

Chapter 3: Conditions & Trends

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History's Influence on Land Use

Vernon's physical layout – its streets, neighborhoods, business locations and other elements – were shaped by historic trends and events. Some of these historic factors were common to many Connecticut communities, while others were unique to Vernon.

Early Water Supply Protection

As early as 1847, the newly formed Aqueduct Company had the foresight to buy land around the Town's water supply – Lake Shenipsit.

However, the lake was a popular summertime resort. By the early 1900s, the Aqueduct Company realized that resort activities threatened the water supply. The resort owners shut down and sold their land to the Aqueduct Company, further protecting what today serves as a regional water supply.

Vernon Becomes a Town

Vernon's early inhabitation by Native Americans is memorialized in the names of rivers and lakes in the Town. Three territories converged at Lake Shenipsit – Nipmucks, Mohegans, and Podunks. These tribes eventually moved westward as new settlers arrived from East Windsor.

The area that is Vernon today was part of Bolton and referred to as North Bolton. By 1808, the farmers of North Bolton found it too difficult to travel to Bolton for town functions. They petitioned the Connecticut General Assembly and in 1808, Vernon became a town. Vernon Center was the new town's center with the church, meeting house, school, grange and houses. Vernon was predominantly an agricultural town at this time. The Hartford Turnpike, built in 1801, ran through Vernon Center, connecting Vernon Center to Hartford and the court in Tolland. In 1810, 827 people lived in Vernon. Connections improved in 1847, when a railway connected Vernon to Hartford and Providence. Vernon Center remained the Town's civic center.

Early Development Patterns

Vernon's rivers – the Tankerhoosen and Hockanum – drove industry and created patterns that we still see today. The rivers provided water power for mills, mainly during the 1800s and early 1900s. The development of Talcottville and Rockville exemplified the concept of "mill towns."

The Talcott Brothers (owner of the Talcottville Mill) owned land in what today is Talcottville. As many mill owners did at the time, they built a village for its workers. The village included houses (many still there today), a store, an assembly hall, library and a church. Because the area was under single ownership, Talcottville emerged as a cohesive village.

Multiple mill owners in Rockville also developed housing, stores, and other amenities, but each mill owner developed its own mini-village. Most businesses existed solely to support the mills. It was not until much later, when roads were built to connect these villages, that Rockville became a "place" and eventually a city.

Rockville Thrives

As Rockville thrived, history repeated itself. Similar to the desire of North Bolton residents to avoid traveling to Bolton, Rockville residents found it inconvenient to travel to Vernon Center. So they built their own church and a school in 1836. As a result, Rockville residents had less interaction with the rural residents of Vernon. By 1856, Town Meetings began alternating between Vernon Center and Rockville.

From 1860 to 1880, Rockville was booming, with the continued construction of single family houses and businesses. By this time, businesses that were not dependent on the mills opened, including lawyers and physicians. Roads were improved and parks were created. The pressing demand for more housing resulted in houses being built up the steep hills around Rockville and spurred the conversion of boarding houses and some larger single-family houses to multi-family housing. New two- to four-family houses also were built. Talcott Park was created in the 1860/70s and Central Park was created in 1877. Transportation improved too; by 1863, a railroad spur served Rockville and trolley service began in 1898.

Meanwhile, residents in “rural” Vernon were concerned that their taxes were supporting public improvements in Rockville and they did not feel they were benefitting from such investments. By 1889, the Town successfully petitioned the State legislature to incorporate Rockville as a city. Rockville was still a part of Vernon, but now had the ability to govern and tax itself.

Public improvements continued, cementing Rockville’s civic, business and cultural identity. Memorial Hall opened in 1880; the Library was built in 1904; and Rockville City Hospital opened in 1921. But industry changed and many mills began closing. Some changed in ownership and shifted to new products. Many burned down. A number remain today; some have been renovated and reused while some sit vacant.

Suburbanization and Redevelopment

Like most communities, Vernon sought to capitalize on two trends occurring in the 1950s and 1960s – land use patterns that supported automobile use and urban redevelopment. The Town adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1951.

Vernon’s suburbanization was marked by the loss of rail and trolley service, better access to Hartford via the newly-built Wilbur Cross Parkway, and the opening of the Tri-City Plaza. Suburbanization is credited with alleviating some of the economic impact of the declining mill industry. Redevelopment of Rockville entailed tearing down buildings and building suburban style retail. At that time the Hockanum River was viewed as a constraint that limited Rockville’s redevelopment potential, so it was covered. It was also at this time (1961) that the first zoning ordinance was adopted for Rockville. Shortly afterward, Rockville’s and Vernon’s government and police were consolidated. Consolidation of the fire department followed.

