# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT FOR THE TOWN OF SOUTHBURY, CONNECTICUT

**EXIT 16 / STRONGTOWN** 

**SOUTHBURY PLANNING COMMISSION** 

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT FOR THE TOWN OF SOUTHBURY, CONNECTICUT

#### **STRONGTOWN / EXIT 16 PLAN**

Adopted: March 17, 1998 Effective: April 8, 1998

A Program prepared under the provisions of Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes and PART SEVEN: Adoption, Modification and Administration of the Comprehensive Plan of Development.

**SOUTHBURY PLANNING COMMISSION** 

#### SOUTHBURY PLANNING COMMISSION

H. William Davis, Jr., Chairman

Gary Metcalf, Vice Chairman

Gail DePietro, Secretary

Donald S. Antilla

Tekin Akalin

Donald Cole

<u>Alternates</u>

Jeffrey Fine

**Guy Colson** 

Former Members During Preparation of the Plan

Hugh John Sullivan

James Donahue

Robert Phelan

Planning Staff

DeLoris Curtis, Planning Administrator

Stacy Tlalka, Secretary

Robert S. Bryan, AICP

Alan N. Morosoff, Planner - Cartographer

Oswald Inglese

+

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
OBSERVATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS	3
Comprehensive Plan Location and Extent	3
Plan Map "Strongtown / Exit 16 and Vicinity"	
Plan Map "Exit 16- Strongtown"	
Plan Map "AP-Town Aquifer Protection District"	
PLANNING AREA AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS	8
Planning Area A Planning Area B Planning Area C Planning Area D	8 8 9 9
LAND AREAS AND ZONING	10
Plan Map "Landscape Analysis"	
BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE	13
Sewers Water Highways	13 14 14
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	16
Transportation Sewers Water	16 17 17

FUNCTION APPEADANCE (CHAPACTER	<u>Page</u>
FUNCTION, APPEARANCE/CHARACTER, LANDSCAPING AND STREET GRAPHICS	18
Function	18
Appearance and Character	18
Landscaping	18
Street Graphics	19
IMPLEMENTATION	20
Transportation	20
Sewers	20
Water	21
Function	21
Appearance/Character	22
Landscaping	23
Street Graphics	24
Application Review Procedures	25

# THE STRONGTOWN / EXIT 16 PLAN

#### INTRODUCTION

The STRONGTOWN / EXIT 16 PLAN is a part of the document entitled Comprehensive Plan of Development for the Town of Southbury, Connecticut and is adopted by the Southbury Planning Commission as a "program" modification under Part Seven: "Adoption, Modification and Administration" in order to detail and elaborate on features of the Comprehensive Plan with regard to a particular geographic area.

The high visibly of this area, plus the established pattern of residential development requires a plan that:

- protects and preserves residential property values
- establishes high quality appearance at all sites, especially as viewed when entering
   Southbury on Interstate 84
- does not endorse a scope of activity beyond road capacities
- provides a reasonable use of land that is presently uncommitted

This PLAN provides a guide for the development and conservation of land in an area around the intersection of Interstate 84 and CT Route 188 and vicinity, historically known as "Strongtown" and encompassing Exit 16 of Interstate 84, where lands in Southbury are devoted to Region 15 school facilities and sites for commercial and economic development as well as residential occupancy. Lands in the adjacent Towns of Middlebury and Oxford are also designated for Region school facilities, commercial and economic development and the Oxford Airport.

This PLAN pertains only to the Town of Southbury portion of the STRONGTOWN / EXIT 16 area but has been prepared with recognition of conditions, zoning and known land use and facility plans in the Towns of Middlebury and Oxford without intent to interfere with the independent responsibility of those Towns for their area of jurisdiction.

Southbury Planning Commission

# **OBSERVATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

As part of its continuing responsibilities, the Southbury Planning Commission prepares studies, inventories and evaluations concerning demographic, economic, environmental, land use and public facility features of the Town. In the course of preparing this PLAN for the Strongtown / Exit 16 Area, observations are made about trends and conditions that pertain to the plan area. Certain observations and assumptions became part of the basis for the plan and are summarized in sections that follow.

#### **Comprehensive Plan**

The adopted Comprehensive Plan of Development¹ recognizes the Exit 16 Area at I-84 for its access and economic development potential for a campus-style corporate or research park and states that the use of the site will require an impact analysis that addresses traffic and utilities. This adopted Plan also cites the need to consider the following factors:

- traffic impact on established neighborhoods
- visual impact
- building design and conformity to natural contours and topography

While the adopted Plan mainly refers to the road frontage commercial strip and the hillside site for economic development, this Strongtown / Exit 16 Plan addresses a larger area around Exit 16 - the environs that may be directly affected by the highway access and related land development.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "Comprehensive Plan of Development for the Town of Southbury, Connecticut" adopted July, 17, 1986.

