

Draft Future Land Use Plan Summary Narrative March 24, 2021

Downtown Rockville – Historic Downtown Rockville serves as the civic, business, arts, and cultural center of Vernon and Tolland County. It contains a broad mix of residential densities and the most diversity of land uses in Vernon, including retail, services, office, government, residential, and cultural uses. A robust sidewalk network and public transit service connect Downtown Rockville to surrounding residential neighborhoods. The focus over the next ten years is on redevelopment and infill development that is consistent with Rockville’s historic development patterns and complements its architectural character. Increasing the residential population through mill redevelopment/mixed-use development will directly support growing Rockville’s commercial base, fostering a true local and regional hub of activity. Residential densities of 10 units per acre can co-exist with the existing single-family, duplex, and the other diverse multi-family housing options, based on scale, context, architecture and other characteristics.

Sewer Service: Existing Sewer Service Area

Residential Density Expectations: 4 to 10+ units per acre.

Mixed-Use Corridor – This area encompasses the Route 83 corridor south of Windsorville Avenue and the Route 30 corridor west of Hillside Avenue. Availability of water and sewer infrastructure, high traffic volumes, and proximity to I-84 make this area conducive to high intensity commercial and mixed-use development. These are Vernon’s primary retail and business corridors. While commercial and retail uses should predominate on the properties fronting Route 83 and Route 30, residential uses are appropriate on rear lots, areas set back from the roadways, or as a part of mixed-use projects. While predominantly auto-oriented today, this area would benefit from improved bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and better connections to the residential neighborhoods and rails-to-trail to the east. Improved access management, intersection safety improvements, and enhanced architectural, site design, and landscaping standards can ensure that this corridor develops in a cohesive manner that aligns the mixed-use vision for the area. Due to the mixed-use nature of the corridor, transitions between land uses are likely to occur over the next ten years. Business expansion along the corridor should be balanced by good mitigation efforts and buffering where adjacent to residential uses. Transitions should be incremental and orderly and should consider the context of the area.

Sewer Service: Existing Sewer Service Area

Residential Density: 4 to 10+ Units Per Acre

Rockville Gateway West – The Rockville Gateway West district comprises the area between Downtown Rockville and the Route 83 corridor. Union Street and West Main Street form the entry points into Rockville and contain a mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. While this area represents a step-down in density from Downtown Rockville, it shares many similarities: development is generally on smaller lots, buildings are situated closer to the roadway, and there is a robust sidewalk system. Future development should ensure consistent architectural, site design, and landscaping standards to improve aesthetics and ensure consistency with adjacent policy areas.

Sewer Service: Existing Sewer Service Area

Residential Density: 4 to 8 Units Per Acre

Rockville Gateway East – The Rockville Gateway East district comprises the area along Grove Street between Downtown Rockville and Route 30. Today, this area consists primarily of moderate density residential development, interspersed with a handful of commercial and institutional uses. While this area represents a step-down in density from Downtown Rockville, it shares many similarities: development is generally on smaller lots, buildings are situated closer to the roadway, and there is a robust sidewalk system. Residential densities ranging from 4 to 8 units per acre are appropriate. While this area will continue to be primarily residential, mixed-used development and adaptive reuse (commercial uses in a formerly residential structure) are also appropriate. In place between Downtown Rockville and Exit 67, commercial development pressure is expected. Future development should ensure consistent architectural, site design, and landscaping standards to improve aesthetics.

Sewer Service: Existing Sewer Service Area

Residential Density: 4 to 8 Units Per Acre

Route 30 – East – The Route 30 corridor extends from the Tolland border to South Street and is centered on the neighborhood retail node at the intersection of Route 30 and Route 31. This area contains a mix of commercial, residential, and light industrial uses; a diverse mix which is encouraged. Given its access to sewer and water infrastructure and proximity to the highway and transit service, residential densities ranging from 4 to 8 units per acre are appropriate. This area serves as the eastern gateway into Rockville. Future development should include consistent site design and landscaping standards to ensure consistency amongst the mix of uses. In addition, sidewalk infrastructure should be prioritized in this area to better connect commercial and residential areas together.

