

Town of Enfield, Connecticut
Plan of Conservation & Development

Draft

Chapter I:
Planning and Why We Plan



March 9, 2021

Prepared by:
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Laurie P. Whitten, CZEO, AICP
Director of Development Services
Town of Enfield
820 Enfield Street,
Enfield, CT 06082

Re: POCD – Draft Chapter I – Planning and Why We Plan

Dear Director Whitten:

This document provides an introduction to the planning process and (tentative) draft narrative for what is conceptualized as Chapter I of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). The draft chapter explains planning, the planning process, the POCD requirements, and a summary of the Plan chapters. Therefore, this chapter can be drafted without public outreach and Steering Committee discussion. However, the draft should be reviewed by staff and the Committee and can be discussed and revised if needed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald J. Poland".

Donald J. Poland, PhD, AICP
Planning Consultant



Planning and Why We Plan

The aim of this document is to introduce planning and the Enfield Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). To accomplish this, the document will introduce the Planning and Zoning Commission, POCD Steering Committee, and the community to the process of planning, why we plan, and the legal requirements for creating a comprehensive plan. Doing so will create understanding and context that will frame the planning process and this plan.

What is Planning?

Planning is a process and action that can be inform or formal. When informal, it is something we often do not notice or take for granted. For example, we plan our lives every day. What we need to do, where we need to go, and when we must be there. While informal planning works well in the short term, it does not work so well long term. Long term planning requires a thoughtful approach. In addition, planning for town, unlike planning for our doctor's appointment or dinner with our spouse, request a systematic approach that balances the needs, wants, passions, and enthusiasms of the community against social, economic, and environmental considerations. So, what is planning? Planning is a:

- process of preparing for the future,
- systematic approach to problem solving,
- strategy for improvement,
- continuous learning and adjustment, and
- prediction of the future with the *risk of being wrong*.

The Planning Process

The planning process, as a systematic approach, can be designed in many ways and can utilize various steps. The process to be utilized for the POCD is a simple five-step planning process that focuses attention on what is most important. The process is as follows:

1. **Where Are We Today?** (Market Research & Existing Conditions Assessment)
Step one is the assessment of existing conditions (historic, demographics, land use, and social, economic, and environmental conditions). This includes the inventory of community assets and an assessment and understand what is working and what is not working.
2. **Where Do We Want to Be in the Future?** (Outreach, Visioning, & Outcome Definition)
Step two utilizes public outreach and community engagement to gain understanding what the community wants and what the community needs. This is done through the process of exploring future potential, crafting a vision, and setting outcomes for what Enfield will strive to be in the future.
3. **How Will We Get There?** (Strategies & Actions for Improvement)
Step three is the strategy development portion of the planning process where what is learned from the



prior steps is utilized to develop the strategies that will move Enfield toward the community vision and desired outcomes.

4. How Will We Know We Are on the Right Course? (Measuring for Improvement)

Step four is a portion of the planning process that allows us to think carefully about the desired outcomes and the strategies that will be employed to achieve those outcomes, with the aim of establishing basic measures to help inform us if what we are doing is working—a means of tracking and measuring the effectiveness of the strategies.

5. Implementation. (Road Map & Action Agenda)

The final step is creating the road map to the future—the action agenda that informs how Enfield’s Plan will be implemented. This includes listing priorities, identifying needed resources and their sources, establishing responsibilities, and a system of follow up.

This five-step planning process provides a simply, yet systematic approach and process to working through the creation of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

The Plan of Conservation and Development

The Plan of Conservation and Development is known in planning as a comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan is the broadest and most general planning document most communities create—as compared to special area plans. The POCD is a policy guide to the spatial organization and physical development of the community. The policy decisions for how the community will develop are typically based on social, economic, and environmental considerations and the existing infrastructure and community facilities and projected future needs for such infrastructure and facility needs.

