

Conditions and Trends

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Overview

This chapter provides a general overview of conditions and trends affecting Newington at the time the Town Plan was being prepared.

History of Newington

While Native American tribes have inhabited North America for the past 10,000 years or so, European settlement of the area now recognized as Connecticut began in the 1630s at Windsor, Hartford, Wethersfield and Old Saybrook. The area we now know as Newington was part of a land “purchase” around 1665 and first settled by people from the Wethersfield colony after that time. Early settlers were generally subsistence farmers.

By 1708, these settlers had become frustrated over the rigors of travelling to Wethersfield each week to participate in religious and governmental meetings, especially during the winter months. Permission was granted in 1712 to establish a separate parish. Eventually, this new parish became known as Newington. Residents still had to travel to Wethersfield for town meetings.

This arrangement worked well for the next 160 years or so. Eventually, however, disagreements with Wethersfield over the use of tax revenues towards desired road improvements led to an effort to incorporate as a separate municipality. This petition was approved in 1871 and Newington became the 166th municipality in Connecticut.

The advent of the trolley car, bus service, and the automobile brought more growth in the early 20th century and Newington grew rapidly, especially after World War II. Newington’s geographical location in the center of the state, proximity to Hartford, plus great improvement in highways attracted many new residents and businesses over the years.

While population growth slowed in recent decades, Newington continues to evolve and adapt to address community needs.

People of Newington

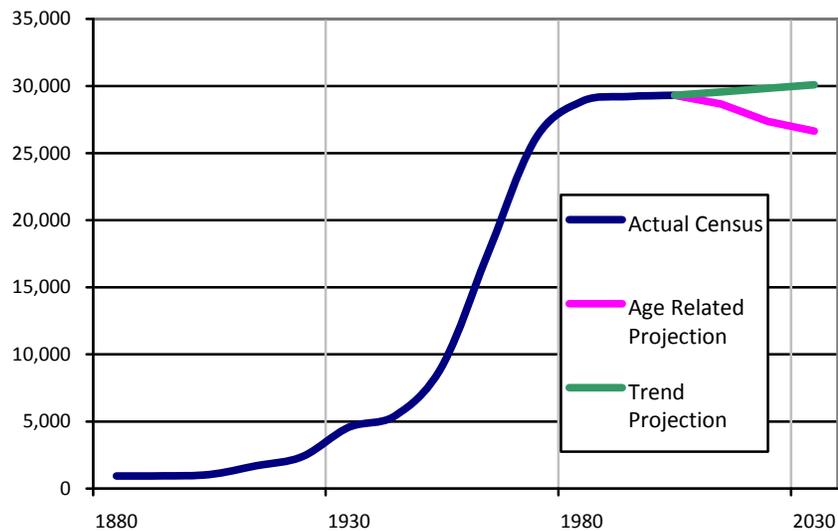
Overall Growth Is Slowing

Looking back, Newington’s has experienced two significant population growth periods. The first, between about 1900 and 1940, was a result of the availability of streetcar and bus service which connected Newington to jobs in surrounding communities. The second, from 1945 to 1975 or so, was the result of the automobile-driven suburban expansion which occurred following World War II.

However, growth has slowed in recent years due to limited land availability and future population estimates for Newington are not clear.

Some projections (based on recent trends) project that modest growth will continue through 2030 or so. Other projections, based on the likelihood of an aging population, suggest that population may decrease.

Population Growth (1880 - 2030)



Simply stated, some of the projections indicate that housing units in Newington will likely be occupied by smaller households in the future. Since the population of Newington is aging (as will be described later) and since older households tend to be smaller than younger households, this may be a natural progression of becoming a more mature community.

Historic Population

| Year | Population |
|------|------------|
| 1880 | 934 |
| 1890 | 953 |
| 1900 | 1,041 |
| 1910 | 1,689 |
| 1920 | 2,381 |
| 1930 | 4,572 |
| 1940 | 5,449 |
| 1950 | 9,110 |
| 1960 | 17,664 |
| 1970 | 26,037 |
| 1980 | 28,841 |
| 1990 | 29,208 |
| 2000 | 29,306 |

Historic - 1900 - 2000 Census

Projections – State Data Center

| Year | Population |
|------|------------|
| 2010 | 28,659 |
| 2020 | 27,365 |
| 2030 | 26,637 |

Projections – www.ctsdc.uconn.edu with an adjustment for non-household population (group quarters)

Projections – CTDOT

| Year | Population |
|------|------------|
| 2010 | 29,550 |
| 2020 | 29,830 |
| 2030 | 30,100 |

Projections – ConnDOT LU-27C, 2008

Age Composition Is Changing

Projected changes in Newington’s age composition may be even more significant than the traditional focus on overall population numbers.