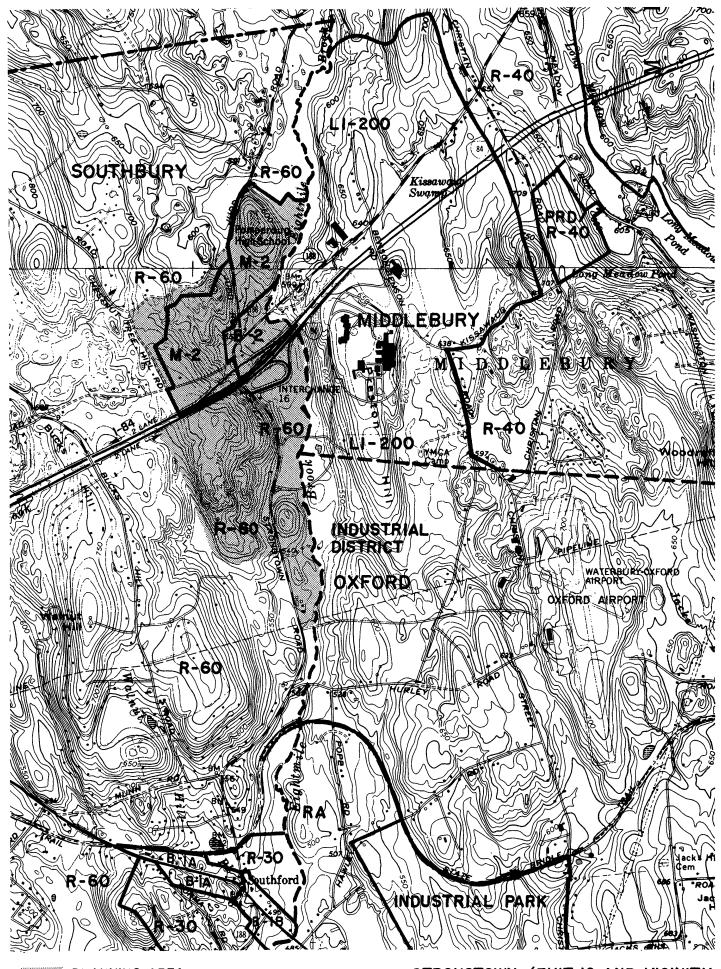
This Strongtown / Exit 16 Plan does not elevate nor structure the area as a community "center" in the Town, in the manner of the Southbury Center Area, Southford and South Britain Village Center. Strongtown, however, is an inter-town location that may one day take on a special character and focus of its own.

#### **Location and Extent**

The Strongtown / Exit 16 planning area is mapped to encompass 376 acres, of which 98 acres are categorized as wetlands/flood hazard areas. The planning area includes the CT Route 188 intersection with Interstate 84 (Exit 16) as well as Old Waterbury Road (a Primary Collector Route on the Comprehensive Plan) from Reservoir Road to CT Route 188. Judd Road extending north from CT Route 188 is also a Primary Collector Route.

Interstate 84 connects easterly to Waterbury, Hartford and routes leading to Boston and other parts of New England. In a westerly direction Interstate 84 leads to Danbury and connecting routes leading to Southwestern Connecticut and New York City while also crossing the Hudson River to points west. CT Route 188, a secondary State Highway, leads to Southford Center and CT Route 67 and in the other direction leads to Middlebury. Old Waterbury Road, while feeding adjacent neighborhoods, is an important collector that parallels Interstate 84 and links Strongtown with Main Street North in the Southbury Center Area. Judd Roads provides access to Region 15's Pomperaug High School and to Woodbury.

