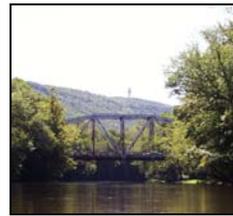


SIMSBURY



2007 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT



COVER LEGEND

*What We Want
To Protect*

**Natural
Resources**

**Open
Space**

**Agricultural
Resources**

**Historic
Resources**

**Scenic
Resources**

**Community
Character**

*How We Want
To Grow*

**A Future
By Design**

**Special
Areas**

**Economic
Development**

Housing

*What We Want
To Provide*

**Community
Facilities &
Recreation**

Transportation

Infrastructure

Implementation

Implementation

WELCOME



WELCOME TO SIMSBURY'S 2007 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Simsbury Planning Commission is pleased to present the adopted 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development. The Plan is based on significant community input and discussion over the past five years and reflects the Commission's consideration of hundreds of hours and pages of spoken and written comments from Simsbury's residents and organizations.

For example, the Commission hosted three Public Information Meetings on the Draft Plan in November of 2006, accepting wide-ranging oral and written comments. At the Public Hearing on Adoption of the Proposed Plan on September 19, 2007, the Commission received oral and written comments. On October 9, 2007, the Commission voted to adopt the 2007 Plan with an effective date of November 3, 2007.

We encourage you to become familiar with Simsbury's 2007 Plan. The Plan's ongoing implementation will necessitate reliance on continuing input and broad participation by individuals and organizations. In turn, the Plan's successful implementation will ensure the preservation and enhancement of Simsbury's extraordinary character and qualities.

For the Planning Commission,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "John Loomis".

John Loomis, Chairman
November 3, 2007

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Why Plan?



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.

An established community, Simsbury has a special appearance, function, and character. Integral to those properties is Simsbury's remarkable variety, including its natural and manmade landscapes, rural and suburban neighborhoods, historic and contemporary architecture, and a diversity of industry and commerce.

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 regulations 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 of conservation and development. 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.

The 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development 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.

Introduction - Why Plan?

Tension between growth and quality of life causes the most conflicts, yet there is a difference between growth as a measure of increased economic activity in the short-run, versus sustainable development that improves lives from one generation to the next. "Getting bigger" is not the same as "getting better." Today's planning challenge is to advance the built environment while protecting Simsbury's origins and to understand how to connect its past accomplishments to contemporary and future needs. 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.

Our overall vision is to protect and enhance those features of Simsbury that we value. The appropriate regulations to secure those features must be the result of an ongoing community-wide examination of what it is that we have and value, how those resources may be vulnerable to change or amenable to enhancement, and which growth strategies will assist us in achieving our vision.

Becoming a more vibrant and sustainable community is a long journey; planning is the process to secure our chosen destiny - a community by choice. This 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development is the Town's statement of what we want our future to be and how we propose to achieve and manage it.

This 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development is the Town's statement of what we want our future to be and how we propose to achieve and manage it.

Plan Summary



Overview

This 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development connects our vision for Simsbury with the nature and location of our future development.

In preparing this Plan, the Planning Commission examined the 1994 Plan of Development, and drew heavily on input from more than thirty presentations by the Town's Boards and Commissions, special interest organizations, professional consultants, and individuals.

We have made choices that honor the expressed needs of residents and the need to preserve the natural and manmade features we treasure. We have made choices that are intended to foster a sense of community, preserve the landscape, and encourage responsible economic development that will enhance our town.

The choices expressed in this Plan are intended to:

- *foster a sense of community,*
- *preserve the landscape, and*
- *encourage responsible economic development that will enhance our town.*

Introduction - Plan Summary

Existing Land Use and Zoning

A review of how land in Simsbury is used found that about 85 percent of the land in town is:

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

Use	Acres	Subtotal	Percent
Residential		8,296.7	37.8%
Single Family	7,894.5		
Apartment / Multi Family	402.2		
Business		777.2	3.5%
Offices / Light Commercial	493.9		
General Business / Intensive Business	131.3		
Light-Heavy Industrial /	151.9		
Open Space		6,594.4	30.1%
Town / State Open Space	4,038.8		
Non-Profit & Non-Active Open Space	1,031.9		
Private / Managed Open Space	1,114.3		
Acquired Development Rights / Conservation Easement	409.4		
Institutional		1,431.0	6.5%
School (public and private)	1,050.7		
Local Government / Public and Quasi Public Facilities	380.3		
Transportation / Water		1,668.0	7.6%
Vacant		3,173.7	14.5%
Totals		21,940.8	100.0%

Source: New England Geo-Systems based on Town of Simsbury GIS data (2006).

Existing Land Use Map

(Flip page up)

Introduction - Plan Summary

Existing Zoning

Over 90 percent of the land in Simsbury is zoned for residential use. Approximately 2,067 acres are zoned for business or industrial use.

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Residential		19,874.0	90.6%
R-160	1,768.7		
R-80 / R-80OS	3,867.6		
R-40 / R-40 OS	11,487.7		
R-30 / R-25	843.4		
R-15	1,056.4		
Designed Multiple Residence / Apartment Zone	473.8		
Housing Opportunity Development	376.6		
Business		572.4	2.6%
Center Zones (including A, B, C, D)	317.6		
Restricted Business	60.9		
General Business	98.0		
Designed Business Development	79.0		
Professional Office	16.9		
Industrial		1,494.4	6.8%
Restricted Industrial	835.0		
General Industrial	604.6		
Earth Excavation	54.8		
Totals		21,940.8	100.0%

Source: New England Geo-Systems based on Town of Simsbury GIS data (2006).

Existing Zoning Map

(Flip page up)

Introduction - Plan Summary

Plan Elements and Highlights

The 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development contains sections addressing each of the topics listed below. The goals, policies and objectives presented for each of these topics are intended to move Simsbury toward the overall vision expressed in the Plan.

What We Want To Protect

- Natural Resources
- Open Space
- Agricultural Resources
- Historic Resources
- Scenic Resources
- Community Character

How We Want To Grow

- A Future By Design
- Special Areas
- Economic Development
- Housing

What We Want To Provide

- Community Facilities & Recreation
- Transportation
- Infrastructure

How We Will Make It Happen

- Implementation
- Future Land Use Plan
- Looking Ahead

Introduction - Plan Summary

Highlights - What We Want To Protect

Natural Resources

As with prior Plans, the 2007 Plan is rooted in protecting important environmental resources and encouraging environmentally sensitive site designs in Simsbury. The Plan recommends clustering as a method of increasing density on the environmentally less sensitive areas of a site proposed for development.

Open Space

Acquiring and retaining open space is the preferred method of protecting the Town's natural, historic, cultural, agricultural, and scenic resources --- all of which are critical to Simsbury's "sense of place". The Plan identifies programs and strategies to help preserve these resources and proposes a heightened focus towards interconnecting areas with a town-wide network of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, paths, and multi-purpose trails.

Agricultural Resources / Historic Resources / Scenic Resources

Simsbury has a rich agricultural history and this Plan recommends strategies to help support the farms and preserve the farmland that remains.

Many communities are working to create the historic character that Simsbury already has. The Plan seeks to underscore the Town's historic riches as a character asset and as an increasingly valuable economic and tourism resource.

Simsbury has many exemplary visual resources such as scenic vistas and the views of our ridgelines --- all of which are critical to Simsbury's "sense of place". The Plan recommends strategies to help protect these resources.

Community Character

There are many resources which contribute to the overall character of Simsbury - a character which is recognized and treasured by residents and visitors. The Plan recommends strategies to preserve and enhance this character.

Introduction - Plan Summary

Highlights - How We Want To Grow

A Future By Design

The 2007 Plan recommends that Simsbury consider amending local regulations to incorporate some type of “form-based coding” which will focus more on “form” than on “use” in order to recognize, embrace, reinforce, and enhance the “sense of place” that exists in Simsbury. The Plan also recommends adopting mixed-use regulations for Simsbury Center and the village centers with specific design criteria and requirements.

Special Areas

Simsbury has an extraordinary diversity of “character places” that gives our town a special quality. This section of the Plan identifies policies and objectives for some of these areas in order to guide future development in ways that enhance the overall character of Simsbury and the desirable features of these areas.

Economic Development

The 2007 Plan recognizes the importance of an economic balance within Simsbury and recommends policies and programs to:

- 1) develop an understanding of the net economic impact of each type of development.
- 2) recruit businesses that will have the most positive and sustainable net economic impact for the Town.
- 3) encourage business expansion by existing and new entities.
- 4) implement programs to assist with economic development (establish incentives, streamline the application process, consider establishing a development agency).

Housing

The Plan seeks to continue many of the policies that have created the attractive residential neighborhoods that comprise the community. The Plan also recommends:

- 1) enabling and promoting greater diversity in Simsbury’s housing options, and
- 2) allowing mixed-use developments that will create residences of varying types close to, and within, commercial areas.

Introduction - Plan Summary

Highlights - What We Want To Provide

Community Facilities and Recreation

The Plan reaffirms the Planning Commission's statutory duty to review capital improvement projects to ensure that the proposed projects reflect community needs and are consistent with The Plan.

Transportation

The Plan's goal is to place a renewed focus on alternative modes of local transportation and their beneficial effects. Among the emphases are:

- 1) implementation of "park and walk" opportunities in the village centers, at a minimum including Simsbury Center and Tariffville, and
- 2) expansion of, and creation of, a network of sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and multi-use paths.

Infrastructure

The Plan recognizes the need to be proactive and collaborative when planning for the development and maintenance of Simsbury's infrastructure, e.g., the adequacy and safety of the public water supply; and the availability of high-speed data communication technologies.

Introduction - Plan Summary

Highlights - How We Will Make It Happen

Implementation

Implementation of the strategies and recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development is the main purpose of the planning process.

For the Plan to be realized, it must serve as a guide not only to local boards and commissions -- but to all residents, businesses, builders, developers, applicants, owners, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly conservation and development of Simsbury.

Some of the key implementation recommendations include:

- allocating sufficient resources to planning and land use to help make this Plan a reality,
- improving the land use review process,
- updating the zoning and subdivision regulations to reflect recommendations of the Plan,
- using the recommendations of the Plan when reviewing applications,
- encouraging consistency between the Plan and the municipal operating budget and capital budget,
- establishing a Plan Implementation Committee to help implement the Plan, and
- maintaining and updating the Plan in incremental steps over time rather than in one major initiative every ten years.

Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan illustrates the location and intensity of *future* land uses that are desired. In addition, the consistency of this Plan with state and regional planning objectives is discussed.

Looking Ahead

The Plan ends with a summary of some future steps that will need to be taken to maintain and update the Plan. In addition, this section contains a "Future Land Use Plan" which summarizes the other elements of the Plan into one overall plan and evaluates consistency of this Plan with state and regional plans.

Natural Resources



Overview

Natural resource information is critical to any type of land use planning because it allows a community to assess the impacts of various types of development from an environmental standpoint.

By acquiring and utilizing natural resource information, it is possible to minimize environmental degradation while at the same time facilitating or enhancing appropriate development. Resources such as biodiversity, wetlands, flood hazard areas, agricultural lands, streambelts, aquifers, scenic vistas, steep slopes and other unique natural areas must be identified to determine their need for protection and their limitations for intensive land uses. By identifying these areas, we can have significant impact on shaping patterns of development in the community.

Knowledge of the natural resource base not only aids in identification of areas where lands should be protected, but also helps to define where appropriate growth should be directed.

Until recently, the task of identifying “environmentally sensitive” areas has posed a challenge for the Planning Commission and the Town. Although previous versions of the Plan have referred to “wildlife corridors,” “significant habitats,” and “conservation areas,” the data needed to identify these unique, often fragile, places was often lacking.

Now, the data are more accessible and, with the availability of geographic information systems (GIS) and data collected by the State for the Natural Diversity Database and by other public and private agencies, this effort has become easier.

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

For example, thanks to the Farmington River Watershed Association and its Biodiversity Project, Simsbury now is better able to identify areas that are “environmentally sensitive.” This project and its related implementation guidelines have gained widespread recognition and have resulted in the Farmington Valley being listed as one of the nation’s 19 most nature-friendly places to live (Nature Friendly Communities, Island Press, 2005). The Biodiversity Project’s “Conservation Area Map” and its associated databases (and similar efforts) will be a valuable tool for the Planning, Zoning, and Conservation and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commissions in their land use reviews.

By better identifying the remaining critical natural resources in Simsbury, we are in a position to encourage more “environmentally sensitive” site designs. At its most basic level, this type of site design suggests “clustering” as one method of development which might locate proposed uses on the less sensitive areas of a site in order to better preserve and protect those areas that are more critical. In addition, recent amendments to the Connecticut General Statutes now permit so-called “pre-applications” which allow for a preliminary review of the site’s proposed layout. The effective use of both pre-application reviews and tools such as the Biodiversity Project will allow both the Town and the applicant to identify these critical natural resources early on in the land use approval process.

Prospectively, this will likely lead to more environmentally-sensitive developments while also saving the applicant time and expense.

Goals, Policies & Objectives

GOAL

Maintain a balance between the use of land and the need to conserve natural resources.

Maintain the ecological integrity of the landscape, both in Simsbury and at the regional level.

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

Policy 1	CONSERVATION - Identify and protect wildlife corridors, significant geologic and natural features, and significant natural communities and habitats.
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Objective A: Preserve areas listed by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in the Natural Areas Inventory (such as Tariffville Gorge, King Phillip Cave, Horseshoe Cove, Lucy Brook Ravine, Hedgehog Mountain, Sugarloaf Mountain, King Phillip Brook Ravine) and any conservation areas provided in the Farmington Valley Biodiversity Project’s Conservation Area Map. Appropriate methods for preserving unique natural areas might be conservation easements, acquisition, or the purchase of development rights.

Objective B: Where necessary, restrict public access and use of environmentally sensitive areas to educational or scientific purposes in order to minimize adverse impacts.

