

# Town of Berlin

## Plan of Conservation and Development 2023 – 2033



DRAFT 3/31/23

Effective x/x/x

## Acknowledgments

### Town of Berlin Planning and Zoning Commission

- Joan Veley, Chair
- Diane Jorsey, Vice Chair
- Brian Rogan, Secretary
- Andra Lou Millerd
- June Daly
- Timothy Zigmont
- Nikki Sambitizky, Alternate
- Andrew Legnani, Alternate
- Steven Biella, Jr., Alternate

### Town of Berlin Planning and Zoning Department

- Maureen Giusti, Town Planner

### Town of Berlin Economic Development Department

- James Mahoney, Economic Development Coordinator
- Chris Edge, Director of Economic Development

### General Acknowledgments

Thank you to the many residents, property owners, business owners, Town staff, and other individuals who contributed to this effort via surveys, workshop, thematic meetings, and POCD Committee meetings.

Plan Produced By:



DRAFT 3/31/23










Berlin Plan of Conservation and Development

# Town of Berlin

## Plan of Conservation and Development

### 2023 – 2033

**Contents**

	1.0 Introduction .....	1
	2.0 Environmental Resources.....	15
	3.0 Housing.....	31
	4.0 Economic Development.....	43
	5.0 Transportation .....	61
	6.0 Facilities & Services.....	73
	7.0 Cultural Resources .....	93
	8.0 Future Land Use.....	107
	9.0 Implementation Summary.....	113

DRAFT 3/31/23





# 1.0 Introduction

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## About Berlin

Established in 1785, Berlin is a mid-sized Hartford County town with approximately 20,000 residents. Berlin attracts residents for its schools, natural beauty, quiet neighborhoods, access to goods and services, and proximity to major employment centers. Like many Connecticut towns, Berlin is comprised of more than one village center spread out over a relatively large area (twenty-seven square miles) comprised mainly of open space areas and low-density residential development.

The Town is a member of the Capitol Region Council of Governments, which is the regional planning organization for multiple towns and cities in the greater Hartford area. Reference to “region” in this plan may include surrounding towns, regardless of county or metropolitan planning organization membership.

## About the Plan

As a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), this Plan documents existing conditions relevant to the Town and provides a guide for its future; it provides a future vision that is based in the realities of the resources and constraints that are present in Berlin today.

The Plan establishes goals for Berlin’s physical form, economic and social health, and quality of life. Its vision and goals provide a foundation for policy and funding decisions and will inform the Town’s zoning and municipal ordinances. The Plan also recommends strategies and actions necessary to achieve its goals and realize the vision.

Extensive input was sought from Town residents, businesses and stakeholders, elected officials, and Town staff in development of the Plan. That outreach included multiple conversations with stakeholders via interviews, thematic meetings, a public workshop, and an online survey. In total, the Town received input from over two hundred stakeholders.

This Plan meets Connecticut General Statutes which require that a municipal plan of conservation and development be updated every ten years. It is also consistent with both the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the Capitol Region Council of Government’s Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

## How This Plan is Organized

This plan identifies a broad **vision** for Berlin to work towards. This vision is supported by six **goals** – one for each section of the Plan. The goal for each section is set forth at the end of that section, together with a set of **strategies** that provide guidance on how to achieve the goals. Specific **actions** (step by step methods of implementing strategies and achieving goals) are also provided in each section. Goals, strategies, and actions are consolidated in the implementation summary (Section 9).

### Vision

The vision describes what the people of Berlin value and what the Town will strive toward over the next ten years. The vision is an expression of the desires and aspirations of the community in a statement that is meant to guide Town leaders and frame the goals and strategies of this plan.

### Goals

Goals are commitments towards achieving the Plan’s vision. They are statements about what the community wants to achieve.

### Strategies

Strategies are the methods by which the goals will be achieved. They describe the interim outcomes that can lead to achieving the impact described in a particular goal.

### Actions

Actions are specific steps that can be taken to accomplish strategies. They are the first steps to be taken toward achieving the Plan’s vision.



## Consistency with the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan: Revised Draft 2018-2023

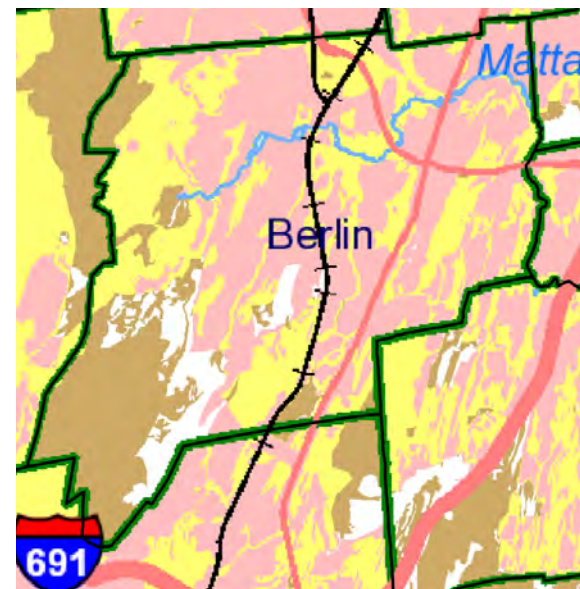
The recommendations of this plan were compared with the current State Conservation and Development Policies Plan (2018-2023 Revised Draft) for consistency. The 2018-2023 Plan provides a benchmark for municipal plans of development going forward.

The 2018-2023 Revised Draft Plan is organized around six growth-management principles. Municipalities must consider these principles as they update their plans of conservation and development:

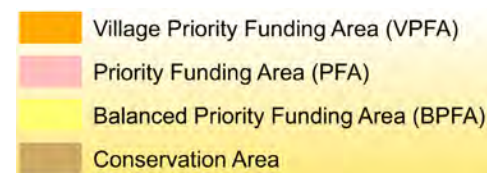
1. Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure.
2. Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.
3. Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation 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 policies and strategies which comprise Berlin's 2021 Plan of Conservation and Development are complementary to the growth principles stated above.

The 2018-2023 Locational Guide Map (at right) identifies Priority Funding Areas, Balanced Priority Funding Areas, and Conservation Areas within Berlin. Funding areas are areas that are prioritized for State grants and investment. Much of Berlin is identified as a Priority Funding Area, which mostly corresponds with the Town's commercial, industrial, and neighborhood areas. A comparable share of Berlin is identified as a Balanced Priority Funding Area which corresponds with many of Berlin's low density residential areas. A lesser share of Berlin, mostly on the west side of the Town is designated as Conservation Areas, which corresponds with designated open space in the Town. Areas shown in white are not a priority for funding or conservation.



2018-2023 Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut Locational Guide Plan



## **CRCOG 2014-2024 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development**

Berlin is one of 38 member municipalities of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG). Berlin became a member when its former metropolitan planning organization, the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency was dissolved in 2014.

In 2014, CRCOG adopted its 2014-2024 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development. The plan was developed prior to Berlin becoming a member of CRCOG and so the plan lacks guidance and recommendations that are specific to Berlin. Regardless, the plan provides a framework for growth across the region that is applicable to Berlin. It identifies the conservation and development goals below:

### **Conservation Goals**

#### *Natural Resource Conservation*

- Protect air, water, and soil quality in the region
- Grow and develop in harmony with natural resources
- Promote active natural resource stewardship

#### *Watersheds and Water Quality*

- Improve and maintain water quality
- Protect water supply and increase water conservation efforts
- Reduce non-point source pollution
- Continue combined sewer overflow and point source pollution discharge reductions
- Use innovative wastewater treatment techniques for new developments

### *Open Space and Farmland Preservation*

- Support protection of more open space in the region
- Encourage preservation of farmland in the region
- Encourage preservation of declassified water company land as open space
- Coordinate and prioritize open space preservation throughout the region
- Expand and protect open space along major rivers

### *Food Systems and Food Security*

- Preserve and look for opportunities to reclaim the Capitol Region's working lands
- Improve regional residents' access to food resources
- Improve the health and nutrition of the region's population
- Reduce environmental impacts of the food system

### **Development Goals**

#### *Climate Change*

- Connect communities with tools and resources to address climate change
- Strengthen and broaden CRCOG's network of partnerships to address climate change
- Bolster the regional approach to climate change planning
- Continue to work toward greater transportation options in the Capitol Region in an effort to mitigate the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels in the state

#### *Sustainable Land Use and Zoning*

- Guide growth to regional centers and areas of established infrastructure
- Increase sustainable redevelopment and infill development efforts
- Revise zoning and subdivision regulations to address local and regional land use concerns

### *Public Water and Sewer Service*

- Ensure an adequate and high-quality water supply
- Continue reduction of environmental impacts of sewage discharge
- Use existing water and sewer infrastructure to guide future growth
- Balance water supply and ecosystem considerations

### *Transportation*

- Provide a range of viable transportation options within the region
- Improve interregional and interstate transportation
- Coordinate land use, environmental, and transportation efforts
- Anticipate and plan for future transportation needs

### *Housing*

- Increase the range of choice in housing for people of all incomes and all ages, but especially for those who have the least choice in achieving their locational preference
- Enforce Federal and State fair housing laws and promote fair housing through the creation of housing opportunities
- Encourage and support the maintenance of viable residential neighborhoods
- Support preservation of the region's rental housing stock, and the expansion of housing opportunities for renters
- Continue to improve the Capitol Region transportation system in order to better link housing, jobs and services, thus expanding individuals' housing choices









## Berlin's Vision

Berlin's vision statement was developed in response to the community's feedback regarding their priorities for the Town and based upon discussion with the Town's Planning and Zoning Commission and Town staff. It is intended to be a brief, memorable statement that frames the Plan's recommendations. That vision is as follows:

*Berlin is a community with a small-town feel founded in a rural and historically agrarian landscape that benefits from its location at the center of the state. The town has a rich history, strong community, and provides a peaceful atmosphere for its residents. Berlin will continue to grow, but in a sustainable manner and without compromising the town's natural resources or outgrowing its ability to provide high-quality services to its residents. Strong connections to the region and within town are highly valued by the community for all modes of travel. Berlin will balance growth against preservation of its historic landscape and village centers. The town's village centers, and farmland are important to the history and identity of Berlin; protecting and improving areas such as Kensington Center will remain a priority for the town.*

## Goals

The plan is organized around six goals that directly support the community's vision.

- 
**Environmental Resources**  
 Protect environmental resources, expand protection of open space, and conduct necessary measures to improve water quality in the Town's water bodies and courses.
- 
**Housing**  
 Allow for a wide selection of housing choice that enables residents to live in Berlin through various stages of life and attracts new residents to the community.
- 
**Economic Development**  
 Foster a vibrant economy that provides residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while diversifying the Town's property tax base.
- 
**Transportation**  
 Improve and expand transportation options to ensure greater connectivity within Town and to the region; maintain and improve infrastructure in an environmentally and fiscally responsible manner.
- 
**Facilities & Services**  
 Provide high quality facilities and a high level of service to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a fiscally responsible manner.
- 
**Cultural Resources**  
 Protect, promote, fund, and continue to act as a steward for Berlin's cultural resources with a special focus on the Town's historic properties and farms.

## The Plan Update Process

The Plan update process was initiated in 2021. The Planning and Zoning Commission established a POCD Committee, with broad representation from the community, to act as the steering committee for the project. The Planning Team was comprised of the Town Planner, Planning & Zoning Administrator, and staff members from FHI Studio.

Community engagement was a central component of the Plan's update with the following engagement tools and strategies deployed:

- **Planning and Zoning Commission:** The Planning and Zoning Commission acted as the steering committee for the Plan update. The Commission met regularly with the planning team to discuss the planning process and review plan content.
- **Online Survey:** An online survey was conducted in the Summer of 2022.
- **Public Workshop:** A public workshop was conducted in June of 2022. The workshop was conducted in person at the Berlin Community Center.
- **Thematic Meetings:** Four thematic meetings were conducted with property owners, business owners, board and commission members, and Town staff in June of 2022. The meetings were organized by the following themes: Economic Development; Housing; Transportation, Infrastructure & Town Facilities; and Open Space, Natural & Historic Resources.
- **CRCCOG and Town Council Review:** April 2023
- **Public Hearing:** Adopted by the Planning & Zoning Commission on 6/X/23.

### Thematic Meetings for Berlin's Plan of Conservation and Development

Please join us for in-person thematic meetings!

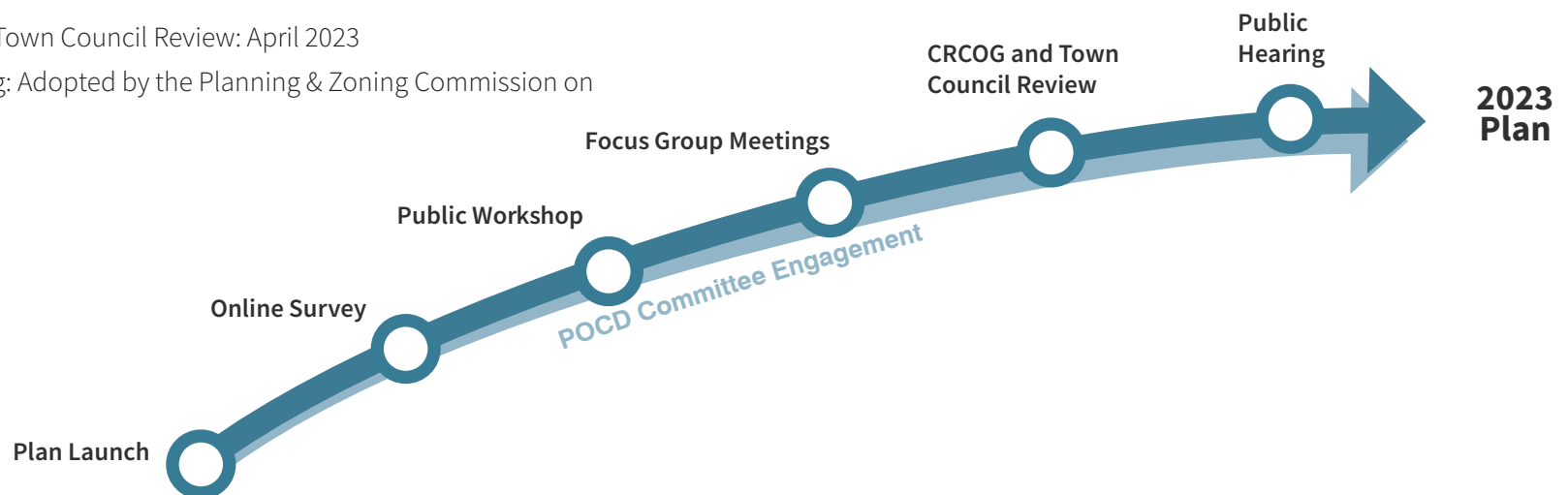
<b>Wednesday, June 22nd</b> 5:15 pm: Economic Development 7:00 pm: Housing	<b>Thursday, June 23rd</b> 5:15 pm: Transportation, Infrastructure & Town Facilities 7:00 pm: Open Space, Natural & Historic Resources
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**Questions?**  
 Contact Maureen Guisti, Town Planner, at [mgiusti@berlinct.gov](mailto:mgiusti@berlinct.gov)

**Berlin Board of Education Conference Room**  
 238 Kensington Rd  
 Berlin, CT 06037

**Take the Survey too!**  
 Tell us what your priorities are for Berlin.  
[www.surveymonkey.com/r/berlinpocd](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/berlinpocd)

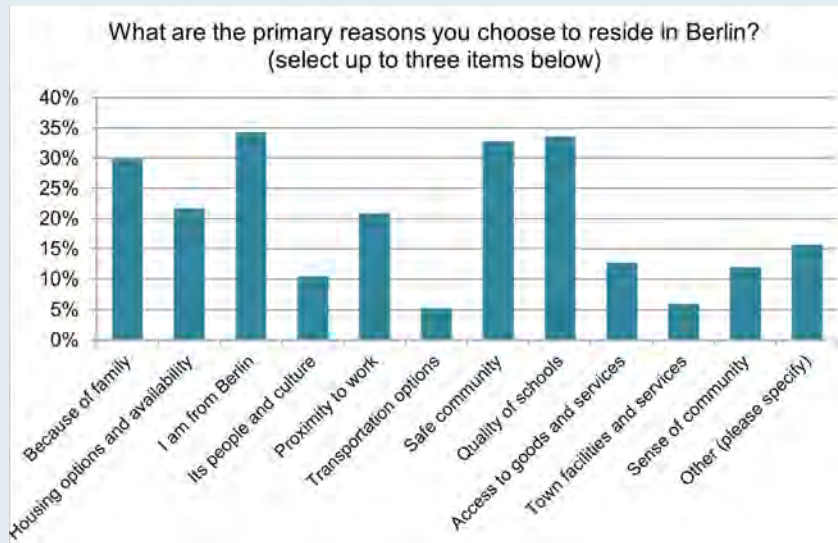
Find out more about the Berlin's POCD update: [bit.ly/berlinpocd](https://bit.ly/berlinpocd)



## Survey Response

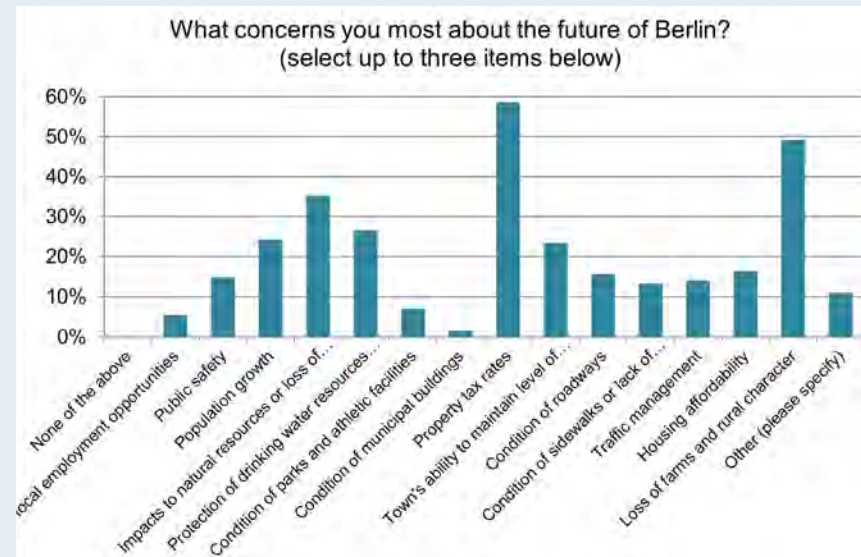
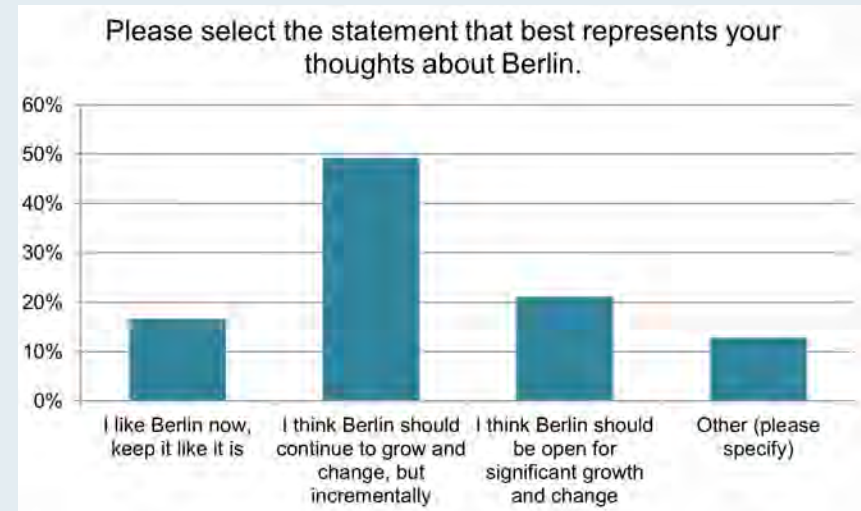
The Town conducted an online survey in the summer of 2022. Respondents identified a range of priorities for the Plan and shared their concerns regarding the Town's future. Ninety-six percent of respondents were Berlin residents with the remaining four percent of respondents having ties to the Town by way of property ownership, business ownership, or employment. Sixty-seven percent of respondents have lived in Berlin for more than twenty years.

Being from Berlin, the quality of schools, safety of the community, and having family ties to the Town were identified as the primary reasons that participants choose to reside in Berlin. Few respondents identified transportation options or Town facilities and services as the reasons they choose to live in Berlin.



When asked about their vision for growth and change in Berlin, most participants (49%) responded that “I think Berlin should continue to grow and change, but incrementally”. A lesser share believe that Berlin should be open for significant growth and change (21%) or remain as it is now (17%). These differing visions for Berlin are strongly correlated to the age of participants and their tenure in Berlin with younger residents that are newer to Town being more open to change and older residents

who have resided in Berlin longer preferring to keep things as they are or closer to where the Town was years ago. Additionally, participants identified property tax rates and the loss of farms and rural character as their primary concern regarding the future of Berlin.



## Public Workshop

A public workshop was conducted on June 9, 2022 at the Berlin Community Center. The two-hour workshop began with a presentation of the POCD purpose and planning process and demographic and socioeconomic trends in Berlin. An interactive survey was also conducted to gauge participants opinions on several topics. This was followed by topic area discussions with participants specific to housing, economic development, cultural resources, and environment and open space. Key themes from those discussions is summarized below.

### ***Housing***

- Don't build non single-family housing that intrudes on single-family neighborhoods
- The Town has enough single-family homes
- The Hilltop (Golden Triangle) area zoning should be reviewed to ensure development is compatible with that area.
- Build denser housing where infrastructure can support it (such as Farmington Ave & Berlin Turnpike)
- Berlin needs more condo/townhouse options
- Berlin needs more assisted living options
- Senior housing should be located in or near Kensington Center

### ***Economic Development***

- Work with property owners along the Berlin Turnpike to improve the appearance of the area
- The Town's commercial tax base is important for funding the Town's services
- Focus on supporting the reuse of existing empty buildings
- Review the Town's parking requirements to ensure that they are not overly burdensome on development

## ***Cultural Resources***

- Maintain historical Town-owned properties
- Worthington Church reuse public space
- Farm on High Road should be preserved
- Nelson Augustus Moore house and surrounding properties:
- House adjacent belonged to Nelson Augustus Moore --- stone house, would be great as a wedding venue, etc.; is privately owned
- Xmas tree farm next door; has remains of a historic dam
- Property on the other side of the road used to be a farm too; someone started to redevelop it but then ran out of money; it should be restored
- Dairy Farm on Lower Lane
- Berlin should capitalize on their historic resources, as Wethersfield does
- A café on Worthington Ridge would be a good idea
- Town should seek to re-purpose historic assets

## ***Environment and Open Space***

- Maintain forests and preserve existing open space
- Pursue the development of trails as a means of connecting open space
- Ensure that zoning is sufficiently flexible to allow farm-based business to thrive
- Support agritourism
- Preserve and protect farms (Such as the farm on High Road near Glenn Street)
- Continue to protect and clean-up the Mattabasset River, people don't appreciate the Mattabasset River; lots of trash in it
- Rezone Chamberlain Highway POD Zone

## Thematic Meetings

Four thematic meetings were conducted on June 22nd and 23rd of 2022 as a means of identifying the key issues from the perspective of residents, business owners, property owners, Town staff, elected officials, and board and commission members. These meetings were conducted in small group formats of twenty or fewer people and consisted of discussions about issues and opportunities relative to each topic. The following is a summary of the key discussion items from those meetings:

### ***Economic Development***

Discussion regarding economic development was focused on some of the challenges of development in Berlin such as land cost, construction cost, and compliance with State and Town regulations. The Town's tax abatement program was identified as not sufficient to overcome development costs for certain projects. The need to split large industrial sites into smaller parcels was also discussed as a means of making industrial land more available to small businesses. Specific areas such as the south side of Farmington Avenue across from Steele Center, Ferndale Plaza, and segments of the Berlin Turnpike were discussed as areas that have potential for redevelopment that could accommodate mixed-use development.

The location of future development was discussed with agreement that developments should be located near services and in Town, not sprawled out. The service and health care sectors were discussed as having the most potential for new economic development in Berlin.

### ***Housing***

The housing discussion focused on the need to provide more housing choices in Town, particularly for seniors who wish to remain in Berlin. This need extends beyond the limited housing available through Berlin's Housing Authority. The idea that zoning should be more flexible in the types and density of housing that are permitted in areas that have infrastructure was discussed. Also discussed was the perception that homebuyers, particularly first-time buyers are being crowded out of the market by investors who are able to make cash offers on homes. This impression is confirmed in data that showed that most homes in Berlin sell at prices within Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) price limits and yet

the number of CHFA financed houses in Berlin declined in the period since the start of the COVID pandemic.

Participants stated that the Town does not need much more single-family housing and that if built, single-family housing should take the form of cluster development as a means of reducing cost and impacts to open space. Also discussed was the idea that there is not enough housing supply at the upper end thus making it more difficult for lower-income households to compete for moderately priced housing. If there were more housing at the upper end it could free up more housing that is affordable to those with lower incomes.

### ***Transportation, Infrastructure, and Facilities***

This meeting covered a wide range of municipal facilities and infrastructure. With respect to transportation infrastructure, a preference for improved traffic operations, primarily intersections and traffic signals, was discussed. Also discussed was the need for a more expansive and better-connected sidewalk network. The lack of bicycle facilities was also discussed and the need to try to accommodate bikes on- and off-street. Off-street facilities could take the form of greenways and pathways that should connect to regional trail and greenway networks. Also discussed was the need to plan for accommodating electric vehicles by providing charging stations and the need to improve CT Transit bus operations and stops to better serve the Town.

In addition to transportation needs, the need to expand and improve Town facilities was discussed including the need to take action on addressing senior and community center needs. Sewer and water infrastructure enhancements were also identified as a top priority.

### ***Open Space, Environment, and Cultural Resources***

The importance of preserving the Town's open space and farms was the primary theme of this discussion. Participants felt that the Town should do more to support and protect farms including amending the zoning regulations to be more permissive of small farms and accessory farm uses. The need for the Town to remain engaged in the acquisition of open space was also discussed whether purchased by the Town or through a land trust. The need to protect and restore historic properties received significant discussion with agreement that the Town should be more proactive in the restoration and reuse of properties such as the Worthington Meeting House.



## Key Demographics and Trends

### Population

Berlin is a mid-size suburban town with a population of approximately 20,000 residents. Its population experienced significant growth in the 1970's, 80's, and 90's, but growth has slowed since 2010. Population research available from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (CT DECD) projects a potential population growth through 2030 before declining in the ten years following *(these projections are based upon 2016 estimates of existing demographic trends and are subject to change)*. Population change is one of the most important factors facing Berlin as it plans for its future. Population growth is a call to action for the community to take measures necessary to accommodate that potential growth in a sustainable manner.

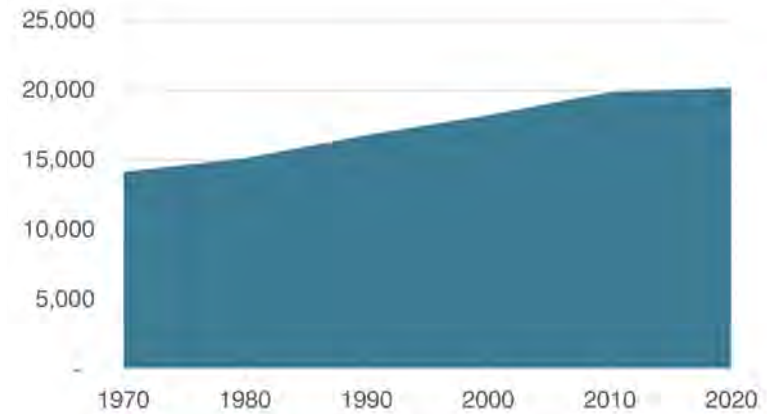
The COVID pandemic has had impacts on where people live and work and those impacts have yet to be fully accounted for in available Census data or population projections. The shift towards working from home may stimulate more population growth in communities such as Berlin, provided there is sufficient housing to accommodate that population.

While the Town's population has grown, Berlin's school enrollment steadily decreased between 2012 and 2021. Enrollment was 3,894 students during the 2010-11 school year but has since contracted to 3,118 students in the 2019-20 school year. Enrollment projections conducted for the school district suggest that enrollment will stabilize over the next decade (in a low-growth scenario) and could increase by as much as 12% (in a high-growth scenario).

Berlin's population density (779 people per square mile) is less than half that of the Hartford County average but is slightly higher than the State's (645 people per square mile). Population density steadily increased in Berlin between 1970 and 2010 but has since leveled off due to stagnation in population growth.

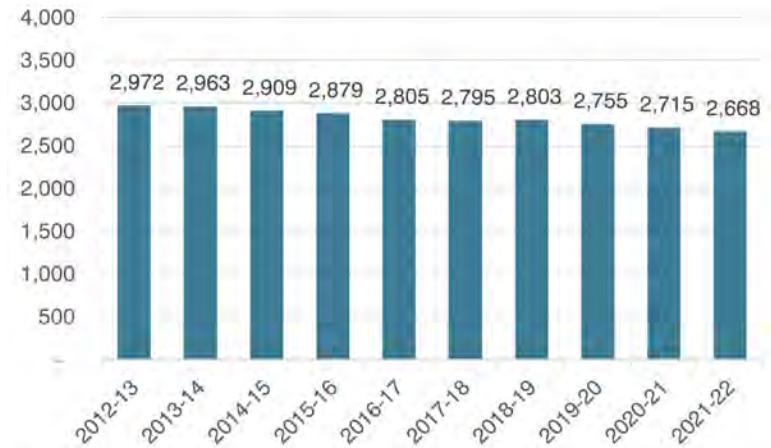
*Berlin's Population (1970-2020)*

Source: US Census, ACS



*Berlin Public School K-12 Enrollment (2012-2021)*

Source: CT DOE, Berlin Schools



## Housing

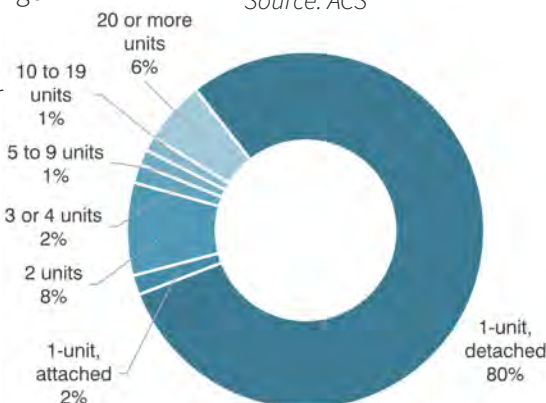
Berlin has a range of housing types, although a majority (86%) of housing is single-family (1-unit detached). The Town's multi-family housing is mostly distributed in buildings and developments ranging from two units to nine units. Less than one percent of the Town's housing stock is found in buildings with 10 or more units.

Like many communities in Connecticut, the cost of housing is a challenge for many of Berlin's residents.

Median gross rent in Berlin is \$1,277 which is slightly higher than Hartford County's but matches the State's median. A significant share of rental households (48.9%) spent more than 30% of their household income on rent, while 25.5% of households with a mortgage and 14.5% of households without a mortgage are housing cost burdened.

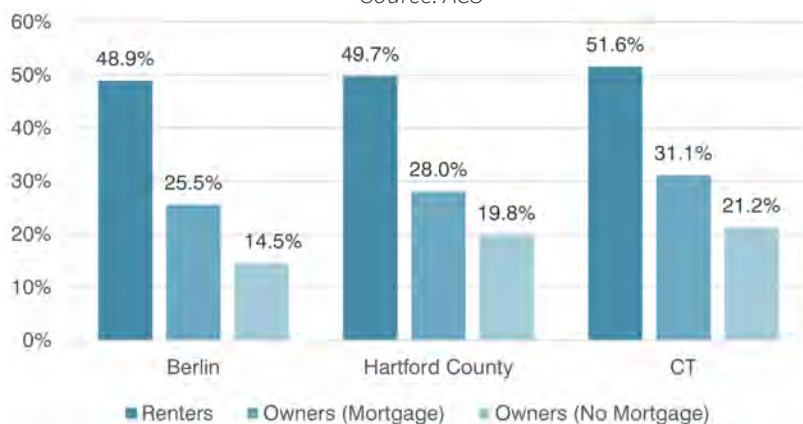
**Housing Type (2021)**

Source: ACS



**Share of Households with Housing Costs of 30% or more of Household Income (2019)**

Source: ACS



Between 2013 and 2021, residential construction permit activity in Berlin was low relative to the three decades prior to 2000. Permit activity fluctuated from year to year, but had not exceeded 38 permits since between 2013 and 2021. More recently, the Town has approved over 500 multi-family housing units that would more than double the number of purpose built multi-family rental housing in the Town. Recent permits for multi-family housing projects, including for the 88-unit Deming Ridge mixed income rental project, have reversed the trend of declining housing permits.

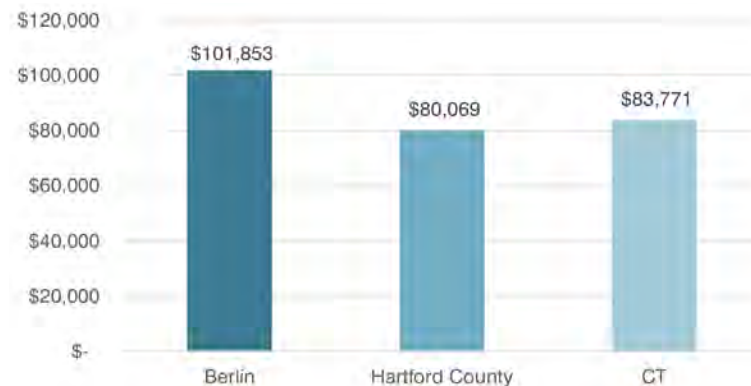
**Berlin Housing Permits (2012-2021)** Source: CT DECD



## Income

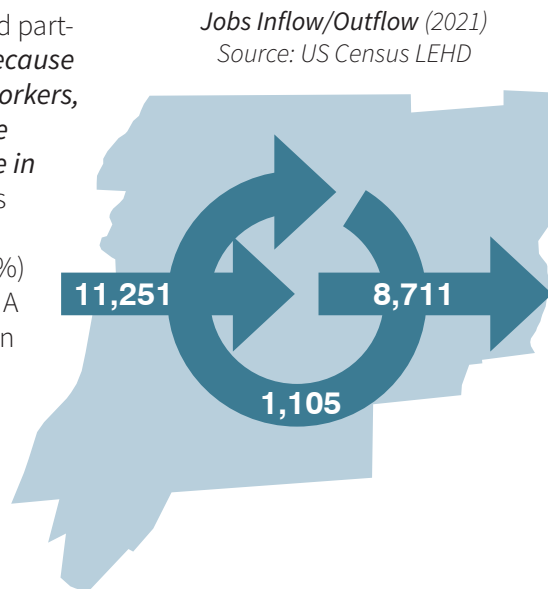
In comparison to both the State and County, Berlin has a high median household income. Over the 2017-2021 census period, Berlin had a median household income of \$101,853 versus \$80,069 in Hartford County and \$83,771 in Connecticut.

**Median Household Income (2021)** Source: ACS



## Employment

Berlin has a total of 12,356 full and part-time jobs located in the Town. **Because multiple jobs are held by some workers, these figures do not represent the number of workers that commute in and out of Berlin.** Most of the jobs (11,251) are held by workers who commute to Berlin while 1,105 (9%) jobs are held by Town residents. A total of 8,711 jobs outside of Berlin are held by Town residents who commute to other communities for work; with Hartford being the most common destination, followed by New Britain, Newington, Farmington, and Middletown. While most of the



Town's residents work in nearby cities and towns, many residents also commute as far as New Haven, Bridgeport, New York City, Danbury, and Springfield, MA for work. Additionally, Berlin is the second most common work destination of workers that reside in Town. The recent shift towards work-from-home practices established during the COVID-19 period may have a permanent positive impact on the number of jobs held in Berlin.

## Fiscal Trends

The Town's grand list has been relatively stable since the 2011-2012 fiscal year, ranging from \$2.23 billion in that fiscal year to \$2.43 billion in the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Properties that hold the greatest grand list value include Rocky River Realty Co., Corbin Russwin Inc., Cedar Brickyard, B&F Machine Inc, and Tomz Corporation which together comprise \$286.3 million (12.3%) of the Town's grand list.

The Town's budget rose consistently between the 2010-2011 fiscal year and the 2017-2018 fiscal year before dropping in the 2018-2019 fiscal year and then resuming the trend of increase thereafter. The Town's 2010-11 budget was \$69.3 million; this grew to \$94 million in the 2021-2022 fiscal year, a 35.6% increase over that period. The rate of inflation over the same period was 24.3%. When corrected for inflation, the Town's 2021-2022 budget was comparable to that of the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

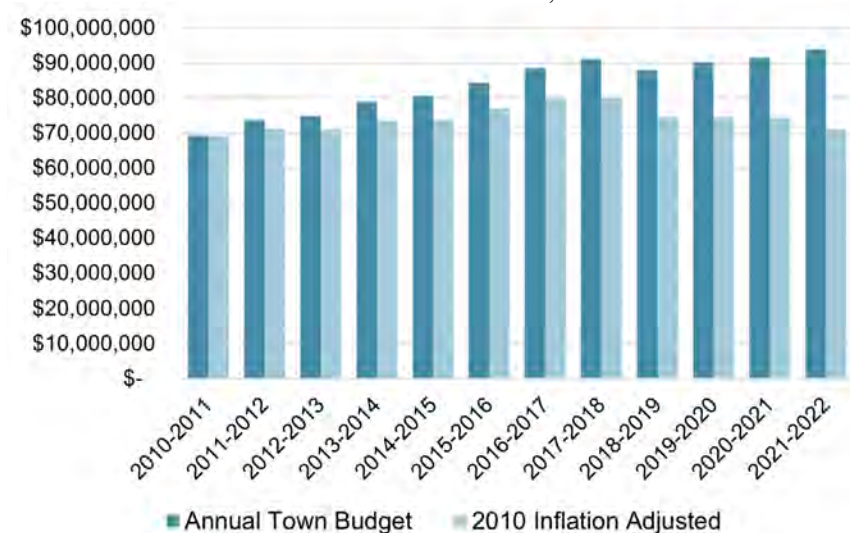
## Grand List (2011-2021)

Source: CT Data Collaborative, Town of Berlin



## Town Budget (2010-2021)

Source: CT Data Collaborative, Town of Berlin



## Plan Priorities

The primary issue that Berlin faces is how to manage growth in response to housing demand and population growth while maintaining its identity as a town with agrarian roots. Consistent with State and regional trends, housing demand, an increase in housing construction, and a slowdown in housing development since 2010 have driven up housing cost in Berlin making the community less affordable and placing development pressure on open space.

Berlin's population has grown steadily over the last fifty years but that growth has slowed since 2010. As household sizes become increasingly smaller in Berlin and across the State, the Town's housing supply will support a smaller population. Berlin's housing stock, being comprised primarily of single-family detached homes may not meet the future demand for housing which is likely to be in the form of lower cost attached housing and rental housing located in a multi-unit building or development. Recent housing project approvals and permitting has been in the form of apartment units that are far less likely to contribute to school enrollment than single-family development. Given declining school enrollments, the development of new housing in Berlin is not expected to overburden Berlin's school system.

As Berlin makes the investments necessary to maintain and improve facilities and services, it will be challenged to control costs and manage property tax rates. An escalation in the Town's property tax rate may have the counterproductive effect of making Berlin less attractive to new residents and businesses. The Town should continue to play an active role in supporting economic development as a means of maintaining its diversified tax base and reducing its reliance on residential property taxes. The Town should also remain proactive in acquiring state and federal funding via grant programs and manage the growth of operating costs without adversely impacting services and while improving facilities.

Berlin's commercial and industrial tax base continues to evolve. The Town has hundreds of acres of undeveloped or underdeveloped land located in commercial and industrial districts. While there are development constraints including significant amounts of wetlands and floodplains and the lack of infrastructure at some properties, the Town should continue to fully support appropriate economic development.





The protection of Berlin's environmental resources is also fundamental

concern for the Town as these resources are central to the identity of the community. Berlin benefits from rich and diverse environmental resources; future economic or residential development should be located, designed, and constructed so as to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. Berlin's farms and historic properties should also be preserved as they are crucial to the Town's identity. Farms should be recognized as important economic contributors to the Town and the Town's regulations should fully support their operations and growth.

The Town's policies and practices should continue to evolve in response to changing conditions such as changes in housing preference, infrastructure needs, and an evolving economic landscape.

## Priority Themes

This Plan's recommended strategies and actions are directly aimed at supporting the vision and goals identified in this Plan. Among these goals, strategies and actions are common themes that emerged through the planning process. These include the following:

- 
***Grow Economic Base***  
 Berlin's economy is changing and the Town should work towards encouraging and supporting a diverse economy that draws upon Berlin's strengths including access to state highways, available commercial and industrial land, and a strong business environment.
- 
***Expand Housing Choice***  
 Berlin needs to expand its housing choice with respect to housing type and housing cost to ensure that housing remains affordable and accessible to its residents, particularly young adults, young families, and older residents.
- 
***Protect Environmental and Cultural Resources***  
 Berlin should continue to protect its environmental and cultural resources to ensure the health of its ecosystems and that its rural and agrarian character is retained.
- 
***Invest in Infrastructure***  
 Berlin should continue to make the necessary investments in its transportation infrastructure and sewer and water infrastructure to ensure that its infrastructure continues to meet the needs of residents while also accommodating strategic growth.





# 2.0 Environmental Resources



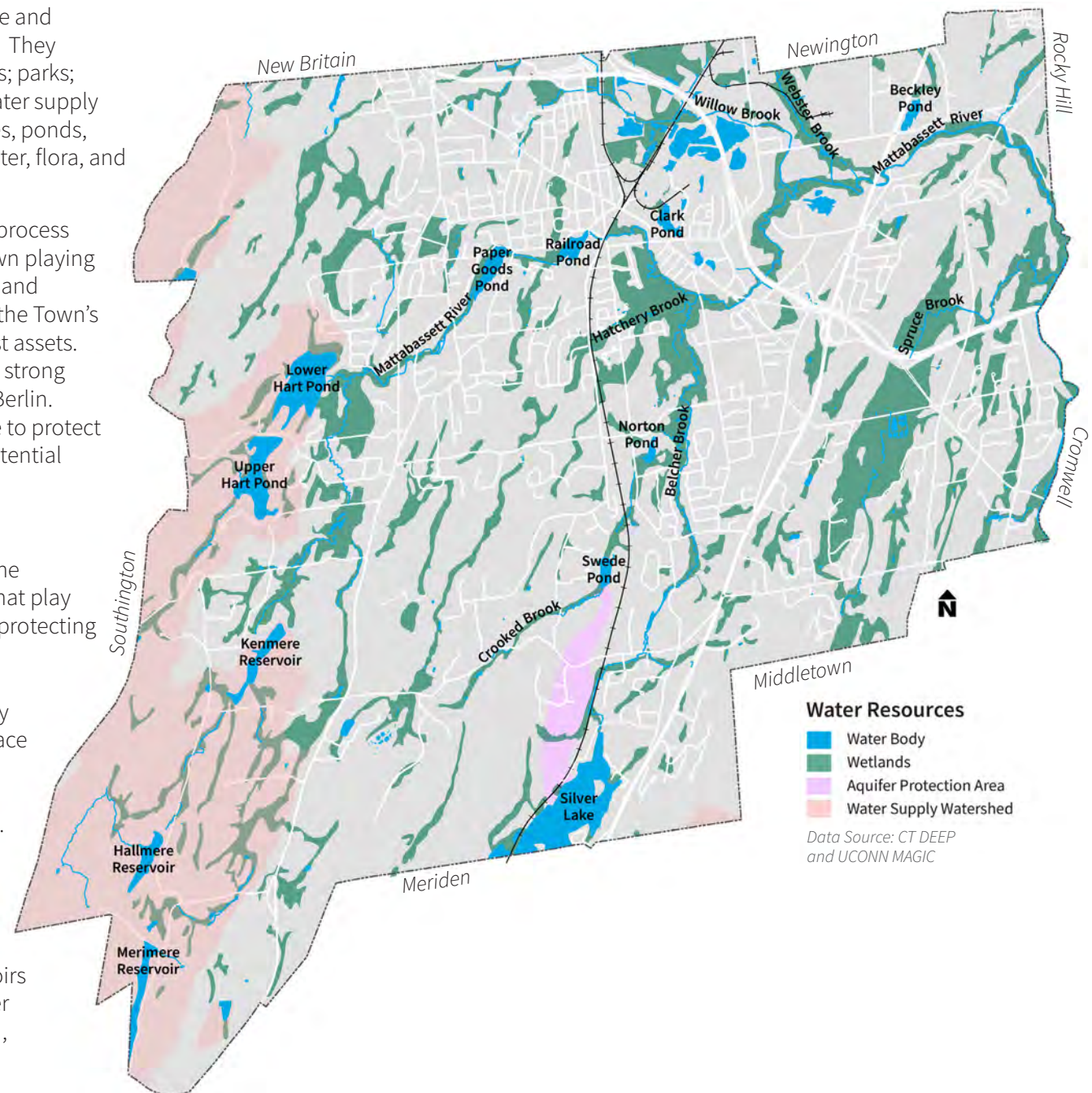
Berlin's environmental resources are diverse and strongly contribute to the Town's identity. They include ridgelines; forests; farms and pastures; parks; water resources such as a surficial aquifer, water supply watershed areas, rivers, streams, brooks, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and riparian areas; and the soil, water, flora, and fauna that comprise and inhabit these areas.

Through the Plan's community engagement process residents expressed strong interest in the Town playing an active role in protecting natural resources and preserving open space. Residents identified the Town's environmental resources as one of its greatest assets. Berlin's landscape and rural environment are strong factors in many residents' decision to live in Berlin. Residents feel that the Town should continue to protect these resources, particularly in light of the potential redevelopment of large sites across Town.

### Water Resources

Protecting Berlin's water resources requires the preservation of forest and wetland habitats that play critical roles in recharging local aquifers and protecting water quality. Development, particularly in the form of impervious surface, challenges this ecological system and should be carefully considered with respect to its impact on surface and groundwaters. Similarly, agriculture requires environmentally responsible and sustainable practices to protect water quality.