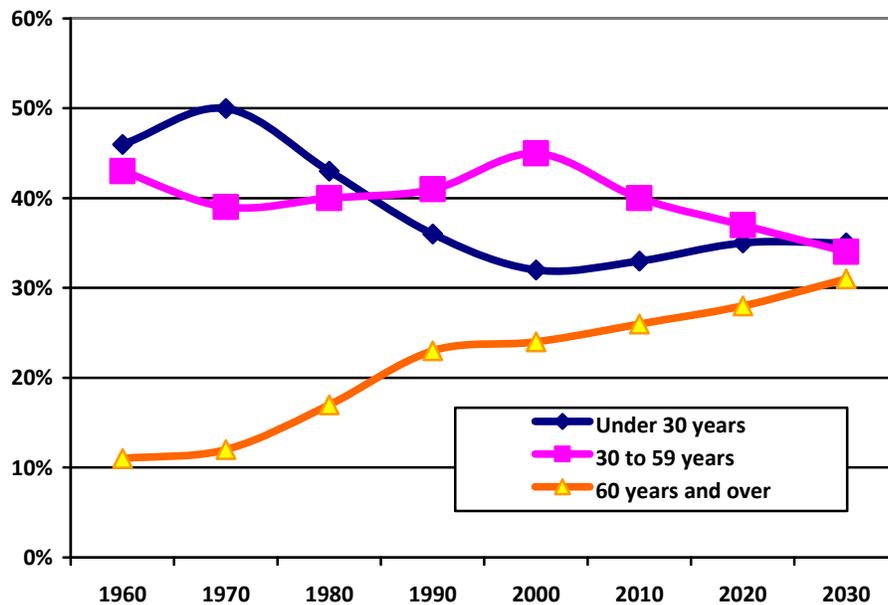
In 1970, since about 50 percent of Newington’s population was under age 30, it is reasonable to conclude that the community was probably oriented towards the needs of younger families with children.

In the year 2000, about 45 percent of the population in Newington was aged 30 to 59. Since these age groups are typically younger families, the community was still oriented towards the needs of younger families with children.

However, looking ahead to the year 2030, Newington may be a different community. People in the “baby boom” generation (born between 1946 and 1965) will be over age 60 and there may be stronger interest in programs and activities for older residents. In fact, Newington may only be a few years away from persons over age 60 being the largest demographic group in Newington.

Overall, it is projected that the proportion of older age groups will increase in Newington as it will around the country. Where residents aged 60 and over were only about 12 percent of the Newington population in 1960, these age cohorts may constitute over 30 percent of the population in the year 2030.

Age Composition (1960 - 2030)



Housing in Newington

Housing Growth Is Slowing

Due to the low availability of residentially zoned land, the rate of housing growth has slowed. The housing stock is close to full capacity. Any existing residentially zoned land that is now not developed should remain as currently zoned. This plan shall discourage any change from industrial, commercial and business zoned land to residential. Vacant residential land should stay as currently zoned, not changed to higher density.

Historic Housing Stock

| Year | Units |
|------|--------|
| 1960 | 4,972 |
| 1970 | 7,655 |
| 1980 | 10,445 |
| 1990 | 11,609 |
| 2000 | 12,264 |

Historic - 1900 - 2000 Census.

While almost two-thirds of all housing is single family detached units, the other one-third consists of a variety of housing types. Most of Newington’s housing stock is owner-occupied. About 60 percent of the Newington’s housing stock was built between 1940 and 1980. The age and characteristics of this housing stock may be an issue for the community to address in the future.

Housing Affordability Continues To Be A Concern

Newington has a number of housing units that are naturally affordable since they rent or sell at prices that make them affordable to people earning less than the median income. These “NOAH” units (naturally occurring affordable housing) are a key asset for Newington.

However, studies by “HOME Connecticut” found that in 2005 and 2006, a household earning the median income in Newington could not afford a median sale price home in Newington. This was a result of housing prices and financing terms at that time.

Census data also indicates that there can be issues of affordability in Newington for households with lower incomes (the young and the elderly). Almost half of all households earning less than \$50,000 per year were spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Single Family Neighborhoods



Multi-Unit Housing



Economy of Newington

Newington Is A Regional Economic Center

Newington is a major economic contributor in the region in several ways.

