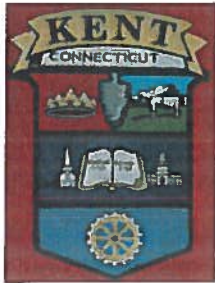


WHAT MAKES KENT SPECIAL



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

From “Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent”
2009

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

Quality of Place

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

Kent’s Character of Community

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

Kent - New England

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

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

Kent – Rural

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

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

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

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

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

Kent – Modern

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

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

Population Density

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

Source: OPM Municipal Fiscal Indicators, 2009

*162 lowest density of 169 State towns

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

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

Small Town Characteristics

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

Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent

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

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

Kent's Cultural Assets

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

Private Schools in Kent

- Kent School
- South Kent School
- Marvelwood School

Protected Open Space

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

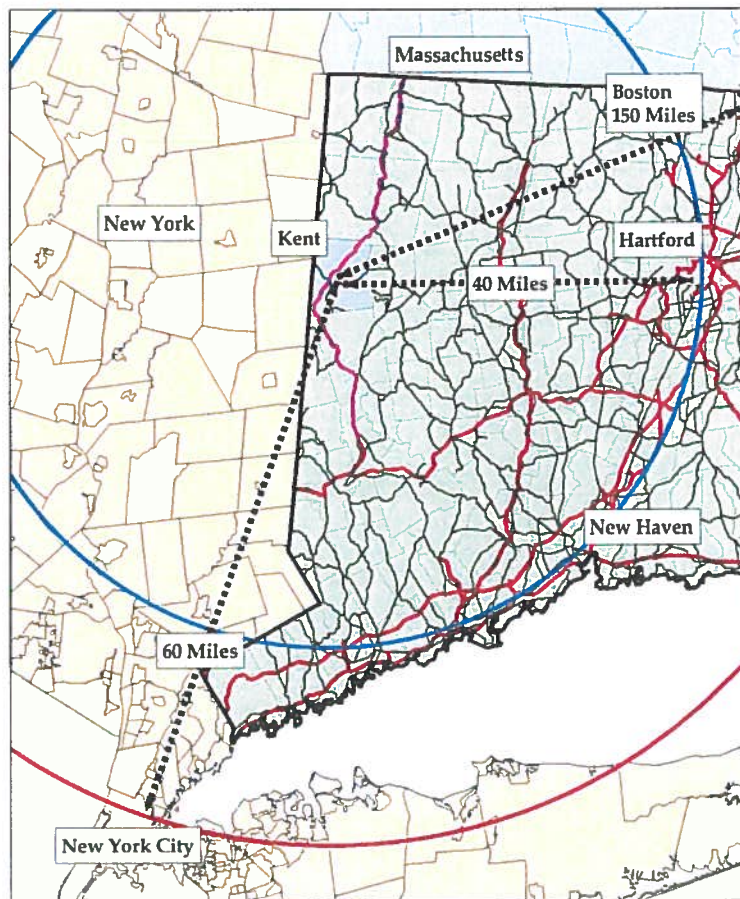
Source: *Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent, -2009* (Data currently being updated by Conservation Commission for inclusion in the pending Open Space Plan update)

* Fee and easement

Primary Land Cover (2006)

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

Source: Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research



Where We Are

A VISION FOR OUR COMMUNITY

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

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

A Vision for Kent

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

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

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

Community Input

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

Key Influences

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

Planning Themes

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

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

From "Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent"

PLANNING OVERVIEW

Kent, Connecticut Fast Facts

Incorporated:
1739

Form of Government:
Selectmen, Town Meeting

Population:
2000 – 2858
2010 - 2979

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

Land Area:
49.6 Square Miles

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

This Plan

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

Planning in Kent

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

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

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

Why We Plan

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

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

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

Growth Management Principles

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

Regional Concerns

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

Growth Management Principles (CGS §8-23)

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

Regional Concerns to Kent

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

Natural Resources

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

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

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

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

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

Natural and Rural Heritage Preservation – Implementation

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

Natural Resource Protection Regulations – Retain and/or Improve

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

Survey Responses

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

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

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

Open Space

Open Space Priorities

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

From *Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent* 2009

Survey Responses

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



Transfer of Development Rights – CGS §8-2

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

Designated Scenic Roads in Kent

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

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

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

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



Farms and Farming

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

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

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

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

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

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

From Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent

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

From Natural and Cultural Riches of Kent
2009



Cultural Resources

Statutory Growth Management Principles

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

Protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety.

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

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

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

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



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

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

Environmental Issues

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

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

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

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

Low Impact Development Principles

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

From Connecticut DEEP Stormwater Quality Manual

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dark Skies

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

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

Rural and Natural Heritage Goals - Summary

Immediate Actions

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

Near Term Actions

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

Evaluation for Future Action

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

Continuing Policies

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