



Town of Morris  
Plan of Conservation & Development

DRAFT 2020 Update

*Adopted by the Morris Planning & Zoning Commission on* \_\_\_\_\_

*Effective Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

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### *Introduction- Why Plan?*

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**Why update our Town Plan of Conservation and Development every ten years?** 1) State law requires each municipality prepare or update their Town Plan at least once every ten years. 2) Because it gives us the opportunity to hear from residents of the Town and all of the other town boards, commissions, and organizations about what land use related issues we need to address together over the next ten years to preserve what we love about our town and try to address our challenges.

Our Town Plan resident input survey, which was conducted in August and September of 2020, found that residents most wanted the Town to address the following over the coming 10-year period:

- **Protect water quality; especially in Bantam Lake**
- **Permanently protect more land from development**
- **Protect farmland and support farm businesses**
- **Attract and retain young adults and young families**
- **Support local small businesses**

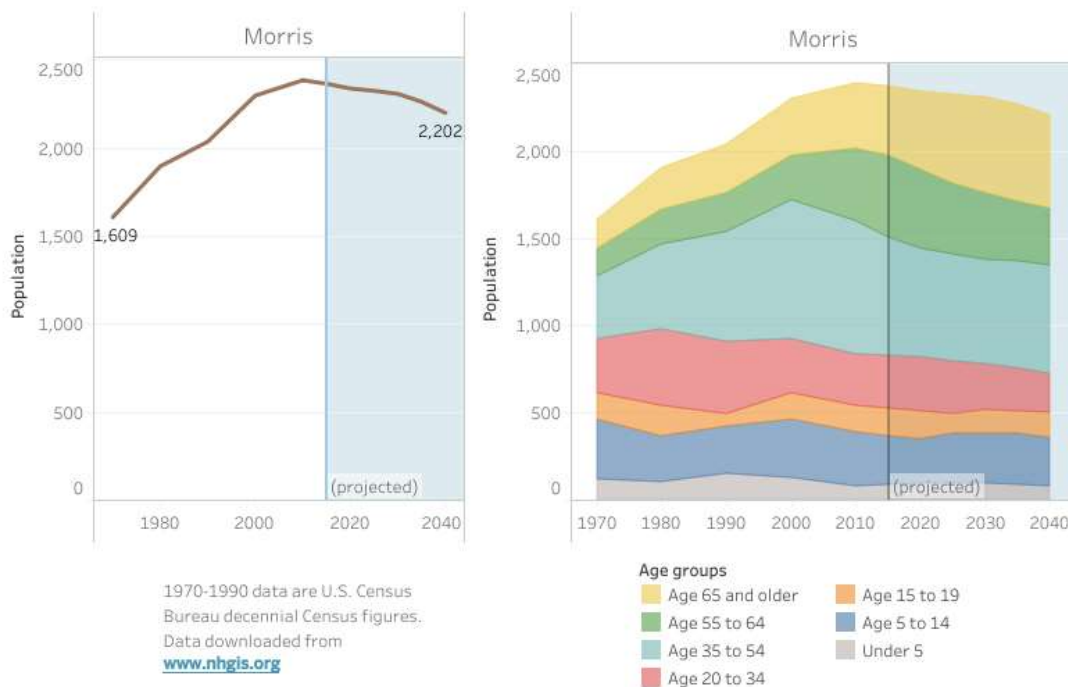
**This Plan is a guidance document design to help us meet these goals.** We look forward to working with our fellow town boards, commissions, and the town's many non-profit organizations to carry out the tasks described in this plan to meet our common goals. We plan to revisit the Town Plan at least once a year, to celebrate the tasks we have accomplished and set priorities for the tasks we will attempt to address in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Morris Planning & Zoning Commission

*David Wiig (Chairman), Eileen Narbutas (Vice-Chair), Bob McIntosh, William Ayles, Douglas Barnes  
Barbara Bongiolatti, Veronica Florio, David Geremia, Del Knox, Katie Nack*

## Current Conditions and Trends



### Population & Demographic trends:

As of 2018, the Town of Morris had approximately 2,288 residents living in 900 households.

- 416 residents are estimated to be over 65 yrs old (18% of residents)
- 524 residents are estimated to be under 19 years old (23% of residents)

Over the last 9 years for which we have data (2010-2019), the town saw a net loss of 134 residents (5.6% of the total population). It is projected by the Connecticut State Data Center that the town's population could continue to decline slightly over the next 10-year period. Like its neighboring towns, the segment of Morris's residents that are over 65 years will increase while the number of school aged children is projected to decline slightly or remain flat. This trend is similar in almost all Litchfield County towns.

There is a significant "seasonal/part-time" population in Morris, especially around Bantam Lake. According to the American Community Survey data, 453 homes were vacant in 2018 or 33% of the town's total housing units. Many of these homes are considered vacant for "seasonal, recreational, or occasional use."

### Jobs & Income:

According to the CT Dept. of Labor there were 525 people employed in Morris in 2018, employed by 85 employers.

