hole in Sharon.
- Request that the District Engineer improve and stabilize the shoulders at existing informal pull-offs to reduce the drop-off along the edge of the pavement.

### **3) Managing the Impacts of Tourism**

The implementation of efforts to manage the impacts of tourism in the region by focusing such efforts on "heritage tourism", as recommended in Chapter 3, starting on page 62, should be carried out through the proposed regional Northwest Scenic Roads Committee (or a similarly established regional committee). Many of the same groups with an interest in scenic roads are also interested in heritage-based tourism.

The broadly-based and coordinated involvement of existing groups with expertise and interest in promoting and managing tourism is extremely important. Groups such as the Tri-Corners History Council, Chambers of Commerce in each town, and local historic societies must be involved to ensure that an appropriate level of tourism is promoted— one that will fit within the limits and capabilities of the corridor communities to manage and sustain. Too much tourism will destroy the very resource that is attractive to visitors. Once such a level is established, the Litchfield Hills Travel Council would be in the best position to promote such approaches to the outside world through State of Connecticut tourism programs.

This effort could be an important long-term focus for the regional scenic roads program as well as for each individual town— a way to consolidate and interpret their past heritage, their present attractions, and their future plans for both residents and visitors alike. More importantly, such a program would serve to

guide tourism to those locations most capable of accommodating its impacts.

#### **Step 1: Expand State Scenic Road Designation**

As one of its first priority actions, the regional scenic roads committee, coordinated by NWCCOG, should seek to gain recognition for scenic roads throughout the region. State Scenic Road designation will provide some immediate protection for roadside character and can serve as the first step in creating established regional touring routes. The following routes should be pursued:

- Non-designated sections of Route 7 between New Milford and North Canaan (Canaan), including the involvement of the Towns of New Milford, Cornwall, Sharon, Salisbury, Falls Village (Canaan) and Canaan (North Canaan);
- Non-designated sections of Route 4 between Cornwall Bridge and Sharon (see Sharon Scenic Corridor Management Plan);
- Route 126 and Route 44 in Falls Village (Canaan) connecting Route 7 with Route 44 in Salisbury
- In addition, inter-state cooperative efforts with Berkshire County, Massachusetts to the north could expand the corridor further into the Berkshire Mountains, possibly along Route 41 or along Route 7 (also see Route 41 and 44 Corridor Management Plan for Salisbury, in progress).

The extension of the Route 7 portion of the scenic byway network to include Cornwall is a further valuable implementation measure that should be undertaken in the short term. This portion of Route 7, while an extremely attractive roadway comparable or even superior to many other designated portions of the roadway, is also vulnerable to potential inappropriate development.

On the one hand, the 'Conservation Priorities' map for that portion of Route 7 shows that many of the parcels within the viewshed are protected by virtue of ownership, easement, or environmental constraints, including land containing unbuildable soils or steep slopes, but also within the protected viewshed of the Appalachian Trail.

On the other hand, other parcels (some in large single-ownership) with good access and visibility have been the subject of negotiations between landowners, land trust/conservation entities, and potential developers. Designation of this portion of Route 7 could increase the potential of these sites for concerted and creative open space preservation.

Existing regulations cannot prohibit view-destructive intrusions on these scenic parcels. However, as shown in the examples in Section 3 of this report, with careful siting and design incentives, development if it occurs can be made to complement the designated scenic corridors. In addition, more assertive non-public sector approaches to achieving byway objectives can also help—utilizing priority-parcel land trust participation and voluntary private development actions as available incentives for properties within the view corridor.

#### Step 2: National Scenic Byway Designation

The establishment of a National Scenic Byway would gain additional recognition for the qualities of Northwest Connecticut's scenic roads and serve as a focus for locally based conservation efforts—to keep these places just the way they are today. At the same time the recognition of Northwest Connecticut's scenic roads as a National Scenic Byway could be used as a touring route promoting the region's history and natural beauty in an appropriate manner.

The designation of a route as a National Scenic Byway will result in some additional promotion at the federal and national level—a scenic byway brochure and marking the routes on AAA maps. Further promotion appears to be what a region wants to do on their own. Given the variance in views of each town on what constitutes an appropriate level of tourism promotion, this emphasis may vary from town to town.

At the Fall 1998 public workshop and at Advisory Committee meetings, interest was expressed in further exploring this possibility. As in other Northwest communities, concerns were also expressed regarding the implications of

such designation because of possible increased tourism attraction. However, it was pointed out by others that because of the more specialized appeal of local attractions (natural beauty, human-powered recreation, small villages and hamlets and the historical interest of the region), that increased visitation simply as a result of National Scenic Byway designation would be highly unlikely.