Objective C: Utilize the database at the DEP’s Natural Resources Office and Farmington Valley Biodiversity Project to identify and protect rare and endangered species of plants and animals and their natural communities and habitats in and around Simsbury.

Objective D: Protect trap rock ridges and steep slopes (grade over 20%) from development.

Policy 2	CONSERVATION - Encourage land uses compatible with the conservation of the Farmington River, its tributaries, and its floodplain, recognizing the unique natural, aesthetic, recreational, agricultural and educational characteristics of the river.
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Objective A: Encourage the Zoning Commission to strictly enforce their use restrictions associated with the Floodplain Zone which is defined as “all land adjacent to the Farmington River that falls at or below the FEMA 100-year flood elevation (A- Zone)”.

Objective B: Encourage the formation of a Farmington River Greenway project linking river corridor open space lands throughout the Farmington River Valley.

Objective C: Encourage the acquisition of land or public access rights, where feasible, to land adjacent to the Farmington River for active and passive recreational use.

Floodplain Ordinance

In addition to the Floodplain Zone, Simsbury also has a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance.

While both provisions (zoning and ordinance) apply along the Farmington River, there are other places where one applies.

This has the potential to create confusion, especially if the regulations are not carefully coordinated.

During the planning period, it may make sense to:

- reevaluate the provisions of the Ordinance and update as needed,
- convert the Floodplain Zone to an “overlay zone” that identifies all floodplains in Simsbury (not just the floodplain along the Farmington River),
- map all floodplains on the Zoning Map, and
- refer in the Zoning Regulations to the Ordinance

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

Objective D: Ensure that public access be provided to the Farmington River when new developments are planned adjacent to the Farmington River floodplain, where feasible and appropriate.

Objective E: Continue to enforce the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year Flood Zone Ordinance to qualify for the Federal Flood Insurance Program.

Objective F: Encourage the adoption of regulations that provide for appropriate setbacks along stream belts (possibly including flood-prone areas identified in the town wide drainage study).

Objective G: Maintain an open dialogue with the Farmington River Watershed Association and support its continuing efforts to manage the watershed.

Objective H: Retain areas of annual flooding, floodplains, and wetlands in their natural state to the maximum extent possible to preserve water quality, protect water retention capabilities, facilitate flood flow levels, and reduce the hazards and costs associated with flooding.

Objective I: Prevent increases in the magnitude and frequency of stormwater run-off so as to prevent an increase in flood flows and in the hazards and costs associated with flooding.

Objective J: Prevent decreases in groundwater recharge and stream base flow so as to maintain aquatic life, assimilative capacity and potential water supplies.

Policy	
3	CONSERVATION - Protect surface and groundwater quality.

Objective A: Reduce the amount of nutrients, sediment, organic matter, pesticides, and other harmful substances that reach watercourses, wetlands, or subsurface water bodies by using scientifically proven processes including filtration, deposition, absorption, plant uptake, and denitrification, and by improving infiltration, encouraging sheet flow, and stabilizing concentrated flows.

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

Objective B: Designate land uses on the Land Use Plan that are consistent with state and local water quality standards.

Objective C: Utilizing data from the Groundwater Drawdown Study, designate land uses consistent with protection of public or private wells and recharge areas.

Objective D: Encourage continued enforcement of regulations that protect groundwater aquifers in land use decisions, including the Aquifer Overlay Zone. Work to gain the State Department of Environmental Protection's approval of the Town's Aquifer Protection Plan.

Objective E: Coordinate with the DEP and provide continued enforcement of polluted groundwater restoration activities/programs.

Objective F: Initiate studies to identify and eliminate non-point sources of groundwater pollution.

Objective G: Encourage developers to evaluate the impact of proposed wells on existing wells where soil and geological conditions warrant.

Objective H: Study the use and location of chemical additives to the soil (e.g., pesticides, fertilizers) in agriculturally utilized areas, as well as throughout town, past and present.

Objective I: Continue to support the underground tank ordinance.

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

Impervious Surface Development

Impervious surfaces are those which do not allow for the vertical drainage of water (percolation) into the soil.

Roofs, roads, and paved parking areas are examples of surfaces which are essentially impervious.

Impervious surfaces can be a concern since they:

- can accelerate the rate of runoff,
- can increase the quantity of runoff,
- do not attenuate pollutants, and
- may increase the temperature of runoff water.

Policy 4	CONSERVATION - Improve surface water quality in the town's drainage network prior to its discharge to the Farmington River.
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Objective A: Complete the upgrade to Simsbury's Water Pollution Treatment Facility to provide maximum treatment of discharged water and seek continued improvements in the future.

Objective B: Coordinate with other Towns in the Farmington River and Pequabuck River Watersheds to improve water quality in the Farmington River and to discourage reduction in water flow particularly for (large) diversions out of the Farmington Watershed and the Pequabuck Watershed.

Objective C: Maintain water flow of the Farmington River to appropriate standards to maintain dilution levels above minimum Class B standards and recreational uses at the existing high quality level.

Objective D: Utilizing data from the town-wide drainage study, require that new development comply with zero increase in the rate of runoff where appropriate to minimize flooding, erosion and sedimentation.

Objective E: Utilize the Sedimentation and Erosion Control Ordinance and the Inland Wetlands Regulations to protect stream corridors from erosion and sedimentation.

Objective F: Utilize mechanisms such as particle separator chambers and bio-remediation filters to improve surface water quality in the town's drainage network prior to its discharge to the Farmington River.

Objective G: Support and encourage studies to identify and eliminate non-point sources of pollution in the Town's surface drainage network.

Objective H: Support regulation changes which minimize impervious surface development. Update engineering standards to adopt "best management practices" as identified in the "Impervious Surface Study" done by the Farmington River Watershed Association. Examine use of permeable surface material, such as pervious pavers, in areas of flood plain, floodplain fringe, wetland fringe or riparian corridors when such drainage benefits or appearance benefits would be appropriate.

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

Objective I: Develop a schedule for retrofitting existing deficient stormwater systems to reduce environmental impacts and be in accordance with best management practices.

Objective J: Require primary treatment on all storm drainage systems and discourage “piped storm water systems” in favor of systems that provide bio-remediation from overland flow and infiltration of “clean water” to provide groundwater recharge.

Objective K: Promote on-site infiltration of storm water through the use of rain gardens, dry wells, rain barrels and other similar means where such techniques are appropriate.

Policy 5	CONSERVATION - Actively participate in regional conservation planning meetings and workshops including the Farmington Valley Biodiversity Project and these sponsored by the Capitol Region Council of Governments to promote the protection and enhancement of the environment.
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Policy 6	CONSERVATION - Encourage the use of “green building” strategies for new and redeveloped properties using recognized best practices.
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Policy 7	DEVELOPMENT - Ensure that developments and development patterns take into consideration the natural features and conditions of the land.
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Objective A: Require developers to preserve natural land features by designing buildings to harmonize with the natural surroundings.

Objective B: Use techniques such as open space cluster zoning and view sector regulations to preserve farmland, scenic areas, wetlands, streambelts, fields and woodlands, other natural areas, and historic buildings and sites.

Green Building Strategies

Green building” strategies are design practices which result in structures that have a minimal impact on the environment.

Use of passive and active solar energy use techniques are examples of strategies which can result in minimal impact, because fossil fuel and electrical energy use is thereby reduced resulting in lower costs.

The phrase “sustainable development” is also used to define the use of best practices in the built environment.

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

Conservation Protection Areas

A specific geographic area containing exceptional or unique environmental characteristics and designated a conservation area by the Town of Simsbury.

Policy 8	DEVELOPMENT - Encourage development away from conservation areas or areas that are unsuitable due to the presence of steep slopes, soils with severe development limitations, wetlands, riparian corridors, public water supply aquifers and associated recharge areas, significant natural communities and habitats or other sensitive natural conditions.
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Objective A: Utilize the Farmington Valley Biodiversity Project’s Conservation Area Map and the DEP’s Natural Diversity Database Maps to guide efforts to protect “environmentally sensitive” areas.

- Utilize the map in the Planning, Zoning and Conservation and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commissions’ land use review process.

Objective B: If development (except a single-family dwelling) is proposed within conservation areas, undertake a study to:

- identify critical natural resources and potential impacts on the resources,
- encourage environmentally sensitive site designs that avoid critical resources and keep ecological connections intact,
- preserve open space, and
- use best development/management practices.

Objective C: Encourage the preservation of sensitive sites through the use of conservation easements, fee simple purchase or purchase of development rights.

Objective D: Encourage the Zoning Commission to continue very low-density zoning in non-sewered areas where slopes exceed 20% or where soils have severe limitations for on-site septic systems.

Objective E: Protect aquifers, wetlands, natural drainage systems, steep slopes, “Conservation Protection Areas”, and other environmentally sensitive areas by directing development away from these sites.

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

Objective F: Connect open spaces with each other to the greatest extent possible to allow for the preservation of wildlife habitat and other environmental functions and maintain ecological connectivity.

Objective G: Monitor and assess the effectiveness of zoning and subdivision regulations and Town ordinances for aquifer protection on a periodic basis with particular attention to existing and potential water supply aquifers and associated recharge areas.

Objective H: Encourage the Zoning Commission to maintain a minimum R-40 Zone in non-sewered areas over designated stratified drift aquifers as defined by the USGS and consider re-zoning these areas to R-80.

Objective I: Maintain unfragmented wildlife corridors along the trap rock ridges on both the east and west side of town and actively seek to preserve parcels of open space that will provide linkage between these two systems.

Objective J: Retain / enhance natural, vegetated buffers between wetlands and/or watercourses and any soil disturbance or material stockpiles associated with construction or road building activities.

Objective K: Encourage a “pre-application” process for proposed development within conservation areas. Preliminary layouts will provide information to the commissions and guidance to the applicant by identifying areas of concern for further study so as to minimize delay, expense and inconvenience to the applicant and the Town upon future receipt of a formal application.

Objective L: Require developments to use habitat-friendly design elements. For example, low-angle curbing eases crossing by reptiles and other small animals.

Objective M: Require applicants to prepare a “context plan” using topographic and wetlands maps showing the site in relation to sensitive resources and surrounding properties.

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

“Dark Skies”

The term “dark skies” is used to draw attention to light pollution and its impact upon night skies.

Several decades ago, there was little night lighting being used so its overall impact was not particularly noticeable. Nowadays, excessive night lighting is having an overall impact on communities and the quality of life. It also wastes electricity.

A dark-skies ordinance typically:

- requires all outdoor light fixtures to shine downward only.
- prohibits light streaming up into the night sky, where it interferes with a clear view.

According to the International Dark Sky Association, an estimated 1,000 cities and towns in the U.S. have enacted some form of dark-sky ordinance.

Policy 9	DEVELOPMENT - Encourage land use and development patterns and practices that protect air quality.
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Objective A: Require industrial, commercial, and residential development to implement best management practices to protect air quality.

Objective B: Encourage the expansion and retention of trees and vegetation to provide a mechanism to filter airborne pollutants and to improve air quality.

Objective C: Request periodic monitoring of Simsbury’s air quality by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Air Quality Division.

Objective D: Encourage carpools, vanpools, commuter buses, bike trails, and other forms of public transportation to reduce auto emissions and protect air quality.

Policy 10	DEVELOPMENT - Evaluate adverse environmental impacts generated from construction in new or existing developed areas.
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Objective A: Minimize surface and groundwater impacts that affect water quality and water quantity.

Objective B: Recommend that the Board of Selectmen consider adopting a noise ordinance (perhaps similar to the one adopted in Farmington).

Objective C: Minimize impacts of noise on residential areas from commercial and industrial uses.

Objective D: Implement a “dark skies” ordinance in order to minimize impacts of ambient light generated by streetlights, parking lots, and vehicular traffic.

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

Objective E: Adopt the “Best Development Practices” (Metropolitan Conservation Alliance technical paper series: No. 5) as a basis for evaluation of potential impacts on vernal pool ecosystems and incorporate those practices into land use regulations.

Objective F: Retrofit old stormwater systems in order to take advantage of current best management practices to reduce environmental impact.

Policy 11	MAINTENANCE - Promote proper maintenance of existing on-site water and sewage disposal systems.
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Objective A: Support the Farmington Valley Health District in its efforts to inform and educate homeowners with on-site septic systems concerning proper system maintenance especially with regard to proper disposal of hazardous substances.

Objective B: Encourage the Farmington Valley Health District, in cooperation with the State Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Protection, to continue long-term monitoring of the impacts of septic systems on soil and ground water and coordinate with the Town on the results of these efforts.

Objective C: Recommend adoption of a “septic management ordinance” which would monitor the maintenance of septic systems in Simsbury.

What We Want To Protect - Natural Resources

Policy 12	REMEDICATION - Establish criteria for the assessment and proper remediation of properties that, if developed in their present state, could pose a contamination risk to the natural or built environment.
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Objective A: Identification: Require the identification of potentially impaired sites proposed for development when prior use of the property suggests the potential for environmental issues.

1. Encourage applicants to perform a “Phase I” Environmental Site Assessment (“ESA”) to document historical use of their property.
2. On sites identified as “suspect” through Phase I ESA, require applicants to perform a “Phase II” ESA to determine actual presence of contaminants on their property.

Objective B: Remediation: Identify the best approach to remediate the site.

1. On sites that are identified as contaminated based upon a “Phase II” ESA, require the applicant to work with Town staff and the appropriate Boards and/or Commissions to develop a “Phase III” ESA that will identify best management practices for the type and scope of contamination.
2. Assure that “Phase III” ESA will insure compliance with the State of Connecticut Remediation Standard Regulations (RSR’s).

Objective C: Verification: Verify satisfactory remediation prior to the issuance of permits or approvals.

1. Verify remediation is complete and all regulatory standards have been met prior to subdivision approval or the issuance of any zoning or wetlands permits.
2. Assure all necessary state and local sign-offs are obtained.
3. Document environmental compliance on the land records.
4. Zoning, subdivision, and wetlands approvals should be conditioned upon the applicant’s ability to produce satisfactory evidence that post-remediation testing demonstrates compliance with stated goals.

