2018
PLAN OF CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

TOWN OF SPRAGUE, CONNECTICUT

Prepared by:
Town of Sprague Planning and Zoning Commission
and
Philip S. Chester, AICP
with assistance from the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments

Adopted January 24, 2018
Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ................................................................................................................. 1

I. TOWN HISTORY .......................................................................................................................... 3

II. POPULATION .............................................................................................................................. 8

III. HOUSING ................................................................................................................................ 11

IV. AGRICULTURE .......................................................................................................................... 15

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES ............................................................................ 20

VI. OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES ............................................................................ 28

VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .................................................................................................. 34

VIII. TRANSPORTATION ................................................................................................................ 39

IX. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN ........................................................................................................ 46

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE .............................................................................................................. 47

APPENDIX

A. Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)
B. Plan of Conservation and Development participants
C. 2018 Town Government Organizational Flowchart

Planning and Zoning Commission

Sandor Bittman Jr., Chair
John S Adams Jr.
Warren A. Baker
Phyllis Nelson
Paul F. Piezzo
Arthur E. Spielman Jr.
Nicholas Velles
Kathleen Z. Boushee, Alternate
Christian P. Mueller, Alternate

2018 Sprague Plan of Conservation and Development
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Sprague’s 2018 Plan of Conservation and Development (“POCD” or “Plan”) is the town’s master or comprehensive plan. The Plan builds upon the work of the 2007 POCD and is a management blueprint for conservation and public and private growth. It identifies current land use and municipal service trends and is a statement of Sprague’s goals and objectives for the physical and economic development of the town for the 2018-2027 planning period.

Sprague’s 2018 POCD contains specific action steps to:

- Strengthen Sprague’s small town and rural character;
- Develop and expand Sprague’s open spaces and river access to promote ecotourism, public health, and the arts;
- Encourage redevelopment of Baltic Village to preserve and strengthen the housing stock, provide small commercial business opportunity, promote ecotourism, help fill the “food desert”, and stabilize or improve property values;
- Guide and promote redevelopment of the Baltic Mill site to help expand the tax base, reduce blight, provide business and housing opportunities, and establish a regional food hub and/or food cooperative.
- Encourage redevelopment of the former paper board company site to help expand the tax base and provide business and housing opportunities;
- Provide community facilities and town services necessary to meet resident needs; and
- Preserve and strengthen Sprague’s agriculture.

Sprague’s last Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted in 2007, a turning point in the State and U.S. economy. The previous 10-year planning period was a time of economic expansion with a record building boom, lax mortgage practices, low unemployment, bullish stock market, and a housing bubble.

By 2007 the U.S. saw a dramatic downturn in each of these areas. This time period has been called the financial and subprime mortgage crisis or “Great Recession” -- from which the Town of Sprague and State of Connecticut have yet to completely recover. In addition, the town has been forced to adjust to the closing of its manufacturing base, as well as endure years when State funding to municipalities was capped, or most recently reduced.

Consequently, over the past decade the town has been forced to operate within tight budgetary constraints, resulting in a reduction in town staff and limits on tax increases. Paradoxically, the town has gained over $30 million dollars in discretionary state and federal funds or approximately $25,000 per household in Sprague over this same period.
These funds have been used for a host of capital projects, including but not limited to: renovation of Shetucket Village, remediation of the Mukluk property, new public water supply wells, sewer replacement in Baltic Village, brownfield remediation at the former Baltic Mill site, construction of the public works equipment storage shed, road and sidewalk improvements, and open space land acquisition.

Connecticut municipalities are required to complete a Plan of Conservation and Development every 10 years under Connecticut General Statute Section (CGS) 8-23 in order to be eligible for State discretionary funds. Sprague’s Planning and Zoning Commission is the designated town agency responsible to prepare the town’s POCD by Connecticut Statute.

The Town of Sprague retained the planning services of Philip Chester, AICP, to guide the Planning and Zoning Commission during a six month planning process and prepare the Plan elements. The Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SECCOG) prepared the Plan’s Transportation Section and mapping.

As part of the planning process, the Commission reviewed the recommendations contained in the 2007 POCD, conducted a SWOT exercise to identify the town’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and contacted town agencies, departments, staff, residents, and business owners, to gain input on how they felt the town should plan for growth over the coming decade. The Commission held a public hearing on January 24, 2018 to present the draft Plan to the public and gather input from residents and the Board of Selectmen.

Sprague’s 2018 Plan of Conservation and Development was compared with the 2017 Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments Regional Land Use Plan and Connecticut’s 2018 Conservation and Development Policies Plan, and found to be consistent with both -- a requirement under CGS Sec. 8-23.

The POCD includes eight sections, an Implementation Guide and a Future Land Use Map. Sections cover current conditions, factors and trends that will effect growth in the coming decade, and recommends specific action steps to help achieve Sprague’s land use objectives.

Town boards, commissions, agencies and staff are encouraged to read and follow Sprague’s Plan of Conservation and Development.
I. TOWN HISTORY

The history of Sprague is intrinsically connected to the rivers and railroads which crisscross the town; to former Rhode Island Governor William Sprague who established his cotton mill in Baltic and to other mills that developed along the Shetucket River, Beaver Brook and Little River; to the eventual closure of Sprague’s mills and its manufacturing base; and to the farmers, mill workers, business owners, and other residents who have called Sprague home for almost 160 years.

The Town of Sprague is rich in history, architecture, and diversity of manmade and natural landscapes. Only 13.8 square miles (8,841 ac.) in size, Sprague is one of the smallest towns in area in Connecticut. Yet within its small confines is a wide range of architecture, land uses, landscape, and socio-economic groups typically found in much larger communities.

There is Baltic Village or the town center with its walkable urban landscape, dense housing core, historic architecture, pedestrian/human scale, municipal buildings, parks and recreation facilities, and former mill sites located on the banks of the Shetucket River and Beaver Brook. There is the rural scenic village of Hanover with its 18th and 19th century homes and congregational church tightly woven with small farm agriculture near the banks of Little River. There is the village of Versailles at the confluence of the Shetucket and Little Rivers. Finally, there is an abundance of riverfronts, open spaces, and agrarian landscapes spread throughout the community.
Portion of 1854 Map of New London County (William E. Baker Publisher) with the Town of Sprague (est. 1861) superimposed in yellow
A Village is Born - Baltic

William Sprague served as U.S. Congressman, U.S. Senator and Governor of Rhode Island from 1835 to 1844. By the early 1850s, Sprague’s Cranston Rhode Island cotton manufacturing business was in need of additional resources and he looked east to Connecticut along its rail lines to find land adjacent to a river for a mill site.

In 1856 William Sprague purchased 300 acres of land and water rights along the Shetucket River in the Lord’s Bridge section of Franklin, opening what would become one of the largest cotton mills of its kind in America. The mill began operation in 1857 with 900 workers who made cotton yarn that was shipped by rail to the family’s weaving mill in Rhode Island.

By 1861, the mill stood 5 stories tall and was made of granite, and Sprague constructed 130 1½ story 2-family homes for his workers – most of which still stand today and represent an historic and uniform architectural landscape which help identify Baltic Village. The impact of these homes on the community cannot be overstated as today they represent almost 20% of the town’s total housing stock. William Sprague also built a store, grist mill, and foot bridge across the Shetucket River to link the mill with mill homes.

In 1861 William Sprague successfully petitioned the Connecticut General Assembly to establish the Town of Sprague to include his property and additional land in Franklin and Lisbon. By 1864 the mill was almost 1,000 feet long, contained 1,800 looms, and employed 1,400 people. Workers included both adults and children, as the 1874 Annual Town Report notes that there were “231 employed under the age of 14, 57 of whom were under 8 years”.

With the success of the mill, power from the river, and the existence of the railroad, other businesses quickly grew in Baltic. These included a hotel, bakers, artisans, doctors, grocers and other shops. It also included the Shetucket Worsted Mill built in 1892 on West Main Street – a structure which still remains today along Beaver Brook. Electric trolley service was introduced in Baltic in 1903 and ran between Willimantic and Norwich until 1936.

Baltic’s mill homes were sold to private individuals in 1939, and the mill continued to operate with various owners for 110 years until it closed in 1967. In 1999 the abandoned mill fell victim to arson. The town acquired the property in 2007 and is currently cleaning up the former mill site in order to foster new development.

In 1987 the federal government deemed Baltic worthy of preservation and placed Baltic Village on the National Register of Historic places. Baltic Village remains a distinctive enclave with its uniform and densely grouped historic homes, compact street grid, first floor commercial spaces, and former mill sites along the Shetucket River and Beaver Brook.

Limited new development has taken place in Baltic over the past century. Exceptions include new public facilities (Town Hall, Sayles School, Post Office and Shetucket Village
housing), expansion of St. Joseph Elementary School, and construction of TJ’s Cafe and Cumberland Farms gas station. Baltic Village’s historic core remains intact and it is the center of urban life in Sprague just as it was 160 years ago. Today, Baltic Village contains roughly 40% of all town residents and housing units in roughly one-square mile area.

**Hanover Village**
The most rural of Sprague’s three villages is also its oldest and most quaint. Hanover Village was recognized in 1761 as an ecclesiastical society by the CT General Assembly. It contains a variety of 18th and 19th century homes juxtaposed with small scale agriculture. The center of Hanover contains the 1847 Congregational Church, historic cemetery, playground, and post office. At one time it also contained a general store and gas station. Nearby Potash Hill and Salt Rock Roads are scenic roadways mixed with historic homes and agriculture.

Hanover Village sits along the Little River which housed saw, paper, rubber, silk and woolen mills for 200 years. The largest of these was owned by the Allen and Park families from early 1800 until 1975. When Angus Park purchased the Allen Mill in 1899 he renamed it the Angus Park Woolen Company and made woolen and flannel suits until it closed in 1973. The mill burnt down in 1975 and with it went the last vestiges of village employment.

