City of Meriden, Connecticut

Plan of Conservation and Development

City of Meriden
Planning Commission

March 2009

the health and well-being of citizens through comprehensive program planning and implementation of programs supporting both disease prevention and health promotion.

Public School System

The Meriden Public School system consists of eight elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools. In addition, Meriden sends 595 students to the Thomas Edison Magnet Middle School, which is operated by ACES. There are currently three sections of full-day kindergarten located at Barry Elementary School; the remainder of the kindergarten classes in the school system are only half-day. The Board of Education is planning to add more full-day kindergarten capacity through an expansion of Hanover Elementary School. The 13 school facilities are listed in Table VIII-3.

TABLE VIII-3
Meriden Enrollment by School, 2007-08

School	Location	Grades Served	Enrollment
John Barry Elementary School	124 Columbia Street	PK-5	544
Benjamin Franklin Elementary School	426 West Main Street	PK-5	435
Nathan Hale Elementary School	277 Atkins Street Ext.	K-5	622
Hanover Elementary School	208 Main Street	PK-5	590
Thomas Hooker Elementary School	70 Overlook Drive	K-5	517
Casimir Pulaski Elementary School	100 Clearview Avenue	K-5	737
Israel Putnam Elementary School	133 Parker Avenue	K-5	621
Roger Sherman Elementary School	64 North Pearl Street	PK-5	591
Lincoln Middle School	164 Centennial Avenue	6-8	763
Washington Middle School	1225 North Broad Street	6-8	859
Thomas Edison Middle School*	1355 North Broad Street	6-8	595
Maloney High School	121 Gravel Street	9-12	1,280
Platt High School	220 Coe Avenue	9-12	1,169
Special Education - Placed Out			216

*Regional magnet school operated by ACES.

Source: Meriden Public Schools, Research Dept.; compiled by HMA.

Current public school enrollment is 9,407 pupils. Elementary enrollment (K-5) is 4,264, middle school enrollment (6-8) is 2,192 and high school enrollment (9-12) is 2,451. Meriden's Pre-Kindergarten program has 251 students, and there are 249 special education students in the school system. Total school enrollment is 782 pupils greater today than it was in 1997-98.

Over the past decade, the high school enrollment has increased by 24.7% while the middle school enrollment has grown by 20.2%. In contrast, the elementary school enrollment has only increased by 23% over the same time period.

In addition to public and magnet schools, there are four Roman Catholic elementary schools in Meriden: Our Lady of Mount Carmel, located at 115 Lewis Avenue; St. Joseph, located at 159 West Main Street; S. Mary, locate at 97 Grove Street; and St. Stanislaus, located at 81 Akron Street. All of these schools are K-8 facilities. Also, Wilcox Tech is a regional vocational high school located at 298 Oregon Avenue.

At the present time, there is no excess school capacity anywhere in the Meriden school system. In a sense, the Meriden school system is operating at peak efficiency; while there is very little unutilized space in the schools, enrollments have not reached a tipping point that would necessitate more extensive school construction or expansions needs. However, the lack of excess capacity also means that were Meriden's school enrollment to rise unexpectedly, class sizes and overcrowding could become an issue that would need to be addressed quickly.

