

**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

RECORD OF DECISION

FOR

**FUNDING ASSISTANCE IN SUPPORT OF THE
CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN
FOR THE DOWNTOWN AREA**

TORRINGTON, CT

September, 2006

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RECORD OF DECISION

This Record of Decision was prepared for the *Conceptual Master Plan for the Downtown Area*, as presented by the City of Torrington, Connecticut. The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) will administer funds appropriated by a Special Act of the Connecticut General Assembly for a portion of the cost of the project. The funding would support infrastructure improvements and facilities that will be necessary to accommodate new and expanding enterprises. DECD's funding involvement in the project triggers compliance with the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) and preparation of an Environmental Impact Evaluation (EIE). Approval of the CEPA document is one of the requirements that must be met prior to release of the committed funds.

Project Description

For more than a decade, the city of Torrington has been evaluating opportunities for both economic growth and revitalization of the city's downtown area. As a result of various planning efforts and community workshops in recent years, the city has developed a series of goals, objectives, strategies and initiatives aimed at restoring the economic vitality of Torrington's downtown. These elements form the basis for the city's *Conceptual Master Plan for the Downtown Area*.

The city's Conceptual Master Plan was first presented in November 2002. It identifies infrastructure improvements and desired land use patterns that will encourage new business and attract shoppers, tourists and arts enthusiasts to Torrington. The city has an agreement with a development company, Downtown Torrington Redevelopment LLC, who is working to promote investor interest in Torrington's redevelopment.

An EIE was prepared in accordance with the CEPA regulations. Prior to issuing a Final EIE for approval by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), the document was published and released as a draft that was subject to public and agency review during a 45-day public comment period. A public hearing was held on July 27, 2006 during the comment period to provide an additional opportunity for public and agency comment. Comments were received in writing during the comment period, and oral testimony received at the public hearing, are addressed and published as part of the Final EIE.

Purpose and Need

The following project purposes and needs were established by city officials, with input from local boards, commissions, civic groups and the general public.

- Promote economic development.
- Strengthen the existing mixed uses of downtown.
- Promote local and regional arts, cultural interests, and tourism.
- Preserve Torrington's heritage and historic character.
- Improve pedestrian facilities, traffic circulation, parking and streetscape.

Together, the project purposes and needs establish the basis for evaluation of the appropriateness and feasibility of the city's Conceptual Master Plan and alternative redevelopment scenarios.

Proposed Action

DECD was authorized by Connecticut Special Act 01-2 to provide financial assistance for Torrington's downtown revitalization to further the city's and state's economic and community development goals. DECD's proposed action is to administer up to \$30 million in state economic and community development funds for infrastructure improvements and facilities that will be necessary to implement Torrington's Conceptual Master Plan. DECD anticipates contributing funds to roadway and intersection improvements, streetscape, parking expansions, pedestrian amenities, and other projects that will promote investment in the city's revitalization plans.

Conceptual Master Plan for the Downtown Torrington

The proposed action is to provide financial support for implementation of the Conceptual Master Plan for Downtown Torrington. The conceptual plan, updated in 2006, was based on a 2002 plan and updated by the Torrington Development Corporation (TDC) with input from the public, the city's developer and state agencies as well as traffic, economic, community and natural resource analyses performed for the EIE. The TDC was established in 2004 as a non-profit entity charged with overseeing the planning and implementation of the downtown redevelopment plan. The projects proposed in the Conceptual Master Plan will be finalized in a Municipal Development Plan (MDP) as per CGS Chapter 132 or in a detailed Redevelopment Plan (RP) as per CGS Chapter 130. The MDP process will begin immediately following the CEPA process.

The Conceptual Master Plan is depicted in the plan map shown in the attachment and includes the following projects, listed by area:

Central Downtown Core

1) Traffic and parking improvements

Realignment of East Main Street/Litchfield Street (U.S. Route 202) at Main Street/Water Street/Franklin Street (the five-way intersection) and reconfiguration of Main Street to one-way northbound between East Main and Church Streets (limited two-way between Church and Pearl). On-street parking on Main Street is reconfigured to be angled, which allows an increase in the number of spaces by approximately 30. The improvement also includes adding turning lanes at Pearl/Prospect, Litchfield/Prospect and East Main/Center Streets and revised traffic signal phasing and adjustment of pedestrian traffic devices where necessary. Prospect Street would be converted to one-way flow southbound from Pearl Street to Water Street in later phases of the project. The Torrington Plaza drive would be relocated away from the Litchfield/South Main Street intersection.

2) Pedestrian facilities and streetscape.

Streetscape improvements are planned that include decorative sidewalk pavers, period street lighting, plantings, benches, bike racks and directional signage.

