

X. LAND USE

A. INTRODUCTION

Land use is the expression of human activity on the land. It is the principal focus of the comprehensive planning process. As such, it requires the integration of all other elements of the Plan. This element identifies historic and existing land uses and recommends future land use patterns. Land uses are compared to the existing zoning ordinance and inconsistencies are identified.

The major product of the Land Use Analysis is the formulation of a future land use plan. This Plan, in conjunction with the data provided in the other Comprehensive Planning Elements, will be used to implement the Town's long-range goals and objectives regarding its physical development.

State Planning Act Requirements

According to the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, the Land Use Plan Element shall:

"Designate the proposed general distribution and general location along with the interrelationship of land use for residential, commercial, industrial, open space, recreational, community facilities and other categories of public and private uses of land. The Land Use Element is based upon the other elements contained in Section 45-22.2-6 (the Act) and it shall relate the proposed standards of population density to the capacity of the land and available or planned facilities and services. A land use plan map, illustrating the future strategy and land use policy of the municipality as defined by the comprehensive plan is required. The land use plan must contain an analysis of the inconsistency of the existing zoning districts, if any, with the land use plan. The land use plan should specify the process by which the zoning ordinance and zoning map shall be amended to conform to the comprehensive plan."

B. LAND USE PATTERNS

Cumberland's pattern of land development distinguishes it from other communities in the State; this historical development creates a special sense of place in the Town. This analysis describes past settlements to provide insight into present and future land use activities. Contemporary land uses are then inventoried, including changes that have taken place since the original Plan. Finally, future land use is determined: results of three build-out analyses are described in order to provide insight into the impacts of unplanned growth, the 2010 Land Use Plan devised in 1991 is discussed. Finally, the Town's growth management and visioning initiatives are summarized.

1. Historic Land Use

Cumberland's natural environment greatly influenced the way in which the community was developed. Such factors as its hilly, wooded uplands, numerous streams and ponds, and particularly the Blackstone River shaped its development. Cumberland's rich natural resources of mineral deposits, water and power led to the establishment of a number of industries. Iron ore was mined and manufactured at several locations in Cumberland until the time of the American Revolution, and granite was quarried at Diamond Hill. Gristmills for grinding grain grown on the farms and sawmills for processing forest timber into lumber were erected along the streams and rivers.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Cumberland evolved from its colonial beginnings as a series of scattered agricultural settlements to established hamlets centered around a church, a mill, or a shop. The industrial use of waterpower transformed the western and southern sections of Cumberland into mill villages which still retain their names today – Ashton, Berkeley, and Lonsdale.

The first cotton mill, erected around 1800 at Robin Hollow, was followed by a second at nearby Happy Hollow around 1818. While the mills were initially somewhat isolated, completion of the Blackstone Canal in 1828 and the Providence & Worcester Railroad in 1847 linked them, as well as the whole length of the Blackstone Valley, to the regional urban spheres of Providence and Worcester. A smaller line, constructed in 1877, connected the eastern part of Cumberland to Franklin, Massachusetts.

In the eastern part of Town, along Abbott Run, a machine shop was erected in 1825 at the small hamlet of Arnolds Mills. Saw and grist mills continued in operation at Grants Mill and other scattered locations in the agricultural uplands. Granite quarrying near Diamond Hill, as well as less prosperous coal, copper, and other mineral mining, acted as a catalyst for development in that area. Massive railroad and road bridges built over the Blackstone River, and smaller iron truss bridges built on secondary roads, helped connect different hamlets of the Town.

In 1867, the heavily industrialized village of Woonsocket Falls, in the northwest corner of Cumberland, split off and became the Town of Woonsocket. During this time, the political center of town shifted from Cumberland Hill to Valley Falls, where a new Town Hall was constructed in 1894. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Valley Falls emerged as the largest, most densely developed, and urban of the Town's villages.

