

PLAINFIELD MASSACHUSETTS



Historic, Open Space,
and Recreation Plan

September, 1987

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I. OVERVIEW

The Plainfield Survey, conducted in June and July of 1987, brought responses from one-half of all residents 13 years of age and older. 250 voices were heard, long time and new (2/3 more than 6 years in town, 1/4 more than 20 years!). The survey composes pure notes into a complex tune:

Keep Plainfield rural and quiet,
but keep the freedom to grow.
Let people of all incomes continue to live here,
but please no "projects".
For heaven's sake, let's fix our roads,
but keep our trees and stone walls.
Let's have recreational fields,
and a Town Common.
Preserve the historic vistas, keep the farms,
protect the natural areas and our water,
but let's have some more cottage industry,
some light industry, and probably
more markets and shops.
and as for special zones vs. our single zone
with special permits,
we are split down the middle.

If there is a refrain throughout the survey, and fifty volunteered commentaries, it is:

We love Plainfield the way it is,
but we know it must grow.
So whatever we do,
let's balance freedom and control.

More important than answers, what the survey now provides is an agenda of questions and issues that the townspeople must face if Plainfield's future is to remain, as for 200 years, substantially in the hands of its citizens.

The survey and plan will serve three purposes:

- make Plainfield eligible for fifty to as much as ninety percent state and federal reimbursement for certain town land acquisition projects.
- provide a sound foundation for a town strategic planning and growth management effort, and
- increase the awareness and participation of all townspeople in the quality and protection of our living space.

On behalf of the Open Space study team, Ed Kohn, Chairman
Conservation Commission

II. HISTORY

With the closing of the French and Indian War, the people of the eastern part of Massachusetts desired more room to spread out. The need was met by dividing some of the State's land into ten townships which were sold at auction to the highest bidder. Township Number 5, west of the Connecticut River, was bought by John Cumming of Concord, in 1762. He was an organizer, and got together a committee of 30 men to help him divide the land into lots for sale to those who desired to settle there.

The State had certain rules for the forming and settling of these townships. There must be 60 settlers, and within five years from the date of purchase, they must have built a frame house 18' by 24' with a 7' stud, indicating the height of the walls. Seven acres must be cleared, fenced and plowed or sown to English grass. Also in order to become a town, a "learned Protestant minister" must be settled. The townships were planned to be six miles on a side, but that did not always result. When No. 5 was surveyed it was found that the town of Partridgefield, now Peru, overlapped the southwest corner. It was also discovered that an earlier grant to the inhabitants of Hatfield occupied most of the northeast part, therefore the town was laid out in three divisions, south, northwest, and east, the south part being the first settled.

In the early days it was not considered healthful for people to live in valleys close to the streams, therefore in Cummington it was decided to build the meeting house for a town center on the top of Cummington Hill. It was the place for all public assembly, whether for town meetings or for church services, everyone from the whole area was expected to be at the latter, though of course, only the men were required to be at the many town meetings that were necessary in the beginning. It was soon found that it was a considerable chore for those living north of the Westfield River to descend their hills, cross the river, in whatever weather, and climb Cummington Hill for Church service.

Therefore those the most affected petitioned to be made a district of Cummington, which would allow them to have their own town meetings, their own church services, and their own schools. Indeed the only great difference between a district and a town was that a district had to join with a town for representation in the State legislature. This petition being granted, the northern part of Cummington became the District of Plainfield in 1785, the division line going through the southwest corner of Hatfield Equivalent, thus relieving Cummington of any difficulty with that large section of land. As it did not belong to Cummington, anyone wishing to settle within its bounds had to buy the land from the Hatfield residents to whom it belonged. It had been meticulously appropriated and surveyed in proportion to the personal estate of the Hatfield people.

It did not take the residents of the District long to form a church, and to start seeking for a minister equal to the task of building a church in new territory. Schools must also be started, and after a short time three were established, one in the northeast, one in the southeast and one across Mill Brook in the west.

The search for a minister took some time, three or four were tried and found unsuitable. Finally Moses Hallock from Goshen, who had been a soldier briefly in the Revolution, and was a graduate of Yale, was decided upon. That same year - 1792 - the Meeting House was raised on the site of the present church, Moses Hallock being present. Though the building was made usable that year, it was not finished by the addition of the belfry and bell, until five years later. The bell was very important for it was used, not only to call people to meetings, but for the nine o'clock curfew, and to announce a death by tolling the age of the deceased.

As the District grew, those who had come from towns in the eastern part of the State - and there were many - desired to have Plainfield become a town also. But the area was not large enough, though the 36 square mile ideal seems to have been somewhat relaxed. A little was added to the southeast, by a purchase from the State by Plainfield residents of a gore between Plainfield and Ashfield. This helped but it was not enough. Therefore through a petition to the State, one mile in depth from the south side of Hawley, which included a larger area than some towns, was added to the north side of Plainfield. Some two thirds of this strip included a further amount of Hatfield Equivalent. It was a blow to Hawley, for the line ran through a flourishing village, depriving Hawley of a large group of inhabitants, and the revenue from their taxes, which being cash, was very important.

Now Plainfield could and did become a town with all the privileges thereof. Meanwhile Rev. Moses Hallock, interested in the education of the youth of the town, had started a classical school, the students of which boarded in his home, the price being \$1.00 a week. It seems a small amount, but even some years later farmers lost their farm homes because they could not come up with the hard cash to pay a yearly tax of less than \$5.00. This school was to prepare young men for college, and for many years Williams College in Williamstown depended on students from Mr. Hallock's school for the bulk of their freshman class. The school was also open to girls, not that they went on to college, but they were much better equipped to become school teachers and helpers of their husbands if they married. Seven of Mr. Hallock's students later became missionaries, and 50 others became ministers, and in the 30 years in which he conducted the school he numbered over 300 students. There is no list of those who became school teachers, manufacturers, storekeepers, and businessmen, as well as productive citizens and farmers.

Probably because of Moses Hallock there was only one church in Plainfield until after his death in 1837. Because there were many Baptists in Ashfield, a group was formed in the eastern part of Plainfield about 1840, who purchased land and built a small church in the angle between East and Main Streets which was used for a generation. About 90 or 100 years ago, an Advent chapel was built along West Main Street near Plainfield Pond. This was also used for a generation. If there were records kept of this society, they have not been handed down, so little is known about it.

The most important help to settlers and their descendants, physically, was the building of the mills. Saw and grist mills principally. Because of the stipulation that settlers build frame houses in five years, the saw mills were probably first. Andrew Ford and his family came here in 1774 and built a saw mill on southern Mill Brook, and Samuel Streeter followed them four years later. He also built a saw mill on Mill Brook just west of the center. This mill was in use for about one hundred years. Caleb White and family came in 1776, and were builders of a saw mill on lower Meadow Brook north of the road called for many years "Sawmill Hill". The most famous grist mill was that of Deacon Joseph Beals which stood upstream and on the opposite side of Mill Brook from the later Nash mill. Of course, its fame came from the personality of the Deacon, about whose conversion a tract had been written that was internationally circulated.

At least nine of the town's streams supported one or more mills or factories during its power use. Some of these mills, woodworking, cloth manufacturing and dressing, as well as a couple of tanneries, ran for nearly a hundred years, others for only the lifetime of the builders. There was also a brickyard, begun around 1800 and carried on for nearly 100 years. Many of the large chimneys of the early houses were built from bricks from this yard. There are at least three brick houses still standing, built with these bricks, and at least two other houses and a school house were built with them and later torn down. The bricks are identifiable, because of a slightly different dimension and some small stones in the clay.

With the growth of the population, which peaked at nearly 1000 in 1835, the number of schools also increased to ten, two of which were shared with neighboring towns. As Plainfield was settled by people from the eastern part of the state, wanting more room, so also did people from Plainfield go west in search of more room and better farmland.

Besides church, schools and mills, other things considered needful in the early towns were taverns and stores. Inns and later hotels were not absent from Plainfield's scene during the years. An early tavern stood on the south side of the four corners in the "upper village" and a store was located there before 1800, offering a large and varied assortment of goods. About that time, Samuel Streeter, who built and occupied the house north of the church, was an inn keeper, as appears on an old deed. Others also kept inns for a few years. One store particularly well known in all the surrounding area, was the "Brick Store" of John Mack which still stands on the north side of the upper village cross roads. John Mack also became Plainfield's first Postmaster in 1816, and that was an added attraction to his already large emporium. He also became what would have been in the present time called a real estate dealer, as well as a Justice of the Peace, though Deacon James Richards appears to have outdone him in the latter office. Mack purchased property all over town and bought up mortgages, often to help those desiring to go west.

About 1845 it was decided that the Constitutional Amendment separating Church and State should be more closely adhered to.

Up to this time the town had run the affairs of both through the workings of Town Meeting, paying the ministers salary as well as the town officials' and the school teachers'. Therefore, it was decided to tear down the Meeting house, which had seen some 55 years of strenuous service, and build on the same site a church building, with a Town Hall beside it; the lower floor of which would be occupied by the center school and the upper floor being an open hall for meetings. This was accordingly done, the Church building being erected in 1846 and the Town Hall in 1847. These two buildings, on a line with each other and facing south, are the only matched pair of public buildings in the hill towns, or any nearby towns, still in existence.

The reason for having had so many school buildings in the past was that it was desired that no pupil should have to walk more than two miles to school. But as the population declined, fewer schools were needed and it is probable then that some scholars had to walk farther. For many years there was a school in the northwest that was called the "Pond" school. There was also one in the southeast and one in the northeast, the latter still standing, though now a private "camp", in addition to the one in the center.

In 1916 the old house of Moses Hallock burned, the fire having been accidentally set by some children playing near the barn with matches. The loss was keenly felt, but the granddaughter of Dr. Samuel Shaw - whose combined home and office still stands across the road from John Mack's store - together with others who became interested, raised and donated sufficient funds to build, on the site of the Hallock home and school, a combined library and school building as a memorial to both men. This was dedicated in the fall of 1925. For two generations all the town's children walked or were bussed to this school. They also had the use of the Shaw Memorial Library. Later on, the population still declining, the children were bussed to Ashfield, with which town a school district has recently been formed. As the building was no longer used for a school, one room was converted to a children's library room, and the other was made into much needed Town Offices.

The last house on the south side of Main Street in the "lower village" became a hotel in the early 1800s and remained such, catering to summer visitors until well into the 1900s. It, like the one north of the church, had been "raised" early in the 1800s by a method often used, making the ground floor into the second floor, and constructing a new ground floor underneath. The "old hotel" was raised before the church building was contemplated, for when the meeting house was torn down, the church services were held in the ballroom of the hotel, which was on the second floor of the ell. All of this is now gone, and the hotel has become again a one-story private home.

As for the stores, of which there were many in different parts of town, there were four that were large enough and enduring enough to be mentioned here. John Mack's has already been noted, the building remained a store under different owners, closed at different short intervals, but now an antique shop, though for many years and two generations run by the family of

Harold S. Packard, a general store with large custom. A store in the lower village was carried on for many years by the Clark family. East of this about 1840 was also a general store, coupled with a bonnet shop, that was much patronized. From about 1900 the store was run by Albert Gurney, his grandson William A. Packard, and later Warren Carver. Around 1965 it was closed, much to the distress and detriment of the people. After that time not a loaf of bread or a gallon of gas could be purchased in town. About 20 years later, with the increase in population, one or two small stores have been opened, allowing for the purchase of some edibles, which is a much appreciated service.

With the improvement of transportation, especially for working people, it appears to have been found more pleasant and financially feasible to own a house in the country and drive to work in the city.

The social life of the town has also had several changes through the years. At first practically everyone met at the two church services on Sunday. There were also prayer meetings and singing schools which very many of both sexes and all ages attended. The men were always involved in Town Meetings and town affairs. Later when the Town Hall was built, and Town Meeting became lengthened by having more business to consider, the women gathered and prepared a dinner in the hall during the nooning. This was a very special occasion, for though the women could not vote until 1920, they knew what was going on and could discuss things amongst themselves and at home. There was also a Lyceum held at the Hall for the discussion of literary and social matters, and this was held for many years. Later on, the Grange, an organization to assist farmers, was formed, and after their business meeting was a social time. This is a national organization with state and county groups as well as local ones. After the Civil War the Grand Army of the Republic, composed of those who had served in that conflict, met in the Hall regularly for about 30 years, as did their auxiliary, the Women's Relief Corps. When the G.A.R. declined, the last remaining veteran realized that the Memorial Day services which they had conducted annually would be no longer observed. He therefore asked the Grange to carry on the decoration of the soldiers graves in their stead. This has been done ever since, only now they decorate the graves of the veterans from all the wars, who are buried in Plainfield.

As for the women's groups, after the prayer meetings and the singing schools, there were other church related groups such as the Missionary Society, the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Ladies Benevolent Society. The latter is still in existence, a group of church women who have made clothes for the needy, rolled bandages during war time, held various sales to benefit the church and done other similar activities. Among the young women of the town there has been the "What Nots" which is entirely a social group with no special affiliation, just meeting for sociability. This has been a much needed group, for with so many young people working outside of town, there is scant opportunity for the women to get together and know each other.

For the younger ones, there was the Christian Endeavor for a

number of years. For well over a hundred years there has been the Sunday School and for at least two generations the 4-H has brought the children and young folks together for interesting projects and activities. In recent years, the Little League has become very popular.

The Plainfield Athletic Club and later the Plainfield Men's Club attracted local men. The Men's club became the loyal supporter of the Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department and obtained the town's first fire truck in the 1950s. The Plainfield Volunteer Firefighter's Association evolved from a group of strong supporters. Through the efforts and sponsorship of these groups of dedicated citizens, the Town now has five trucks for firefighting, and also a firehouse to keep them in. From this building, which must be kept warm in the winter, has also come Hathaway Hall, dedicated to the memory of Chief Norton "Dutch" Hathaway, which is also used for social affairs by the townspeople as well as the firefighters. With so many working out of town, the community social life has suffered and many of the organizations mentioned have fallen by the wayside.

