

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

POCD

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"We take stock of a city like we take stock of a man. The clothes or appearance are the externals by which we judge."

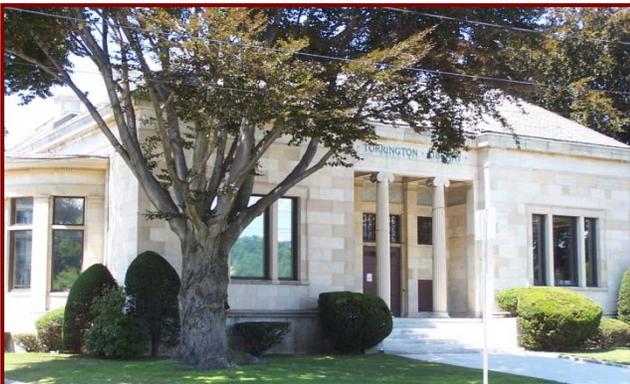
Mark Twain

As part of the preparation of the Plan of Conservation and Development, a City Department Head Questionnaire was developed and Department Heads were asked to comment on current and/or anticipated needs of their departments during the planning period. In regards to community facilities they were asked to comment on the greatest need for their departments over the next five to ten years and in particular major needs to be considered in the Plan.

Also included in the questionnaire were questions relating to other department needs as well as the City's greatest challenges, things to be encouraged by the City as well as types of things to be discouraged.

Goal - To provide adequate community facilities to meet the needs of current and future residents

Torrington Library



Torrington YMCA (above); Besse Pond Pool (below)



Community Facilities include:

- recreation facilities,
- administrative buildings,
- schools, and
- public safety.

Recreation Facilities

Park Master Plan

In 2003, in recognition of the necessity of expand and enhance the quality of the community's recreational assets and opportunities, the City of Torrington's Parks and Recreation Department identified a strategic initiative to develop a Recreation Master Plan.

The focus of the master plan effort was to:

- comprehensively inventory existing conditions,
- determine current and future needs with the community,
- synthesize needs and recommend proposed improvements,
- focus on properties with development potential,
- develop an implementation strategy, and
- assemble findings into a working document for the City's implementation.



New greenway trail (above); Santa's arrival at Christmas Village (below)



Torrington High School at Basee Pond

The Recreation Master Plan identifies a number of community needs including an Indoor Aquatic Facility/Community Center, additional ball fields and a Dog Park. The Plan also identifies the role each type of facility plays and the ideal Program Area needed. Torrington should continue to implement the Recreation Master Plan.