Policy 13	REMEDICATION - Ensure suitable soil remediation as a precondition to residential development in order to protect the health and safety of potential residents.
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Open Space



Overview

Simsbury has long recognized that acquiring and retaining open space will help maintain and preserve important local resources and community character:

- natural resources such as the Farmington River and Talcott Mountain;
- historic gateways such as Folly and Rosedale Farms;
- historical/cultural village centers such as West Simsbury and Tariffville;
- working farms and agricultural land;
- visual resources such as scenic vistas and the views of our ridgelines; and
- recreational resources such as greenway trails.

If these resources were to be lost or radically altered, so too would be Simsbury's character and "sense of place." Open space also makes a significant contribution to the overall quality of life in Simsbury.

Simsbury has been very fortunate over the years to have had assistance in the preservation of open space by organizations such as the Simsbury Land Trust, McLean Game Refuge, the State of Connecticut, the Trust for Public Land, and other such organizations.

Also, as documented in a publication by The Trust for Public Land titled "The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space" (www.tpl.org), open space preservation has an economic benefit for communities. Sprawl has ecological and economic costs. Open space enhances quality of life, property values, and creates minimal demand for services that may be a hidden cost of development.

What We Want To Protect - Open Space

Goals, Policies & Objectives

GOAL

Provide sufficient open space to:

- *advance the physical and mental well-being of our citizens,*
- *preserve the natural and rural characteristics of the community, and*
- *provide a range of recreational opportunities for our citizens and for tourists.*

Policy

1

Continue current practices to encourage and implement acquisition of open space and easements.

Objective A: Support the purchase of open space for passive or active recreational use.

Objective B: Since open space is vital for the creation of buffers between land uses, and to protect unique natural areas, agricultural land, floodplain and watercourses, wildlife habitats, scenic vistas and ridgelines:

1. Retain the twenty percent (20%) open space requirement in the Subdivision Regulations for a “conventional” subdivision and require similar dedications in new mixed-use developments of scale.
2. Consider requiring more open space (perhaps as much as 50 percent) in association with an open space/cluster subdivision.

Objective C: Seek opportunities for open space acquisition or easements in new or redeveloped land use projects.

What We Want To Protect - Open Space

Objective D: Work with property owners of land considered desirable for open space to obtain a right of first refusal when contemplating sale.

Objective E: Support the Open Space Committee in its goal of identifying, prioritizing and acquiring open space for the Town.

Objective F: To help clarify open space intentions, seek to classify Town-owned land into categories such as “permanent open space”, municipal facilities, or other Town-owned land.

Objective G: If the Town uses protective easements as a conservation tool, the Town should provide adequate resources to monitor and enforce them.

Policy 2	Encourage greater use of the trails in Town by both residents and tourists, year-round and for multiple purposes.
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Objective A: Erect markers at access points for all trails and publish maps with useful information, especially for tourists.

Objective B: Maintain toilet facilities at trails, as needed, to support users for as much of the calendar year as possible.

What We Want To Protect - Open Space

Policy 3	Pursue the following specific objectives that the Planning Commission has heard and adopted.
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Objective A: Advocate for an interconnected town-wide network of multi-purpose trails and other public ways to create non-vehicular connectivity between Simsbury' residential areas and key destinations, such as Simsbury's schools, Simsbury Farms, Tariffville, West Simsbury, Simsbury Center, Weatogue Center, parks, athletic fields and similar destinations.

Objective B: Seek opportunities to create local parks and play areas in residential neighborhoods, especially where population density is high.

1. Create a village green on the Town-owned land at 31 Main Street in Tariffville with a gazebo, pre-school play area, and other amenities to support civic gatherings and a visitor rest stop along the hiking, biking and canoe/kayak trails that cross through the village.
2. Upgrade Tariffville Park roads, paths and boat launch and extend the Farmington River Greenway biking trail and the Farmington River canoe/kayak trail through the park to increase recreational use and economic activity in the village.
3. Add recreational facilities in the south end of town.

Objective C: Increase access to the Farmington River for launching and landing canoes, kayaks, and rowing craft, and for fishing and other recreation.

1. Create a broad, conceptual master plan for the land between Iron Horse Boulevard and the river.
2. Create access to the riverbank via Helen's Way
3. Improve the boat launch and access road in Tariffville Park.
4. Pursue creation of a State Park at Tariffville Gorge.
5. Investigate the feasibility of increasing river access at Route #185 and Nod Road.

What We Want To Protect - Open Space

Objective D: Increase the establishment of a multi-use inter and intra-town trail system using railroad or utility rights-of-way, State land, easements over other land or land purchased by the Town.

1. Extend the Farmington Valley Greenway trail across the river and along the riverbank through Tariffville Park and into Tariffville, eventually to connect to the proposed Griffin Line Trail into Hartford, to the Metacomet Trail and across the river again via Tunxis Road into East Granby.
2. Pursue funding for a suspension bridge for recreational purposes (pedestrians and bicyclists) across the Farmington River to connect Tunxis Road to Spoonville Road in East Granby and to provide tourist access to view the river rapids through Tariffville Gorge.
3. Acquire the undeveloped parcel on the ridge above Church Street and Hayes Road in Tariffville and redirect the Metacomet Trail down the old carriage road onto Church Street and into the village.
4. Establish a trail connecting the Farmington Valley Greenway trail to Simsbury Farms, the Saddle Ridge Trails and the Owens Brook bike path.
5. Support the efforts by the US Parks Service and local organizations to designate the Metacomet Trail as a National Scenic Trail and the lower Farmington River as a Wild & Scenic River.
6. Update and expand the Parks and Recreation Commission Bike Master Plan to include all new trails, including hiking and waterway trails.

Objective E: Continue to monitor demand for, use of, and maintenance requirements of hiking and biking trails and waterway trails.

Objective F: Complete the acquisition of a fee simple interest in the Ethel Walker Woods and ensure that the public has full access.

"Ethel Walker Woods"

In the fall of 2006, Simsbury voters endorsed a plan to acquire a fee simple interest in the "Ethel Walker Woods" -- land between Bushy Hill Road and Town Forest

Preservation as open space will help protect an important aquifer area in Simsbury, protect wildlife habitat, protect a significant scenic view, and provide passive recreation opportunities for Simsbury residents.

A combination of local, state and federal funds, along with private and charitable fundraising, is being used to preserve this parcel.

What We Want To Protect - Open Space

“Nuisance” Open Space

For the purposes of the Plan, the term “nuisance open space” is used to refer to parcels of open space land that, due to their size or location or character;

- may not contribute to an overall open space system in Simsbury,
- may not contribute to overall community character,
- may not protect an important resource, or
- may have other issues (such as excessive maintenance needs).

Policy 4	Create a Master Plan for acquisition and intended uses of open space and easements while addressing the following objectives.
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Objective A: Working with the Open Space Committee and the Conservation and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission:

1. Inventory, evaluate, and prioritize all existing open space, easements and recreational facilities owned by the Town, the State or other entities permitting public access, describing all current and expected future uses, and
2. Identify potential opportunities to acquire land or easements for parks and recreational uses all over Town.

Objective B: Once open space priorities have been identified, work with property owners and potential funding sources to identify and refine programs to preserve desirable open space.

Objective C: Consider whether the establishment of a program through which the Town would sell “nuisance open space” to abutters in return for a restrictive covenant being placed on the land. A rigorous process would need to be established for selecting these sites. Moreover, any proceeds would need to be designated solely to an open space acquisition fund.

Agricultural Resources



Overview

Simsbury has a rich agricultural history and the remaining farms contribute to Simsbury's character and sense of place. Simsbury needs to continue to protect our agricultural resources and find creative ways to keep farms operating and utilized. The value in supporting local farms is that we can continue to reflect our rich agricultural history, obtain local farm products, and maintain the rural character we so cherish. Farmland preservation also has a documented economic benefit.

While Simsbury has been very active in supporting farms and preserving farmland, more can and should be done.

Goals, Policies & Objectives

GOAL

Support farms and preserve farmland to help retain the rural characteristics of the community.

What We Want To Protect - Agricultural Resources

Policy 1	Strongly support the preservation of working farms.
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Objective A: Preserve the Town's agrarian legacy as represented by the following working farms and vineyards: Dewey, Flamig, Folly, George Hall, Joseph Hall, Pharos, Rosedale, Town, Tulmeadow and Woodford.

Objective B: Strive to find a permanent location in Simsbury for a farmers market.

Objective C: Encourage the purchase of products (such as milk, wine, and produce) from local farms.

- Encourage the school system to purchase local milk and produce.

Objective D: Preserve *Town-owned* agricultural land (such as Pharos Farm, Town Farm Dairy, Dewey Farm, and Hall Farm on Terry's Plain Road) and continue to promote farming uses on those lands to keep them in good working condition, maintain fertility, and minimize soil erosion.

1. Execute long-term leases to support a local agricultural economy.
2. Ensure that lessees of Town-owned agricultural land implement and follow best management practices outlined in the Soil Conservation Service Guidelines.
3. Maintain Pharos Farm in farming, recognizing its prime agricultural value and its integral and gateway value to Simsbury's scenic road and historic districts corridor.
4. Give preference to resident lessees who demonstrate best stewardship of the land resources.
5. Provide incentives for reclaiming farmland that has fallen into disuse.

Objective E: Maintain quality agricultural land in agricultural use

1. Continue to lease Town-owned agricultural land for farming.
2. Expand the Community Garden Program as needed, particularly to areas containing prime agricultural land.

What We Want To Protect - Agricultural Resources

Policy 2	Strongly support the conservation of agricultural lands recognizing the need for a continued agricultural presence.
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Objective A: Utilize data on agricultural land and soils to preserve prime and important farmland.

Objective B: Under the auspices of the Conservation and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and the Open Space Committee, survey existing open space to identify suitable parcels for additional agricultural use.

Objective C: When reviewing the 20% open space requirement in proposed subdivisions, consider acquiring or preserving prime or important agricultural land that could be utilized for commercial farming or community gardens.

Objective D: Identify specific mechanisms to preserve agricultural lands including those that would provide incentives.

Objective E: Encourage the formation of farming cooperatives to facilitate a mutually beneficial farming environment.

Objective F: Support regulations that allow clustering of development on one part of a parcel in order to preserve agricultural use on another part of the parcel.

Objective G: Recommend an Agricultural Subcommittee to create a plan for farm preservation

Agricultural Resources Plan

(Flip page up)

What We Want To Protect - Agricultural Resources

Policy 3	Continue to invest in and encourage the preservation of farmland and open spaces in cooperation with the Simsbury Land Trust and other public and semi-public organizations.
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Objective A: Should they become available, give working farms and agricultural land top priority for:

- “open space” acquisition, or
- development rights acquisition.

Objective B: Work with local farmers and others to identify specific mechanisms, including incentives, to preserve agricultural lands.

Historic Resources



Overview

For centuries, Native Americans farmed the rich flood plains of the Farmington River Valley. As early as 1642, just 22 years after the landing at Plymouth Rock, settlers have called Simsbury home. As a result, historically significant sites and structures are located throughout the town, many of which exist in dense clusters. Simsbury is therefore rich in history, and the 2007 Plan seeks to underscore this asset.

This section of the Plan has a slightly changed title. Whereas the 1994 version was entitled “Historic Preservation,” in the 2007 Plan it is “Historic Resources.” Though the modification may be slight, it reflects a shift in emphasis in the underlying policies and objectives. These changes reflect the Commission’s belief that Simsbury’s historic resources not only benefit the quality of life of our citizens, but can also be an economic and tourist resource for Simsbury. In other words, the Commission sees our historic character as an asset and an opportunity.

Many communities are working to create the authenticity that Simsbury already treasures. In some cases, our historic resources as they currently exist present valuable opportunities. In other cases, they are in need of enhancement through adaptive reuse. Either way, these resources will be vital to Simsbury’s long-term prosperity and to its economic development.

What We Want To Protect - Historic Resources

Goals, Policies & Objectives

GOAL

Create an awareness of the historic character of Simsbury.

Preserve, enhance, and promote the historic character of Simsbury for its contribution to the quality of life and for its economic benefits.

Policy

1

Ensure the protection of archeological resources.

Objective A: Identify and implement techniques to protect archeological sites identified in the Archeological Site Sensitivity Analysis of the Town of Simsbury.

Objective B: Recommend the adoption of an archaeological resource protection ordinance.

Objective C: Amend the Subdivision Regulations to require consideration of archaeological resources.

Objective D: Recommend that the Zoning Commission adopt regulations to require consideration of archaeological resources.

What We Want To Protect - Historic Resources

Policy 2	Ensure the protection of historic resources.
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Objective A: Complete and maintain the Historic Resources Inventory, which locates, evaluates, and identifies historic, archaeological, architectural, and industrial sites, in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

Objective B: Reinforce the work of the Simsbury Historic District Commission to protect concentrations of historic sites and to perform all duties and discretionary acts as permitted by the Connecticut General Statutes.

Objective C: Maintain Simsbury’s designation as a Certified Local Government in the National Historic Preservation Program.

Objective D: Support the listing of all qualified buildings, sites, structures, and districts on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places:

1. Support the designation of the Heublein Tower as a National Historic Landmark.
2. Support listing the farmhouses of West Simsbury as a thematic nomination to the National Register.
3. Support research and listing of Simsbury’s barns as a thematic nomination to the National Register.

Objective E: Support the establishment of local historic districts in areas of concentrated historic resources, such as:

1. Tariffville,
2. West Simsbury, and
3. Terry’s Plain.

Objective F: Amend the Subdivision Regulations to require consideration of historic resources.

Objective G: Recommend that the Zoning Commission amend the Zoning Regulations to require:

- identification and consideration of historic resources, and
- preservation of historic resources, where possible.

Certified Local Government

The National Historic Preservation Program Act creates a partnership between federal, state, and local governments to preserve local historic resources. Through this program local communities can apply to become a Certified Local Government.