According to the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC), Newington employers supported 17,664 jobs in the year 2007. Since there are about 16,649 Newington residents in the labor force, it can be seen that Newington is a “jobs exporter” to the region.

| Unemployment Rate | |
|-------------------|------|
| Newington | 7.7% |
| Connecticut | 8.5% |
| United States | 9.7% |

CT Dept. of Labor

| Median Household Income | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Newington | \$71,496 |
| Hartford County | \$63,239 |
| Connecticut | \$67,236 |

DECD - CERC

Further, the Census of Retail Trade reports that retail sales in Newington were much higher on a per capita basis than for the State of Connecticut as a whole since Newington is a retail focal point for a larger region.

Economic Growth Has Been Substantial

Although there have been fluctuations over time, Newington has experienced significant job growth since 1963. While early job growth in Newington was supported by “goods-producing” businesses, growth over the past 30 or 40 years has primarily been in “service-producing” businesses.

| Employment Growth | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Total Employment (Non-Agricultural) | Goods-Producing (Manuf. / Const.) | Service-Producing (Non-Manuf) |
| 1963 | 8,035 | 4,402 | 3,633 |
| 1970 | 12,421 | 5,949 | 6,472 |
| 1980 | 13,400 | 5,740 | 7,660 |
| 1990 | 17,330 | 5,870 | 11,460 |
| 2000 | 18,070 | 4,540 | 13,530 |
| 2007 | 17,664 | n/a | n/a |

Connecticut Department of Labor, 1963 – 2000, CERC 2007

Local Business



Local Businesses



Land Use in Newington

Overall, it is estimated that about 91 percent of the land area in Newington is developed or committed to different uses. Of the developed and committed lands, the largest category (44%) is used for residential purposes, mostly for single-family homes on individual lots. About 19 percent is used for business purposes and about 11 percent is used for open space purposes.

Remaining Vacant Undeveloped Land

There are only 685 acres remaining which might be considered vacant and available for development. Approximately 63 percent, 433 acres, has development limitations which if protected could add an additional 5 percent open space.

The remaining developable vacant land is 252 acres, 3 percent of the Town's total area, with approximately 126 acres designated for residential uses and 126 acres for non-residential purposes.

Table 1 - Land Use in Newington

| Land Use | Acres | % of Developed Land | % of Total Land |
|---|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Residential Single Family = 2,862 acres / Multi-Family = (510 acres) | 3,372 | 44% | 40% |
| Commercial / Industrial / Utility Commercial = 782 acres / Industrial = 618 acres / Utility = 60 acres | 1,460 | 19% | 17% |
| Open Space Dedicated Open Space = 726 acres / Managed Open Space = 173 acres | 899 | 12% | 11% |
| Community Facilities / Institutional Community Facilities = 272 acres / Institutional = 495 acres | 767 | 10% | 9% |
| Other Roads, Utility Rights of Way (1,200 acres) | 1,200 | 16% | 14% |
| Developed (committed land) | 7,698 | 100% | 92% |
| Vacant (uncommitted) Approximately 433 acres have development limitations due to inland wetlands and flood hazards. | 685 | | 8% |
| Total | 8,383 | | 100% |

