

Agenda Item # 8.1

AGENDA ITEM BACKGROUND

ITEM: Discussion on review of Proposed Amendment of the Plan of Conservation and Development for the Tolland Village Area.

ITEM SUBMITTED BY: Linda Farmer Director,
Planning & Community Development

FOR COUNCIL MEETING: April 26, 2011

TOWN MANAGER APPROVAL: _____

ITEM SUMMARY: The Planning & Zoning Commission, at their meeting on February 14, 2011, approved proposed amendments to the POCD that revise "Create a Town Center" in Chapter 5 to include more specific information regarding the Tolland Village Area. The attached document (p 56 – 61) will replace current pages 56 – 58. The PZC will hold the Public Hearing on this for May 23, 2011.

In accordance with Section 8-23 of the CT General Statutes, the PZC submitted a copy of this proposed amendment to the Town Council at least 65 days prior to the public hearing (submitted to Town Council February 17, 2011). The Town Council may endorse or reject the entire amendment or part and may submit comments and recommended changes to the commission. Any section of a plan that is not endorsed by the Town Council may only be adopted by the PZC by a vote of not less than two-thirds of all the members of the commission.

The Planning & Zoning Commission will also conduct additional Public Hearings on May 23, 2011 on the Tolland Village Area regarding:

- Proposed revisions to the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map for the Tolland Village Area and other minor revisions.
- Design Guidelines for the Tolland Village Area to be added to the Zoning Regulations.
- Revisions to the Low Impact Development and Road Design Manual to incorporate stormwater treatment standards for the Tolland Village Area and other changes to road designs.

The above noted documents can all be viewed on the PZC website www.tolland.org/pzc. Anyone wishing paper copies should contact my office.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY: N/A.

TOWN ATTORNEY REVIEW: N/A.

COUNCIL ACTION DESIRED: Discussion.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

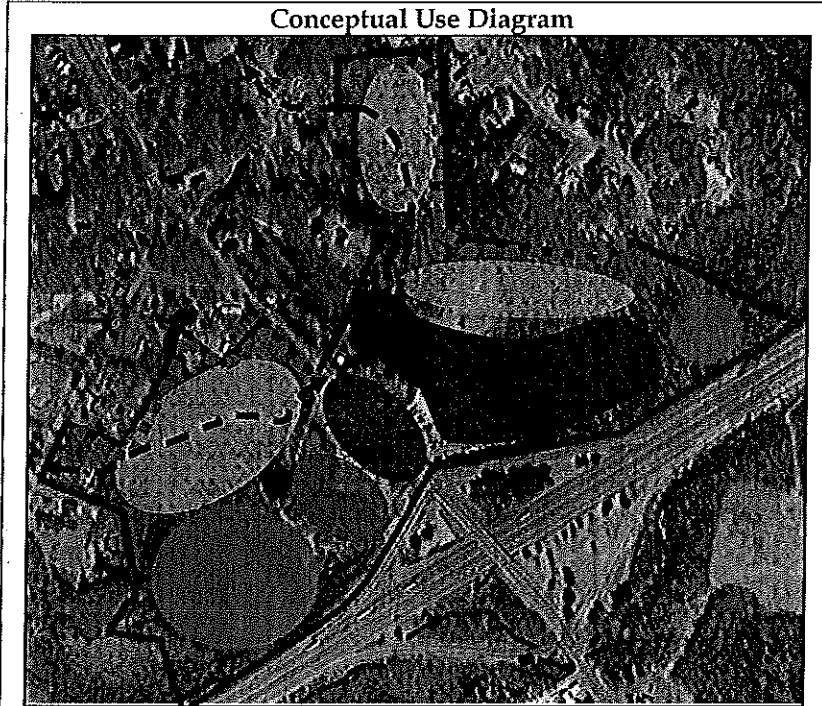
- Proposed amendment to the POCD
- Traffic report and Concept Map for the proposed new connector road and Route 195 improvements for the Tolland Village Area from Steve O'Neill, PE of VHB.
- Proposed relocation of the commuter lot documents:
 - GIS map – commuter lot relocation.
 - DOT bureau of Policy and Planning Report.
 - Engineering drawing of proposed new commuter lot.

Create a Town Center

(for May 23, 2011 Public Hearing)








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.

Conceptual Use Diagram



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 upmost importance.