As Plainfield is in the middle, about equi-distance from North Adams, Pittsfield, Greenfield, and Northampton (which is the county seat), it has become a "bedroom" town, as well as a "summer place", and its population has doubled in the past 25 years, but it is still about half of what it was at its peak in 1835 - only now there is no school and the children have to be bussed to schools in nearby towns. Some of the primary concerns of the early settlers are no longer available in town. It is interesting to note the changes that have occurred, and try to guess what living in Plainfield will be like in the future.

Priscilla C. Dyer Allen
June 1987

III. STATEMENT OF PARTICIPATION AND METHODOLOGY

Plainfield is fortunate to have received an Open Space planning grant from the Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden Conservation District in January 1987. Public notification in the Plainfield Post drew interested citizens to an informational hearing in March 1987. We met with representatives of the Conservation District and the Department of Environmental Management who were assigned to help us develop a working Open Space and Recreation Plan for our town. Citizens volunteered their time to serve on various committees (recreational, historical, agricultural, survey...) which made up the larger Open Space and Recreation Committee.

Our Open Space and Recreation Committee includes active participation from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historical Society, and Recreation Committee, in addition to the Fire Department and many other concerned citizens.

More than thirty people contributed substantial time, thought, healthy skepticism and deliberation; often into the wee hours of the night. The workers were a cross section of long-time and new residents - so richly a feature of life in Plainfield. Two fine examples well represent the score of others: Priscilla Dyer Allen, whose grandfather wrote The History of Plainfield in 1892 contributed a short history for the project. Kimberly Longey for certain can not count (and would not want to know!) the extraordinary number of hours she has contributed in assembly and drafting through the study. Together they, and all who contributed by responding and participating, represent the deepest resource of Plainfield -- it's people.

With an incredible volunteer effort, six Plainfield Post articles and weekly meeting announcements soliciting help from other residents, the Committee began compiling questions and information for the Plainfield Survey. After many weeks of studying questions and issues, the Survey Committee completed and printed the survey. We were able to send surveys to every resident age 13 and older (this information was gathered from the Town Clerk's street lists) and also mailed surveys to out of town property owners (this information was gathered from the Assessor's and Tax Collector's lists). 525 surveys were mailed on June 3, 1987. Return postage was applied and two drop-off points were made available in town. By the return deadline of June 27, 1987 we had received a record 50% response to the questionnaire. These responses provided valuable opinions of pressing issues in out town. Coupled with data compiled by members of other sub-committees and the Tri-county Conservation District, this information allowed the Open Space and Recreation Committee to formulate an Open Space and Recreation Plan that well reflects the expressed needs of our town.

How representative was the survey? The survey results are weighted in favor of those living in town the longest. 95% of those living in town 20 years or more responded (57 out of 60); 42% of those in town 6 to 20 years (96 of 229); and 33% of those in town 5 years or less (77 out of 231).

Cross tabulation of some selected results show a potential for assisting in future study and education. For example, when zoning questions are reviewed by age of respondent, the data shows that of townspeople 18 to 35 years of age 38% favor and 58% oppose commercial zones, while of those over 60 years of age 59% favor and 32% oppose them. (Most preliminary cross-tabulations confirm the general findings.)

IV. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Physical Characteristics

1. Geographical Location

The town of Plainfield encompasses 21.32 square miles and is situated on the north western border of Hampshire County. Its neighboring towns are Savoy and Windsor to the west (both in Berkshire County), Hawley on the north and Ashfield to the east (both in Franklin County), and Cummington to the south (Hampshire County). Plainfield lies approximately 30 miles east of Pittsfield and 30 miles northwest of Northampton.

2. Climate

Not unlike the other Berkshire hilltowns, Plainfield experiences a wide seasonal variation in temperature. Although the average temperature in January is 21.6F and 67.5F in July, fluctuations can produce temperatures in an annual range of -21F to 107F. Frosts have occurred as late as June and killing frosts as early as late August, making the growing season in Plainfield a relatively short one.

Plainfield has a cold, snowforest climate. Air masses are generally cold, dry currents from sub-arctic North America, or warm, humid currents from the Gulf of Mexico and sub-tropical waters eastward. The average annual precipitation is 50.60 inches.

The high elevations in town account for at least 10 degree variations in temperature between Plainfield and the neighboring river valley communities. Summer days are warm and pleasant, with the nights rarely spent without a blanket, creating an attraction for many visitors and summer residents. The mountainous vistas and thickly tree lined routes draw the annual Autumn "leaf-peeping" crowd. The winter months are icy and bitter with snowfalls gathering between 50 to over a 100 inches yearly. The heavy snowfall finds both Plainfield residents and out-of-town visitors utilizing the cross-country skiing and snowmobiling areas creating a small, but consistent climate-dependant tourist industry.

Once a snow cover accumulates, with a maximum depth achieved mid-February, it usually remains until spring thaw. Flash run-off conditions in the spring coupled with heavy precipitation in the summer months have created serious flooding and erosion problems in past years. Residents say the town has two seasons: winter and road repair.

3. Geology and Topography

Plainfield, geologically is part of the Berkshire Uplands. This character establishes its topography. The region is characterized by rounded hills with 300 to 400 feet of local relief. Major streams cut steep-sided valleys 1200 to 1400 feet deep into the upland surface.

The mineral content of Plainfield reflects its geologic history. That history has produced two basic geologic components. The bedrock component contains underlying solid parent material while the surface component contains the overlying broken up rock material.

The town is underlain by three major metamorphic rock types forming large bands in approximately a north to south direction:

a. The Mortown Formation - Underlies a belt 2 to 4 miles wide that occupies the west-central part of town. This formation is mostly schist with some quartzite. A prominent dark-green chlorite schist containing small needles of green actinolite is present.

b. The Hawley Formation - Occupies a northern trending belt 0.4 to 2.3 miles wide, in the east-central part of town. It consists mainly of two rock types: dark to medium gray amphibolite and rusty-weathering, dark-gray carbonaceous mica schist. Amphibolite makes up the bulk of the formation, whereas the carbonaceous mica schist forms thin units.

c. The Goshen Formation - Underlies the eastern margin of town. It is subdivided into two units. One unit is composed of schist with rare beds of granulite and quartzite. The other is composed of a gray or buff quartzbiolite granulite.

Superficial deposits are primarily glacial in origin and are composed mostly of unstratified glacial till. The known resources of sand and gravel are small and must be imported for construction purposes. Some gravel is present in the stream terrace deposits along the major brooks.

Deposits of gneiss are located at Hallockville Pond. the age of the gneiss is uncertain. Just west of Prospect Street is an abandoned manganese mine. This example of open pit mining yields rhodanate and rhodochrasite containing low grade manganese (20% - 25%).

4. Biological Resources

Soils, vegetation and wildlife are interconnected aspects of Plainfield's natural environment. The soils of an area help determine the types and amounts of vegetation that may establish. Animals add to the soil through waste decomposition, vegetation distribution, and animal decay. Animals use vegetation as food, cover and protection while influencing growth patterns and densities of plant populations.

A. Soils

Soils are composed of a variety of substances including: rock particles of various sizes, air, water and organic matter. Plainfield's soils were basically formed by the most recent glacier and the weathering processes that have occurred since that glacier. If it was not for the upper six inches of topsoil, life as we know it would not exist in Plainfield.

According to the Interim Soils Report prepared by the USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in April, 1986, Plainfield is mainly composed of the following soil groups:

1. Berkshire-Marlow Association - These soils are composed of deep, well drained Berkshire and Marlow soils. The Berkshire soils are stony and typically on the steeper and higher parts of slopes. The Marlow soils are typically on the lower and less steep slopes or on concave areas. Stones and boulders are approximately 5 to 20 feet apart. This unit consists of about 55% Berkshire, 30% Marlow and 15% other soils.

2. Lyman-Tunbridge Association - This association of soils includes shallow, somewhat excessively drained Lyman soils and moderately deep, well drained Tunbridge soils. These soils form in very stony, shallow and moderately deep glacial till on moderately steep slopes. The Tunbridge soils are typically on flat areas between the Lyman soils and bedrock outcrops. Bedrock outcrops and many stones and boulders are prominent features. This unit consists of about 45% Lyman, 45% Tunbridge and 10% other soils.

3. Peru-Marlow Association - This association contains deep, moderately well drained Peru soils and deep, well drained marlow soils. These gently sloping and moderately sloping soils are on the sides and tops of hills and mountains. The Peru soils are typically on the lower parts of slopes or in convex areas. Stones and boulders approximately 3 to 20 feet apart are prominent features. This unit consists of about 60% Peru, 20% Marlow and 20% other soils.

4. Pillsbury Association - This unit consists of very deep, poorly drained soils and very deep, very poorly drained mineral soils in depressions or pockets. These soils developed in compact glacial till derived from schistose rocks. These soils have a loam or fine sandy loam surface and subsoil. They are underlain at a depth of about 15 to 30 inches from the surface by a hardpan. Stones and boulders 5 to 20 feet apart are prominent features of the landscape.

5. Tunbridge-Lyman Association - This association is composed of moderately deep, well drained Tunbridge soils and shallow, somewhat excessively drained Lyman soils. The Tunbridge soils are typically on the flatter parts of slopes between rock outcrops and the Lyman soils are on the upper parts of slopes or on convex areas.

Stones, boulders and rock outcrops approximately 3 to 20 feet apart are abundant. This unit consists of about 55% Tunbridge, 35% Lyman and 10% other soils with rock outcrops.

The SCS classifies most of Plainfield's soils as having very severe limitations that make them unsuitable for cultivation without major reclamation. These limitations restrict use largely to grazing, woodland and/or wildlife.

The SCS soil survey should be used as a guideline in soil determination and use. It is commonly known that a majority of Plainfield's soils do not perc well. Information for planning land uses, such as building-site development, sanitary facilities, construction materials, water management and recreation should be based on percolation tests and specific soil tests.

B. Vegetation

Soils help determine the type and amounts of vegetation found in an area. Plainfield is approximately 86 percent forested. This Hemlock-Northern Hardwood Forest prefers high elevations with cool temperatures and moist soils. The dominant tree species include: red spruce, hemlock, sugar maple, yellow birch and beech. Some of the more important understory trees are red maple, striped maple, white ash, red oak, white pine, black cherry, mountain ash and shadbush. The more numerous shrubs and herbaceous plants include mountain laurel, viburnums, honeysuckle, blueberry, yew, witchhazel, trillium, various ferns, lycopodium, grasses and a myriad of ground covers on the forest floor.

In Plainfield's past, fields were more abundant than they are today. Much of this open land is now in various stages of succession. Succession is the somewhat predictable stage of plant communities from youthful (pioneer stage) to mature (climax stage). Plainfield's vegetation is presently found in various stages of succession, relative to the amount and length of time since the last disturbance to the plant community. A typical selection of old field succession might include; gray birch, poplar (aspen), white pine, sumac, alder, low juniper, yew, grasses, daisies, meadow sweet, stepplebush, cinquefoil, rose multiflora, wild strawberry, hawkweed, black-eyed Susan, goldenrod, asters, and yarrow.

Plainfield's wetlands produce important, as well as endangered plants such as the Heartleaf Twayblade (*Listera cordata* L.). All ponds and lakes are in the successional process of becoming filled. Siltation and aquatic vegetation will eventually produce marshes and meadows where once pondlife flourished. Typical pond plants found in Plainfield are cattail, bullbrush, water lily, duck weeds, pond weeds, pickerel weeds, and numerous species of algae. These plants form an important part of the food web of any pond. The aquatic vegetation of streams is much less complex, having green and blue-green algae, diatoms, and aquatic mosses as the principle plant life. Other Plainfield wetlands contain the following representative types of vegetation:

1. Wooded Swamp - red maple, white ash, hemlock, blueberry, and skunk cabbage.
2. Shrub Swamp - alder, silky dogwood, blueberry willow and azalea.
3. Bog - sphagnum moss, leather-leaf, sheep laurel, cranberries, pitcher-plant, cotton-grass, black spruce and larch (tamarack).
4. Wet Meadow - soft rush, sedges, sensitive ferns, and blue flag.
5. Marsh - arrowhead, cattail, loosestrife, bullbush, and pickerel weed.

Timber harvesting is an essential element of forest management programs. Forestry helps the economy of the town while providing income for the landowner and helping pay management costs and taxes.

The numbers of Plainfield acres in hay are continually being reduced as agriculture plays a less important economic role. Typical hayland vegetation of grasses and legumes include fescue, timothy, orchard grass, clover and alfalfa.

C. Habitat and Wildlife

Plainfield is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty. This natural beauty provides the habitat for a rich and diverse wildlife community. Habitat provides food, water, cover and protection that must be present and available within an area for wild animals to survive and reproduce.

Much of Plainfield exhibits northern natural habitats, as well as human altered habitats. Primary terrestrial areas include: woodlands, pasture, cropland, meadows, old fields, old orchards and edge (areas where different types of habitat meet). Aquatic concerns include a limited number of ponds and lakes with an abundance of streams and brooks.

Plainfield's natural habitats provide for a vast diversity of wildlife. From the occasional visiting moose (the largest member of the deer family), to the most insignificant insect, wildlife abounds. On a continuum from the smallest creatures to the largest, it includes microscopic life forms, worms, mollusks, (snails, clams, slugs, etc.), arachnids (spiders), insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. State classified endangered animal populations include Northern spring salamanders (*Gyrinophilus p. Porphyriticus*), wood turtle (*Clemmys Insculpta*), and the great blue heron (*Ardea Herodias*).

Wildlife sightings enhance the quality of human life. The quality of the natural environment can, in part, be measured and monitored by the resident and transient animal populations. No species, including humans, can exist for long periods of time where the environment is unsuited to their existence.

Plainfield's wildlife populations can be generally grouped according to their preferred habitat. Many animals will overlap their habitat preferences. Only the more common wildlife forms are mentioned below:

1. Forest habitats (Coniferous, Mixed, Deciduous) - deer, black bear, red fox, gray fox, coyote, porcupine, fisher, weasel, opossum, skunk, snowshoe hare, cottontail rabbit, vole, shrew, mice, moles, bobcat, flying squirrel, gray squirrel, red squirrel, woodchuck, raccoon, chipmunk, bats, red-shouldered hawk, broad-wing hawk, pine siskin, black cap chickadee, grosbeak, ruffed grouse (partridge, turkey, barred owl, great horned owl, pileated woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, thrushes, nuthatch, wood turtle, wood frog, red efts, red-backed salamanders.