As the automobile came into more widespread use and as improvements were made in the existing roadway system, development began to concentrate along the major arteries. Diamond Hill Road and Mendon Road stimulated the development in Cumberland along their north-south corridors.

2. Contemporary Land Use

The starting point in formulating a land use plan is to examine recent patterns of land development. Land development is generally not reversible, therefore, current patterns of development will identify the parameters for future land use options. In this section, recent patterns of land use are identified based on information obtained from the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program.

Land use data for the years 1970, 1988, and 1995 were obtained from the Rhode Island Office of State Planning. For each of these three years, the State determined land use data by interpretation of aerial photographs. However, the exact methods used varied between these studies: photographs used were of different scales, and land use classifications altered. Because of differing methodologies it is not possible to make absolute comparisons. In addition, land use has continued to changes since this data was analyzed. However, the data does illustrate the general evolutionary pattern of

land use within the Town between the years 1970 and 1995.

Because of the different methodologies used in classifying land use in Rhode Island, and because the State Planning System’s classification system is more detailed than is necessary for identifying major trends in land use, information from these three studies has been combined into several general categories so that information can be more easily compared. These categories are further generalized into Agricultural, Developed, and Open Space Categories. Definitions of these categories are shown in Table X-1, while land use as of 1995 is illustrated in Figure X-1.

Table X-1 Land Use Categories

Category	Definition
Developed Land	Consists of residential, commercial, industrial, infrastructure, developed recreation, institutions, cemeteries, quarries, waste disposal areas, and vacant land located in urban areas.
Agricultural	Includes tillable cropland, pasture, orchards, turf farms, and nurseries.
Open Space	Land and water permanently protected from Development
Vacant Land	Land and water that is currently undeveloped or is developed for certain recreational uses such as golf courses but has no permanent protection from future development.

Developed Land

As shown in Table X-2, Developed Land consists of several different categories. While developed land as a whole has increased over the 1970-1995, from 21 percent to 35 percent of Cumberland’s land area, not all categories of developed land have grown to the same degree. This section discusses specific changes that have occurred in developed land use over the twenty-five year time period.

Table X-2 Developed Land

Land Use	1970		1988		1995	
	Acres	% Land	Acres	% Land	Acres	% Land
RESIDENTIAL	2,836	15.7	4,533	25.1	4,784	26.5
COMMERCIAL	198	1.1	287	1.6	294	1.6
INDUSTRIAL	124	0.7	280	1.5	314	1.7
COM/IND MIXED	N/A	N/A	0	0.0	7	0.0
INSTITUTIONAL	139		218	1.2	222	1.23
TRANSPORT & UTILITIES	156	0.9	417	2.3	429	2.4
RECREATIONAL	81	0.4	134	0.7	149	0.8
URBAN OPEN & CEMETARIES	358	2.0	67	0.4	103	0.6
Total	3,892	21	5,936	33	6,302	35

Residential - The most significant change between 1970 and 1995 in the amount of land considered developed in Cumberland has occurred in the form of residential development. In 1970, there were 2,836 acres in residential use, this increased to 4,533 acres in 1988 and 4,784 acres in 1995. The amount of land devoted to residential use nearly doubled during the 1970-1995 time period. Residential land use continued to increase between 1995 and 2003, this trend will continue unless a plan for managing growth is implemented.

Residential land use can be broken into three categories based on population density: low, less than 0.5 units/acre; medium, 0.5-4 units/acre; and high, greater than 4 units/acre. Most of the residential growth between 1970 and 1988 occurred in the medium density residential category, with approximately 80 percent of increase in residential land area occurring in this category. This trend has changed in the most recent decade, of the 250 acres converted to residential use between 1988 and 1995 over 50 percent was used for high-density development.

Commercial- Includes retail and office uses such as stores, service stations and professional office buildings. Commercial uses in Cumberland have generally developed in a strip configuration along the primary transportation routes, Diamond Hill and Mendon Roads. The amount of land devoted to commercial use has remained fairly constant between 1970 and 1995, accounting for a little over one percent of the total land area.

