

April, 2004

FINAL REPORT ELLINGTON BUILDOUT COMMITTEE

TOWN
OF
ELLINGTON

WHY A BUILDOUT STUDY

Ellington is the second fastest growing community of the 29 towns in the capitol region. This growth is a result of low interest rates, available land, a desire for good schools and other public services and the general preference for single family detached homes on large, private lots. Although Ellington's rapid growth is primarily residential, retail and other service uses follow this residential growth. The rate of growth may rise and fall over time, but these basic trends will not change. Ellington will continue to grow.

*Ellington will
continue to grow.*

Residents are becoming increasingly concerned with the impacts this growth is having on community character, public finances, traffic and natural resources. In response to these concerns, the Board of Selectmen retained a consulting firm to undertake a "buildout analysis." This report contains the findings of that analysis, as well as recommended steps the town could take to manage this growth.

*Residents are
concerned with
the impacts of
growth.*

In simple terms, a buildout study asks the question, "Where will we be if we do not change the way we're managing growth?" A buildout study develops estimates of future residential, commercial and industrial growth, based on current zoning and land use regulations and policies. Residential growth is quantified in terms of population and housing units. The mapping of vacant land areas and their associated zoning regulations permits alternative residential densities to be explored. It also provides some insight into the balance (or lack thereof) between residential and commercial development, an important consideration given the town's reliance on the property tax.

*Where will we be if
we do not change the
way we're managing
growth?*

Ellington's buildout study provides a "road map" for present and future boards to better manage growth, so the Town can preserve and enhance community character, protect essential natural resources, promote long-term fiscal integrity, meet demands for quality public services, and provide for a better transportation and circulation system.

*This buildout study
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manage growth.*

The value of the buildout analysis is two-fold. First, it provides a vehicle through which interested parties can begin discussing important long-term issues. Secondly, as a result of this dialogue, citizens can begin to develop a consensus on steps that might be taken to address the issues raised during the analysis. In this way, a buildout study is a valuable precursor to more focused "strategic" initiatives. Specific strategic and tactical recommendations that address the issues of growth, change, and community character are included in this report.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS IDENTIFIED BY THE STUDY



The number one element of community character is Ellington's rural quality.

Ellington's historical icons are cherished.

The public wants to continue to enjoy excellent public services.

Transportation and community character are inextricably linked.

Public discussion elicited several categories of issues and concerns that the Town needs to address as it grows. Community input clearly revealed a strong focus on "community character". While citizens recognize the reality of growth, they want the town to grow in a manner that promotes and enhances community character.

Rural Character

Without question, the number one element of community character is Ellington's rural quality. This rural character is comprised of some obvious elements, and some not so obvious. All these elements combine to create a "feel" that defines Ellington. Extensive vistas across gently rolling agricultural fields are part of that character. Forested ridgelines, wooded maple swamps, and rocky ledges are also important. Elements of rural character might include a rusted farm tractor and a falling down tobacco barn, as well as silos, cows, cornfields, and roadside produce stands. As Ellington grows, it should try to grow in a way that protects and enhances these important qualities.

History

The village center, the Pinney House, the farms, and other cultural icons are unique parts of Ellington that help to define the town. These icons are cherished. As the town grows, people do not want to lose touch with these "living artifacts," but would greatly prefer they remain part of the current and future fabric.

Public Services and Facilities

Ellington presently enjoys generally excellent public services and facilities. The school system and public parks received very high marks. As the town grows, people do not want to accept lower levels of service, although they recognize it will be harder to pay for these as residential growth outpaces commercial and industrial development. Leadership will need to develop and implement strategies that balance the need for economic development, with the desire to protect and enhance community character, so that the public can continue to enjoy excellent public services.

Transportation & Circulation

More people and more businesses mean more cars. In our rural setting, private automobiles are the mode of preference, and generally the only practical choice. As the town grows, citizens are generally willing to accept the need for improvements to the surface street system, particularly in terms of arterial and collector streets, but they only appear willing to accept these changes when other feasible options are not available. Land use, transportation and community character are inextricably linked. The town will need to evaluate land use and circulation options closely if it hopes to develop and adopt practical solutions that balance community character with the need to move people and goods efficiently. In general, community character should not be sacrificed or subordinate to the desire for a quick car trip.