2. Agricultural and Openland Habitats (Pastures, orchards, fallow fields, abandoned fields, croplands) - deer, black bear, red fox, cottontail rabbit, woodchuck, skunk, chipmunk, mice, voles, moles, shrew, bats, coyote, ruffed grouse, woodcock, kestrel, hawks, owls, turkey, goldfinch, turkey vulture, bobolink, robin, sparrow, mourning dove, songbirds, snake (black, milk, green, red-bellied, ribbon), american toad, wood frog and wood turtle.

3. Wetland Habitats (Ponds, streams, wooded swamps, shrub swamps, bogs, wet meadows, marsh) - beaver, muskrat, mink, otter, bats, migratory birds (ducks, geese, etc.), kingfisher, swallows, herons, blackbird, woodpeckers, marsh hawk, osprey, woodcock, snapping turtle, painted turtle, green frog, pickerel frog, wood frog, spring peeper, newts, spotted salamanders, northern spring salamanders, stocked brook trout, native brook trout, chain pickerel, bullhead, bass, sunfish, yellow perch, shiners, minnows, suckers, mosquitoes, blackflies, and zooplankton.

Wildlife that have increased their populations and/or extended their range into Plainfield during recent years include; moose, black bear, eastern coyote, opossum, eastern cougar, cardinal, mockingbird, tufted titmouse, house finch, and turkey vulture. Plainfield's insect life forms are too numerous to mention in this report. Normal populations find favorable conditions in all habitats including those occupied by humans. Occasional population explosions plague the town with outrageous numbers of gypsy moths, Saddle prominence and cluster flies. These population explosions are normal and controlled generally by natural parasites and predators.

5. Water Resources

Plainfield is unusual that is situated between two river watersheds. Most of the town lies in the Westfield River watershed, with a smaller northwestern portion located in the Deerfield River watershed.

The principle larger ponds are Crooked Pond (30 acres), Plainfield Pond (57 acres), Hallockville Pond (25 acres) and the Ashfield Rod and Gun Club Pond (10 acres). Plainfield Pond drains into Hallockville Pond (both are located in the Hawley State Forest), which eventually empties into the Deerfield River. Crooked Pond, which lies only a short distance from Plainfield Pond, drains into Windsor Pond which in turn empties into the Westfield River. Plainfield and Hallockville Ponds are part of the Deerfield watershed, while Crooked pond is part of the Westfield watershed.

The town lies primarily within four small watersheds drained principally, from west to east, by Bartlett Brook, Mill Brook, Meadow Brook and the North Branch of the Swift River. These water courses are tributaries of the larger Westfield River watershed that eventually empties into the Connecticut River. The streams of Plainfield are all cold water habitats that have tremendous influence on both terrestrial and aquatic wildlife in the area.

Private wells and springs depend on ground water recharge for a direct supply of water to Plainfield's households. Aquifer studies have not yet been conducted. The assumption that 3-acres per house lot zoning provides adequate water resource protection is not yet tested. Citizen concern dictates careful monitoring in this area.

B. Social Characteristics and Demographics

Any profile of Plainfield characteristics would be incomplete without reference to its human topography -- its characters. Plainfield is a rich medley of all ages, of farmers and writers, tradespeople and artists, craftworkers, musicians, builders and all the rest. Plainfield's commitment to its own conservation is a human document -- creative and enduring.

Plainfield has 13,645 acres within its boundaries, or 21.32 square miles. As of 1987, the population density was 24 people per square mile. Compared to the county wide average of 255 persons per square mile, this hilltown characteristic contrasts sharply with the valley towns.

POPULATION GROWTH

| YEAR | POPULATION | PERCENT CHANGE |
|------|------------|----------------|
| 1790 | 458 | - |
| 1800 | 797 | +74 |
| 1810 | 977 | +22 |
| 1820 | 936 | - 4 |
| 1830 | 984 | + 5 |
| 1840 | 910 | - 8 |
| 1850 | 814 | -11 |
| 1860 | 639 | -22 |
| 1870 | 521 | -19 |
| 1880 | 457 | -12 |
| 1890 | 436 | - 4 |
| 1900 | 404 | - 7 |
| 1910 | 406 | - |
| 1920 | 332 | -18 |
| 1930 | 306 | - 8 |
| 1940 | 264 | -14 |
| 1950 | 238 | -10 |
| 1960 | 237 | - |
| 1970 | 287 | +21 |
| 1980 | 425 | +48 |
| 1985 | 479 | +12 |
| 1987 | 520 | + 9 |

Plainfield is a rapidly growing town, though it's population remains well below the historic high of 984 in 1830. Residential land-use has changed. Today is characterized by a proportionately greater number of smaller households, more widely distributed. The town is suburbanizing. Also striking from current numbers is the observation that nearly half of the residents have lived in Plainfield less than 5 years, while one out of five have resided 15 years or longer.

PLAINFIELD POPULATION IN 1987

| NUMBER OF YEARS OF PLAINFIELD RESIDENCE | NUMBER OF PEOPLE | PERCENT |
|--|------------------|---------|
| 1 - 5 years | 231 | 44 |
| 6 - 10 | 110 | 21 |
| 11 - 15 | 70 | 13 |
| 16 - 20 | 49 | 9 |
| 21 - 25 | 21 | 4 |
| 26 - 30 | 11 | 2 |
| 30 years and longer | 28 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 520 | 98 |

EVIDENCE OF GROWTH

| YEAR | HOUSING STARTS | APPROVALS BY PLANNING BOARD OF LAND NOT SUBJECT TO STATE SUBDIVISION CONTROL LAW |
|------|----------------|--|
| 1970 | 3 | Not Available |
| 1971 | 3 | " |
| 1972 | 10 | " |
| 1973 | 6 | " |
| 1974 | 5 | " |
| 1975 | 3 | " |
| 1976 | 4 | " |
| 1977 | 3 | " |
| 1978 | 2 | " |
| 1979 | 3 | " |
| 1980 | 3 | " |
| 1981 | Not Available | 3 |
| 1982 | " | 3 |
| 1983 | " | 4 |
| 1984 | " | 6 |
| 1985 | 2 | 10 |
| 1986 | 15 | 18 |

POPULATION STATISTICS FROM 1980 FEDERAL CENSUS

| AGE LEVEL | TOTAL |
|--------------|-------|
| 0 - 17 years | 130 |
| 18 - 24 | 28 |
| 25 - 34 | 104 |
| 35 - 54 | 73 |
| 55 - 64 | 48 |
| 75 and older | 12 |
| TOTAL | 425 |

PLACE OF WORK: 1980

Plainfield workers 16 years of age and older: 164

WORKING IN:

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| PLAINFIELD | 35 |
| OTHER HILLTOWNS | 14 |
| NORTHAMPTON & ENVIRONS | 45 |
| AMHERST, HADLEY & ENVIRONS | 11 |
| BERKSHIRE COUNTY (INC. PITTSFIELD) | 19 |
| FRANKLIN COUNTY (INC. GREENFIELD) | 9 |
| ELSEWHERE | 15 |
| UNREPORTED | 16 |

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 1980 CENSUS

Acres: 13,645
Square Miles: 21.32
People per Square Mile: 22
Minority: 3
Households: 148
Persons per Household: 148
Per Capita Income: \$5, 783
Family Income: \$16,250
Housing Units: 224
Year Round Housing Units: 182
Percent of People Below the Poverty Level: 12.5

C. Transportation Networks

Of 23 towns in Hampshire County, Plainfield is second smallest in population, but ranks sixth in the miles of road maintained by the town. Plainfield has 51 miles of road maintained by the town. 26 miles of these are dirt roads, making for seasonal vulnerability. Central Street running north and south connecting Route 116 to Route 9 is the critical route of travel for emergencies and any mutual aid.

The only public transportation is offered by the Franklin County Regional Transportation Authority which provides service one day per week to Senior Citizens for shopping and medical visits in Northampton.

V. OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

A. Land Use Inventory (1972 figures)

| <u>TYPE</u> | <u>ACRES</u> | <u>PERCENT</u> | <u>DESCRIPTION</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Wetland | 121 | 1 | Water more than 3' deep |
| | 22 | < 1 | Freshwater wetland |
| Agricultural | 839 | 6 | Intensive agricultural land |
| | 847 | 6 | Open agricultural land |
| Industrial/ Commercial | 11 | < 1 | Industrial/Commercial land |
| Urban | 47 | < 1 | Residential land |
| | 26 | < 1 | Public land |
| Forest | 2,005 | 15 | Young forest less than 40'tall |
| | 9,707 | 71 | Older forest more than 40'tall |
| Total | 13,625 | | |

B. Town Owned Land

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Hilltop Cemetery Central Street | Size: 4.40 acres Management: Cemetery Committee Description: Historic site |
| 2. Union Street Cemetery Union Street | Size: .12 acres Management: Cemetery Committee Description: Historic site |
| 3. Haskins Cemetery West Street | Size: .03 acres Management: Cemetery Committee Description: Historic site |
| 4. West Hill Cemetery Summit Street | Size: .50 acres Management: Cemetery Committee Description: Historic site |
| 5. Dyer Cemetery Pleasant Street | Size: .30 acres Management: Cemetery Committee Description: Historic site |
| 6. Town Garage Main Street | Size: 2.00 acres Management: Board of Selectmen Description: Town building |
| 7. Town Hall Main Street | Size: .30 acres Management: Board of Selectmen Description: Town building, Historic site |

B. Town Owned Land (continued)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 8. Hathaway Hall/Firehouse Main Street | Size: .87 acres Management: Board of Selectmen Description: Town building, Council on Aging, Volunteer Fire Department |
| 9. Shaw Memorial Library/ Town Offices Main Street | Size: 2.50 acres Management: Board of Selectmen Description: Historic site, Library, Town Offices, Playground |
| 10. Town Beach Plainfield Pond West Main Street | Size: 1.02 acres Management: Recreation Comm. Description: Sandy beach, swimming area, boat launch |

Total Town Owned Land: 12.04 acres (<1/10 of 1 percent)

C. State Owned Land

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Central Street | Size: 8.20 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: Hawley State Forest land |
| 2. West Street | Size: 115.00 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: Deer Hill State Reservation land |
| 3. Hawley Street | Size: 118.40 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: Hawley State Forest land |
| 4. Central Street | Size: 90.90 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: Hawley State Forest land |
| 5. North Union Street | Size: 36.90 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: Hawley State Forest land |
| 6. North Union Street | Size: 119.80 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: Hawley State Forest land |

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 7. Off Main Street | Size: 254.60 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: Hawley State Forest land |
| 8. Main Street | Size: 323.20 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: Hawley State Forest land |
| 9. Main Street | Size: 28.00 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: Hawley State Forest land |
| 10. Main Street | Size: 38.20 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: State Forest land |
| 11. Main Street | Size: 53.30 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: State Forest land |
| 12. Main Street | Size: 2.60 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: State Forest land |
| 13. Hawley Street | Size: .65 acres Management: Mass. D. E. M. Description: Hawley State Forest land |

Total State Owned Land: 1,189.75 acres (9%)

D. Privately and Institutionally Owned Protected Lands

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Plainfield Congregational Church Main Street | Size: .26 acres Management: Church Trustees Description: Historic site |
| 2. Parsonage Main Street | Size: .68 acres Management: Church Trustees Description: Historic site |
| 3. Shaw-Hudson House Main Street | Size: .70 acres Main Street: Bank Trustees Description: Historic site |
| 4. Ashfield Rod and Gun Club Off Grant Street | Size: 79.00 acres (in town) Management: Club Members Description: Private recreation area |

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 5. | Plainfield Historical Society Off Main Street | Size: 1.00 acre Management: Historical Society Description: Historic site |
| 6. | West Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary | Size: 1,483.00 acres Management: MA Audubon Society Description: Wildlife Habitat |
| 7. | The Trust for Public Land Off North Central St. | Size: 44.00 acres Management: Owner Description: Private protected land |
| 8. | University of MASS. Off West St. | Size: 16.7 acres Management: UMASS Description: State owned |
| 9. | Private property deeded to the Connecticut River Valley Watershed Council | Size: 42.00 acres Management: Owner Description: Private protected land |

Protected Land Under Real Estate Classification Programs

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Chapter 61 | 2,765.90 acres |
| Chapter 61A | 867.57 acres |
| Chapter 61B | 65.00 acres |
| Total | 3,698.47 acres |

Pre-West Mountain Sanctuary Total Privately Owned Protected Land:
3,882.81 acres (28%)

Total including the Sanctuary: 5,283.70 acres (39%)

Total Town, State and Private Protected Land: 6,565.70 acres
(48%)

VI. PLAINFIELD PERSPECTIVES

A. Land Use Perspective

To get a perspective of land use in Plainfield one only needs to walk the roads, trails and stonewalls of the town. At first the area was virgin forest occupied by wildlife and passing Indians. As European Civilization arrived the land was farmed and forested until the mid 1800s when a number of factors led to the decline of farming and industry in Plainfield. At that point, there were large tracts of open land bordered by stonewalls and fences with small mills dotting the local brooks. As the economy declined, some fields were abandoned and the forest began to take over.

The latest detailed survey of land use was done in 1972 for the Department of Wildlife Management. Plainfield is primarily a sparsely populated hilltown with 86 % of its 13,625 acres forested, 12 % agricultural or open land, 1 % wetland and 1 % urban. Predicted land use changes from 1972 to 1992 included a population growth of 40% (at today's figures Plainfield has grown 73% since 1972). This growth will create greater demand for residential land. As quoted from the McConnell report, "Agricultural land will decrease which will degrade the scenic quality of the town, decrease its value as a wildlife habitat and decrease the water production of the land if it grows up into forest." In 1952 open space accounted for 18% of the land. That percentage decreased to 12% by 1972. Consequently, the combination of a demand for residential land coupled with a decline in farming, Plainfield's open spaces have been shrinking every year. On December 31, 1986 a singular event impacted on Plainfield's open space. The West Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, encompassing 1483 acres in western Plainfield, was established by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. This event followed a year of concerted effort by the conservation Commission and the town bodies. Representing 11% of Plainfield's acreage, the sanctuary is a third larger than the total state forest holding in town. With it's very long-term strategies, Audubon will shepherd in 70 years or so, the re-establishment of great cathedral groves of red spruce on the site. The public is invited to walk it's trails.