Therefore, it is not anticipated that much additional traffic would be generated, over and above what occurs along Route 7 today, unless the corridor communities wanted to use the designation to promote the region. Therefore, the ultimate control over tourism promotion rests with the corridor communities, not with the Federal or State government. Moreover, FHWA's Scenic Byway Program provides competitive grants targeted at mitigating the impacts of any increased tourism activities resulting from such designation.

The benefits of such recognition would be improving chances for funding through FHWA's Federal Scenic Byway Program. Current funding is focused on projects which enhance the safety of the designated routes. This funding could help improve pedestrian safety in the villages of Kent and Cornwall Bridge and fund informational kiosks to direct visitors to appropriate locations throughout the corridor.

Chances for gaining recognition as a National Scenic Byway would be more likely if the designated route were a longer, more continuous, and multi-jurisdictional segment. As previously noted, multi-state applications may have a higher likelihood of designation. Route 7 lends itself to such extension, as does Route 41 in Sharon and Salisbury, by virtue of its linkages to Massachusetts' Berkshire County to the north.

In order to be eligible, these additional extension segments would need to have their own Corridor Management Plans (and eventually be an integrated part of a composite compendium of individual plans). Such a plan would also need to anticipate and put in place safeguards to maximize view protection and open space preservation, and minimize traffic and other impacts. The NWCCOG is willing to coordinate



the preparation of these corridor management plans which can be developed as a supplement to one of the existing corridor management plans.

#### Establish Gateways

Funding for gateways at Bulls Bridge and West Cornwall (and the pull-off at the Cellar Hole) should be pursued immediately. The next funding cycle for the National Scenic Byway Program will be in early 1999. The next application for designation of National Scenic Byways will most likely be in December of 1998. Yet designation will not formally be announced until after the deadline for funding. Application for both funding and designation should be pursued at the same time.

*Possible Extension into New York State*

*Note:  
New York State will  
designate county  
roads as state scenic  
byways*