Water Street

- 1) Redevelopment of Water Street as a cohesive retail and multi-use district designed to complement the visual character of the existing historic district. Relocation of incompatible existing businesses (including the city fire station) to create space for new development. Total new retail proposed is approximately 255,000 square feet of retail on Water Street and 75,000 square feet of professional office and 75,000 square feet residential on Water Street between Church and Pearl Streets. Anchor stores will be located at the ends of a continuous row of shops, with a mix of small and medium shops in between. Eight historic buildings and five existing historical building facades will be retained and/or rehabilitated. Any contaminated properties will be remediated prior to redevelopment.
- 2) Relocation of the historic Train Station, currently located on the Kelly Bus Company property, to a newly created historical plaza on the south side of Water Street between the Stop and Shop plaza drive and the existing railroad tracks.
- 3) Streetscape improvements on Water Street as an extension of the new streetscape on Main Street, and a new pedestrian pathway that connects the proposed historical plaza with Christmas Village to the north.
- 4) New surface parking at the rear of buildings on Water Street with linkages to the Water Street streetscape and pedestrian pathways along the river.
- 5) Termination of the existing Naugatuck Railroad tracks south of Water Street.

Franklin Street/Center Street

- 1) Development of 125,000 square feet of new professional office space including aesthetic improvements and remediation of any contaminated properties.
- 2) Construction of a new headquarters for the Torrington Fire Department (approximately 25,000 square feet) to replace the fire station currently located on Water Street.

- 3) Renovation and reuse of the former Torrington Manufacturing facility as a residential complex with an estimated 200, two or three bedroom units in 200,000 square feet.
- 4) Attractive pedestrian pathways linking parking areas, the river, and the Central Core.

South Main Street/Litchfield Street/Summer Street

- 1) Revitalization, modernization and façade improvements at Torrington Plaza. The creation of murals on the rear of the plaza to improve aesthetics along the riverfront will be incorporated into the Riverwalk project.
- 2) Future ancillary development projects at this location may include the construction of a new establishment, such as a restaurant, on the South Main Street.

Naugatuck River

Pedestrian walkway system, “Riverwalk”, along the Naugatuck River between Church Street and Franklin Street that provides connections with the downtown redevelopment streetscape and parking areas. Pedestrian walkways will be developed to also provide links with the longer Naugatuck River Greenway trail project.

Gateways

Gateway treatments are physical improvements such as new curbing, street-side amenities such as street furniture, signage and vegetation. Gateway improvements are recommended for the following six locations on the perimeter of the downtown study area:

Northern Gateway

Main Street at Pearl/East Pearl Street

Eastern Gateways

Route 202 (East Main Street) at Route 8 Southbound On Ramp

Route 202 (East Main Street) at Wall Street/Willow Street

Southern Gateways

South Main Street at Coe Place

Route 202 (Litchfield Street/New Litchfield Street) at Litchfield Street/Turner Avenue

Western Gateway

Water Street/Migeon Avenue at Church Street

Project Cost and Phasing

The Downtown Torrington Conceptual Master Plan, dated March 2006, outlines five phases for implementation of the plan.

Phase One – Planning and Administration

Immediately following the EIE, the city of Torrington will begin to prepare the MDP or detailed RP.

Estimated cost: \$300,000

Project management by the TDC.

Estimated cost: \$200,000 (two-year annual budget of \$100,000 per year).

Phase Two – Downtown Core

The first construction phase of the redevelopment project is the engineering, design, and construction of roadway and streetscape improvements to the Main Street/ East Main Street/ lower Water Street historic downtown core.

Estimated cost: \$3,000,000

Matching façade improvement grant program.

Estimated cost: \$400,000

Phase Three – Upper Water Street

Streetscape improvements and retail development on Water Street will commence following improvements to the Downtown core.

Estimated cost: \$91,000,000

Phase Four – Riverwalk, Pedestrian Connections and Gateways

Implementation of the Riverwalk, creation of pedestrian connections linking parks and open green spaces to the commercial core, and landscape and new signage at gateways.

Estimated cost: \$2,500,000

Phase Five – East Main Street Gateway

New professional office development in the Center Street/ Franklin Drive area; renovation of the Torin Manufacturing building for residential; a new (relocated) fire department headquarters; and beautification and streetscape improvements along the East Main Street corridor from the Route 8 gateway to the Main Street intersection.

Estimated cost: To be determined*

*Details on the future project phases will be developed based on future market conditions and further refinement of the individual project phase.

The total cost estimated for the first four phases of the Conceptual Master Plan for Downtown Redevelopment is \$97,000,000 (public and private sources).

Alternatives Evaluated

No Action Alternative

The no action alternative is that state funding would not be provided for Torrington's downtown redevelopment plan.

Alternative Development Plan

This alternative was originally proposed as the city's Conceptual Master Plan. This alternative plan is not the preferred development plan.