Another growing open space resource within, abutting or nearly to Plainfield are the State Forests (Dubuque, previously Hawley, Windsor, Deer Hill, and Savoy). Along with Trustees of Reservations holdings, these constitute rich open space resources for Plainfield's citizens.

Thus, the emphasis within Plainfield is the selective acquisition or preservation of open space character, future access to it's principal river, habitat improvement and preservation through landowner education and conservation restriction. The critical deficiency of active recreation land will be addressed.

B. Perspective of Zoning Laws

Plainfield's zoning history indicates little regulation and administration of by-laws pertaining to land use and intensity of housing or commerce. The land was used mostly for farming, forestry, housing and local commercial establishments. As awareness of the land limitations became clear, a need to develop solutions to local land use problems such as waste disposal and development became evident.

In 1964 the Town of Plainfield passed a Protective by-law, and in 1970 passed a supplemental, interlocking Zoning by-law. In the mid seventies a zoning review was made and it was determined that the By-laws would need revision.

In 1982 a set of new by-laws were passed by town vote. As stated in the current by-laws, "the purpose of these laws are to confirm and preserve the character and integrity of the Town of Plainfield as a rural residential and agricultural community, with all the protection authorized by the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Chapter 40A and amendments thereof. To promote health, safety and the general welfare of all the inhabitants of the Town of Plainfield, to protect and conserve the value of property, beauty of the town, its streams, ponds and waterways, and to encourage appropriate utilization of the land and alternative energy sources."

The entire town is zoned as one rural residential and agricultural district, with special permits required for business uses other than "cottage industries". Generally, cottage industry refers to a business run in a residential dwelling that involves no more than one other building on the lot and employs no more than 2 persons (excluding family members) at any given time. To avoid overcrowding of housing only one dwelling is allowed per lot and restrictions are placed on 2-family dwellings.

The intensity regulations were updated to require 300 feet of frontage on a town road and a minimum of 3 acres for each lot. Buildings must be set back 50 feet from all boundary lines. The maximum height of any building may not exceed 35 feet. The revised laws also address the process of Appeals and Special Permits.

In 1973 Subdivision Control laws were initiated to insure that a process was in place in the event a proposed subdivision occurred. In 1987 amendments were passed to tighten up the existing Subdivision Control laws and bring them up to current standards. This insures that the town will have appropriate control over any proposed development. To date there has not been a single subdivision proposed to the Plainfield Planning Board, but as land values escalate around us the developmental interest in town has increased, as evidenced by the numerous recent requests for copies of the subdivision control.

C. Waste Management in Plainfield

From the 1700's until today homeowners and businesses undertook the task of waste disposal on their own. Nearly everyone had a backyard dump and by the mid 1900s there were little dumps strewn across the Town of Plainfield. One can find treasures of rusty cans, old bottles, bedsprings, and other relics in most backyards in town.

A Town Dump was created in the 1950s at the corner of River Road and West Hill Road. It was the typical landfill of the day. Everything was accepted and once in while an accidental fire would burn, rats would run downriver, and neighboring homeowners would complain about the smell. These events are well documented by many Plainfield residents. The site would be covered with fill at times when it was required. This dump was closed permanently in the early 1970s and a new dump site created on North Central Street. Brush at both sites was traditionally separated from the rest of the waste, but there was no real regulation of other household waste, including oil, insecticides, herbicides, paint, and other hazardous chemical compounds. As state regulations and public awareness increased, greater care was taken to manage this new facility. The Board of Health was in charge of the dump management and no fees were charged for its use.

As the 1980s arrived, so did new dumping regulations. A compactor was rented and a local hauler hired to take the Town's refuse to a larger regional landfill. Metals, hazardous waste and large refuse could no longer be disposed of in town, and presently there is no place to dispose of this type of waste in Plainfield. There is a growing concern about the final destination of waste that is not accepted at our dumping facility.

In 1986, \$5.00 dump fee was charged per year for each household. This fee increased to \$10.00 in 1987. The Board of Health still manages the waste disposal in Plainfield, and an annual budget is appropriated at town meeting. The town generates approximately 300 tons of refuse per year. The present removal fee is \$15.00 per ton. However, hidden costs (called tipping fees) are another concern. Tipping fees are the cost per ton paid to another town or private party to take our trash and put it in their landfill. This cost has climbed from \$37.00/ton to the present rate of \$60.00/ton. It is projected to continue its increase to an estimated \$90.00/ton in the foreseeable future.

Recently, the county began the process of establishing a Regional Solid Waste District. Plainfield voters approved the appointment of representatives from our town to pursue a regional concept of solid waste disposal and to work with this committee at the county level. So far, regional landfills, recycling centers and composting are three forms of disposal that this committee is pursuing. Support from local and state officials, along with increasing public awareness is crucial if this waste disposal concept is to succeed.

D. Agricultural Land Uses

Plainfield residents attribute historic economic and scenic value to farmlands within the town, as the survey results made clear. Four of the five fulltime farmers in Plainfield work land that surrounds every traveler en route to the center of town from the south and west. The town was named after these fields. Until 80 years ago, most of the land was grazed by sheep. Almost all of West Mountain was clear. What land was not available as pasture served as orchard or sugar bush. Farming was not a commercial enterprise, however until a few generations ago when dairying was the most profitable agricultural use of the land. A resounding 95% of the survey respondents felt it very important to preserve our working farms. 85 people reported some farm activity as part of their life in Plainfield, and 29 of those said agricultural production contributes significantly to their income. 53 people with a total of 955 acres indicated they would like to restore their land to agricultural use.

Professional farming is a vital and growing part of community life in Plainfield. Two families have kept their land as productive dairy farms for four generations. Another young family is beginning their profession as dairy farmers in Plainfield. A second young couple extended their family's potato farming to Plainfield approximately 12 years ago and now has 225 acres of tillable field. The assessors records show that 12% of the 13,625 acres of land in town are open agricultural lands. 276 acres are restricted under Chapter 61 and another 867.57 are protected under Chapter 61A.

Land is now being cleared and reclaimed for pasture and hay production every year by these full time and now part time farmers. Some of these part time enterprises include a sheep farm, a buffalo farm, and many acres made valuable by landowners in hay production. A maple syrup producer has also expanded recently on Main Street. In addition to farming as an economic venture in Plainfield, 33% of survey respondents listed farming a partial use of their land.

E. Recreational Prospects in Plainfield

The Recreation Committee is funded with annual budget appropriated at the annual town meeting. It sponsors activities for citizens of all ages.

1. Annual Events Sponsored (1986)

a. Excursion to Quincy market and New England Flower Show
47 people.

b. CPR Course for lifeguards and others.

c. Swimming lessons for beginners through advanced lifesaving (in cooperation with the American Red Cross) - 50 people.

d. Games and entertainment at annual Firefighters Barbeque - 300 people. "14 and under footrace" - 10 participants.

e. Participation in Hilltown Junior Olympics - 35 grade schoolers.

f. Halloween parade, games and refreshments - 150 persons.

g. November Craft Fair.

2. Organized Weekly Recreation

a. Summer Hoops - 20 9-13 year olds meet in two sessions twice weekly for drills and inter-squad games. Privately sponsored and supervised by volunteers and parents.

b. Aerobics - Monday and Wednesday evenings at the Firehouse.

c. Co-ed softball. A regular pick-up game is scheduled at Davis Field. It is not known how many participate on a regular basis.

3. Unorganized Recreation

a. There are a number of townspeople actively involved in individual recreational pursuits such as hiking, rock climbing, skiing (cross country and downhill), bicycling, jogging, volleyball, hunting, fishing, boating, and camping.

4. Discontinued Recreation

a. Triathlon - discontinued in 1986 due to lack of organizational support.

b. Little League - discontinued in 1987 due to lack of coaching and insufficient appropriate aged participants. Lack of a Town owned playing field is also a factor.

5. Recreational Facilities

A. Town Owned and Maintained:

Plainfield Pond, route 116, 4 miles west of Plainfield Center. Sandy Beach, posted for town use only.

Playground, behind Shaw Memorial Library. Tennis court without lines or net (doubles as a basketball court with backboards at each end), picnic tables, swing set, monkey bars, slide, level grassy area for volleyball etc. Too small for softball or baseball.

B. Other:

Sam Davis Field, center of town. Private property available for townspeople use with permission. Has been used by Little League and Women's Softball Teams. Maintenance by individuals using the field or by Mr. Davis. Recently sold as part of local business. Status uncertain.

Dubuque State Park/Hawley State Forest. Ponds, streams, trails, woods, camping facilities. State owned land on Plainfield's northern border, open to all. Seasonal cross-country ski races and horseback riding.

Cummington Farm, South Street. Cross country ski area which hosts hot air balloon festival in summer. Ski trails, ski shop, restaurant, large hall. Privately owned and maintained. Undergoing sale of property. Status uncertain.

Berkshire Green Acres, 3 miles east of town center. Privately owned campground. Fields, woods, facilities for tent and camper camping. Playground for young children. Permission to use unmaintained field for Women's softball games.

Mill River, flows through town. Hiking and fishing with permission on private property.

VII. ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

Although Plainfield is not a convenient commuting distance to major local employment centers, 80% of working residents travel at least 30 miles to their jobs. As development pressures increase in surrounding towns, Plainfield has become more attractive as population statistics show. In the last 30 years, the total population has doubled and today 44% of the town's residents have lived in town five years or less. There is reason to conclude that this trend will continue when one considers that in the next 5 to 6 years the "Baby-Boomers" will be coming into the second-home market. Proposals for condominium projects in neighboring communities show that the pressure is imminent and new workers relocating from urban centers to Valley towns are forced in their search for homesteads into, for example, the 45 minute commuter range that canvasses Plainfield. Mindful of these new pressures, the Town of Plainfield sought to focus on the questions of preservation vs. growth.

With the support of the Regional Conservation District, the Town embarked on an Open Space and Recreation planning study, including a thoroughgoing gaining survey of Townspeople opinions. This will enable the Town to focus its study and decision making on growth issues while there is still some time to carefully consider all of the alternatives. Accordingly, questions in the survey included zoning issues, historic and natural resources protection issues and strategies, and affordable housing concerns. These results have been incorporated in creating goals and objectives and a five-year plan.

During June and July of 1987, the Plainfield Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee conducted a survey to determine general opinions on open space, conservation and recreation issues. This detailed survey was sent to over 500 residents and land owners in the Town of Plainfield and 245, or nearly 50% of the surveys were returned. The final results, as well as a copy of the survey, are included in Section X.

The following is a brief summary of the Townspeople's opinions expressed through the survey:

Topics which enjoyed the strongest positive responses were the preservation of agricultural land (86%), natural resources (73 - 91% on various categories) and historic sites (81%). Most respondents felt that it was crucial that Plainfield encourage its working farms, and 22% responded positively when asked if they would like their own land restored to agricultural use (a total of 955 acres was cited).

Survey results indicated a strong majority supported preservation of natural resources which included farmland, scenic vistas, woodlands, wetlands, ponds, streams, and wildlife. Perhaps a reflection of this sentiment can be interpreted from the response to the question: should road improvements be kept within existing tree line? 63% felt that they should, 30% opposed. The town also voiced a majority opinion that historic sites were important to the town and support for a designated historic district on main Street was favored by 70%.

Most were less interested in preservation by way of limiting new development and more interested in obtaining grants and gifts to protect historical assets.

Recognizing that these preservation measures require funding, the study committee was very interested in how the town would be willing to protect its assets. Sixteen landowners would consider contributing land to the town (with donor benefits). One response was: "My comments count for naught since I no longer live in Town. However, I enjoyed it so much while we did live there that I've never planned to give up my property. If the town would use it, I'd be glad to let them have it." In addition, landowners of several hundred acres have expressed interest in studying measures for protection of their land. Others are willing to donate money to an acquisition fund. Another 16 landowners checked off that they were willing to sell their land to the town at a bargain price (with donor benefits). Of those that responded to this question, 14% would sell at fair market prices, 22% would sell or contribute a conservation restriction to protect land from future development and 17% would rewrite their deeds to limit future land uses. The survey effort has prompted a process of preservation that will be pursued with all interested landowners. One hundred and ten, or 45%, would vote for a town supported land acquisition fund and 131 supported state funds to purchase land in Plainfield.

Preservation of this land or restricting future land use has a direct influence on housing, zoning and ecology issues. Questions on these topics were asked in an effort to determine the Town's stance on these complex issues and provide guidance to this planning committee as well as recommendations to other town boards.

More than half of those who responded expressed concern over the climbing price of housing, and only 33% believed they would be able to buy their house at today's prices. A clear majority, 71% felt that people of all income levels should be able to find affordable housing in Plainfield, but 55% opposed "cluster housing" (apparently misunderstood by many as "projects") as a means for accomplishing this goal.

Zoning was another topic which reflected mixed opinion. When asked if Plainfield should have a commercial zone, 43% approved and 49% disapproved. Industrial zoning was opposed by 59% and approved by only 35%. Most, by a small margin, apparently favor the current practice of single town-wide agricultural/residential zone with special permits issued for other uses. When asked if more enterprises should operate by special permit, 77% said yes and 17% no to cottage industry, 63% yes and 30% no to light industry, and 57% yes and 35% no to markets, shops and stores. In a question relating to zoning issues, people were asked if they supported development of a town common and 69% responded positively, and only 19% said no. When asked about the composition of this proposed common, 58% versus 42% were in favor of combining public land with retail businesses.

Concerning ecology issues, namely pollution, responses showed that 41% were concerned about their current water supply but 75% were uneasy about their water supply for the future. Most noted that they would support and/or use a town recycling center (75%), annual trash clean up day (56%), household hazardous waste collection (54%) and large refuse collection (67%). Many residents were concerned about pesticide spraying along power lines (69%) and roughly one half were in favor of screening motorists' views of the power lines by planting trees at the roadside.