Industrial - Industrial land uses include manufacturing plants, light industrial facilities, and sand and gravel extraction operations. The older industrial areas in Cumberland are located along the Blackstone River. New industrial facilities have developed adjacent to Interstate 295 at major intersections such as Diamond Hill Road, and at the Highland Corporate Park. In 1995 there were over three hundred acres of land in Cumberland was devoted to industrial use. This amount has subsequently progressed as construction of new industrial facilities has taken place at Highland Corporate Park. When this Industrial Park is fully developed, industrial land use will account for 438 acres of Cumberland's land.

Recreation - Developed recreation primarily includes urban parks and playgrounds. In 1995, 149 acres were identified in this category, an increase from 134 acres in 1988. Nevertheless, this category accounts for a very small proportion of Cumberland's land use.

Institutional - This land use includes public, educational, health, correctional, and religious facilities. Institutional use has remained constant at approximately one percent over the twenty-five year period.

Agricultural Land

Parcels of land which are actively cultivated for agricultural purposes were included in this land use category. This includes farms, pastures, and orchards. The agricultural areas are generally found in northern, the more rural sections of Cumberland. Agricultural land use declined from ten percent to seven percent from 1970 to 1988, and has remained stable since.

Undeveloped Land

This category consists of forest and brush land, water, wetland, and barren land such as beaches and rock outcrops. This category accounted for 12,296 acres in 1970, 10,613 acres in 1988, and 10,357 acres in 1995. The 256-acre loss between 1988 and 1995 occurred as a result of the 251 acres of residential development over that time period.

The Statewide Planning Programs land use inventory does not distinguish between vacant land that is preserved and areas that can potentially be developed. However, these categories are very different. Open Space is land protected from development, this accounted for 4,488 acres of land in 2003, a large increase from 1991. However, there are still large areas of vacant land that may be build upon in Cumberland. It is essential to utilize this remaining land wisely, according to the Goals and Policies set forth in this Plan.

3. Future Land Use

In order to implement the goals and policies set forth in the various elements of the plan, it is necessary to establish how land will be developed in the future. First, a build-out analysis must be conducted determine to what degree future land use will comply with these goals and policies under existing regulations. Next, a future vision of land use for the Town must be devised. In order to implement this vision, a variety of innovative techniques must be used.

Build-out Analysis

A build-out analysis provides an estimate of the maximum development potential of a municipality based on existing zoning requirements. This provides an estimate of the maximum number of housing units that could potentially be constructed if all buildable land was to be developed. This information, along with Census information, can then be used to estimate the maximum population of an area based on complete development of all available land, as well as associated need for infrastructure and services.

Three build-out analyses of Cumberland have been conducted over the past decade. The first, in 1990 by the Maguire Group (an independent firm hired for assistance in development of the original Plan), was included in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. The Town of Cumberland conducted a separate analysis in the mid-90's, the Residential Development Forecast Report. The most recent build-out analysis was conducted by the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley Natural Heritage Corridor Commission (BRVNHCC).

The general method utilized by each of these entities was to determine the amount of land

considered buildable in each of Cumberland’s Zoning Districts, generally by subtracting land that has already been developed and unbuildable land such as water and wetlands. Next, zoning regulations were applied to determine the maximum number of units that can be built. Finally, the average number of residents per household was used to determine potential number of new residents at the build-out scenario.

The Maguire Group’s analyses projected that an additional 3,879 new residential units could be built, corresponding to 9,697 additional residents and a maximum population of 38,531. Cumberland’s residential forecast predicted more housing units: 4,145, with 10,362 new residents resulting in a population of 39,400. The BRVNHCC study predicted only 2,453 new additional residential lots, but it predicted the highest maximum population 41,897, based on 10,057 additional residents.