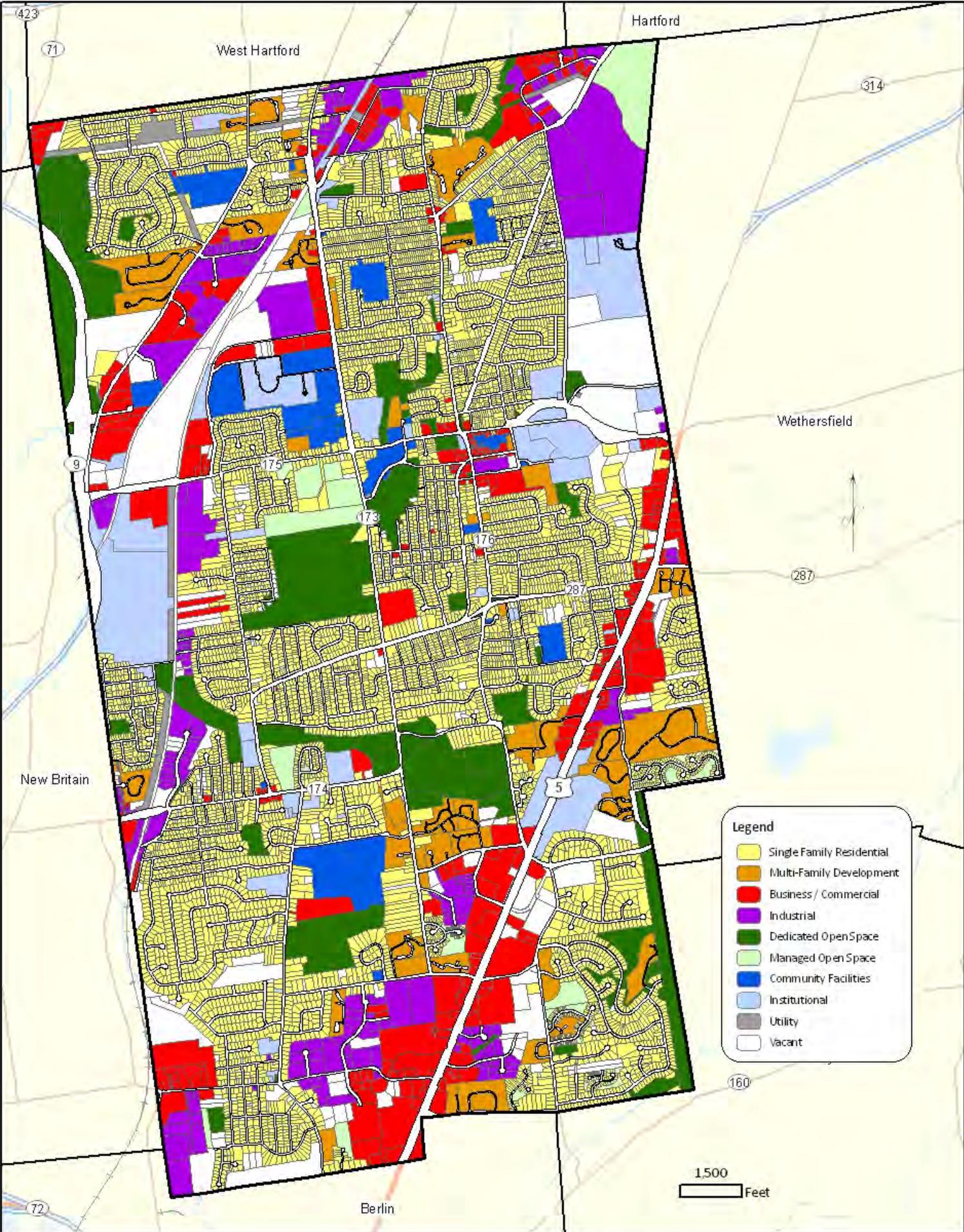
Totals may not add due to rounding. Land use information from Newington and updated by Planimetrics.

Definitions

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Developed Land – land that has buildings, structures, or improvements used for a particular economic or social purpose (such as residential or institutional). | Committed Land – land that is used for a particular economic or social purpose (such as roads or open space). | Vacant Land – land that is not developed or committed. | Dedicated Open Space - land owned by the Federal government, the State, the Town, land trusts, or conservation organizations intended to remain for open space purposes. | Managed Open Space - land owned by other organizations which is used for other purposes, but provides open space benefits. |
|---|--|---|---|---|

2009 Land Use Map

Newington, CT



Zoning in Newington

Newington is divided into zoning districts in order to manage land use activities.

The majority of land in Newington (57 percent) is zoned for residential uses – either as single family lots (4,035 acres) or as multi-family developments (726 acres).

About 25 percent of the land area (2,103 acres) is zoned for commercial, industrial, or mixed uses.