Berlin's major rivers and brooks include the Mattabessett River, Belcher Brook, Crooked Brook, Hatchery Brook, Spruce Brook, Webster Brook, and Willow Brook. Berlin is also home to many lakes, ponds, and reservoirs including Silver Lake, Upper Hart Pond, Lower Hart Pond, Paper Goods Pond, Railroad Pond, Hallmere Reservoir, Merimere Reservoir, Kenmere Reservoir and many small ponds.



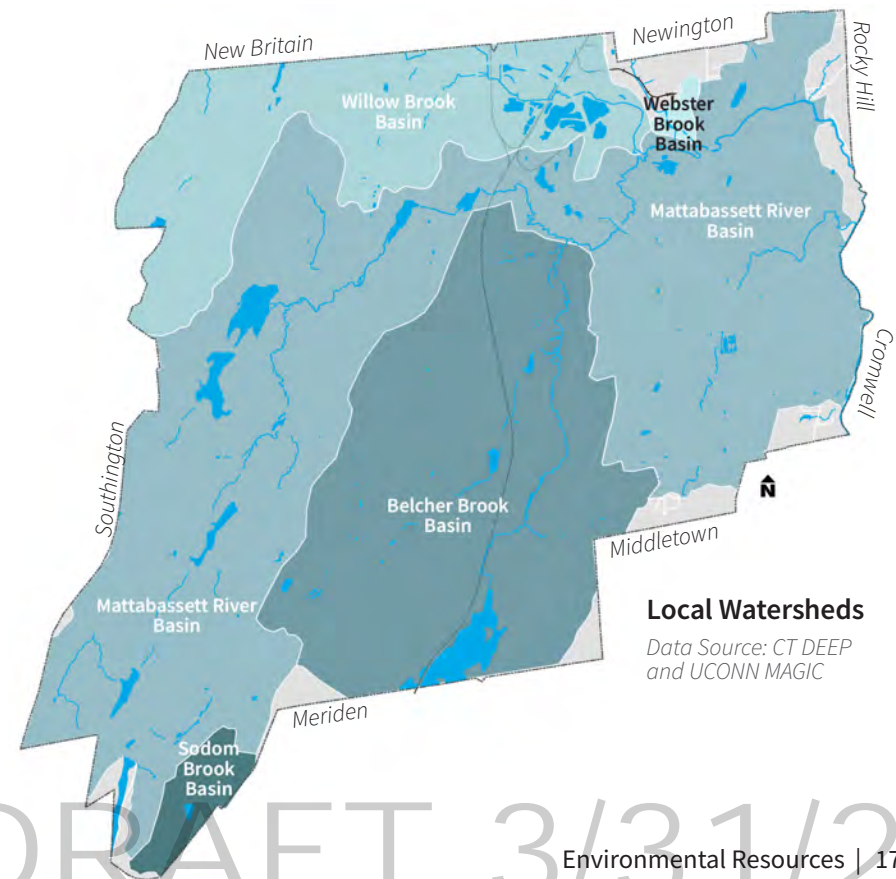
Water quality of the Town's water resources varies. Water quality assessments recorded in the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environment's (DEEP) 2020 Integrated Water Quality Report rate many of the Town's waterbodies as not supporting aquatic life or recreation. The exception to these findings was that a segment of the Crooked Brook was found to be fully supporting aquatic life and Silver Lake was found to be fully supportive of recreation. In addition to these assessments, DEEP also classifies waterbodies based upon a water classification system. Of the water bodies assessed, all but a segment of the Mattabessett River were assessed the highest rating (A or AA). While the water in a waterbody may be rated high, the water body itself may still be classified as not supporting aquatic life or recreation due to other factors such as the presence of invasive species, pH levels, and water temperature. In addition to these classifications, DEEP identifies both Silver Lake and the Mattabessett River as "Impaired Waters". Silver Lake's suitability for habitat is impaired due to turbidity and nutrient loading and the Mattabessett River is impaired for both habitat and recreation with the recreational impairment caused by bacteria levels.

Water Quality Assessments (2020 Integrated Water Quality Report)			CT DEEP Water Quality Classification
Waterbody	Aquatic Life	Recreation	
Belcher Brook	Not Supporting	Not Supporting	A
Crooked Brook	Not Supporting / Fully Supporting	Not Assessed	Not Assessed
Hatchery Brook	Not Supporting	Not Assessed	Not Assessed
Mattabessett River	Not Supporting/ Insufficient Information	Not Supporting/ Insufficient Information	A/B
Spruce Brook	Insufficient Information	Not Supporting	Not Assessed
Webster Brook	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	A
Willow Brook	Not Supporting/ Insufficient Information	Not Supporting/ Not Assessed	A
Lower Harts Pond	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	AA
Kenmere Reservoir	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	AA
Merimere Reservoir	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	AA
Paper Goods Pond	Not Assessed	Not Assessed	A
Silver Lake	Not Supporting	Fully Supporting	A

*Water Quality in Berlin Source: DEEP*

Berlin has five subregional watershed basins that contribute to the larger Mattabessett River Watershed, a 45,000-acre watershed that is drained by the Mattabessett River. These include the Belcher Brook, Mattabessett River, Sodom Brook, Webster Brook, and Willow Brook Basins. Berlin's basins generally drain north and east towards the Mattabessett River until reaching the Rocky Hill and Cromwell town lines where the Mattabessett River turns south before entering Cromwell on its way to the Connecticut River.

The most recent watershed plan for the Mattabessett River Watershed was conducted in 2000; this was preceded by a water quality and stream health study. Both the plan and the study identify water quality impairments to the Mattabessett and its tributaries and recommend mitigation measures for protecting and improving water quality. These recommendations are primarily directed towards reducing and controlling non-point sources of pollution such as runoff from pavement and lawn fertilizer.





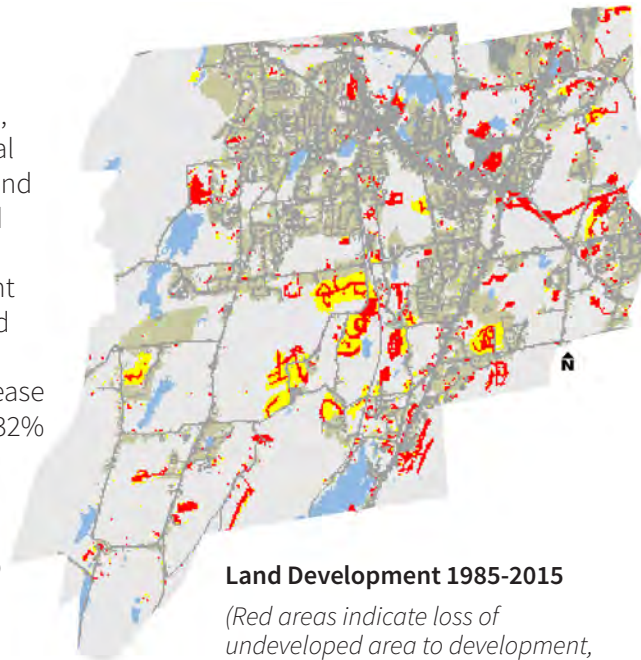
## Land Cover

According to data from UCONN's Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR), the greatest land cover in Berlin is forest areas, which comprise 40% of the Town's land cover. This is followed by developed areas including buildings and pavement, which comprise 25.8% of Berlin's land cover. Including turf and grass areas, 40.9% of the Town's land area has been experienced some form of development. Agricultural land covers 7% of Berlin's area.

Most of Berlin's forest area is deciduous forest with a small amount of area that is coniferous or wetland forest. Berlin's forest areas play a significant role in providing habitat, moderating surface water temperatures, and reducing stormwater runoff. The Town's forest cover has changed and is likely to continue to change in composition over the next decade due to threats posed by invasive species and pests such as emerald ash borer and woolly adelgid, and by rising average temperatures.

## Landscape Change

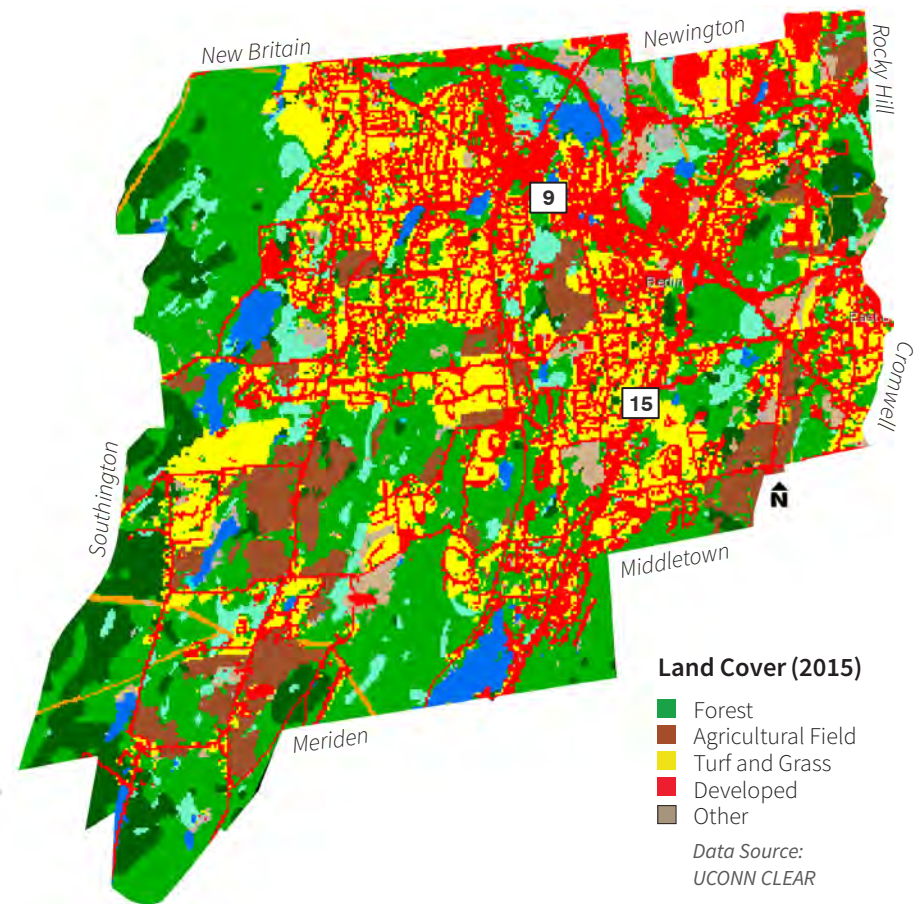
In the thirty-year period between 1985 and 2015, 1,196 acres (6.9% of total area) of undeveloped land in Berlin was developed or converted to turf and grass. This development occurred in forested and agricultural field areas resulting in an 8% decrease in forested areas and a 32% decrease in agricultural fields. By comparison, Connecticut lost 6% of its forest cover and 16% of its agricultural fields over the same period. Development between 1985 and 2015 was spread evenly across the Town (as shown in the map at right).



### Land Development 1985-2015

*(Red areas indicate loss of undeveloped area to development, yellow areas indicate loss of undeveloped area to lawns)*

*Source: UCONN CLEAR*



### Land Cover (2015)

- Forest
- Agricultural Field
- Turf and Grass
- Developed
- Other

*Data Source:  
UCONN CLEAR*

Land Cover (2015)	Acres	Share
Forest	7,942	45.8%
Agricultural Field	1,219	7.0%
Turf & Grass	2,591	14.9%
Developed	4,479	25.8%
Other	716	6.5%

## Farmland Soils

Agricultural soils, including those that are on properties that have already been developed, cover 42% of Berlin's geographic area. Of Berlin's 7,225 acres of farmland soils, 3,179 are classified as "prime farmland soil" and 4,046 acres are classified as "statewide important farmland soils". Those farmland soils are primarily associated with the Town's brook and river valleys and adjoining floodplains.

Prime farmland soils are soils that have the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for agricultural and forestry uses. These lands have soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields or crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to acceptable farming practices. Because the supply of high-quality farmland is limited, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages local governments to protect this land for agricultural use. Prime farmland soils are potentially eligible for conservation easement funds administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service of the USDA.

Statewide important farmland soils are soils that fail to meet one or more of the requirements of prime farmland, but are important for the production of food, feed, fiber, or forage crops. They include those soils that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

## Habitat

Berlin has a diversity of habitats associated with its forests, wetlands, and surface waters. The Town's habitats are critical to supporting biodiversity and greater biodiversity is correlated with more positive ecological health.

The Town has several critical habitat areas designated by DEEP. Those areas are primarily associated with the Mattabessett River however there are small areas scattered in other parts of Berlin. Critical habitat areas indicate the distribution of twenty-five rare and specialized wildlife habitat types in the State.

Berlin also has several areas that are designated as Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) areas. Those areas represent approximate locations of endangered, threatened and special concern species and significant natural communities in Connecticut. The Town's NDDDB areas are clustered in the northeastern corner of Town, along the town boundary with Meriden and Middletown, and along the Mattabessett River.

### Farmland Soils

- Prime Farmland Soils
- Statewide Important Farmland Soils

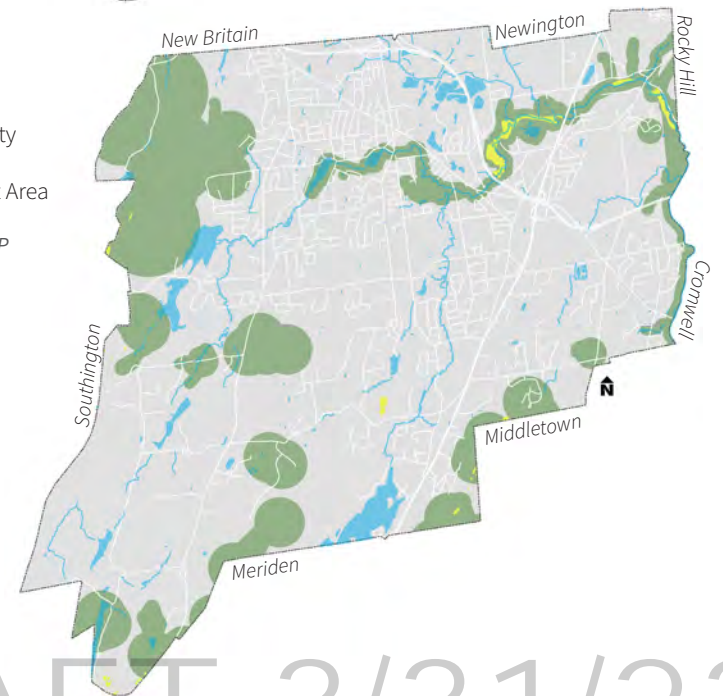
Data Source: CT DEEP and UCONN MAGIC



### Habitat

- Natural Diversity Database Area
- Critical Habitat Area

Data Source: CT DEEP and UCONN MAGIC



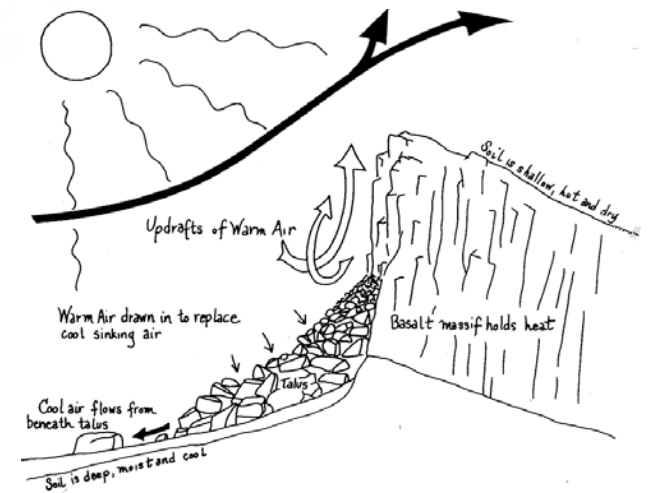
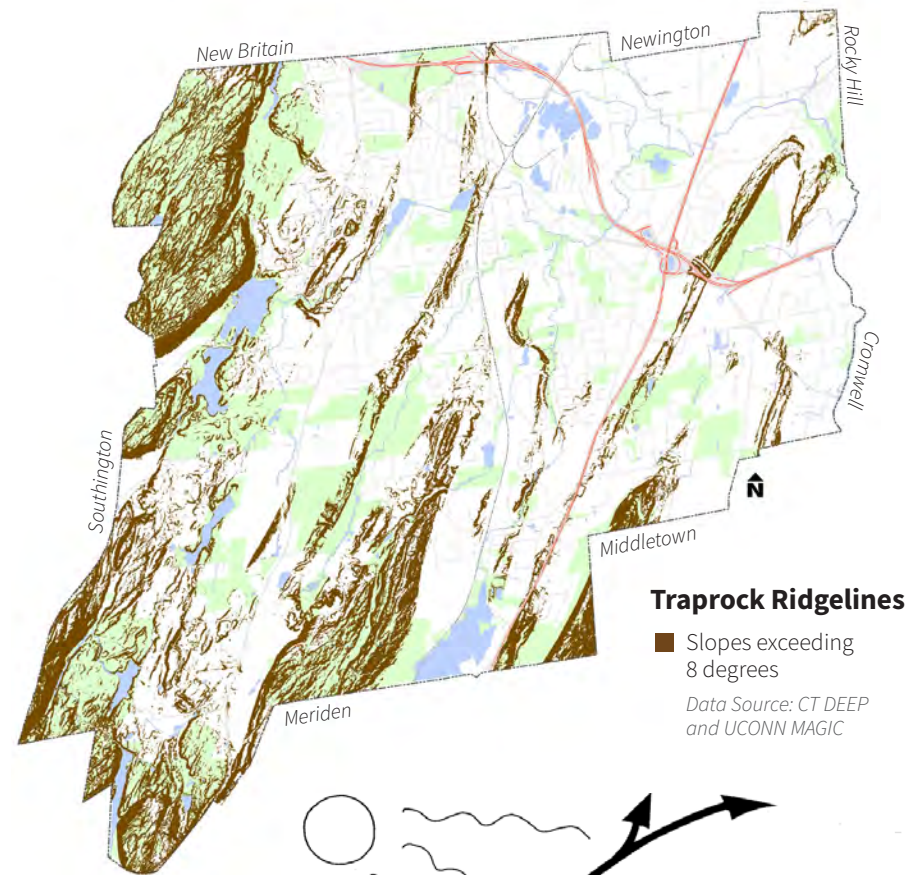


## Traprock Ridges

Berlin's ridgelines are oriented north/south and are heavily concentrated in the western and southern areas of Town. These ridgeline areas provide habitat for a wide range of species. The trap rock ridges act as refuges and corridors, allowing for the presence and movement of wildlife through surrounding developed areas. Berlin's ridges are a component of the larger Central Connecticut traprock ridge system.

The Central Connecticut's traprock ridge system is a nearly continuous greenbelt bordering the Central Valley of Connecticut from Massachusetts to Long Island Sound. The ridges that extend up the Central Valley form a nearly continuous belt of undisturbed upland forest. The volcanic soil on traprock ridges is fine-textured and less acid and richer in minerals, like calcium, magnesium, and potassium than soil derived from other bedrock. The steep slopes have thin soil, rocky outcrops, talus, and boulder fields. These specialized ecological conditions differ than those found in lowland forests and are associated with a unique habitat of plants and animals.

The diversity of habitat types found on the ridges provides specialized conditions for a wide variety of insects, birds, reptiles, and amphibians with limited distribution in the region. Warm talus slopes are ideal for species such as the Northern Copperhead snake and Peregrine Falcon. Vernal pools on the dip slopes and the summits provide critical breeding sites for a variety of mole salamanders, including rare species. Some of the animals found on the ridges are closely tied to the rocky habitat and its plant communities. Many animals that were common in the region before settlement have since retreated. Some have disappeared as agriculture and urban development has disrupted habitats. Although some animals such as the Lynx are no longer present, the ridges provide refuge for those that remain.



Function of Traprock Ridges Source: Cara Lee, 1985

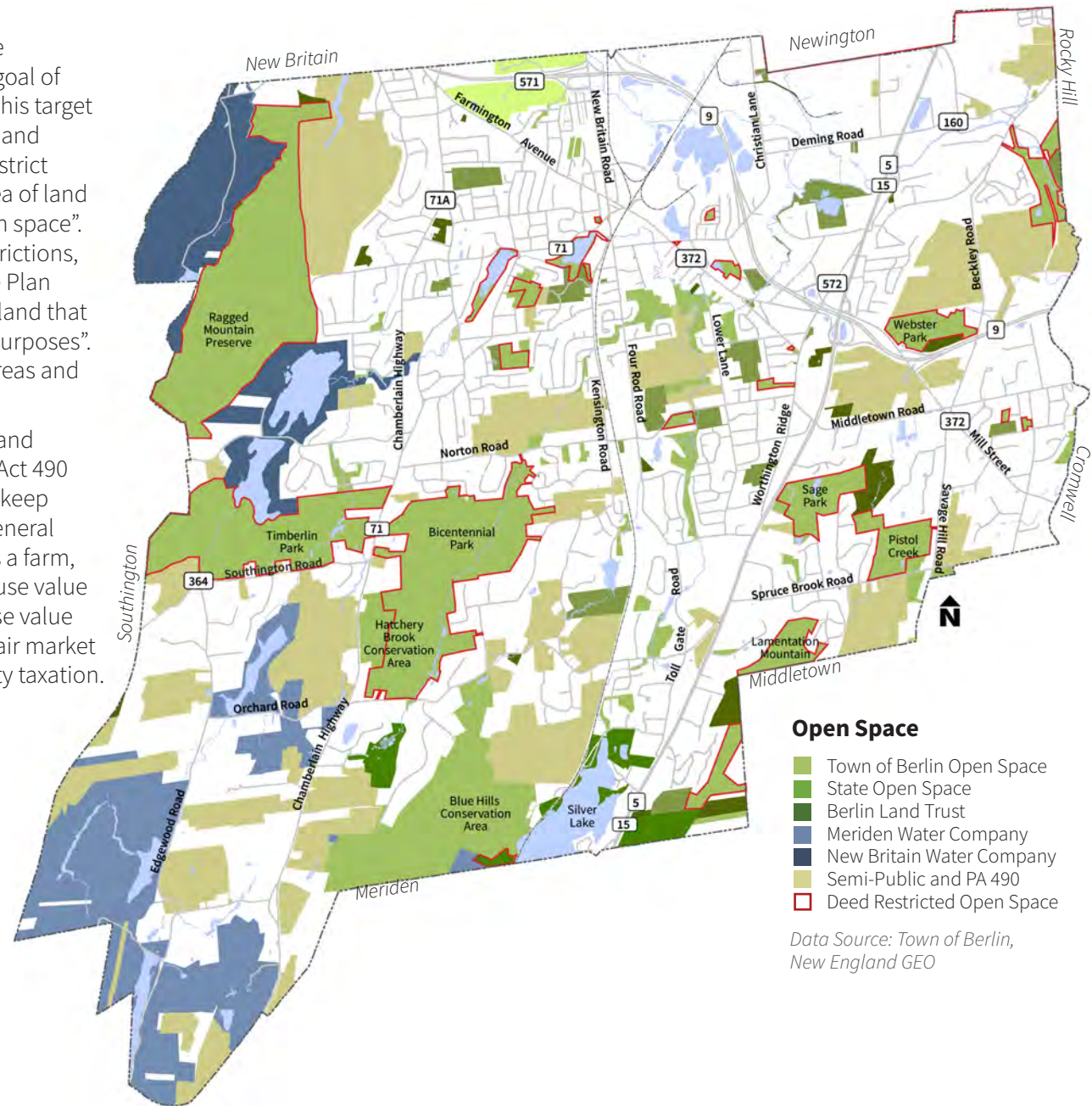


## Open Space Inventory

Connecticut's 2016 Comprehensive Open Space Acquisition Strategy (Green Plan) establishes a goal of 21% protected open space statewide by 2023. This target is intended to be met through State, municipal, and private acquisitions. The Green Plan provides a strict definition of "protected" open space as "any area of land with a restriction that would limit its use to open space". This includes lands subject to conservation restrictions, deed restrictions, or certain reserved rights. The Plan defines "preserved open space" as "any area of land that has been acquired and is used for open space purposes". This includes State parks, forests, and wildlife areas and Class I and II watershed lands.

In addition to the open space described above and shown on the map at right, Connecticut Public Act 490 (PA 490) is utilized by many landowners to help keep their land undeveloped. PA 490 (Connecticut General Statutes Sections 12-107a through 107-f) allows a farm, forest, or open space land to be assessed at its use value rather than its fair market or highest and best use value (as determined by the property's most recent "fair market value" revaluation) for purposes of local property taxation.

The intent of this designation is to encourage the preservation of farmland, forestland and open space land that might otherwise be developed because of the property tax burden placed upon those lands. PA 490 lands help add to the rural character and preserve the agricultural history of Berlin and by keeping (at least temporarily) the land from being developed; also with PA 490 land additional Town services are not required which helps to keep taxes in check. It is important to note that PA 490 land is not permanently protected and is generally not open for use by the public.



Based upon the Green Plan's definition, CTDEEP's 2010 mapping, and open space mapping provided by the Town's mapping contractor (NE GEO), Berlin has 5,575 acres of open space, which covers 32.3% of the Town's total area. *This does not include privately owned PA 490 land and not all of this land meets the criteria of protected open space.*

Protected or preserved open space in Berlin includes water company lands held by New Britain and Meriden, Town parks and land held as open space, State of Connecticut park land, land trust properties, and park land owned by the City of New Britain. Semi-public open space lands, of which Berlin has 445 acres, include properties such as private golf courses which have the lowest level of protection. Overall, the Town holds the greatest share of open space in Berlin (2,906 acres).

Open Space in Berlin	Acres	Share
Town of Berlin	2,906	52%
Town of New Britain	115	2%
State of Connecticut	266	5%
Semi-Public	445	8%
Land Trust	129	2%
Water Company	1,715	31%
Total	5,575	



Chotkowski Conservation Area

## Open Space and Conservation Successes

Since completion of the 2013 POCD, the Town has actively worked to protect open space and expand conservation as recommended by the plan. The following open space and conservation improvements and investments have been accomplished since the 2013 POCD:

### Policies

- New farming provisions were added to the Zoning Regulations expanding farm related uses.
- Created and updated open space story maps on Town website. Created open space trail maps in Avenza App.

### Studies

- Endangered species studies conducted at Short Mountain and Hatchery Brook
- Study completed for waters supply and open space multi-purpose use of Woodlawn Water Department parcel. The concept was approved by the Connecticut Department of Public Health.
- Concepts for Kensington Center TOD open space connections were done and a follow-up study is currently being conducted.

### Acquisitions and Sales

- Chotkowski properties including completion of soil management and restoration efforts
- Beckley Road parcel contiguous to Webster Park was acquired by the Berlin Land Trust (BLT) with Town assistance.
- The BLT acquired a Lamentation Mountain parcel on NET Trail (not in Berlin)
- Conveyed tax sale parcels to the BLT, along streams and at the rear of Ferndale Plaza

### Trail Improvements

- Completion of Metacomet Loop Trail
- Relocation of Metacomet Trail at Meriden line
- Completion of trail system in Bicentennial/Hatchery Brook area
- Completion of Tree Trail at Bicentennial Park
- Multiple trail improvements with assistance from the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association (CFPA)
- Repaving of some Pistol Creek Trails and the creation of a handicap accessible trail section
- Extension of Bicentennial Trails to Norton Road, including the completion of an Eagle Scout bridge



### **Cleanup**

- Removal of tires from the pond at the end of Cross Creek.

### **Other Improvements**

- Community Garden improvements
- CCSU students-built bridges at Sage Park and Timberlin Park.
- Bridges constructed or replaced at Bicentennial, Ragged, and Hatchery Brook.
- New bridge completed at rear of Town Hall to connect to Percival Field. Pathway improvements under consideration.
- Fishway was constructed at Railroad Pond
- Sidewalks on Norton Rd. were extended to connect to Bicentennial Park
- Parking was added at the Kensington Orchards & Chotkowski properties and handicap accessible parking at Pistol Creek
- Open space signage improvements

### **Open Space Conservation and Protection**

This Plan recommends the conservation and/or protection of additional open space in Berlin. Conserved or protected land is intended to preserve water quality for current and future residents, protect Berlin and surrounding towns from flooding and erosion, protect ecosystems, create opportunities for a wide range of recreational uses and preserve Berlin's character as a largely rural community with agrarian roots. While commercial and residential development will continue, open space planning should strive to balance the need for development with protection of environmental resources.

Properties considered for conservation or protection should be prioritized based upon proximity or contiguity to other open space, which can enhance the value of both spaces. Parcels, even if they are small, that connect spaces and create wildlife corridors can be particularly important. Additionally, prospective properties should be evaluated based on long-term strategic planning interests such as creating a greenway corridor or expanding a Town park.

Open space has a range of functions and values. The following important open space attributes should be considered in identifying priority lands for conservation or protection.

1. Lands that serve to protect high-quality natural waters and drinking water resources – The CT Green Plan gives priority to these acquisitions.

Clean water, including in rivers, lakes, and inland wetlands, are essential to life and provide some of the richest wildlife habitat in the State. Land conservation is an important part of watershed management for protecting habitat and water quality against impacts by fragmentation, climate change, runoff pollution, and other threats.

2. Recreation opportunities – Natural lands are a valuable recreational resource for activities such as hiking, bicycling, and bird watching. Open space that provides recreational opportunities improves quality of life for residents and visitors and also enhances property values.
3. Ecosystem and habitat preservation – Open space lands provide habitat for plant, insect, and animal species essential to local ecosystems. Many plants, insects, and animals are threatened by loss of habitat due to development. Strong consideration should be made for the preservation of habitat for native plant or animal species listed as threatened, endangered or of special concern and/or a relatively undisturbed outstanding example of a native ecological community.
4. Preservation of historical or agricultural heritage or preservation of natural landscape features – There are specific open space sites in the Town with historical or other cultural importance that merit their retention as open space. While the most important function of agricultural land is food production, it also contributes greatly to the visual qualities of the community.



## Greenways and Trails

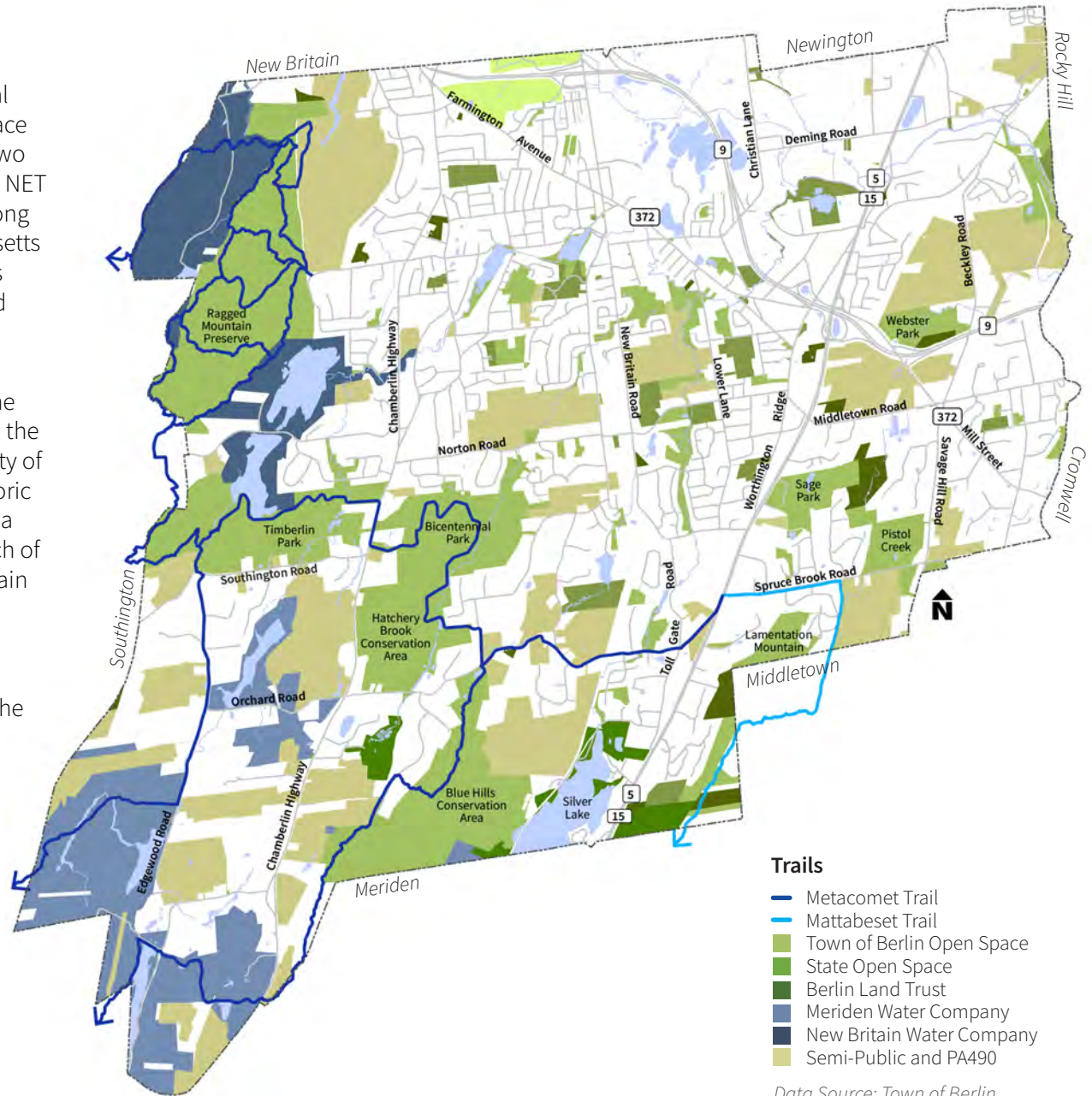
Berlin is home to both the New England National Scenic Trail (NET) that includes segments of Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails as well as several smaller local trail systems in its parks and open space areas. The Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails are two of many blue-blazed trails across Connecticut. The NET is a nationally designated trail that extends from Long Island Sound, through Connecticut and Massachusetts to the New Hampshire border. It was designated as a national scenic trail in 2009 and is also comprised of the Menunkatuck, Mattabesett, Metacomet, and Metacomet-Monadnock Trails.

The Metacomet Trail is 62 miles long and follows the traprock ridge from the Hanging Hills of Meriden to the Massachusetts border. The trail covers a wide variety of terrain and provides expansive views, features historic landmarks, and provides opportunities to observe a variety of wildlife. Within Berlin, the trail spans much of the west side of the Town including Ragged Mountain and it crosses southern areas of the Town where it meets the Mattabesett Trail.

The Mattabesett Trail travels 65 miles with its northwestern origins at Lamentation Mountain at the



Trail at the Chotkowski Conservation Area





Berlin and Meriden lines. The trail extends south to Guilford before reversing course and traveling northeast to meet the Connecticut River in Middletown.

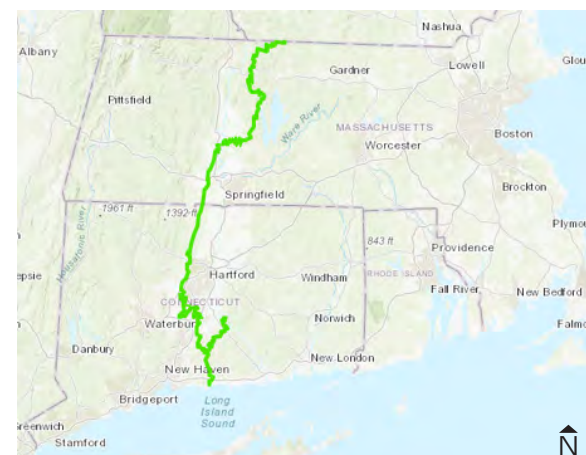
The eastern sections of the Mattabesett Trail contain high ledges and bald knobs with views of the Connecticut River. The trail's terrain includes tumbled ledges, frequent brooks, shallow bogs, vernal pools, and hardwood forests. The western sections offer ridge walking and cliff views while traversing the southern end of Connecticut's traprock ridges.

Berlin is also surrounded by regional greenway and pathway systems. These include the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (Canal Trail) to the west of Berlin. The Canal Trail extends from New Haven to the Massachusetts line where it connects with the Columbia Greenway Trail and it is almost entirely off-road with much of the trail occupying former rail beds or canal tow paths. The Airline Trail is east of Berlin and begins in Portland from where it extends east to Thompson, Connecticut. A much shorter pathway is the CTfastrak pathway north of Berlin, which is a paved pathway that travels alongside the CTfastrak busway from New Britain to Newington Junction.

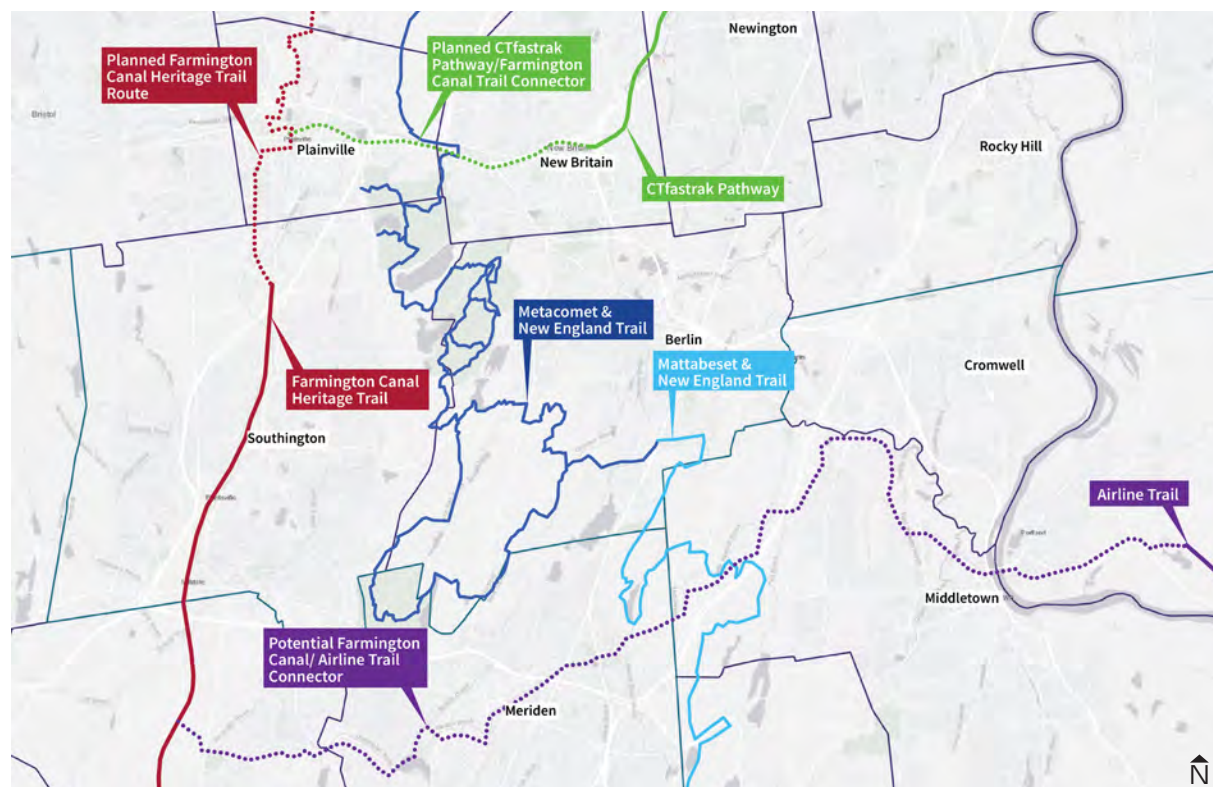
While these pathways and greenways currently lack interconnections, multiple connections are being planned or considered. The GAP Closer Trail Study conducted by CRCOG in 2018 identified a preferred route for the Canal Trail through Plainville, where a gap currently exists. The GAP Study also explored options for connecting the Canal Trail across Plainville to the CTfastrak pathway. Both of these connections are under design and funding has been secured

or is anticipated for constructing segments of the planned connections.

In addition to these projects, a connection between the Canal Trail and the Airline Trail is being considered. Route planning for this potential connection is expected to begin in 2023. If constructed, the trail route would likely extend from Cheshire to Portland crossing Meriden and Middletown along the way. That connection would likely pass south of Berlin within a mile or two of the town line. Berlin and Middletown have started planning for improvements to the Pistol Creek/Lamentation Mountain area that would also provide a connection to the multi-use trail south of Pistol Creek along Atkins Street in Middletown.



*New England Trail* Source: New England Trail



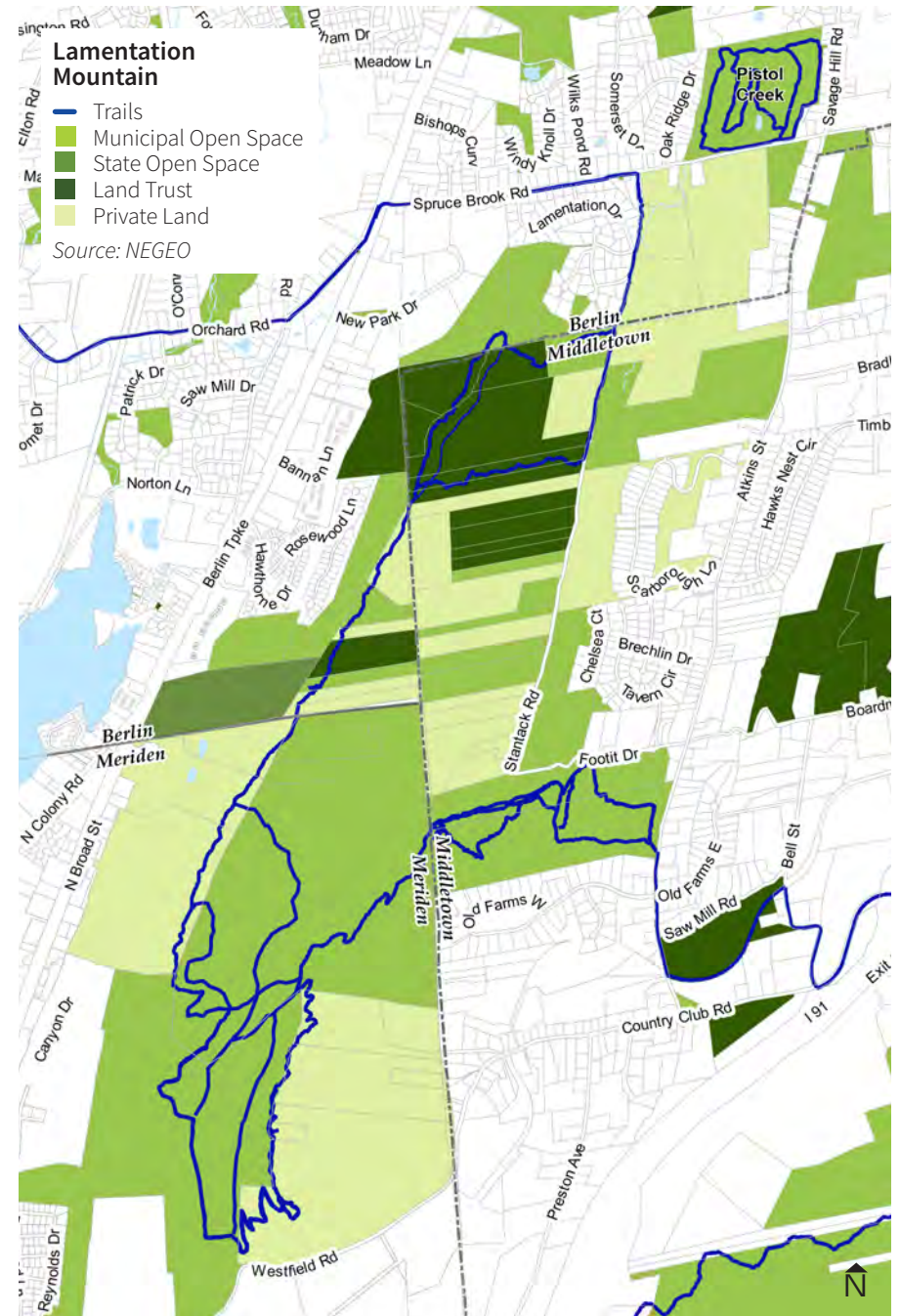
*Regional Trails* Source: CT DEEP, CFPA, GAP Closure Study, RiverCOG

## Open Space Connectivity

Berlin has a wealth environmental, open space, and trail resources, but many of those resources are not connected by contiguous protected open space. Contiguous open space is needed by wildlife, particularly larger mammals, for foraging and hunting. Contiguous open space is also valuable for pollinating species such as bees and butterflies. The provision of trails as a component of contiguous open space also provides residents and visitors with an opportunity to visit a wide array of landscapes through hiking.

Berlin's open space areas are clustered along the Town's western hills at and south of Ragged Mountain. There is also a cluster of open space at Lamentation Mountain that extends into Meriden and Middletown. Adjacent to that area is the Pistol Creek open space area. While this is a large area of contiguous open space, the property ownership is diversified with much of the property being privately owned (as shown on the map at right) and is susceptible to development.

The Lamentation Mountain area is traversed by the Mattabesett Trail but the trail does not connect to trails at Pistol Creek. Middletown and Berlin have developed a plan to better connect Pistol Creek and Lamentation Mountain by making on new trail through City of Middletown open space property on the west side of Atkins Street and by improving the Stantack Road right of way and have applied for a grant to implement to this plan. The acquisition and protection of private parcels in the Lamentation Mountain area has the potential to enhance this open space corridor. Coordination with Meriden and Middletown is needed to ensure that this area is permanently protected and that access to existing trails, expansion of the trail network, and connection to the future multi-use trail are achieved.



### Environmental Resources Goal

Continue to protect the Town's environmental resources and better connect open space resources through the strategic acquisition and protection of open space.

#### Strategy 1

Ensure that the Town's zoning regulations direct development towards areas that can support development without adversely impacting the Town's environmental resources.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Maintain the Town's low density residential zoning districts as a means of limiting development in environmentally sensitive areas.
2. Review the Town's land use regulations including zoning regulations, floodplain regulations, subdivisions regulations, and inland wetland regulations, to streamline those regulations and ensure that the regulations adequately protect environmental resources and encourage sustainable development. Amend the regulations as necessary, and expand protections as needed, in favor of environmental protection that is fully supportive of the goals of this plan.

