

## LAND USE ELEMENT

### 5.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The area of Rhode Island that would become the Town of Foster was settled in the early 1700's and was originally part of the City of Providence. Throughout most of its history, Foster's pattern of land use has been one of modest agricultural use with small patterns of commercial and industrial growth around the villages and hamlets. It was a rural community's need for self-determination that led to Foster's independence; first from Providence in 1731 and then from Scituate in 1781. In the 220 years since Foster's incorporation, the town has seen years of growth and decline. It flourished briefly in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. During the second half of the 19th century its population dwindled and land cleared for farming reverted back to forest.

It has only been in the last fifty years that Foster seems to have been "rediscovered". Rapid suburbanization in and around the Providence Metropolitan Area and the need to get "back to the land" have changed the land use patterns in many areas of Foster. Growth pressure and blanket "5 acre" residential zoning are determining the current development of the town. Beginning in 2000, Foster initiated discussions with State and Federal agency representatives and affiliated organizations regarding the benefit of cluster or conservation zoning. Foster representatives have participated in workshops held during 2001 and 2002 on subdivision design that preserves open space and critical resource areas. The Town values its existing open space and is encouraged to take efforts to preserve farmland. Town representatives also recognize the importance of Foster's large lot zoning that protects private water supplies for all of the Town's residents. This zoning is due to the abundance of shallow and poorly drained soils.

Foster has zoned for a uniform "5 acre" (1 residential unit/4.59 acres) pattern of residential development with the supposition that rural character can be preserved with this zoning. The land use study undertaken for the 1991 Comprehensive Plan demonstrates that while the density of development overall *may be appropriate for the preservation of an abundance of sensitive environmental features*, the "5 acre" lots being created and built on are actually suburbanizing the landscape, sprawling development along Foster's roads, with houses at uniform intervals much like land use patterns in standard large lot suburban development. Likewise, Foster's single example of a backlot subdivision is not unlike subdivisions in suburban Cranston, Warwick, Barrington, East Greenwich and North Kingstown, with suburban houses at regular intervals on wide curvilinear streets. This land use pattern, although protective of some environmental features, is at odds with the physical character of the town and the historical pattern of development that, in part, created this character.

#### Findings - A Summary

- To achieve community goals for the preservation of a rural, non-suburban, town character and provide environmental protection, the present "4.59 acre" minimum lot size zoning needs to be enhanced with

standards for development that are *more specific* to the land and *its character* and less rigid.

- The Town of Foster is living on "borrowed views". That is to say that much of Foster's rural and agricultural landscape can be subdivided for residential use at any time.
- There are no local disincentives to keep existing agricultural lands from being developed. There are, however, local tax mechanisms (assessment) that help owners retain agricultural land.
- Setback and lot frontage requirements in Foster's Zoning Ordinance are creating a homogeneity of land use that mimics the suburban sprawl conditions seen in more developed communities.
- Approximately 22% of the total acreage of the Town of Foster remains vacant.
- The current use of the Residential-Senior Citizen zone amounts to the isolation of elderly residents who do not have access to an automobile.
- The existing Highway Commercial (HC) Zone promotes land development and project design which is not in keeping with Foster's rural character. These areas are designated on the current Zoning Map by 400 ft dimensional setbacks from the Route 6 R-O-W extending from Paine Road west to the Connecticut line on both sides of the Highway. These boundary lines do not conform with property lines.
- The Neighborhood Commercial Zones are not promoting the type of development that they were meant to. Two of these zones (located at the intersection of Cucumber Hill Road and Moosup Valley Road and at the intersection of Luther Road and Plainfield Pike) are located in areas inappropriate for such use. All Neighborhood Commercial zones are designated by dimensional setbacks from roadways which do not correspond to actual property lines.
- The utility companies hold large tracts of land within the Town of Foster which are producing tax revenue, serve as protected open space and provide visual enjoyment. This may not always be the case because utility companies may wish to develop this land at some time in the future. These lands are important open space assets.
- As frontage lot development continues, Foster's villages will begin to lose their unique identity. The important edges that define these areas are being gradually eroded. Preserving the integrity of Foster's villages is a critical component of future planning efforts.