BUILDOUT ANALYSIS – EXISTING ZONING

A detailed description of the methodology used to develop the estimates of future residential and commercial/industrial growth is included in the appendix to this report.

Using the Town's digital map system, total net buildable areas, by zone, for the entire town have been developed. Total net buildable areas take into consideration that a parcel of vacant land cannot be covered with a building from property line to property line. Consideration needs to be given to zoning restrictions, natural resource constraints such as slopes and wetlands, and the availability of public water and sewer facilities. The net acreage was then multiplied by a factor (persons per unit) for residential, and a "floor area ratio" for commercial and industrial uses. An important distinction was made between areas served by public sewers versus those served by on-site septic fields.



Residential Development Findings

It is difficult (and not necessary) to estimate the ultimate "buildout date" because the rate of growth will change over time. However, it is clear that Ellington is predominantly a residential town. Current residential growth trends will likely continue, absent some major shift in consumer preferences, state and federal policies, household incomes or other factors.

Current residential growth trends will likely continue.

According to the 2000 Census, Ellington had a population of 12,921 and a dwelling unit count of 5,195 with an average household size for owner-occupied units of 2.81. Latest population estimates prepared by the State put the 2002 population at 13,248. (DECD 2001-2002 Town Profiles)

An analysis of vacant residentially zoned land showed that approximately 9,000 acres of net developable land are available. (See map on page 5 delineating vacant land.) This acreage would accommodate approximately 8,465 dwelling units resulting in an additional future population of 23,788. Thus the Town's buildout population under the current zoning scheme would be approximately 37,000 people, principally housed in subdivisions of detached single-family homes.

The buildout population under current zoning would be approximately 37,000.

Commercial/Industrial Development Findings

Commercial and industrial developments typically balance the tax base to help support public services. In that Ellington is and likely will continue to be a predominantly residential community, the extent of future residential growth should be balanced with the potential level of commercial and industrial development.

Future residential growth should be balanced with the potential level of commercial and industrial development.

Estimating future commercial and industrial development is much more difficult than estimating future residential growth. This is due to several factors. The "mix" of these uses may vary considerably from town to town, depending upon the availability of sewers, the local labor supply, access to interstate highways, the attributes of competing towns, the available consumer market, and other considerations.

The Assessor's records show that the total existing building area for commercial and industrial properties is 1.4 million square feet. This is located almost exclusively within a few areas including the Route 83 corridor, the airport area, the Windemere area, Nutmeg Park, and at Five Corners.

The theoretical buildout for commercial and industrial development would be approximately 5.4 million square feet of building.

Market considerations, such as location and access, will be greater determinants of actual commercial/industrial buildout than will zoning.

The town's digital mapping revealed the net buildable land available for commercial/industrial development is 345 acres. Through the application of floor area ratios it was determined that the 345 acres of net buildable land could accommodate an additional 4 million square feet of commercial/industrial floor area. Thus the theoretical buildout for commercial/industrial development would be approximately 5.4 million square feet of building.

