

CITY OF NORTHAMPTON

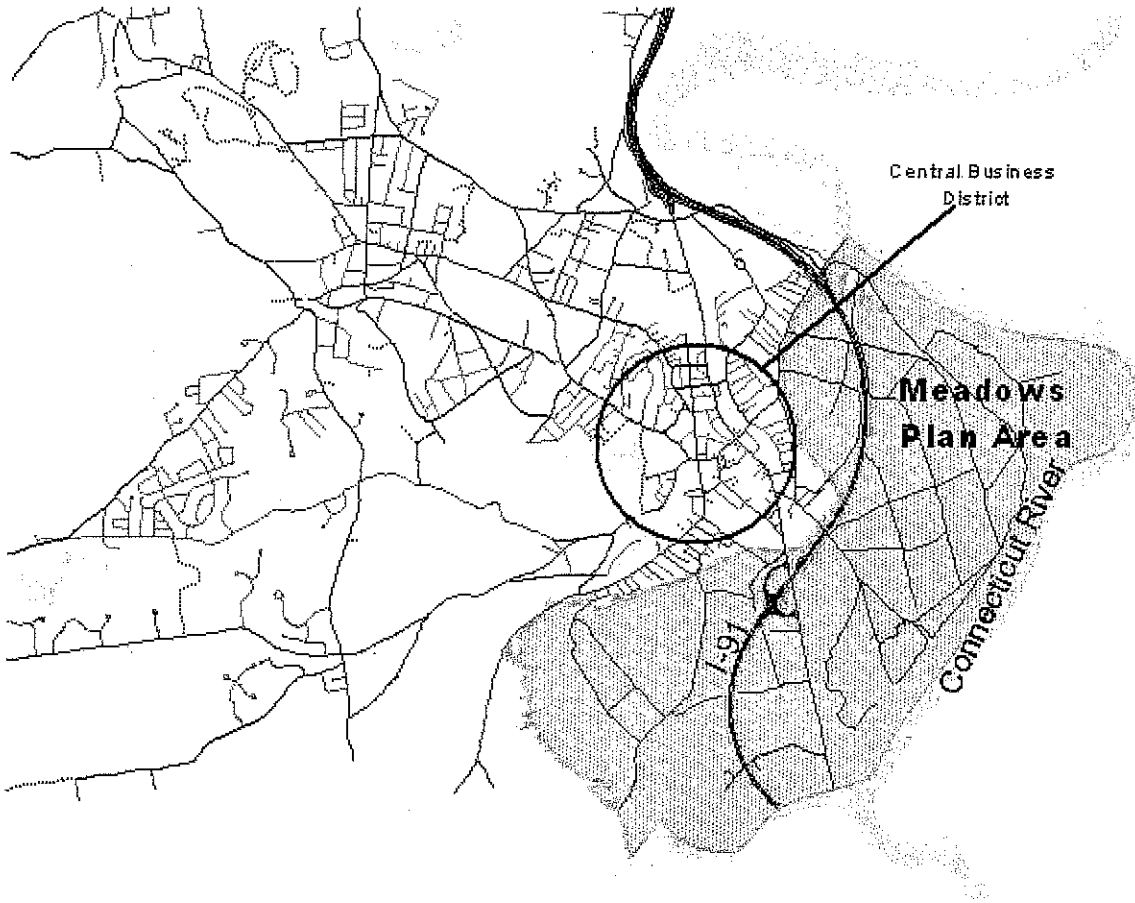
Meadows Land Use Plan



City of Northampton
June 2005



includes actual language for specific zoning ordinance amendments that are identified in the proposed actions section of this plan.



Meadows Locus Plan

Background:

The plan was initiated by the residents of Ward 3 Neighborhood in an effort to address concerns by property owners about existing problems as well as the desire to clearly understand development pressures and direct how the area could be maintained essentially as it is now. Additionally, this plan process serves as a follow up to the City's Flood Hazard Mitigation plan process.

Ward 3 Neighborhood Association sponsored five public focus groups in early 2005, with assistance from the City. An estimated 300 people participated in these forums and specific comments were recorded and can be found in the attached appendix. In a sixth and final forum, issues and areas of agreement were confirmed. The goals, policies, and action items within this plan reflect these accepted principals for use and how to address future existing concerns and issues. Other issues where no consensus could be confirmed have been noted as items that necessitate further discussion and assessment.

