

# **TOWN OF OXFORD**

## **2007 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**



Town of Oxford  
New Haven County, Connecticut

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# **I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

## **A. Purpose of POCD**

Chapter 126 Section 8-23 (a)(1) of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that at least once every ten years, a planning and zoning commission prepare or amend and adopt a Plan of Conservation and Development. Although a State requirement, the most important function for a Plan is to help guide the future growth and development of the Town, through a series of coordinated goals, policies and strategies. The Plan should record the best thinking of the Town as to its future physical growth and development and to give direction to both public and private development.

The Plan should encompass a long term vision of the community, but while its objectives are long-range, the Plan should be capable of offering guidance for short-range land use decision upon adoption. Although it is often difficult to address immediate issues and problems with long-range concepts and principle, short term solution without respect to long-term purposes can dilute, even nullify the ultimate effectiveness and impact of the immediate solution.

The Town of Oxford has recognized the importance of planning. The Town's Plan was updated in 1991. Sections of the Plan dealing with commercial and industrial development were updated in 1999. The ongoing emphasis and use of planning has served the Town well, but conditions have changed over the past several years. The current update is necessary for the Town to cope with these rapid sets of changes, and plan for its future.

## **B. Statutory Requirements**

The statute states that all plans shall consider the following:

1. The community development action plan of the municipality, if any. (Oxford does not have one)
2. Need for affordable housing.
3. Need for protection of existing and potential public surface and ground drinking water supplies.
4. Use of cluster development and other development patterns to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity with the municipality.
5. Connecticut State Plan of Conservation and Development.
6. Regional plan of development

7. Physical, social economic and governmental conditions and trends.
8. Human resource, education, health, housing, recreation, social services, public utilities, public protection, transportation, cultural and intercommunication needs.
9. Objective of energy efficient patterns of development; use of solar and other renewable forms of energy and energy conservation.

The plans shall:

1. Be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality.
2. Promote, with the greatest efficiency and economy, the coordinated development of the municipality, and the general welfare and prosperity of its people.
3. Recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreation, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes,
4. Recommend the most desirable density of population.
5. Note any inconsistency it may have with the State Plan of Conservation and Development.
6. Make provisions for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity for all residents of a municipality and region.
7. Promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households.

The statute also states that the Plan may make recommendations for:

1. Conservation of trap rock and other ridgelines.
2. System of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets and other public ways.
3. Airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds.
4. General location, relocation and improvement of public buildings.
5. General location of public utilities and terminals
6. Extent and location of public housing projects.

7. Programs for the implementation of the Plan, including schedule, budget, program for enactment and enforcement of zoning and subdivision regulations, implementation of public housing, plans for open space acquisition and greenways.
8. Any other recommendations that would be beneficial to the community.



## **II. GOALS & POLICIES**

### **A. Principles of the Plan**

The Plan has been formulate in accordance with a set of overall principles, which should be used as the basis for all Town actions:

1. Recognize the uniqueness of Oxford as a rural community within the rapidly growing region of southwestern Connecticut, and strive to preserve the rural character.
2. Preserve and acquire open space and promote economic growth to ensure a balanced and economically viable community.
3. Preserve the important natural characteristics of Oxford.
4. Promote the development of a modern sustainable economy that supports the residents and enhances the quality of life.
5. Plan for the changes within the community so that development results in a modern, rural residential community with a superior quality of life.
6. Use the Plan as a guide for all activities of the various town agencies, boards and commissions.
7. Enhance the sense of community for the residents of the Town, through providing for a central focus of activity, public services that enhance the wellbeing of residents, and increased opportunities to live, work and shop in Oxford.
8. Continue to regulate residential development to achieve consistency with the goals of the plan by utilizing the concept of Minimum Buildable Area to ensure that residential development is consistent with the goals of the plan.

### **B. General Planning Policies**

The general planning policies of the Plan are to:

1. Recognize that Oxford is part of a larger region; therefore, planning its future must take into account the impact, beneficial or otherwise, of this interdependent relationship.
2. Encourage actions by all town agencies and departments to reflect the goals, policies and strategies of the Plan. All pertinent codes, regulations, and ordinances which effect development should be reviewed,

strengthened where necessary, and enforced to support the goals of the Plan.

3. The Town's financial resources should be considered when planning for future municipal improvements and services.
4. Promote greater citizen awareness of and participation in, local planning efforts through meetings, publications and other appropriate mechanisms.
5. Provide adequate technical support to the Town's land use boards utilizing available resources, within the budgetary constraints of the Town.

### III. DEMOGRAPHICS & HOUSING



#### A. Existing Conditions

##### 1. Demographics

In formulating the plan to meet the needs of the residents of Oxford, it was important to understand the characteristics of those residents. The demographic characteristics of the community describe some of those characteristics. It is equally important to understand the population trends and forces that will influence the development of the community.

##### A. Population Trends

The Town of Oxford has experienced rapid population growth over the past several decades. The Connecticut Economic Resources Center, which estimates the population of Connecticut municipalities for the State Department of Economic and Community Development, estimates that the current population of

Oxford is 10,881,<sup>1</sup> a 10.8% increase in just four years since 2000. This growth rate is one of the highest in the State of Connecticut (refer to Table III-1 and Figure III-1).

**Table III-1 Population Growth in Oxford**

Year	Population	% Change from Previous Period	% Change from 1950
1950	2,037	NA	NA
1960	3,292	61.6	61.6
1970	4,480	36.1	119.9
1980	6,634	48.1	225.6
1990	8,685	30.9	326.4
2000	9,821	13.1	382.1
2004	10,881	10.8	434.2

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

The Town's population has increased over four fold since 1950. The population increased by over 60% during the 1950's, a period during which many suburban and rural communities in Connecticut experienced significant growth. Oxford's growth has continued unabated during each decade, although it was somewhat less during the 1990's. Growth has increased again during recent years, in conjunction with residential development.

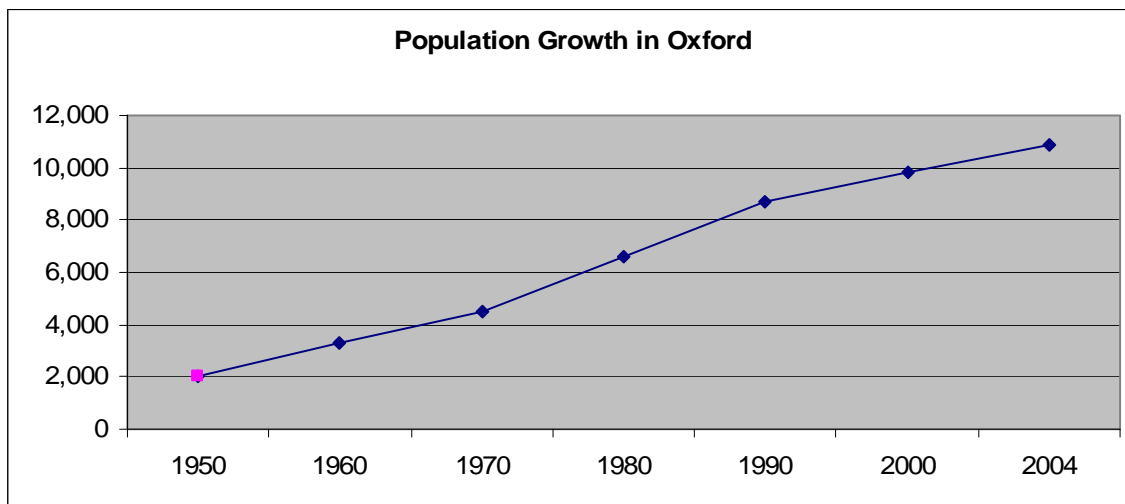
Certain population characteristics were compared in Oxford with that of other area towns to achieve a better understanding of Oxford's existing and potential role within the region. Oxford is surrounded by communities with larger populations. Of all neighboring communities, only Middlebury and Beacon Falls have smaller populations (refer to Table III-2 and Figure III-2).

However, an examination of the relative population density of area communities can provide an indication of the overall character of the community, as well as the likelihood for future growth. (Refer to Figure III-3 for an illustration of the relative population density of Oxford and area communities.)

The recent increase in population in Oxford over the past several years is consistent with the historical trends over the past 50 years. We can expect it to continue, as Oxford is the least developed among neighboring communities and has more "room to grow."

<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Town Profiles  
<http://products.cerc.com/pdf/tp/oxford/pdf>

**Figure III-1 Population Growth in Oxford**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

**Table III-2 Population Density in Area Towns - 2000**

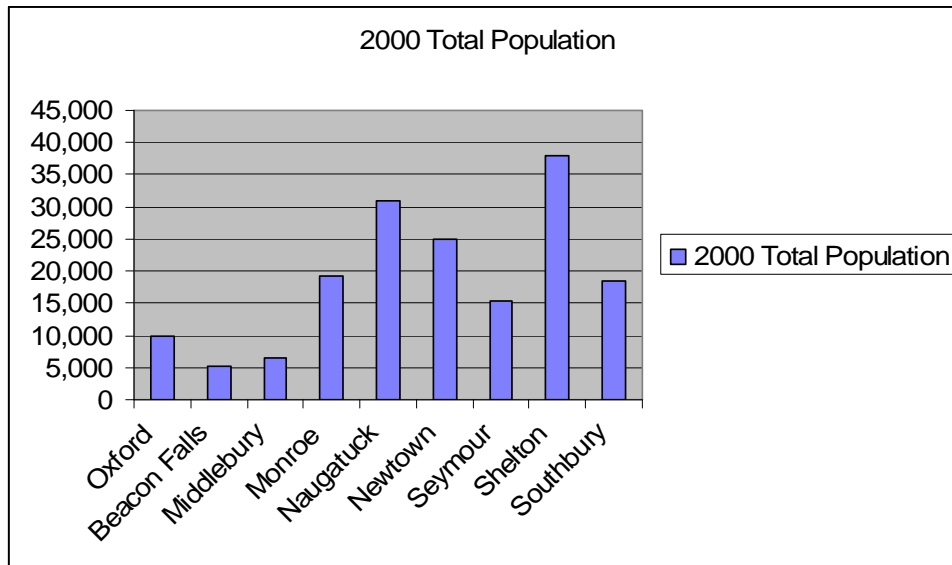
Town	2000 Total Population	2000 Population Density (people per sq. mile)	Town Land Area (in Sq. Miles)
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>9,821</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>32.89</b>
Beacon Falls	5,246	537	9.78
Middlebury	6,451	363	17.75
Monroe	19,247	737	26.13
Naugatuck	30,989	1,891	16.39
Newtown	25,031	433	57.76
Seymour	15,454	1,061	14.57
Shelton	38,101	1,246	30.57
Southbury	18,567	475	39.06

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

Oxford is geographically the largest of area Towns except for Southbury. Even with its large area, Oxford's total population is significantly less than that of Shelton, Naugatuck, Newtown, Monroe, Southbury and Seymour. Only Beacon Falls and Middlebury have smaller populations than Oxford (refer to Figure III-2).

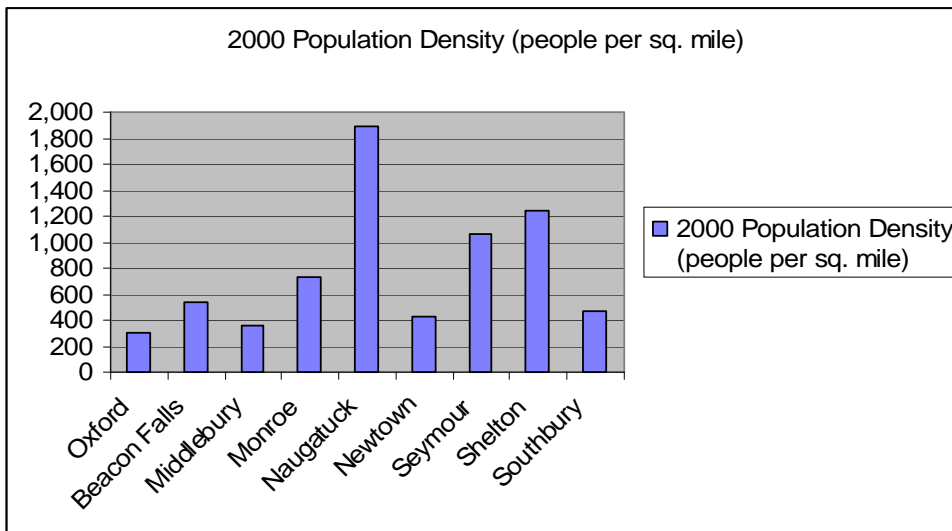
In spite of the rapid residential development, Oxford still has the lowest population density of all surrounding communities. The population density in Oxford is significantly lower than that of its more urbanized neighbors of Naugatuck, Shelton, and Seymour, but it is also lower than that of its comparable rural neighbors, such as Newtown, Southbury, and Middlebury. This indicates that Oxford is more rural than its neighbors, and has the most room, or potential, for additional residential development (refer to Table III-2 and Figure III-3).

**Figure III-2 2000 Total Population**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

**Figure III-3 2000 Population Density**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

**B. Age Characteristics**

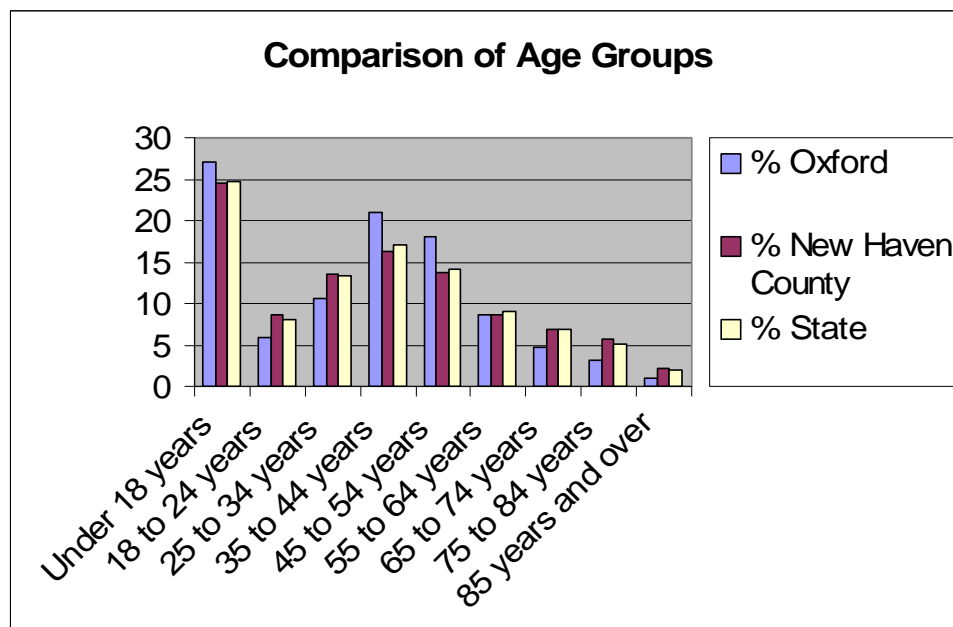
Table III-3 and Figure III-4 illustrate that Oxford has a greater concentration of young families with children than New Haven County or the State as a whole.

**Table III-3 Comparative Age Data – 2000**

Age	Total Population in Oxford	% of Population in Oxford	% of Population in New Haven County	% of Population in State
Under 18 years	2,663	27.1	24.5	24.7
18 to 24 years	579	5.9	8.7	8
25 to 34 years	1,045	10.6	13.6	13.3
35 to 44 years	2,053	20.9	16.3	17.1
45 to 54 years	1,765	18	13.7	14.1
55 to 64 years	859	8.7	8.7	9.1
65 to 74 years	462	4.7	6.8	6.8
75 to 84 years	308	3.1	5.6	5.1
85 years and over	87	0.9	2.1	1.9
Median Age	NA	38.4	37.0	37.4

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

**Figure III-4 Comparison of Age Groups**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

The median age of Oxford residents is slightly higher than that of New Haven County or the State. However, Oxford has a higher percentage of children (under 18), and adults within the 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 age groups. This indicates that young families with children are a higher proportion of Oxford's population than that of either the State or of New Haven County. (Refer to Table III-3 and Figure III-4.)

**Table III-4 Changes in Age of Oxford Population**

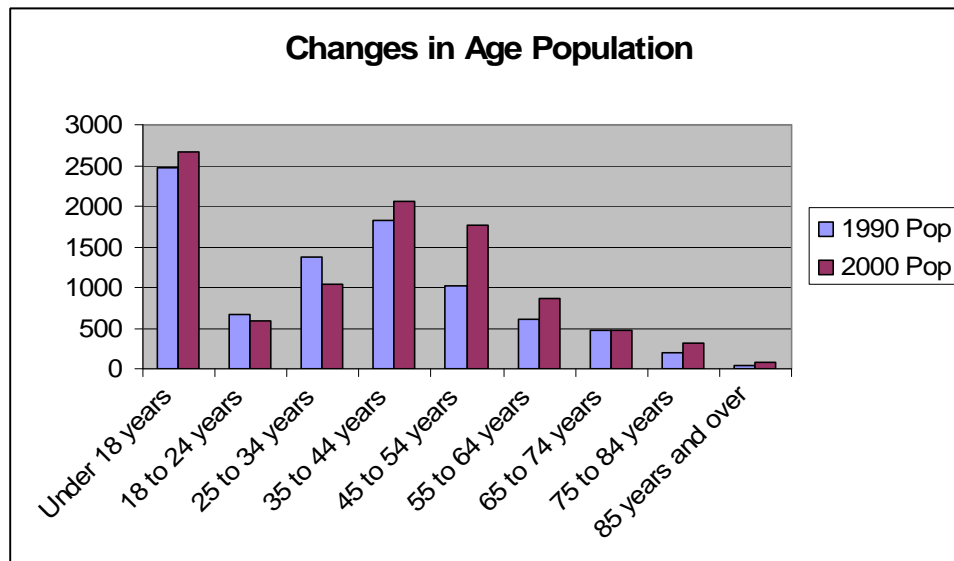
Age Group	2000		1990		% Change 1990-2000
	Number	%	Number	%	
Under 18 years	2,663	27.1	2462	28.4	8.2
18 to 24 years	579	5.9	675	7.8	-14.2
25 to 34 years	1,045	10.6	1377	15.9	-24.1
35 to 44 years	2,053	20.9	1831	21.1	12.1
45 to 54 years	1,765	18	1025	11.8	72.2
55 to 64 years	859	8.7	615	7.1	39.7
65 to 74 years	462	4.7	463	5.3	-0.2
75 to 84 years	308	3.1	196	2.3	57.1
85 years and over	87	0.9	41	0.5	112.2

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

The changes in population of the various age groups reflect the overall growth of the population between 1990 and 2000, but the growth among the different age groups was uneven. The data indicates the growths of the numbers of families with children, with the number of children are growing by 8.2%, and the numbers of people in the 35 to 44 age group are growing by 12.1%. This is partially balanced by a decline in the young adult age groups, (18 to 24 and 25-34), which may be caused by increased housing prices. (Refer to Table III-4 and Figure III-5.)



**Figure III-5 Changes in Age Population**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

However, the most significant trend is that the number of people in all age groups of 45 and older increased significantly, except the 65 to 74 age group which declined slightly. The largest increases were within the 45 to 54 age group, (+72.2%) and the above 75 age groups.

There are two important ramifications of this age-demographic profile. The first is that the population of Oxford is aging. The large increases in the 45 to 54 and 55 to 64 age groups have certain implications for housing and social services. The increases shown by this data occurred prior to the construction of any age restricted housing in the town. The number of Oxford residents in the 55 and over age groups will continue to increase, as the age-restricted housing is constructed. Therefore, we can conclude that within the next ten years, Oxford will become home to a larger number of older people.

The other implication is the increased enrollment in the school system. As families continue to migrate into Oxford, there has been an increased demand for additional school facilities. The Town has responded to this demand with the recent approval of the construction of Oxford's first high school.

### C. Household Size

Table III-5 compares changes in the median household size of Oxford, with that of New Haven County and that of the State, according to the 1990 and 2000 United States Census.

**Table III-5 Average Household Size – 1990 and 2000**

	<b>Oxford</b>	<b>New Haven County</b>	<b>State of Connecticut</b>
1990	<b>3.09</b>	2.55	2.59
2000	<b>2.94</b>	2.50	2.53

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

The data shows that the median household size in Oxford is considerably higher than that of either New Haven County or the State. Oxford's larger household size is likely to be attributable to the composition of the housing stock. Both the County and the State have a considerably smaller percentage of their housing stock in single-family dwellings than does Oxford. Single-family dwellings tend to house more people than multi-family dwellings.

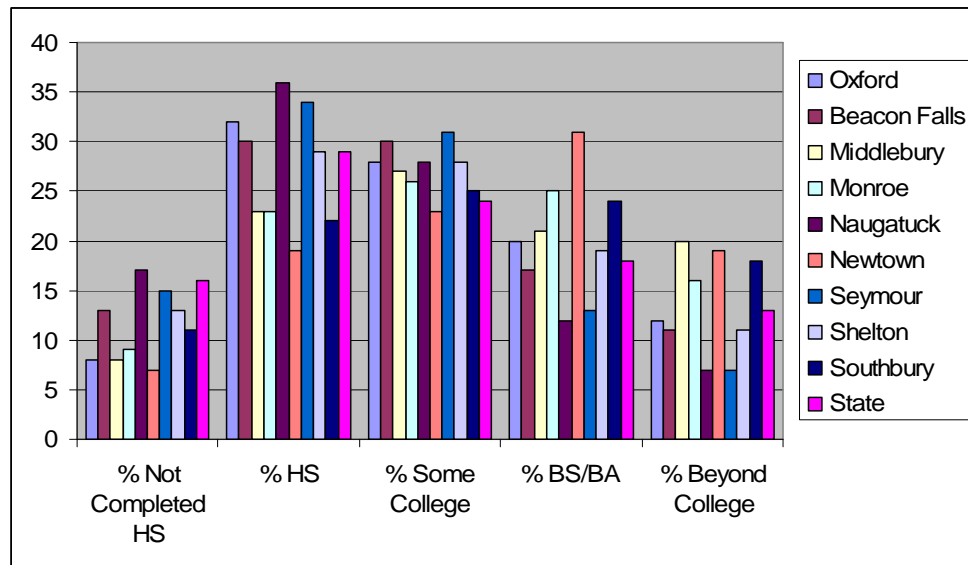
The data also indicates that the median household sizes have been declining for all three geographic areas. This overall trend is due to a range of societal factors, such as delayed marriage, a trend towards smaller families, and the aging of the population. The construction of age-restricted housing is likely to lead to a continued decline in average household size in Oxford.

### D. Educational Achievement

The level of educational achievement among the residents of a community often correlates directly with income levels. Educational achievement also has important ramifications for local and regional economic development efforts. Many of the growing, emerging industries that could be the basis for future economic growth in Oxford, require an educated work force. The economic development strategy should be consistent with the skill and educational levels of the population.

The data indicates that the educational achievement in Oxford is generally comparable or higher than State averages. Locally, the percent of Oxford adults that have achieved a BA or BS degree, or have advanced degrees is higher than that of Shelton, Seymour, Naugatuck or Beacon Falls, but lower than that of Newtown, Monroe, Middlebury, or Southbury. From the opposite perspective, Oxford has a lower percentage of adults who did not complete high school than all other area Towns except Newtown. (Refer to Figure III-6.)

**Figure III-6 Educational Achievement – 2000**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

#### E. Income

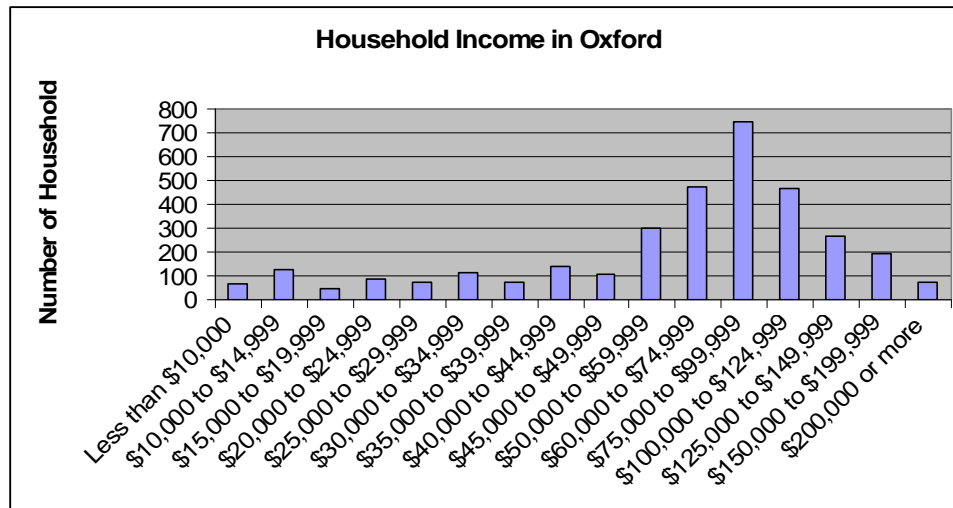
The level of income of residents in a community is a very important measure of the economic health of the community, its ability to pay for necessary services, and needs of a community. Table III-6 and Figure III-7 illustrate levels of household income in Oxford.

**Table III-6 Household Income Levels in Oxford – 2000**

Income Level	Households	Percentage
Less than \$10,000	66	2.0
\$10,000 to \$14,999	125	3.7
\$15,000 to \$19,999	49	1.5
\$20,000 to \$24,999	84	2.5
\$25,000 to \$29,999	74	2.2
\$30,000 to \$34,999	111	3.3
\$35,000 to \$39,999	76	2.3
\$40,000 to \$44,999	138	4.1
\$45,000 to \$49,999	107	3.2
\$50,000 to \$59,999	298	8.9
\$60,000 to \$74,999	475	14.2
\$75,000 to \$99,999	745	22.3
\$100,000 to \$124,999	465	13.9
\$125,000 to \$149,999	264	7.9
\$150,000 to \$199,999	193	5.8
\$200,000 or more	72	2.2
Median income (dollars)	77,126	NA

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

**Figure III-7 Household Income Levels in Oxford – 2000**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

The income data shows that there is a strong presence of middle income groups in Oxford, with over half the households having incomes between \$60,000 and \$125,000.

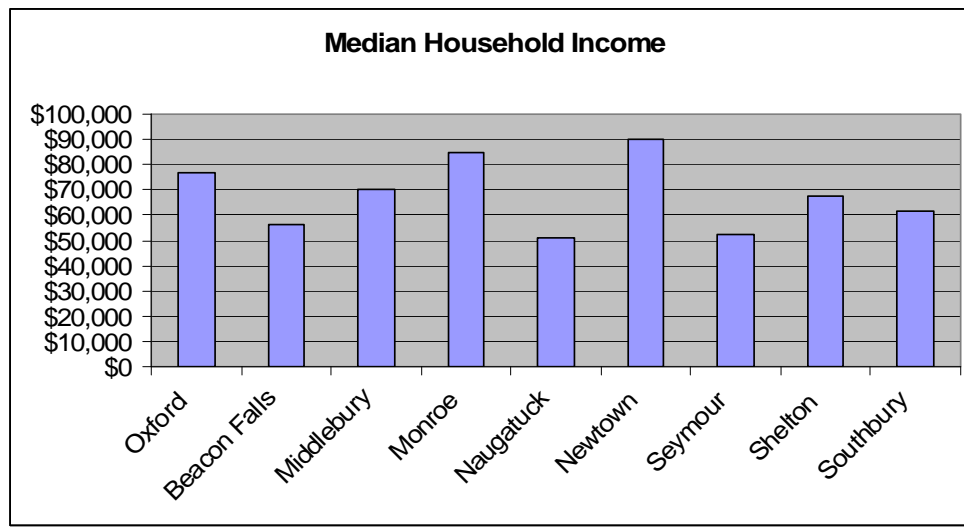
**Table III-7 Median Household Income – 2000**

Town	Median Household Inc.	Median Family Inc.	Per Capita Inc.
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>\$77,126</b>	<b>\$80,422</b>	<b>\$28,250</b>
Beacon Falls	\$56,592	\$62,461	\$25,285
Middlebury	\$70,469	\$81,370	\$33,056
Monroe	\$85,000	\$92,514	\$34,161
Naugatuck	\$51,247	\$59,216	\$22,757
Newtown	\$90,193	\$99,192	\$37,786
Seymour	\$52,408	\$65,012	\$24,056
Shelton	\$67,292	\$75,523	\$29,893
Southbury	\$61,919	\$81,109	\$32,545

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

The median household income in Oxford is higher than that of all area towns except Newtown and Monroe. (Refer to Table III-7 and Figure III-8.)

