

# SIMSBURY



**2017 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

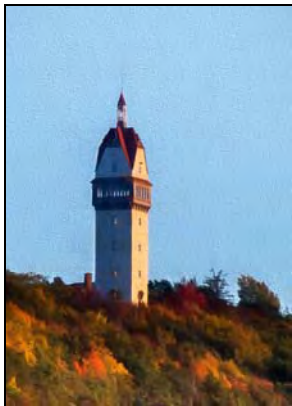




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## POCD Pictures

The picture of the Heublein Tower on the front cover was taken by Lorraine Cosgrove and was submitted as part of a Photo Contest conducted by the Town of Simsbury.



Most of the other photographs in the POCD were taken by Planimetrics or were obtained from the Town.

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# WELCOME



September 26, 2017

The Town of Simsbury Planning Commission is pleased to present the adopted 2017 Plan of Conservation and Development to the community. In September 2016, our commission embarked on a yearlong journey, together with our planning staff and consultant, to complete the Plan before you today.

Along this journey, we had the wonderful opportunity to carefully engage members of our community in order to gather information, evaluate the information collected, and ultimately craft language to assist the community with determining the future needs and direction of the town from a land use perspective. During this journey, we utilized personal telephone surveys and online surveys to garner community input and ascertain community values. The Commission also solicited and received written and verbal input along the way at a multitude of public workshops and hearings.

Following a final public hearing on September 26, the Planning Commission voted to adopt the 2017 Town of Simsbury Plan of Conservation and Development with an effective date of November 1, 2017.

The development and adoption of the POCD is critical to the future of the Town and we anticipate that the implementation strategies and guidance offered in the document will bring the plan to life. I would like to thank all the people within our community for their involvement in the development of this plan which provides direction to the Town's policy makers and land use commissions on land use matters that will enhance our community character and quality of life in Simsbury and make Simsbury an even better place in the future.

Sincerely,

*William F. Rice*

William F. Rice, Chairman  
Simsbury Planning Commission

## **EXCERPTS FROM CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES 8-23 – PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **The Planning Commission shall:**

- prepare, adopt and amend a plan of conservation and development ...
- review the plan of conservation and development at least once every ten years ...
- adopt such amendments to the plan or parts of the plan ... as the commission deems necessary to update the plan.

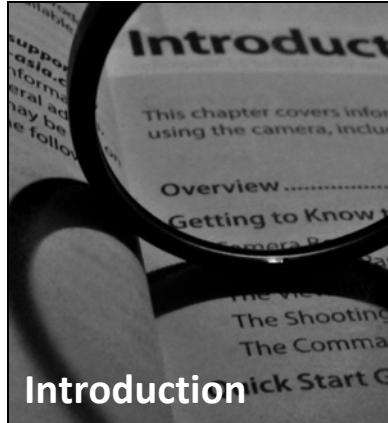
### **The Plan of Conservation and Development shall:**

- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality, ...
- show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality.
- be designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people.
- be made with reasonable consideration for restoration and protection of the ecosystem and habitat of Long Island Sound ...
- make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region ...
- promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs ...
- take into account the state plan of conservation and development ... and note any inconsistencies it may have with said state plan.
- consider the use of cluster development to the extent consistent with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity.

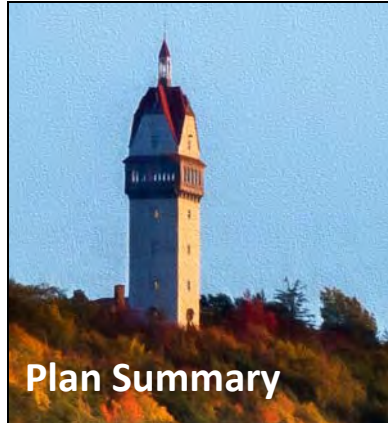
### **The Plan of Conservation and Development may:**

- show the commission's recommendation for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets and other public ways; for airports, parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; for general location, relocation and improvement of public buildings; for the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned for water, sewerage, light, power, transit and other purposes; and for the extent and location of public housing projects.
- include recommended programs for the implementation of the plan ...
- (include) such other recommendations ... in the plan as will ... be beneficial to the municipality.

# INTRODUCTION



**Introduction**



**Plan Summary**



**Conditions  
And Trends**



**Community  
Issues & Concerns**



# INTRODUCTION

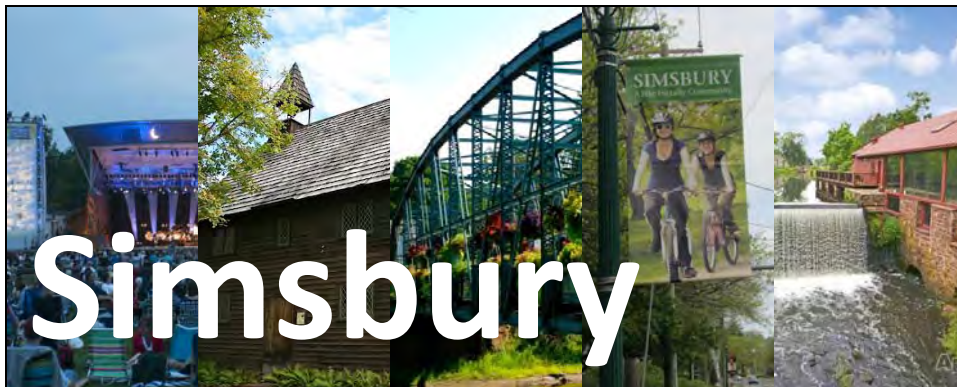
## Overview

This document is Simsbury's 2017 Plan of Conservation and Development.

A Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is a document intended to establish a common vision for the future of a community and then recommend policies and action steps that will help attain that vision. While its key purpose and function is to address the physical development of a community, it will often address issues related to the economic development and social development.

The goals and recommendations of this Plan are intended to reflect an overall consensus of what is considered desirable for the town of Simsbury and its residents in the future. The POCD is not a regulation or a mandate but it is an important advisory document. It is intended to guide the community towards positive outcomes and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities.

Implementation of the policies and action steps will only occur with the diligent efforts of the community. The Plan will only be effective if it is understood and supported by the people of Simsbury, and implemented by the Town's boards and commissions.



## Introduction - Introduction

The following introductory text adapted from the 2007 POCD helps set the stage for this Plan and its meaning for the community:

For centuries people have left their mark, small and large, on this place we call Simsbury. Our community is what it is today partly because of its physical location and natural environment, and partly because of the choices made or not made, with both intended and unintended results. All have combined to create this unique and attractive place.

Just as the decisions of our predecessors shaped the Simsbury of today, current actions will shape the Simsbury of tomorrow. In evaluating possible directions for the next decade we ask a number of questions. What will Simsbury be in twenty, thirty, or fifty years? Will we secure our identity and build places we care about? In what ways can we manage our future? Answers to these questions begin with a vision, then a plan, and finally actions to secure our chosen direction.

Healthy and prosperous communities do not just happen. They are created by informed and intentional choices based on a comprehensive, long-term plan. The way we develop affects the quality of our lives and the vitality of our community. We seek an environment designed around the expressed needs of individuals, conducive to the formation of community and preservation of the town's landscape.