In an effort to balance conservation and recreation use of land in Plainfield, questions were asked to determine how people currently recreate in town and what they would like to see offered. The majority of landowners use their property for recreation (59%), hunting (20%), and fishing (19%). Of those who enjoy leisure time in town, most participated in fishing, swimming, and hiking. Skiing, boating, camping and volleyball were also popular activities. From the survey results, more would participate in organized sports such as baseball and tennis if the town would provide more town owned and maintained areas (60%). The possibility of developing a map outlining hiking, skiing and historical site trail routes in Plainfield was supported by three to one of the respondents. Again, funding was an issue but 47% were willing to pay user fees, 33% wanted to utilize town funds, 34% were in favor of donations and 41% wanted to pursue special grants.

Questions specifically concerning Plainfield Pond were asked, as it is the most frequently used recreational area in town. 71% responded that they swim at the pond, and 33% boated there. An overwhelming majority (86%) wanted to continue the quiet-pond policy (no outboard gasoline motors). A good proportion (55%) were interested, versus 16% not interested, in gaining some public access to Mill River.

Attitudes toward recreational use of private land by the general public were queried. Most (65%) of the landowners do not post their land. Those that do listed preservation of wildlife and prohibiting hunting and fishing, as well as protection of family and property as the main reasons. Only 14% listed past abuse as the reason for posting their property. Generally, most landowners permitted non-motorized use of their land such as hiking and skiing and did not permit snowmobiling (78%), all terrain vehicles (84%) or hunting (70%).

The results from this survey have provided the Town and the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee with important information on how the majority of the residents and landowners feel about specific issues and have provided some insight as to how to deal with problems or opportunities as they occur now and in the future. Since some of the issues such as affordable housing and zoning will require many more hours of work, debate and mutual education before solutions are found, this survey cannot be considered a mandate by town boards, but rather a guideline for future study and action.

These results are incorporated into a formal Goals and Objectives section and finally, a Five Year Action Plan for protection and preservation of the Town's natural resources, historic sites and recreation lands.

VIII. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. Conservation Goals and Objectives

GOAL #1

To ensure that the quality and quantity of our water resources are adequate to meet the ecological, social and economic needs of our community.

— OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain current awareness of Wetlands Protection Act
2. Protect existing groundwater recharge areas
3. Protect existing surface waters
4. Achieve an adequate network of all season fire pond resources, as firefighting is increasingly critical with existing growth rates.

GOAL #2

Protect and preserve the integrity of the natural resources including soils, vegetation, water and wildlife.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Create, improve, maintain and protect Plainfield's diverse wildlife habitats.
2. Actively search for conservation land uses through a variety of methods.
3. Work with the Soil Conservation Service to adjust land uses to the limitations and potentials of the soil characteristics.
4. Promote multiple-use forest management to include timber, water resources, recreational and wildlife values.
5. Protect and preserve the water quality of Plainfield's ponds and cold water, trout habitat streams.

GOAL #3

Continue to safeguard against environmental pollution in Plainfield and create solutions that will make the land, water and air safe for future generations.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Responsibly dispose of waste and take an active part in the Regional Waste Planning Board.

Town voters have approved the creation of a committee to represent them at the county level. Due to the many pressures on waste disposal it is very important that the process of finding solutions to these problems is continued.

2. Study water quality and monitor domestic supplies and resources.

The Board of Health should implement testing. 41% of survey respondents are concerned about their water quality now, and an overwhelming majority (75%) are concerned about water quality in the future.

3. Engage public involvement in activities that would help solve local and regional waste disposal problems

Many respondents to the survey supported these solutions with the following levels of enthusiasm. Recycling (75%), Large Refuse Collection (67%), Household Hazardous Waste Collection (54%) and Annual Trash Clean Up (56%). These are all activities that will only succeed if the public is involved.

4. Hold informational seminars on environmental issues.

Because of the lifestyle in Plainfield is one where many citizens feel close to the land and part of the environment, there is a strong need to preserve and protect the land for future generations. Education is vital to keep people abreast of ever changing conditions that affect our town.

B. Recreation Goals and Objectives

GOAL #1

To preserve, protect and enhance the Town's recreational resources in a manner compatible with the existing natural and human resources.

GOAL #2

To encourage passive forms of recreation such as swimming, fishing and hiking, and active forms of recreation such as volleyball, tennis and softball, in response to the needs of the Town.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide information on access to facilities that are underutilized.

Nearly two-thirds of those responding (64%) would like the town to develop and distribute a detailed map outlining hiking, skiing and historical site trail route routes. 23% opposed and 13% were unsure.

Although not determined by the survey, the Recreation Committee, at a recent meeting, agreed that town residents may not be aware of the existence of facilities and equipment available to them.

2. Acquire, develop and maintain land for a Town Park which will include a softball field, tennis courts, basketball court and open areas for soccer, frisbee etc.

Sixty percent of those responding said they would like the town to provide more town-owned and town-maintained areas for organized recreational activities such as baseball and tennis. 25% opposed and 15% weren't sure.

A ranking of recreational preferences by survey response puts tennis eighth and softball twelfth of 25 activities. the question was worded "what activities do you participate in?" It is not known if the response would have been different if the question had asked "would you participate...if facilities were provided?"

Plainfield participates in the Hilltown Junior Olympics with six other towns, providing annual games for youngsters. The Recreation Committee has voiced concern about levels of participation, citing lack of practice, past performance and the inability of the town to host games when our rotation comes up.

3. Provide support for team sports for all ages through the Recreation Committee.

In the past, teams such as Little League and Women's Softball received little to no support from the town. The Recreation Committee should become more of a resource to all those interested in forming sport teams in Plainfield.

4. Continue and expand services at Plainfield Pond.

The overwhelming majority of those responding to recreational questions on the survey cited swimming as the number one activity (&70%). The town currently provides a lifeguard and swimming lessons in cooperation with the American Red Cross. These are very popular and successful programs managed by the Recreation Committee.

5. Identify and preserve all lands currently used or suitable for passive recreation.

The top ranking responses to the outdoor recreational preferences question on the survey were swimming, fishing, hiking and skiing, all "passive" pursuits. These are individual forms of recreation that do not require (although they do not preclude) town sponsorship. The response to these needs is not as simple as providing a single-site park. Land, both public and private, which is used for these activities must be mapped, with the consequences of sale of the private lands taken into consideration. Will losses of large tracts of private land erode current resources? Passive forms of recreation coexist with other priorities such as natural resource protection and preservation of scenic vistas. The newly formed Land Acquisition Committee must determine what lands may be appropriated for these needs in the future. The Recreation Committee should research its role in support of these forms of recreation, such as how to distribute information and determine responsibility for trail maintenance.

6. Seek opportunity for access by townspeople to Mill River adjacent a historic mill site.

This objective was favored 3 to 1 by those responding.

C. Historic Sites and Scenic Vistas Goals and Objectives

GOAL #1

To maintain, preserve, restore and enhance the Town's visual, cultural and historical resources.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Pursue appropriate funding and preservation programs through local, state and federal agencies.

A vast majority of citizens (81%) felt active pursuit of funds to buy or preserve historic and scenic areas of town was important. A Land Acquisition Committee has been established to pursue land acquisition alternatives for Town consideration for recreational, conservational and historical uses.

2. Research and educate Plainfield residents on the pros and cons of historic districting and designations.

70% of the survey respondents supported a historic district in the Main Street area of town. While this is a significant percentage, educational and informational hearings are thought to be very important, so as to not alienate the remaining percentage, a number of whom might possibly reside in this area.

3. Create and maintain a Town Common.

69% of the survey respondents favored pursuing funding to create and preserve a publicly owned town common, with a majority (58%) favoring its combination with some form of marketing center.

4. Create and publish a listing of historic, scenic and cultural areas in Plainfield.

As part of the Open Space planning process, this is underway with the help of interested citizens and the Historic Commission. 65% of Plainfield's homes are over 100 years old. --- houses predate the year 1800. The Town is also well endowed with beautiful historical mill sites that remind us all of Plainfield's historic ties to a broader commerce.

D. Agricultural Goals and Objectives

GOAL #1

Preserve and increase agricultural land use in Plainfield.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Promulgation of opportunities under the Law to preserve agricultural land use including Mass. General Law Farmland Assessment Act, Chapter 61A, and the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Act, and support of individual applications thereunder.
2. Encouragement of residential site planning to maximize agricultural land use opportunities.
3. Support of marketing of local and regional agricultural products where consistent with Town Ordinances.

E. Planning Goals and Objectives

GOAL #1

Administer zoning by-laws to keep pace with citizen wishes and everchanging patterns of society.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Study alternatives to the present single zone in Plainfield.
2. Pursue mechanisms that would encourage cottage industry, light industry, shops and stores.

where?
There is strong support evidenced by survey results for more enterprises that would benefit the local community, but not be offensive to the rural character of the town.

3. Begin updating the current Zoning By-laws.

The most recent update occurred in 1982 and with consideration to the length of time needed to undertake this task the Planning Board should begin this project soon.

4. Create a Growth Management Plan for Plainfield.

This is being actively pursued by the Planning Board and the implementation of the above objective will prompt this project.

GOAL #2

Inform, educate and motivate citizens towards a solution to affordable housing problems for local individuals and families.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Hold open forums to educate the public about the facts and options available to our community.

A respectable number of respondents (55%) were concerned about the rising price of housing. Prices have doubled in many cases for properties in this area. 54% indicated that they would not be able to afford their homes at today's prices. However, 55% presently oppose clustering, and comments suggest that for some "clustering" is thought to imply "housing projects".

2. Research mechanisms that can help long time residents afford housing while still maintaining local control.

71% of the people answering the survey believed people of all income levels should be allowed to live in Plainfield. It is not an issue of whether, but how, and how to maintain the character of the Town.

GOAL #3

To ensure safe travel and improve Plainfield's roads while preserving the rural and scenic character of our town.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Promote needed improvements and needed additions to our road systems that are supportive of the town's land use plan.

IX. FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN

Goal

Protection of agricultural land and use.

Action

1. Individual briefings by members of the Plainfield Conservation Commission to interested citizens and eligible farmers. Public information offerings.

1988 - ongoing

2. Workshops held on land-use alternatives. ie: housing, zoning, and maximum agricultural use.

Hilltown CDC: Spring 1988

3. Farm products marketing workshop; study of market stands as allowable under zoning ordinance.

Plainfield Grange: Spring 1989

Goal

Historic Preservation.

Action

1. Promote cooperation between the Land Acquisition Committee (*) and other town boards to pursue enabling and funding alternatives for the Town Commons Program and list historic, scenic and cultural areas.

1987 - ongoing

(* The Land Acquisition Committee, established by Town Meeting, May 1987, includes representatives of the Conservation Commission, the Historical Commission, the Recreation Committee, the Planning Board, and the Bicentennial Association.)

Goal

Pursue affordable housing alternatives.

Action

1. Land-use alternative workshop hosted by Hilltown CDC, with Center for Rural Mass.

Spring 1988

2. Ongoing study of land trust/affordable housing strategies, with CDC and others.

Ongoing

3. Encourage and assist in pursuing a strategic planning mini grant. Planning Board and other interested boards and citizens.

Fiscal Year 1988

Goal

Study Zoning options.

Action

1. Review existing methods to implement increased accommodation of industries under present ordinances.

ZBA: 1987 - ongoing

Goal

Identify and eliminate sources of environmental pollution.

Action

1. Become members of a Regional Solid Waste Planning Board. Inform the town of alternatives and implement. Board of Health, Solid Waste Planning Board.

1987

2. Canvas water quality testing resources for residents of Plainfield.

Board of Health, Conservation Commission: 1988 - ongoing

3. Conduct water resource workshop. Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Multi-town participation, Extension Service.

Summer 1988

4. Conduct a regional hazardous waste collection day, explore state resources.

Fall 1987

5. Conduct annual trash clean up of town beach, roadsides, etc.

Spring 1988 - ongoing

6. Pursue recycling options.

Waste Management Team seminars.

1988

Goal

Protection of water resources.

Action

1. Wetlands orientation kit distributed through the building inspector, conduct workshops, publish informative articles.

Conservation Commission: Fall 1987

2. Pursue aquifer study by UMASS.

Conservation Commission, Board of Health: 1989

3. Establish fire ponds, seek grant support for conservation of all-season fire ponds.
Volunteer Fire Dept., Conservation Commission: Fall 1987

Goal

Preserve the scenic quality of Plainfield's roads and continue to repair and maintain them.

Action

1. Apply for a DPW Open Space grant.
Selectboard, Highway Dept.: Winter 1988
2. Pursue alternative funding for the repairs.
Selectboard: ongoing
3. Review of plans submitted for reconstruction of Rte 116.
Fall 1987

Goal

Preservation and protection of natural resources.

Action

1. Promote awareness through educational tours. Utilize the Mass. Audubon land on West Mountain.
Fall 1987
2. Promote awareness of Chapter 61.
Conservation Commission: 1988 - ongoing
3. Promote acquisition of land and easements to protect rare and endangered species habitats.
Conservation Commission: 1988
4. Continue Acid Rain monitoring project with UMASS on Plainfield Pond.
Conservation Commission: 1987 - ongoing
5. Review and study land acquisition options, prioritize parcels of land to be acquired, and make recommendations through Land Acquisition Committee.
Conservation Commission: 1987
6. Provide assistance to landowners on conservation restriction implementation. Conservation Commission with River Valley Planning Association and others.
Ongoing.

Goal

To preserve, protect and enhance the Town's recreational resources.

Action

1. Produce recreation resources handbook and map.
Recreation Committee: Winter 1987

2. Research funding for proposed activities.
Recreation Committee with other town boards: Spring 1988

3. Assign priorities for developing projects and begin to administer programs.
Recreation Committee: Fall 1987 - Ongoing

4. Encourage cooperation and information sharing between the Recreation, Land Acquisition, and other Town Boards and Committees in the development of all long term goals and objectives.
Ongoing

X. FUNDING SOURCES

The opinions expressed from the responses to the survey indicate a strong desire for protection of Plainfield's natural, historic, agricultural and recreational resources. Acquisition of open space by the Town is only one method to preserve and protect our resources. The educational process of introducing alternative methods of preservation and protection requires participation by Plainfield's officials and citizens alike. In order to encourage the educational process the following descriptions outline available programs the Town may pursue.

