



**Turner Miller Group**  
planning consensus community

Land use, economic development, and environmental planning  
Facilitating consensus among diverse constituents  
Creating sustainable communities

# Report of Public Meeting and Background for Goals and Objectives

## Town of Beacon Falls Plan of Conservation and Development Meeting 3

June 18, 2010

## Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of a community are central to development of a Plan for Conservation and Development. The goals and objectives are best developed by considering the input of a community's stakeholders, the status of previous planning goals and the realities effecting the community. We are providing this report as background in anticipation of developing a formal list of goals and objectives for the Plan of Conservation and Development.

## SWOT Meeting

On May 26, 2010 Turner Miller Group facilitated a public meeting held by the Open Space and Land Use Committee held for the purpose of soliciting public input. The format of this meeting was to have the public identify what they liked most about Beacon Falls and what they were least happy about. This input was used as a basis for entering into a traditional SWOT discussion in which the public was asked to detail what they believed were the community's strengths and weakness, and what opportunities and threats face the community. At the end of the meeting, the public was asked to score what they believed were the most significant of the identified factors.

The following is a summary of the input collected at the meeting. The score of each identified factor is included in parentheses and the factors are listed in the order of importance as indicated by the public in their voting. A map identifying the best and worst attributes of the Town as identified by the public also follows.

## WEAKNESSES

1. Recordkeeping and communication between Town Hall and Residents (+16) Additional systems and training are required to ensure better recordkeeping and implementation of initiatives.
2. Road system is obsolete for current uses (+10) – Main Street was designed as a four lane regional highway, and the new Route 8 bypasses the downtown altogether. There are no sidewalks in downtown. Main Street dead-ends. Zoning parking requirements do not recognize the capacity of available on-street parking.
3. Speeds on Route 42 and Burton Road (+8) – Traffic speeds on Route 42 and Burton Road make it difficult for pedestrians, bicyclists and residents. Traffic on Route 42 is seen as associated with intercommunity traffic, while Burton Road traffic is generally associated with local residents, especially school employees.
4. The deteriorated appearance of Railroad Avenue (+4) – Some of the homes along Railroad Avenue are deteriorated and residential occupancy is not compatible with industrial and heavy commercial uses in the area.
5. Tobey's pond is not safe in current form. (+2) – Tobey's pond needs to be improved for passive park use
6. Route 8 makes access to Main Street & River difficult (+1)
7. There are a lack of facilities for visitors to Naugatuck River
8. Old Turnpike Road and its trailer park may not perceive itself as a part of the community
9. The current condition of the RR Station makes it unattractive for use
10. Breault Road dead-ends making developable lands inaccessible

## STRENGTHS

1. Open Space (+12). The most highly prized open spaces is the ridge along the east side Route 8 just south of Exit 23. Next most prized is the ridgeline that is the backdrop to the north side of Burton Road. Also cited is the narrow wooded appearance of roads, especially Route 42.
2. Active and Passive Parks including Matthies Park , Tobey's Park and Recreational Fields (+10) – Local parks are picturesque, unique and provide a range of outdoor sporting activities
3. Small Town Community Feel (+5) - Neighbors know and speak to each other. Someone answers the phone at Town Hall. The downtown is small and provides limited necessary services. Town is perceived as a safe location to raise a family.
4. High school (+3) – The new high school provides the community with identity and is a draw for families.
5. Olmsted Neighborhood (+3) – There are few communities that can claim a neighborhood designed by this visionary architect/planner. It is an example of how higher densities should be designed.
6. Main Street (+3) – Main Street is revitalizing and is charming for its scale, lack of traffic and views of the Naugatuck River.
7. Oxford Airport (+1) – The presence of nearby Oxford Airport gives companies in the community opportunities for regional travel by private jet.
8. Naugatuck River (+1) – The Naugatuck River presents opportunities for fishing, boating and other recreational activities.
9. Volunteer Boards (+1) – The community has a pool of passionate, involved individuals intent on preserving and improving the community and resident's quality of life.
10. Uniroyal Apartments – A particularly well-executed example of historic preservation and adaptive reuse.
11. Regional Location – The location of the community is central to the State and provides convenient access to major economic centers such as Bridgeport, Waterbury, New Haven, Danbury, and Hartford.
12. RR Station – The location of a railroad station gives the community easy alternative access to employment centers.