Each of the three build-out analyses were conducted using different methodologies and based on different underlying assumptions; therefore results cannot be directly compared. Two of the major differences among the analyses were the figures used for Cumberland’s population at the time of the study and average household occupancy. The Maguire study was based on an estimate of Cumberland’s 1990 population, the Planning Department’s build-out was based on 1990 Census data, and the BRVNHCC’s analyses relied on 2000 Census data. While both the Maguire Group and the Cumberland Planning Department assumed average occupancy rate to be 2.5, the BRVNHCC used 4.1 for this figure.

In order to more directly compare the results of the studies, data was transformed using each individual study’s estimate of additional households, population at the time of the study, and an average household occupancy rate of 2.59 (from 2000 census). The following table, X-3, compares results of the three analyses when transformed in this manner.

Table X-3 Build-out Analysis

Estimate	Maguire Group (1990)	Town of Cumberland (1995)	BRVNHCC (2000)
Buildable Land	9,127 acres	N/A	6,986 acres
Additional Units	3,879	4,145	2,453
Additional Residents	10,047	10,736	6,353
Maximum Population*	39,085	41,175	38,193

*Additional residents and actual population at time of analysis

Despite the different methodologies used, results of these three analyses were quite similar, with estimates ranging from approximately 38,000 to 42,000 people. In addition, it must be noted that these build-out analyses represent conservative estimates of the development potential of the remaining vacant land in Cumberland. Because Cumberland's current Zoning regulations allow for higher development densities in areas serviced by sanitary sewers and municipal water, the maximum population would be higher than expected if the infrastructure is extended.

The projected increase in population brings with it additional demand for infrastructure and services. Subdivision of land and construction of new housing will reduce the amount of vacant open space land in Cumberland, thereby negatively impacting its rural/suburban character. In addition, more school children will mean a need for increased capacity in Cumberland Schools. As population increases, greater pressure is put on natural resources, water quality is especially at risk. Water demands by this additional population could range from 500,000 to 750,000 gallons per day. An additional population of this size is estimated to generate 17 to 25 additional tons of solid waste per year. Traffic problems, currently an important issue for the Town's residents, would increase significantly.

Land Use 2010

The original Comprehensive Plan contained a plan for future land use in Cumberland, the "2010 Land Use Plan". This Plan did not recommend radical change to the Cumberland's pattern of development, rather, it encouraged and reinforced existing development trends. Its emphasis was on in-fill residential development of existing neighborhoods, modest expansions of existing industrial areas, consolidation of neighborhood commercial activities and preservation of Cumberland's unique natural and cultural resources. Figure X-2 shows this Plan for future Land Use.

In addition to the proposed zoning changes/or areas that ought to be considered for rezoning as described below, Figure X-2 illustrates the following areas:

- Low Density Residential – areas allowing for single family homes on lots ranging from 25,000 to 80,000 square feet, depending on the availability of infrastructure
- Medium Density Residential – areas allowing for duplexes on lots ranging from approximately 15,000 to 80,000 square feet, depending on the availability of

infrastructure

- High Density Residential – the most dense of the Town’s residential zones, allowing multifamily units on lots ranging from approximately 15,000 to 80,000 depending on the number of units involved and the availability of infrastructure
- Commercial – these areas are either zoned for, or lend themselves to, commercial activities including the provision of general services and trade; these areas are generally dense and should be accessible by pedestrian as well as vehicular traffic.
- Wetlands – property identified by the RIDEM as wetlands and which ought to be protected from any development.
- Rural – undeveloped, vacant land. The bulk of this land is zoned for low-density, residential uses. However, much of this land remains undeveloped because it has significant amounts of natural resources. As such, it is this land that lends itself toward public acquisition and protection from further development.
- Industrial – these areas contain/will contain the Town’s manufacturing and other industrial activities. The bulk of these areas are clustered around Martin Street or are in industrial parks such as the park on Nate Whipple Highway or in the Highland Corporate Park. Other manufacturing uses remain where they have historically been practicable – in mill buildings along the river or near the railroad.
- Extraction – areas currently used for mining but that are zoned for industrial uses. Once the mining is completed, these areas will lend themselves to reuse. Their industrial zoning would allow them to be used for manufacturing purposes. Considering that most of these areas are adjacent to residential areas, some sort of transitional activity may be appropriate, such as a commercial use or green space. However, that would require rezoning.
- Public Land – Town, State or non-profit owned land for open space or recreation. Management plans are in the process of being created for the Town-owned land in order to define what uses may or may not be allowed on the Town-owned property. Other potential areas for acquisition are identified in the Recreation and Open Space Element of this Plan.
- Institutional – land owned by religious institutions or schools and public buildings
- Agricultural – low density areas used for niche farming, such as tree farms, orchards, specialized animals, and preservation of historic farmlands
- Water – surface water bodies.