The Land Use Element of the Plan seeks to address these findings among others and provide basic policy direction for corrective change and enhancement. The Land Use Element has been developed in concert with and in support of the other plan elements in this document. The findings are as true in 2003 as they were in 1991.

### 5.3.2 EXISTING LAND USE & ZONING

#### Issues and Concerns

##### Residential Land

Residential land in the Town of Foster is divided in the land use studies developed for the Plan into three categories; single family residences on more than 9.2 acres, single family residences on less than 9.2 acres, and land that contains multifamily residences. The use of 9.2 acres as a cut off point between single family residential land in Foster has been derived from the Town's Zoning Ordinance. Zoning regulations for the Town require a minimum of 4.59 acres of land on which to build. Lots with less than 9.2 (2x4.6) acres cannot be legally subdivided and therefore represent land that is "built out". Land above 9.2 acres has the potential to be subdivided to allow for additional building.

Residential development in Foster is allowed by right in only one of Foster's land use zones; the Agricultural-Residential (AR) Zone. This zone covers well over 90% of the Town and according to the Town's Zoning Ordinance is meant to "help preserve the rural character of the town" and "protect land now used for agriculture and forestry from haphazard encroachment". More encouragement is needed to keep land in agriculture.

*Whether or not the AR Zones accomplish rural preservation is of concern.*

##### Single-Family Residential Greater Than 9.2 Acres

This land use represents approximately 30.5% of the total land use acreage in the Town of Foster and represents the greatest use of land in the Town. This also represents one of the greatest potentials for development. While vacant land is usually subdivided and developed at one time, houses with large tracts of land tend to be subdivided and sold off in smaller increments. A preliminary check of aerial photographs taken of Foster in 1988 show many of these large lots contain a secondary agricultural use that is not reflected in records kept by the tax assessor. *As these lots become subdivided many of these secondary agricultural uses will disappear with subsequent loss to Foster's rural character.*

##### Residential Compound

The intent of the residential compound is to allow a Foster resident owning thirty or more acres to develop three residences using one shared driveway. These compounds while resulting in lots that comply with the 200,000 square foot minimum lot size, require three hundred feet of frontage for the entire development and lot setbacks (with the exceptions of wetland, well and septic), are eliminated. The landowner must hold the property for five years. The Residential Compound alternative is beneficial to the Town of Foster in that they can create a clustering of houses leaving more land available as open space. They benefit the landowner by minimizing the cost of development for driveways and utilities.

### Single-Family Residential Less Than 9.2 Acres

While almost half (48%) of the properties listed in the Foster Tax Assessors records are used for single family residences, this represents only 14.5% of the actual land use. The "4.59 acre" lot is and will continue to be the most predominant use of land allowed by current zoning ordinances. A minimum of 300 feet of frontage is required on these lots and most of the new "4.59 acre" lots created in the last 10 years do not exceed this minimum. This results in a pattern of relatively long and thin lots facing the roadways sometimes referred to as "piano keys" because of the way they appear on a map. When combined with a shallow 35 foot setback, buildings on these lots give the appearance that the town is more developed than it actually is. *Frontage and setback requirements may cause development patterns that place the houses at approximately 250' intervals along the roads set back 35' from the edge of the pavement - giving the town a suburban look and character.*

It appears that most of the new lots created in Foster are located along the town's existing paved roads. Continued development of frontage land will eventually encourage development along Foster's network of unpaved roads. *Development along these roads will increase the pressure to upgrade and pave them.*

### Multifamily Residences

There are only 75 properties listed in the Tax Assessor's records as multifamily. Thirty of these units are located at Hemlock Village. Current zoning allows for no multifamily construction without special exception from the Zoning Board and is limited to two-bedroom apartments. While the Town's Zoning Ordinance does currently allow for the use of accessory apartments in the Agricultural-Residential (AR) Zone.