Sewer Service: Existing Sewer Service Area

Residential Density: 4 to 8 Units Per Acre

Route 30 – Center – This area represents a step down in intensity from the eastern portion of the Route 30 corridor and comprises the land within and immediately surrounding Vernon Center. Land uses consist primarily of single-family residences at densities ranging from 2 to 4 units per acre. This area also serves as a secondary institutional hub of the community and is home to several school buildings, religious institutions, the police department, and historical society. This area contains numerous historic structures as well as the protected Strong Farm. Future development in this area should be at a scale and style that is compatible with historic development patterns, primarily residential and institutional.

Sewer Service: Existing Sewer Service Area

Residential Density: 2 to 4 Units Per Acre

Exit 66 Node - This area encompasses the lands adjacent to I-84 Exit 66. This area contains industrial, commercial uses and vacant land. Currently, sites are served by on-site septic systems, which limits density. Extension of sewer service can help facilitate additional development. Given the limited availability of industrial land in Vernon, this area should be favored for light industrial development. Adequate buffers, quality site planning, and good architectural design should be maintained to minimize impacts to adjacent residential neighborhoods and nearby environmental resources.

Sewer Service: Potential Sewer Expansion Area

Residential Density: N/A

Exit 67 Node – The Route 67 node encompasses the land around the I-84 Exit 67 interchange. There are several large vacant properties surrounding the interchange along with a park-and-ride lot with bus service to Downtown Hartford and Mansfield. Extension of sewer service to this area can help facilitate future development. The Plan encourages a mix of higher density residential, commercial, or industrial development, comprehensively planned, at Vernon’s primary greenfield development opportunity. Adequate buffers, quality site planning, and good architectural design should be maintained to minimize impacts to adjacent nearby open space and environmental resources.

Sewer Service: Potential Sewer Expansion Area

Residential Density: 10+ units per acre

Residential – Village Density – These neighborhoods are located on the periphery of Downtown Rockville and provide the greatest opportunities for housing diversity at densities ranging from 4 to 8 units per acre. A range of housing types are appropriate for this area including single-family homes on small lots, duplexes, triplexes, and multifamily developments. This area is served by public water and sanitary sewer infrastructure, is near bus transit lines, and is within walking distance to shopping, services, and employment in Downtown Rockville, the Route 83 corridor, and the Route 30 corridor. Higher intensity infill development may be appropriate in transition areas (where two planning areas abut) and on arterial or collector roadways. This type of development should have strong site design, landscaping, and architectural standards that complement adjacent residential properties.

Sewer Service: Existing Sewer Service Area

Residential Density: 4 to 8 units per acre

Residential – Medium Density – Most of Vernon’s residential neighborhoods are in the medium density category and are comprised primarily of single-family homes at densities ranging from 2 to 4 units per acre. This area contains pockets with higher intensity development including duplexes, townhomes, and multi-family developments. These neighborhoods have access to sanitary sewer service, and most are served by public water service. Medium Density planning areas should continue to consist of

predominantly single-family homes on small lots. Higher intensity infill development may be appropriate in transition areas (where two planning areas abut) and on arterial or collector roadways. This type of development should have strong site design, landscaping, and architectural standards that complement adjacent residential properties.

Sewer Service: Existing Sewer Service Area

Residential Density: 2 to 4 units per acre

Residential – Low Density – These neighborhoods encompass the rural areas in eastern Vernon south of I-84. This area is predominantly in the R-40 zone and contains single-family homes at densities less than 1 unit per acre, undeveloped lands, and forests. All properties are served by well water and on-site septic systems. This area contains most of Vernon’s open space lands, which are concentrated along the Tankerhoosen River and Railroad Brook. Due to the lack of infrastructure and presence of sensitive natural resources, large scale development should be discouraged.

Sewer Service: Sewer is not anticipated for this Planning Area

Residential Density: 1 or fewer Units Per Acre

Conservation Overlays:

Existing Protected Open Space – Existing protected open space is depicted on the Future Land Use Plan. Refer to the Town of Vernon Open Space Plan for future open space acquisition priorities.

Rail-to-Trail – Vernon’s Rail-to-Trail provides connections between residential neighborhoods and numerous open space and recreational resources.

Future Trail Connections – Better connections between the rail-to-trail and commercial and mixed-use districts can enhance bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the Town.

Historic and Scenic Districts – These areas include local, state, and national historic districts and areas with high concentrations of historic structures. The following areas are depicted on the Future Land Use Plan:

- Downtown Rockville
- Vernon Center
- Talcottville
- Valley Falls/Tankerhoosen Valley