**Village of Versailles**
In the southern-most part of Sprague where the Little River becomes Versailles Pond and converges with the Shetucket River sits the village of Versailles. Beginning in the late 1700s, several mills were established in this part of town, including a grist mill, watch factory, and several cotton and woolen manufacturers. The largest mill operated until 1962.
As of 1866, paper mills were established along the banks of the Little River in the northern section of Versailles. By 1916 one mill began manufacturing box board from waste paper. Over the years the mill had multiple owners and expanded -- including a $15 million dollar expansion by The Federal Paper Board Company in 1962.

The facility was last owned by Fusion Paperboard Company which closed its doors in 2014, laying off its remaining 140 workers. At that time it was Sprague’s largest employer and taxpayer. In 2017 the town acquired the 486-acre property due to non-payment of taxes, and it is currently being assessed for brownfields and redevelopment opportunities.

The last remaining manufacturer in town is Amgraph Packaging, Inc. at 90 Papermill Road in Versailles. Amgraph employs over 100 workers – making it Sprague’s largest employer. It designs and constructs energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly customized flexible packaging for food, health and beauty, lawn care, and pharmaceutical products.
II. POPULATION of Sprague

Sprague’s population peaked at 3,463 persons in 1870 – a direct result of the creation of the Sprague mill in Baltic in 1857. The town’s population ebbed and flowed for the next hundred years in direct correlation to the success of the various mills in town, and has remained level since 1970 when the last mill closed.

Sprague has a population today of approximately 3,000 people – a number which has remained within 96 people for half a century. While the total number of people in Sprague has remained consistent since 1970, there have been significant changes in age distribution, educational attainment, and to a lesser degree racial composition.

Age Distribution
In 1970, children under the age of 15 represented Sprague’s largest population cohort accounting for 30% of the population. Today this cohort represents 20% of Sprague’s population. The decrease in school-age children is not exclusive to Sprague as Connecticut and the U.S. have seen a dramatic drop in birthrate due to life-style changes resulting in people having fewer children or none at all. According to the State Data Center at UCONN, the number of school-age children is expected to remain relatively steady through 2040.

At the same time as the number of school-age children has declined, the number of those living to be 65 and older has increased since 1970. This trend is expected to rise through 2040. According to the State Data Center at UCONN, the number of residents age 65 and older is expected to increase by 40% in the coming two decades, from 339 persons or 11.3% in 2015 to 474 or 15.8% in 2035 as the “baby boomer generation” (or those born between 1946-1964) matures.
The median age of a Sprague resident has increased significantly since 1970 when it was under 30 years old. Today the median age is over 40 years old and is expected to rise over the planning period. This is due to the aging of the "baby boomers" and a continued reduction in number of children per household because more people are living alone and longer.

According to UCONN's State Data Center, Sprague's overall population number is expected to remain steady through 2040. However, this same data projects substantial population increases for Windham (up 46%) and Norwich (up 30%) through 2040. Should Sprague's neighbors to the north and south experience a dramatic growth rate, the town should expect some minor increases in population and development.

**Educational Attainment**
The percent of Sprague residents that have completed high school and college has increased considerably since the 1970s. In 1970, just under a third of residents age 25 and older had obtained a high school diploma. Today that number is over 90%.

The rate of increase in residents who have obtained a college degree is even more striking. In 1970, just under 5% of Sprague residents age 25 and older had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher education level. Today that number is almost 30%.

![Education Attainment](chart)

**Racial Composition**
According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the majority of Sprague residents or 90.2% identify themselves as “White”. “Hispanic or Latino” residents make up 4.6% and “Black or African American” residents make up 2.0%. It should be noted that since 2000 the U.S. Census Bureau permits residents to identify with more than one race. Both the Hispanic or Latino and Black or African American racial composition of Sprague has increased from previous census counts; however, these groups collectively represent a low percentage of town residents.
Income Characteristics

The median household income\textsuperscript{1} in Sprague has increased since 1979 when adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index\textsuperscript{2}. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Sprague had a median household income of $68,241 in 2009 which was 7.0\% higher when adjusted for inflation to its median household income of $19,925 in 1979. Current estimates by the US Census Bureau indicate that Sprague’s median household income has declined slightly since 2009 due to the “Great Recession” and the region’s slow economic recovery.

Sprague’s median household income has historically been slightly lower than the State average, on par with that of New London County, and slightly above that of Windham County. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Sprague was ranked 135\textsuperscript{th} of the 168 Connecticut towns in terms of median household income – a position that has remained relatively unchanged over 30 years.

Recommendation

The town should work to attract a younger demographic by marketing Sprague and Baltic Village as a socio-economic, diverse community that is historically and architecturally significant, affordable, walkable, eco-friendly, safe, and rich in natural resources. The town should also promote its small school system and community atmosphere where “everybody knows your name”.

\textit{Responsibility: All Town Boards and Commissions.}

\textsuperscript{2} A cost-of-living index measures changes over time in the amount consumers need to spend to reach a certain utility level or standard of living.
III. HOUSING in Sprague

Strengthen the quality of Sprague’s housing stock, and increase opportunities for additional multi-family housing for seniors, Millennials and Generation Z.

Sprague has approximately 1,269 housing units, the majority of which, or almost 75%, are made up of single-family homes. The remainder is primarily two-family structures, most of which are located in Baltic Village. Sprague contains an older housing stock with almost half of all homes constructed prior to 1950.

Between 1970 and 2010, 366 new homes were constructed in Sprague. Over this 40-year period the town averaged 9.1 new houses annually -- seeing between 4 and 13 new housing units each year. Over the past decade new housing starts have slowed to a trickle, with under one new home constructed annually over the past 5 years. This is a clear reflection of the impact the “Great Recession” has had on commerce – specifically the construction industry in Eastern Connecticut.

In 1970, the average household size was 3.3 persons. Today, that number is 2.63 persons -- a reflection of people living longer, choosing to live alone, having fewer children, and aging in place.
Affordable Housing

5.91% or 75 units of Sprague’s housing stock are classified “affordable” under CGS Sec. 8-30g. The Statute defines affordable housing as (1) government assisted housing, (2) financed by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) or USDA Farmer's Home Administration; or (3) subject to a deed restriction. Sprague’s 75 affordable housing units are made up of town-owned Shetucket Village (20 units of subsidized housing) and five deed-restricted units in Baltic Village, 14 Section 8 housing vouchers, and 36 home mortgages financed by CHFA or USDA.

In 2013 Sprague’s Housing Authority conducted a $2 million dollar renovation of the town-owned 20 subsidized unit Shetucket Village in Baltic. This facility is fully occupied and has a waiting list. In 2012 the town acquired 5 housing units in Baltic Village and placed deed-restrictions to assure they remain affordable in perpetuity.

Only 31 (or 18.3%) of Connecticut’s 169 cities and towns meet the State’s goal of each community obtaining 10% of its housing stock as affordable. Because Sprague does not have an affordable housing stock of 10% it is not exempt from the State’s affordable housing appeals process which shifts the burden of proof to the town when it denies an affordable housing project to show that public safety or health concerns outweigh affordable housing need.

Sprague is unique in that over a third of its small (1,260 unit) housing stock is made up of two or more units per house, and a third of all housing units are rental units. In Baltic Village, over half of all housing units are rental units which range in price from $600-650 for a one-bedroom, $750-800 for a two-bedroom, and $850-900 for a three-bedroom. These housing units provide a dependable and ample supply of affordable workforce housing.

To increase affordable housing opportunities for low or moderate income persons, the town should consider granting a density bonus for affordable housing proposals within Conservation Subdivisions and adopting inclusionary zoning under CGS Sec. 8-2i to require that a percentage of new subdivisions and other housing developments are affordable. In
addition, the town should require an affordability component for housing units constructed at the former Baltic Mill and paper board sites.

**Housing Preservation**
Sprague’s mid-to-late nineteenth century industrial development and limited new development has resulted in a large percentage of its housing stock emanating from the 1800s. This is particularly true in Baltic and Hanover Villages, where the majority of homes are from the 1800s and provide excellent examples of the architecture and community character Sprague wishes to preserve and enhance. At the same time, there are several homes and businesses in Baltic Village that are in need of rehabilitation.

Consequently, the town should provide incentives to property owners in Baltic Village to promote facade (and signage) improvements. Incentives could be in the form of facade improvement grants and/or tax incentives for architectural restoration of historic structures, with the goal to help assure that Baltic’s architectural integrity and property values are retained and strengthened.

Additionally, the Planning and Zoning Commission should incorporate Baltic Village into a Village District zone under CGS Sec. 8-2j, which requires the adoption and adherence of architectural design standards for renovations or new land uses.

As noted, Baltic Village is particularly unique and provides an excellent example of an early industrialized community not readily seen or as well preserved elsewhere in Connecticut. Controlling the design of existing and proposed buildings and landscaping will not only help retain Baltic’s character but will help stabilize and enhance property values.

**Housing Analysis**
There is a need in Southeastern Connecticut to provide new housing desirable to Millennials and Generation Z, particularly in conjunction with the projected expansion of labor markets at Electric Boat in Groton and development of Mohegan Sun’s entertainment complex on the grounds of the former State Hospital in Preston.

The town has adopted policies consistent with the objectives of CGS Sec. 8-23, including but not limited to the use of cluster and other development patterns to the extent consistent with soils types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity; energy-efficient patterns of development; affordable housing; and the expansion of housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of households such as multi-family housing, accessory apartments, subsidized housing, workforce housing, and elderly housing.
**Recommendations for Housing**
The following recommendations build upon Sprague’s current Zoning Regulations and the housing objectives outlined in CGS Sec. 8-23.

1. Amend the Zoning Regulations by adopting inclusionary zoning as permitted under CGS Sec. 8-2i. to require a percentage of new housing units to be affordable housing for low or moderate income persons.
   
   *Responsibility: Planning and Zoning Commission.*

2. Provide housing opportunities for all age groups by apportioning part of the Baltic Mill site for this purpose and include an affordable housing component. Some seniors no longer wish to maintain property but long to live near friends, family, and community, while Millennials and Generation Z are looking for new housing adjacent to recreation.
   
   *Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Housing Authority, Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Meeting.*

3. Consider designating a portion of the former paper board site for the development of housing. This will require a zone change to permit residential use.
   