CONSERVATION RESTRICTION

This popular method of funding exists as a contract between a governmental body or a non-profit conservation organization and the landowner. The uses of the land are restricted under this agreement, and the value of the land may be proportionally lowered. The resulting tax reduction to the landowner will depend upon the Town Assessors' judgement. The restriction may apply to future owners of the parcel as well or may be for a limited period of years, or on only part of the parcel.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT

In contrast to Conservation Restrictions, this method grants the public a right of access to the parcel for certain activities. The landowner is not liable for injuries sustained by people while they use the right given to them under this agreement. The landowner, however does not usually receive any tax reduction.

GIFT IN FEE

Such a donation of land involves the transfer of the title of a parcel of land from the owner to the Town, to an organization or to the Commonwealth. Title may be retained by the landowner during his lifetime and who then donates it by will. Giving a Gift in Fee results in substantial tax savings for the landowner. Real estate taxes are reduced. Income taxes are reduced because such gifts are deductible. Since the value of the estate has been reduced, estate taxes are lowered on the death of the owner.

PURCHASE AND LEASEBACK

This method involves the sale of private land to the Town or to a conservation protection group which in turn leases out the land for private uses, often farming. Conditions and restrictions may be placed on the land by the buyer before the parcel is returned to the open market. The land is thus protected by certain limitations but may actively generate income for the town of conservation group.

REAL ESTATE CLASSIFICATION PROGRAMS

A. The Forest Tax Law (Mass. General Law Chapter 61)

This Act, revised in 1982, allows significant deferment of property taxes for wood lot owners who follow a ten-year management plan as follows:

1. Land must be at least 10 acres of contiguous forest not developed for non-forest use.
2. A 10-year forest management plan must be furnished to the landowner by a professional forester and includes its use history, deed information and analysis of its tree types, condition and value. The plan provides a schedule for thinning, harvesting, road management, firewood cutting and wood products investment measures.
3. The landowner applies for certification by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM). The state's service forester reviews the plan and visits the property, then certifies the application. The filing fee is a minimum \$25 plus a state-figured administrative surcharge.
4. The state-certified plan is submitted to the local board of assessors for the land to be assessed in the special forest land class. Once classified, the land will be assessed at 5 percent of its fair market value, and taxed at the usual Town tax rate. The assessed value may not be less than \$10 per acre. The assessment and tax are to be applied annually.
5. Each year the owner must pay an 8 percent products tax on the stump-age value (value before cutting) of any wood cut for personal or commercial purposes. The tax is payable to the Town. Assessors mail forms to certified forest land owners by April 1 and the tax is due May 1.
6. For land to be classified for the tax year beginning January 1, management plans must be submitted to the DEM by July 1 of the previous year, and the certified plan to local assessors by September 1 of the previous year.

7. Once a year, owners may add or remove less than 10 acres of land from the plan. Such change requires an amendment to the plan submitted to the DEM state forester by July 1 of that year, with his approval submitted to local assessors by September 1. The amendment carries another application fee. Adding or removing more than 10 acres requires a new application and management plan.

8. If land is withdrawn, either voluntarily or for failure to comply with the management plan, the owner must pay a penalty tax plus interest to the Town. The tax is equal to the difference between his Chapter 61 tax and the normal assessed property tax that otherwise would have been levied, for the sum total of years that land has been under Chapter 61 up to 10 years maximum. An interest rate is applied for the sum of years, as figured by state government.

9. If the designated land is sold, the new owner may assume the benefits of Chapter 61, if they register with the DEM and the assessors. New owners must comply with the management plan. The Town has the option of first refusal (60 days) on sale of Chapter 61 land, except for land transferred to immediate family members.

10. Land now under Chapter 61 is not affected by the new provisions; in fact, owners have an extra year to decide whether to become recertified under the new provisions.

B. Farmland Assessment Act (Chapter 61A)

The basic qualifications for classifications under Chapter 61A are as follows:

1. The land must be of at least 5 contiguous acres and actively devoted to agricultural/horticultural uses during the tax year in issue and must have been so devoted for at least the 2 immediately preceding tax years.

2. The gross sales produced by the agricultural/horticultural uses must be \$500 or more per year or it must be shown that the purpose of such uses was to produce that amount. When the parcel to be classified exceeds 5 acres, the \$500 gross sales requirement will be increased at the rate of \$5 for each acre in excess of 5, or, if the additional acres are woodland or wetland, by 50 cents for each acre in excess of 5.

3. The land must have been actively devoted to agricultural/horticultural uses; ie. satisfied the use, size and gross sales requirements specified above, in at least the 2 tax years immediately preceding the year for which classification is sought.

C. Recreation Land Taxation Act (Chapter 61B)

The purpose of this Chapter 61B is to afford relief from real estate taxes for designated land utilized for recreational purposes. This statute provides such relief by classifying land where appropriate as recreational land and taxing it exclusively under the provisions of this Chapter. Recreational land is to be assessed solely on the basis of its present use rather on its highest and best use, and in no event shall the valuation exceed 25 percent of the full and fair cash value.

D. Agricultural Preservation Restriction Act

This Act (Chapter 780, Acts of 1977) was developed to offer the necessary protection for farmland in Massachusetts. It provides farmland owners the opportunity to realize the value of the "development rights" of their property. In other words, the farmer can be paid for the land's development value, without the land being converted to non-farm uses.

The Commonwealth compensates the landowner for his willingness to place a permanent restriction on his land prohibiting all non-farm development and allowing only for agricultural uses. The landowner still owns the land and retains all rights of ownership, such as the right to privacy, the right to sell the land, lease it and will it to heirs.

In effect, the Preservation Act allows a farmer to realize the equity "locked up" in the land, sell the development rights to the Commonwealth and the restricted farmland to another farmer. Or, a farmer may be under financial stress, and by selling his development rights, he can utilize the funds necessary to keep farming.

E. Federal Aid Program - Land and Water Conservation Fund

The National Park Service (NAPS) (formerly the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service) is a part of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Land and Water Conservation Fund, administered by NAPS, reimburses local, state and federal agencies up to 50 percent of the cost of acquisition and/or development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities. NAPS is interested in meeting public recreational needs, as well as preserving open space. It may therefore fund intensive uses, such as swimming pools, rinks and campgrounds, which are not eligible under the Self-Help Program.

The regional office of the NPS is located in Philadelphia, PA. The program is administered in Massachusetts through the office of the Division of Conservation Services.

Since requirements are subject to change, the first step in applying for assistance should be to make an inquiry of the Division of Conservation Services in the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. Authority to request a grant must be obtained by town meeting vote prior to application and that no binding local action may be taken until the NPS has given written approval. The funding decision is made in September prior to the start of the federal fiscal year, thus preliminary steps to determine eligibility should be taken no later than the spring or early summer.

STATE AID PROGRAMS

A. Massachusetts Self-Help Program (10)

Since the adoption of G.L. Chapter 132A, S 11, which established the Massachusetts Self-Help Program, municipal conservation commissions can obtain up to 80 percent of the cost of acquiring land for conservation and passive outdoor recreation purposes. The rationale behind the Program is that local participation in acquisition of open space assures intelligent choice of lands as well as popular support in the form of local appropriations. Land acquired with Self-Help assistance must be open to the public and the participating municipality has responsibility for maintenance.

1. Use Requirements

The Self-Help Act provides that the Secretary of Environmental Affairs may assist cities and towns which have established conservation commissions to acquire land for conservation purposes. The program is administered by the Division of Conservation Services in the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. Chapter. 132A, S. 2B, states that the land acquired must be, so far as is practicable, preserved in its natural state. State policy dictates that these lands be used only for conservation or "passive" recreation, that is, for activities which can be performed with minimum disturbance of the area's natural condition.

Examples including hiking, picnicking, canoeing, ice skating, cross-country skiing, casual swimming in natural water bodies or informal sports in open areas. Development of facilities on Self-Help land is therefore limited to such minor changes as trails, small parking areas, boardwalks, small shelters, and the like. The Division has, however, permitted maintenance of facilities already on the land. It has also approved agricultural use. The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, as discussed below, is designed to fund more extensive recreational development.

The land must be open to the general public, subject to conservation commission regulations applicable to all.

2. Planning Requirements

One of the primary concerns of the Division is that local communities devise a natural-resource, open space and recreation plan and that this plan of action be orderly, soundly based and consistent with the needs and demands of the citizens for whom the plan was formulated. No application under the Self-Help Program is approved unless the Conservation Commission has filed such a plan with the Division. A recreation plan is also required for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund applications. To be eligible for funding under either program, an approved plan must be less than 5 years old.

3. Funding

Under the regular Self-Help Program, the Commonwealth may grant up to 80 percent of the approved cost of a project, and most projects have been funded at this level. If federal funds are available as well, the community may receive as much as 90 percent combined state and federal reimbursement. The Division bases its reimbursement only on the Highest appraised value, even if the municipality decides to pay the owner more. In eminent domain takings, reimbursement may be based on the court award.

The program is one of reimbursement of funds actually expended by a city or town for land or interests in land. Thus the municipality must first come up with the total cost of the project. This requirement may be met in a variety of ways: the municipality may appropriate funds from the year's tax revenues; it may borrow money and issue municipal bonds; it may transfer money from available funds; it may spend money from the local conservation fund.

Although a commission may use money in its conservation fund without further authorization, it cannot obtain a Self-Help Grant unless a town meeting has passed a vote authorizing the purchase of a particular parcel of land (or of an interest in that land). The Town meeting vote requires only a majority, and may be conditioned upon federal or state reimbursement, according to an Opinion of the Attorney General.

4. Procedures

Commissions should contact the Division for up-to-date information before taking any official action. The importance of early contact with the state cannot be over-emphasized, since it may save much trouble and disappointment later on. A completed application must be on file before property is acquired. The Division will investigate the project and give preliminary approval before the municipality votes to acquire land, provided some Self-Help funds are available and all other requirements have been met.

Appraisal(s) and/or opinion(s) of value must accompany Self-Help project applications.

XI. SURVEY

The following questions were asked on the Plainfield Survey. The response to each question is indicated below:

1. How important to the character of Plainfield are it's historic sites, old houses and scenic vistas? (check one)

---- very important
---- somewhat important
---- not important

244 responses: 73% very important, 24% somewhat important, 3% not important.

2. Should the Town do everything it can to raise funds and help preserve it's historic assets? (For example: agricultural preservation, historical designations, seeking grants and gifts.)

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

239 responses: 81% yes, 9% no, 10% don't know.

3. A historic district or scenic byway can help preserve the present character of a specific area by setting some limits on new development within it that can be administered by the Town.

3a. Would you favor a Main St. historic district from the Central St. and Rte 116 intersection to the Union St. (Church) intersection? (This is not a Town vote, just an opinion survey.)

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

237 responses: 70% yes, 22% no, 9% don't know.

3b. Would you favor a Central St. historic district or scenic byway from Main St. (Rte 116) to the Cummington town line?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

236 responses: 47% yes, 34% no, 19% don't know.

3c. Would you favor preservation measures for other sites in town? Please list the most important additional sites:

Many differing responses.

5. Are you concerned over the climbing price of housing in Plainfield?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

232 responses: 58% yes, 35% no, 7% don't know.

6. From what you know of present housing prices, would you be able to afford your own house if you had to buy it today?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

236 responses: 33% yes, 54% no, 13% don't know.

7. Do you believe people of all income levels should be able to find housing in Plainfield they can afford?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

232 responses: 71% yes, 19% no, 10% don't know.

8. Off-the-road cluster housing might enable more moderate-priced housing. Would you favor this land use? (Cluster housing permits houses to be grouped closely, or possible adjoining as townhouses, with portions of their 3-acre minimums included in surrounding open space.)

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

237 responses: 34% yes, 55% no, 11% don't know.

9. Plainfield is now a single agricultural/residential zone. (All else is by special permit.) Do you think Plainfield should have:

Commercial Zone(s) (retail shops, food services)

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

242 responses: 43% yes, 49% no, 8% don't know.

Industrial Zone(s) (small factories, small manufacturers)

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

237 responses: 35% yes, 59% no, 7% don't know.

More enterprises without special zones?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

235 responses: 30% yes, 48% no, 22% don't know.

10. Do you think more commercial enterprises should be encouraged to operate in town by special permit? (check each category)

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|------------------|----------|---------|----------------|
| Cottage Industry | | | |
| 217 responses: | 77% yes, | 17% no, | 6% don't know. |
| Light Industry | | | |
| 245 responses: | 63% yes, | 30% no, | 7% don't know. |
| Markets | | | |
| 203 responses: | 57% yes, | 35% no, | 8% don't know. |
| Shops and Stores | | | |
| 210 responses: | 58% yes, | 35% no, | 7% don't know. |

11. Would you like Plainfield to have a Town Common or Town Center?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

227 responses: 69% yes, 19% no, 12% don't know.

12. If yes, should it include public and historic facilities only, or combine with some small businesses (general store, restaurant, etc.) Check one:

---- Public facilities only
---- Public and retail combined

167 responses: 42% public only, 58% combination.

13. How important to you is it to preserve our natural resources? Please check each category:

| | Very | Somewhat | Not |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|---------|
| Farmland | | | |
| 231 responses: | 83% very, | 15% somewhat, | 2% not. |
| Scenic vistas | | | |
| 220 responses: | 77% very, | 20% somewhat, | 3% not. |
| Woodlands | | | |
| 228 responses: | 84% very, | 13% somewhat, | 3% not. |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------|------|
| Wetlands | | | | |
| 227 responses: | 73% very, | 14% somewhat, | 3% not. | ---- |
| Ponds | | | | |
| 224 responses: | 88% very, | 10% somewhat, | 2% not. | ---- |
| Streams | | | | |
| 231 responses: | 91% very, | 8% somewhat, | 7% not. | ---- |
| Wildlife | | | | |
| 223 responses: | 89% very, | 10% somewhat, | 1% not. | ---- |
| Other | ----- | ---- | ---- | ---- |
| Many varying responses. | | | | |

14. To preserve open spaces in Town would you: (check all that apply)

- 16 Contribute land to town (with donor benefits)
- 35 Sell land to town at fair market prices
- 55 Sell or contribute a conservation restriction to protect your land from future development
- 41 Rewrite your deed to limit future uses of your land
- 16 Sell land to town at bargain prices (with donor benefits)
- 110 Vote for a town supported land acquisition fund
- 43 Donate money to buy land
- 131 Support state funds to purchase land in Plainfield

The above numbers for each question indicate actual numbers of people responding to each question.