## THREATS

1. Pending development threatens community character (+11) – There is much concern that if future development is not properly planned, it could irreversibly change the character of the community. The area of most concern is the area near Exit 23 off of Route 8. Also mentioned is the area at the south terminus of Breault Road.
2. New residents, especially seniors/empty-nesters won't share values of existing residents (+7) – There is concern that new residents are increasingly from upper income areas, or are coming to reside in age-limited housing. Such new residents may demand more in the way of local business services, which may fuel commercial growth of the downtown and reduce the small-town charm of the community. Further senior citizen and empty nesters may not support funding of recreational and educational initiatives, making the community less attractive for families.
3. Reduced State/Federal money/cooperation (+6) – While the Town has been reasonably successful in achieving State grants, there is some existing dissatisfaction with the cooperation

of the State in implementing the projects funded by the grants. With the turn in the economy, there is fear that funding may be reduced and State cooperation will become worse

## OPPORTUNITIES

1. Railroad Station (+7) – By far the most identified opportunity was the opportunity that could be captured by redeveloping the Railroad Station. This station is seen as a very large undeveloped asset.
2. Open Space and Trails (+3) – The network of open space and trails surrounding the community, coupled with access to the Naugatuck River and local parks, is a large potential source of tourism.
3. Downtown Potential (+2) - With businesses in the downtown improving, a grant and plans to improve the right-of-way for pedestrians, the Downtown has much potential for economic development.
4. Improvements to Zoning (+2) – The recent improvements made to the zoning will encourage future private investment in the community
5. Breault Rd – Haynes Property (+2) – This parcel is a very good potential area for future development, if done correctly.
6. Businesses in Industrial Park (+2) – Although the occupancy of the Town's industrial park has waned somewhat, the presence of such an industrial park coupled with regional highway, rail and airport access provides an economic development opportunity
7. Riverfront on Railroad Avenue (+1) – While the existing disposition of Railroad Avenue is less than desired, the location on the Riverfront provides a catalyst for improvement.
8. Regional Universities for Business Incubation – The Town is centrally located to several regional institutions of higher learning, creating opportunities for business incubation
9. Economic Downturn gives time to plan – While the economic downturn has been felt in Beacon Falls, as in many communities, it is also seen as an opportunity to plan for future growth when the economy recovers.

## 2002 POCD Survey

The 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development also started with a public input process in the form of a community survey. That plan indicated that the chief concerns expressed by the Public were:

1. Coordination of local boards
2. Economic development in Main Street Area
3. Preservation of Open Space
  - a. Purchase land or development rights for large remaining farms
  - b. Require open space as part of large developments
  - c. Trail between Naugatuck State Forest and River
4. Expand community facilities including Library, Community Center, Town Hall, Meeting Rooms, Affordable Senior Housing, Fire/Police/EMS, Recreational Facilities at Matthies Park, purchase vacant land for future use

## **2002 POCD Goals and Objectives**

This public input process is intended to act as a basis for the Open Space and Land Use Committee to develop a series of formal Goals and Objectives as well as a Vision Statement for the Community. While the preceding POCD did not have a formal list of Goals and objectives, it was reviewed in an attempt to mine a list of identified priorities of the community in drafting the plan. We believe the following list accounts for the goals and objectives of the 2002 POCD.

### **Conservation**

1. Protect Naugatuck River, Carrington Pond, Rimmon Brook, Beacon Hill Brook, Hockanum Brook, Spruce Brook and Hemp Swamp Brook from pollution.
2. Provide open space greenbelts connecting a river walk with Naugatuck forest trails.
3. Provide Greater public access to open space
4. Enhance the area of smaller green areas.
5. Coordinate historic documentation and preservation
6. Identify important historic resources
7. Preserve historic resources through local regulation