Foster does have a zone allowing Senior Citizens Group Homes that does not appear on the Town's Zoning Map. This "floating" zone can be placed anywhere in town at the discretion of the Town Council via a zone change.

According to the Town's Zoning Ordinance, the Residential-Senior Citizen (R-SC) Zone allows the development of senior citizens group dwellings because "Senior Citizens, as a special class of citizens, have particular needs and different lifestyles". This zone encourages the segregation of senior citizens from the rest of Foster by not only imposing a ban on any other use within the zone but also by specifying a "minimum" age at which one would be allowed to reside in such a zone. *It fails to recognize the fact that, "as a special class of citizens", senior citizens can live healthy and productive lives above the age of 62 and not have to be housed in a special zone with no other amenities other than a community room. Hemlock Village, the town's only senior housing complex, is located a distance from Foster Center and from any services.*

### **Agricultural Land**

Less than one percent (approximately 71 acres) of land in Foster is used purely for agricultural purposes. Large parcels of land needed to sustain viable agricultural uses. As previously stated many large lot residential properties appear to be supporting secondary agricultural

use.

Small scale agriculture, however, can contribute to the local economy. There are many small agricultural properties in Foster which are not only providing secondary incomes, but also help retain a rural agrarian character that imparts to Foster its sense of place. *Conditions that support both large and small scale agriculture should be promoted.*

Agricultural uses are permitted either by right or special exception in almost all of Foster's existing land use zones. While the Town does offer a reduced tax assessment for agricultural land, owners of agricultural land do not have to give assurances that they will not "rollback" the land to a nonagricultural use. The State does run a program that provides purchase of development rights (PDR) for prime agricultural and open space lands. The town may wish to implement a policy requiring property owners to enter into a legal contract with the tax assessor stating their intention to not develop the land for uses other than agricultural and to pay the back taxes plus interest if they develop the land in the future. There is also a State enabled preferential tax assessment program available through the Farm, Forest and Open Space Act (FFO). This incentive carries with it a rollback disincentive or penalty to be assessed if and when the property is developed. Foster had five parcels located in town totaling 276 acres that were in this program recently. At the end of 2003 approximately sixteen landowners owners participate in this program.

### **Commercial Land**

The bulk of the commercial property in the Town of Foster is located along Route 6. Most of the properties are single use retail establishments that serve local residents and traffic traveling along the Route 6 Corridor. Approximately half of the existing commercial properties listed in the records of the Foster Tax Assessor do not appear to be located in existing areas zoned commercial.

There are two zones that have been created to allow for commercial development. The Highway Commercial (HC) Zone is located along the Route 6 corridor. The inadequacy of this type of zoning has been addressed in previous studies (*Foster, Route 6 Commercial Strip Planning Recommendations*, Everett Associates, 1986). Foster is lucky that it has been spared the intensive commercial "strip" development that the type of zoning currently in place has brought to other communities. *The current HC zone if developed would allow strip malls, fast food restaurants and office buildings to be constructed on several miles along both sides of Route 6 between Mount Hygeia Road and the Connecticut Line.* Strip highway commercial zoning in Foster should be discontinued, with new planned commercial development zones established at key intersections where developable land exists. These locations are at the Route 6/Connecticut line and at the intersection of Route 6/Foster Center Road.

A Neighborhood Commercial (NC) Zone was created in several areas of the Town "to provide convenient local shopping services and to promote public safety for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic". As previously stated, it appears that the local, neighborhood-type, shopping services remain

located along the Route 6 corridor with little signs of moving. Part of the reason for this appears to be that the NC zone does little to provide incentives for business to locate there especially when a small commercial store can be placed within an AR Zone by special exception. *The existing NC zones are not large enough to support the mix of uses needed to create a "neighborhood commercial" area and the Zoning Ordinance does not allow the types of development that have traditionally blended pedestrian and vehicular traffic.* The 6 NC zones are located at the intersection of Winsor Road and Hartford Pike, at the intersection of Paine Road and Route 6, at the intersection of Route 6 and Old Danielson Pike in Hopkins Mills, along Foster Center Road north of the intersection of Foster Center Road and Howard Hill Road, at the intersection of Luther Road and Old Plainfield Pike, and at the intersection of Cucumber Hill Road and Moosup Valley Road. The latter two locations of these zones are not appropriate for commercial use and should be rezoned as AR zones. The Paine Road/Route 6 NC zone should be incorporated into a planned commercial development zone extending to the Foster Center Road intersection.