Planning is the process to secure our chosen destiny – a community by choice.

This 2017 POCD provides a framework within which to make informed decisions that will allow Simsbury to continue to be attractive, functional and economically healthy; and an increasingly desirable place to live, work, attend school, play, visit, shop, and invest in the development of the community. The goal is to build a community that remains healthy and prosperous over the long term, benefiting the local economy as well as the residents of the place where we live.

This 2017 POCD is the Town's statement of what we want our future to be and how we propose to achieve and manage it. Overall, the mission statement embodied in this POCD is:

### **POCD Mission Statement**

***Preserve the best from Simsbury's past ...***

***... Ensure the best for Simsbury's future.***



# PLAN SUMMARY

# 2

## Overview

This Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is intended to guide:

- the current and future physical conservation and development of Simsbury,
- the current and future economic development of Simsbury, and
- the overall quality of life in the community.

By implementing policies and completing action steps identified in the POCD, we will make Simsbury a better community for all of us. Please consider joining your neighbors and other Simsbury residents in implementing the 2017 Plan of Conservation and Development.

## Plan Organization

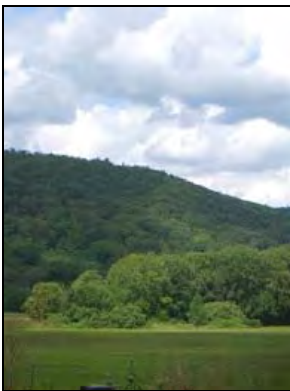
The POCD contains five main sections:

<b>Introduction</b>	An overview of planning, conditions and trends affecting Simsbury, and community concerns
<b>What We Want To Protect</b>	Strategies to protect the things that Simsbury residents have indicated are important to them (natural resources, open space, community character, etc.)
<b>How We Want To Grow</b>	Strategies to guide growth or change in ways that will help make Simsbury a better community in the future (Simsbury Center, Tariffville, business development, residential development, etc.)
<b>What We Want To Provide</b>	Strategies related to services and facilities that will help make Simsbury a better community in the future (community facilities and services, transportation, infrastructure, etc.)
<b>Looking Ahead</b>	A future land use plan illustrating the desirable future configuration of the community and a chapter promoting implementation of the POCD recommendations.



### Introduction ...

1. **How Much Will We Grow (Or Not)?** – There has been visible housing growth in Simsbury in recent years so it is reasonable to expect the population to grow. At the same time though, there are changes in the 9,000 other housing units in Simsbury as the “baby boomers” get older (older households generally contain fewer people). The net effect of these two trends will become more apparent when the 2020 Census results are received. Beyond 2020, whether Simsbury grows and by how much will depend on the balance between new housing (and new residents) and changes in existing housing units.
2. **Room For Growth** - Simsbury has room for additional residential and business growth so the POCD focuses on how land is zoned and used since these two factors influence how communities grow in the future.
3. **Resident’s Concerns** - In a community-wide survey, residents indicated their top three concerns included:
  - Maintain and enhance community character.
  - Encourage additional business development.
  - Maintain and enhance community facilities.



### What We Want To Protect

4. **Protect Natural Resources** – Simsbury will continue efforts to protect natural resources and will remain diligent in its efforts to protect water quality.
5. **Preserve Open Space** – Simsbury will focus on a strategic approach to preserving open space in order to create a meaningful overall open space system while preserving important natural resources and the overall character of the community.
6. **Maintain And Enhance Community Character** – Simsbury will seek to protect resources that contribute to community character and ambience:
  - historic resources (buildings and sites),
  - farms and farming,
  - scenic views and scenic roads, and
  - community spirit.

Simsbury will also promote community character by continuing to carefully review building and site design as part of new development.

7. **Promote Sustainability & Resiliency**– Simsbury will seek to be a more sustainable community and a more adaptable community in the future. Not only is this the right thing to do ecologically, it is the right thing to do fiscally and economically.

## How We Want To Grow

8. **Promote Places With A Sense of Place** – Simsbury will seek ways to guide development so that it maintains and enhanced places with a “sense of place.” This means recognizing the special places that Simsbury already has and making them even better in the future:
  - Simsbury Center
  - Tariffville and Weatogue Center,
  - Hoskins and West Simsbury.
  - Other unique places in the community.
9. **Promote Economic Development** – Simsbury will encourage and promote economic development that benefits the community (jobs, goods and services, tax base). Some areas will be investigated for expansion of business zoning in order to take advantage of Simsbury’s locational advantages.
10. **Guide Residential Development** – Simsbury will guide residential development to protect existing neighborhoods, address housing needs, and promote places with a sense of place while maintaining and reflecting Simsbury’s history and special character.



Simsbury Center



Tariffville



Economic Development



Residential Development







## What We Want To Provide

11. **Enhance Community Facilities**– Community services and facilities help make Simsbury such a great community. Simsbury intends to provide community services and facilities that meet community needs and enhance the quality of life as cost-efficiently as possible.
12. **Address Transportation Needs**– Simsbury intends to address transportation issues in order to address problem areas and enhance the overall quality of life in the community. The POCD also recognizes how much Simsbury has achieved in terms of bicycle and pedestrian improvements and seeks to continue this progress.
13. **Address Utility Infrastructure Needs**– Simsbury intends to encourage the provision of adequate utility infrastructure to meet community needs. In addition to water and sewer services, this also includes storm drainage and internet capacity.



## Looking Ahead

14. **Implement The Plan**– Simsbury intends to implement the policies and complete the action steps identified in the POCD. Many recommendations can and will be implemented for little or no expense. Simsbury is considering establishing a “Plan Implementation Committee” made up of representatives of local boards and commissions as a way to promote and coordinate implementation of POCD strategies.

**A glossary in the Appendix may help you understand some of the terms used in the POCD.**

# CONDITIONS & TRENDS

# 3

## Overview

This section of the POCD provides a general overview of conditions and trends affecting Simsbury at the time this POCD was being prepared.

## History of Simsbury

The landscape of the area we now know as Simsbury evolved over millions of years as a result of massive geologic forces. The advance and retreat of glaciers and fluctuations in climate created a riverine valley between two sets of ridges and hilltops. While there is no written record of their early habitation, Native Americans are believed to have lived in this area as early as 10,000 years ago.

### European Settlement

Europeans “discovered” this part of North America in 1614 when Dutch explorer Adriaen Block sailed into what we now call Long Island Sound. For the next 20 years or so, the Dutch and English competed for trade with Native Americans. The British settled in Plymouth (Massachusetts) in 1620 and the Dutch settled in New Amsterdam (New York) in 1624 before settlement began in what we now know as Connecticut.

A trading post was established by the English about 1634 at the confluence of the Farmington River with the Connecticut River (present day Windsor). Even though trade was welcomed by both groups, there were occasional skirmishes between settlers and Native Americans that raised tensions. After the Pequot War of 1637, European settlement began to extend to other areas of what we now know as Connecticut.

Settlers from Windsor began to migrate up the Farmington River to establish new homesteads and this eventually led to settlement at an area called Massaco where broad flat meadows, rich soil, and stands of trees all seemed ideal for homes and farms.