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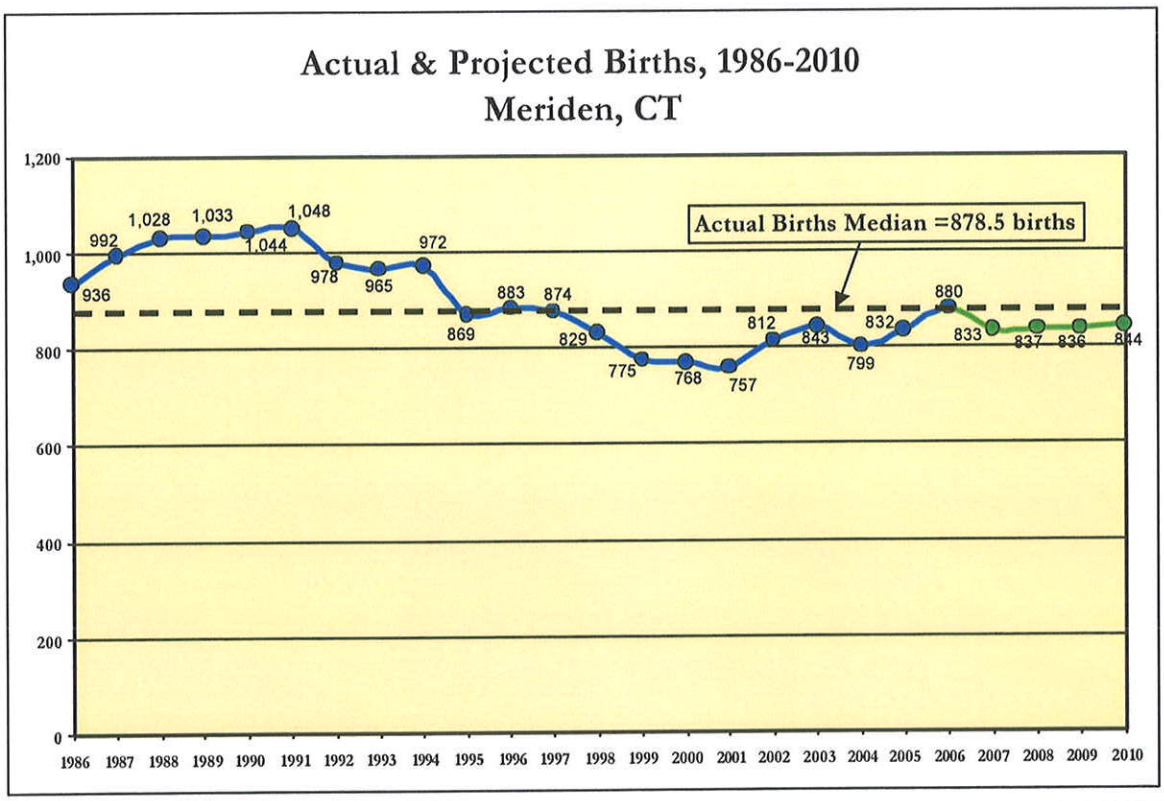
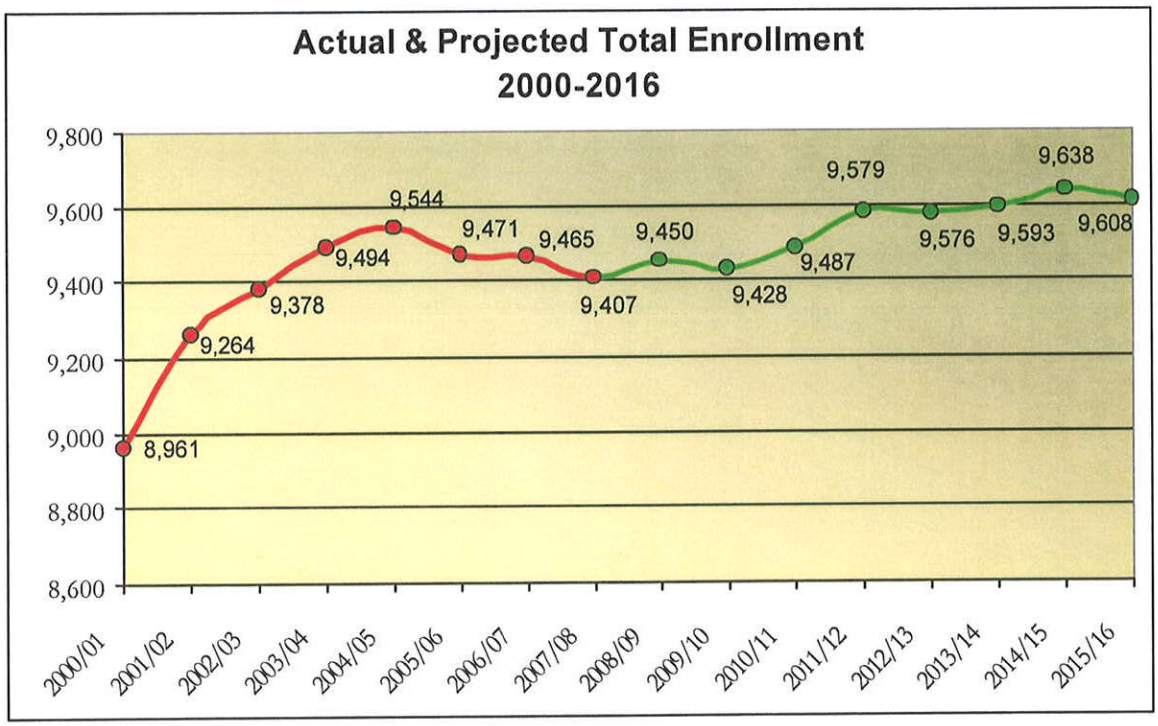
Birth Trends and Projections