Finally, there is a General Industrial District (GI) with a WP overlay located at the Oxbow/Route 5 Bridge and Island Road intersection. Warehousing, manufacturing, some limited office uses are generally allowed within the GI district. The 15% substantial improvement threshold applies in this area as well.

A few non-conforming businesses exist. However, the City's zoning ordinance allows continued use, changes, and expansions of non-conformities either by-right or with Zoning Board of Appeals approval, depending on the nature of the request.

Zoning District	Uses Allowed By Right♦	Uses allowed by Special Permit ♦	Open Space Required	Lot Area Required (square feet)
SC	Agricultural, Day Care, Educational	Single-family residential, Outdoor Recreation, Airport, stables, kennels, substantial (15%) improvements, accessory apartments (attached only).	95%	50,000
SR (WP overlay)	Single Family Residential, Accessory Apartments (attached)	Fair, substantial (15%) improvements, detached access. apartments	70%	30,000
URB (WP overlay)	Single, 2-Family Residential, Accessory apartments (attached)	3-family residential, substantial (15%) improvements, detached accessory apartments.	50%	8,000/12,000
GB	Retail, commercial, hotels, some auto uses, multi-family, mixed uses, agricultural uses	Research & Development, telecommunications, auto sales, substantial (15%) improvements	5%	0
GI	Manufacturing, warehouse, office	substantial (15%) improvements	20%	20,000

♦ represents the major use classifications, but not all uses allowed.

Goals:

- Preserve and encourage agricultural uses. These are crucial to maintaining the economic viability of farming within the city and preserving scenic, ecological, environmental benefits for the City as whole. The City should support it through allocation of resources and infrastructure investments.
- Ease regulatory burden on landowners who wish to maintain or expand their homes or businesses.
- Encourage improvements to existing businesses to maintain their viability and thereby reduce the potential for sale or conversion to alternative uses.
- Maintain the primarily open and agricultural nature of the Meadows as it is today with no new residential lots and no significant increase in residential density.
- Preserve floodplain as a resource to prevent other areas and neighborhoods from flooding.
- Sustain existing uses in order to prevent conversion to new uses.
- Reduce destructive and illegal use of private property. Reduce illegal dumping.
- Increase public awareness of private property boundaries, by clearly identifying public space and roads.

Policies:	Responsible Parties:
<p>General Use: The City should continue to support farming as a vital resource for the community at large. Financial opportunities to assist farmers with farming, and partnering opportunities to preserve agricultural land should be sought when possible. The City should make infrastructure improvements, as feasible, that facilitate production and access to farm parcels.</p>	Farmers, City, DPW
<p>Protect the meadows as a floodplain resource for flood storage capacity. As described elsewhere in the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan, this floodplain is necessary to function as overflow of the Mill and Connecticut Rivers. If it is not maintained, widespread damage to private property beyond the exiting floodplain area could occur.</p>	City, Residents
<p>Restrict illegal motorized access and use of meadows trails and roads, to the extent feasible.</p>	Residents, City
<p>Residential Development: The existing historic neighborhoods within the Meadows are an important character-defining element of the area. The City should ease local restrictions, to the extent feasible, to allow existing residential structures to be improved/expanded. Expansions should be allowed so long as flood storage is not lost and criteria within state codes are met.</p>	City
<p>Allow limited increase in residential units through the addition of accessory dwelling units but prohibit new residential units on lots that do not currently contain residential structures anywhere within the Meadows.</p>	City
<p>Business Development: Allow development in areas currently zoned General Business and General Industry. In other districts allow expansions of businesses on lots currently in business use. Do not expand or create new commercial and industrial zones within the Meadows.</p>	City, Businesses

legally pre-existing non-conforming or have been issued special permits.			
2. Change Zoning Ordinance to prohibit creation of new residential structures on new lots.	City Council	Planning Board/ Office of Planning & Development Neighborhood	Summer/fall 2005
3. Clarify and define existing and any proposed regulatory requirements and steps in the process for building within the floodplain.	Office of Planning & Development Ward Councilor	Mayor's Office of Economic Development	Summer/fall 2005
4. Create long-term infrastructure maintenance and improvement plan with prioritized items and search for resources, (includes Old Springfield Bridge replacement).	City Council DPW	Neighborhood/ Community	2006
5. Develop protocol between neighborhood and police department to establish effective mechanism to eliminate dumping and deter destruction of property (vandalism, crop damage etc) presence of enforcement or community policing and deterring illegal ATV use.	City Council Police Department	Ward 3 Residents	Summer 2005- Ongoing.
6. Develop community educational campaign on rights/responsibilities of the public, mapping public areas.	Ward Councilor	Office of Planning & Development Neighborhood	Fall 2005- ongoing
7. Pursue funding mechanisms that help sustain farming viability, open space and recreational opportunities.	City Council	Community/ Office of Planning & Development	Ongoing
8. Organize Clean-up Days	Ward 3 Association	DPW	Annually
9. Have the State review all zoning changes proposed within the floodplain to ensure consistency with federal requirements	Commonwealth / City Staff		Summer 2005