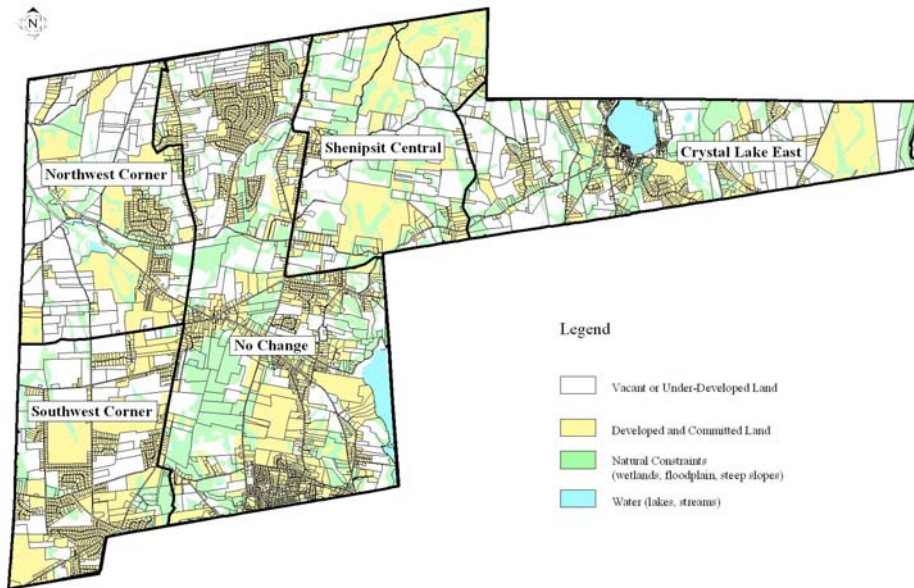
While an estimate based purely on zoning suggests 5.4 million square feet of future (total) commercial and industrial development is possible, it was generally agreed that the actual long term "yield" will probably not approach this level. Market considerations, such as location and access, will be greater determinants of actual commercial/industrial buildout than will zoning. This is a very important consideration in the buildout analysis.

It is imperative that Ellington closely evaluate its current economic base, current and future market trends and other factors. The results of that analysis should be used to develop a long-term economic development strategy that compliments other buildout objectives.

BUILDOUT ANALYSIS – MODIFIED ZONING

The buildout analysis revealed that under current zoning, the town would not grow in the desired way. Based on the input provided by citizens, as well as other sources, the Steering Committee created an alternative buildout scenario more likely to achieve the town’s goals for growth.

In order to proceed with the alternate buildout analysis, major areas of town were identified that are residentially zoned, contain substantial growth potential, and are served by on-site septic. This resulted in the Town being divided into five sub-areas as shown on the following map.



Some of these areas (such as the northwest corner) contain large tracts of land with relatively few development constraints. Others (such as the east panhandle) contain moderate to severe development constraints, are relatively isolated from public services, have poor surface street systems, or exhibit other limitations.

Currently all areas require one acre per lot. The simplest way to reduce potential buildout population would be to increase minimum lot size and lot frontage requirements in residential zones served by septic systems in targeted areas. The proposed lot size changes would be based upon a variety of factors, including the availability of public water and public sewers, soils, sensitive environmental resources, street capacity and character, proximity to public services, availability of potable water supplies, access for emergency services, and other considerations.

Modified zoning standards were applied to four areas and calculations were made of additional dwelling units/population at buildout. No changes were made for the “central core” area.

An alternative buildout scenario was created that was more likely to achieve the town’s goals for growth.

The Town was divided into sub-areas in order to proceed with the alternate buildout scenario.

Potential buildout population can be reduced by increasing minimum lot size and lot frontage.

Additional Future Residential Development*

Area	Modified Zoning Standards	Net Buildable Land - Acres	Additional Dwelling Units	Additional Population – Modified Zoning
Crystal Lake East	Min. Lot: 80,000 s.f. Min Frontage 200'	1,760	915	2,565
Shenipsit Central	Min. Lot: 60,000 s.f. Min Frontage 200'	1,350	955	2,685
Northwest	Min. Lot: 60,000 s.f. Min Frontage 175'	1,815	1,330	3,725
Southwest	Min. Lot: 60,000 s.f. Min Frontage 150'	1,305	880	2,470
Central Core	Use Current Zoning Standards	3,000	1,990	5,600
Totals		9,230	6070	17,045

* Numbers Rounded

Under these modified zoning standards, the total buildout population would be approximately 7,000 persons less than under existing zoning.

The Steering Committee recommends that base lot sizes be increased from 40,000 square feet to between 80,000 and 100,000 square feet, decreasing the potential buildout population even further.

Large lot zoning, in and of itself, will not protect community character over the long term.

The Steering Committee is also recommending actions that would promote more sophisticated design options for residential land uses.

The buildout analysis using current zoning standards estimated the future additional residential population at 23,790 persons, with a total buildout population of approximately 37,000. The above analysis, using modified zoning standards, indicates that the total buildout population would be approximately 30,000, or 7,000 persons less than the buildout population under existing zoning.