15. Planting can be done to minimize the view of high tension towers at roadside. Do you favor this?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

230 responses: 53% yes, 34% no, 13% don't know.

16. Do you get water from:

____ Deep well

____ Shallow well

____ Spring

____ Stream or Pond

Other: _____

249 responses: 75% Deep well, 7% Shallow well, 14% Spring, 1% Stream or Pond, 3% other.

17. Water quality is sometimes affected by road salt, sewage, or agricultural residue. Are you concerned about your water quality at this time?

____ yes

____ no

____ don't know

255 responses: 41% yes, 54% no, 5% don't know.

18. Are you concerned about your water quality for the future?

____ yes

____ no

____ don't know

217 responses: 75% yes, 21% no, 4% don't know.

19. Do you have a water resource on your land? (check all that apply)

50 Stream

1 Quarry

15 Bog

1 Spring

2 Flood plain

7 None

19 Pond

10 Don't know

The above numbers next to each question indicate actual numbers of people responding positively to that question.

20. Plainfield has fine forest and pond resources available to it for use. Would you favor access for townspeople on the Mill River?

____ yes

____ no

____ don't know

224 responses: 55% yes, 16% no, 29% don't know.

21. Do crops or animal products raised on your land contribute significantly to your livelihood?

---- yes ---- no

244 responses: 13% yes, 87% no.

22. Is it important to you that Plainfield keep it's working farms?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

244 responses: 86% yes, 9% no, 6% don't know.

23. Do you have land you would like to see restored to agricultural use?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

208 responses: 25% yes, 75% no.

24. If yes, how much?

Total of 955 acres, parcels range from 1 - 100 acres.

25. Should road improvements be kept within existing tree lines?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

239 responses: 63% yes, 30% no, 7% don't know.

26. Which of the following outdoor recreational activities do you participate in: (check all that apply)

The following rank order also indicates the actual number of people responding to the category:

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----|----------------------|----|
| 1. Swimming | 121 | 12. Jogging | 47 |
| 2. Fishing | 112 | 13. Softball | 47 |
| 3. Hiking | 109 | 14. Snowmobiling | 42 |
| 4. Skiing | 94 | 15. Horseback riding | 40 |
| 5. Camping | 91 | 16. Basketball | 37 |
| 6. Boating | 79 | 17. Playground | 37 |
| 7. Volleyball | 66 | 18. Baseball | 29 |
| 8. Tennis | 53 | 19. Golfing | 26 |
| 9. Frisbee | 50 | 20. ATV riding | 20 |
| 10. Hunting | 49 | 21. Soccer | 18 |
| 11. Ice Skating | 48 | 22. Ice hockey | 4 |

27. Would you like the town to provide more town owned and town maintained areas for organized recreational activities such as baseball and tennis?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

245 responses: 60% yes, 25% no, 15% don't know.

28. How would you pay for these facilities?

| | |
|------------|----------------|
| <u>114</u> | User fees |
| <u>81</u> | Town funds |
| <u>84</u> | Donation |
| <u>101</u> | Special grants |

The above numbers next to each choice category indicate actual numbers of people responding positively to that choice.

29. Do you: (check all that apply)

---- Swim at Plainfield Pond
---- Boat at Plainfield Pond

245 responses: 71% swim, 33% boat.

30. Are you in favor of continuing the policy against outboards on the pond?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

244 responses: 86% yes, 6% no, 6% don't know.

31. Is your land posted?

---- yes ---- no

239 responses: 33% yes, 67% no.

32. If yes, please check why: (check all that apply)

| | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| <u>35</u> | Past abuse (littering, crop damage) |
| <u>56</u> | To protect family and property |
| <u>46</u> | To limit liability |
| <u>54</u> | To prohibit hunting or fishing |
| <u>56</u> | To preserve wildlife |
| <u>8</u> | Other: privacy |

The above numbers next to each category indicate actual numbers of people responding positively to that category.

33. Do you permit transit on your property for: (check each category)

| | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------|------|------|
| Snowmobiling | ---- | ---- |
| 199 responses: 22% yes, 78% no. | | |
| Skiing | ---- | ---- |
| 199 responses: 41% yes, 49% no. | | |
| Hiking | ---- | ---- |
| 199 responses: 42% yes, 48% no. | | |
| Hunting | ---- | ---- |
| 199 responses: 24% yes, 76% no. | | |
| Fishing: | ---- | ---- |
| 199 responses: 17% yes, 83% no. | | |
| Other: | ---- | ---- |

34. Would you like the town to develop and distribute a detailed map outlining hiking, skiing, and historical site trail routes in Plainfield?

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

237 responses: 64% yes, 23% no, 13% don't know.

35. Check any of the following that you would support and/or use:

184 town recycling center
137 annual trash clean up day in town
133 household hazardous waste collection
165 large refuse collection

The above numbers next to each category represent the actual number of people responding positively to that choice.

36. Fire ponds are important to have. Would you be willing to build a firepond on your property and do you have a site in mind? (if yes, please call any Plainfield Firefighter, Conservation Commission Member, or Selectperson.)

---- yes ---- no ---- don't know

194 responses: 30% yes, 36% no, 34% don't know.

37. Are you:

---- under 18

---- 18 - 35

---- 36 - 60

---- over 60

251 responses: 5% under 18, 20% 18 - 35, 51% 36 - 60, 24% over 60.

38. Are you:

75 an owner living year round in Plainfield

15 an owner living seasonally in Plainfield

7 an owner with no house on site

3 a renter living year round in Plainfield

0 a renter living seasonally in Plainfield

244 responses: the above numbers represent the percentage of respondents checking that category.

39. How much land do you own?

---- none

---- 1 acre or less

---- 2 - 10 acres

---- 11 - 50 acres

---- over 50 acres

181 responses: 6% none, 11% 1 acre or less, 37% 2 - 10 acres, 17% 11 - 50 acres, 29% over 50 acres.

40. How long have you lived in Plainfield?

---- 0 - 5 years

---- 6 - 20 years

---- over 20 years

230 responses: 33% 0 - 5 years, 42% 6 - 20 years, 25% over 20 years.

41. Are you disabled?

---- yes

---- no

245 responses: 3% yes, 92% no.

42. How many people live in your house regularly?

---- people

The following numbers of people were indicated:

4 - 1 person
39 - 2 people
16 - 3 people
18 - 4 people
7 - 5 people
2 - 6 people
3 - 7 people
3 - more than 7 people

43. This question is optional. If you are willing, please check the category that best describes your annual household income:

---- under \$20,000
---- \$20,000 - \$35,000
---- \$35,000 - \$50,000
---- over \$50,000

Only 50% of the sample answered this question. Percentages are unreliable.

Comments: -----

See attached comment pages.

XII. WRITTEN COMMENTS

"Keep Plainfield beautiful and rural!"

One quarter of survey respondents commented on Plainfield's growth, community concerns, and needs for recreation. Their perceptions highlight the survey findings. Plainfield is unique and let's do our best to keep it's rural character.

GROWTH

Many residents expressed concerns about growth, which ranged from a few who want no growth, to many who understand growth is inevitable, but support controls.

"People are selling their land because of the high property tax. Developers will want to build on that land. Families with many children will move to town and place a school tuition burden on the town. The property tax will have to increase to accommodate this new development. Keep the tax rate down and keep developers out."

"I think no more houses should be built, any large areas of forest be made into a state forest or wildlife sanctuary. I also am all for 116 being rebuilt but without cutting down trees and moving houses."

"The Town of Plainfield should grow with the times. A few individuals have control and they don't want the outsiders to come in."

"Growth must be limited to land that percs."

"We use our cabin as a retreat, mostly weekends, and are most concerned with preserving the rural character of the town rather than recreational or business facilities, but support these ideas if they can be incorporated so as to maintain the town's rural beauty."

"I will support any and all efforts to keep Plainfield rural, quiet, undeveloped town. If I wanted the advantages of living in a big town with commercial and industrial zoning, I'd move. Progress is great, but so is rural America."

"I feel that it is very important for the town to maintain its historical open space and recreational resources by carefully planning for the future development which may occur within the town."

"Please keep Plainfield rural and beautiful. Don't bring the city to the country. Preserve wildlife and woodlands and wetlands in areas like Cumington Farms, River Road and Plainfield Pond."

"It is most important that these small hilltowns protect the unique environment we have...If you live here you've chosen the slight disadvantage as worthwhile...Driving a little farther for food or work; it's important to control our growth without the influence of distant real estate developers controlling it for us...Plainfield is so unique.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS: ROAD REPAIR

Many people expressed interest in road repair within present tree lines as part of preserving and maintaining Plainfield's character.

"Good roads in any town improve and beautify it and make people like to return. Not so in out town; the roads are a disgrace."

"It would be nice to have our town preserved but it would be nice to have roads which would be fit for traveling so everyone could drive through and enjoy the town's beauty."

"First priority for the town is to put main roads into good condition. The present condition of the roads is a hazard. If we don't put the roads into shape first, all the questions asked are useless, as we won't be able to get out of town. One of these days someone will be hurt on the roads and will sue the town for all its worth."

"Repairing existing roads within presently existing ditches by tearing up road bed, fixing drainage and laying back of road bed would be much better than building new roads which would take away the character of the town."

COMMUNITY CONCERNS: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A number of people responded to the issue of affordable housing, and some expressed concern that cluster housing implied low income or federally subsidized housing.

"Affordable housing: In favor of everyone having a fair chance, however, not in favor of building especially for special groups including low cost housing."

"We are of moderate income and fixed up an empty cabin to rent--other such cabins exist and should be made available. However, federally subsidized "cluster" housing would ruin this town and we would move somewhere truly rural. We want to stay because of Plainfield's special character."

"I would like all kind and income levels of people to be able to live in Plainfield, but in no way do I support federally funded low income housing projects in Plainfield."

But not all feel this way:

"Plainfield needs a balanced housing plan -- ie. options for all, elderly, low-income families, and handicapped as well as those who can afford housing now. New plans must not exclude these groups."

COMMUNITY CONCERNS: COMMERCIAL AND HISTORICAL ZONING

"Favor commercial and industrial zones to avoid scattering."

"I believe there have to be permits, regulations etc. I think they should be done over a period of time so as to be well thought out and administered."

"We must be very careful in usurping owners rights to do what they will with their property. Infringing on a neighbors health and peace is much different than infringing on his ideal of beauty or sense of preservation."

"I moved to Plainfield because it is a beautiful small country town and want it to remain in its unspoiled condition. I like the central part of town (church, town hall, etc.) the way it is and would not welcome any major change. I would not want to be part of a historical district as I want to be the one who makes the decisions for my property."

COMMUNITY CONCERNS: COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND AGRICULTURE

"We would like very much to see a school back in town. Although we are now regionalized with Ashfield, we should do as many towns and have Ashfield students come to Plainfield. Divided three grades each town. When all students were transferred and school closed, the town lost some of its closeness and community spirit."

"Cummington was able to have a road bypass built that avoided the village. One should be available to Plainfield by beginning just west of the Meadowbrook by Albert's Farm going NW to avoid the cemetery and power "park" crossing Parson;s Ave., N. Union and N. Central Sts. and joining Route 116 before the bridge near Cullen's. This would give plenty of room for cluster housing and condominiums, shops and stores, and leave the present center of Plainfield undisturbed."

"Education seems to be important in order to teach ourselves and our children how to better care for the land round us. Also, we are concerned about the environment."

"Working farms are important to me but restrictions on crops or methods that require large amounts of pesticides should be enacted."

RECREATION

People support recreation and the work the Recreation Committee has done.

"Strongly support the acquisition of land for town recreation, i.e. baseball, softball, tennis."

"Our town would be greatly enhanced by the addition of tennis courts and a youth center."

"There should be more recreational activities for the kids in the town."

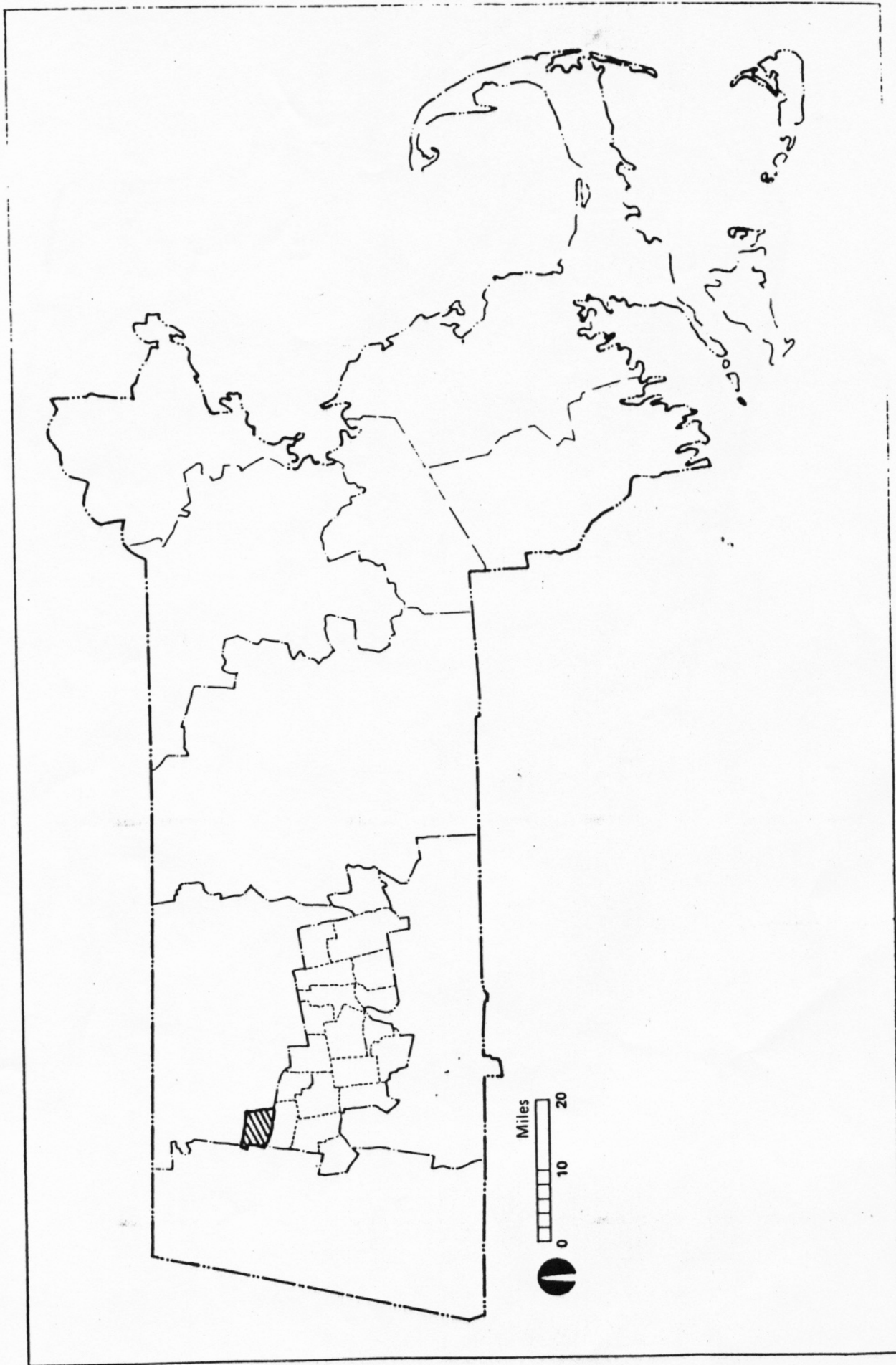
"Feeling concern that I am new to the area and trying to form opinions. I was drawn to Plainfield because of the open fields and I would like to see some preserved."