   *Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Meeting.*

4. Amend Zoning Regulations to allow 1-bedroom accessory apartment by right.
   
   *Responsibility: Planning and Zoning Commission.*

5. Set aside and administer funds for facade and signage improvement grants to Baltic Village property owners.
   
   *Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Grants Administrator, Town Meeting.*

6. Adopt and implement Village District Zoning under CGS Sec. 8-2j to provide architectural design controls for Baltic Village in order to preserve and promote desired development and retain and improve property values.
   
   *Responsibility: Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Enforcement Officer.*

7. Create and disseminate a poster entitled “The Mill Homes of Baltic Village” with images of the various historic former mill homes.
   
   *Responsibility: Historical Society.*

8. Amend Zoning Regulations to require cisterns, fire ponds or sprinklers outside of water service areas in subdivisions of 5 or more lots and in developments requiring a special permit that are of a certain size or nature as recommended by the Fire Department.
   
   *Responsibility: Planning and Zoning Commission, Fire Department.*

---

2018 Sprague Plan of Conservation and Development
IV. AGRICULTURE in Sprague

Encourage agricultural land use by promoting agriculture-based economic opportunities and healthy eating, and protecting farmland for current and future generations.

Agriculture is a land use and business as old as any in our State. Maintaining and growing the agricultural land base is important to providing and protecting Sprague’s valuable scenic vistas, open spaces, natural resources and quality of life. It is also important for food security and public health.

Few property owners understand their land or its natural resources more than farmers who rely on clean water and soil to operate. Agricultural development provides less potential for loss of habitat, flooding, erosion and sedimentation, impervious surface coverage, diminished air quality and global warming than residential, commercial or industrial land uses.

Local agriculture helps reduce carbon emissions by providing local food and horticultural sources versus a dependence on products shipped across regional, state and continental divides. It also provides a positive tax base as studies show that farmland pays more than its fair share in taxes compared to residential development and is comparable to commercial and industrial development.

According to UCONN’s 2017 Economic Impact of Connecticut’s Agriculture Industry, agriculture contributes up to $4 billion dollars annually to the State’s economy and employs over 20,000 people. Most farm production dollars are spent locally on labor and ancillary businesses. Every dollar in agricultural sales generates an additional two dollars to the State's economy.
Existing Conditions

There are 3,749 acres of farm land classified by the Tax Assessor under Public Act 490, which represents 42% of town land. PA490 was established in 1963 and requires towns to assess farm and forest land on the basis of use rather than development or market value in an effort to lessen the loss of Connecticut’s farmland. Three-quarters of Sprague’s land classified under PA490 is in forest versus farmland.

According to the 2012 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture there were 85 farms in Sprague. The USDA counts a farm if $1,000 or more of farm products were raised and sold (or normally would have been sold) during the Census year. These include a mix of small equestrian, honey, maple syrup, poultry, goat and beef cattle operations, and a large dairy.

The vast majority of farms in Sprague are small in land area and scale. The exception is Spielman Farm located on Plain Hill Road. Spielman Farm is a third generation dairy operation containing almost 600 cows. Spielman Farm utilizes 1,000 acres of land in and around Sprague, as it takes up to 2 acres to feed a single cow. In addition, Spielman Farm operates a large corn harvest removal business assisting farmers in other communities by utilizing large forage harvester equipment.

There are several retail farm operations in Sprague, including Baltic Greenhouse Nursery on Willimantic Road which provides a variety of annuals, perennials and shrubbery; Cedarview Farm on Potash Hill Road with 700 chickens, 20 beef cows, sheep, pigs and ducks that sell to area food cooperatives and farmers markets; Stonewall Apiaries in Hanover which sells honey and beeswax products online; Sprague Sugar Shack on Bushnell Hollow Road which sells maple syrup; and, Big Bones Farm on Salt Rock Road which sells raw goat’s milk as well as chicken and duck eggs. In addition to properties that provide dairy and equestrian support by providing hay and corn, Sprague also has multiple “hobby” farms with horses and other livestock.

According to the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, 5,271 acres or 60% of Sprague contain prime, statewide and locally important farmland soils. These soils have the best combination of chemical and physical characteristics for producing food, feed and fiber and are important for the production of the region’s food supply.
The 2012 USDA Agriculture Census showed that New London County had over 60,000 acres of farmland (second only to Litchfield County in Connecticut). In the towns of Bozrah, Franklin and Lebanon alone, over 8,000 acres (or the equivalent land area of Sprague) has been permanently preserved through conservation easements purchased by the State. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture’s goal is to preserve 130,000 acres of farmland. To date, 44,000 +/- acres statewide have been preserved; however, no land in Sprague has been preserved for agricultural purposes by the State.

Agriculture Analysis
Sprague and communities close to Connecticut’s shoreline contain a microclimate favorable to fruit crops, including vineyards. With the advent of global warming and rising sea temperatures it is believed that the environment for these and other warm climate crops will increase and make the region more agriculturally viable.

At the same time, small retail and hobby farming has been on the rise as more people choose to grow or raise food and more consumers are seeking locally-grown products. While the median size of a farm in New London County and Sprague has gotten smaller over time, trends show the total number of farms to be holding or growing.

According to UCONN’s Center for Land Use Education and Research, over the past 30 years Sprague has lost 130 +/- acres of land to development – with almost half that loss coming from farmland. Development tends to hit farmland hard as this land is more easily developed because it has already been cleared, is relatively level, and has limited wetlands.

Baltic Village, with its high concentration of population and limited access to a healthy food supply, can be defined as a food desert. The USDA defines a food desert as a geographical area that lacks fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and healthy food providers. Research has linked food deserts to a host of diet-related health problems.

Preserving farmland, encouraging the expansion of agriculture, and filling the Baltic Village food desert should be priorities in Sprague. Since 2007 when the last POCD was completed, the town has taken several steps to promote agriculture. These include adopting a tax reduction program for farm buildings and equipment; establishing an Agriculture Commission to advocate for farming; adopting a “right-to-farm” ordinance to formally encourage farming; identifying locally-important farmland soils which increases eligibility for USDA and State funding; and, amending zoning to be more “farm friendly”.

Nevertheless, the Town can continue to assist farmers and residents in a number of ways. These include amending the “Purpose” sections of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to include language such as to “promote and protect agriculture” and “preserve prime and
important farmland soils”; limit commercial solar arrays to commercial and industrial zones; and, mandate agricultural buffers as part of the open space requirements when development is proposed next to an actively farmed property.

Agricultural buffers, like fences, help make good neighbors and a 100-foot or greater agricultural “no-build” buffer in the form of a conservation easement should be considered as part of the open space requirement.

The Town can also partner with State, Federal and land trust partners to preserve and promote agriculture; continue to lease town-owned farmland; pass a tax exemption ordinance for owners of horses and ponies; incorporate the farm-to-school program at Sayles; and, consider establishing a food cooperative and farmers market to promote local agriculture and provide fresh produce to residents in Baltic Village and beyond. Food coops and farmers markets not only provide a local venue for farmers to sell their products, but allow residents to access healthy food, and depending on location, can help promote Baltic Village as an economically vibrant place.

Lastly, the Town should consider a redevelopment plan for the Baltic Mill site that includes a regional food hub and/or food cooperative. A food hub assists producers in marketing and distributing products to wholesale, retail and institutional operations, while a food cooperative would help lessen the food desert in Sprague’s center. Both could provide spin off development in Baltic Village.

**Recommendations to Protect, Preserve and Grow Agriculture**

In 2012 the Planning and Zoning Commission amended the POCD to “promote farming and agriculture as part of an overall plan to protect and preserve Sprague’s existing open space plan and to enhance the town’s economic and commercial base through agriculture related businesses”. The following recommendations are made in that spirit.

1. Amend Sprague’s Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to:
   a. identify “agriculture” in the purpose sections;
   b. mandate “agricultural buffers” in the form of a conservation easement as part of the open space provisions in all subdivisions that abut active farmland;
   c. require conservation easements on active farmland as part of the open space provisions in all subdivisions to retain agricultural land viability; and,
   d. permit “commercial solar arrays” only in commercial and industrial zoning districts.
   
   **Responsibility: Planning and Zoning Commission.**

2. Consolidate the Agriculture Commission with the Conservation Commission. Sprague, like many small towns, has limited resources, including staff and volunteers. Combining these resources into a larger (7+ member) Conservation and Agriculture Commission
has proven effective in the nearby towns of Columbia, Franklin, Lebanon and Preston, and would help solidify the conservation and agricultural community.

*Responsibility: Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting.*

3. Consider establishing a food hub and food cooperative when redeveloping the Baltic Mill Site to promote local and regional agriculture, help lessen Sprague’s food desert, and expand Baltic Village’s economy.

*Responsibility: Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting.*

4. Adopt an ordinance that exempts horses and ponies from taxation as permitted under CGS Sec. 12-81gg to help promote this use. Taxing horses and ponies provides limited, if any, tax benefit.

*Responsibility: Conservation Commission, Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting.*

5. Incorporate the farm-to-school program into the food program at Sayles School to promote local agriculture, healthy eating and nutrition education.

*Responsibility: Board of Education.*

6. Set aside town matching funds to partner with the United States Department of Agriculture, Connecticut Department of Agriculture, and land trusts to promote agriculture, preserve farmland and promote healthy eating habits.

*Responsibility: Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Town Meeting.*

7. Consider establishing a farmers market in Baltic Village to promote local agriculture, promote public health and help revitalize the Village. Department of Agriculture Farm Viability Grants can help pay for staff to run the market and advertising expenses.

*Responsibility: Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen.*

8. Expand community gardening opportunities in Baltic Village and at Sayles School property to educate youth, provide food security, and promote public health.

*Responsibility: Board of Education, Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen.*

9. Continue to lease town-owned farmland.

*Responsibility: Conservation Commission and Board of Selectmen.*

10. Continue to utilize PA490 to help preserve Sprague’s rural character.

*Responsibility: Assessor.*

11. Assure Sprague ordinances, regulations, policies and actions are supportive of existing and new agricultural technologies.

*Responsibility: All town Boards and Commissions.*
V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Maintain and expand community facilities and town services necessary to meet resident need.