- 18% of workers in Morris are "self-employed", 10% of respondents to the Town Plan resident input survey said they worked from home.
- Morris's median household income in 2018 was \$94,500.
- The town's poverty rate is estimated at 2.8% (compared to 6.8% county level, 10% state)

**Housing:**

Most of Morris's homes are single-family homes (92%). Just 8% of homes have 2 or more units in the structure. There are few rental housing options available in town (Renters live in 12% of Morris's housing stock compared to 20% in Litchfield County and 30% in Connecticut.)

- Morris has 31 units of affordable housing (as defined by the State) which is 2% of all units. Towns are encouraged to have 10% of their housing stock available at prices/rents affordable to families at 80% Area Median Income ("AMI"). (\$77,000 for a family of 4)
- Over the last 5-year period (2013-2017) for which we have data there has been 1 housing permit/yr.

**Land Use:**

- 1,346 acres (11%) of Morris's land is permanently protected from development. This includes 1,032 acres conserved by state agencies, 299 acres by conservation non-profits, and 15 acres of town conserved land.
- 1,690 acres of land is actively being farmed (as classified by the Public Act 490 Program).
- 1,548 acres of land is certified as forest land (as classified by the Public Act 490 Program).

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## Goals & Action Plan


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<b>LEGEND:</b> <b>"Responsible Lead" group abbreviations</b>	
<b>BOS</b>	Board of Selectmen
<b>BOF</b>	Board of Finance
<b>BLPA</b>	Bantam Lake Protective Association
<b>EDC</b>	Economic Development
<b>IWC</b>	Inland Wetlands Commission
<b>MLT</b>	Morris Land Trust
<b>OC</b>	Ordinance Committee
<b>PZC</b>	Planning & Zoning Commission
<b>WMF</b>	White Memorial Foundation

The sections below lay out goals and tasks to be carried out over the next ten years. The "responsible lead" is asked to initiate these tasks with the assistance of the partners that are listed.

As noted in the introduction, the Planning & Zoning Commission intends to revisit this Plan at least once each year and ask the "Responsible Lead" on each task for an update on progress and which tasks it intends to try to address over the coming year.

## Water and Natural Resources



Insert photo from photo contest!

Bantam Lake is the largest natural lake in Connecticut and is recognized as an outstanding natural resource locally and at the State and Federal levels. The State legislature designated Bantam Lake as a Connecticut Heritage Lake in recognition of its water and recreational values. It offers public and private beach access, private and public boat launches, and a public marina. Bantam Lake is a very significant driver of economic activity, home values and seasonal visitors.

The issue of protecting water quality received the highest number of "votes" for the issue that the Town of Morris should address over the next 10 years. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of residents who responded to the Town Plan resident input survey believed that the Town of Morris should address protecting water quality and dealing with invasive plants in our lake, ponds, and streams.

Since the last Town Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted, the Town of Morris adopted the Low Impact Sustainable Development Design Manual.

The Town of Morris also adopted new subdivision regulations to include section 4.17 on storm water run-off in April, 2020.

The Town has many partners in protecting water and natural resources including:

- White Memorial Foundation (WMF)
- Bantam Lake Protective Association (BLPA)
- Morris Land Trust (MLT)
- Waterbury Water Company (WWC)

Goal	Task	Responsible Lead*	Partners
<b>Protect drinking water supplies</b>	Hold at least one public educational meeting and/or send at least one mailing annually to <b>share current best practices with Morris homeowners</b> on ways they can help protect drinking water including pesticide and herbicide use, proper hazardous materials disposal, and septic system maintenance.	Inland Wetlands Commission	BLPA, WMF, MLT
	Establish a <b>Public Drinking Water Supply Overlay Zone</b> that will require any new subdivisions of land within the town within a drinking water supply watershed area be at least 2 acres in size to protect drinking water.	Planning & Zoning Commission	WWC can supply watershed mapping
	The Town of Morris should <b>monitor and minimize the use of road salt and herbicides along the roads</b> and address potential for hazardous material spills resulting from vehicular accidents	Morris Highway Department	
	<b>Amend the Zoning Regulation Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations</b> to treat and control the negative impacts of storm water runoff to lakes, ponds, wetlands and groundwater. This would include requiring <b>Low Impact Development Standards</b> be utilized.	Planning & Zoning Commission	
<b>Protect Bantam Lake's water quality and protect against invasive weeds</b>	Provide <b>adequate financial support</b> and/or assist with applications for grant funding for BLPA, and cost sharing from neighboring communities that benefit from the lake, to continue to implement the <b>Bantam Lake Management Plan</b> including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional <b>monitoring of basic water quality parameters</b> at least monthly during the spring, summer and fall. This is essential to track the progress in improving water quality and clarity and to focus future improvement projects.</li> <li>• Lake and river <b>shoreline surveys</b> during the growing season for <b>new invasive plants</b> and to chart the movement of existing invasive plants.</li> <li>• <b>Treatment</b> of invasive plants and/or</li> </ul>	Morris Board of Finance, BOS	BLPA, WMF