The designation:

- helps communities to preserve the integrity of historic resources at each level of government;
- permits local communities to receive technical assistance and small matching grants through the State Historic Preservation Office; and
- enables local governments to influence land use decisions that affect historic resources.

Simsbury has been a certified local government since 1992.

What We Want To Protect - Historic Resources

Policy 3	Preserve and create awareness of Simsbury's prehistoric and historic sites, structures, buildings, and districts.
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Objective A: Increase public awareness of local historic resources by disseminating preservation information to the public, including town history, technology for renovation, and legal and financial tools.

1. Add all historic resource data to the Town's GIS database, including buildings, structures, and cultural features like stone walls.
2. Cooperate with the Simsbury Historical Society and the Simsbury Public Library to create a historic preservation center.
3. Link all electronic information on local heritage tourism and designation information to the Town of Simsbury website and to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

Objective B: Seek linkages and connections when planning for historic resources.

1. Consider the surrounding landscape or context within which the historic resource was created.
2. Consider creating corridors or linkages between historic sites when possible (for example, the Rosedale Farm - East Weatogue Street - Tariffville corridor).

Objective C: Recommend that the Zoning Commission amend the Zoning Regulations to require that infill construction in a National Register Historic District be compatible with its surroundings in mass, scale, setback, lot configuration, and placement of buildings on the site.

Objective D: Recommend that the Historic District Commission continue to require that construction in a local historic district be compatible to its surroundings in mass, scale, setback, lot configuration, and placement of buildings on the site.

Objective E: Retain the Town's Delay of Demolition Ordinance.

What We Want To Protect - Historic Resources

Policy 4	Enhance the viability of Simsbury's historic resources as town assets.
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Objective A: Promote heritage tourism in Simsbury in cooperation with the Simsbury Main Street Partnership, the Simsbury Tourism Committee, the Simsbury Historical Society, the Farmington Valley Visitors Association, and the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism by utilizing partnerships with other community businesses and organizations in fulfillment of Simsbury's status as a *Preserve America* community.

Objective B: Create awareness of and promote Simsbury's recognized and designated historic districts: the local East Weatogue Historic District and the state and National Register Districts of East Weatogue, Terry's Plain, Tariffville, and Simsbury Center Historic District.

Objective C: Recognize historic sites, structures and districts as opportunities for improvements to our quality of life and to the Town's economic development.

1. Renovate historic transportation corridors and facilities within the principles of context sensitive design.
 - a. Enforce the Scenic Road Ordinance and add more Town-maintained roads, as appropriate.
 - b. Recognize the presence of the remnants of the historic Farmington Canal in Simsbury by installing signage and publicizing it.
 - c. Recommend the state bridge over the Farmington River on Route 185 for National Register listing and consider enhancing the appearance of the bridge by adding architectural lighting and other enhancements.
 - d. Design bridge replacements to the width of the roadway, as appropriate.
2. Complete the Farmington Canal Greenway and the Farmington River Trail along the two historic railroad corridors (Canal and Central New England Lines).
3. In order to preserve historic buildings, give greater consideration for flexibility in adaptive reuse of Simsbury's historic residential, commercial, governmental and industrial sites.

Preserve America

The Preserve America program was established in 2003. It recognizes and designates communities that protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization, and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs.

As a result of an application prepared by the Simsbury Main Street partnership, Simsbury was designated as a Preserve America Community in 2006 and was awarded a grant in 2007 to promote and enhance the intelligent use and development of its unique assets.

(More information on Preserve America may be found at www.preserveamerica.gov)

What We Want To Protect - Historic Resources

Adaptive Re-Use

Since older buildings may outlive their original purposes, adaptive re-use is a process where older buildings are adapted for new uses while retaining their historic features.

For example:

- an old factory may become an apartment building,
- a church may become a restaurant (or a restaurant may become a church),
- an old house may be converted to office use.

Objective D: Maintain the architectural integrity of historic structures and sites when adapted for re-use for commercial, industrial or residential purposes.

- Use available modifications of the building codes in the restoration or renovation of historic buildings (per the discretion of the State Building Official).

Objective E: Pursue financial incentives for preservation:

- State and federal grants;
- Tax incentive programs, such as façade improvement and restoration of historic farm buildings;
- Preservation easements, including façade and archaeological as well as others;
- Assessment deferrals on National Register-listed properties; and
- Purchase of development rights on historic properties.

Objective F: Maintain the integrity of the East Weatogue Historic District, recognizing its importance as a gateway and as a cultural and historic asset.

Policy 5	Encourage or require the preservation of stone walls, burial sites, cellar holes, and other historic resources when determined to be appropriate.
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Objective A: Recommend that the Board of Selectmen consider a Town ordinance to preserve stone walls.

Objective B: Investigate how the Subdivision Regulations can be modified to encourage or require the preservation of stone walls, burial sites, cellar holes, and other historic resources.

Objective C: Investigate how the Zoning Regulations can be modified to encourage or require the preservation of stone walls, burial sites, cellar holes, and other historic resources.

Scenic Resources



Overview

Scenic Resources include the vistas that embody the rural characteristics of Simsbury, such as, but not limited to the Talcott and West Mountain ridgelines, vistas along East Weatogue Street and Terry's Plain Road (the Farmington River, Hall's Farm area, the Militia Field and Pharos Farm). In addition, other popular vistas include the Ethel Walker hillside and pastures, West Simsbury, Tariffville Gorge the intersection of Laurel Lane and Great Pond Road. All scenic vistas in town contribute to Simsbury's "sense of place".

In addition, Simsbury's scenic roads are important to the preservation of our town's rural character and beauty.

Goals, Policies & Objectives

GOAL

Preserve and protect scenic resources in Simsbury.

What We Want To Protect - Scenic Resources

Policy 1	Preserve the scenic characteristics of Simsbury.
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Objective A: Preserve scenic vistas and areas that enhance the overall character of Simsbury, including but not limited to:

- the Talcott and West Mountain ridgelines;
- the look and ambiance of West Simsbury as a farming village;
- the look and ambiance of Tariffville as a 19th century mill village;
- the scenic vista of the Ethel Walker School west of Bushy Hill Road;
- vistas that embody the rural characteristics of Simsbury, such as those along Nod Road, East Weatogue Street and Terry’s Plain Road; the southerly portion of Old Farms Road; the intersection of Laurel Lane and Great Pond Road; vistas of the Farmington River; the Tariffville Gorge; and other vistas.

Objective B: Support, cooperate and collaborate with the Simsbury Land Trust and similar organizations promoting preservation.

Objective C: Encourage preservation of natural areas, woodlands, and agricultural areas.

Objective D: Continue to utilize “PA-490” assessment reduction programs (CGS 12-107) related to farmland, forest land, and other undeveloped land in accordance with statutory and local policies (this is categorized as a scenic resource protection objective rather than an open space or agricultural resource protections strategy since PA-490 does not actually “preserve” land, it just makes “undeveloped land less expensive to own).

What We Want To Protect - Scenic Resources

Objective E: Pursue the designation of scenic roads in Simsbury, where appropriate, using the existing ordinance.

Objective F: Maintain and expand corridors and connections between scenic areas.

Objective G: Expand awareness and preserve the scenic vistas along designated scenic roads.

Objective H: Retain title to Town-owned property with scenic vistas, unless other appropriate uses are identified.

Policy 2	Continue to utilize existing tools to preserve scenic resources.
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Objective A: Enforce the subdivision regulations dealing with land located above the 250-foot elevation in the eastern slope of Town and above the 350-foot elevation in the western slopes of Town

Objective B: Enforce the subdivision regulations restricting structure (including glass area) and roof colors to earth tones in order to preserve the scenic vistas of these areas.

Scenic Road Ordinance

In 1991, the Board of Selectman passed a Scenic Road Ordinance allowing the Planning Commission to designate scenic roads in Simsbury, after receiving written approval of the owners of a majority of lot frontage along the road.

Such designation helps protect those roadways from inappropriate changes.

The following Town roads have been designated since the establishment of the ordinance:

- Goodrich Road
- Ferry Lane
- Terry's Plain Road
- East Weatogue Street
- Barn Door Hills Road (which continues into the Town of Granby by their action)

Currently there is no state highway within Simsbury that is designated as a Scenic Road.

What We Want To Protect - Scenic Resources

Policy 3	Ensure perpetual tree cover in Simsbury.
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Objective A: Enhance the streetscape of existing neighborhoods and where necessary develop a comprehensive program for streetscape improvements along the community's major streets.

Objective B: In construction and reconstruction of large commercial/industrial sites, encourage the Zoning Commission to emphasize the installation of landscaping and berms to soften the architecture and add a park-like or natural character to the streetscape, particularly along major commercial corridors or gateway approaches such as Routes 44, 10/202, 185 and 167.

Objective C: Preserve and maintain historic and significant trees such as the sycamores along Route 10 and Route 185.

Objective D: Encourage the planting of blight-resistant Elm and Chestnut trees in landscaping plans for subdivisions, site plans and municipal projects.

Objective E: Develop a street tree plan, a maintenance program, and a tree replacement program.

Objective F: Coordinate road improvements with State and Regional agencies to minimize pavement expansion.

Objective G: Support the provisions of the Scenic Road Ordinance to maintain the aesthetics of landscaping adjacent to roads so designated.

Community Character



Overview

Community character is consistently cited as one of the attributes which makes Simsbury special to residents.

Three essential factors (discussed on the following pages) go into establishing what people recognize as Simsbury's special character:

- Resources,
- Sense of Place, and
- Quality of Life.

**Tulmeadow Farm
(Resource)**



**Simsbury Gateway
(Sense of Place)**



**Summer Concerts
(Quality of Life)**



What We Want To Protect - Community Character

Historic Patterns

Simsbury's history shows us patterns, too.

The first settlers in the late 17th century found a fertile valley and promptly began clearing land for agriculture. Marginal land remained undeveloped. The major transportation and communication routes connecting Simsbury with its neighbors followed the original Native American trail systems along the Farmington River and through the notches in the mountains.

Over time development along these routes supported commercial, industrial, and residential activities in town center and the villages of Weatogue Center, West Simsbury, and Hoskins Station. These were surrounded by open farmland.

Meanwhile, Tariffville's location on the falls of the Farmington River enabled it to evolve into a mill village by harnessing the water's power.

Each of these landscapes developed in a distinctive pattern shaped by the circumstances of its location.

Resources

Resources are the valued elements peculiar to places. Such resources can be natural, historical/cultural, or visual.

Natural resources includes the topography of Talcott and the West Mountains, the Farmington River, farmland and open space, wetlands and floodplains. Some of our historical/cultural resources include our architectural treasures, hamlets and villages, and neighborhoods. The visual resources encompass scenic overlooks, views of the ridgelines, and a wide variety of landscapes and scenic roadways.

What makes Simsbury unique when compared with many New England towns of a similar size is the variety of resources that are found here and the fact that many of them have been preserved. Our farms and ridgelines have not become a blur of housing developments. Our town center has always been a genuine center of commerce, recreation, and a visual point of reference.

Sense of Place

A "sense of place" is what draws many new residents to Simsbury. People make a conscious choice to live here because of its small town character and sense of community.

The concept of "place" is abstract, and defining it is elusive; however, you know it when you see it. Place is found in the organizational patterns of the physical landscape, natural or built, i.e., ridgelines, signature brownstone buildings, winding secondary roads, etc., or in preserved historical land uses, such as farms, factories, mills, etc.

These patterns extend beyond the visual. It is more than just the way the town "looks". "Place" is also manifested in the interaction between human and habitat. The organizational pattern of a farmstead, for example, includes the familiar house, barns and fields. But it also includes the experience of a farm—the sounds (livestock and tractors), the smells (manure and freshly mown hay), and the history associated with the site (perhaps owned by the same family for generations or renowned for its organic produce).

What We Want To Protect - Community Character

Quality of Life

How we have used land and developed our environment substantially affects the quality of our lives. Simsbury has made choices in the past that have contributed to the overall quality of life we enjoy today.

As we move forward, we must remember that how we determine land use and develop the environment will substantively affect the quality of life for future residents.

There is growing recognition in Simsbury that the aesthetic aspects of development impact the quality of life in our community. In addition, the ideas of “sustainability” and “community design” are gaining resonance here and in many other communities as being generators of a higher quality of life. This reflects an evolution from the historic dichotomy where planners simply weighed the consequences of environmental impact against the economic benefits of development.