As part of the requirements of the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use

Regulation Act, the original Plan include a zoning discrepancy analysis to compare planned land uses with the (then) existing zoning districts. Cumberland’s Zoning Ordinance has been amended several times since approval of the plan, resulting in changes that have brought zoning substantially into conformance with the 2010 Land Use Plan. However, some additional changes to zoning are still necessary. These include:

Modification of zoning at Highland Corporate Park to clarify the Town Council’s original intention to allow for both commercial and industrial uses in the park.

2. Some parcels of land currently being used for industrial purposes are zoned residential. However, due to the nature of industrial activity on these properties, they are no longer appropriate for residential development and should therefore be rezoned industrial so they can maintain their current use.
3. All publicly owned land is currently zoned as Open Space. Although an Open Space category is not specifically defined in the Zoning Ordinance, this may not be appropriate for land with schools and other public buildings on it.
4. On Assessor’s Plat (AP) 1, the land between Abbott, Titus and High Street is zoned Industrial-1 when it is used almost entirely for residential purposes. We should explore rezoning this to Residential-3.

On Assessor’s Plat 3, there is property abutting Macondry Street, between Elm and Geldard that is currently zoned Residential-2, when in fact it is currently used for manufacturing purposes. The Town should explore rezoning this for industrial uses, as land that has historically been used for industrial uses should not be converted to residential unless the property is of historic value, such as mill buildings.

6. Between the railroad right of way and Curran Road, on Assessor’s Plat 5, the property is primarily used for single-family residential homes and thus should probably be rezoned Residential-1 and not Residential-2. The railroad right of way should be zoned Open Space rather than Residential-2.
7. There appears to be some spot zoning on Assessor’s Plat 6; lot 3 should probably be zoned Residential-2 instead of Commercial-1, the property is surrounded by residential development and there is a house located on lot 3. There is a similar issue on Assessor’s Plat 10, where a lot on High Street is currently zoned Commercial-1, but should perhaps be considered for Residential-2 zoning.
8. Several mill buildings and vacant land on Factory Street (Assessor’s Plat 11) are

being developed as an affordable housing project – the land is zoned Commercial-2, but should be rezoned as Residential-3.

9. Assessor's Plat 18, lot 549 adjacent to the Miller's Brook Subdivision is currently Agricultural-2, but based on the results of a recent legal case should probably be zoned Residential -1.

On Assessor's Plat 27 between lots 23 and 27 there are a series of mixed commercial and residential uses along Diamond Hill Road. The zoning and variances that have been given to several of these lots suggest that further review of this area may be appropriate.

11. Several lots along Mendon Road on Assessor's Plat 58 are currently zoned Industrial but in fact are being used for buildings with commercial activities on the ground floor and residential on the top floors. We should perhaps consider rezoning this area to reflect the actual uses, as mixed uses should be encouraged in this older, densely populated neighborhood

While the 2010 Land Use Plan recommended giving approximately 2,200 acres a new Open Space designation, the Town continues to struggle with property rights issues associated with such an action; prohibiting all uses on certain parcels of privately held land raises the takings issue. In the case of property with significant natural resources, the Town has been attempting to either purchase the land outright or purchase the development rights in lieu of rezoning and prohibiting all development.