Sprague’s Town Government is conducted by 31 elected and 78 appointed officials, and over 80 full and part-time employees – 75% of which are employed by the Board of Education. Town Government responsibilities are broad and include providing community service delivery of schools, police, fire, property assessment, taxation, budgeting, record keeping, land use planning, zoning, building inspection, wetlands protection, animal control, recreation, senior services, as well as maintenance of town facilities such as buildings, roads, bridges, dams, water and sewer infrastructure, etc.

In addition to preparing its annual budget, the town prepares 5 and 10 year capital plans to address long term improvement needs. In 2017 the town prepared a Hazard Mitigation Plan to identify hazards and risks, existing capabilities, and steps to mitigate natural disasters.

As part of preparing the Plan of Conservation and Development, CGS Sec. 8-23 requires communities to look at their “governmental conditions and trends”, including but not limited to education, human resources, social services, infrastructure, and other elements reviewed elsewhere in this document. The following recommendations are an outgrowth of discussions with town departments with a focus on the 10-year planning period.
Fire, Ambulance, and Police Safety

The Baltic Volunteer Fire Department station was constructed in 1982 at 22 Bushnell Hollow Road in Baltic Village. (Prior to that time it was located at the Town Hall.) There are currently 37 volunteers, a number which has been declining due to the requirements of member certification and volunteer time commitment. The town has mutual aid agreements with the towns of Franklin, Lisbon, Scotland, Windham Center, and Occum in Norwich. Most Fire Department emergency responses are ambulance calls. Vehicle replacement planning is contained in the town’s capital plan.

Sprague participates in the Resident State Trooper Program for all its policing needs and to protect residents. The town has installed cameras in town to help protect staff, residents and assets. The Resident State Trooper has an office in Town Hall and State Police Troop E is responsible for the protection of Sprague residents. The need for a town police force is not expected during this planning period.

Recommendations: (1) Given the reduction in number of volunteers, growing requirements for certification and cost of equipment, consideration should be given to regionalizing fire and ambulance service with neighboring communities and/or use of a private ambulance service; and, (2) Require that new subdivisions and developments outside water service areas to install cisterns, fire ponds or sprinklers.

Library

Sprague’s public library is located at 76 Main Street in Baltic Village on the first floor of the Grist Mill building. The Grist Mill also houses a meeting room and kitchen on the second floor and the Historical Society Museum on the third floor. The Grist Mill shares its limited (18) parking spaces with Town Hall which can cause the lot to overflow onto nearby streets.

The Library is open four days a week for a total of 31 hours. It is run by four part-time employees including the Library Director. The Library has a collection of almost 13,000 books, periodicals, DVDs and CDs, with 9,187 of these items loaned out in 2016.

Sprague’s Library serves as an important community resource for adults, teens and children, especially those who reside in Baltic Village and children who attend Sayles School which does not currently have a librarian. The Library offers a limited number of programs given its small staff size. It is among the State’s lowest funded libraries per capita.

Recommendation: In order to provide additional community benefit and resources to Baltic Village residents, a full-time Library Director should be considered to help expand library hours and programs, seek grants, implement Library Board policies, and provide support to Sayles School.
Public Health
Sprague is a member of the UNCAS Health District, a regional government entity that represents nine (9) towns responsible for approving private septic systems and wells, conducting inspections of public food service providers, public health outreach and education, and managing public health emergencies.

Public Housing
The Sprague Housing Authority manages 20 units of subsidized housing at Shetucket Village in Baltic Village. In addition, the town owns five (5) deed restricted units of affordable housing on West Main Street which are managed by the Board of Selectmen.

Recommendation: The Housing Authority should expand its management to the five (5) deed restricted town-owned housing units on West Main Street that are currently controlled by the Board of Selectmen.

Public Schools
Sprague's public school system consists of Sayles School located at 25 Scotland Road. Built in 1957, and with several additions constructed since, Sayles School provides pre-kindergarten through eighth grade education. Prior to 1957 each of the three villages had its own elementary school. The school also houses the town's emergency shelter with a generator and showers.

Sayles School currently serves 335 students and has 81 full and part-time staff members, including the Board of Education offices. Based on population projections and existing conditions there appears to be capacity within the school to handle an increase in student enrollment. However, the parking lot does not provide sufficient space for expanded staff, let alone visitors.

According to the Connecticut Department of Education, Sprague's per pupil expenditure is almost last in terms of public school funding and its SBAC or school test scores are slightly below state average. Most Sayles students go on to high school at Norwich Free Academy, although they may also choose to attend Griswold High, Montville High, Windham Tech., New London Magnet School, Norwich Tech., and Lebanon’s Lyman Memorial High School or Regional Ag-Science & Tech. Center.

Recommendations: (1) Reconfigure Sayles School parking lot to expand number of parking spaces and to provide safer separation between bus and parent pick-up/drop off; (2) Consider funding librarian and world language positions and fully update classrooms; (3) Utilize Sayles School as a community school where activities can be scheduled for all ages after school hours and year-round; (4) Provide a safe pedestrian
link between Sayles School and Baltic Village so that those without transportation can utilize this community resource; and, (5) Incorporate the farm-to-school program into the food program at Sayles School to promote local agriculture, healthy eating, and nutrition education.

Public Utilities - Water, Sewer, Electricity, Gas, Technology Infrastructure

Sprague’s Water and Sewer Authority provides water and sewer service to most of Baltic Village and sewer service to Hanover Village. The system includes over 4 miles of distribution lines, 5 wells, 2 storage tanks, 62 water hydrants, 2 pump stations, and a treatment facility off Rte. 138 along the northern bank of the Shetucket River.

The town’s wastewater treatment plant was constructed in 1971 and no upgrades have taken place. Because the plant was designed to accommodate Baltic and Hanover mills there is excess capacity. The Water and Sewer Authority upgraded its sewer lines in Baltic Village in 2012. Upgrades will need to be made to the 100 year old cast-iron lines that serve the 167 households in Hanover as repairs to these lines are reported to be costly and frequent.

Norwich Public Utilities provides sewer service to the village of Versailles and has capacity. Eversource Energy provides electricity to Sprague’s property owners and natural gas to a portion of Baltic. Fiber optics is located at Sayles School and the Fire Station. The town should continue to incorporate new infrastructure technologies.

In 2017, the town successfully sought a provider to construct a solar array at its wastewater treatment plant with the expectation that it will offset 90% of the plant’s power needs. Construction is expected in 2018.

In 2008 Sprague declared a water emergency when it experienced severe water shortages affecting its customer base which include 40% of Sprague residents. As a result it drilled a new well and put online older wells. The town is now considering installing an emergency water connection to Norwich Public Utilities to eradicate future water supply problems.

Sprague adopted Aquifer Protection Area Regulations in 2010, designating the Planning and Zoning Commission as the Aquifer Protection Agency. The Aquifer Protection Area includes the recharge area for the town’s well fields and is designated on the Zoning Map.

Recommendations: (1) Consideration should be made to extend water and sewer service areas to induce growth in Baltic Village; (2) Replace the 100+ year old sewer lines in Hanover; (3) Make plans to upgrade sewage treatment plant; and, (4) Consider regionalizing water service with Norwich Public Utilities to provide secure and additional water supply for Baltic.

2018 Sprague Plan of Conservation and Development
Sewer Avoidance Map

Sewer Service Areas
- Existing
- Planned

2018 Sprague Plan of Conservation and Development
Recreation (For passive recreation see Open Space and Natural Resources section.)
The town offers recreational opportunities coordinated through the Recreation Commission, Little League, and Selectmen’s Office. The majority of these activities take place at the town-owned Bob Labbe Field and Babe Blanchette Park located along River and Main Streets. This 21-acre facility includes a soccer field, track, baseball and little league fields, volleyball court, and skateboard park. Across Main Street lies the town’s ice skating pond and parking area. There is also a playground adjacent to Town Hall.

The Recreation Commission offers a four-week summer day camp at the Sayles School for children entering grades K-8. Additional recreational events sponsored by the town include:

- Ride the Shetucket River which takes place monthly late spring through early fall, where participants paddle or tube from the Scotland Dam to the River Park.
- Annual Three Villages Fall Festival at Babe Blanchette Park that includes music, artisan and vendor market, games, competitions, food, and other offerings.
- Outdoor Movie Nights and Summer Music held at River Park July-September.

Recommendations: (1) Create a part-time Recreation Coordinator position to implement Recreation Commission policies and run and expand programs; (2) Continue to utilize Sayles School for child and adult recreation programming; and, (3) Expand the recreation complex to include full basketball and tennis courts, and bike racks.

Solid waste disposal
Sprague operates a recycling center and transfer station at a former landfill at 112 Bushnell Hollow Road three (3) days a week. Bulky waste is sent to Willimantic Waste Paper and household waste is sent to the Preston Incinerator.

Town Hall Municipal Complex, including Public Works Garage and Senior Center
Sprague Town Hall is located at 1 Main Street in Baltic Village and was constructed in 1957 adjacent to the 1953 Public Works Garage and former 1949 Fire Department. In addition to containing the offices of Town Hall staff, the facility contains a meeting room, Public Works Department, and Senior Center.

Parking for 18 cars is shared with the Library across Main Street at the Grist Mill building. Overflow parking occurs on the streets abutting Town Hall. The town added a municipal parking lot on West Main Street in 2013.

The Public Works Department contains 3 fulltime and 2 part-time employees. Manpower has declined by one fulltime position since the last POCD was completed. Equipment is stored at this facility, with the exception of sand and road salt which is stored on Bushnell
Hollow Road. The town has recently secured a $2 million dollar grant to construct a cold storage facility on Bushnell Hollow Road to alleviate the crowding of equipment that exists with Senior Center vans on this shared 1.7-acre site.

Sprague’s Senior Center is located in what was the former Fire House in Town Hall. It operates Monday through Thursday lunch service and offers health screening, computers, movies, games, and other programs for seniors. It also provides residents van service to and from the facility, for medical appointments and shopping, and to neighboring Occum to connect with the Southeast Area Transit District bus. The “meals on wheels” program is run out of the Senior Center facility by the Thames Valley Council for Community action. The Senior Center is operated by a part-time Senior Center Coordinator.