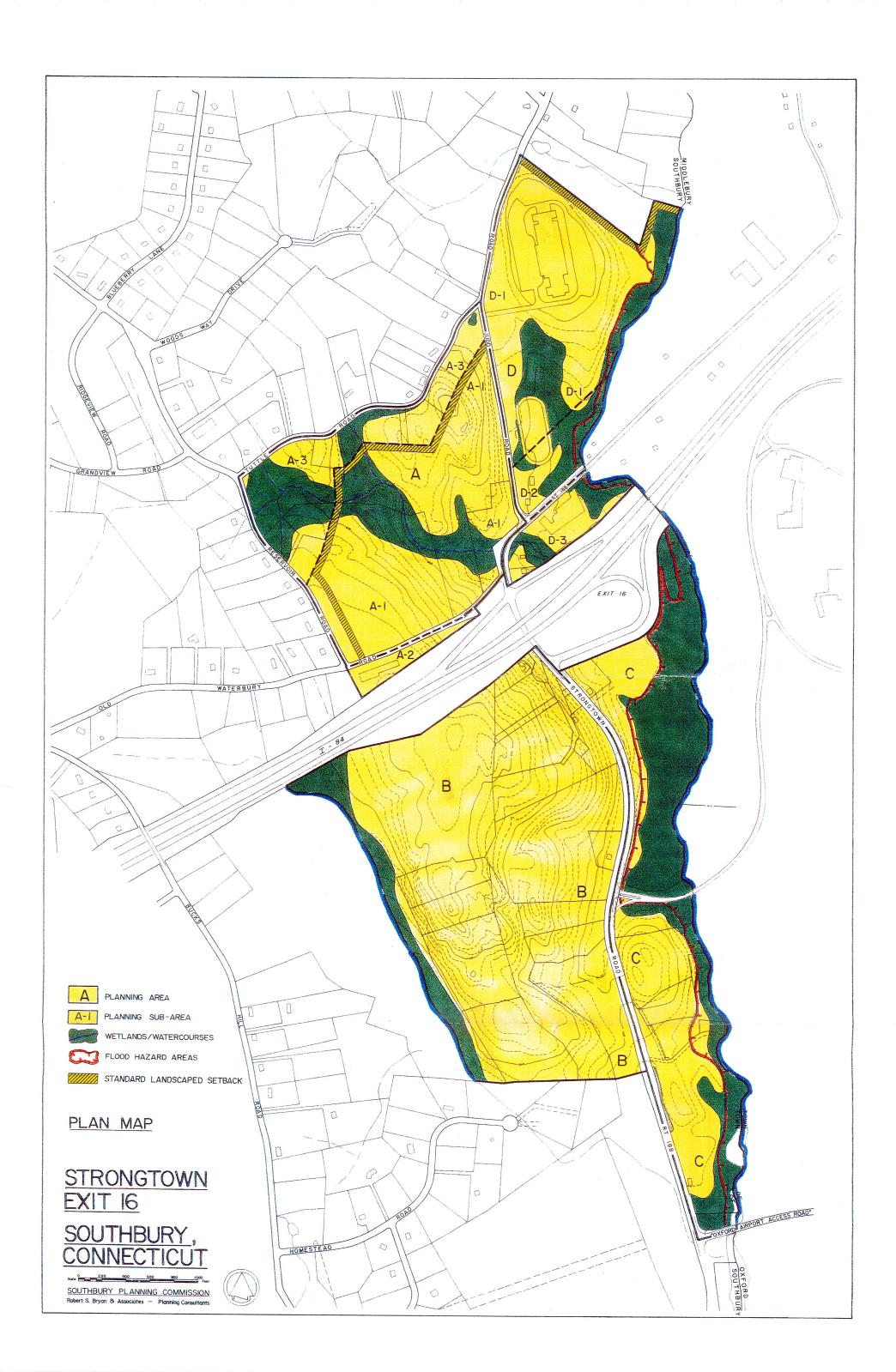
The 376 acres of the Planning Area is the central and western portion of the Exit 16 environs. Lands adjacent in the Town of Middlebury and Oxford are the easterly portion of the Exit 16 environs. Those two towns have extensive areas zoned (522+ acres) and now partially build up in economic development. The easterly environs also include the Oxford Airport, a State of Connecticut facility. See map of "Strongtown / Exit 16 and Vicinity".