#### Strategy 2

Prioritize the protection and acquisition of open space and improve linkages between existing open space properties.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Consider funding opportunities, through grants, donations of open space, and capital budgeting for the strategic acquisition of open space for the purposes of conservation.
2. Partner with outside organizations such as land trusts to expand the supply of protected open space in Berlin.
3. Update inventory of potential open space linkages that could be provided through the acquisition of land and/or development of greenway networks on public and private properties.
4. Consider funding strategies for improving and maintaining Town-owned conservation properties including the hiring of more public grounds staff.
5. Maintain a Town fund or bonding authorization to strategically acquire open space or development rights as those opportunities become available.
6. Prioritize the linkage of existing protected open space properties and foster improved intertown connections such as at Lamentation Mountain (Middletown, Meriden), Ragged Mountain (New Britain, Southington,) and Short Mountain (Southington).
7. Review open space areas that do not have conservation easements and recommend additional protection for all or parts of these properties, as required.
8. Pursue State grants for the acquisition of open space.



**Strategy 3**

Adopt and implement low impact policies and practices.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Review and amend the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that the regulations encourage or require Low Impact Development (LID) practices in new developments.
2. Work towards the adoption of sustainable practices at Town parks and facilities such as capturing rainwater for irrigation use, encouraging use of pervious pavement, reducing water usage, use of integrated pest management on athletic fields, improving recycling, and reducing solid waste.

**Strategy 4**

Continue the oversight and protection of environmentally sensitive areas.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Continue to adequately staff departments and commissions with land use functions and provide sufficient resources to carry out their duties. Assign a Town staff member as point person for open space and environmental issues and ensure that staff have the resources necessary to carry out their duties.
2. Continue to attempt to manage invasive species problems in Town-owned waterbodies.
3. Work with property owners to encourage the permanent protection of sensitive portions of their properties such as riparian buffers and forest areas with voluntary conservation easements. Consider the use of tax incentives to encourage the voluntary establishment of conservation easements.

**Strategy 5**

Actively work towards protecting and improving water quality of the Mattabessett River and other waterways in the Town.

**Supporting Action**

1. Conduct a public campaign to reduce litter and pollution into the Town's brooks and rivers.
2. Review the Town's zoning regulations for opportunities to include riparian zone requirements and restrictions for developments in proximity of the Town's rivers and brooks.
3. Require inspections and reporting on the condition of on-site stormwater management systems in existing and new developments.

**Strategy 6**

Improve stewardship of forests and tree canopy on Town-owned open space and rights-of-way.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Seek the assistance of a university forestry program to develop a forest management and invasive species control plan for all Town-owned open space and forests.
2. Continue to allocate financial resources towards forestry so as to adequately respond to the need for forest and roadside tree maintenance and removal.
3. Review zoning regulations to ensure that they require adequate tree planting and replacements on projects as appropriate. Allow flexibility in requirements to allow tree planting in locations where they would be most beneficial and most likely to thrive.



**Strategy 7**

Continue to promote sustainable stormwater management and floodplain management to be resilient and adaptable to a changing climate.

**Supporting Action**

1. Continue to invest in stormwater infrastructure improvements throughout the Town as recommended by the Town's Stormwater Management Plan. Sustainable infrastructure improvements should be prioritized. Add stormwater projects to the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
2. Review and evaluate the Town's Floodplain zoning regulations to ensure consistency with FEMA recommended model ordinances.

**Strategy 8**

Expand and improve the Town's trail system to better connect open space properties and connect Berlin to trail networks in surrounding Towns and improve access to and promotion of trail system.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Work with CFPA and Land Trusts to protect the path of the Mattabeset and Metacomet Trails and New England Trail in Berlin and to relocate trails to protected property when necessary.
2. Make trail connection from Timberlin to Reservoir Road on newly acquired Reservoir Road parcel.
3. Work with New Britain Water Department to relocate a portion of the former Wigwam Road ROW to connect Reservoir Road to Ragged Mountain Preserve. Develop a trail after the ROW is relocated.
4. Work with CFPA and other partners to reduce the distance of road walks of through trails on Spruce Brook Road, Orchard Road and Edgewood Road. Improve safety of the trail crossing at the Berlin Turnpike.
5. Improve the connection between Pistol Creek and the Mattabessett/ New England National Scenic Trail (NET) at Lamentation Mountain.
6. Relocate the Metacomet Trail off private property and into the Blue Hills Conservation area in the vicinity of Summit Wood Drive.
7. Work with New Britain and Meriden Water Departments to provide more public access to lands they own in Berlin, as feasible.
8. Coordinate with the Hungerford Nature Center to incorporate Hungerford trails into the Town's website, apps and mapping resources.
9. Keep trails information up to date on the Town website and make trails information available through apps.
10. Study Town open space areas for potential for bridle trails for horseback riding so as to support riding and minimize conflict with other users.

**Strategy 9**

Provide site improvements to open space properties to ensure proper stewardship of those properties and to improve access by the public.

**Supporting Action**

1. Advance planning for the shared open space, water department use for the Woodlawn Road parcel.
2. Improve parking for Ragged Mountain Preserve at West Lane.
3. Improve parking at Park Drive that is an access point to Meriden's Hubbard Park and to trails.
4. Work with Middletown to improve the Pistol Creek properties and expand trail connections to Lamentation Mountain to foster a two-town open space and recreational area and coordinate with Meriden to enhance the Lamentation Mountain trails system that includes Meriden's Giuffrida Park.
5. Re-establish public access to Webster Park.
6. Make town open space lands more accessible to the public by creating new trails, marking existing trails and boundaries, building bridges and boardwalks, placing signage, improving accessibility, keeping trails information up to date on the Town website and making trails information available through apps., and creating parking areas.
7. Identify critical improvements and maintenance needed at Town-owned open space properties and produce a summary and list of needs.



# 3.0 Housing



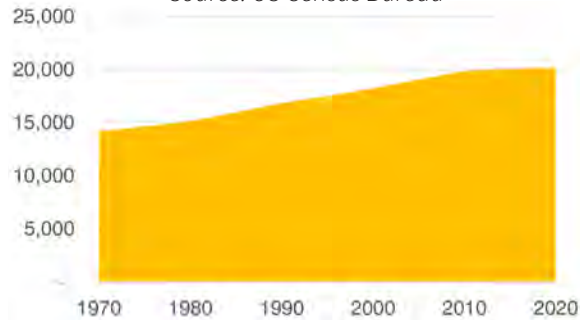


## Population Trends

Berlin's population grew at a steady rate in the 50 years between 1970 and 2020, but growth has slowed since 2010. Population growth generally places pressure on housing supply, increasing demand and often increasing housing rental cost and purchase prices. Berlin has experienced most of its population growth in age cohorts 60 and older. These households are smaller in size than younger households which implies that Berlin's housing stock is accommodating fewer people. Combined with population growth, an aging population with fewer persons per household increases housing demand and places upward pressure on housing costs.

*Berlin's Population 1970 to 2020*

Source: US Census Bureau

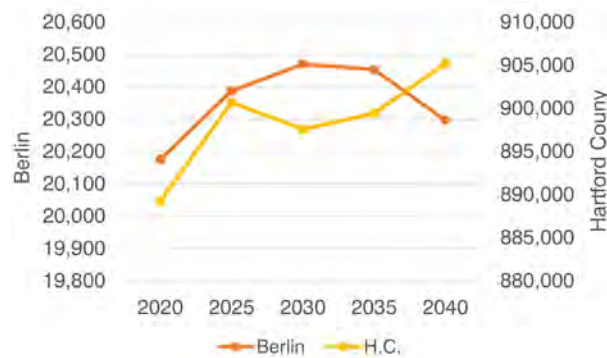


According to population projections conducted by the State of Connecticut, Berlin's population is expected to continue to grow over the next decade, although modestly (by approximately 200 residents). Population is expected to peak in 2030 at 20,470 and according to projections will recede from those levels following 2030. These projections do not account for either the population shifts attributed to COVID-19 or the significant recent increase in approved, but yet unbuilt, apartments.

Berlin's population growth is projected to grow at a similar rate as Hartford County through 2025 when growth in the County is expected to fall off while Berlin's population is projected to grow through 2030. Following 2030, Berlin's population is projected to decrease while Hartford County's population is expected to grow through 2040.

*Projected Population Growth*

Source: Connecticut DECD

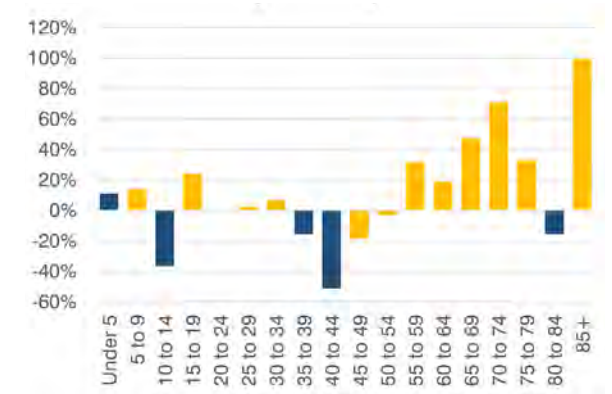


Over the past decade, Berlin has seen population growth in those over the age of 60 indicating that the community is aging. Given the relatively stable population, the shifts in age cohorts also suggests that many Berlin residents are choosing to age in place and remain in the community over time. Over the last ten years, Berlin has also seen some increases in residents ages 25-34 representing early career professionals who may be looking for a mix of rental and ownership opportunities in town. Recent approved housing developments in Berlin may also help cater to the housing preferences of younger adults looking for newer more amenitized apartment buildings in convenient locations. These new developments could help the Town attract and retain residents in

this age group, as well as offering a more diverse range of smaller housing unit options for older adults looking to downsize but remain in Berlin.

*Population Change by Age Cohort (2010-2021)*

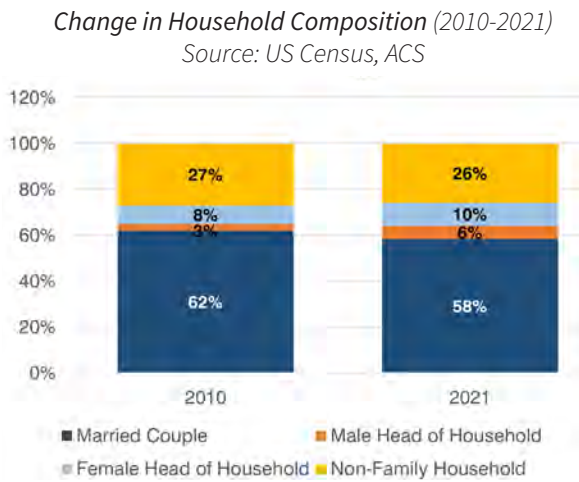
Source: US Census, ACS



*Berlin's Seniors -the Town's largest growing age group*  
Image Source: Berlin Senior Center



Between 2010 and 2021, the number of households in Berlin increased from 7,911 to 8,105, a total increase of 194 households (2.4%). Approximately 74% of all households were family households in 2021, which coupled with the age distribution data suggests that the primary driver of family household growth is in older populations without children living at home.



Household composition changed slightly within the family household category where married couple households decreased and single parent households increased by five percentage points. The share of non-family households has remained stable over the past decade.

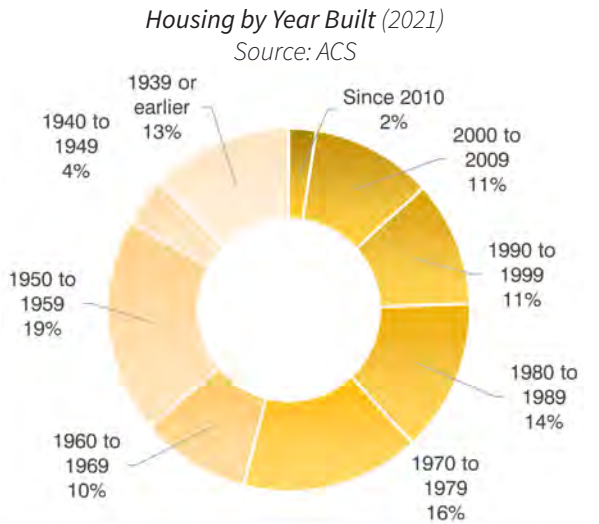
Most of Berlin's growth with respect to household size came in the form of two-person households, which grew by 25.7% over the past decade. The greatest growth in renter households was experienced in three- and four-person renter households, which grew by 85% and 190% respectively.

The shifts in age composition suggests that households headed by older adults and those headed by the youngest adults could be contributing to the growth of two-person households. This may also be the result of the decreasing number of married couple households which tend to have larger household sizes. The average household size in Berlin declined from 2.67 in 2000 to 2.47 in 2021, which is counter to the trend in both Hartford County and the State which both increased slightly over that period.

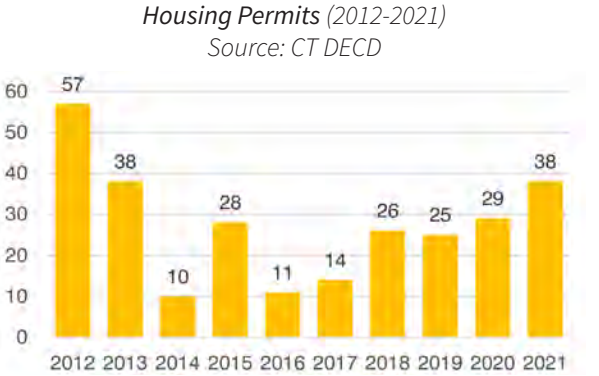
**Housing Stock**

Berlin has a total of 8,441 housing units (according to the 2021 American Community Survey). The Town's housing stock was largely constructed prior to 2010 with 98% of units built before that year.

Most of the Town's housing stock was constructed between 1950 and 2000 with 81% of housing built over that fifty-year period. Like much of Connecticut, housing production has slowed since the year 2000 with only 13% of units built in the past twenty years.



From 2012 to 2021, housing permit activity in Berlin was at its lowest levels over the past 30 years. Permit activity trends were similar to both Hartford County and the State between 1990 and 2018. Housing production, based upon permits issued, was exceptionally high in the early 2000s particularly for large multi-unit structures. Housing development slowed considerably as a result of the 2007-2009 recession and housing market bust. Permits for new housing construction have not returned to prerecession levels, however, Berlin has seen steady permitting levels for single unit structures over the latter part of the last decade and a recent spike in multifamily structures in the last three years.



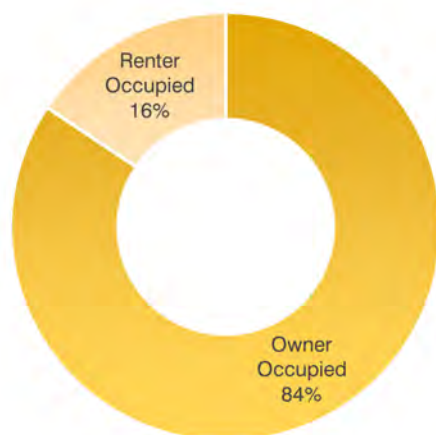
New Housing Construction Image Source: Realtor.com

Approved and not yet permitted multi-family rental projects suggest that the trend of increased multi-family permits will continue in the short term. With the recent high level of multi-family project approvals and permitting, the Planning and Zoning Commission instituted a moratorium on new multi-family project applications in 2022. The moratorium extends to August of 2023 in order to provide time to evaluate and manage the multi-family development segment in the context of the Town's Affordable Housing Plan approved in May of 2022 and the work on this Plan of Conservation and Development Plan update.

Of the occupied housing units in Berlin, approximately 84% are owner-occupied and 16% are renter-occupied. The homeownership rate in Berlin is twenty percentage points higher than it is in Hartford County revealing the dominance of owner-occupied homes in Berlin.

*Owned vs Rental Households (2021)*

Source: ACS



Like other higher-income towns in Hartford County, Berlin's proportion of single-family homes in 2021 was roughly 82% of the Town's total housing stock. The Town has also seen an increase in residential structures with 10 to 19, 20 to 49, and 50+ units suggesting that an emerging segment of Berlin's housing portfolio are larger multi-family developments. This trend is likely to continue with the recent approvals of multi-family rental housing.

Single-family housing comprises 85.8% of Berlin's residential land area but only comprises 28.5% of the Town's total land area. The second largest portion of residential land area is condominiums which comprise 5.8% of residential land area and 1.9% of total land area. Single-family homes and condos comprise the largest portion of residential units with 72% being single-family and 10% being condos. Residential development as a component of mixed-use development is a growing share of the housing stock in Berlin.

An interesting comparison in Berlin is the number of one- and two-person households, primarily the owner-occupied households compared to the overwhelming stock of larger single-family homes in Town. As discussed earlier, the aging population and shrinking average household size is creating a situation where the dominance of single-family homes in Town may force older adults to age in place for longer, which in turn could hinder turnover and availability of the housing stock for younger residents and families.

Recent multi-family rental development approvals and permits may help mitigate this pressure but affordability will still be an impediment because most of the newly approved or permitted multi-family rental units are market rate and the approved Berlin Housing Authority affordable

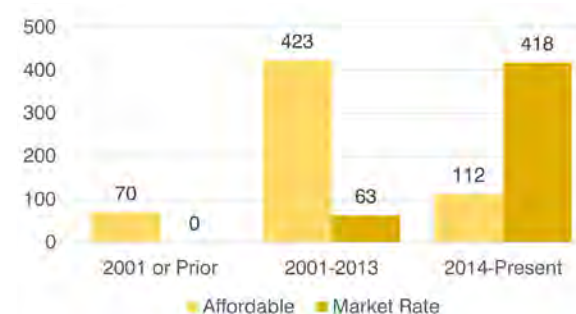
age restricted project has not yet reached the permitting stage.

While the Town is largely comprised of single-family ownership housing, over one thousand units of multi-family rental housing have been approved, are under development, or has been built in Berlin since 2001. This includes both market rate and affordable units. Since 2014 most of this development has been driven by market rate units.

*Multi-Family Rental Development (2021)*

*Approved, Under Development, or Built*

Source: Town of Berlin



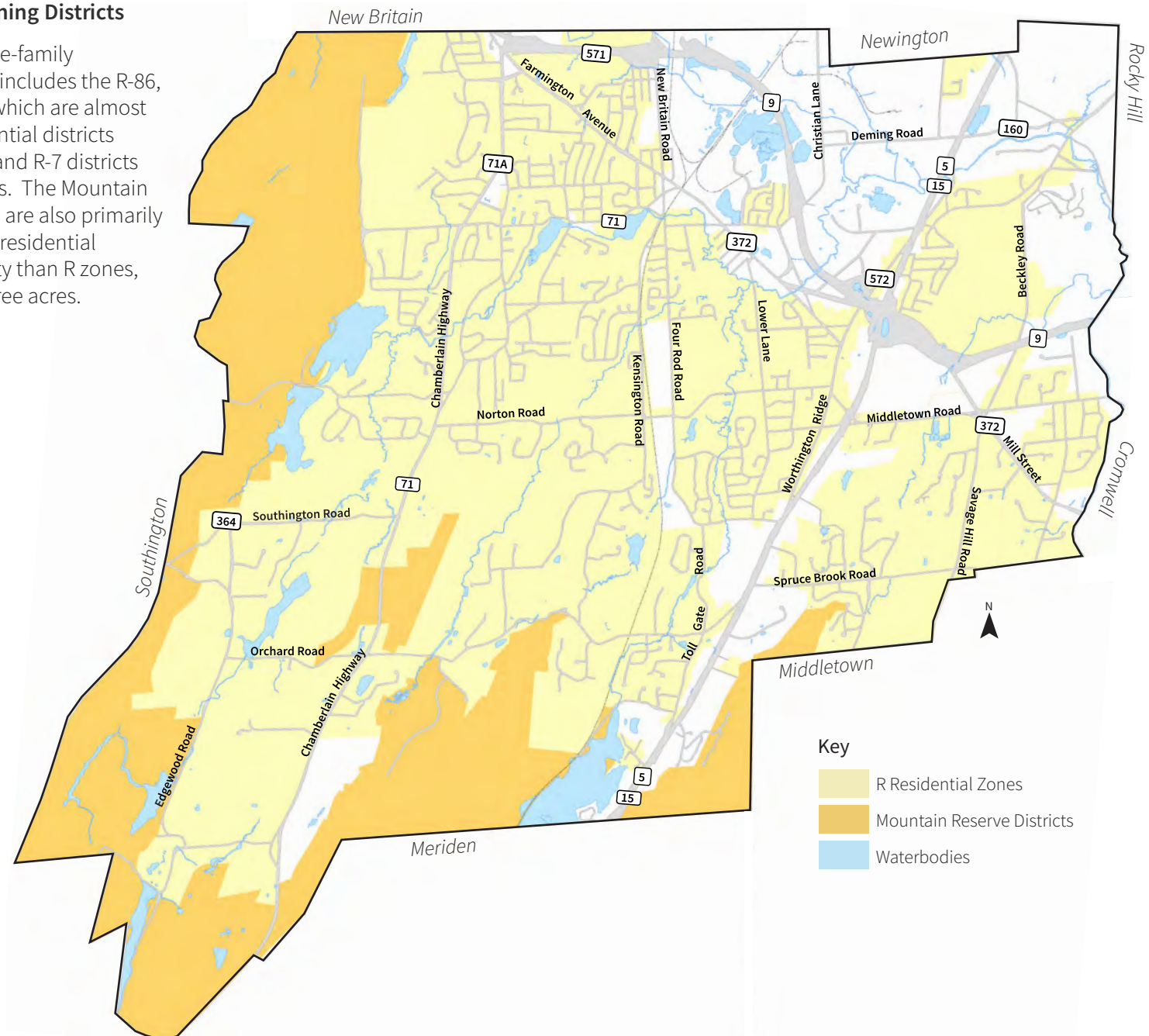
*Newport Center, a Mixed-Use Development*

Image Source: Newport Realty



## Single-Family Residential Zoning Districts

Most of Berlin is zoned for single-family residential development. This includes the R-86, R-43, R-21, R-15, R-11, and R-7 which are almost exclusively single-family residential districts with the exception of the R-11 and R-7 districts which permit two-family homes. The Mountain Reserve zones (MR-1 and MR-2) are also primarily oriented towards single-family residential uses although at a lower density than R zones, requiring lot sizes of at least three acres.



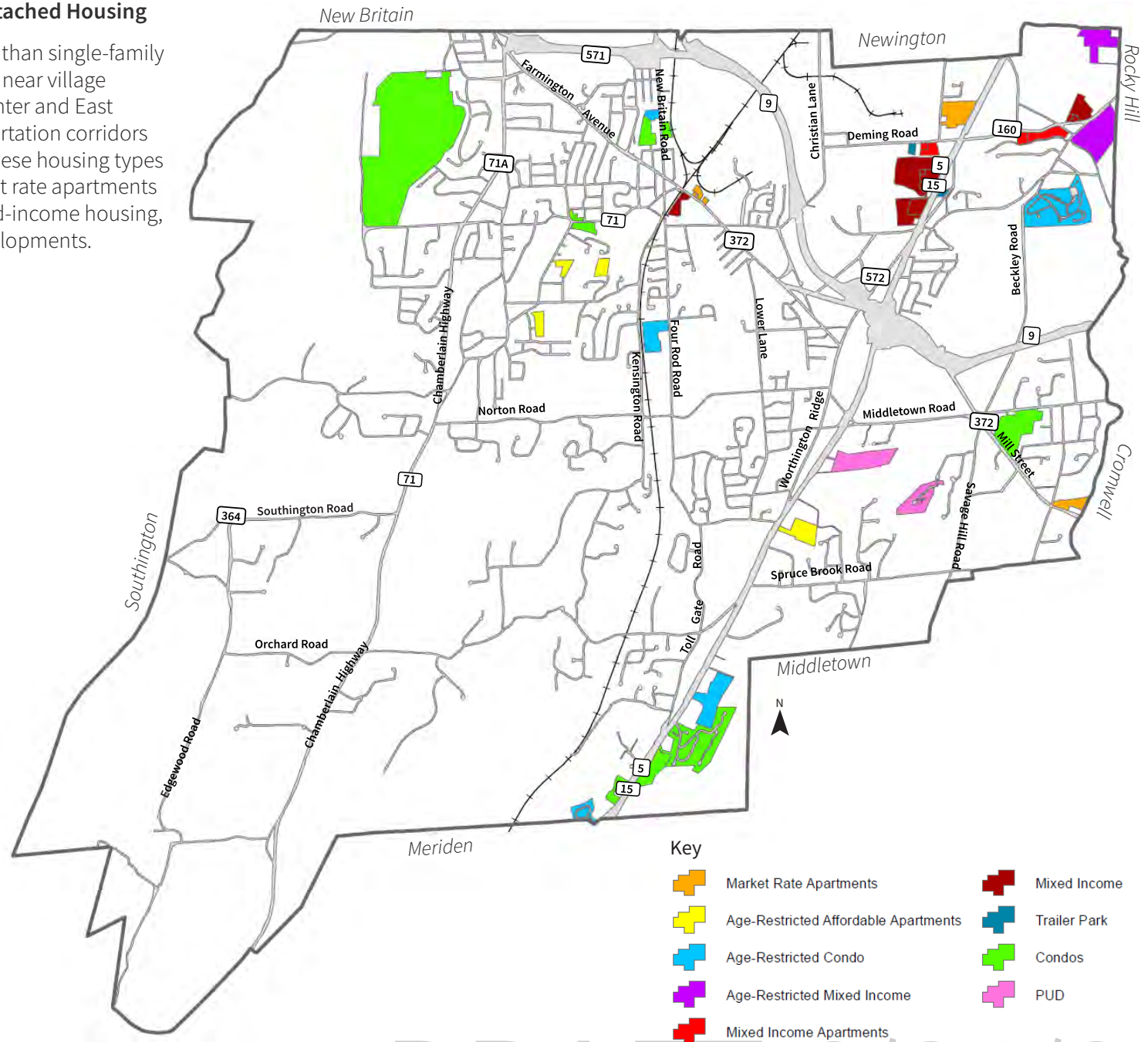
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### Other Than Single-Family Detached Housing

Berlin's supply of homes, other than single-family detached homes, are clustered near village centers such as Kensington Center and East Berlin and along major transportation corridors such as the Berlin Turnpike. These housing types range considerably from market rate apartments to age-restricted units, to mixed-income housing, condos, and planned unit developments.

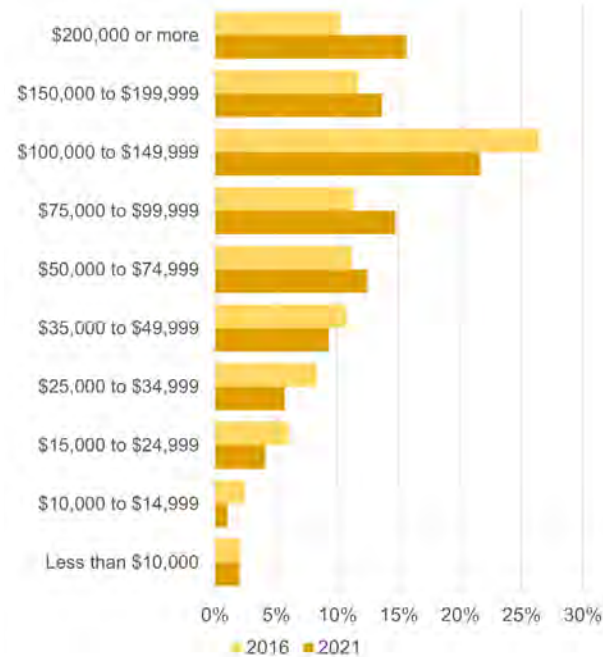
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## Income and Cost Burden

The median household income in Berlin was \$101,853 in 2021. Household incomes have continued to become more stratified over the past ten years with many more households exceeding the \$150,000 per year mark than five years ago. Since 2016, Berlin saw a 35% (614 households) growth in households earning \$150,000 per year or more.

*Household Income (2016 vs 2021)*  
Source: ACS



Renter household income has experienced its own shifts since 2016. For renters in middle-income brackets (\$50,000 - \$74,999 & \$75,000-\$99,999), the number of households has increased by 104% (159) and 60% (48)

respectively. The Town does not currently have a large stock of luxury rental units which creates a situation where higher income renter households reside in units that are priced lower than what they technically could afford. This creates added competition for middle-market rental units which a larger share of the town's renter population may be vying for.

Many renter households in Berlin are considered housing cost burdened. HUD considers a household to be cost burdened if it spends more than 30% of its monthly income on housing costs. About 48.9% of all renter households in Berlin are cost burdened which is slightly below state averages.

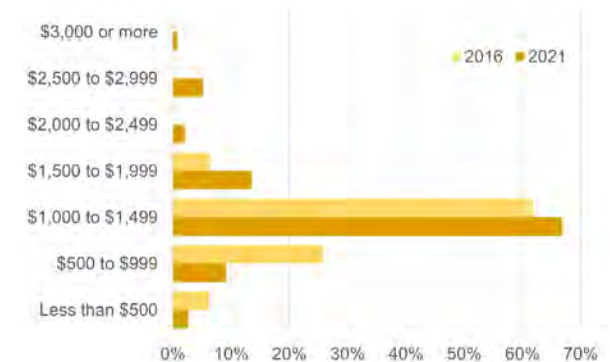
The challenge for households spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs is that less money is available for spending on other necessities such as food, transportation, education, healthcare, and childcare. Finding ways to build more housing that is affordable to renters is one way of helping to keep cost burdening down.

Renters in Berlin are more likely to be cost-burdened compared to owners. According to data from HUD, 47% of renters were spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs compared to only 21% of homeowners in 2018. More than one quarter (27%) of renters spend more than half of their income on housing compared to only 10% of homeowners that spend more than half of their income on housing.

## Housing Cost

As of 2021, most (88%) of Berlin's rental housing cost more than \$1,000 per month. Rents at or above \$1,000 increased by 22% between 2016 and 2021. In Berlin, the largest share of rental units are those priced between \$1,000 and \$1,499, comprising 67% of rentals. Only 13% of rental units have a gross rent under \$1,000 per month.

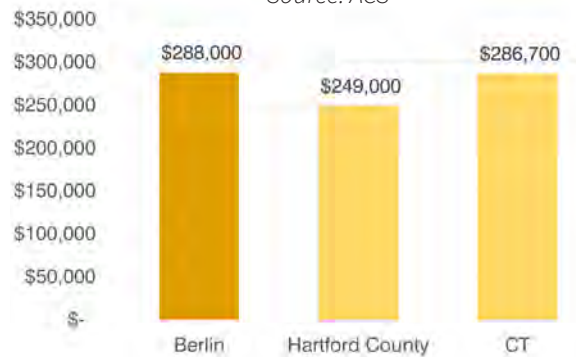
*Gross Monthly Rent (2016 vs 2021)*  
Source: ACS



*Rental Unit at Westview Highlands*  
Image Source: MLS 2016

Berlin's median owner-occupied home value in 2021 was \$288,000, which is higher than both Hartford County and the State. Median home value increased in Berlin over between 2010 and 2020. Approximately 69% of Berlin's owner-occupied housing stock is valued at or above \$250,000. Over the past decade the number of homes valued at \$250,000 or more has increased by 5.6%. The fastest growth occurred for homes valued between \$250,000 - \$499,999 which increased by 6% (225 homes). Berlin's median home value is higher than Hartford County by nearly \$43,000 and higher than Connecticut by about \$8,000.

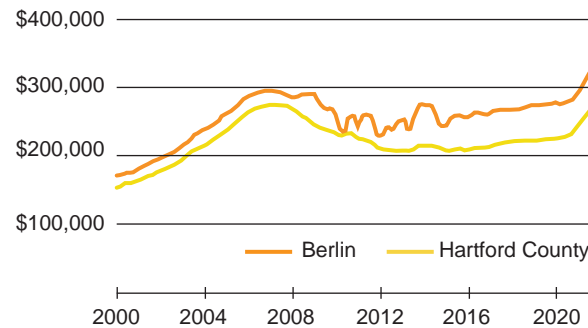
**Median Owner-Occupied Home Value (2021)**  
Source: ACS



Between 2010 and 2020, Zillow Housing Research estimates that the median home value in Berlin experienced a 92% increase. This growth has mirrored that of Hartford County although home value growth increased more significantly in Berlin than the County followed the 2007-2009 recession. This may be attributed to a slow-down of housing development in Berlin over the past fifteen years and an influx in household wealth resulting in higher income households competing for existing homes.

**Home Value Index (2000-2020)**

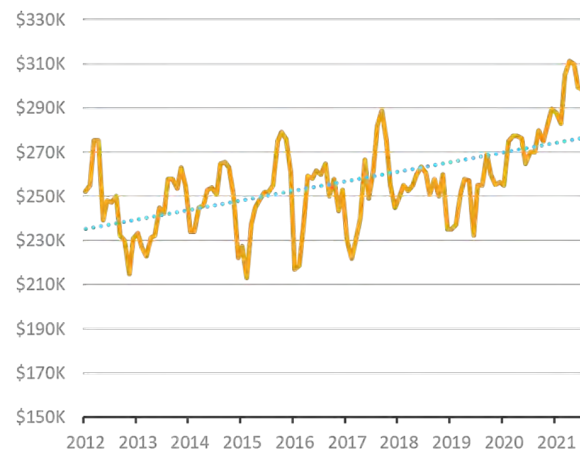
Source: Zillow



Median sales prices in Berlin have been rising. This trend is common in many cities and towns in Connecticut, particularly in 2020 and 2021 with existing homeowners selling at top of market prices to higher income households looking for single-family homes in suburban communities. Driving some of this increase is an influx of residents coming from larger urban areas to find cheaper housing with more space.

**Median Sales Price of all Homes in Berlin (2012-2021)**

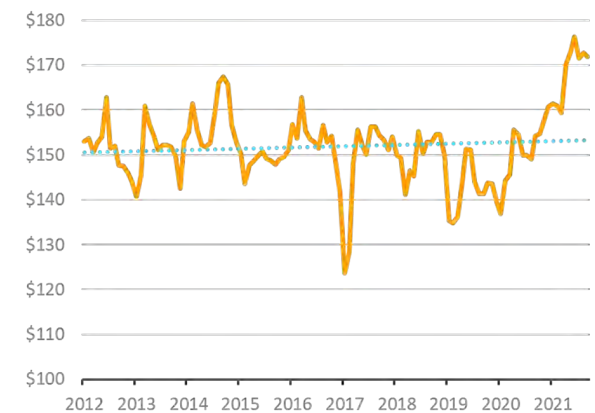
Source: Redfin



Average home sales price in Berlin when calculated by the square foot fluctuated on an annual basis between 2012 and 2020 rising above and dipping below \$150 per square foot. Since 2020, however, the average home sales price per square foot has climbed and was \$170 per square foot in 2021. The average home sales price per square foot is a good indicator of value increase across a range of housing sizes, which can provide a more accurate assessment of increases in home values than median sales price which can fluctuate based upon the size of housing that is being sold.

**Average Home Sales Price per Square Foot (2012-2021)**

Source: Redfin





## Affordable Housing Supply

"Affordable housing" is defined by the State through Connecticut General Statute Section 8-30g. This law encourages development of "affordable housing" priced so that households which earn 80% or less of the applicable median income (the lesser as between the state or area median income (AMI), will spend no more than 30% of their annual income on housing. Adjustments are made for the percentage of the applicable median income earned by the household, household size, housing type/ unit size, etc.

Housing is deemed affordable per State statute if it is:

- Assisted housing receiving financial assistance under any governmental program for the construction or substantial rehabilitation of low- and moderate-income housing, and any housing occupied by persons receiving rental assistance under federal law.
- Financed by a Connecticut Housing Finance Authority mortgage.
- Subject to a deed recorded on the municipality's land records containing a covenant or restriction requiring that it be sold or rented at, or below, affordable rates for a defined period of time.
- Mobile manufactured homes located in resident-owned mobile manufactured home parks.

Berlin's share of affordable housing in 2021 was 9.02%. The Town's share of affordable housing increased by two percentage points between 2011 and 2020. More substantial gains were experienced over the 19-year period between 2002 and 2020, with a 6.3 percentage point increase in the affordable share of the Town's housing supply over that period. This increase in the supply of affordable housing is a result of intentional efforts by the Town over the past two decades to expand the supply of affordable housing in Berlin. The Town's affordable housing supply fluctuates from year to year and can drop due to a reduction in any one of the types of units. By example, CHFA units in Berlin dropped between 2020 and 2022. While the reason for this drop is not clear, it may have been related to a strong housing market with cash and high-deposit offers outcompeting CHFA mortgages, which feature a lower down payment requirement.

In 1978 the Berlin Housing Authority was established and the first affordable housing units in Berlin were constructed within the Marjorie Moore Village. In 1982 the Berlin Housing Authority completed the Percival Heights senior development. Affordable housing development activity resumed in the 2000's with the development of three projects with a combination of age

Berlin Plan of Conservation and Development

restricted mixed-income housing being constructed. Three additional projects added affordable units that were not age restricted in the 2010's. Since 2020, multiple affordable units have been approved or have applications pending or expected, including the 88-unit Deming Ridge mixed-income not age restricted project that is now under construction.

In 2022 the Town adopted an affordable housing plan. That plan identified the following goal:

*Achieve the development of additional affordable housing units in Berlin that will meet the needs of all Town residents and will result in a total share of affordable housing that exceeds ten percent of the Town's total housing supply.*

This goal is supported by four strategies and multiple more action items that direct the Town towards achieving the stated goal.

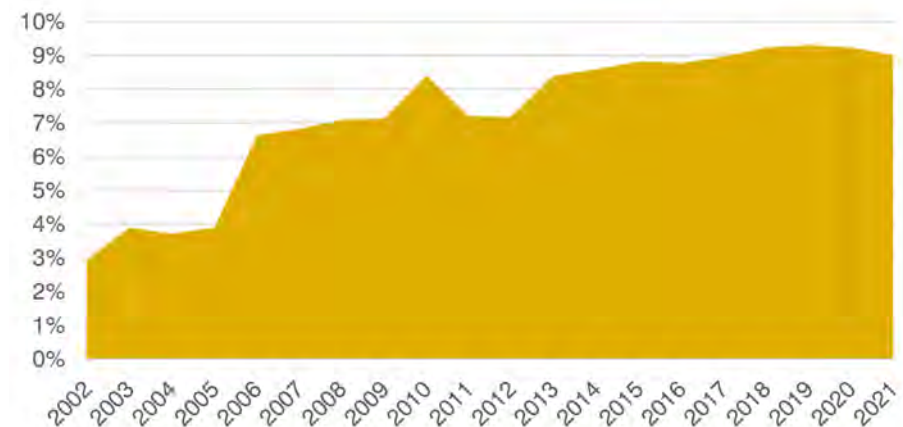
**Berlin's Affordable Housing Supply by Type (2021)**

Source: CT DOH

2010 Census Housing Unit Count	2021 Govmnt. Assisted	2021 Tenant Rental Assistance	2021 Single Family CHFA/USDA Mortgages	2021 Deed Restricted Units	Total Assisted Units	2021 Percent Affordable
8,140	556	50	124	4	734	9.02%

**Berlin's Affordable Housing Supply (2002-2021)**

Source: CT DOH



## Housing Goal

Ensure that Berlin has a wide selection of housing choice that enables residents to live in Town through various stages of life and provides housing opportunities to new residents to the community.

### Strategy 1

Implement recommendations of the 2022 Affordable Housing Plan and take other measures necessary to increase the supply and range of affordable housing in Berlin and maintain an affordable housing inventory in excess of existing supply.

#### Supporting Actions

See 2022 Affordable Housing Plan

### Strategy 2

Maintain and increase the supply of housing designed for or occupied by seniors.

#### Supporting Action

1. Explore innovative approaches to stimulate the development of affordable senior apartments.
2. Revise zoning regulations to allow for the development of, or conversion to, multi-generational housing that provides shared living areas for multiple generations of a family in appropriate residential districts.
3. Consider a revision to the zoning regulations to allow assisted living facilities in the OT, OT-2, BT-1, PI-2, SPDD, and BT-2 districts.
4. Continue and expand support services to assist seniors to age in place.

### Strategy 3

Administer, educate, and support affordable housing initiatives.

#### Supporting Action

1. Seek funding for affordable housing initiatives with a focus on programs that provide support to targeted income levels.

### Strategy 4

Promote affordable home ownership opportunities.

#### Supporting Action

1. Provide residents, real estate professionals, and other stakeholders with information on CHFA mortgages and other financing options for lower income and first-time homeowners.

### **Strategy 5**

Revise zoning as recommended by the Affordable Housing Plan to support development of affordable housing.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Explore potential for revisions to PS-A district zoning regulations at individual locations to allow for mixed-use residential at a density appropriate to the location, with a required affordable housing component.
2. Consider adjustments to the BTB zone to further incentivize development of affordable housing on appropriate sites providing that commercial development remains a required component of new development.
3. Revise Kensington Village Core 2 regulations to allow increased residential density with an affordability requirement and/or consider redistricting area across the train station to Farmington Avenue Core Area 1.
4. Revise the zoning regulations to allow private development of Housing for the Elderly on Town-owned property.

### **Strategy 6**

Support the diversification of the Town's housing stock without adversely impacting single-family neighborhoods by providing adequate zoning controls.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Ensure that the zoning regulations direct higher density housing towards areas that have the infrastructure to support such development.
2. Provide additional design standards and/or guidelines for multifamily development to ensure that development is not adversely impactful to adjacent single-family residential properties or districts.
3. Amend zoning regulations to better control orientation and placement of residential uses and the protection of sensitive environmental features on a developed lot.

3.0



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# 4.0 Economic Development

## Economic Development Trends

Various elements contribute to a Berlin's economic well-being. Household incomes, educational attainment, labor force composition, commercial and industrial building stock, and zoning decisions all impact the economic output of a town. The allocation of land for non-residential uses and the physical development of commercial and industrial space paired with economic development initiatives can help a town attract businesses. This creates an opportunity for a town to increase employment opportunities and reduce the tax burden for residents by capturing a larger share of tax revenue from commercial and industrial operators.

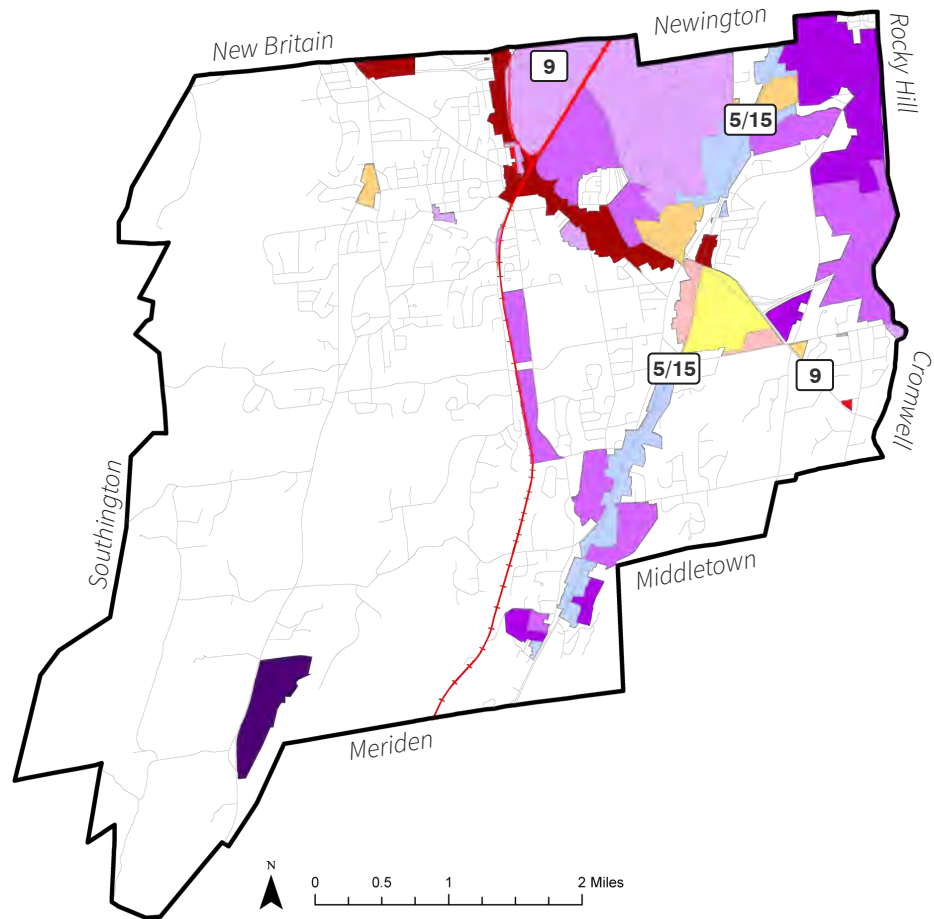
Berlin has a relatively low tax rate compared to its neighbors, which could be an economic development tool to incentivize businesses to choose to locate in Berlin. The Town's tax rate is in line with Plainville, Rocky Hill, and Middletown but far lower than Meriden and New Britain. While Berlin's share of commercial and industrial property was not as high as some of its neighbors in 2020, recent development activity suggests this number will rise in the future, which could help reduce the tax burden on residents.

Several commercial zoning districts are located throughout Berlin, focused around the Farmington Avenue corridor and the Berlin Turnpike. The Town's industrial zones are primarily in the northeastern section of town, with a few running along the New Haven-Hartford rail line.