Table 2 - Zoning Districts in Newington

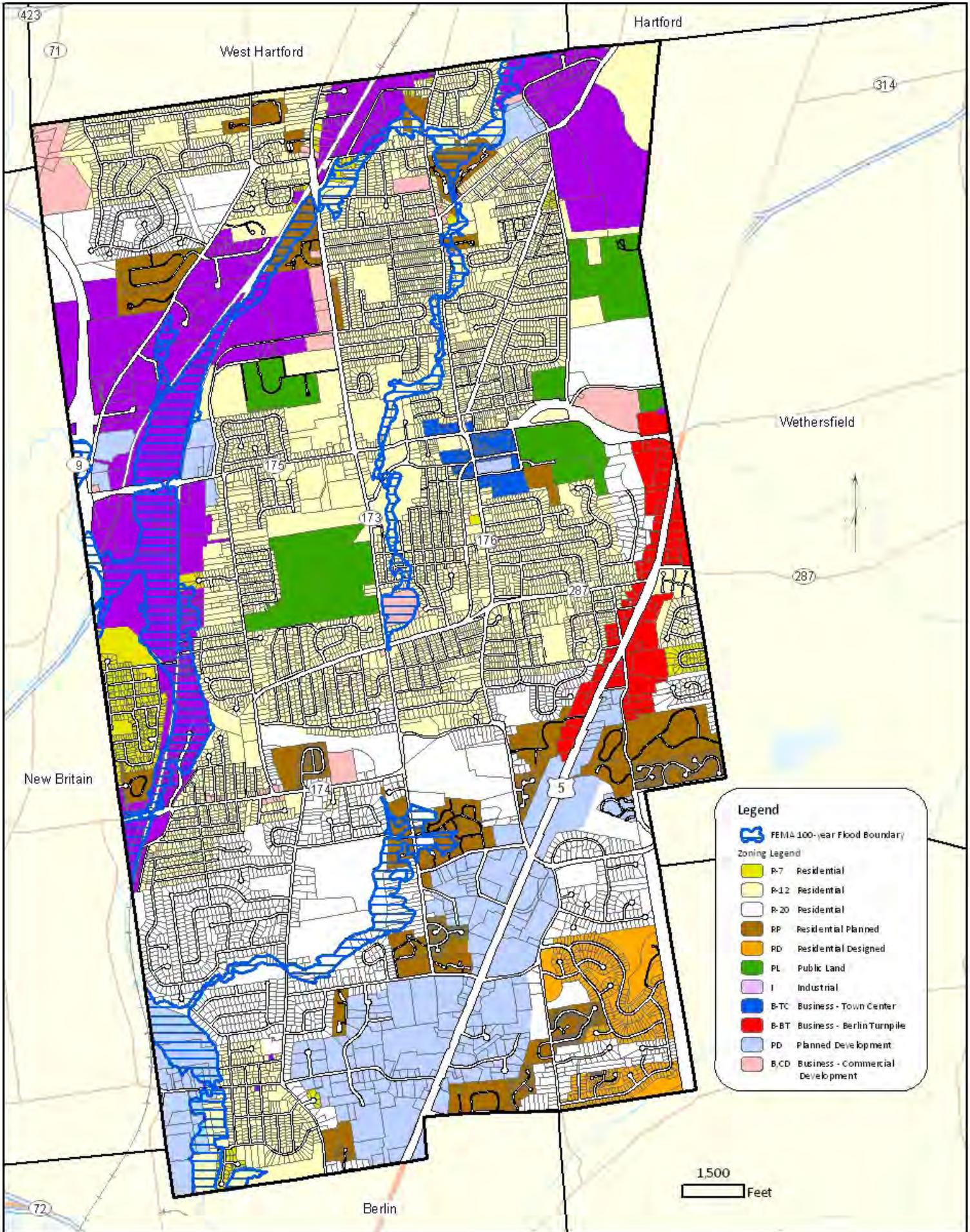
| Land Use | Acres | % of Total Land |
|--|--------------|-----------------|
| Residential – Single Family | 4,035 | 48% |
| R-7 Residential (130 acres) | | |
| R-12 Residential (2,510 acres) | | |
| R-20 Residential (1,394 acres) | | |
| Residential – Multi-Family | 726 | 9% |
| RP Residential Planned (557 acres) | | |
| RD Residential Designed (169 acres) | | |
| Commercial / Industrial / Mixed Use | 2,103 | 25% |
| I Industrial (1,002 acres) | | |
| PD Planned Development (756 acres) | | |
| B-BT Business Berlin Turnpike (155 acres) | | |
| CD Commercial Development (73 acres) | | |
| B Business (73 acres) | | |
| B-TC Business Town Center (45 acres) | | |
| Other Zones | 320 | 4% |
| Public Land (320 acres) | | |
| Other Land | 1,200 | 14% |
| Right of Way (1,200 acres) | | |
| Total | 8,383 | 100% |

Totals may not add due to rounding.

Land use information from Newington and updated by Planimetrics.

2009 Zoning Map

Newington, CT



Plan Approach

The Town Plan has been organized around three main themes which are intended to organize the overall approach to guiding the future of Newington:

| Theme | Description | Contents |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Conservation | Strategies to protect and preserve natural resources, wetlands, watercourses, flood-plains, steep slopes over 15 percent which are important to overall community health, character, and quality of life | Natural Resources Open Space Community Assets |
| Development | Strategies to guide and manage growth and development in ways which will enhance Newington and help meet community needs | Community Structure Town Center Residential Development Business Development |
| Infrastructure | Strategies to provide for services and facilities which are desired or needed | Community Facilities Transportation Utilities |