After considering public input, the factors outlined above and other relevant issues, the Steering Committee recommends that base lot sizes be increased to between 80,000 square feet (roughly two acres) to 100,000 square feet (roughly two and one half acres), decreasing the potential buildout population even further. Lot frontage would be increased proportionately. Areas served by sewers, currently developed, or approved for development would retain their existing lot size and frontage requirements.

Large lot zoning, in and of itself, will not protect and enhance community character over the long term. In fact, many would argue that unless other policies and practices are pursued, large lot zoning will help destroy community character over the long term. In that the largest remaining undeveloped portions of town are residential, the approach ultimately chosen to manage the form of future residential land uses will be critical to the town’s success in achieving buildout objectives.

While lot size changes would likely result in a lower buildout population, the ability to effectively manage community character over time will require commitment to flexible design standards, open space protection and other important initiatives. For this reason, the Steering Committee is also recommending actions that would allow or even promote more sophisticated design options for residential land uses. Those actions would allow developments to be designed with additional flexibility in exchange for increased open space, preservation of important and unique features, preservation of working farmlands, adherence to architectural design standards, or to achieve other important objectives.

DEALING WITH ISSUES OF GROWTH & CHANGE

“Preservation of community character “is a useful concept for grouping issues and solutions that are important to Ellington as growth occurs. Not all aspects of the Town’s current “character” can be preserved. For instance, there are tracts of farmland that will stop being active farmland and developed as residential subdivisions. There are simply not enough resources to preserve all of the farmland in Town. Nevertheless, there are significant actions that can be taken to maintain important aspects of the community in the face of growth. These actions are discussed below in the context of land use regulations and other programs which would provide the best opportunity for Ellington to manage future growth to protect and enhance community character over the buildout period.



Update the Plan of Conservation and Development

A number of policy guidelines in the Plan of Conservation and Development should be updated so as to provide better guidance in land use decision making. The more significant areas are:

Land Use Plan: Update to include revisions to residential density patterns so that they are aligned with the recommendations of this report. Also update to include other major findings of the Buildout Analysis Report.

Circulation Plan: Congestion on Route 83 and the lack of east-west connecting roads are shortfalls in the Town’s circulation pattern. The Circulation Plan should be updated to delineate future street connections running east to west. Additionally, key intersections should be identified that will have to be maintained or improved to provide reasonable levels of service. Finally, a circulation pattern should be developed such that it reinforces other major recommendations of the Plan.

Open Space: Open space helps to define town character. It is useful visually as well as for active recreation. A more aggressive program is needed to preserve open space. In order to develop such a program, a comprehensive open space plan should be adopted. Among other elements, it should include a priority-ranked plan for the acquisition of open space. The plan should also incorporate greenways, i.e., open space corridors that connect other areas of open space. A major benefit of a comprehensive Open Space Plan is that it will aid in choosing when to ask for fees-in lieu of open space donations and when to require parcels of land as open space through the subdivision process.

Residential density patterns need to be reviewed to reflect the recommendations of this report.

The Circulation Plan should reinforce other major recommendations of the Plan.

A more aggressive program to preserve open space should be implemented.

Special studies addressing targeted areas should be undertaken.

Special Study/Master Plan Areas: Sponsor special studies to address the following targeted areas:

- Route 83 Corridor: Address circulation, land use, and design elements.
- Five Corners Area: Address circulation and land use issues.
- Rockville Area: Address land use and design issues.
- Main Street Village Center: Address preservation, design, and circulation.
- Crystal Lake Area: Address water quality and land use issues.
- Western Farm Belt Area: Address farm preservation, open space acquisition, and land use issues.

Update Zoning Regulations – Residential

The vast majority of residential land is zoned for single family lots of 40,000 square feet and 150 feet of road frontage. These zoning standards do not match well with either the varying natural conditions throughout the town or with the availability of infrastructure. For example, in the majority of instances, future residential growth will rely upon on-site septic systems and individual wells. Zoning needs to be more flexible and responsive to individual circumstance. The following approaches to achieve this are suggested.

