

# ESTABLISH AN EFFICIENT TOWN CENTER

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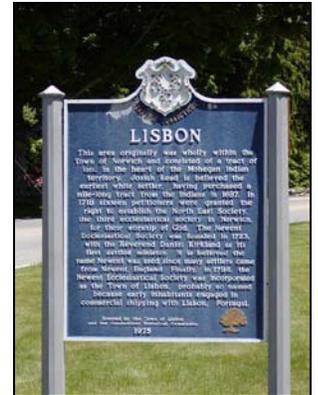
## Overview

Lisbon residents are proud of the history of Newent and at the same time recognize its current importance as a centralized location for a variety of municipal functions. The community also recognizes that additional growth, municipal needs, and the general value of a community focal point require attention to municipal facilities and services that are largely concentrated in Newent.

Therefore, this Plan proposes three specific objectives pertaining to Newent and its role as a strong community center:

- Establish safe and efficient access
- Address municipal facility needs, and
- Consider creation of a special design district.

Although these objectives and their respective strategies may be pursued independently, a preferred approach is to initiate a comprehensive village center study for Newent to identify needs, resources, and strategies to ensure the establishment of Newent as a focal point and community hub for the people of Lisbon.



Entering Newent



Town Office



Lisbon Meadows



Public Works Garage



## Student Input

A survey by social studies students at Lisbon Central School identified two issues of concern to residents:

- The need for a sidewalk around Newent, and
- Reconfiguring the intersection of State Route 169 and 138 to permit safe pedestrian crossing.

## Public and Institutional Facilities in Newent

- Town Offices
- Lisbon Central School
- Senior Center
- Lisbon Volunteer Fire Department
- Public Works Garage
- Lisbon Meadows Park
- Historical Museum
- Newent Congregational Church



# Establish Safe and Efficient Village Access

## Sidewalks

Virtually all of Lisbon's public buildings and several institutional facilities are located within walking distance of each other in Newent. This concentration of publicly accessed facilities, the present and future use of other Town properties, and the busy traffic intersection in Newent all point to the need for improved pedestrian access.

Of particular concern is safe and convenient pedestrian access among these municipal facilities. No sidewalks connect the various buildings and parking areas and crossing the State roads is inconvenient at best. A research project by Central School students confirmed the importance of this issue to the community, as described in the sidebar.

The value of a safe pedestrian sidewalk system would be increased with the future incorporation of walking trails and recreational facilities associated with Lisbon Meadows and possible future greenway corridors. Any commercial activities, either as currently permitted or as may be defined in the future, would also benefit from a pedestrian access system that encouraged use of shared or municipal parking and safe, convenient access.

The Newent Village Center Study, recommended below, would include consideration of access issues, and should also identify possible sources of funding, such as State small town grants, Federal Transportation Efficiency Act programs, municipal bonding or budget appropriations, or even privately supported funding. A conceptual sidewalk and pathway design, which might be refined for grant applications or presentations for budget purposes, is shown on the following page.