A Plan of Conservation and Development is required under Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 8-23 to establish policies and goals related to both the development of land, as well as setting priorities for the conservation of land. Connecticut General Statutes state that the Plan shall:

- Be a statement of policies, goals, and standards for physical and economic development.
- Provide for a system of principal thoroughfares, sidewalks, and multi-purpose trails.
- Promote coordinated development to have compact transit-accessible pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development patterns and land reuse.
- Recommend the most desirable use of land for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and include a map showing proposed land uses.
- Note inconsistencies with the following growth management principles:
 - redevelopment and revitalization of commercial centers;
 - expansion of housing opportunities and design choices;
 - concentration of development around transportation nodes;
 - conservation and restoration of the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and existing farmlands;
 - protection of environmental assets critical to public health and safety; and
 - integration of planning across all levels of government.



- Make provision for the development of housing opportunities.
- Promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing.
- The Plan shall consider:
 - The need for affordable housing.
 - The need for protection of existing and potential drinking water supplies.
 - The use of cluster development and other development.
 - The State Plan of Conservation and Development.
 - The Regional Plan of Development (Capitol Region Council of Governments).
 - Physical, social, economic, and governmental conditions and trends.
 - The needs of the municipality, including the objectives of energy-efficient patterns of development.
 - Protection and preservation of agriculture.

As a physical *land use plan* that recommends the spatial organization and density of development for the community, the POCD and planning process allow us to evaluate the physical, demographic, social, economic, and conservation trends to best determine the:

- natural resources to be protected and conserved,
- areas for residential, commercial, and industrial development (including density and intensity of development)), and
- the infrastructure and community facilities required to support the development of the community.

The Organization of the Plan

The plan will likely be organized into ten chapters. The following is a summary of each of the assumed chapters. It should be noted that recommendations contained in this plan often relate to more than just an individual chapter. For that reason, the Commission asks that the document be reviewed in its entirety.

Chapter 1: Introduction: Presents information on what a Plan of Conservation and Development is and how it was prepared. Discusses statutory requirements, and challenges in maintaining community character. Presents an overview of efforts to gauge public opinion through the conduct of an on-line survey and community visioning sessions.

Chapter 2: A Sustainable and Resilient Enfield: This chapter discusses the importance of decision making relating to planning that will help support a sustainable and resilient future for Enfield. Also introduces a discussion about the concept of “resiliency” and the importance of adopting a planning approach that can adopt to changes that have not necessarily been forecasted.

Chapter 3: Conservation Strategies: Natural Resource Protection: Presents information relating to the Enfield's natural resources and mechanisms to protect them, including floodplains, wetlands, open space, forested lands, the management of stormwater, erosion control, and septic system maintenance. Discusses challenges to protect these resources with additional measures to consider.



Chapter 4: Conservation Strategies: Preservation: Discusses strategies to further preserve community character through prioritizing the preservation of certain parcels of open space.

Chapter 5: Housing Strategies: Presents detailed information about Enfield’s existing housing stock and includes a housing needs assessment utilizing criteria established under state law for “affordable housing”. Also presents strategies to address affordable housing need. Includes a discussion about creating opportunities for multi-family and mixed-use development.

Chapter 6: Economic Development Strategies: Discusses strategies for development in commercial and industrial areas. This chapter also includes a discussion about the importance of agriculture as a major contributor to the Towns overall economy.

Chapter 7: Transportation Strategies: Discusses the established Town road network. Also includes a discussion about parking requirements for commercial uses and the importance of access management. This chapter also discusses issues relating to alternative modes of transportation including sidewalks, bike lanes, and recreational pathways.

Chapter 8: Public Facilities and Infrastructure Strategies: Reviews the existing community facilities and future needs, including as discussion considerations for the next 10-year planning period.

Chapter 9: Consistency with State and Regional Plans: Presents a summary of how the recommendations contained in this plan are consistent with the major principles express in the both the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the Capitol Region Plan of Conservation and Development.

Chapter 10: Implementation Guide: Presents a summary of the major recommendations in this plan and the agencies and/or staff principally responsible to implement them.