Zoning should be updated to be more flexible and responsive to individual circumstance.

Minimum Lot Size: Zoning should allow a variety of lot sizes to work more carefully with the land. The following minimum lot size and minimum frontage requirements are recommended for the four areas of town with the largest amount of vacant land.

A variety of lot sizes would allow residential development to work more carefully with the land.

Area	Proposed Zoning Standards
Crystal Lake East	Min. Lot: 100,000 s.f. Min Frontage 200'
Shenipsit Central	Min. Lot: 80,000 s.f. Min Frontage 200'
Northwest	Min. Lot: 80,000 s.f. Min Frontage 175'
Southwest	Min. Lot: 80,000 s.f. Min Frontage 150'
Central Core	Use Current Zoning Standards

Density Standards: Utilize a combination of developable land standards and density standards to ensure that subdivision development works harmoniously with natural resource constraints such as steep slopes, wetland areas, and the capacity of soils to support septic systems. As an example, assume there is a parcel of land 100 acres in area with the following natural constraints: 10 acres wetlands, 5 acres flood plain, and 5 acres with slopes in excess of 25%. These areas of constraints would be subtracted from the total to arrive at the amount of buildable land to which a density standard would apply.

Total Land	100 acres
Wetlands	-10 acres
Flood Plain	- 5 acres
Slopes	- <u>5 acres</u>
Buildable Land	80 acres

The density standard would vary from sub-area to sub-area depending upon soil conditions, availability of infrastructure, and similar considerations. In this example, the density of the overall subdivision could not exceed 0.5 single family houses per acre of buildable land.

Buildable Land	80 acres
Density Factor	0.5
Maximum # Lots	40

Further refinements of this approach would involve the use of cluster zoning to emphasize open space preservation and provide flexibility for the subdivision layout. (A comparison of an open space subdivision with a standard subdivision is shown in Appendix A, Booklet 3.)

Range of Housing Forms: The ability to meet differing housing needs is important for the Community. Currently there are limited sewered areas that would allow for alternatives to a detached single family home. It is desirable to provide for a range of housing forms and compatible uses, subject to strict design standards for architecture, landscape, operational characteristics, etc. This could include age-restricted cluster developments, assisted living, and small scale resort lodging, with or without other related or accessory uses, such as equestrian facilities, spas, golf courses, and the like.

Density standards would ensure that subdivision development works harmoniously with natural resource constraints.

The density standard would vary from sub-area to sub-area.

Cluster zoning could emphasize open space preservation

The ability to meet differing housing needs is important for the Community.

Update Zoning Regulations – Commercial/Industrial

A balanced tax base that does not overly rely upon residential development is needed. Zoning should encourage desirable land uses that could benefit the tax base. In order to attract business and industry land use regulations need to be kept current such that new businesses can readily develop.

It is not recommended that any new areas be re-zoned to commercial or industrial categories. The distribution and amount of commercially and industrially zoned land appears adequate. There are two areas where re-zoning to residential may be warranted. The first is the PC Zone westerly of Stafford Road in the Crystal Lake area. The extent of the existing PC zone is much greater than warranted, given the isolated location and the sparsely populated surrounding area. Additionally, much of the zoned area has wetland constraints. The second area is the Industrial Zone in the northwest area of town easterly of Route 140. This area has neither the access nor the infrastructure appropriate for certain industrial uses.

Design Standards for commercial and industrial development should be reviewed and updated as appropriate. Aesthetics, especially as regards commercial development, is an important element of community character.

Specific areas and zones that require review and updating, both on a short term and a long term basis, include the following:

Village Center, Short Term: Review current zoning to identify any glaring inconsistencies, and consider near term changes, prior to more comprehensive analysis and planning.

Village Center, Longer Term: As part of a more detailed and focused planning initiative, consider a “special design district” approach, specifically tailored to address unique needs in this area. The special design district should address land use, zoning, utilities, natural resources, bulk standards, design standards for architecture, landscape, traffic, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, public amenities, parking, adaptive uses and historic preservation, and relationships to abutting lands.