### **Development**

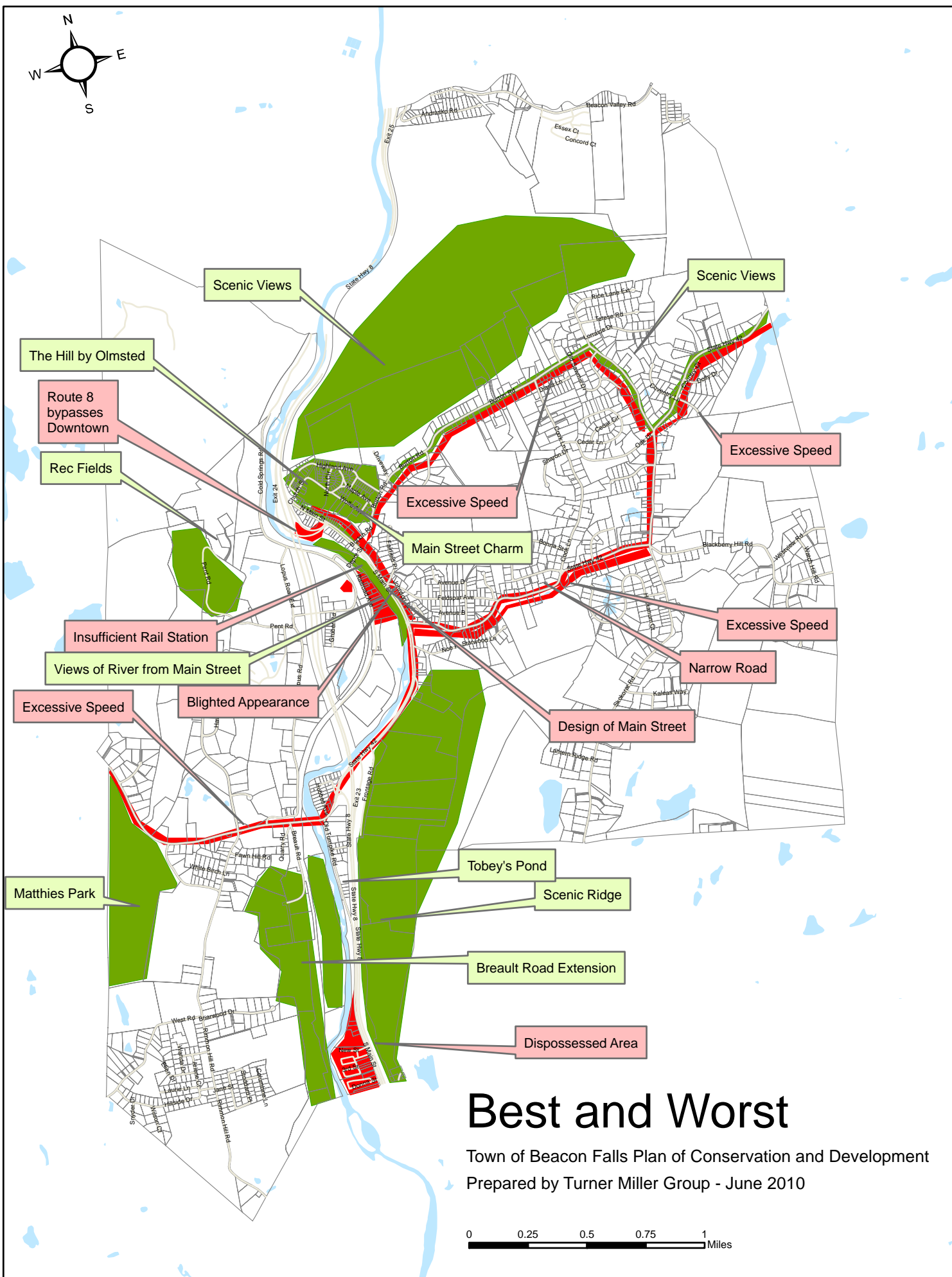
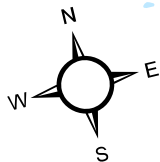
8. Focus commercial, recreation and institutional growth to Main Street
9. Promote residential growth that preserves open space
10. Provide housing diversity especially affordable senior housing
11. Rehabilitate housing in key areas
12. Grow the tax base/reduce the mil rate
13. Attract businesses to industrial park
14. Provide goods and services to residents
15. Create a revitalized and more attractive Main Street.
16. Encourage River Tourism

### **Government/Infrastructure**

17. Promote new library
18. Implement Pavement management system
19. Improve roadway circulation at Main Street, Route 8 Interchanges, Old Pines Bridge Road/Lopus Road, Burton Road/Lasky Road
20. Improve transit service
21. Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel.

## **Conclusion**

It will be the focus of the next Open Space and Land Use Committee meeting to distill this information into an updated list of defined Goals and Objectives. More specifically, we will review the information from the previous POCD and discuss the continuing relevance of the priorities of that Plan. Then a list of goals and objectives will be developed based on the input received at the SWOT meeting.



# Best and Worst

Town of Beacon Falls Plan of Conservation and Development  
Prepared by Turner Miller Group - June 2010