**Figure II-8 Median Household Income**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

## **2. Housing**

The nature and character of residential development is a vitally important component of the physical development of the community. In most communities, including Oxford, residential uses encompass the majority of existing and planned land uses within the community. In addition, the quality of life of a community and its residents are usually largely determined by the nature, characteristics and condition of its housing stock.

### **A. Characteristics**

The nature of a community's housing stock is often a defining characteristic of the community. Table III-8 and Figures III-9 thru III-13 compare the composition of Oxford's housing stock with other area communities.

The data shows that the overwhelming composition of the housing stock in Oxford is single-family residences. Most of the remainder of the housing stock is two-family residences, but this encompasses a very small percentage of the Town's housing stock.

The predominance of single-family residences in Oxford is very evident when the Town is compared with the State, New Haven County and other area communities. The proportion of single-family housing units in Oxford is significantly higher than that of the overall State averages and that of the County. Oxford is one of four area communities with a very high concentration of single-family housing, the others being Middlebury, Monroe and Newtown. Amongst

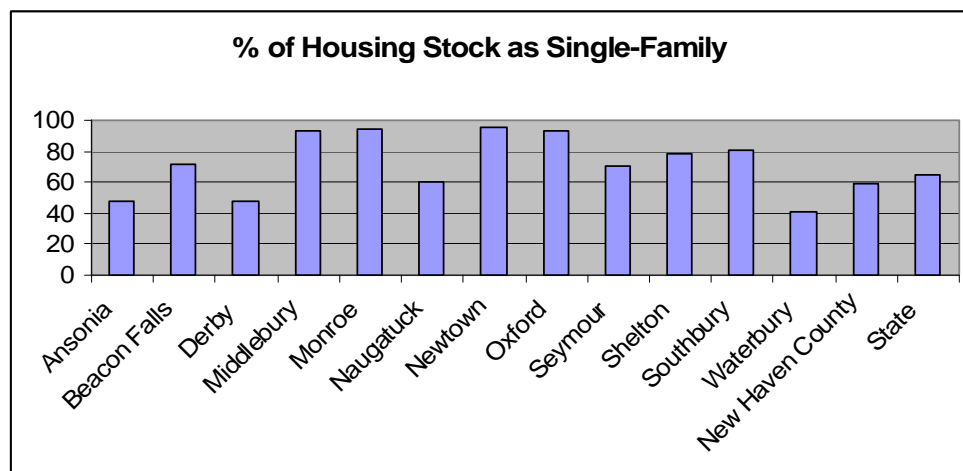
area communities, Waterbury, Ansonia and Derby have the lowest concentration of single-family residences, all less than fifty percent of the housing stock.

**Table III-8 Composition of Housing Stock by Percentage – 2003**

	Single Family Units	2 Family Units	3-4 Family Units	5 + Family Units	Mobile Homes
Ansonia	48.2	27.7	13.2	10.8	0.1
Beacon Falls	72.0	4.8	4.9	11.1	7.3
Derby	47.2	23.0	12.2	17.6	0.3
Middlebury	93.2	1.6	0.8	4.4	0
Monroe	93.8	0.8	1.8	3.6	0
Naugatuck	59.7	12.1	9.5	15.8	2.8
Newtown	95.0	1.4	1.5	1.0	1.1
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Seymour	70.6	7.8	4.6	16.9	0.2
Shelton	78.3	6.2	6.1	7.2	2.1
Southbury	81.0	5.4	7.7	5.5	0.4
Waterbury	40.5	11.2	21.7	26.5	0.1
New Haven County	59.1	9.7	10.6	21.2	0.5
State	64.5	8.5	9.0	17.3	0.8

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

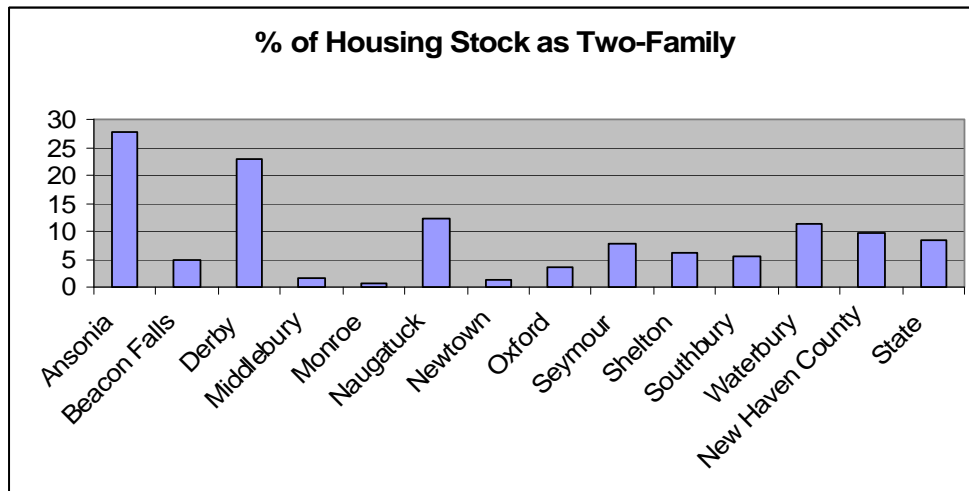
**Figure III-9 Percentage of Single-Family Housing**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

Figure III-10 illustrates the concentration of two-family homes in area communities. Oxford has a relatively low concentration of two-family homes, although it is slightly higher than some other area communities. The largest concentrations of two-family homes are found in Ansonia, Derby and Naugatuck.

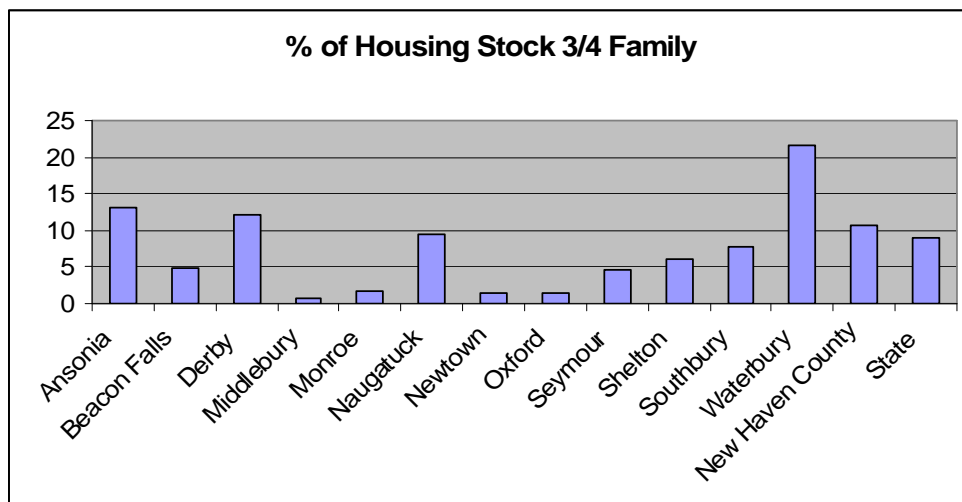
**Figure III-10 Percentage of Two-Family Housing**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

Three- and four-family homes are a relatively special component of the housing stock. They are primarily found within older neighborhoods, or more recent townhouse condominium communities. Oxford has very small number of these type homes (refer to Figure III-11).

**Figure III-11 Percentage of Three- and Four-Family Housing**

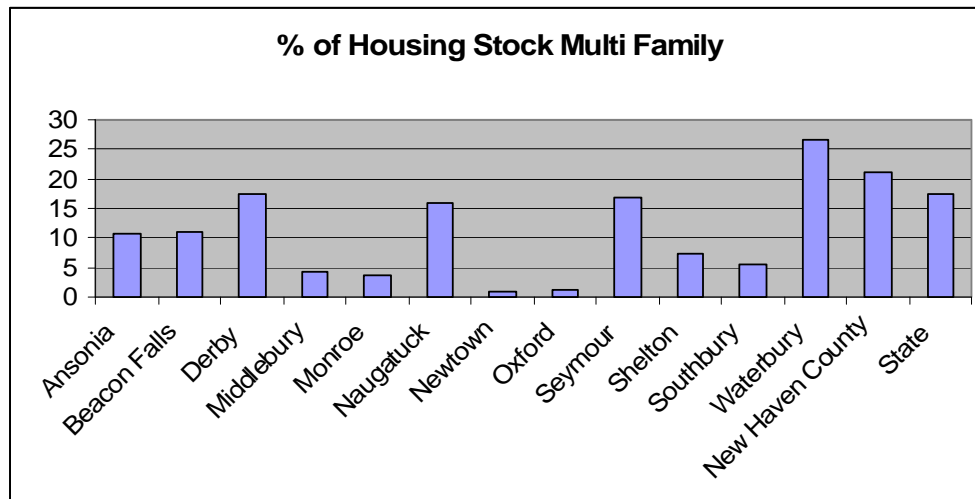


Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

The amount of housing stock within multi-family housing is often an indicator of the degree of urban uses within the area. The chart above indicates that the more urbanized communities have a higher percentage of their housing sock as multi-family uses. There are exceptions, as Beacon Falls has a significant

amount of its housing stock as multi-family units, although most of it is located within one development (refer to Figure III-12).

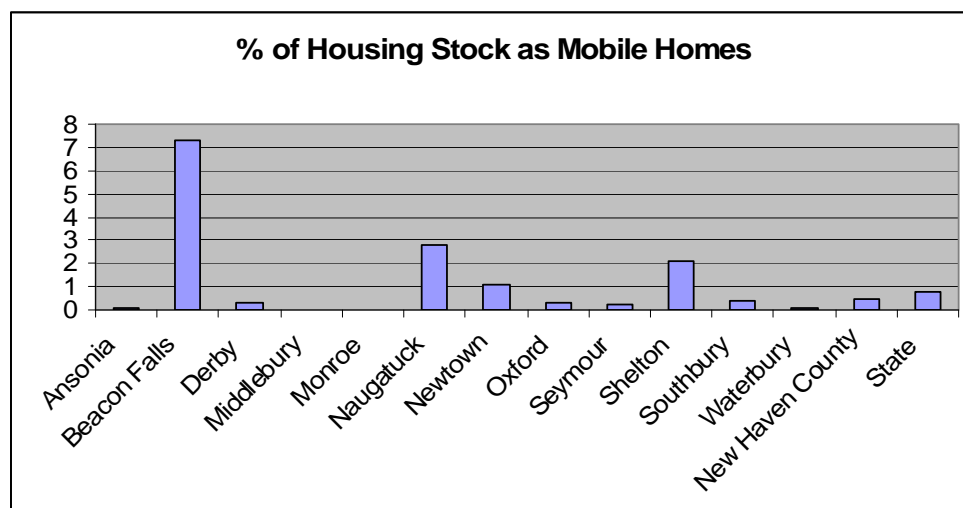
**Figure III-12 Percentage of Multi-Family Housing**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

Mobile homes are generally a minor component of the housing stock in Connecticut. This is true in Oxford, where there are only a small number of mobile homes scattered throughout the community (refer to Figure III-13).

**Figure III-13 Percentage of Mobile Homes**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)



The data indicates a relatively new housing stock in Oxford, with less than 30% of the units constructed before 1970. Over two-fifths of the units have been constructed since 1980.

**Table III-9 Age of Housing in Oxford**

<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Built 1999 to March 2000	103	3.4
Built 1995 to 1998	274	9
Built 1990 to 1994	180	5.9
Built 1980 to 1989	760	25
Built 1970 to 1979	684	22.5
Built 1960 to 1969	290	9.5
Built 1950 to 1959	278	9.1
Built 1940 to 1949	213	7
Built 1939 or earlier	262	8.6

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

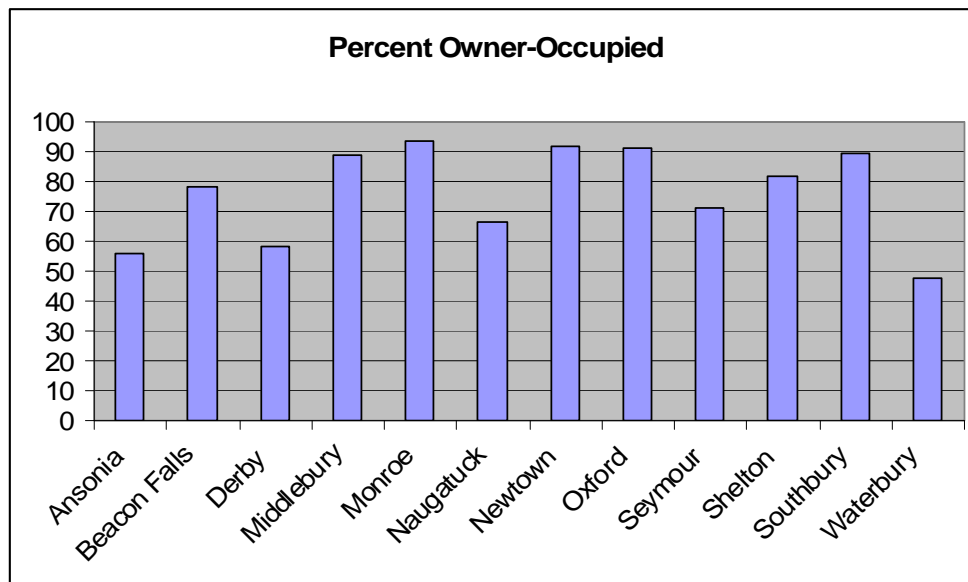
A very high percent of the housing stock in Oxford is owner occupied, similar to that of other area suburban/rural communities such as Middlebury, Monroe, Newtown and Southbury (refer to Table III-10 and Figure III-14).

**Table III-10 Percent Owner-Occupied Housing**

	<b>Owner Occupied %</b>	<b>Renter Occupied %</b>
Ansonia	55.6	44.4
Beacon Falls	78.4	21.6
Derby	58.2	41.8
Middlebury	89.0	11.0
Monroe	93.4	6.6
Naugatuck	66.5	33.5
Newtown	91.9	8.1
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>91.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>
Seymour	71.2	28.8
Shelton	81.8	18.2
Southbury	89.5	10.5
Waterbury	47.7	52.4

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

**Figure III-14 Percent Owner-Occupied Housing**



Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

**B. Growth of Housing Stock**

The growth in the housing stock of Oxford area communities since 1990 is illustrated in Table III-11. This time period was used as it is a long range time period, and it includes economic areas of recession and expansion.

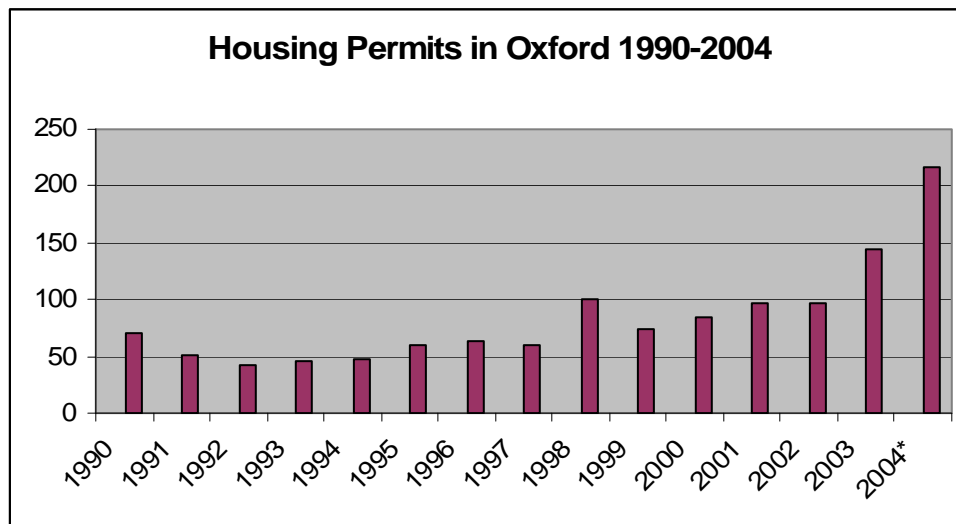
**Table III-11 Housing Permits 1990 and 2004**

	Year															Total – 90- 04
	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	
Ansonia	15	19	46	49	34	27	23	16	33	40	38	22	22	21	16	421
Beacon Falls	18	22	27	25	18	18	22	25	24	49	48	24	14	17	26	377
Derby	17	13	13	36	38	0	0	33	26	55	22	20	17	15	15	320
Middlebury	6	6	12	9	16	31	28	26	32	29	34	30	33	42	70	404
Monroe	36	61	84	90	94	119	115	125	111	69	51	34	36	32	27	1,084
Naugatuck	99	62	86	80	81	68	58	44	57	64	68	47	66	66	95	1,041
Newtown	69	92	143	207	213	210	199	195	238	221	103	164	195	159	137	2,545
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>1,249</b>
Seymour	40	32	58	66	33	27	52	66	54	46	43	45	122	46	39	769
Shelton	114	137	143	150	215	208	173	168	227	169	121	119	141	85	132	2,302
Southbury	58	97	94	198	122	5	9	93	118	105	81	70	113	116	109	1,388
Waterbury	354	239	116	95	134	180	67	43	57	66	114	46	69	138	71	1,789

Source: State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

The data shows that housing permits in Oxford have increased significantly within the past several years. 2004 had the highest number of permits issued of any year, but the number of permits issued in Oxford has increased over the past seven years. More permits for new residential units were issued in Oxford in 2004 than in any other area community (refer to Figure II-15).

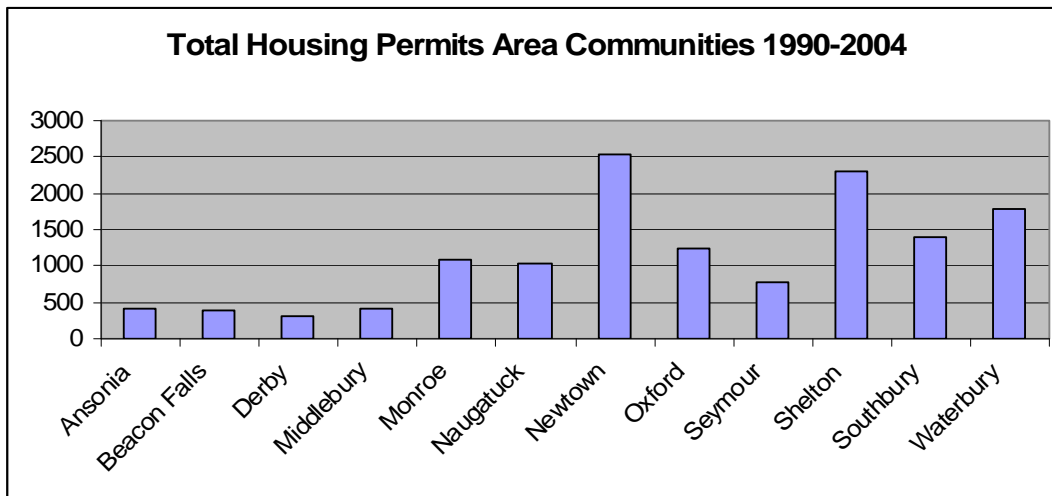
**Figure III-15 Oxford Housing Permits 1990 and 2004**



Source: Town of Oxford Building Department

Although Oxford had the most residential development in 2004, over the long term its residential growth has been more comparable with other area communities. Since 1990, Oxford has had about one-half the number of new residential permits of Newtown, which had the most of any area communities. Shelton, Southbury and Waterbury all had more new residential units over this period of time than Oxford. Therefore, while Oxford has experienced significant residential growth in recent years, over the longer term, its residential growth is not much different than that what was experienced in other area communities (refer to Figure III-16).

**Figure III-16 Oxford Housing Permits 1990 and 2004**



Source: Town of Oxford Building Department

**C. Housing Affordability**

The affordability of housing has some inherent subjectivity to it. What is affordable to some people may not be affordable to others.

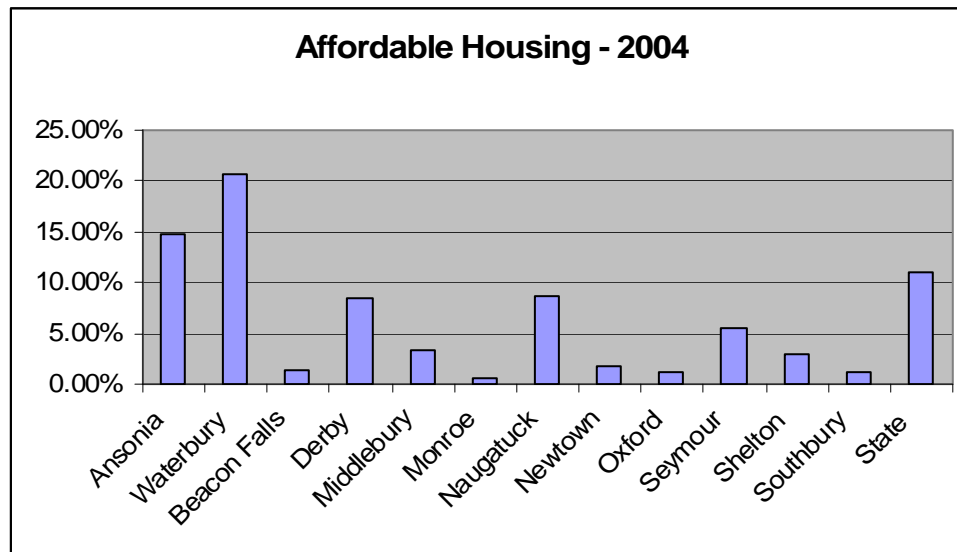
A narrow definition of affordability is included within Section 8-30g of the Connecticut State Statutes. This chapter, often referred to as the Affordable Housing Appeals Act defines housing units as affordable if; (1) they are governmentally assisted either through construction or ongoing public subsidy and made available to low and moderate income residents; (2) owner-occupied homes purchased with a mortgagee issued by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority or the Farmers Home Administration or (3) restricted by deed as to cost and occupancy for low or moderate income residents. The affordability of housing in accordance with this definition is illustrated in Table III-12 and Figure III-17 for area communities.

**Table III-12 Housing Affordability**

Town	2000 Census Housing Units	Governmentally Assisted Units	CHFA/FmHA Mortgages	Deed Restricted	Total Assisted	Percent
Ansonia	7,937	1,053	116	NA	1,169	14.73%
Waterbury	46,827	7,143	2,553	NA	9,696	20.71%
Beacon Falls	2,104	6	25	NA	31	1.47%
Derby	5,568	402	67	NA	469	8.42%
Middlebury	2,494	76	9	NA	85	3.41%
Monroe	6,601	30	7	NA	37	0.56%
Naugatuck	12,341	757	305	NA	1,062	8.61%
Newtown	8,601	123	12	15	150	1.74%
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>3,420</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1.20%</b>
Seymour	6,356	276	78	NA	354	5.57%
Shelton	14,707	318	45	82	445	3.03%
Southbury	7,799	85	11	NA	96	1.23%
<b>State</b>	<b>124,755</b>	<b>10,303</b>	<b>3,235</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>13,635</b>	<b>10.93%</b>

Source: State of Connecticut, Department of Economic and Community Development

**Figure III-17 Oxford Affordable Housing – 2004**



Source: State of Connecticut, Department of Economic and Community Development

The importance of this definition is that the Affordable Housing Appeals Statute allows local zoning regulations to be overridden if the proposed development includes at least 30% of the units as affordable, in accordance with certain

requirements. Communities are exempt from this law if they have a minimum of 10% of their housing stock classified as affordable by the Department of Economic and Community Development. DECD performs an annual evaluation. The 2004 evaluation found only Waterbury and Ansonia of area communities met the qualifications for exemption. Oxford, with 1.2% of its housing stock classified as affordable could not meet that exemption. In fact, it is statistically impossible for Oxford to create enough units to become exempt from the Affordable Housing Appeals Statute.

It should be understood that this particular measure of affordable housing is heavily weighted towards the more urban communities. These communities have an older housing stock, a history of government sponsored residential development, and the utilities and community structure to support higher densities of housing. It is more difficult to have affordable housing as classified by the State Statutes be developed in the more rural and suburban communities.

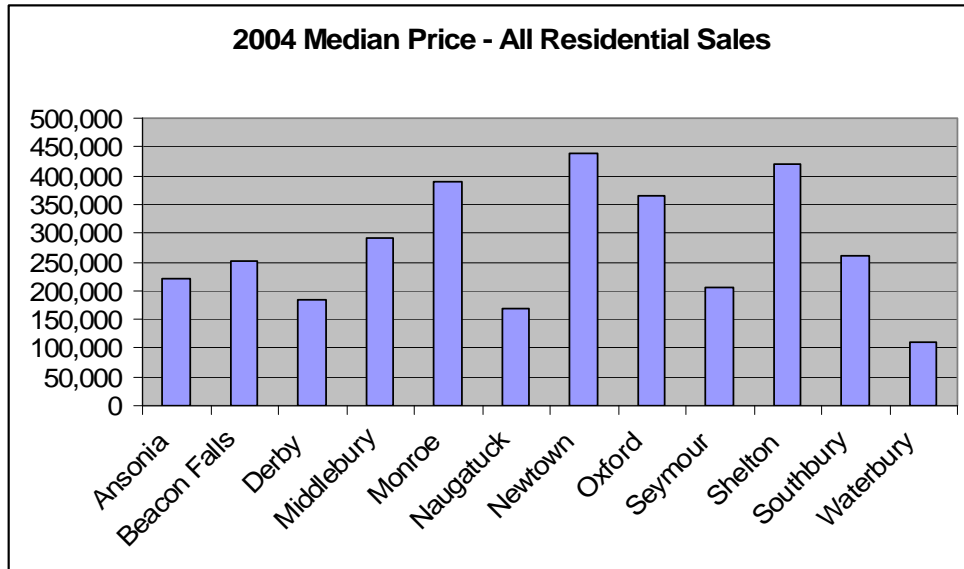
There have been rapidly escalating sales prices throughout most communities in the region. Median sales prices in Oxford have doubled in the past four years. However, prices still remain lower than the area communities within Fairfield County (refer to Table III-13 and Figures III-18 and III-19).