Route 83, Short Term: Consider expanding the PC zone to include all current C zones, so that new development will at least be subject to a special permit. Consider concurrently, the need to amend special permit standards to address commercial design requirements and/or other considerations.

Route 83, Longer Term: A special design district and related regulations and procedures should be considered that would provide for a variety of potential uses. The focus would be on expanding the tax base, but should also address critical circulation, environmental, design issues. The concept should seek to promote flexibility and creativity, subject to a basic “framework” for certain elements (circulation, access management, trunk utilities, etc.), and high standards for architecture, landscape, lighting, and other features.

It is not recommended that any new areas be re-zoned to commercial or industrial categories.



A “special design district”, specifically tailored to address unique needs, may be useful for the Village Center.



Rockville, Short Term: Assess current zoning to identify any glaring issues that need to be addressed, e.g., bulk requirements.

Rockville, Longer Term: This area also may benefit from a more flexible approach to zoning. Its focus should be on protecting the stable residential neighborhoods in the area, as well as providing for opportunities to aggregate and develop commercial lands in the corridor for development and redevelopment. Any such development should be consistent in terms of scale and design with the need to protect adjacent neighborhoods. The commercial focus would be on possible neighborhood-scale retail and service uses, as well as “transitional” land uses.

Industrial Zones, Short Term: Assess current use and bulk requirements to identify changes necessary in the near term to achieve buildout objectives.

Industrial Zones, Longer Term: As the major economic development areas, these lands should be provided with the greatest degree of design flexibility, while focusing on uses that provide the highest possible return on investment. Uses allowed in the areas should be targeted to those objectives, understanding the current and future market, as well as likely utility limitations. Flexible zoning such as a performance-based standard might help, but would need to be subject to specific standards intended to protect adjacent lands where appropriate.

Crystal Lake, Short Term: Assess current use and bulk requirements for this area to identify near term changes necessary to address significant critical issues. The extent and location of commercially zoned land should be reviewed for consistency with utility, access and natural resource constraints.

Crystal Lake, Longer Term: Recent installation of public sewers in portions of this area is leading to significant investments in rehabilitation and expansion of formerly seasonal “cottages.” Current approaches to development in this area need to keep pace with these changes and anticipate the possibility of future development of adjacent lands. To recoup public investment and enhance stability, standards should generally seek to promote this trend while protecting the basic character of the area. On a selective “strategic” basis, targeted use of flexible approaches to zoning may be appropriate in this area.

Five Corners, Short Term: No initial changes are suggested here, pending completion of a detailed and comprehensive analysis of land use, utility, circulation, and related issues in order to develop more appropriate zoning, circulation and design standards for this area. Note that it will be necessary to involve Vernon, South Windsor, as well as the State DOT, and affected landowners.

Five Corners, Longer Term: The immediate area should be considered for a focused planning initiative. Subject to the findings of this analysis, the area may benefit from a special design district approach, similar to that for the Village Center area, that addresses standards for commercial design, access management, lot aggregation, and similar considerations, but that also provides some flexibility in terms of more basic design requirements, such as parking and access drive geometry and area loading standards.

The focus for the Rockville area should be protecting stable residential neighborhoods while providing opportunities to aggregate and develop commercial land.

Industrial land should be provided the greatest degree of design flexibility, while focusing on uses that provide the highest possible return on investment.

Targeted use of flexible approaches to zoning may be appropriate in the Crystal Lake area.

The Five Corners area may benefit from a special design district approach, similar to that for the Village Center.

Update Subdivision Regulations

The design standards of the subdivision regulations should be reviewed with the goal of encouraging future development that preserves many of the community characteristics that are definitive of the Town's character. Areas of recommended regulation include:

Protecting ridgelines can help to maintain the rural character of Ellington.

Protection of ridgelines: The preservation of trees at higher elevations maintains the forested back-drop that defines the character of many areas of the town.

Encouraging open space subdivisions will add to the attractiveness of the Town.

Encouraging open space subdivisions: The clustering of development on the more buildable areas of a property can allow for the preservation of other areas on the site that can remain in their natural state and continue to add to the attractiveness of the Town.