### Tax Rate and Tax Base Trends

Source: CT Data Center, Grand List by Town, Mill Rates, 2011-2020

Town	FY 2022 Mill Rate	2020 Share of Real Property		2011-2020 Change	
		Residential	Commercial/Industrial	Residential	Commercial/Industrial
Berlin	\$33.93	76.6%	21.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Cromwell	\$30.33	75.1%	24.8%	-3.8%	4.8%
Meriden	\$40.86	70.2%	23.9%	-0.1%	-1.2%
Middletown	\$35.70	61.1%	28.7%	-9.1%	11.5%
New Britain	\$49.50	69.4%	18.5%	-3.5%	1.7%
Newington	\$38.81	71.7%	24.1%	-1.8%	1.6%
Plainville	\$34.56	69.9%	26.2%	-0.7%	1.3%
Rocky Hill	\$34.10	63.1%	28.6%	-5.9%	2.6%



### Commercial & Industrial Zoning District

Source: Town of Berlin Parcel Database, RKG Associates



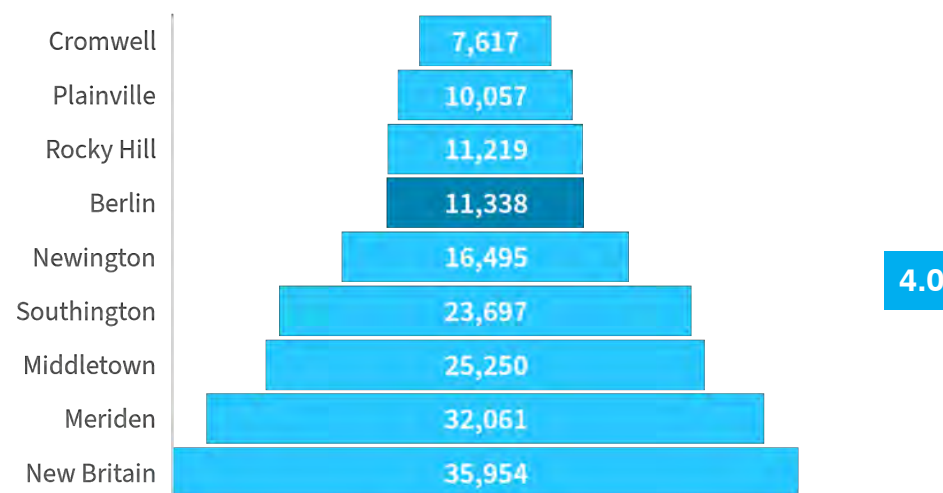


## Labor Force

Berlin had a total labor force of 11,338 as of October 2021. The Connecticut Department of Labor reports labor force as the number of all persons aged 16 and over who are not on active duty in the Armed Forces and who are not inmates of institutions, including prisons, mental facilities, and nursing homes who are either employed or unemployed. The employment count includes self-employed individuals. The unemployment count includes individuals that do not have jobs and have actively looked for work in the past 4 weeks. Berlin accounts for roughly 2.5% of Hartford County's labor force, which totals 460,531. Berlin's unemployment rate of 4.3% in 2021 was lower than the City of Hartford, Hartford County, and the State, which have rates of 9.2%, 5.5%, and 5.3% respectively.

Berlin's labor force is smaller than most of its neighbors. It is roughly one third the size of both Meriden and New Britain's labor force, its neighbors to the north and south, but is comparable in size to Rocky Hill's labor force.

The average annual unemployment rate of the Town's residents steadily declined from 2010 to 2019, reaching a low of 3.2% in 2019, half a percentage point below the State's rate. A sharp increase occurred in 2020 due to the labor force disruptions and challenges related to the ongoing COVID pandemic, bringing Berlin's rate to a high of 6.2% in 2020 before recovering to the pre-pandemic levels in 2021.

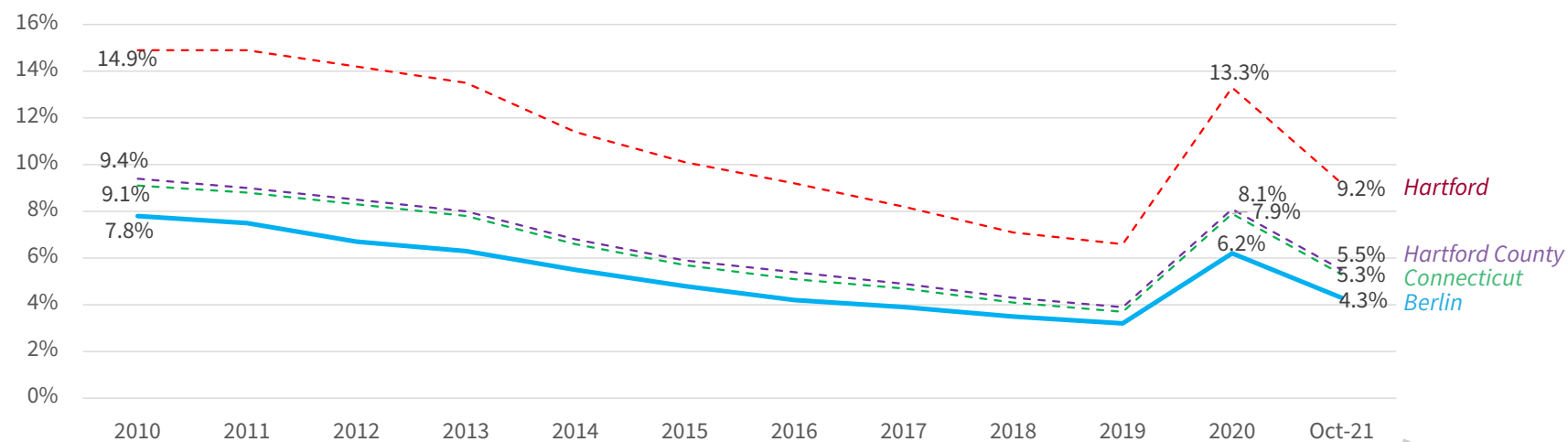


*Labor Force: Berlin vs Neighboring Communities*

*Source: CT Department of Labor, 2021*

## Unemployment Rate, 2010-2021

*Source: CT Department of Labor, 2021*



Berlin's labor force had been rising prior to the pandemic and in 2021 was below 2010 levels, 600 less than the peak in 2019. This pattern is consistent with both the County and State. Given the labor shortages, early retirements, and disengagement of many from the workforce during the pandemic, these trends are not surprising.

The data suggests that the employed count remained relatively stable in the second half of 2020 with the drop in labor force as a result of a reduction in the count of unemployed individuals. This implies there may be a segment of the unemployed population that is uncounted because they are not actively looking for work, resulting in a deflated unemployment rate. Several factors may have contributed to this, including early retirement, reductions in immigration, lingering COVID apprehension, and increased childcare responsibilities. Hesitant workers have started to re-enter the workforce as the public health situation has improved.

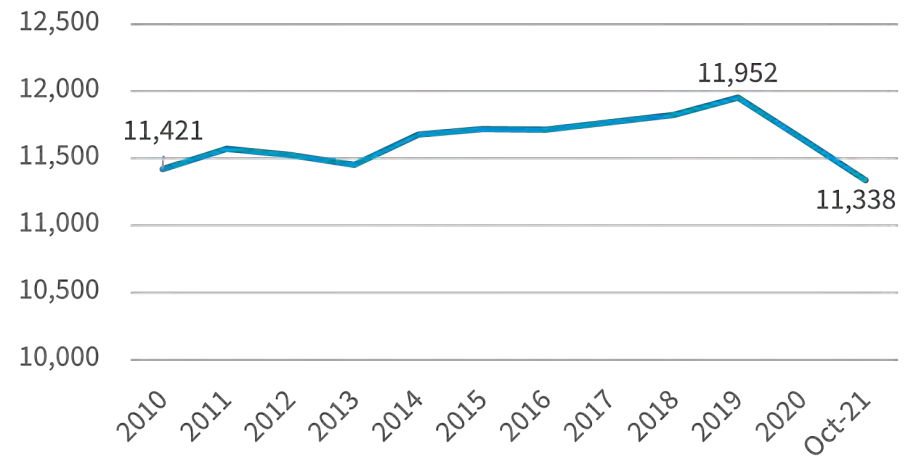
Berlin has a well-educated population. While the majority of residents aged 25 and older hold at least an associate's degree, 43% have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher as of 2020. This share of the population increased by five percentage points over the past decade with only 38% having obtained a bachelor's degree or higher in 2010. Berlin outpaces Hartford County in this respect, where only 39% of the population holds a bachelor's degree or higher in 2020.

Census data indicates that the largest share of Berlin households earn between \$100,000 and \$149,999 in 2021, which equates to 23.5% of total households. As of 2021, Berlin had a greater share of households in all income brackets over \$75,000 per year than Hartford County.

From an employment and commuting perspective, the Town has a net positive inflow of workers. As of 2019, Berlin had a total of 12,356 full- and part-time jobs located in the Town. Those jobs were mostly held by workers who live out of town, but approximately 9% of the resident labor force worked within Berlin, occupying 1,105 jobs. A total of 11,251 people who live elsewhere commuted into Berlin for work in 2019. That year, a total of 8,711 working residents left Berlin for their full- and part-time jobs. Most Berlin residents had short commutes to their primary job with over half of working residents commuting less than ten miles to work (56%), with the highest concentration of resident jobs to the north in Hartford and the towns in between.

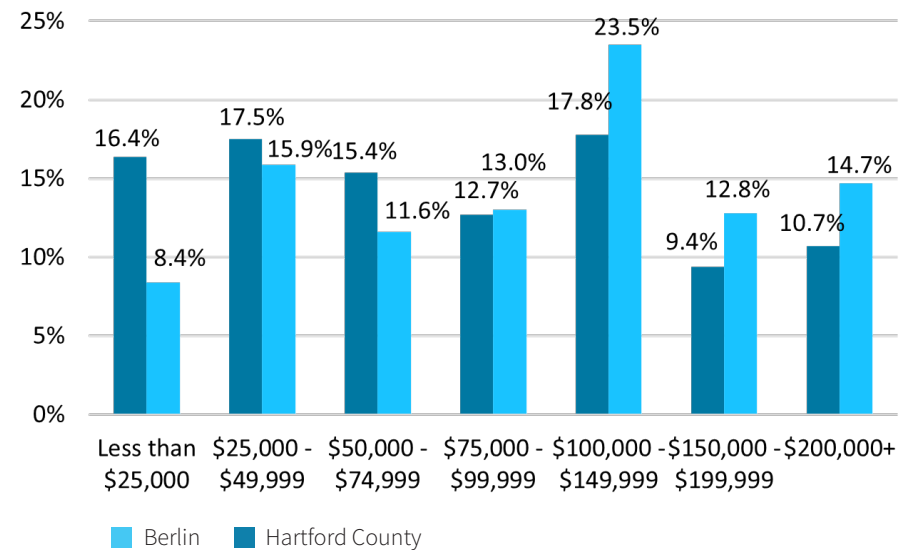
#### Berlin's Labor Force Trends

Source: CT Department of Labor, 2021

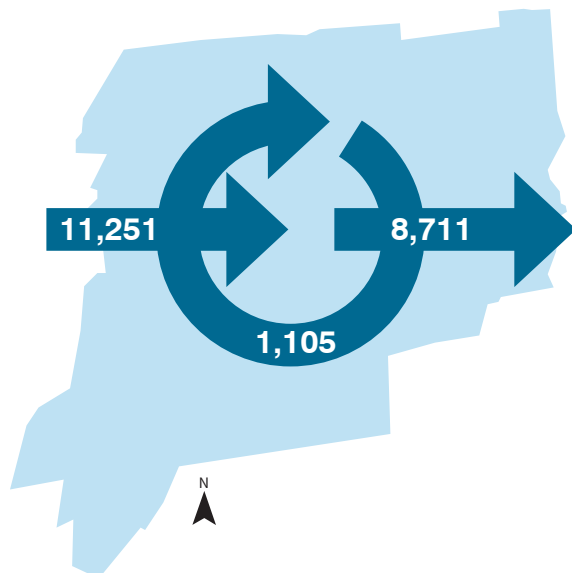


#### Household Incomes, 2020

Source: US Census Bureau 5-year ACS



2019 Employment Inflow/Outflow (All Jobs)  
Source: US Census Bureau OnTheMap, 2019



Where Berlin's Residents Work (All Jobs)  
Source: US Census Bureau OnTheMap, 2019

Town	Jobs	Share
Hartford	1,126	11.5%
<b>Berlin</b>	<b>1,105</b>	<b>11.3%</b>
New Britain	796	8.1%
Farmington	548	5.6%
Newington	496	5.1%
Middletown	361	3.7%
Meriden	357	3.6%
West Hartford	319	3.2%
East Hartford	304	3.1%
Rocky Hill	302	3.1%
All other locations	4,102	41.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,816</b>	

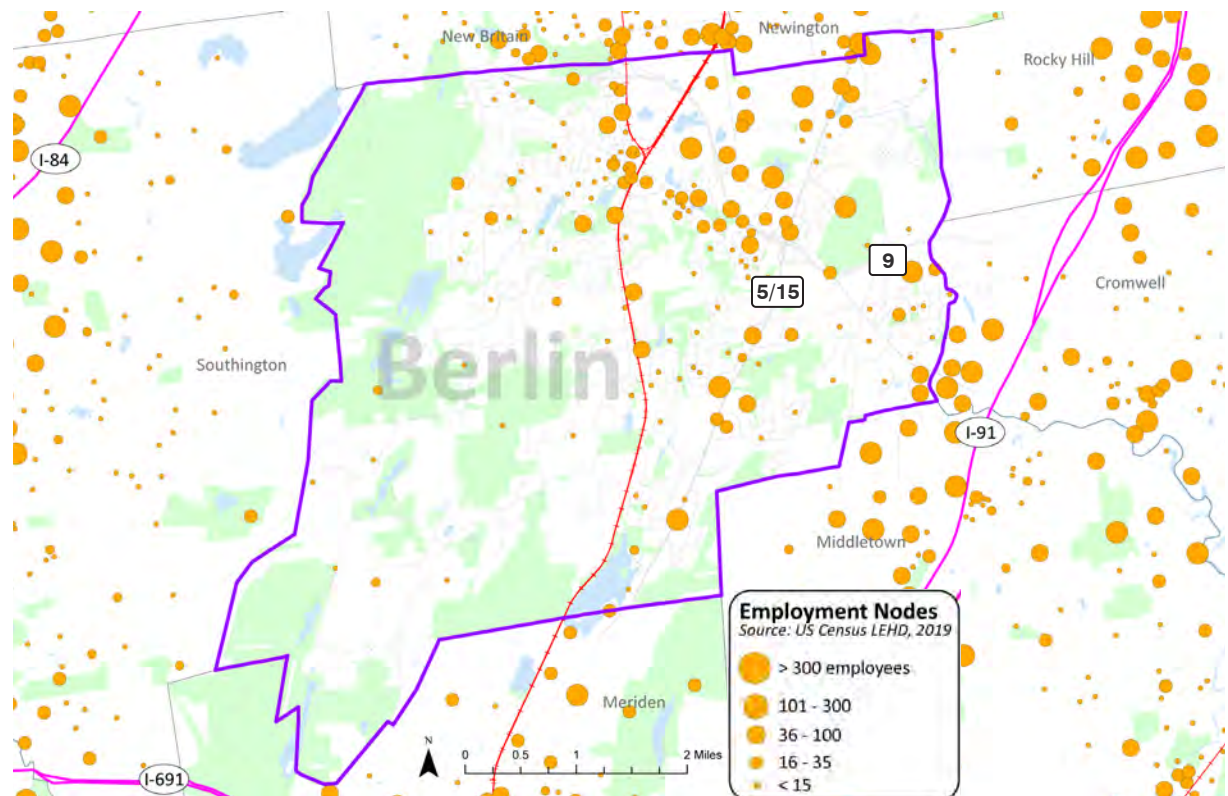
## Employment Composition

Geographically, employment within Berlin is concentrated along the Berlin Turnpike, Route 9, and Farmington Avenue. The strongest commercial corridor is along Farmington Avenue, which boasts the highest concentration of businesses in town. This is where most restaurant and retail businesses are located. The Berlin Turnpike is also an active, more auto-oriented retail corridor that is home to larger businesses. The map below depicts the number of jobs per census block within the Town.

Berlin has employment participation across a diversity of industries but the number of jobs in Town has declined by about 5% between 2020 and 2021 with most of that decline as a result of the pandemic. Manufacturing is the leading industry, accounting for 1,992 jobs and 19% of the Town's total employment in 2021. Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Government are Berlin's next leading industries with between 1,200 and 1,500 jobs each. Industrial uses are clearly important to Berlin's economy, as the Manufacturing, Transportation & Warehousing, Construction, and Wholesale Trade industries are all among the town's top eight industries by employment in 2021.

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Employment Nodes Source: US Census Bureau OnTheMap, 2019





Ten industries were growing in employment in Berlin prior to the pandemic, but only two have grown between 2019 and 2021. Manufacturing remains the Town's leading employer by a wide margin. Transportation & Warehousing's growth has intensified since the start of the pandemic, which comes as no surprise with the continued national rise in e-commerce activity. The Retail industry appears to have recovered from the economic effects of the pandemic much faster than the Accommodation & Food Services industry (down 3.6% and 21.7% per year respectively). Finance & Insurance and Professional, Scientific & Technical Services jobs were increasing at a healthy rate prior to the pandemic (2.2% and 3.6% annually). Professional, Scientific & Technical Services was the second fastest growing industry in Berlin from 2011 to 2019, behind only Transportation & Warehousing. It is now the seventh largest industry in Berlin.

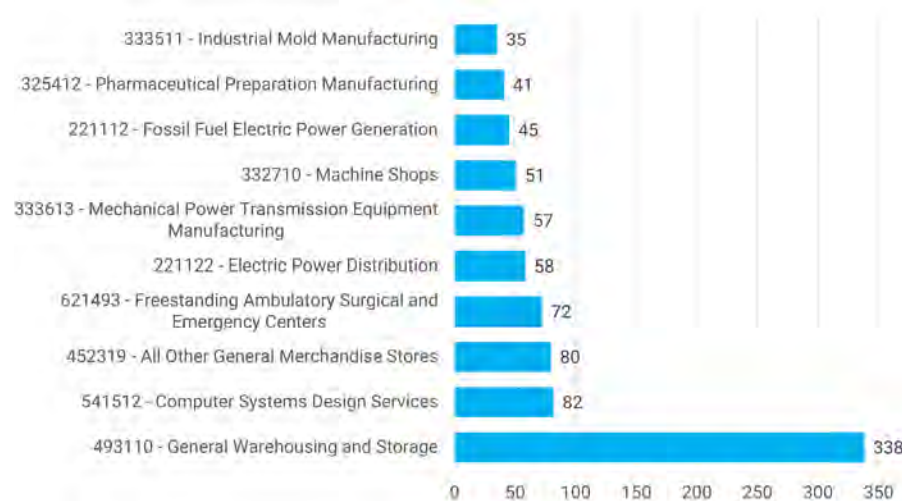
Out of the top ten industry sectors (with a 6-digit NAICS Code), three are manufacturing related. Skilled nursing care facilities rank as the top industry sector in Town, employing over 800 people and encompassing 58% of Berlin's healthcare jobs. The top three manufacturing sectors (Machine Tool, Mechanical Power Transmission Equipment, and Machine Shops) combine

to employ 820 people, representing 41% of the manufacturing industry employment. General Warehousing and Storage was the only industry to in which jobs grew by more than 100%, highlighting a potential emerging sector in Berlin as the warehousing and distribution of goods become more important to online shopping and e-commerce vendors. The General Warehousing and Storage sector had experienced significant growth in Berlin, adding 338 jobs between 2011 and 2021, more than four times the amount seen in the next leading growth sector. This sector is the reason for the Transportation & Warehousing industry's strong continued growth over the past decade, accounting for 89% of the industry's 381 new jobs since 2011. It has helped the industry rise from employing 372 people in Berlin in 2011 to 753 today. It is now the town's fifth leading industry.

The Computer Systems Design Services sector is the second fastest growing industry sector, adding 82 jobs since 2011. This is boosting the Professional, Scientific & Technical Services industry growth within Berlin. Four of the top ten growth sectors are in Manufacturing, including the highly specialized and high-paying Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing sector, which serves New England's growing Life Sciences industry cluster.

#### Berlin's Top Ten Growth Sectors

Source: EMSI, 2011-2021 by 6-Digit NAICS Codes



#### Berlin's Top Employment Sectors

Source: EMSI, Industry Report, 2011-2021 by 6-Digit NAICS Codes

Sector	2021 Jobs	2011-2021 Change
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	809	-24.5%
General Warehousing and Storage	611	124.3%
State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	527	-4.5%
Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government)	369	-3.7%
Machine Tool Manufacturing	307	-9.9%
Mechanical Power Transmission Equipment Manufacturing	292	24.4%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	271	-9.1%
Full-Service Restaurants	228	-28.9%
Machine Shops	221	29.8%
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	187	-8.1%

## Employers

The largest employers in Berlin span numerous industries, including Government, Manufacturing, Retail, Education, and Health Care. This highlights the diversity of Berlin's economy. The majority of the Town's largest employers are reported to have between 100 and 1,200 employees. The top ten employers contribute to 37% of Berlin's overall workforce. The largest employer in Berlin is Eversource, New England's largest energy delivery company, with an office in Berlin.

Berlin's other large employers include Assa Abloy (a manufacturing company offering products in relation to locks, doors, and other entrance hardware), EuroAmerican Home Care (home assisted living care), Comcast Cable (cable programming), and TOMZ Corporation (medical devices manufacturer).



*Eversource Energy Berlin Headquarters*

*Source: SR, Google*

## Berlin's Largest Employers

*Source: Town of Berlin Economic Development Department, 2021*

Company	Industry	Employees	Share of Town Employment
Eversource Energy	Electric Power Generation	1,200	11.6%
Town of Berlin	Government	688	6.7%
Assa Abloy	Hardware Manufacturing	410	4.0%
EuroAmerican Home Care	Home Health Care Services	287	2.8%
Comcast Cable/TCI	Cable and Other Subscription Programming	274	2.7%
TOMZ Corporation	Industrial & Commercial	251	2.4%
Keep Me Home	Home Health Care Services	250	2.4%
Budney Overhaul and Repair	Appliance Repair and Maintenance	180	1.7%
Parker Fluid Control	Instrument Manufacturing	157	1.5%
Stop & Shop	Grocery Stores	137	1.3%
Total		3,834	37.1%

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## Commercial and Industrial Market

### Land Use Patterns

According to the Town's assessor-designated land use codes, 969 acres of built commercial space exists in Berlin. This accounts for \$374 million in assessed value (combined land and building value) and 18.9% of the total assessed value. The parcels currently being used for commercial purposes in Berlin are focused along the Farmington Avenue corridor and the Berlin Turnpike. On the industrial side, there is 1,204 acres of industrial space, with an assessed value of \$228 million in assessed value. The industrial zones are primarily in the northeastern section of town, with a few running along the rail line and surrounding the commercial districts along the southern portion of the Berlin Turnpike. According to the Town's assessor records, 51% of Berlin's commercial building stock and 37% of the industrial stock was originally built before 1980.

### Commercial & Industrial Properties by Year Built

Source: Town of Berlin Parcel Database, RKG Associates, 2019

Year Built	Commercial		Industrial	
	Parcel Count	Share	Parcel Count	Share
Pre 1930	51	13%	5	2%
1931-1951	82	21%	41	15%
1960-1979	68	17%	54	20%
1980-1999	71	18%	53	20%
Since 2000	38	10%	26	10%
N/A	90	23%	89	33%

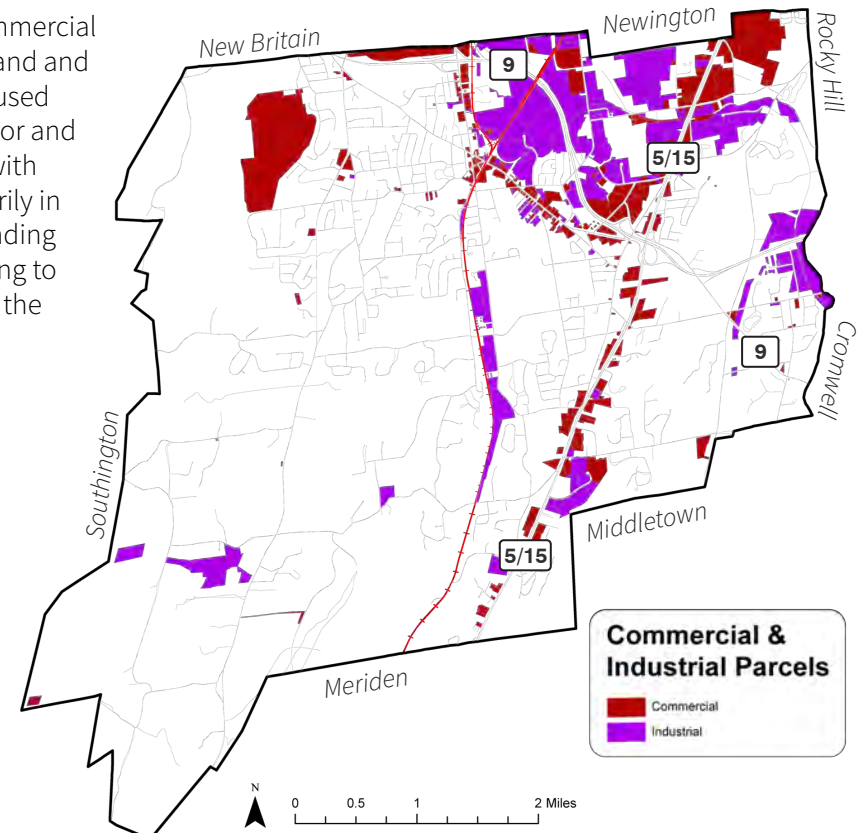
### Commercial & Industrial Properties by Year Built

Source: Town of Berlin Parcel Database, RKG Associates, 2019

Commercial	Parcels	Acres	Total Assessed Value	AV/Parcel	AV/Acre	Property Taxes	Taxes/Parcel
Office	86	168	\$133,463,290	\$1,551,899	\$796,685	\$4,528,409	\$52,656
Retail	81	141	\$98,379,736	\$1,214,565	\$698,564	\$3,338,024	\$41,210
Restaurant/Bar	45	24	\$23,091,042	\$513,134	\$980,522	\$783,479	\$17,411
Hotel/Motel	13	23	\$9,233,700	\$710,285	\$398,275	\$313,299	\$24,100
Other	175	614	\$110,203,945	\$629,737	\$179,504	\$3,739,220	\$21,367
<b>Total Commercial</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>\$374,371,713</b>	<b>\$935,929</b>	<b>\$386,339</b>	<b>\$12,702,432</b>	<b>\$31,756</b>
Total Industrial	268	1,204	\$228,807,790	\$853,760	\$190,022	\$7,763,448	\$28,968

## Commercial & Industrial Land Use

Source: Town of Berlin Parcel Database, RKG Associates





## Market Trends

Rents do not vary significantly across commercial asset types within Berlin's relevant commercial submarket. Class A office and retail rents remained close in the range of \$18 to \$20 per square foot. The retail vacancy rate remains significantly lower than the office rates across the submarket, with the retail vacancy rate at 11.1%. Both the vacancy rate and average rent for retail space has climbed since 2006, with an asking rent in 2020 of \$18.80. The regional Class A office market demonstrated consistent rent and decreasing vacancies between 2010 and 2020, with rents in 2020 of \$24.50 per square foot and vacancy at 18.2 percentage points. Class B and C office space maintained similar vacancy trends, converging with Class A vacancy rates from 2011 to 2020. With the COVID pandemic, office vacancies have most likely increased, following national trends of increased remote-work policies.

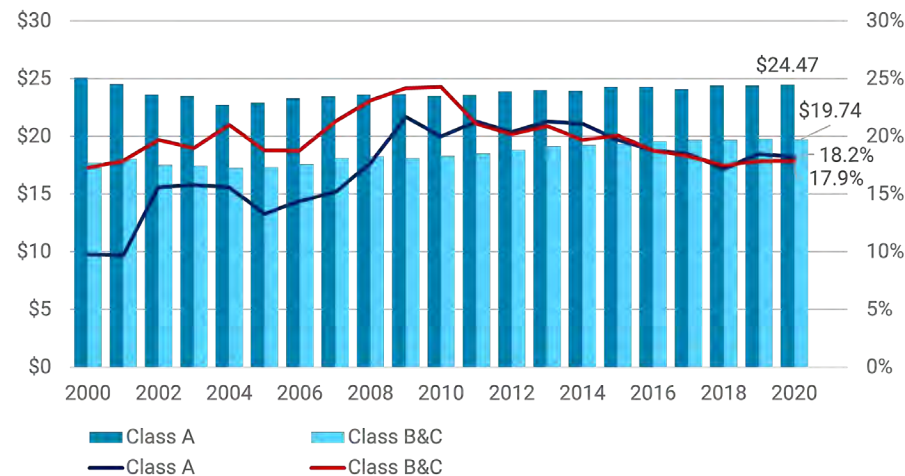


Retail Vacancy on Farmington Avenue

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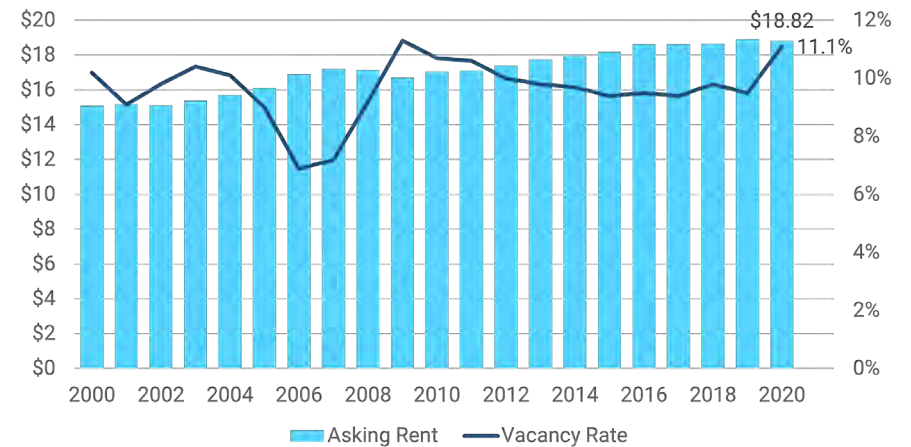
### Average Office Asking Rents and Vacancy Rates, Hartford South Submarket

Source: Moody's Analytics REIS, 2000-2020



### Average Retail Asking Rents and Vacancy Rates, Hartford South Submarket

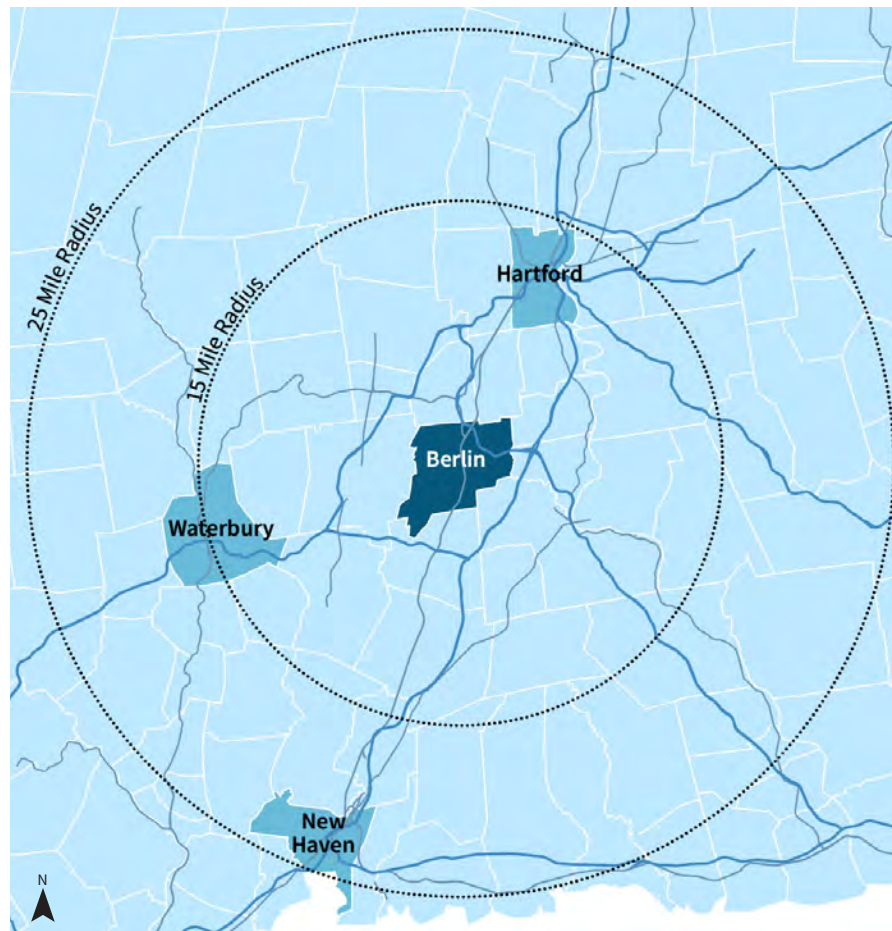
Source: Moody's Analytics REIS, 2000-2020



Berlin's industrial and commercial markets benefit from its location. The Town is situated in the center of the state and in southern Hartford County, between Hartford, Waterbury, and New Haven (three of the state's top five most populous cities), which are all within 25 miles of the Town's center. The Hartford Line runs through Berlin, providing direct rail service to both Hartford (just one stop away) and New Haven. Amtrak provides connections to Boston and New York City. Additionally, I-91 and I-84 are easily accessible via Routes 9 and 5/15.

#### 4.0

##### *Berlin's Location Proximate to Major Population Centers*



— Highway  
— Rail Corridor

Businesses are also afforded a strong support system within Berlin through several economic development entities. Berlin's Economic Development Department and its Economic Development Commission act as coordinators of activities to promote economic development and improve Berlin's economic conditions.

Business development in Berlin was consistent in four years from 2008 to 2021. From 2018-2019, 306 new jobs were added with 12 new businesses and 7 business relocations into Berlin, while in 2020-2021, 294 new jobs added with 27 new businesses and 1 business relocation. Berlin's location, strong regional connections, low tax rate, and robust support for local businesses should position the Town well in the eyes of employers going into the future.



*New Business Ribbon Cutting*  
Source: Town of Berlin



The Town has had several recent economic development accomplishments. TOMZ Corporation has acquired additional land and expanded its buildings, alongside the construction of solar arrays. Tasca Ford has renovated its dealership and received approval to construct a new dealership building. . Air Temp relocated to a facility on Fuller Way and is investing over \$1,000,000 in renovations and adding 100 jobs. These examples of successes span multiple industries, further diversifying the town's economy and protecting it from being overly burdened by a downturn in any one industry.





## Economic Development Areas

### Targeted Economic Development Sites (TEDS)

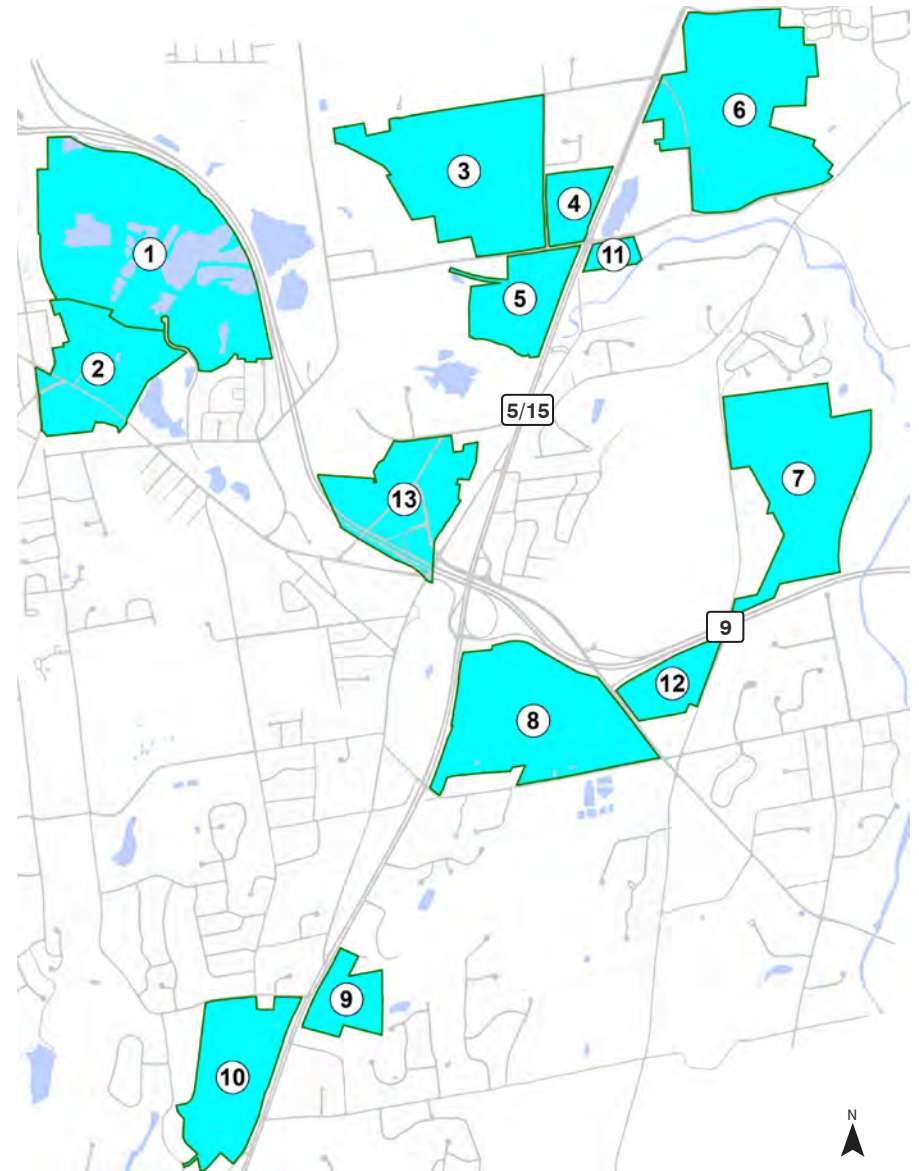
Targeted Economic Development Sites were created with the Town's 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development. Identification of these sites is intended to leverage the Town's zoning to encourage development in places that best serve public interest, while protecting natural resources. The intention is to support development of underutilized sites that are commercially/industrially zoned and that have infrastructure and systems that are already in place or can readily be extended.

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The TEDS strategy encourages the reuse of brownfield sites and development on lands that are vacant or developed or underdeveloped in relation to development potential. A major element of this strategy is to bolster the tax base and create local jobs by advancing zoning amendments to benefit the commercial and industrial zones. By concentrating development in existing commercial and industrial zones with very limited expansion at the margins in certain areas and creating allowable uses in zones that better fit the locations and the market, Berlin has been able to keep its vacancy rates low and encourage development in appropriate areas.

The TED Sites include:

1. New Britain Road (Rear)
2. Town Center Train Station Area
3. Corbin-Russwin
4. Northwest of Deming Road and Berlin Turnpike
5. Southwest Intersection of Deming Road and Berlin Turnpike
6. Northeast Utilities Area
7. Beckley Road Area
8. Intersection of Route 9 and Berlin Turnpike ("Hilltop")
9. Berlin Turnpike south of Sage Park
10. Berlin Turnpike south of Meadow Lane
11. Southeast Intersection of Berlin Turnpike and Deming Road
12. Mill Street at Route 9 Ramps
13. Webster Square Area



**Targeted Economic Development Sites (TEDS)**

Source: Town of Berlin, NE GEO

## **TEDS Status**

- 1** TEDS 1 is located east of New Britain Road between the Amtrak rail line and the Pan Am rail freight line. This area has significant wetlands and floodplain area. There are two areas with potential for development, one is owned by Rotha and its affiliates and the other is under contract for sale to Clean Earth. Rotha has renovated a substandard building and is reusing it as a warehouse and has approvals in place for a limited amount of additional development. Clean Earth has developed a reuse plan for the northern portion of the site. A part of the area would be developed as an industrial park and the remainder would be used for open space. Inland Wetlands Commission approval has been granted for this project and environmental studies are ongoing.
- 2** TEDS 2 is the area around the Berlin Train Station. There has been significant development in this area including the start of the Steele Center project. This project is being developed on properties acquired by the Town and cleared for redevelopment, including a brownfields site at 55 Steele Boulevard (aka 889 Farmington Avenue) and was facilitated by zoning amendments proposed in the 2013 POCD as well as additional changes that increased the allowed residential density. At the start of 2023, the first mixed-use building (a 21,000 square foot structure) at 9 Steele Boulevard was completed and a second 1,600 square foot building on the site is under construction. The project will eventually provide a connection between Farmington Avenue and the Berlin Train Station. First floor space at the Newport Center project at 848 Farmington Avenue has been leased and plans are in development to build additional residential units on the site. Many new businesses have located in this area and several facade improvements projects have been completed within a half mile of the Train Station. Streetscape projects on Main Street were completed and Deming Park underwent a total redevelopment between 2015 and 2021. The new Berlin Train Station was constructed at the site to accommodate the now operating Hartford Line commuter rail service and Amtrak service.
- 3** TEDS 3 is the Corbin Russwin manufacturing complex and its vicinity. TOMZ Corporation (manufacturing) acquired additional land from Corbin Russwin and has expanded its buildings in TEDS 3. TOMZ and Corbin Russwin also constructed significant solar arrays.
- 4** In TEDS 4, land has been assembled and redevelopment is underway at the northwest intersection of the Berlin Turnpike and Deming Road. The mixed-use Turnpike Ridge project is under development and the commercial square footage has been completed and foundations are in for the residential buildings. Turnpike Ridge is a mixed-use development that will include commercial and 72 market rate residential units and 18,000 square feet of commercial space.
- 5** In TEDS 5 at the southwest corner of the Berlin Turnpike and Deming Road intersection, there are two potential projects. The 404 Berlin Turnpike project has been approved and will include 200 mixed-income residential rental units, including 40 affordable units, a hotel, and a gasoline convenience store. In addition, an application is pending for the properties at 550-554 Berlin Turnpike for 106 mixed income apartments.
- 6** TEDS 6 is the vicinity of the Eversource Energy headquarters, east of the Berlin Turnpike at the Newington town line. The Deming Ridge project is under construction and will include 88 units of mixed income housing, including 27 affordable units.
- 7** There has been little change at TEDS 7, east of Beckley Road. Biopellet, a manufacturing company in Berlin, located and expanded a facility in this area.
- 8** There has been no change at TEDS 8 the Hilltop property that is east of the Berlin Turnpike at its intersection with Route 9
- 9** There was only a minor development in TEDS 9 that is east of the Berlin Turnpike opposite Meadow Lane. A new use includes a small buildings sales company located there.
- 10** There has been no change at TEDS 10 but Peterbuilt recently acquired the former golf cart and bowling alley properties to expand its medium and heavy-duty commercial trucks sales and service business.
- 11** There has been no change at TEDS 11.
- 12** There has been no change at TEDS 12.
- 13** In TEDS 13, the Stick Village development is almost completed with four of five approved buildings now complete and the fifth building under construction. The majority of spaces have been leased to commercial tenants. Additional tenants have been added at Ocean State Job Lot Plaza and Tasca Ford has renovated its dealership and has started construction of a Pro Elite Ford truck dealership Commercial Sales and Service Center, the first of this new concept in New England.



## Transit-Oriented Development

Kensington Village is home to Berlin's train station, which is serviced by the Hartford Line commuter rail service and Amtrak. Additionally, a portion of the Village is designated as TEDS 2. The Center is one of the most densely settled areas of Berlin, owing much of that density to historic development patterns. The Village is comprised of a mixture of uses including industrial businesses such as TIGHITCO, Berlin Steel, AMCO Precision Tool, and multiple banks, national and local retailers, and restaurants.

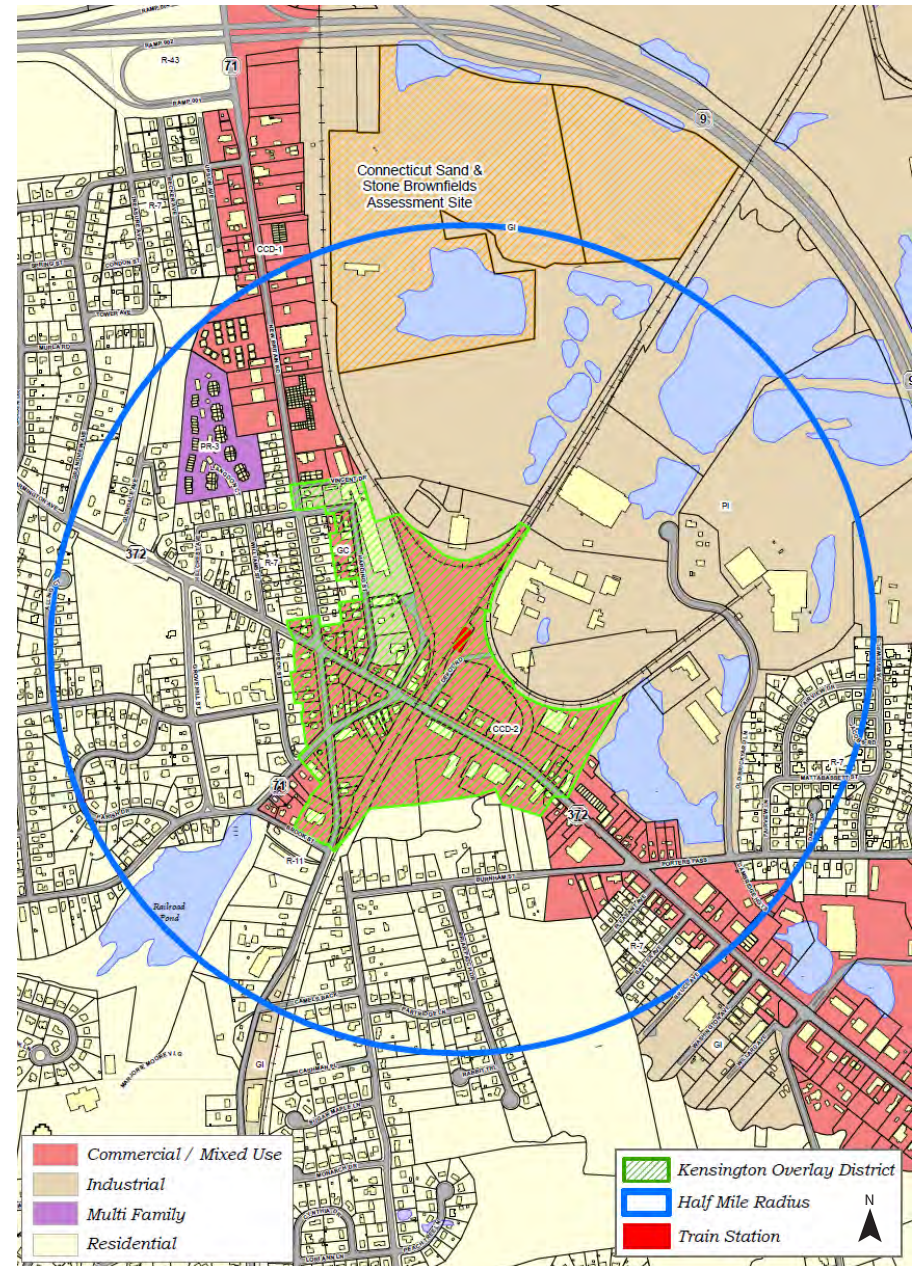
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The half-mile radius of the station is commonly referred to as the transit-oriented area as this area is generally accessible within a ten-minute walk of the station. Because of the rail station and the historic mixture of uses and density of the Village, the Kensington Village District, a transit-oriented development zoning district was established by the Town as a means of encouraging moderate density mixed-use development including commercial and multi-family residential uses.

