

Residential Growth Forum

I. Where we are:

- A. Building trends –
 - Analysis of single-family residential development reveals building “booms” in the early 1960’s, early 1970’s, mid 1980’s and late 1990’s.
 - Residential growth has been strong and steady since 1993.
- B. Average lot size – 3.71 acres since August 2001 when current minimum lot sizes of 55,000 sq. ft. and 2 acres in the Shenipsit Lake Watershed were adopted.
- C. Build-out data
 - Build-out Analysis dated July 2002 estimated an ultimate population of 20,000 – 23,000.
 - Recent town acquisition of Open Space land would lower that figure approximately 4%.
 - Current population estimated from census data and new dwellings – 14,000±.
- D. Cost of housing –
 - FY 1992 – \$177,669
 - FY 2002 - \$237,000
 - The 33.4% increase since 1992 is the highest in the Capitol Region.
- E. Existing Open Space/Protected Land – totals 16% of Tolland.
 - 5.9% is Town owned Open Space/recreational land
 - 5.1% is private and water company Open Space/protected land
 - 5.0% is State owned Open Space
- F. Taxation
 - 85.77% of 2003 Grand List is real estate.
 - 5.82% of real estate is Commercial/Industrial properties.

II. Development/Preservation Goals:

- A. From Plan of Conservation and Development
 - To preserve the town’s rural character by encouraging compatible growth patterns, protecting natural, historic and archaeological features, and improving aesthetics.
 - To ensure that new development, especially in areas of severely limited or sensitive resources, avoids impacts to natural systems.
 - To encourage quality residential development and construction throughout a range of housing values.
 - To encourage residential design that preserves or creates valuable Open Space, and;
 - To gear Tolland’s future growth (both residential and non-residential) to: (a) the Town’s infrastructure capacity (roads, sewers, water supply, drainage, parks, recreation, schools, fire, police, etc.)’ (b) the residents’ ability to pay for existing and expanded infrastructure without creating an undue hardship; and (c) maintaining the character of the Town deemed to be desirable.

- B. Conservation Commission goals for Open Space and Land Conservation.
- To promote protection of natural areas which have high visibility and which provide the greatest number of Tolland residents an appreciation of the natural beauty of Tolland.
 - To provide an interconnected system of wildlife corridors and trails throughout Town. Where possible, these corridors and trails shall be in areas which retain natural features;
 - To provide large unbroken tracts of upland soil areas which are contiguous to or interconnected to other wildlife habitat corridors or areas such as wetlands and riparian (river) corridors.

III. What can we not do (legally in the State of Connecticut)?

- A. Establish moratoriums, except in certain instances for a specific period of time.
- B. Limit the issuance of Building Permits for new dwellings or otherwise slow the pace of growth.
- C. Assess Development Impact Fees as some other states allow.
- D. Deny residential subdivisions that comply with Zoning & Subdivision Regulations except for public health, safety and welfare issues.

IV. Tools we can use:

- A. To reduce growth potential:
 - 1. Increase minimum lot requirements (size, buildable area, width, frontage)
 - Will reduce number of potential dwellings.
 - May increase sprawl and intrusion into wildlife corridors, habitats and greenway corridors.
 - Affects affordability.
 - 2. Acquire more Open Space with subdivisions.
 - Could regulate percent of Wetlands allowed in required Open Space.
 - Could increase, from 10%, required Open Space set aside.
 - Will further Open Space goals.
 - Affects affordability.
 - 3. Reduce cul-de-sac lengths
 - Will limit number of lots.
 - May help preserve interior wildlife corridors and habitats.
- B. To reduce residential growth impacts:
 - 1. Encourage "Cluster" or "Open Space" subdivisions.
 - 2. Retain vegetation to reduce impact of new roads.
 - 3. Purchase or protect land as Open Space.

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