## Introduction - Conditions & Trends

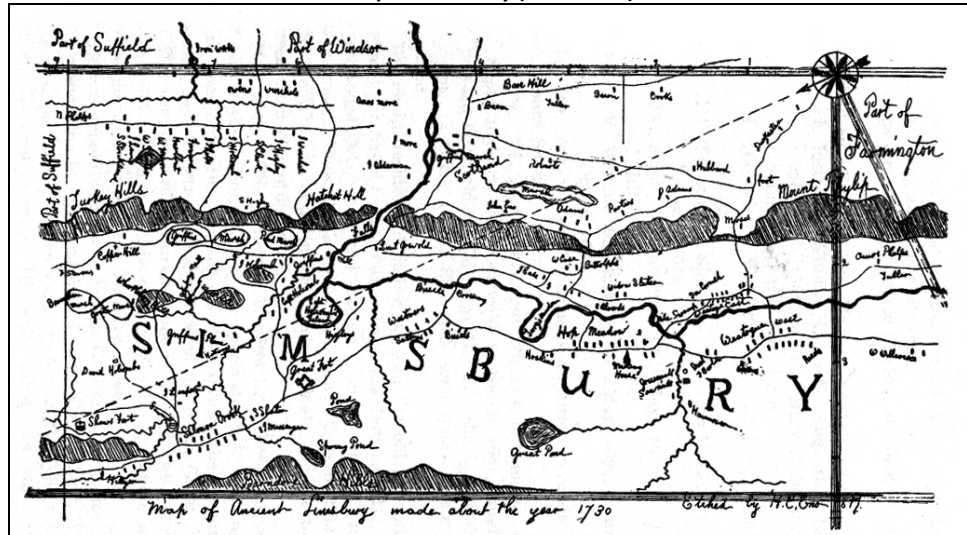
### Formation Of A Town

Life was challenging for early settlers in this area and it was made more challenging by the customs of the time where settlers would travel every week to a “meetinghouse” for religious services regardless of season or weather.

By 1670, several settlements were in place and the Colonial legislature granted “town privileges”. The original land grant covered about 100 square miles of territory (10 miles by 10 miles) and included parts of what we now know as Granby, East Granby, Canton, and Bloomfield.

As concerns over safety diminished, new settlers came to this area and moved further out to create their own homesteads. Sawmills, blacksmith shops, and other communal amenities were established along brooks and streams to support the growing economy. Tar and pitch were created from local forests. Copper was extracted from local mines.

Map of Simsbury (after 1730)



1766 Map of Connecticut



Re-Enactment Of Colonial Agriculture





## **Introduction - Conditions & Trends**

This growing settlement was resented by Native Americans. In 1676, Simsbury was the target of an organized Indian assault (one of the last of its kind in New England) where 40 houses were burned. This attack deterred some existing settlers and slowed the arrival of new settlers. However, taxes were abated for a period and settlement activity resumed.

Local ingenuity and resources combined to bring changes to the community. One of the first coins minted in America was made by Doctor Samuel Higley, a Simsbury resident. Local inventiveness led to the invention of the safety fuse and the growth of a specialized industry that later became the Ensign-Bickford Company. The unique climatic conditions of this area led to a tobacco farming industry which later specialized into "shade tobacco" grown for cigar wrappers.

The power of the Farmington River was harnessed for carpet manufacturing and what was known as Griswold Village was changed to Tariffville in recognition of the role of the Tariff Manufacturing Company. At the height of its economic strength, the population of Tariffville was almost as big as the rest of the community. Tariffville was also a social destination for people from other areas.

Economic advances also brought transportation changes. Between 1825 and 1835, an inland canal was constructed from Northampton Massachusetts, through Simsbury, to New Haven. Unfortunately, this canal was soon replaced by the advent of the railroad and several rail lines travelled through Simsbury bringing people and resources in and taking products out.

### **Age of the Automobile**

After the turn of the century, the advent of the automobile and paved roadways supported the continued growth of Simsbury. Following World War II, Simsbury experienced the same surge of growth that affected other communities in the region. A cultural trend toward suburban living and the flexibility offered by the automobile supported the development of Simsbury. Former farms were subdivided and developed and the population more than doubled between 1950 and 1960 and almost quadrupled between 1950 and the "tri-centennial" celebration in 1970.

By 1980, Simsbury had grown to be a community of over 21,000 people and the overall pattern of the community was established.

While the amount of land available for new development is limited, there continues to be considerable interest in Simsbury because of its location, character, amenities, and the quality of life it offers its residents.

## Simsbury's Population

1790	2,576
1800	2,956
1810	1,966
1820	1,954
1830	2,221
1840	1,895
1850	2,727
1860	2,410
1870	2,051
1880	1,830
1890	1,874
1900	2,094
1910	2,537
1920	2,958
1930	3,625
1940	3,941
1950	4,822
1960	10,138
1970	17,475
1980	21,161
1990	22,023
2000	23,234
2010	23,511

2020 23,206 – 23,810

2030 22,508 – 23,303

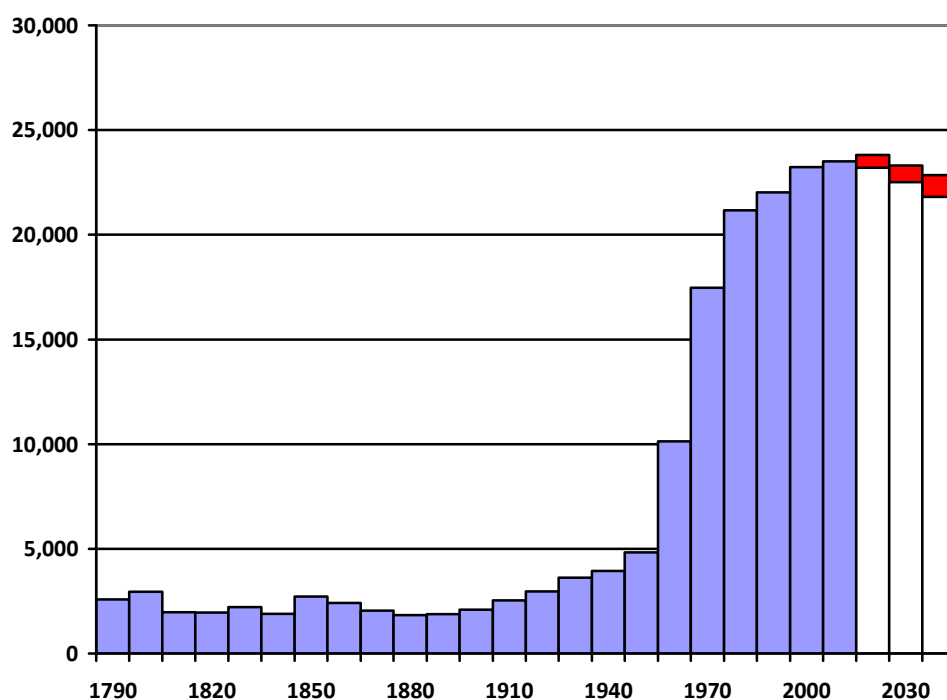
2040 21,810 – 22,850

US Census data for 1820 to 2010. Low projections from Connecticut State Data Center (do not reflect recent residential growth). High projections from Planimetrics account for reflect recent residential growth.