The initiation of Hartford Line rail service and establishment of the Kensington Village District have been successful in supporting new development in Kensington Center. Most notable is the Steele Center project which is a \$17 million mixed-use project that includes 71 market rate apartments and 19,000 square feet of commercial space spread over five buildings, the first of which has recently been constructed.



9 Steele Center Image Source: SmartMLS 2022



Kensington Center Transit Oriented Development Area

Source: Town of Berlin, NE GEO



### **Economic Development Goal**

Foster a stable economy that leverages Berlin's location and commercial zones to provide residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while expanding and diversifying the Town's property tax base.

#### **Strategy 1**

Foster an environment that is supportive of economic development and provides opportunities for the growth and development of small and large businesses in the Town.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Continue to streamline the Town's business permitting and licensing processes to be efficient, effective, and expeditious.
2. Continue to work with local banks, SBA lenders, and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to promote existing small business lending and micro-lending programs.
3. Continue to provide tax incentives to for new economic development projects consistent with the Town's tax abatement policy. Consider dynamic changes to the tax abatement policy as economic and market conditions change.
4. Encourage the expansion of high-speed broadband coverage and gigabit internet access across the Town.

#### **Strategy 2**

Develop a campaign and communications that promotes Berlin as a place that is friendly to business.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Continue implementing and refine the strategic communications and engagement plan for the Town including the 'It's All in Berlin' branding and awareness effort.

2. Continue to provide and evolve regular communications and promotion of economic development activity in the Town through multiple media platforms.
3. Continue and refine the Town's economic development marketing effort including, information on available commercial and industrial properties, an overview of Berlin's strengths and assets, and print and digital materials.
4. Support the newly created Arts and Culture Committee and coordinate activities through the Town's Economic Development Director as liaison.
5. Continue membership in Chambers of Commerce to actively promote Berlin and distribute campaign materials and information.

#### **Strategy 3**

Support the development of industrial parks that will serve small and emerging businesses.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Identify sites that would be suitable for the development of small lot industrial parks.
2. Revise zoning regulations to allow for the development of small lot industrial parks at suitable sites. Allow 1 acre lots in PI-2 if part of a unified site plan for a lot 5 acres or larger. Allow 100' frontage in PI-2 and PI-I if development of a unified site plan for 1 acre lots.

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**Strategy 4**

Review and update, as appropriate, the Town's mixed-use, commercial, and industrial zone regulations to ensure that the regulations provide sufficient flexibility to allow development that responds to current and future market conditions.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Review zoning regulations to ensure that they are supportive of the development of health care facilities in appropriate districts.
2. Review special permit uses and reduce requirement as feasible to a zoning permit and site plan for specific uses in specific districts.
3. Review zoning regulations to ensure that they allow for the development of shared working spaces and business incubators in a range of districts.
4. Analyze the Town's existing industrial zoning districts to determine if allowable uses, building heights, parking and loading requirements, and constraints on building size or footprints are in line with today's industrial/manufacturing/distribution standards.
5. Modify site plan and zoning regulations to allow the Planning and Zoning Commission to strengthen requirements for environmental assessments for properties with potential for environmental contamination based on historic uses.
6. Study mixed-use options that include residential in the PS-A zoned areas (see housing section).
7. Consider revising BTZ zoning regulations to require at least 20% commercial development and that commercial and residential development be done on a pro rata basis if a project is phased.
8. Study the SPDD and the SPDD Overlay and SPDD-2 zones to determine how those districts could be modified to be more effective in attracting appropriate development. Consider allowing a set of uses by right (permitted uses), expanding the range of uses allowed by special permit including residential uses as part of a mixed-use project and reducing setbacks and minimum lot sizes to facilitate mixed-use development.

9. Update Town zoning regulations to consider providing more flexibility in the definition of business uses and to address contemporary business trends and definitions.

**Strategy 5**

Focus economic development efforts on Farmington Avenue and the Berlin Turnpike.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Review parking requirements for potential reductions to requirements that may allow for infill development in existing parking lots.
2. Consider conducting corridor studies or area plans for the Berlin Turnpike and Farmington Avenue to help align economic development priorities with needed infrastructure improvements to adequately support future growth.
3. Identify infrastructure enhancements needed in those areas.
4. Review zoning regulations to ensure that the regulations support desirable land uses and site design and provide opportunities for housing development without displacing commercial uses.

### **Strategy 6**

Facilitate the clean-up, improvement, and reuse of vacant, aging, or contaminated commercial and industrial properties.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Continue to facilitate clean up and reuse of brownfields sites including by seeking grants and loans to facilitate investigation and clean up. Consider RFPs for sale of tax liens to address tax delinquent brownfields sites.
2. Maintain a focus on reducing commercial building vacancies by working with property owners to identify needs and challenges in filling vacancies.
3. Step up the enforcement of the Town's blighted property ordinance.
4. Work with and provide incentives to commercial property owners on Farmington Avenue and the Berlin Turnpike to improve the appearance of properties.

### **Strategy 7**

Continue to promote Berlin's TED sites by developing informational and promotional materials specific to each site.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Seek additional funding to continue the façade program to upgrade landscaping and facades on Farmington Avenue, New Britain Road, and vicinity.
2. Work with the TED site property owners to support their marketing efforts if the properties are for sale. Prepare conceptual development plans in concert with the owners.
3. Continue to encourage property owners in TEDs areas to work together on issues regarding sale and future development of the properties.
4. Consider infrastructure extensions and other incentives to stimulate the development of TEDs properties consistent with the uses proposed in this Plan.

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**Strategy 6**

Continue to invest in Kensington Village and facilitate the redevelopment of properties and development of mixed-use commercial and residential projects.

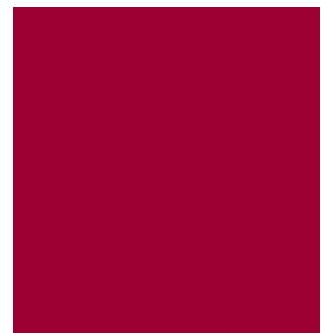
**Supporting Actions**

1. Assist private property owners to market properties consistent with the uses proposed in the Plan.
2. Increase the allowed residential density in Kensington Village Core Area 2 (see Housing section).
3. Communicate with property owners in the core of the TOD area and develop and coordinate plans for the next phases of TOD area mixed use redevelopment as properties are available for sale.
4. Make transit, pedestrian and bicycle improvements to link residents and employees to the TOD hub at the Berlin Train Station.
5. Expand open space walking connection from the Train Station to Old Brickyard Lane and beyond.
6. Continue membership in the Main Street Program and consider the creation of public/private organizational structure to foster town center revitalization in Kensington Center.
7. Continue to implement Farmington Avenue Design standards and update standards as needed.
8. Continue to extend sidewalks and fill missing links to connect the Kensington Village TOD area to nearby neighborhoods.
9. Consider rezoning the Berlin Steel complex and industrial properties on Harding street for Transit Oriented Development uses if these properties become available for sale or reuse.
10. Continue to make public investments to reinforce the Kensington Village TOD area.
11. Continue streetscape improvements as grant funds become available. Concentrate on streetscape improvements on Farmington Avenue between to New Britain Road and Steele Boulevard.

12. Study creation of wireless zone downtown.
13. Connect Steele Boulevard to the Train Station parking and Depot Road when appropriate rights can be secured from CTDOT and AMTRAK.



# 5.0 Transportation



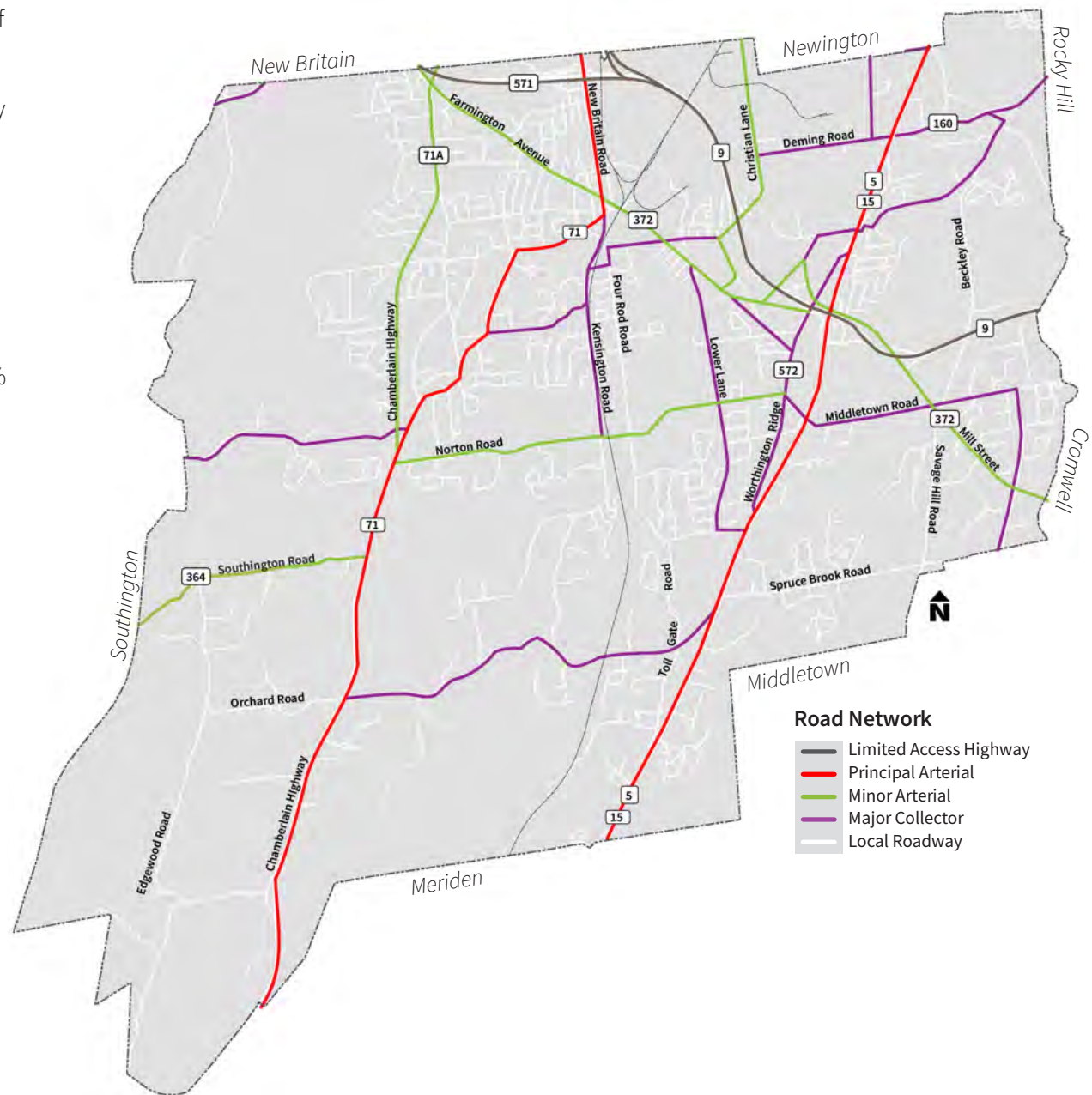


Berlin's transportation network is comprised of local roadways, State roadways, a passenger rail line and station, and a limited network of sidewalks and pathways. Berlin is approximately ten miles southwest of Hartford and is traversed by divided highways including Route 9 and Routes 5/15 (the Berlin Turnpike). Route 9 provides a direct connection to both I-84 and I-91. As a suburban community with rural areas, Berlin's transportation network is autocentric with approximately 142 miles of State and local roadways. The Town also has 89 miles of sidewalk in public right-of-way, which spans 27% of public roadway edge.

The Town's transportation network is vital to providing access to jobs, housing, schools, open space, goods and services, and recreation. As such, it should maximize access for all users and accommodate a wide array of transportation modes. A comprehensive transportation network is central to economic development and the vitality of a community.

### Roadway Network

Approximately 77% of Berlin's roadway network (110 miles) is local roadway that is maintained by the Town; the remaining 32 miles are State roadway maintained by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). The Town has resurfaced an average of 3.2 miles of roadway per year over the past two years. This is equivalent to 2.9% of the Town's local road network per year. Recent paving projects have been funded with State grants; no Town bonding has been secured for paving in last three years. The Town would need to pave 6 to 7 miles of roadway per year in order to adequately maintain the roadways in a state of





good condition. In response to this need, the Town has recently engaged a consultant to conduct a townwide pavement conditions assessment to assist in making strategic roadway investments.

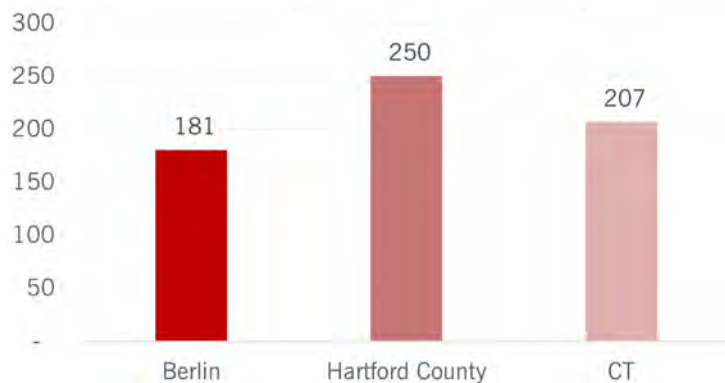
State routes in Berlin include the following:

- Route 5/15 (Berlin Turnpike)
- Route 9 (a limited access highway)
- Route 71 (Chamberlain Highway/Percival Avenue/Main Street/New Britain Avenue)
- Route 71A (Chamberlain Highway/High Road)
- Route 160 (Deming Road)
- Route 364 (Southington Road)
- Route 372 (Farmington Avenue/Mill Street)
- Route 571 (a divided highway connecting Route 71A to Route 9)
- Route 572 (Worthington Ridge)

With approximately 20,000 residents, Berlin has 29 linear feet of local roadway per resident or 181 residents per mile of local roadway. When compared to the average across Hartford County, Berlin has 28% fewer residents per mile of roadway. This means that the cost of maintaining roadways is distributed over a smaller number of residents in Berlin as compared to most residents of Hartford County. Even when compared to the State average, Berlin has 13% fewer residents per roadway. This implies that Berlin's roadway network has capacity to serve more residents.

*Residents per Mile of Roadway (2020)*

*Source: US Census and GIS data*



*Recently improved segment of Heritage Drive Image Source: Town of Berlin*

## Bridges and Culverts

Berlin has fifteen bridges and culverts on local and State roadways that are listed in the 2021 National Bridge Inventory. Those bridges date from 1950 with four bridges and culverts having been replaced or substantially reconstructed as recently as 2022 under the Federal Bridge Preservation Program. These include the Berlin Street bridge, Heritage Drive culvert, Wildermere Road culvert, Worthington Ridge bridge. In addition to these recently completed projects, an additional four projects are in planning, design, or permitting phases. These include the Kensington Road culvert, Spruce Brook Road (not listed in the National Bridge Inventory), Glen Street culvert, and Edgewood Road culvert. The Town has also hired a consultant to provide a report on condition of other bridges and provide guidance on maintenance, repair, and replacement priorities.

5.0

### 2021 National Bridge Inventory for Berlin

Source: US Department of Transportation

Bridge #	Bridge Type	Year Built	Facility Carried	Feature Spanned	Condition
06854	Concrete Culvert	2012	Beckley Rd	Spruce Brook	Good
05224	Prestressed Box Beam or Girders	1981	Berlin St	Mattabesset River	New
04473	Steel Culvert	2019	Burnham St	Mattabesset River	–
06824	Concrete Culvert	1950	Christian Ln	Willow Brook	Fair
05814	Steel Culvert	1970	Deming Rd	Willow Brook	Fair
04474	Prestressed T-Beam	2017	Farmington Ave	Mattabesset River	Good
06955	Culvert	1957	Glen St	Mattabesset River	Poor
06123	Concrete Culvert	1985	Heritage Dr	Stocking Brook	New
03657	Steel Culvert	1958	Kensington Rd	Mattabesset River	Poor
04062	Prestressed Slab	1970	Lower Ln	Mattabesset River	Fair
06124	Concrete Culvert	1999	Middletown Rd	Spruce Brook	Good
04472	Steel Culvert	1974	Orchard Rd	Belcher Brook	Fair
04477	Prestressed Box Beam or Girders	1970	Wethersfield Rd	Mattabesset River	Fair
06122	Concrete Culvert	1980	Wildermere Rd	Belcher Brook	New
04476	Prestressed Slab	1996	Worthington Rdg	Mattabesset River	New





## Transit

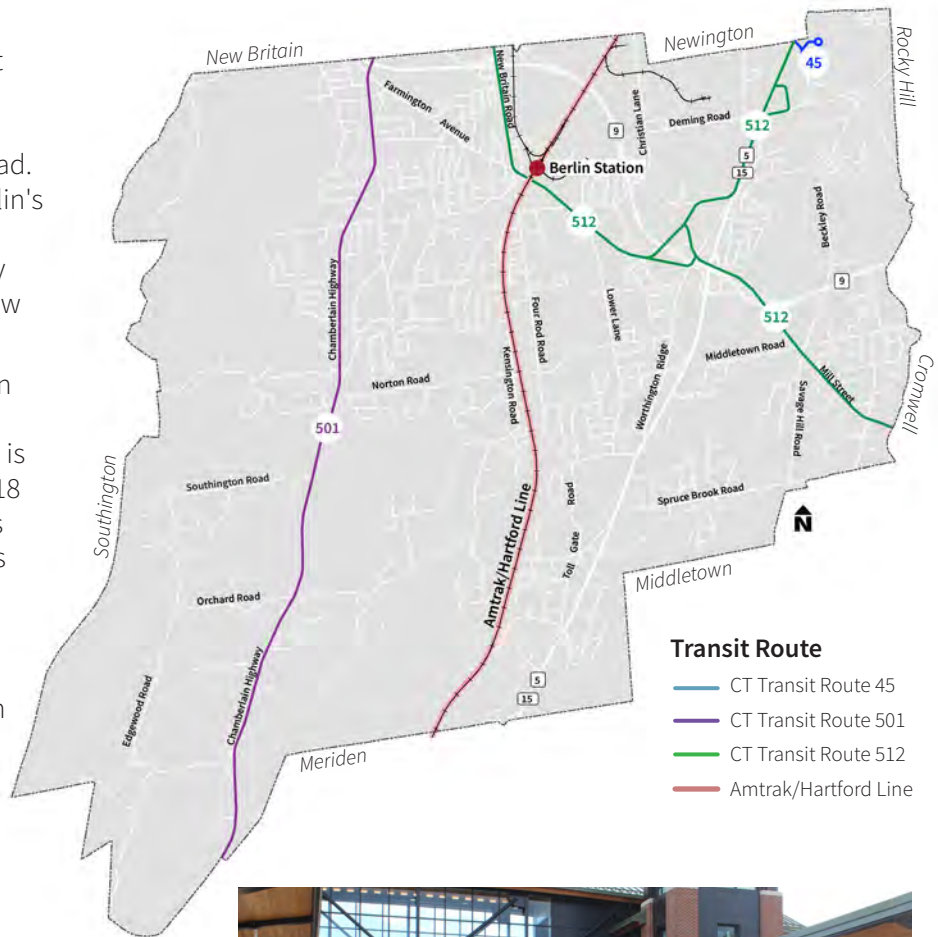
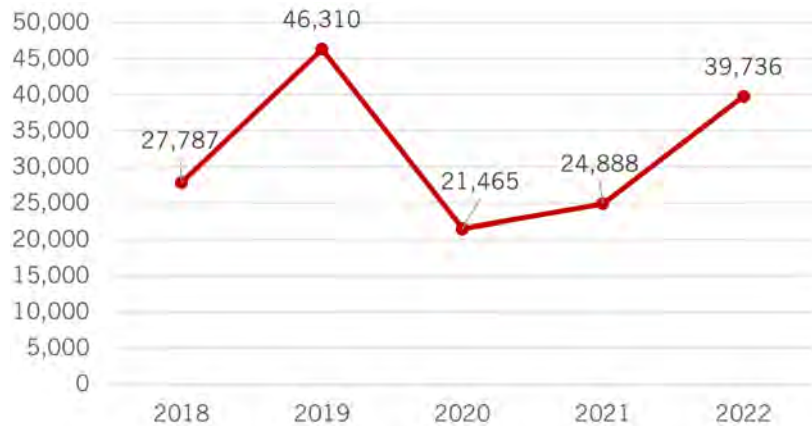
Berlin benefits from bus and rail transit services. This includes three CT Transit bus routes that serve the Town. Route 501 connects New Britain and Meriden along Chamberlain Highway. Route 512 connects Middletown to New Britain along Mill Street, the Berlin Turnpike, Farmington Avenue, and New Britain Road. Route 45 provides service between Eversource and Hartford. Additionally, Berlin's Senior Center operates weekday paratransit service within Berlin and to New Britain. While Berlin has bus transit service, that service is limited in frequency and hours of operations and weekend service is limited. The Town also has few bus stops with amenities such as paved waiting areas, benches, or shelters.

Hartford Line commuter rail service is provided by CT Rail with service at Berlin Station. Service is available seven days a week connecting Berlin to multiple stations between New Haven and Springfield, MA. Amtrak regional rail service is also provided at Berlin Station. Hartford Line rail service was introduced in 2018 with Berlin Station accommodating over 46,000 train boardings and alightings (on and offs) in 2019 before being impacted by the pandemic. Ridership levels have since recovered from the 2020 low with almost 40,000 boardings and alightings at Berlin Station in 2022.

A 2016 commuter rail study conducted by CTDOT explored the feasibility of providing commuter rail service between Berlin Station and Waterbury Station along the Pan Am freight line. The study determined that implementing passenger rail service was not viable due to its high costs, potentially low ridership, and difficulties in upgrading the Terryville Tunnel.

**Berlin Station Ons and Offs**

Source: CT DOT



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Berlin Station Image Credit: Brady Rider, Wikipedia



## Pedestrian Facilities

Berlin has 89 miles of sidewalk in public right-of-way, which line 27% of public roadway edge. Sidewalks are scattered across the Town with the most extensive sidewalk network found in the center of Town along and in proximity of Farmington Avenue, Kensington Road, Four Rod Road, and Norton Road. Most of the Town's sidewalk network was constructed by developers as they built new roads in subdivisions as required by the Town's zoning regulations. Consequently, many of Berlin's older neighborhoods and streets, which have higher density than many newer developments lack sidewalks.

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The Town budgets \$100k to \$125k per year for sidewalk repairs and replacement. Recent sidewalk improvements have been concentrated in Kensington Center with the goal of completing gaps in the sidewalk network that will better connect surrounding neighborhoods, including the Municipal Complex, to the Center and Berlin Station. Specific projects include sidewalk improvements on Farmington Avenue, Langdon Court, Newton Street, and Norton Road. Additionally, a major streetscape project has recently been completed on Steele Boulevard and Main Street. That project provides an improved connection to Berlin's train station and includes brick pavement, pedestrian area lighting, crosswalk enhancements, and traffic calming elements.



Kensington Center Streetscape Enhancements



## Bicycle Facilities

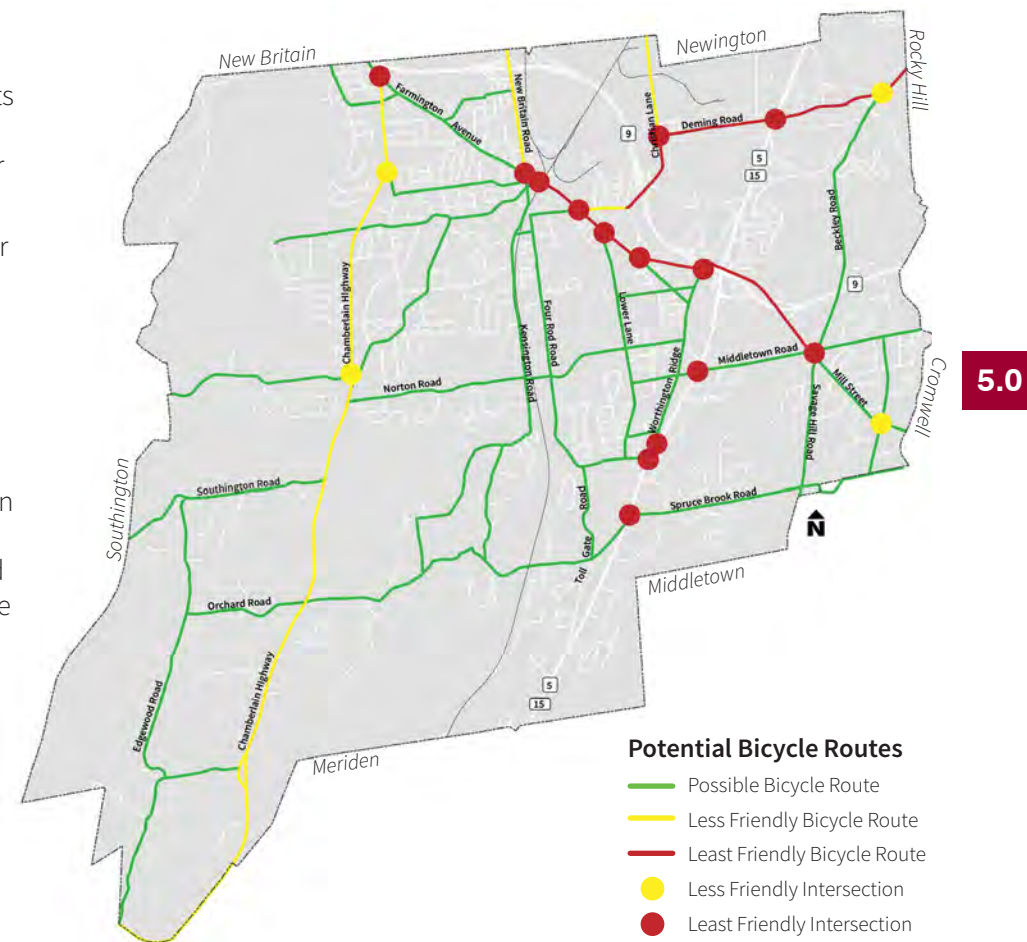
While Berlin is popular with recreational bicyclists, bicycling as a means of commuting and running errands in Berlin is very low (0.2% of Berlin residents commute to work by bike). Berlin also lacks facilities such as bike lanes and paved bicycle paths but has many low volume roadways that are suitable for bicycling.

The Town recently conducted a high-level evaluation of arterial and collector roadways and intersections in order to identify which routes may be most suitable for bicycling. That evaluation considered factors such as traffic volume, traffic speed, and roadway geometry. The corridors were identified as "possible bicycle routes", "less friendly bicycle routes", and "least friendly bicycle routes".

Corridors identified as "possible bicycle routes" include roads such as Edgewood Road, Southington Road, Orchard Road, Norton Road, Kensington Road, Four Rod Road, Lower Lane, Worthington Ridge, Beckley Road, Middletown Road, Spruce Brook Road, Savage Hill Road, Toll Gate Road, and others. Segments of Farmington Avenue, Mill Street, and Christian Lane were identified as the "least friendly bicycle routes" while Chamberlain Highway, New Britain Road, and a segment of Christian Lane were identified as "less friendly bicycle routes". The Town also evaluated multiple intersections for bicycle suitability and evaluated them using a similar criteria. Most intersections identified as "least friendly" are located along Farmington Avenue, Mill Street, Deming Road, and the Berlin Turnpike.

While the Town does not currently have bicycle facilities, these routes hold potential for accommodating bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, or for shared use with appropriate pavement markings and signage. The Town is seeking to provide bicycle facilities where appropriate when reconstructing roadways and is planning to reconstruct Episcopal Road and Rowley Street to include bicycle lanes. The Town is also exploring the potential to establish connections to nearby multi-use trails

In addition to these local potential bicycle routes, the Connecticut's Statewide Active Transportation Plan identifies three preferred corridors for regional bicycle routes through Berlin. These include Christian Lane/Deming Road and Routes 372 and 71. These corridors were identified based upon their potential to provide regional bicycle connections. The development of bicycle facilities on these corridors would require substantial investment and improvements in the corridors to accommodate bicyclists.



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## Commuting Preferences and Patterns

Like most of Connecticut's rural or suburban communities, Berlin's residents overwhelmingly drive to work alone (84%) exceeding Hartford County (79%) and the commuters across the State (76%). Only 16% of Berlin residents travel to work by other means, this includes 5% of residents who carpool, 2% of residents who walk to work, and 8% of residents who work at home. Less than one percent of the Town's residents commute via public transit or bicycle to work.

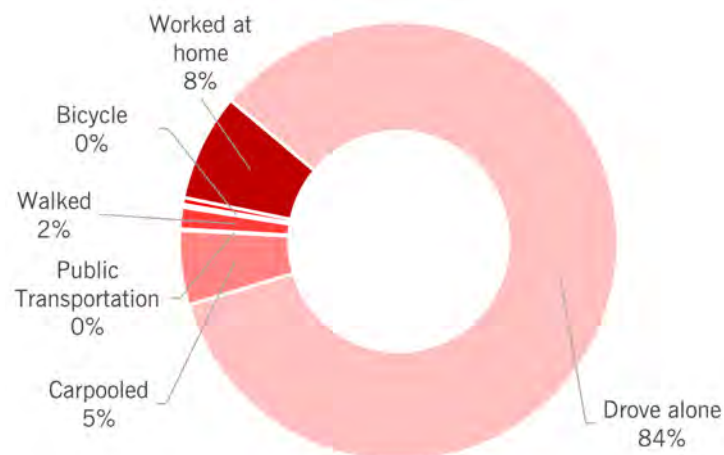
More than half of Berlin residents work within ten miles of their homes. This is comparable to the commuting distances of workers across Hartford County. Compared to workers across the State, Berlin's resident workers work closer to home with fewer resident workers commuting 25 miles or more to work.

Hartford is the most common work destination of Berlin's resident workers. In 2019, a total of 8,711 workers residing in Berlin commuted to other towns or cities for work. Other common work destinations outside of Berlin include New Britain, Farmington, Newington, Middletown, Meriden, West Hartford, East Hartford, and Rocky Hill.

Commuting patterns shifted modestly over the ten-year period between 2009 and 2019, with fewer residents working in New Britain and Middletown and more residents working in East Hartford, Farmington, Hartford, Meriden, and Rocky Hill. Most commuting destinations are directly accessible from Berlin by Route 9 or the Berlin Turnpike.

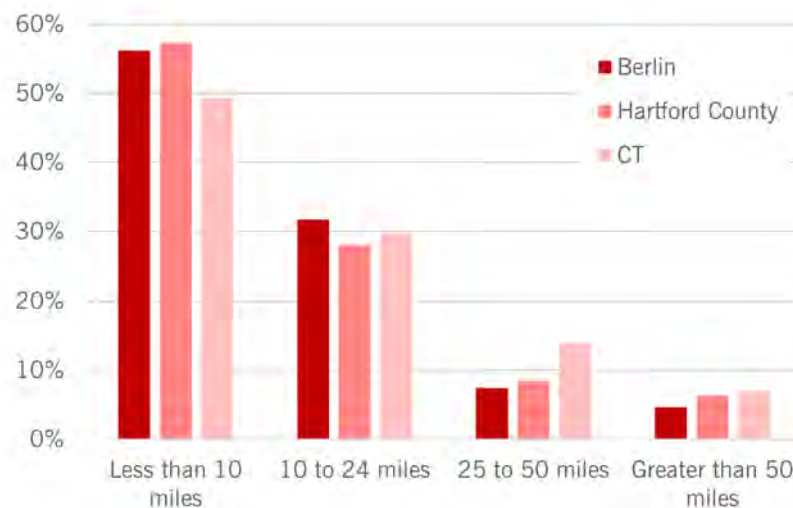
*Means of Transportation to Work, 2020*

*Source: US Census Bureau 5-year ACS*



*Distance to Work, 2020*

*Source: US Census Bureau 5-year ACS*



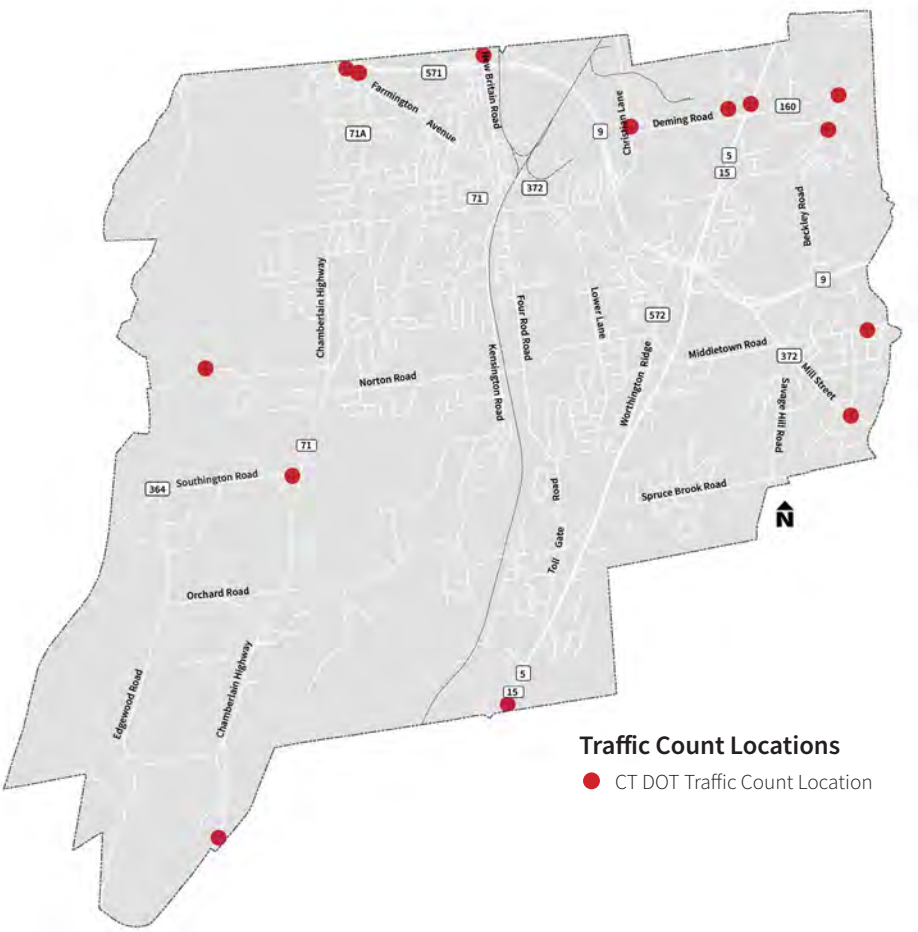
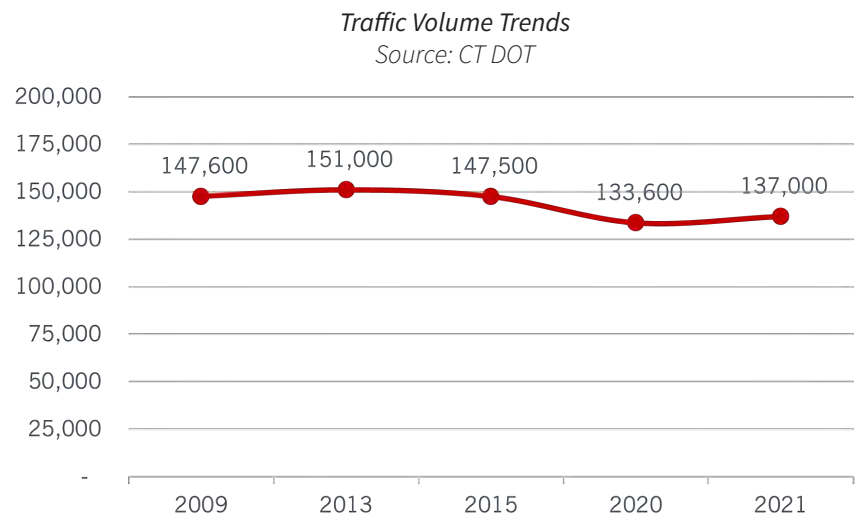


Traffic Volume Trends

Between 2013 and 2015, traffic volume as measured at fifteen locations in Berlin monitored by the Connecticut Department of Transportation dropped an average of 2.3%. Traffic volume dropped by an average of 7% at those locations between 2015 and 2020, although this decrease was likely pandemic related. Traffic volume has rebounded since 2020 but has not yet reached 2015 volumes.

The pre-pandemic traffic volume drop could be associated with changing travel behavior due to an increase in working from home and/or shopping from home. While traffic volume has decreased at these locations, traffic patterns may have shifted over the same period of time resulting in other locations and routes experiencing more traffic. Additionally, these trends do not reflect changes in peak hour traffic volume, which could be higher in specific locations resulting in a diminished level of service at some intersections in Berlin.

Overall, these traffic volume trends suggest that new housing units and commercial space associated with development activity in Berlin over the past ten years has not resulted in unsustainable traffic growth and that the Town's roadway network likely has the capacity to absorb a limited amount of more growth without exceeding traffic volume levels previously experienced.



**Traffic Count Locations**  
● CT DOT Traffic Count Location

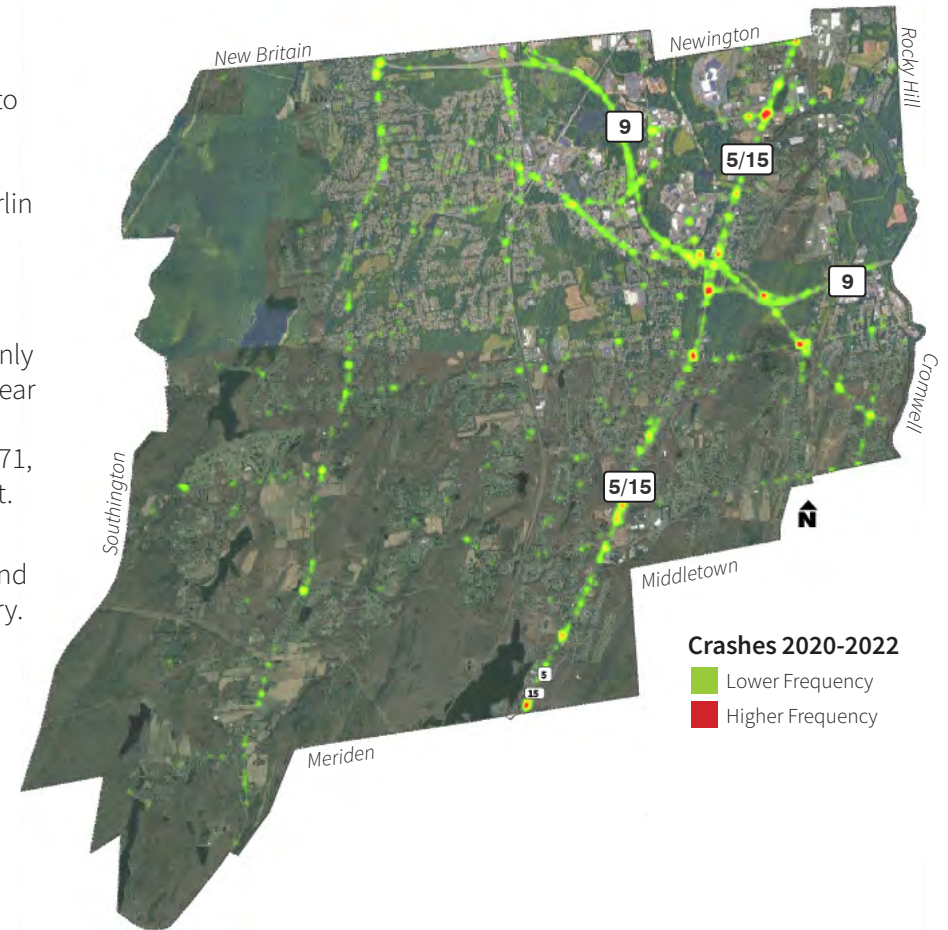
## Transportation Safety

Berlin's crash rate is slightly above the State's with an average rate of 31.2 crashes per one thousand residents over the 2020 to 2022 period compared to an average rate of 24.8 crashes per thousand residents across the State over the same period. While Berlin's rate is slightly higher, the number of crashes per year over the last three years was lower than prior to the pandemic — Berlin experienced 700 or more crashes per year between 2015 and 2019.

Over the three-year period between 2020 and 2022, there was a total of 1,862 crashes comprised of six fatal crashes (occurring on Routes 9, 5/15, and 571) and 500 injury crashes with the remaining crashes being property-damage-only crashes. More than three-quarters (77%) of crashes in Berlin over the three-year period occurred on State highways with 30% of all crashes occurring on the Berlin Turnpike. Other corridors with high crash rates include Route 9, Route 71, and Route 372. This concentration of crashes can be seen on the map at right.

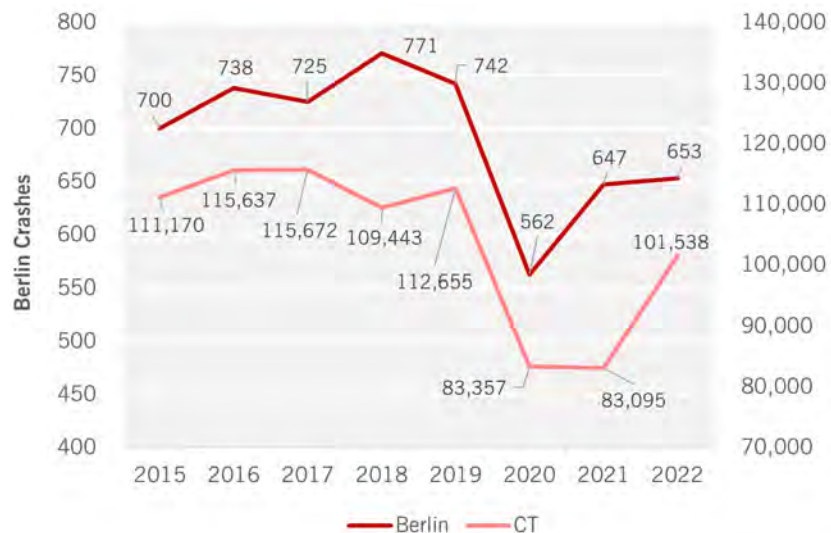
Berlin had a relatively low incident of pedestrian or bicycle related crashes between 2020 and 2022, which included eight pedestrian-involved crashes and six bicyclist involved crashes. All but one of those crashes resulted in an injury. Both pedestrian and bicycle crashes occurred primarily on State roadways with the Berlin Turnpike and Route 71 having the greatest occurrence of these crashes.

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**Berlin vs Statewide Crash Trends, 2020-2022**

Source: CT Crash Data Repository



## Transportation & Infrastructure Goal

Improve and expand transportation options to ensure greater connectivity for all modes of transportation and maintain and improve infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

### Strategy 1

Improve traffic operations across the Town.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Improve the Town's traffic operations by updating traffic signal infrastructure and technology at intersections that experience a low level of service.

### Strategy 2

Strategically improve transportation infrastructure across the Town.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Continue to pursue State and Federal funding for local bridge maintenance and repairs.
2. Integrate Low Impact Design (LID) measures in transportation infrastructure projects as feasible.
3. Implement recommendations of pavement conditions survey and management plan to address outstanding needs in pavement conditions of the Town's roads.
4. Seek grants for and continue to invest in streetscape projects in commercial areas where warranted with priority being Farmington Avenue between New Britain Road and Steele Boulevard.

### Strategy 3

Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the Town.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Adopt a Complete Streets policy that prioritizes the provision of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and traffic calming improvements in transportation infrastructure and maintenance projects and review ordinances, regulations, and policies to align with complete street principles.
2. Provide bicycle racks at locations across Town such as the Train Station, schools, and parks. Consider providing bike lockers at Train Station.
3. Develop a bicycle plan that identifies preferred bicycling routes and corridors that may be appropriate for the development of bike lanes or pathways.
4. Prepare an accessibility plan to evaluate the accessibility of existing sidewalks and to recommend projects to improve accessibility.
5. Continue to invest in improving existing sidewalks and making sidewalks more accessible.
6. Update the Town's sidewalk plan and identify needed improvements to connect gaps in the network prioritizing corridors that connect neighborhoods to schools, Town facilities, and Kensington Village and East Berlin Village. Also review and prioritize corridors such as Farmington Avenue, Worthington Ridge, Berlin Turnpike, Deming Road, Four Rod Road (south of Norton), Percival Avenue (Carbo Lane to Percival Field), Robbins Rd (Towne Drive to Timberwood), and Kensington Road (Carriage Drive to Norton Road).
7. Seek grants and provide funding for and expand the Town's sidewalk network as identified by the updated sidewalk plan.
8. Identify priority intersections across Town for improving pedestrian crossings and provide improvements to pedestrian crossings as needed including crosswalk markings, signage, signal enhancements, and lighting enhancements.

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- Expand trail and greenway connections across the Town and identify preferred routes for connecting to nearby regional trails such as the Farmington Canal Trail.

#### **Strategy 4**

**Accommodate emerging transportation modes and technologies.**

##### **Supporting Actions**

- Seek funding to provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure at Town facilities and where may be required to support electric vehicle fleets.
- Review zoning regulations and amend as necessary to require the provision of bicycle parking and electric vehicle charging as appropriate.
- Investigate the best options for improving efficiency and reducing environmental impact of Town vehicles.

#### **Strategy 5**

**Continue to address safety issues across Berlin's transportation system.**

##### **Supporting Actions**

- Pursue grant funding, as available, to provide safety enhancements at high-crash areas.
- Continue to work with CTDOT to ensure that safety enhancements are made to high-crash locations on State highways in Berlin.
- Develop a traffic calming toolbox as part of a Complete Streets plan and implement traffic calming measures on local roadways where crash rates could be reduced through traffic calming.

#### **Strategy 6**

**Improve access to CT Transit bus routes.**

##### **Supporting Actions**

- Provide additional bus shelters and waiting/drop-off areas.
- Work with CT Transit to provide more local stops on routes that currently serve Berlin.

#### **Strategy 7**

**Improve access to Berlin Station and encourage use of commuter rail, regional rail, and CTfastrak service.**

##### **Supporting Actions**

- Reduce parking requirements for developments within TOD districts.
- Complete gaps in sidewalk network between Berlin Station and surrounding neighborhoods and multi-family properties.
- Focus initial bicycle improvements on providing connections between Berlin Station and surrounding neighborhoods and multi-family properties.
- Improve CT Transit bus service between Berlin Station and New Britain's CTfastrak Station.