- 1) Traffic and parking improvements: The alternative plan for resolving traffic operation deficiencies included realignment of East Main Street with Water Street to create a T-type intersection to reduce the number of turning movements. It would be necessary to remove or relocate the existing building on the northeast corner of the Main/East Main Street intersection. Four lanes would be provided on Water Street between East Main Street and Main Street northbound (two lanes in each direction). Turning lanes would be added at Litchfield/Prospect Streets, East Main/Center Streets. The Torrington Plaza drive would be relocated away from the Litchfield/South Main Street intersection. Provision for additional parking included the construction a 300-car parking structure off City Hall Avenue, behind the Warner Theatre.
- 2) Pedestrian facilities and streetscape: Pedestrian and streetscape improvements would be implemented on Main Street and Water Street that would be identical to the Conceptual Master Plan.
- 3) Nearly total redevelopment of upper Water Street as a retail district with mixed commercial and residential uses serving as transitional areas between retail and residential neighborhoods. New development would be designed to complement the existing character of downtown. Relocation of most existing businesses to create space for new development. Total new development would be approximately 350,000 square feet retail and 70,000 square feet mixed office and residential. Any contaminated properties would be remediated prior to redevelopment. Five buildings would be retained and façades on others would be preserved if physically and financially feasible.

New surface parking between the rear of Water Street businesses and the river, with linkages to pedestrian pathways would be provided. A new parking garage for 1100 cars would be constructed off Church Street.

- 4) Redevelopment in the Franklin/Center Street area would include approximately 150,000 square feet of retail, commercial, office, and residential. New development would include aesthetic improvements, and any contaminated properties would be remediated prior to redevelopment. Redevelopment would also include the construction of a civic/institutional facility (e.g. courthouse or museum), with an estimated 200,000 square feet and ample space for parking. Attractive pedestrian

pathways linking parking areas, the river, and the Central Core would be provided along Franklin Street.

- 5) Future revitalization, modernization and aesthetic improvement of the Stop and Shop Plaza on High Street and the Torrington Plaza on South Main Street as included in the Conceptual Master Plan.
- 6) Adaptive reuse of the former Stone Container factory as residential apartments with an estimated 200, 3-4 bedroom units (approximately 250,000 square feet).
- 7) Adaptive reuse of the former Torrington Manufacturing factory as residential apartments with an estimated 200, 2-3 bedroom units (approximately 250,000 square feet).
- 8) Multi-use trail system along the Naugatuck River to include a combination of recreational uses.
- 9) A pedestrian bridge from the municipal parking lot on Litchfield Street, over the river, to Water Street.

Environmental Effects

The environmental effects of the Conceptual Master Plan as compared with the alternative development plan and the no action alternative are summarized below in Table 1. Adverse environmental effects that would occur with implementation of the Conceptual Master Plan and proposed mitigation for those effects are provided in Table 2. Benefits of the Conceptual Master Plan associated with each resource category and how they achieve the project purposes and needs are listed in Table 3.

Table 1. Environmental Effects of the Conceptual Master Plan and Alternatives.

RESOURCE	CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN –PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	NO ACTION
Land Use	Achieves planned mix of complementary uses, revitalization, streetscape, reuse of property. Pedestrian walkways connecting city attractions to downtown. Shifts in property uses and truncation of railroad and permanent use of right-of-way	Same	No beneficial change.
Community Characteristics	Revitalization improves quality of life for residents and attracts visitors. Relocation of fire station will improve access to service areas. Increased demand for city services	Same	Less chance for Riverwalk; does not further city, regional, and state development priorities.
Property	Acquisitions, demolitions and/or easements required on 49 private, 1 state and 1 municipal properties. Allows success of comprehensive master plan for revitalization of deteriorating urban center; replacement, reuse/ rehabilitation of deteriorating buildings.	Acquisitions, demolitions and/or easements required on 48 commercial/industrial and 32 residential properties.	Less chance for rehabilitations of blighted buildings and neighborhoods.
Zoning	Achieves land use objectives of Torrington Plan of Development. Zone amendments and special exceptions required.	Same	No effect
Socioeconomics	<u>City</u> : project cost \$10 million; debt service, city services, loss of existing property revenue = \$23 million over 20 years. Net positive increase in employment, population, consumer expenditures. 15% loss for existing city retailers. Housing meets five-year market forecast.	<u>City</u> : project cost \$10 million; debt service, city services, loss of existing property revenue = \$23 million over 20 years. Net positive increase in employment, pop., consumer expenditures. 22% loss for existing city retailers. Surplus of housing.	Struggle for future economic development and retention of existing downtown businesses.
	<u>State</u> : project cost up to \$30 million; debt service cost, state expenditures for new population. Net positive increase in employment, population, gross state product, personal income, state revenue = \$125 million over 20 years	<u>State</u> : project cost up to \$30 million; debt service cost, state expenditures for new population. Net positive increase in employment, population, gross state product, personal income, state revenue = \$72.8 million over 20 years	No new state revenues.
	<u>Private</u> : project cost \$60 million. Potential \$54 million annually in retail sales	Same	May discourage private investment.
Traffic and Parking	Increases in traffic volume, pedestrian, parking and transit demand. Roadway projects improve traffic flow (LOS D or better) and the pedestrian environment. Parking space added to meet demand.	Same	No roadway improvements to improve future traffic congestion.
Air Quality	Short-term construction effects. No long-term effects	Same	No effect
Noise	Short-term construction effects. No long-term affects	Same	No effect