**Table III-13 Median Sales Price – 2004**

	<b>Single-Family</b>	<b>All Sales</b>	<b>% Change 2000-2004</b>
Ansonia	222,000	219,700	83
Beacon Falls	265,000	251,000	100
Derby	197,215	185,000	59
Middlebury	228,950	290,000	66
Monroe	415,000	389,500	57
Naugatuck	191,500	168,000	45
Newtown	437,500	440,000	48
<b>Oxford</b>	<b>348,500</b>	<b>364,900</b>	<b>103</b>
Seymour	241,000	205,000	50
Shelton	325,000	420,000	46
Southbury	369,000	260,000	56
Waterbury	119,900	110,000	35

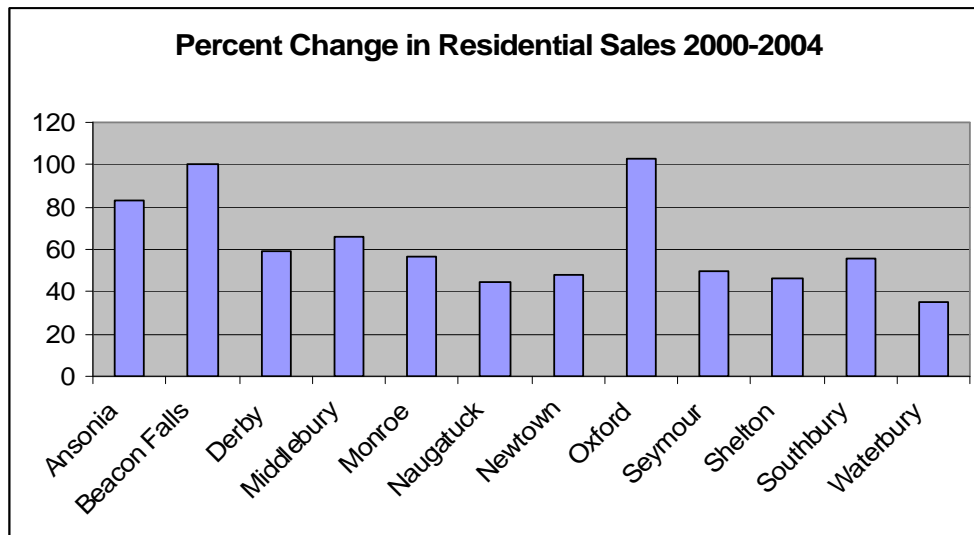
Source: The Warren Group

**Figure III-18 Residential Median Sales – 2004**



Source: The Warren Group

**Figure III-19 Percent Change in Residential Sales – 2000 – 2004**



Source: The Warren Group

The housing prices in Oxford and most other area communities are a direct function of the rapid residential price escalation experienced throughout western Connecticut. The problem of affordability of housing for younger residents, elderly, service workers and others is experienced throughout the State.

#### D. Age Restricted Housing

Studies indicate that Oxford would have the highest ratio of age-restricted housing compared with the current eligible population. However, this ratio will become lower as more people aged 55 and over move into new units.

The demographic analysis indicates that Oxford has an aging population. Oxford is attracting residents from other communities now due to a variety of demographic and economic factors. The choice of the community for aged restricted housing is whether Oxford wishes to continue to specifically attract residents 55 and over.

There community would achieve a range of economic benefits to continue to permit and/or pursue age-restricted housing. Aside from the positive fiscal impact, these residents will consume goods and services that may be provided by local businesses. These services would include all medical related services. In addition to doctor's offices, these services could include pharmacies, home health care services, medical laboratories and other providers of specialized medical services.

#### E. Regulation of Residential Development

Most of homes in Oxford are single-family detached dwellings, and most of the land is zoned for Single-family residential development. Therefore, we anticipate that most of the residential development in Oxford within the foreseeable future will be conventional single-family homes within subdivisions, with a minimum lot size of two acres, as required in the Residential District A regulations of the Oxford Zoning Regulations.

Many communities, seeking to retain their rural character have used multi-acres minimum lot zoning regulations as the principal method. Unfortunately, this alone has not prevented the disruption of natural features and development in inappropriate areas. The Town of Oxford, in the face of rapid residential development recognized this several years ago and began using the "Minimum Buildable Land Concept" within their zoning regulations. This concept is based upon the premise that the actual amount and configuration of land that can be utilized within a parcel of land is at least as important as the overall size of the land. Therefore, the Town of Oxford requires that in addition to a minimum lot size of two acres, the following requirements for the establishment of a minimum building lot:

- There be at least one and one-half acres of contiguous non-wetland area.
- There be a square buildable area with minimum dimensions of 175' that is located totally outside of the wetland area.



- There be no disruption of large contiguous areas with slopes in excess of 35%.
- That it be shown that all lots will be able to accommodate a relatively level rear yard area extending at least 50' from the foundation of the house.

The implementation of this concept and its embodiment within the zoning and subdivision regulations has worked to assure that each new building lot can accommodate sound residential development without undue disruption of the natural environment.

## **B. Housing Goals Policies & Recommendations**

### **1. Housing Goal:**

***All expansion of the housing stock should be of the highest quality and consistent with the rural character of the community.***

#### **A. Policies**

1. Detached single-family housing shall remain the predominant form of housing within the community.
2. Preserve the integrity and quality of existing neighborhoods.
3. The neighborhood should be the basis for residential development in Oxford, with residential development designed to create and/or enhance the sense of neighborhood.
4. Continue to ensure that residential development includes the preservation of open space.
5. Provide limited new opportunities for housing of residents aged 55 and over in high quality developments that further the goals of the community, in addition to those developments already approved.
6. Recognize the need to provide affordable housing to residents of Oxford, who cannot afford the current high costs of housing, in a way consistent with the character of the community.
7. Ensure that the residential development can be safely accommodated by the road system of the area. This is especially important in areas west of Route 188.
8. Plan for an ultimate population of approximately 20,000, to provide for a superior quality of life for present and future Oxford Residents.

#### **B. Strategies**

1. The Town's zoning regulations should permit age-restricted housing under the following circumstances:
  - Residential Golf Community District – Approval has been granted for expansion of this zone. The road system would need additional improvements to accommodate expansion. Additional expansion

beyond current approvals would not be warranted within the foreseeable future.

- Route 34 Corridor – There are several parcels along Route 34 that have been disturbed through earth removal or other operations. Age-restricted housing offers the opportunity to restore and use the land in a way that can minimize the disruption of the topography in the area.
  - Route 67 Corridor – The planned installation of sewers offers the opportunity for age-restricted developments near Route 67. This would include properties with frontage on Route 67 and properties nearby.
2. The use of conservation subdivisions should be considered as a way to permit residential development and to protect sensitive environmental areas.
  3. Continue to include methods to protect the slopes and hillsides of Oxford in residential development.
  4. Evaluate the regulations to ensure that the placement of drainage facilities in residential subdivisions do not detract from the quality of the subdivision.
  5. Continue use of the Minimum Buildable Land concept within the zoning and subdivision regulations to determine lot size within the zoning regulations. This concept is embodied within the Oxford Zoning Regulations and creates a complimentary set of standards that factor in actual build able area as well as overall lot size. Major components of this approach include:
    - Minimum contiguous non-wetland areas;
    - Minimum buildable square;
    - Limitations and safeguards concerning regarding;
    - Protection of steep slopes.
  6. Amend the subdivision regulations to allow the Commission to require that specific building envelopes be designated on lots if the Commission determines that certain environmental features on the lots should not be disturbed during the construction process.

## IV. ENVIRONMENTAL & NATURAL RESOURCES



### A. Existing Conditions

Residents have indicated that the rural character and natural environment are very important aspects to Oxford's quality of life. Although the community has experienced substantial growth in the recent past, much of the natural environment of Oxford remains.

#### 1. Topography

Oxford is a community of hills and valleys with very few large level areas. The town's overall topography consists of three upland areas, separated by the lowlands and valleys along the Little River and Eight Mile Brook. The valley areas are not broad, nor do they contain extensive areas of floodplain. The upland areas are bisected by numerous smaller stream valleys, making a generally rolling topography.

The highest point in the Town is on Towantic Hill, at 773' above mean sea level, just east of Riggs Street. The lowest elevation is along the banks of the Housatonic River, north of the Seymour Town Line, at an elevation of 47 feet

above mean sea level. The Housatonic River defines the southwest boundary of the Town. The land rises sharply from the river, with hills and ridges defining the area northeast of Route 34, which runs along the river. The northern area of Oxford, around the airport, is a plateau, where the topography is less severe.

The severe topography of Oxford has defined the traditional development pattern of the community. Nearby communities along the Naugatuck River valley were urbanized centers for the past century, but the highlands and severe topography of Oxford limited development until recently. The topography, wooded hillsides and areas of severe slope still define the community and influence the pattern of development. However, as areas with less development constraints within southwestern Connecticut have developed, developers have looked for areas which have presented prior developmental challenges. As a result, there has been increasing pressure for the development of areas with environmental challenges. This has resulted in development pressure on Oxford hillsides. The Oxford Planning and Zoning Commission responded to this pressure in 2004, when the approved amendments to the Zoning Regulations that would control and limit development and alteration of sloped areas.

## **2. Inland Wetlands**

Connecticut statutes define wetlands as those soil types designated poorly drained, very poorly drained, and alluvial and floodplain. These soil types perform several valuable functions:

- Flood control, through absorption of water and reduction of runoff;
- Water Quality, by absorbing contaminants and allowing vegetation to renovate water quality;
- Wildlife habitat is a source of food and shelter for a wide variety of animal and aquatic life;
- Water availability, by slowly releasing the water that they have absorbed into the ground and recharging the aquifer; and
- A range of other conservation, economic aesthetic, recreational and other uses and values.

To protect these functions and values in Oxford, activities within wetland areas are regulated by the Oxford Inland Wetlands Commission. The Commission is charged by State law to regulate the use of wetlands; “to protect the citizens of the State by making provisions for the protection, preservation, maintenance and use of the inland wetlands and watercourses by minimizing their disturbance and pollution; maintaining and improving water quality in accordance with the highest standards set by federal, state or local authority; preventing damage from erosion, turbidity or siltation; preventing loss of fish and other beneficial aquatic organisms, wildlife and vegetation and the destruction of the natural habitats thereof; deterring and inhibiting the danger of flood and pollution; protecting recreational and other public and private uses and values; and protecting the

state's potable fresh water supplies from the dangers of drought, overdraft, pollution, misuse and mismanagement by providing an orderly process to balance the need for economic growth of the state and the use of its land with the need to protect its environment and ecology in order to forever guarantee to the people of the state, the safety of such natural resources for their benefiting and enjoyment and for the benefit and enjoyment of generations yet unborn;" (Section 22-36 CGS.)

The State defines wetlands by soil types. (Refer to Figure IV 1.) The map indicates that many are located the Town's watercourses. There are also many smaller wetland areas of differing characteristics located throughout the Town. Most of the wetlands retain certain natural characteristics that make them important components of the storm drainage and natural ecosystems. Some of the wetland areas have characteristics or locations that can significantly restrict the development potential of building sites.

### **3. Waterbodies**

The most significant water body impacting the Town of Oxford is the Housatonic River, and Lake Zoar, which is the portion of the river above the Stevenson Dam. The Housatonic River flows from the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts into Long Island Sound, between Milford and Stratford, approximately ten miles downstream of the Oxford town line. The river defines the southwestern border of Oxford, separating it from Shelton, Monroe, and Newtown. The river, as it flows past Oxford, is broad and slow flowing, and it has long been a recreational resource, particularly upstream of the Stevenson Dam. Jackson's Cove, an important recreational resource of the Town, is located on the shore of Lake Zoar.

The Little River and Eight Mile Brook are the other important watercourses in the community. Both have several tributaries that flow through Town. The Little River runs through the center of the Town, along the Route 67 corridor, before flowing into the Naugatuck River in Downtown Seymour.

There are several ponds and small lakes in Oxford, many of which have been created by the impoundment of a watercourse. The largest of these are Swan Lake and Towantic Pond. Swan Lake is in the southern section of the town. The shores of Swan Lake were subdivided prior to the establishment of land use regulations and developed for vacation cottages during the early part of the twentieth century. Homes were built around the lake on lots as small as five to ten thousand square feet with onsite waste deposal systems. Originally constructed as seasonal homes, the conversion of these homes to permanent dwellings has potential implications for the water quality of Swan Lake. Care must be taken to not further degrade the water quality of the lake.

Towantic Pond is located in the northern part of the Town, just east of Towantic Road and the Larkin Bridal Path. Some subdivision activity has occurred north of the pond, but unlike Swan Lake, the lots are larger and more consistent with contemporary zoning and waste disposal standards. The area around Towantic Pond was recently included within an approved age restricted housing development, of which dedication of the pond and land around it was a condition of approval.

#### **4. Drainage Basins**

Drainage basins are based upon a river or other principal watercourse. They are defined as all the land that drains into the watercourse. The largest category of drainage basins is Major Drainage Basins. These are relatively large areas drained by major rivers or watercourses. All of Oxford is within the Housatonic Major Drainage Basin.

Regional Basins are defined by the tributaries of the major watercourses. The Town is relatively evenly divided between two regional basins. The western half of the Town is within the Housatonic Regional Basin and the eastern half within the Naugatuck Regional Basin.

The sub regional drainage basins are based upon specific rivers, streams or other water bodies. The Housatonic, Kettletown Brook and Eight Mile Brook are all part of the Housatonic Regional Basin and drain the western area of the Town (Refer to Figure IV-2). The Little River, Naugatuck and Long Meadow Pond Brook sub regional basin are all part of the Naugatuck basin and drains the eastern half of the Town. The Little River sub regional basin is the largest within the Town, draining a wide north-south swath through the center of Oxford.

#### **5. Floodplains**

Floodplains are low land along watercourses that are subject to periodic flooding. A 100-year flood is a flood that has a one percent probability of occurring in a given year. Similarly, a 500-year flood is one with a 0.2 percent probability of occurring in a given year. The extent and boundaries of the floodplains have been determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, (FEMA). Floodways are those areas within the floodplains that convey the floodwaters. The floodways are subject to water being carried at relatively high velocities and forces. The floodway fringe are those areas of the floodplain outside of the floodway which are subject to inundation but do not convey the floodwaters.

Development or alteration of areas within the 100 year floodplain area is restricted by local regulations. Development activities that are permitted must conform with standards related to safety and the impact on floodwaters. Generally, development within the floodway fringe is permitted if it is adequately flood proofed, and has a base floor elevation above the level of the 100-year

flood, while development within the floodway is more restricted. These standards have been incorporated within Town regulations. They have been adopted to be in compliance with FEMA regulations, so that properties in Town are eligible for federally sponsored flood insurance.

Although there are numerous rivers and streams within the Town, there are not extensive floodplain areas. The steep topography has limited the extent of the floodplains along the smaller rivers and streams to the lowland area immediately adjacent to the watercourses.

The floodplain along the Housatonic River has been controlled by the Stevenson Dam. The shore area upstream of the dam is part of Lake Zoar, and the flood elevations are a function of the spillway elevation and capacity, so potential flooding is limited. The potential flooding of the land downstream of the dam is somewhat limited by the flood control capacities of the dam. The extent is limited to portions of the strip of land between Route 34 and the river.

## **6. Groundwater Resources**

Groundwater is the result of precipitation that has been absorbed into the ground. Water in the ground may either be returned to the atmosphere through evaporation and transpiration, or it may percolate downward to the water table and eventually become part of the groundwater. At any particular time, this groundwater may be held in place or move down gradient to springs, streams, wetlands, and lakes. It can also be transported back to the surface through wells and serve as a supply of drinking water.

The quality of the groundwater resources is particularly important in Oxford, whereas a vast majority of landowners obtain their drinking water from individual on-site wells. Therefore, it becomes particularly important to protect the groundwater quality of those areas of Oxford that rely on wells.

The quality of groundwater is affected by land use and activity on the land above the aquifer. A pollutant will tend to move with the natural flow of the groundwater through the underlying soil and bedrock. In time and over distance, pollutants will decrease in concentration as a result of dilution, decay absorption and death of bacteria. The sources of groundwater pollution are extremely varied. Sanitary landfills, road salt storage and application, leaks and spills of petroleum or other chemicals, industrial or commercial waste disposal, septic systems, land disposal of septic and sewage sludge and some agricultural practices are all potential sources of groundwater pollution.

Public Act 89-305 requires that public and private water companies serving more than 1,000 persons prepare maps delineating the recharge areas for wells using stratified drift aquifers. The Department of Environmental Protection is required to formulate regulations for land uses in these designated recharge areas. These



regulations are to include best management practice standards for land uses in these areas, including standards for existing regulated activities and a compliance schedule for nonconforming activities. The most recent information from the State Department of Environmental Protection shows an area of potential impact within the southeastern area of the Town, adjacent to the Seymour town line.

## **7. Soil Resources**

The soil characteristics of a rural community such as Oxford are important determinants in the pattern of land use. Most of the land in Oxford cannot be served by public sanitary sewers or water. Therefore, all water supply and wastewater disposal must occur on site. The inherent physical characteristics of the land determine the capability of the land to accommodate these necessary on-site functions. Different soil types have different capabilities to accommodate on-site wastewater disposal systems. Soils with high concentrations of clay are more difficult for the construction and maintenance of on-site wastewater disposal systems.

The construction of homes on soils that were inadequate to support on-site wastewater disposal has been a significant problem. Cotemporary health codes, as enforced in Oxford by the Pomperaug Health District, has resulted in performance standards that must be demonstrated prior to the construction of dwellings or commercial uses utilizing on-site disposal systems. The Oxford zoning and subdivision regulations have further supported these requirements, through the adoption of minimum buildable area provisions. Therefore, recent development has been consistent with the physical capabilities of the soil types.

## **8. Agricultural Land**

Farmland is the source of the nation's food and fiber. It has been disappearing at a rapid rate, largely through development of farmland to urban uses. Farming is still a major industry, and does make contributions to local economies.

The State of Connecticut, in recognition of the value of the preservation of agricultural land, has had a special Farmland Preservation Program, in which the development rights for farms, where purchased, with the ownership of the land and the right to farm is maintained by the farmer. The current Open Space Purchase Program does provide for the purchase of agricultural lands, or the purchase of the development rights to those properties.

Oxford has a long-standing agricultural heritage. Although most of the land was too steep or rocky for extensive cropland, there is a strong heritage of dairy farms within the Town. There has been a pronounced loss of dairy farming in Connecticut over the past several decades, as the rising price of land has made

it more economical to move dairy herds to more inexpensive areas of the Northeast, such as northern New England and upstate New York.

Although the large dairy farms are disappearing, there is still an important agricultural “flavor” to Oxford. The resident survey indicated that the rural character of the Town was very important to the residents, and agriculture can be an important component of that rural character. Many residents of Oxford enjoy living in the community as it affords them the opportunity to raise or keep a small number of horses, goats or other livestock. These “hobby” farms may be small, and not the primary source of income to the landowner; however, they still contribute to the cultural landscape and the overall character of the community.

Unfortunately, the raising of livestock has some potential impacts upon neighboring properties. Even a well run dairy farm will have odors that will be considered unpleasant by many people, especially those not accustomed to a rural environment. The challenge facing the community is how to balance the desire for a rural character with the potential impacts of agricultural aspects of that rural character.

## B. Goals, Policies & Recommendations

### 1. Environmental Preservation Goal

***The preservation of Oxford's natural resources and open spaces for the benefit of current and future residents should be of the highest priority, given the dwindling supply of natural land within the Town.***



### A. Policies

1. Preserve the quality of the Town's bodies of fresh water, so that they may be used for public recreation and environmental conservation.
2. Protect the groundwater resources of the Town as much of Oxford will continue to utilize individual wells into the foreseeable future.
3. Work with State and Regional agencies to maintain the air quality of the Town and Region.
4. Continue to protect inland wetland areas from development that impairs their ability to store floodwater, to control erosion, to recharge and purify surface and groundwater and to support wildlife.

5. Protect the unique natural features of Oxford, which define the character of the community, such as hilltops, and stream corridors.
6. Preserve the agricultural resources of Oxford, as an important component of the community.

B. Strategies

1. Given fiscal constraints, the Town should continue to utilize a range of other methods of open space preservation in addition to public acquisition. These methods include imposition of conservation easements during the development review process, dedication of open space for subdivisions, payment of a fee-in-lieu of dedication and other appropriate methods.
2. Continue to enforce the wetland regulations. There should not be significant development on wetland areas, especially when the wetlands are significant natural resources. Generally, alteration should be considered only when there is no feasible and prudent alternative. Wetland alteration should be permitted only in conjunction with mitigation procedures, which results in improved and/or replacement wetlands.
3. Continue to protect the slopes and hillsides of Oxford in residential development, through provisions in the zoning and subdivision regulations.
4. Recognize the Housatonic River as an important natural resource to the community, and work to expand physical and visual access to the river.
5. Utilize public-private partnerships to preserve open space whenever possible.
6. Ensure that the zoning regulations do not inhibit the operation of bona fide agricultural operations. The Commission should consider permitting “farm stores” and other agriculturally related uses by special exception in residential zones when conducted in conjunction with an agricultural operation.
7. Formulate and adopt aquifer protection regulations to protect the drinking water of Oxford residents.
8. Continue to require the installation of street trees in conjunction with all new development to enhance the streetscapes of the community.
9. Evaluate the feasibility of requiring protection of hilltops within the zoning regulations.

## 2. Open Space Goal



***Preserve a system of open space throughout the Town that will maintain and enhance the community's rural environment***

### A. Policy

1. Provide an interconnected system of passive and active recreation that links neighborhoods within Oxford with open space and community resources.

### B. Strategies

1. Explore the utilization of open space development as an effective method to preserve natural features on a site as an alternative to conventional subdivisions. The amount of open space that could be preserved by this method should be 40% of the site, exceeding the maximum of 20% that can be preserved as part of a conventional subdivision.

2. Establish a system of natural river corridor greenways throughout the Town to protect the major watercourses of the Town. This shall include corridors with a minimum width of 100 feet, or 50 feet off the centerline of the watercourse. This should include Eight Mile Brook, Towantic Brook, Little River, and Jacks Brook.
3. A second greenway system should be established that would be more oriented toward a higher intensity of use. These greenways would consist of paved pathways that could be used for bicycling and other similar activities. The central focus of this type of greenway would be along Route 67 between the Town Hall and Great Hill Road or the Seymour Town Line. This greenway could utilize the Route 67 right-of-way and land along the Little River.
4. Greenways and paths can also be established along unused public rights of way such as Old Litchfield Turnpike, Larkey Road and Condon Road. It may be possible to utilize these rights-of-way to link the lands of the State Forest with Oxford Center.
5. Acquire for public usage Towantic Pond and the land around the pond, as a recreational facility for Town residents, which would be a component of an open space system that would include the State Bridal Trail.
6. Use open space to maintain the physical separation of Oxford from its neighboring communities, as much as feasible.
  - The southwest boundary is defined by the Housatonic River. Open space with views and/or access to the river should be acquired. This should include the steeply sloped areas rising from the river's floodplain.
  - The South Community Buffer with Seymour is partially developed, but the area contains existing open space and opportunities for future open space acquisitions.
  - The East Community Buffer separates Oxford from Beacon Falls and Naugatuck. Much of this area is within public ownership, as part of the Naugatuck State Forest, or land owned by the Town of Beacon Falls. The Town should strive to add to this area, particularly lands east of Chestnut Tree Hill Road.
7. The Town should strive to protect the major ridgeline through Town, generally lying within the area between Routes 67 and 188. This should be protected through open space acquisition, where feasible, including subdivision dedications.



## V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



### A. Existing Conditions

The Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) has prepared an analysis of the regional economy and how it may impact economic development efforts in Oxford. Refer to Appendix A. A summary of this analysis is provided below.

This analysis of Oxford and the economic region of which it is a part yield insights into the economic market and structure and opportunities for growth. As a result of this analysis certain key findings emerge:

1. **Reasonable access to arterial highways** - Although the town lacks direct access to interstate highways, both north-south and east-west corridors are within close proximity in neighboring towns.
2. **Superior market location** -Oxford, a fairly affluent community, is located within one of the wealthiest regions in the country. Further, it is within a

one-hour drive of the New York City metro area, one of the largest urban areas in the world and the financial services capital of North America.

3. **Strong regional retail demand** - Southwestern Connecticut is home to more than 439,000 households with total annual expenditures of \$29 billion, of which \$12.4 billion are retail expenditures.
4. **Open space and low population density are assets** - With large amounts of vacant and open space and with population density less than half that of the State, Oxford has an invaluable asset.
5. **Sound family structure** - In comparison to the state average, residents of Oxford are more likely to live in traditional two-parent households (83.7% vs. 67.7%) with children (40.3% vs. 32.2%) in owner-occupied housing (91.0% vs. 66.8%) with head-of-household aged 25 to 54 years (60% vs. 45%). Further, residents are more likely to have been born in Connecticut (76% vs. 57%) and were less likely to have moved between 1995 and 2000 (70% no move vs. 58% no move.)
6. **Relatively affluent, middle – income community** - With a 2004 median household income estimated at \$82,500, Oxford is more than 40 percent higher than the state average. Fifty-nine percent of Oxford households have annual income between \$60,000 and \$150,000 in comparison with 37 percent state-wide. This is also reflected in a poverty rate that is one-quarter of the state average.
7. **High levels of labor force participation** With 75 percent of the eligible population in the labor force, Oxford's participation rate is much higher than the state rate of almost 67 percent. This reflects positively on the skill and work ethic of the resident population.
8. **Affordable Housing** - As a result of higher incomes, affordable housing does not currently appear to be an issue for the community. Only 43 percent of households spend more than 30 percent of their income on mortgage or rent payments relative to 61 percent at the state level.
9. **Bedroom Community** - More than 85 percent of workers who live in Oxford commute to jobs in neighboring cities and towns with primary destinations being Shelton, Stratford and Bridgeport. About 1,200 workers commute into Oxford for employment purposes.
10. **Industry Growth Prospects** – Following a series of analyses, certain industries were identified as key to the Region's (Region equals Fairfield and New Haven counties) economic success and potentially suitable for Oxford as well. Industries are grouped into three categories:



## **Current Strengths**

The following Industries are part of the Region's trade sector and have seen recent growth. These industries have developed a presence in the area and thrive. Chief among these are:

- Securities and commodities
- Funds, trusts and other financial services
- Performing and creative arts
- Amusement and recreation

## **Retention Targets**

Industries that have done well in the past but, because of declining competitiveness may benefit from increased focus.

- Telecommunications
- Broadcasting
- Insurance carriers
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Nursing and residential care facilities

## **Emerging Strengths**

Refers to industries that are not currently part of the traded sector in the regional economy, but have seen some recent growth.

No industries were identified in this category although given the magnitude of retail leakage from Oxford, we believe there are some possibilities in this area such as furniture and home furnishings stores; and specialty food stores.

**11. Regional Clusters** - Finally, looking at groups of industries that share some common inputs and markets, we identified five regional industry clusters:

- Financial services
- Health care
- Business services
- Technology
- Specialized transport.

## **12. Potential Key Industries for Oxford**

Previous analyses were performed to determine the key industries in the Region. However, not all of these industries would be an appropriate fit in Oxford. Moreover, as a methodological matter, aggregating the three-digit NAICS industries into larger groupings clarifies our analysis and more accurately depicts the degree of variance within any industrial group examined. Thus, the key regional industries that may enhance Oxford's business community include:

- Financial Services;
- Health Care;
- Retail;
- Business Services;
- Technology; and
- Specialized Transport.

## B. Goals, Policies & Recommendations

### Economic Development Goal

***Promote the development of a twenty-first century economy that utilizes the assets of Oxford to promote economic opportunities for Oxford residents and provides the tax base to fund a level of municipal services required by Oxford's growing population.***



### A. Policy

1. Looking at groups of industries that share common inputs and markets, five regional industry clusters were identified that may be successful in the Town:
  - Financial services
  - Health care
  - Business services
  - Technology

- Specialized transport
2. The following industries have done well in the past but because of declining competitiveness may benefit from an increased strategic focus:
    - Telecommunications
    - Broadcasting
    - Insurance carriers
    - Professional, scientific and technical services
    - Nursing and residential care facilities

B. Strategies

1. Economic development and growth should be planned with an eye towards limiting sprawl and encouraging high-density use.
2. Due to a lack of retail presence in the Oxford region, millions of dollars each year are leaving the local economy and being spent elsewhere. If the Town was able to capture a portion of these retail sales, it would have a tremendous impact on the local economy.
3. The success of neighboring communities in attracting back-office activity from the New York metro area may warrant closer examination by the Town of Oxford. The Waterbury Oxford Airport offers a potential benefit to businesses that utilize air transport.