Image Credit: Brock USA

# 6.0 Facilities & Services

Berlin has a range of municipal and school facilities. Within Town are five Berlin public schools; four fire stations; a senior center; an animal control facility; a physical services complex that includes a municipal garage for vehicle maintenance; and a municipal complex that includes Town Hall, the Board of Education, the Police Department, and the Berlin Peck Memorial Library and community center. With exception of Fire Station #4 (South Kensington Volunteer Fire Department), most facilities are located in the center or northern half of Berlin.

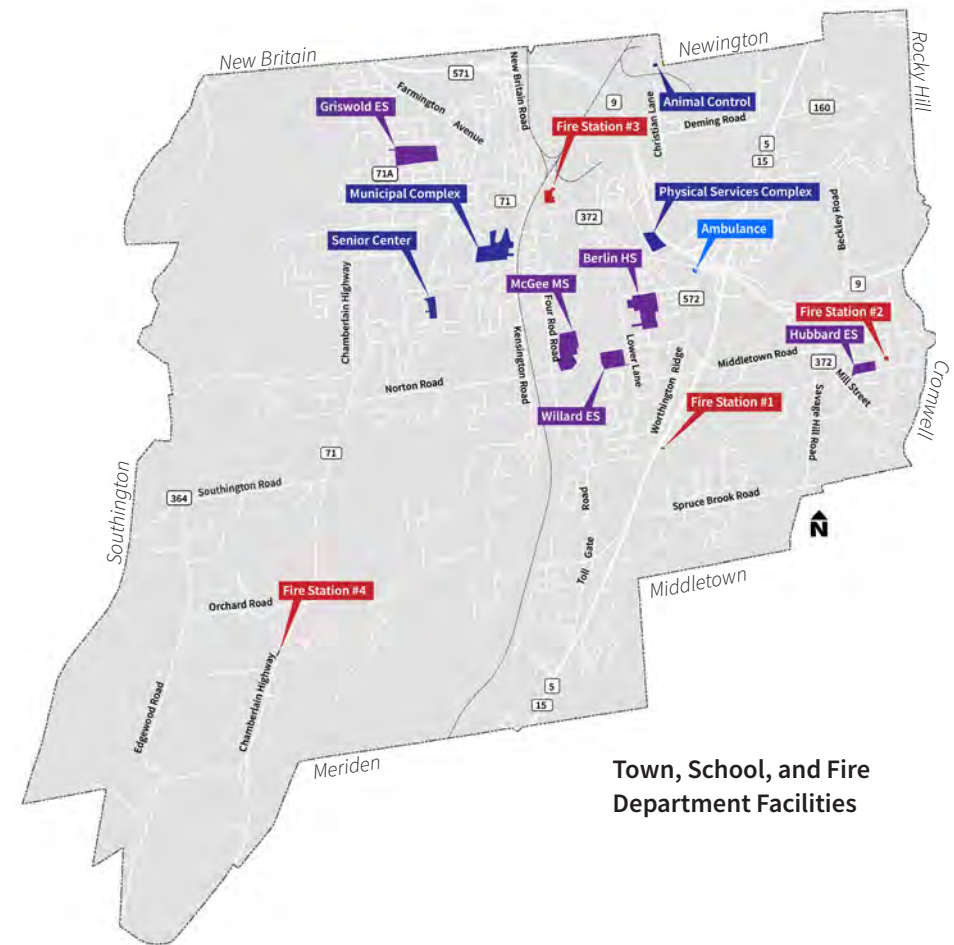
From these facilities, the Town provides a range of services to its residents. Services are typical of a mid-sized community and includes four volunteer fire departments; police services; animal control; library services and programming; senior services; social services; a public works department that provides street, public facility, and infrastructure maintenance and services; water and sewer services; and Town administrative services.

Maintenance of Town facilities is conducted by the Building Facilities Division of the Department of Public Works. The Division is responsible for maintaining and servicing all 33 Town-owned buildings and schools, including: fire alarms, heating, air conditioning, plumbing, security, lighting and any other areas pertaining to proper operation and maintenance.

6.0



Berlin Town Hall



Town, School, and Fire Department Facilities



Town Facilities

Berlin owns, maintains, and operates multiple buildings and facilities from which it provides services. These facilities total approximately 192,000 square feet of floor area, the largest of which is the Town Hall building, which includes the Police Station and Board of Education offices on the lower level. With exception of the Berlin Peck Memorial Library and Animal Control building, all other facilities are nearly forty years old or older. Facilities vary considerably in condition, amenities, and accessibility.

Town Hall, Police Station, and Board of Education Offices

The Town Hall building was constructed in 1975. Substantial improvements were made to the building in 1995, 2016, and 2019. A roof replacement is planned for 2025 and a \$5 million renovation is planned for Police Station in 2024. The total building area is 46,842 sf and it is located on a 25.1-acre site.

Berlin Peck Memorial Library

The library is one of the newest municipal buildings constructed in Berlin. It was constructed in 1989 and has a total of 43,408 sf of space with half of that space on a lower level, which is currently used as a community center. Improvements to the building have been made periodically since its construction and a roof replacement is planned for 2024. The library is located on the 25.1-acre municipal complex site that it shares with Town Hall.

Physical Services Complex

The physical services complex sits on a 7.9-acre site and is comprised of eight buildings and several accessory structures. The complex’s buildings were constructed between 1957 and 1983. The complex houses the Department of Public Works facilities and the Town’s municipal garage where its fleet of vehicles are serviced and maintained. This site is located within the floodplain of the Mattabessett River and is subject to periodic flooding.

Senior Center

The Town’s Senior Center is located in 15,575 sf of space leased from the Housing Authority. The building in which it is located was constructed in 1955 and has been upgraded at least twice since. It is located on a 5.8-acre parcel near the Town’s municipal complex.

Animal Control

Berlin’s Animal Control facility is comprised of a 4,706 sf building located on a half-acre site near the Newington town line. The building was constructed in 2008.

Town Facilities	Year Built	Rehab	Area (sf)	Site Area (ac)	Notes
Town Hall Building (includes Board of Education and Police Department at lower level)	1975	1995, 2016, 2019	46,842	25.1	Roof replacement planned for 2025, \$5 million renovation planned for Police Department in 2024
Berlin Peck Memorial Library (includes Community Center on lower level)	1989	2000, 2016, 2018	43,408	(shares Town Hall site)	Roof replacement planned for 2024
Berlin Senior Center	1955	1985, 2009	17,575	5.8	Space is leased from the Berlin Housing Authority
Physical Services Complex & Municipal Garage	1957-1983	—	38,156	7.9	\$1.6 million of renovations were recommended by a 2014 facilities study. Site located in a flood zone
Animal Control	2008	—	4,706	0.5	

Source: Town of Berlin Assessor’s Database

## Fire Department Facilities

### Fire Stations

Berlin has four volunteer fire companies that work from stations that range from 2,523 sf to 20,712 sf in size. Fire stations sites vary from 0.23 acres at Fire Station #1 to 4.21 acres at Fire Station #3. The fire stations were constructed between 1946 and 1970, with three of the stations constructed between 1968 and 1970. The South Kensington Fire Station is the only station that is owned by the Town. A masterplan for facility updates of the South Kensington Fire Station is currently being considered. With exception of the South Kensington Fire Station, stations are clustered in the northeastern area of Town.

6.0

Fire stations serve as the primary place of business for fire rescue and services (including training & fire equipment), provide locations for radio equipment for Police, Fire & Public Works, act as primary emergency operations centers, provide a place of refuge for the Police Department, and provide training classrooms used by Fire, Police, CTDEEP, Connecticut State Police & other Town departments. Typical reoccurring improvements to the fire stations include roof replacement, door replacement, lighting upgrades, boiler and air conditioner replacement, and repaving.

The fire stations sites and buildings, while requiring maintenance and minor upgrades, generally meet departmental needs. However, a masterplan for facility updates at the South Kensington Fire Station is being considered by the plan.

Fire Station	Year Built	Rehab	Area (sf)	Site Area (ac)	Notes
Fire Station #1 Berlin Volunteer Fire Department	1946	1980, 1995	9,744	0.23	
Fire Station #2 East Berlin Volunteer Fire Department	1968	1960, 1972, 1990	9,316	0.45	
Fire Station #3 Kensington Volunteer Fire Department	1968	1976, 1995	20,712	4.21	
Fire Station #4 South Kensington Volunteer Fire Department	1970	1994	2,523	0.58	Town-owned. Masterplan for facility updates is being considered.

Source: Town of Berlin Assessor's Database



South Kensington Volunteer Fire Department

Image Source: South Kensington Volunteer Fire Department

## School Facilities

Berlin has five public schools in total; three elementary schools, one middle school, and a high school. All five schools were built within a sixteen-year period between 1953 and 1969 and improvements were made at all school buildings in 2017 or 2019. Current district-wide enrollment is slightly above 2,600 students but enrollment at all schools is well under capacity.

School	Year Built	Last Rehab	Area (sf)	Site Area (acres)	Current Enrollment (students)	Rated Capacity (students)
Willard Elementary	1955	2019	90,290	20.4	508	720
Griswold Elementary	1964	2019	69,846	26.0	435	600
Hubbard Elementary	1965	2019	51,264	6.7	213	325
McGee Middle School	1969	2019	142,400	22.2	600	924
Berlin High School	1953	2017	430,148	25.6	866	1,200

Source: Town of Berlin Assessor's Database, CT Department of Education, Berlin Board of Education

### Emma Hart Willard Elementary School

Willard Elementary has grades K through 5. The school was built in 1955 and was last updated in 2019. The school sits on 20.4 acres and has 90,290 square feet of building space. The school currently has an enrollment of approximately 508 students.

### Mary E. Griswold Elementary School

Griswold Elementary has grades K through 5. The school was built in 1964 and was last updated in 2019. The school sits on 26 acres and has 69,846 square feet of building space. It also serves as an emergency shelter. The school currently has an enrollment of approximately 435 students.

### Richard D. Hubbard Elementary School

Hubbard Elementary has grades pre-K through 5. The school was built in 1955 and was last updated in 2019. The school sits on 6.7 acres and has 51,264 square feet of building space. Of the five schools, Hubbard Elementary has the smallest campus and smallest enrollment at approximately 213 students.

### Catherine M. McGee Middle School

McGee Middle School has grades 6 through 8. The school was built in 1969 and was last updated in 2019. The school sits on approximately 22.2 acres and has 142,400 square feet of building space. Current enrollment is approximately 600 students.

### Berlin High School

Berlin High School has grades 9 through 12. The school was built in 1953 and was last updated in 2017. The school is on a 25.6-acre campus and has 430,148 square feet of building space. The school has a current enrollment of approximately 866 students and serves as the Town's primary emergency shelter.

### Planned Improvements

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) improvements are currently planned at all three elementary schools which will include \$10 million in HVAC upgrades planned for 2024 and 2025 and \$3 million in boiler replacement planned for 2026-2027. Additionally, \$6.1 million of window replacement is planned at Griswold, Hubbard, Willard, and McGee in 2027, 2028 and later. There are no plans, or demonstrated need, to expand school capacity through additions or construction of new schools.



Berlin High School Image Source: Berlin High School



### School Enrollment Trends and Projections

Enrollment projections conducted for the School District in 2020 predict small year-over-year contractions through the 2024-2025 school year before growing again in the 2025-2026 school year and returning to current enrollment levels in the 2029-2030 school year. Compared to enrollment trends over the past decade, which had been decreasing an average of 1.3% per year, the projected enrollment figures point to a stabilization of school enrollment levels. These projections are subject to change and the implications of the pandemic on future school enrollment in Berlin is not yet understood.

**Berlin Public Schools K-12 Enrollment & Projected Enrollment**  
 Source: CT State Department of Education and Peter Prowda, PhD



Berlin High School Cheerleading Image Source: Berlin High School

## Parks & Recreation Facilities

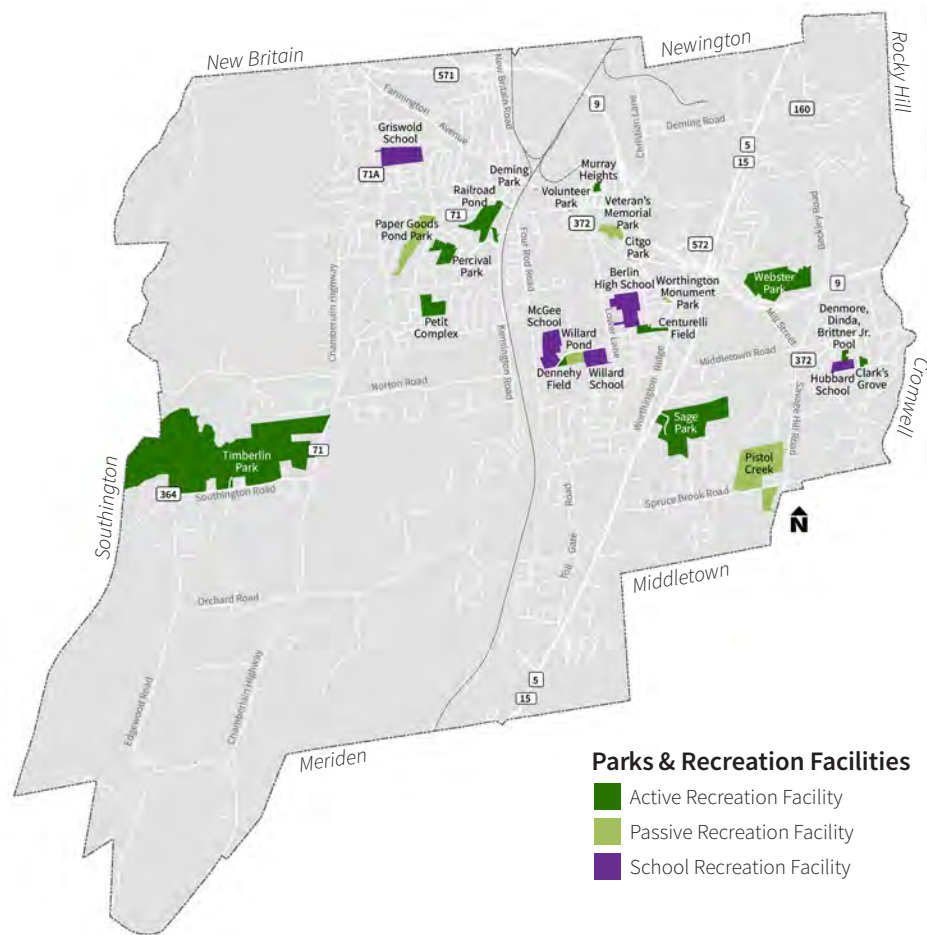
Berlin has a range of parks and recreation facilities including active recreation parks, passive recreation parks, and school grounds that are used for recreation. In total, the Town has 628 acres of recreation facilities not including open space conservation areas that may be used for recreation. Berlin's largest park is Timberlin Park, which is 348 acres in size and includes a golf course and passive recreation areas. The Town's smallest parks are less than half an acre and include playgrounds and other small spaces such as Deming Park.

Active Recreation Parks	Site Area (acres)	Passive Recreation Parks	Site Area (acres)
Clark's Grove	2.8	Citgo Park	0.3
Community/Worthington Ridge Grounds and Playground including Centurelli Field	6.1	Deming Park	0.2
Demore, Dinda, Bittner Jr. Memorial Outdoor Pool and Tennis Courts	2.3	Dorothy "Dot" Heffernan Memorial Park	0.5
Dennehy Field and Smith Field	9.8	Paper Goods Pond Park	23.8
Friendship Place, Boundless Playground	0.2	Pistol Creek	77.0
Little People's Playground/Park	2.3	Veterans Memorial Park	8.0
Murray Heights Park	2.0	Volunteer Park	0.3
Percival Pool & Field Complex	9.4	Willard Pond	9.8
Petit Complex 1 & 2	14.1	Worthington Monument/Park	0.5
Sage Park	77.0		
Timberlin Park	348.3		
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>474.3</b>		

School Grounds	Site Area* (acres)
Willard Elementary	6.5
Griswold Elementary	4.5
Hubbard Elementary	2.7
McGee Middle School	10.0
Berlin High School	9.8
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>33.5</b>

\*Athletic and recreation areas only



**Parks & Recreation Facilities**

- Active Recreation Facility
- Passive Recreation Facility
- School Recreation Facility

6.0

### **Recreational Facilities**

Berlin's parks have a range of recreational facilities that are maintained by the Public Grounds Division of the Department of Public Works and programmed and staffed by the Parks and Recreation Department. These facilities include the following:

- (11) Playgrounds and playscapes
- (19) Ball courts (basketball and tennis)
- (25) Athletic fields (soccer, football, lacrosse, baseball, softball, little league, multi-use)
- (1) Track and field
- (2) Swimming pools
- (1) Skate park
- (2) Picnic pavilions
- (1) Community garden
- Sledding hills
- Ice skating ponds
- Fishing ponds
- (1) Boat launch

### **Planned and Future Improvements**

Multiple improvements are planned or anticipated across the Town's park and recreation facilities. These include the following:

- Percival Field Reconstruction (soccer field)
- Biscoglio Field (BHS) upgrade to synthetic turf (DEEP grant)
- New scoreboard at Scalise Field (Sage Park)
- East Berlin Pool: New liner and building
- East Berlin Tennis Courts: Resurfacing
- New playground and boundless playground at Willard School
- Drainage improvements and field reconstruction at Willard School Soccer Field
- Resurfacing of basketball and tennis courts at McGee Middle School
- Drainage improvement and field reconstruction at all fields at McGee Middle School
- Percival Pool building upgrade
- Reconstruction of both little league fields at Griswold Elementary
- Identify location for and provide a splash pad
- Reconstruction of Little People's Playground
- Improvements at multiple other playgrounds



*Timberlin Golf Course* Image Source: *Timberlin Golf Course*



## Town Services

The Town provides a range of services typical of a small- to mid-sized community. These services include a combination of administrative services and direct services to residents. Most services are entirely municipal, but the Town also contracts with private organizations and has regional partnerships.

### **Administrative and Fiscal Services**

The Town's fiscal and administrative services include the Assessor's Department, Registrars of Voters, Finance Department, Human Resources, Tax Collector, and Town Clerk.

### **Ambulance Service**

Ambulance service in Berlin is provided by Hartford Healthcare (formerly Hunter's Ambulance), which is under contract to provide this service to the Town through 2030. The ambulance service, which is privately owned, has a garage and office on Mill Street near Route 9.

### **Berlin Peck Memorial Library**

The Berlin Peck Memorial Library has a collection of 112,000 volumes and a circulation of over 200,000. The Library offers a range of programming and services to the community and is open six days a week.

### **Building Department**

Berlin's Building Department administers building codes as adopted by the State of Connecticut. The purpose of which is to apply the standards to establish life, health, public and building safety both residential and commercial through the permitting and inspection process. Additionally, the Department assists in the permitting process with plan reviews, inspections and guidance in understanding the codes and regulations.

### **Health Services**

Berlin is a member of the Central Connecticut Health District. The District is the local health department serving the towns of Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill, and Wethersfield. Berlin joined the District in 1998. The District provides the following services:

- Conducts and disseminates assessments focused on population health status and public health issues facing the community
- Investigates health problems and environmental public health hazards to protect the community



*Berlin Peck Memorial Library* Image Credit: Jerry Dougherty

- Informs and educates about public health issues and functions
- Engages with the community to identify and address health problems
- Develops public health policies and plans
- Enforces public health laws
- Promotes strategies to improve access to health care services
- Maintains a competent public health workforce
- Evaluates and continuously improves processes, programs, and interventions
- Contributes to and applies the evidence base of public health.

### **Office of Emergency Management**

The Office of Emergency Management provides a comprehensive all-hazard emergency management program in partnership with Local, State and Federal Agencies as well as Berlin residents and businesses and organizations in order to save lives, protect property, and safeguard the environment. This is accomplished through a four-step cycle of proper mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery actions.

### ***Parks and Recreation Department***

The Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of programming for community members of all ages. This includes after school programs, summer camps and sports, dance, and fitness programs. The Department also manages the Town's park system including scheduling of facilities.

### ***Planning and Zoning Department***

The Planning and Zoning Department administers Berlin's Plan of Conservation and Development, enforces the Zoning Regulations, and provides professional support for the Planning & Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Conservation Commission, and the Historic District Commission.

## **6.0**

### ***Police Department***

The Berlin Police Department is headed by a five-member Board of Police Commissioners. It has 42 authorized sworn positions including 30 police officers. The Department is comprised of an administrative/records division, dispatch, operation division, traffic division, patrol division, and a support services division that includes a school resource officer. The Department has special assignment units including a canine team, bicycle patrol, ATV unit, and underwater response team. The Department also has trained D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officers, field training officers, and an honor guard.

### ***Department of Public Works***

The Public Works Department encompasses several divisions: Engineering, Environmental and Flood Hazard oversight, Highway Maintenance, and Building Facilities. The Engineering Division provides construction management oversight and assistance with design of all significant building projects (both Town and Schools), storm and sanitary sewer mapping, and sidewalk maintenance and installation.

Environmental oversight includes the solid waste disposal and recycling programs such as our leaf collection/removal and hazardous waste disposal.

The Highway Division performs routine maintenance of the public rights-of-way such as: pothole patching, roadside mowing, litter and debris removal, street sweeping, catch basin cleaning, and maintaining and replacement of traffic control and street signs. The Division oversees major road reconstruction, bridge replacement, and resurfacing projects. Seasonal



*Berlin Police Officer* Image Source: Berlin Police Department

focus during the winter months is to provide snow and ice removal on Town-owned roadways. The Division also respond to emergencies on a twenty-four-hour basis, when requested by either the Police or Fire Departments.

The Building Facilities Division is responsible for maintaining and servicing all thirty-three of the Town-owned buildings/schools, including: fire alarms, heating, air conditioning, plumbing, security, lighting and any other areas pertaining to proper operation and maintenance. The Division oversees utilities such as electricity, water, natural gas, fuel oil, and telephones (land and cell). It maintains parking lot lighting, traffic lights for the Police Department, recreational field lighting, emergency generators, and security systems. The Facilities Division also manages and performs preventive maintenance as well as custodial services.



*Berlin Senior Center Event* Image Source: Berlin Senior Services Department

### **Senior Services Department**

The Berlin Senior Services Department promotes healthy aging by providing opportunities for the productive and satisfying use of leisure time, to create an environment for ongoing socialization and to develop quality programs and services which will contribute to meeting those needs, while serving as a focal point and bridge to other services for older adults. The Department provides information and assistance to seniors, their family members and caregivers connecting them to state and local resources. The Department offers health & fitness, recreational and social programs, to support independence and encourage their involvement in and with the community, emanating from a facility that is safe, accessible and attractive. Daily transportation services are offered for the elderly and disabled residents of Berlin. The Department offers a daily nutrition program, which includes a Congregate Meal at the Center and meal delivery to homebound seniors. The Department also conducts intakes for the Fuel Assistance program and offers AARP free tax aide.

### **Social and Youth Services**

Berlin's Social & Youth Services is dedicated to the development, coordination and implementation of programs and services that help provide for basic human needs, promote the healthy development of children and youth, support the healthy functioning of families, and promote dignity, competence and independence for persons in all phases of life. The Department offers basic needs programs including a food pantry, energy assistance, holiday assistance, and housing guidance.

### **Timberlin Golf Course**

Timberlin Golf Course is a municipal 18-hole, par 72 golf course that has a golf shop and restaurant. The course was constructed in 1970 and underwent \$2 million of improvements in 2006. Timberlin offers various memberships including Junior, Women, Senior and one of the largest Men's Club organizations in the State.

### **Fire Services**

Berlin's Fire Services are comprised of four volunteer fire departments and a Fire Administrator. The fire departments include the following independently organized volunteer fire companies: Berlin Volunteer Fire Department, East Berlin Volunteer Fire Department, Kensington Volunteer Fire Department, and South Kensington Volunteer Fire Department. As of 2020, the Town had a volunteer force of 86 volunteers and 20 officers. The fire administrator is responsible for preparing a budget, reporting documentation, and capital purchases. A board of fire chiefs from each company is responsible for establishing operating procedures and training requirements. Equipment includes seven Class-A pumpers, one aerial ladder truck, one 100-foot tower ladder, one tanker truck, and one heavy-duty rescue truck.

### **Solid Waste Disposal**

The Town's solid waste disposal is contracted through Covanta Bristol Inc., which operates a 650 ton-per-day mass-burn solid waste facility in Bristol. Berlin is one of 14 communities that are members of the Bristol Facility Policy Board. The Town's operating agreement with Covanta is in place through 2034.



### ***Water Control Commission***

The Water Control Commission (WCC) is one of three water and sewer districts in Berlin but is the only Town-owned and managed system and district. The WCC is responsible for providing both potable water and sanitary sewer service for part of the Town. The Commission has a customer base of 2,800 residential customers, 121 commercial customers, and 15 industrial customers and serves a population of 6,200 residents. In 2021 the WCC produced 62% (214.8 million gallons) of its water needs and purchased 26.9% (92.8 million gallons) from the New Britain Water Department and 11.1% (38.2 million gallons) from the Cromwell Fire District. The WCC also processes about 1 billion gallons of sanitary effluent for the entire Town through its collection system, which is discharged to the Mattabassett District system.

6.0

### ***Kensington Fire District***

The Kensington Fire District was created in 1921 as a special taxing district that levies property taxes to fund its operations. It has a customer base of 3,200 residential and 228 commercial customers and serves population of 7,553 residents. Its water supply is sourced from the New Britain Water Department. Daily water production averages around 653,000 gallons, with an estimated yearly withdrawal of 240 million gallons.

### ***Worthington Fire District***

Like the Kensington Fire District, the Worthington Fire District was created in 1921 as a special taxing district. It has a customer base of 1,200 residential customers and serves a population of 2,875 residents. Water is exclusively supplied from the Berlin Water Control Department through seven metered locations.



**Water Control Department** Image Source: Sewer and Water Magazine

## Sewer, Water, and Stormwater Infrastructure

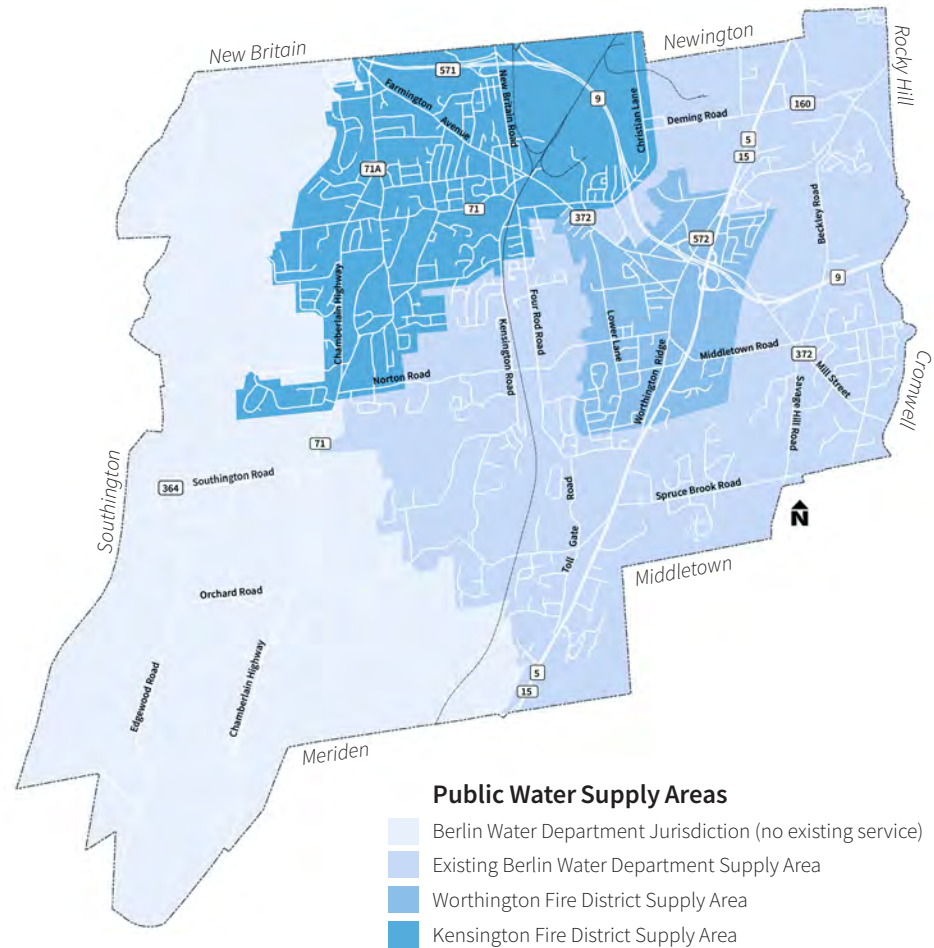
As described on previous pages, Berlin's sewer and water infrastructure are owned and maintained by three different districts including one Town district (Berlin Water Control Commission) and two private districts (Kensington and Worthington Fire Districts). The infrastructure maintained by the WCC and fire districts includes well fields, water mains, fire hydrants, sewer lines, pump stations and other related infrastructure. Berlin's stormwater infrastructure is owned and maintained by the Town's Department of Public works.

### Public Water Supply Infrastructure

Townwide, Berlin has 72 miles of water mains across its three water districts. The system is partially supplied by two wells at a wellfield on Elton Road that are capable of producing 1 million gallons of water per day. Elton Well #2A has a depth of 95 feet and a production capacity of 350 gallons per minute. It was placed in service in 1996 and was rehabilitated in 2017. Elton Road Well #1B replaced Well #1A in 2017. It is capable of pumping over 350 gallons per minute. Water from Elton Wells #1B and #2A are blended together prior to entering the distribution system. In addition to these wells, the Town has a two-million-gallon water storage tank. The Elton wells supply 55% of water to Berlin's distribution system; the remaining 45% is supplied through interconnects with the City of New Britain and Cromwell Fire District.

The Berlin Water Department serves the largest geographic area in Berlin, but only serves 26% of the Town's population with drinking water. The Kensington Fire District serves the largest share (38%) of Berlin's population with drinking water with the Worthington Fire District only serving 5% of the Town's population. The remaining 31% of Berlin residents are served from private wells or neighboring municipalities. In addition to its existing service area, the Berlin Water Department has jurisdiction over areas of the Town not currently served by public water and would be the provider of water service to those areas if the system is expanded.

Berlin's water distribution system is connected to neighboring district systems through active interconnections and emergency interconnections. The Berlin Water Department has interconnections with the New Britain Water Department, Cromwell Fire District, and the Metropolitan District Commission. Additionally, the Kensington Fire District has an interconnection with the New Britain Water Department. The Berlin Water



Department and Worthington Fire District systems are also served by an interconnection that allows the Berlin Water Department to supply the Worthington Fire District with water.

Through these interconnections, the New Britain Water Department supplies Berlin with approximately 1.5 million gallons of water per day. The Cromwell Fire District supplies only 76 thousand gallons of water per day to the Town. The Metropolitan District does not currently supply water to Berlin on a regular basis through its interconnect with the Town.

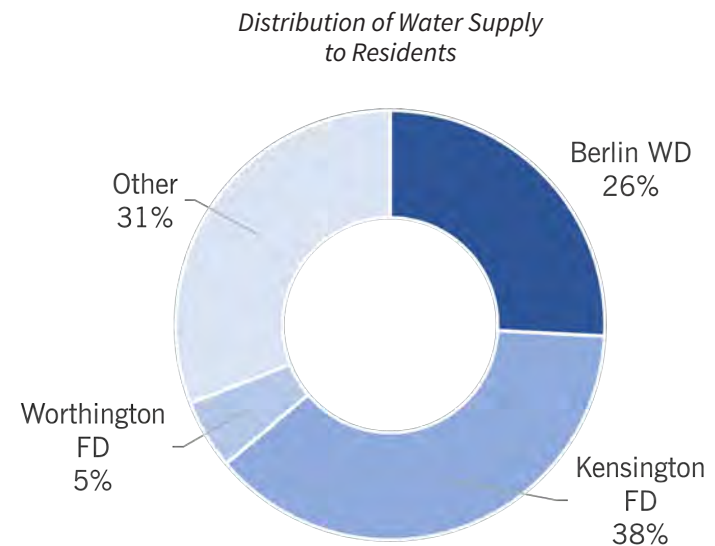
Planned and needed improvements to Berlin's water supply system include:

- Relining and replacement of water mains in East Berlin. Improvement of mains in those areas could allow for an interconnection with the Middletown Water Department.
- Interconnection with the Meriden Water Company needs to be completed.
- Interconnection with the Cromwell Fire District needs to be expanded.
- Interconnection with the New Britain Water Department needs to be upgraded.

The 2018 Coordinated Water System Plan for the Central Connecticut Public Water Supply Management Area made the following recommendations for additional interconnections:

- The Berlin Water Control Commission and Meriden Water Division should consider developing an emergency interconnection along Route 5 where each system is proximal, which would further connect Meriden to interconnected systems in the central part of the region. (\$1.7 million in water main improvements at the southern end of the Berlin Turnpike that will enable this interconnection are currently planned and likely to be completed in 2023 or 2024.)
- The Middletown Water Department should consider developing emergency interconnections with the Berlin Water Control Commission and Cromwell Fire District, which would tie this system into the regionally interconnected systems. (The Cromwell Fire District is actively pursuing this interconnection.)

The existence of three separate water companies in Berlin presents challenges to managing and maintaining those systems. In response to this issue, consolidation of the water companies has been studied and considered multiple times over the past several decades.



*Source: 2018 Coordinated Water System Plan*



## Wastewater Infrastructure

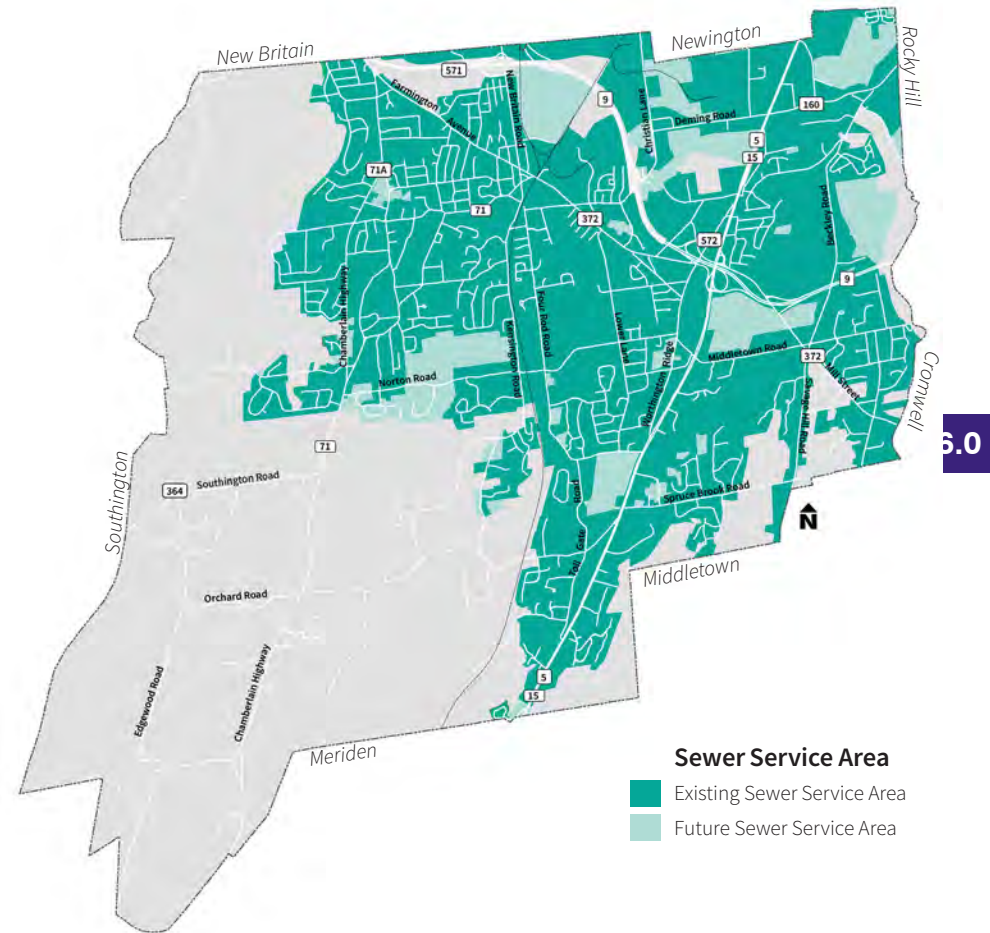
Berlin's wastewater is collected by a system that serves an area that is largely aligned with the area that is served by the Town's public water supply. This system is comprised of 99.2 miles of sewer mains and multiple pump stations. The system is discharged to the Mattabassett District's system at the Cromwell line with wastewater being treated at the District's water pollution control facility in Cromwell. Treated water is discharged to the Connecticut River. Flow from Berlin averages 3.35 million gallons per day, which is 16% of the flow into the Mattabassett District's system.

Berlin's sewer service area is located mostly in the northern and eastern parts of Town with service extending south along the Berlin Turnpike. Within that service area there are many parcels and large areas that are not currently served by sewer mains but have been identified as areas that should be targeted for future service. With a few exceptions, expansion of service outside of the existing sewer area has not been identified as a priority and is likely undesirable due to the cost of expanding and maintaining the system and capacity limitations of the system.

The Mattabassett District has requested that participating districts reduce their inflow and infiltration into the system to assist with their permit compliance. In response to this, the Berlin Water Department has completed \$4 million of infiltration/inflow sewer lining projects including the Belcher Brook Trunk Interceptor relining project. Other recent improvements completed by the Berlin Water Department include rehabilitation of the Elton Road sanitary sewer lift station.

Planned and needed improvements to the system include:

- The Deming Road sewer pump station needs a \$3 million improvement. The Metropolitan District Commission will fund 50-60% of the cost as the they contribute flow to the station.
- The Berlin Turnpike and Middletown Road pump stations need to be updated.
- Inflow and Infiltration prevention improvements are needed within all three water districts but needs are most pressing within the Kensington and Worthington Districts.



## Stormwater and Flood Control Infrastructure

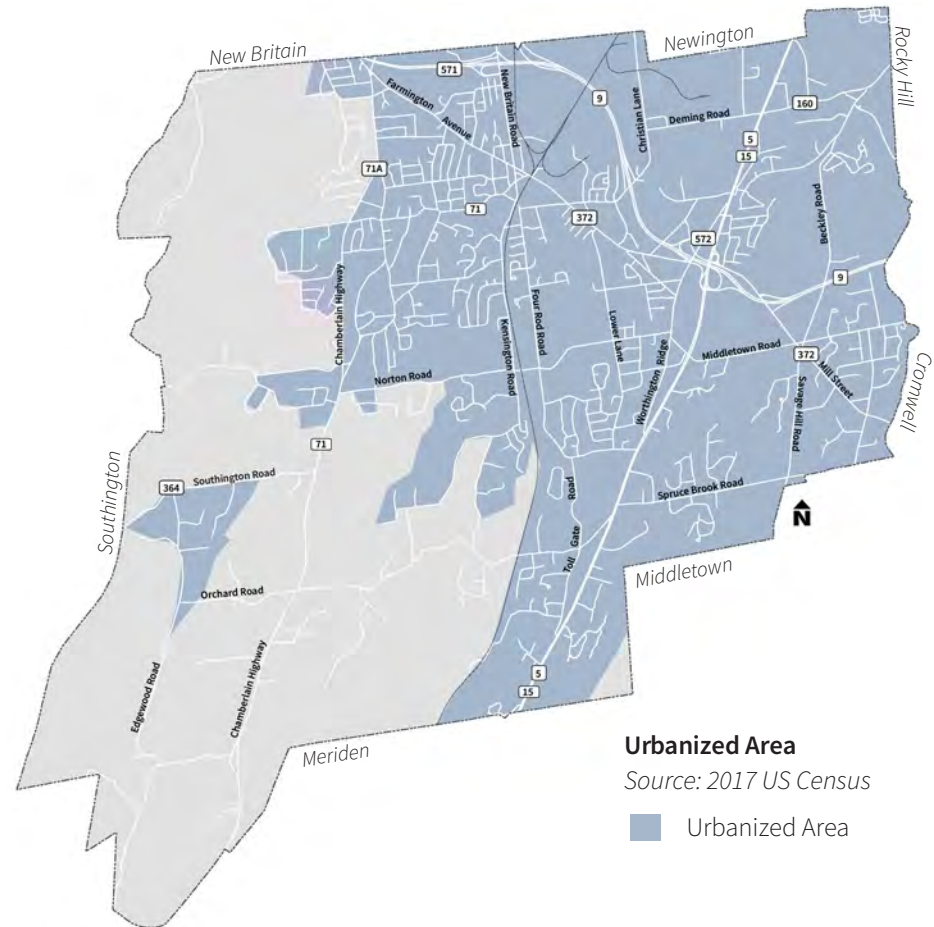
The Town's stormwater infrastructure helps to control flooding, protects Berlin's waterways, and keeps roadways operational during storm events. The system is comprised of catch basins, storm drains pipes, stormwater outfalls, and detention basins. The system is regulated by the State under the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit program. As required by the program, the Town adopted a stormwater management plan in 2017 and conducts annual reporting regarding activities and progress towards the minimum control measures identified by the plan.

The plan specifically addresses stormwater discharges from Town-owned-and-operated facilities. The permit and compliance activities are focused on Urbanized Areas, which are the areas defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Approximately 15.8 square miles of Berlin's total 27 square miles (58%) are located within the 2010 Census Urbanized Area of Hartford. Within the Urbanized Area, the permit directs the Town to evaluate Directly Connected Impervious Areas (DCIAs) as the target areas for stormwater pollution control.

The plan has the following components:

- Public Education and Outreach on Stormwater Impacts
- Public Involvement/Participation
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control
- Postconstruction Stormwater Management in New Development and Redevelopment
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

Since 2017 the Town has made progress on most of the minimum control measures identified by the plan. According to the 2022 Stormwater Annual Report, of the 47 recommended best management practices, 7 are completed, 28 are completed and/or ongoing, 5 are ongoing, 5 are in progress, and 2 have not been completed. The measures that are in progress represent a significant share of the work that remains. This includes investigation of catchments for suspected illicit discharges; dry weather screening of every MS4 outfall and interconnection, completion of catchment investigations; mapping and calculation of DCIA, GIS mapping of detention/retention basins; inspection of stormwater basins, and submission of as-built GIS mapping of stormwater structures and basins by developers.



In addition to the Town's stormwater infrastructure, Berlin has two dams along the Mattabessett River that assist in providing flood control for the Town. This includes the Kensington Dam and the Paper Goods Dam.

The Kensington Dam impounds the Mattabessett River to form the 12-acre Railroad Pond. The dam is 210 feet in length and 25 feet in height. It consists of a concrete gravity dam with a centrally located spillway. A \$1.6 million repair project including a federally funded fishway installation was completed in 2019.

The Paper Goods Dam is immediately upstream of the Kensington Dam and is in need of maintenance and repairs. An engineering review was conducted in 2022 and potential repairs are anticipated in 2024.

## Facilities & Services Goal

Provide high quality services and facilities to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a sustainable manner.

### Strategy 1

Continue to fund and implement Town capital projects and investments consistent with the projects and priorities identified in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and subject to the availability of funding resources. Annually update the CIP in consideration of dynamic changes and to address goals, strategies and actions recommended in this POCD.

### Supporting Actions

1. Update the Town's CIP on an annual basis. In the next CIP update, consider adding projects to the CIP that address the goals, strategies, and actions of this plan.
2. Create and fund a grants match account to provide grants matching funds that will increase the opportunity to secure grant funds to fund projects in the CIP or otherwise recommended in this POCD.

### Strategy 2

Continue to preserve, enhance, and maintain parks and recreational facilities including projects in the Town's CIP.

### Supporting Actions

1. Develop a Parks and Recreation Masterplan.
2. Conduct playscape, athletic field, and athletic court replacement and refurbishment as directed by the Masterplan to ensure better conditions.

3. Expand and enhance trails and paths within and connecting parks with the aim of connecting the Town's parks and open spaces with a connected network.
4. Make accessibility improvements at parks including pathway upgrades and accessible playgrounds to ensure full access.

### Strategy 3

Support sustainability including energy efficiency and renewable energy sources across all Town facilities.

### Supporting Actions

1. Develop a municipal energy plan that includes energy tracking and management, energy reduction goals and actions, and clean energy goals and actions.
2. Commit funding to address the needs identified by the energy assessment and pursue grant funding as available to assist in the financing of improvements.
3. Benchmark and track energy use across Town and school buildings and facilities.
4. Include energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in the Town's capital improvement plan.
5. Implement energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements at Town and school buildings and facilities.

6.0



**Strategy 4**

Continue to protect and maintain the Town's drinking water supply and distribution infrastructure.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Limit further expansion of water service infrastructure so as to discourage expansion of the system to rural areas and low-density land uses.
2. Make investments in water supply system including investments identified in the capital improvement plan of the Berlin Water Control Commission as needed to ensure a safe yield and continue to explore additional water sources so as to be less dependent on outside water districts to meet water supply needs.
3. Continue to expand interconnections with adjacent Towns and the Metropolitan District Commission to increase the resiliency of the water supply system.
4. Implement water saving measures across Town properties and facilities as a means of reducing Town drinking water usage.
5. Revisit the potential consolidation of the Berlin's three water districts as a means of improving sewer infrastructure and reducing costs. If the districts are not consolidated, each district needs to plan and complete inflow and infiltration reduction projects if requested by the Mattabassett District, to reduce sewer system flows in storm events. Update the working agreements between the districts to more efficiently coordinate services and streamline permitting for projects requiring inter-jurisdictional cooperation.
6. Promote the adoption of best management practices and the use of green infrastructure as a means of reducing the use of drinking water supply for irrigation. Implement measures at Town properties and include regulations and guidelines within the Town's zoning regulations.

**Strategy 5**

Continue to make needed investments in the Town's wastewater collection infrastructure.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Limit further expansion of wastewater infrastructure so as to discourage expansion of the system to rural areas and low-density land uses and focus on needed improvements to the existing system.
2. Address inflow and infiltration issues across the wastewater collection system.
3. Upgrade obsolete or dysfunctional components of the wastewater collection system.
4. Revisit the potential consolidation of the Berlin's three water districts as a means of improving sewer infrastructure and reducing costs. If the districts are not consolidated, each district needs to have a capital plan that addresses existing and anticipated water and sewer system needs and to plan and complete inflow and infiltration reduction projects if requested by the Mattabassett District, to reduce sewer system flows in storm events. Update the working agreements between the districts to more efficiently coordinate services and streamline permitting for projects requiring inter-jurisdictional cooperation.