Today Vernon’s villages are integral parts of the community. Although some have been lost (e.g., Dobsonville), the historic importance of Rockville and Talcottville have been cemented by their listing as historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places.

“Vernon” and “Rockville”

Some degree of the “Vernon versus Rockville” sentiment is still evident today.

Residents expressed concern that others do not see Rockville as their village center and that residents perceive “Rockville” and “Vernon” as two different communities.

It can be a delicate balance to celebrate the uniqueness of Vernon’s neighborhoods, while still promoting that all residents are “Vernon” residents.

This Plan envisions that those who live in Rockville will view themselves as Vernon residents and those who live elsewhere in Vernon view Rockville as Vernon’s Town Center.

Civic events play an important role in bringing residents together and drawing them to Rockville. These efforts should continue and be supplemented with other events throughout Vernon.

Regional Context

Vernon is a member of the 29-community Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and a member of the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce. The CRCOG region includes a mix of urban, suburban and rural communities. Vernon is one of nine communities categorized as “Fully Suburban”, meaning that there are 1,251 to 3,000 persons per square mile.

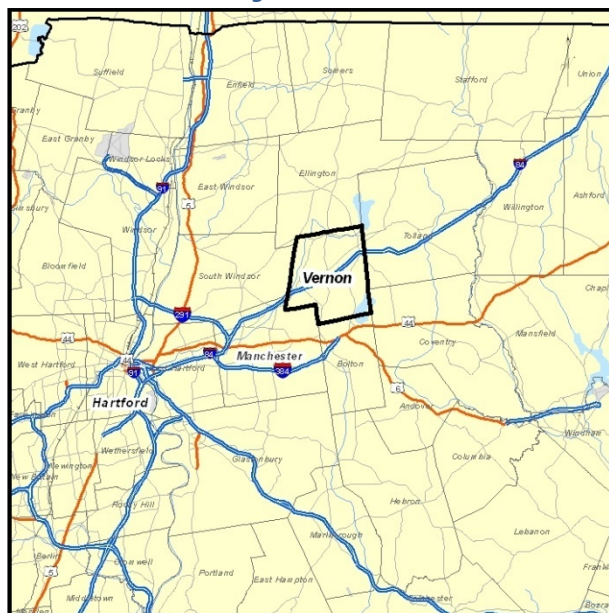
CRCOG has adopted a number of regional plans that have implications for Vernon. These include:

- [Regional Plan of Conservation and Development](#) (2009)
- [Capital Region Transportation Plan](#) (2011)
- [Transportation Improvement Program](#) (FFY 2010-2013)
- [Regional Pedestrian Plan and Bicycle Plan](#) (2008)

A number of regional assets are found in Vernon. These include transportation infrastructure (I-84, major State routes), recreational opportunities (trails, parks, open space, lakes), cultural assets (museums), and State and regional facilities (Connecticut National Guard, Rockville Hospital, etc.). And Shenipsit Lake provides water to the region. Vernon’s retail businesses provide goods and services to neighboring communities in addition to its own residents.

Conversely, Vernon’s residents and businesses depend upon the greater region for a number of things, including jobs. Also, conditions and trends in the greater region can impact Vernon. Examples include better access to Hartford which spurred residential growth in Vernon and retail development in neighboring communities that competed with retail businesses in Vernon, but also opened up new opportunities.

Regional Context



People

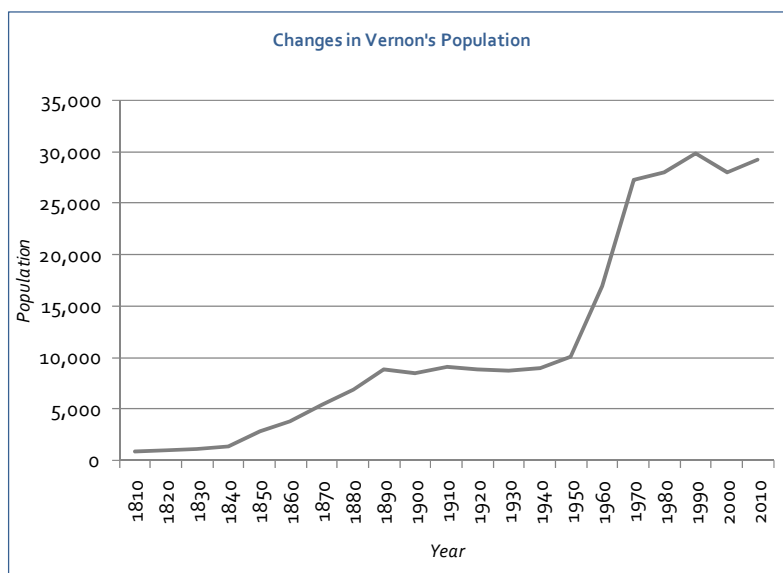
Vernon experienced dramatic population growth during two periods – in the mid 1800s due to the booming mill industry and one hundred years later when access to Hartford improved. The Town experienced a decline in population from 1990 to 2000. Census data from 2010 indicates that the decline has reversed and 29,179 people live in Vernon.