	<p>excessive algae.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>“Rapid Response”</b> program to permit BLPA to act quickly if another invasive weed is identified.</li> </ul>		
	Explore developing a Bantam Lake Waterfront Overlay District that would create restrictions for activities that negatively affect the water quality of Bantam Lake.	Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC)	
	Coordinate with local and state agencies to enforce rules concerning the potential introduction of invasive species to Bantam Lake.	BLPA, BOS	
	Increase awareness about and ensure that applicants follow the <b>Low Impact Sustainable Development Design Manual</b> to treat stormwater runoff before it reaches the lake.		
	Hold at least one educational forum or mail/email information to <b>discourage excessively cultivated landscapes on Bantam Lake</b> and in the shoreline areas of all rivers, brooks, lakes and ponds. Remind full- and part-time residents that wetlands and regulated buffer areas are off limits for use of fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides.	Inland Wetlands Commission	BLPA, WMF
<b>Protect prime farmland soils from development</b>	The Town should adopt a local <b>right to farm ordinance</b> , a policy statement noting public interest and concern for the preservation of working farms and prime and important agricultural soils and support for large- and small-scale farm enterprises.	Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC)	Ordinance Committee, MLT
	<b>Rank the most important farmlands</b> in Morris to protect with a focus on protecting active working farms and farmland. Assist farmland owners with applications to the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program, State Open Space grant program, USDA Farm and Ranch Act grant program.	MLT	PZC
	Continue tax relief for agricultural lands under Public Act 490.	BOF/BOS	
<b>Preserve important wildlife habitats and corridors</b>	Maintain up to date mapping of <b>DEEP Designated Endangered, Threatened or Of Special Concern Species</b> within Morris. Assure that this is considered during review of subdivision applications.	Inland Wetlands Commission	PZC
	<b>Map wildlife corridors</b> in Morris with the assistance of the Housatonic Valley Association (“HVA”). The subdivision regulation open space section should be amended to include among the purposes for open space - protection of unique and fragile areas, important habitats and wildlife corridors.	Conservation Commission & PZC	HVA

	<b>Focus on protecting lands that link existing open spaces</b> by acquisition, easement or other action, to provide continuous wildlife corridors and habitats for public, passive recreational use and environmental protection (greenways).	MLT	Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy
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# Rural Character

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**Rural Character was the number one reason that respondents to the Town Plan Survey listed for choosing to live in Morris.** The Preservation of Rural Character has been a basic part of every Town Plan. The key physical elements of Morris's rural character are the views & vistas of open farmland, water bodies, ridgelines & historic centers, especially seen from the Town's many scenic roads. **The Plan should identify & focus on the protection of these key rural features for the future generations of Morris.**

Goal	Task	Responsible Lead*	Partners
<b>Encourage Designation of Scenic Roads</b>	The Board of Selectmen should initiate a Town Meeting to present to the citizens of Morris, a Scenic Road Ordinance, which if adopted, would enable property owners who live along a scenic road segment to petition for scenic road designation. Town officials should aim to gain approval of at least 10 miles of scenic roads in Morris over the next ten years, according to the scenic road criteria as set forth in section 7-149a of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) See the list of Town roads with scenic road qualifications in appended list <b>(page 19/20 of the 2009 Town Plan)</b>	BOS	Planning & Zoning Commission
<b>Update Subdivision &amp; Setback Regulations for Open Space &amp; Scenic Roads</b>	Amend the open space section of the subdivision regulations to place a priority on protection of open space along the frontage of Town & State roads. Amend the regulations to allow for private road subdivisions to protect valued scenic features or roadside views & change the setback regulation from a minimum of 50' to 75' from the road right-of-way or 75 feet from the road pavement, whichever is greater.	PZC	
<b>Consider a Blight Ordinance</b>	A Town ordinance could be created specifically to regulate & prevent the accumulation of unregistered vehicles, outside storage of junk & highly deteriorated/abandoned structures in view from the roadway.	OC	PZC
<b>Create Regulations to Protect Ridgelines &amp; Slopes</b>	Change wording in Subdivision Regulations, section 6.1.5 to restrict development on "Land with a slope of 20% or greater". Define, identify & inventory existing "ridgelines". Prioritize for protection while clearly defining the needs & benefits of such protection	PZC	