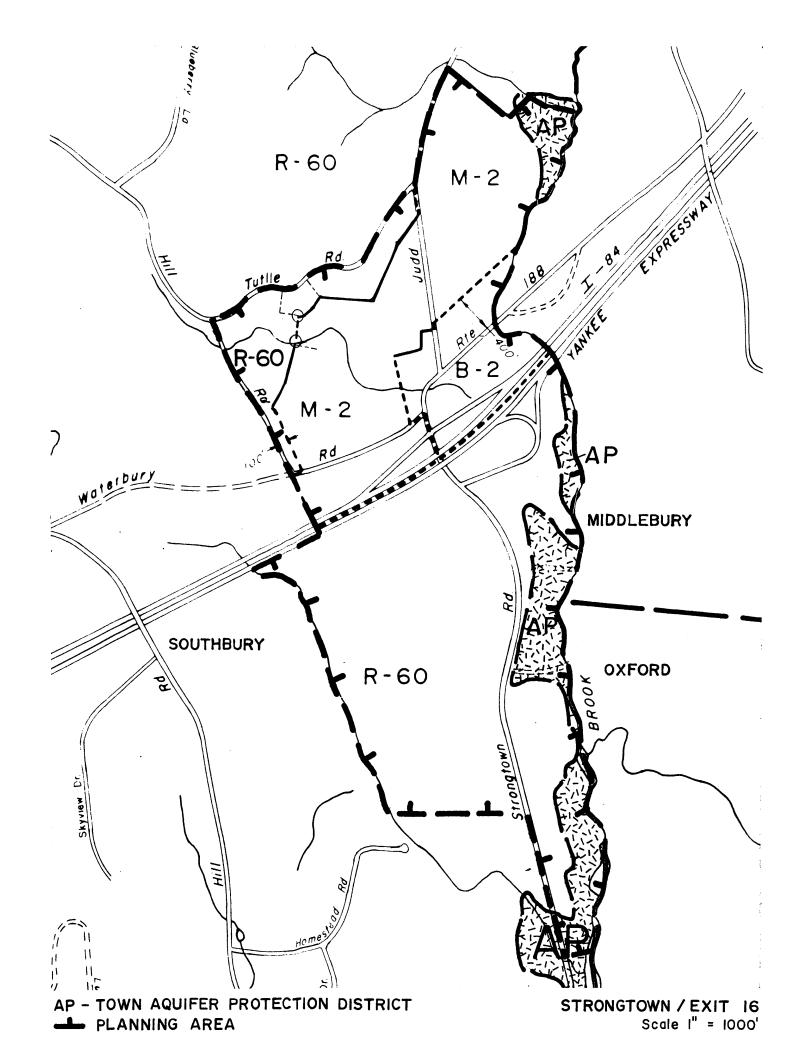


PLANNING AREA
R-60 ZONING DISTRICTS

STRONGTOWN / EXIT I6 AND VICINITY

Scale I" = 2000'





# **PLANNING AREAS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS**

The Strongtown / Exit 16 Planning Area consists of four development quadrants each having distinct and clearly identifiable characteristics. These characteristics contribute significantly in considering these sectors for suitable land uses. See Land Use Recommendation by Planning Area Chart.

# **Planning Area A**

**A-1**, the largest area of the three in the northwest quadrant (62.02 acres), has frontage along Judd Road and along Old Waterbury Road. The terrain is characterized by slopes in the 15 to 25 percent range and a significant wetland area. This area is highly visible from Interstate 84 and the ultimate development is critical to the preservation of this gateway to Southbury. The development of this area is preferred to be professional and corporate offices, medical offices and research, and assisted living facilties. Conservation areas, single family houses and multi-family dwellings are also acceptable uses.

**A-2**, this sub area consists of 3.93 acres and is between the right of way of Interstate 84 and Old Waterbury Road. It lacks significant depth and is considered suitable for professional and corporate offices. Although currently developed, medical offices and research, and conservation areas are also acceptable uses.

**A-3**, is presently developed as single family homes and a large conservation area is under the jurisdiction of the Southbury Land Trust. This area is expected to remain the same.

## **Planning Area B**

Planning Area B consists of 140.93 acres within the southwestern quadrant and includes frontage and or direct access to Strongtown Road. This area is very visible from west bound traffic on Interstate 84 as well as Strongtown Road. There are hillsides and

slopes in excess of 25%. Development within this area should not intrude on the existing natural setting. Buildings should be adjusted with the terrain. Preferred use of this quadrant is for single family houses. Housing may also consist of two family, multifamily and assisted living facilities.

# Planning Area C

This area totals 75.67 acres and is within the southeasterly quadrant of the Planning Area. It extends along Strongtown Road from its intersection with the Oxford Airport access road to the entrance/exit ramps at Interstate 84. The easterly boundary of the area abuts the Town of Oxford and is delineated by the Eight Mile Brook. Planning Area C lacks developable depth and contains wetlands and flood plains associated with the Eight Mile Brook and an underlying aquifer. One and two family homes are a preferred use. Civic uses and areas set aside for conservation area acceptable.

#### **Planning Area D**

**Planning Area D** consists of three sub areas totaling 69.25 acres. Two of the sub areas, **D-1** and **D-2**, totaling 60.50 acres, are occupied by the Region #15 Pomperaug High School.

**Sub Area D-3** consists of four small parcels, the largest of which is about 6.63 acres. These parcels have frontage along Route 188. The area is currently developed. Additional acceptable uses include professional and corporate offices, small retail stores, assisted living facilities, civic uses and conservation areas.

### **LAND AREAS AND ZONING**

The Strongtown / Exit 16 Planning area is currently divided among three zoning districts: an R-60, an M-2 and a B-2. The gross land area within the Planning Area consists of approximately 376 acres of which about 98 acres or 26 percent consists of lands classified as wetlands or lands which may be subjected to flooding.