## People Of Simsbury / Demographics

According to the Census, Simsbury had a year 2010 population of 23,511 persons. This represents an increase of 277 persons from the 23,234 persons reported in the 2000 Census. If pre-2010 trends had continued in terms of housing construction and migration, it is projected that Simsbury would likely have lost population in the coming decades due to an aging population.

Simsbury's Population (1790 – 2010)  
(with projections to 2040 if past trends continued)



United States Census / Connecticut State Data Center

From 1950 to 1980, net in-migration was the main driver of population change in Simsbury. From 1980 to 2010, natural increase was the main driver of population change since there was net out-migration during this period.

## Components of Population Change

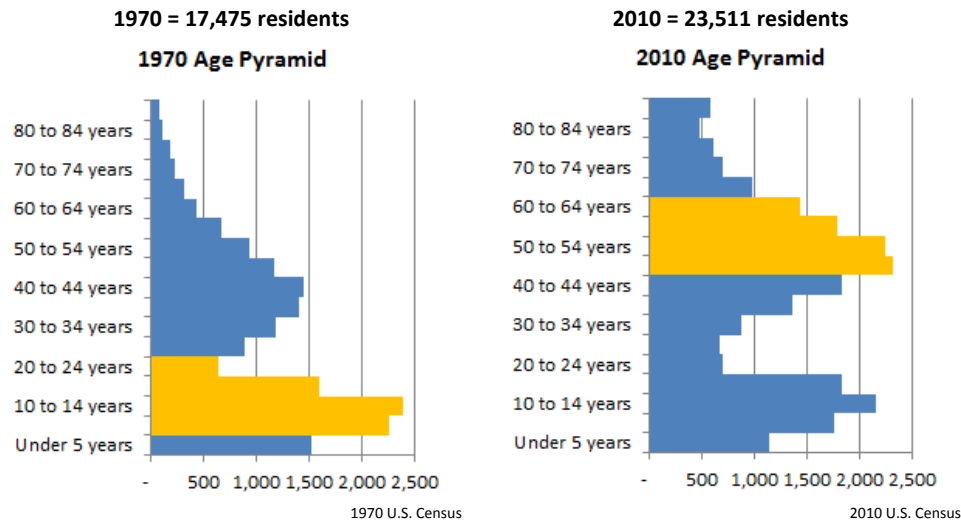
	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
Births	1,784	2,356	1,967	2,382	2,688	2,123
Deaths	499	713	954	1,182	1,496	1,480
<b>Change Due To Natural Increase</b>	<b>+1,285</b>	<b>+1,643</b>	<b>+1,013</b>	<b>+1,200</b>	<b>+1,192</b>	<b>+643</b>
<b>Total Change (from Census)</b>	<b>+5,316</b>	<b>+7,337</b>	<b>+3,686</b>	<b>+862</b>	<b>+1,211</b>	<b>+277</b>
<b>Change Due To Net Migration</b>	<b>+4,031</b>	<b>+5,694</b>	<b>+2,673</b>	<b>(338)</b>	<b>(19)</b>	<b>(366)</b>

US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports,

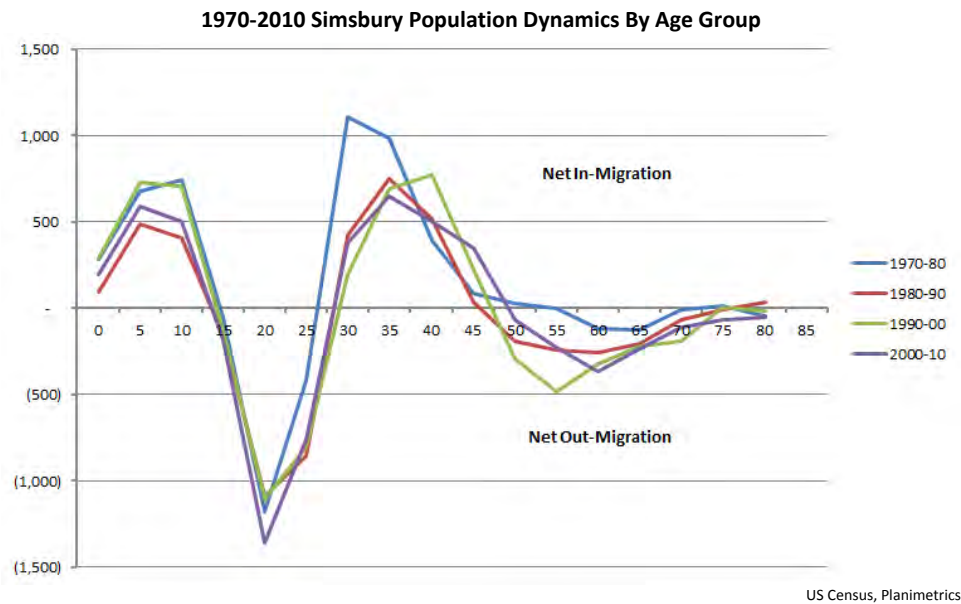
## Introduction - Conditions & Trends

### Age Composition

The age composition of Simsbury changes over time as a result of births, deaths, net migration, and natural aging. The following charts show the change in the age composition between 1970 and 2010 and the impact of the “baby boom” (people born between about 1945 and about 1965, shown in orange below).



When looked at in more detail, it can be seen that Simsbury has historically experienced *net in-migration* of families (ages 30 to 50) with children (ages 0 to 15). The following chart also shows a pattern of *net out-migration* of young adults (ages 15 to 25) and older adults (ages 50 and higher).



### Migration Patterns

Simsbury probably attracts families with children due to:

- the overall attractiveness of the school system,
- community amenities,
- location, and
- Simsbury's reputation as a family-friendly community.

The pattern of net out-migration of young adults (ages 15 to 25) and older adults (ages 50 and higher) likely reflects:

- young adults setting off to find their place in the world, and
- “empty nesters” and retired persons finding new places to live.

Even with these trends, it is anticipated that the number of people aged over 55 in Simsbury will continue to grow due to the number of people in the “baby boom” who are getting older and the fact that people are living longer.



**Housing Units**

<b>1980</b>	6,837
<b>1990</b>	8,175
<b>2000</b>	8,739
<b>2010</b>	9,123

US Census. Data for 1980 to 2010 reflects number of units. Due to data availability, data for 1960 and 1970 reflects number of households.

**Average Household Size**

<b>1980</b>	3.09
<b>1990</b>	2.69
<b>2000</b>	2.66
<b>2010</b>	2.57

US Census. Data for 1980 to 2010.