The Town began exploring a Town Center concept for the Tolland Village Area in 2006. Based upon some

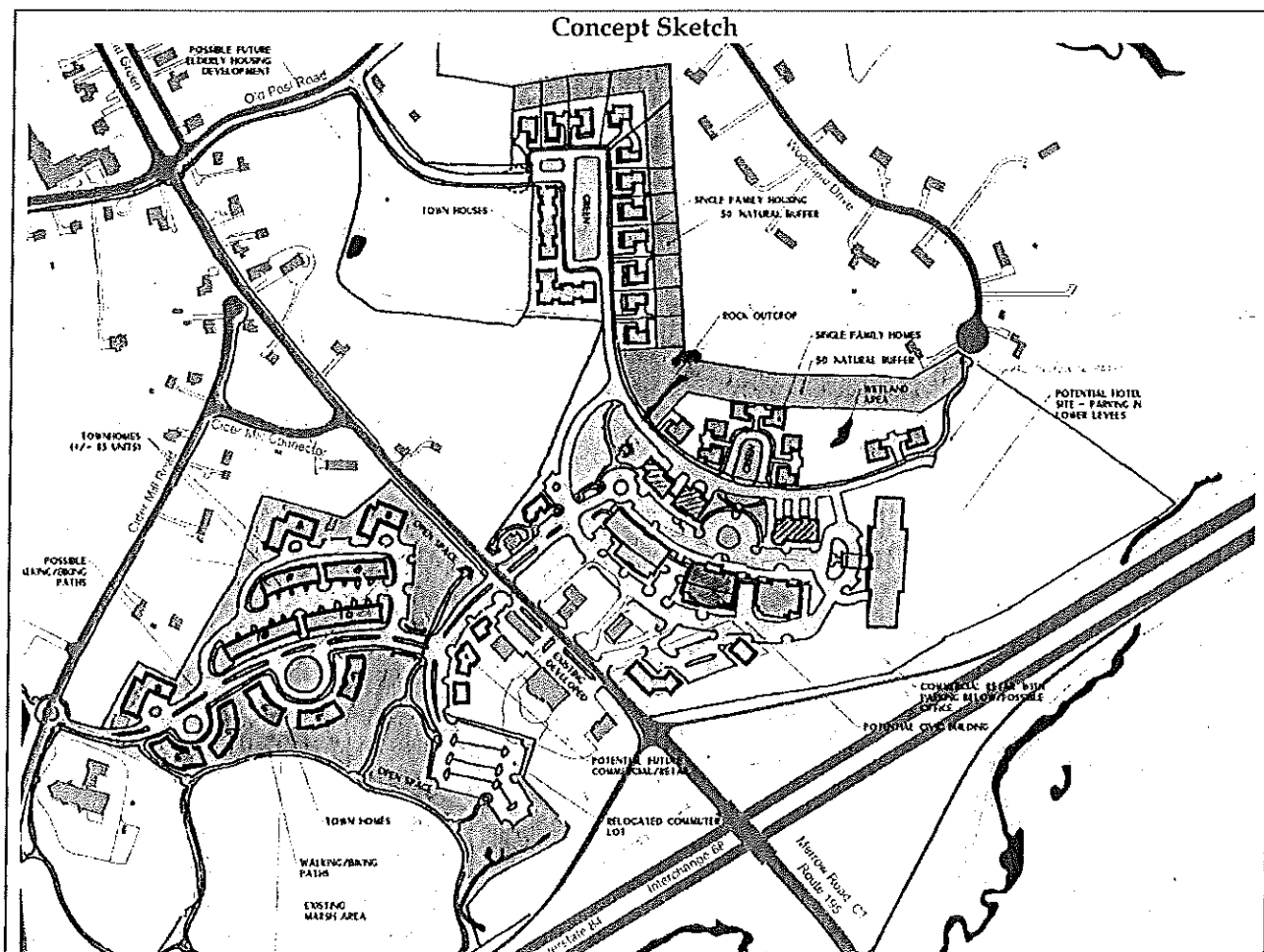
| | |
|---|--|
|  | Mixed use (e.g., retail, services, offices, restaurants, hospitality, civic, with residential or commercial on upper floors) |
|  | Commercial (e.g., retail, services, offices, restaurants) |
|  | Limited commercial or transportation use |
|  | Residential |
|  | Open space, trails |
|  | Through street |
|  | Vegetated buffer |

previous studies, input from the community, an analysis of the area, and the goal to create a village area, the above diagram indicates the appropriate 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.