Planning for Future Growth

As residential development in Cumberland continues and build-out scenarios draw nearer, the urgency associated with preserving Cumberland's historic character and protecting its resources grows. Pressure on services and infrastructure is increasing, while solutions for easing that pressure less obvious and more costly. Within the last few years, the Town has stepped up its attention to these issues and is taking a two-pronged approach to the issue by addressing two primary questions:

- How do we better manage the pace of growth in the first place?
- How do we force future development to be more attractive, functional, and environmentally sound?

The Town is working on developing answers to these complicated issues in two ways: a Growth Management Program and a visioning effort. Development of strategies to address unrestricted, inadequately planned growth is only the first step in preserving Cumberland's character. Procedures and regulations must be changed so as to implement these strategies; it is essential that these procedures be adhered to in order to manage Cumberland's growth and maintain the unique character of the Town.

Growth Management- The Town of Cumberland is working on developing a strategy for managing growth in the future. As part of its recently established Growth Management Initiative, specific strategies for managing growth will be analyzed to determine the most effective method for Cumberland. Most likely, the results of these studies will be incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan through the amendment process. Methods of growth management that will be assessed through the growth management planning process include:

- **Adequate Public Facilities Standards** – Allows growth in areas properly serviced by facilities and infrastructure, while prohibiting growth where facilities are inadequate.
- **Rate of Growth Phased Programs** – Establishes a set rate of growth based on studies that examine the community's ability to absorb the impacts of growth.
- **Growth Caps** – Limits the amount of development that may occur in a year.
- **Impact/Conveyance fees** – Requires new development to absorb the costs of municipal costs associated with the new development.
- **Open Space Acquisition** – Acquiring land so that it cannot be developed.
- **Zoning** – Using innovative techniques such as cluster subdivisions to reduce and manage growth.

The Town is making progress in managing growth. A building permit cap has been enacted to limit residential growth to one percent per year. Concurrently, studies are taking place to further understand the impact of residential growth on public water and sewer facilities, schools and traffic. The use of vacant land in the densely developed portions of Town is something that requires further consideration. These areas, already close to the transportation corridors with existing public water and sewer linkages should be the areas targeted for infill development, rather than new construction in agricultural

zoned areas. In addition, the Town has been considering implementing a five-year Capital Improvement Plan in order to better anticipate and finance capital costs. Ultimately, the Town will use impact or conveyance fees to assist with the financing of capital improvements.

Visioning- The second part of Cumberland' approach to future land use is to develop strategies to improve the Town's visual quality. Town has hired the firm of Gates & Leighton to help Cumberland's residents articulated design preferences. The results should be available soon in a document summarizing this visioning effort. Based on these efforts the Town will be developing performance standards for commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential development. These standards will range from the appearance of the building and its landscaping to ways of improving circulation patterns and protecting the environment.

C. FINDINGS

Similar to the findings of the 1991 Community Survey, residents continue to feel that the Town is growing too quickly and in doing so is losing its suburban/rural character. Workshop participants in 2002 and 2003 suggested that the Town limit its water and sewer infrastructure in order to manage residential growth, continue purchasing open space to reduce the amount of lots that can be developed and protect natural and scenic resources, and to consider the use of impact or conveyance fees to help fund services and facilities. A cap on building permits has been imposed while the Town continues to study various growth management options.

Beyond the significant residential growth and its acquisition of open space, several regulatory changes have taken place since 1991 that have helped the Town manage its growth and preserve its character. The Zoning Ordinance allows for cluster developments and planned unit developments. Performance standards are in the process of being created to facilitate the Development Plan Review process (formerly known as site plan review, conducted by the Design Review Commission). Zoning Ordinances, as proposed in 1991, have been adopted pertaining to Soil Erosion and Sediment Control and stormwater runoff; Subdivision Regulations now also require plans that specify how these two issues are to be handled on-site. A digitized zoning map (overlaid on the Assessor's Plat Maps) is in the process of being prepared and

should be available electronically by Fall 2004. Specific trends in Land Use are identified below.