<b>Protect Bantam Lake Scenic Views</b>	<p>Amend Zoning Regulations to set a reasonable fence, berm, or visual barrier limit along public road frontage on the lake shore to protect against blocking roadside views of Bantam Lake.</p> <p>This will protect important segments of scenic views of the lake from surrounding roads, as these views &amp; vistas of Bantam Lake are important State &amp; local visual assets &amp; worthy of protection.</p>	PZC	BLPA, WMF
<b>Establish New &amp; Update Current Regulations for Docks &amp; Floats on Bantam Lake</b>	Consider establishing total length & surface area limits & a dock numbering & registration system to protect against the proliferation of excessively large or long docks that interfere with safe boating, cause disturbance to the lake shore/bottom & disturb the visual beauty of the lake	IWC	PZC, BLPA
<b>Establish Lighting Regulations to Protect Nighttime Views of the Stars &amp; Constellations</b>	<p>Provide educational materials &amp; encourage residents to create lighting plans for their property that do not disturb neighbors or cast light above the horizontal plane which contributes to “Light Pollution” &amp; prevents the viewing of the night sky.</p> <p>Establish “Dark Sky” standard lighting regulations for residential &amp; commercial properties to help preserve the view of the night sky in Morris. <b>Refer to <a href="http://www.darksky.org">www.darksky.org</a></b></p>	PZC	BLPA
<b>Protect Cultural &amp; Archaeological Resources</b>	Consider adopting zoning regulations that require all subdivision & site plans to include identifying archaeological, historic or cultural resources within the property to be developed, & provide that the State Archaeologist can perform on-site archaeological assessment of the impact of the proposed development prior to work commencing on the property.	PZC	
<b>Retain Characteristic Population Density of a Rural Community</b>	<p>Establish a 2 or 3 acre minimum lot size with the requirement that the minimum lot area cannot include wetlands, watercourses or steep slopes. This will help to prevent the suburbanization of Morris. Regulations should include protecting existing lots of less than that size, which can be “grandfathered” in.</p> <p>Review current zoning map with soils map when amending lots sizes/zoning map. Make larger lots in areas with poor soils. This will help to prevent septic failures in watershed areas with a growing population.</p>	PZC	
<b>Protect Camp Columbia</b>	The Town should explore the purchase of Camp Columbia from the State of Connecticut. State budget cuts in the future could jeopardize the status of the park & control of the property by the Town would help to ensure its future	BOS	PZC

	as open space as well as for passive recreational purposes (as addressed below).		
<b>Consider Architectural Design Requirements</b>	Consider adopting zoning regulations for commercial buildings & other non-residential structures proposed in view from the Town roads, especially in village centers, that encourage buildings of a size, scale & style compatible with the Town's rural New England character.	PZC	
<b>Protect Historic Landmarks</b>	Morris has over eighty homes from the eighteenth & nineteenth centuries, as well as numerous historic landmarks. These structures of are an important part of the Town's rural character & should be, wherever possible, preserved & protected. Zoning regulations should be updated to protect the Cultural and Archeological Inventory as listed on pages 36-44 of the Morris Natural and Cultural Resources inventory prepared in 2005.	PZC	

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## Economic Development

Insert photo from photo contest!

Morris has limited infrastructure for additional business, commercial, or light industrial development due to its small population, limited areas zoned for commercial or light industrial, and only a small portion of town being served by sewer (Rt. 209 on the west side of Bantam Lake).

However, there is a great deal of opportunity to support Morris's existing businesses, encourage additional businesses in the existing commercial/industrial zoned areas, support telecommuting residents and home based businesses, and support agricultural/tourism related businesses.

- 79% of respondents to the Town Plan survey agreed that the Town should **support and encourage home based businesses and telecommuting residents**. 69% of survey respondents said that Morris needs **fiber-optic broadband internet and better cell reception** to attract/retain home-based businesses.
- The following changes have occurred relative to economic development and commercial uses since the Town's 2009 Plan of Conservation & Development:
  - The American Country Barns (ACB) Planned Development District was created, which now houses Harvest Moon Timber Frame. This adjoins the west side of the CB zone in East Morris on Route 109.
  - The old Webster Bank on the southeast corner of Routes 109 and 63 is now a restaurant called The Barn.
  - The property that surrounds The Barn has an approved site plan that has been built out, which is now the location of a gift shop called Bella Luna.
  - A major national retailer, Dollar General, opened shop in the CA zone, north of Route 109 west of the Morris Town Center. After this the Commission passed a 9-month moratorium to consider changes to the regulations to allow more public participation in decisions to approve commercial development.
  - The White Barn at South Farms in East Morris has expanded its use with a new site plan.
  - A self-storage use has been approved in the CA zone on the west side of Route 61 south of the Town Center, which has not been developed.
  - A retail use was approved for the property north of Straits Turnpike on the east side of Route 63 in East Morris. It currently houses the Morris Mountain private fitness center.

### Take Action to Implement the Recommendations to Protect Water Quality and Support Morris' Tax

**Base** – Throughout Morris's modern history Bantam Lake has been a pillar of the town's tax and job base. Today Bantam Lake remains the most important natural resource, recreational resource and tax base resource in Morris. Around the lake the seasonal population is declining and the year around population is increasing. At the same time property values on the lake have increased at a greater rate

than the rest of the town. It makes economic development sense to implement the recommendations of the Town Plan that aim to preserve the water quality and quality of life for residents on and visitors to Bantam Lake.