Two tools 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.

Village Districts

Establishment of a village district in accordance with CGS 8-2j enables a Planning and Zoning Commission to regulate:

- Design and placement of buildings
- Maintenance of public views
- Design, materials, and placement of public roads
- Other elements to protect village character
- Historic integrity
- Compatibility of buildings and improvements
- Architectural compatibility
- Protection of historic resources

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.

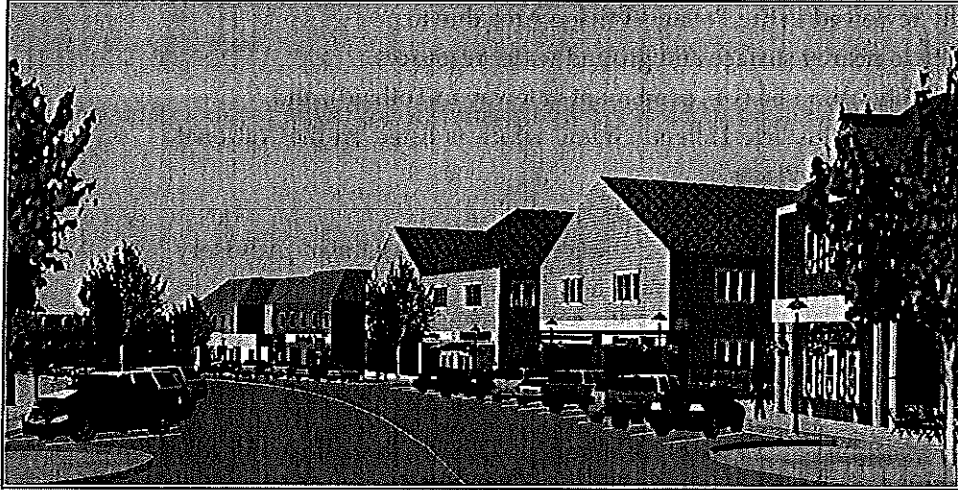
| Summary of Placemaking Objectives | |
|--|---|
| <p>Neighborhood Fabric & Composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage walking and reduce vehicle miles traveled by mixing uses and densities • Maximize density levels to create optimal nodes of activity • Minimize the negative impact of car parking and encourage healthy modes of transportation • Maximize opportunities for passive solar heating and cooling <p>Nature & Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create or enhance green open space networks • Conserve natural resources • Maximize access to parks and recreational areas • Maximize access to local food sources | <p>Community Streets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>Equity, Diversity, & Affordability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
| Summary of Green Building & Infrastructure Objectives | |
| <p>Green Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate stormwater management practices as part of neighborhood design features and amenities <p>Sustainable & Indigenous Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce maintenance requirements and costs, water consumption, and negative environmental impacts | <p>High-Performance Buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create high performance projects to reduce water consumption, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions |

For additional objectives, see full document.

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

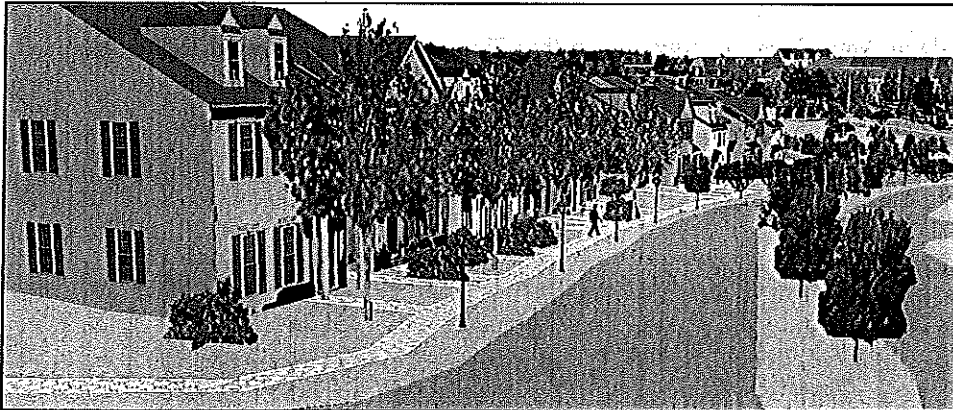
A 3-D model of a village scenario was developed. The following images help convey some of these design principles and objectives.

