

# INFRASTRUCTURE THEMES



## Overview of Infrastructure Themes

For the purposes of preparing a Plan of Conservation and Development, the term “infrastructure” refers to community facilities and services, transportation facilities, and public utilities. Infrastructure supports overall community structure and plays a significant role in determining the quality of life in a community.

In the preparation of a Plan, infrastructure topics follow conservation and development issues. This sequence helps ensure that infrastructure decisions support, but do not dictate, the desired overall land use patterns. While infrastructure availability can guide other land use decisions, it should not be the overriding consideration.



**Municipal Center**



**Library**



**Sewer Pump Station**



**Sub-Station Power Facility**



# COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## Overview

The next several chapters look at the Town's existing facilities and public services to determine what improvements will be required or should be considered, in order to provide the facilities and services that the residents of the Town will need over the next ten years.



**Educational Facility**



**Teen Center**



**Municipal Center**



**Town Garage**

## Maintain a State of the Art Educational Facility

The Bethel Public School System consists of five schools located on one centrally located, 140-acre educational park near the geographical center of the community, as shown in the aerial photograph below. For many, the educational park is also the social and recreational center of the community. The following are the schools managed by the Bethel Board of Education:

- F. A. Berry School for Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- A. H Rockwell School, for Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- R.M.T. Johnson School, for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades
- Bethel Middle School for 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades
- Bethel High School, for 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades

The primary focus of the Plan of Conservation and Development in relation to educational facilities is the physical capacity to provide for the long range educational needs of the community. Bethel's foresight in acquiring and managing the 140-acre campus provides Bethel with the ability to site and / or expand school facilities should the need arise in the future.

It is difficult to determine how many if any additional school aged children will be residing in Bethel in the future. Population projections indicate that the population may increase and that there may be more school aged children in the future than there are today. If this age cohort does increase, Bethel would likely need to build additional educational facilities. Despite the presence of wetlands, steep slopes, and other constraints on the lands in the Educational Park, Bethel has the ability to accommodate additional school-aged children by expanding the existing facilities.

### Action to Maintain the Educational Facilities

1. Maintain adequate land and facilities for potential expansion of the school aged population.



Bethel High School



Bethel's Educational Park

## Bethel Parks & Fields

Parks	Acreage
Meckauer Park	39
Bennett Park	8
Overlook Park	38

Ball Fields	Acreage
Mitchell Park	19
Parloa Park	7
Educational Park	28
Rourke and Freebairn	46
Crowe Field	5



Ball Field

## Increase Recreational Opportunities

The Parks and Recreation Department has six full-time and as many as 60 part-time and/or seasonal employees and manages approximately 190 acres of land for recreational uses. A consistent theme heard in public meetings held during the scoping phase of this Plan is a desire for additional recreational facilities, programs, and opportunities, including more parks for passive recreational activities, more ball fields, swimming facilities, and a community recreational facility. The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen identify funding mechanisms to provide recreational opportunities at town owned properties such as Terre Haute and Bald Rock with investments in trails, parking areas, and other improvements.

### Improve the Capacity of the Senior Center

The Town Senior Center is located in the Municipal Center, where there is insufficient space to accommodate all the desired programs. As the number of seniors in Bethel is likely to increase in the future, it will become increasingly difficult to accommodate all who want to use the facility. In addition, as seniors live longer and healthier lives, they may want more challenging activities. The Commission recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Board of Selectmen consider development of a community facility with designated areas for seniors.

### Provide Appropriate Recreational Services to Teens

The Town operates a Teen Center in the former Town Hall, which needs major repairs and does not provide the full range of activities and programs desired by the Center's Director. Some communities have determined that a stand-alone facility for teens is not the best use of municipal facilities and dollars. Offering services and programs in multi-use facilities can be a more effective and cost-efficient way to serve this population. The Commission recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Board of Selectmen consider development of a community facility with designated areas for teens.

### Consider a Multi-Use Recreational Facility

The Town has no public facilities for indoor recreation, and no public swimming facility. Developing a single multi-use facility with both common areas and separate areas for the various age cohorts might be the most economical way to provide recreational opportunities for all segments of the population. While these disparate age groups need some separate programming, there are many areas, supplies, and facilities that can be more economically delivered in a multi-use facility.

The Commission recommends the development of a multi-use indoor recreational facility, with either an in-door or outdoor swimming pool. In any proposal to develop a recreational facility, an analysis of combining the resource needs of the senior population and the teen population should be addressed.

### Action Steps for Increasing Recreational Opportunities

1. Develop recreational infrastructure on Town-owned properties.
2. Determine how best to meet the needs of seniors and teens.
3. Consider development of a multi-use recreational facility with programs for seniors and teens and with a swimming pool.

# Community Facilities Plan

Town of Bethel, CT

## Legend

### Public Safety

- 1 Stony Hill Fire Station
- 6 Police Department
- 14 South St. Fire Station

### Town Hall

- 10 Town Hall

### Education

- 7 Educational Park

### Other Municipal

- 11 Teen Center
- 12 Library
- 16 Public Works Facility  
Town Garage
- 19 Paul St. Pump Station

## Legend

### Athletic Fields

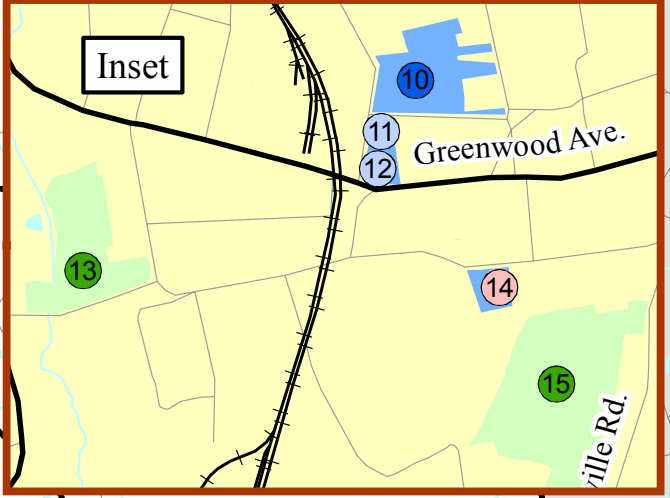
- 8 Educational Park Fields
- 9 Crowe Field

### Parks

- 2 Mitchell Park
- 3 Meckauer Park
- 4 Bennett Park
- 5 Bergstrom Park
- 13 Parloa Park
- 15 Overlook Park
- 17 Putnam Memorial Park
- 18 Huntington Park



See Inset



3,000 Feet

## Support Public Safety Services

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The Town of Bethel has Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services. Each of these public service entities has facility needs which are necessary in order to adequately provide the full range of emergency and public safety support services required by the community.

### Support the Town's Emergency Response Teams

The Town of Bethel has two Fire Departments; one located Downtown on South Street and the other in the Stony Hill area on Route 6. Both Fire and Emergency Medical Services are handled out of the Town's two Fire Departments.

The Stony Hill Department recently built a new facility that accommodates all of that Department's equipment, personnel, and training needs.

The South Street Station has a facility plan, developed in the 1980's, to build an extension to the existing facility to accommodate additional training and administrative services. The Board of Selectmen should identify funding sources to complete the South Street Fire House expansion.

Bethel is currently protected by two volunteer fire departments with a combined membership exceeding one hundred and twenty volunteers. All emergency medical responses as well as fire and rescue calls are handled by these dedicated volunteers. The Town of Bethel offers incentives for volunteering in the form of tax abatement and pension plan. Certification and training fees for both firefighting and emergency medical training are paid for through the town budget. A paramedic is funded by the town to provide advanced life support care when necessary. If future growth of the town dictates a change to the current system it should be approached cautiously to develop the best emergency services possible.