Residential - The amount of land devoted to residential use has increased significantly. In 1960 there were 2,836 acres in residential use, as of 1995 there are 4,784 acres in residential use. The amount of land devoted to residential use in Cumberland is continuing to rise.

The Town has substantial growth potential remaining within its residentially zoned areas. The Build out analyses estimates that between 2,500 and 4,000 new residential units could be built, for a total maximum population of over 38,000. This represents a substantial increase in Cumberland's population.

The principle growth area in the Town is the area north of I-295, even though portions of this land have development constraints such as poor soils, steep slopes or wetlands. This area is in the watershed for a public drinking water supply source. Development in this area must be limited due to its potential impacts on water quality.

Commercial-Land devoted to commercial use has remained fairly constant in recent decades. Commercial land use occupies approximately 300 acres of land in Cumberland. The majority of commercial activity is located along the transportation corridors of Diamond Hill Road and Mendon Road.

The existing Zoning Ordinance does not adequately distinguish between the various commercial activities in terms of uses allowed, dimensional requirements, parking requirements, and design standards. The Economic Development Element did identify that the current pattern of development, building style and density is often an obstacle to the expansion of neighborhood commercial zones.

Industrial-The amount of land devoted to industrial use has increased from 280 acres in 1970 to 314 acres in 1990. However, its percentage of the Town's total developed area has remained constant for the time period 1975 to 1990. Major concentrations of industrial land use occurs along the Blackstone River and at the intersection of I-295 and Diamond Hill Road. New industrial development is taking place at the Highland Corporate Park, located on the Woonsocket Town Line.

Open Space and Recreation-The amount of land devoted to open space and recreation has shown a dramatic increase between over the past decades, as development pressure had placed valuable natural resources at risk. In the past decade, over 2,000 acres of land have

been afforded protection from development, bringing the total acreage of protected land to over 5,000 acres.

Growth Management

The Town has recently begun the complicated process of devising a strategy to address Cumberland's growth. Some steps have been made, such as instituting a building cap and purchasing open space. Once a plan specifically designed to manage growth in Cumberland has been created it will be included in this Comprehensive Plan as an Amendment.

D. GOALS, POLICIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Goals and policies for land use and growth management have been formulated based on the inventory and analysis of the previous sections.

State Planning Act Goals

- To promote orderly growth and development that recognizes the natural characteristics of the land, its suitability for use and the availability of existing and proposed public and/or private services and facilities.
- To promote a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and age groups, which recognizes the affordability of housing as the responsibility of each municipality and the state.
- To promote the protection of the natural, historic and cultural resources of each municipality and the state.
- To promote the preservation of the open space and recreational resources of each municipality and the state.
- To encourage the use of innovative development regulations and techniques that promote the development of land suitable for development while protecting our natural, cultural, historical and recreational resources and achieving a balanced pattern of land uses.
- To ensure that municipal land use regulations and decisions are consistent with the comprehensive plan of the municipality and to insure state land use regulations and decisions are consistent with state guide plans.

Cumberland Land Use Goals

Goal LU.1 DEVELOP A BALANCED AND HARMONIOUS PATTERN OF LAND USE WHICH PROVIDES ADEQUATE AND SUITABLE SPACE FOR ALL LAND USE ACTIVITIES.