RESOURCE	CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN –PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	NO ACTION
Historic Resources	Demolition of 17 historic buildings ⁽¹⁾ ; impact minimized by preservation of façades on 5 and substantially altered existing condition of 6 of the 17 buildings. Reuse of historic factory; retention and/or rehabilitation of 8 historic buildings in the Water Street NRHD; creation of a historical railroad plaza, promotes façade improvement program; streetscape improves setting.	Demolition of 18 historic buildings; impact minimized by substantially altered existing condition of 6 of the 18 buildings. Reuse of two historic factories; retention and/or rehabilitation of 5 historic buildings in the Water Street NRHD; creation of historical railroad plaza, promotes façade program; streetscape improves setting.	No direct effects, but adversely effects chances for rehabilitation and reuse of deteriorated buildings.
Visual and Aesthetic	Physically and visually reconnects downtown streetscape with the river. Short-term construction impacts. New construction mixed with old.	Same	Adversely effects chances for improvements to deteriorated buildings, riverfront and streetscape.
Water Resources	Improvements in stormwater control would result of overall long-term improvements. Short-term construction impacts (minimized). No long-term effect.	Same	No effect
Floodplains	Possible encroachment on 100-year flood boundary with Riverwalk.	Encroachment on 100-year flood boundary with Riverwalk. Higher riverbank impact.	No effect
Wetlands	No effect. Improvements in stormwater control would result from overall long-term improvements.	Same	No effect
Wildlife and Vegetation	Use of native, non-invasive vegetation in riverside landscaping and removal of invasive species would result of overall long-term improvement.	Same	No effect
Environmental Risk	Environmental hazards may be encountered at 15 risk sites. Permanent remediation of contaminated sites provides a long-term local and regional benefit.	Same	Less chance for remediation.
Utilities	No adverse effect. Increased water and wastewater treatment demand of 115,000 gpd	No adverse effect. Increased water/ wastewater treatment demand of 224,000 gpd	No effect
Energy	Minimal net increases in use of electricity and fuel.	Same	No effect
Cumulative Impacts	\$30 million project cost, combined with multi-million dollars of funding on other Torrington projects. Promotes state economic and community development; preserves state heritage and historic character; promotes local and regional arts, cultural interests and tourism; improves pedestrian facilities, traffic circulation, and streetscapes.	Same	No effect

⁽¹⁾ Represents the maximum adverse effect requiring additional preservation and adverse impact reduction during later project planning phases, to be undertaken by Torrington, DECD and the SHPO.

Table 2. Summary of Adverse Environmental Effects and Proposed Mitigation of the Conceptual Master Plan for Downtown Torrington Redevelopment.

Resource	Adverse Effect	Proposed Mitigation
Land Use	Development within state-owned railroad right-of-way.	New pedestrian pathway near displaced railroad right-of-way.
Property	Acquisition and/or easements on 49 private properties; displacement of 29 businesses and 34 residences (many low income).	Torrington Relocation Plan for residences and businesses; potential relocation within new development areas; relocation of suitable affordable housing for low income displaced residents.
Socioeconomics	Estimated net fiscal cost to Torrington of \$8 million over 20 years.	Private and state investment in revitalization, future vitality and quality of life of downtown.
Historic and Archaeological	Demolition of 17 (50%) historic buildings in historic district; impact reduced by façade retention on 5 and substantially altered condition of 6 of the 17 buildings ⁽¹⁾ .	Increase historic building rehabilitation/reuse component of redevelopment plan and decrease demolitions to meet the standards of the Connecticut SHPO. Building and District analysis to be conducted as part of the Municipal Development Plan or Redevelopment Plan. No building demolition prior to approval of the Municipal Development Plan or Redevelopment Plan. Plan coordination with SHPO and no façade preservation/building gutting without SHPO approval.
Environmental Risk Sites	Environmental hazards may be encountered at 15 identified risk sites.	Phase I and Phase II site assessments and remediation where necessary, according to state standards and regulations.

⁽¹⁾ Represents the maximum adverse effect requiring additional preservation and adverse impact reduction during later project planning phases, to be undertaken by Torrington, DECD and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Table 3. Benefits of the Conceptual Master Plan and Project Purpose and Need.