Sample "Main Street" Scenario

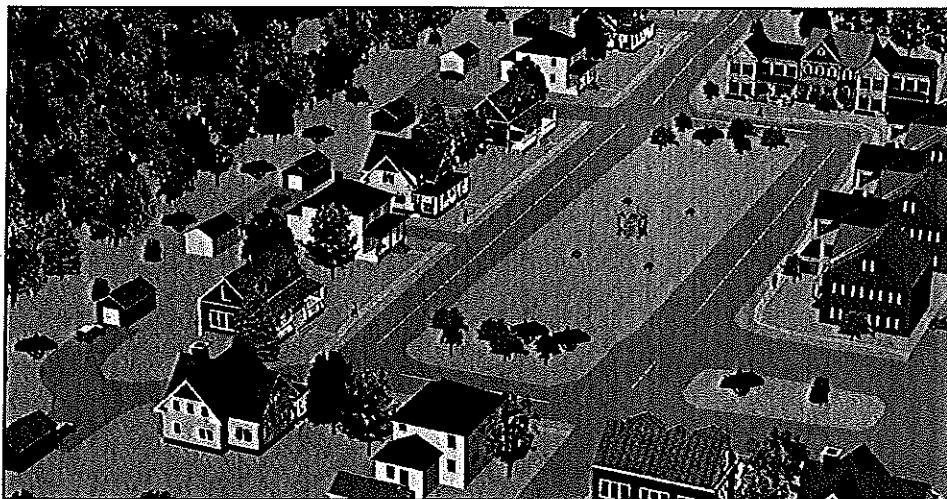


A mixture of uses, wide sidewalks, buildings built up to sidewalks, varying colors and rooflines.

Sample Neighborhood Scenarios



Houses oriented toward street, landscaping, sidewalks, variety in style of each unit. Boulevard type street.



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:

1. Adopt a new Tolland Village Area Zone, which contains design principles, to promote village style development near the Interstate 84 interchange.
2. Ensure that new development in the Tolland Village Area conforms with the design principles.
3. Apply the design principles to other nodes in Tolland.



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Memorandum

To: Linda Farmer, AICP
Director, Planning & Development
Town of Tolland

Date: April 1, 2011

Project No.: 41719.00

From: Stephen O'Neill, P.E. 

Re: Tolland Village Area-
Route 195 Improvement Strategy

Introduction

VHB was retained by the Town of Tolland to identify conceptual roadway improvements along Route 195 in support of the "Tolland Village Area Concept Sketch" prepared by Planimetrics/CR3, dated November 30, 2010. The study area was limited to the proposed intersection of Route 195 and a future town road providing a connection to Cider Mill Road via a new residential development to the west of Route 195 and a future town road to the east of Route 195 that will provide access to a future mixed use development. This memorandum focuses on improvements to Route 195 and the proposed "connector road" between Route 195 and Cider Mill Road in support of the Tolland Village Area.

Route 195 Improvements

VHB developed a conceptual roadway improvement plan for a new proposed intersection and the section of Route 195 between Cider Mill Road and just north of the I-84 westbound off-/on-ramps. The concept plan is presented in *Figure 1: Concept Plan* and was developed based on a range of possible development assumptions for the Tolland Village Area and general Connecticut Department of Transportation design guidelines.

The proposed concept plan revolves around the introduction of a new signalized intersection along Route 195 approximately 600 feet north of the I-84 westbound off-/on-ramps. The intersection has been located to minimize impacts to the adjacent property owners, adjacent water body, and existing traffic operations (i.e., curb cuts, signalized intersections, etc.) while providing access to developable land on both the east and west side of Route 195. The intersection geometry was developed based on anticipated traffic demands and patterns associated with a potential develop strategy generally outlined in the Village Area 3-D Model¹.

The proposed intersection geometry for the new signalized intersection presented in Figure 1 represents a phased development approach considering the scale and magnitude of the full build-out scenario². The proposed intersection associated with the first phases of development generally

¹ Square Feet, Housing Units, and Parking Spaces- Estimates Based Upon Tolland Village Area 3D-Model, February 2011.

² Additional intersection improvements associated with a full build-out scenario are illustrated on Figure 2, located in the appendix.

consists of a Route 195 northbound exclusive left-turn lane and through right-turn lane. The Route 195 southbound approach consists of an exclusive left-turn lane and a shared through/right-turn lane. The new eastbound "connector road" and the westbound approach are median divided as they approach the intersection and consists of a single multi-purpose lane. Pedestrian crosswalks are located across all approaches to the intersection with sidewalk connections along both sides of Route 195 to the south and the two new roadways.