Issues for Further Investigation and Clarification	Responsible Party	Partners	Timeframe
River bank erosion- needs more investigation to determine how to address this and identify ancillary impacts.	Conservation Commission, City		
Look at creative mechanism for creating community wide or organized/cumulative flood storage areas that meets the regulatory requirements under the WPA. for expansions to existing residential structures/uses such as garages, septic ect.	Conservation Commission	Dept of Environmental Protection	2006-07

Two Thousand Five

Councilors Marilyn Richards

Appendix A §5.2

Amend Special Conservancy District to allow expansions of existing residences and businesses without a planning Board Special Permit and allow Attached Accessory Apartments by right and detached Accessory Apartment by Zoning Board of Appeals Special Permit.

Section 5.2

{Amend §5.2 by making the following changes to the various sections}

Two Thousand Five
Councilors Marilyn Richards

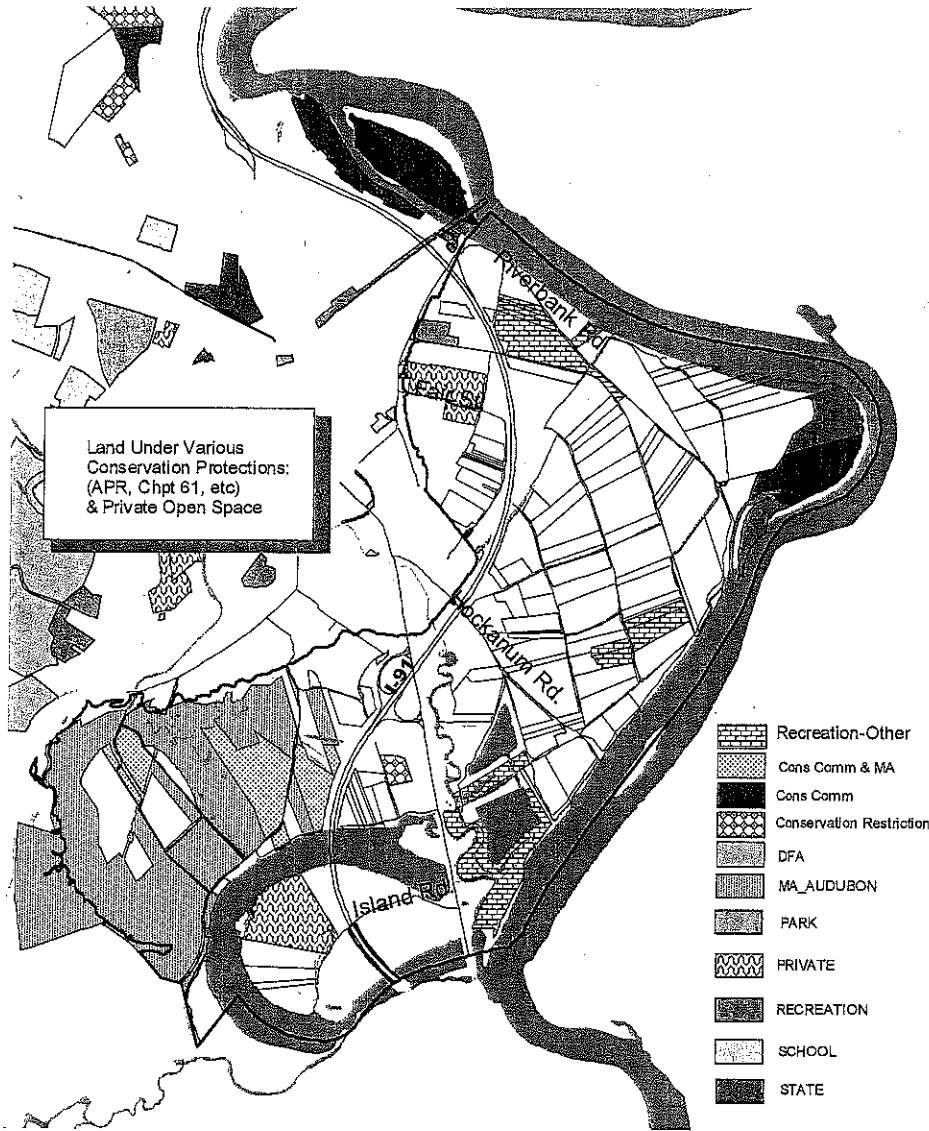
Appendix A §6.2

Amend Special Conservancy District dimensions to allow expansions of existing residences and businesses by reducing the open space requirements and restricting new housing development

Section 6.2

{Amend §6.2 by making the following changes }:

2.



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4. Comments from Focus Group Meetings

FARMERS Jan 6 None	WARD 3 ASSOCIATION Jan 12	OWNERS/RES Jan 19 No Changes from existing	BUSINESSES Jan 25	OTHERS Feb 1 Keep it like it is now- except for restoration of degraded areas to natural state.	Reconvene Feb 22 Identify values for on region and statewide basis
				Land acquired for permanent protection. No More dumping Safer surroundings	Value of tourism
				System of Financial Resources & support to protect land	
				Cooperative Alliance to Support Farming and Protect Land.	
				Diminished Pesticide Use	
				Local "CSA" to foster sustainable agricultural use	
				Continue Pollution Reduction efforts along rivers/waterways	
				Farming/Agricultural Resource	
Ability to Maintain Farming	Agricultural Resource Area	Unique Farmland		Wildlife Habitat	
	Open Space	Open Space	Open space (value added for business locations)		
	Wildlife Resource	Low Density		Forest and Fields	
	Beauty/ Health	Quiet		Residential Use/Neighborhoods	
	Recreational Resource: walking, biking, birding, boating, swimming, skiing,	Privacy		Bird Habitat- migratory corridor	