The following are the goals for Economic Development and strategies to achieve these goals:

Goal	Task	Responsible Lead*	Partners
<b>Continue to Use and Enhance the Option for Planned Development Districts (PDD)</b>	<p><b>Review the Planned Development District Regulations –</b> Morris shall continue to use the Planned Development Districts (PDD) regulations to meet the goals of the Town Plan and provide opportunities for new development that improves the town tax base. Revisions/updates should focus on ways to prioritize uses such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arts and Culture</li> <li>2. Tourism and Lodging</li> <li>3. Agriculture and Agricultural Technology</li> <li>4. Outdoor Recreation</li> </ol> <p><b>Promote The PDD for Developing a Mixed-Use Approach for Larger Properties Adjoining the Town and Commercial Centers -</b> There are large parcels of land that adjoin the various town and commercial centers. These properties would provide opportunities to expand these Town and Commercial Centers with a mixed-use development to provide housing as well as commercial uses to support the residents of the development and the town. PZC should review the PDD regulations to see if updates are needed to better allow mixed use developments.</p>	PZC	EDC
<b>Continue to Support Home-Based Businesses</b>	<b>Update The Regulations for Home-Based Business–</b> The PZC should continually monitor the evolution of home-based business uses and modify the Zoning Regulations as needed to ensure the zoning approval process is not a barrier to the creation and maintenance of a home-based business that can be conducted without harming neighboring property values.	PZC	EDC
	<b>Support Fiber-to-the-Home Broadband Initiative and increased cellular coverage areas –</b> To support telecommuting residents and home based businesses, fiber-optic broadband connectivity must be considered as important as roads to our infrastructural needs. (See infrastructure section)	EDC	Northwest Connect, NHCOC
<b>Encourage Other Business Compatible with Morris Town Plan Goals</b>	<b>Explore Life Care Facilities And Other Similar Facilities To Enhance The Tax Base –</b> Life care facilities are a compatible business use. This type of use provides housing for active elder adults and on the same campus provides assisted living, nursing and even hospital type facilities.	PZC	EDC
	<b>Analyze The Commercial Uses In Town To Determine What We Have And Where We Can Grow The Tax Base –</b> Morris completed a comprehensive Natural Resources Inventory almost fifteen years ago; however, there has never been an analysis of this nature on economic development. With such	EDC	PZC

	<p>an analysis, the board would be able to better determine what economic development options make sense. This would also help determine what changes to zoning regulations should be considered.</p> <p><b>Review And Update The Permitted Uses In The Commercial Zones</b> – The bulk of the uses in the commercial zones in the Morris Planning and Zoning regulations date back to the late 70's and early 80's. While the regulations have had updates in recent years, a comprehensive review and update has not been undertaken. The objective of this review should be to bring these regulations up to date including <b>agricultural-tourism, and arts &amp; culture</b> related business uses.</p>	PZC	EDC
	<p><b>Catalog and Publish a List of Existing Non-Conforming Uses and Special Exceptions.</b> To improve transparency, to facilitate effective management, enforcement and review. Additionally, to avoid the unintentional expansion of non-conforming uses.</p>	PZC	
<p><b>Assure Compatible Development in Morris' Commercial Centers/Hamlets (Morris Center, East Morris, Route 209, Route 61 and Lakeside)</b></p>	<p>Develop a plan for the growth of commercial centers/hamlets in Morris, while protecting the rural character of the area. This plan will designate particular mostly commercially zoned areas that will regulate the appearance and presentation of structures and development of infrastructure for these centers. Explore the use of PDDs for properties adjoining these centers for larger mixed-use development.</p>	PZC	EDC
	<p><b>Ensure Small Town Character is Retained When Permitted Commercial Uses Are Implemented</b> – The Special Exception was added about 10 to 15 years into the zoning. It can be employed to provide greater scrutiny on uses that would today be approved with a site plan. It is a tool to consider ensuring that a public hearing is held for larger applications or applications for uses that demand a closer review. Having a requirement for a public hearing provides visibility. Having the ability to apply conditions to manage situations that are inconsistent with the rural and small-town nature of Morris provides for a better way to manage these applications.</p> <p>Consider adopting design requirements or guidelines that encourage buildings of a size, scale &amp; style compatible with the Town's rural New England character.</p>	PZC	

## Housing

Insert photo from photo contest!

The Town of Morris has 1,319 housing units; 866 (65%) of which were occupied year-round in 2018 (the most recent year for which data is available). 453 (35%) of the housing units in 2018 were vacant either for weekend or seasonal use or for sale or for rent. A vast majority of these housing units are single-family homeownership units which is often the most expensive type of housing to own and maintain especially since almost 40% of these homes are over 80 years old.

The Town Plan resident input survey showed that almost 40% of respondents believed the town needed more housing options that allow older adults to “downsize”; 35% of respondents believed that the Town needed more housing options that allow older adults to remain in their homes including affordable rehabilitation and accessibility modifications like ramps and accessible bathrooms. 20% of respondents said they foresee that they may have different housing needs in the future that are not currently available in Morris and 14% anticipate that at some point their children will have to move out of Morris to find the housing options they need.