**Housing Tenure**

	<b>Own</b>	<b>Rent</b>
<b>Simsbury</b>	84%	16%
<b>State</b>	68%	32%

2010 Census

**Percent Multi-Family**

<b>State</b>	<b>35%</b>
Bloomfield	29%
Canton	22%
East Granby	20%
<b>Simsbury</b>	<b>15%</b>
Avon	17%
Granby	5%

2010 Census

**Affordable Housing**

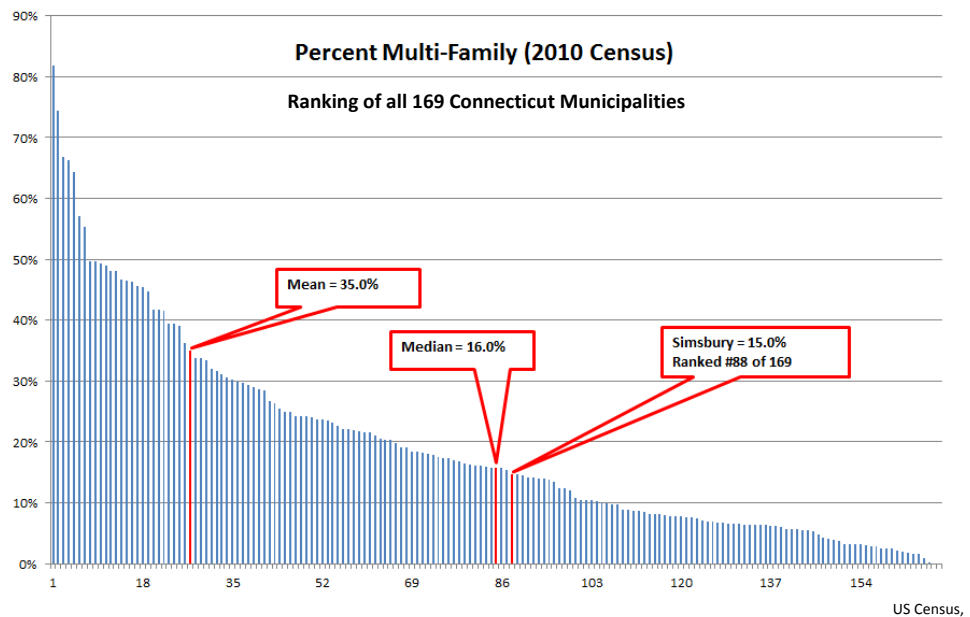
<b>State</b>	<b>11.1%</b>
Bloomfield	10.8%
Canton	7.0%
East Granby	5.1%
<b>Simsbury</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
Avon	3.8%
Granby	3.0%

CT Department of Housing, 2017

**Housing In Simsbury**

According to the U.S. Census, Simsbury had about 9,123 housing units in 2010. Between 1990 and 2010, Simsbury was adding an average of about 47 housing units per year. Prior to 1990, Simsbury had been adding an average of over 130 units per year.

The housing stock in Simsbury consists primarily of single-family detached homes. As a result, the vast majority of homes in Simsbury (84%) are owner-occupied. According to the 2010 Census, about 15 percent of the residential units in Simsbury were multi-family units at that time (in structures containing more than one dwelling unit).

**Affordable Housing**

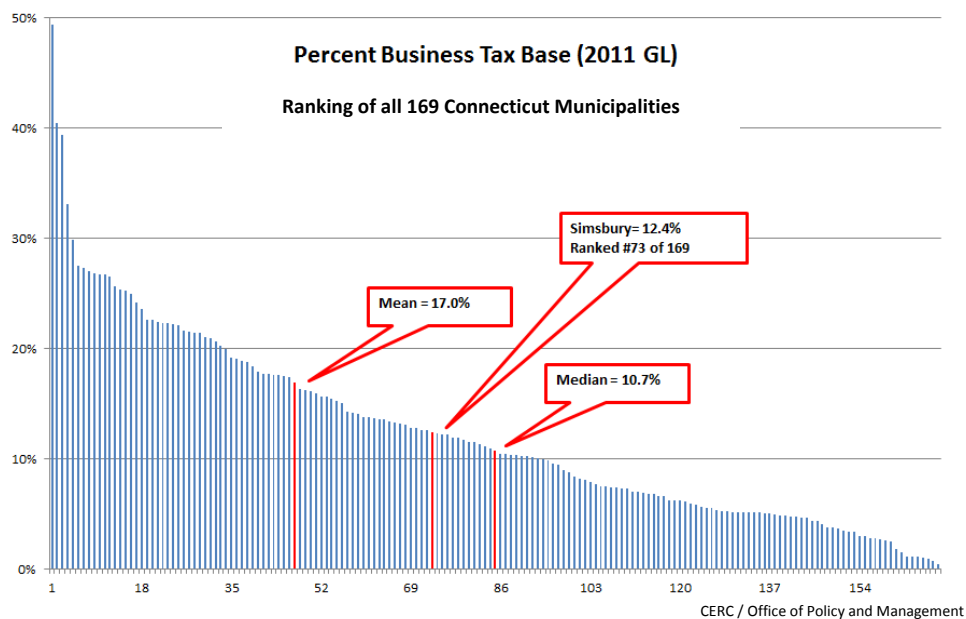
About 4.5 percent of the housing units in Simsbury meet the State definition of “affordable housing” (assisted housing, financed by Connecticut Housing Finance Authority mortgages, or sale price restricted by deed). Since less than ten percent of the housing units in Simsbury meet the State definition, Simsbury is subject to the State’s Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (codified as Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes).

The Town has been working on increasing the number of affordable housing units in ways and locations appropriate for the community.

## Economy of Simsbury

While Simsbury is not recognized as a major employment center, there are many jobs in the community. Even with the relocation of the jobs by Hartford Insurance, it is still possible that Simsbury will have more jobs than housing units and this supports the local economy.

Since Simsbury is predominantly a residential community, the Grand List (the value of taxable property) is heavily influenced by the value of residential real estate. According to data from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, the business component of the tax base is about 12.4 percent. It is important to Simsbury to maintain a strong tax base with a solid business component.



### Jobs In Simsbury

<b>1970</b>	3,473
<b>1980</b>	5,050
<b>1990</b>	9,500
<b>2000</b>	11,080
<b>2010</b>	9,929

CT Labor Dept.

### Jobs

Bloomfield	19,272
<b>Simsbury</b>	<b>9,558</b>
Avon	8,013
East Granby	3,842
Canton	3,534
Granby	2,400

CERC, 2014

### Business Tax Base

Bloomfield	22.3%
East Granby	15.3%
Canton	12.3%
<b>Simsbury</b>	<b>11.3%</b>
Avon	10.5%
Granby	4.3%

CERC, 2014

### Median Household Income

<b>Simsbury</b>	<b>\$113,224</b>
Avon	\$105,116
Granby	\$97,500
Canton	\$87,643
East Granby	\$77,596
Bloomfield	\$68,372
<b>State</b>	<b>\$67,740</b>