*To Millerton*

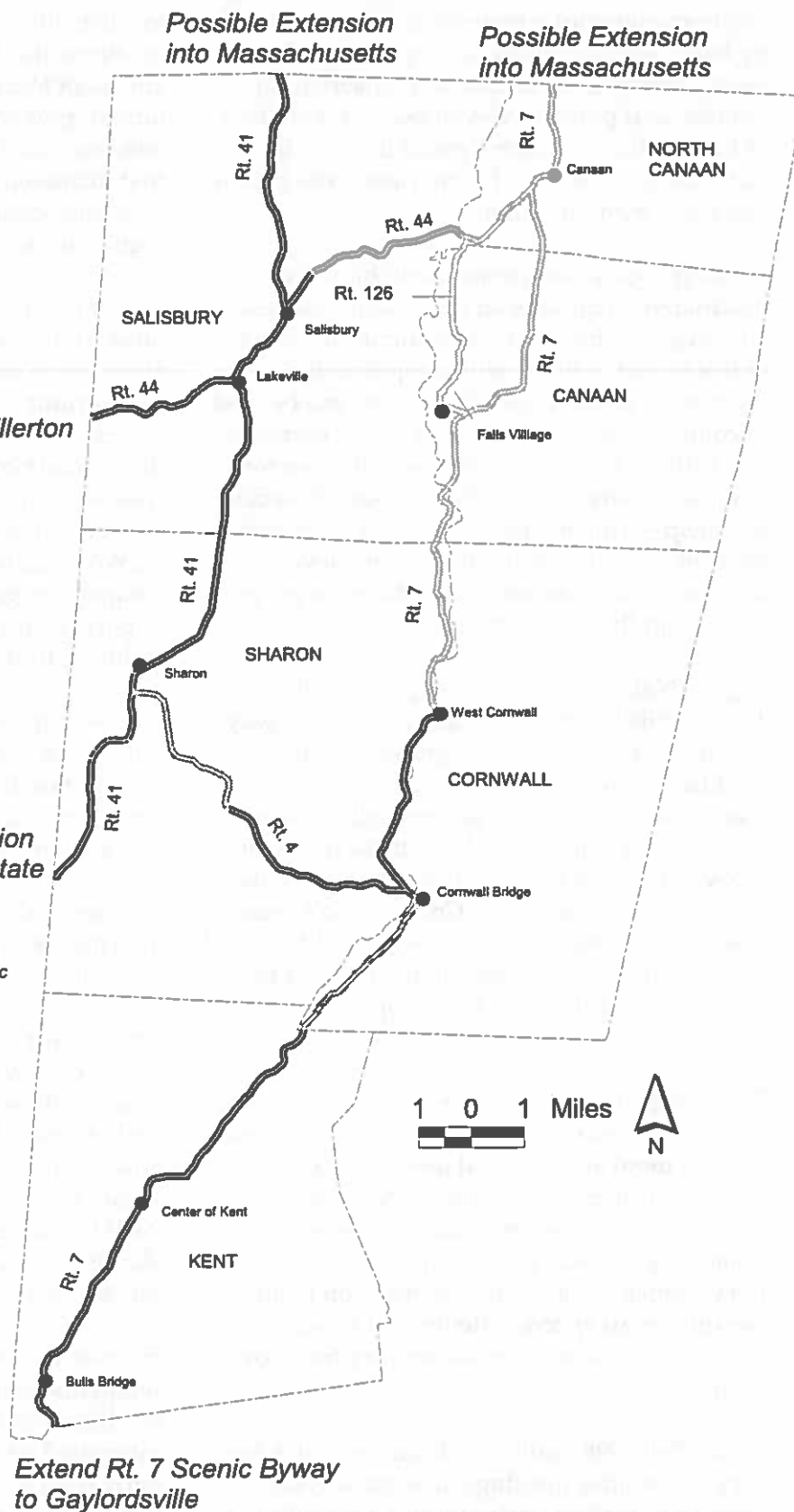


Figure 4-1 Recommended route for a proposed Housatonic Highlands Scenic Byway. Routes highlighted in dark gray are existing state designated scenic roads; those in light gray require state designation.

#### 4) Enhancing Roadside Character & 5) Traffic Calming

The road and right-of-way strategies outlined in this report will require the full cooperation of the Connecticut DOT, utility companies and adjoining land owners.

The most immediate implementation efforts are to address the issues of pedestrian safety in the Center of Kent, and to come to an agreement about the long-term strategy for guiderail replacement.

With regard to pedestrian safety, there is a need to assess the feasibility and cost of installing pedestrian safety improvements (this report recommends bumpouts to provide better sight lines to oncoming automobiles) along Main Street in Kent. Pedestrian enhancements should be amended to the regional transportation plan and grant funding from ISTEA or the Scenic Byway Program should be pursued to design and construct the pedestrian safety improvements.

At the same time, the guiderail issue must be resolved in a cooperative effort between ConnDOT and the three corridor towns. Replacement by standard guiderail will destroy the character of Route 7 as it parallels the Housatonic.

The NWCCOG should apply for a grant from DEP to study the feasibility of utilizing bioengineering techniques to help stabilize the banks of the river and to provide a more permanent solution to the guiderail problem in a more aesthetically, environmentally, and economical fashion. Information to submit an application to DEP (that also could be used for FHWA's Scenic Byway Program Fund) are contained in the Appendix.

The wildflower planting test site at Cornwall Bridge should also be implemented. This has potential long term benefits, in that if a system for the planting and maintenance of wildflowers along the roadside could be proven to be feasible and workable, then wildflower plantings could help serve a number of other benefits

including use as gateway and intersection plantings.

In addition, longer term involvement will be required to implement the strategies proposed for roadside tree preservation and planting, management and enhancement of the two pull-offs, and implementation of traffic calming measures.

Volunteer efforts are critical to the successful management of roadside vegetation. ConnDOT's maintenance budgets are very tight and they are unable to maintain new plantings within the road and right-of-way. Using the "adopt-a-ramp" model, volunteer agreements can be developed between Towns and District IV to allow volunteer groups to plant and maintain landscaped areas.

#### Establishing a Maintenance Trust Fund

The most significant regional and statewide effort that is needed is to create a "maintenance trust fund." The biggest constraint to implementing enhancements to roadside character, such as alternative guiderails, paving treatments, or new plantings is the limitation on maintenance budgets by ConnDOT.

Legislative authority of some kind appears to be needed to create such a trust fund. The proceeds of the trust would be used to pay for maintenance costs for special details used for scenic roads over and above those that are typically required for standard practice.

Another issue that will require legislative action is the need for more flexible design standards for rural areas. A national effort is currently underway to shed more light on the feasibility of establishing more flexible rural road design standards. This effort should be closely monitored to determine its impact on Northwestern Connecticut.

## 6) Growing the Center of Kent

Cooperation between a variety of participants will be required to implement the sorts of ideas put forward in Section 3 for the Kent village center: improving traffic flow, safety and appearance of the road and right-of-way adjacent to Route 7, and circulation and function within the village center and associated development.

The Kent Village Green, as a private development with private roads, will be of necessity a partnership project in which participation and agreement by the property owners are necessary.

The scenic byway consultants have met with 'Kent Village Green' owners. Although friendly and interested in the ideas expressed, they are not willing to consider suggested improvements to the center at this time. One issue is that they cannot be expected to undertake and fund extensive revisions. In order to consider potential changes, they will need reciprocal proffers of associated improvements or assistance by other potential partners. Any agreement must be a win-win situation for everyone, leaving each partner with more than they have now, and minimizing any restrictions on land use or development rights.