Institute a referral process to the Conservation Commission on proposals for open space dedication. Provide a reference to the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development relative to open space preservation.

Preserving significant trees and tree lines can also help to maintain rural character.

Preserving significant tree lines along major roads: This can be accomplished through conservation easements along the frontage of properties and/or accessing property primarily through new, interior roads.

Preserving trees adjacent to new streets: Require the preservation of existing trees or the planting of new trees adjacent to new subdivision streets. Additionally, allowing for a planted boulevard entrance to new subdivisions would allow the new development to relate better to older established neighborhoods.

Preserving existing natural features: Refine submittal requirements to provide for a more detailed existing conditions plan, with emphasis on natural features, land cover, and unique attributes such as stone walls and major trees.

Modified design standards would encourage "rural" streets.

Draft and adopt a wider range of design standards for streets, with emphasis on providing for smaller, "rural" street standards.

Eliminate the requirement to improve watercourses to accommodate the 50 year flood pass thru, a requirement that is inconsistent and in direct conflict with other buildout objectives.

Provide different but appropriate standards for commercial and industrial subdivisions, e.g., no open space required, different street standards.

Provide for the ability to require inter lot connections (pedestrian and vehicular), based on future or existing uses of adjacent land, recommendations in the Plan of Conservation & Development, or other special studies.

Update Zoning Regulations – Historical Preservation

The character of the Village Center on Main Street can be preserved and enhanced through a number of different approaches.

Site Development Standards: Review and update zoning standards in the historic Main Street area. This update could address such items as landscaping, lighting, and other site development details. Unique standards could be developed that would complement the historic attributes of the area.

Village District Zoning: Preservation of existing historic buildings and landscapes warrants consideration of Historic District or Village District Zoning for the Main Street area. This would allow to the Zoning Commission to exercise much greater control over the design and aesthetics of development.

Design Review Board: Complement the use of Zoning Regulations through the establishment of a Design Review Board (DRB). Appropriate references to the DRB should be included in the zoning regulations.

There are multiple tools available to preserve and enhance the character of the Village Center.

Additional Programs & Policies

The following recommendations are directed at reinforcing the efforts undertaken through the land use regulatory approach:

Establish a Permanent Program for Open Space Acquisition. This could consist of a standing committee charged with developing and maintaining a priority list for land acquisition. This committee would deal with both open space and farmland preservation. Additionally, an annual budget for land acquisition would be implemented.

Establish a Design Review Committee to advise the Planning & Zoning Commission on design details of commercial & industrial development, as well as multifamily development.

Seek State Transportation Grants to fund an access management program for the Route 83 corridor.

Consider establishing a Historic District for the Main Street Village area.

Balanced residential and commercial/industrial growth will need to be supported through the town's infrastructure, e.g., sewer capacity, to ensure that the Community is fiscally sound. As part of the Plan of Conservation & Development or as a related separate document, consider developing a "Strategic Plan" which integrates land use, utility, open space, education, housing, public service and other plans, initiatives, and projects with the goal of securing the Town's long term fiscal welfare.

Review and update the Capitol Improvement Program as appropriate to implement recommendations which follow from the Buildout Analysis Report.

Increase and possibly formalize opportunities and procedures for coordination and communication between the BOE, BOF and major land use agencies (PZC, IW, EDC, Conservation Commission, etc.).

The nature of land use management requires action by multiple local authorities.

Role of Local Boards

The list of recommendations is comprehensive and broad in scope. The nature of land use management is such that full implementation of these recommendations will require action by multiple local authorities. By Charter and Code, the financial, policy and operational authorities necessary to pursue these recommendations are widely dispersed. In addition, the ability of local authorities to affect change in certain regards is limited by state or federal pre-emption, the impacts of regional, national and even global market forces, and other factors.

Nonetheless, this should not discourage the Town from pursuing these important actions, particularly with regard to the “tools” that are controlled locally. The buildout report is only the beginning. Many more steps are required. The list of critical local players must include the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Conservation Commission, Inland Wetland Agency, Traffic Authority, and Water Pollution Control Authority. Other local groups, such as the Historical Society, the local Chamber, public water companies, emergency services, land trusts, religious organizations and others will also need to play important roles. To be successful, local citizens, property owners and businesses will all need to support the effort.