2010 Census

Providing Employment



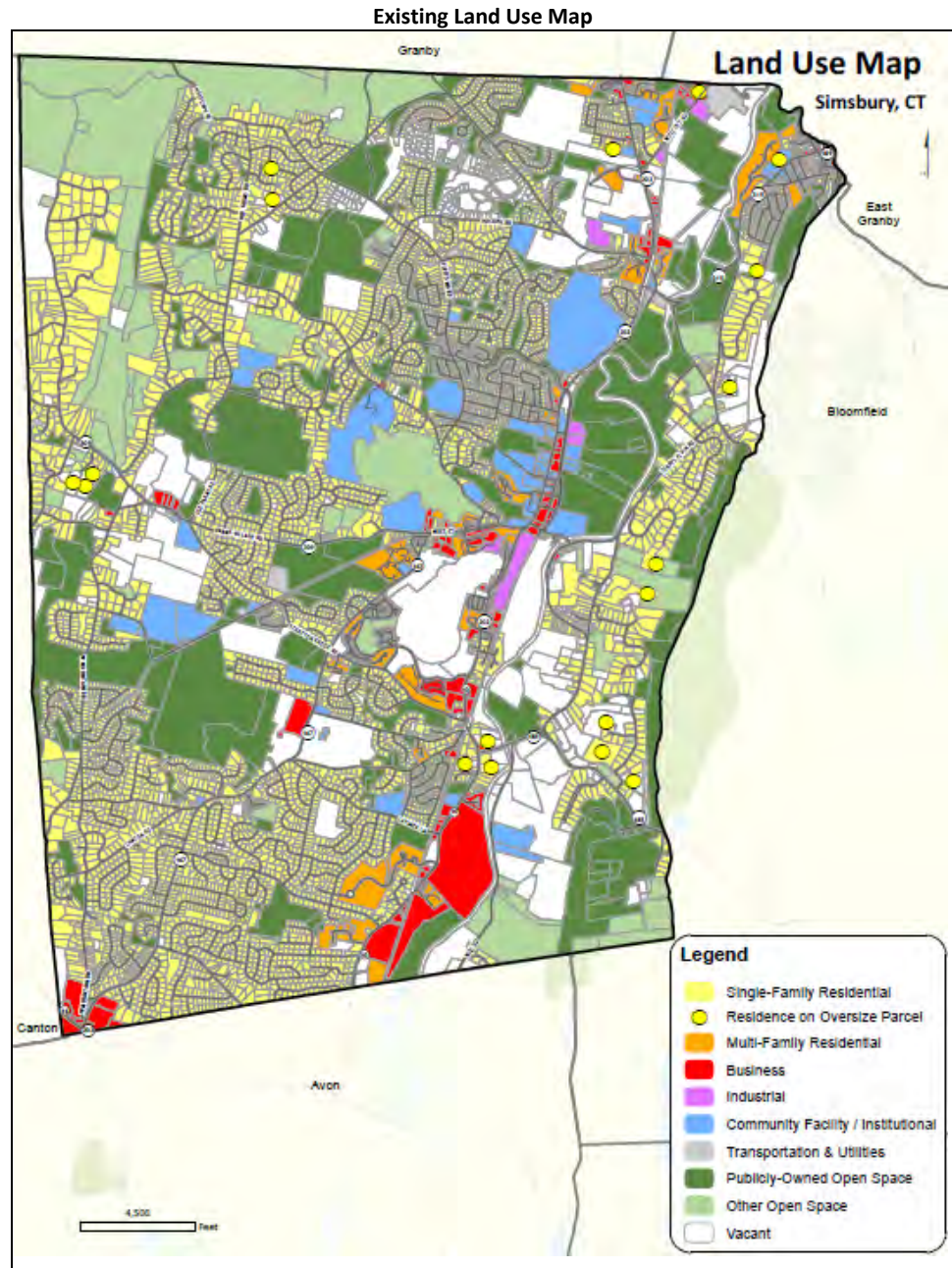
Providing Goods and Services



## Land Use In Simsbury

In 2016, the Town had the following land use map prepared based on the assessor's database. Based on this analysis, about 88 percent of the land in town is:

- developed for residential, business, institutional, or other uses, or
- committed to open space or other non-structural purposes.

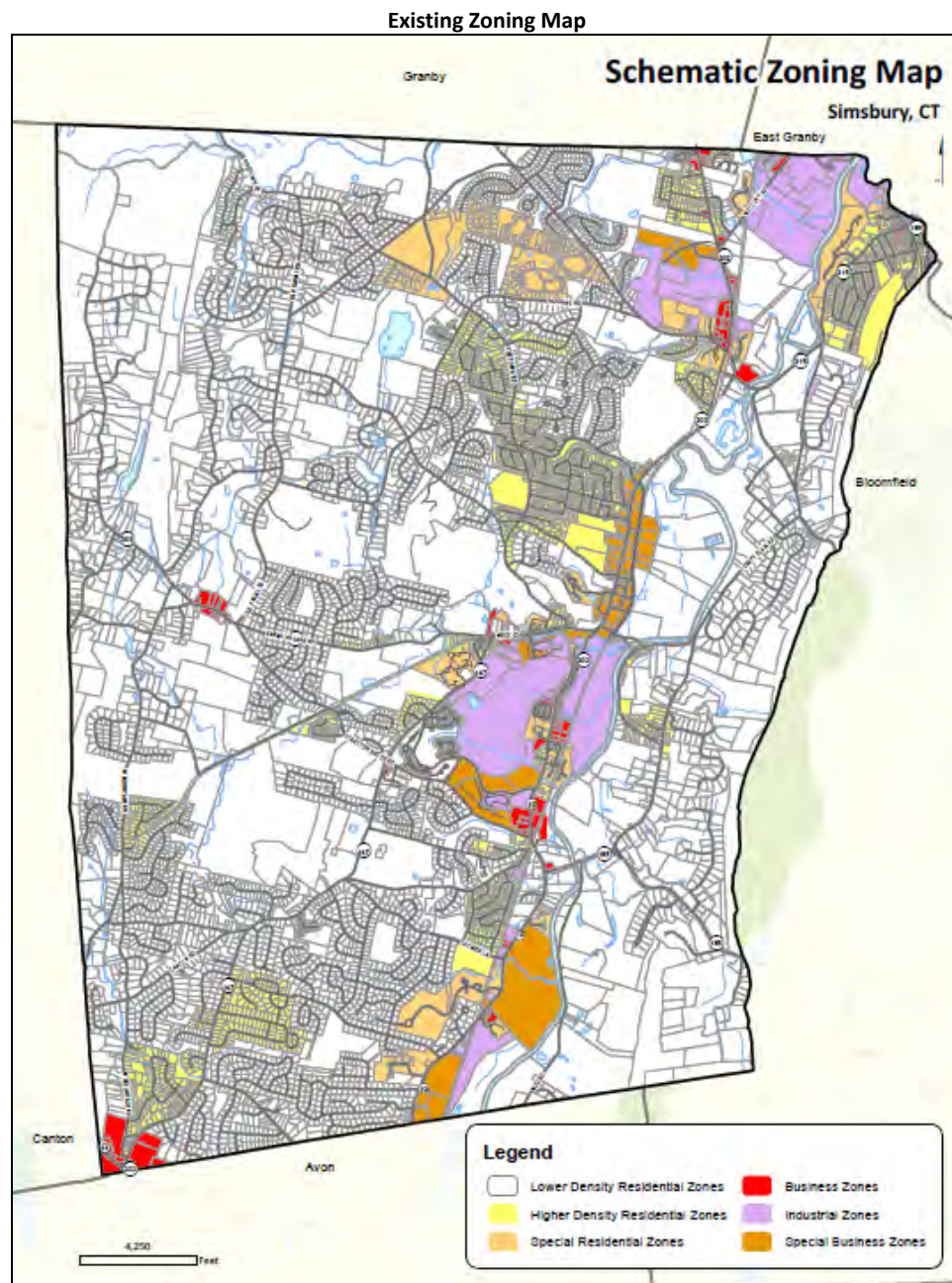




## Existing Zoning

Based on analysis of the zoning map,:

- about 91 percent of the land in town is zoned for residential use, and
- about 9 percent is zoned for business or industrial uses or for mixed use development.





