

CONSERVATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN

Each year, more land area in New Hartford is developed or committed. As a result, consideration must be given now to identifying and preserving those natural features that are important to the quality of life. A plan can help ensure that important resources and features are protected.

Preservation can be accomplished by:

- donation to, or acquisition by, public or private land conservation groups,
- requiring open space dedication as part of development proposals, or
- conserving important functions through compatible land uses and development patterns or other techniques.

MAJOR PRINCIPLES

Major greenbelts should be established along the Farmington and Nepaug Rivers since these resources define the community and provide important corridors for conservation, wildlife, recreation, and scenic enjoyment.

Minor greenbelts could also be established along tributary streams and within major blocks in order to establish the framework for a trail system within the community.

Watershed protection, particularly in the Nepaug watershed, should be a major consideration for land use activities.

The following resources should be preserved since they are major contributors to the rural character of New Hartford and the region:

- steep slopes on Jones Mountain,
- steep slopes on Yellow Mountain, and
- floodplain/wetland system between Nepaug Center and Maple Hollow Road.

Open space dedication should be required of all residential development in order to protect natural resources, provide open space areas and/or connections, and maintain the scenic beauty and rural character of the community. Provisions in the subdivision regulations (that require up to 15 percent of the parcel area be dedicated for public purposes) should be more effectively utilized.

Statutory authorization for payment of a fee in lieu of open space dedication under certain conditions should be adopted and utilized so that a fund can be established for acquisition of critical open space parcels. The Commission can then decide when to accept open space, when to accept a fee, and when to waive the requirement but such provisions should be applied to all parcels regardless of size so that such a decision can be made.

Floodplain, wetland areas, steep slopes, and other significant natural areas should be conserved due to their ecological function and importance.

The overall Conservation & Open Space Plan will be enhanced if there is access to, and trails within and between, open space and conservation areas. Connections (like the Tunxis Trail) between existing and proposed open space and conservation areas should be required so that open spaces are accessible and may be enjoyed by residents.

Road crossings intended to provide desired circulation within the community or access to conservation/open space areas are considered compatible with the Conservation & Open Space Plan provided they are designed and located to have minimum impact on the environmental resources in these areas.

Other Recommendations

Development of steep slopes, ridgetops, difficult soils, wetlands, watercourses, floodplains, or that adversely affects significant natural features should be discouraged or allowed at lower densities in order to protect the ecology of these areas and minimize adverse impacts.

Due to the reliance on groundwater for water supply in many areas, the Nepaug Overlay District regulations might be extended to development in other areas of the community. Activities that may adversely affect water quality (either surface or ground) should be required to avoid such impacts.

Salt stockpiles located at Town, State, and other facilities should be covered in order to protect groundwater.

Regional coordination of hazardous waste collection and similar programs should continue to be encouraged.

Open space connections are an important consideration and even small pathway areas that will eventually be connected to other paths and to large open space areas should be provided whenever possible.

Areas should be set aside for neighborhood parks in the community. These parcels should be located where they are accessible to neighborhood residents. Providing recreation equipment might be a situation where open space dedication requirements could be relaxed.

Open space (and farm and forest) assessment should be continued in order to encourage the preservation of these areas throughout the community.

CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE PLAN

The map on the facing page presents the Conservation and Open Space plan for New Hartford. A brief summary follows.

Existing Public Open Space includes state, municipal, and private lands that are currently used as public open space.

Existing Semi-Public Open Space includes land that is presently maintained as open space and is owned by the Metropolitan District Commission, the Boy Scouts, the Land Trust, or similar organizations.

Proposed Preservation Areas includes:

- areas located along the Farmington or Nepaug rivers that comprise the major greenbelts proposed for these areas,
- areas located on Jones Mountain or Yellow Mountain that significantly contribute to the rural character of New Hartford, or
- other areas where substantial constraints exist or where significant natural functions should be conserved.

Preservation can be accomplished by donation, purchase, dedication, or conservation easement provided the natural or aesthetic functions are conserved.

