

Chapter 11

Middletown's Planning Principles

The preparation of this Plan amendment has been guided by several key principles that have helped to shape the future vision for the City of Middletown. These principles are in part based on the findings of resident surveys. They also reflect and build upon the recommendations described in the 1990 Plan, in subsequent studies such as the Downtown Vision's 2000 and Beyond study, and the comprehensive 2002 citywide planning study.

The key principles used to guide the future strategic plan are summarized below:

Limit the Sprawl of Low-Density Housing. With over 6,000 acres of undeveloped land zoned for residential use, Middletown must restrict the spread of low density housing in order to retain its prevailing rural character that exists in much of the southern and western sections of the City and to control the high cost of community services associated with residential development.

Encourage Infill Development. New development should be channeled to infill sites that are currently served by public Water and Sewer. This principle reflects 'smart growth' policies that are designed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of road and infrastructure systems.

Encourage Alternate Means of Transportation. The City should continue its efforts to create interconnected pedestrian/bike paths and a more user-friendly and efficient transit system. In the long term, the city should promote commuter rail and water transport.

Attract Office/Light Industry. The City ought to promote economic development by attracting office, light industry, and research and development firms within existing office/industrial zones. It should ensure that development proceeds in an environmentally sensitive and aesthetically pleasing manner.

Protect Natural Resources. The City should continue its efforts to protect natural features such as watercourses, wildlife habitats, farmland and important undeveloped areas. Priority should be given to protecting those areas that expand on existing dedicated open space in order to establish a connected network of open space.

Emphasize Downtown as the Community Focal Point. The City should continue its efforts to create a lively, mixed use downtown that should focus on strengthening its cultural and entertainment facilities and programs.

Increase Access and Use of Riverfront. Expanded public recreation and open space areas should be established along the Connecticut River waterfront. Additional pedestrian and vehicular links are also needed to connect the City to the river.

Improve Design Quality of Development. Over the past two decades, the City has recognized the value of its historic buildings in downtown and has increased its efforts to improve the visual quality of the downtown area as a whole. This interest should be extended to other urban areas of the City, including the commercial strip areas that are located on the key approach roads leading to downtown.