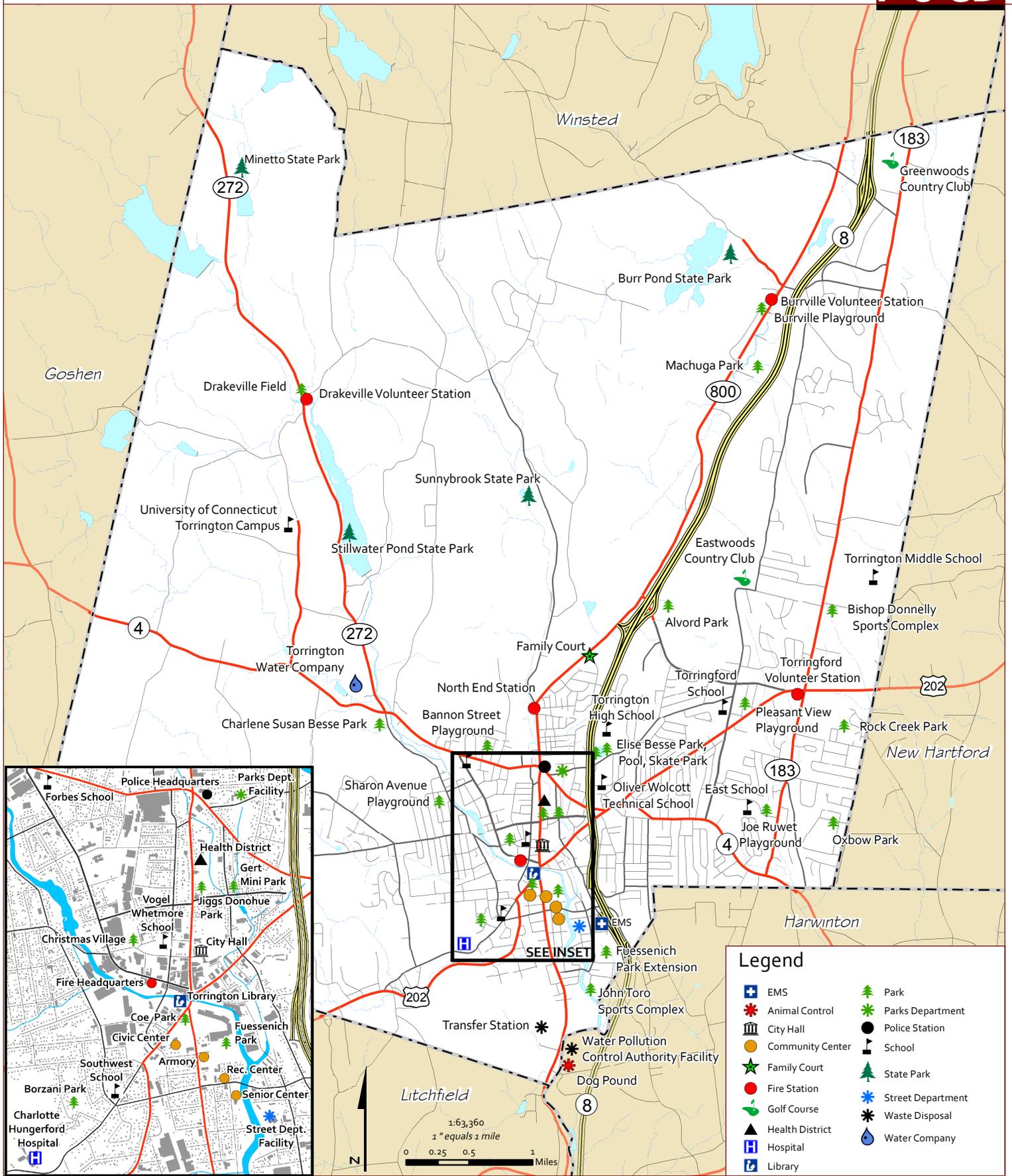
Popular bicycle races (above); Skate Park (below)



Playgrounds are being upgraded

Greatest needs are securing capital funding for completing facility improvements and updates. A central complex for park maintenance is recommended. Development fees for park development and improvements should be evaluated. There is a need for a multi-purpose community center.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES



Legend

	EMS		Park
	Animal Control		Parks Department
	City Hall		Police Station
	Community Center		School
	Family Court		State Park
	Fire Station		Street Department
	Golf Course		Waste Disposal
	Health District		Water Company
	Hospital		
	Library		

Facility Management

The Recreation Master Plan also recognized the role that the school-managed properties play in providing recreation space in Torrington. These properties provide game courts/fields, and the use of playgrounds as neighborhood parks. With cooperative management, these resources can reduce the number of new facilities or fields to be built, can give the City flexibility in scheduling game locations and can provide windows of time for normal maintenance activities or occasional renovation or repair.

It is important to recognize the school properties are prioritized for the school's needs. However, through improved maintenance practices, game fields may be able to offer more opportunity for use of programs outside of the daily, or seasonal, school calendar.

For example, the school's use of the baseball fields at the high school and middle school is focused on the spring season; however, additional maintenance applications would allow these fields to be more useful to athletic leagues in the summer. The Parks Department is taking a more active role in supporting schools with summer maintenance and the City should continue to explore ways in which the mutual benefits might be realized.

Information Technology

Torrington should upgrade the City's computer network to a Self-Managed Fiber-Optic network connecting all the City's buildings and facilities. This network would reduce data costs and provide all departments with faster data and more infrequent loss of data access. Torrington might also consider expanding the Fiber Optic network to the business community as an economic development tool.