Heublein Tower



Farmington Valley Greenway



Town Clock



What We Want To Protect - Community Character

List of Character Places - Simsbury's Treasures

Buildings

1. Webster Bank Building
2. Simsburytown Shops - example of village style/scale center
3. Ensign Bickford "campus" or "village"
4. Railroad stations - One Way Fare and Ferrero- Hixon Architects
5. Culbro Tobacco Barns on Route 10
6. Central School
7. Town Offices (Belden School)
8. Hop Brook Brownstone Building
9. Various Tobacco Fields and Barns
10. The Tariffville Mill
11. Pettibone's Tavern
12. St. Mary's Church
13. Methodist Church
14. Congregational Church
15. St. Bernard's Church
16. Trinity Episcopal Church

Aesthetic Places

1. Hop Brook waterfall
 2. King Philip's Cave
 3. Massaco Plantation
 4. Militia Training Band Field
 5. Sycamores along Route 10
 6. Treed ridgelines and escarpments
 7. The Farmington River Flood Plain in the middle of town
 8. Stone walls
 9. Bartlett Tower
 10. Sugarloaf Mountain
 11. Patterson Park
 12. Iron Horse Meadows
 13. Case Meadow Ethel Walker Woods
 14. Simsbury Center
 15. Garrett stairs in the McLean Game Refuge
 16. Heublein Tower
 17. Intersection of Laurel Lane and Great Pond
 18. Drake Hill Bridge
 19. Farmington River Canal
 20. Fields next to CL&P
 21. Fountain across from Pettibone's
 22. Silo and Sycamore at Folly Farm
 23. Pinchot Sycamore tree
 24. The Quarry
 25. The Route 185 Bridge
 26. Waterfall at McLean Game Refuge
 27. West Simsbury Center
 28. Barndoor Hills View
 29. Grave site on East Weatogue Street (ox cart death)
 30. Various tobacco fields and barns: Firetown Road, Hoskins,
 31. Old barn on Terry's Plain Road, formerly Bartlett Farm
 32. Scenic road along East Weatogue Street, Terry's Plain Road, Ferry Lane
 33. Views of the Farmington River along Riverside Road, Terry's Plain Road
 34. Nod Brook Field
 35. Public School Properties (see details on Community Facilities Plan)
 36. Simsbury Farms Recreation Complex
-

What We Want To Protect - Community Character

Historic Districts

1. East Weatogue Historic District
 2. Terry's Plain Historic District
 3. Tariffville Historic District
 4. Simsbury Center Historic District
-

Waterways

1. Farmington River
 2. Meadow Pond
 3. Tarriffville Gorge
 4. Great Pond
-

Farms

1. Tulmeadow Farm
 2. Flamig Farm
 3. George Hall Farm
 4. Hall's Farm
 5. Rosedale Farm
 6. Pickin' Patch Farm
 7. Town Farm
 8. Folly Farm
 9. Dewey Flower Farm
-

Parks and Recreation

1. Town Forest
 2. Stratton Brook Park
 3. Schultz Park
 4. Tariffville Park
 5. Tariffville Green
 6. State Wildlife Management Area
 7. McLean Game Refuge
 8. Metacomet trail
 9. Pharos Farm
 10. Curtiss Park
 11. Memorial Park
 12. Hopmeadow Country Club
 13. Tower Ridge Country Club
 14. Onion Mountain Park
 15. Belden Forest
 16. Talcott Mountain State Park
 17. Penwood State Park
 18. Metacomet Trail Overview
 19. The Hedgehog
 20. The Sugarloaf
-

What We Want To Protect - Community Character

Simsbury and Design

In 2001, the Simsbury Design Review Board published Guidelines for Community Design to help developers pursue designs that complement, and are compatible with, the existing fabric of site and building design in Simsbury.

This publication received the following awards for excellence:

- The Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association Honor Award,
- The Connecticut Society of Landscape Architects Public Service Award, and
- The Connecticut Society of Landscape Architects Frederick Law Olmsted Award.

Copies of the Guidelines for Community Design are available in the Simsbury Town Hall and on the Town's web site.

Goals, Policies & Objectives

GOAL

Continue to maintain and enhance the established character of Simsbury.

Policy

1

Continue to identify and protect the resources, "sense of place", and quality of life that contribute to the overall character of Simsbury.

Policy

2

Undertake a series of studies to identify the resources and places that contribute to the overall character of Simsbury.

Objective A: Conduct public meetings to gather citizen input and develop consensus about the essential elements of community character in Simsbury.

Objective B: Translate this consensus into design guidelines for each "Character Place" to show developers how we wish them to address our important concerns when proposing new development projects.

Policy

3

Continue to include the Design Review Board in local land use issues and continue to implement the Guidelines for Community Design as a dynamic document reflecting the Town's changing needs and interests.

A Future By Design



Overview

This section of the Plan is based on the observation that people feel there must be ways to improve upon our approach to land use. Today, many people approach development (especially in their neighborhood) with alarm since they may be unsure or unclear about what will result and how it might affect them.

People mistrust the intentions of others and occasionally form active alliances to stop development, if only because it appears to be the only avenue open to them. Residents believe they are witnesses to, and not participants in, a process that produces results they may feel are not in their best interests. There are many examples around the country where this may be so - trading open fields for house lots or swapping winding, country roads for reconfigured multi-lane traffic corridors.

The quandary is that people visit, understand, and enjoy certain types of places—for example, an Essex or Chester, CT—and yet towns have tended to regulate for, approve, and build something quite different. Further examination reveals that many of the same places people admire and would like to emulate are actually not permitted as the area is presently zoned. It is interesting to note that many of the “best Places” in towns were built before any land use regulations were ever enacted.

The problem, then, is that residents tend to resist all development rather than just resist bad development. The expectations of people may be misguided, not from bad planning or design, but from not enough planning or design. This Plan promotes the idea that the solution is increased community involvement and better expression of community goals and expectations— a future by design.

Importance of Design

The character of a community evolves over long periods of time. As a result, communities are the result of incremental change involving many decisions made by many individuals over the course of many years. All decisions, from the seemingly inconsequential to the most profound, make a difference.

That said, it benefits all who are engaged or affected by the building process - designers, developers, commissioners, staff and residents alike - to examine the “cause and effect” relationship of community building in order to come to a consensus and to lessen the uncertainty of the outcome.

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Use-based Criticisms

Experience has found that use-based zoning can have some drawbacks. For example:

- it has paid little attention to the form of the built environment.
- it provides little guidance about how buildings relate to the streetscape.
- it has resulted in mono-type development (“sprawl”).
- it has forced an “auto-oriented culture” on many places.
- it is not very adaptable to changing market conditions.
- it has been used to create social and economic exclusion.
- it can ignore “scale” (size of use) in favor of function (type of use).

Conventional (Use-Based Zoning)

For the last 75 years or so, most communities around the country have guided development decisions within their borders through “use-based” zoning. Simsbury falls within this timeframe, establishing a Town Plan Commission in 1931, a Zoning Commission in 1933, and beginning subdivision regulation in 1941.

The first type of zoning was predicated simply on the separation of uses with no other standards. For example, an early zoning code might have designated areas as exclusively residential so as to avoid “incompatible” industrial uses (such as tanneries or smelters). Gradually, this type of zoning was supplemented by adding area and dimensional standards (such as lot size, setback, height, and similar standards). As zoning expanded throughout the country in the years following World War II, this was the predominant zoning model employed.

In response to criticisms that such dimensional standards did not provide enough design guidance or resulted in places that all looked the same, some communities adopted design review standards. This is the type of zoning model which has served Simsbury well for the past 15 to 20 years.

It has been observed that use-based zoning (as summarized above) does not readily translate into what form appears on the ground. In addition, the form that does appear is not always what people want. Even with design guidelines, use-based regulations do not always capture the vitality Simsbury is trying to achieve.

While “use-based” zoning has served Simsbury fairly well over the years, there are some concerns that this tool may need to be enhanced to meet future needs. Since Simsbury is about 85 percent developed / committed, much of the development in the future will be occurring either as new development in close proximity to existing development, as infill development in developed areas, or as redevelopment of existing sites.

Over time, we have learned that people are as concerned (or maybe even more concerned) about the “form” of what is proposed as they are about the use that is proposed. If we are to guide future development in ways that will enhance the overall character and quality of life in Simsbury, then the design of what is proposed must be carefully managed.

Simsbury needs to look at new tools, such as form-based regulation, to help us achieve our proposed future - our future by design.

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Form-Based Regulations

In recent years, communities around the country have found that “form-based” regulations are a way to provide better guidance about the type of development that a community feels will be most appropriate.

Form-based regulations have the potential to guide development in ways that will reinforce the existing community fabric. In contrast to conventional use-based regulations, form-based regulations are richly illustrated. In order to encourage consensus on the regulations and the final built form, the development of such regulations typically involves a significant level of public participation.

The 2007 Plan recommends that form become a more significant feature of a regulatory system that would promote the following objectives:

- **Closely manage the form of the resulting built environment;**
- **Allow for a variety of uses on one site to create vitality (such as mixed residential density and housing types);**
- **Develop contextual standards appropriate to each type of area; and**
- **Create the types of compact, walkable areas that people like and which contain enhanced streetscapes and civic life.**

It is in our Town’s long-term best interest if all of our decisions and actions about how we grow are based on a shared vision for the future—a future by design. Through design, we can create “places”. By creating “places”, we will help to foster a sense of community, preserve the landscape and encourage development that produces an economically healthy and a vibrant, diverse community and enhances the overall quality of life.

The Planning Commission believes there are areas within Simsbury that exhibit different physical or cultural characteristics. These categories honor Simsbury’s pre-existing variety and avoid the generalization that one design solution suits any and all sites. Further, since each category of area has a specific identity and function, it can be used as a building block to which we can ascribe specific design guidelines and regulations.

Form-Based Codes

The following communities have adopted some type of form-based code (in full or in part) and may provide some examples for Simsbury to consider:

- Sonoma, CA
- Hercules, CA
- Petaluma, CA
- Leander, TX
- Huntersville, NC
- Davidson, NC
- Woodford County, KY
- Syracuse, NY
- Saratoga Springs, NY
- Providence, RI

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Desirable Outcomes of Form-Based Design

Existing Condition or
Possible Outcome with
Use-Based Coding

Building



**McDonalds Restaurant
(Typical Prototype)**

Streetscape



**Arterial Road with
Automobile-Oriented Development**

Neighborhood



**Existing Automobile-Scale
Neighborhood**

Future Condition or
Desired Outcome with
Form-based Design



**McDonalds Restaurant
(Freeport, Maine)**



**Arterial Road with
Pedestrian-Oriented Development**



**Possible Pedestrian-Scale
Neighborhood**

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Form Categories

At this time, it is envisioned that the “form” of Simsbury might be considered as consisting of eight (8) different form categories. These categories are broad classifications and it is not meant to imply that different areas within a classification share the same form characteristics.

Natural Area	Areas that are expected to remain predominantly in their natural state (such as dedicated open space, purchased development rights, wetland, floodplain, etc.)
Rural Area	Areas with a decidedly rural character (such as active farmland, low density residential (R-80, R-160), and large areas of undeveloped land).
General Residential	Areas for medium density residential development (R-25, R-30, R-40) which may include some areas of undeveloped land.
Cluster Residential	Areas for higher density residential development (R-15, MFD) which may include very limited mixed use and some areas of undeveloped land.
Hamlet	Small areas with limited mixed use that serve a neighborhood role or function (such as West Simsbury).
Village Center	Small to medium size areas with limited mixed use that serve a community role or function (such as Tariffville or Weatogue).
Town Center	Simsbury Center - a mixed use area that serves as the overall focal point of the community.
Single Use District	Areas generally devoted to a single use (such as industrial, office, or retail) due to their size, location, access, environs, function, and/or opportunity.

The following pages contain conceptual, illustrative examples of various elements of form and how these elements might vary between areas. This might provide a framework for inventorying character areas in Simsbury and then developing strategies to strengthen and reinforce them.

Transitions

The focus on form is not simply to achieve outcomes within areas, but also to regulate the form as it changes *between* areas.

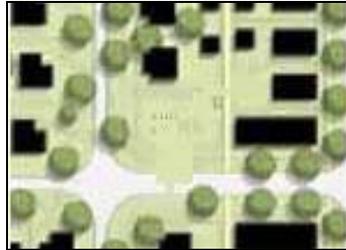
Under use-based zoning, there can be a dramatic transition from one zone to another -- such as from a residential zone to an industrial area.

Form-based planning helps to soften transitions by reinforcing the character within one area and the separation to other areas with the goal of removing the “hard edges” which might occur between separate developments.

By defining discernible centers (such as Simsbury Center, Tariffville and, Weatogue) the Plan intends to help reinforce such areas, maintain separations between such areas, and avoid the evolution of “strip” or “sprawl” development patterns.

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

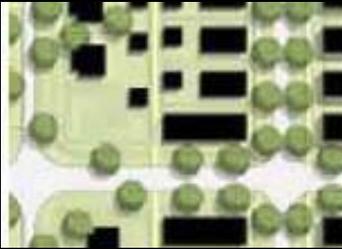
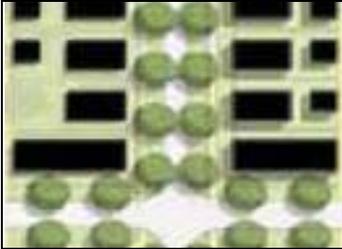
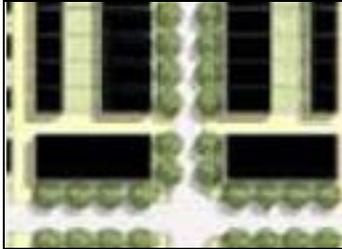
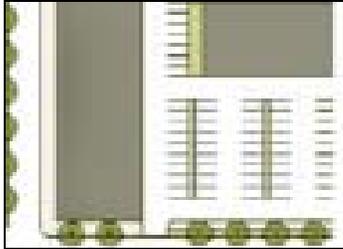
These graphics and standards are intended for discussion purposes only at this time.

	Natural Area	Rural Area	General Residential	Cluster Residential
Sketch View				
Plan View				
Land Use Types	Natural Preserves, Recreation Areas	Natural Reserves, Agriculture, Very Low-Density Residential	Low-Density Residential, Home Occupations	Medium-Density Residential, Limited Office/ Commercial / Lodging
Building Types	Accessory To Recreational Uses Only	Agricultural Buildings, Detached Housing	Detached Housing	Detached Housing Attached Housing
Streetscape Types	Swales, Naturalistic Planting, Bike Trails	Swales, Naturalistic Planting, Bike Trails	Naturalistic Planting, Bike Trails, Limited Sidewalks, Limited Curbs	Semi-Regular Tree Pattern, Planters, Bike Trails, Narrow Side- walks, Curbs
Road Types	Town Roads	Town Roads	Town Roads, Local Streets	Local Streets, Rear Lanes
Open Space Types	Fields, Forests	Fields, Forests, Farms, Parks,	Parks And Greens	Parks, Greens, Playgrounds

Graphics from Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Company

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

These graphics and standards are intended for discussion purposes only at this time.