The buildout report is only the beginning. Many more steps are required.

As a general guide, the report includes a summary table that shows which local board would play the primary and support roles for pursuing the various recommended initiatives. (See Page 16) A general discussion of Board/Commission responsibilities follows.

Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen

These important Boards need to play a “leadership” role in helping develop and maintain community support for implementing the report recommendations. To the extent financing is necessary for various initiatives, such as farm and open space preservation, these Boards will need to provide that support.

Planning and Zoning Commission

This is the primary land use agency and, as such, will need to play a major role. The types of actions required will include updating and enhancing the existing Plan of Conservation and Development, making various regulation and map amendments, and undertaking additional, more focused planning initiatives.

Economic Development Commission

This commission played an instrumental role in funding and supporting the Buildout Analysis. They will also play an important role in implementing the recommendations. More specifically, they will undertake a focused economic development analysis, leading to a comprehensive economic development strategy. That strategy will be integrated with other policy elements, such as open space planning, transportation plans, planning for Route 83, and capital improvement plans.

Conservation Commission

Although only operational for one year, this commission is well on its way to developing the Town’s first open space inventory and plan. That plan will be a critical and integral component of an updated Plan of Conservation and Development. The open space plan will complement and help to formulate other Plan elements such as transportation and economic development. As such, it will serve as the basis for helping the commission evaluate prospective developments.

Inland Wetland Agency

This agency is already providing excellent services to the community by evaluating prospective developments affecting regulated inland wetlands and adjacent regulated areas. They are currently in the process of a comprehensive update of their regulations, and will shortly begin a more active field presence in order to monitor compliance during site development. As such, these efforts will provide support for other report based initiatives.

Zoning Board of Appeals

This Board grants variances to bulk regulations and, at times, use regulations. The ZBA will help play a role in evaluating existing “Euclidian” standards (e.g. larger lot sizes) based on the types and extent of variances provided in recent years. Once more appropriate standards are adopted for bulk requirements in developed areas, necessary variances should be limited.

Water Pollution Control Authority

The WPCA will be essential in providing support for proposed development initiatives that are deemed consistent with report recommendations and fall within the sewered areas of town. For instance, this might include appropriate economic development efforts, such as providing sufficient sewer allocation to suitably located and designed age-restricted cluster developments.

Design Review Board

This Board does not yet exist, but the report recommends a “DRB” be created to provide advisory recommendations regarding the design of commercial and other projects to regulatory boards. The scope, “charge,” membership, staffing, budget and other relevant matters must be addressed, but the concept of a DRB has strong support.

The buildout analysis provided an opportunity to do an intensive strategic review of the Town’s land use policies and controls. In order for changes to occur, land use agencies and other public authorities must take the steps necessary to make those changes. If this is done, Ellington can manage its future as it matures.

General Implementation Table

Task	Municipal Entity						
	BOS	BOF	PZC	EDC	CON	IWA	WPCA
Farm Preservation	P	P	P	S	P	S	S
Open Space Preservation	P	P	P	S	P	S	S
Design Review Board	P	P	S	S	S	S	S
Route 83 Study	S	S	P	P	P	S	P
Update Plan of Conservation & Development	S	S	P	S	S	S	S
Update Zoning Map & Regulations	S	S	P	S	S	S	S
Prepare Economic Development Strategy	S	S	S	P	S	S	S
Prepare Open Space Plan	S	S	S	S	P	S	S
Conduct Village Center Study	S	S	P	S	S	S	S
Prepare Rockville Area Study	S	S	P	S	S	S	S
Prepare Crystal Lake Area Study	S	S	P	S	S	S	S

BOS = Board of Selectmen
 BOF = Board of Finance
 PZC = Planning and Zoning Commission
 EDC = Economic Development Commission
 CON = Conservation Commission
 IWA = Inland Wetland Agency
 WPCA = Water Pollution Control Authority

“P” Indicates primary/lead role

“S” Indicates support role