## **VI. TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION**



### **A. Existing Conditions**

#### **1. Existing Road System & Jurisdiction**

The jurisdiction of roads is important in that it indicates what agency has the authority to implement improvements or changes to a road. It also indicates who is responsible for maintenance.

The existing road system in the Town of Oxford consists of a network of State and local roads. The principal roads within the Town are state highways; Routes 67 (Oxford Road), 42, 34 (Roosevelt Drive), 188 (Quaker Farms Road), 486 (Oxford Airport Road). The Town, except for private roads, maintained by their owners, maintains all other roads.

## **2. Design Classifications**

Roads may be identified by their functional classifications, which are defined by a street's role in the hierarchical process of travel. This hierarchy of roads ranges from local roads that access individual properties to principal arterials that provide longer-range travel. Design classifications are often "designed into" a road in terms of paved width, pavement markings, limits to horizontal and vertical curves, and the type of median and curbs used. The first measure used to classify a road's function deals with the nature of the roadway network geographically.

It is important to understand design classifications when planning land use. The land uses appropriate for an area are often dependent, at least in part, on the type of roads and public transit that is available to adjacent land. For example, most housing types are best located on local roads, while nonresidential uses are often better suited to arterials.

Design classifications as developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, are described below. The Central Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, as part of their transportation planning process, has classified the roads in Oxford and elsewhere throughout the region. (Refer to Figure VI-1 for an illustration of the functional classifications of roads in Oxford.)

### **A. Principal Arterials**

Principal Arterials are characterized by corridor movement with trip length and density suitable for substantial statewide or interstate travel. Access to Principal Arterials is usually limited, especially in the case of Interstate Arterials. Route 34 (Roosevelt Drive) is classified as a Principal Arterial.

### **B. Minor Arterials**

Minor Arterials link cities, larger towns, and other traffic generators that are capable of attracting travel over long distances as well as serving transportation needs within communities. This class of highway provides more access to adjoining land uses, and has a higher frequency of access points and intersections with collectors and the local street system. Route 67 (Oxford Road) and Oxford Airport Road are both classified as minor arterials. Route 188, Quaker Farms Road is not classified as a regional minor arterial, but from the local perspective, it functions in that capacity.

### **C. Collectors**

Collector roads serve to connect places of importance within a community, link the local street system with the arterial system or link locally important traffic-

generating land uses with the arterial system. Generally, there are no limits to access with collectors. Local access is the collector's principal function, with traffic flow being incidental. Access to adjacent land uses along collectors is frequent. Christian Street, Hawley Road, Jacks Hill Road, Riggs Street, Route 42, (Chestnut Tree Hill Road, Pinesbridge Road) Governors Hill Road, Hogs Back Road, Quaker Farms Road, Great Hill Road, and a portion of Maple Tree Hill Road are classified a collector roads.

#### D. Local Roads

The primary purpose of Local Roads is to provide access to abutting land uses that generate little or no through traffic. Local Roads are generally not designed for high speeds or volumes of traffic. The remainders of Oxford roads are classified as Local Roads.

### **3. Traffic Counts and Areas of Potential Congestion**

Traffic counts were obtained from the Connecticut Department of Transportation Bureau of Policy and Planning for the Town of Oxford. The data was examined to determine the level of usage of existing roadways in the Town and to identify areas of congestion that may exist. Average Daily Traffic volumes for each of the Town's State routes are illustrated in Table VI-1.

Areas of congestion often indicate points where the design of the road, and/or the mixture and density of land uses is such that optimum operation is not possible. It is appropriate that a local government consider such limitations when planning, or in certain cases to plan remedies.



**Table VI-1 – Oxford Average Daily Traffic Volumes, 1997-2003**

Route	Location	1997 AADT	2000 AADT	2003 AADT
42	East of Old State Rd. #3	--	--	2,500
188	North of Governors Hill Rd.	--	--	3,400
67	NW of Riggs St.	13,000	13,300	13,800
34	West of Coppermine Rd.	--	--	8,700
42	North of Chestnut Hill Rd. #1	--	--	3,100
67	SE of Hogs Back Rd.	11,400	11,600	12,200
67	At Seymour Town line	17,300	18,200	19,200
42	At Beacon Falls Town line	2,100	2,300	2,500
188	At Seymour Town line	3,700	3,700	3,900
34	At Seymour Town line	--	10,400	9,000
188	At Southbury Town line	2,700	2,700	2,800
67	At Southbury Town line	10,100	10,800	10,500
--	Chestnut Tree Hill Rd. #1 north of Jenny La. #2	--	1,300	1,200
--	Griswold Rd. northwest of Chestnut Hill Rd. #2	--	600	700
--	Hogs Back Rd. east of Great Oak Rd.	--	--	1,300
--	Chestnut Tree Hill Rd. #2 north of Sheldon Dr.	--	--	1,000
188	North of Captain Wooster Rd.	--	--	2,900
67	NW of Governors Hill Rd.	--	--	12,900
67	SE of Route 42	--	--	12,600
67	North of Great Hill Rd.	--	--	16,800
42	East of Route 67 (Oxford Rd.)	2,200	2,300	2,000
67	South of Old State Rd. #3	12,000	13,200	13,500
67	North of West St.	13,100	14,300	15,100
486	Oxford Airport Rd. west of Christian St.	1,600	1,800	1,800
486	Oxford Airport Rd. east of Christian St.	600	600	500
67	SE of Park Rd.	14,300	15,800	16,700
67	North of Chestnut Tree Hill Rd. #1	12,200	13,300	13,600

Source: Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)

#### A. Route 67 (Oxford Road)

Route 67 falls under the jurisdiction of the CTDOT and is the main corridor through the center of town, providing access to Oxford Center. The road extends from Woodbridge through the center of Seymour, across Oxford, to Southbury and into Litchfield County, intersecting Route 188 at Southford Village. Route 67 is the primary connection between Oxford and the Route 8 Expressway, at the interchange in Seymour.

According to available data obtained from the CTDOT, traffic volumes have moderately increased since 1997. Route 67 is essential to the Town, as a large percentage of local traffic originating from surrounding areas and bound for Oxford use this route.



The steady increase of the counts may be generally attributed to regional and local growth as evidenced by increased building and investment in the area and the resulting increase in population. This length of Route 67 mostly provides access to nonresidential uses as well as to the majority of Oxford's restaurants, entertainment, retail and service uses.

Any future nonresidential growth in Oxford may impact the function of Route 67; however, the operation of Route 67 is especially sensitive to uses that require large trucks. Because of the narrowness of land between Route 67, little area has been allotted by existing nonresidential uses to allow proper turning radii for large trucks. Future land use along Route 67 should consider the abilities of any required large trucks to access sites.

B. Route 486 – Airport Access Road

Route 486, Airport Access Road falls under the jurisdiction of the CTDOT, is located in the northwestern portion of the Town and travels in an east-west direction between the Town of Southbury and the Waterbury-Oxford Airport. This is the widest road in Oxford and was constructed to accommodate large volumes of traffic.

The property along Airport Access Road is zoned for industrial and corporate office development. Development of these properties for this use would increase traffic volumes on this road, but the road has substantial capacity to accommodate additional development. However, additional development may result in capacity limitations on Route 188 and Interstate 84 interchange. Traffic volumes reported by the CTDOT for Route 486 have moderately increased during the six-year period from 1997 to 2003.

C. Route 188

Route 188 falls under the jurisdiction of the CTDOT and extends from Route 34 in Seymour, north through the western portion of Oxford, through Southford to the interchange with Interstate 84.

According to available data from the CTDOT, traffic volumes have moderately increased since 1997. Route 188 is important to the Town, as a large percentage of regional traffic originating from Interstate 84 use this route.

D. Route 42

Route 42 falls under the jurisdiction of the CTDOT and extends east from Route 67 near Oxford Center towards Beacon Falls and Route 8. Route 42 has relatively low traffic volumes within Oxford.

#### E. Route 34

Route 34 falls under the jurisdiction of the CTDOT and extends from the junction of Interstates 91 and 95 in New Haven to the junction of Route 6 and Interstate 84 in Newtown through West Haven, Orange, Derby, Seymour, Oxford, and Monroe. This corridor serves as the major route through southern Oxford, running along the north bank of the Housatonic River and linking the town with Route 8 in Derby. Traffic volumes in Oxford are generally low, although the width of the road does tend to encourage high speeds of travel.

#### 4. **Accident History**

High accident locations can often indicate where the design of a roadway or the mixture and density of land uses is such that dangerous conditions may result. Like areas of congestion, it is appropriate that local government consider high accident areas in planning future land use. While remedies for dangerous road locations are often beyond the capabilities of land use regulation, it is important that any land use patterns consider the potential to exacerbate problems.

Accident data includes only those local road injury and fatal motor vehicle traffic accidents that met the location criteria set by the CTDOT. Many accidents are not included in this analysis. These omissions include accidents that occurred on new roadways, accidents that occurred on roadways that changes, and accidents that the CTDOT was unable to adequately locate. Property damage only accidents that occurred on locally maintained roadways from April 1, 1992 to the present were not coded for inclusion in the CTDOT Accident History File. (Refer to Table VI-2.)

**Table VI-2 – Oxford Accidents, 1999-2003**

Route	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
67	71	62	63	69	93	358
34	12	23	18	22	24	99
42	5	14	7	3	15	44
188	18	27	15	16	21	97
486	0	2	1	1	0	4
487	0	0	1	0	1	2
Town	23	27	13	15	13	91
Total	129	155	118	126	167	695

Source: Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT)

Route 67 had the greatest number of accidents of all roads in Town, which is not surprising as it has the greatest traffic volumes. Between January 1999 and December 2003 there were 358 reported accidents on Route 67 within Oxford. These accidents resulted in 173 injuries and 3 fatalities. Analysis of available data does not indicate any particular trends with regards to the season of year, day of week or time of day that accidents occurred. The vast majority of accidents reported (77%) involved passenger vehicles.

Between January 1999 and December 2003 there were 91 reported accidents on Town Roads within Oxford. These accidents resulted in 115 injuries and 2 fatalities. Analysis of available data does not indicate any particular trends with regards to the season of year, day of week or time of day that accidents occurred. The vast majority of accidents reported (80%) involved passenger vehicles.

## 5. Waterbury-Oxford Airport<sup>2</sup>



The Waterbury-Oxford Airport, located in the north-central portion of the Town provides facilities and services for corporate, freight, and recreational flights. The airport is owned and operated by the CTDOT, Bureau of Aviation and Ports. The airport currently handles approximately 147,000 operations per year or about 400 flights per day. There are 235-based aircraft, of which 40 are medium and large corporate jets.

Keystone Aviation Service is the fixed-base operator of the airport. They offer servicing and maintenance as well as charter passenger service and airfreight. Double Diamond/Richmor Aviation offers charter passenger service. Business Air Service provides medium and small jet servicing and aircraft charter.

The Waterbury-Oxford Airport is a significant employer and an asset to the Town and surrounding communities. According to the 1995 Airport Master Plan, the airport contributed approximately seventeen million dollars into the regional

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<sup>2</sup> From Long Range Regional Transportation Plan: 2004-2030, Central Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments, pp. 35.

economy. Since 1995, the airport has experienced unprecedented growth, far above 1995 predictions. An update to the Master Plan began in 2004.

## **6. Railroad Commuter Service**

Metro-North Railroad, a division of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) provides commuter rail service from the Naugatuck Valley to Bridgeport, Stamford, New York City, and all other stops on the Railroad's New Haven Line. Stations in Naugatuck, Beacon Falls and Seymour are within a five to ten minute drive of much of Oxford, and offer an alternative means of commutation.

## **7. Pedestrian Circulation**

There were no sidewalks in Oxford until very recently. The recently approved Oxford Greens and other age-restricted developments have included an internal sidewalk system. The Meadowbrook development on Great Hill Road included the construction of several hundred feet of sidewalk along Great Hill Road to the intersection of Oxford Road.

## **8. Transportation Deficiencies**

Except for the airport, the Oxford transportation system consists of a road system that was essentially designed to serve the needs of a rural community. The needs of a growing suburban community are different, and Oxford needs to accommodate its system to accommodate these changing needs.

Many of the local roads are generally narrow and winding with areas of poor horizontal alignment. Improvements are needed for many of the local roads throughout the community, to improve safety and accommodate the increasing volumes of traffic.

East-west access is inadequate in the residential areas of the Town, between the Quaker Farms area and Route 67. Access currently is primarily by way of Great Hill Road, Hogsback Road and Governors Hill Road. The road system west of Route 188 is particularly inadequate. Access to many areas is indirect and circuitous.

East-west access in the north industrial area is also currently inadequate to support planned economic and residential development within that area. Jacks Hill Road is currently the major east-west access there. Its jog along Larkey Road makes it dangerous and inadequate to support projected traffic volumes from the Oxford Greens development and industrial development of vacant lands within the area.

The Town has started to implement a ten-year program to improve Town roads. Riggs Street was improved in conjunction with the development of Oxford

Greens. O'Neil Road was recently improved, and improvements are underway for sections of Chestnut Tree Hill Road. Improvements are planned within the next year for Good Hill Road, Hog's Back Road, and Punkup Road.

Automobiles are and will remain the primary mode of transportation in Oxford. However, some residents, primarily elderly residents, may be unable to drive or lack access to an automobile.

## **B. Goals, Policies & Recommendations**

### **1. Transportation Goal**

***Provide for the efficient and orderly movement of people and goods into, out of and within Oxford and provide adequate access to place of employment, residential, recreational and commercial activity.***

#### **A. Policies**

1. Improve the street system to assure safety of motorists and pedestrians. However, all improvements to residential roads should be consistent with the character of the rural and residential areas.
2. All collector roads within the residential areas of Oxford should remain as two lane roads.
3. Although automobile travel will remain the dominant mode of travel into the foreseeable future, the Town should explore and be receptive to alternative modes of transportation, especially for those residents who are unable to use an automobile.
4. Oxford Airport is a unique transportation asset in the Town, and should be protected.
5. Access to regional destinations from points within Oxford need to be improved, in cooperation with State and Regional organizations.
6. Create the "Airport Loop" that will improve traffic circulation in the northern industrial area, so that the increased industrial development can be accommodated without having traffic disrupt the residential areas of the community.

#### **B. Strategies**

The Long Range Regional Transportation Plan: 2004-2030, compiled by the Central Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments in 2004 include the following transportation improvement recommendations:

1. Traffic patterns on Routes 42, 188, and 34 should be evaluated for improvement.
2. Construction of a rear access road for Waterbury-Oxford Airport, connecting Christian Street with Prokop Road is a high priority project. The access road would link Oxford's corporate industrial park off Hurley Road and Waterbury-Oxford Airport with the Towantic Energy Plant

located off Towantic Hill Road. This would be a major component of the Airport Loop. It should also be accompanied by the improvement of Prokop Road between the proposed intersection of the new road and the intersection of Riggs Street.

3. Secure a shuttle for elderly residents.
4. Drainage along Quaker Farms Road (Route 188) should be improved just north of Edmunds Road.
5. There are eight skewed intersections along Route 67, remaining from where the old highway was located approximately seventy years ago. Site lines should be improved on spurs along Route 67, from Chestnut Tree Hill Road to Hawley Road. Spurs demanding attention include Old State Road 67, Old State Road #3, Old State Road #2, and Old State Road #1.
6. Chestnut Tree Hill Road (Route 42) should be straightened at its intersection with Oxford Road. The spur (Old State Route #3) should be eliminated, and the intersection should be at a 90 degree angle.
7. Christian Street should be widened to accommodate additional traffic to the airport and the potential siting of a new retail center along this roadway. Curves along Christian Street, from Jacks Hill Road to Oxford Road, should be straightened and sight lines improved.
8. A major curve in Pines Bridge Road at the intersection with Old Litchfield Turnpike should be softened. This roadway is a heavily used route into and out of Beacon Falls.

In addition to the above indicated recommendations, it is important that the Town continue to implement its ten-year road improvement plan. Improvements needed include the following:

9. Straighten Jacks Hill Road by extending it west from the current intersection of North Larkey Road to Christian Street.
10. Chestnut Hill Road is being improved, but additional improvements will need to be improved to accommodate increased residential development in that area.
11. Riggs Street has been improved most of its length to accommodate the Oxford Greens development. These improvements should be extended north to the intersection of Prokop Road and Towantic Hill Road, in conjunction with the development of the property south of Towantic Pond.



12. Hawley Road should be improved to accepted collector road standards between Christian Street and Route 67 as part of the Airport Loop.
13. Bala Ridge Road between Donovan Road and Hurley road is only important to provide access and circulation to adjacent properties. It should be realigned or abandoned if development conditions warrant it.
14. Larkey Road, north of Jacks Hill Road should be improved to Town standards, in conjunction with development to the area. It should be improved north to the proposed new east-west road. Some realignment may be appropriate to address potential environmental issues.
15. Continue to evaluate and prioritize the reconstruction other town roads that need various degrees of improvement, including those indicated above.
16. Pisgah Road should be improved out to O'Neil Road. The Town should take measures to ensure that developers provide as much financial assistance for this improvement project as is legally possible.
17. Old Good Hill Road should be improved out to Freeman Road. The Town should take measures to ensure that developers provide as much financial assistance for this improvement project as is legally possible.
18. The subdivision process should provide a road connection between Newgate and Good Hill Roads.
19. An additional connection is needed between Route 67 and Route 188 in the north area of Town, perhaps through the improvement and extension of Ferry Lane.
20. Perkins Road should be improved to connect Route 188 and Moose Hill Road, perhaps in conjunction with the utility extension to serve the new high school. This improvement will improve access to the new high school.
21. The additional development of properties between Thurson Road and Quaker Farms Road should provide for better east-west connections in this area.
22. The road system west of Route 188 is particularly inadequate. Access to many areas is indirect and circuitous. Some of the principal roads within this area, such as Punkup and Good Hill Roads will need to be improved to accommodate increased levels of traffic resulting from residential development.

23. Continue to review the impact of major development proposals along Route 67 and require necessary improvements, in cooperation with the State Traffic Commission.
24. The State has been studying the I-84 corridor between Waterbury and the New York State line. The Towns of Oxford, Middlebury and Southbury should cooperate in a planning effort to ensure that improvements are made to the Route 188 interchange to accommodate planned development within these three communities.
25. Sidewalks should be installed along Route 67 within the existing commercial area.
26. Many if not most of the town roads lack the road base that is required for construction of new subdivision roads. This leads to the need for greater requirements for maintenance and a shorter required repaving cycle.
27. The new streets within subdivisions are likely to be of better quality than the existing town roads. Therefore, subdivision streets should be designed to avoid dead-ends and cul-de-sacs.
28. The Town may wish to consider placing weight limits on its local streets to discourage truck traffic, which is typically viewed as non-compatible with residential neighborhoods.
29. Any additional nonresidential development along Route 67 that generates additional traffic to the area should be responsible for installing remedial improvements. Signalization, installation of turning lanes, and consolidation of curb cuts could potentially improve the operation of Route 67.
30. The Town should review the status of paper and unimproved roads, in consideration of abandonment or to accept the financial responsibility for improvement of the road. The Town is legally responsible for maintaining accessibility along these streets. It is also legally difficult to limit development along these streets. Abandonment of some of these streets should be considered. This would ensure that improvement to accommodate development would be the responsibility of the developer.

## VII. COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES



Community services and facilities are important components of the Town that enhance the Town's residents' quality of life. They include the buildings, land, and equipment generally associated with government services and facilities owned and operated by other public, quasi-public, and private organizations for the benefit of the community as a whole. The demand for more and varied community facilities and services will increase as the Town's population increases, existing facilities become outmoded, and public expectations rise. Community needs will also depend on the population being served – for example, senior citizens will require different services than teenagers. For an illustration of the locations of the Town's community services and facilities refer to Figure VII-1.

## **A. Existing Conditions**

### **1. Emergency Services**

#### **A. Ambulance Service**

The Oxford Ambulance Service (484 Oxford Road) serves the Town of Oxford. The organization provides among other things, public safety programs, CPR training, first aid training, and senior citizen training. It is anticipated that the ambulance service will continue to serve the Town.

The Corps is comprised of about 35 active members, including trained Emergency Medical Technicians and Medical Response Technicians. If advanced life support by a paramedic is required, clients will be billed for those services by the Valley Emergency Medical Service, based at Griffin Hospital. The OAA also will provide transportation by ambulance, to and from hospitals for residents who cannot walk and have to be moved on stretchers.

#### **B. Fire Protection**

The Town of Oxford Fire Department consists of three volunteer fire companies: Oxford Center, Quaker Farms and Riverside, and the Oxford Junior Fire Corps, based at Riverside Fire Station. The department is administered by the Board of Fire Chiefs, which consists of one Fire Chief (including two Assistant Chiefs) from each of the Town's three fire companies. The Board of Fire Chiefs reports to the Board of Selectmen, which is the Board of Fire Commissioners for Oxford. The Department has not reported any difficulties in effectively responding to calls.

According to the Town's Fire Chief, the Oxford Fire Department currently includes 83 volunteers. Fifteen members on average respond during a typical emergency. In 2004 the Department responded to 355 calls ranging from fires to false alarms to motor vehicle rescues. The Department has mutual aid agreements with each of the Town's surrounding communities including Beacon Falls, Naugatuck, Middlebury, Southbury, Monroe, and Seymour. The typical response times of the Department in most areas of town are six minutes or less. Response times to the area of the Town in the vicinity of Chestnut Tree Hill Road are typically more than six minutes, and as a result do not meet State fire standards for response. A list of the Department's equipment at each of the Town's fire stations follows:

- Quaker Farms Fire Station
  - 1 Class A pumper truck
  - 1 brush truck

- 1 tanker truck
- Oxford Center Fire Station
  - 2 Class A pumper trucks
  - 1 brush truck
  - 1 tanker truck
  - 1 heavy rescue truck
- Riverside Fire Station
  - 2 Class A pumper trucks
  - 1 Brush truck
  - 1 light rescue truck
  - 1 rescue boat

The Department is currently in the process of replacing the light rescue truck at the Riverside Fire Station with a heavy rescue truck. The Department also has three vehicles for the use of the Fire Chief and two Assistant Chiefs. The Fire Chief also expressed a need for the purchase of an aerial truck and updated communications equipment.

The Department's fire insurance rating is 9 out of 10, with 1 being the best, for the majority of the Town without public water and hydrants. The areas of the town with fire hydrants have an insurance rating of 5 out of 10. The Town has been addressing the need for a water supply for fire protection by requiring the installation of water tanks in new subdivisions.

The Oxford Junior Fire Corps is an organization comprised of teenagers between the ages of 14 and 18 who have a serious interest in learning fire fighting and rescue skills. Meetings and training take place at the Riverside Firehouse on Coppermine Road on Thursday evenings.

#### C. Police Protection

Police protection in Oxford is provided by the Town of Oxford Police Department, located at 429 Oxford Road. The Police Department consists of six police officers employed by the Town and two Resident Troopers employed by the Connecticut State Police and contracted by the Town. Their services include routine protection and law enforcement activities including patrolling the Town's roads, responding to emergencies, and typical disturbances. Though the Department does not have an official mutual aid agreement with any of the Town's surrounding police departments, the police departments from the Towns of Seymour and Monroe typically assist in responding to calls in Oxford when requested.

Recently, twenty-four hour per day police coverage of the community began. Prior to 2007, no coverage was provided by the Oxford Police Department five

days per week from 3:00am to 6:30am and two days a week from 11:30pm to 6:30am.

The Department's equipment includes six patrol vehicles and one SUV obtained through a DWI grant through the Connecticut State Police. No new purchases for equipment are planned in the near future.

The police station was established when Oxford was a small rural community. Replacement will be needed in the near future with a facility that meets contemporary standards.

## **2. Educational and Library Services**

### **A. Oxford Public Schools**

Public school services, from pre-kindergarten to eighth grade, are offered to residents in Oxford by the Oxford Public School system. The system's facilities include the Quaker Farms School, serving approximately 504 students from pre-kindergarten to second grade; Oxford Center School, serving approximately 462 students from third through fifth grade; and Great Oak Middle School, serving approximately 458 students from sixth through eighth grade. (Refer to Tables VII-1 through VII-3 for school capacities and current and projected enrollment figures.)

Given existing and anticipated increase in enrollment, school district properties within Oxford will continue to function as educational facilities for the foreseeable future. A new high school is currently under construction on Quaker Farms Road and is expected to be completed in time for the 2007-2008 school year. Students in the Town have been attending the following high schools:

- Masuk High School in Monroe (tuitioned) – 115 students
- Seymour High School (tuitioned) – 312 students
- Nonnewaug (Vo-Ag) School in Woodbury – 2 students
- The Sound School (Aquiculture) in New Haven – 2 students
- Vocational Technical – 2 students

**Table VII-1 – School Capacities**

	<b>Building Size</b>	<b>Optimum Capacity</b>	<b>Design Capacity</b>	<b>Maximum Capacity</b>
<b>Quaker Farms School</b>	63,000 S.F.	391	525	575
<b>Center School</b>	58,000 S.F.	460	446	598
<b>Great Oak School</b>	75,000 S.F.	399	446	532

Source: Oxford School District based upon latest available information.

**Table VII-2 – Pre K Through 8 Enrollments and Capacities, 1994-2005**

Year	Quaker Farms School	Center School	Great Oak School	Total
1994	449	434	427	1,310
1995	430	454	426	1,310
1996	427	451	432	1,310
1997	436	429	425	1,290
1998	449	416	445	1,310
1999	471	430	454	1,355
2000	471	436	458	1,365
2001	497	438	450	1,385
2002	484	460	452	1,396
2003	491	458	456	1,405
2004	491	498	447	1,436
2005	504	494	487	1,485
<b>Total Growth</b>	12%	14%	14%	--

Source: Oxford School District

**Table VII-3 – Enrollment Projections**

Year	Quaker Farms School	Center School	Great Oak School	Total
2006	508	505	495	1,508
2007	564	483	532	1,579
2008	605	482	530	1,617

Source: Oxford School District

The Oxford Central School District in a report dated September 2, 2004 and entitled “Enrollment and Capacity in Oxford Public Schools” suggests a number of possible solutions and next steps to meet future enrollment demands. These include the following:

- Classroom additions to all existing buildings;
- Reconfigure grade levels between buildings with one additional project;
- Build a new elementary school;
- Set up an enrollment task force to study school facility options;
- Consider consultation; and
- Increase public awareness of enrollment issues facing the District.

Construction of a three-room addition to Oxford Center School and resolution of an ongoing water problem has recently been completed.

There are no post-secondary educational facilities located in the Town.

## **B. Public Library**

The Oxford Public Library, located in the basement of Town Hall on Oxford Road, serves Town residents. Library hours are Monday and Thursday, 9am to 8pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, from 9am to 4pm. The library is open on Saturdays from September through June. The Oxford Public Library is a member of the American Library Association, the Connecticut Library Association and the Association of Connecticut Library Boards.

The library collection includes adult and children's fiction and non-fiction, reference materials, magazines, newspapers, as well as books on tape and compact disc. The library also maintains a video and DVD collection. Materials from the interlibrary loan service are also available. A copy machine and two public computers that offer Microsoft Word and access to the Internet are available to users. Patrons of all ages may sign up to display collections in the library display case. The library also features the work of local artists.

In addition to providing a summer reading program for children in preschool through high school, the children's librarian conducts story hours for young children. Other children's and teen programs are offered on a regular basis.

The library's website – [www.oxfordlib.org](http://www.oxfordlib.org), features an online card catalog and provides access to the Connecticut Digital Library and a listing of upcoming activities and events.

There is currently no pedestrian connection for children or non-driving members of Oxford's population to access the facility.

## **3. Government Services**

Day-to-day governmental services are administered through a combination of Town programs and services. Functions carried out at Oxford Town Hall, located at 486 Oxford Road, in the central portion of the Town, include: local law enactment; building inspection/code enforcement; wetland regulation; planning and zoning including site plan and subdivision review; board of appeals; tax assessment and billing; and senior citizen programs.