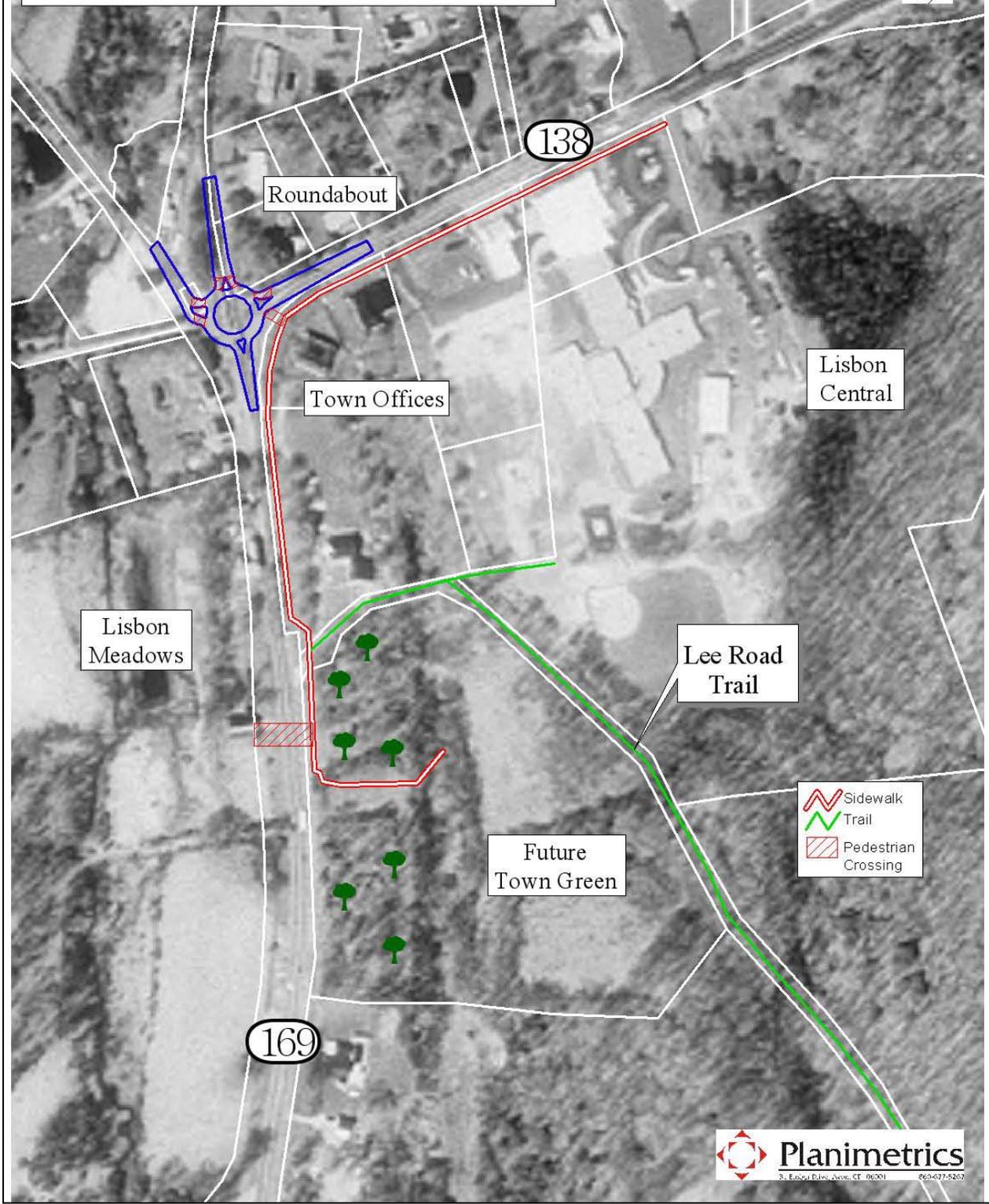
## State Highways

Although the current Route 138/169 intersection does not demonstrate a high-accident rate, as Lisbon grows and as Newent becomes a more important focal point, improvements to the intersection may become a higher priority. This intersection has been considered in regional Transportation Improvement Programs, but no specific improvement designs have been proposed. One option the Town may wish to request that the State evaluate is the creation of a roundabout to replace the stop light at the 138/169 intersection as an alternative to a typical four-way stop or traffic light. An illustration of such a traffic control system is also shown on the following page.

When plans are completed for pedestrian access in Newent, the State Department of Transportation should be approached to install pedestrian cross walks at appropriate locations, including the entrance to Lisbon Meadows Park.

Lisbon will continue to monitor transportation planning and be prepared to recommend a preferred intersection improvement plan when and if possible. As with the pedestrian access options discussed above, detailed road considerations would also be appropriately included in the Newent Village Center Study.