Vernon's population has surpassed projections prepared by state entities (29 to 30,000 residents were projected by 2030). Simply extending the current 4% growth over the previous decade would place Vernon's population at approximately 31,560 by 2030.

Each age group has different needs, particularly in terms of housing and town services and facilities. The following chart depicts the actual and projected proportion of Vernon's population in each age group. The projections indicate that if current demographic trends continue, the proportion of the over 55 population will continue to grow while the proportion of most other age groups will decrease.

Additional Data

See the POCD web page for additional demographic data (<http://www.vernon-ct.gov/plan-of-conservation>).



Changes in Vernon's Age Composition

Description	Age Range	Needs / Wants	1980 Share	2000 Share	Projected 2020 Share	Future Trend
Infants	0 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child care Pre-school programs 	7%	6%	6%	↓
School Age	5 to 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School facilities Recreation programs and facilities 	25%	18%	15%	↓
Young Adults	20 to 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental housing, starter homes Social destinations 	28%	22%	16%	↓
Middle Adults	35 to 54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starter homes, trade-up homes Family programs, school programs 	23%	31%	17%	↓
Mature Adults	55 to 64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller homes, second homes Leisure programs and facilities 	9%	10%	15%	↑
Retirement Age	65 +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower upkeep, higher service housing Elderly programs, tax relief 	9%	13%	32%	↑

Sources: Census and CT State Data Center.

Housing

Housing Units

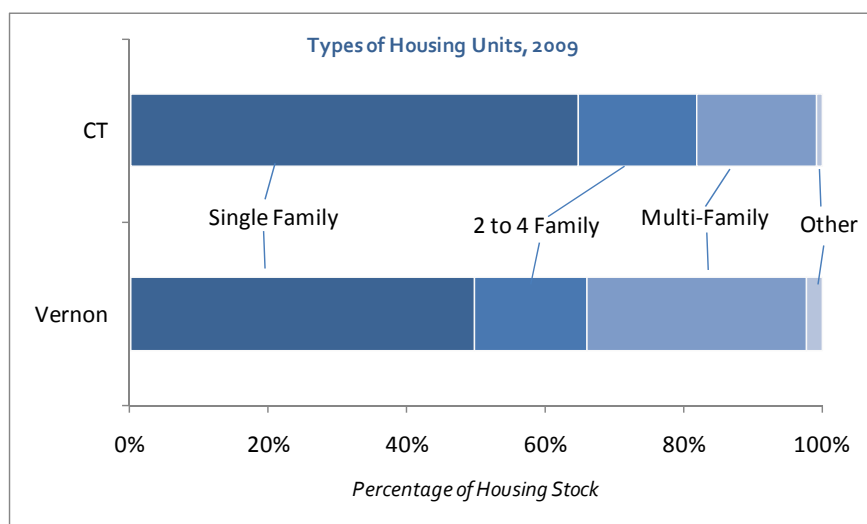
By 2010, there were just under 14,000 housing units in Vernon (a 9% increase since 2000). Growth since 2000 is attributed mainly to additional multi-family units (950 new multi-family housing units were constructed).

Vernon's housing stock is diverse – much more so than the State as a whole (see chart). According to the 2006/08 American Community Survey (ACS), 57% of Vernon's housing units are owner-occupied and 43% are renter-occupied.

Changes in Vernon's Housing Stock

Year	# of Units	Change
1960	5,408	--
1970	8,608	59%
1980	10,611	23%
1990	12,748	20%
2000	12,867	1%
2010	13,986	9%

Sources: US Census and previous Town Plans.



Having a variety of housing types and ample rental units helps to meet the needs of many segments of the region's population. At the same time, having a high proportion of rentals and multi-family might draw residents who only stay in Vernon for a few years – i.e., they "trade-up" elsewhere. In addition, while Vernon's housing stock has provided opportunities for seniors to remain in Town and likely draws area seniors to locate in Vernon, a population that lacks age-diversity could have implications in the future.

A 2009 study by HomeConnecticut analyzed housing affordability for all Connecticut municipalities and determined that housing in Vernon was "affordable" (affordable meant that in 2009, a family earning the Town or State median household income could qualify for a mortgage to purchase the median sales price home in Vernon).

Vernon is one of the more affordable communities in the region. Vernon's single family sales prices in 2010 were substantially lower than the median sales price for the State and many nearby communities.