Hamlet	Village Center	Town Center	Single Use Area	
				Sketch View
				Plan View
<p>Medium-Density Residential, Office, Commercial, Retail, Lodging, Civic</p> <p>Detached Housing, Attached Housing, Office Buildings, Inns, Shopfront Retail, Civic Buildings</p> <p>Raised Curb, Narrow Sidewalks, Bike Lanes, Planters, Regular Tree Pattern</p> <p>Arterial Roads, With Irregular Network Of Streets And Lanes</p> <p>Parks, Greens, Squares, Playgrounds</p>	<p>High-Density Residential, Office, Commercial, Retail, Lodging, Civic</p> <p>Townhouses, Live-Work Units, Office Buildings, Hotels, Shopfront Retail, Civic Buildings</p> <p>Raised Curbs, Wide Sidewalks, Bike Lanes, Planter, Regular Tree Pattern</p> <p>Arterial Road And/Or Main Street, With Network Of Streets And Alleys</p> <p>Parks, Greens, Squares</p>	<p>High-Density Residential, Office, Commercial, Retail, Lodging, Civic</p> <p>Multi-Story Apartments, Townhouses, Mixed-Use Buildings, Retail, Office, Civic Buildings</p> <p>Raised Curbs, Wide Sidewalks, Bike Routes, Planter, Regular Tree Pattern</p> <p>Arterial Roads And/Or Boulevards, With Network Of Streets And Alleys</p> <p>Parks, Plazas, Greens, Squares</p>	<p>May be Office, Industrial, Retail or Educational, for example.</p> <p>As Appropriate For Location and Use</p> <p>As Appropriate For Location</p> <p>Access To Arterial Road Strongly Encouraged</p> <p>As Appropriate For Location</p>	<p>Land Use Types</p> <p>Building Types</p> <p>Streetscape Types</p> <p>Road Types</p> <p>Open Space Types</p>

Graphics from Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Company

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

These graphics and standards are intended for discussion purposes only at this time.

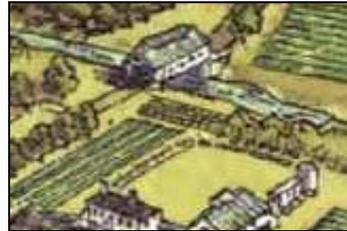
Natural Area

Rural Area

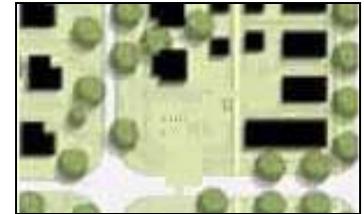
General Residential

Cluster Residential

Sketch View



Plan View



Use / Density

« Less Density ·
 « Mostly Residential ·

Buildings

« Smaller, Detached Buildings / More Wooden Buildings ·
 « Generally Pitched Roofs / Articulated Building Shapes / Massing ·

Streetscape

« Buildings with Yards & Porches / Deep and Variable Setbacks ·
 « More Greenscape / Natural Vegetation / Mixed and Irregular Tree Clusters ·
 « Larger Block Sizes ·

Circulation

« Roads and Lanes ·
 « Narrow Pedestrian Paths ·

Infrastructure

« Open Swales ·
 « Little to No Light (Dark Skies) ·

Graphics from Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Company

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

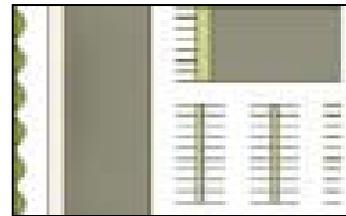
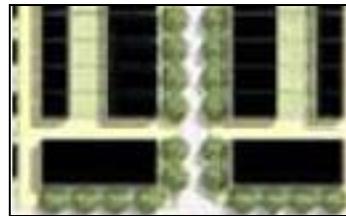
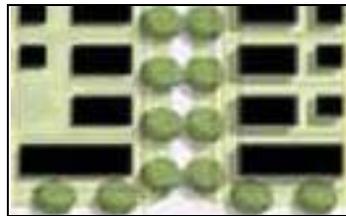
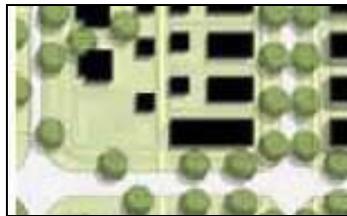
Hamlet

Village Center

Town Center

Single Use Area

These graphics and standards are intended for discussion purposes only at this time.



Sketch View

Plan View

- ▶▶ More Density
- ▶▶ Mostly Mixed Use.....
- ▶▶ Larger, Attached Buildings / More Masonry Buildings.....
- ▶▶ More Flat Roofs / Simpler Building Shapes/Massing.....
- ▶▶ Buildings with Stoops and Shopfronts / Shallow and Aligned Setbacks
- ▶▶ More Hardscape / Landscaped Vegetation / Aligned Street Trees
- ▶▶ Smaller Block Sizes
- ▶▶ Streets and Alleys
- ▶▶ Wide Sidewalks.....
- ▶▶ Raised Curbs.....
- ▶▶ Brighter (but Targeted) Night Lighting

Use / Density

Buildings

Streetscape

Circulation

Infrastructure

Graphics from Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Company

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

"Smart Growth"

The term "smart growth" is used to describe a set of principles for guiding development.

Those principles are:

- Mix land uses
- Use compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

www.smartgrowth.org

In terms of development on private property, form-based coding would define the overall intensity of development allowed and its relationship to surrounding public and private property. The actual use within a building might be a lesser concern than is typical with current use-based zoning regulations. This flexibility would allow for mixed use development and allow places to adapt to changing market conditions.

Creating a form-based code for Simsbury (in whole or in part) might involve the following approach:

- **an inventory of existing form of that type of "place" in Simsbury (street types, block and building types, form and massing of buildings, etc.)**
- **input from residents through "charettes" and/or other public workshop meetings to define a vision for the area.**
- **definition of standards based on the desired future form such as:**
 - **organization (overall structure and desired elements),**
 - **streetscape (to shape the public area of the street),**
 - **building envelope (mass, placement and orientation),**
 - **architecture (building design elements);**
- **illustration of standards;**
- **adoption of standards; and**
- **application of standards.**

Form-based coding is rich with illustrations. The illustrations are intended to help guide the design of both the public spaces (such as the street and yards) and the private spaces (such as buildings).

It is a key objective of this Plan to encourage "smart growth" (see sidebar) and innovative and creative design for the few remaining areas for significant commercial development while insisting that any such development promote harmony with the surrounding forms of land and buildings.

Goals, Policies & Objectives

GOAL

Guide future growth in ways that will provide for the orderly and compatible use of land and maintain and enhance the established character of Simsbury.

Policy

1

Ensure that future development in Simsbury will reflect the form of its surrounding area as well as uses appropriate for that area.

Objective A: Encourage the Zoning Commission to employ form-based development criteria, together with use-based criteria.

Objective B: Consider the appearance and functionality of particular neighborhoods.

Objective C: Assure that the architecture of new development complements the existing developed environment so that Simsbury's architectural characteristics are preserved.

Objective D: Continue to refer site plan applications to the Design Review Board for analysis and recommendations based upon the Guidelines for Community Design.

Objective E: Zoning regulations for Simsbury's village centers, in particular, should include criteria that ensure form-based development as well as use-based development. Village District Regulations may be an appropriate tool to achieve this objective.

Objective F: Conduct and update design studies for the following: Simsbury Center, Tariffville, Weatogue Center, West Simsbury, and West Street. The studies should emphasize these areas' unique and historic characteristics, traffic and pedestrian circulation, parking, landscaping, open space and recreation, signing, greater business utilization, and revitalization and possible residential development.

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Policy 2	Recommend development of zoning regulations to promote “form-based” zoning where the “form” of what is proposed (the design) is at least as important as the “function” of what is proposed (the use).
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Objective A: Promote a regulatory strategy that will allow variety within the community that is appropriate to the location and context of individual sites.

Objective B: Shift the emphasis from pursuit of separation and dispersal by use to a discussion about building whole and vibrant communities that sustain and enhance quality of life and property values; a discussion that honors the built heritage and inspires creative solutions for the future.

Objective C: Promote the formation of area-specific zoning “design districts” which can provide flexibility within the existing regulatory system and allow for planned developments that are keyed to the context of the project site and reflect the design principles appropriate for each site.

- In rural areas, for example, where preservation of open space, forests, or river corridors is paramount, regulations should emphasize an understanding of town-wide open space systems.
- In villages a different approach is needed, one that emphasizes the design of streets, houses, and neighborhood structures as the primary design determinants in addition to open space elements.
- The location and scale of commercial development also should relate to its context depending on whether it is in the countryside, close to a village center, or in a village center.

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Policy	
3	Develop appropriate design principles to guide activities proposed in “form-based” districts.

Objective A: As discussed further below, develop design principles, guidelines, or regulations that emphasize the following elements:

- Resources
- Mixed-Use Development
- Pedestrian-Friendly Design
- Neighborhoods
- Rural Districts

Objective B: For “resources,” seek to preserve the important elements of the four distinct types – natural resources, cultural/historic resources, recreational resources, and visual resources.

Objective C: For “mixed-use development,” seek to promote mixed uses in settings that foster a “real town” experience that grows and changes organically over time.

Objective D: For “pedestrian-friendly design,” seek to promote development patterns and places that are successful at getting people out of their cars and walking since history has shown this adds to character and makes places more successful.

Objective E: For “neighborhoods,” seek to focus on neighborhoods (rather than sites) as the basic unit of planning simply because of its scale and its importance to establishing a “sense of place.”

Objective F: For “rural districts,” seek to promote the visual and underlying functional structure of the landscape—for example, by allowing some development and growth without sacrificing the natural beauty. Simsbury’s “rural districts” should continue to play a significant and defining role in shaping Simsbury’s heritage and character.

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Policy 4	Encourage aesthetic and functional compatibility between adjacent uses and structures throughout the town, within zones, in mixed-use areas, and particularly in areas of transition.
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Objective A: Review and amend the Simsbury Subdivision Regulations to incorporate the goals, policies and objectives expressed in this Plan clarifying the determination and requirements of an open space dedication.

Objective B: Encourage the Zoning Commission to review and amend the Simsbury Zoning Regulations and the Zoning Map to incorporate the goals, policies and objectives expressed in this chapter of the Plan.

Objective C: Consider impacts of proposed and expected future development on existing neighborhoods, existing businesses, the environment, and the infrastructure of the town.

Objective D: Ensure the scale and form of new development is compatible with the surrounding areas.

Policy 5	Encourage property owners/developers to work with Town commissions, boards, officials and citizens in the preparation of their developments so that they are of a scale and form that is in harmony with the community and surrounding areas.
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Objective A: Property owners/developers are encouraged to work with land use commissions, the Design Review Board, Town officials, and the citizens of Simsbury in advising them of the proposed scale and form of their projects in the format of a pre-application meeting before the appropriate land use commissions.

Objective B: Recommend to the Zoning Commission that property owners/developers be required to present Net Economic Impact analyses for large-scale developments to determine how the project will affect Town finances, especially for zone change applications.

Objective C: Property owners/developers are expected to provide information to Town officials during the pre-application and application process to evaluate the extent of needed improvements in the town's infrastructure.

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Policy 6	Protect and enhance the major “gateway” approaches to and within Simsbury through the use of landscaping, maintaining a buffer (e.g., trees, open space or berm), town identification and signage, where appropriate.
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Objective A: Consider “gateway” approaches to include but not be limited to:

- The north and south entrance points of Route 10/202
- The intersection of Routes 167 and 44
- The intersection of Routes 315 and 189 in Tariffville
- The entrances at Route 185, Nod Road and Route 309
- The Wolcott Road area near East Granby

Objective B: Encourage the Zoning Commission, through the site plan review process and other means, to maximize landscaping and minimize pavement on public and private right-of-ways at the gateway approaches.

Objective C: Encourage the preservation of existing woodlands along the streetscapes, such as but not limited to Routes 185 and 309, to enhance the character of the gateway.

Objective D: Consider also “interior gateway” approaches within the town (such as but not limited to those for historic districts, scenic roads, and town and village centers) for similar protection and/or enhancement.

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Policy 7	Pursue the use of grants and incentives, such as but not limited to tax abatements, infrastructure support reimbursement program, and density bonuses, in order to implement the Plan's goals, policies and objectives.
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Objective A: Encourage developments that utilize open space clustering and other “land efficient” methods to accomplish their goals.

Objective B: Promote open space that is logical for the site and useful in the larger framework for the community.

Objective C: Incorporate a master bike/pedestrian/trail plan stressing “connectivity” via sidewalks, bike paths, and trails to encourage non-automotive mobility for all ages between residential, educational, cultural, recreational, retail and commercial destinations within Simsbury and surrounding towns.

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Policy 8	Enhance the land use application review and decision-making process.
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Objective A: Develop guidebooks for applicants containing, for each type of application, an outline of all the necessary steps, including applications and checklists for each type of application.

Objective B: Implement an integrated permit tracking system.

Objective C: Develop staff checklists for all types of applications.

Objective D: Develop post-approval guidelines and checklist for the implementation of the approved plans.

Objective E: Utilize, to the extent feasible, joint meetings of land use boards and commissions to expedite the review and decision-making process.

How We Want To Grow - A Future By Design

Policy 9	Promote the coordination of compatible land uses and consistent environmental protections along the Town's borders.
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Objective A: Encourage active coordination of land use applications with the land use commissions and staffs of neighboring towns.

Objective B: Encourage joint access management planning between abutting, similar uses at the Town line.

Objective C: Encourage continued environmental stewardship of the Farmington River through the Farmington River Watershed Association.

Objective D: Encourage aquifer protection into adjacent communities.

Policy 10	Coordinate State and Regional Land Use Plans with Simsbury's Plan of Conservation and Development.
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Objective A: Consider the recommendations of State and Regional land use plans in determining the most desirable land uses in Simsbury.

Objective B: Interact with State and Regional planning agencies with respect to Simsbury's land use plans and policies.

Special Areas



Overview

Many of the Goals, Policies and Objectives contained in the Plan are somewhat general in nature; they apply to many, if not all, parts of Simsbury. On the other hand, there are several areas that deserve individual attention. That is the purpose of this section of the Plan.