Towns such as Burlington, Vermont have found it advantageous and profitable to install fiber-optic networks within their municipal boundaries. The city started building its infrastructure in 2005, signed its first customer in 2006, went "cash flow positive" in 2007, and is set to become profitable this year.

Burlington started its network with municipal government offices. Large businesses took up the network next, with residents soon following. Burlington's service provides cable television, telephone, and broadband cable service to its customers. www.converanet.com

Comptroller

The greatest need for the Comptroller is to promote finance and purchasing shared services between the City government operations and Board of Education operations. This project might also include sharing services between the Department of Public Works and Board of Education as well. The Department needs a software update to create greater efficiency and provide better analysis data.

Public Safety

Evaluate and Improve Fire Protection

In Torrington, fire protection is provided by a paid department operating out of two fire stations and three volunteer departments. The single most critical factor in fire extinguishment is time; once a fire starts it grows exponentially. The sooner the fire fighters arrive, the smaller the fire is and the more easily, quickly, safely, and successfully it can be extinguished.

Fire station location obviously affects how quickly the Fire Department can respond. The Insurance Services Office, an organization that rates fire departments and influences insurance rates, recommends that no property be more than 1.5 miles from a fire station.

Areas where Torrington might improve Fire Protection:

- improve the level of fire protection service to achieve an Insurance Services Office rating of 3;
- provide land for future fire stations to maintain or improve existing response times.
- insure an adequate water supply for fire protection;
- Policies require the extension of water mains to new subdivisions where appropriate;
- as part of the subdivision approval, continue to require where appropriate, fire ponds with dry hydrants in areas without water mains;
- review proposed subdivisions, especially on the City's west side, for potential acquisition of property for a fire station; and
- encourage developers to provide sprinkler systems in homes that in remote locations and in all commercial and industrial buildings.

Update the Police Headquarters

The Police Department occupies a former school building, which was renovated in 1990. As the renovations of this building approach the 20-year mark a number of issues are starting to be identified. Torrington should:

- upgrade the heating and cooling system to reduce maintenance problems and costs,
- improve communications technology,
- provide additional parking, and
- maximize the use of interior space.

Upgrade Emergency Dispatch Services and Facilities

Currently there are plans to combine all public safety dispatching for Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) into one location, Police Headquarters. If this proposal is implemented, there will have to be a complete overhaul of the dispatch office in order to accommodate all of the activity that will take place.

Grants have been applied for to upgrade equipment and to construct a temporary dispatch until the final plan and project is completed. It is imperative for this project to be completed if the Centralized Dispatch project does in fact take place. The current dispatch and the temporary dispatch will not be adequate for the project in the long term.

Fire Headquarters

11 Water Street

Police Department

576 Main Street

The City of Torrington Police Department is comprised of 83 sworn officers and 25 civilian staff. It is the largest municipal police department in Litchfield County. The Department is a full service police agency providing service to the city seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.

In 2008 officers of the Department handled 46,501 calls for service and it is expected that the 2009 call volume will exceed this number.

Over the past four years calls for service have increased by 30 percent.

Dispatch Facility Needs

Any upgrade of the Dispatch Center should consider:

- new radio frequencies,
- technology upgrades,
- information storage,
- telephone systems,
- ergonomics,
- adequate and appropriate levels of staffing, and
- construction methodology.

City Hall

140 Main Street

Board of Education

355 Migeon Avenue

Torrington is the largest school district in Litchfield County with an enrollment of approximately 5,000 students in grades pre-K through 12.

The Vision of Torrington Public Schools is to be recognized as a high achieving, future-oriented learning community dedicated to embracing all people as individuals who contribute purposefully to our diverse and dynamic society.

The Board of Education's Mission is to graduate all students with the knowledge, skills, ethics, attitude and confidence to succeed in their future.