Approximately 261 acres (69% of the total area) are zoned R-60 - Residential R-60 District requiring a minimum of 60,000 square feet of land area. Land zoned R-60 is primarily located to the south of Interstate 84 at either side of Strongtown Road (see areas B and C in the "Planning Areas" map attached).

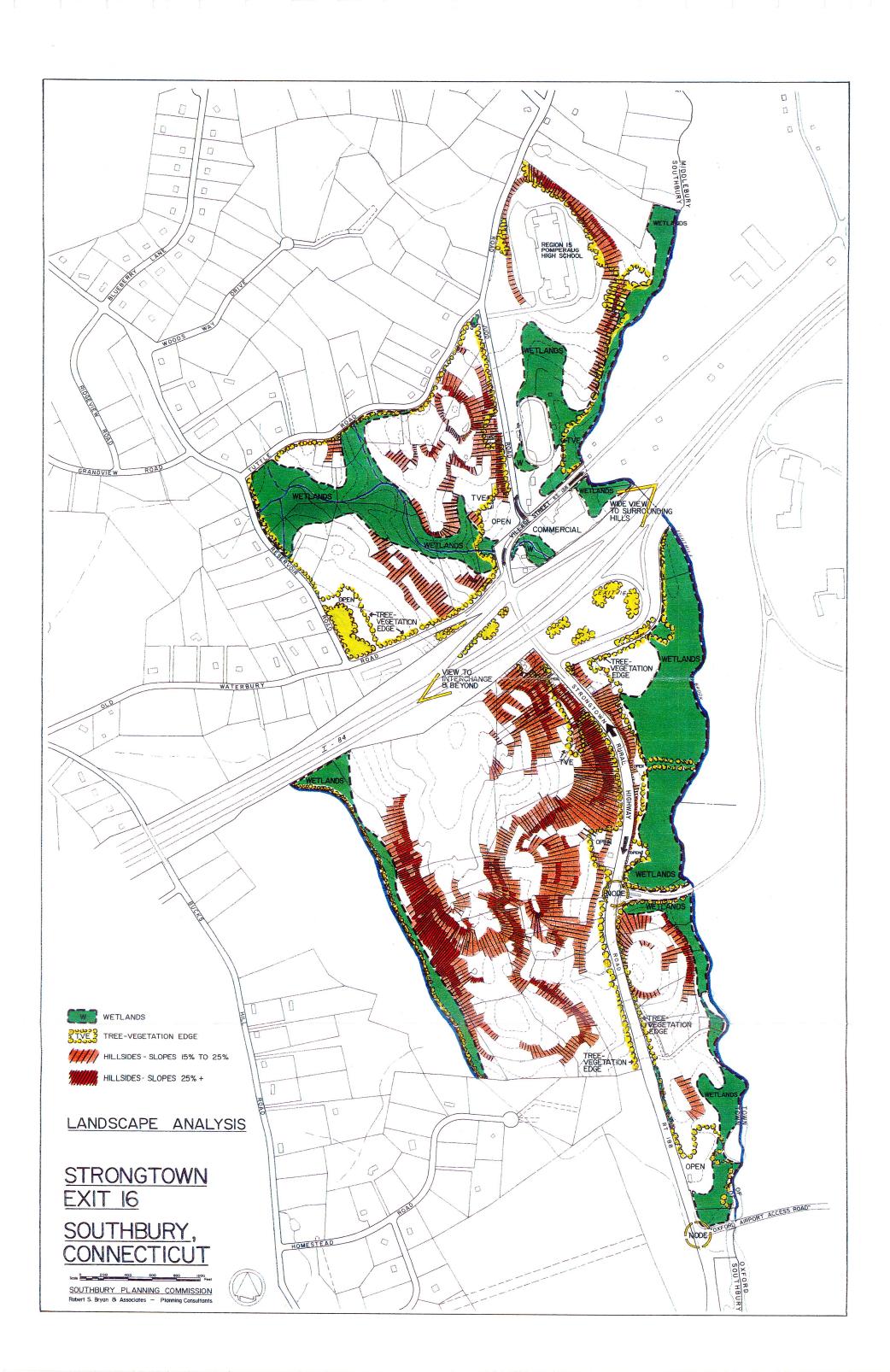
An additional 77 acres (20% of the total) are zoned M-2 - Industrial M-2 District requiring a parcel having a minimum of 2 acres. The M-2 zones are located between Old Waterbury Road and Interstate 84 west of CT Route 188 within the area designated as A-2. A larger area, currently zoned M-2 is located along Judd Road and abutting the Eight Mile Brook and commencing 400 feet north of CT Route 188. The Region 15 High School facility occupies this M-2 area. (See map entitled "Planning Areas").