South Street Fire Station



Stony Hill Fire Station

### Construct a New Police Department Facility

The Bethel Police Department is located in an 8,000 square-foot building built in the 1970s. Since then, the nature of police work has changed significantly. The current building does not provide the type or amount of space necessary for today's police work. An independent space needs assessment was conducted of the existing facility in 2005. Some of the major deficiencies identified in the space needs assessment are as follows:

Prisoners and potentially violent persons are interviewed and/or processed in the same areas:

- where the general public visits;
- where victims are being interviewed; and
- in areas which provide access to police officer's weapons and other equipment which can be used as weapons.

The current facility has insufficient space for:

- storage of evidence;
- storage of files;
- training;
- target practice;
- sanitary facilities;
- keeping male and female prisoners and youth offenders separated from each other as required by law;
- parking of police vehicles;

The building has been subjected to flooding with water and sewage due to the building's location in or adjacent to a wetland. In addition, the building was constructed with materials making it impossible to secure all areas of the building.

Another finding of that report was that it would be more cost effective to build a new facility than to try to renovate the existing building due to the presence of wetlands at the current location. The Board of Selectmen should continue to work with architects, engineers, and the various Town Departments to identify an appropriate site and finalize plans for construction of a new Police station facility.

### **Actions to Support the Town's Public Safety Services**

1. Complete the South Street Fire House expansion project.
2. Consider options for ensuring full-time coverage by emergency responders.
3. Identify an appropriate location for construction of a new Police Department facility.
4. Identify funding sources for construction of a new Police Department facility.
5. Construct a new Police Department facility.

## Agencies and Departments in the Municipal Center

- 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman's Office
- Building Maintenance
- Social Services
- Tax Assessor's and Tax Collectors offices
- Town Clerk
- Registrar of Voters
- Comptrollers Office
- Building Department
- Fire Marshall's Office
- Health Department
- Land Use, Planning and Zoning and Inland Wetlands
- Town Engineer
- Parks and Recreation
- Tree Warden
- Board of Education

## Support the Municipal Center

The Municipal Center, formerly the Bethel High School at one time and the Middle School at another time, now houses almost all town agencies and departments, identified in the sidebar. In addition to the many agencies and departments, the Municipal Center also houses the Senior Center and the Visiting Nurse Association.

The Town should be commended for the adaptive reuse of this building, which has many historic and architecturally significant qualities. However, a lack of space for additional and necessary employees in several departments has been identified by many of the Department Managers. Meeting rooms are frequently double-booked due to a lack of appropriate space for community meetings.

The antiquated HVAC system and energy-inefficient windows create situations which do not meet energy efficiency goals. While these issues may be expensive to address, the Town may realize cost savings from increased energy efficiencies over time. The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen address needed renovations and improvements particularly in regards to the HVAC system, windows, meeting room space, and storage facilities. These improvements should be addressed in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan.

### Conduct a Space Needs Assessment

The Board of Selectmen should consider conducting a needs assessment of the Municipal Center to determine whether future staffing, training, storage, and meeting room space will be available for the Town Departments housed in the building.

### Improve the Networked Computer System

Many of the departments in Town Hall would benefit by having increased inter-departmental access to data. A networked system, allowing the Land Use office, the Town Engineer's Office, the Assessor's office, the Health Department, the Police and Fire Departments, the Building Department, Parks and Recreation, and other departments to communicate and share data is beneficial for both internal communications and communications with the public.

The Town's networked computer system should include inter-departmental access to joint permitting software and GIS. GIS, which stands for geographic information systems, is a database of information used to produce highly detailed maps and was used to produce the maps and related data in this Plan.

The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen fund a computer upgrade allowing all departments access to data, GIS, and related inter-departmental information.

### Actions to Improve the Municipal Center

1. Complete renovations at the Municipal Center including installation of a new HVAC system and window replacement.
2. Consider conducting a needs assessment of the Municipal Center.
3. Expand the capabilities of the Town's networked computer system.
4. Consider acquisition of joint permitting software and provide inter-departmental access to the software.
5. Fund computer upgrades linking all departments with a shared GIS program.



## Support the Public Works Department

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The Public Works Department is responsible for the upkeep of the infrastructure of the town. Comprised of a number of related operations, it is the organization responsible for plowing and removal of snow, road and street repair, and sidewalk construction and maintenance. The positions reporting to the Public Works Director are identified in the sidebar.

This office maintains and oversees the water and sewer systems for the residents and businesses located within the Town's water and sewer service supply areas. It oversees all building maintenance for the municipal structures. It works with the State and Federal Governments to coordinate and implement the major bridge replacement projects around town. It oversees the engineering aspects of all new construction within the Town and ensures that these projects conform to local and state regulations.

Except for the Town Engineer's office, the Public Works Department is located at the Town Garage off Route 53 on Sympaug Park Road. The current size and configuration of the Town Garage is not sufficient to store all equipment indoors. This is a concern since outdoor storage of heavy equipment can hasten deterioration of the Town's many expensive pieces of road and utility equipment.

There are also concerns that there is not adequate space for all public work employees in the Town Garage, particularly if staffing is increased on the Highway Department, (discussed in the next Chapter on Transportation). Some consideration has been given to moving the water and sewer service employees to another location in order to provide sufficient indoor space for the storage of all equipment and sufficient sanitary and meeting space for the public works employees. While the Commission believes that the Engineer's office should continue to be maintained in the Municipal Building for customer-service related issues, it recommends that the Board of Selectmen review the options and determine how best to manage and maintain the equipment and personnel at the Town Garage.

### Action to Support the Public Works Department

1. Consider adjustments or renovations to the Town Garage to ensure adequate space for all equipment and personnel.

### Positions Reporting to the Public Works Director

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- Highway Superintendent
- Town Engineer
- Transfer Station Manager
- Tree Warden
- Utility Supervisor

## Support the Library

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The Bethel Library is consistently identified as a valuable community resource. It is located in a historic building listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Ongoing support is necessary in order to ensure that the facility is able to meet the needs of the community.

Parking continues to be a problem, in part due to the Library's convenient location in the Village Center. The Library makes use of the parking lot at the former train station, but better signage is recommended for those unfamiliar with this practice. If at some time in the future, the School Street properties are redeveloped, parking considerations for the library should be addressed.

### Actions to Support the Library

1. Complete the library renovations and provide signage for all library related parking.



**Bethel Library**

# TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS



## Overview

Transportation systems tie a community together, connecting it with the larger community. Local streets and roads need to provide safe, reliable access to work, schools, shopping, and residences. Transportation systems also need to provide for the movement of goods and services both into and out of a community.

For most of the last century, transportation systems have primarily relied on vehicular traffic. This chapter also includes transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities, to ensure that these systems move people and goods safely and efficiently, support community character and structure, and protect residential neighborhoods and provide transportation options for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



**Road with Stormwater Management**



**Train Station**

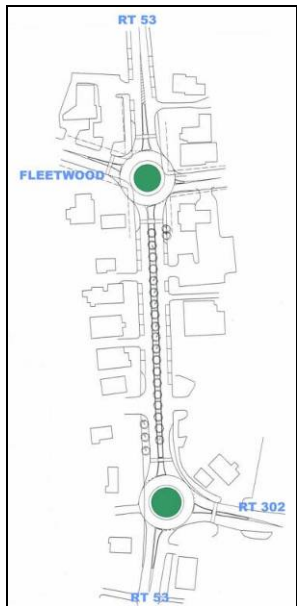


**Big Truck on Small Street**



**Bicycle Parking**

Route 6  
Route 53  
Route 58  
Route 302



HVCEO

**Proposed Roundabouts  
on Route 53**

## Improve the Town's Road Network

### Implement HVCEO Recommendations

The Town's Highway Department works with the State Department of Transportation (CONN DOT) and the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials (HVCEO) on most transportation issues related to State and Interstate roads in Bethel. HVCEO conducted an overview of traffic issues in Bethel in 2005 with a focus on state roads and major regional issues. That review generated a number of recommendations for future traffic improvements in Bethel. Those recommendations are included in the *Bethel, CT, Traffic Issues Report*, available from HVCEO or on-line at HVCEO.org. The Board of Selectmen should continue to work with HVCEO to implement the recommended improvements.