# Newent Village Center Access Plan





## Address Municipal Facility Needs

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The concentration of community facilities in Newent is central to any considerations for the future of the area. Although the Town has acquired several important properties that will support a wide range of community objectives, no master plan has been developed to address these objectives. Additionally, future property acquisition in Newent should be considered by the Town to ensure adequate space for municipal services and recreational opportunities.

This Plan recommends consideration of a municipal campus plan, as described below, to provide efficient public services consistent with the preservation of the Newent area's character and importance to the community. The municipal campus plan should incorporate the recommendations of the Lisbon Meadows Master Plan, and update those recommendations to reflect additional land acquisitions and the current and future needs for municipal facilities.

Research for this Plan revealed a number of areas to be considered to ensure continued effective provision of municipal services:

- Town Offices and Meeting Space
- Community Center Facility
- Public Works Garage and Storage
- Resident State Trooper's Office
- Fire Station Storage and Training Capacity
- Recreational Facilities
- Future School Expansion

All of Lisbon's municipal facilities are currently, and appropriately, located in Newent. However, this concentration has created potential and actual conflicts, particularly with respect to access and parking for the Lisbon Central School and the Public Works facility. Related conflicts involve bus parking at Lisbon Meadows Park. As the demand for municipal services grows, these and other constraints will increase.

Each of these municipal facility needs and relevant planning recommendations are discussed below.

**Town Office**



**Public Works Garage**



### **Expand Town Offices**

The Lisbon Town offices are conveniently located in a functional and efficient building. However, these offices are limited in their capacity to meet the wide range of needs for meeting spaces, civic activities, document and supplies storage, and other typical municipal uses.

Over the ten year Plan period, a space needs assessment should be conducted to determine the current and projected uses of municipal offices, the appropriate amount of space for such uses, and the space available to meet those needs. Standard space requirements for typical municipal functions may be obtained and evaluated in the context of Lisbon’s specific needs.

Clearly, the central location of the Town offices should be retained in any future facilities plan. The relocation of the fire station, discussed below, would open up opportunities for use of the existing facility for office or other municipal uses.

### **Relocate Public Works and Public Safety Facilities**

The Town Public Works garage and Resident State Trooper’s office are co-located in a single building behind Lisbon Central School. The central location of these facilities is important; however, space constraints and shared access with Lisbon Central School make clear the need to re-locate some or all of these important municipal functions.

Similarly, the Lisbon Volunteer Fire Department facility is located adjacent to the school properties in an appropriate centralized location. The fire station is beginning to experience space shortages for the purposes of training programs and records management. Additionally, although adequate for the equipment and supplies currently in use, additional or larger new equipment as the community grows will require expansion or relocation of the fire station.

Appropriate criteria for new facilities would include screening or buffering a public works facility from view and designing a fire station to be compatible with the character of its location. An example of design options that may be considered is shown below compared to the existing Newent Firehouse.