RESOURCE	BENEFIT	PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED
Land Use	Achieves planned mix of complementary uses, revitalization, streetscape, reuse of property, pedestrian walkways connecting city attractions to downtown	Strengthens existing mixed uses of downtown.
Community Characteristics	Revitalization improves quality of life for residents and attracts visitors. Relocation of fire station will improve access to service areas.	Promotes economic development, arts and tourism.
Property	Impacts allow success of master plan for revitalization of deteriorating urban center, and replacement, reuse / rehabilitation of deteriorating buildings.	Strengthens existing mixed uses of downtown and promotes economic development, arts and tourism.
Zoning	Achieves land use objectives of Torrington Plan of Development	Strengthens existing mixed uses of downtown;
Socioeconomics	City: net positive increase in employment, population, consumer expenditures. Conservative estimate of net fiscal loss to Torrington of \$8 million over 20 years.	Strengthens existing mixed uses of downtown and promotes economic development, arts and tourism;
	State: net positive increase in employment, population, gross state product, personal income, state revenue = \$125 million over 20 years	Promotes economic development, arts and tourism;
	Private: potential \$54 million annually in retail sales	Promotes economic development, arts and tourism
Traffic and Parking	Roadway concepts improve traffic flow (LOS D or better), added parking and pedestrian environment streetscape improvements.	Improves pedestrian facilities, traffic circulation, parking and streetscape.
Historic Resources	Reuse of historic factory; retention and/or rehabilitation of a minimum of 8 historic buildings in the Water Street NRHD; creation of a historical railroad plaza, promotes façade improvement program; streetscape and riverwalk improves setting	Partially preserves Torrington's heritage and historic character. Strengthens existing mixed uses of downtown. Provides historic district plan and preservation program in Municipal Development Plan or Redevelopment Plan.
Visual and Aesthetic	Streetscape, Riverwalk, rehabilitation of deteriorating historic buildings.	Promotes economic development, arts, culture, tourism, heritage and historic character, and improves pedestrian environment.
Water Resources	Riverwalk physically and visually reconnects downtown streetscape with the river. Improvements in stormwater control would result of overall long-term improvements	Preserves Torrington's riverfront heritage.
Floodplains	Possible encroachment on 100-year flood boundary with Riverwalk.	Riverwalk is beneficial for all project purposes and needs.
Wetlands	Improvements in stormwater control would result of overall long-term improvements.	Preserves Torrington's riverfront heritage.
Wildlife and Vegetation	Use of native, non-invasive vegetation in riverside landscaping and removal of invasive species would result of overall long-term improvements.	Preserves Torrington's riverfront heritage.
Environmental Risk	Permanent remediation of an estimated 15 potentially contaminated sites providing long-term local and regional benefit.	Promotes economic development
Cumulative Impacts	Cumulative effect of projects promotes city and state economic and community development.	Preserves city and state heritage and historic character; promotes local and regional arts, cultural interests and tourism; improves pedestrian facilities, traffic circulation, and streetscapes.

Comments on Environmental Impact Evaluation

Eight public workshops were held by the City of Torrington in 2002 during the development of the Conceptual Master Plan. During these workshops, the public provided input that was incorporated into the plan. The following EIE scoping meetings were held:

- Joint Torrington Commission Meeting – City Hall, Torrington, CT – April 2, 2003
- Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials, Goshen, CT– April 16, 2003
- Torrington Downtown Redevelopment Work Group, City Hall, Torrington – November 20, 2003

Comments from Federal and State Agencies

The following summarizes the written comments received by federal and state agencies and subsequent responses.

United States Department of the Army, New England District, Corps of Engineers

The US Army Corps of Engineers comments pertained to necessary permit to perform work within their jurisdiction. This area includes all work in navigable waters (Section 10) and discharges of dredged or fill material into all US waters and landward to the high tide line or the landward limit of any wetlands, whichever is more extensive (Section 404).

- The City of Torrington will obtain all required permits necessary for construction and will require developers within the area to do the same. The plan outlines anticipated permits, including Section 404 Wetlands Permit. These issues will be addressed during the design process, when final plans are completed and ready for permit submission. DECD will not provide funding for development unless appropriate permits are obtained.

Connecticut Department of Public Health

The Connecticut Department of Public Health commented that the EIE did not address what actions would be performed should lead paint and asbestos be encountered during various stages of construction activity, including property acquisition, demolition, construction, infrastructure work, building renovation, site work and remediation work. Additionally, the use of historic buildings and former industrial sites to be redeveloped as residences was also raised as a concern with regards to residual chemical contamination.

- The City of Torrington will comply with state and local regulations and policies governing the disturbance and/or removal of lead-based paint and asbestos. These issues will be addressed during the design process. DECD will not provide funding for development unless appropriate permits are obtained.

Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

The Office of Policy and Management also provided comments on lead paint and asbestos requirements as well as residual chemical containment associated with the manufacturing properties proposed to be used for residences.

- See previous response regarding lead paint and asbestos. The City of Torrington will perform an evaluation of properties, as appropriate, to determine the presence of residual contamination. Based on the evaluation, Phase I and II environmental assessments will be performed, as required, and remediation will take place. These issues will be addressed during the design phase. DECD will not provide funding for development unless appropriate documentation and management plans are prepared and submitted and adequate public notification is given.