Limited commercial/ business use is allowed in the AR Zone. Home occupations not using more than 200 sq. ft. in a residential structure are allowed by right. Fruit stands and grocery stores less than 1000 sq. ft. in size are allowed to be built on a residential property by permission of the Zoning Board. The small general store in Moosup Valley is an example of this type of use. *This zoning allows for small scale "cottage" type businesses and industry to be located throughout town by special permit. This can be beneficial to Foster's rural - self sufficient character.*

### **Industrial Land**

In 2003, only one property in Foster is listed as being used for industrial purposes. This parcel lies along the town's northern border at Hartford Pike and Winsor Road and is used by Turnquist Lumber Company. Two additional forestry based business operate within Foster, both of which are state-exempted from manufacturing classification. The second is located on Route 6, east of the junction with Route 94. The last is a secondary use on a large residential lot along the Foster-Scituate border. Foster has set aside (Planner to verify # of acres) 155 acres of land as a Manufacturing-Industrial (MI) Zone in the north-central area of town off Hartford Pike. Presently only 57 acres are used for MI purposes by Turnquist Lumber Company. Many of the limited uses permitted in an MI Zone are also allowed either by right or special exception in Foster's other zones. *Foster's industrial zone is located within the Scituate Reservoir Watershed and as such should be regulated by strict land use performance standards, including site design, and use limitations which protect the Scituate Reservoir Watershed from adverse impacts.* The current Industrial zoning district includes in addition to the Turnquist property undeveloped property along both sides of the Ponagansett River and within two wellhead protection zones. These environmentally sensitive areas are not suitable for industrial development and should be excluded from the zoning district.

### **Institutional Land**

Institutional land is made up of properties that are used by tax exempt agencies in the town. This includes non-profit and charitable organizations and churches. It also includes Town and State owned properties. Institutional land in Foster is scattered throughout the town. Many of the Town-owned properties are located in the vicinity of Foster Center. Most of the church-owned properties have historic significance and include several historic cemeteries. While there is not much land in Foster that is being used for Institutional use, the land that is has important cultural significance. The Town is well served by having the seat of government, as well as a library, located in Foster Center. These uses should remain within Foster Center.

Foster does have a zone limited to municipal/institutional uses; the Municipal (M) Zone. The land occupied by Municipal buildings in Foster Center are currently zoned Municipal. Like the R-SC Zone, land use in this zone is severely limited in use.

### **Historic Villages**

There are four principal small village centers in Foster: Foster Center, Hopkins Mills, Clayville and Moosup Valley. Each of these areas has a unique identity. Each has a special historical integrity which has earned recognition and listing in the National Register of Historic Places. There are no specific protection devices within the current zoning code for these areas other than use, density and setback regulations applying to other non-village areas such as those found in the AR zoning district. Serious attention should be given to the study of factors adversely affecting the integrity of each individual village, as well as factors contributing to the preservation of these areas. The development of Special Area Management (SAM) Plans for each village, with input from village residents, could lead to constructive and specific actions for conservation of their character in the future. The 1982 Comprehensive Plan proposed that: *"safeguards to village character could be accomplished by setting up a Village Center zone in which commercial uses would be permitted by special exception, and could be examined on a case by case basis. This would reflect the historical precedent of stores which have existed in each of the village centers. The zone could be expanded to cover the centers of each village, at the same time tightened performance standards to assure development compatible with the character of the villages. Performance standards could fairly well assure that the villages would not be defaced by standard highway commercial structures, by stipulating, for example:*

- *a small maximum square footage (say 1500 sq ft);*
- *required building materials (e.g., horizontal wood siding);*
- *lighting limits;*
- *paving limits;"*

The 1982 Comprehensive Plan recommendations for Foster's villages should be used as a starting place for SAM plan discussion. These recommendations were approved by the Planning Board and adopted by the

Town Council after public input nearly two decades ago as policy.