Affordable Units in Vernon

Discussion on the previous page focused on whether units sell at affordable prices; sales prices fluctuate based on a number of market conditions. This section focuses on how many of Vernon's housing units are designated as affordable.

The State, pursuant to CGS 8-30g, considers a unit to be affordable if the dwelling unit is assisted, CHFA-financed or deed restricted. Just over 15% of Vernon's housing stock is affordable as of 2008 (see sidebar). All of Vernon's affordable units are either "assisted" or CHFA-financed. Out of the 1,626 affordable units in 2008, two-thirds are family units and one-third are elderly units. Roughly 34% of all affordable units are managed by the Vernon Housing Authority.

Vernon's percentage of affordable units has been declining (in 2002, it was 20.07%). The decline has occurred due to:

- Loss of deed-restricted units. Since 2004, Vernon has lost all 25 of its deed-restricted units. These were units that were affordable for a set period of time and once that time expired, the owners had fulfilled their obligation and could rent or sell the units at market rates.
- Certain developments were accidentally double-counted by the State. Corrections made it appear that the Town lost those units.
- Vouchers and subsidized mortgages are counted as affordable units. These are attached to the householder – not the housing unit. If the householder moves out of Vernon or loses the voucher or mortgage, Vernon loses the affordable "unit".

Vernon's affordable housing percentage may drop further when the State updates the affordable housing percentages using 2010 Census because the 2008 percentage is based on the number of housing units counted in the 2000 Census. Vernon has seen additional housing units built since 2000. Using the 2009 housing unit total, Vernon's percentage would drop to 11.4%. Any time new market rate units are built, Vernon's percentage will continue to decrease unless additional affordable units are also created / built. If Vernon loses another 560 affordable units then the Town would drop below the 10% requirement. While this seems like a large number, Vernon has "lost" almost 600 affordable units since 2002.

Vernon is one of only 31 municipalities in the State to surpass the 10% threshold – it will be important to stay above the 10% threshold in order to continue to provide housing for a range of income levels and to avoid becoming subject to the affordable appeals process.

Affordable Housing Definition

An affordable unit under CGS 8-30g must be:

- assisted (funded under a state or federal program);
- CHFA-financed (financed under a program for income-qualifying persons or families); or,
- deed restricted to be affordable to low- or moderate-income persons or families for at least 40 years.

When 10% of a community's housing stock is affordable, it is exempt from an affordable housing appeals procedure that shifts the burden of proof to the community to show that threats to public health or safety outweigh the need for affordable housing.

Percentage of Units that are Affordable, 2008

E. Windsor	16.25%
E. Hartford	15.63%
Vernon	15.44%
Manchester	15.13%
S. Windsor	7.07%
Ellington	6.39%
Coventry	5.68%
Tolland	3.54%
Bolton	0.71%

Source: DECD, 2008.

Additional Resources

For additional information on Vernon's economy, see:

[Economic Conditions & Trends](#), Economic Development Commission, 2008

[Town of Vernon Market Study](#), by Economic & Policy Resources, Inc., 2004

Change in Jobs, Vernon

Year	# of Jobs	Change
1980	7,650	--
1985	9,170	20%
1990	10,130	10%
1995	9,830	-3%
2000	9,530	-3%
2005	9,213	-3%
2009	8,998	-2%

Source: CT Department of Labor.

Economy

Vernon's economy provides employment, offers goods and services to local and regional businesses and residents, and adds to the local tax base. It is important to distinguish between Vernon's "Labor Force" and "Jobs":

- **Labor Force** – The labor force is comprised of Vernon residents who work or are seeking employment. They may work in Vernon or elsewhere.
- **Jobs** ("Employment") – These are jobs that are located in Vernon. The jobs may be filled by Vernon's labor force or by people who live elsewhere.

In 2008, 17,540 Vernon residents were part of the labor force. Vernon's labor force depends upon jobs located outside of Vernon. For every one Vernon resident in the labor force, there were 0.5 jobs in 2008. Vernon saw tremendous job growth in the 1980's, but that trend has since reversed itself resulting in modest decreases since 1990. In 2008, there were approximately 9,180 jobs located in Vernon.

In terms of types of jobs in Vernon, the highest percentage of jobs are in health care and social assistance (24%), followed by retail (17%), accommodation and food service (13%), and local government (12%). These top sectors do not, however, offer the top wages in Vernon. Top wage jobs in Vernon were in construction, state government, professional / technical / scientific services, and manufacturing.

The Connecticut Economic Resources Center, Inc., (CERC) prepared the *Economic Conditions and Trends Report* for the Town in 2008. The report identifies which industry sectors might be economic engines in Hartford and Tolland Counties.

