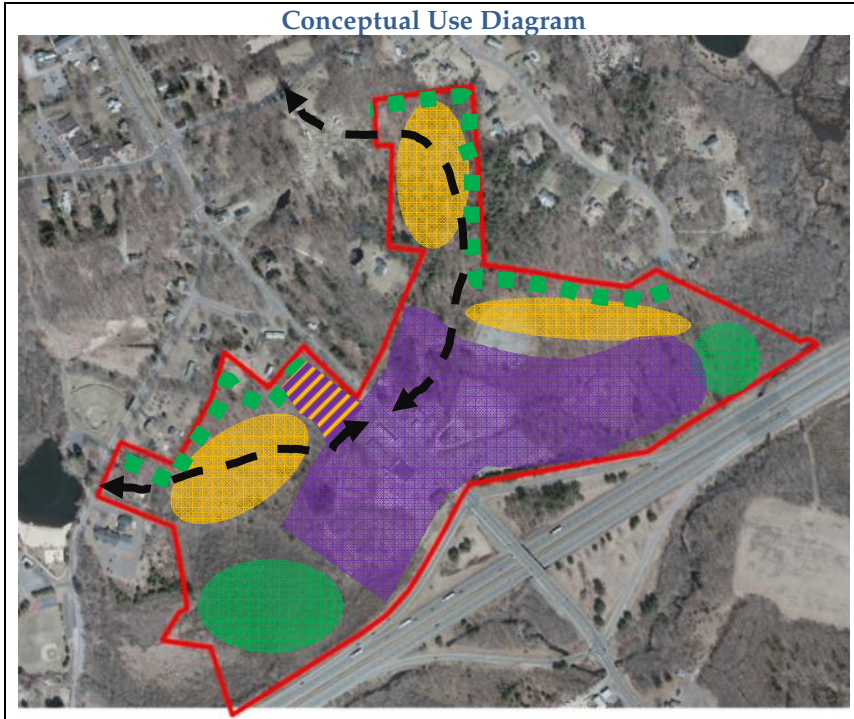


Create a Town Center (Revised July 1, 2011)

The survey asked residents if they would support the creation of a village-type “town center,” in a walking-friendly setting with community gathering spots and shops – 64% said they support this concept.



The Community Structure Plan delineates a Town Center area that encompasses Tolland Green, the gateway area, a stretch of Route 195, the schools and the Cross Farms area. The village-style development discussed here should be focused in the “node” (i.e., the area formerly called South Green, now Tolland Village Area), which is served by infrastructure. The premise of the larger “Town Center” illustrated on the map is that this is an area where protecting visual character is of utmost importance.

The Town began exploring a Town Center concept for the Tolland

Village Area in 2006. Based upon some previous studies, input from the community, an analysis of the area, and the goal to create a village area, the above diagram indicates the desired uses for each section of the Tolland Village Area. The overall goal is to have more intense, mixed use development closer to I-84, with a transition to residential uses closer to existing neighborhoods.

Open space and buffers should be provided along the zone’s edges. The commercial component could include neighborhood and community services and offices. Community amenities would play an important role, such as cultural facilities, outdoor plazas or other gathering spaces to bring residents together.

The form of development should be a village-type pattern that is pedestrian-friendly, with buildings oriented toward new streets and sidewalks. Visitors would be able to park their car once and walk to multiple destinations. Internal pedestrian connectivity and connections to nearby areas would be important elements.

The overall streetscape should be appealing to pedestrians, with wide sidewalks, amenities such as benches, attractive landscaping, and interesting store-fronts.





Concept Sketch

The Concept Sketch above illustrates important components of a village and how those components might work in this area. It is not intended to be a development plan or site plan. Rather it is intended to convey the form and style of development envisioned for this area. It is expected that property owners will create their own plans for village style development.

A tool could help accomplish the vision:

Form Based Zoning

Most zoning regulations focus on uses and provisions to ensure that buildings are not too large, too tall, too close to property lines, and so forth. They tend to focus on what is not wanted rather than what is desired. Communities often find that buildings may not look appealing, even though the zoning requirements were met.

With form based zoning, the community determines the physical form it would like to see in an area and then establishes regulations to create the desired form. It looks at a larger area and determines how each parcel can contribute to the desired form of that larger area. Form based zoning is a tool to implement a vision for a specific area.

While the uses of the building are still a consideration, often it plays a lesser role.

