

## **Section 5**

### *Community Facilities*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The size, type, quality and location of a municipality's public facilities help determine its character, attractiveness and desirability. As the town grows, people expect and require more services from the community. To remain the desirable community it has been for so many years, Middlefield must plan now to adequately meet its anticipated needs.

Community facilities are analyzed with respect to present adequacy and recommendations are made for their improvement based on future needs created by population growth and the trend toward expanded municipal services.

#### *Police*

Police protection is provided by two Resident State Troopers. Additional assistance can be called in from the Troop F Barracks located in Westbrook which provides coverage to Middlesex County. Offices are located in the lower level of the Community Center at 405 Main Street and the department is supported by a part-time secretary.

The need for additional police protection is based in the community's perception of the adequacy of the service and emerging needs. Any future expansion of either the officers or support personnel should be at the Community Center.

#### *Fire*

The town's fire service is volunteer with the firehouse located at 406 Jackson Hill Road, telephone 860-349-7124. The department was first established in April, 1934. Their primary job is to protect, with the resources available, the lives and property of the citizens of Middlefield from loss or destruction by fire or other emergency. As well as fire response, they are the first responders to medical calls throughout the town. Meetings and drills are held weekly. Membership is limited to fifty people, however there are vacancies and new members are welcome. Funding is provided from the town budget and they also have fund raisers to purchase equipment and take care of internal functions throughout the year. The fire service currently has two engines, two tankers, a rescue truck, a pickup medical response truck, a small boat and an antique engine for parade use.

The department operates a six-bay firehouse on a 0.8 acre lot on Jackson Hill Road abutting the Community Center and the Town Green. The firehouse was built in 1919 and most recently expanded in 1987, with a total area of 8,464 square feet for garaging equipment, training room, meeting room, offices and other related uses. The site is in the geographic center of the Town and has adequate capacity to meet future needs.

The department has six major vehicles along with other support vehicles and equipment. For many years, the department has had an aggressive and comprehensive Capital Improvement Program to assure the highest level of service to community and protection of the volunteers. Part of their Capital Improvement Program provides funding for the installation of new water supplies in developed areas and the department works closely with the Planning and Zoning Commission to develop water supplies related to new development.

A comprehensive water supply plan has been developed and significant progress has been made towards its implementation.

#### *Emergency Medical Services*

Emergency medical services are provided by a private ambulance company based in Meriden and located in Middletown. To date, there has been no active consideration of forming a volunteer ambulance company to supplement this service and it is considered to be the most cost effective system. Every 911 call related to medical emergency on an accident is responded to by the Middlefield Volunteer Fire Department.

#### *School Facilities*

The need for a quality school system is of paramount importance to the residents of Middlefield. The Plan of Conservation and Development addresses the site requirements to meet for expansion needs.

Public education in Middlefield is provided through Regional School District #13 which includes the Town of Durham. Within the Town of Middlefield, the District maintains the John Lyman Elementary and Memorial Schools. The following table compares the District's Facilities.

Regional School District #13

School	Coginchaug	Strong	Memorial	Lyman	Korn	Brewster
Grade	9-12	7-8	5-6	PreK-4	PreK- 4	PreK-4
Age	1977	1923	1954	1966	1963	1955
Site Acreage	69	(1)	20	15	(1)	20

(1) Located on the 69-acre campus with Coginchaug Regional High school.