### **A. Public Works**

The Town's Public Works Department, located on Great Oak Road, is responsible for the maintenance and repairs of local roads. In addition to oiling, chip sealing and paving, the Department posts road signs, applies sand to roads, and plows snow. Sand is available to Town residents for home use during the winter months.



## B. Waste Disposal and Recycling

Disposal of garbage and other household waste is the responsibility of homeowners. A recycling station, located at the Department of Public Works garage on Great Oak Road is open to residents on Saturday's, weather permitting. Proof of residency is required.

The Center accepts glass and metal food containers; scrap metal, white goods, bundled newspaper, paper, corrugated cardboard, junk mail, waste oil, batteries, and tires. Bulky waste items that are accepted include furniture, appliances, mattresses, wood, rugs and construction and demolition materials.

## C. Senior Services

The Commission for the Elderly recommends and provides programs for older citizens of the Town. The Commission studies the conditions and needs of elderly persons in relation to housing, health, employment, the cultivation of friendships, the development of mutual interests, and the sharing of social, educational and recreational projects. The operation of the local senior center is under the auspices of the Commission.

The Center, located in Town Hall, is open from 9am to 5pm Monday through Thursday and offers many ongoing programs. These include out-trips, speakers and presentations on various subjects, social luncheons, arts and craft groups, billiards, a bereavement group, line dancing, exercise groups and other activities of interest to seniors. A mini-van with handicapped accessibility is also available to transport seniors to the Center and for trips to the supermarket and medical centers. A new senior center is being planned for a site on Old Church Road.

## 4. **Meals on Wheels**

Homebound residents over the age of 60 who cannot prepare their own meals, do not have family support, and do not have access to congregate meal sites are eligible to have meals delivered to their home by Training, Education and Manpower (TEAM).

The program is funded by the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut. Hot meals are delivered Monday through Friday for a suggested donation of two dollars each. Homebound residents also may opt to have frozen meals delivered on Monday for a suggested donation of twenty-five dollars, for a five-day supply. The Agency also offers meals for seven dollars per day to persons who do not meet the above specified criteria.

The Agency also offers homemaker services, which assists elderly homebound residents with laundry, shopping and light housekeeping. TEAM will refer elderly citizens to the appropriate agency for services it cannot provide itself.

## **5. Town Owned Parks & Recreation**

Recreational facilities that are located throughout the Town are owned and maintained by a number of local and regional agencies. The maintenance of Town-owned parks is the responsibility of the local Park and Recreation Commission.

In addition to the Town Green, located on Oxford Road (Route 67) near Academy Road, and Victory Memorial Park, further south, Oxford has three recreational parks.

### **A. Posypanko Park**

Posypanko Park located on Hawkins Road was sold to the Town in 1966 for \$5,000 by the Nicholas Posypanko estate for recreation purposes. The 16.5-acre tract contains ball fields and a batting cage, tennis courts, a basketball court, a concessions stand/storage facility and playground. The Town's Little League teams use this park for games and practice.

### **B. Jackson Cove Park**

Jackson Cove Park on Lake Zoar was purchased from the Connecticut Light and Power Company in 1969. The park offers a quiet beach with a large pavilion and 27 acres of woodland trails. Use of the park requires a permit and it is primarily used for swimming, water skiing, boating, and hiking. The Park is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day by permit only. A new pavilion, built by the Oxford Lions Club at Jackson Cove, was dedicated to the Town in 2002.

### **C. Oxford Glen**

Oxford Glen, located on Roosevelt Drive is the Town's newest park. A former gravel mine, the property was donated to the Town during the 1960's. The 3-acre park offers a ball field and a soccer field.

### **D. Victory Memorial Park**

Victory Memorial Park is a small wooded parcel just south of the Oxford Green on Oxford Road (Route 67). The park is the site of a memorial dedicated to veterans of the community.

### **E. The Oxford loop of the Pomperaug Trail**

A new hiking trail, known as the Oxford loop of the Pomperaug Trail provides scenic views of the Housatonic River. The loop consists of a 4.6 mile trail extending from Fiddlehead Road to Kettletown State Park. The trail was blazed

by volunteers from the Connecticut Forest Parks Association along with members from the Oxford Land Trust and community residents. It was put into use on June 4, 1994 as the first completed trail segment of the Housatonic River Belt Greenway.

F. Ball Fields

Additional ball fields are located at Oxford Center School and Great Oak Middle School. Great Oak Middle School also has an outdoor track and tennis courts.

G. Kirk's Pond

Kirk's Pond, located on Route 67 near the Town Hall is available for youth fishing and ice-skating.

H. Adult and Children's Programs

The Town's recreation department offers a variety of men's and women's softball, volleyball, and basketball intramural leagues. Woman's aerobics and a co-ed basketball league are also offered. The intramural activities take place on a year-round basis and are conducted primarily at the Great Oak Middle School and Oxford Center School.

Programs for children include Babe Ruth Baseball, soccer, basketball, Pop Warner Football, fishing rodeo, dance classes, flag football, little league softball, and a summer day camp.

The Park and Recreation Commission also offer a number of trips and special events each year to popular out-of-state spots for concerts, plays, ball games and shopping. The destinations vary from year to year but typically have included Newport, New York, and Boston.

**6. Connecticut State Parks**

Oxford is bordered by several state parks. These include:

- Kettletown State Park
- Southford Falls State Park
- Naugatuck State Forest
- Larkin Bridle Trail

A. Kettletown State Park

The Kettletown State Park is a 220-acre park that offers camping, swimming, hiking and a picnic area. It is accessible from Kettletown Road in Southbury.

B.     The Larkin Bridle Trail

The Larkin Bridle Trail passes through the Town's industrial zone, and is a favorite of area equestrians.

C.     The Naugatuck State Forest

The Naugatuck State Forest is comprised of 365-acres of forestland and is used primarily for hiking and picnicking.

D.     Southford Falls

Located on Route 188, Southford Falls is a 115-acre park bisected by Eight Mile Brook. Scenery, including a cascading waterfall, covered bridge and lush foliage, make the park a popular locale. A dam, stocked with trout, provides good fishing in the springtime and ice-skating in the winter. The park also has hiking trails, a pavilion and picnic benches.

Pedestrian access to all recreational facilities is limited as the Town currently does not have a formal pedestrian or bicycle trail system.

## **B. Goals, Policies & Recommendations**

The Town will need to balance the needs of the community with the costs associated with expanded services. Given the Town's current and anticipated population base, it will be important to explore options including partnerships where the cost and maintenance of facilities are shared among other agencies and service providers. Wherever possible, we recommend that the Town continue to initiate and/or expand relationships with other service providers to share the burden of providing services.

### **1. Public Facilities Goal**

***Provide Town residents with a range of recreational, educational, social and protective services to meet the needs of residents in a contemporary society, consistent with the Town's fiscal limitations.***

#### **A. Policies**

1. Expand and continue to improve and upgrade the Oxford public school system to enable students to meet the future challenges of the work force into the twenty-first century.
2. Provide the widest possible range of educational, recreational and social facilities consistent with population to be served, and located so as to be easily accessible to all residents of all ages.
3. Provide sites for community facilities reflecting existing and future needs.
4. Continue to provide and maintain public infrastructure facilities such as roads, sewers and storm drainage, where needed, in all areas throughout the town to prevent physical deterioration.
5. Prior to the future development of all types of land uses, consider the feasibility of their being served well, efficiently, and at reasonable cost with public facilities; which facilities shall not necessarily always be the Town's responsibility to provide.
6. Broaden cooperation between the Board of Education and Town government with the sharing and joint use of facilities and coordination of programs and services.
7. Continue cooperation with the Towns of Naugatuck and Seymour to provide adequate sewer capacity to enable growth in the Town.

8. Program capital improvements on the basis of a priority system carefully related to the needs of the community and fully integrated with the Plan of Conservation and Development.

B. Strategies

1. Projected population growth and enrollment increases are likely to require a new school at some point in the future. The Town should explore the acquisition of a site that could be used for a school in the future. If a new school is not needed, the Town could either sell the property or use it for another purpose, such as a park.
2. Additional parkland will be needed. The Town should acquire a site suitable for a town wide recreational complex.
3. Additional emergence medical services will be needed to serve the 55 and over population within the northeastern section of Town. This may include an ambulance station.
4. The need for an additional fire station in northern Oxford should be evaluated, to serve the growing industrial and residential sectors in that area.
5. It is likely that the police force will need to be expanded to meet the needs of a growing population. At some point in the future, a new police station will be needed as well.
6. A new library will be needed to meet the needs of the Town's growing population.
7. The Town Hall has a shortage of office and meeting space. The relocation of the senior center and potential relocation of the library would provide additional space that should meet needs within the short term.

## VIII. HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES



### A. Existing Conditions

The cultural and historic resources of Oxford contribute greatly to the character of the community. The historic streetscape of Oxford Center, church green old farmhouses and churches are all important to the uniqueness of Oxford. This plan attempts to provide a basis for actions to continue to preserve and enhance these unique features.

Oxford is an historic community with roots dating back to the 1600's. Its history and places of historic distinction have been well documented by efforts of the Oxford Historical Society and efforts of interested citizens.

The Town Historian, in a recent review of assessor records, found 249 buildings within the Town that are over 100 years old. There are some concentrations of these buildings, but many are scattered throughout the Town. The primary historical resources within the Town of Oxford include the following properties that are within the National Register of Historic Places.

1. The Washband Tavern: 90 Oxford Road, Underground Railroad station, tavern and stage stop in Colonial period.
2. Wooster Sawmill - on National Register of Historic Sites:
3. Quaker Farms Historic District --511 Quaker Farms Rd., Oxford (150 acres, 19 buildings)  
Historic Significance: Architecture/Engineering  
Architect, builder, or engineer: Boulton, George  
Architectural Style: Federal, Greek Revival, Colonial Revival  
Area of Significance: Architecture  
Period of Significance: 1700-1749, 1750-1799, 1800-1824, 1825-1849, 1850-1874, 1875-1899, 1900-1924, 1925-1949  
Owner: Private  
Historic Function: Domestic, Religion  
Historic Sub-function: Religious Structure, Secondary Structure, Single Dwelling  
Current Function: Domestic, Health Care, Religion  
Current Sub-function: Hospital, Religious Structure, Secondary Structure, Single Dwelling
4. Stevenson Dam Hydroelectric Plant

In addition, the following properties are not within the National Registry are potentially eligible:

5. Oxford Center - A proposal for historic district there failed to gain residents' approval, as did the bid to place the Quakers Farms district under State Statutes as a Local Historic District with property restrictions.)
  - Oxford Congregational Church
  - St. Peter's Church
  - Oxford Congregational Parsonage -- childhood home to Martha Hubbell, Martha, daughter of Noah Stone, M.D. She wrote the popular novel "The Shady Side" in 1853, which sold 42,000 copies by 1860; By comparison, Nathaniel Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter, written in 1850 sold 11,800 copies by 1860. Her novel was influential in securing reforms regarding the treatment of New England clergy by their parishes.
  - 430 Oxford Road, Hudson House, Mary's Little Lamb Tea House
  - Oxford House - early stagecoach stop, inn and tavern
  - John Twitchell House. 7 Academy Road- Congregational Church organized there, served as early post office, and general store. Was at one time the Episcopal parsonage.

There are other individual houses scattered about town that are equally worthy of inclusion, but they are not so easily grouped together. If I was to extend this list beyond ten, I would include the following buildings of cultural significance in



## Oxford's History:

6. 561 Oxford Road: Beardsley House and Mr. Munn's School for Boys -- private school in 1800's.
7. 423 Oxford Road: Formerly the home of Mr. W. W. Hughes , who founded the Oxford Circulating Library, with the assistance of the Episcopal rector, and ran it out of his home for many years. This later became the Oxford Public Library.
8. 154 Hogs Back Road, McEwen House, where a boarding school for boys was held.

## **B. Goals, Policies & Recommendations**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources Goal**

***Conserve and enhance the components of Oxford that contribute to the character and quality of life of the Town.***

#### **A. Policies**

1. Preserve the historically significant structures and landmarks throughout the Town.
2. Encourage the re-use of culturally and historically significant structures in an economically viable way that preserves their cultural or historical significance as much as feasible.
3. Maintain and enhance the streetscapes of the Town, including street trees.

#### **B. Strategies**

1. Inventory the historically significant structures and landmarks within the Town. The inventory should identify those that are at risk due to physical deterioration or changing economic circumstances.
2. Revise the zoning regulations to permit the re-use of those historically significant structures that have been identified, under special circumstances. The proposed reuse should be consistent with the character of the neighborhood. These uses should only be permitted where the use permitted in the underlying zone may not be economically viable for the unique nature of the historic structure.

3. Explore the feasibility of the establishment of a local historic district for Oxford Center. A local historic district is created by ordinance and approval of the property owners. The creation of a local historic district would include the establishment of an Historic District Commission, which would regulate exterior modification of property within the district, as to conformance to standards of historical integrity.
4. Enforce the recently enacted demolition delay ordinance and utilize it to fully explore re-use option for historically significant structures.

## **IX. LAND USE**

### **A. Development Potential**

A Geographic Information System (GIS) was utilized in an analysis of residential and non-residential development potential and the likely population that would occur if this development were to occur in the Town.

#### **1. Development Potential Methodology**

In order to assess development potential, privately owned vacant and over-sized lots most susceptible to further development were identified. An assessment was then made of the potential buildout of these lots under existing zoning.

State and Town-owned lands, transmission easements, and quasi-public facilities were assumed to have no potential for further development.

Once the lots were identified, the next step was to identify the factors that would affect the development potential of each lot. The factors considered included:

- The Town's current zoning classifications;
- FEMA 100- and 500-year Floodplains;
- Wetlands;
- Waterbodies; and
- Steep slopes (slopes greater than or equal to 15%).

The extent of the known constraints are based on various sources of data including mapping products acquired from the United States Geologic Survey (USGS), the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).

Environmental constraints were factored, with deductions on a parcel-by-parcel basis to yield a net developable lot area. In determining residential development potential, the net developable lot area was decreased by 15% to take into account space for the installation of infrastructure and inefficiencies in lot layout, and 10% for the Town's open space dedication requirement (Oxford's subdivision regulations allow the Planning and Zoning Commission to require up to 20% of land for open space dedication, of which half may be wetlands); the remaining net developable lot area was then divided by the two-acre minimum lot area of the Residence A District to yield the potential number of additional residential development lots.

The deductions taken are as follows:

- Infrastructure - 15% deduction;

- Open space dedication – 10% deduction;
- FEMA 100- and 500-year Floodplains, wetlands, and water bodies – 100% of the land area of that portion of a parcel with constraints was counted as part of minimum lot area;
- Slopes equal to or greater than 25 percent – 100% of the land area of that portion of a parcel with constraints was counted as part of minimum lot area; and
- Slopes ranging from 15 to 25 percent – 50% of the land area of that portion of a parcel with constraints were counted as part of minimum lot area.

## 2. Development Potential Analysis

The analysis indicates there is the potential for an additional 2,050 residential development lots in the Town. In addition, there are approximately 400 building lots that are part of approved subdivisions. According to the 2000 U.S. Census the average household size for the Town of Oxford is 2.94 persons. If an additional 2,450 single-family homes were constructed in the Town, the population would increase by approximately 7,179 persons, if family sizes remained the same. (Refer to Figure X-1, Development Potential.)

Over the past several years 1,261 units of age-restricted housing has been approved in five developments. Approximately 150 have been completed, leaving 1,161 units that have yet to be built. Assuming 1.75 residents per unit for this type of housing, this would mean another 1,944 residents.

Based upon these factors, the total population in the Town upon full buildout is estimated to be 20,004 (refer to Table X-1). This represents nearly a doubling of the Town's population over a period of time if the Town was built out to its maximum capacity.

**Table X-1 – Potential Residential Population**

Description	Town of Oxford
Estimated Population (2004)	10,881
Potential Additional Residential Dwelling Lots	2,050
Building Lots in Approved Subdivisions	400
Additional Residents (2.94/DU – from 2000 Census)	7,179
Additional Residents in Age Restricted Housing	1,944
Total Potential Population	20,004

Source: 2000 United States Census – [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

The subdivision development potential for the Town was further broken down into three separate areas to provide a better understanding of the patterns in which Oxford may be built out in the future (refer to Table X-2, Residential Development Potential by Area). Area 1 is located north and east of Route 67 (Oxford Road) and Route 42; Area 2 is located between Route 188 and Routes 67 and 42; and Area 3 is located south of Route 188 (refer to Figure II-22).

**Table X-2 – Residential Subdivision Potential by Area**

Area 1	489 Development Lots
Area 2	723 Development Lots
Area 3	838 Development Lots
Total	2,050 Development Lots

Approximately 447 acres of environmental constraints, including wetlands, water bodies, and steep slopes, were subtracted from developable lots in Area 1; 420 acres in Area 2; and 517 acres in Area 3.

The analysis of the potential residential development does not include the potential for development of additional age-restricted housing, as the current regulations do not provide for independent living facilities or an expansion of the golf course community. The change in these regulations would likely increase the development potential.

It is important to note that the Oxford Planning and Zoning Commission has adopted several significant regulatory changes over the past several years that have had an impact upon the potential residential build out. These changes include a two-acre minimum lot size, slope regulations, and requirements for open space dedication in subdivisions. The potential development of the Town would have been significantly higher if these regulations had not been adopted.

## **B. General Land Use Considerations**

The land use plan of a community must reflect the goals and objectives of the community. It should be based upon realistic expectations as well as environmental conditions. The plan should reflect a balance between respect for private property and achievement of public welfare.

In the formulation of a land use plan for a community, it is important to identify those factors that are the major influences on land use. The following are the primary considerations in the formulation of a land use plan for Oxford:

1. Oxford is a rural community without a well established system of infrastructure that could support intensive development.
2. Our analysis has found that under current zoning, there is potential for a population of approximately 20,000, an increase of approximately 68% over the current population. The increase would have been significantly greater, but recent amendments to the zoning regulations concerning minimum lot size and restriction on regrading have served to lower the potential build-out of the Town.
3. Land use regulatory decisions were made many years ago to zone the northern section of the Town, around Waterbury-Oxford Airport for industrial and related uses. This decision has essentially remained in place, with some minor revisions, and enforced by recent zoning amendments.
4. The Corporate Business District was intended to promote high quality office and industrial development between the airport and the interchange of Interstate 84. This goal remains a valid long term goal, although there may be some minor adjustments needed to the zoning regulations to facilitate contemporary business park development.
5. The road system of the community is generally inadequate to support anticipated levels of residential and nonresidential development.
6. The road system of the western area of Town, west of Route 188, is particularly inadequate to support substantial levels of development.
7. The Town of Oxford is categorized by a hilly topography, and any future development should be respective of these development limitations.
8. Route 67 between the Town Hall and the Seymour Town Line has been the traditional “spine” of activity within the Town. Future development

within this area has been somewhat limited by the presence of the Little River and steep hillsides, as well as the lack of sewers.

9. Economic growth will be needed to balance the needs of a growing population with the ability of the municipal government to supply those needs.

## **C. Proposed Land Use Classifications**

The Land Use Plan is based upon a series of land use classifications (refer to Figure IX-2, Land Use Plan). Some of these classifications correspond with current zoning districts, but there may be a need to create additional zoning districts to accommodate future classifications.

### **1. Commercial**

Intended for retail and other consumer oriented businesses that benefit from the visibility along Route 67 and a location central to the Oxford Community. Most of the retail developments will be small, but there may be the opportunity for larger scale development at select sites within the corridor. The goal should be to improve the aesthetic character of the corridor, and promote more a pedestrian oriented development.

### **2. Industrial**

Intended for industrial and related development at contemporary standards. Development here will primarily consist of single story buildings used for manufacturing, warehousing, wholesaling, research and development, or office uses. Where yard based industrial or similar outdoor activities occur, they should be visually screened and landscaped to avoid adverse offsite visual impact.

### **3. Corporate Business**

This category is intended as an area reserved for the emerging industries that have the potential to be major components of the future regional economy. The airport and accessibility to Interstate 84 will be major determinants for uses within this area. These uses are intended to be developed in accordance with the highest contemporary architectural and site development standards, including extensive landscaping, and buildings with a high architectural finish. Within a comprehensively planned office/industrial development, it may be appropriate to permit a limited amount of small scaled retail and restaurant uses, to support and enhance the overall business park environment.

### **4. Residential**

Single-family residential development that will preserve the rural character of the community and be as harmonious as possible with the natural environment, respecting topography, watercourses and other significant natural features. Overall density shall not exceed 0.5 units per acre, but in most areas densities are likely to be lower due to environmental limitations. Public water and sewer service is not required nor is it available to serve most of the areas designated as



residential, but the road system should be upgraded to adequately handle the increased traffic that would result from residential development.

#### 5. Route 67 Office

Limited small scale non-residential uses that would not detract from the residential and rural environment, such as small offices, day care centers, houses of worship and similar uses. Retail uses are not included within this category.

#### 6. Oxford Center

To retain the existing historic character and maintain the area as the governmental center of the community, the area will continue to be predominately residential, with limited commercial uses that will support the historic character of the area.

#### 7. Route 34 Corridor

Development within the Route 34 Corridor should consist of clustered housing, including age-restricted housing, which utilizes disturbed areas, but preserves the natural slopes and does not degrade the water quality of the Housatonic River. Development within this area should include substantial areas of open space.

#### 8. Age Restricted Housing

There are existing areas of age-restricted housing, that when fully developed will provide homes for several thousand residents aged 55 and over. These areas are all served by public water and sewer. Additional areas should either be within the Route 34 Corridor, as described above, or on select sites along the Route 67 Corridor.

## **D. Land Use Goals, Policies and Recommendations**

***GOAL Maintain the rural character of Oxford, while providing for the appropriate mix of commercial, industrial and public uses that will enhance the quality of life of a growing community.***

There are several distinct geographic areas of Oxford that help define the character of the Town. As the Town continues to grow, these areas will take on a more distinctive appearance and be important in defining the Town. Although they do not necessarily correlate with neighborhoods, these areas all have distinctive needs. (Refer to Figure IX-1, Existing Land Use.)

### **A. Route 67 Commercial Areas**

This includes the area along the Route 67 corridor, from the Seymour Town Line and the area just south of the intersection of Route 42. This area has been the major commercial area of the Town, and the Plan envisions that this be continued. However, this area must change and adapt to meet the needs of the growing community. It needs to start to become more pedestrian friendly, with design issues taking on additional importance. The area needs to be viewed as the “heart of the community,” with aesthetic and functional characteristics that will define Oxford into the future. Although it will continue to be the commercial center of a rural community, it should encompass principles of design, intensity of development, and pedestrian accessibility that will be consistent with a twenty-first century rural-suburban community.

The overall policy should be that commercial development should be encouraged along Route 67 at a scale, design and locations to meet the needs of Oxford residents.

### **Strategies**

1. The installation of sewers along Route 67 offers the opportunity for more intensive commercial development along Route 67. This more intensive development should be accompanied by higher design standards and the creation of more pedestrian – friendly environment.
2. The setback requirements of the zoning regulations should be evaluated and revised to facilitate the commercial development of the smaller parcels that proliferate along Route 67, and create incentives for lot consolidation.

3. The boundaries of the Commercial District should continue to be readjusted, upon request, to coincide with parcel boundaries.
4. In several locations, there are parcels large enough to accommodate a significant commercial development. These developments should be designed to include a pedestrian orientation and serve as focus of activity along the corridor.
5. The Commission should continue to review the architectural designs of proposed buildings within the commercial zone.
6. The Town should formulate a plan of streetscape improvements along Route 67 between Oxford Center and the Seymour Town Line. The Plan should address the following:
  - Landscaping, including street trees, and a program of landscaping for the private property along the corridor;
  - Sidewalks, walkways and other pedestrian improvements;
  - Street furniture, including lighting;
  - Cross sections of the road at appropriate locations;
  - Public spaces, including small park areas along the river;
  - Integration of the Little River as a linear open space trail along the Little River. The corridor can be a walking or bicycle trail and it can be developed in conjunction with the development of the commercial properties;
  - Determination of overall theme of roadway and design features to enforce theme; and
  - Coordination with State Department of Transportation in design.
7. Retail developments that include office space should be encouraged to provide space for small and growing businesses.
8. Retail and office development should be encouraged within commercial centers that are planned and developed in accordance with a comprehensive unified plan.
9. The existing commercial areas along Route 67 should be enhanced through public and private actions, including redevelopment of existing properties, design regulation, and the installation of right-of-way improvements, such as landscaping and sidewalks, where feasible.
10. Landscaped "Welcome to Oxford" signs should be installed at the major entrances to the Town: Route 67 from the north and south, Route 42 from Beacon Falls and Airport Access Road off of Route 188. They should be surrounded by a small landscaped area, or even part of a small park.

11. The planned installation of sewers offers the opportunity for higher density development along the Route 67 corridor that would enhance the feel of a centered commercial area. There are opportunities for age-restricted developments and similar type developments along the Route 67 corridor, including, properties with frontage on Route 67 and properties nearby. The sewers would permit more intensive development, and the higher densities would support and enhance commercial development along the road. The Mountainbrook development on Great Hill Road is an excellent example of this type of development.

#### B. North Industrial Area

The large area of industrial zoning was designated many years ago in response to the development of the airport. Its existence was re-enforced with Interstate 84, creating approximately four square miles of land zoned for industrial use, near a major interstate interchange, surrounding a general aviation airport. This is a unique situation, not only in Connecticut, but along the entire east coast corridor. The North Industrial Area includes the Corporate Business Park zone which was created to establish a slightly different form of industrial development that would take advantage of the Airport and highway proximity.

Although industrial and related development has not proceeded as rapidly as many people many have hoped for, the economic development attributes of this area are unquestionable, and the Town needs to proceed along the course of utilizing this valuable asset. Essentially, for the Town to accomplish this, it must ensure that the infrastructure is in place to accommodate growing businesses and industries, and that the regulations are realistic as to contemporary economic development trends. The regulations have been evaluated on an ongoing basis, but there is still a need to improve the infrastructure to provide for the economic development of the entire area. Therefore, the emphasis on promoting development within this area is to upgrade the roads, sewer, telecommunications and electric power infrastructure, and to ensure that the regulations provide for the type and quality of development envisioned.

#### Strategies

1. The areas zoned for industrial development, including the Corporate Business Park Zone, can accommodate a great deal of future growth and there is not need for additional industrially zoned land in Oxford.
2. The Industrial area contains enough land to meet Oxford's economic development needs well into the future. However, rezoning of large tracts of land to residential uses is not recommended as there is a sufficient supply of residentially zoned property to meet Town needs as well.

3. The Town should continue the improvement of necessary infrastructure to serve the industrial areas, such as roads, water, sewer, electrical power, and broadband access, as recommended in this plan.
4. The Oxford Airport is a unique resource for the future development of this area. Efforts should be made to attract industries that can take advantage of the airport.
5. Development within the industrial area should continue with strict design controls, and landscaping and buffer requirements, to assure that the entire area develops as a high quality business park environment.
6. The improvement of the road system, particularly the construction and improvement of the roads encompassing the Airport Loop, as recommended in the transportation section, is needed to provide sufficient access, particularly to the eastern section of the industrial zone.
7. Development within the Corporate Business Area has been slow, but it still represents a unique development opportunity, as it is one of the few areas of western Connecticut with good access to an airport and interstate highway. Therefore, the standards for development of this area should be maintained, although the Commission should consider incorporating a potential for mixed use developments that contain some retail development to support the primary uses if it a component of a large comprehensively planned development.
8. Airport Access Road is a wide, underutilized road. It should be the focus of more intensive development. Although access to the road is limited, the intersecting streets and frontage. However, the additional development may require improvements to Route 188 and the interchange of Interstate 84.
9. Development of the area north of Airport Access Road should include the construction and/or improvement of road connections into Middlebury to join with the Preston Hill Office park, and other industrial areas of southern Middlebury, if feasible.
10. The primary uses within the industrial areas should be high value manufacturing and supporting uses.
11. Limited retail and service businesses that support the primary uses within the industrial area should be permitted. However, the development of a large scale retail center or “big box” within this area would not be consistent with Town policies.