A new law was passed by the State legislature in 2017 requiring each municipality to adopt an Affordable Housing Plan. According to the statute, “At least once every five years, each municipality shall prepare or amend and adopt an affordable housing plan for the municipality. Such plan shall specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments in the municipality.” In 2020 the Town received a grant from the State to develop an Affordable Housing Plan as required. This Plan will be developed during 2020-2021 and will expand on the goals and tasks listed below.

The State’s definition of “affordable housing” is housing that costs 30% or less of the income of a household that earns 80% or less of the area median income (AMI). (The AMI that applies to Morris in 2020 is \$102,600; 80% of the AMI for a family of four is \$78,500) As of 2019, Morris had 31 units of housing that qualified under this definition; 20 units that are “governmentally assisted” (Eldridge Senior Housing); 4 units that are receiving tenant rental assistance, and 7 homes have CHFA/USDA mortgages. This represents 2% of the Town’s housing stock. The State encourages each town to have at least 10% of its housing stock qualify as affordable.

Goal	Task	Responsible Lead	Partner
<b>Increase housing options;</b> especially for seniors and young families	Study possible expansion options at Eldridge Senior Housing.	Affordable Housing Plan committee	Housing Authority
	Increase the accessibility of Morris’s existing housing stock by increasing resident awareness of guides on accessibility modifications including the	Senior Center Commission	BOS

	<a href="#">AARP Home Fit guide</a> . Also, continue the home modification loan program for property owners who cannot afford to make needed accessibility modifications.		
	Consider facilitating the creation of a new non-profit Morris Housing Trust organization with local volunteers to facilitate the creation of downsizing options for seniors and housing options for young families. Ask residents to consider donating land to the Trust once it is formed.	BOS	NHCOG, NWCT Regional Housing Council
	Update zoning regulations as needed to allow “lifecare facilities” and active adult housing as described in the economic development section of this plan.	PZC	EDC
	Review the zoning regulations to allow more flexibility for the creation of <b>accessory apartments</b> including allowing them by-right or by site plan review rather than by special permit where appropriate.	PZC	NHCOG
<b>Meet State requirement to have an adopted Affordable Housing Plan</b>	Work towards adopting an Affordable Housing Plan for the Town in 2021 utilizing existing grant funding from the State.	BOS	PZC



## Infrastructure: *Sewers, Roads, Broadband, and Community Facilities*

Insert photo from photo contest!

Sewers: This Town Plan supports maintaining the public sewer currently serving the west side of Bantam Lake (which eliminates septic sewage pollution). It would be ideal to preserve available sewer treatment capacity for future failing septic systems in areas near the existing sewer line.

Roads: State, Town, and local residential roads permit a safe & convenient system of traffic circulation, especially for emergency vehicles. Future road design and location should be designed in such a way as to enhance the Town's rural appearance.

Sidewalks and biking paths: A planning study could be conducted to help the town consider the addition of sidewalks and safe crosswalks in the Town and Commercial Centers if funding becomes available and/or further commercial or mixed-use development occurs in these areas. Sidewalks would help to reinforce the character of the town center areas and give residents and visitors the option to walk safely between destinations within each center. Wider shoulders and/or biking lane/paths should be considered along Rt. 209 on Bantam Lake and on Alain White Road to allow pedestrians and bikes to more safely travel on these roads. These lanes/paths could be also connected to the bike and hiking trails in Litchfield.

Broadband and Cellular Phone coverage: To support resident's ability to telecommute or participate in remote healthcare and businesses ability to reach markets beyond Morris, fiber-optic broadband connectivity must be considered as important as roads to our infrastructural needs. While 5G connectivity is not feasible to deploy in non-urban locations, 4G technology and fiber-optic connectivity are the what can be done to keep Morris connected as our bandwidth needs increase exponentially over the coming years.

Town Services: According to the Town Plan resident input survey, 71% of respondents believed the Town's beach & recreation services were good or excellent, 81% believed that the transfer station was good or excellent, 64% believed that the library was good or excellent, and 62% believed the volunteer fire and ambulance service was good or excellent. Respondents believed the service that most needed improvement was recreation and activities for teens (30%). One suggestion in the survey was to have a mountain bike park at Camp Columbia.