Neighborhood conservation planning is a similar approach which could be considered, along with regulatory tools such as historic district zoning and site plan review, in each SAM plan.

### **Recreational Land**

The large tracts of vacant land and the rural character of Foster provide its residents with ample opportunity for recreational use. However, this land is not set aside for recreational purposes and can be developed at any time. Based on the Land Use Map, only a small percentage of land in Foster is being used for recreational purposes. The largest tract of land being used for recreation is Foster Country Club. The Town has one recreational facility, Woody Lowden, in the south end of town and open space behind the Captain Isaac Paine School. Open recreational land which includes playgrounds and parks is allowed by right in all of Foster's mapped zones. *This gives the Town the opportunity to create recreational areas in all areas of town - an appropriate vehicle to promote the development of additional commercial-recreational areas, in keeping with the town's character.* A portion of land dedication and fees-in-lieu of, as specified in the Foster Land Development and Subdivision Regulations, should be used for the purchase and development of future recreation land in Foster.

### **Utilities**

*Land owned by utility companies has an enormous impact in the town of Foster.* Approximately 2628 acres, or 8.3% of the land use acreage in Foster is owned by a utility company. While all of this land lies east of Route 94, it has an effect on the entire town. The Providence Water Supply Board oversees the largest portion of this land. It also has restrictive power over the use of land within the Scituate Reservoir Watershed. The watershed extends far beyond the boundaries of its own land and includes large tracts of land within the Town of Foster. Since the Town of Foster expends tremendous effort to protect and produce pure water use, for 80% of the State, the Town should be more fairly compensated for the cost borne by Town residents.

The Narragansett Electric Company also owns large tracts of land in Foster. The utility has had plans to use this land, along with easements purchased across existing properties, to install a high voltage power line. This line would cut a zig-zag path from north to south along the eastern half of the town. Plans for the transmission line are currently "on hold." *The land owned by both companies presents the possibilities for existing and future passive (visual) open space use since it will be left primarily in its natural state.* There are, however, serious concerns regarding the health hazards of electro-magnetic fields associated with high voltage power lines as well as herbicides used in brush control. The Town should continue to monitor any plans Narragansett Electric may have for the transmission corridor.

### **Vacant Land**



*There is more vacant land in the Town of Foster than is used by any other land use category with the exception of residential land greater than 9.2 acres. Approximately 22% of the total land comprising 7087 acres is vacant, (i.e., no residences). Almost all of this vacant land sits in the Agricultural-Residential Zone and may be developed into "5 acre" lots. A large number of vacant lots have little or no frontage. The only way some of these can be developed is through the use of new roads conforming to subdivision regulations. Maintenance of these roads will become the responsibility of the Town upon completion. "Back lot" conversion to residential use has been of great concern in town. Many current property owners may wish to subdivide back lots for family members in a small scale form of development with a private road and perhaps several large lots rather than subdividing on a scale as dictated by the Town's Subdivision Regulations. This option is now possible through the Residential Compound.*

Significantly, Foster has not been subjected to the scale of standard subdivision development that many of its neighboring communities have which are closer to the Providence Metropolitan Area. The future, however, is likely to bring increased pressure to subdivide the back land. Currently Foster's zoning and subdivision regulations, based upon conventional "suburban-type" land development, encourage sprawling patterns of residential development similar to that found in East Greenwich, Barrington, western Cranston, and Warwick. The prototype of the future for back lots, based upon current regulations, is Bridle Path Estates located off Plainfield Pike. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) working on this Plan found this type of development to be out of character with their vision of Foster and its future. Flexible zoning and Cluster Development options will be reviewed for possible implementation in Foster to encourage development that conforms with the character of the town.