Current Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Internet Broadcasting • Social Assistance • Museum and Historical Sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Companies and Enterprises • Waste Management, Remediation Services
High Priority Retention Targets	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warehousing and Storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
Emerging Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of Buildings • Food Manufacturing • Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing • Wholesale Electronic Markets, Agents, Brokers • Clothing and Accessories Stores • Truck Transportation • Motion Picture and Sound Recording 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securities, Commodity Contracts, Other Investments • Rental and Leasing Services • Educational Services • Performing Arts, Spectator Sports • Amusement, Gambling, Recreation • Accommodation • Food Services, Drinking Places

Fiscal Overview

Revenues

In the fiscal year ending (FYE) 2009, Vernon had just over \$2,600 in revenue per person. This was lower than nearby communities and the State overall.

The majority (68% in FY 2010) of the Town's revenues come from property taxes. From 2003 to 2010, property tax income increased from just over \$40 million to \$54 million. Vernon is much less dependent upon residential uses for the tax base compared to the State and many nearby communities (see sidebar). Vernon's top ten taxpayers are listed in the following table.

Top 10 Taxpayers in Vernon, 2008

Taxpayer	% of Grand List
Chapman and Mansions, LLC (apartments)	2.50%
Tri City Improvements (shopping center)	1.59%
Evandro Santini & Woodbridge LLC (apartments)	1.13%
Connecticut Water Company (utility)	1.05%
Connecticut Light & Power/Yankee Gas Co. (utility)	1.00%
CE Vernon II LLC (shopping center)	0.81%
Chapman Acres (apartments)	0.47%
Boston Rockville / Boston Vernon (shopping center & land)	0.45%
Parkwest Residents Association (apartments)	0.40%
Kerensky, Schneider (Risley Trust) (commercial & residential)	0.36%

Based on the October 1, 2010 Net Taxable Grand List.

Expenditures

When compared to other nearby communities Vernon had the lowest per capita expenses (see sidebar). Of the total governmental activities, education accounted for 67% of the expenses.

Per Capita Revenue, FYE 2009

S. Windsor	\$3,985
Tolland	\$3,594
CT	\$3,563
Bolton	\$3,494
E. Hartford	\$3,408
Coventry	\$3,091
Ellington	\$3,062
Manchester	\$2,888
E. Windsor	\$2,874
Vernon	\$2,637

Source: Office of Policy Management, 2010.

Residential Grand List Percentages, 2008

Coventry	83.7%
Tolland	81.0%
Bolton	82.3%
Ellington	76.4%
CT	71.4%
South Windsor	66.1%
Vernon	65.4%
East Hartford	56.3%
Manchester	56.1%
East Windsor	54.8%

Source: Office of Policy Management, 2010.

Per Capita Expenditures, FYE 2009

S. Windsor	\$4,050
CT	\$3,580
Tolland	\$3,576
Bolton	\$3,549
E. Hartford	\$3,440
Ellington	\$3,104
Coventry	\$3,077
E. Windsor	\$3,074
Manchester	\$2,930
Vernon	\$2,624

Source: Office of Policy Management, 2010.

Definitions

Developed Land – land that has buildings, structures, or improvements used for a particular economic or social purpose (such as residential, commercial, or institutional).

Committed Land – land that is used for a particular economic or social purpose (including open space).

Vacant Land – land that is not developed or committed.

Dedicated Open Space – land or development rights owned by the Federal government, the State, the Town, land trusts, or conservation organizations permanently protected as open space.

Managed Open Space – land that is currently used as open space but is not protected from future development.

Community Facilities w/open space – the grounds of many community facilities are used for open space purposes, such as school grounds. This plan assumes that those open space uses will continue. Those facilities are tallied in this separate category.

Existing Land Use

Most of Vernon's land (86%) is developed or committed to a use (see sidebar for definitions). Half of committed land is for residential use. Open space is the second largest category, with just over 1,900 acres that are either permanently protected or used for open space purposes. That leaves just over 1,600 acres of vacant / uncommitted land.