CONN DOT has prepared a plan for widening I-84 and redesigning the access at Exit 8. The State's plan for I-84, if implemented, would facilitate movements for local traffic seeking I-84 access. A notable improvement would be for northbound Payne Road traffic entering I-84 eastbound immediately to the right of the intersection of Payne Road with Route 6, rather than requiring a circuitous trip around the large Exit 8 rotary. Access to I-84 westbound would be improved via a new bridge extending Payne Road across I-84 to Exit 8. The Board of Selectmen should continue to work with both HVCEO and CONN DOT to see these plans are fully implemented.

Another improvement proposed by HVCEO is the use of roundabouts for the intersections of Route 53 with Fleetwood Avenue, Route 53 with Route 302, and Route 53 with Willow Street (see sidebar). These proposed locations on Route 53, which include a heavily used shopping area, would benefit by the increased safety conditions that a roundabout provides. The reconfiguration would allow also for additional parking spaces, which are needed to support this busy commercial area. The Board of Selectmen should support the development of a detailed feasibility study, funded by the HVCEO transportation planning program as soon as possible. This study should include an evaluation of the conceptual plan in regards to CONN DOT's roundabout criteria. The completed feasibility study should then be submitted to the CONN DOT Project Development Unit with an application for funding.

### Address Congestion, Capacity, and Access Management

Congestion occurs when traffic volumes exceed the capacity of a roadway or intersection. In Bethel, congestion or capacity deficiencies are primarily located along the State roads, including the mile and a half of Route 6 in the northern part of Town, along Route 302 particularly in the Village Center, and at the intersection of Route 302 with Route 53. All of these road segments are addressed in the *Bethel, CT, Traffic Issues Report*, one of several reports prepared by HVCEO relative to traffic and transportation in Bethel.

When the Commission conducts an update of the Town's Zoning Regulations, the recommendations in the HVCEO reports, particularly those related to access management, should be reviewed and incorporated as appropriate.

In 1997, HVCEO completed an access management plan for Route 6. As part of the Route 6 Corridor Study already underway, the Route 6 access management plan will be updated.

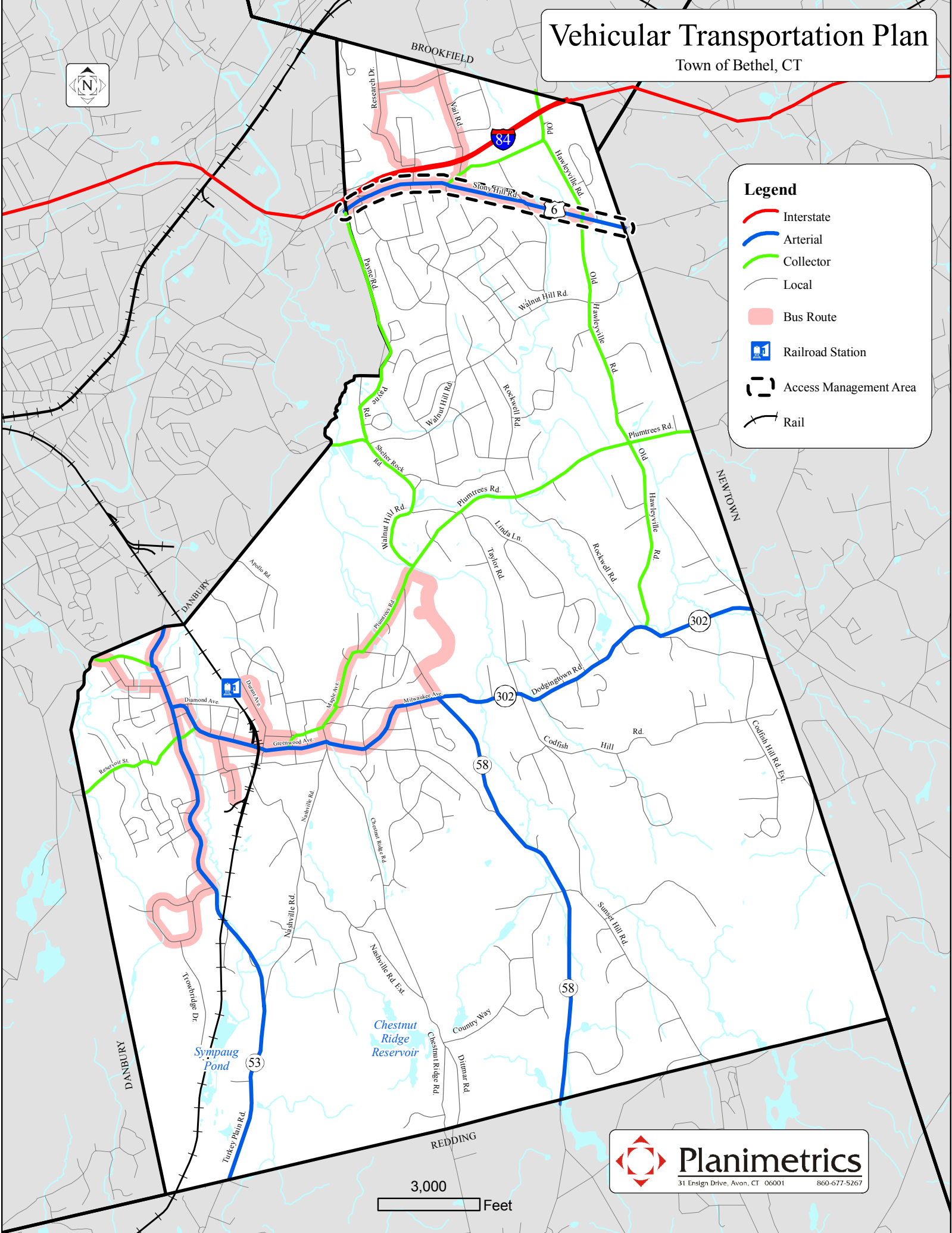
# Vehicular Transportation Plan

Town of Bethel, CT



## Legend

- Interstate
- Arterial
- Collector
- Local
- Bus Route
- Railroad Station
- Access Management Area
- Rail



3,000 Feet

**Planimetrics**  
31 Ensign Drive, Avon, CT 06001 860-677-5267

## Encourage Scenic Roads

A major element of road engineering in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was on removing road hazards and moving cars as efficiently as possible. This approach frequently resulted in wide, flat, and straight roads, characteristics that encourage speeding and detract from community character. Many of Bethel's roads, originally cow paths or wood trails, were built prior to those 20<sup>th</sup> century standards and as a result many of the older roads are narrow and windy.

Today new roads in Bethel are built to standards requiring wider road widths, as required by the Town's Road Ordinance. These standards create roads which are often incompatible with scenic road criteria.

In the last several years, the Highway Department, working with the Town Engineer and the Public Works Director, has developed a manual for new road construction and subdivision infrastructure to replace outdated standards in the Town's *Road Ordinance*. The manual, "*Design and Construction Standards*" provides guidance on road materials, width, slope, stormwater management, and access management. While this manual has some improvements over the existing Road Ordinance, it relies on the Road Ordinance for many of the standards.

The Commission should review the manual and make recommendations to the Town Engineer to revise the manual. Revisions should include removing all references to fees, which should be managed by the Board of Selectmen and not be included in policy and regulatory documents. Other revisions that should be incorporated into the Road manual before it is formally adopted address the road standards and include the following:

- paved widths of less than 25 feet for secondary roads;
- prohibitions against grading flat for the full width of the road right-of-way;
- allowing gradients of up to 15% where site conditions permit;
- requirements that stone walls along rights-of-ways be preserved or built; and
- requirements for street tree plantings in the road rights-of-way.