Finally, about 37 acres (9% of the total area) are zoned B-2 - Business B-2 Districting requiring a minimum of 40,000 square feet of land area. Lands zoned B-2 are located between CT Route 188 and Interstate 84 and are within Planning Areas D-3, D-2 and at the southeast corner of area A-1 (See "Planning Areas" map).

Table I indicates the net land area for each of the planning areas after subtracting lands designated as wetland areas may be subjected to flooding.

Table I Planning Area - Acreage

Planning		Wetlands		
Area	Total Area	Flood Hazard	Area	Zone
A-1 A-2	60.02 3.93	12.13	47.89 3.93	M-2, B-2, R-60 M-2
A-3	<u>24.39</u> 88.34	<u>10.57</u> 22.7	<u>13.82</u> 65.64	R-60
В	140.93	9.9	131.03	R-60
С	75.67	43.94	31.73	R-60
D-1 (Phase)	52.7	13.04	39.66	M-2
D-2	7.8	5.06	2.74	B-2
D-3	<u>8.75</u> 69.25	<u>3.66</u> 21.76	<u>5.09</u> 47.49	B-2
Total	376.19	98.3	277.89	



## **BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Strongtown / Exit 16 Plan area has development limitations caused by the insufficiency and/or inadequacy of the basic infrastructure components. The following description reflects current conditions.

#### <u>Sewers</u>

The Heritage Village Water Company owns and operates a sewage treatment facility having a recently upgraded capacity of 750,000 gallons per day (gpd). The treatment plant, however, is located more than 3 miles away from the Strongtown / Exit 16 planning area. Additional discharge from the planning area may require an expansion of the plant's design capacity and it is anticipated that, to overcome the distance, several sewage pumping stations would be necessary. This course of action including the plant expansion, the required supplementary facilities, plus the installation of sewer mains, would be contrary to the goals and policies described in the Southbury Comprehensive Plan of Development<sup>2</sup>. Properties along the route would also become eligible to connect to the upgraded system.

The sewage treatment facilities of the Town of Middlebury include sewer mains that serve the Pomperaug High School and the Southbury Hilton Hotel. While it may be reasonable to anticipate that the Town of Middlebury would agree to provide additional sewer capacity for new development within the Strongtown / Exit 16 area, it is not appropriate nor prudent to seek such extensions at this time as such venture would also be contrary to the Plan of Development.

-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Section VIII, "Comprehensive Plan of Development for the Town of Southbury, Connecticut" adopted July 17, 1986

#### **Water**

The Heritage Village Water Company serving the Heritage Village complex also provides water to developments on Old Waterbury Road. It would appear, however, that currently, the provider's ability to provide water services to additional development is very limited as the company is currently operating under a moratorium issued by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The purpose of the moratorium is to prompt the development of additional water supply sources to boost water availability in the company's current distribution areas. Among the additional sources sought are the potential wells adjacent to the Village Area near the Pomperaug River.

Although premature to anticipate at this time, the development of additional water capacity would provide the planning area with future water supply options. For the foreseeable future however, it would appear prudent that plans for new development in the planning area consider water from wells within local stratified drift or bedrock aquifers.

#### **Highways**

CT Route 188 - Strongtown Road - is a major arterial roadway that transverses the planning area and connects to the south with the Southford district. In Southford, CT Route 188 intersects with CT Route 67 that leads to municipalities further to the south. To the north of the planning area the roadway passes the Regional High School and enters into Middlebury. One of the major transportation corridors throughout the planning area is Interstate 84, a major interstate highway crossing the State from east to west. Exit 16 is the focal point at the intersection of CT Route 188 and Interstate 84.

CT Route 188 is mostly a two lane roadway, consisting of one lane of travel in each direction. There are several driveways providing entrance and exit to existing developments along CT Route 188. These driveways occur within short distances of the interchange. The Interstate 84 westbound entrance and exit ramps on and off CT Route 188 are signalized. An additional traffic signal is at the intersection of CT Route

188 and Old Waterbury Road. All other intersections and driveways entering and exiting to/from CT Route 188 are "STOP" sign controlled. Posted speed limits at CT Route 188 vary from 45 MPH to 35 MPH throughout the intersection and in the vicinity of Region 15 High School.