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEP) commented on the timing of property acquisition and construction of the proposed riverwalk, the redevelopment of the Torrington Manufacturing parcel, requirements of the state's floodplain regulatory program, stormwater management, dewatering of groundwater, conducting Phase I and II environmental site assessments, potential for subsurface contamination, and CO attainment designation.

- During the design phase of the project, the City of Torrington will pursue available funds, as mentioned, to acquire necessary easements. Additionally, more detail will be developed for the riverwalk during this phase that will incorporate habitat enhancements, as recommended.
- During the design phase of the project, DECD will apply for flood zone certification and the City of Torrington will acquire the necessary permits for stream channel encroachment and groundwater discharge. DECD will not provide funding for development unless appropriate permits are obtained.
- During the design phase, the City of Torrington will evaluate stormwater runoff and identify appropriate construction and post-construction best management practices (BMPs) that will be incorporated into final design plans during permit submissions. DECD will not provide funding for development unless appropriate permits are obtained.
- During the design phase, the City of Torrington will determine which properties will be subject to Phase I environmental assessments. DECD will not provide funding for development unless appropriate documentation is prepared and submitted.
- Based on the department's comments, for those properties that do not meet the statutory definition of an establishment, the City of Torrington should either conduct voluntary remediation pursuant to Section 22a-133x or 22a-133y of the Connecticut General Statutes or enter into a Consent Order. These issues will be addressed during the design phase. DECD will not provide funding for development unless appropriate documentation is prepared and submitted.
- During the design phase, the City of Torrington will consult with the Remediation Division once on-site investigations are commenced.

- It is hereby noted that that the State of Connecticut is designated as an attainment region for CO and PM₁₀.

Connecticut State Traffic Commission

The State Traffic Commission commented on the requirement of the project to obtain certification from the commission prior to any building permits being issued. The commission reviews traffic mitigation measures.

- During the design phase, the City of Torrington will obtain necessary certification from the State Traffic Commission, providing adequate information to review projected traffic volumes and mitigation strategies. DECD will not provide funding for development unless certification is pursued.

Comments from General Public

A public hearing was held on July 27, 2006. Oral and written comments were received by public officials and the public at large. The majority of responders was supportive of Torrington's Conceptual Master Plan and concurred with the findings of the EIE. Some of those in favor, and many of those who expressed opposition to the plan, cited specific issues they believe need to be addressed.

A description of these issues and DECD's responses in the context of the environmental effects analyzed in the EIE are as follows.

Purpose and Need

There was a concern that the purpose and need "strengthen mixed uses downtown" is not met by the Conceptual Master Plan because the mixed use areas are on the margins of development rather than integrated.

- Land use areas were originally designated in the 2002 Conceptual Master Plan (Figure 2-1) and are all considered part of the downtown. The proposed Conceptual Master Plan also allows for a continued mix of uses in buildings that would remain or be renovated. This led to the conclusion that it was in keeping with the city's goals and would meet the purpose and need.

The presence of loiterers and vandals in the downtown detract from the pedestrian environment and discourage visitors.

- Included within the project purposes and needs is the goal of attracting residents, shoppers and visitors to downtown. Increased positive activity and the presence of more people downtown would help to discourage negative, undesirable behavior (Section 4, page 8). Taking no or insufficient steps toward revitalization may encourage this behavior.

Land Use, Property and Zoning

Several commenters were concerned about the possibility for the use of eminent domain for the acquisition of properties.

- The Torrington Development Corporation, which has been designated to manage project planning, administration and acquisition of property, has stated that they have “...no plans for using eminent domain for the acquisition of property for private purposes.”

A question was raised about the statement in the EIE on page 4-8 that relocation of the Fire Department Headquarters would positively affect response times if travel through the intersection of Water, Main and East Main Streets was avoided.

- The Chief of the Fire Department has indicated that the Conceptual Master Plan would have a positive affect on the city and would not burden services (Section 4.2.3). The assessment of response times was provided by the city. The EIE also states that the fire department intends to conduct a formal analysis before a final location for the fire department headquarters is selected.

Existing businesses should be offered an option to stay, and there is a concern about the loss of small business, attracting enough retailers and competition with the East Main Street retail area.

- The city’s goal is to attract new medium to large size retailers to complement existing small businesses to achieve a mix (Downtown Torrington Summary of Conceptual Master Plan, Appendix A). The city will work with existing businesses on relocation within the new development or other downtown locations (see Section 4.2.2). The timing of construction and contracting with retailers will be outlined in the MDP. The purposes and needs for the project (Section 2.2) embrace the need for drawing shoppers back to downtown.

Municipal Services

The majority of commenters made positive statements about the Riverwalk. However, several concerns were raised regarding property owner liability, crime, maintenance and lighting for safety.