The process for agreeing on appropriate measures should include the following steps:

- *The Town of Kent's Scenic Road Committee should continue to meet with landowners, town representatives and others to discuss potential changes*  
This should initially include those who represent potential resources for funding or implementing some of the changes (for instance, local land trust or garden club representatives). Other important participants would include railroad representatives (for discussions of crossings and right-of-way usage), district engineers from ConnDOT and utility company participants.
- *Examine basic issues, alternatives and constraints*  
Using the conceptual options developed as part of this scenic corridor study, examine the following constraints that must be

overcome, for instance, only if outside funds are available or only if another party resolves another related issue:

- *Route 7 circulation:* in/out turning movements at the two existing Kent Village Green shopping center entry/exit points (as private roadways, neither of which are traffic controlled), including related impacts on Route 7 through traffic;
  - *Road connections and off-street parking lot circulation and efficiency:* Can it be improved as suggested by strategic improvements such as new road connections to Route 7 or internal roadway reconfigurations?
  - *Pedestrian linkages to additional parking:* new and more direct pathways between Route 7 shops and commercial development and employee and overflow parking to the rear;
  - *Other center opportunities:* expansion or renovation of existing buildings or creation of new infill sites for office & commercial (or even residential) development;
  - *Adjacent land uses:* the potential for new residential development within the Village Green development or on adjacent connected infill sites;
  - *Linkage to adjacent sites:* potential pedestrian linkages to sites south of Route 341 or the residential units adjacent to the center to the north;
  - *Appearance:* what the downtown area looks like on approach from the south and from the north—signage and landscaping opportunities.
- *Agree on a strategy for improvements:*  
Who can do what, where, and when?
    - Can the town foster consensus between adjacent owners by assuming maintenance of internal roads, adding new roadways, or making improvements to other town roads (including accessory parking), allowing supporting changes in adjacent zoning (for instance, allowing increased residential densities on key infill and adjacent sites or working to achieve better directional and information signage for shops and parking), and



- facilitating approvals of agreed plans?
- If beneficial internal or local road circulation changes are made, what will ConnDOT do in return to improve Route 7 traffic patterns, intersection operations, and shoulder appearance?
- Will the utility company consider undergrounding, shifting poles and wires, or contributing appropriate landscaping?
- Can local civic groups undertake additional landscaping improvements and maintenance on islands or in the right-of-way? (The Kent Garden Club has already volunteered to beautify Main Street)
- Can land trusts and private property owners play a role in ensuring preservation of mature trees on adjacent sites or in facilitating connections to sidewalks and bikeways?
- If such improvements are agreed upon, will the landowner agree to proposed or similar improvements in return for expanded development value?

With such partnership support, based on an accepted Corridor Management Plan, this project could be an excellent candidate for potential funding assistance:

- Programs such as US Department of Agriculture grants for 'rural enterprise development' (these are not large grants, but could be used to develop a more refined master plan for the area)— this also requires further research and coordination with the Rural Development Council and others);
- For the Route 7 safety related improvements (such as pedestrian crossings) Federal Scenic Byway Program funding (depending on Congressional program appropriations);
- Pedestrian safety improvements on Route 7 should also be placed in the regional transportation plan so that state funding could be pursued for these improvements;
- Tax-increment financing— local bonding for public improvements, paid for by future tax revenues from benefited sites (more research is required into the applicability of State of Connecticut enabling/qualifying legislation);

## 7) Growing Hamlets

While the strategies for growing the existing hamlets are intended to be applied broadly to all the hamlets, (as part of the strategy of actively focusing development away from rural open space areas), the highest priority should be placed on improving the attractiveness and safety of Cornwall Bridge.

As with other strategies, a partnership effort between public, private and civic participants is needed to encourage appropriate growth in the smaller hamlets. For smaller hamlets, similar implementation strategies should be used to those described above for the Center of Kent. For Cornwall Bridge, the following steps should be taken:

- Adjoining property owners and the Town of Cornwall should come to an agreement about the proposed improvements that are needed to make Cornwall Bridge a safer place to stop, park your car, conduct business, walk between stores and services, and then get back in your car and exit safely. The two options presented in Chapter 3, pages 105-107, need to be reviewed by the town and a consensus formed about the preferred approach. These two options were already developed with property owner and Town involvement.
- As part of this planning effort, the Town may consider additional changes to zoning that would encourage residential infill within the commercial area. Over the long-term such a change would promote the pedestrian qualities of the area and perhaps encourage more business activity in the existing properties.
- Once a preferred approach is selected, the Town of Cornwall needs to endorse the plan and adopt it as part of their Plan of Development. Further, road improvements should be amended to the regional transportation plan so that these improvements would be eligible for State funding. This would also increase chances for funding through the National Scenic Byway Program at FHWA.

The proposed management plan for the scenic corridor is based on the following principles:

- 1. To preserve the natural and cultural resources of the scenic corridor.
- 2. To provide for the enjoyment of the scenic corridor by present and future generations.
- 3. To protect the scenic corridor from development that would be inconsistent with the scenic corridor's character.
- 4. To provide for the scenic corridor's economic and social benefits.