Existing Land Use in Vernon

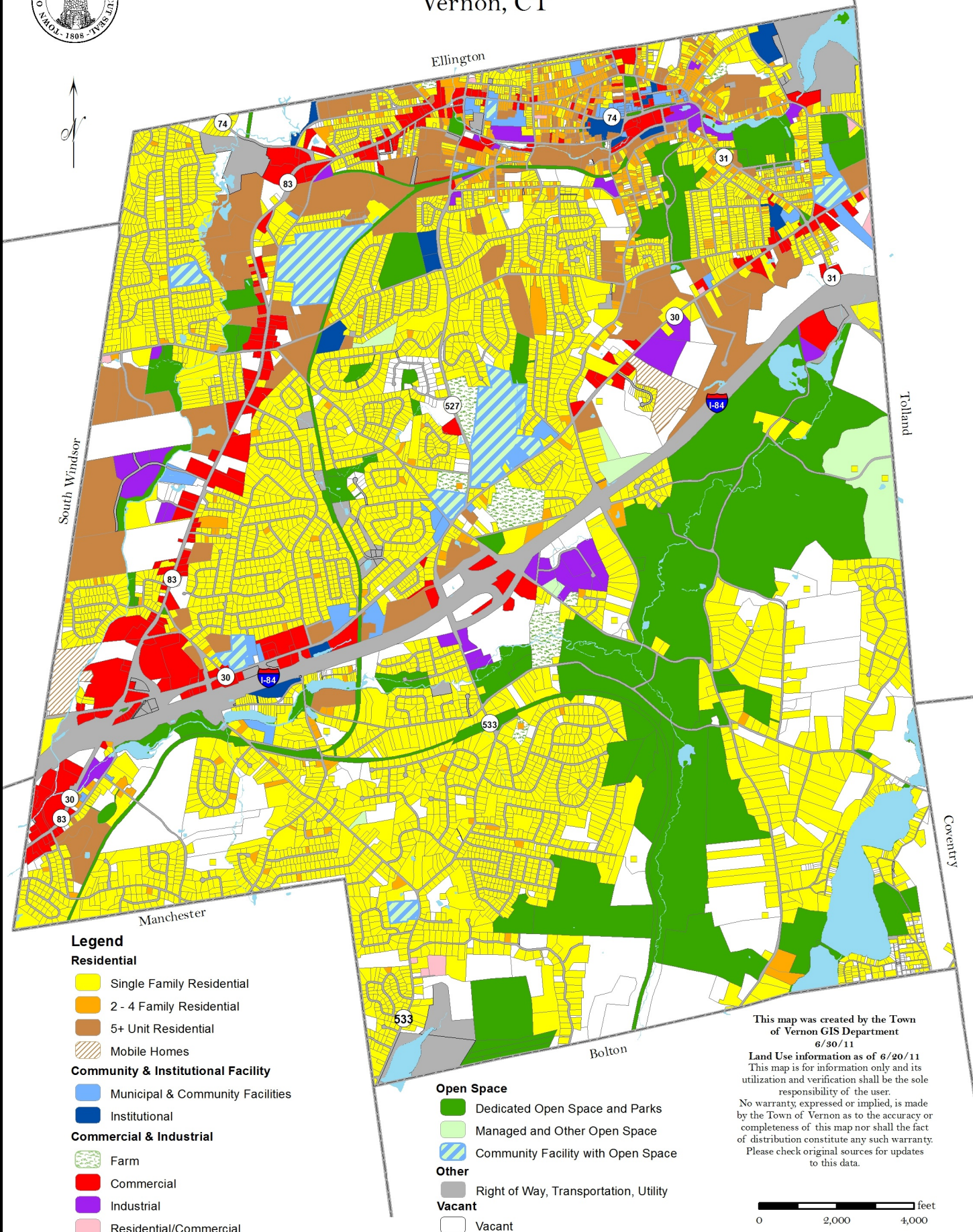
Land Use	Acres	% of Committed Land	% of Total Land
Residential	5,304	54%	46%
Single Family	4,150		
2-4 Family	277		
5+ Family	811		
Mobile Home	66		
Commercial or Industrial	712	7%	6%
Commercial	445		
Industrial	156		
Agriculture	95		
Residential / Commercial	16		
Community Facilities or Institutional	352	4%	3%
Community Facilities	94		
Community Facilities w/open space	193		
Institutional	65		
Open Space	1,904	19%	17%
Dedicated Open Space and Parks	1,766		
Managed / Other Open Space	118		
Other	1,610	16%	14%
Right-of-Way, Transportation, Utility	1,238		
Water	256		
Total Developed & Committed Land	9,882	100%	86%
Vacant Land	1,636	--	14%
TOTAL	11,518		

Numbers may not add due to rounding; as of June 2011.



Existing Land Use Map

Vernon, CT



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Land Use information as of 6/20/11
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Additional Resources

For a full description of zoning districts, see:

[Town of Vernon Zoning Regulations](#)

Existing Zoning

Most of the Town's land area is zoned for residential use (over 72%), while over 8% is zoned for business use (these figures exclude the zones in Rockville which allow for both business and residential uses). According to an analysis by CRCOG, of the 29 communities the region, Vernon has the 4th highest percentage of land zoned for commercial uses, but the 6th lowest in the percentage of land zoned for industry (see 2009 Regional Plan, CRCOG).