Sprague operates without a Town Charter and without a professional town administrator to implement the growing regulatory and human service responsibilities of running a multi-million dollar government. The First Selectman is the Chief Elected Official, the town’s administrative officer, human resource officer, public works director, and economic development director.

The complexity of running local government is complex and requires addressing a mounting array of local, state and federal mandates. Residents look to local government for a growing array of public services while at the same time the number of resident volunteers wanes. [See Sprague’s town government organization flowchart in Appendix C.]

Recommendations: (1) Replace ordinance requiring the election of the Tax Collector and Town Clerk and make these positions appointed; (2) Assure that all Boards and Commissions are educated in and follow FOI requirements by hosting a biennial education seminar; (3) Create a part-time Recreation Coordinator position to implement Recreation Commission policies and run and expand programs; (4) Create an Economic Development Coordinator position to implement Sprague’s Economic Strategic Plan, seek out and administer economic development grant opportunities, and market town-owned sites; (5) Increase part-time hours of Building Official, Zoning Official and Blight Officer position to provide greater opportunities for public access and enforcement of Building Code, Zoning Regulations, and Blight Ordinance; and, (6) Consideration should be given to adopting a Town Charter and hiring a Town Administrator to oversee staff and implement policies of the Board of Selectmen.

Private Community Facilities and Services
In addition to town-owned community facilities and services, Sprague has a limited number of private and religious facilities and services available to the community. These include the Sprague Community Center located in the former Baltic United Methodist Church at 22 West Main Street. This facility, run by volunteers through the Lee Memorial United
Methodist Church in Norwich, is open Fridays to provide lunch and food pantry items, health screening, and other activities for Sprague and area residents.

Saint Joseph Elementary School (pre-K through grade eight) and the Academy of the Holy Family, an all-girls high school are private schools operated by the Norwich Diocese. Located on West Main Street in Baltic Village, these facilities are built in the Georgian Revival style and along with Saint Mary Church, and are the dominant architectural landmark when entering Sprague from the west -- stretching an entire block.

In addition, there is Versailles United Methodist Church at 4 Church Street, Hanover Congregational Church at 266 Main Street, Hanover Nursery School, and several in-home daycares.
VI. OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Provide for the permanent protection of wetlands, watercourses, open space tracts and corridors, giving priority to those that provide recreation opportunities, protect natural resources, and are deemed important to Sprague’s community character.

Sprague is rich in open spaces and natural resources. From its highest geographic point 450 feet above sea level at Plain Hill and School Hill Roads near the Norwich town line, to its lowest point at the Occum Dam at 50 feet above sea level, the town boasts 1,000 acres of preserved open space and almost 9 miles of the Shetucket River within its border. It contains a diversity of natural landscapes with opportunities to enjoy nature by walking, swimming, boating, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding.

Of Sprague’s 8,841 acres, 11% are made up of wetlands (593 acres) and water (378 acres). The latter includes the Shetucket and Little Rivers, Beaver Brook, Baltic and Hanover Reservoirs, Papermill and Versailles Ponds, and smaller streams and water bodies that dot the landscape. To help protect these natural resources the town limits development in these areas as well as on steep slopes and in floodplains through its Zoning, Subdivision and Wetlands Regulations. The town has forest management plans for most town-owned open space.

Sprague also lies within the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor. Designated by the National Park Service in 1994, this corridor includes 35 Connecticut and Massachusetts communities that contain one of the last stretches of farm and forested lands and dark skies at night in the Boston-Washington corridor. The non-profit Last Green Valley works to promote awareness and education of the corridor’s open spaces and natural resources.
Sprague’s regional watershed or drainage basin is the Shetucket River. Its subregional watersheds are Shetucket and Little Rivers, and Beaver Brook each of which lead to the Thames River and Long Island Sound. Because Sprague’s rivers and streams contribute to the water quality entering the Sound the State requires that it keep stormwater entering its storm sewer systems clean before it enters waterbodies. Sprague is also required to educate residents about everyday pollutants that can contribute to stormwater runoff.

According to CT-DEEP, 10% of Sprague contains various amounts of impervious ground cover. Because of Sprague’s inland location, projected sea level estimates of 8 inches to 6.6 feet by year 2100 identified in the 2012 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Technical Report OAR CPO-1 will not directly affect the community. However, should sea level rise occur in feet versus inches, significant indirect impacts could be felt as housing and manufacturing located along Connecticut’s shoreline may move inland.

According to UCONN’s Center for Land Use Education and Research, (CLEAR) roughly 90% of Sprague was undeveloped in 2015, with 60% of town containing deciduous forest and 10% made up of agricultural fields and 10% developed land. Based on the limited development that has occurred since 2007 there has not been substantial changes to Sprague’s land cover.

**Shetucket River**

Sprague is home to the Shetucket River which is the town’s premier natural resource. The Shetucket River runs 20.4 miles long with close to half of it winding through the town of Sprague. It begins in the north in Willimantic at the confluence of the Willimantic and Natchaug Rivers and flows south through Sprague into Norwich where it meets the Quinebaug River and forms the Thames River in Norwich. Within Sprague, the Shetucket stretches from Scotland to the north, to Occum in Norwich in the south for almost 9 miles. The river is considered to have some of the best salmon fishing in New England.

There are almost 6 miles of riverfront along the Shetucket River open to the public in Sprague. A trail system linking River Park in Baltic Village to the Sprague Land Preserve to the north and to Occum in the south should continue to be an open space and natural resource acquisition priority in order to solidify Sprague’s position as an eco-tourist haven.
Sprague Land Preserve – 625 acres and Growing

In 2005 the town acquired the 270-acre Mukluk property along the Shetucket River at the Scotland town line and the Sprague Land Preserve was born. Soon after, the non-profit Friends of the Shetucket Valley were created “to identify and protect open space in the Shetucket River Valley for the future enjoyment of the public and the preservation of key habitat for fish and wildlife”.

In 2012, the 230-acre Watson property was added to the Preserve, and in 2016 the 125-acre Robinson property. Funding for these projects was a collaborative effort between the Friends of the Shetucket Valley, Towns of Sprague and Franklin, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), Joshua’s Trust and other likeminded groups.

Sprague’s Land Preserve is an excellent example of regional collaboration between local (Sprague and Franklin) governments, the State (DEEP), and non-profit land preservation organizations. The property is used frequently by visitors to walk, fish, hunt, boat, horseback ride, or just to congregate. It contains 11 miles of walking trails and over a mile of riverfront, a waterfall, and other natural features abutting the Shetucket River.

Baltic Reservoir

The 23-acre Baltic Reservoir is surrounded by 300 acres of open space. Baltic Reservoir was constructed by the Baltic Mill and used as Baltic Village’s main water supply until 2008. The reservoir contains a walking path around its perimeter and a small parking lot on Baltic Hanover Road. Fishing and non-motorized boats are permitted. In addition to the Shetucket River, Baltic Reservoir is Sprague’s most valuable resource for both recreation and future water supply.

River Park

River Park is located in Baltic Village just north of Lord’s Bridge on the Shetucket River. This 21-acre town park provides access to the river for fishing and over-the-car boat launch, as well as green space, picnic tables and grills. Multiple recreation activities provided by the town take place at River Park including summer movie nights, concerts, and Ride-the-Shetucket events.

Other Baltic parks and open spaces include the Veterans’ Memorial Park on West Main Street along the Shetucket River opposite River Park; the green space and benches along the Shetucket River at the Grist Mill building; recreation field at Sayles School; and the town’s recreation complex along River and Main Streets.
Salt Rock Campground
The 149-acre Salt Rock Campground on Scotland Road was purchased by the state in 2001. This state park abuts the Shetucket River with a mile of riverfront. The State closed the campground in 2016 due to budget cuts and the town is considering leasing the campground to promote this valuable eco-tourist site.

In addition, the almost 100-year old Sprague Rod & Gun Club owns two locations in Sprague and is dedicated to the conservation and propagation of fish, game, and other kinds of wildlife. And, as previously noted, there are 3,749 acres of farm and forest land classified under Public Act 490, which represents 42% of town. These land uses are an important component of the town’s rural character that residents want to preserve.

Recommendations
The following recommendations will help advance Sprague’s desire to protect and promote its open spaces and natural resources, and develop the town into an ecofriendly destination.

1. Redevelop Baltic Mill site to take advantage of its presence along the Shetucket River, to provide additional river access, and to showcase the town’s redevelopment efforts that honor the environment while paying homage to the industrial economic past.
   
   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning Commission.

2. Work with property owners, State, Friends of Shetucket, and others to acquire additional open space parcels and/or conservation easements along the Shetucket River with the goal to create a trail from Baltic Village to the Sprague Land Preserve that includes handicapped access, exercise equipment, art, education, parking, and river access.

   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Grants Writer, Conservation Commission.

3. Continue to work with neighboring communities to create joint preservation projects.
   
   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen.

4. Designate the entire Shetucket River or the 9-mile segment in Sprague as a federal National Wild and Scenic River. This designation requires administration by a state or federal agency with the goal to protect and enhance the scenic and recreational values.

   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Federal Representatives.
5. Acquire the management rights to Salt Rock Campground to help open this facility, and appoint a standing Committee to develop policies and manage the campground.
   
   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Coordinator, Recreation Coordinator, Board of Finance, Town Meeting.

6. Develop an ADA accessible fish ramp at River Park.
   
   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Grant Writer.

7. Amend Zoning Regulations to increase building setbacks from waterbodies (rivers, streams, ponds, reservoirs).
   
   Responsibility: Planning and Zoning Commission.

8. Continue to protect wetlands, waterbodies, and floodplains, and support best management practices for soil conservation.
   

9. Develop a plan and implement the clean-up of Versailles Pond.
   
VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Promote Sprague’s rich industrial history, architecture, riverfront, diversity of landscapes, affordability, public utilities, and socio-economic diversity.

Similar to other former mill towns in Eastern Connecticut, Sprague has yet to bounce back from its once thriving industrial past, where jobs were plentiful, services were within walking distance, and the tax base was ample. Today there are 99, mostly small, businesses that list personal property with the Town of Sprague Assessor. These include home occupations, contractors, landscapers, personal services, agriculture, restaurants, industry or manufacturing, and other businesses.