**Town Center
(Simsbury Center)**



**Village Centers
(Tariffville)**



**Hamlet Settlements
(West Simsbury)**



**Form Districts
(Gateways)**



**Single-Use District
(Office)**



How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

For discussion purposes, the "Special Areas" have been organized based on "form categories."

Town Center - Simsbury's highest intensity development distinguished as the primary historic, cultural and economic focal point in the community:

- Simsbury Center

Village Center - Moderately-scaled, mixed-use, activity center with development intensity appropriate to the specific neighborhood context:

- Tariffville Village
- Weatogue Village

Hamlet Settlement - Small-scale, mixed-use, activity center with development intensity appropriate to the specific neighborhood context:

- West Simsbury Village
- West Street
- Hopmeadow Street: Center to Weatogue

Form District - Neighborhood-scaled land consisting of large single or multiple contiguous parcels in excess of 50 acres absent significant pre-existing development:

- Northern Gateway (Preferred Strategy)
- Southern Gateway (Alternative Strategy)

Single Use District - Area that may develop with a single use focus that may not be integrated into an adjoining neighborhood easily due to location or other attributes:

- Northern Gateway (Alternative Strategy - I1 - Office)
- Southern Gateway (Preferred Strategy - I1 - Office)
- Wolcott Street/Simsbury Airport (Industrial)
- Southwest Corner (Retail)

Special Areas Map

(Flip page up)

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Town Center

Simsbury Center

Simsbury Center projects the character of the Town. It is where we find our government, our meeting places, our history, our concerts and our main commercial center. In the age of shopping malls and developments of scale, we need to preserve and enhance the feel of a living downtown area where the pace and scale are markedly different. To this end, Simsbury Center must remain the vital, historic, cultural and economic hub of Simsbury. Moreover, we must implement strategies to make it even more so.

The vitality and appearance of Simsbury Center provide a focal point for our community. The development of the playing fields and the Performing Arts center at Simsbury Meadows bring families to the center of town and has spurred investment and renovation in the downtown area. The challenge is to promote economic development in the Center while preserving the look and feel that residents find to be charming.

Policy	
1	Establish a broad, conceptual master plan for Simsbury Center.

Objective A: Create a broad Master Plan for Simsbury Center and the Simsbury Meadows to be incorporated into the Plan of Conservation and Development and the Zoning Regulations which will address:

1. the location, intensity, and design of mixed use projects that can help create a larger “critical mass” in the Town Center;
2. how to make available state-owned land for local development purposes; and
3. what infrastructure improvements (if any) are needed.

Objective B: Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider specific modifications to the Simsbury Center Zone regulations to:

1. expand the Center Zone perimeter to include the areas shown in this Plan.
2. make Simsbury Center a “village district” as authorized by Conn. Gen. Stat. § 8-2j or a Special Development District or a Planned Development District;
3. address the performance objectives outlined in this subsection; and
4. reflect the recommendations from the proposed conceptual master plan.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Policy 2	Expand the Simsbury Center Zone.
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The Center Zone needs to be expanded to embrace recent changes in the area and to meet the uses and expectations of the residents. These changes are shown on the aerial photographs in this section.

To the east, the Center Zone should reach to its natural boundaries, including to the Flood Plain. Further consideration must be given to determining what the “underlying zone” is beneath the floodplain, and further zone changes must be made as appropriate. Most of the western side of Hopmeadow Street has been excluded from the Center Zone in the past. To encourage uniform development of the Center, the Zone should be expanded west to include more parcels. Likewise, the current prohibition against retail and personal service uses should be lifted.

Running north/south, the Center Zone should encompass the commercial sites surrounding the intersection of Route 10 and West Street on the south, and reach to the boundary of Westminster School to the north. Beyond this, further expansion of the Center Zone is not recommended at this time in order to focus development within the “core” area of the Center and to maintain “transition spaces” around the Center. It is contemplated that, were the Dyno-Nobel site ever to be redeveloped as an adaptive reuse, that Iron Horse Boulevard and the Simsbury Center Zone may be extended southward to include this property.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Policy 3	Encourage the Zoning Commission to designate Simsbury Center as a “village district”.
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Simsbury Center is certainly an area that has a distinctive character, landscape and historic value. As mentioned in other sections of the Plan, it will be important for us to protect and enhance the overall character of the Center in order to help improve the overall quality of life in the community. Designating Simsbury Center as a “village district” under CGS Section 8-2j is one way to do this since this type of zoning district allows greater consideration of (and authority over) design issues as part of land use approvals.

Once designated as a “village district,” new construction and substantial rehabilitation of properties within that area and in view from public roadways can be regulated by the Zoning Commission in relation to design considerations outlined in the statute (see sidebar).

Village District Design Considerations

These considerations include, but are not limited to the following:

1. whether buildings and site improvements reinforce existing patterns and assure there is no adverse impact on the district;
2. whether significant features of the site (such as distinctive buildings or sight lines or vistas from within the district) are integrated into the site design;
3. whether landscaping, signs, lighting and accessory structures support a uniform architectural theme and are compatible with their surroundings; and
4. whether the scale, proportions, massing and detailing of any proposed building is in proportion to the scale, proportion, massing and detailing in the district.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Policy	
4	Encourage greater density in Simsbury Center.

The development of a more pedestrian friendly environment in the Center Zone requires consideration be given to encouraging greater density within the Zone. Greater density offers a better flow of pedestrian traffic, without gaps between sections to discourage walking and exploring. The promotion of development between Hopmeadow and Iron Horse Boulevard should increase the use of the Town Center as a primary destination. To this end, infill between Hopmeadow Street and Iron Horse Boulevard must be a primary objective in the coming years.

Due to topography, there is substantially less room for growth on the west side of Hopmeadow Street. On the other hand, retail and personal services uses are currently banned from the west side of the street. Lifting these prohibitions will allow for development in these areas. In so doing, however, strategies to encourage pedestrian mobility across Hopmeadow Street must be explored (for example, raised medians at select crosswalks as described in the Simsbury Center Charette).

Density is partially a function of setback requirements. The Town should consider eliminating or minimizing side yard setback requirements and, with the exception of the Simsbury 1820 House property, achieve a uniformity of front yard set back requirements.

Policy	
5	Increase the residential component of Simsbury Center.

To enhance the vitality of Simsbury Center, the residential element of downtown must be increased. To date, regulations have limited residential development to an accessory use of a commercial building. Mixed-use development should be encouraged so that there are more residents in the Center. At a minimum density of four units per acre, the larger population will create a greater sense of activity in the center, and will encourage the development of shops and stores designed to meet the needs of these residents. Uses that maximize the number of people who shop, dine, and walk will enhance the Center.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Policy 6	Continue efforts to make Simsbury Center even more pedestrian-friendly.
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The vitality and appearance of Simsbury Center will be enhanced by continuing efforts to make it even more pedestrian-friendly. New developments should be encouraged to provide improvements that will allow pedestrians to walk among the different sites.

One benefit to a pedestrian-friendly environment can also be a reduction in traffic volume and congestion. More walking while shopping also contributes to traffic calming to some degree. Greater use of the large public parking lots would also benefit the use of downtown.

Policy 7	Ensure the provision of “green space” within the Simsbury Center Zone.
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Simsbury is fortunate to have considerable green space in its Town Center. From the Farmington River to the east, to the State and Town land to the north, to Schultz Park in the center and Belden Forest to the west, the Center Zone has significant open environmental assets. The active regional bike path running along Iron Horse Boulevard offers new commercial opportunities, including the development of community space in the parking lots on the weekends. The Simsbury Meadows is evolving into a new “town green” where residents gather for athletic, cultural and civic events. Development along Iron Horse Boulevard should complement and promote the objectives of the Center Zone.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

SIMSBURY CENTER ZONE DESIRABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

Statement of Intent

- Consider focusing less on the restrictive elements and focusing more on the Center Zone regulations as providing an opportunity for mixed use, creative architectural design, and sound inter-relationship of buildings to open spaces, pedestrian and automotive circulation, landscaping, parking areas, and business signs.

Permitted Uses

- Consider eliminating use restrictions in certain areas in the Center and allowing retail, personal and business services, restaurants, inns, professional offices, banks, residential, public, and institutional uses throughout the Center.
- Achieve uniformity of permitted uses throughout the zone.
- Permit housing throughout the entire zone as either a primary use or as part of a mixed-use development
- Permit retail and personal service uses on the west side of Hopmeadow Street

Design Requirements

- Consider relying more on input from the Design Review Board and a “village district consultant” to guide design in the Center Zone rather than “one size fits all” standards.
- Achieve uniformity of front-yard setback requirements throughout the zone by reducing some of the front yard setbacks on the east side of Hopmeadow Street to the same setback (10 feet) as allowed on the west side of the Street
- Explore the feasibility of eliminating side-yard setback requirements or consider reducing side and rear yard setbacks from 20 feet (which can be waived by the Zoning Commission) to 10 feet throughout the Center.
- Consider whether additional changes in design requirements may be warranted.

Parking Requirements

- Consider revisiting the parking requirements in the Center Zone both on an overall basis and when it can be demonstrated that adequate parking will be available since the peak parking needs of different uses occur at different times.
- Consider allowing land uses in the Center Zone to count public parking spaces when they are reasonably accessible.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Policy 8	Strive to reduce or minimize the impact of less attractive features (such as utility wires).
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Simsbury Center has developed over the years with a variety of attractive features. The Town should attempt to minimize the less attractive features of future development by requiring that utility wires be located underground (where possible) and that loading areas and mechanical equipment (HVAC, generators, etc.) be screened from street view (where possible).

Policy 9	Promote municipal ownership and management of parking areas currently owned by the State.
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There are parking areas in Simsbury Center that are owned by the State of Connecticut. These parking lots (which are remnants from the days when the railroad was active) are extremely important to the overall function of the Center). The Town should explore ways that these parking areas can be transferred to the Town so that local officials can determine how to best use these areas for the long-term health of the Center.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Recreational Amenities

The Tariffville area has potential as a focal point for bikers, hikers, canoeists, and kayakers without impacting the village environment or ambiance. The creation of walkways and bike paths to link destinations within Tariffville and to other areas of Simsbury (and surrounding towns) will help reinforce this potential.

The Tariffville Gorge is widely recognized kayaking location with exceptional Class II/III rapids and this can also be used to support recreational activities in the area.

Village Centers

Tariffville

Tariffville reflects the heritage of this part of Simsbury as a New England mill village. It has narrow streets and sidewalks where residents walk to the post office and visit each other without accessing their cars.

The village contains a diverse mix of housing, some commercial development, the Tariffville Mill, and open spaces nestled in a compact area in the vicinity of the Tariffville Gorge. The Village has a strong civic association and community-minded citizens who have worked to preserve and improve the village.

Tariffville should continue to be a mixed-use walkable village. Development or redevelopment in the Center should reflect design elements and features appropriate for the village such as tree-lined sidewalks and street parking that accommodates walkability in the Center. Adaptive reuse of the Tariffville Mill office complex is helping to stimulate the area's economic development potential.

Policy 1	Consider zoning techniques for Tariffville that will enable its individual characteristics to stand out.
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Objective: Encourage the Zoning Commission to create a new zoning district for Tariffville that will permit mixed-use development and re-development, but which will also include specific form-based design criteria to ensure this village retains its historic characteristics and its economic vitality is enhanced.

Policy 2	Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating Tariffville as a "village district."
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Designating Tariffville as a "village district" under CGS Section 8-2j is one way to help maintain and enhance community character since this type of zoning district allows greater consideration of (and authority over) design issues as part of land use approvals.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Weatogue

This important gateway, linear with a mixture of businesses very close to Route 10 and, in some places devoid of landscaping, deserves significant attention.

With access to the river and the Farmington Valley Bikeway, and with many parcels under common ownership, there is potential to improve commerce and services to the many nearby residences and guests at our major hotel property as well as take advantage of other unique features such as the fountain, the non-functioning bike path over the Farmington River, the possibility of a boat/kayak/ canoe club just south or North of the Route 185 bridge, etc. as well as the proposed parking and pedestrian access to Connecticut's largest sycamore tree.

Policy 1	Consider zoning techniques for Weatogue that will enable its individual characteristics to stand out.
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Objective: Encourage the Zoning Commission to create a new zoning district for Weatogue that will permit mixed-use development and re-development, but which will also include specific form-based design criteria to ensure this village retains its historic characteristics and its economic vitality is enhanced.

Policy 2	Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating Weatogue as a "village district."
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Designating Weatogue as a "village district" under CGS Section 8-2j is one way to help maintain and enhance community character since this type of zoning district allows greater consideration of (and authority over) design issues as part of land use approvals.

Hamlet Settlements

West Simsbury Village

West Simsbury represents the early rural farming tradition in Simsbury, an important historic element in the town that contributes to Simsbury's economic development, environment, and quality of life. Its natural beauty exceeds that of the typical rural district due to its mix of agricultural uses and a small-scale town center.

This village center is a symbol of the town's early tradition as a rural community. It contains a mixture of residential and commercially zoned properties including the post office. It is adjacent to Tulmeadow Farm the development rights of which have recently been purchased by the Simsbury Land Trust.

The Plan recommends:

- retaining the rural character of the center in any future development;
- limiting business development to the center as infill;
- continuing the limited pattern of mixed uses that combine existing residential properties with small commercial properties; and
- that new construction in the center continue to reflect the siting, scale and historic characteristics of the area.

West Simsbury



How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Outside the center, preservation of open space and purchase of development rights should continue to be a priority. If development is to occur in this area in the future, it should be low density residential and limited to large lot clustered development where preservation of open space and protection of scenic views can be assured. The Town should continue to try to secure a scenic road designation for the area.

Policy 1	Consider zoning techniques for West Simsbury that will enable its individual characteristics to stand out.
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Objective: Encourage the Zoning Commission to create a new zoning district for West Simsbury that will permit mixed-use development and re-development, but which will also include specific form-based design criteria to ensure this village retains its historic characteristics and its economic vitality is enhanced.