Existing Zoning in Vernon

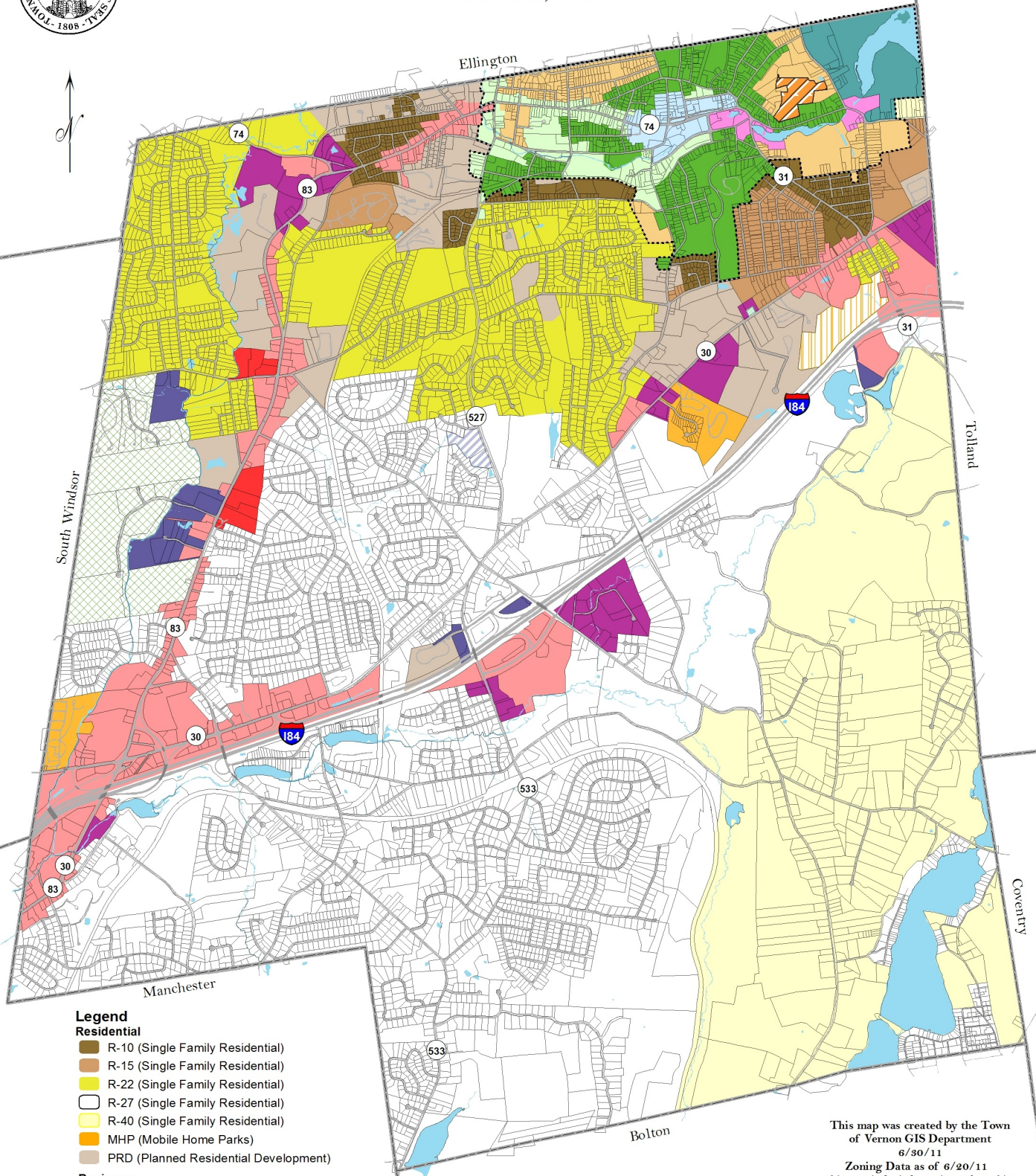
Zone	Acres	% of Land Area
Residential	8,289	72%
R-10 (Single Family)	143	
R-15 (Single Family)	178	
R-22 (Single Family)	1,136	
R-27 (Single Family)	4,330	
R-40 (Single Family)	1,861	
MHP (Mobile Home Parks)	82	
PRD (Planned Residential Development)	543	
CMFD (Comprehensive Multi-Family)	16	
Business	877	8%
C (Commercial)	523	
PC (Planned Commercial)	38	
I (Industrial)	209	
HD-I (Historic District Industrial)	24	
SED (Special Economic Development)	83	
Rockville Historic District	698	6%
NR-10 (Neighborhood)	176	
PND (Planned Neighborhood Development)	273	
RDBR (Business & Residential)	45	
HD-RC (Historic District Residential Commercial)	115	
RC (Residential Commercial)	1	
RW (Restricted Watershed)	88	
Other	326	3%
PDZ-EXT 67 (Exit 67 area)	42	
PDZ (Gerber Farm)	272	
SFZ-GZ (Garden Zone)	12	
No Zone (right-of-way, water, other)	1,328	12%
TOTAL	11,518	

Numbers may not add due to rounding. As of July 2011.