Birth trends and projections are used to plan for school enrollment. As depicted on the chart entitled *Births, 1986-2010*, resident births in the City of Meriden reached their peak in the early 1990s with a record high of 1,048 births in 1991 and 1,044 births in 1990. Children born in these birth years are now exiting the high school grades. Resident births declined back down to around the 20-year median in the mid 1990s before hitting a 20-year low in 2001. Since 2001, the number of births has once again begun trending upward.



Future Enrollment Projections

Using a cohort survival methodology and data on the past and projected number of births in the City of Meriden, the Meriden Public Schools projects the 2015-16 school year enrollment for the school district to be 9,608 pupils; this represents an increase of 201 pupils or 2.1% from the 2007-08 enrollment. The grade breakdown of this projected enrollment is 4,485 elementary school students, 2,155 middle school students, 2,468 high school students and 500 pre-kindergarten and special education students. **As compared to the 2007-08 enrollment levels, elementary school enrollment is projected to increase by 5.2% and high school enrollment is projected to increase by 0.7%, while the middle school enrollment is expected to actually decrease by -1.7%.**



Future Public School Facility Plans and Considerations

The City of Meriden has recently issued an RFQ for the expansion of Hanover School to accommodate full-day kindergarten. The expansion of Hanover School would provide 8 full-day kindergarten classes that would serve the entire City of Meriden. Enrollment in the full-day kindergarten program would likely be determined through a lottery process.

Both Maloney High School and Platt High School are projected to be renovated over the coming years. The complete rebuilding of the high schools would require the City to find two 45 acre developable sites within Meriden, a daunting task given the lack of available land in the City. While

not materially expanding the capacity of either high school, the renovations will help modernize the schools and better fit them to current programmatic needs. The cost of renovating the high schools is estimated at between $70 million and $75 million each.

Further out in the future, the City will likely undertake renovation /expansion projects at Hooker Elementary School and Pulaski Elementary School. These two projects, while still only in the discussion phase, will likely expand the capacity of both schools to a certain degree.

Meriden's enrollment projections for the coming years show a much slower rate of increase in enrollment in the school system, with an actual decrease in enrollment projected for the middle school grades. However, toward the end of the projection period, there appears to be another demographic "bubble" entering the elementary school grades, similar to the one that started in the early 1990s and is now exiting the high schools. Due to the lack of excess student capacity in the school system, the City should remain vigilant on the issue of school enrollment so that any unexpected changes in enrollment can be addressed quickly and effectively. Also, should the Board of Education decide to pursue City-wide full-day kindergarten, additional physical space may be needed.

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C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

For a community of approximately 60,000 people, the City of Meriden provides an extensive range of municipal services. Public and non-profit community facilities provide for the convenience, health and welfare of residents and constitute a significant component of the City's quality of life. Maintaining an adequate array of community facilities in good condition to meet changing needs is an important aspect of local government.

Promote energy-efficient and sustainable patterns of development, practices and operations for the City and its residents.

Based upon the information presented and discussed previously in this memorandum, the following goals and objectives for the provision of community facilities and services have been developed.

Goal: Promote energy-efficient and sustainable patterns of development, practices and operations for the City and its residents.

Objectives:

- Continue a committee to explore the use of energy by the City and recommend measures to improve efficiency and sustainability.

Goal: Continue to improve and enhance police and fire services to maintain a high level of fire suppression and rescue service, as well as expanding effective community policing initiatives.

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Continue to meet the health and social service needs of Meriden residents in a coordinated and efficient manner.