TABLE 2 - LAND USE - FOSTER, RI - 1990

Land Use	Acres	% Total Acres	No. of Parcels	%Total
Vacant Land	11549.7	35.1	613	27.1
Residential > 9.2	11838.5	35.9	384	17.0
Residential < 9.2	3758.7	11.4	981	43.4
Multi-Family	337.7	1.0	22	<1
Agricultural	643.8	2.1	13	<1
Commercial*	537.6	1.6	66	2.9
Industrial	56.3	<1	5	<1
Institutional	396.8	1.2	53	2.3
Recreational**	275.8	<1	5	<1

Utilities	2368.9	7.2	58	2.5
Seasonal	501.4	1.5	30	1.3
Other				
TOTALS	32,265.20		2,230.00	

TABLE 2 - LAND USE - FOSTER, RI - 2003

Land Use	Acres	% Total Acres	No. of Parcels	%Total
Vacant Land	7087.4	22	324	13.5
Residential > 9.2	9646.27	30.5	370	15.4
Residential < 9.2	4588.1	15.5	1152	48
Multi-Family	715.8	2.2	66	2.7
Agricultural	71.3	<1	4	<1
Commercial*	506.2	1.6	49	2
Industrial	58.6	<1	2	<1
Institutional	1062	3.4	77	3.2
Recreational**	508.4	1.6	9	<1
Utilities	2627.9	8.3	75	3.1
Seasonal	531.7	1.7	10	<1
Other	4178.7	13.2	257	10.7
TOTALS	31,582.6		2,395	

\*Includes Foster C.C., Rod and Gun Clubs. \*\*Includes Farm, Forest and Open Space Land

### 5.3.3 ALTERNATIVE LAND USE REGULATIONS AND TOOLS

Several alternatives exist that preserve open space and agricultural land and address the problems associated with zoning regulations that produce suburban sprawl patterns. Many of these programs have been put in place in other communities in New England and throughout the United States to preserve rural character.

A set of definitions pertaining to these tools is included in the Technical Appendix. Among the tools listed, the use of Creative Land Development design techniques and Conservation overlay zoning are two strategies which are acceptable to Foster residents at this time.

### 5.3.4 APPROACH

To guide development in patterns that respect the rural character of the town and its environmental sensitivity, the Plan calls for enhancement of the Agricultural - Residential (AR) zoning district and the adoption of a Farmland - Rural Conservation Overlay Zoning District which will include areas of town with the unique qualities that prescribe rural character and are the most sensitive to development - prime agricultural lands and farmland, unique natural habitats, aquifers, environmentally sensitive wetlands and hydric soils, historic and scenic areas. Within this district, development standards will be applied in addition to the existing zoning to mitigate the adverse effects development may have on these defining characteristics.

The AR district will be retained with the current 4.59 acres or 200,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size requirement. It will be enhanced significantly, however, by standards for the protection of high-water table soils and steep slopes as well as the Farmland - Rural Conservation Overlay zoning District.

*As required by State Law, areas of fundamental conflict, between existing zoning and land use promoted by the Plan, will be subject to the future corrective influence of additional development standards listed below and/or rezoning, although grandfathered rights will apply to existing uses. Conflicts include insensitive frontage lot development in the AR district throughout town, strip commercial development on Route 6 and inappropriate areas zoned for Neighborhood Commercial use.*

Other programs to manage change constructively in ways to enhance Foster's character such as further study and use of some of the tools mentioned in the Technical Appendix will be implemented in a phased approach to achieve the following primary goals:

- Assure a high standard of building quality and site design in existing and new construction, efficient use of housing stock, and the elimination of blighted conditions consistent with the rural physical and social identity of the town.
- Assure that the integrity and identity of new residential neighborhoods is consistent with the rural character of Foster and that the quality of life, including an increasingly secure, more healthful, self-reliant and attractive rural community environment is retained and enhanced by new development.
- Promote land use patterns that:
  - reflect and respect the town's natural resources, wildlife habitat, and rural density traditions, scenic values and cultural heritage.
  - reinforce overall town identity and provide generous amounts of open space between village centers.