**Per Capita Tax Base (ENGL)**

Avon	\$195,638
East Granby	\$154,279
Canton	\$148,941
Bloomfield	\$134,635
<b>Simsbury</b>	<b>\$133,168</b>
Granby	\$120,521

CERC, 2014

**Per Capita Expenditures**

Avon	\$4,427
Bloomfield	\$3,968
Granby	\$3,834
East Granby	\$3,794
<b>Simsbury</b>	<b>\$3,683</b>
Canton	\$3,537

CERC, 2014

**Per Capita Tax**

Avon	\$3,864
<b>Simsbury</b>	<b>\$3,474</b>
Bloomfield	\$3,414
East Granby	\$3,207
Canton	\$2,958
Granby	\$2,923

CERC, 2014

**Effective Tax Rate**

Bloomfield	34.85
<b>Simsbury</b>	<b>26.09</b>
East Granby	20.79
Canton	19.86
Avon	19.75
Granby	24.26

CERC, 2014

## Fiscal Conditions

Fiscal conditions for Connecticut municipalities are going through a major change as the State seeks to reduce state payments and push state costs to municipalities. This issue is likely to continue during the planning period and will place greater importance on communities growing their tax base and refining services to what residents are willing to pay.

In terms of tax base, Simsbury's overall grand list (the value of all taxable property in the community) was almost \$2.3 billion in 2014. On a per capita basis, Simsbury's tax base is less robust than some adjacent communities.

In terms of expenditures, Simsbury's overall budget was \$98 million in 2014 for schools (about \$74 million) and general government (about \$25 million). On a per capita basis, Simsbury's expenditures are not as high as some adjacent communities.

Due to the tax base, Simsbury's revenue raised from taxes is higher than some surrounding communities. With the potential reductions in state aid, many Connecticut communities will need to adjust spending to tax revenue or raise local property taxes. This is why tax base growth may be a greater consideration in the future.

Finally, Simsbury's effective tax rate (property taxes as a percent of estimated market value) are higher than a number of surrounding communities.

# COMMUNITY ISSUES & CONCERNS

# 4

## Overview

This section summarizes issues and concerns which were identified as part of the POCD update. These issues and concerns were identified through:

- working sessions of the Planning Commission,
- input from a community meeting devoted to hearing from Simsbury residents,
- responses to a survey of members of local boards and commissions,
- responses to a survey of Town department heads,
- listening sessions dedicated to hearing from residents and agencies about planning issues,
- a joint meeting with the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission,
- field trips around Simsbury,
- responses to an on-line survey, and
- responses to a telephone survey.

Community Meetings



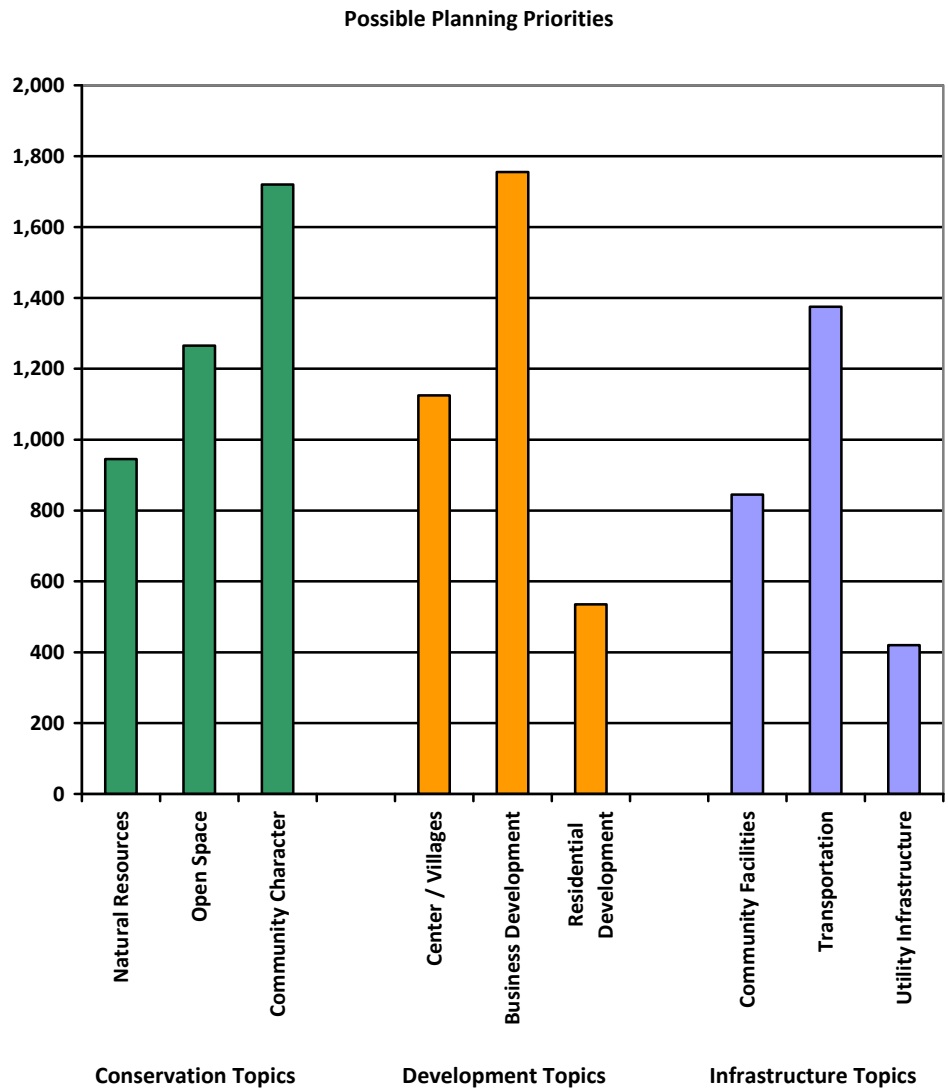
Community Surveys



## Key Issues and Topics

As part of the community meeting (November 2016) and the on-line survey, participants were asked to identify the issues most important to them as part of the POCD update. If the results of these separate exercises are combined (300 participants), the following priorities emerged among the various elements typically addressed in a POCD.

The potential planning priorities identified were business development, community character, transportation, open space, and Simsbury Center / villages.



## Telephone Survey

In order to further learn about issues important to Simsbury residents, a random sample telephone survey of residents was conducted in March 2017. A total of 400 surveys were completed by a professional survey firm using land-lines and cellular phones.