#### Current and Projected Enrollment

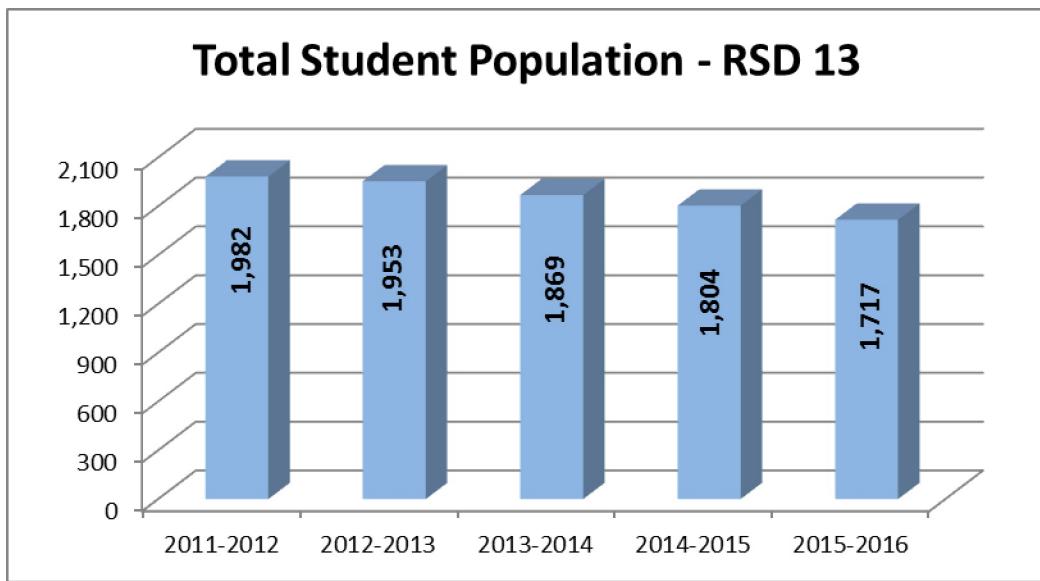
Regional School District #13 (of which Durham is a part) is in the midst of a prolonged trend of declining enrollment. The decrease in enrollment is currently reflected most profoundly in the elementary schools; where enrollment in grades K-6 has dropped from a high of nearly 1,200 students in the 2008-09 school year to 830 students in the 2015-16 school year. As a consequence, there are more classrooms than needed to accommodate the educational needs of our students.

The following table shows the district's current and projected enrollment. These projections are based on the "RSD#13 Comprehensive School Enrollment Study" prepared by Milone & MacBroom in January of 2014. An earlier study was conducted by H.C. Planning Consultants, Inc. in May of 2012. The two studies indicated similar reductions in enrollment.

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT #13 CURRENT AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENTS**

School	Coginchaug	Strong	Memorial	Lyman / Korn / Brewster
Grades	9-12	7-8	5-6	Pre K-4
2015-16 Enrollment	556	318	566	577
2025-26 Estimated Enrollment	340	202	202	547
Site Acreage	69	(2*)	20	15 (2*) 20

\*Located on the 69-acre campus with Coginchaug Regional High School.