Goal	Task	Responsible Lead*	Partners
<b>Provide Safe &amp; Efficient Traffic Circulation</b>	The primary objective for the Town road system is to provide for safe & efficient traffic circulation. In a rural town such as Morris, an important objective is to design & layout new roads & maintain existing roads in a manner	PZC	BOS MHD

	that supports the Town Plan land use policies & preserves the Town's rural scenic beauty (Natural & Cultural Resource Inventory, Scenic Road Inventory & Map, Figure 14, Scenic Roads, pp. 45-46.)		
<b>Maintain Major Town or Collector Roads</b>	<p>Maintain these major/collector roads at a standard of improvement that will permit safe traffic carrying capacity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Alain White Rd.- Provides access to White Memorial, Litchfield HS &amp; Wamogo Regional HS.</li> <li>◆ West Morris Rd.- Connects to State Route 202 &amp; the Borough of Bantam</li> <li>◆ Benton Rd. &amp; Anderson Rd.- Connector roads from the center of town to Route 63</li> <li>◆ Higbee Rd. &amp; Benton Rd.- Connector roads for travel to Bethlehem, Woodbury &amp; Route 6</li> <li>◆ Todd Hill Rd.- Bethlehem &amp; Woodbury traffic</li> </ul>	Highway Department – Town of Morris	PZC, BOS
<b>Update Subdivision Regulations</b>	<p>All sections need to be reviewed &amp; updated to current State requirements and procedures. Revisions to be considered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ require a preliminary subdivision plan</li> <li>◆ provide options for alternative subdivision designs including private road subdivisions, cluster, or open space subdivision &amp; density bonus considerations for protection of open farm fields, ridgeline protection &amp; provision for affordable housing</li> <li>◆ encouraging interior lots where the subdivision design will protect a valued natural or cultural resource feature</li> <li>◆ possible reduction in required road pavement width for dead end streets, &amp; revision to the drainage section to encourage Low Impact Development drainage catchment &amp; treatment systems</li> <li>◆ include the option to require installation of an in-ground water storage tank for fire protection purposes. The Morris Fire Company &amp; Fire Marshall must be given the authority to inspect these installations &amp; owners of lots in the subdivision must be responsible for replacement of such in-ground tanks as needed.</li> </ul>	PZC	
<b>Support affordable high speed internet options</b>	Participate in the Northwest ConneCT fiber-to-the-home broadband initiative. Formally appoint the EDC or a local broadband task force to look into affordable broadband options for the town and report back to the BOS on the costs and benefits of possible options.	BOS	EDC, Northwest ConneCT, NHCOG
<b>Increase Cell Service Coverage</b>	Many areas of town are still without cellular coverage. Many residents do not have a way to call for emergency services should they lose power to their home phone. The local broadband task force suggested above could also look into ways to improve cellular coverage town-wide without adding additional cell phone towers.	BOS	NHCOG, Northwest ConneCT

<b>Avoid New Sewer Installations</b>	Previous Town Plans, Morris Water Pollution Control Agency (Sewer Commission) & the Planning & Zoning Commission agree that sewers should be avoided outside of the west shore of Bantam Lake.	Sewer Commission	BOS, PZC
<b>Sidewalks and Biking Paths</b>	Apply for Community Connectivity or other funding to do a planning study of the costs and benefits of sidewalks and crosswalks in the Town and Commercial Centers and bike/walk paths or lanes on Rt. 209 on the west side of Bantam Rd, and Alain White Rd. These two roads are used frequently by residents for walking, running, and biking but are not considered as safe as they could be.	BOS	PZC
<b>Camp Columbia</b>	Seek ways to increase recreational and/or tourism opportunities at Camp Columbia including making improvements like a new accurate map and properly maintained trails. A mountain bike park was one suggestion from the resident input survey.	EDC	Beach & Rec., BOS

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## *Consistency with State & Regional Plans of Conservation & Development*