The new signal will need to be coordinated with the existing signalized intersections of Route 195 and the I-84 ramps to appropriately manage queue lengths during the morning and evening peak travel periods. The location of the proposed signalized intersection will also introduce longer "gaps" in traffic and may improve access to the adjacent businesses. Additionally, the proposed intersection is not anticipated to significantly negatively impact access/egress to/from adjacent businesses. All access/egress drives have been maintained with an additional drive added for access to the Mobil Station from the new connector road. Finally, potential minor right-of-way amendments³ may be needed to accommodate the proposed Route 195 roadway cross-section and adjacent sidewalks.

Connector Road

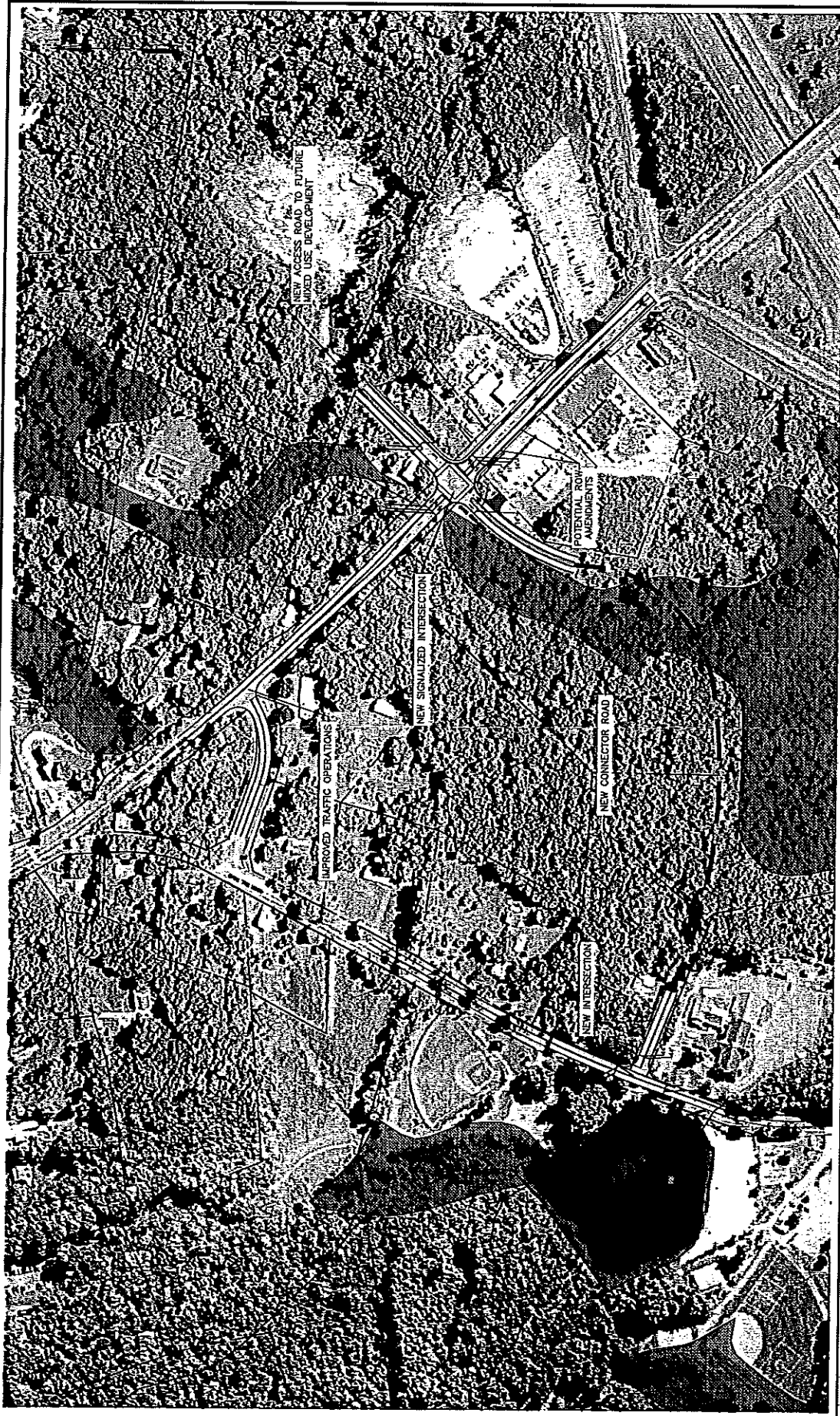
The Tolland Village Area Concept Sketch presents a new connector road between Cider Mill Road and Route 195 to improve access to developable land on the west side of Route 195 in the Village Area. The proposed connector road is proposed to be designed with "complete street" principles to adhere to the overall residential village development theme. These design techniques are anticipated to include a reduced roadway cross-section, introduced horizontal curvature, and diagonal on-street parking to reduce travel speeds, as well as, continuous sidewalks, mid-block pedestrian crossings, textured crosswalks, and bicycle accommodations to encourage an active village environment.