PUBLIC ACCESS & CONNECTIONS

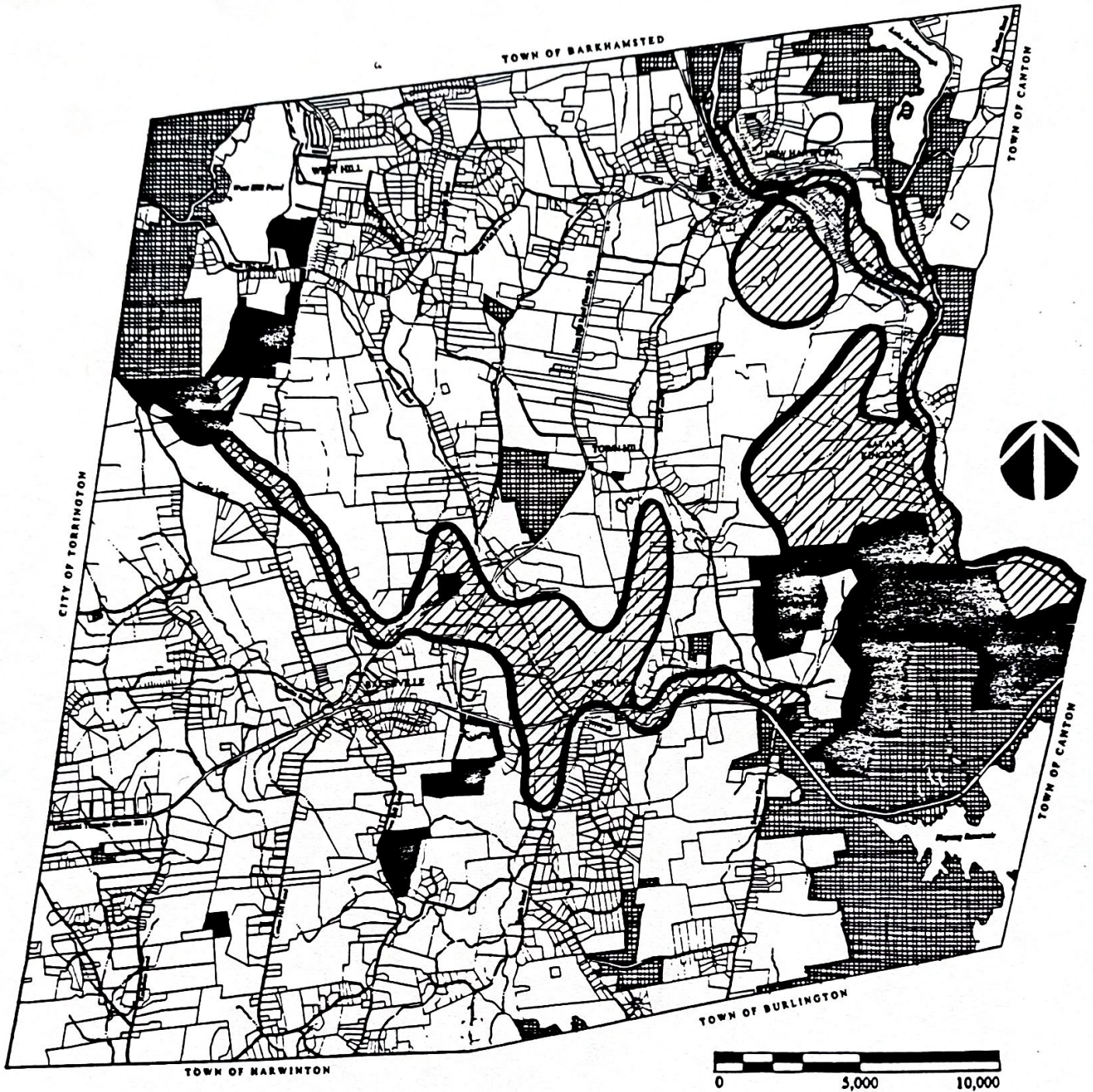
Public access to, and connections between, open space areas are integral components of the Conservation & Open Space Plan. Public access can be secured through the coordinated actions of all Town agencies as opportunities arise.

Trail connections are critically important. While such recommendations might be discussed in this section, they have been addressed in the Transportation section because of their relationship to an overall circulation system in the community.




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-  Existing Public Open Space
-  Existing Semi-Public Open Space
-  Proposed Preservation Areas

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