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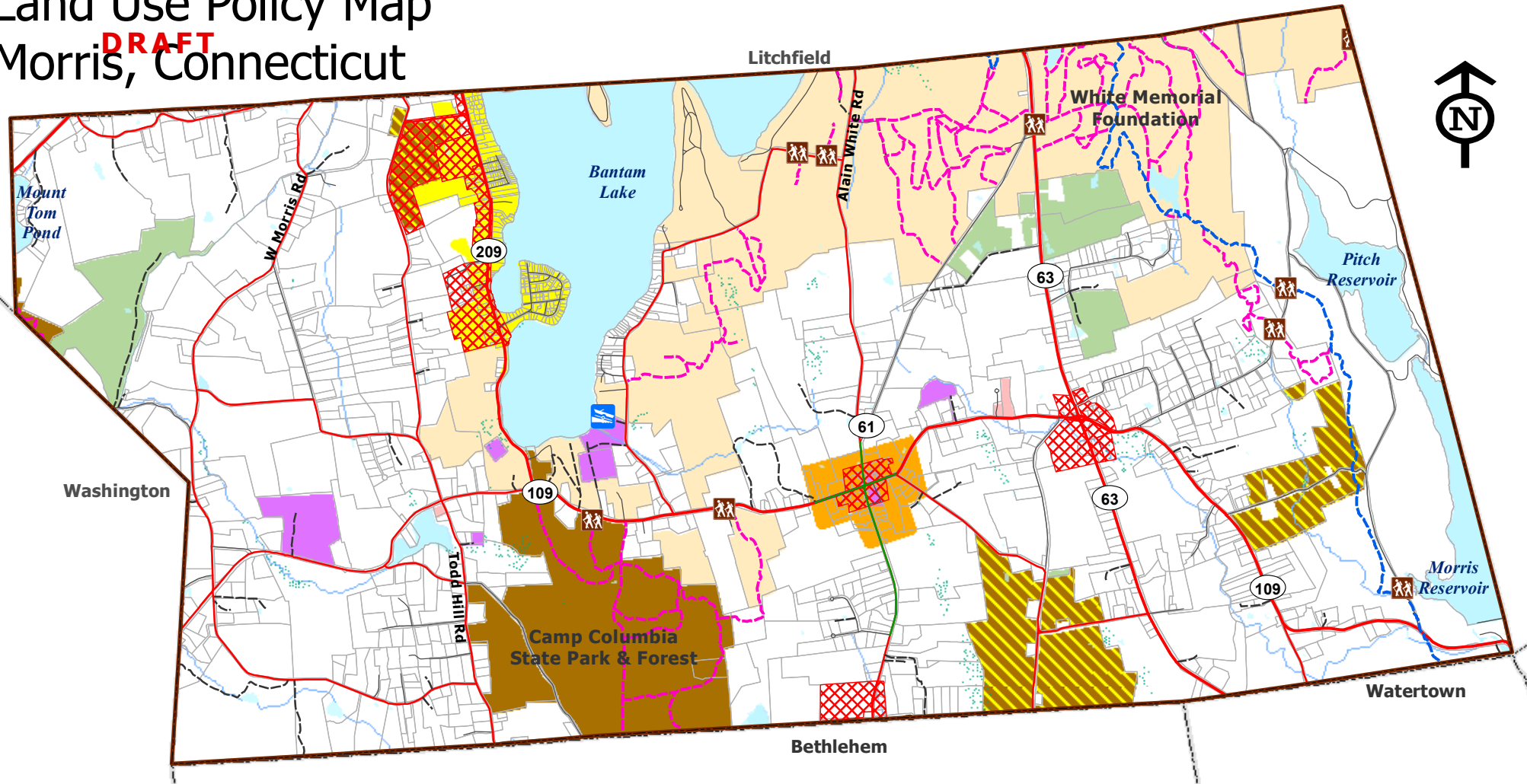
**The goals and tasks recommended in this Plan are consistent with both the State and Regional Plans of Conservation and Development.** The current State Plan (2013-2018) is organized around the following six growth management principles: (1) Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing 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 current regional plan that covers Morris is the 2017-2027 Regional Plan of Conservation & Development adopted by the Northwest Hills Council of Governments, of which Morris is a member. This plan is focused on actions that will assist the NHCOC's 21 member towns to meet the following goals: (1) Attract and retain young residents; (2) Protect water quality and natural resources; (3) Support farm businesses and protect farmland; (4) Strengthen our town centers and Main Streets; (5) Meet the needs of our older adult residents; and (6) Continue to foster regional collaboration and resource sharing.

# Land Use Policy Map

## Morris, Connecticut

**DRAFT**



### Legend



Boat Launch



Town Boundary

### Trails

Recreational Trails

Mattatuck Trail

### Roads

Primary Route

Secondary Route

Local Road

Unimproved Road

Freshwater Emergent Wetland

Watercourse

Waterbody

Parcels



Village Growth Areas\*



Commercial/Industrial Zoned



Sewer Service Area



Municipal Property



White Memorial Foundation

### Permanently Protected Land

Cemetery

Private

State

Ag Restriction

1:42,973



### Data Sources:

Permanently Protected Land: Housatonic Valley Association in cooperation with The Litchfield Hills Greenprint(2019)

Sewer Service Area and Water: Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. (DEEP CTECO)  
U.S. routes, and state routes: The U.S. Census. (TIGER Data)  
Zoning: Arthur Howland & Associates/Town of Morris

\*Village Growth Areas adapted from Connecticut Office of Policy and Management's (CT OPM) Conservation and Development Policies Plan (2017)

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Date: 10/5/2020

## Land Use Policy Map

State statute requires that Town Plans of Conservation & Development include a map showing the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, conservation, agriculture, and other purposes. Following are the policies associated with the areas show on the Land Use Policy Map:



**Village Growth Area:** This is the area shown on the State's Plan of Conservation and Development Policy map as the town's traditional village center area. This area should encourage uses and infrastructure investments that would reinforce the traditional New England village center character of this area. Any action or investments in this area should take into consideration ways to strengthen or improve the traditional village character of this area.



**Sewer Service Area:** This area on the west side of Bantam Lake is served by Litchfield's sewer system. Expansion of this sewer system is not anticipated.



**Commercial/Industrial Zoned Areas:** These areas are currently zoned for commercial or light industrial uses.



**Permanently Protected Land Areas:** These lands are protected from development and will remain forested, farmed, or fields.



**Rural Areas:** these areas are appropriate for low density residential use on parcels with soils that can accommodate on-site wastewater treatment and wells. Many of these areas also contain water resources, core forests, and/or priority farm fields which are conservation priorities.