12. Formulate a comprehensive economic development strategy consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development. This strategy should be ongoing and include specific strategies for the Town to pursue for economic development. The strategies should be accepted by all relevant town agencies.
13. Establish a non-profit economic development corporation which would facilitate municipal economic development efforts. It could provide more flexibility in the purchase sale and development of land. If established, it should have a clear mission, and have strong organizational links to the municipal government.

C. Oxford Center

Oxford Center represents the historic core of the community. Unlike other Town centers, it did not experience substantial commercial development. However, the historic character of the center has been preserved, and it has remained a center of civic activities. A recently completed planning study Included the following the following vision and recommendations:

*Vision - In order to meet the needs of the twenty-first century, Oxford Center needs to become more of a gathering place and focus for the community. This includes Improvements to make the area more comfortable for residents, and the creation of facilities and businesses that would attract more residents. At the same time, the historic and environmental characteristics of the area must be maintained and enjoyed.*

Although the area has inherent strengths, generally, it is not a place that people feel comfortable spending much time there, other than a specific destination. People tend to spend the minimum amount of time in Oxford Center to accomplish there task, whether it is to conduct municipal business, go to church or attend school.

There are several important components to making Oxford Center more of a community gathering place and focus.

1. Pedestrian Linkages

There are no accommodations for any pedestrian activity in Oxford Center. The area has no sidewalks or walkways. Walking along the road is uncomfortable and sometimes dangerous, as vehicles travel at high speeds despite the 25 MPH speed limit. The stretch of Route 67 within the Center contains no traffic control devices that would enable a pedestrian to cross the road.

A system of sidewalks and walkways is needed. It should include a sidewalk along the northeast side of the street between Town Hall and Riggs Street. Pedestrian circulation on the southwest side of the street could include a combination of on-street walkways and a path along the river. There should also be internal walkways connecting nearby facilities, such as the Center School, Kirks Pond and Town Hall.

## 2. Business

The growing population of Oxford is creating new business opportunities. The town is experiencing a great deal of retail “leakage;” residents leaving town to conduct business. Additional business development would enhance the role of Oxford Center as the focus of the community, as it would create another reason for people to visit the center. However, the physical layout, residential character and historic characteristics of the area make it imperative that any retail or related uses be small-scale in nature, and of a nature that is consistent with the historic and residential character.

Although there are some limited opportunities for new construction to accommodate businesses, the emphasis should be on the continued re-use of the existing buildings within the area, with continued strict standards for site design. Any new construction should be of a scale and quality so that it also blends into and enhances the area.

The commercial uses should be small scaled and respective of the historic and residential character within the area. Art galleries, professional offices, studios, antique shops and similar uses would be appropriate within this area. The current Oxford Center zoning permits a limited range of commercial uses in existing buildings. However, some new buildings may be appropriate, such as on the vacant parcel on the north side of Route 67, just west of the intersection of Riggs Street.

## 3. Community and Government Center

The role of Oxford Center will be strengthened by locating the future municipal facilities within the town center, including the library, senior center and expanded town hall. However, for some facilities like the police station, other locations within the Town may be more advantageous.

Similarly, the churches are important components of the center, and should remain.

## 4. Parks and Greenways

The key to making Oxford Center a more interesting and inviting place is to create a system of parks and greenways within the area, essentially an open space ribbon through the area. The ribbon would tie the area together, linking

activity centers with open space resources. These open space resources should include Kirks Pond, the Little River, the land behind the Town Hall, and both Town Greens.

## 5. Historic Resources

Oxford Center has a strong heritage that should be utilized in its improvement efforts. Many of the homes and churches in the area are historic. The Green and the surrounding buildings encompass a unique and valuable historic resource. Any improvement efforts should be based upon and respective of the historic character of the area.

## 6. Visibility

Even with pedestrian improvements, vehicular traffic will continue to dominate in and through Oxford Center. The area needs to be better defined, with entrance features that let everyone know that they are entering a unique area of the community.

## 7. Town Role

Oxford Center, along with other sections of the Route 67 Corridor extending south towards the Seymour town boundary should be considered as the “central spine” of Oxford. Although Oxford Center is not the central retail area, it is part of the corridor which collectively provides much of the focus and activity of the community. Therefore, future land use decisions should be made to reinforce this role. Oxford Center should be viewed as the historic and civic anchor to this corridor.

## Strategies

There are recommendations for each of the sub-areas of Oxford Center, as well as general area wide recommendations. The recommendations are physical, programmatic and regulatory, to provide a multi-faceted approach for the renewal of Oxford Center.

### 1. Southeastern Gateway

This is the area southeast of the intersection of Riggs Street, and includes the Victory Park. As stated previously, it is somewhat separated from the rest of Oxford Center. The plan for this area includes the following:

- a. Install an entrance feature at the south end of Victory Park to inform motorists that they are entering Oxford Center. This should include a sign and distinctively landscaped area.
- b. Maintain the homes along Old State Highway as residences.



- c. Landscape the “leftover” parcel of land between Riggs Street and Route 42.
- d. Request the State Department of Transportation to investigate the feasibility of a traffic light at the intersection of Route 42 and/or Riggs Street.
- e. Permit limited non-residential uses on properties along Route 67.

## 2. Historic Core

This area is what is perceived when people speak of Oxford Center. It includes the green and surrounding historic areas, as well as both churches. It includes the area between the Center School and the intersection of Riggs Street. The area includes some historic non-residential uses, but is still dominantly residentially in character.

- a. Redesign the Town Green by:
  - Creating a passive recreational area for Town residents
  - Open up views of the Congregational Church, possibly by select tree trimming or removal.
  - Create pedestrian linkages between the Green and other areas of the Center.
  - Allow for the use of the homes along the Green for certain limited non-residential uses, such as a Bed and Breakfast, or professional office. This may require some relaxation of the parking requirements.
- b. Consider permitting the development of the vacant parcel on the northeast side of Route 67, across from Dutton Road for a small scale commercial development. The development should incorporate careful architectural and site design that is in conformance with the historic character of the area.
- c. Install landscaping between the Oxford House parking lot and the road, to reduce the visual impact of the parking lot.
- d. When a new Police Station is constructed, reuse the existing building for office or small scale retail uses. The site has room for additions, but the parking areas should be well landscaped and shielded from view from the road.

Re-use of the site may require demolition of the existing building and reconstruction. Should that occur, the new development should

be designed is a scale and style consistent with the historic context of the area around the Green.

- e. Permit the use of the existing homes for limited retail and office uses.

### 3. Municipal Area

- a. The Town Hall should remain within Oxford Center; either at its existing location, or at the Center School, if the Board of Education decides that the Center School is no longer needed or appropriate for educational needs.
- b. If the municipal offices are moved to the Center School, and the existing Town Hall building is not needed for other municipal purposes, the existing site of the Town Hall should be redeveloped into a retail commercial area, with a village like character. This may require the demolition of the existing Town Hall.
- c. Kirks Pond should be improved into the principal town green in the area. It should be designed and improved to be the primary outdoor public space in the community, and a focus for community activities.
- d. If the Center School is reused as a Town Hall, the area behind should be integrated into the overall center park system.
- e. The lands behind the Town Hall and across the street from the Town Hall should also become part of the overall center park system. They can serve as a base of a trail system through Town open space.

### 4. Overall

#### 1. Zoning

- a. Village District Regulations - Village Districts are specially enabled by State Statute to provide a higher level of review for specially designated areas of the Town. It offers the opportunity for a higher level of architectural and site control. The jurisdiction would also apply to public rights-of-way, including the State Highway. Oxford Center would be eligible for the creation of a Village District. The statute states that the village districts must be located within areas of distinctive character, landscape or historic value that are specifically identified in the plan of conservation and development of the municipality.

The adoption of Village District regulations would enable the regulations of the design and placement of buildings, maintenance of public views, design, paving materials and placement of public roadways, and other

elements that the Planning and Zoning Commission deems appropriate to maintain and protect the character of the village district. This higher level of review would enable changes in use in Oxford Center, in accordance with the Village District Controls.

- b. The current Oxford Center zoning regulations permit limited commercial uses in existing buildings, with minor additions. The regulations should be amended to permit more commercial uses within Oxford Center, with strict architectural and site guidelines.
- c. The zoning regulations should include lower parking requirements for business uses within Oxford Center, and also include incentives for shared parking. Parking areas should be visually deemphasized, with screening from the road. The goal should be to encourage use of the municipal parking facilities and minimize parking impacts within the historic core.

## 2. Parks and Open Space

The existing and potential park and open space resources within Oxford Center are unique for Town centers. However, these collective resources are not effectively functioning as assets to Oxford Center. The individual park and open space resources should be improved to a linking “green necklace” throughout Oxford Center. This should include the following:

- Greenway and paths along the Little River.
- Enhancement of Kirk’s Pond to serve as the Town Green within the municipal area, with linkages to the Center School and Town Hall. This area should be designed to serve as a central feature of Oxford Center.
- Improvement of the Church Green to open up views of the Congregational Church.
- Creation of an entrance feature at Victory Park that lets people know that they are entering Oxford Center.

## 3. General

1. Install sidewalks along both sides of Oxford Road between Town Hall and the Church Green.
2. Extend sewer service up Route 67 as far as the Town Hall, and provide sewer service to the properties within Oxford Center.
3. To the extent feasible, new and expanded municipal facilities that provide services to residents should be located within Oxford Center. Although there may be significant financial reasons to construct a new

library further up Route 67, other municipal facilities such as a senior center and expanded Town Hall should be located within Oxford Center.

4. Work with the State Department of Transportation to install a traffic signal at the intersection of Riggs Street – Route 42 and Route 67.
5. Work with the State Department of Transportation to install a crossing walk signal in the vicinity of the Center School in conjunction with the construction of sidewalks. This can be done in conjunction with installation of the sidewalks.
6. Provide a systematic planting scheme along Route 67 within Oxford Center that includes street trees and ground plantings.
7. Any center revitalization or enhancement efforts require an entity to advocate for the interests of the businesses and property owners within the area. Unlike other centers or downtowns of larger communities, Oxford Center has not had a strong identity that would foster the creation of this type of group.

However, within the long term planning horizon, this type of group can be effective in furthering the unique interests of Oxford Center. In order to begin the process of advocacy for Oxford Center, the Oxford Economic Development Corporation should establish an Oxford Center working committee, whose role would be to further implementation of the recommendations of this plan.

8. It is generally accepted that revitalization of downtown areas within large and smaller communities are significantly enhanced by residential development in or near the downtown area. This provides a market for downtown businesses, and enhances the role of the area as a 24 hour activity center.

Oxford Center is not a downtown, in the sense of communities such as Naugatuck, Seymour, Derby, Ansonia or Shelton. However, some additional residential population within close proximity of the Oxford Center would enhance its role as the community center. It is important that this residential development occur in a design and scale that is consistent with the overall character of the community. Age-restricted housing, at a slightly higher density than otherwise permitted in Oxford has proven successful and consistent with overall planning and land use goals. Therefore, the zoning regulations should provide for age-restricted housing, at higher densities than otherwise permitted near Oxford Center. The extension of sewer service into this area would facilitate this type of development.

#### D. Route 67 North

The area north of the Town Hall along Route 67 has gradually been transitioning into non-residential uses. The area should retain its rural character, but permit non-residential uses as may be appropriate.

##### Strategies

1. The best potential for the development of a community based planned retail or mixed use development remains along Route 67, north of the Town Hall. Ideally the site should encompass a minimum of ten to twenty acres of developable land and can be planned for development within a uniformed manner. The existing Planned Commercial District would accommodate this type of development, but should be reevaluated to assure that it would result in the desired form of development.
2. The commission should consider permitting less intensive non-residential uses along the northern section of the Route 67 corridor, between Oxford Center and the Southbury Town Line. These uses should not include retail uses, but may include small offices and similar uses that incorporate high design standards and are compatible with nearby residential use.

#### E. Route 34 - Riverside

The Route 34 Corridor in Oxford runs along the banks of the Housatonic River. The south side of the road is a narrow strip between the highway and the river and the north side of the road consists largely of bluffs, rising sharply from the road. Many of these areas have been mined, leaving a scarred landscape.

The area contains neighborhoods of lots that were created prior to the enactment of zoning. Many of the lots are undersized.

The challenge of the Commission is to permit and encourage development that will restore and respect the hills rising from Route 34, opposite of the Housatonic River.

##### Strategies

1. There are several parcels along Route 34 that have been disturbed through earth removal or other operations. Age-restricted housing offers the opportunity to restore and use the land in a way that can minimize the disruption of the topography in the area.
2. A limited amount of mixed uses may be appropriate along this corridor.

3. The significant characteristics of this area are visual and physical access to the Housatonic River. All developments within this area should be designed to; (1) permit physical access to the river, if located on the south side of Route 34; or (2) provide for visual access to the river, both from the prospective residents as well as the public.
4. Development of undersized lots should only be permitted in strict conformance with all regulations. The combination of undersized lots should be encouraged.

#### F. Quaker Farms

Quaker Farms is a generally defined area along Route 188, centered on the intersections of Barry Road and Captain Wooster Road, where there is a church, fire station and several historical homes clustered along the road. This area has the characteristics of a traditional rural center, a small cluster of homes and activities.

The western section of Oxford, from Route 188, is the most rural section of the Town. It includes the greatest amount of undeveloped land and areas of steep topography. The road system within this area reflects the historical patterns of traveling towards the Housatonic River, and includes steep, narrow roads going through valleys and along hillsides.

#### Strategies

1. The historic character of the center of Quaker Farms should be preserved through careful control of development and public improvements within the area.
2. Residential development west of Route 188 should be in conjunction with improvements to existing roads, as well as new road connections.

## **X. CONSISTENCY WITH STATE AND REGIONAL PLANS**

Section 8-23 CGS requires that a municipal plan of development take into consideration the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the applicable regional plan for the area.

### **A. State Plan of Conservation and Development**

The Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut, 2005-2010 (C&D Plan) is comprised of two separate components – the Plan text and the Locational Guide Map. Both components include policies that are intended to guide the planning and decision-making processes of state government.

The policies contained in the C&D Plan text provide the context and direction for state agencies to implement their plans and actions in a manner consistent with the following six Growth Management Principles (GMPs):

1. Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure.
2. Expand Housing Opportunities and Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs.
3. Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options.
4. Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands.
5. Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety.
6. Promote Integrated Planning Across all Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional and Local Basis.

The Locational Guide Map is intended to guide relevant state actions by providing a geographical interpretation of the state's conservation and development policies. The map comprises four development categories and four conservation categories that are prioritized according to their characteristics and suitability for various state actions. The policies associated with these categories reflect the Plan's different applications and impacts relative to an area's character of development, social structure, economic base, natural conditions, and public service facilities.

According to the Locational Guide Map, the following locational categories are within Oxford:

- Growth Area;
- Rural Community Center;
- Existing Preserved Open Space;
- Conservation Area; and
- Rural Lands.

Although most of the state designated locational categories are consistent with the goals, policies and land use classifications of this update of the Oxford, Plan of Conservation and Development, there are several situations of inconsistency between the State Plan and proposed municipal plan. These are with the current local zoning classifications, and in several situations, with the actual land use.

1. The entire area north of Jacks Hill Road and west of Riggs Street has been zoned industrial for many years. Both the 1990 Plan of Development as well as the 1990 North Area Update showed this area for industrial use. The land is all zoned industrial, served by public water and sewer, contains industrial land uses and is being developed for additional industrial facilities.
2. The land on the east side of Riggs Street, south of Towantic Pond, and east of Chestnut Tree Hill Road is being developed for an age-restricted residential golf course community. The zoning regulations permit a maximum of 1,000 units within the community; several hundred have already been constructed. All public utilities have been either installed or planned for the site. Almost half the site is planned to remain in its natural state.
3. Route 67 is the major commercial and retail corridor of the community. It includes essentially three clusters of activity; the extreme southern area adjacent to the Seymour Town boundary, the Oxford Center area and a stretch of commercial activity in between. The current plan is to strengthen and reinforce this corridor, through streetscapes, installation of pedestrian facilities, intensification of use and the installation of public water and sewer to adequately support the appropriate scale of commercial uses.
4. The State Plan designates the extreme southern area as a Growth Area, but growth area designation of the entire corridor, except those areas that are environmentally significant and should remain in their natural state, would make the State Plan consistent with growth and development goals of Oxford, as well as the actual pattern of land use. The designation of Oxford Center as a "Rural Community Center" may no longer be accurate, as Oxford is no longer a rural community. Its growing residential population requires a growing business and service population to serve it,



which can best be met by the enhancement of the existing pattern of land uses along the Route 67 corridor.

## **B. Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Plan of Conservation and Development**

The Plan for the Central Naugatuck Valley region, which includes Oxford, was updated in 1998. The plan is regionally oriented and as such, emphasizes overall approach to land use issues within the region. It includes a series of strategies and implementation factors.

The regional planning includes several overall themes that are echoed in the Town Plan of Conservation and Development; the aggressive pursuit of economic development, preservation of open space including greenways, and the encouragement of development in areas served by infrastructure. The Plan, as part of its land use recommendations, designates the North Oxford Industrial Area, along with adjacent land within the Town of Middlebury as a "Major Economic Area," the designation of Oxford Center as a "Community Center." This is consistent with the Oxford Plan as well. However, the regional plan is similar to the State Plan in its designation of Growth Areas, and differs from the Town Plan in the same situations as described above.

## **XI. IX IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX**

The value of this plan is the ability for it to be implemented. The Plan emphasizes actions that can be taken by the various boards and agencies within the Town. The key to successful implementation is the cooperation and coordination of the various Town agencies in ensuring the successful implementation of the Plan. The Plan contains numerous individual recommendations, but ten specific action steps are shown here to prioritize and assist in implementation.

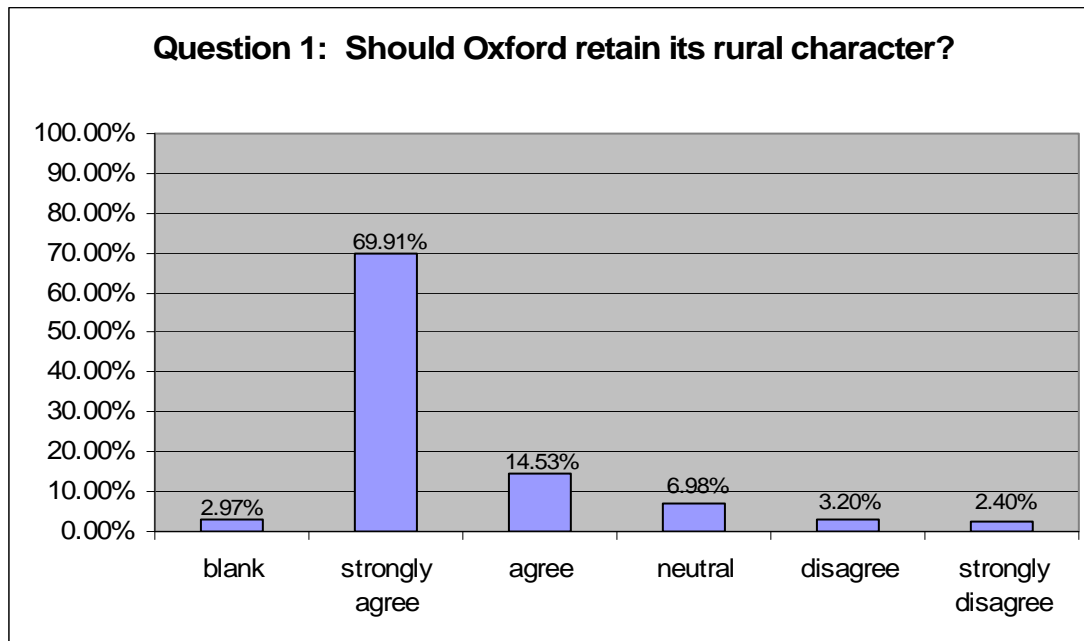
The Planning and Zoning Commission, is the body primarily responsible for the adoption and implementation of the Plan. The Commission can monitor the successful implementation of the plan, by reviewing the strategies on a bi-annual basis.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Implementing Agency</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1.	Complete a Route 67 Corridor Plan	PZC with cooperation of Town	Year 1	
2.	Apply to Amend State POCD	PZC, Board of Selectman, Economic Development Coordinator	Year 1	
3.	Amend Zoning Regulations	PZC	Year 1 to 2	Route 67 north, Oxford Center, Commercial
4.	Implement Town Center Improvements	Board of Selectmen	Year 1 through 5	Redesigned public space around Kirks Pond and Town Hall sites
5.	Change Zoning Map as recommended	PZC	Year 1 through 2	
6.	Pursue road improvements in North Industrial area	Board of Selectmen	Year 1 through 5	Jacks Hill Road, Ecommerce Drive, Christian Street
7.	Acquire open space in designated areas	Board of Selectmen; PZC	Ongoing	PZC through development review
8.	Establish Linear Open Space trail along Route 67	Board of Selectmen	Years 2 through 5	Implementation of Route 67 Plan
9.	Provide planning to decide upon nature size and location of new or expanded community facilities; library, town hall offices, schools etc.	Board of Selectmen, LRPC, PZC	Years 1 through 3	
10.	Improvements to Route 67	Board of Selectmen, PZC, DOT	Years 3 through 5	
11.	Pursue development of town-wide recreational complex, either on land owned by the Town or additional land	Board of Selectmen, Recreation Commission	Years 2 through 4	

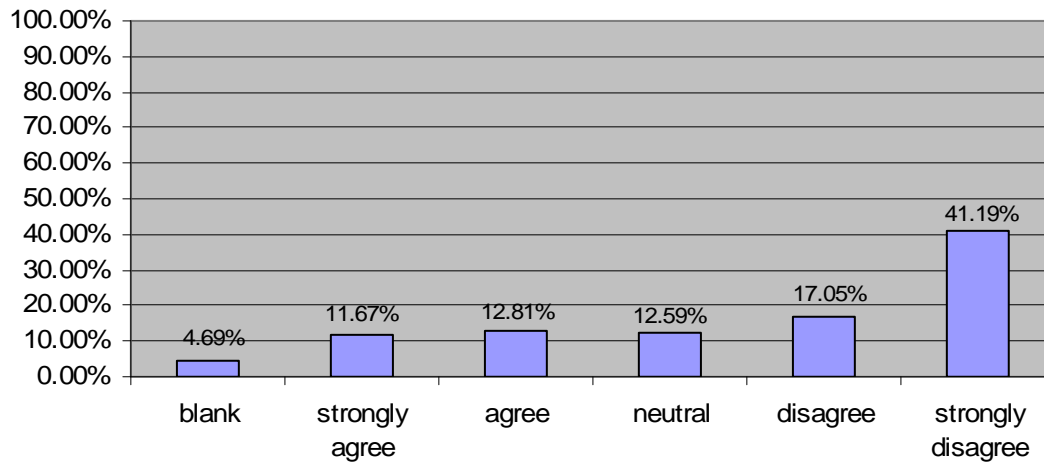
## XII. APPENDIX COMMUNITY SURVEY

A public opinion survey was sent to all owners of residential property as shown on the Town Assessor records. Attempts were made to adjust the list to eliminate multiple mailings to owners of more than one parcel of property. Approximately 4,000 surveys were mailed out. Respondents were given approximately one month to return the survey. 874 surveys were returned, a response rate of approximately 22%. Normally, a response rate of 10% to 15% is expected.

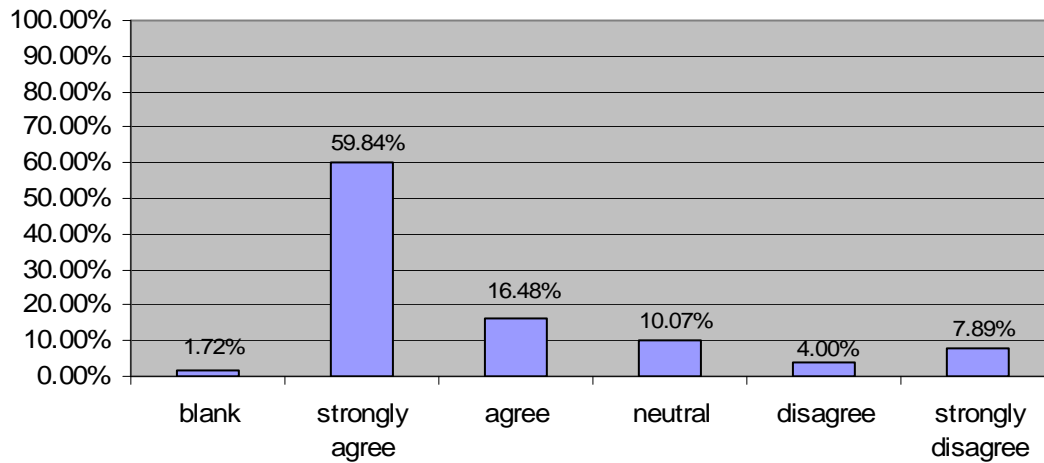
In the first 15 questions, respondents were asked to state whether their degree of agreement with each statement, with a choice of strongly agree, agree, neutral/no opinion, disagree and strongly disagree. The reaction to each of these questions is shown below:



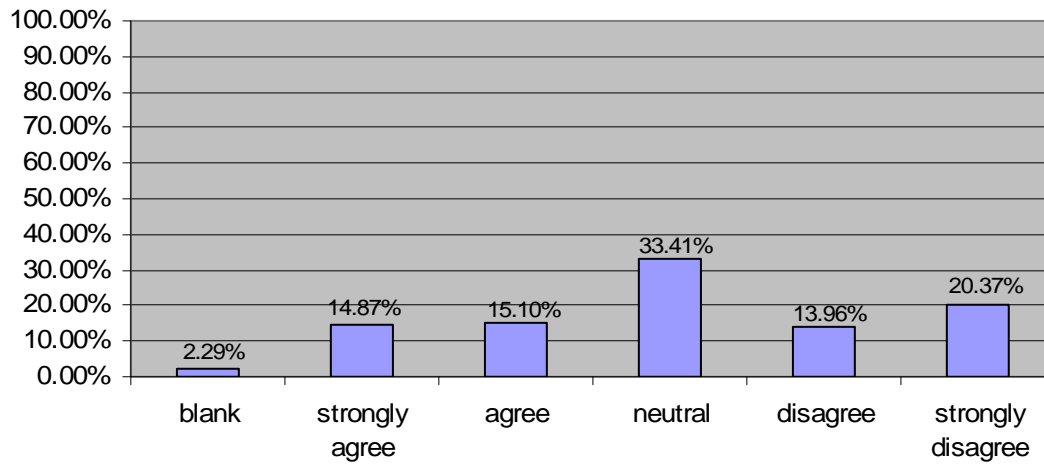
**Question 2: Should Oxford become a more developed suburban community?**



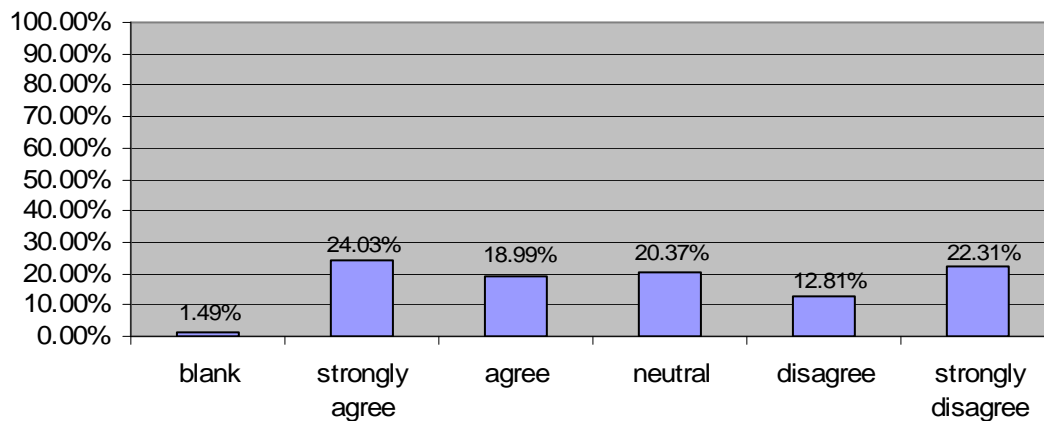
**Question 3: Should most of the new residential development continue to be single-family homes?**