- Property owners granting easements for the Riverwalk are protected from liability by state statute (52-557f). Additional information is available from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Greenways division. The Torrington police department has indicated that while the Riverwalk may increase the need for patrols, orienting businesses toward the river and drawing more people to the area would promote a safer atmosphere (Section 4, page 8). Additional details on Riverwalk design (e.g. lighting, usable by disabled) and maintenance will be outlined in the MDP.

Several commenters expressed concern about the impact of new residential apartments proposed in the Conceptual Master Plan. A few commenters fear that the project would add large numbers of school children to the school system and be a burden on city services.

- The Torrington Conceptual Master Plan as proposed in the EIE includes a potential 200, two or three bedroom apartments. A previous plan incorporated a higher number, but this proposal was eliminated by the alternatives analysis. The projected increase in the number of public school children was calculated, assuming the scenario proposed in the plan, and was provided in EIE Section 4.3.4. The increase projected was approximately 39 school children between the ages 5 and 17. The Torrington Board of Education was contacted regarding the impact of the additional students. The schools currently have adequate capacity to absorb students from new housing developed throughout Torrington. The impact of an influx of new students on classroom capacity and administration would depend on the age distribution and time period over which the new students would enter the school system. Increases in residential development in other areas of the city would also be a factor. The need for additional staff is not projected as a result of the downtown redevelopment. The financial impact was included in the fiscal impact analysis.
- The projected municipal costs and revenues from the additional population were also included in the fiscal impact analysis in Section 4.3.4. As indicated in Table 4-10, aside from the cost of bonding, the result could either be a net positive of \$3.2 million with the 50% population scenario (only half of apartment residents coming from outside Torrington) or a net negative of \$2.1 million with the 100% population scenario (all new residents coming from outside Torrington). The population estimates will vary depending on the actual number, size and type of residential units developed. The exact nature of the residential development has not yet been determined.

Socioeconomics

Many commenters suggested that the city and state funds could go directly to businesses or to help other budgetary problems in the city.

- Through a Special Act of the Connecticut legislature (01-2 Sec. 94), the State Bond Commission authorized DECD to, "...provide financial assistance to Downtown Torrington Redevelopment LLC for restoration and improvements to property..."

Several comments involved the phasing of the projects. Should new residential be included in the same phase that impacts to residential occur, e.g. Phase 3?

- Mixed use development was also included in Phase 3, along with redevelopment of existing residential buildings. Details on project phasing will continue to be worked out by the city and the Torrington Development Corporation during the development of the MDP.

There are concerns about the respective use of city, state and private funds, and the resulting ownership of property, associated with the implementation of the redevelopment plan.

- The distribution of funding and the mechanism for purchases of property will be developed by the city, state and the Torrington Development Corporation and outlined in detail in the MDP.

What is the financial benefit to the taxpayers versus the developer?

- It was estimated in the municipal fiscal analysis (Section 4.3.4) that the project would generate approximately \$15 million in revenue for Torrington over 20 years, but after costs, including the initial \$10 million investment and municipal bonding costs, there would be a net cost to Torrington of approximately \$8± million. The benefits to taxpayers from this investment is rooted in the goals of the project purposes and needs (EIE Section 2), which were conceived for the betterment of the city as a whole. The purposes and needs are based on the premise that revitalization of the downtown improves many aspects of quality of life for the citizens of the city and the region (also see response under hazardous materials). Healthy cities and retention and creation of thriving businesses also benefit the state in the form of jobs and revenue. Private investment, which constitutes the largest share of the project funding, is essential for the city and state to be able to achieve this goal and sustain the revitalization. The financial impact to the private sector was not specifically analyzed in the EIE, but sales from new retail were projected to be \$54 million annually (Section 4.3.2).

Project phasing should consider availability of funds, capacity for the project management team and city staff to handle the work required to implement the projects, and ongoing maintenance of streetscape and gateways.

- This suggestion will be taken into consideration during the refinement of project phasing that will be part of the MDP. Phase one involves hiring full-time staff for the Torrington Development Corporation to manage planning and administration.

Traffic, Transportation and Parking

Several commenters expressed being for or against parking garages.

- As a clarification, the Conceptual Master Plan indicates only surface parking expansions in the rear of building frontage on Water Street, on Main Street and in the rear of the Nutmeg Conservatory. The EIE parking analysis noted (Section 4 page 49) that provided existing parking areas are available for the new development, the new surface parking would be sufficient. A parking structure may only be needed in the Franklin/Center Street area, depending on the actual parking demand.

Questions were raised about the distribution of parking on Main Street and recommendations were proposed for addition pockets of angled parking in the area between the river at Center Bridge and Water Street at Main Street.

- The configuration of the Main Street/Water Street/East Main Street realignment as shown in the Conceptual Master Plan graphic (Figure 2-2) is still conceptual. In order to accommodate the recommendations for lane arrangements provided in the traffic analysis on page 4-39, it cannot be determined at this time whether there is space for additional angled parking spaces (or for an outdoor café as the city has suggested). These ideas would be explored further during the design process for the intersection improvements and in the MDP.