The scenic corridor management plan is a comprehensive plan that addresses the following issues:

- 1. Land use and development.
- 2. Transportation and infrastructure.
- 3. Natural resources and conservation.
- 4. Cultural resources and heritage.
- 5. Recreation and tourism.
- 6. Economic and social development.

The scenic corridor management plan is a living document that will be updated as needed to reflect changes in the scenic corridor's character and needs. The plan is a guide for decision-makers and the public in managing the scenic corridor.

The scenic corridor management plan is a key tool for managing the scenic corridor. It provides a framework for decision-making and a basis for public participation in the management of the scenic corridor.

The scenic corridor management plan is a key tool for managing the scenic corridor. It provides a framework for decision-making and a basis for public participation in the management of the scenic corridor.

The scenic corridor management plan is a key tool for managing the scenic corridor. It provides a framework for decision-making and a basis for public participation in the management of the scenic corridor.

The scenic corridor management plan is a key tool for managing the scenic corridor. It provides a framework for decision-making and a basis for public participation in the management of the scenic corridor.

The scenic corridor management plan is a key tool for managing the scenic corridor. It provides a framework for decision-making and a basis for public participation in the management of the scenic corridor.

The scenic corridor management plan is a key tool for managing the scenic corridor. It provides a framework for decision-making and a basis for public participation in the management of the scenic corridor.

The scenic corridor management plan is a key tool for managing the scenic corridor. It provides a framework for decision-making and a basis for public participation in the management of the scenic corridor.

The scenic corridor management plan is a key tool for managing the scenic corridor. It provides a framework for decision-making and a basis for public participation in the management of the scenic corridor.

Table 1: Implementation Summary  
Plan Element

Establish a Permanent Entity (see page 111)	Towns of Kent, Cornwall and Sharon Boards and Commissions Weantinogue, Kent, Sharon Land Trusts, HVA Cornwall Association ConnDOT CL & P NWCCOG Interested Civic Groups	Northwest Connecticut Council of Governments to coordinate as part of transportation planning MOU agreement	It may be useful for the Board of Selectmen of each Town to appoint an ad hoc committee to determine the most suitable organizational structure for this committee and its charge.
Forward Plan to Boards and Commissions for endorsements (as well as active civic groups)	Each Town's P & Z Appropriate Historic District Commissions Housatonic River Commission Weantinogue, Kent Land Trust Civic Groups e.g. Cornwall Association)	NA	Endorsement letters are needed to pursue outside funding and to demonstrate the overall commitment of the Towns and their citizens to the plan's implementation.
Incorporate resource maps, conservation priorities map into next revision (or an amendment) to the Town Plan of Development	Each Town's P & Z	NA	Consultant GIS files available as ArcVIEW v2.1 or 3.0 Shape files - entire project file could be provided to Town. Maps stored at NWCCOG w/ Town maps given to each
Adopt conservation priorities and guidelines (see pages 38-45) as part of each Town's Plan of Development and Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances (slope, ridgeline development, and tree protection), possibly as part of a scenic overlay district.	Each Town's P & Z	NA	It may be useful to establish a 'scenic overlay district' as a mechanism to implement the guidelines, including appropriate incentives
Submit regional application for scenic designation for non-designated section in Cornwall and extension in New Milford, Sharon, Falls Village and Canaan (also include non-designated section of Route 4 and section of 126 connecting Route 7 to Route 44	NWCCOG to Coordinate Requires support of Board of Selectman, letters of support from Land Trusts, Civic Associations, Housatonic River Commission, possibly state legislative representatives	NWCCOG transportation planning responsibilities	Reference recommendation of corridor management plan in application



Table 1: Implementation Summary (continued)