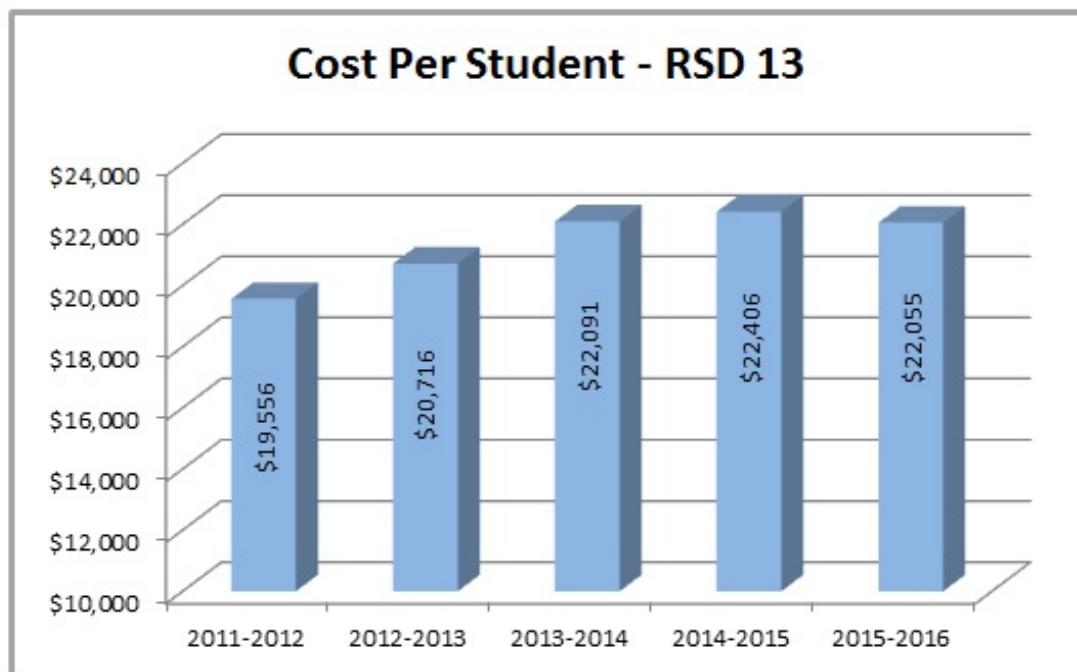


As a result of these Projections, in September of 2014, RSD#13 commissioned Drummey Rosane Anderson Inc. to conduct a *Facilities Utilization Study*. Many alternatives were considered, and the RSD#13 School Board selected Plan "C3"; which called for the closing of the Korn and Lyman schools and the implementation of various improvements at the Brewster, Memorial and Strong schools. These improvements were proposed to minimize the impact of the Korn and Lyman school closings. Under the plan, Korn School would be closed in 2016, while Lyman would be closed in 2019. Grants that were issued by the State of Connecticut for various improvements made to these schools may prevent the conveyance of the Korn School property to the town(s) ahead of the current amortization schedule, unless the state legislature approves an accelerated conveyance schedule.

In 2014, a committee was formed to study the possible re-use of the closed school buildings. The committee included the First Selectmen of both Durham and Middlefield, members of the RSD#13 Board of Education and the public.

## Education Costs

Education currently represents nearly 80 percent of the town's budget and, as such, is a major driver of its taxes. Controlling costs in the face of decreasing enrollment can be challenging. As the following chart shows, after a period of increasing per-student costs, the district has taken steps to control these costs. The town and Board of Education should continue to work together to identify and implement efficiencies.



Amounts for 2011-2015 based on June 30 year-end audits; 2015-2016 based on approved budget

## *Refuse Disposal/Recycling*

In the fall of 1970, Middlefield and Durham voted to purchase jointly a 22-plus acre site located on the east side of Cherry Hill Road and to the north of its intersection with Route 147 (Middlefield Road). Approximately seven acres of the property are located in Durham and the remainder in Middlefield.

Durham and the neighboring town of Middlefield jointly own a 22-acre site along the east side of Cherry Hill Road, north of the intersection of Route 147 (Middlefield Road). The site had been used as a landfill for solid waste and bulky waste until 1989. In 1990, a Transfer Station was constructed for the compaction of solid waste; for transport to the *Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority* (MIRA/formerly CRRA) facility located in Hartford, Connecticut. The transfer station is managed by the Durham-Middlefield Interlocal Agreement Advisory Board (DMIAAB).

The site accepts waste from residents, commercial refuse collectors (until July 1, 2016) and landscaping companies. Users are required to provide proof of residency and purchase a sticker that must be affixed to the windshield of the vehicle. In 2012, a 50-foot long weigh scale was installed to provide accurate weights of bulk materials brought into or out of the facility.

All materials which are brought to the site are eventually removed for recycling or disposal. The facility currently recycles plastics, motor oils, electronics and cardboard and grinds brush on-site, converting it to mulch. Through a series of site improvements, public education and increased hours of operation, the towns have achieved a high level of participation in recycling. Paints and other hazardous wastes may be safely disposed of through the town's participation in the Regional Council of Government's Hazardous Waste Collection Program.

In September of 1999, the towns jointly purchased an additional 2.75 acres of adjacent property, having frontage on Old Indian Trail in Middlefield. The current facilities are expected to be adequate for the foreseeable future; and could be expanded if necessary by utilizing this property.

To accommodate the future increase in MSW as a result of population increases and commercial/industrial expansions, the hours of operation can be expanded, additional equipment could be purchased and personnel added without the need for additional land. Future composting opportunities can be accommodated on-site.

#### *Library Facilities*

Middlefield's library needs are served by the Levi E. Coe Memorial Library, located on Main Street, and centrally located near the Fire House, Town Hall, and Community Center.

Judge and Mrs. Levi E. Coe gave the library to an Association consisting of Middlefield residents in 1893. The current Association membership consists of approximately 55. The Association has an unlimited membership and any resident of Middlefield is eligible to join. The library also has a 12-member Board of Directors. The Board consists of six members from the incorporators and six appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Board is responsible for the annual budget and the operations of the library.