- Policy LU.1.1** Use existing residential concentrations and village centers as integral parts of the growth areas.
- Policy LU.1.2** Utilize the various natural resources areas as open space corridors and buffers in developing the pattern of land use in Cumberland.
- Policy LU.1.3** Designate nodal type planned commercial development which provides for small scale, mixed use (residential/commercial) neighborhood oriented buffered commercial development rather than strip commercial or large-scale shopping center development.
- Policy LU.1.4** Promote expansion of existing industrial areas which are capable of supporting economic development and compatible with surrounding land use activities.
- Goal LU.2** RELATE LAND USE DEVELOPMENT AND DENSITY TO THE NATURAL CAPABILITY OF THE LAND TO SUPPORT SUCH DEVELOPMENT AND THE CAPABILITY OF THE COMMUNITY TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE PUBLIC SERVICES.
- Policy LU.2.1** Improve and maintain existing public services and facilities, limit expansion in order to maintain the difference between rural and village character.
- Policy LU.2.2** Develop a land use strategy which protects valuable natural and cultural resources and areas.
- Goal LU.3** COORDINATE LAND USE ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE OF ADJACENT COMMUNITIES.
- Policy LU.3.1** Promote regional cooperation and planning initiatives.

Action LU.3.1.1 Formulate a regional partnership to discuss issues of mutual interests among Planning Departments of the Blackstone Valley Communities.

Goal LU.4 UTILIZE A WIDE VARIETY OF INNOVATIVE LAND USE REGULATIONS AND TECHNIQUES WHICH MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR FUTURE GROWTH.

Policy LU.4.1 Develop and adopt land use regulations which are consistent with this Comprehensive Plan and the revised State Zoning Enabling Legislation.

Action LU.4.1.1 Implement a Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Overlay District in the Zoning Ordinance.

Action LU.4.1.2 Implement a Watershed/ Aquifer Protection Overlay District in the Zoning Ordinance.

Action LU.4.1.3 Implement a Wastewater Management Overlay District in the Zoning Ordinance.

Action LU.4.1.4 Develop a Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Appendix X - Recommendation Details

Overlay Districts

Overlay districts are areas of special concern to the community. An overlay district places supplementary controls on parcels in addition to regular zoning requirements. These controls are specifically designed to regulate the special concerns of the community within the designated area. For the Town of Cumberland, this plan has recommended the following overlay districts.

- **Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Overlay District -**
This corridor is an integral part of the past and future development of Cumberland. The unique qualities of this area and its resources should be carefully managed.
- **Watershed/Aquifer Protection District -** Water quality and quantity are strongly affected by land use. This ordinance will give the Town the opportunity to review site specific developments to minimize impacts on water quality and quantity impacts.
- **Wastewater Management District -** A wastewater management district provides an additional layer of protection for water quality by providing regulatory controls of septic systems in unsewered parts of the community. It can also provide financial incentives for septic system improvements needed to protect public health.

Performance or Design Standards

Performance or Design standards establish specific requirements which limit the adverse impacts of development. The Zoning Ordinance should be revised to include performance or design standards in concert with the Town's Visioning efforts (facilitated by the firm of Gates, Leighton). The standards should provide guidance on landscaping, exterior building design, industrial performance, stormwater runoff, erosion and sediment control, etc.

Development Plan Review

Formerly known as Site Plan Review and administered by the Design Review Commission, this process needs to be improved and be made to conform with the State's Zoning Enabling Act. Development Plan Review provides for performance controls to mitigate the impacts of development on the natural as well as man-made environment.

Zoning Map

The Town's plat maps are currently being digitized and a single zoning map will be superimposed for much easier reference and updating.

Responsible Party: Planning Department and Planning Board/Town Council.

Time Frame:

- Review Town's Existing Ordinance – 3 months
- Review Comprehensive Plan Recommendations – 3 months
- Prepare and Submit Zoning Ordinance – 6 months
- Prepare and Submit Zoning Map – 6 months
- Prepare and Submit Subdivision Regulations – 4 months
- Revise Draft – 2 months
- Prepare Final Ordinance – 1 month
- Meetings- 4 months

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

A Capital Improvement Program is a formal method for systematically scheduling major capital expenditures. Any major non-recurring expenditure for physical facilities for local government such as construction of buildings, additions to buildings, capital equipment and land acquisition should be included in the CIP.

The CIP consists of a list of projects, with their estimated cost, over a five to ten year period. It is customary to prepare a CIP annually adopting it along with the Town's