### Quality Of Life

When asked how they would rate the overall quality of life in Simsbury, participants indicated the following:

Responses	Percent
Very good	77%
Good	23%
Poor / Very poor / Not sure	0%

When asked what was the ***one thing*** the Town of Simsbury could be doing to improve the quality of life, responses included:

Theme	Responses	Percent
<b>Don't Know</b>	Don't know	26%
<b>Develop More</b>	Increase the amount of businesses / jobs, develop downtown / town center, more shopping / restaurants, more affordable housing, redevelop empty buildings / existing buildings	16%
<b>Fiscal</b>	Lowering taxes / increasing tax base	13%
<b>Nothing</b>	Nothing, none, fine as is	10%
<b>Enrichment</b>	More entertainment / activities / events, more arts / culture	7%
<b>Walk / Bike</b>	Make town more walkable / more sidewalks, become more bicycle friendly	5%
<b>Develop Less</b>	Stop building / limit additional development, less apartment buildings / less housing development	4%
<b>Traffic</b>	Better roads, improve traffic flow, better transportation options	3%
<b>Other</b>		16%

### Survey Participants

Careful attention was paid as part of the telephone survey to getting a representative response from different age groups and neighborhoods in Simsbury.

About 10 percent of participants were aged 20 to 34, about 69 percent were age 35 to 64, and about 21 percent of participants were age 65 or older.

About 30 percent of participants had lived in Simsbury for 10 years or less, about 28 percent had lived in Simsbury for 10-20 years, and about 42 percent of participants had lived in Simsbury 20 years or more.

When asked for the main reason why they moved to Simsbury, participants indicated the following:

Theme	Percent
<b>Location</b> (Close to work / family / highway)	41%
<b>Amenities</b> (Education system / recreation facilities)	25%
<b>Legacy</b> (Born here / parents moved here)	14%
<b>Character</b> (Character of town / neighborhood)	14%
<b>Other</b>	7%



## Introduction – Community Issues



This icon is used throughout the Plan to direct attention to the results of the telephone survey.

Survey responses directly related to Plan topics are generally located in the relevant chapter.

A complete summary of the telephone survey results is on file at Town Hall.

Due to the random sampling and number of responses, the survey results are expected to be representative of the community with a margin of error of about 3.5 percent.

### Key Issues

In terms of the most important issue facing Simsbury, participants indicated the following:

Theme	Responses	Percent
<b>Fiscal</b>	High taxes, Town budget, Town finances, loss of state funding, decreasing tax base	46%
<b>Development</b>	Overdevelopment of town, Town growth, Town zoning, preserving town character	11%
<b>Education</b>	Quality of the school system	9%
<b>Other</b>	Cost of living, traffic, etc.	21%
<b>No Response</b>	Not sure	13%

When asked what **one thing** they might want to change in Simsbury, responses included:

Theme	Responses	Percent
<b>Nothing</b>	Nothing / no improvements needed	25%
<b>Fiscal</b>	Lower taxes	16%
<b>Don't Know</b>	Don't know / refused	14%
<b>Develop More</b>	Encourage development / more business, more housing options, fill building vacancies / improve outdated buildings, improve downtown/town center	13%
<b>Town</b>	Improve town government, improve school systems, improve parks / recreation / activities, senior options / amenities, improve town services / amenities	12%
<b>Transportation</b>	More sidewalks / walkable areas, access to highways, bike friendly, less traffic, public transit	9%
<b>Develop Less</b>	Less development, less apartments	4%
<b>Other</b>		7%

These responses to these questions differ from the on-line survey / community meeting since the question was asked open-ended rather than from a list of pre-selected items normally addressed in a POCD.

## POCD Approach

Following the introductory exercises, the Planning Commission decided to organize the 2017 POCD around the main thematic elements:



- **What We Want To Protect (Conservation-Related Strategies)** - Things Simsbury wants to protect or preserve in the future.



- **How We Want To Grow (Development-Related Strategies)** - How Simsbury wants to guide future growth and change.



- **What We Want To Provide (Infrastructure-Related Strategies)** - Facilities Simsbury wants to support the overall vision.



- **Looking Ahead (Implementation-Related Strategies)** - How Simsbury intends to accomplish the overall vision.

### Additional POCD Guidance

In addition to following the general organization of the 2007 POCD, the Planning Commission expressed a desire to improve upon the user-friendliness of the 2007 POCD by:

1. Crafting a shorter, well-illustrated POCD.
2. Providing an executive summary to summarize the main principles and recommendations.
3. Using a logical numbering system to be able to refer to policies and programs.
4. Adding an overall “mission statement.”
5. Reducing repetition by placing strategies in one logical place and providing cross-references where needed.
6. Coordinating and prioritizing the recommendations to avoid the appearance of a “laundry list” of items.
7. Providing guidance in the event of conflicts between recommendations.
8. Identifying who will be responsible for implementation of a specific recommendation.

## POCD Recommendations

In the chapters that follow, the POCD identifies four types of recommendations:

- **Goal** – the overall purpose or outcome desired with regard to that topic.
- **Strategy** – a plan of action for accomplishing the goal.
- **Policy** – an *on-going* approach or position to help implement the strategy.
- **Action Step** – a *specific discrete task* which can be identified, initiated, managed, monitored, and completed to help implement the policy and/or strategy. The action steps are highlighted in red text to draw attention to the specific pro-active things that can be done to implement the POCD. The checkboxes are to highlight when they have been completed.

In addition, each policy and action step identifies leaders and partners. The top listed acronym is the “leader” and this is the organization with primary responsibility for implementation. The other acronyms are “partners” and these are other organizations involved in implementation. A legend for the acronyms used to identify leaders and partners is contained in the inside back cover.

The diagram illustrates the components of a POCD recommendation and how they are identified in a sample document. Red arrows point from labels on the left to corresponding elements in the sample POCD page on the right.

- Goal:** Points to the **GOAL** section: *Maintain an appropriate balance between the use of land and the conservation of natural resources.*
- Strategy:** Points to the **5.1 Protect surface and groundwater quality.** section.
- Policy:** Points to the **A. WATER QUALITY - Simsbury will:** section.
- Action Step (red text):** Points to the red text action step: *a. Review map boundaries and text related to locally defined aquifer areas.*
- Leader / Partners:** Points to the table listing leaders and partners for the action step.

**Sample POCD Page Content:**

**GOAL**  
*Maintain an appropriate balance between the use of land and the conservation of natural resources.*

**5.1 Protect surface and groundwater quality.**

**A. WATER QUALITY - Simsbury will:**

	Leader	Partners
1. Continue to protect water quality.	Town	FVHD DEEP
2. Administer and enforce regulations intended to protect: • existing public water supply wells, and • aquifers and associated recharge areas.	Town	CWC DEEP
<input type="checkbox"/> a. <i>Review map boundaries and text related to locally defined aquifer areas.</i>	ZC	
3. Consider impacts on water quality and public health as part of land use decisions.	FVHD	Town
4. Coordinate with other organizations to protect water quality and remediate threats to water quality or public health.	Town	FVHD DEEP

*Outgoing and Ingoing  
media based on*

**B. UD (Water Quality) - Simsbury will:**

	Leader	Partners
1. Promote the use of “low impact development” (LID) strategies, where appropriate, to help protect water quality.	Town	
<input type="checkbox"/> a. <i>Review Town regulations for opportunities to minimize impervious surface as part of new development.</i>	ZC	
<input type="checkbox"/> b. <i>Update engineering standards to incorporate “best management practices” for LID.</i>	PW	
2. Where LID strategies for protecting water quality are appropriate, utilize other mechanisms (such as particle separator chambers and bio-remediation filters) to minimize degradation of water quality.	PW	

*Outgoing and Ingoing  
media based on*