**Lisbon Volunteer Fire Department**



**Firehouse Design Example**



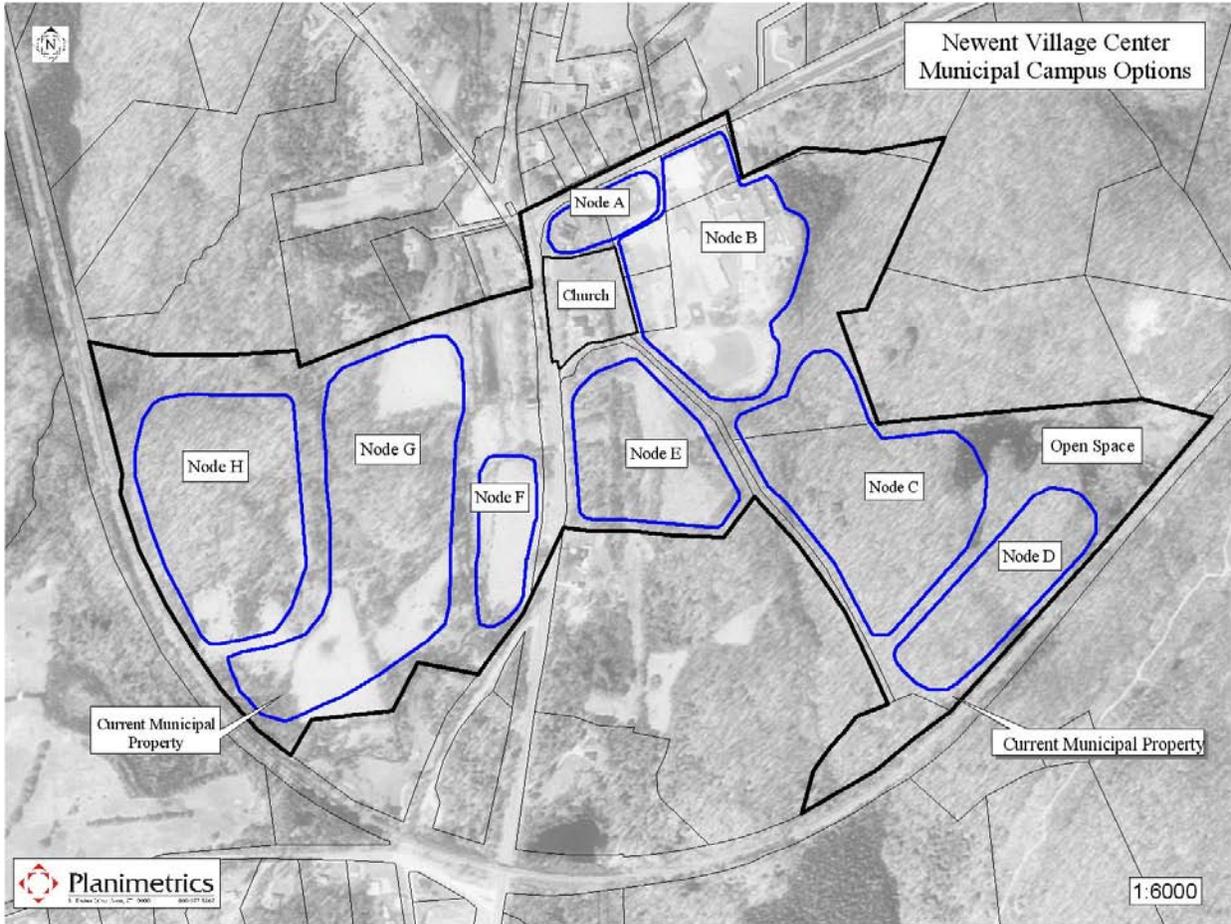
## CONCEPTUAL NEWENT MUNICIPAL CAMPUS

The Town has acquired several parcels of land in Newent, some of which include sufficient space and access to warrant consideration as possible sites for municipal facilities without compromising the recreational and open space goals set in the 2000 Master Plan for Lisbon Meadows.

A conceptual municipal campus plan for Town properties in Newent is shown on the facing page, identifying nodes, or available sites, for current and future facilities. The table below lists existing and potential uses for each site. The suitability of the identified nodes for the suggested uses must be determined by further site specific investigations.

Node	Existing and Potential Uses								
	Town Offices	Community/ Senior Center	School	Firehouse	Public Works	Playfields, Picnic, Tennis, Playscape	Amphitheater, Gardens, Gazebo	Bus Lot	Recreation/ Open Space
A	● ○	● ○		● ○					
B			●		●			○ Short term	
C			○ Future School Uses		○				○
D						○			● ○
E							○		○
F		○ Future center		○			○	●	●
G					○	○			● ○
H			○ Future School		○			○ Long term	●

● : Current Use      ○ : Potential Use



### **Establish a Community Center Facility**

Existing municipal facilities, other than Lisbon Central School, do not have sufficient capacity to allow for civic events and activities, recreational programs, and large meetings. School facilities are used, but scheduling can be difficult. Therefore, planning for additional municipal facilities should consider both the demand for and the best location for a community center to serve community needs. For example, a new firehouse facility could be designed to incorporate adequate space for public meeting and other civic activities.