Plan Element		Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities	Implementation Issues
Pursue National Scenic Byway Designation for Routes 7, 4, 41, 44, and 126		NWCCOG to coordinate Town Boards and Commissions Housatonic River Commission HVA, Wantinogue Lant Trust, Sharon Land Trust Civic Associations Tri-Corners History Council Historic District Commissions Litchfield Hills Travel Council	Will require funding to extend corridor management planning process to remaining towns (New Milford, Falls Village, Canaan)  NWCCOG Pursue funding from DED	Next deadline likely to be December 98 -- need to have corridor plans complete for entire length of submission.  Local governments must agree to participate -- it would be useful to make an early determination as to who is willing to apply, and who is not; then focus corridor planning effort on those that are interested.
Amend Regional Transportation Plan to incorporate recommendations from Corridor Management Plan		NWCCOG ConnDOT	NA	Need a name for this byway! Application for ISTEAF funds typically requires inclusion of projects in TIP. Since this is a rural area, this may not be required, but may be useful for other funding opportunities
Prioritize projects for pursuit of America the Beautiful, ISTEAF or FHWA Scenic Byway Program Funding (perhaps 1 in each town)		Role for permanent entity - Apply through NWCCOG to ConnDOT, FHWA	Scenic Byway Program Funding or ISTEAF (contact ConnDOT regarding ISTEAF application - also dependent upon reauthorization of ISTEAF)  America the Beautiful (contact CT Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Forestry)	For ISTEAF, Scenic Byway Program, stress enhancements of scenic byway, pedestrian safety, vehicular safety, etc. (pull-offs, traffic calming, pedestrian crosswalks, etc.)  For America the Beautiful stress tree planting, possibly wildflowers
Pursue Department of Economic Development Funding for Gateway Pull-offs		Town of Kent, Town of Sharon CL & P Historic District Commissions	DED CL & P (in-kind services and possibly land lease)	Gateway points are also eligible for scenic byway funding -- however, the land may need to be in public ownership, and therefore may not work for the Bull's Bridge site.
Pursue outside funding to prepare Housatonic River Pathway Feasibility Study		HVA Towns of New Milford, Kent, possibly further north) CL & P/Kent School and other major property owners Trail clubs and user groups	Greenways for America (Conservation Fund)	Work with corridor planning efforts on Route 7 or with other future efforts to create a regional scenic byway
Pursue outside funding to test feasibility of bio-engineering techniques		Town of Kent or Sharon ConnDOT/DEP	CT DEP, USDA/NRCS, ISTEAF,	This is a very fundable project area (see appendix for application information)

Table 1: Implementation Summary (continued)

Plan Element		Potential Partners	Funding Opportunities	Implementation Issues
Work with regional conservation groups to establish Northwestern Connecticut Scenic Alliance		Rt. 7 plus Sharon, Salisbury, Roxbury, Scenic Road Advisory Committees/NWCCOG National Audubon Weantinoguc, Sharon, Kent, Salisbury Land Trusts Civic Associations Housatonic Valley Association Dutchess Land Conservancy	Greenways for America (Conservation Fund) has small grants that might be used for establishing such a group.	Needed to provide coordinated action for regional issues such as development on highest priority conservation needs (such as view at Sharon/Salisbury town line, or telecommunication towers, etc.)
Seek outside funding for purchase of conservation easements		Same as above	Kresge, Prospect Hill, Sudbury, Perkin, Cricket, Kaplan - See FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES CHART)	Check with DEP -- they are currently looking at Statewide Land Acquisition through recent action by Governor Rowland Coordinate with Land Trusts and HVA to define priorities and find parcels of land that are high priority for scenic conservation as well as for environmental/historical value.

Table 2: Private Funding Sources

Foundation	Address	Mailing Address	Keywords	Phone/Fax	Date Due	Funding Opportunity	Contact	Initial Action
Kresge Foundation	3215 West Big Beaver Rd., PO Box 3151	Troy, Michigan 48007-3151	buildings and equipment, land acquisition for conservation organizations working on habitat and species organizations Funded Nature Conservancy, Mass Audubon	810-643-9630 (phone) 810-643-0588 (fax)		purchasing of conservation easements for habitat protection	John E. Marshall, III, President	Telephone before submitting a proposal, guidelines available
Pew Charitable Trusts	One Commerce Square/2005 Market Street suite 1700	Philadelphia, PA 19103-7017	protect the global atmosphere, reduce the production and use of highly persistent toxic chemicals, and preserve forest and marine systems	215-575-9050 (phone) 215-575-4924 (fax) www.pewtrusts.com		possible ridgeline and slope protection policies—may be successful on Route 7 related to Housatonic River—collaboration with environmental organization needed	Joshua S. Reichert, Director, Environmental Division	call for application procedures on environmental pollution
Prince Charitable Trusts	10 South Wacker Drive, Suite 2575	Chicago, Illinois	open space, land use planning, transportation collaborative planning, citizen participation, collaborative efforts, education, land acquisition	312-454-9130 (phone) 312-454-9125 (fax)		may be limited to Chicago, Rhode Island, and Washington, D.C.	Tracy Shafroth, Program Director	2 page letter of inquiry
Prospect Hill Foundation	420 Lexington Ave. Suite 3020	New York, NY 10170	land and water protection primarily in the Northeast -- offer strategies and policies for the conservation of public and private lands; strengthen policies and initiate means for improving water quality and protecting coastal areas	212-370-1144 (phone) 212-599-6282 (fax)		possible funding for circuit rider to help all NWCCOG towns implement conservation planning	Constance Eisman, Executive Director	3 page letter - call for annual report with application guidelines
The Conservation Technology Support Program c/o Conservation GIS Consortium	324 Fuller Avenue - Suite C2	Helena, MT 59601	provides hardware, software, and training to nonprofit organizations addressing environmental and conservation issues so that they can undertake a variety of projects using a geographic information system (GIS)			goal is to provide a comprehensive package of GIS support to organizations that can demonstrate the need to apply appropriate GIS methods to accomplish their objectives, but lack the tools to do so - HVA was recent recipient	email clsp@desktop.org	