Once these revisions have been made, the Commission requests that the Board of Selectmen adopt a new roads ordinance that identifies the manual as the source of all road standards. The roads ordinance should state that the Town Engineer has the authority to administer and maintain the Manual and the Commission has the authority to review any proposed amendments to the manual, with the provision that any such proposed amendments are not to be effective until the Commission has made a positive recommendation.

## Maintain the Town's Highways, Roadways, and Bridges

Bethel's Highway Department is located in the Public Works Garage on Sympaug Park Road near the Francis J. Clarke Industrial Park. Responsibilities of the Highway Department include leaf removal, sand removal, snow and ice removal, sidewalk maintenance, and storm drainage maintenance.

Recent State and Federal legislation mandates additional stormwater management tasks, requiring additional equipment and manpower. The staff of the Highway Department should be expanded in order to adequately provide these valuable services to the community in the most cost-effective manner possible.

The Department does the majority of the road reclamation work in Bethel and is able to perform local road maintenance and new road construction cheaper and quicker than any of the neighboring towns. Regular maintenance minimizes the total amount of work required, cost-effectively maintains good road conditions, and helps avoid expensive road reconstruction projects. Deferred maintenance results in significant efforts and expenditures to restore the original integrity of the roadway. For this reason, Bethel should continue to make regular road improvements on local roads.

In addition to the historic stone bridges discussed in an earlier chapter, there are also many bridges in Town, all of which need regular maintenance. Some of these bridges, particularly those crossing the Sympaug River, are in need of replacement. The Board of Selectmen should ensure that bridge replacement efforts are fully funded and a work plan is proceeding in a timely fashion.

## Resolve Train Track and Road Network Conflicts

The railroad, designed long before cars and trucks dominated the transportation system, provides an important link between Bethel and southern Fairfield County and New York City. As a result, roads and the railroad tracks intersect in several critical locations creating conflicts for truck drivers, residents living on narrow streets where the heavy truck traffic is diverted, and the Town owned Industrial Park.

One of the most serious of these conflicts is on State Route 53 adjacent to the Francis J. Clarke Industrial Park. The railroad tracks cross over the road on a railroad trestle that prevents trucks taller than 11' 4" from passing under the trestle. In addition to thwarting the economic potential of the Industrial Park by limiting the size of trucks that can easily access the park from the State Highway, the Commission is also concerned about the number of large trucks that must travel through residential areas on narrow, winding, and densely populated residential streets, ill-equipped to accommodate large vehicles.

If the Town is going to realize the full potential of its location in Fairfield County, vehicles of all sizes must have unimpeded access to all state routes. The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen, working collaboratively with CONN DOT, CONN Rail, Metro North, and HVCEO, pursue options for moving truck traffic across the railroad and out of residential neighborhoods. The Board of Selectmen should actively pursue raising the height of the Danbury Branch railroad overpass to allow for the free flow of all legal truck heights.



**Truck on Sidewalk**



**Car on Railroad Track**



**Large Truck Small Street**

## **Provide Access for Trucks Out of the Historical Industrial Area**

There are conflicts between trucks and residential streets resulting from limited access from the historical industrial area adjacent to the Village Center. A potential solution is to identify a road right-of-way from Henry Street to Route 53. However, this is not a simple solution, as the area between Henry Street and Route 53 is largely wetlands. The Board of Selectmen should hire a transportation engineer with wetlands expertise to identify a potential route with minimal impacts to the wetlands. If a possible route is identified, the Board of Selectmen should submit an application to the Town's Wetlands Commission and to the State DEP. Depending on the size of the disturbance, it is likely that the Army Corps of Engineers will also need to approve the project.

The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen consider the magnitude of the problem and determine an appropriate solution, using this Plan for guidance. The Commission also suggests that a partial solution to this problem is related to finding more appropriate locations for the businesses in the historic industrial area, located over a public water supply watershed.

## **Actions to Improve the Town's Road Networks**

1. Implement the recommendations of the HVCEO report "Bethel, CT, Traffic Issues Report" to the maximum amount practicable.
2. Continue collaborative efforts with Regional, State, and Federal Transportation officials, and policy makers to resolve conflicts between local roads and Interstate 84.
3. Request a roundabout feasibility study and then submit the study to the CT DOT Project Development Unit with an application for funding.
4. Request updates to the 1997 Access Management Plan for Route 6.
5. Request realignment of the Route 6/Hawleyville/Benedict Road intersection and of the Route 6/Sand Hill intersection.
6. Adopt a scenic roads ordinance.
7. Continue to maintain the Town's highways and road network.
8. Adequately staff the Highway Department to address additional stormwater management tasks.
9. Revise the draft "Design and Construction Standards" manual removing all references to fees and revising road standards to encourage narrower, scenic roads.
10. Once revisions have been made, adopt the manual. Request that the revised manual replace the Road Ordinance, identifying the Town Engineer as the administrator.
11. Ensure that all revisions to the manual are subject to the Commission's approval.
12. Maintain bridges and continue to make bridge improvements.
13. Actively pursue options for resolving the road/railroad conflict on Route 53 near the Francis J. Clarke Industrial Park.
14. Consider hiring a transportation engineer with wetlands expertise to identify a potential route from Henry Street to Route 53.
15. Consider incentives to relocate businesses out of the historic industrial areas and then rezone to a mixed-use district, supported by transit.



## Support Transportation Options

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For more than 50 years, Bethel's transportation system, like most communities in the United States, has relied primarily on vehicular circulation. With rising gas prices, increasing congestion of the roadways, and mounting evidence that burning fossil fuels are contributing to unwelcome climate changes; the time has come to better balance vehicular transportation with other transportation options. In addition, providing pedestrians and bicyclists with safe and attractive routes adds vitality to the commercial areas and helps to calm traffic on the streets.

### Support Rail Service

The Metro North Railroad operates a train station in Bethel on Durant Avenue, provides rail service north to Danbury and south to Norwalk, with connections into New York City. The Commission supports the continuation of rail service to New Milford along existing tracks that provided this service in the past.

The Commission also supports more convenient connections to the New Haven line with more frequent service to both Stamford and New York City for both peak and off-peak periods. The Commission recommends that the Town, through the offices of the First Selectman, and in coordination with HVCEO, continue to work with Metro North Railroad and CONN DOT to increase the availability of train service into and through Bethel.

The Train Station, located at 13 Durant Avenue, has parking for 199 cars. This parking lot is usually fully occupied between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. The Board of Selectmen, working with Metro North, should pursue options for additional parking capacity on this site. Metro North is supportive of Transit-oriented development and might be able to assist with some funding if a development proposal is consistent with Metro North's TOD guidelines.

Bethel should also work with its partners in the Region to advocate for an additional station, perhaps in the northern part of Danbury to provide convenient access from the rail to the Berkshire Industrial Park and Route 6.

In order to make the train station more accessible to those living on the west side of the tracks, the Commission supports the development of a platform on the west side of the station so that train doors can open on both sides. The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen and HVCEO advocate for a west side platform and additional parking for both cars and bicycles.

### Support Additional Transit Service

HART (Housatonic Area Regional Transit), the greater Danbury public transportation provider, operates a 15-route bus system providing service between Bethel and Danbury with connections to the Connecticut communities of New Milford, Brookfield, Newtown, Redding, New Fairfield, Norwalk, Ridgefield, and Wilton, and additional locations in New York State. Other HART services include the SweetHART (Dial-A-Ride) system, and bus-to-rail shuttles between Ridgefield and the Katonah Metro North Railroad Station and between Danbury and the Brewster Metro North Railroad Station. The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen continue to work with HART to provide additional transit service in Bethel including increased frequency of existing services, additional capacity of the SweetHART system, more amenities for transit riders, and the creation of additional transit options.



**Parking Lot at Train Station**



**Track at Train Station**

## Trackless Trolley

HART operates a trackless trolley in Danbury that serves as a model for a potential trolley system in Bethel. While the densities do not currently exist to support such a system in Bethel today, it is envisioned that such a system could provide transit service in the future.

