

Kent, Connecticut

2012 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVE CRITERIA DETERMINING THE ELEMENTS OF NEW ENGLAND 'RURAL CHARACTER'

QUANTIFIABLE PHYSICAL, GEOGRAPHICAL, CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

This list is based on observations of rural areas throughout New England from 1960's to the present. It does not presume to be exhaustive. Elements may be inventoried to determine degree of retention or loss.

Geography

- Geographical isolation – significant distance from metropolitan areas, interstate highways and major airports.
- New England pattern of settlement, i.e. small towns located approx 8 -12 miles apart connected by older 2 lane roadways coursing through rolling landscape of mixed wooded and open viewscape. Commerce, emergency services, schools and government offices concentrated in small village centers. Strip development on roads connecting villages is minor or absent.
- Well defined village center, usually at or near the junction of two or more state highways, containing a community open space or village green. Smaller hamlets are often dispersed within the town.

Demographics

- Low total population.
- Low population density per square mile.
- Rate of residential growth is low and consistent. Generally a consistent or slow increase in population –1% per year or less.
- Multi-generational resident consistency for significant percentage of population, i.e. 3rd generation residents not uncommon. At least a few families in 6th generation or longer.

Employment

- High level of population employed locally.
- Minimal commuters into town as percentage of local labor force
- Minimal commuters leaving town for daily employment (Construction trades workers excepted).

Roads

- Local road system consisting of a network of older, narrow, 2 lane roads, a double digit percentage of which are unpaved.
- New road construction is infrequent.
- Low level of vehicular traffic on most town roads.

Civic and Social

- Churches established and built in earliest days of settlement some of which are still active, some in their original structures.
- Local library.
- Town hall or community meeting hall.
- Small, diverse social/civic groups or associations, i.e. Elks, Masons, Lions, Kawanis, Grange, Rod and Gun, political committees, etc.

Services

- High level of volunteer participation in municipal government, school boards and other local civic activities.
- All volunteer fire department and emergency medical services. Minimal or no full time municipal police department.
- Police protection largely provided by local constabulary or reliance on State Police or County Sheriffs.

Government

- New England model Town Meeting form of government. Voters are the ultimate legislative body.
- Ample opportunity for individual participation and self representation in the function of local government.
- Well attended annual town meeting and public participation in local budget process.

Agriculture

- Active agricultural endeavors, dairy and crop production constitute a significant percentage of the local economy.
- Farmstead architecture, i.e. series of connected structures – house, ice house, wood shed, barn, etc.
- Local Grange chapter, local 4-H activity, local FFA (Future Farmers of America) chapter.
- Local feed and grain supply and local large animal veterinary practice (within 20 mile radius).
- Farm equipment dealership within 20 mile radius.

Geology/History

- Rolling Appalachian topography, landscape of alternating open fields, pastures, cropped acreage and forested area.
- Significant number of large parcels in single ownership –30 acres to 100 plus acres.
- Significant percentage of structures pre date 1900.
- Most residences in rural areas are served by on site water wells and septic systems.

Nature

- Ample local opportunities to hunt, trap and fish. Abundant, healthy, diverse species of wildlife.
- Ample, unfragmented wildlife habitat.
- Dark night sky. Quiet after dark.