The Traffic Study<sup>3</sup> conducted within the planning area indicated that visual observations of the existing traffic operations throughout the interchange was smooth with no extensive delays that would not dissipate during the ensuing traffic signal cycling. The roadway capacity analyses indicated that Level of Service (LOS) throughout the interchange was observed to be at LOS C or better at all times with the exception of the left turn from the eastbound exit ramp which operates at a LOS D during the morning peak hours. An analysis of the land holding capacity under current zoning was conducted as part of the traffic study. The analysis included all three communities that depend on Exit 16 for access and egress to/from Interstate 84. The potential maximum level of development ranged from 250-300 single family homes on approximately 400 acres of vacant land to approximately 7 million square feet of industrial and office spaces on approximately 455 acres of vacant land in Middlebury and Oxford. The Study concludes that the development potential with the area and environs could generate more than 10,000 additional vehicle trips during peak hours. This level of development activity would demand substantial improvements to the interchange with 200,000 square feet of office space marking the threshold when roadway improvements would have to be initiated.

-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Traffic Study, Route 188/I-84 Interchange Study, Vanasse Hagen Brustlin, Inc.; September 21, 1995

#### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Comprehensive Plan of Development<sup>4</sup> recognizes the Strongtown / Exit 16 Planning Area for its accessibility, the existence of established neighborhoods, the need to establish a visually attractive design concept while also recognizing the potential for economic development and recommends that the Area be studied further. This Plan recognizes the Area's potential, assesses the problems and opportunities and attempts to outline ways to guide further development in an acceptable and sensible way. Furthermore, this Plan sets forth objectives that, in the aggregate, will assist in achieving the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

The objectives set forth below address the areas of transportation, sewers, water, the function of the planning area, its appearance, the character, the future landscaping and the street graphics and provides the framework within which development within the planning area should evolve.

#### **Infrastructure**

#### <u>Transportation</u>

• Allow development to occur only to the degree that the present local and State road infrastructure can accept the traffic load. Ensure that any growth in traffic does not adversely affect the safe use of the existing Region 15 School and recreational facilities. Review State of Connecticut plans for potential expansion of Route 188, and consider adjustments to this Plan as State and local roads are shown to have the capacity.

#### **Sewers**

 While future developments should be able to occur to the extent that may be handled by adequate on-site subsurface sewage disposal systems, it is recognized that certain other developments, by virtue of the use type or density, cannot be handled by on-site sewage treatment installations and therefore, they will not be appropriate for this planning area.

#### **Water**

• On-site wells are the preferred source. However, if the usage type requires water supply in excess of on-site capacity, then access to public water supply systems may be considered only if long-term total safe yield can be assured.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> "Comprehensive Plan of Development for the Town of Southbury, Connecticut" adopted July 17, 1986.

# FUNCTION, APPEARANCE/CHARACTER, LANDSCAPING AND STREET GRAPHICS

#### **Function**

The Exit 16 Planning Area should function as an economic development area where
a variety of corporate and small scale retail and service facilities would be located
and which facilities would offer a variety of employment opportunities for
professional, skilled and for semi-skilled labor.

#### **Appearance and Character**

• The Exit 16 Planning Area should be developed recognizing that it is one of Southbury's principal gateways. Therefore it should be subject to a rational and cautious treatment consisting of well placed structures, cautiously nestled on the hillside, of suitable proportions and reflective of the New England traditions. Development therein should convey Southbury's sensible development criteria and its interest in enhancing aesthetic qualities while providing for economic development opportunities. Consistent with existing Regulations, the site appearance and signage should not draw attention from off-site locations.

# Landscaping

Landscaping should encourage pedestrians and should link areas, uses, buildings
and functions with walkways, walkpaths and similar pedestrian ways, furnished with
appropriate street graphics and lighting. Utilities and services should be placed
underground whenever possible. Buffer areas should be established to provide
transition and meaningful and effective separation between residential and nonresidential land uses.

# **Street Graphics**

• Street graphics should be such so as not to interfere with the safety of pedestrians and motorists; they should be reflective of the area's character and should be appropriate for the use, service or function that they identify.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The following recommendations and suggestions are designed to assist development interests in achieving the goals and objectives set forth in this Plan. They address transportation, sewers, water, the function of the planning area, its appearance, the character, the future landscaping and the street graphics.

#### **Transportation**

Goal: The scope and pattern of development in this Planning Area should recognize the documented capacity of this local and State road infrastructure. Development of a scope beyond road system capacity should not be permitted unless local road capacity and safety issues are addressed, and the State and local roads are upgraded to accept increased loads.

#### Recommendations/Suggestions:

- In order to reduce traffic impact and facilitate traffic movements, consolidate entrance from and exit onto Strongtown Road and Judd Road whenever practicable.
- Maintain substantial distances between road cuts and access points to allow for sufficient traffic queues for turning vehicular traffic.
- Discourage land uses considered high-traffic generators so as to minimize the negative impact on current Level of Service prevailing on Strongtown Road and on Judd Road.