Potential routes include Stony Hill corridor to the Train Station(s) and Downtown; and from the Train Station to locations such as the Town's Industrial parks, the Village Center, and the Route 6 corridor.



## Support the Development of Bus Shelters

An important amenity for transit users are bus shelters. Currently there is not a single bus shelter in Bethel. The Commission will ask that HART study this matter. Considerations in a study of bus shelters in Bethel should include identification of locations such as the Village Center, adjacent to the train station, and along Route 6. There should also be consideration given to the aesthetic qualities of the shelters and ongoing maintenance.

## Create a Pedestrian Network

Sidewalks, trails, and greenways provide for safe pedestrian circulation, an important element in creating and maintaining an active and vital community. In addition, providing an adequate pedestrian network will increase the chances that someone will choose walking over driving, particularly when the destination is a mile or less away.

In Bethel, the installation of sidewalks on one or both sides of a roadway occurs in one of two ways:

- the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations require the installation of sidewalks for most new projects; and
- the Town undertakes sidewalk construction projects, through the Capital Improvement Program or in conjunction with specific projects such as the STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) funded sidewalk improvement program for the Downtown's Village Center.

Bethel has a concentration of sidewalks in the historic Village Center. Sidewalks also exist along Durant Avenue up to the Metro North Rail Station. There are some residential subdivisions and commercial developments that installed sidewalks as part of their site development. The *Sidewalk and Walkways Plan* shows the location of existing and proposed sidewalks.

A recommendation of this Plan is to increase and improve the pedestrian network in Bethel. This includes construction of new sidewalks, maintenance of existing sidewalks, connecting sidewalks with greenways and other trails, and addressing conflicts between pedestrians and roadways. A fee-in-lieu of sidewalks may be appropriate in some locations and should be an option where it is appropriate.



The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen fully fund a *Sidewalk Improvement Plan (SIP)*, to be administered by the Town Engineer. The Goal of the SIP should be to assess the condition all sidewalks addressing gaps, potential extensions, handicap access, and maintenance issues at one time.

# Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan



Town of Bethel, CT

## Legend




### Bike Routes

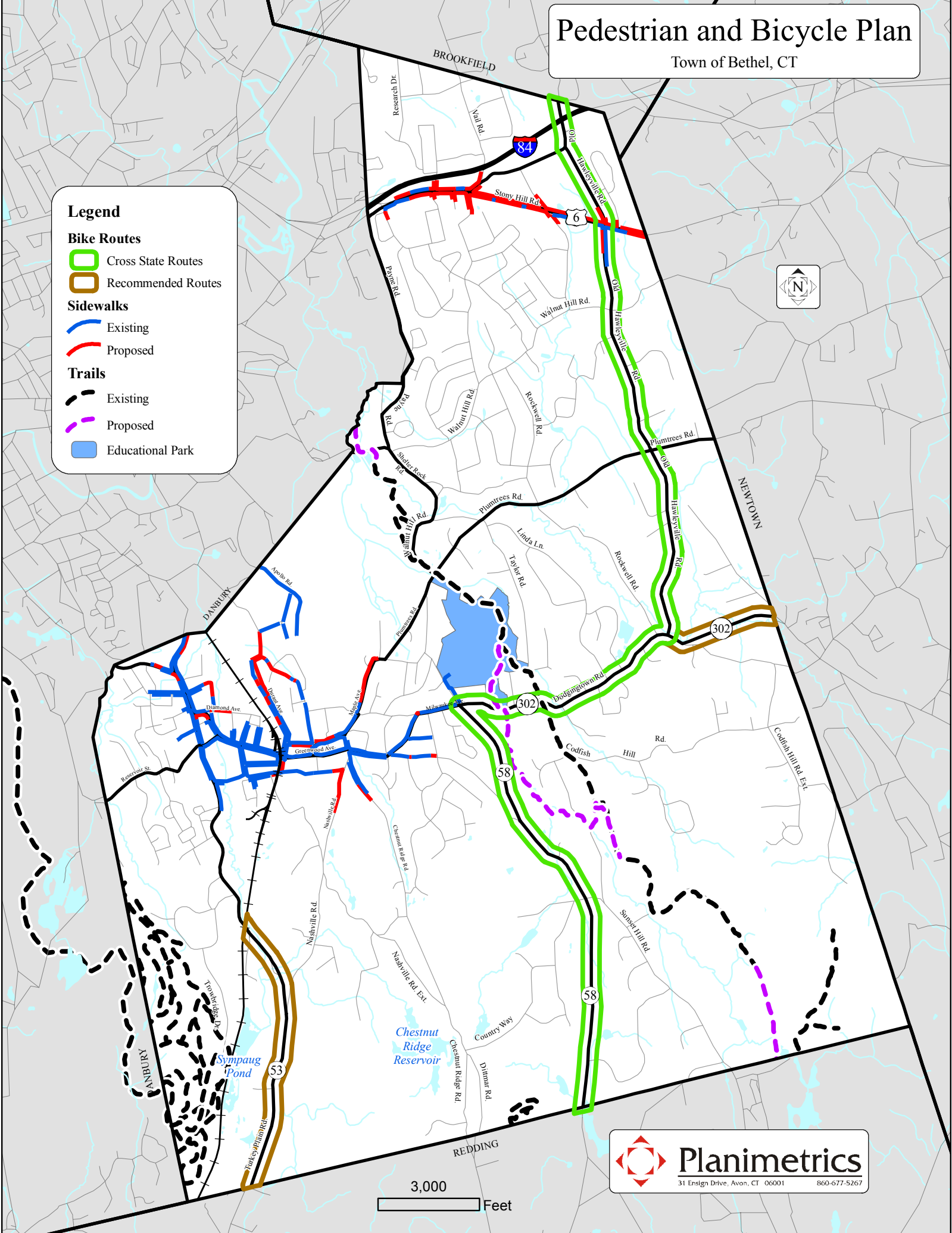
-  Cross State Routes
-  Recommended Routes

### Sidewalks

-  Existing
-  Proposed

### Trails

-  Existing
-  Proposed
-  Educational Park



3,000 Feet



**Planimetrics**  
31 Ensign Drive, Avon, CT 06001 860-677-5267

## Support Bicycle Infrastructure



**Bike path**



**Bicycle parking at  
Railroad Station**



**Cannondale Bicycles  
Headquarters**

Bicycling is a popular activity in the region. The Bethel Town Hall is used by a number of cycling clubs and bicycle enthusiasts as a meeting point for bicycle trips. The Hat City Cyclists, a bicycle club based in Bethel, has been organizing bike trips since 1985 which start at the Municipal Center and end up at a local restaurant.

The two major types of bicycle facilities are on-road and off-road. On-road facilities share the road with motor vehicle traffic, and may include either lanes specifically designated for bicycles or lanes that are shared by both bicycles and motorized vehicles. Off-road facilities include bike paths, which are exclusively for bicycle use, or multi-use trails, which are shared with pedestrians, in-line skaters, and other non-motorized forms of transportation. The Commission recommends that transportation facilities should become more bicycle friendly.

The State Bicycle Map identifies suitable on-road bicycle facilities which are identified on the Sidewalks and Bicycle Plan on the following page. There is a segment of Route 302, on the eastern edge of town, identified as a bicycle route on the State Bicycle Map. In addition, Route 58 is identified as a Cross State Route. According to a disclaimer on the State Bicycle Map “extreme caution is advised with both of these roads as motor vehicle speeds can be excessive and visibility can be impaired by terrain and vegetation.”

Off-road facilities do not currently exist for bicycle users in Bethel. Bethel should take advantage of the proximity of the world headquarters of Cannondale Bicycles, a premiere manufacturer of bicycles, to make Bethel a more bicycle friendly community, perhaps by developing some off-road bicycle trails within Terre Haute. Cannondale might also be a good partner for developing and supporting other bicycle friendly infrastructure and amenities. The Board of Selectmen should consider creating an ad-hoc committee comprised of members of the Hat City Cycling Club, Cannondale, the EDC, and Parks and Recreation to oversee the development of more bicycle friendly facilities.