Sprague suffered great economic losses in the 1960s and 70s with the closing of its textile mills. This, coupled with the past decade’s “Great Recession” has caused Sprague to lose its remaining manufacturing base. In Baltic Village, many former storefronts have become residences or lay vacant. The town’s unemployment rate is higher than most of its neighbors and New London County as a whole. 50 years ago most town residents found work within the community, whereas today the vast majority (or over 90%) are employed outside of Sprague in Norwich, Groton and Montville respectively.
The Town of Sprague is listed by the Department of Economic and Community Development as one of 25 “distressed municipalities”. This designation is based on a review of Sprague’s per capita income, percentage of residents living below poverty level, unemployment rate, population growth, percent housing stock built before 1939, and adjusted equalized net grand list per capita as compared to other 168 Connecticut communities. This distinction allows Sprague to leverage additional state resources for open space and infrastructure improvements, brownfields remediation, and Community Development Block Grants.

Because of these factors, the town has been working diligently to identify a new economic vision with specific strategies to redevelop Sprague. These strategies are fully articulated in the 2004 Strategic Plan for the Economic Re-Development of Sprague prepared by the Economic Development Commission and the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan prepared by the Board of Selectmen. The documents are predicated on the following principles.

1. Value economic history and traditions;
2. Protect architectural integrity;
3. Leverage waterfront assets;
4. Promote and develop community arts and cultural venues;
5. Plan for people to work, live and recreate in the community;
6. Work on neighborhood development; and,
7. Recognize cultural and ethnic diversity in their communities.

**Baltic Mill Site**

In 2007, the town acquired the 15.5 acre former Baltic Mill site due to non-payment of taxes and secured state funding to clean up the property so that redevelopment can more easily occur. The Planning and Zoning Commission has amended its Zoning Regulations to permit mixed use development at this site. The next step will be to find a suitable development plan and developer to implement the project.

The town believes the site should include a mix of land uses, including but not limited to housing, food cooperative to help fill Baltic's food desert, small businesses such as an artist cooperative to promote the regions local artists, offices, and open space as this site has a commanding view of the Shetucket River. Any redevelopment should promote the rich industrial history of the site, its importance to Sprague and the region.

**Former Paper Board Site**

In 2017 the town acquired a 400+ acre former International Paper Company site due to non-payment of taxes. The town is currently evaluating the site and looking for
development opportunities. The property is served by rail and sewer, and the town is considering subdividing the land into smaller parcels so that they can be developed with an eye to maximizing tax revenue and meeting the land use needs of residents.

Given the site's close proximity to Route 395 and public sewer, a potential mix of land uses include agriculture, multi-family housing for Millennials and Generation Z, open space or bike trail, utilization of rail line by the aerospace industry, commercial solar arrays and other industrial uses.

Other Economic Development Opportunities
As noted, the 149-acre Salt Rock Campground on Scotland Road was closed by the State in 2016 and the town is considering leasing the campground to promote this valuable eco-tourist site along the Shetucket River. Sprague’s Zoning Regulations permit new campgrounds to be established by special permit outside of the village zones.

In 2016 a private 20-megawatt commercial solar array, one of the largest east of the Mississippi, was begun off Potash Hill and Westminster Roads. It will provide renewable energy and $200,000 annually in local tax revenue for the next 20 years.

The Mohegan Sun Golf Club off Pautipaug Hill Road is an 18-hole golf course owned by Mohegan Sun Casino. This state-of-the-art facility has a clubhouse and facilities for events and should be promoted by the town.

As noted, the Shetucket River provides almost 6 miles of riverfront open to the public in Sprague and is an important asset to promote eco-tourism and related economic ventures, i.e., tubing or kayak rental, restaurants, provisions, etc. A public trail system linking River Park in Baltic to the Sprague Land Preserve is a goal the town should pursue in order to solidify Sprague as an eco-tourist haven.

In 2012 the Planning and Zoning Commission amended the 2007 POCD to make the promotion of farming and agriculture an integral part of the town’s plan to protect and preserve open space and enhance Sprague’s economic and commercial base through agriculture related businesses. Recommendations to protect, preserve and grow agriculture are provided in the Agriculture section of this Plan and directly relate to open space and economic development.

Analysis
Sprague has tremendous natural and manmade resources, which make it ripe for ecotourism. The Baltic and former paper mill redevelopment sites provide opportunity to
reshape the community’s economic base and attractiveness. Baltic Village contains many of the elements that new urbanists envision – environmentally-friendly, walkable, density, architectural character, human scale, safe, and affordable housing. With the addition of a food store, a mix of small business and restaurants, and new housing desirable to all ages, Sprague has the potential to reinvent itself as Eastern Connecticut’s premiere place to live, work, and play.

Incorporating architectural design standards into any future project in Baltic Village will allow the Planning and Zoning Commission to promote design standards acceptable to the community. Controlling the design of buildings will not only help retain the character of the village but will help stabilize and enhance property values, which could lead to further development.

Implementing the recommendations below requires dedicated effort by paid professional staff trained to implement the town’s economic strategies and its redevelopment projects. However, Sprague does not have a professional town administrator, and eliminated its full-time grant writer position in the past decade due to budget constraints. Sprague also does not have a planner on staff and contracts with SECCOG for part-time planning assistance.

**Recommendations**

Focusing on the principles articulated in Sprague’s Economic Development plans, and recognizing that developing Sprague’s economic vibrancy will take time, commitment and resources, the following economic development strategies are recommended.

1. Create a full-time Economic Development Coordinator position to implement Sprague’s Economic Strategic Plan, implement a Marketing Plan, seek out and administer additional grant opportunities, and redevelop the Baltic Mill and former paper board mill sites.
   
   *Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance.*

2. Prepare and implement a marketing plan for Sprague with a focus on Baltic Village that showcases village architecture, housing affordability, outdoor recreation, and proximity to Groton and New London. The following elements also should be considered.
   
   a) Promote Sprague in print and online as a business and environmentally friendly, safe, affordable, historic, and caring community in which to play, work and live;
   
   b) Conduct a retail-gap analysis to show retail dollars leaving the community and local spending potential;
   
   c) Establish a farmers market, easel park, and other outdoor activities;
   
   d) Create and disseminate a poster entitled “The Mill Homes of Baltic Village” with images of Sprague’s historic mill homes; and,
e) Conduct regular ghost tours and educational walks; and,
f) Prepare self-guided handbook describing Baltic Village’s architectural gems and history.

Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Coordinator, Board of Finance, Historical Society.

3. Redevelop Baltic Mill site to incorporate as many of the following land uses as possible. Utilize the services of a university or architectural design firm to develop a physical plan for the Baltic Mill site.
   a) Housing opportunities for seniors and others to help revitalize the Village;
   b) Business/office space rental, including restaurants (“Shetucket Brewery”), food cooperative, artisan cooperative, food hub, etc.;
   c) Replace foot bridge to Baltic Village to include art, history, and education – as both a pedestrian link to new development and as a tourist attraction; and,
   d) Recreation/escortourism opportunities, i.e., zip line across Shetucket River.

Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Coordinator, Board of Finance, Town Meeting.

4. Redevelop the former paper board site with consideration to utilizing the existing rail line for aerospace or other industry; subdividing the property to accommodate industrial uses such as commercial solar arrays, agriculture, open space or bike trail, and/or development of multi-family apartment or condo housing to fill a need for new housing in the area created by increases in employment in Southeastern CT.

Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Economic Development Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Meeting.

5. Establish a Baltic Village facade and signage improvement grant program.

Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Grant Writer.

6. Continue to use DECD’s classification of Sprague as a “distressed municipality” by seeking additional grants that are consistent with the POCD.

Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Grant Writer, Economic Development Coordinator.

7. Provide adequate public water and sewer supply to stimulate investment within Baltic.


8. Continue to develop a trail network from Baltic Village along the Shetucket River.

Responsibility: Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Town Meeting.
VIII. TRANSPORTATION (Prepared by Southeastern CT Council of Governments)  
*Provide a safe and efficient intermodal transportation network that improves the quality of life and promotes the economic vitality of Sprague.*

Sprague’s transportation network is comprised of state and local roads, a limited sidewalk network, and freight rail line. Private roads provide direct access within some housing developments within Sprague. Sprague is primarily accessed by Interstate 395 by exits 18 and 19, through Norwich and Lisbon respectively. Many of Sprague’s current roads had their origins in Colonial days when trails and cart paths connected settlements and farms. And prior to the incorporation of Sprague, these roads were part of Franklin to the west and Lisbon to the east.

**Existing Roads**
Transportation officials classify roads based on traffic volumes, accessibility and function. Road classification influences funding streams for infrastructure improvements and maintenance. The State DOT has identified three different levels of roadway classifications in the Town of Sprague: Major Collector, Minor Collector, and Local Road.

Sprague is served by 36.9 miles of public roads, 68% percent of which were Town roads (25.1 miles) and the balance (11.8 miles) were State roads. In addition to the four State roads, which are classified as Major Collectors; Inland, Papermill, Westminster and Plain Hill Roads are classified as Minor Collectors. All other public roads are classified as Local. Reclassifying Westminster Road and Paper Mill Road from local to “Collector” was a goal of the 2007 POCD, which has been achieved.

In addition to classifying roadways, the CTDOT collects Average Daily Traffic counts on a three year cycle statewide. Within Sprague, state routes are counted at various points along the roadways. Traffic was observed for a 24 hour period during each ADT cycle. 2014, 2011 and 2008 cycles are compared below along Routes 97, 660, 138 and 207. Volumes have remained relatively constant or have slightly declined over the past decade. This is consistent with population changes over the same period.