Table 2: Private Funding Sources (continued)

Foundation	Address	Mailing Address	Keywords	Phone/Fax	Date Due	Funding Opportunity	Contact	Initial Action
Sudbury Foundation	278 Old Sudbury Road	Sudbury Mass. 01776	modest investment in grant funds can help in a significant way to protect or restore the health and integrity of the environment; funded Mass. Watershed Coalition in Fitchburg for computer mapping	508-443-0849 (phone) 508-443-3767 (fax) www.agmconnect.org/sudbury1.html		10-20,000 dollars -- promoting collaborative conservation efforts-- best to emphasize river/greenway efforts as collaborative to scenic road conservation	Derry Tanner, Executive Director	Telephone call or brief concept paper; get grant guidelines
The Fund for Preservation of Wildlife and Natural Areas	One Boston Place, 24th Floor c/o The Boston Foundation	Boston, Mass. 02108	past funding for natural area protection, Nashua River Watershed Association greenway brochure	617-723-7415 (phone) 617-589-3616 (fax)	4/30	past grants might support land conservation activities/greenways	Glauco Ruesga, Donor Resources Manager	contact for updated guidelines
Norcross Wildlife Foundation	P.O. Box 0414 Planetarium Station	NY NY 10024-0414	land and habitat conservation, species protection, rivers, and coastal issues	212-362-4831 (phone) 212-362-4783 (fax)	8/31	possible source of greenway funding	Richard S. Reagan, President	contact for current grant-request guidelines - app. is 2 pages 14 cp
The Cabot Family Charitable Trust	75 State Street	Boston, Mass. 02109	Environmental issues of New England, land conservation, coastal issues, agricultural education, outdoor education, and recreation	617-342-6007 (phone) 617-342-6103 (fax)	2/29	Funded Trustees of Reservations, funds seed money -- ask for funds for revolving open space acquisition program	Ruth C. Sheer, Executive Director	Annual Report with Application Procedures
Perkin Fund	340 Country Club Road	New Canaan CT 06840	support for land and wildlife conservation	203-966-8947	3/15 and 9/15	CT address - tie in to greenways/wildlife conservation - scientific research through nonprofit institution or organization	Gladys T. Perkin Trustee	send letter to Morris & McVeigh/767 3rd Ave. NY NY 10017

Table 2: Private Funding Sources (continued)

Foundation	Address	Mailing Address	Keywords	Phone/Fax	Date Due	Funding Opportunity	Contact	Initial Action
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	1120 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 900 (Bender Building)	Washington, D.C. 20036	Wetland conservation, conservation education and leadership training, fisheries initiative, neotropical migratory bird conservation program, fisheries and wildlife assessment, wildlife and habitat initiative - funded Mass Audubon for protection - NC state	202-857-0166 (phone) 202-857-0162 (fax) www.nfwf.org	7/15 and 11/15	land acquisition, collaborative efforts, demonstration programs, innovative programs, training, -- could be a source for circuit rider position if tied more to environmental (UConn linkage helpful)	Kristen LaVine, Wildlife & Habitat; Holly Quirk, Wetlands & Private Land; Gris Batchelder, Fisheries Conservation & Management; Trevor Needham, Conservation Education	Ask for application material from foundation
The Cricket Foundation	Exchange Place, Suite 2200	Boston, Mass. 02109-2881	support for land conservation, watershed protection, seedstock preservation, and student education in New England	617-570-1130 (phone) 617-523-1231 (fax)	4/14	operating costs and projects - small grants for land protection (requires IRS tax exempt number)	George W. Butterworth III, Esq., Counsel	Telephone inquiry to start
American Conservation Association, Inc.	1350 New York Ave. NW, Suite 300	Washington, D.C. 20005	land conservation, (public lands, open space, wilderness, forest protection), coastal issues, water quality, river protection and wildlife	202-624-9365	4/30	has funded scenic conservation projects, emphasis on citizen participation, technical assistance	Charles M. Clusen, Executive Director	Annual Report, Grantskeeper Guide
The George I. Alden Trust	370 Main Street, Suite 1250	Worcester, Mass. 01608	Conferences, education, land acquisition, publications, research seminars Worcester Area/Northeastern United States Funded Worcester County Horticultural Society, New England Aquarium	508-798-8621 (phone) 508-791-1201 (fax)	6/30	favors educational institutions - look for funds to support U. Conn participation for technical assistance - horticulture related taught at Worcester Polytechnical Institute (use extension funding angle)	Frances H. Dewey, 3rd, Chairman	Annual Report includes submission