Objectives:

- Budget for capital and programmatic improvements for police and fire services in the most cost-effective manner.
- In addition to expanding the Neighborhood Initiative Unit target area into the northern end of the City, examine whether other areas of Meriden could benefit from inclusion in the Unit's target area.
- Build upon the success of the Neighborhood Initiative Unit by securing funding for additional police officer positions within the Unit.

Goal: **Continue to meet the health and social service needs of Meriden residents in a coordinated and efficient manner.**

Provide the highest level of educational services to the children of Meriden.

Objectives

- In the future, focus additional resources on enhancing the Senior Affairs department's ability to provide home-delivered meals, transportation and in-home assessments for elderly residents.
- Expand efforts to reduce school truancy among Meriden youth.

Goal: **Provide the highest level of educational services to the children of Meriden.**

Objectives:

- Create a comprehensive and cost-effective renovation program for both Maloney High School and Platt High School that provides a state-of-the-art learning environment for Meriden's students.
- Continue to pursue the expansion of Hanover Elementary School to provide greater access to full-day kindergarten for Meriden families.
- Comprehensively evaluate the physical and programmatic needs of each of Meriden's school facilities, identify pertinent issues to be addressed, and develop a plan for addressing identified needs through renovations, expansions and programmatic changes over the long-term.
- Continually evaluate the need for additional school system programs such as universal kindergarten and new curriculum programs so that emerging education needs can be addressed quickly and effectively.
- Identify key properties to be acquired for potential future expansion of school facilities.

Provide enhanced waste disposal, sewage treatment, and other public works infrastructure to ensure that the City of Meriden can meet both its current and future waste disposal needs.

Goal: **Provide enhanced waste disposal, sewage treatment, and other public works infrastructure to ensure that the City of Meriden can meet both its current and future waste disposal needs.**

IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES: **BOE** - Board of Education; **Council** -City Council; **CD** - Community Development Division; **CTDEP** - Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection; **CTDOT** - Connecticut Department of Transportation; **DPW** - Department of Public Works; **ED** - Economic Development Division; **Elderly** - Agent for the Elderly; **HA** - Housing Authority; **MFD** - Meriden Fire Department; **MPD** - Meriden Police Department; **IWC** - Inland Wetlands Commission; **FC** - Flood Control Commission; **LB** - Library Board; **MH** - Meriden Historical Society; **CC** - Conservation Commission; **PR** - Parks & Recreation Division; **DE** - Development & Enforcement Department; **PC**- Planning Commission; **SCRCOG** - South Central Regional Council of Governments; **CM** - City Manager; **LT** -Land Trust; **MFD** - Meriden Fire Department; **DRB** - Design Review Board; **PU** - Public Utilities		PRIORITY			
	Lead Agency	On-Going	Short Term (1-3 Years)	Mid Term (4-6 Years)	Long Term (7-10 Years)
Community Facilities					
GOAL: Promote energy-efficient and sustainable patterns of development, practices and operations for the City and its residents.					
Action:					
Continue a committee to explore the use of energy by the City and recommend measures to improve efficiency and sustainability.	Council / DPW	X			
GOAL: Continue to improve and enhance police and fire services to maintain a high level of fire suppression and rescue service, as well as expanding effective community policing initiatives.					
Action:					
Budget for capital improvements for police and fire services in the most cost-effective manner.	CM	X			
Continue to study whether there is a need to add additional paramedic services, and implement if necessary.	MFD / CM		X		
In addition to expanding the Neighborhood Initiative Unit target area into the northern end of the City, examine whether other areas of Meriden could benefit from inclusion in the Unit's target area.	DE / MPD			X	
Build upon the success of the Neighborhood Initiative Unit by securing funding for additional police officer positions within the Unit.	CM / Council		X		
GOAL: Continue to meet the health and social service needs of Meriden residents in a coordinated and efficient manner.					
Action:					
In the future, focus additional resources on enhancing the Senior Affairs department's ability to provide home-delivered meals, transportation and in-home assessments for elderly residents.	CM / Council		X		
Expand efforts to reduce school truancy among Meriden youth.	BOE	X			
GOAL: Provide the highest level of educational services to the children of Meriden.					
Action:					
Create a comprehensive and cost-effective renovation program for both Maloney High School and Platt High School that provides a state-of-the-art learning environment for Meriden's students.	BOE		X		