"I feel that additional services and improvements made to the town would be nice, however, not at the expense of the taxpayers. Additional ways or raising money should be found through donations, grants, fund raisers, etc."

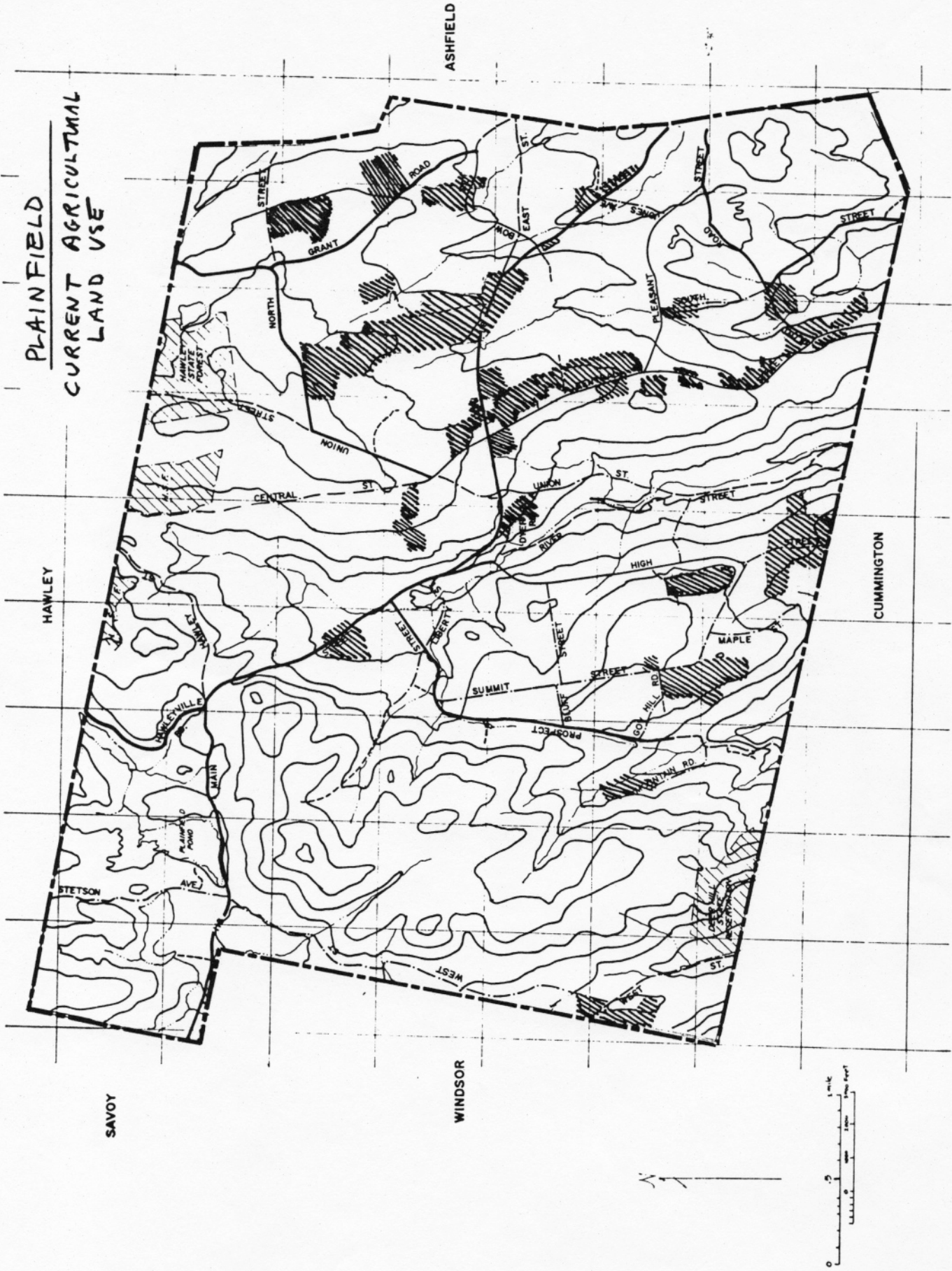
The spirit of the survey was captured by one former resident in a generous offer to the Town:

"My comments count for naught since I no longer live in the town. However, I enjoyed it so much while we did live there that I've never planned to give up my property. If the town would use it, I'd be glad to let them have it."

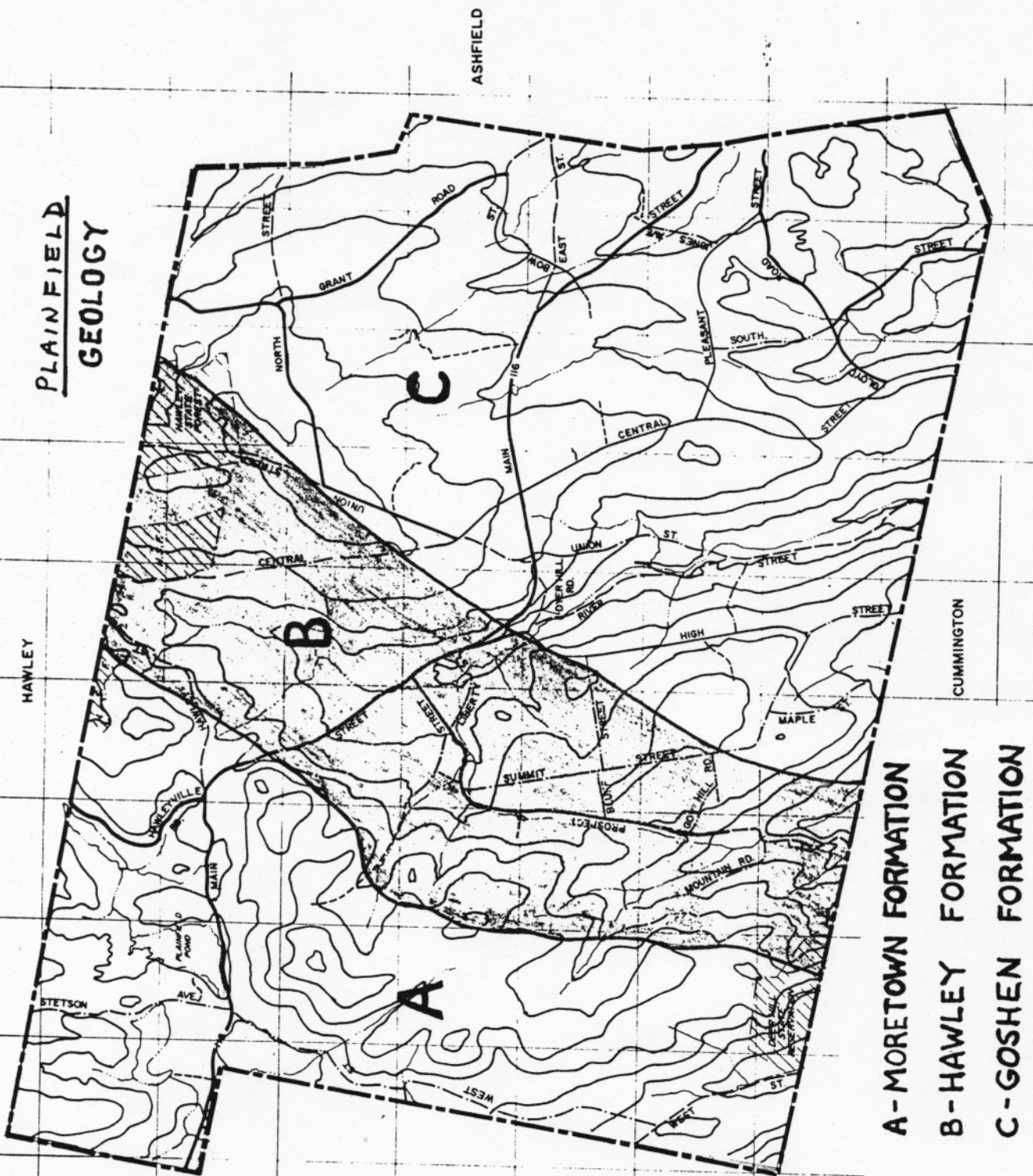
State Context for Hampshire County and Plainfield (Cross-hatched)



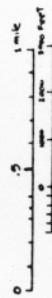
PLAINFIELD CURRENT AGRICULTURAL LAND USE



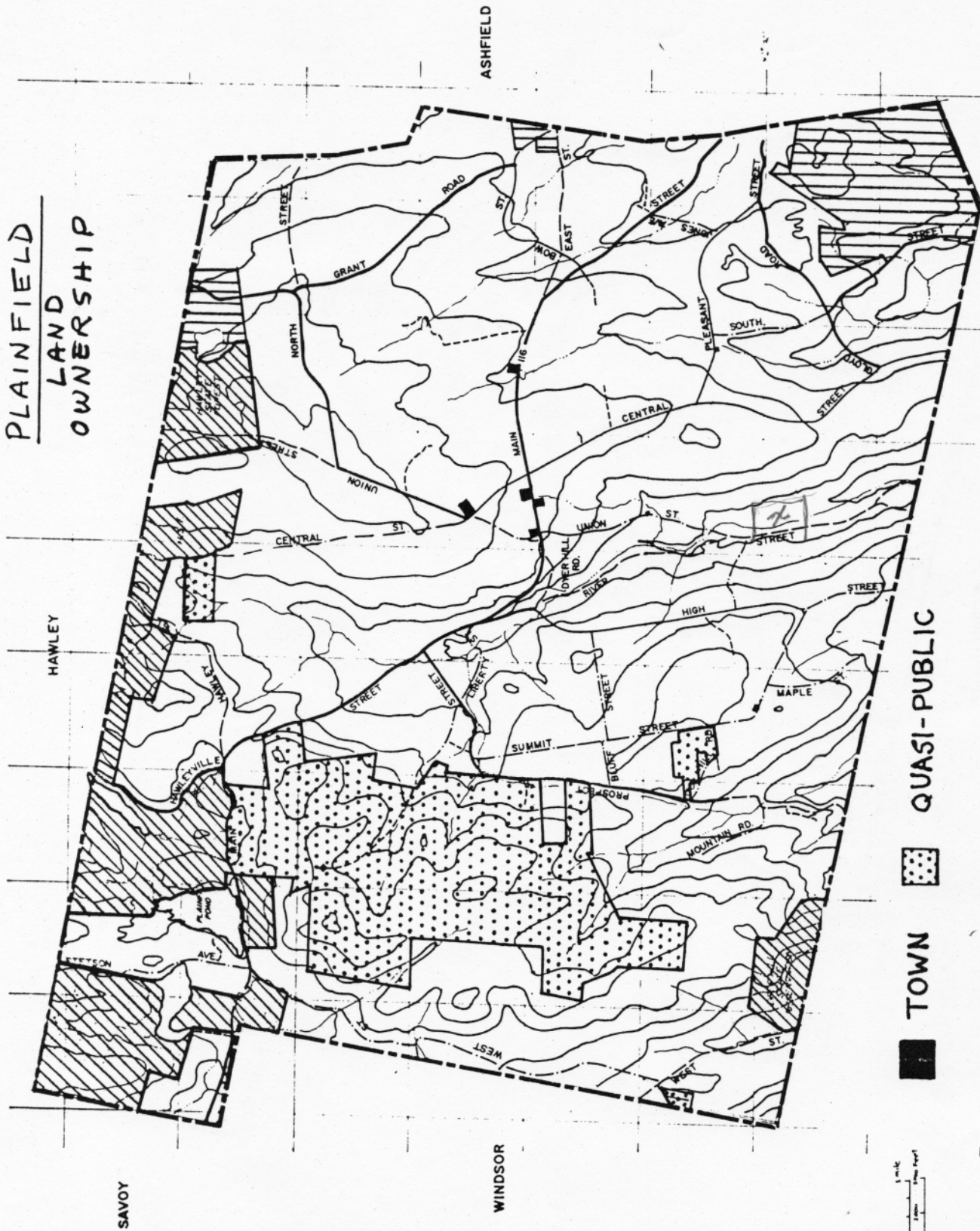
PLAINFIELD GEOLOGY



- A-MORETOWN FORMATION
- B-HAWLEY FORMATION
- C-GOSHEN FORMATION



PLAINFIELD LAND OWNERSHIP



0 1/2 1 mile
0 1/2 1/4 1/2 3/4 1 mile

STATE TOWN QUASI-PUBLIC
PVT. - REC. + 2 = 613 65 Acres

PLAINFIELD MAJOR WETLANDS