### **Plan for Future School Facilities**

Although the school age population projections prepared by the Connecticut Department of Education predict a declining school enrollment in Lisbon over the ten year Plan period, the Lisbon school administration believes that sufficient uncertainty exists to warrant planning now for future school facility needs. Certainly if the pace of residential development increases, as this Plan anticipates, demand for school and other services could increase beyond current projections.

The current location of the Lisbon Central School, including the expansion now underway, is on property with additional development potential, particularly if the public works facility can be relocated. Additionally, that parcel abuts other Town-owned properties that have been previously identified as potential future school sites, shown on the conceptual campus map on page 4-7. Further evaluation would be necessary when a specific need is identified for school facilities.

### **Support Implementation of Lisbon Meadows Master Plan**

Lisbon has committed significant resources to the development of recreational and open space opportunities at Lisbon Meadows, and the Town should continue this effort. The Master Plan should be updated as implementation proceeds to include other property acquisitions in Newent and to adjust or revise the Plan as may be determined necessary by the Town.



## Consider a Special Design District

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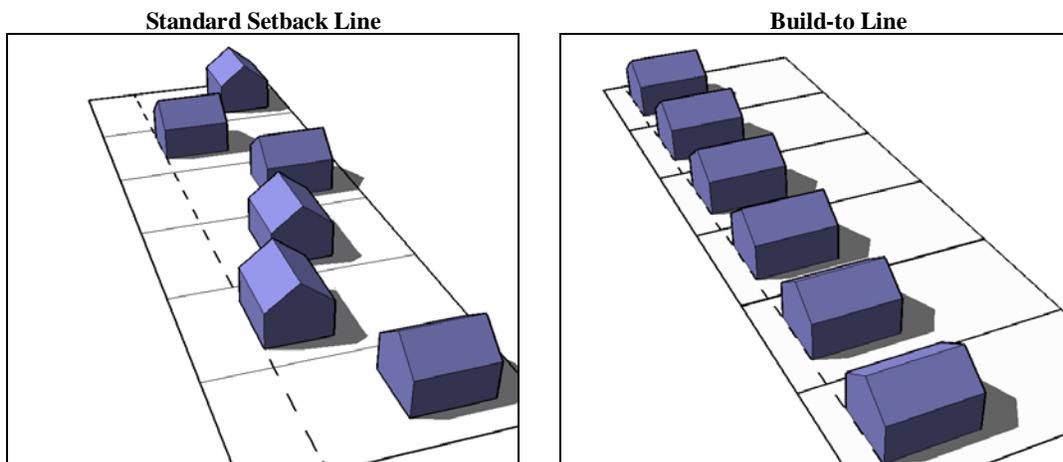
Newent is located within a residential district, but the concentration of municipal and institutional uses there may warrant consideration of expanding the potential for limited commercial activity beyond that permitted in current residential zones. Properly designed and controlled, such uses can complement the visual and historic character of a neighborhood, while helping to ensure its preservation.

Lisbon's goal of establishing a strong, community supported center may benefit from the increased activity that low intensity commercial uses would bring. The Town may consider regulations specific to a defined Newent area, including such typical special use standards as

- encouragement of multi-story, mixed use buildings with retail or pedestrian-friendly uses on the first floor and residential or office uses on upper floors,
- establishment of a "build-to line" or a maximum setback, rather than a *minimum* building setback from the street, to ensure compatible building sites,
- requirement of parking areas located to the rear of buildings and interconnected with a minimum of driveways that interrupt the pedestrian orientation, and
- use and dimensional standards that reduce any existing non-conformities and provide flexibility under a Special Permit review process.