### Bicycles and Transit

Two additional recommendations to increase bicycle use would also support transit riders.

One recommendation is a bikes-on-buses program. This program, successfully operating in other communities, allows bicycles to be placed on a rack in the front of the bus, allowing many more riders to access the bus lines by traveling a portion of the trip by bicycle.

Another possibility for individuals wishing to ride their bicycle at least a portion of the way to work, is to drive the bike, in a car, to a park and ride facility, park the car, and then ride the bike the remainder of the commute.

The Board of Selectmen should consider collaborating with bicycle advocates and State sponsored car-pooling programs to develop a map of potential park-and-ride locations that Bethel residents can use. This map should also be made available to commuters wishing to participate in carpooling programs.

## **Actions to Support Transportation Options**

1. Collaborate with Regional, State, and Federal transportation officials to extend the rail service north to New Milford.
2. Encourage increased service to the New Haven line for both peak and off-peak hours.
3. Develop additional parking capacity at the Train Station.
4. Advocate for a Danbury North Railroad Station near the northwest corner of the Town of Bethel.
5. Consider development of a west side train platform with additional parking and facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
6. Increase the frequency and coverage of HART bus services in Bethel, including additional service for the SweetHART Dial-A-Ride.
7. Encourage HART to provide bus shelters in Bethel.
8. Consider a trackless trolley route between Stony Hill and the Village Center.
9. Include a fee-in-lieu of sidewalks in the Subdivision Regulations where appropriate.
10. Develop and fund a sidewalk improvement plan (SIP) for ongoing maintenance of sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure.
11. Consider the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in all transportation projects, integrating facilities to support pedestrian and bicyclists to the maximum amount practicable.
12. Collaborate with bicycle advocates to develop additional bicycle infrastructure in Bethel.
13. Collaborate with Cannondale to develop more bicycle friendly trails and bicycle infrastructure.
14. Encourage HART to accommodate bikes on buses.
15. Identify potential park-and-ride lots for bicyclists and carpoolers.

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# UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE



## Overview

The availability of public utilities can strongly influence development patterns. There are typically piped utilities such as public water and sewer service; wired utilities such as telephone and cable services and wireless services.

The Plan seeks to ensure that utilities are suitably located and have adequate capacity to support the desired residential and commercial growth pattern expressed throughout this Plan.



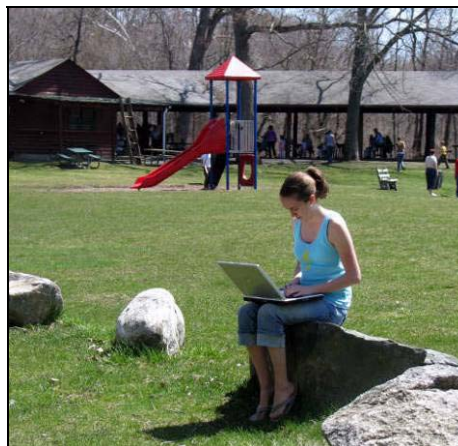
**Water Supply Service Area**



**Sewer Pump Station**



**Wired Utilities**



**Wireless Utilities**

## **Provide Public Water for Community Needs**

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Water supply is a critical element of the Town's infrastructure. Public water service provides potable water for fire protection, residential, and business requirements, and supports desired development patterns. There are two water service areas in Bethel, as identified on the map, *Water Service Areas*. The Bethel Water Department is a municipal utility and the Bethel Consolidated Water Company is a private utility. Areas not identified on the *Water Service Areas Plan* are served by private wells.

The Bethel Water Department obtains water primarily from the Maple Avenue Wells, which supplies 70% of the Town's drinking water. The remaining 30% comes from the Chestnut Ridge Reservoir. Emergency back-up supplies are located in Danbury in two reservoirs owned by the Town of Bethel.

The Bethel Water Department has a safe yield of 1.66 million gallons per day. Average consumption over the last five years, according to the Town Engineer, has been 942,400 gpd. Therefore, there are adequate water supplies to meet existing needs and sufficient capacity for some expansion of service.

The Bethel Water Department is responsible for the maintenance of the municipal drinking water systems and conducts monthly and yearly testing of the Town's water supply systems, including wells and reservoirs, to ensure that the Town's water supply is in compliance with state and federal guidelines. The Bethel Water Department provides water for those areas of the downtown and centrally located areas of town which are connected to the public water system.

The Town's water supplies are currently dependent on two reservoirs and the emergency back-up of Murphy's Brook. The Connecticut DPH recently completed assessments for all reservoirs and associated watersheds in the State. DPH concluded that the absence of source protection regulations in Bethel is a potential risk factor for its water supply. DPH recommends the creation of local watershed protection regulations, including a water supply overlay zone. Commission will adopt a water supply overlay zone when it revises the Zoning Regulations.

The privately owned Bethel Consolidated Water Company provides water for Chimney Heights and the Berkshire Corporate Park. Water for Chimney Heights comes from privately managed well fields in the Dibble Brook Aquifer, which has a safe yield of 224,640 gpd. Average daily consumption is approximately 110,000 gpd. Water for the Berkshire Corporate Park comes from an interconnection with Danbury. Average daily consumption for the Park is at 60,000 gpd.

As noted in the first draft of a water supply study prepared for the Housatonic Valley Council of Elected Officials in October 2006, despite the costs associated with a water supply overlay zone, the benefits of water source protection far outweigh the costs. The report entitled "*Adopting a Water Supply Protection District Overlay Zone for Bethel*" contains a number of recommendations for protection of Bethel's water supply. Once that report has been completed, the Commission should use the recommendations as guidance in the forthcoming revision process to update the Zoning Regulations.

### **Actions for Protecting Public Water Supplies**

1. Create local watershed protection regulations, including a water supply overlay zone.
2. Implement the recommendations of the "Adopting a Water Supply Protection Overlay Zone for Bethel."