In addition to providing access to developable land, the connector road will also address the long standing traffic issues associated with the intersection of Route 195 and Cider Mill Road. The construction of the connector road will alleviate some the existing traffic congestion at the intersection of Route 195 and Cider Mill Road. The connector road will provide motorists with an alternative route to Cider Mill Road via Route 195 and significantly reduce the existing peak hour turning movement traffic at the existing intersection of Cider Mill Road and Route 195.

Conclusion

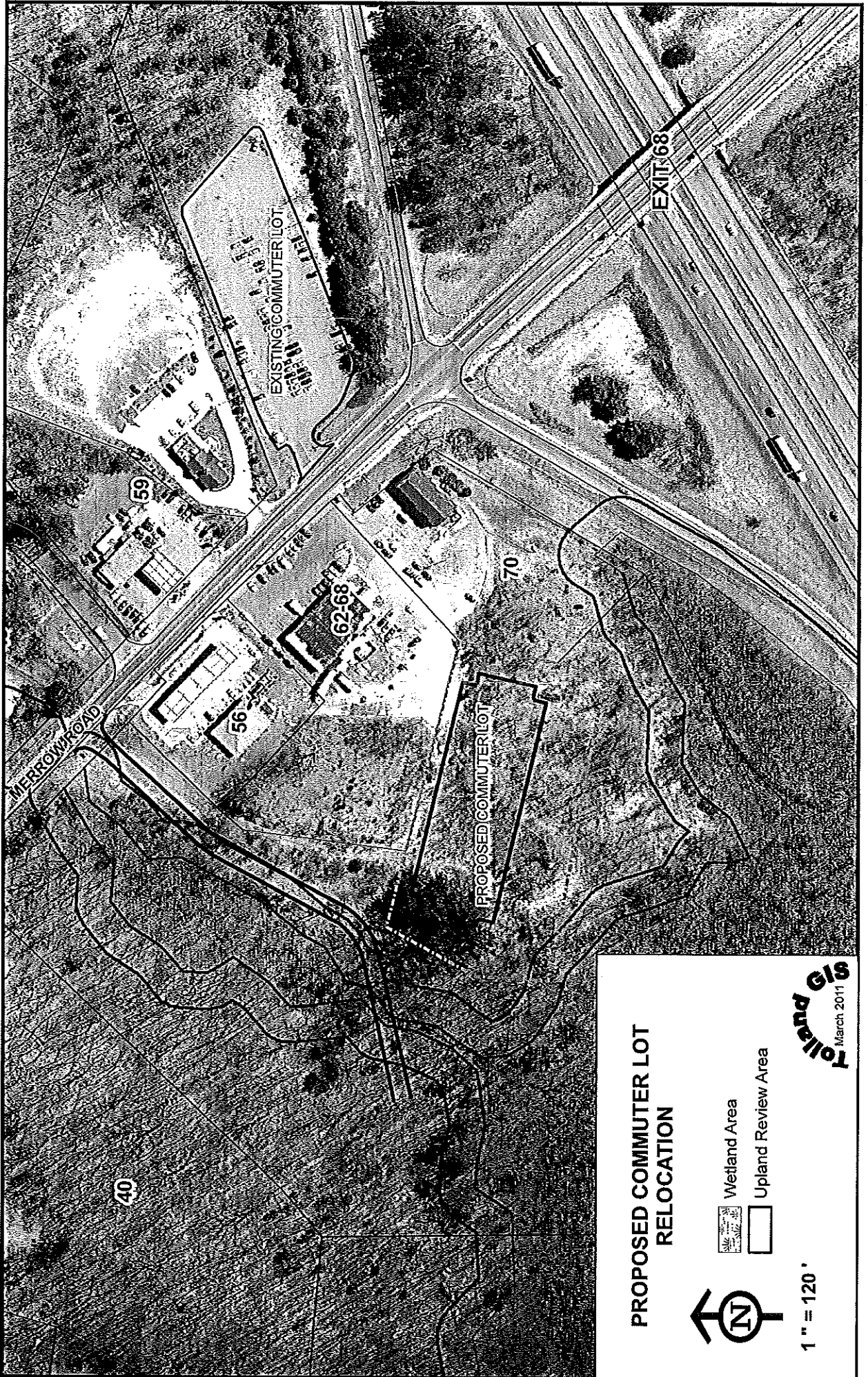
The implementation of a new signalized intersection and "connector" road, as presented in Figure 1, will support the transportation needs of the Tolland Village Area with minimal traffic or right-of-way impacts. The introduction of a new coordinated signalized intersection at this location will provide for better queue management along this area of Route 195 and improve "gaps" in traffic for better access to the adjacent businesses. In addition, the connector road will alleviate existing traffic operational issues associated with the intersection of Cider Mill Road and Route 195 and provide improved access to the Cider Mill Road area via a roadway that will be designed to reduce travel speeds and reflect the village theme of the area.