#### <u>Sewers</u>

Goal: While future developments should be able to occur to the extent that they will be handled by adequate on-site subsurface sewage disposal systems, it is recognized that certain other developments, by virtue of the use type or density,

cannot be handled by on-site sewage treatments installations, and therefore are not recommended in this Plan.

#### Recommendations/Suggestions:

- Uses of land and buildings that do not require connection to municipal sewage facilities are endorsed. Recommended types of development in the overall Planning area should be consistent with the existing sewer avoidance recommendations of the overall Comprehensive Plan of Development.
- Uses of land or buildings that are hazardous and that may present a threat to the public health should be prohibited.

#### Water

Goal: On-site wells are the preferred source. However, if the usage type requires water supply in excess of on-site capacity, then access to public water supply systems may be considered only if long-term total safe yield can be assured.

#### Recommendation/Suggestions:

- Allow uses that can be supported from on-site wells.
- If potable water is available from off-site sources (i.e. water main on Old Waterbury Road) extensions into the Planning Area should be sized to provide water for fire fighting purposes.

#### **Function**

Goal: The Exit 16 Planning Area should function as an economic development area where a variety of corporate and convenience retail and service facilities and uses would be located and which facilities would offer a variety of employment opportunities for the professional, the skilled and for the semi-skilled labor.

Recommendations/Suggestions:

The following uses of land and buildings are encouraged:

- Research and development services.
- Buildings that contain small retail and service facilities.
- Establishments for the specific trades including workplaces that provide, primarily services to other establishments, rather than products for sale to the general public.
- Professional offices and medical clinics.
- Mixed residential and non-residential uses may be permitted whenever potable water and soil conditions permit.
- Service organizations and agencies, especially assisted living facilities.
- Uses of land and buildings that may pose a threat to ground water quality should be prohibited.

#### **Appearance/Character**

Goal: The Exit 16 Planning area should be developed recognizing that it is one of Southbury's principal gateways. Therefore it should be subject to a rational and cautious treatment consisting of well placed structures, cautiously nestled on the hillside, of suitable proportions and reflective of the New England traditions. Development therein should convey Southbury's sensible development criteria and its interest in enhancing aesthetic qualities while providing for economic development opportunities.

#### Recommendations/Suggestions:

- New structures and buildings should have a footprint not to exceed six thousand square feet and should not be higher than 2 1/2 stories and not exceed 40 feet.
- Buildings rooflines should reflect architectural forms found in traditional New England designs. Preference should be given to buildings exhibiting pitched roofs which may include dormers, chimneys and similar appurtenances. Flat roofs are to be avoided and no mechanical equipment should be visible.
- To the extent possible and whenever practicable, building designs should attempt to minimize substantial land regrading and should be sighted to conform to existing land forms and contours.
- Siding and fenestration should also be reflective of traditional New England architecture.
- The use of natural-looking materials should be encouraged such as brick, wood clapboard, and stone.

#### **Landscaping**

Goal: Landscaping should be encouraging for pedestrians and should link areas, uses, buildings and functions with walkways, walkpaths and similar pedestrian ways, furnished with appropriate street graphics and lighting. Buffer areas should be established where necessary, to provide transition and meaningful and effective separation between residential and non-residential land uses.

#### Recommendations/ Suggestions:

• Landscaping designs should attempt to appear as an extension of the existing plant cover.

- Buffer areas should be provided along boundaries separating residential from nonresidential zoned lands. These areas should be designed to provide permanent year-round vegetative screening.
- Power lines, utilities and service wiring should be placed underground whenever possible.
- Walkways, walkpaths and similar pedestrian ways should be integrated in the landscaping design. These should be furnished with low-profile lighting standards such as light poles or ground lighting devices.
- Benches and kiosks may be integrated where warranted.

#### **Street Graphics**

Goal: Street graphics should be so as not to interfere with the safety of pedestrians and motorist; they should be reflective of the area's character and should be appropriate for the use, service or function that they identify.

# Recommendations/Suggestions:

- Signs should be consistent with the use, service or function that they are designed to identify.
- Signs should be uniform design within each multi-use complex.
- Street graphics should be clear and concise to avoid confusion while encouraging the appropriate flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

• Consistent with the Town Center Plan and existing Regulations, no signage shall be orientated to Interstate I-84.

# **Application Review Procedures**

Development applications should be reviewed through the special permit and/or special exception process to allow ample interaction between the Commission and the applicant. The process would allow the Commission to question the applicant's intent and rationale for the design solutions offered while it would allow the applicant to sense and capture the Commission's intent for the Planning Area.