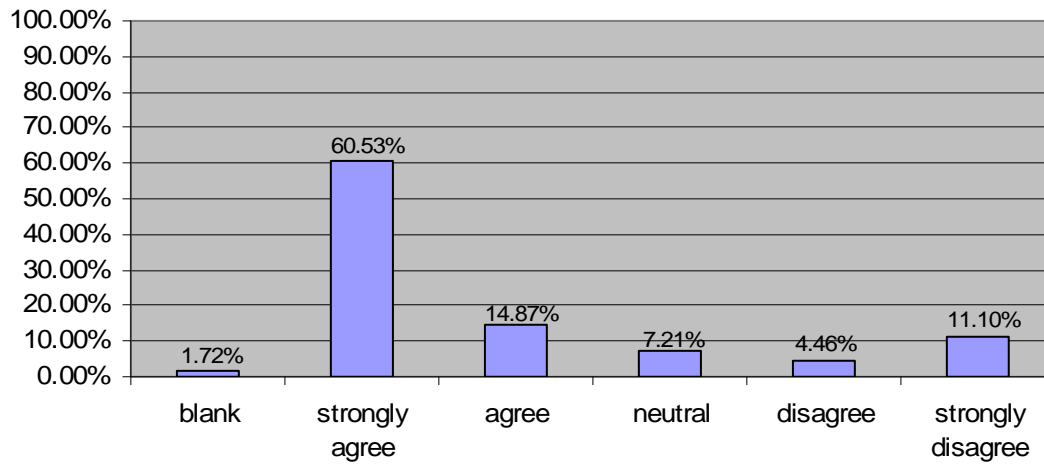
**Question 4: Should there be more housing opportunities  
in Town for singles and young marrieds?**



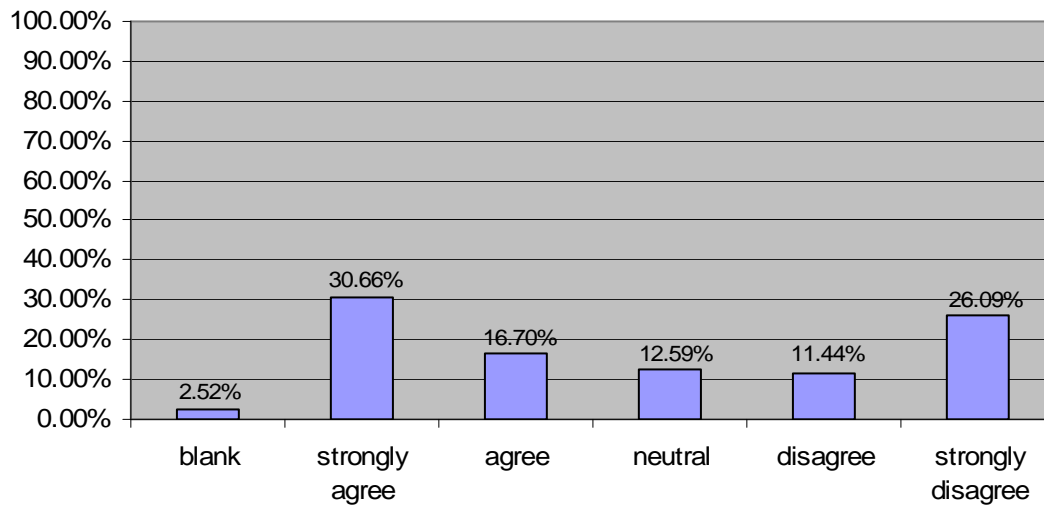
**Question 5: Should Oxford continue to permit the  
development of housing for people over 55 with no  
children?**



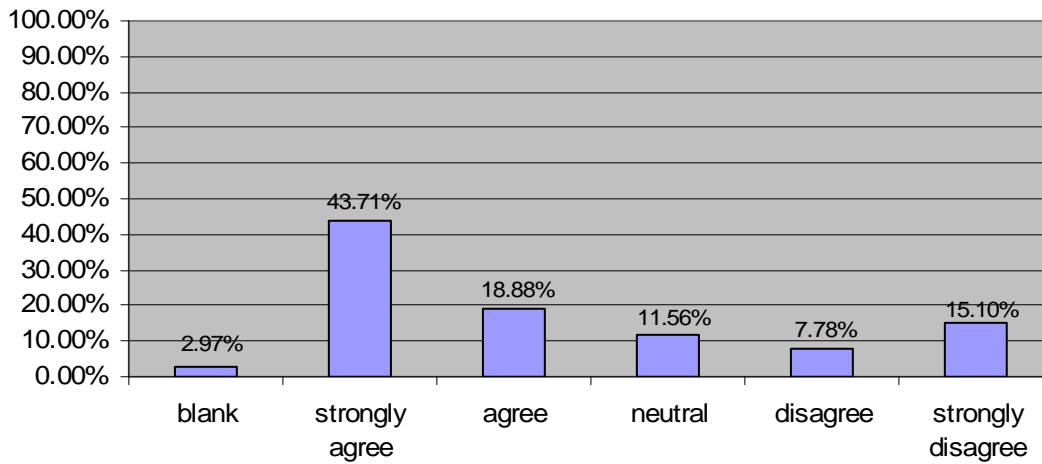
**Question 6: Should the Town encourage development in the industrial zone?**



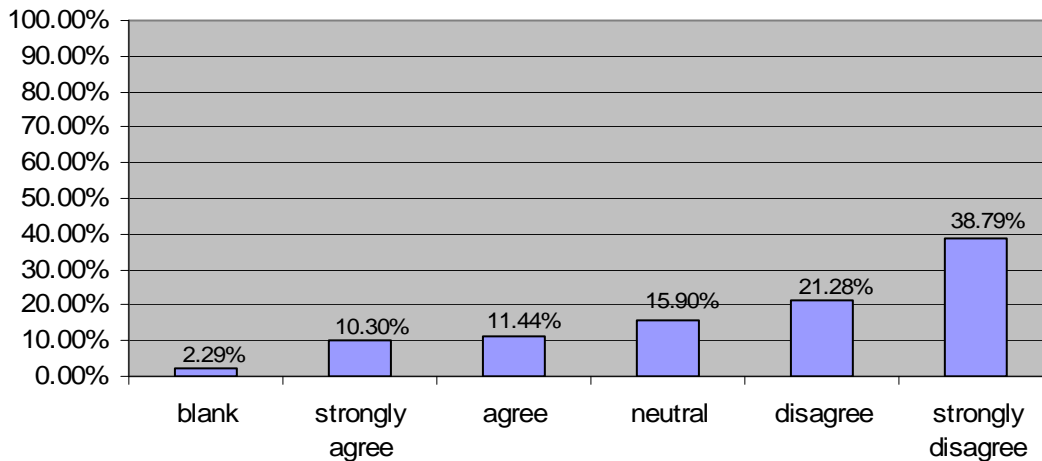
**Question 7: Does Oxford need more retail facilities?**



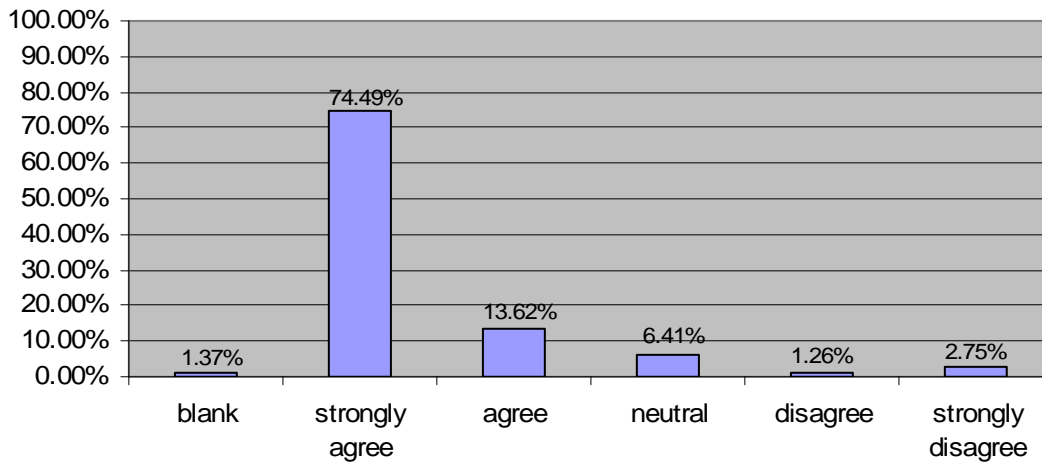
**Question 8: Should the retail area along Route 67 be improved?**



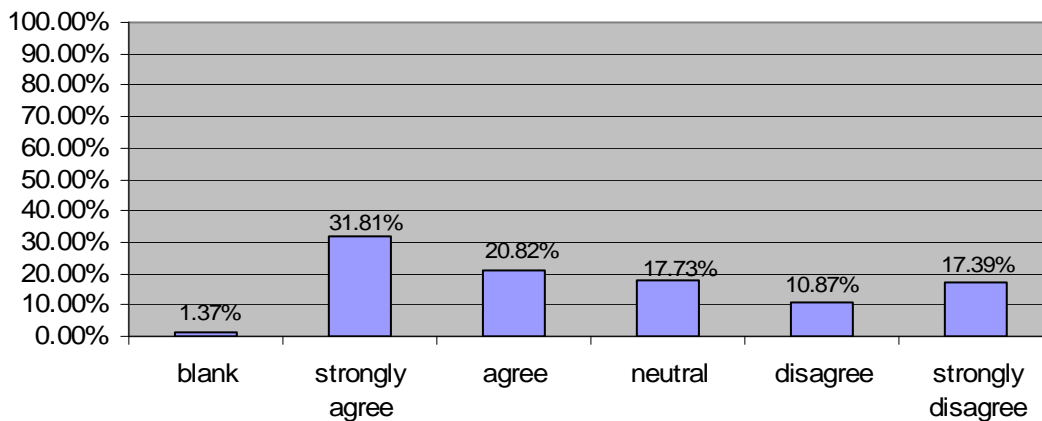
**Question 9: Is the local road system adequate to support the additional residential development?**



**Question 10: Should the Town preserve open space corridors along the river and streams?**

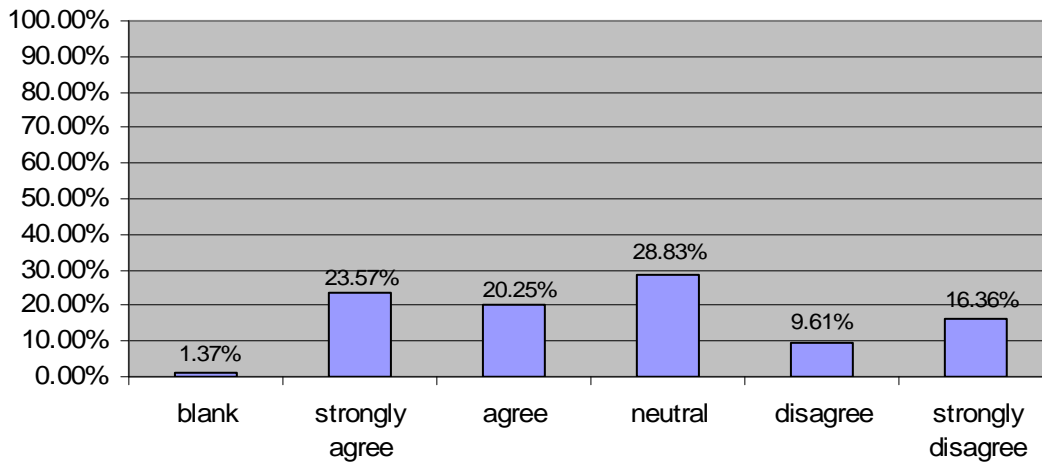


**Question 11: Should the center of Town (Municipal Buildings, Center School and Oxford House area) be improved with sidewalks and parks?**

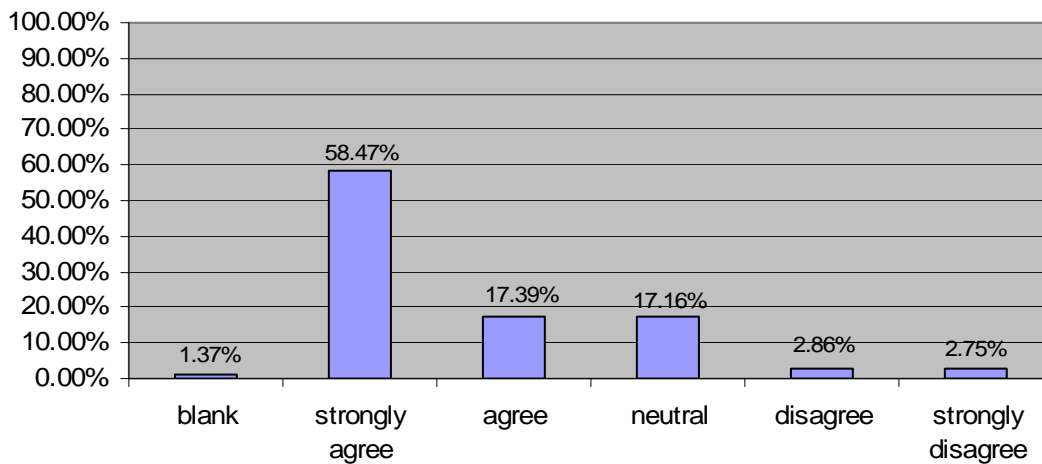




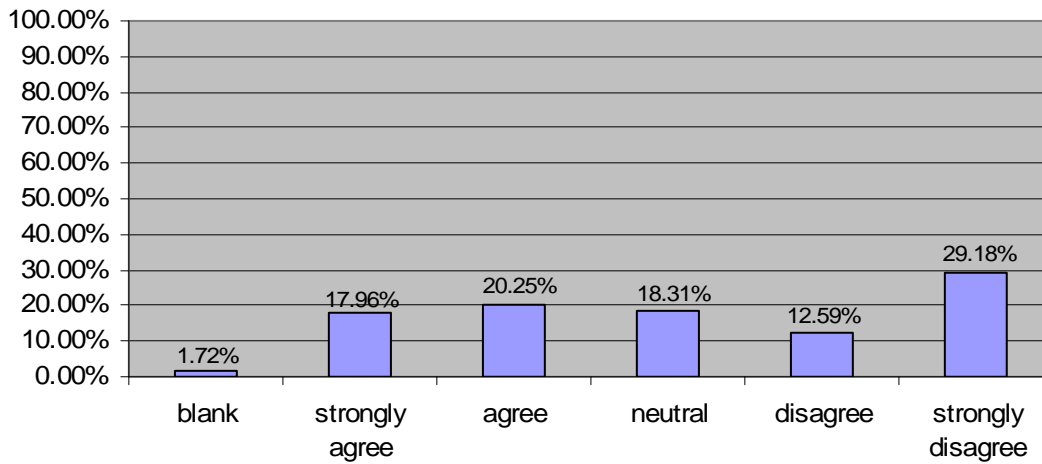
**Question 12: Does Oxford need more playing fields and recreational facilities?**



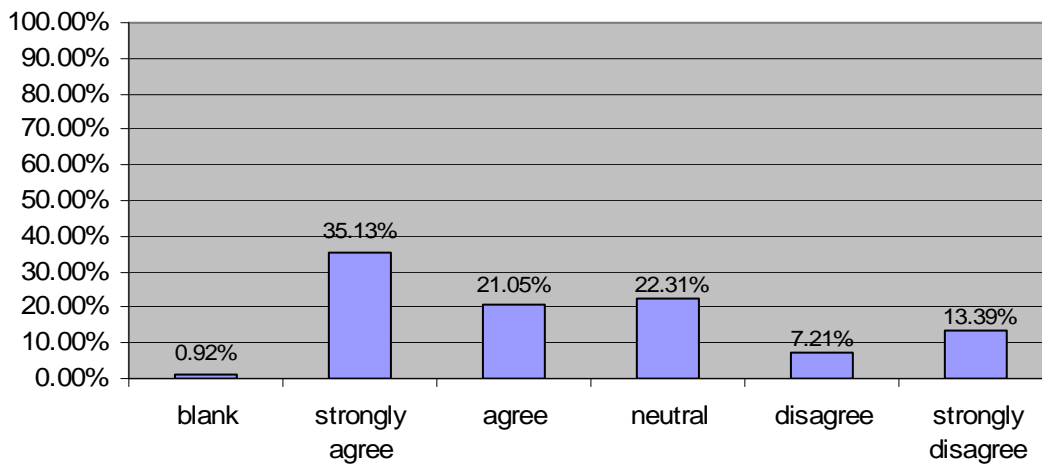
**Question 13: Should hilltops and ridgelines be protected?**



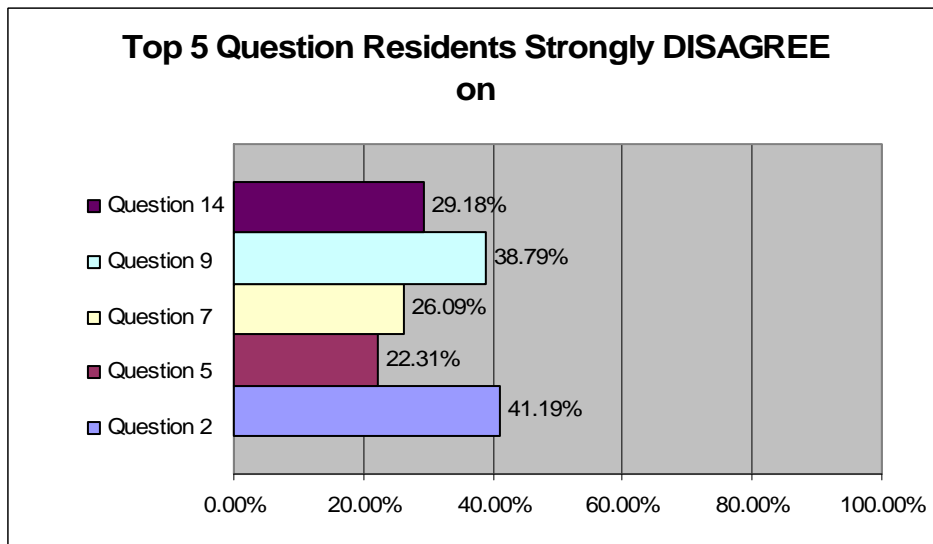
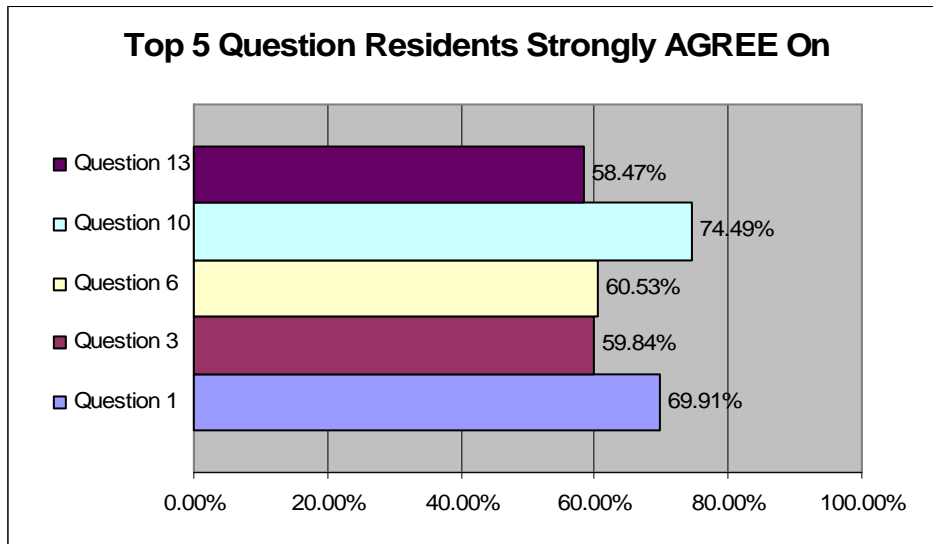
**Question 14: Will you support an increase in taxes to purchase more open space in Town?**



**Question 15: Does Oxford need an increase in library space and resources?**

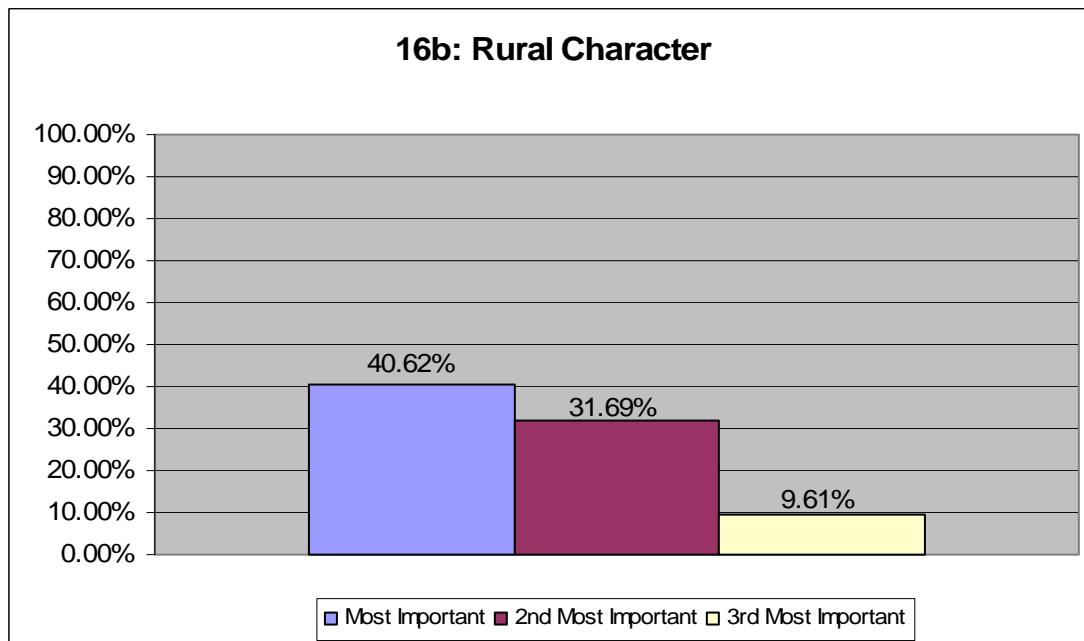
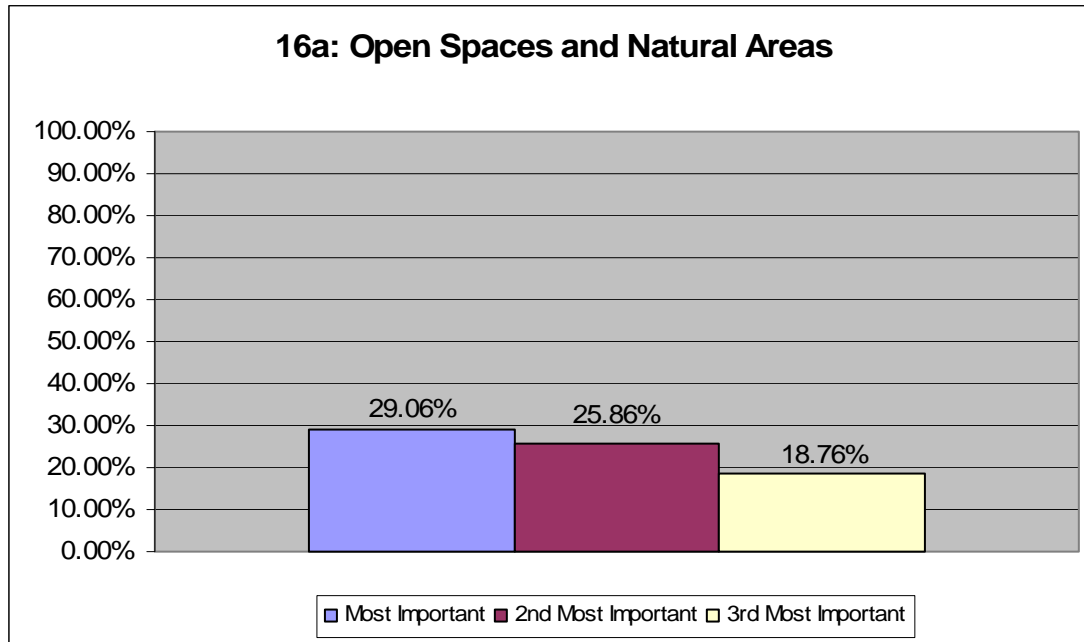


The areas of strongest agreement and disagreement are shown below:

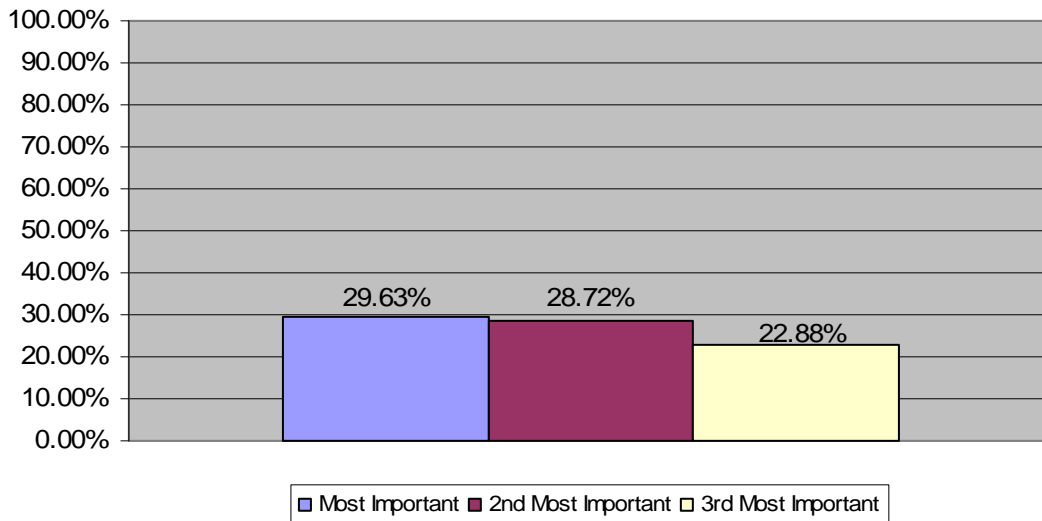


For questions 16, 17 and 18 respondents were asked several questions and asked to rank their response. The following graphs show the percentage of respondents that selected each of the answers as ranking first, second or third for each question.