³ Additional base mapping, record plans and/or survey is needed to further assess ROW impacts.





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|----------------------------|------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. Transportation Lead/Development Environmental Services | PROJECT TITLE TOLLAND VILLAGES AREA ROADWAY CONCEPT | TOWN TOLLAND, CONNECTICUT | PROJECT NO. 41719.00 |
| DESIGNED BY APPROVED BY | DRAWN BY CHECKED BY | DATE March 14, 2011 | DRAWING NO. I | PROJECT NO. 41719.00 | DRAWING NO. 41719.00 |
| SCALE IN FEET 1" = 100' | | PLANES ISSUED: NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION | FIGURE 1: CONCEPT PLAN | | |
| SHEET NO. | | SHEET TOTAL | | | |

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**PROPOSED COMMUTER LOT
RELOCATION**

-  Wetland Area
-  Upland Review Area



1" = 120'

Tolland GIS
March 2011

Report from DOT

Relocation of Commuter Lot at Tolland Exit 68 For Proposed Tolland Village Area Development

Lot ID: 142-01PRA
Lot Location: Route 195, Tolland
Size: 132
Use: 42
Owner: state
Pavement: G
Striping: G
Lights: yes
Shelter: yes
Shelter condition: F
ADA Compliant: yes

Issues associated with proposed relocation of lot from east side of Route 195 to west side of road:

The size of the existing lot is 132 spaces. Annual counts show that only 42 spaces are used on a regular basis, although this utilization is below 50%, ideally, the same number of spaces (i.e. 132 spaces) should be provided by the developer to maintain the current ratio and to allow for the possibility of increased use in the future.

The same amenities should be provided with the new lot. The existing bus shelter is constructed out of wood, and is nearly 20 years old, which is at or beyond the useful service life of the structure. Experience with similar shelters has shown that even when in good condition, moving this type of shelter is problematical and may result in catastrophic failure, hence loss, of the subject shelter. Therefore, the developer should budget funds in the project for replacement of the subject shelter.

Lighting for the new commuter lot should be state-of-the-art, energy-efficient lighting. This type of lighting, in addition to saving on monthly utility costs, also directs almost all of the generated light downward onto the parking lot pavement, eliminating most complaints from abutting property owners about stray lighting.

The present lot provides 5 handicap spaces, making it A.D.A. compliant. In order to insure that the lot remains A.D.A compliant, an equivalent number of handicap spaces (i.e. 5 spaces) should be provided in the new lot.

Assuming that most commuters are accessing the lot traveling westbound towards the I-84 entrance to Hartford, the turning movement for the new lot would be a right turn, whereas at the present time, the turning movement into the existing lot is a left turn. This would be an advantage, because it would eliminate a turning movement across an active lane of traffic on Rte. 195.