Zoning Map

Vernon, CT



Legend

Residential

- R-10 (Single Family Residential)
- R-15 (Single Family Residential)
- R-22 (Single Family Residential)
- R-27 (Single Family Residential)
- R-40 (Single Family Residential)
- MHP (Mobile Home Parks)
- PRD (Planned Residential Development)

Business

- PC (Planned Commercial)
- C (Commercial)
- HD-I (Historic District Industrial)
- I (Industrial)
- SED (Special Economic Development)

Other

- PDZ-EXT 67 (I-84 Exit 67 Area)
- PDZ (Planned Development Zone Gerber Farm)
- SFZ-GZ (Special Floating Zone - Garden Zone)
- CMFD (Comprehensive Multi-Family Dwelling)

Rockville Area*

- NR-10 (Neighborhood NR-10)
- RW (Restricted Watershed)
- RC (Residential Commercial)
- RDBR (Rockville Downtown Business & Residential)
- PND (Planned Neighborhood Development)
- HD-RC (Historic District Residential Commercial)

*The Rockville area shown on this map does not reflect the historic boundaries of the City of Rockville

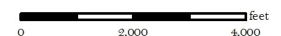
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6/30/11

Zoning Data as of 6/20/11

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Chapter 4: Community Input

In this Chapter:

Public Input
Process

Prominent
Themes

Resident Survey

References in this plan to “the survey” [also marked with a ] refer to a statistically valid random sample telephone survey of Vernon residents.

In November 2010, the Pert Group conducted the survey of 400 Vernon residents. The survey asked 40 questions on various topics related to conservation, development, community facilities, transportation, etc., along with demographic questions. The full survey results are available as a supplement to this Plan on the Town’s POCD [website](#).

Public Input Process

A Plan should focus on those issues and goals that are important to the community. To solicit input and keep residents informed of the planning process, the Planning and Zoning Commission (and in some cases the POCD subcommittee):

- Held two public workshops at the beginning of the planning process to identify issues and solicit goals and strategies
- Established a web page using social media to disseminate project information
- Posted project documents on the Town’s web site
- Collected input from individual board / commission members and staff via a written questionnaire
- Invited boards / commissions and other local officials to provide input at a special Planning and Zoning Commission meeting
- Met with local reporters to enhance newspaper coverage of the project’s progress
- Conducted a statistically valid, random sample telephone survey
- Held a public information meeting on the draft Plan on June 9, 2011
- Held a public hearing on adoption on October 13, 2011

In addition, the planning consultant interviewed a number of departments about issues and their future needs.



Prominent Themes

A number of themes became evident through the public outreach process. Here is a summary of those themes:

Overarching Themes

- **Fiscal resources.** The plan was updated during an economic downturn. Municipalities, including Vernon, were facing great uncertainty about revenues, whether stalled economic projects would impact the tax base, and with many residents struggling financially, would residents be willing to pay for needed projects, let alone quality-of-life amenities.
- **Optimism.** At the same time, many felt optimistic that many goals can be achieved with little if any “cost” and / or would provide a return on investment.
- **Goals are not at odds with one another.** Some goals may appear to be at odds (e.g., open space protection and business development), but many felt strongly that this is not the case. Vernon can have both, with thoughtful planning.
- **Community engagement.** Vernon has a large pool of volunteers who are committed to maintaining and improving the Town’s quality of life. However it is difficult to broaden the volunteer pool, possibly in part due to a large renter population, who may not feel committed to Vernon over the long-term.

Conservation Themes

- Development should be “responsible” – i.e., does not impact natural resources
- Protecting water quality is particularly important
- Good job preserving open space and strong support to continue
- Reuse historic buildings to preserve our heritage
- Our natural features, unique places (e.g., Rockville), and community spirit help define Vernon’s character
- While “Rockville” and “Vernon” were historically seen as two separate communities, today we are one community

Development Themes

- Rockville is a “gem” and it is important to focus on revitalization...
- ...but we as a community are not patronizing Rockville’s businesses
- Continue to promote homeownership and work to attract families to Vernon
- Maintain residential neighborhoods and rethink how and where new multi-family housing is built
- Continue to build the tax base
- Vacant and underutilized buildings are assets for business development
- Business development in certain areas will require careful planning

Infrastructure Themes

- Maintenance of existing infrastructure is a priority (roads, sewers, facilities, etc.)
- Quality schools can attract families / homeowners
- Vernon offers stellar parks and recreational facilities
- Neighborhoods and commercial areas could be better connected with paths and sidewalks
- Better bus service is desired...but few indicate that they would use it

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