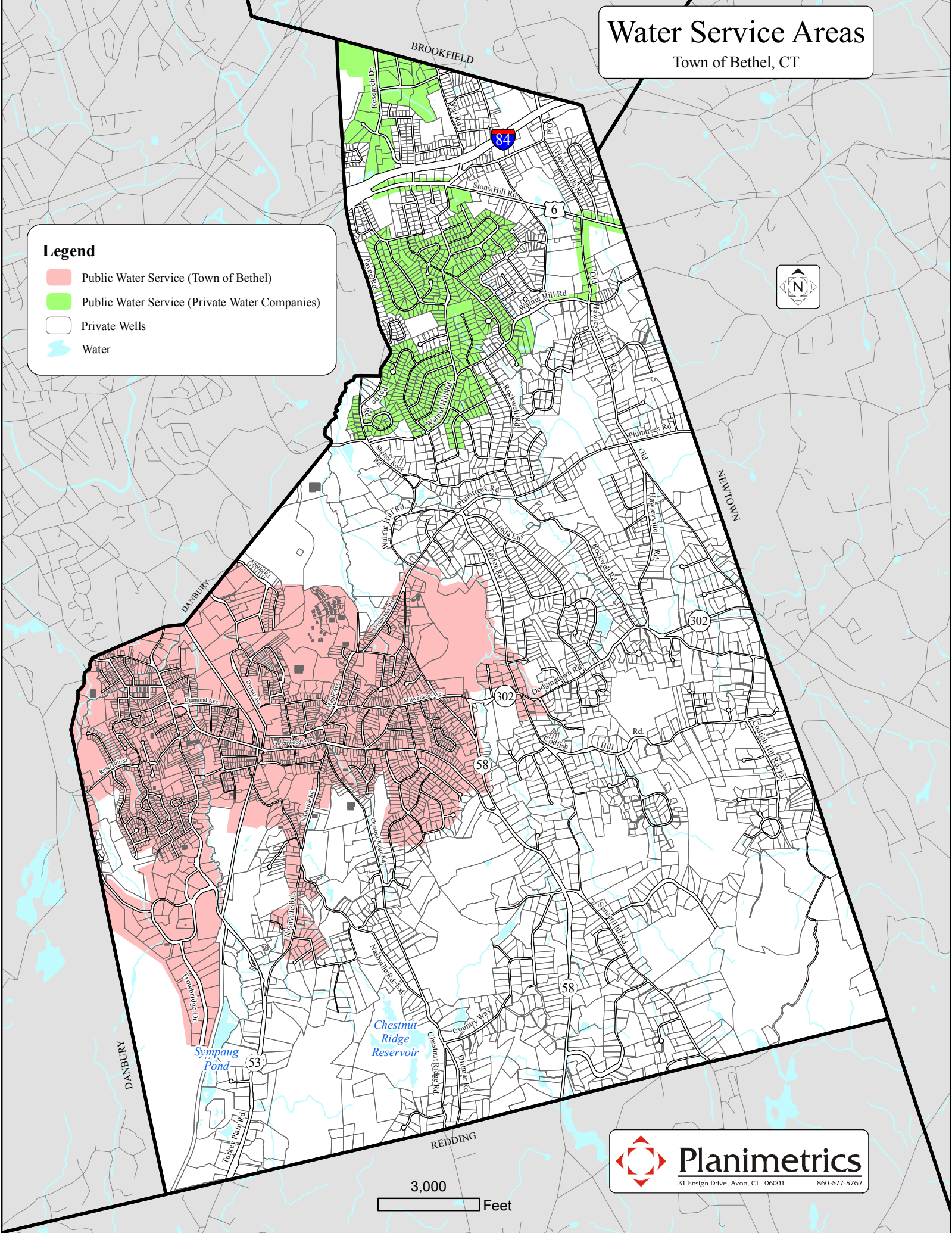


# Water Service Areas

Town of Bethel, CT

## Legend

- Public Water Service (Town of Bethel)
- Public Water Service (Private Water Companies)
- Private Wells
- Water



## **Ensure Adequate Sanitary Sewer Service**

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Public sewers can provide safe and efficient sewage disposal for residential and business needs, protect public health, and support desired development patterns.

Bethel's Public Works Department, primarily through the Town Engineer and the Utility Supervisor, maintain the municipal sewer mains located within the Town. The Town has an Inter-local Agreement with the City of Danbury to send its municipal sewage to their treatment facility. There are three different sewer service areas served by three sewer pump stations. As identified on the *Sewer Service Areas Plan*, sewer lines currently serve the entire downtown Bethel area, the Francis J. Clarke Industrial Park, the Berkshire Industrial Park, Hoyt's Hill, and the Stony Hill/Route 6 Corridor. Sewer service has been approved for Chimney Heights and Phase 1 work on installation of sewer service to this neighborhood has begun. The *Sewer Service Areas Plan* identifies existing, proposed and potential sewer service areas. Areas not identified on the *Sewer Service Areas Plan* use private septic systems.

As of October 2006, there were 3,476 customers of the Bethel Sewer System. An agreement with the Danbury Sewage Treatment Plant (DSTP) allows for up to two million gallons of sewage a day. Current usage is approximately 1.2 million gallons a day indicating that there may be some excess capacity in the system. However, according to a recent study conducted by Tighe and Bond, both the Paul Street Pump Station and the Downtown sewer service areas are near capacity. There are concerns that new development in these areas may jeopardize the current agreement with Danbury.

The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen and the Public Utility Commission consider revising the agreement with the DSTP to reallocate some sewage capacity from the northern area, where there is a surplus, to the Village Center, in order to support some limited additional development in the Village Center. As the Commission revises the Zoning Regulations and considers allowing for some increases in density both in the Village Center and within the proposed Transit-Oriented Development District, both the Zoning Map and the Sewer Service Plan may need to be reviewed and amended for compatibility.

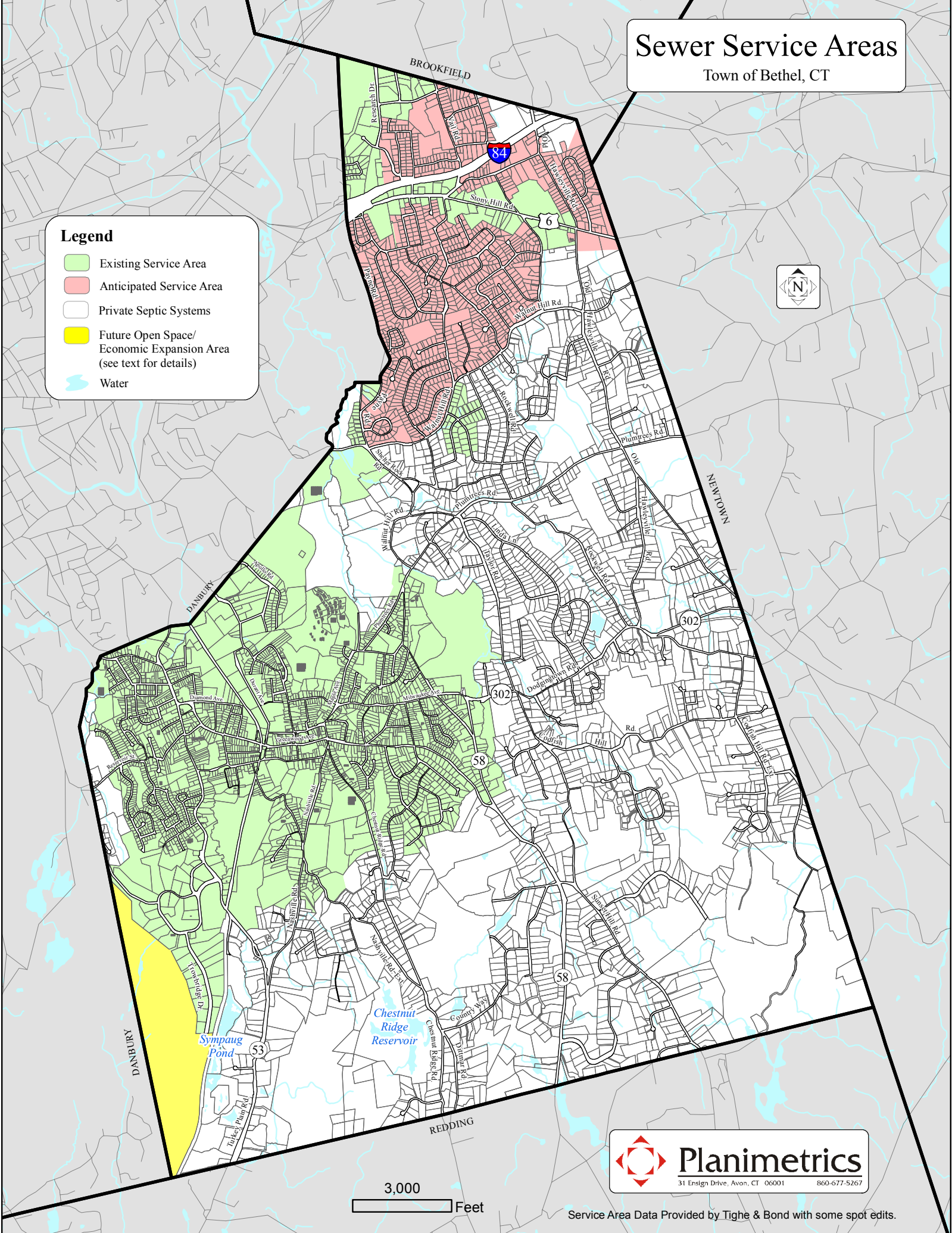
The Public Utility Commission and the Board of Selectmen are considering extending sewer service throughout the southwestern part of Town. This is in conflict with the State Plan of Conservation and Development, which has identified this area as rural land and a conservation area. Therefore, the Commission recommends that the Town work to resolve this discrepancy and clarify the State Plan of Conservation's designation of this area of Town before moving forward with the proposal to sewer the southwestern part of Town and/or to propose or allow any additional development in this area.