The streetscape for a Tolland Town Center should incorporate traditional New England village features and sustainable development practices as follows:

- **A mixture of uses and activities** including residences, retail, offices, restaurants, civic uses, lodging, etc. will be allowed, so that there is activity in the area on week days and weekend, day and evening.
- **A “main street” as the village focal point**, with buildings oriented toward the street, wide sidewalks and pedestrian amenities should be incorporated into the design. Buildings on the main street should have commercial uses on the first floor to create activity and contribute to a pedestrian environment.
- **Walkability within the village area** and to nearby destinations including parks, municipal facilities and the Green, via sidewalks and trails are important and should be provided.
- **Connectivity between buildings, properties and use areas.** Even if areas are developing one at a time, sites should be planned to fit cohesively with future village development on neighboring properties.
- **Protection of nearby water resources** through preservation of green spaces and low impact development techniques.
- **Parking is mainly on-street parking.** In cases where a parking lot is necessary, it will not be prominent.
- **Building architecture is critical.** Design guidelines will illustrate desirable and undesirable building styles and architectural features for the village area. Buildings should complement the nearby historic Tolland Green, provide for an attractive gateway to our town, and create a unique atmosphere.
- **Sustainable design, high performance buildings, and “green” technology** should be encouraged.

In addition to these guidelines, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed guidelines for “smart growth” and “sustainability”, which can provide guidance for village style development here and in other nodes in Tolland. Key neighborhood “placemaking” and “green building and infrastructure” objectives are summarized in the following chart.

Summary of Placemaking Objectives	
<p>Neighborhood Fabric & Composition Encourage walking and reduce vehicle miles traveled by mixing uses and densities Maximize density levels to create optimal nodes of activity without creating public safety issues. Minimize the negative impact of car parking and encourage healthy modes of transportation Maximize opportunities for passive solar heating and cooling</p> <p>Nature & Open Space Create or enhance green open space networks Conserve natural resources Maximize access to parks and recreational areas Maximize access to local food sources</p>	<p>Community Streets Calm traffic and create desirable, pedestrian friendly, safe streets Create bike-friendly streets Maximize neighborhood connectivity Enliven street frontages Beautify streets with trees and green infrastructure practices</p> <p>Equity, Diversity, & Affordability Encourage housing type, tenure, and income diversity Create environmental usable to all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialization</p>
Summary of Green Building & Infrastructure Objectives	
<p>Green Infrastructure Incorporate stormwater management practices as part of neighborhood design features and amenities</p> <p>Sustainable & Indigenous Landscaping Reduce maintenance requirements and costs, water consumption, and negative environmental impacts</p>	<p>High-Performance Buildings Create high performance projects to reduce water consumption, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions</p>

For additional objectives, see full document.

Source: Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design & Development, US EPA, 2009.

A 3-D model of a village scenario was developed. The following images help convey some of these design principles and objectives.

Sample "Main Street" Scenario



A mixture of uses, wide sidewalks, buildings built up to sidewalks, varying colors and rooflines.

Sample Neighborhood Scenarios



uses oriented toward street, landscaping, sidewalks, variety of style of each lot. Boulevard et.



Mixture of housing types, oriented toward street and a green.

It is intended that allowing increased development potential will encourage landowners to work together. However, zoning for this area should allow flexibility if village development on individual properties occurs over an extended time. New development and substantial redevelopment proposals must be carefully reviewed in the Tolland Village Area due to:

- proximity to nearby surface and ground water resources,
- high visibility from I-84 (i.e., prominent gateway to Tolland), and,
- proximity to the historic Tolland Green, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Careful review by the Planning and Zoning Commission, Design Advisory Board and Town officials can ensure that the buildings, streets, parking areas, drainage facilities, etc., meet the goals for the Tolland Village Area and that any potential impacts to Tolland's natural or historic resources are minimized. Design review is also critical to ensure that the distinctive character of the nearby Tolland Green Historic District is enhanced rather than impacted. Zoning should provide for review of the design and placement of buildings and other features, and ensure that public views are attractive.

The Tolland Village Area Zone, as depicted in this Plan, might be expanded to include adjacent land in the future, if the Commission determines that the expansion meets the goals of the Tolland Village Area Zone and provides adequate transitions and buffers.

Actions to create village nodes:

Adopt a new Tolland Village Area Zone, which contains design principles, to promote village style development near the Interstate 84 interchange.

Ensure that new development in the Tolland Village Area conforms with the design principles.

Apply the design principles to other nodes in Tolland.

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