### **Strategy 6**

Proactively work towards obtaining and securing funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) as a means of financing needed improvements to Town facilities and infrastructure.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Work across Town departments to identify projects eligible for funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and other funding sources.
2. Work across Town departments and with State agencies to prepare grant applications and request for funding including through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

### **Strategy 7**

Continue work towards establishing an accessible intergenerational social and recreational community facility.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Complete the process that was presented to the Council in 2022 for a new Senior and Community Center by following thru on the recommendations such as revising the statements of need initially submitted by the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Commission on Aging whether as one project, in a phased manner and/or in partnership with other organizations.

### **Strategy 8**

Provide improvements to the Town's stormwater infrastructure to reduce risk of flooding and protect water quality.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Conduct a study of the Mattabesset/Sebethe River Basin to determine the most appropriate ways to improve drainage and minimize the flood plain.
2. Continue to conduct improvements to stormwater infrastructure as specified in the Town's stormwater management plan.

### **Strategy 9**

Continue to maintain and upgrade public buildings and public safety facilities including projects identified in the CIP and strive to improve accessibility, energy efficiency, longevity, air quality and healthiness of all buildings.

#### **Supporting Actions**

1. Continue the process to design and construct improvements to address identified Police Department space needs and continue to evaluate facilities to ensure that Berlin's Public Safety services have the resources to meet the needs of the community.
2. Plan for and maintain public safety facilities in accordance with evolving space and technology needs.
3. Provide more support for the maintenance and improvement of Volunteer Fire Company Stations.

6.0

**Strategy 10**

Undertake a complete inventory of Town properties.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Identify properties that may be appropriate for new uses or additional protection.
2. Identify properties that should be reserved for future town facilities and those that could be sold to generate revenue from sale, reduce the Town's maintenance costs, and generate additional tax revenues.

**Strategy 11**

Encourage the underground installation of electric and communications infrastructure in new developments as a means of protecting infrastructure from storm events and improving the appearance of new developments.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Modify subdivision requirements as necessary to encourage underground utilities for new residential and business projects.





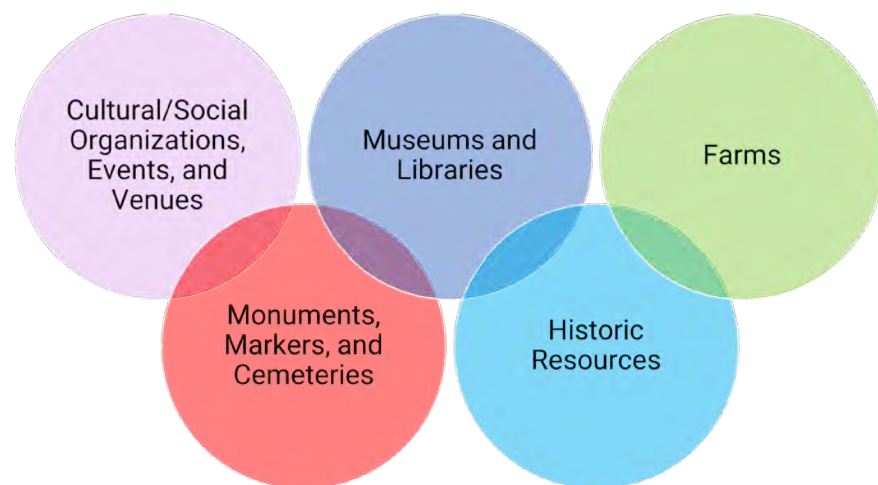
# 7.0 Cultural Resources





Berlin enjoys a range of cultural resources that contribute to its quality of life and sense of place. These resources are diverse and include organizations, events, and venues; museums and libraries; farms; monuments and cemeteries; and historic resources. Through the Plan's community engagement process, residents strongly communicated the importance these cultural resources to Berlin's identity. While many of these resources are privately owned, the Town shares a responsibility in their stewardship through its regulations and policies. In many cases the Town is an active partner in supporting resources such as the annual Berlin Fair, maintenance of historic cemeteries, and through ownership of historic properties such as the Worthington Meeting House. Berlin's cultural resources require continual investment and stewardship on the part of the Town, private institutions, and residents to ensure their preservation or continued operation.

7.0



## Cultural/Social Organizations, Events, and Venues

The Berlin Fair is the most prominent annual event in Berlin. It was initiated in 1882 as a Harvest Festival and is now listed by the State Agricultural Fair Association as a major fair. Sponsored by The Berlin Lions Club, and held in September, the Fair provides local community groups an opportunity for fundraising with booths offering homemade foods, crafts, services and games. The Fair also features animal exhibits and pulls as well as varied entertainment schedule. The event is held at the Berlin Lions Club Fair Grounds on Beckley Road. Maintaining the fairgrounds property as a property that can continue to host this event is important to the Town's identity and connection to its agrarian roots.

In addition to the Lion's Club, other social organizations in Berlin include: Loyal Order of Moose Lodge, Berlin-Kensington Branch YMCA, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Italian Independent Political Club, and many church and religious associations. These organizations play an important role in Berlin's social life and provide a range of volunteer services across the community.



Berlin Fair Midway Image Source: Berlin Fair

## Museums and Libraries

Berlin is home to two museums, the Berlin Historical Society Museum and Hungerford Nature Center. The Historical Society Museum showcases exhibits and resources including over 3,000 artifacts that provide insight into Berlin's history. It is located at 305 Main Street in Kensington in the original Peck Memorial Library building. The Hungerford Nature Center is a non-profit museum and nature center that is a component of the New Britain Institute and is located on Farmington Avenue in Berlin. It offers educational programming, exhibits and special events that relate to environmental education, biological and animal sciences, and STEM.

Berlin has three libraries, the Berlin-Peck Library, the Berlin Free Library, and the East Berlin Library. These libraries are valuable resources to the community and provide a gathering place and educational and entertainment resources to residents and visitors of all ages. These libraries vary in the size of their collections and circulations as noted below:

- The Berlin-Peck Library is a municipal library and the largest library in Berlin. The Library is located on the grounds of the Town's municipal complex at 234 Kensington Road. The Library has a collection of 88,187 volumes and a circulation of 191,516 items per year.
- The Berlin Free Library is located at 834 Worthington Ridge in the former Academy Building where it has been since the building's donation to the Free Library Association. The Library hosts a collection of 22,773 volumes and circulates 7,614 items per year it also provides programming including programming for young children.
- The East Berlin Library is managed by the East Berlin Library Association and is located at 80 Main Street in East Berlin. It has a collection of 8,125 volumes and a circulation of 2,030 items.

Many library programs, whether at the Berlin-Peck Library or at the Berlin Free Library or East Berlin Library are reliant on volunteers. Also, the provision of such programming, the expansion of collections, or the improvement of facilities is often funded or subsidized by benefactors. Maintaining the engagement of volunteers and benefactors will continue to be important to the long-term health of the Town's libraries.



*Berlin Free Library* Image Credit: Jerry Dougherty

7.0

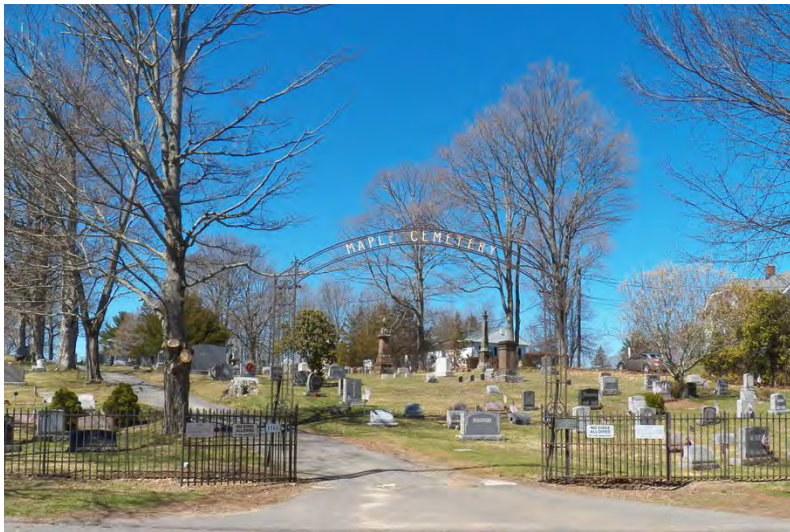


## Cemeteries, Monuments, and Markers

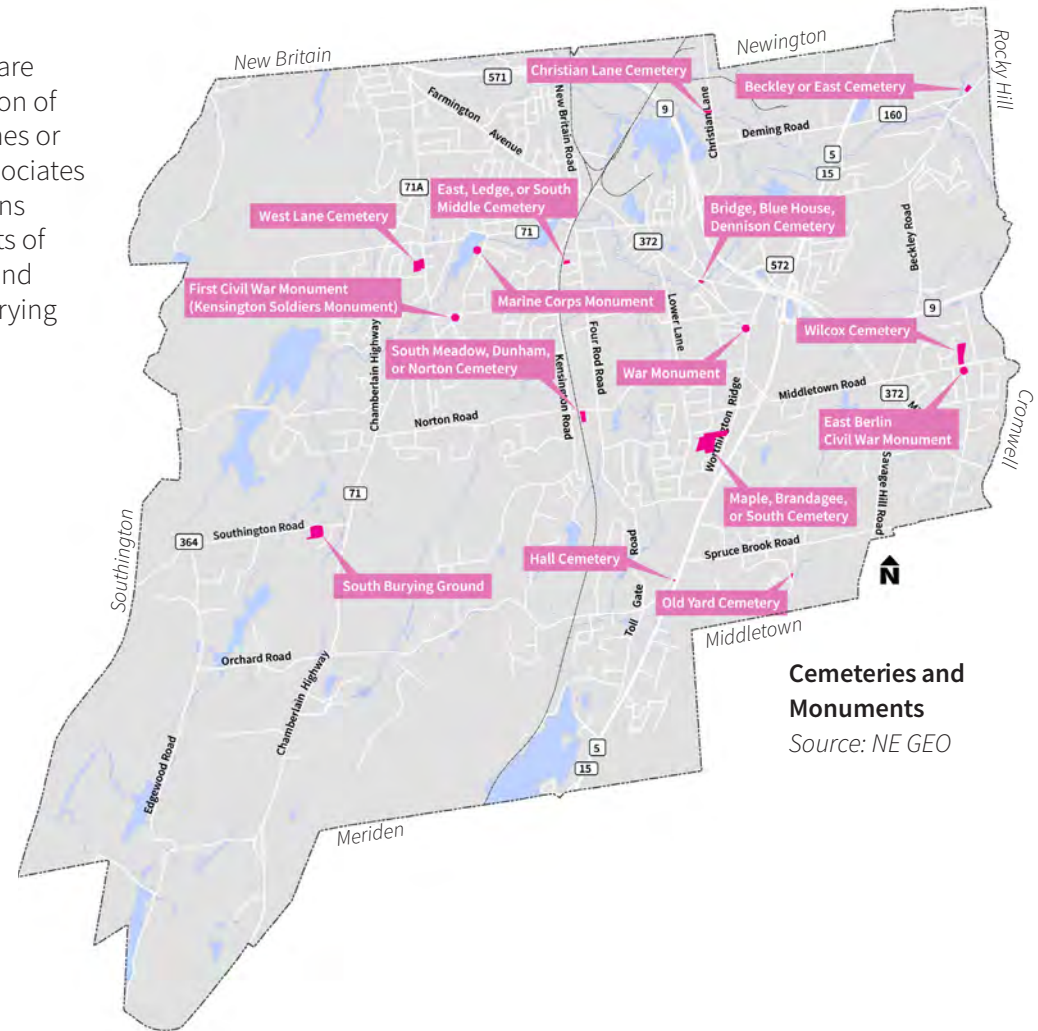
Berlin has several monuments and cemeteries that pay tribute to or are the resting place of generations of the Town's residents. The condition of cemeteries across the Town varies. Cemeteries are owned by churches or associations. Maintenance of cemeteries that do not have active associates is conducted by the Town with assistance from volunteers. Conditions of these neglected cemeteries has been improving through the efforts of the Town's Cemetery Committee with the support of Town funding and State grants. In total, the Town has eleven separate cemeteries or burying grounds spread across the Town including:

- Beckley/East Cemetery
- Bridge/Blue House/Dennison Cemetery
- Christian Lane Cemetery
- East/Ledge/South Middle Cemetery
- Hall Cemetery
- Maple/Brandeggee/South Cemetery
- Old Yard Cemetery
- South Burying Ground
- South Meadow/Dunham/Norton Cemetery
- West Lane Cemetery
- Wilcox Cemetery

7.0



Maple Cemetery Image Source: findagrave.com



**Cemeteries and Monuments**

Source: NE GEO



The Town is also home to nine markers or monuments. Among these resources is the Kensington Soldier's Monument which is one of the oldest Civil War memorials in the United States. The brownstone obelisk was erected in 1863 and was designed by Kensington native and accomplished artist Nelson Augustus Moore. The markers and monuments include the following:

- East Berlin Civil War Monument
- Emma Hart Willard Marker
- First Meeting House Marker
- Kensington Soldier's Monument
- Marine Corps Monument
- Original Settlement Marker
- Post Road Mile Marker/Simeon North Mill
- Town Pump/Well Marker
- War Monument



*Kensington Soldier's Monument* Image Source: Wikipedia



*East Berlin Civil War Monument* Image Source: Jerry Dougherty

7.0

## Historic Resources

Berlin has a range of historic properties and one historic district. Many of these resources were documented in a town-wide historic resources inventory that was conducted in 1985. While the Town has extensive historic resources, the share of resources that are listed on State or National Registers or located within a historic district is relatively small. These resources require continual maintenance and stewardship to ensure their long-term survival. In total there are four individual resources and one district listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

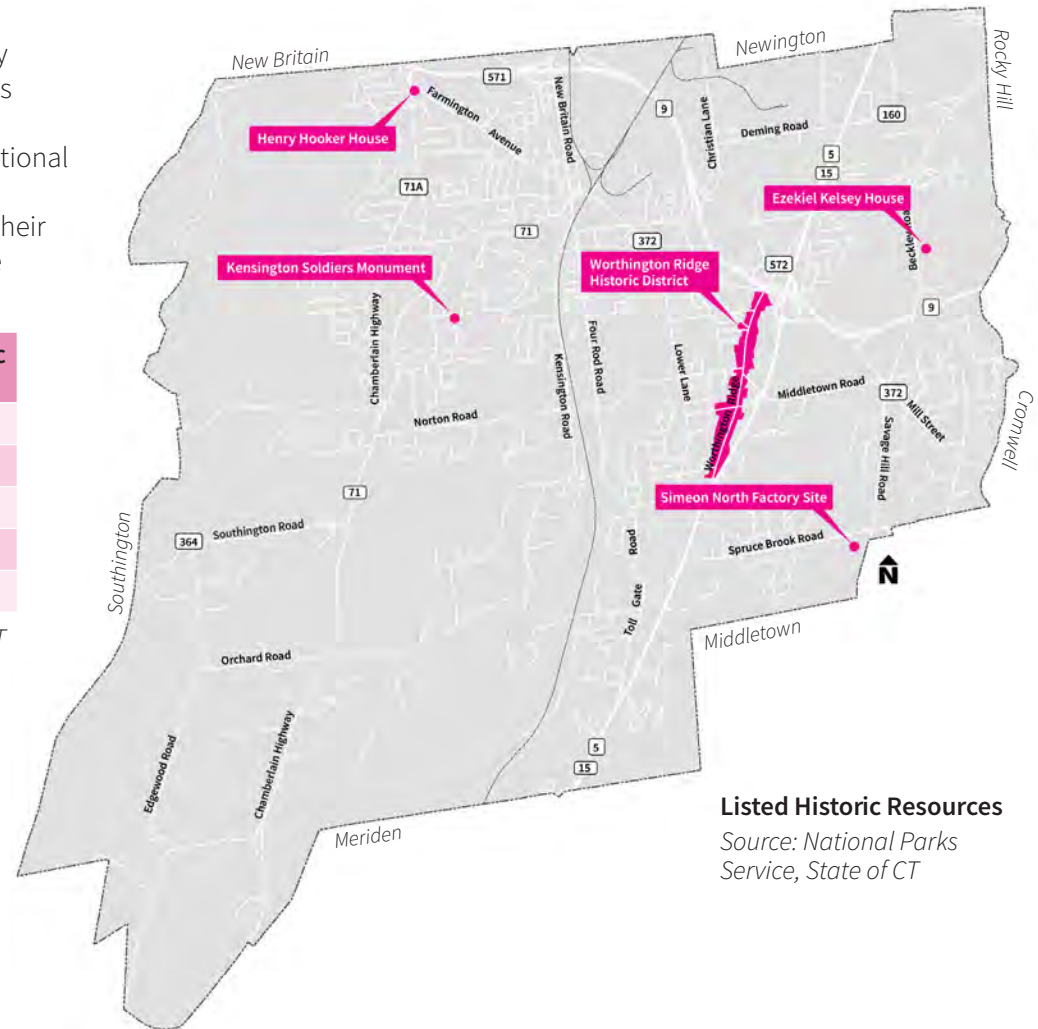
District or Property	National Register	State Register	Local Historic District
Ezekiel Kelsey House	✓	✓	
Henry Hooker House	✓	✓	
Kensington Soldier's Monument	✓	✓	
Simeon North Factory Site	✓	✓	
Worthington Ridge Historic District	✓	✓	✓

*Listed Historic Resources in Berlin* Source: National Parks Service, State of CT

### National Register of Historic Places

The Worthington Ridge Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which is administered by the National Park Service. The National Register is the official listing of the Nation's cultural resources that are worthy of preservation. A listing on the National Register is a prestigious recognition of the importance of a site but does not affect the owner's rights to make use of the property. Protection and preservation tools available include the following:

- Provide for review of federally funded, licensed or sponsored projects which may affect listed historic properties.
- Make owners of historic properties eligible to apply for federal grants-in-aid (when available) for preservation activities.
- Encourage the rehabilitation, through tax incentives, of income-producing historic properties that meet preservation standards.
- Provide protection from unreasonable destruction of historic/cultural resources through use of the environmental protection provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes.



### Listed Historic Resources

Source: National Parks Service, State of CT



### ***State Register of Historic Places***

A listing on the State Register provides honorary recognition. The listing is an additional way to recognize the historic nature of a site or structure so that consideration is given to land use decisions which may impact upon these sites or structures. Special consideration is also available under the State Building Code for State Register listed buildings. All of the sites on the National Register are also recognized on the State Register; currently there are no sites or structures in Berlin listed separately on the State Register. However, because the listing process is generally quicker than that for the National Register, State Register listing can be used as an interim recognition for sites and structures while National Register recognition is being prepared or is pending.

### ***Local Historic Districts***

Local historic designation enables a local historic district commission to regulate the exterior appearance of sites and structures as viewed from public streets or places. The responsibility for the regulation of properties within Berlin's Worthington Ridge Historic District rests with the Town's Historic District Commission. The designation of a local historic district or property is intended to preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings, places of architectural and historical significance and streetscapes.

### ***Worthington Ridge Historic District***

The National Register listing for the Worthington Ridge Historic District identifies 118 resources with 94 historically and/or architecturally significant properties spanning more than two centuries of development. The District includes properties that are or were used as residences, barns, a meeting house, hotels, taverns, and stores dating from 1720 to 1930. Structures within the District have a range of architectural styles including Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Victorian, Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival and Bungalow architectural styles. While they cover similar areas, the Worthington Ridge National Register District differs slightly in geography from the Local Historic District.

Properties within the district vary significantly in their condition with some properties in need of substantial restoration to ensure their long-term viability as structures that contribute to the historic district. These properties can be costly to maintain and improve, particularly to the

standards required within a local historic district. Many of these homes are large structures and generally exceed the spatial needs of a family, particularly in light of the trend of shrinking family sizes. The challenge to the continual maintenance and improvement of properties within the District will be to identify and provide financial assistance for such efforts or by modifying the Town's zoning regulations to allow for the adaptive reuse of structures that is complementary to the District and would make the restoration of the properties more financially viable.

One of the most prominent structures in the District is the Worthington Meeting House. The original structure was built in 1774 and is owned by the Town. It was built as the meeting house of the Worthington Ecclesiastical Society. In 1790 a steeple was added to the north side of the building and the building served as a church until 1850 when the congregation relocated to a new church. In addition to its use as a church, the Meeting House also served as a community center for celebrations and harvest fairs. It was also the site of the first Berlin Library and served as Town Hall from 1850 to 1907. Following relocation of the Town Hall in 1907 and after extensive redesign and renovations, the building reopened as Worthington School. It operated as a four-room school until 1957 when the town closed it and reused the building as offices for the Board of Education until 1974. The building has been sparsely used since then and needs substantial renovations to accommodate a new use.

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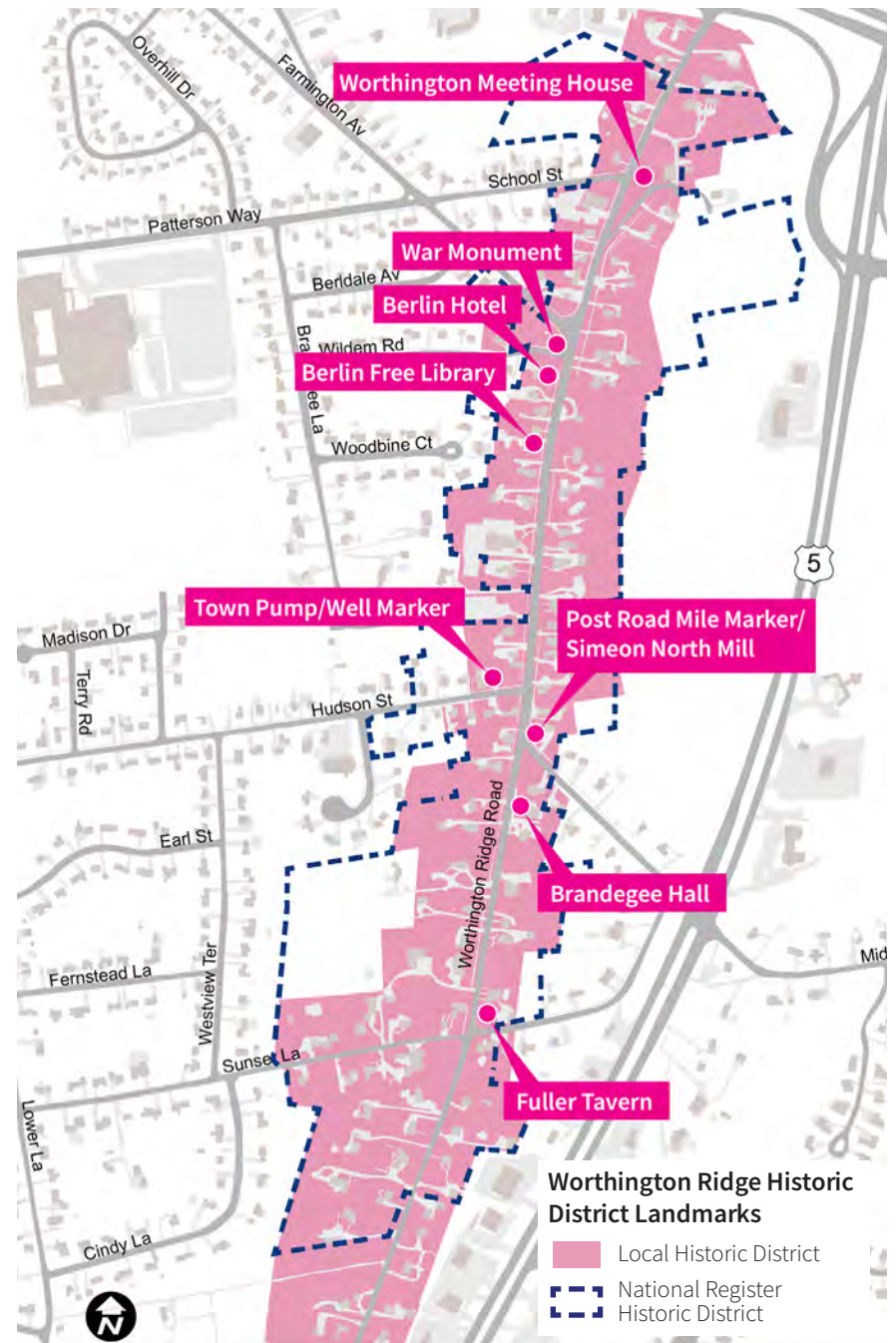


*Worthington Meeting House* Image Source: Friends of Worthington Meeting House

Reuse of the property as a new home for the Berlin Historical Society and as a cultural community center for the Town is planned by the Society. The Friends of Worthington Meeting House, a non-profit organization, was formed to raise funds to ensure the continued restoration and preservation of the Meeting House. The current proposed use is as a cultural and historical center that would provide educational and social opportunities to the community.

In addition to the Worthington Meeting House, notable historic properties in the Worthington Ridge Historic District include the following:

- Asahel Hart House (1786)
- Berlin Congregational Church (1850)
- Berlin Free Library (1831)
- Berlin Hotel (1814)
- Blakeslee Barnes House (1820)
- Brandegee Hall (1884)
- Captain David Sage House (1720)
- Catharine M. North House (1780)
- Charles A. Gillin House (1895)
- Daniel Dunbar House (1804)
- Daniel Galpin House (1790)
- David Sage House (1770)
- Edith Bradley Taylor House (1905)
- Edmund Boldero House (1801)
- Elishama Brandegee House (1845)
- Elijah Loveland Tavern (1797)
- Fuller's Tavern (1769)
- Galpin Store (1862)
- George E. Prentice House (1930)
- Jedediah Norton House (1790)
- Joseph Booth House (1800)
- Lafayette Gladding House (1880)
- Leland Gwatkin House (1895)
- Levi Deming House (1825)
- Mary Brandegee House (1895)
- Phineas Squires Case House (1750)
- Phineas Squires House (1790)
- Reverend Nathan Fenn House (1780)
- Samuel Porter House (1786)
- Walter Gwatkin House (1905)
- Worthington Ecclesiastical Society Parsonage (1845)
- 820 Worthington Ridge (1800)







*Brandegee Hall* Image Source: [historicbuildingsct.com](http://historicbuildingsct.com)



*Fuller's Tavern* Image Source: [connecticutbarns.org](http://connecticutbarns.org)

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*Berlin Hotel* Image Source: [historicbuildingsct.com](http://historicbuildingsct.com)



*Mary Brandegee House* Image Source: [historicbuildingsct.com](http://historicbuildingsct.com)



## Other Historic Resources

In addition to listed properties, buildings in the Worthington Ridge Historic District, and those resources described elsewhere in this section, Berlin is home to many properties and areas that have historic or cultural significance. Because these resources are not listed historic resources or located within a historic district, they have very little protection. These resources include but are not limited to:

### Homes

- Augustus Moore home and property
- Charles Jarvis House (1905)
- Colonel Richard Wilcox House (1802)
- Daniel Belden House (1855)
- Dominick Venturo House (1911)
- Dr. James Percival House
- East Berlin Center Victorian properties
- Edward Cole House (1785)
- Edward Honiss House (1893)
- Fred Lang House (1893)
- George Lawrence House (1891)
- Grace Raymond House (1925)
- Henry Dickinson House (1847)
- Jesse Hart House (1800)
- Lustron Houses
- Mary Bunce House (1888)
- Milo Hotchkiss House (1855)
- Newtown Woodford House (1855)
- Reverend Luke Daly House (1873)
- Reverend Samuel Clark House (1759)
- Seth Stanley House (1750)
- Timothy Hubbard House (1735)
- Tower House (1875)
- William Daniels House (1855)
- William Hooker House (1771)
- Other 18th & 19th century homes and barns identified in Berlin Historical Society architectural survey

### Commercial and Industrial Properties

- American Paper Goods Company Building (1893)
- Beckley Mill site

- Berlin Iron Bridge Company
- Cheney Clock Shop
- Mattabessett River Bridge (built by Berlin Iron Bridge Co.)
- Old East Berlin Train Depot
- Pistol Creek site and bridge/dam on Spruce Brook
- Quarry at Wethersfield Road
- Seven Sisters Railroad Bridge
- Seymour Fort site on Christian Lane

### Schools, Churches, and Civic Buildings and Properties

- Ledge School
- King-Peck Memorial Building (1902)
- Selden School
- Saint Paul Catholic Church (1914)
- Sacred Heart Catholic Church (1897)
- Saint Gabriel's Episcopal Church (1897)
- East Berlin United Methodist Church (1896)
- Kensington Congregational Church (1870)
- Kensington Congregational Church Parsonage
- Kensington United Methodist Church (1893)



King-Peck Memorial Building Image Source: Berlin Historical Society

## Farms

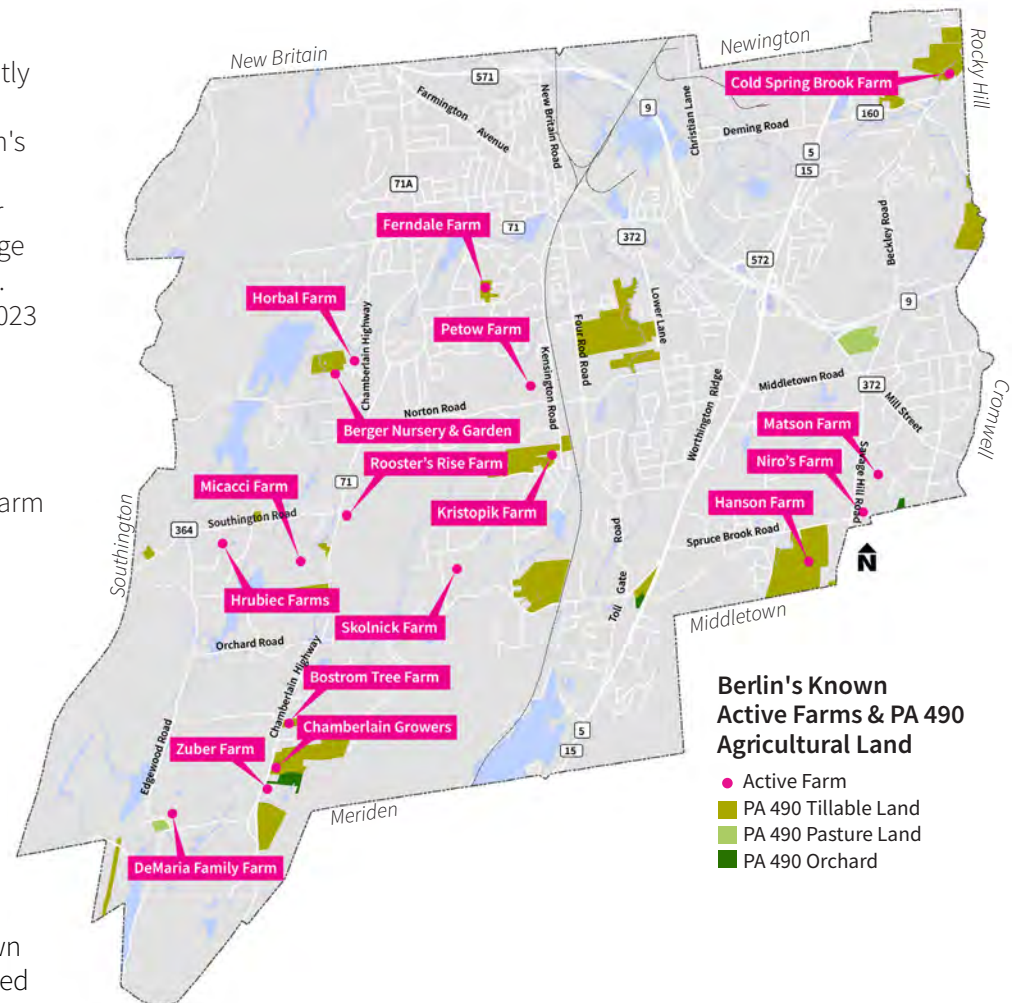
Berlin's farms play an important role in the Town's history and significantly contribute to its cultural landscape. Over one hundred farms were in operation in the 20th century as documented by the Town. Today Berlin's farms range considerably in their level of activity with some farms being used only for the production of hay, which may be harvested by another farm in Town and a small number of farms that are engaged in a full range of farming activity including production of crops and raising of livestock. The farms that are known to be in some form of active operation as of 2023 include the following:

- Berger Nursery & Garden
- Bostrom Tree Farm
- Chamberlain Growers
- Cold Spring Brook Farm
- DeMaria Family Farm
- Ferndale Farm
- Hanson Farm
- Horbal's Farm
- Hrubiec Farm
- Kristopik Farm
- Matson Farm
- McGill Farm
- Micacci Farm
- Niro's Farm
- Petow Farm
- Rooster's Rise Farm
- Skolnick Farm
- Zuber Farm

Berlin's farmers are engaged in a range of activities including the farming of crops such as corn and vegetables, fruit trees, tree farming, dairy farms, and the raising and keeping of chickens and livestock including horses. Farm owners and operators also conduct accessory activities at farms including seasonal events such as hay rides. Farmers increasingly have a need to diversify their operations to keep them viable. The preservation of Berlin's farms is critical to the Town's identity and every effort needs to be made by the Town to support the viability of its farms.

While there is a relatively small number of active farms in Berlin, the Town has a relatively large area of land that is taxed at a lower rate as authorized by Connecticut Public Act 490 (PA 490), which allows a farm, forest, or open space land to be assessed at its use value rather than its fair market or highest and best use value (as determined by the property's most recent "fair market value" revaluation) for purposes of local property taxation. Much of this land is used for agricultural purposes such as the growing of crops or use as hayfields or pastures.

In spite of preservation measures such as the PA 490 program, Berlin has continually lost farms over the past several decades. There are many reasons for this attrition, which is seen across Connecticut and New England, including increased competition from large corporate farms,



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increased cost of operating a small farm relative to a large farm, a lack of succession to younger generations, and development pressures increasing the value of land for development. These trends call attention to the need for the Town to be more proactive in its preservation farms and more flexible with policies and regulations to ensure that the Town's farms can adopt their business models to engage in land uses and activities that will improve their viability.

With the exception of a few farms on the east side of Berlin, most of the Town's farms are clustered on the west side of the Town in proximity of Chamberlain Highway. This roadway, which accommodates Route 71, is a relatively narrow rural roadway that provides scenic views of farms, forested areas, and Ragged Mountain to the west. Given the character of this area, the road should be considered for designation as a scenic road. Scenic road classification is maintained by the Connecticut Department of Transportation which recognizes rural roads abutting significant natural or cultural features such as agricultural land. This designation encourages sightseeing and restricts modifications such as widening that would detract from its appearance.

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*Matson Farm* Image Source: Matson Farm



*Cold Spring Farm* Image Source: Cold Spring Farm



*DeMaria Family Farm* Image Credit: Diane Jorsey



## Cultural Resources Goal

Protect, promote, fund, and continue to act as a steward for Berlin's cultural resources with a special focus on the Town's historic properties and farms.

### Strategy 1

Provide continued support for the promotion and protection of historic resources in Berlin.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Promote public awareness and appreciation of local historic resources through the development of print materials, online content, and on-site signage.
2. Develop an inventory and assessment of all historic properties and cultural resources in the Town including cemeteries, greens, residential and commercial structures, and other cultural sites.
3. Inventory and protect Berlin's scenic roads and byways. Define the features that would distinguish these, such as agricultural vistas, open meadows, historic properties, stone walls, mature trees, notable geologic formations. Study the benefits of a Scenic Road ordinance per the Connecticut General Statutes and adopt an ordinance if found to be beneficial.
4. Develop regulations to preserve the physical and architectural characteristic of historic houses and their sites.
5. Install historic plaques in the Worthington Ridge Historic District that convey the significance of the properties and Berlin's role as part of the Underground Railroad.
6. Pursue financial incentives for preservation, including Town capital investments, State and Federal grants, tax incentive programs, preservation or facade easements, assessment deferrals and transfer of development rights. Consider creating a grant match account specifically for historic assets grants/projects.

### Strategy 2

Allow for the reuse of historic properties and ensure the preservation of historic properties when re-used or when redeveloped.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Encourage maintenance of the architectural integrity of historic and architecturally significant sites, buildings and structures when adapted for reuse for commercial, industrial or residential purposes.
2. Amend the zoning and subdivision regulations to encourage the preservation and reuse of historically significant structures within proposed developments.
3. Revise zoning ordinances to allow adaptive reuse of buildings in the Worthington Ridge Historic District including limited commercial or additional residential units.

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### Strategy 3

Develop a marketing campaign for Berlin that features and promotes its cultural resources.

#### Supporting Actions

1. Develop branding and print materials that promote Berlin's cultural resources.
2. Establish a unified presence on social media to promote Berlin's cultural resources.

**Strategy 4**

Provide continued support for the Town's farms to help ensure their continued operation.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Develop and maintain an inventory of active farms in Berlin including acres farmed, number of people employed by these farms and agricultural businesses, and other information pertinent to the economic value of Berlin's agricultural and related products.
2. Engage in a dialogue with local farmers to identify additional zoning amendments to encourage the preservation of local farms, including by expanding definitions of farming related uses.
3. Evaluate the opportunity for farming on Town properties, including continuation of haying in open space areas.
4. Use Town open space acquisition funds and identify funding partners to purchase development rights of farms to ensure their continued operation.
5. Review and revise the zoning regulations as appropriate to allow farms to engage in accessory uses that are complementary to the principal use of a farm.

**Strategy 5**

Support the development of micro-farming in Berlin.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Revise zoning regulations to allow farming on lots less than ten acres. Consider a two-tier definition with expanded farming uses permitted only on sites that are 10 ten acres or more.
2. Change definition of farm to include lots of greater than 5 acres if part of a farm subdivision master plan with farm-related restrictive covenants.

3. Allow a house on farms of at least 10 acres in the POD zone. Also allow a house on 5 acres if part of a farming subdivision master plan of a parcel greater than 10 acres.
4. Provide adequate regulations for farm activities based upon lot size and district to ensure that farm activities are appropriate to the area not disruptive to surrounding residential properties.

**Strategy 6**

Improve and reuse Town-owned historic properties.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Complete restoration of the Worthington Meeting House and place it into productive use as a Historic Society museum.
2. Review the zoning regulations and revise as necessary to support the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic properties.

**Strategy 7**

Work with owners of historic properties to add properties to the National Register of Historic Places, whether individually listed or as part of a new district.

**Supporting Actions**

1. Prioritize the historic designation of the Nelson Augustus Moore property.

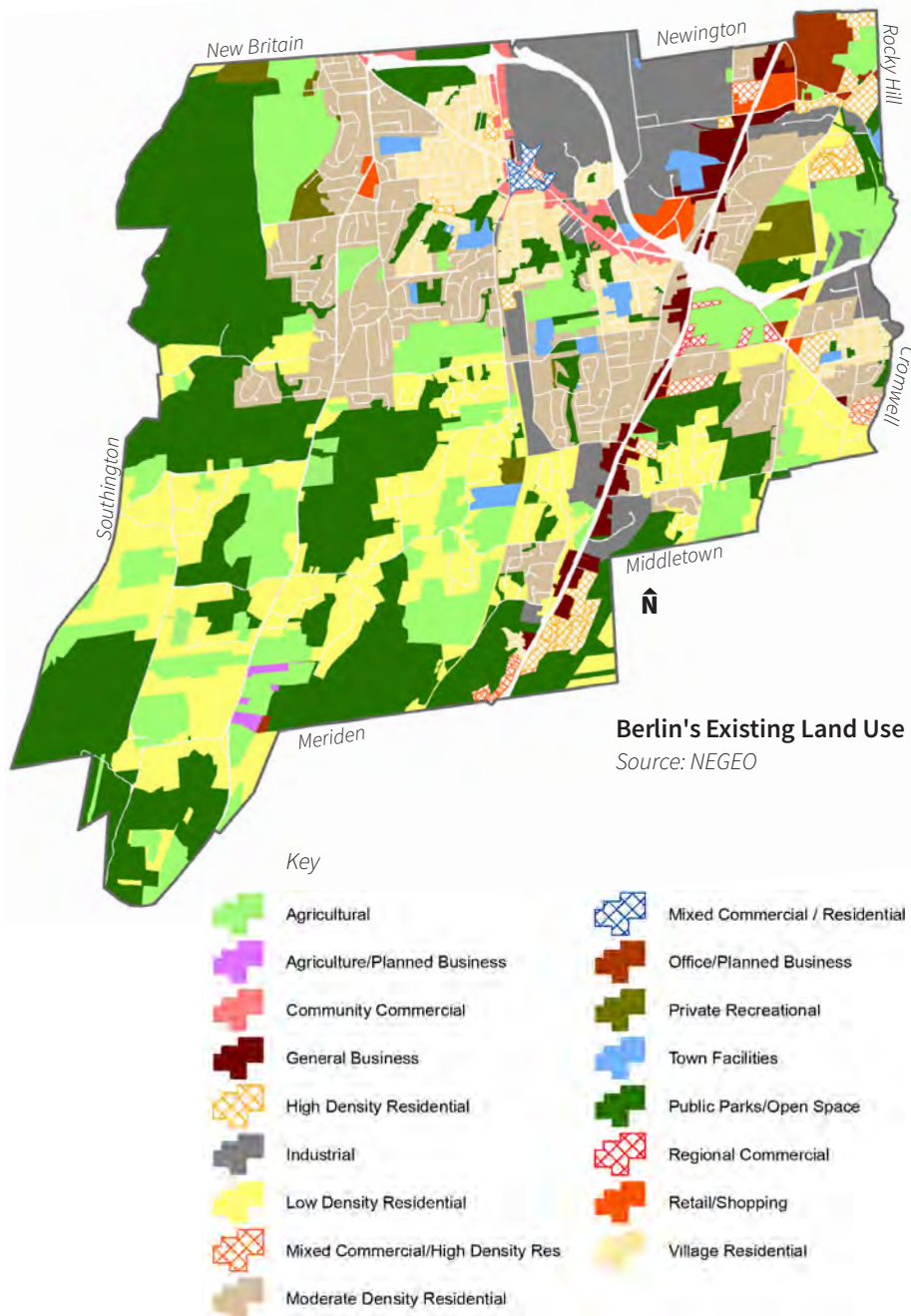


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# 8.0 Future Land Use



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## Future Land Use Planning

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that Plans of Conservation and Development (POCDs) recommend the most desirable use of land within a municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes. The Statute also requires that POCDs recommend the most desirable density of population in areas of the municipality. The most effective means of meeting this requirement and conveying this information is through the use of a future land use map.

The future land use map represents a community's preference for land use, based upon findings and information received during the POCD planning process. The map is intended to provide a guide for policy decisions that have land use implications. The map is also intended to provide a foundation for a municipality's zoning regulations by guiding the location of districts and the types of land use and intensity of use within those districts. The map may take various forms ranging from a generalized map that identifies broad groups of land use to a parcel-specific map that is closely aligned with the current zoning map or existing land use map.

A future land use map differs from an existing land use map (Berlin's existing land use map is shown at left) in that it provides a guide for preferred future land use and is not intended to document existing land uses. In most areas of a community such as Berlin, the existing and future land uses may be the same or equivalent, but the future land use map will also identify uses that don't presently exist in the area where recommended.

The future land use map is not a regulatory tool, and it does not restrict or enable land use or development that is otherwise prohibited or permitted by a municipality's zoning regulations. The map, as a component of and within the context of the POCD, is intended to be used as a guide or reference when considering amendments to a municipality's zoning regulations. Because a community's needs change over time, the future land use map is not intended to be effective in perpetuity. The map is typically updated or redrawn during the POCD update process and may also be revised as needed independent of a plan update should conditions warrant such an update.

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## Future Land Use Categories

Based upon consultation with the POCD Oversight Committee, and in response to findings from the POCD update, the future land use categories that follow are shown in Berlin's future land use map. These categories, and the areas so designated, support the goals of this Plan and will help Berlin achieve its vision.

Berlin's Future Land Use categories include the following:

8.0

### **Rural Residential & Agriculture**

Preservation of open space is the top priority for these areas. Single-family homes are present and allowed on medium to large lots. These areas are often located outside of sewer and water service areas and have limited transportation options.

### **Neighborhood Residential**

Areas are comprised mostly of single-family homes located on small to medium size lots and may include small clusters of attached housing. May include institutional uses such as schools, churches and Town facilities that serve residents. These areas are typically located within sewer and water service areas and may have a range of transportation options including sidewalks and access to transit service.

### **Medium Density Residential**

These areas are comprised of attached and multi-family housing and are typically located along major corridors within or in proximity of sewer and water service areas.

### **Village Center**

These areas are comprised of a mixture of commercial, residential, and institutional uses located in an historic village center.

### **Mixed-Use**

These areas are intended to accommodate mixed-use development within existing sewer and water service areas. They allow for a medium to high intensity of commercial, residential uses, and institutional uses.

### **Commercial**

Includes commercial uses and limited opportunities for residential development mixed with commercial uses. These areas are located along major transportation corridors and are located within sewer and water service areas.

### **Corporate Office**

These area is intended to allow for high-quality economic development comprised of corporate offices, laboratories, or research facilities that will contribute to the long-term economic base of the town, provide attractive sites for the growing and emerging industries, and become an economic, aesthetic and environmental asset for the Town.

### **Industrial**

These areas include a range of industrial, technology, and office land uses. These areas are located within sewer and water service areas.

### **Waterbody**

Includes brooks, streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes.

### **Parks and Protected Open Space**

These areas are comprised of Town-owned parks and open space.

### **Right-Of-Way**

Includes Town and State rights-of-way.