Torrington Schools

Torrington High School
Torrington Middle School
Elementary Schools:

- East School
- Forbes School
- Southwest School
- Torrington School
- Vogel-Wetmore School

www.torrington.org

City Buildings

Improve Access to Information at City Hall

While improvements are being made to the physical elements of City Hall, Torrington should use the internet as a way to conserve paper, manpower and energy. The City should also enable the use of debit or credit cards to pay fees when purchasing or filing documents. Other identified needs include a large centralized voting facility, additional parking and a new parks and recreation building. The greatest challenge foreseen involves language barriers.

Continue to Address Public Work's Space Needs

Greatest need is for Department of Public Works (DPW) Storage and operations space. A facilities study completed by Fletcher Thompson Inc, in 2001 identified City Hall, 104 Main Street, City Barn, Winthrop Street and Public Works Facility located at 107 Arthur Street. The study identified building/site improvements required and several items in need of repair and replacement.

Currently the City Hall building is being completely renovated and a new maintenance building for the Traffic Departments storage has been built at the Winthrop Street location. The DPW Storage and operations space needs identified in the study have not been met.

The Fleet Manager also identified the need for a new facility for equipment maintenance. The Public Works Director identifies traffic improvement upgrades called for in the Municipal Development Plan at the five-way intersection Downtown and making Kennedy Drive/Dibble Street a State Highway as other major needs for inclusion in the Plan.

Continue to Support Torrington Schools

Greatest need is the ability to equip, modernize and sustain a level of maintenance for school facilities and grounds. The Plan should consider the capital plan expenditures for school facilities outlined in the Torrington Board of Education's "Five Year Capital Improvement Plan 2009/2010 – 2013/2014," approved by the Board of Education April 1, 2009. A new municipal sports complex would reduce the strain and over use of the City's and Board of Education facility buildings and grounds.



Forbes School (above); Southwest School (below)



Torrington Middle School

Improve the Sullivan Senior Center

Greatest Department need are building and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) upgrades to the Sullivan Senior Center. A café addition for the nutrition program was identified as a future need. The greatest challenges identified are Torrington's changing demographics and a need for better transportation. Concerns were raised over the mixing the populations of disabled and elderly in subsidized housing.

Card game at the senior center



Sullivan Senior Center (above and below)



Sullivan Senior Center

88 East Albert Street

The Sullivan Senior Center, a multipurpose center and focal point for people age 60 and over.

The mission of the Senior Center is to provide a facility where people meet for the purpose of participating in social, nutritional, educational and support services in order to enhance and enrich their lives. The Center strives to meet the needs of the older population by developing programs utilizing local, State and Federal resources.

www.torringtonct.org

Replace the Dog Pound

Torrington's dog pound is currently located on City-owned property in Harwinton adjacent to the WPCA and the Naugatuck River. The facility is undersized and in poor condition. All efforts should be made to construct a new facility within the City boundaries.

Torrington Dog Pound



Doug Pound (above and below)



The new facility should meet all required Dog Pound Regulations and expand those requirements to include a holding areas for cats and other pets that may need to be seized as well as improved examination areas, and a location for offices and adoptions.

Address Concerns that Regional Problems are Solved Locally

Torrington should continue to encourage a regional dialog about social service needs and that social services should not be concentrated in one community. As a regional center it is recognized that Torrington is ideally situated to headquarter certain initiatives. However, some initiatives do not require a geographically-based concentration to operate efficiently. In those instances, service providers should seek opportunities to expand in other communities within the region.

Community Facility Strategies

	TASK
10-1	Continue to implement the Recreation Master Plan
10-2	Evaluate the management of City-owned facilities
10-3	Evaluate and improve fire protection
10-4	Update the Police Headquarters
10-5	Improve access to information at City Hall
10-6	Address public work's space needs
10-7	Continue to support Torrington Schools
10-8	Improve the Sullivan Senior Center
10-9	Replace the dog pound
10-10	Address concerns that regional problems are solved locally
10-11	Upgrade emergency dispatch services and facilities
10-12	Consider expanding the fiber optic network to the business community