Route 97 is consistently the highest volume road with greatest volumes in Baltic Village and section of RT 97 at the intersection with Route 660 in Versailles. Route 660 saw a considerable drop in traffic near Riverside Drive in the past ADT cycle. This may be contributed to changes in employment in the Industrial zone. Conversely, any new economic development in the former paper board site may induce considerable increases along RT 660, depending on the type of development. In addition to the 4 state routes, CTDOT took counts on Westminster Road just north of the intersection with Inland and Potash Hill Roads in 2014; resulting in a count of 700 ADT.
Crash data is analyzed through the UCONN CRASH Data Repository, and records have been uploaded through September 19, 2017. Crash data is typically analyzed on a three year basis. September 20, 2014 to September 19, 2017 yielded 79 crashes involving 113 vehicles and 123 persons. Of those 79 crashes, 1 resulted in a fatality and 15 resulted in injury. All other crashes in that period resulted only in property damage only. There was a 16% decrease in accidents compared to the next three year period. The 2008-2011 period had fewer accidents, however data collected for a portion of the period did not include property damage crashes on local roads; which would deflate crash reports during that period.
More than half of the 2014-2017 accidents were not crashes with other vehicles, but crashes with roadside hazards such as guard rails, utility poles, trees, etc. To the extent possible the transportation program should make the road system safer by improving sightlines, slowing traffic, and reducing objects in the roadside.
The local road system is reviewed to determine whether it is in a state of good repair by Public Works. Public Works reveals that all locally maintained roads are in a state of good repair. Major reconstruction of roads is unlikely during this planning period based upon current conditions. Water, sewer and gas lines exist within roadways and some of these utilities are nearing the end of their useful life. Future re-pavement should be coordinated with utility work.

The Regional Long Range Transportation Plan calls for improvements to town roads include the following: an upgrade of 2,250 feet of roadway along Hanover-Versailles Road; and 2,000 feet of storm drainage improvements and replacement of a 48 inch culvert along Westminster Road.

**Non-motorized Transportation Network**
Sprague’s sidewalk network is most developed in Baltic Village. Recently there has been significant expansion of the sidewalk network focusing on provision of infrastructure south of the village center, down Route 97/Main Street and in the River Street neighborhood near Labbe Field. Sidewalks are also a typical component of substantial residential subdivisions and would be included, as appropriate, when applications are made to the Planning and Zoning Commission. According to the FY2015-2040 Long Range Regional Transportation Plan sidewalks should be installed on Route 97, a portion of this work is to be funded under the LOTCIP program. There are currently no bike lanes, markings or signage in Sprague.

**Trail Network**
The Sprague Preserve offers over 10 miles of hiking trails, a campsite, unobstructed vistas and Shetucket river access. As this open space grows there is an opportunity to expand the trail system. The Town of Sprague also provides a 1.1 miles trail around Baltic Reservoir, offering residents a picturesque and serene walking environment. This has been newly connected to Sayles School with a new foot path. In addition, the Mohegan State Forest along Waldo Road provides a scenic area for hiking along the Shetucket River.

**Transit**
Sprague is not well served directly by transit at this time. Currently, SEAT Bus provides hourly service accessible to Versailles on Route 4. WRTD runs fixed route bus service out of Willimantic with service on Route 32 thru the Norwich Intermodal Center to Foxwoods Casino. CTTransit provides express bus service from Willimantic (918) and Colchester (914) to Hartford. Additionally CTRides, a service of the Connecticut Department of Transportation, provides services to enhance mobility including assistance with vanpooling and carpooling. It is unlikely that transit service will be extended into Baltic or other parts of Sprague in the near future based on the 2016 SEAT Bus Study.
Rail
There are 6.1 miles of rail lines in Sprague and 1.9 miles of spur lines connecting to the former paper board site. The Connecticut Department of Transportation owns the entire length of this line that runs parallel to the Shetucket River from the Scotland town line south to Baltic Village then east parallel to Route 138 to the Town of Lisbon. The section of rail from the former paper board site east to Lisbon is used for freight shipments service, and is leased by the Providence and Worcester Railroad Company under an operating agreement with CTDOT. Providence and Worcester Railroad was recently purchased by Genesee and Wyoming who operate the New England Central Railroad.

Regionally, the two main rail lines, the Providence & Worcester line and the New England Central Railroad, are both freight railroads. The Providence & Worcester line is being reactivated and it operates from Groton to Worcester along the eastern edge of the Thames River. Whereas the New England Central Railroad line operates from New London, CT to Palmer, MA along the western side of the Thames River. In Sprague, rail service is limited. An $8.1M TIGER grant awarded in 2014, will upgrade the NECR line to 286 ton service. Future land use decisions adjacent to the rail line should consider the highest and best use of this limited resource.

Recommendations to maintain and enhance Sprague’s transportation network

1. Amend Subdivision Regulation Sec. 3.1.a. to reduce minimum pavement width standards to help slow traffic, reduce environmental impact, and mitigate road maintenance cost from 28 feet to 20-22 feet for cul-de-sacs, 28 feet to 22-24 feet for local streets, and 32 feet to 28 feet for collector-arterial streets.
   
   Responsibility: Planning and Zoning Commission.

2. Work to designate entire length of State Route 207 as a “Scenic Road” through CT-DOT to include towns of Sprague, Franklin, Lebanon and Hebron. This dovetails with promoting economic development/ecotourism.
   
   Responsibility: Board of Selectman

3. Coordinate with CTRides to provide ridesharing and vanpooling information at local community events.
   
   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen.

4. Senior Service Coordinator may facilitate disabled, low income and senior transit services available through various regional programs.
   
   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen.
5. Seek funding for projects identified in the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, including an upgrade of 2,250 feet of roadway along Hanover-Versailles Road; 2,000 feet of storm drainage improvements and replacement of 48 inch culvert along Westminster Road; and replacement of bridge over Little River on Potash Hill Road.  
   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen.

6. Prioritize vegetation management in roadways.  
   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen and Public Works.

7. Request CTDOT to improve pavement markings in higher accident locations, which are primarily State facilities.  
   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen.

8. Coordinate paving with future major utility work.  
   Responsibility: Board of Selectmen and Public Works.

9. Encourage rail dependent uses in the Industrial Zone  

10. Provide bicycle route way-finding and/or share the road signage to the Sprague Land Preserve and Baltic Reservoir from Baltic Village.  
    Responsibility: Board of Selectmen.

11. Continue to seek funding to provide sidewalks and/or bike lanes in the village of Versailles on Route 660 and over the Main Street Bridge over the Shetucket River.  
    Responsibility: Board of Selectmen and Hazard Elimination program Traffic Safety Office of DOT

12. Provide bike racks at Labbe Field and the Sprague Land Preserve.  
    Responsibility: Board of Selectmen.
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The following Implementation Guide contains a list of 70 recommended action steps identified by the (1) **lead agency** responsible for each implementation item, (2) **plan topic** found in the Plan of Conservation and Development, (3) **recommended action step**, and (4) **potential municipal cost**.

The Board of Selectmen and the Planning and Zoning Commission assume the greatest role in implementing POCD recommendations, while other agencies assume a secondary role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Town Agency</strong></th>
<th><strong>Lead Role</strong></th>
<th><strong>Secondary Role</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water &amp; Sewer Authority</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Collector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltic Fire Department</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Authority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Finance</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation and AgricultureCommission</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Commission</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Commission</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of the Plan recommendations will require modifications to regulations, policies and funding priorities, requiring the input and consensus of multiple town boards and commissions. In the case of town ordinances and financial commitments Town Meeting approval will be required.

There are three (3) new government positions recommended in the Plan, including hiring of a fulltime economic development coordinator and a part-time recreation coordinator. The Plan also recommends that the town consider adopting a Town Charter and hire a town administrator.