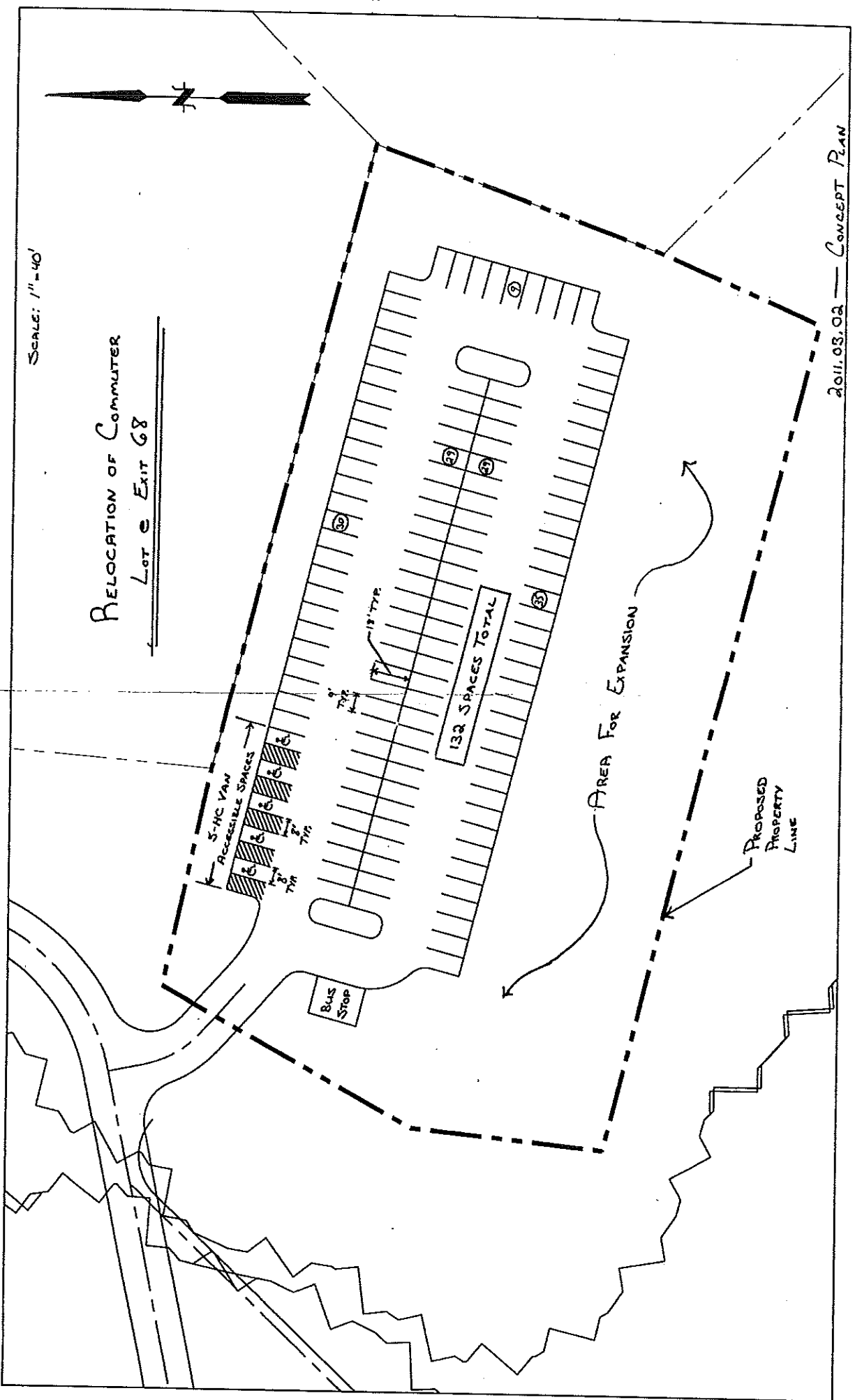
At this time, it is not known whether the Tolland Village Area Development would include commercial establishments (for example, restaurant, donut shop, dry cleaner, drug store, etc.). If this is the case, adequate provision should be made for the commuters to access these establishments conveniently at the beginning and end of the day, when they are moving into and out of the commuter lot. This would provide an economic benefit, and also provide added value for commuters, raising the likelihood of obtaining an outcome of an increased level of "customer satisfaction" among the commuters using the new lot.

Bureau of Policy and Planning

Date: February 18, 2011

SCALE: 1" = 40'

RELOCATION OF COMMUTER Lot e Exit 68



2011.03.02 — CONCEPT PLAN