Table 2: Private Funding Sources (continued)

Foundation	Address	Mailing Address	Keywords	Phone/Fax	Date Due	Funding Opportunity	Contact	Initial Action
J. M. Kaplan Fund, Inc.	30 Rockefeller Plaza Suite 4250	NY, NY 10112	Natural and built environment - natural resources and environmental conservation, land use and farmland protection, environment and enterprise, inner city greening (NY City and State)	212-767-0630 (phone) 212-767-0639 (fax)	10/14	program undergoing review - New York State only, but a telephone call for Connecticut may be worthwhile - perhaps joint effort with Dutchess County	Henry Ng, Director	Telephone for guidelines
Claniel Foundation, Inc.	630 West Germantown Pike, Suite 400	Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462-1059	support for land conservation, watershed protection, beautification, education, and publications	610-828-6331 (phone) 610-828-6405 (fax)		supports innovative ideas for responsible stewardship of the natural and man-made environments-may respond to traffic calming	Dr. Henry A. Jordan, Executive director	Telephone for guidelines
The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, Inc.	50 Main Street, Suite 1000	White plains, NY 10022	support for land conservation, urban forests, marine research, wildlife, and a zoo	914-682-2008 (phone)		emphasis on cultural, social and education issues	Lucy Gioia, Administrative Assistant	Letter of intent, IRS tax-exempt status
The Seymour H. Knox Foundation, Inc.	3750 Marine Midland Center	Buffalo, NY 14203	support for beautification, land conservation, wildlife, and fishery protection	716-854-6811 (phone)		emphasis on community development and education	Northrup R. Knox, President	Letter of intent
Merek Family Fund	6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 500	Takoma Park, MD 20912	support for community greening, protecting and restoring vital eastern ecosystems, economic practices for a sustainable environment	301-270-2970 (phone) 301-270-2973 (fax)		strongly favors results-oriented projects rather than research	Betsy Taylor, Executive Director	Letter of intent, Telephone for guidelines



Table 2: Private Funding Sources (continued)

Foundation	Address	Mailing Address	Keywords	Phone/Fax	Date Due	Funding Opportunity	Contact	Initial Action
Scenic Rhode Island Foundation	25 Bellows Street	Warwick, RI 02888	support for visual environment related education, state and regional transportation, land use, and growth management policies, scenic roads, greenways, historic, and urban corridors, community character enhancements	401-941-3009 (phone) 401-941-2453 (fax)		recipients include advocates for historic preservation, greenways, transportation, and urban development - may be more appropriate to eastern Connecticut	David P. Leach, Executive Director	Letter of intent, telephone for Grant Making Guidelines
Surdna Foundation, Inc.	330 Madison Avenue, 30th Floor	NY, NY 10017-5001	grant themes include Biological and Cultural Diversity, Energy and Transportation, Restoring the Environment in Urban and Suburban Areas	212-557-0010 (phone) 212-557-0003 (fax) e-mail: request@surdna.org		distribution programs include community revitalization, effective environment, effective citizenry and arts	Edward Skloot, Executive Director Hooper Brooks, Program Officer for Environment	Letter of inquiry, Annual Report with Application Procedures
Union Camp Charitable Trust	1600 Valley Road	Wayne, NJ 07470	support for land conservation, coastal issues, water quality, species preservation, and outdoor education	201-628-2248 (phone) 201-628-2848 (fax)		emphasis on citizen participation, education, media projects, volunteerism, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions	Sydney N. Phin, Director, Human Resources	Proposal
CT DEP Nonpoint Source Control Implementation Grant Program - EPA Section 319 grant funds	79 Elm Street	Hartford, CT 06106-5127	provides funding for Habitat restoration, Nutrient Management, and Erosion and Sediment Control previously funds have been given to projects along the Quinnipiac River, Norwalk River, Hockanum River, Naugatuck River, and Scantic River and the Quinebaug/Shetucket Basin	860-424-3730 or 860-424-3810 (phone)	1/31	appropriate for bio-engineering studies and construction along bank of Housatonic River adjacent to sections of Route 7, place emphasis on water quality threat from polluted road surface runoff	Stan Zaremba, 319 NPS Coordinator, CT DEP	Pre-proposal Form must be used - if accepted a final detailed proposal will be requested by CT DEP and EPA
National Scenic Byways Program Discretionary Grants - Federal Highway Administration			provides funding for making safety improvements, construction of pedestrian, bicycle, and interpretive facilities; improvements to enhance recreation; protecting historical, archeological, and cultural resources, providing tourist information to the public		2/9	the grant application must be forwarded to FHWA through DOT or the identified scenic byways agency, a 20% match of state funds is required for all grants	Elizabeth Fisher	Proposal - Grant Application Guidance document is available