Appropriate uses within a Newent Center Design District may also be defined, including such activities as professional offices, antiques and crafts sales, galleries, and similar businesses. Although some of these may be currently allowed in residential districts, special regulations and a special permit process would ensure that they are undertaken in conformity with the overall goals for Newent.

Evaluation of these options could be included in the special study recommended below, or may be undertaken separately when and if determined appropriate. An appropriate boundary for such a special design district would be established after development of goals for the district and detailed analysis of the properties, roads, access, and other considerations, all of which would be included in the Newent Village Center Study discussed below.



## Newent Village Center Study

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The issues surrounding Newent – municipal facilities, institutional uses, roads and pedestrian access, village character, and private properties – are intertwined and cannot be considered independently. Therefore, the Plan recommends that Lisbon establish an ad hoc committee to define and conduct a Newent Village Center Study based on the recommendations and analyses in this Plan.

Such a study would:

- determine municipal needs and identify the options and resources available to address them within the context of a consolidated Town center;
- identify ways to enhance and preserve the essence of Newent, including business village concepts, design standards, preservation of historic assets, and integration of open space, recreation, and greenway resources; and
- design and identify resources to enhance accessible and safe pedestrian circulation inside and outside the area with sidewalks, pedestrian walks, and trails.

Technology now allows for the creation of an interactive three-dimensional visual design study model of defined areas. A study including such a model could help Lisbon residents and officials evaluate how specific improvements will look and how Newent will function once improvements are made. If established, the Newent Village Center Study Committee should investigate the potential of such technology, and other analytical techniques, to address:

1. Alternative scenarios for expansion of existing facilities or construction of new structures (including public works, public safety, community hall, and school facility expansion.
2. Roadway network and traffic circulation.
3. An appropriate sidewalk system in the core village area enhanced by connecting access to Lisbon Meadows and future greenways or trails.
4. Appropriate parking requirements in a mixed use village, and
5. Architectural guidelines appropriate for the village center.

An example of this technological contribution on the facing page shows one conceptual municipal campus layout to illustrate how visual tools would help with the Newent Center planning process.



### **3-D Graphic Representation of Newent Center**

## Summary

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As much as by its landscape and peaceful setting, Lisbon is defined by its historic and valued village center at Newent. Building on this resource to establish a strong and contributing community focal point is a key goal for the Town in this Plan of Conservation and Development.

### **Establish an Efficient Town Center – Strategies Summary**

#### **A. Pedestrian and Vehicle Access**

1. Consider development of a sidewalk system connecting municipal properties and private institutions in Newent
2. Evaluate future Connecticut DOT plans for 169/138 intersection, propose alternatives
3. Seek funding for sidewalks and other Newent area improvements through Small Town Economic Assistance Program, Federal TEA grants, Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers Valley Corridor programs, other sources

#### **B. Municipal Facilities**

1. Conduct municipal space needs and facility availability assessment including offices, public works, public safety, schools, recreation, and community center.
2. Set goals for expanding town office capacity, relocating public works and public safety functions, establishing a community function center, and plan for future school facilities.
3. Initiate site assessment of municipal properties in Newent area for establishment of integrated municipal campus.
4. Monitor properties abutting existing municipal properties or located on State highways in Newent area for possible acquisition by the Town.

#### **C. Special Design District**

1. Consider establishment of a special Newent Center Village Design District, subject to special permits for defined commercial uses consistent with overall goals for Newent
2. Develop standards for defined commercial and mixed uses, based on current home occupation standards and definitions, to address specific village design standards

#### **D. Newent Village Center Study**

1. Establish ad hoc study committee to conduct a comprehensive study of Newent including
  - municipal space needs assessment to determine necessary facilities for provision of municipal services
  - means to enhance and preserve the essence of Newent, including special design district concepts, design standards, and preservation of historic assets
  - designs and plans for accessible and safe pedestrian circulation inside and outside the area with sidewalks, pedestrian walks, and trails