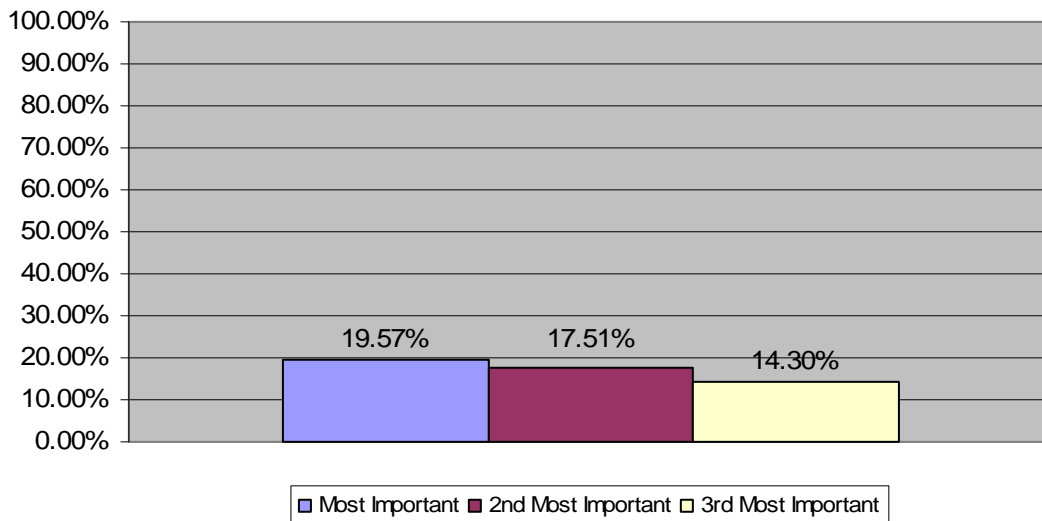
Question 16. – What do you like best about Oxford?



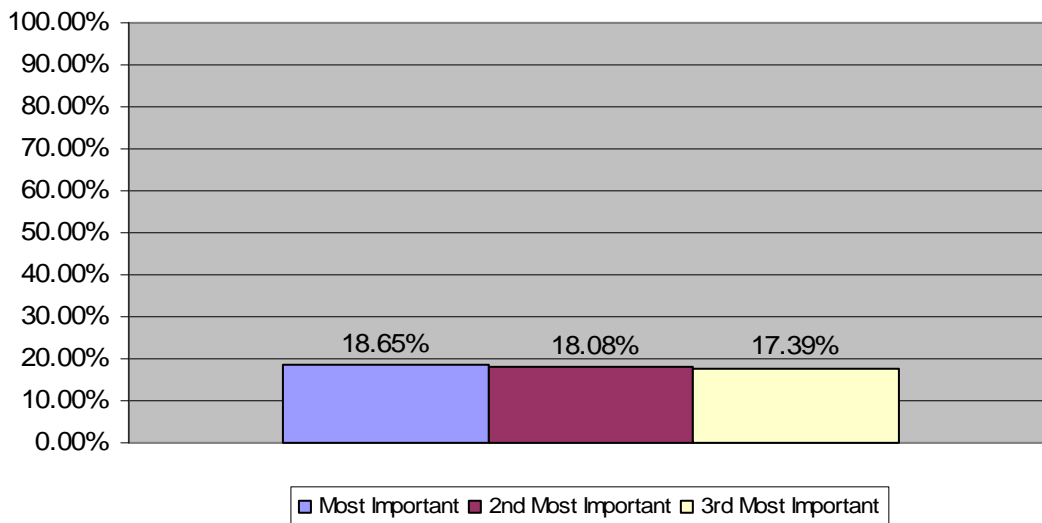
### 16c: Small Town Atmosphere



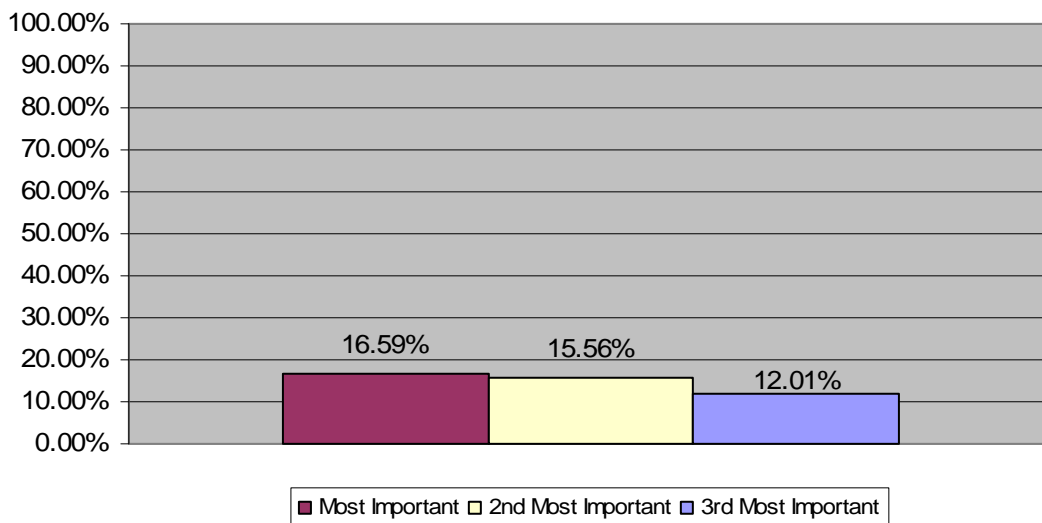
### 16d: Quality of Services

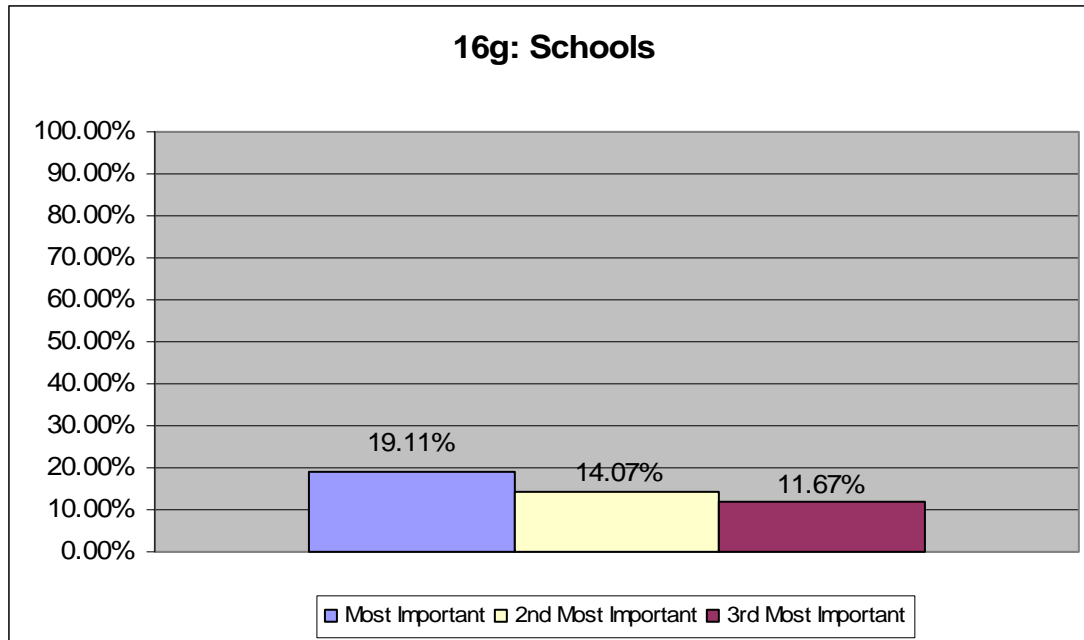


### 16e: Access to Shopping



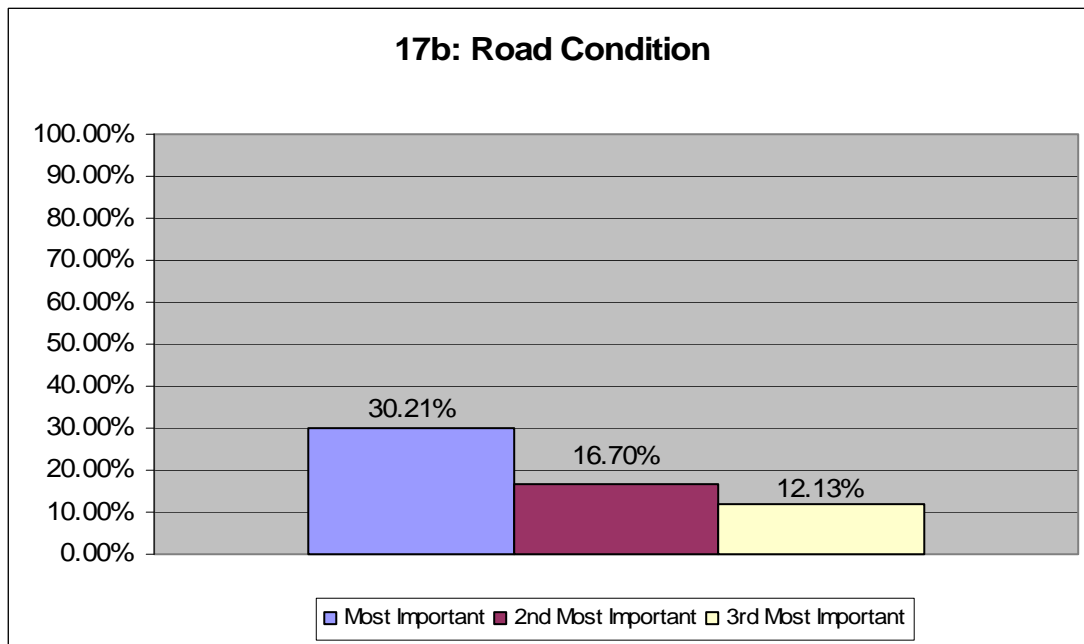
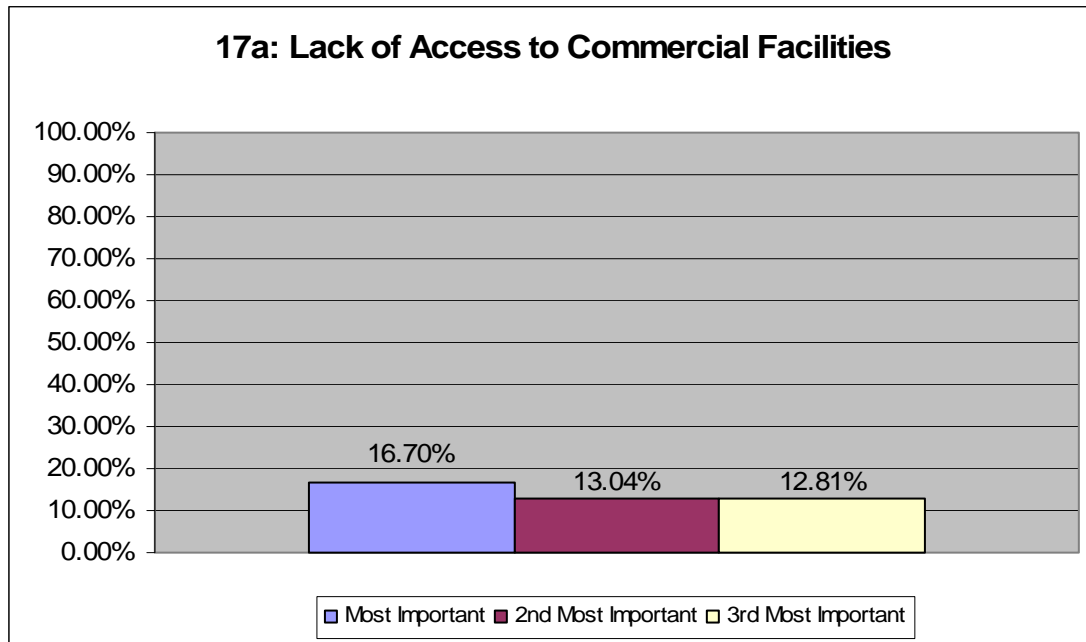
### 16f: Proximity to Employment





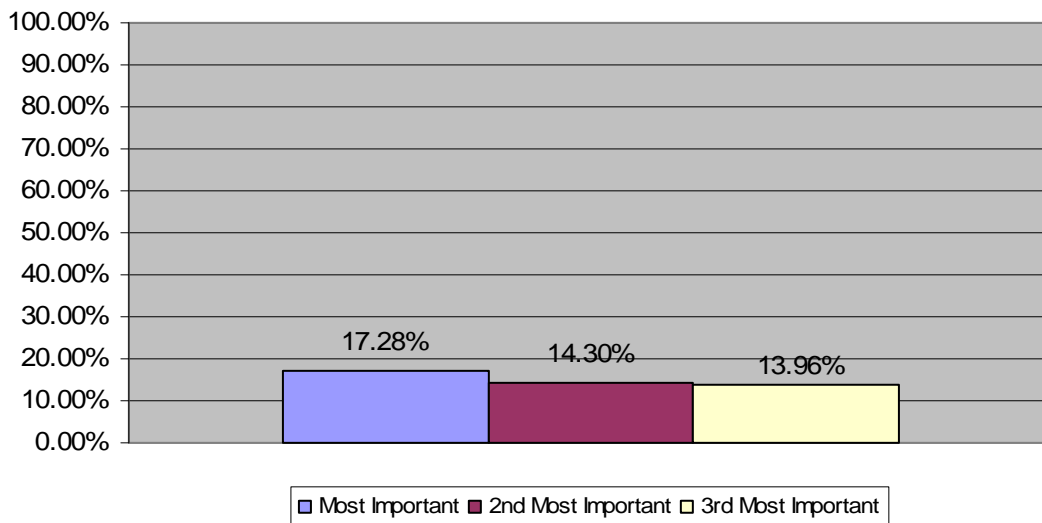
The respondents expressed that the existing characteristics of Oxford that they valued the most were natural open spaces and rural character.

Question 17. - What do you like the least about Oxford?

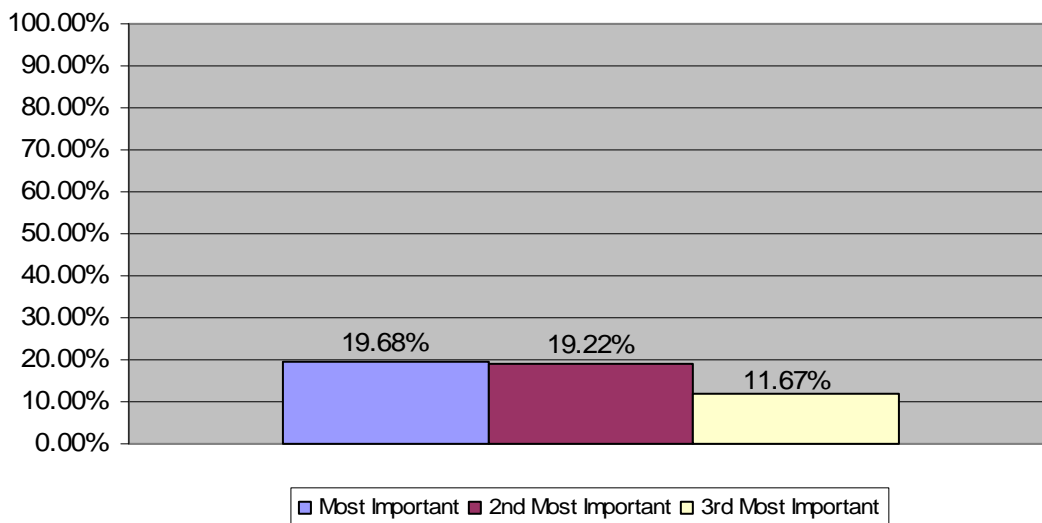


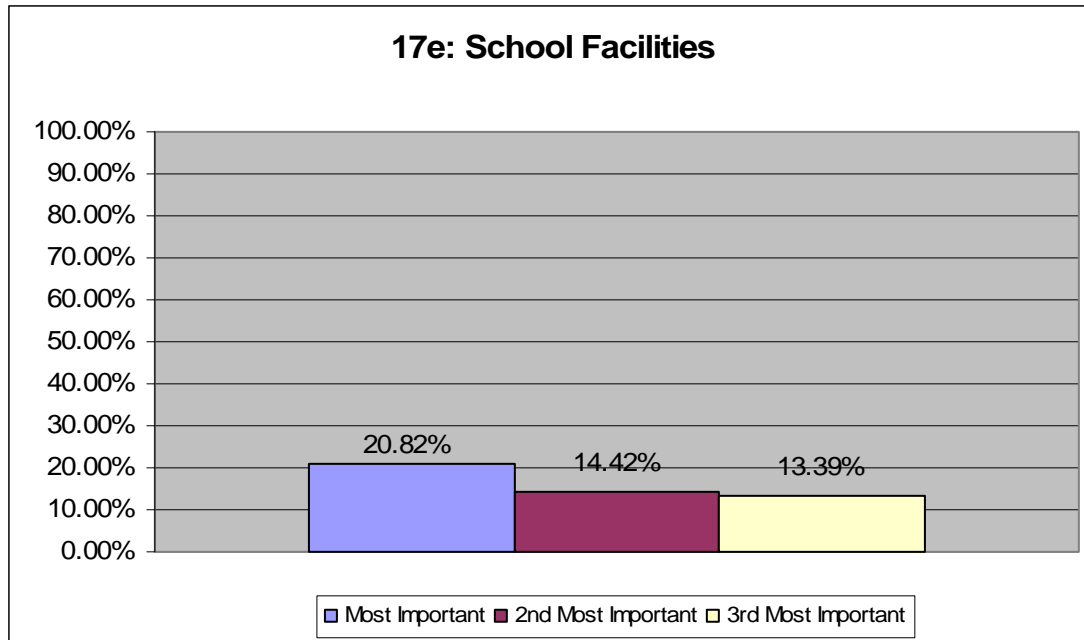


### 17c: Lack of Parks and Recreation



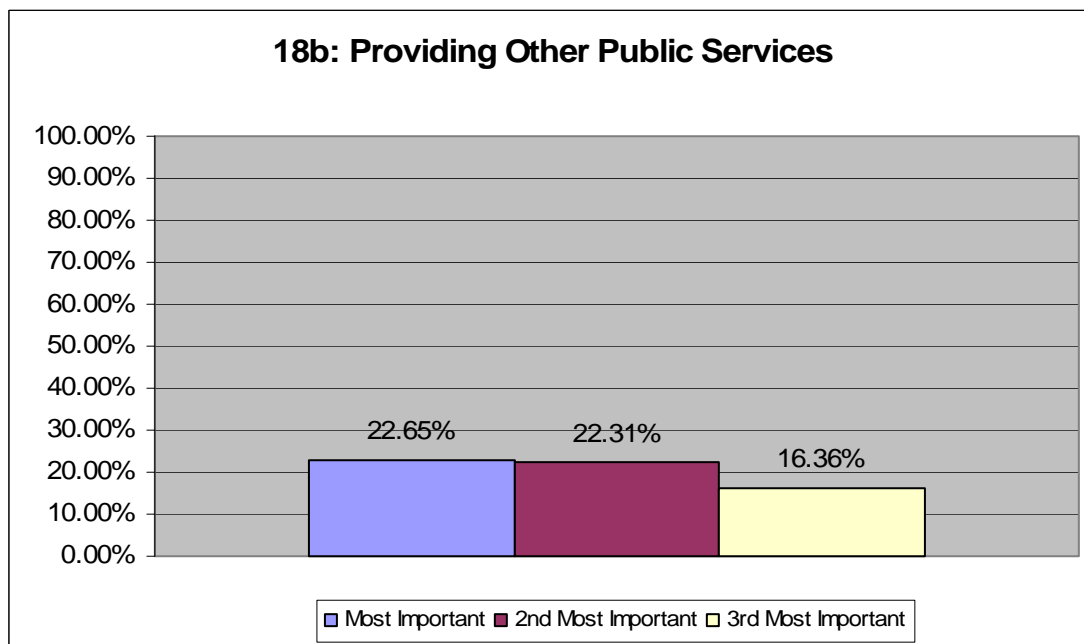
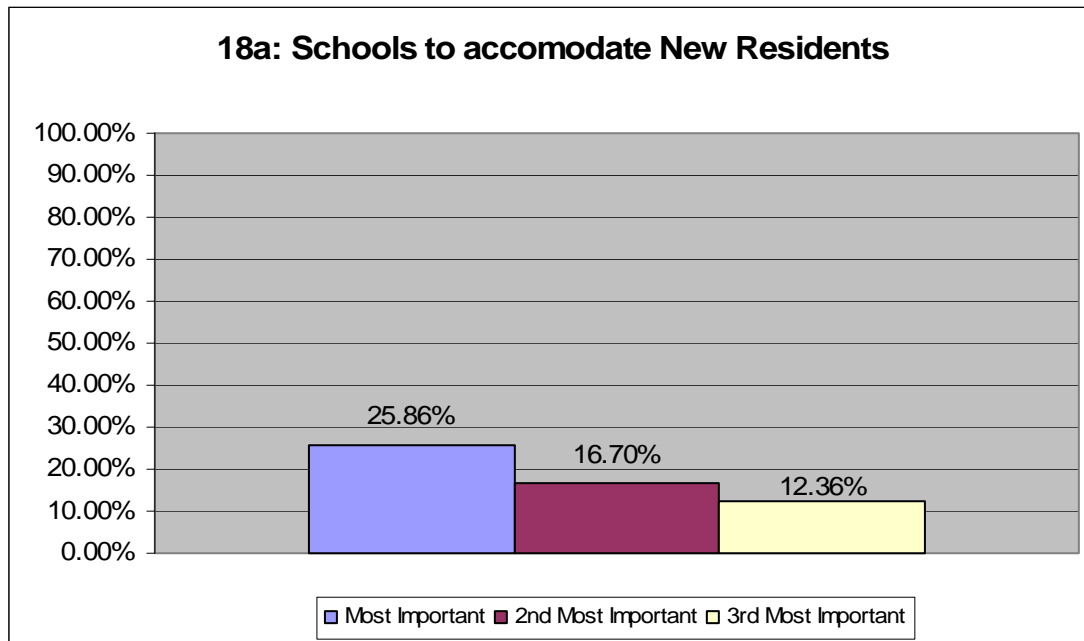
### 17d: Level of Public Services



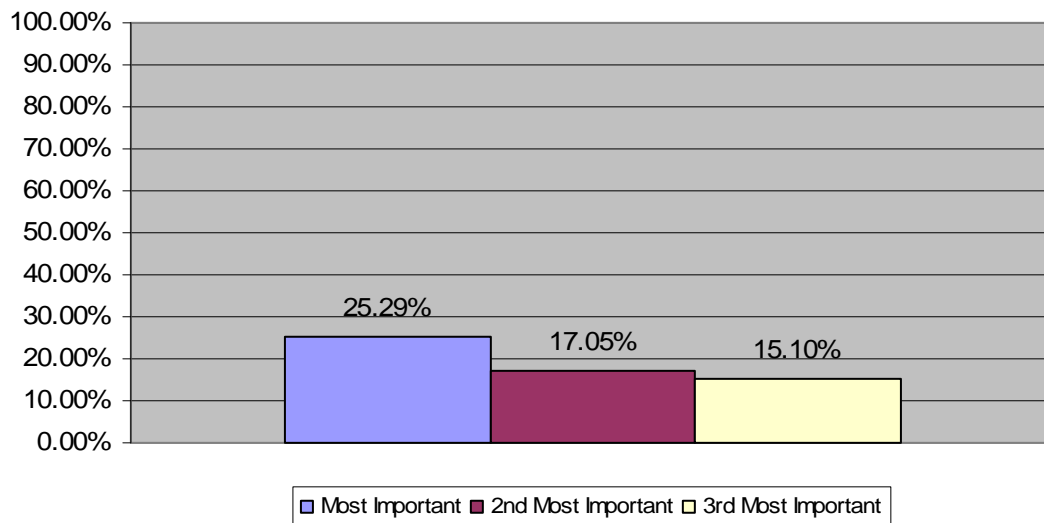


There was less consensus as to what the residents liked least about Oxford, but there was greater dissatisfaction expressed with the road system and school facilities. The dissatisfaction expressed for the school facilities may reflect a lack of a high school.

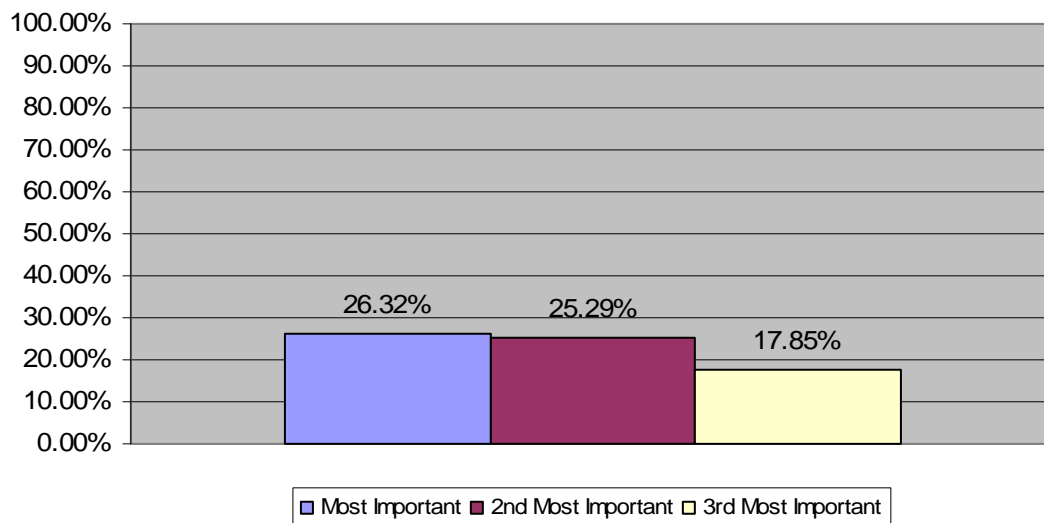
Question 18. – What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the Town over the next ten years?

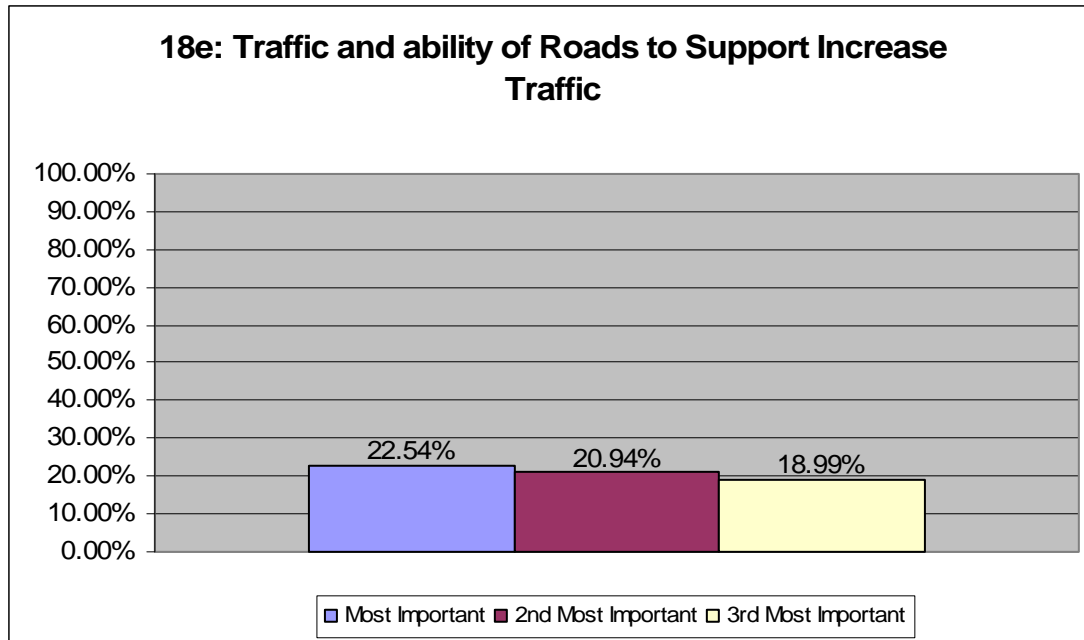


### 18c: Loss of Natural Area



### 18d: Maintaining Small Town Atmosphere





There was a fairly equal level of concern expressed for all five potential challenges. These challenges all reflect the ability of the Town to respond to growth.

Questions 19 and 20 were open ended, in that they asked for any areas of historic, cultural or natural significance that should be preserved. There were a wide variety of answers and are listed in Memorandum 9.