# Sewer Service Areas

Town of Bethel, CT

**Legend**

- Existing Service Area
- Anticipated Service Area
- Private Septic Systems
- Future Open Space/  
Economic Expansion Area  
(see text for details)
- Water



3,000 Feet

**Planimetrics**  
31 Ensign Drive, Avon, CT 06001 860-677-5267

Service Area Data Provided by Tighe & Bond with some spot edits.

In 2006, the Public Utilities Commission conducted a sanitary sewer system capacity evaluation, with the assistance of the engineering firm of Tighe and Bond. That report identified a number of recommendations, many of which the Commission endorses.

A number of recommendations address concerns about the potential for exceeding the flow limits agreement. The Commission recommends that the Board of Selectmen and the Public Utility Commission pursue those recommendations.

Another important recommendation is to develop a system to monitor redevelopment and build-out within the sewer service areas in order to evaluate the impact on wastewater flows and available capacity as development in the Town proceeds. The Commission supports these recommendations.

That report also recommended that the PUC evaluate and potentially upgrade the flow meters at the Payne Road Meter Chamber, the Berkshire Pump Station, and the Plumtrees Road Pump Station. The Commission supports these recommendations.

### **Actions for Ensuring Adequate Sanitary Sewer Services**

1. Update the sewer service area limits to ensure that areas of Town where new sewers are planned are within the sewer service area and are consistent with the State Plan of Conservation and Development.
2. Consider requesting an adjustment to the inter-municipal agreement with Danbury to shift capacity from the northern area to the southern area.
3. Develop a system to monitor redevelopment and build-out within the sewer service area in order to evaluate the impact on wastewater flows and available capacity as development in the Town proceeds.
4. Evaluate and upgrade, if necessary, the flow meters at the Payne Road Meter Chamber and the Berkshire Pump Station.
5. Evaluate options for upgrading or replacing the Plumtrees Road Pump Station.

## Manage Stormwater

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State and Federal regulations now require greater local management of stormwater. Under the Environmental Protection Agency's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II guidelines, Bethel will be responsible for reducing the discharge of pollutants to the "maximum extent practical." Both the Town and all commercial properties tying into the Town's sewer and stormwater systems will be responsible for meeting the new water quality standards. The Board of Selectmen should investigate the creation of a stormwater utility to manage and pay for compliance with the NPDES guidelines and DEP requirements.

Areas with consistent stormwater runoff problems include Plumtrees Road near the Police Station, the intersection of South Street with Nashville Road, the P.T. Barnum Square, and the Diamond / Farnum Hill intersection. The Commission should review its stormwater run-off regulations to address both the volume and velocity of runoff. The Commission should explore regulatory strategies and other approaches to encourage the development of sustainable stormwater facilities such as catch basins, detention ponds, and rain-gardens, to control stormwater flows and improve the quality of stormwater runoff. As the Commission revises the Zoning Regulations, it should ensure that the Town's regulations are consistent with the *CT DEP Stormwater Management Plan* and the *CT Stormwater Manual, 2004* as amended.

As discussed earlier in the section on transportation, the Town Engineer's Office, has developed "*Design and Construction Standards*", which also provides guidance for storm drainage improvements. This manual used the recommendations and proposed regulatory intent of the EPA's stormwater regulations and the CT DEP stormwater management policies. Once the "*Design and Construction Standards*" manual has been reviewed and revised, it should be adopted to provide applicants and the Town Engineer with clear guidance on how to best address stormwater management systems.

### Actions to Manage Stormwater

1. Investigate the possibility of creating a stormwater utility.
2. Consider adopting a Zero Increase in Runoff policy.
3. Revise the Zoning Regulations for compliance with the CT DEP Stormwater Management Plan and the CT Stormwater Manual, 2004 as amended.
4. Adopt the "Design and Construction Standards" manual for guidance on storm drainage improvements.

## Stormwater Run-off BMPs

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Best Management Practices (BMPs) for managing stormwater include:

- reduce residential density and/or lot coverage in sensitive watershed and aquifer areas;
- improve stormwater treatment by natural or mechanical means including oil and grit separators and natural wetland vegetation;
- continue to provide water quality educational resources to land use commissions and the public; and
- adopt a Zero Increase in Run-off Policy.

## Manage Wired Services

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Bethel has adequate wired utility services, which includes electrical, telephone, and cable utilities, in place and able to meet community needs. So that such services continue to be available, the Town should work with utility companies who seek to improve the reliability of their systems by undertaking tree trimming projects. There is a delicate balance between the benefits of tree trimming to improve utility availability and reliability, and the negative impacts to community character that can occur when aggressive tree trimming practices are followed. Bethel's Public Utility Commission and Board of Selectmen should continue to work with utility companies seeking to improve the reliability of the wired services by undertaking tree trimming projects in ways that protect community character and involves private property owners.

During the preparation of this Plan, residents expressed a desire to have wired utility infrastructure placed underground whenever and wherever feasible. Bethel's Board of Selectmen, Public Utility Commission, and our Commission should continue to seek ways to have wired utilities placed underground whenever possible, such as the existing provisions in the Subdivision Regulations requiring that new developments place wired utilities underground. Placing wired utilities underground should be a priority in the Design Districts such as the Village Center, the Transit-oriented Design District, the Route 6 corridor, and along scenic roads.

### Actions for Wired Services

1. Continue to seek opportunities to place wired utilities underground.
2. Continue to work with utility companies who seek to improve the reliability of their systems by undertaking tree trimming projects.



**Wired Utilities**

## Improve Wireless Services

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Over the past several years, there has been a significant increase in the usage and availability of wireless communications. Whereas in the past, the primary concern with cellular phones and wireless services was the visibility of cell towers, today the primary concern is the availability of service.

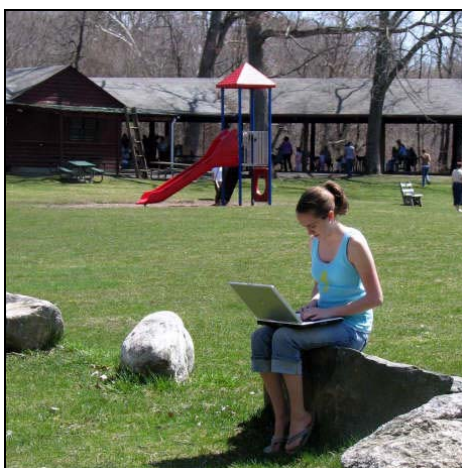
In addition, many owners of laptop computers and other local area network related technologies enjoy the ease with which they can communicate by email and telephone over wireless computer devices and other related services. Cafes, libraries, train stations, and even street benches are becoming likely places to find people communicating wirelessly. The upside is that as more users enter the wireless systems, it is possible to have much smaller cells with less visible antennae.

Due to a Federal Court ruling (*Sprint Spectrum LP v. Conn. Siting Council*, 274 F.3d 674, (2d. Cir. 2001)) the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) currently has jurisdiction over the siting of telecommunication towers, with few exceptions. Prior to the ruling, Bethel adopted comprehensive tower regulations requiring telecommunications providers and tower builders to comply with the local regulations when applying to the CSC. These regulations should be revised in order to comply with State law and Federal legislation.

The Village Center is an excellent location to provide comprehensive wireless Internet coverage, which is known as a Wi-Fi Hot Spot. Wi-Fi Hot Spots allow anyone the appropriate computer hardware and software to connect wirelessly to the Internet which is a desirable amenity to many citizens and businesses. The Board of Selectmen, perhaps in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce should coordinate with local businesses and local providers to establish such a network.

### Actions for Improving Wireless Services

1. Revise the Zoning Regulations relative to telecommunication towers for consistency with State law and Federal legislation.
2. Collaborate with local businesses and Wi-Fi providers to create a Wi-Fi Hot Spot in Bethel's Village Center.



Wireless Services

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