	Ecological Resource- Migration routes, nesting			Sails	
	Ability to live through local			Flat/Wide Paths (ADA)	

Change District of Environmental for the future. What is the current status? (LUTUE-107) (LUTUE-107) (LUTUE-107) (LUTUE-107) (LUTUE-107)

Draft

	buildings	structures- without compensatory. Flood storage	Recreation,	
Improve Old Springfield Rd. Bridge to assist Farmers	Identify different areas for different treatment.	Treat "Developed" areas differently	Treat areas differently- major corridors are different.	Restrict Full Developme both sides c Developme
	Define areas to protect/ preserve from development	No new Residential Structures	Expand General Business Zoning District	Re-Evaluate
Long-term Police Presence to address Vandalsm, trespassing, dumping	Preserve farming through: --Police protection, --Road maintenance, and --Improving the Old Springfield Rd. Bridge	Better Police Presence	Community policing	Ease Zoning Residences Developme
	Promoting natural farming	No changes to existing uses	Allow for special permit options for some uses in the SC district with respect to open space calculations or other criteria.	Itemize Exist Framework, Requiremer
	Need to widen Old Ferry to accommodate farm vehicles	Road Maintenance	Preserve farmland through better enforcement.	Zoning Cha
				Reinstate o; funding to r
				Protect Farr Community
				Protect Floo Storage Ca
				Control of Ir
				Evaluate Us look at red.
				Encourage Use of Trails, (Recreation Safety

CITY OF NORTHAMPTON

MASSACHUSETTS

August 18, 2005

In City Council,

Upon the recommendation of the Councilor Marilyn Richards and the Planning Board

BE IT RESOLVED

WHEREAS, On June 23, 2005, the Planning Board adopted the *Meadows Land Use Plan* as an element of the City's comprehensive plan pursuant to MGL Chapter 41 §81 C and D; and

WHEREAS, Although the plan is now in effect, City Council endorsement is important for overall acceptance of the planning process and the plan;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

City Council endorses the *Meadows Land Use Plan for the City of Northampton.*

In City Council, September 1, 2005
Rules suspended, passed two readings and enrolled.

Attest: *Jane Nuttelman*, Clerk of Council

Approved: Mary Clare Higgins, Mayor

A true copy.

Attest: *Jane Nuttelman*, Clerk of Council