All town agencies have some responsibility identified in the plan, therefore, it is recommended that town boards, commissions, and staff become familiar with Sprague’s Plan of Conservation and Development, and that the Planning and Zoning Commission provide copies of the Plan to new town board and commission members.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY</th>
<th>Plan Topic(s)</th>
<th>Recommended Action Step(s)</th>
<th>Potential Municipal Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Baltic Fire Department</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Given a reduction in volunteers, growing certification requirements, and equipment costs, consider regionalizing fire and ambulance services and/or use of a private ambulance service.</td>
<td>To be determined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Board of Education</td>
<td>Agriculture Community Services</td>
<td>Incorporate CT Farm-to-School Program into Sayles School food nutrition program to promote local agriculture, nutrition education, and health.</td>
<td>To be determined. SEEK grant opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Board of Education</td>
<td>Community Facilities and Services</td>
<td>Reconfigure Sayles School parking lot to expand number of parking spaces to accommodate staff/visitor levels and to better safely separate bus and parent pick-up/drop off area.</td>
<td>Capital Project. SEEK grant opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Board of Education</td>
<td>Community Facilities and Services</td>
<td>Provide a safe pedestrian link between the Sayles School and Baltic Village so students and others can gain pedestrian access to community facility without need for a car or walking along Route 97.</td>
<td>Capital Project. SEEK grant opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Board of Education</td>
<td>Community Facilities and Services</td>
<td>Consider funding librarian and world languages positions, and complete classroom updates.</td>
<td>Operating budget for staff. SEEK grant opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Board of Education</td>
<td>Community Facilities and Services</td>
<td>Utilize Sayles School as a community school resource where greater activities are scheduled for all ages after school hours year-round.</td>
<td>Limited. Additional custodial services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Agriculture Community Services</td>
<td>Consolidate the Agriculture Commission with the Conservation Commission to better utilize limited volunteers and to help solidify the conservation and agricultural community.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Plan Topic(s)</td>
<td>Recommended Action Step(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com.</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Establish farmers market in Baltic Village to promote local agriculture, public health, eliminate food desert, and attract visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Economic Devel. Com.</td>
<td>Economic Devel.</td>
<td>齸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com.</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Set aside town matching funds to partner with the USDA, CT Department of Agriculture and land trusts to promote agriculture, promote health eating habits, and preserve farmland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Board of Finance</td>
<td>Open Space and Natural Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Town Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Grants Administrator</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Apply for Farm Viability Grants from the CT Dept. of Agriculture to help operate a farmers market, community garden, and signage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com.</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Expand community gardening opportunities in Baltic Village and at Sayles School to promote public health and education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Board of Education</td>
<td>Community Facilities/Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Exempt horses and ponies from taxation under CGS Sec. 12-91 (PA 14-33).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com.</td>
<td>Open Space and Natural Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com.</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Continue to lease town-owned farmland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open Space and Natural Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Recreation Commission</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Create part-time Recreation Coordinator position to implement Recreation Commission policies, expand programs, and manage Salt Rock Campground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Board of Finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Town Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Recreation Commission</td>
<td>Community Facilities</td>
<td>Expand recreation complex to include full basketball and tennis courts, and installation of bike racks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Board of Finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Town Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Plan Topic(s)</td>
<td>Recommended Action Step(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com. Planning and Zoning Com. Recreation Commission</td>
<td>Community Facilities</td>
<td>Expand Baltic Reservoir parking area and provide bike racks and better non-motorized boat access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Library Board</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Increase Library Director position to fulltime to expand library hours and programming, seek grants, implement Library Board policies, and provide support to Sayles School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Board of Finance Town Meeting</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Increase part-time Building Official, Zoning Official and Blight Officer position hours to provide greater opportunity for public access and enforcement of Building Code, Zoning Regulations, and Blight Ordinance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Com.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Assure municipal improvement projects are referred to Planning and Zoning Commission prior to implementation under CGS Sec. 8-24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Economic Develop. Com.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Create full-time Economic Development Coordinator position to implement Sprague’s Economic Strategic Plan, to help establish and implement Sprague’s marketing plan, and to seek out and administer additional grant opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Grant Writer Board of Finance</td>
<td>Community Facilities</td>
<td>Continue to use DECD’s classification of Sprague as a “distressed municipality” by seeking additional grants consistent with the POCD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Board of Finance Town Meeting</td>
<td>Community Services and Facilities</td>
<td>Consideration should be given to adopt a Town Charter, and hire a Town Administrator to oversee staff and implement Board of Selectmen policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Plan Topic(s)</td>
<td>Recommended Action Step(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Building Official</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Establish building and zoning permit tracking system to assure that open permits are reviewed every few months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Recreation Commission</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Provide bike racks at Labbe Field, Sprague Land Preserve, and Baltic Reservoir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Com. Plan of Finance</td>
<td>Economic Devel.</td>
<td>Develop former paper board site to include commercial solar and other industrial uses, multi-family housing, agriculture, and open space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Com. Plan of Finance</td>
<td>Economic Devel.</td>
<td>Develop Baltic Mill site to include housing, small business, food hub, food co-op, art co-op, recreation, and foot bridge to Baltic Village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Economic Develop. Com. Plan of Finance</td>
<td>Economic Devel.</td>
<td>Prepare and implement a marketing plan for Sprague with focus on Baltic Village that showcases village architecture, housing affordability, safety, outdoor recreation, and proximity to Groton and New London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com. Plan of Finance</td>
<td>Economic Devel.</td>
<td>Acquire management rights to Salt Rock Campground from CT-DEEP and appoint Recreation Commission or other standing Committee to develop policies and manage facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Grants Administrator</td>
<td>Economic Devel.</td>
<td>Set aside and administer grant funds for façade and signage improvements in Baltic Village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Economic Develop. Com. Plan of Finance</td>
<td>Economic Devel.</td>
<td>Create easel garden(s) along Shetucket River in Baltic Village and at Baltic Reservoir where public is encouraged to paint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Responsible Agency</td>
<td>Potential Municipal Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com. Rec. Commission</td>
<td>Capital Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com.</td>
<td>Economic Devel. Com. Rec. Commission</td>
<td>Capital Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>International Paper Co.</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>CT-DOT</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>CT-DOT</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Water &amp; Sewer Authority</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>CT-DOT</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>Plan Topic(s)</td>
<td>Recommended Action Step(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Recreation Commission</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Provide bicycle route way-finding and/or share the road signage to the Sprague Land Preserve and Baltic Reservoir from Baltic Village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CT-DOT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Econ. Devel. Commission</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Encourage rail-dependent uses in Industrial Zone. Consider tax incentives for projects deemed worthwhile to the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Com.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Board of Finance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Town Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Prioritize vegetation management near roads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Housing Authority</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Expand Housing Authority management to the five (5) town-owned deed restricted housing units on West Main Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>SCCOG</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Assure Planning and Zoning Commission members get regular updates on land use court decisions and are offered land use education opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UCONN Extension Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>All Town Boards and Commissions</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Assure that all town Board and Commission members receive a copy of the POCD and use it as a guide in decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulation Sec. 1 to identify agriculture in the Purpose section to include promoting and protecting agriculture, and preserving prime and important farmland soils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>Agriculture Economic Devel.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulations to allow &quot;commercial solar arrays&quot; in industrial zone only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY</td>
<td>Plan Topic(s)</td>
<td>Recommended Action Step(s)</td>
<td>Potential Municipal Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulations to mandate &quot;agricultural buffers” as conservation easement open space provisions in subdivisions that abut active farmland.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulations to require conservation easements on active farmland as part of the open space provisions in all subdivisions to retain agricultural land viability.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>Economic Devel. Housing</td>
<td>Adopt Village District Zoning with design controls for Baltic Village in Zoning Regulations to preserve and promote desirable village development and retain/improve property values (see CGS Sec. 8-2j).</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>Baltic Fire Department Housing</td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulations to require cisterns, fire ponds or sprinklers outside of water service areas in new subdivisions and developments.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulations to allow one-bedroom accessory apartments by right.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>Housing Authority Housing</td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulations to require inclusionary zoning to increase affordable housing opportunities (see CGS Sec. 8-2).</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>Conservation &amp; Ag. Com. Open Space and Natural Resources</td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulations to increased building setbacks from waterbodies (rivers, streams, ponds, reservoirs).</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>CT-DEEP Population</td>
<td>Review Sec. 15.14 to assure consistency with CT-DEEP and FEMA compliance, and amend accordingly.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>RESPONSIBLE AGENCY</td>
<td>Plan Topic(s)</td>
<td>Recommended Action Step(s)</td>
<td>Potential Municipal Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Amend Subdivision Regulations to reduce road width requirements for new roads.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulations to establish &quot;outdoor lighting&quot; regulations for non-residential properties and properties requiring a special permit to reduce light pollution.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulations to eliminate the allowance of business and retail development in Hanover Village.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amend Zoning Regulations to define &quot;restaurant&quot; to exclude &quot;bar&quot; use only.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td>Limit Adult-Oriented uses to the Industrial Zone.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce allowance on free-standing signs in village zones.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Planning and Zoning Commission</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Review additional recommendations to the Zoning Regulation provided by POCD consultant in 11/1/17 addendum.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tax Collector and Town Clerk</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Replace ordinance requiring the election of a Tax Collector and Town Clerk to make the current elected officials appointed positions.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Assure Boards and Commissions are educated in and follow Freedom of Information (FOI) requirements by hosting education seminars.</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sprague 2018 Plan of Conservation and Development
### IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Plan Topic(s)</th>
<th>Recommended Action Step(s)</th>
<th>Potential Municipal Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Water &amp; Sewer Authority</td>
<td>Board of Selectmen Planning and Zoning Com.</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Replace sewer lines in Hanover.</td>
<td>Grant opportunity and Capital Project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Water &amp; Sewer Authority</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Facility/Services</td>
<td>Plans should be developed to upgrade the Sewage Treatment Plant.</td>
<td>Grant opportunity and Capital Project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX

A. Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Exercise
B. Participants in Plan of Conservation and Development
C. 2018 Town Government Organization Flowchart
APPENDIX A: SWOT Exercise conducted by Planning and Zoning Commission on 6/26/27

**Strengths** (Helpful community attributes.)

Small Town Rural Character
- Government sensitive to citizen needs
- Affordability index (housing, mil rate, government fiscally responsible)
- Strong sense of community (folks knowing/caring about one another)

Open Space and River Access
- Abundance
- Biodiverse
- Ability to hike, hunt, fish and enjoy wildlife
- Ability to capitalize on ecotourism
- River Park community space

Mill Site Redevelopment Potential
- Residential
- Non-Residential
- Rail line
- Gas line
- 3-Phase electric

Baltic Village Redevelopment
- Sidewalks
- Civic and government center
- River access

Agriculture
- Ability to grow sector (farm friendly, land preservation, farmers market)

Hanover Village

Town Reservoir

Academy of Holy Family

History
- Grist Mill

**Weaknesses** (Harmful community attributes.)

Baltic Village
- Lack of parking
- Lack of small business (conversion from residential to commercial)
- Vacant mill site
- Non-owner occupied housing stock
- Conversion of single to multi-family housing

Limited Non-Residential Tax Base

Older Housing Stock

Versailles
- Lack of sidewalks
- Bridge design (width)

Underutilization of Railroad

Water/Sewer
- Aging infrastructure in Baltic
**APPENDIX A continued**

**Opportunities** (Helpful conditions.)

Mill Site Redevelopment
- Senior housing
- Mixed use (commercial, industrial, housing)
- Public water access/ecotourism
- Brewery

Versailles
- Sidewalk installation

Agriculture
- Horse riding and equestrian trails
- Farmers market
- Farmland preservation

Railroad
- Establishment of station for excursions

Salt-Rock Campground
- Reopen

Baltic
- Water and sewer

Shetucket River
- Access
- Ecotourism
- Exercise park

Open Space Development
- Friends of Shetucket
- Trail system, including at Reservoir
- Wildlife corridors

**Threats** (Dangerous conditions.)

Paper Mill Site Contamination
Water Quality
Aging Sewer Treatment Plant
Subdivision
Farm Tenure
Flooding Potential
Health of Versailles Pond
Impacts of Climate Change
APPENDIX B:
2018 POCD Participant List

Baltic Fire Department
Sayles School Principal, Business Manager, and Superintendent Assistant
Sprague Board of Education
Sprague Board of Finance
Sprague Board of Selectmen
Sprague Commission on Aging
Sprague Conservation Commission
Sprague Economic Development Commission
Sprague Historical Society
Sprague Housing Authority
Sprague Library Board
Sprague Recreation Commission
Sprague Resident State Trooper
Sprague Superintendent Assistant
Sprague Water & Sewer Authority

Sprague Town Hall
Assessor
Blight Officer
Building Official
Fire Marshal
First Selectman
Grant Writer
Land Use Coordinator
Library Director
Public Works Foreman and Maintainers
Senior Center Coordinator
Tax Collector
Town Clerk
Water & Sewer Superintendent
Wetlands Agent
Zoning Enforcement Officer