The library receives its combined operating funds from a small endowment, state grants, savings interest and the major portion from Town appropriations. The Coe Library is housed in a Portland brownstone building which encompasses approximately 6,702 square feet. The first major addition was completed in 1974 which was twice the size of the original structure. Further improvements were made in 1995 to meet handicapped accessibility requirements.

A future expansion is planned in the next five to 10 years to meet the expanding demands for library services. The expansion would take place to the rear of the existing structure towards the railroad right-of-way.

The Library has 25,000 volumes and numerous other media sources and is open forty hours per week.

The Shakespeare Garden is located behind the library. Its wide variety of plants plus benches and nearby shade trees make it a wonderful spot for quiet reading and reflection. It is maintained by the Mid Lea Garden Club. Wireless internet access is available in the Shakespeare Garden.

The Lucia K. Ginter children's room, located on the lower level, serves children from birth through sixth grade and their families.

In the adult portion of the building, you can browse the New York Times Best Sellers, fiction, non-fiction, biography, and large print books or connect to our large selection of eBooks and eMagazines.

The media room is home to DVDs, CDs, audiobooks, magazines and newspapers, public internet computers, and our teen section. Wireless internet access is also available.

### *Town Hall*

The Town Hall was built in 1963 and is designed in the colonial style. The floor space totals approximately 2,700 square feet, of which 1,822 square feet is office and related space, 400 square feet is vault space and 908 square feet is occupied by the corridor, bathrooms and the mechanical room.

The staff utilizing the Town Hall consists of five full-time employees and elected officials and a number of part-time personnel.

The personnel consist of the First Selectman, Finance Director, First Selectman's Administrative Assistant, Bookkeeper, Assessor, Tax Collector, Town Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Town Clerk and seasonal help for the Tax Collector.

The number of full-time people in 1978 was six and a space needs study and preliminary architectural plans completed in the mid-1970's indicated a need for an additional 3,000 square feet of office and vault space. Currently, the Building, Health and Zoning Department is located in the Community Center. This creates administrative difficulties as well as logistical issues due to the need for the department to have frequent access to the information maintained in the Town Clerk's office as well as the Assessor's office. Bringing this function back to the Town Hall is a desirable goal for the near future. A space needs study is recommended and any proposed expansion can be accommodated on the existing site.

### *Public Works Facilities*

Portions of the original Public Works garage were built in the 1940's as part of a private contractor's facility. When the Town acquired the property, it utilized these existing buildings as a public works garage. Over the years, the garage has been upgraded and expanded into a six-bay facility. In the late 1970's, a second five-bay facility was constructed along with a salt-sand storage facility. This complex on 4.01 acres continues to house the major Public Works equipment adequately and, based on the size of the Public Works department, that should be adequate for the foreseeable future. Should a future expansion become necessary, there is adequate area available to meet future needs.

A 185 foot telecommunications tower is located on a leased portion of this property. This facility is available to meet town communication needs as well as private telecommunication providers. Only a small portion of the site is included in the lease and the Town receives annual payments over the term of the lease.

## RECREATION FACILITIES

### *Peckham Field*

The principal recreation area for the town is Peckham Field for most active organized sports as well as some passive activities. The complex has gone from 8.24 acres in 1978 to 91-plus contiguous acres. Over 50 percent of the park is classified as inland wetlands. The park has been improved with a number of new facilities constructed over a multi-year period.

Currently, the facility hosts an elaborate playscape, skate board park, a pavilion for food service, restrooms, a half-mile walking track, a basketball court, three Little League/softball fields, one committed girls softball field and a dedicated soccer field. Due to the configuration of the fields, combinations can be formed to meet temporary needs. The facility also contains the original pavilion which will be kept for the foreseeable future. The parking lots can

accommodate approximately 155 vehicles and there is informal parking on other portions of the site. Fishing opportunities exist along the Coginchaug River that runs through property owned by the Town.

A 6.12-acre site fronting on Main Street and abutting Peckham Field to the east should be considered for acquisition to be added to the field. There are no wetlands located on this property and it could alleviate some of the peak parking problems that frequently occur. It could provide parking at the south end of the facility and reduce the long walk to this end of the field. It would also accommodate another dedicated soccer field. The remaining undeveloped non-wetlands portion of the field can support many additional recreational facilities. Across the street from the park is a 12.45-acre parcel of land known as the Lucy Strickland ice skating facility. The Town owns the parcel and maintains the property by mowing the pond area and adjusting the water level. Eventually, a series of recreation facilities could extend to the south of Race Track Hollow Road.