**The following are specific policies for action:**

- Institute performance standards in the Town's Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations that account for environmental constraints and specify appropriate criteria for types of development to meet. These standards may address:
  - Steep slopes
  - Bedrock outcrops
  - Floodplains
  - Poor soils
  - Prime agricultural soils and farmland
  - Wetlands
  - Surface water resources
  - Groundwater
  - Unique habitats
- Institute variable lot standards (see definition in Technical Report #2, Land Use Profile) for all appropriate land divisions and subdivisions in the Zoning Code to vary development patterns and the uniform look of development along roads. These standards should be designed to maintain the rural character of Foster's roads and reduce the appearance of "large lot sprawl".
- Retain the current 4.59 acre/200,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size AR district. Enhance the district with additional and more flexible performance standards to protect high water table soils and steep slopes (e.g. setbacks).
- Institute a Farmland - Rural Conservation Overlay zoning District to protect farmland agricultural uses and open space by guiding development to areas on the property which are appropriate and conserving prime agricultural soils, other farmland, forests, environmental features, views and open space.

The Farmland - Rural Conservation Overlay District will include protection for:

- Hydric soils and wetlands, streams and water bodies
- Aquifers, wellheads and groundwater resources
- Unique natural habitats
- Prime agricultural soils and farmland
- Character-defining historic and scenic resources

The overlay zoning district will permit

- the division or creation of 2 - 3 lots through the Land Development Project process and, if appropriate, Residential Compound-format approved by the Planning Board,
- the creation of 4+ lots and, if appropriate, creative Land Development-format (residential compound or planned unit development) approved by the Planning Board,

- agricultural, forest management, and residential land use as well as uses currently listed in the underlying zones.

Development standards will include guidelines for the placement of the lots and buildings on the property and the scale and placement of access roads. Properties designated for this overlay district will include the areas of conservation concern listed above if at least 50 percent of the property now platted contains these features as determined by the *Environmental Inventory, Overlay Analysis* and other inventories undertaken for the Comprehensive Plan.

- Allow Cluster Development (CD) as an option in AR zones, not affected by the Farmland - Rural Conservation Overlay District, as an alternative to "5 acre" standard lot size subdivision pattern.
- Undertake individual Special Area Management (SAM) Plans for Foster Center, Clayville, Hopkins Mills and Moosup Valley. These plans will be developed through the active participation of residents of each village. The principal purpose of the SAM plans is to provide guidance on how to protect and maintain the unique character of each of these areas.
- Improve the Highway Commercial Zone and redesign to nodal type zoning or planned commercial type development zoning provisions which have specific development standards and site plan review criteria to promote small scale, mixed use (residential/commercial), neighborhood-oriented, buffered development rather than large scale retail shopping centers. Require a commercial site plan review by the Planning Board, with input from the Conservation Commission for all commercial areas. Two nodes will be located at the intersection of Route 6 and Foster Center Road and the intersection of Route 6 and Cucumber Hill Road at the Connecticut line. A third node will be considered for the "Breezy Hill" area mid-way between these areas. .
- Promote incentives to encourage property owners in the Route 6 corridor to enhance and upgrade existing commercial property including joint efforts by the Economic Development Advisory Commission, area businessmen and the RIDOT. Coordinate with the design of the Route 6 upgrade now underway.
- Retain the Neighborhood Commercial Zone at the intersection of Winsor Road and Hartford Pike. Move neighborhood commercial from Cucumber Hill Road to the location of the former Moosup Valley Store. Realign zoning boundaries to conform to property lines.
- Allow attached accessory apartments, for the elderly, parent(s), in-law(s), newly married. Limit the size of the units to no more than 600 sq ft provided environmental constraints are met. Review these provisions annually to determine if effective and rescind or modify, as necessary, based on continuing needs and/or studies.
- Institute Flexible Zoning for A/R - Commercial -Industrial Zones, including development rights.