Concerns were expressed about the impact of the potential City Hall Avenue connector.

- The city and the Torrington Development Corporation intend to study this further and discuss with adjacent property owners.

Commenters made a variety of comments and suggestions about the proposed realignment of Main Street and recommended changes in traffic flow. The consideration of East Pearl, Grove and Wall Streets in the traffic pattern has been suggested.

- The realignment was conceived to improve traffic flow, parking, and the pedestrian environment downtown to an acceptable level for a downtown urban area. Several challenges had to be overcome as discussed in Section 4.4, and the result is not represented as the elimination of all traffic problems. Additional changes in traffic flow were recommended to balance the effects at other intersections, such as, the phased in conversion of Prospect Street to one-way (as needed) between either Pearl or Mason and Water Streets, and also changing Maiden and Mason Streets to a one-way pair. It was noted that turning and approach radii would have to accommodate tractor-trailers (page 4-44). The city has considered other traffic flow patterns during past studies and the concept proposed in the Master Plan is the result of long-term considerations and traffic analyses. There will be additional opportunities for shaping of the roadway concept during the MDP and roadway design processes.

Historic Resources

The concern noted most frequently was for historic buildings and the desire to maintain the historic character and heritage of the downtown, which are important purposes and needs of the project. Many commenters referenced specific buildings while others referred to overall historic character.

- The sentiment in this regard has been clearly recognized. Section 4.6.1 of the EIE acknowledges the potential adverse impact on the Water Street Historic District. The DECD will work with the city and the State Historic Preservation Officer of the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism during the MDP process on exploring the conditions of the buildings and design alternatives that could avoid demolitions. The DECD is committed to helping the city achieve a balance among all

the goals of the redevelopment plan. The DECD will require that the MDP include an historic district and buildings analysis in consultation with the SHPO. No building demolition gutting or façade treatments are to be undertaken without SHPO approval

Many commenters were opposed to relocation of the historic railroad station.

- The DECD will recommend that this building be renovated and incorporated into plans for development of the Kelly property and that no permanent structures be built within the existing railroad right-of-way. The railroad track will be removed between the north side of Water Street and Pearl Street to the north, and will remain on the south side of Water Street.

Concern was expressed about the Allen building on the corner of Main Street and East Main Street.

- The realignment of this intersection, as included in the Conceptual Master Plan, does not affect this building. The alternative concept for reconfiguration of the intersection that did impact this building was eliminated from the plan during the EIE alternatives analysis (Section 5).

Several commenters did not agree with the EIE assessment of “deteriorated condition” of certain historic buildings.

- Preliminary judgments were made in the context of the EIE analysis by a qualified architectural historian, with the caveat that additional conditions assessments must be done to ascertain the suitability for redevelopment versus demolition of each building.

There is no bus transportation on a schedule as typically provided in urban cities.

- EIE Section 3.4.7 describes the candy-striper bus routes in Torrington. The need for additional service to the new development area is acknowledged in Section 4.4.3. The MDP should include a review of the candy-striper bus routes and recommended improvements. The MDP should also consider bicycle routes with provision of adequate linkages between pedestrians, bicyclists, and the bus routes.

Hazardous Materials

There is contamination in the project area that is a safety and financial concern and present owners should not get off the hook.

- The potential for encountering contamination is a major consideration of the redevelopment plan. The clean up of such sites, in accordance with state and federal laws, would be a benefit to the citizens and public safety. This type of historic contamination problem is common in most cities and the responsibility for remediation is frequently worked out through the sale of the property. The preliminary estimates for the cost of remediation were included in the project cost.

- Remedial action financing will include consideration of whether the property owner of record is the generator of the hazardous materials or maintains the contamination. Under the law the property owner is responsible, however, the structure of the financial assistance will be case-by-case and will factor in numerous points of information.

Decision

Based on the findings of the EIE and comments received from public officials, regulatory agencies and the public at large, it is concluded that the impacts and mitigation actions described herein are acceptable, with the following requirements:

- Demolition within the Water Street Historic District will not take place until after the buildings have been examined during the MDP planning phase and an action plan has been developed with the CT Office of Culture and Tourism. The scope of this evaluation should include:
 - a) Building Condition Analysis for each structure
 - b) Reuse Analysis by structure and district
 - c) Market assessment
 - d) Deficiency analysis for district, i.e. off street parking, etc.
 - e) Evaluation of alternatives
 - f) Coordination and consultation with the SHPO
- DECD recommends that the historic railroad station on Water Street not be relocated and that it should be renovated and incorporated in the plan for the Kelley property.
- DECD recommends that no structures be built within the existing railroad right-of-way. The right-of-way lease should remain available for possible future transportation-related uses.

Therefore, it is concluded that the *Conceptual Master Plan for Downtown Torrington* is approved, as defined in this Record of Decision, thereby allowing DECD to administer funding for the proposed project when monies become available.

ATTACHMENT
Conceptual Master Plan Layout