#### *Memorial School*

There is a softball field and a newly constructed, irrigated soccer field at Memorial School. The soccer club will be responsible for the maintenance of the soccer field.

#### *Beseck Beach*

This is a 1.8-acre parcel fronting on Lake Beseck and Lake Shore Road. The Town runs an active water-based recreation program at this facility and it is a very popular area during July and August. No expansion is possible due to the surrounding residential properties.

#### *King Property*

This property on Beseck Mountain has frontage on Lake Beseck. This 83-acre parcel is used for hiking, fishing, camping and other intensity activities including a very popular dog park. The area has a forest management plan that is slowly being implemented.

#### *Memorial and Lyman Schools*

Both schools have recreational facilities that serve the district school population, the general public and the neighborhoods.

#### *Powder Hill Dinosaur Park*

The Powder Hill Dinosaur Park was originally the site of a summer home for Wesley Coe. Coe granted permission to Middlefield to use the stone on his property to create the Beseck Dam in 1846. While excavating the stone, the footprints were discovered. The park is located on Powder Hill Road in Middlefield.

### OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

#### *Old North Burying Ground*

Old North Burying Ground serves as the final resting place for many of Middlefield's earliest settlers. The site was laid out in 1737 and was regularly used until a new burial ground was established in 1828. Old North has a central place in Middlefield's history. Since 1999, its care and restoration have been a project of the Middlefield Historical Society.

Beyond its role as a cemetery, the Old North Burying Ground depicts family life in early Middlefield. Family members were buried together and tombstones often indicate the family bonds. Stillborn children were buried in marked graves alongside adults killed in farming accidents. The graves of enslaved Africans were unmarked, although they were recorded in the community's written histories. For a Middlefield native, a visit to the cemetery can be a quick way to trace the family tree. Tombstones record the names of old families: Birdsey, Coe, Lyman, Rockwell and many others.

Old North Burying Ground is also a repository of period artwork. Tombstone carving became a form of folk art in the eighteenth century. David Miller's art stands out because of its location and its unique design. David Miller, who lived from 1718 to 1789, was a Middlefield native. Miller owned a stone quarry in Middlefield and turned to tombstone carving sometime in the 1740s. He often collaborated with other stone carvers, including William Holland of Middletown. Miller still managed to develop his own style.

Thanks to the efforts of volunteers, both past and present, Middlefield's Old North Burying Ground and its history are once more accessible to the public. The Old North Burying Ground is located on Jackson Hill Road (Route 157) in Middlefield.