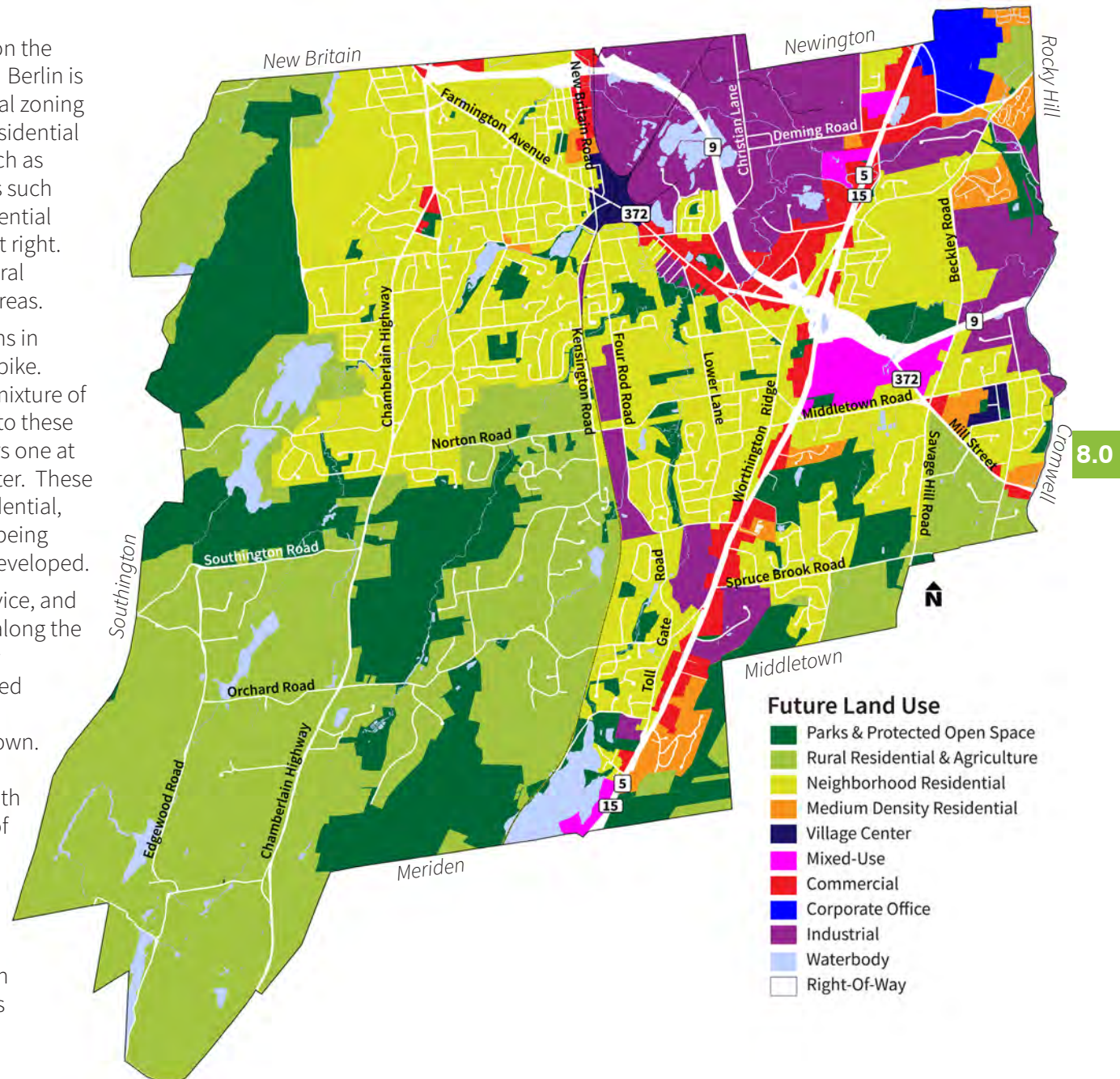
## Future Land Use Map

Berlin's proposed future land use is based upon the Town's zoning districts and existing land uses. Berlin is largely a residential community with residential zoning districts covering much of the Town. These residential districts include complementary land uses such as agriculture, open space, and institutional uses such as schools and churches. The density of residential development varies as displayed in the map at right. Much of the Town is covered by low density rural residential districts or parks and open space areas.

Mixed-Use areas are found in multiple locations in Berlin, located primarily along the Berlin Turnpike. These areas either contain or are zoned for a mixture of commercial and residential uses. In addition to these Mixed-Use areas, Berlin has two Village Centers one at Kensington Village and one at East Berlin Center. These centers contain a mixture of commercial, residential, and institutional uses with East Berlin Center being significantly smaller in size and less densely developed.

Commercial areas in Berlin include office, service, and retail uses. Those areas are clustered mainly along the Berlin Turnpike, Farmington Avenue, and New Britain Road. Berlin's industrial areas are located in proximity of the railroad, along the Berlin Turnpike, and in the northeast corner of the Town. Berlin's Office Technology areas are primarily located in the northeast corner of the Town with the exception of an area at the southern end of the Berlin Turnpike.

The Town's school and municipal properties such as the Town Hall campus are primarily located in residential or village areas. Additionally, Berlin's parks and protected open spaces are identified for continued land use as park or open space properties.



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# 9.0 Implementation Summary





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## About the Implementation Summary

The preceding chapters set forth Berlin's vision, the goals that support that vision, and strategies that support those goals. Supporting data is also provided relevant to the realization of the vision, goals, strategies, and action items. This section of the plan provides recommended priority levels and identifies the departments, boards, or commissions that would take the lead with respect to each action item as well as partners that would be involved in and/or assist with the implementation of each action item.

While this implementation summary identifies multiple strategies and actions in support of the Plan's goals, there may be other actions necessary to complete the implementation of the goals and strategies that are not included in the summary. Due to resource constraints, the completion of all of these items during the ten-year time frame of this plan may not be feasible however implementation of the important recommendations of this plan should be prioritized and completed.

Many of the recommended strategies and actions will likely be ongoing efforts and some of the actions may become established as a regular practice. The speed of implementation of each action item will be dependent on resources available. Some projects may move faster than expected because grants or other sources of funding, volunteer hours or other support not currently anticipated. Other projects may be longer in duration due to limited staffing, funding, or unexpected complications.

While the Plan presented is a ten-year plan, the Planning and Zoning Commission is responsible for overseeing its implementation. In that capacity, the Planning and Zoning Commission intends to review the implementation summary at least once a year to assess the progress that is being made to consider whether the target to complete various actions should be adjusted.

Many of the plan's strategies and actions will have costs associated with their initiation and implementation. This Plan's recommendations have been carefully considered and its recommended goals, strategies, and actions are intended to directly contribute to the long-term sustainability of Berlin. Lead organizations should also seek to identify outside funding sources such as state, regional, and private grants to fund or subsidize initiatives.

The Plan's strategies are identified by their priority theme. Those themes are:

- **Grow Economic Base**  
Berlin's economy is changing and the Town should work towards encouraging and supporting a diverse economy that draws upon Berlin's strengths including access to state highways, available commercial and industrial land, and a strong business environment.
- **Expand Housing Choice**  
Berlin needs to expand its housing choice with respect to housing type and housing cost to ensure that housing remains affordable and accessible to its residents, particularly young adults, young families, and older residents.
- **Protect Environmental and Cultural Resources**  
Berlin should continue to protect its environmental and cultural resources and expand access to those resources to ensure the health of its ecosystems and that its rural and agrarian character is retained and that residents can continue to benefit from those resources.
- **Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure**  
Berlin should continue to make the necessary investments in its facilities and infrastructure to ensure that those resources continue to meet the needs of residents while also accommodating strategic growth.

## Implementation Summary Tables

The implementation summary provided on the following pages organizes the goals and strategies presented in the previous sections of this Plan into a series of tables that may be used as a stand-alone reference. Within the summary tables on the following pages, the Plan's strategies and supporting action items are identified by which Plan theme they directly support. This assists in identifying strategies and actions that may be a higher priority than others based upon the alignment of those strategies and actions with the Plan as a whole. Actions are classified as high, medium, or low priority. This provides guidance regarding which actions should be pursued in the near term and the sense of urgency surrounding the pursuit of specific actions and strategies.

The implementation tables also identify the responsible entity for advancing the actions recommended by this Plan. Those entities vary

from City departments and divisions to boards and commissions and may include outside organizations. Partner entities are also identified in this summary and those entities are expected to provide valuable assistance in advancing the Plan's strategies. Success in achieving this Plan's goals will likely require additional strategies and actions to be implemented that are not yet known to the City. As such, this implementation summary is intended to shape and guide progress towards this Plan's goals, but the measures necessary to achieve those goals are not limited to the recommendations provided here.

### How to Use the Tables

The following table is excerpted from the Land Use and Environmental Resources summary table for explanation purposes.

*Goal specific to the topic area. There is one overriding goal for each topic area of the plan.*

*These themes are a compilation of the themes identified for the supporting actions.*

*The partner entity provides support to the lead entity.*

*Priority level is identified as low, medium, or high. Ongoing actions are rated as high priority.*

Environmental Resources Goal: Continue to protect the Town's environmental resources and better connect open space resources through the strategic acquisition and protection of open space.					
Theme			Strategies and Actions		
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure	Lead Entity	Partner Entity
					Priority Level
			Strategy 1: Ensure that the Town's zoning regulations direct development towards areas that can support development without adversely impacting the Town's environmental resources.		
			1. Maintain the Town's low density residential zoning districts as a means of limiting development in environmentally sensitive areas.	P&Z	IWWC
			2. Review the Town's land use regulations including zoning regulations, floodplain regulations, subdivisions regulations, and inland wetland regulations, to streamline those regulations and ensure that the regulations adequately protect environmental resources and encourage sustainable development. Amend the regulations as necessary, and expand protections as needed, in favor of environmental protection that is fully supportive of the goals of this plan.	P&Z	IWWC

*Actions that directly support or are aligned with one of the plans themes are identified here with a dot.*

*Actions directly comprise the multiple elements of each strategy that can be individually advanced.*

*The lead entity is best positioned to initiate the action and manage progress towards the action.*



### Lead and Partner Entities

The offices, departments, divisions, boards, commissions, agencies, and outside organizations in the table at right are identified as lead or partner entities that will spearhead the recommendations of this Plan and assist with its implementation. Additional offices, departments, and outside organizations may also contribute to the implementation of this Plan, even if not specified within the implementation summary tables.

Entity	Abbreviation
Commission on Aging	COA
Conservation Commission	CC
Department of Public Works	DPW
Economic Development Commission	EDC
Finance Department	FD
Friends of Worthington Meeting House	FWMH
Historic District Commission	HDC
Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission	IWWC
Parks & Recreation Commission	P&R
Planning & Zoning Commission	P&Z
Police Department	BPD
Public Buildings Department	PBD
Public Grounds Department	PGD
Social Services Department	SSD
Town Council	TC
Town Manager	TM
Water Control Commission	WCC
Water Districts	WD

**Environmental Resources Goal:** Continue to protect the Town's environmental resources and better connect open space resources through the strategic acquisition and protection of open space.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●		<b>Strategy 1:</b> Ensure that the Town's zoning regulations direct development towards areas that can support development without adversely impacting the Town's environmental resources.			
		●		1. Maintain the Town's low density residential zoning districts as a means of limiting development in environmentally sensitive areas.	P&Z		High
		●		2. Review the Town's land use regulations including zoning regulations, floodplain regulations, subdivisions regulations, and inland wetland regulations, to streamline those regulations and ensure that the regulations adequately protect environmental resources and encourage sustainable development. Amend the regulations as necessary, and expand protections as needed, in favor of environmental protection that is fully supportive of the goals of this plan.	P&Z	IWWC	High
		●		<b>Strategy 2:</b> Prioritize the protection and acquisition of open space and improve linkages between existing open space properties.			
		●		1. Consider funding opportunities, through grants, donations of open space, and capital budgeting for the strategic acquisition of open space for the purposes of conservation.	TC	CC	High
		●		2. Partner with outside organizations such as land trusts to expand the supply of protected open space in Berlin.	TC	CC	High
		●		3. Update inventory of potential open space linkages that could be provided through the acquisition of land and/or development of greenway networks on public and private properties.	TC	CC	High
		●		4. Consider funding strategies for improving and maintaining Town-owned conservation properties including the hiring of more public grounds staff.	TC	CC	High
		●		5. Maintain a Town fund or bonding authorization to strategically acquire open space or development rights as those opportunities become available.	TC	CC	High
		●		6. Prioritize the linkage of existing protected open space properties and foster improved intertown connections such as at Lamentation Mountain (Middletown, Meriden), Ragged Mountain (New Britain, Southington,) and Short Mountain (Southington).	CC		High
		●		7. Review open space areas that do not have conservation easements and recommend additional protection for all or parts of these properties, as required.	CC		High
		●		8. Pursue State grants for the acquisition of open space.	TM	CC	High

**Environmental Resources Goal:** Continue to protect the Town's environmental resources and better connect open space resources through the strategic acquisition and protection of open space.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●	●	Strategy 3: Adopt and implement low impact policies and practices.			
		●		1. Review and amend the Town’s zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure that the regulations encourage or require Low Impact Development (LID) practices in new developments.	P&Z	DPW	High
		●	●	2. Work towards the adoption of sustainable practices at Town parks and facilities such as capturing rainwater for irrigation use, encouraging use of pervious pavement, reducing water usage, use of integrated pest management on athletic fields, improving recycling, and reducing solid waste.	PGD	DPW	High
		●		Strategy 4: Continue the oversight and protection of environmentally sensitive areas.			
		●		1. Continue to adequately staff departments and commissions with land use functions and provide sufficient resources to carry out their duties. Assign a Town staff member as point person for open space and environmental issues and ensure that staff have the resources necessary to carry out their duties.	TC		High
		●		2. Continue to attempt to manage invasive species problems in Town-owned waterbodies.	PGD	CC, P&R	Medium
		●		3. Work with property owners to encourage the permanent protection of sensitive portions of their properties such as riparian buffers and forest areas with voluntary conservation easements. Consider the use of tax incentives to encourage the voluntary establishment of conservation easements.	CC	TC	High
		●		Strategy 5: Actively work towards protecting and improving water quality of the Mattabassett River and other waterways in the Town.			
		●		1. Conduct a public campaign to reduce litter and pollution into the Town’s brooks and rivers.	CC		High
		●		2. Review the Town’s zoning regulations for opportunities to include riparian zone requirements and restrictions for developments in proximity of the Town’s rivers and brooks.	P&Z	IWWC	High
		●		3. Require inspections and reporting on the condition of on-site stormwater management systems in existing and new developments.	P&Z	DPW	Medium



**Environmental Resources Goal:** Continue to protect the Town's environmental resources and better connect open space resources through the strategic acquisition and protection of open space.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●		Strategy 6: Improve stewardship of forests and tree canopy on Town-owned open space and rights-of-way.			
		●		1. Seek the assistance of a university forestry program to develop a forest management and invasive species control plan for all Town-owned open space and forests.	CC		Medium
		●		2. Continue to allocate financial resources towards forestry so as to adequately respond to the need for forest and roadside tree maintenance and removal.	TC	PGD	Medium
		●		3. Review zoning regulations to ensure that they require adequate tree planting and replacements on projects as appropriate. Allow flexibility in requirements to allow tree planting in locations where they would be most beneficial and most likely to thrive.	P&Z		High
		●	●	Strategy 7: Continue to promote sustainable stormwater management and floodplain management to be resilient and adaptable to a changing climate.			
		●	●	1. Continue to invest in stormwater infrastructure improvements throughout the Town as recommended by the Town's Stormwater Management Plan. Sustainable infrastructure improvements should be prioritized. Add stormwater projects to the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).	PW	TC	Medium
		●		2. Review and evaluate the Town's Floodplain zoning regulations to ensure consistency with FEMA recommended model ordinances.	P&Z		High

**Environmental Resources Goal:** Continue to protect the Town's environmental resources and better connect open space resources through the strategic acquisition and protection of open space.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●	●	<b>Strategy 8:</b> Expand and improve the Town's trail system to better connect open space properties and connect Berlin to trail networks in surrounding Towns and improve access to and promotion of trail system.			
		●	●	1. Work with CFPA and Land Trusts to protect the path of the Mattabesset and Metacomet Trails and New England Trail in Berlin and to relocate trails to protected property when necessary.	CC		High
		●	●	2. Make trail connection from Timberlin to Reservoir Road on newly acquired Reservoir Road parcel.	CC		High
		●	●	3. Work with New Britain Water Department to relocate a portion of the former Wigwam Road ROW to connect Reservoir Road to Ragged Mountain Preserve. Develop a trail after the ROW is relocated.	CC	TC	High
		●	●	4. Work with CFPA and other partners to reduce the distance of road walks of through trails on Spruce Brook Road, Orchard Road and Edgewood Road. Improve safety of the trail crossing at the Berlin Turnpike.	CC		High
		●	●	5. Improve the connection between Pistol Creek and the Mattabessett/New England National Scenic Trail (NET) at Lamentation Mountain.	CC		High
		●	●	6. Relocate the Metacomet Trail off private property and into the Blue Hills Conservation area in the vicinity of Summit Wood Drive.	CC		High
		●		7. Work with New Britain and Meriden Water Departments to provide more public access to lands they own in Berlin, as feasible.	CC	WC	High
		●		8. Coordinate with the Hungerford Nature Center to incorporate Hungerford trails into the Town's website, apps and mapping resources.	CC		Medium
		●		9. Keep trails information up to date on the Town website and make trails information available through apps.	CC		High
		●		10. Study Town open space areas for potential for bridle trails for horseback riding so as to support riding and minimize conflict with other users.	CC		Medium

9.0

**Environmental Resources Goal:** Continue to protect the Town’s environmental resources and better connect open space resources through the strategic acquisition and protection of open space.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●	●	<b>Strategy 9:</b> Provide site improvements to open space properties to ensure proper stewardship of those properties and to improve access by the public.			
		●		1. Advance planning for the shared open space, water department use for the Woodlawn Road parcel.	CC	WC	Medium
			●	2. Improve parking for Ragged Mountain Preserve at West Lane.	TC	DPW	Medium
			●	3. Improve parking at Park Drive that is an access point to Meriden's Hubbard Park and to trails.	TC	DPW	Medium
		●	●	4. Work with Middletown to improve the Pistol Creek properties and expand trail connections to Lamentation Mountain to foster a two Town open space and recreational area and coordinate with Meriden to enhance the Lamentation Mountain trails system that includes Meriden’s Giuffrida Park.	CC		High
		●		5. Re-establish public access to Webster Park.	TC	CC	Medium
		●		6. Make town open space lands more accessible to the public by creating new trails, marking existing trails and boundaries, building bridges and boardwalks, placing signage, improving accessibility, keeping trails information up to date on the Town website and making trails information available through apps., and creating parking areas.	CC		High
		●	●	7. Identify critical improvements and maintenance needed at Town-owned open space properties and produce a summary and list of needs.	PGD	CC	High

9.0



**Housing Goal:** Ensure that Berlin has a wide selection of housing choice that enables residents to live in Town through various stages of life and provides housing opportunities to new residents to the community.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
	●			<b>Strategy 1:</b> Implement recommendations of the 2022 Affordable Housing Plan as a means of increasing the supply and range of affordable housing in Berlin and maintain an affordable housing inventory in excess of existing supply.			
	●			See Berlin 2022 Affordable Housing Plan			
	●			<b>Strategy 2:</b> Maintain and increase the supply of housing designed for or occupied by seniors.			
	●			1. Explore innovative approaches to stimulate the development of affordable senior apartments.	P&Z		Medium
	●			2. Revise zoning regulations to allow for the development of, or conversion to, multi-generational housing that provides shared living areas for multiple generations of a family in appropriate residential districts.	P&Z		Medium
	●			3. Consider a revision to the zoning regulations to allow assisted living facilities in the OT, OT-2, BT-1, PI-2, SPDD, and BT-2 districts.	P&Z	EDC	Medium
	●			4. Continue and expand support services to assist seniors to age in place.	CFTA	SSD	
	●			<b>Strategy 3:</b> Administer, educate, and support affordable housing initiatives.			
	●			1. Seek funding for affordable housing initiatives with a focus on programs that provide support to targeted income levels.	TM		High
	●			<b>Strategy 4:</b> Promote affordable home ownership opportunities.			
	●			1. Provide residents, real estate professionals, and other stakeholders with information on CHFA mortgages and other financing options for lower income and first-time homeowners.	P&Z		High

9.0

**Environmental Resources Goal:** Ensure that Berlin has a wide selection of housing choice that enables residents to live in Town through various stages of life and provides housing opportunities to new residents to the community.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
●	●			Strategy 5: Revise zoning as recommended by the Affordable Housing Plan to support development of affordable housing.			
●	●			1. Explore potential for revisions to PS-A district zoning regulations at individual locations to allow for mixed-use residential at a density appropriate to the location, with a required affordable housing component.	P&Z	EDC	Medium
●	●			2. Consider adjustments to the BTD zone to further incentivize development of affordable housing on appropriate sites providing that commercial development remains a required component of new development.	P&Z	EDC	Low
●	●			3. Revise Kensington Village Core 2 regulations to allow increased residential density with an affordability requirement and/or consider redistricting area across the train station to Farmington Avenue Core Area 1.	P&Z	EDC	High
	●			4. Revise the zoning regulations to allow private development of Housing for the Elderly on Town-owned property.	P&Z		High
	●	●		Strategy 6: Support the diversification of the Town's housing stock without adversely impacting single-family neighborhoods by providing adequate zoning controls.			
	●			1. Ensure that the zoning regulations direct higher density housing towards areas that have the infrastructure to support such development.	P&Z		High
	●			2. Provide additional design standards and/or guidelines for multifamily development to ensure that development is not adversely impactful to adjacent single-family residential properties or districts.	P&Z		Medium
		●		3. Amend zoning regulations to better control orientation and placement of residential uses and the protection of sensitive environmental features on a developed lot.	P&Z		Low

**Economic Development Goal:** Foster a stable economy that leverages Berlin's location and commercial zones to provide residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while expanding and diversifying the Town's property tax base.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
●			●	<b>Strategy 1:</b> Foster an environment that is supportive of economic development and provides opportunities for the growth and development of small and large businesses in the Town.			
●				1. Continue to streamline the Town's business permitting and licensing processes to be efficient, effective, and expeditious.	EDC		Medium
●				2. Continue to work with local banks, SBA lenders, and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to promote existing small business lending and micro-lending programs.	EDC		Medium
●				3. Continue to provide tax incentives to for new economic development projects consistent with the Town's tax abatement policy. Consider dynamic changes to the tax abatement policy as economic and market conditions change.	TC	EDC	High
●			●	4. Encourage the expansion of high-speed broadband coverage and gigabit internet access across the Town.	EDC		Low
●				<b>Strategy 2:</b> Develop a campaign and communications that promotes Berlin as a place that is friendly to business.			
●				1. Continue implementing and refine the strategic communications and engagement plan for the Town including the 'It's All in Berlin' branding and awareness effort.	EDC		High
●				2. Continue to provide and evolve regular communications and promotion of economic development activity in the Town through multiple media platforms.	EDC		High
●				3. Continue and refine the Town's economic development marketing effort including, information on available commercial and industrial properties, an overview of Berlin's strengths and assets, and print and digital materials.	EDC		Medium
●				4. Support the newly created Arts and Culture Committee and coordinate activities though the Town's Economic Development Director as liaison.	EDC	P&R	Low
●				5. Continue membership in Chambers of Commerce to actively promote Berlin and distribute campaign materials and information.	EDC		Medium
●				<b>Strategy 3:</b> Support the development of industrial parks that will serve small and emerging businesses.			
●				1. Identify sites that would be suitable for the development of small lot industrial parks.	EDC		Medium
●				2. Revise zoning regulations to allow for the development of small lot industrial parks at suitable sites. Allow 1 acre lots in PI-2 if part of a unified site plan for a lot 5 acres or larger. Allow 100' frontage in PI-2 and PI-I if development of a unified site plan for 1 acre lots.	P&Z		Medium



**Economic Development Goal:** Foster a stable economy that leverages Berlin's location and commercial zones to provide residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while expanding and diversifying the Town's property tax base.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
●	●	●		<b>Strategy 4:</b> Review and update, as appropriate, the Town's mixed-use, commercial, and industrial zone regulations to ensure that the regulations provide sufficient flexibility to allow development that responds to current and future market conditions.			
●				1. Review zoning regulations to ensure that they are supportive of the development of health care facilities in appropriate districts.	P&Z	EDC	High
●				2. Review special permit uses and reduce requirement as feasible to a zoning permit and site plan for specific uses in specific districts.	P&Z	EDC	Medium
●				3. Review zoning regulations to ensure that they allow for the development of shared working spaces and business incubators in a range of districts.	P&Z	EDC	Low
●				4. Analyze the Town's existing industrial zoning districts to determine if allowable uses, building heights, parking and loading requirements, and constraints on building size or footprints are in line with today's industrial/manufacturing/distribution standards.	P&Z	EDC	Medium
		●		5. Modify site plan and zoning regulations to allow the Planning and Zoning Commission to strengthen requirements for environmental assessments for properties with potential for environmental contamination based on historic uses.	P&Z		Low
●	●			6. Study mixed-use options that include residential in the PS-A zoned areas (see housing section).	EDC	P&Z	Medium
●	●			7. Consider revising BTZ zoning regulations to require at least 20% commercial development and that commercial and residential development be done on a pro rata basis if a project is phased.	P&Z	EDC	High
●	●			8. Study the SPDD and the SPDD Overlay and SPDD-2 zones to determine how those districts could be modified to be more effective in attracting appropriate development. Consider allowing a set of uses by right (permitted uses), expanding the range of uses allowed by special permit including residential uses as part of a mixed-use project and reducing setbacks and minimum lot sizes to facilitate mixed-use development.	EDC	P&Z	High
●				9. Update Town zoning regulations to consider providing more flexibility in the definition of business uses and to address contemporary business trends and definitions and to categorize more uses as permitted (rather than special permit) uses.	P&Z	EDC	High

**Economic Development Goal:** Foster a stable economy that leverages Berlin's location and commercial zones to provide residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while expanding and diversifying the Town's property tax base.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
●	●		●	Strategy 5: Focus economic development efforts on Farmington Avenue and the Berlin Turnpike.			
●				1. Review parking requirements for potential reductions to requirements that may allow for infill development in existing parking lots.	P&Z	EDC	Medium
●			●	2. Consider conducting corridor studies or area plans for the Berlin Turnpike and Farmington Avenue to help align economic development priorities with needed infrastructure improvements to adequately support future growth and to plan growth and redevelopment of these areas.	EDC	DPW, TC	Medium
			●	3. Identify infrastructure enhancements needed in those areas.	EDC	DPW	Medium
●	●			4. Review zoning regulations to ensure that the regulations support desirable land uses and site design and provide opportunities for housing development without displacing commercial uses.	P&Z	EDC	Medium
●		●		Strategy 6: Facilitate the clean-up, improvement, and reuse of vacant, aging, or contaminated commercial and industrial properties.			
		●		1. Continue to facilitate clean up and reuse of brownfields sites including by seeking grants and loans to facilitate investigation and clean up. Consider tax sales or RFPs for sale of tax liens to address tax delinquent brownfields sites.	EDC		High
●				2. Maintain a focus on reducing commercial building vacancies by working with property owners to identify needs and challenges in filling vacancies.	EDC		Medium
●				3. Step up the enforcement of the Town's blighted property ordinance.	TC	P&Z	High
●				4. Work with and provide incentives to commercial property owners on Farmington Avenue and the Berlin Turnpike to improve the appearance of properties.	EDC		Medium
●			●	Strategy 7: Continue to promote Berlin's TED sites by developing informational and promotional materials specific to each site.			
●				1. Seek additional funding to continue the façade program to upgrade landscaping and facades on Farmington Avenue, New Britain Road, and vicinity.	EDC		High
●				2. Work with the TED site property owners to support their marketing efforts if the properties are for sale. Prepare conceptual development plans in concert with the owners.	EDC		Medium
●				3. Continue to encourage property owners in TEDs areas to work together on issues regarding sale and future development of the properties.	EDC		Medium
●			●	4. Consider infrastructure extensions and other incentives to stimulate the development of TEDs properties consistent with the uses proposed in this Plan.	EDC		Medium

**Economic Development Goal:** Foster a stable economy that leverages Berlin's location and commercial zones to provide residents with access to goods, services, and employment opportunities while expanding and diversifying the Town's property tax base.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
●	●		●	<b>Strategy 8:</b> Continue to invest in Kensington Village and facilitate the redevelopment of properties and development of mixed-use commercial and residential projects.			
●	●			1. Assist private property owners to market properties consistent with the uses proposed in the Plan.	EDC		Low
●	●			2. Increase the allowed residential density in Kensington Village Core Area 2 (see Housing section).	P&Z	EDC	High
●	●			3. Communicate with property owners in the core of the TOD area and develop and coordinate plans for the next phases of TOD area mixed use redevelopment as properties are available for sale.	EDC		Medium
●			●	4. Make transit, pedestrian and bicycle improvements to link residents and employees to the TOD hub at the Berlin Train Station.	DPW	EDC	Medium
●			●	5. Expand open space walking connection from the Train Station to Old Brickyard Lane and beyond.	EDC	DPW	Low
●				6. Continue membership in the Main Street Program and consider the creation of public/private organizational structure to foster town center revitalization in Kensington Center.	EDC		Medium
●			●	7. Continue to implement Farmington Avenue Design standards and update standards as needed.	P&Z		High
●			●	8. Continue to extend sidewalks and fill missing links to connect the Kensington Village TOD area to nearby neighborhoods.	PW	EDC	High
●	●			9. Consider rezoning the Berlin Steel complex and industrial properties on Harding street for Transit Oriented Development uses if these properties become available for sale or reuse.	P&Z		Medium
●			●	10. Continue to make public investments to reinforce the Kensington Village TOD area.	TC	DPW, EDC	Medium
●			●	11. Continue streetscape improvements as grant funds become available. Concentrate on streetscape improvements on Farmington Avenue between to New Britain Road and Steele Boulevard.	DPW	EDC	Medium
●			●	12. Study creation of wireless zone downtown.	EDC		Low
●			●	13. Connect Steele Boulevard to the Train Station parking and Depot Road when appropriate rights can be secured from CTDOT and AMTRAK.	DPW	EDC	Medium



**Transportation Goal:** Improve and expand transportation options to ensure greater connectivity for all modes of transportation and maintain and improve infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
			●	<b>Strategy 1:</b> Improve traffic operations across the Town.			
			●	1. Improve the Town's traffic operations by updating traffic signal infrastructure and technology at intersections that experience a low level of service.	DPW		Medium
●		●	●	<b>Strategy 2:</b> Strategically improve transportation infrastructure across the Town.			
			●	1. Continue to pursue State and Federal funding for local bridge maintenance and repairs.	DPW		High
		●		2. Integrate Low Impact Design (LID) measures in transportation infrastructure projects as feasible.	DPW	EDC	Medium
			●	3. Implement recommendations of pavement conditions survey and management plan to address outstanding needs in pavement conditions of the Town's roads.	DPW		High
●			●	4. Seek grants for and continue to invest in streetscape projects in commercial areas where warranted with priority being Farmington Avenue between New Britain Road and Steele Boulevard.	DPW	EDC	Medium

9.0

**Transportation Goal:** Improve and expand transportation options to ensure greater connectivity for all modes of transportation and maintain and improve infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●	●	Strategy 3: Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the Town.			
			●	1. Adopt a Complete Streets policy that prioritizes the provision of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and traffic calming improvements in transportation infrastructure and maintenance projects and review ordinances, regulations, and policies to align with complete street principles.	P&Z	DPW	Medium
			●	2. Provide bicycle racks at locations across Town such as the Train Station, schools, and parks. Consider providing bike lockers at Train Station.	PGD	EDC	Medium
			●	3. Develop a bicycle plan that identifies preferred bicycling routes and corridors that may be appropriate for the development of bike lanes or pathways.	DPW	CC	Medium
			●	4. Prepare an accessibility plan to evaluate the accessibility of existing sidewalks and to recommend projects to improve accessibility.	DPW		High
			●	5. Continue to invest in improving existing sidewalks and making sidewalks more accessible.	DPW	EDC	High
			●	6. Update the Town’s sidewalk plan and identify needed improvements to connect gaps in the network prioritizing corridors that connect neighborhoods to schools, Town facilities, and Kensington Village and East Berlin Village. Also review and prioritize corridors such as Farmington Avenue, Worthington Ridge, Berlin Turnpike, Deming Road, Four Rod Road (south of Norton), Percival Avenue (Carbo Lane to Percival Field), Robbins Rd (Towne Drive to Timberwood), and Kensington Road (Carriage Drive to Norton Road).	DPW	EDC	Medium
			●	7. Seek grants and provide funding for and expand the Town’s sidewalk network as identified by the updated sidewalk plan.	DPW		High
			●	8. Identify priority intersections across Town for improving pedestrian crossings and provide improvements to pedestrian crossings as needed including ADA enhancements, crosswalk markings, signage, signal enhancements, and lighting enhancements.	DPW		High
		●	●	9. Expand trail and greenway connections across the Town and identify preferred routes for connecting to nearby regional trails such as the Farmington Canal Trail.	DPW	CC, P&Z	Medium

**Transportation Goal:** Improve and expand transportation options to ensure greater connectivity for all modes of transportation and maintain and improve infrastructure in a sustainable manner.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●	●	<b>Strategy 4:</b> Accommodate emerging transportation modes and technologies.			
			●	1. Seek funding to provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure at Town facilities and where may be required to support electric vehicle fleets.	DPW		Medium
			●	2. Review zoning regulations and amend as necessary to require the provision of bicycle parking and electric vehicle charging as appropriate.	P&Z		Medium
		●		3. Investigate the best options for improving efficiency and reducing environmental impact of Town vehicles.	DPW		Low
			●	<b>Strategy 5:</b> Continue to address safety issues across Berlin's transportation system.			
			●	1. Pursue grant funding, as available, to provide safety enhancements at high-crash areas.	DPW	EDC	High
			●	2. Continue to work with CTDOT to ensure that safety enhancements are made to high-crash locations on State highways in Berlin.	DPW	BPD	High
			●	3. Develop a traffic calming toolbox as part of a Complete Streets plan and implement traffic calming measures on local roadways where crash rates could be reduced through traffic calming.	DPW		Medium
			●	<b>Strategy 6:</b> Improve access to CT Transit bus routes			
			●	1. Provide additional bus shelters and waiting/drop-off areas.	DPW		Medium
			●	2. Work with CT Transit to provide more local stops on routes that currently serve Berlin.	EDC	DPW	Medium
●	●		●	<b>Strategy 7:</b> Improve access to Berlin Station and encourage use of commuter rail, regional rail, and CTfastrak service.			
●	●			1. Reduce parking requirements for developments within TOD districts.	P&Z		Medium
			●	2. Complete gaps in sidewalk network between Berlin Station and surrounding neighborhoods and multi-family properties.	DPW		High
			●	3. Focus initial bicycle improvements on providing connections between Berlin Station and surrounding neighborhoods and multi-family properties.	DPW		Medium
			●	4. Improve CT Transit bus service between Berlin Station and New Britain's CTfastrak Station.	TC	EDC	Medium

9.0



**Facilities and Services Goal: Provide high quality services and facilities to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a sustainable manner.**

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●	●	<b>Strategy 1:</b> Continue to fund and implement Town capital projects and investments consistent with the projects and priorities identified in the Town's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and subject to the availability of funding resources. Annually update the CIP in consideration of dynamic changes and to address goals, strategies and actions recommended in this POCD.			
			●	1. Update the Town's CIP on an annual basis. In the next CIP update, consider adding projects to the CIP that address the goals, strategies, and actions of this plan.	FD		Medium
			●	2. Create and fund a grants match account to provide grants matching funds that will increase the opportunity to secure grant funds to fund projects in the CIP or otherwise recommended in this POCD.	TC	FD	High
		●	●	<b>Strategy 2:</b> Continue to preserve, enhance, and maintain parks and recreational facilities including projects in the Town's CIP.			
		●	●	1. Develop a Parks and Recreation Masterplan	P&R		Medium
			●	2. Conduct playscape, athletic field, and athletic court replacement and refurbishment as directed by the Masterplan to ensure better conditions.	P&R		High
		●	●	3. Expand and enhance trails and paths within and connecting parks with the aim of connecting the Town's parks and open spaces with a connected network.	P&R	CC	Medium
			●	4. Make accessibility improvements at parks including pathway upgrades and accessible playgrounds to ensure full access.	P&R		Medium
		●	●	<b>Strategy 3:</b> Support sustainability including energy efficiency and renewable energy sources across all Town facilities.			
		●	●	1. Develop a municipal energy plan that includes energy tracking and management, energy reduction goals and actions, and clean energy goals and actions.	PBD		Medium
		●	●	2. Commit funding to address the needs identified by the energy assessment and pursue grant funding as available to assist in the financing of improvements.	TC	PBD	Medium
			●	3. Benchmark and track energy use across Town and school buildings and facilities.	PBD		High
		●	●	4. Include energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in the Town's capital improvement plan.	FD	PBD	High
		●	●	5. Implement energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements at Town and school buildings and facilities.	PBD		High

**Facilities and Services Goal: Provide high quality services and facilities to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a sustainable manner.**

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●	●	<b>Strategy 4:</b> Continue to protect and maintain the Town's drinking water supply and distribution infrastructure.			
		●		1. Limit further expansion of water service infrastructure so as to discourage expansion of the system to rural areas and low-density land uses.	WC & WD	P&Z	High
			●	2. Make investments in water supply system including investments identified in the capital improvement plan of the Berlin Water Control Commission as needed to ensure a safe yield and continue to explore additional water sources so as to be less dependent on outside water districts to meet water supply needs.	WC & WD		High
			●	3. Continue to expand interconnections with adjacent Towns and the Metropolitan District Commission to increase the resiliency of the water supply system.	WC & WD		High
		●	●	4. Implement water saving measures across Town properties and facilities as a means of reducing Town drinking water usage.	PBD		High
			●	5. Revisit the potential consolidation of the Berlin's three water districts as a means of improving sewer infrastructure and reducing costs. If the districts are not consolidated, each district needs to plan and complete inflow and infiltration reduction projects if requested by the Mattabassett District, to reduce sewer system flows in storm events. Update the working agreements between the districts to more efficiently coordinate services and streamline permitting for projects requiring inter-jurisdictional cooperation.	TC		High
		●	●	6. Promote the adoption of best management practices and the use of green infrastructure as a means of reducing the use of drinking water supply for irrigation. Implement measures at Town properties and include regulations and guidelines within the Town's zoning regulations.	PGD		Medium

9.0

**Facilities and Services Goal: Provide high quality services and facilities to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a sustainable manner.**

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●	●	<b>Strategy 5:</b> Continue to make needed investments in the Town's wastewater collection infrastructure.			
		●	●	1. Limit further expansion of wastewater infrastructure so as to discourage expansion of the system to rural areas and low-density land uses and focus on needed improvements to the existing system.	WC & WD		High
			●	2. Address inflow and infiltration issues across the wastewater collection system.	WC & WD		High
			●	3. Upgrade obsolete or dysfunctional components of the wastewater collection system.	WC & WD		High
			●	4. Revisit the potential consolidation of the Berlin's three water districts as a means of improving sewer infrastructure and reducing costs. If the districts are not consolidated, each district needs to have a capital plan that addresses existing and anticipated water and sewer system needs and to plan and complete inflow and infiltration reduction projects if requested by the Mattabassett District, to reduce sewer system flows in storm events. Update the working agreements between the districts to more efficiently coordinate services and streamline permitting for projects requiring inter-jurisdictional cooperation.	TC	WC & WD	High
			●	<b>Strategy 6:</b> Proactively work towards obtaining and securing funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) as a means of financing needed improvements to Town facilities and infrastructure.			
			●	1. Work across Town departments to identify projects eligible for funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and other funding sources.	TM		High
			●	2. Work across Town departments and with State agencies to prepare grant applications and request for funding including through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.	TM		High
			●	<b>Strategy 7:</b> Continue work towards establishing an accessible intergenerational social and recreational community facility.			
			●	1. Complete the process that was presented to the Council in 2022 for a new Senior and Community Center by following thru on the recommendations such as revising the statements of need initially submitted by the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Commission on Aging whether as one project, in a phased manner and/or in partnership with other organizations.	TC	P&R, CFA	High

9.0



**Facilities and Services Goal: Provide high quality services and facilities to residents, property owners, business owners, and visitors in a sustainable manner.**

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●	●	<b>Strategy 8:</b> Provide improvements to the Town's stormwater infrastructure to reduce risk of flooding and protect water quality including by identifying additional projects for inclusion in the CIP.			
		●	●	1. Conduct a study of the Mattabesset / Sebeth River Basin to determine the most appropriate ways to improve drainage and minimize the flood plain.	DPW		Medium
		●	●	2. Continue to conduct improvements to stormwater infrastructure as specified in the Town's stormwater management plan.	DPW		Medium
			●	<b>Strategy 9:</b> Continue to maintain and upgrade public buildings and public safety facilities including projects identified in the CIP and strive to improve accessibility, energy efficiency, longevity, air quality and healthiness of all buildings.			
			●	1. Continue the process to design and construct improvements to address identified Police Department space needs and continue to evaluate facilities to ensure that Berlin's Public Safety services have the resources to meet the needs of the community	BPD		High
			●	2. Plan for and maintain public safety facilities in accordance with evolving space and technology needs.	BPD		Medium
			●	3. Provide more support for the maintenance and improvement of Volunteer Fire Company Stations.	TC	FD	High
●	●	●	●	<b>Strategy 10:</b> Undertake a complete inventory of Town properties.			
●	●	●	●	1. Identify properties that may be appropriate for new uses or additional protection.	CC		Medium
●	●	●	●	2. Identify properties that should be reserved for future town facilities and those that could be sold to generate revenue from sale, reduce the Town's maintenance costs, and generate additional tax revenues.	TC	FD	Medium
			●	<b>Strategy 11:</b> Encourage the underground installation of electric and communications infrastructure in new developments as a means of protecting infrastructure from storm events and improving the appearance of new developments.			
			●	1. Modify subdivision requirements as necessary to encourage underground utilities for new residential and business projects	P&Z		Medium

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**Cultural Resources Goal:** Protect, promote, fund, and continue to act as a steward for Berlin's cultural resources with a special focus on the Towns historic properties and farms.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
		●		Strategy 1: Provide continued support for the promotion and protection of historic resources in Berlin.			
		●		1. Promote public awareness and appreciation of local historic resources through the development of print materials, online content, and on-site signage.	HDC	P&Z, EDC	High
		●		2. Develop an inventory and assessment of all historic properties and cultural resources in the Town including cemeteries, greens, residential and commercial structures, and other cultural sites.	P&Z		High
		●		3. Inventory and protect Berlin's scenic roads and byways. Define the features that would distinguish these, such as agricultural vistas, open meadows, historic properties, stonewalls, mature trees, notable geologic formations. Study the benefits of a Scenic Road ordinance per the Connecticut General Statutes and adopt an ordinance if found to be beneficial.	P&Z	DPW	Medium
		●		4. Develop regulations to preserve the physical and architectural characteristic of historic houses and their sites.	HDC	P&Z	Medium
		●		5. Install historic plaques in the Worthington Ridge Historic District that convey the significance of the properties and Berlin's role as part of the Underground Railroad.	PGD	HDC	Medium
		●		6. Pursue financial incentives for preservation, including Town capital investments, State and Federal grants, tax incentive programs, preservation or facade easements, assessment deferrals and transfer of development rights. Consider creating a grant match account specifically for historic assets grants/projects.	EDC		High
●	●	●		Strategy 2: Allow for the reuse of historic properties and ensure the preservation of historic properties when re-used or when redeveloped.			
●	●	●		1. Encourage maintenance of the architectural integrity of historic and architecturally significant sites, buildings and structures when adapted for reuse for commercial, industrial or residential purposes.	P&Z	HDC	High
●	●	●		2. Amend the zoning and subdivision regulations to encourage the preservation and reuse of historically significant structures within proposed developments.	P&Z	HDC	High
●	●	●		3. Revise zoning ordinances to allow adaptive reuse of buildings in the Worthington Ridge Historic District including limited commercial or additional residential units.	P&Z	HDC	High

**Cultural Resources Goal: Protect, promote, fund, and continue to act as a steward for Berlin's cultural resources with a special focus on the Towns historic properties and farms.**

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
●		●		<b>Strategy 3:</b> Develop a marketing campaign for Berlin that features and promotes its cultural resources.			
		●		1. Develop branding and print materials that promote Berlin's cultural resources.	EDC		High
		●		2. Establish a unified presence on social media to promote Berlin's cultural resources.	EDC		High
●		●		<b>Strategy 4:</b> Provide continued support for the Town's farms to help ensure their continued operation.			
●		●		1. Develop and maintain an inventory of active farms in Berlin including acres farmed, number of people employed by these farms and agricultural businesses, and other information pertinent to the economic value of Berlin's agricultural and related products.	EDC	P&Z	High
●		●		2. Engage in a dialogue with local farmers to identify additional zoning amendments to encourage the preservation of local farms, including by expanding definitions of farming related uses.	EDC	P&Z	Medium
●		●		3. Evaluate the opportunity for farming on Town properties, including continuation of haying in open space areas.	TM		Medium
		●		4. Use Town open space acquisition funds and identify funding partners to purchase development rights of farms to ensure their continued operation.	TC	CC	Medium
●		●		5. Review and revise the zoning regulations as appropriate to allow farms to engage in accessory uses that are complementary to the principal use of a farm.	P&Z		High
●	●	●		<b>Strategy 5:</b> Support the development of micro-farming in Berlin.			
●		●		1. Revise zoning regulations to allow farming on lots less than ten acres. Consider a two-tier definition with expanded farming uses permitted only on sites that are 10 ten acres or more.	P&Z		High
		●		2. Change definition of farm to include lots of greater than 5 acres if part of a farm subdivision master plan with farm-related restrictive covenants.	P&Z		High
	●	●		3. Allow a house on farms of at least 10 acres in the POD zone. Also allow a house on 5 acres if part of a farming subdivision master plan of a parcel greater than 10 acres.	P&Z		High
●		●		4. Provide adequate regulations for farm activities based upon lot size and district to ensure that farm activities are appropriate to the area not disruptive to surrounding residential properties.	P&Z		High

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**Cultural Resources Goal:** Protect, promote, fund, and continue to act as a steward for Berlin's cultural resources with a special focus on the Town's historic properties and farms.

Theme				Strategies and Actions	Lead Entity	Partner Entity	Priority Level
Grow Economic Base	Expand Housing Choice	Protect Env. & Cult. Resources	Invest in Facilities & Infrastructure				
●	●	●		<b>Strategy 6:</b> Improve and reuse Town-owned historic properties.			
		●		1. Complete restoration of the Worthington Meeting House and place it into productive use as a Historic Society museum.	PBD	FWMH	High
●	●	●		2. Review the zoning regulations and revise as necessary to support the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic properties.	P&Z		Medium
		●		<b>Strategy 7:</b> Work with owners of historic properties to add properties to the National Register of Historic Places, whether individually listed or as part of a new district.			
		●		1. Prioritize the historic designation of the Nelson Augustus Moore property.	P&Z		High

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