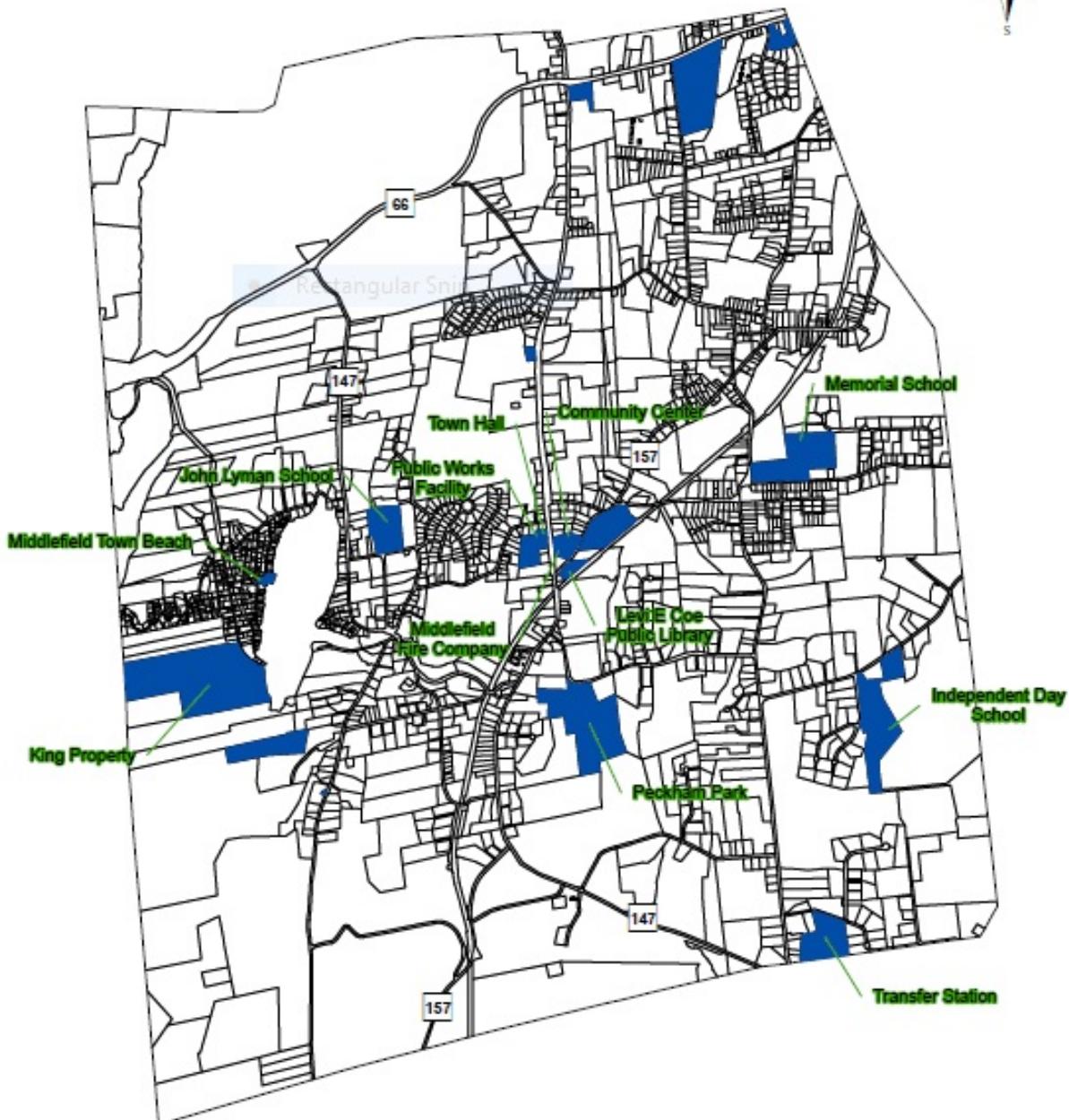
*Town Properties Available for Hunting*

Six properties owned by the Town of Middlefield are shown on the Public Facilities Map and depict the properties for which hunting permits are issued by the First Selectman's Office. The number of permits is limited as well as the type of hunting weapon that is permitted. Those properties are identified as (8) on the Public Facilities Map.

*Public Facilities Map*

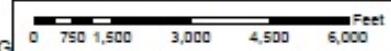
The following map depicts the various community facilities discussed in the preceding pages.

## Middlefield Community Facilities



1 inch = 3,000 feet

Source: River COG



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES (PRIVATE)

### *Places of Worship*

Places of worship are identified as (1) on the following map. They include:

- Jafaria Association of Connecticut Inc., One Meriden Road
- Victory Christian Tabernacle Inc., 191 Meriden Road
- St. Coleman's Church Corp., 79 Hubbard Street
- Methodist Episcopal Church, 402 Main Street.

### *Cemeteries*

Cemeteries are identified as (2) on the following map. They include:

- St. Sebastian Roman Catholic Church Corp., 75 Meriden Road
- Middlefield Cemetery Association, Main Street.

### *Private Schools*

Private Schools are identified as (3) on the following map. They include:

- Independent Day School, 115 Laurel Brook Road.

### *Camps*

Camps are identified as (4) on the following map. They include:

- John J. Nerden Regional Training Center Camp Inc., 89 Powder Hill Road.

**Town of Middlefield, Connecticut  
Parcels**



Community Facilities (Private)

1. Places of Worship
2. Cemetery's
3. Private School(s)
4. Camps

**Legend**

Parcels

1 inch = 2,000 feet

0 400 1,200 2,000 3,600 5,200 feet