Policy 2	Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating West Simsbury as a “village district.”
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Designating West Simsbury as a “village district” under CGS Section 8-2j is one way to help maintain and enhance community character since this type of zoning district allows greater consideration of (and authority over) design issues as part of land use approvals.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Why Not Center Zone?

For a number of reasons, it is not recommended that West Street be added to the Simsbury Center Zone.

The Planning Commission recognizes distinct differences between these two areas in terms of their character, form and function. Expanding the Simsbury Center Zone to include West Street would, for example, be counter to the Plan's stated goal of encouraging infill with the existing boundaries of the present Simsbury Center Zone.

In addition, the Commission has concerns about how some of the provisions of the Simsbury Center Zone regulation (for example, a lack of a coverage limitation) would affect development patterns along West Street.

This area would therefore benefit from its own zone.

West Street

West Street has a collection of small commercial enterprises and mixed residential housing types. Since this area is a historic mixed use area, any and all applications for planning and development should be considered on an individual basis.

Following a series of meetings, property owners on West Street suggested that the Center Zone expand to encompass their neighborhood. Though such an expansion is not recommended at this time, West Street would benefit from the enactment of flexible zoning techniques specific to this area of town.

Policy 1	Consider zoning techniques for West Street that will enable its individual characteristics to stand out.
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Objective A: Encourage the Zoning Commission to create a new zoning district for West Street that will permit mixed-use development, but which will also include specific form-based design criteria.

Objective B: Appoint a special committee to evaluate the creation of a special district for West Street.

Objective C: Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating West Street as a "village district." under CGS Section 8-2j or a Special Development District or a Planned Development District in order to help maintain and enhance community character in this area

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Hopmeadow Street - Simsbury Center to Weatogue

In the northern part of this area is the former Ensign-Bickford research, development, and manufacturing facility (now known as Dyno-Nobel). This facility is well known to Simsbury residents and it is characterized by the buildings that are, in large part, constructed of Simsbury sand stone.

Some of these buildings may not be well adapted to current or future manufacturing processes and it is possible that the existing buildings may be re-used in the future for office or other uses. Should the Dyno-Nobel campus become a multi-user facility at some point in the future, it would be beneficial to have developed a preliminary plan so that the facility could be considered for adaptive reuse.

Policy 1	Develop a preliminary adaptive re-use plan to prepare for the possibility that the Dyno-Nobel campus might become a multi-user facility some day.
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The area along Hopmeadow Street between Dyno-Nobel and the entrance to the Powder Forest contains a diverse mix of land uses (such as retail, office, multi-family residential, and single-family residential). Since managing land use change in this area will require consideration of the factors unique to each site on a case-by-case basis, an overall mixed-use district for this area is not recommended. In the event of a change of the circumstances of this area, there will be a need for comprehensive planning to address issues of access management and pedestrian mobility. Any such planning must also consider how to best take advantage of the Farmington Valley Greenway.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Policy 2	Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider overlay zoning or other techniques that would allow for business uses while maintaining the character of the existing streetscape.
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Objective: Recommend that the Zoning Commission consider permitting conversion of existing residences on Hopmeadow Street (from Powder Forest Drive to West Street) to office uses provided the residential structure remains substantially intact, possibly through the use of an overlay zone (*e.g.*, a Professional Office overlay zone). Additionally, the form of the Simsmore Square area should be maintained. Were this area to be torn down and redeveloped with generic strip development, an important transition area between Weatogue and the Center would be lost.

Policy 3	Create a comprehensive plan to address access anagement and pedestrian mobility in the corridor and to tie in with the Farmington Valley Greenway.
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How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Form Districts

Simsbury is an established town with a finite amount of substantially undeveloped contiguous land left and even fewer large parcel areas of a scale to constitute a general neighborhood of approximately 50-100 acres – generally considered to be a basic building block in good community design. Although much of Simsbury’s future growth will be either infill or redevelopment on previously disturbed sites, two areas stand out for emerging development and both have geographical significance – the Northern Gateway and Southern Gateway – and both areas will be considered here in a category called Form Districts by virtue of their size, resource potential, vulnerability to loss of valued resources, and symbolic importance.

Architectural detailing is important but good community design is primarily a function of open space placement, building specifics and the spaces between those buildings - size, shape and location - all reinforcing specific site resources. Envisioning change by focusing on specific site resources and emphasizing patterns of development instead of individual land uses is the best strategy for the most desirable type of growth in these and any other critical areas within Simsbury.

Three broad criteria speak to good design: form, character, and context.

- **Form**
 - Create a distinct physical settlement that utilizes open space as the primary design element
 - Promote neighborhood greens, landscaped streets, “single-loaded parkways, boulevards integrated into street and block patterns to provide for community spaces and visual features
 - Develop a settlement of modest size and scale that encourages pedestrian travel rather than automobile usage
 - Reinforce specific site visual and natural resources considered desirable by the town through configuration and the disposition of the structures
 - Encourage traditional village building and site development patterns with interconnected streets and blocks as typically exists in Village Centers such as Tariffville Village or more rural Hamlet Settlements such as West Simsbury Center
 - If the “devil is in the details,” clarify design objectives and mitigate site vulnerability to change through detail specificity

Form Districts

Form districts are places where form-based coding (see page 51) might have advantages over use-based coding (see page 50).

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

- **Character**
 - Focus on patterns of development for a more dramatic and lasting effect to infuse character rather than primarily on surface treatments
 - Promote a design incorporating residentially scaled buildings fronting on and generally aligned with the streets
 - Develop a settlement of modest size and scale that encourages pedestrian travel rather than automobile usage
 - Encourage a mix of housing types to create a diversity of age groups and income levels
 - Provide civic facilities or areas for communal activities that act as visual landmarks and symbols of identity
 - Draw design references towards other successful neighborhoods within the town

- **Context**
 - Reference specific site visual, cultural, and natural resources rather than land uses for the most desirable type of growth
 - Encourage the creation of a functionally diverse, but visually unified community focused on an open space – a commons or a greenbelt
 - Promote consolidation of the development by locating buildings in close proximity to each other, the scale of which encourages pedestrian travel within the community
 - Integrate the development with the original neighborhood in terms of function, scale and proportions
 - Preserve open space, scenic vistas, agricultural land, and natural areas
 - Determine and maintain important existing site symbolism at a particular location

The Northern Gateway and Southern Gateway locations are opportunities for a mixed-use development of a configuration and intensity of development that should complement the pre-existing natural, cultural, and visual resources identified as valuable to the specific site context:

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Northern Gateway (preferred strategy)

Overview

The “Northern Gateway” is an area of land approximately 150 acres west of Hopmeadow Street/Route #10 from the Wolcott Road intersection on the north and westerly along the power utility right-of-way and extending south to the intersection with Route 315. This area plus the larger area extending north to the Granby Town Line has developed over time with a mixture of separate uses (retail, office, industrial, residential) at intervals on relatively small parcels without benefit of a conceptual plan that could focus and guide development. Parking lots and multiple access entrances are predominant features.

In the future, the Planning Commission would like to guide new development to avoid the establishment of one continuous strip development in this area. The goal in this area then would entail creating a unifying feature that encourages new development to integrate with the pre-existing commercial development using an open space central green as the primary organizing element. If open space is placed prominently at the center surrounded by mixed-use buildings and streets, the form is one of enclosure, more centrally urbanized, and more densely developed, yet scaled to complement the character of the neighborhood.

Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities include the fact that public water and sewer, and natural gas are available to the properties in this area. In addition, there are several large parcels that are undeveloped and adjacent properties that could be used to establish an overall development concept that enhances Simsbury’s character and meets community needs.

Constraints include the facts that Saxton Brook bisects the area, electrical power lines cross the northerly portion and the aquifer protection overlay for the Hoskins Aquifer covers the entire area. There is an ample supply of ground water beneath properties within this area.

See page 100 for the alternative strategy for the Northern Gateway.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

While there are a variety of zones in this area at the present time, an overall master plan could form the basis for a new overall zoning configuration for this area. In the meantime

- Residential uses and zoning along Hoskins Road reinforce the character of that neighborhood and provide a good transition from Route 10/Hopmeadow Street and should remain.
- The residential designation north of the gravel pit provides a logical transition to the residential neighborhoods of Howard Street and Gordon Street.
- Commercial zoning should remain along Route 10/ Hopmeadow Street from Ely Lane north to the driveway of International Skating Center.

An additional priority for any development of the north end should include a right-of-way for an arterial connection between the intersection of Wolcott Road and Route 10/Hopmeadow Street through to the intersection of Hoskins Road and County Road. This arterial will divert traffic wishing to go north on Route 10/Hopmeadow Street and/or Wolcott Road away from the Hoskins Road/Ely Lane and Route 10/Hopmeadow Street intersection. This proposal is also consistent with the recommendation to shift State Route 315 to Wolcott Road.

It should also be noted that a number of developed R-15 and B-2 parcels may be a part of a Form District in this area. The Planning Commission's intent is to allow those parcels to be a part of a Form District if those property owners so choose. In implementing the recommendations of this part of the Plan, great care should be taken to maintain these property owners' existing zoning rights and to ensure that existing uses do not unwittingly become non-conforming.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Policy 1	Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating the Northern Gateway as a “village district” or a Special Development District or a Planned Development District.
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The Northern Gateway is an area where the community desires to establish a distinctive character in order to help maintain and enhance the overall quality of life in the community. Designating the Northern Gateway as a “village district” under CGS Section 8-2j may be one way to do this, since this type of zoning district allows greater consideration of (and authority over) design issues as part of land use approvals. Once designated as a “village district,” new construction and substantial rehabilitation of existing properties can be regulated by the Zoning Commission as outlined in the statute.

As an alternative to a “village district”, a Special Development District or a Planned Development District may be appropriate.

Policy 2	Promote open space/cluster techniques and “traditional neighborhood design” for residential development located in the northwest part of this area.
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In the area northwest of the Northern Gateway, a greater emphasis should be placed on developing residential land using open space/cluster techniques and Traditional Neighborhood Design. The Plan recommends that the land located to the northwest of the Northern Gateway, which is currently zoned R-40, would be an ideal location for this type of subdivision. The Planning Commission intends to amend its subdivision regulations to add incentives for this type of development.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

NORTHERN GATEWAY DESIRABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. Pre-existing Context

- Location: a symbolically important “Northern Gateway” area
- Uses: a mixture of retail, office, industrial, and residential
- Predominant feature: strip commercial development, parking lots and multiple access entrances
- Vulnerability: growing randomly into one continuous strip development
- Goal: create a unifying feature that encourages new development to integrate with the pre-existing commercial development using open space as the primary organizing feature

2. Design Context

- Utilize traditional mixed-use village center planning principles
- Organize the village around a strong focal point, specifically a central green
 - Configuration: approximately two regulation soccer fields in length and depth sufficient for communal activities
 - Disposition: front one side of the central green along Hopmeadow Street to integrate new to existing development

3. Functional areas

- Conservancy Areas - Protected open space land areas, including, e.g., greens, commons, and private non-commons on parcels used for agriculture, public recreation, and gardens - up to 10%
- Residential Area - Variety of housing options with a broad range of housing types such as apartments, townhouses, duplexes, and small lot single family - 40-50%
- Commercial Office and Non-Office - The primary intention is to provide uses that meet the office, retail and service needs of a traditional Village Center and its vicinity - 12-30%
- Mixed-Use Area - These occupancies may contain other compatible uses such as commercial and institutional uses of community-wide importance and second-floor office and/or residential uses - 10-30%

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

NORTHERN GATEWAY DESIRABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (continued)

4. Form Context

- Locate commercial activities within a consolidated core area for walkability and convenience with the following objectives:
 - Create attractive streetscapes with combinations of wide sidewalks and street trees;
 - Spacing dimensions between buildings on opposite sides of the street should be in the order of 2 times the building heights
- Provide for a complementary mix of building sizes between one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half stories above grade for variety, visual interest, and human scale proportions:
 - Avoid the monolithic and repetitive types of structures
 - Building scale matters and should approximate individual building dimensions that vary from:
 - Smaller building footprint width and/or depth dimensions should be approximately 1 ½ times the building height
 - Larger building footprint width and/or depth dimensions should be no greater than 5 times the building height
 - Building height matters and should approximate individual building dimensions that vary from:
 - One-and-one-half story building should be approximately 25 feet in height
 - Two-and-one-half story buildings should be approximately 35 feet in height

5. Civic Uses

- Set aside building sites for civic structures such as a community center or a bandshell
- Locate small green spaces as terminating vistas at road intersections or for placing ceremonial monuments, fountains, or gardens

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

NORTHERN GATEWAY DESIRABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (continued)

6. Landscape

- Plant large shade trees in the park and along adjacent streets in a semi-regulated pattern
- Landscape public spaces with low shrubs and seasonal plantings
- Conceal parking utilizing natural materials and plantings

7. Open Space and Recreation

- Interconnect all areas with sidewalks and/or pathways
- Provide access to greenways and public spaces
- Provide for a large space within the green belt opposite the skating center for playing fields or future activity center for residents and the public
- Preserve broad buffers along Saxton Brook and other natural features

8. Access

- Plan an access road between Hoskins/County Road and Rt. 10 near the Wolcott Road intersection with bicycle lane and pedestrian sidewalk
- Utilize a simple loop road around the central green as an organizing element
- Connect the central loop to an irregular grid of side streets to minimize congestion
- Build streets as narrow as possible
- Prepare an arrival point to the skating center

9. Residential Streets

- Extend quiet residential streets with bicycle lanes away from the central green
- Keep houses close to the street to allow for usable rear yards

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

NORTHERN GATEWAY DESIRABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (continued)

10. Parking

- Provide for short term on-street parking for the shops and restaurants
- Conceal off-street parking areas from the Route 10/Hopmeadow Street corridor
- Utilize consolidated parking between office uses, residents, and visitors
- Locate parking around sides and rear of buildings avoiding locations between the building and the street

11. Architecture

- Utilize flexible architectural guidelines for diversity while maintaining design unity in building size, proportions, rooflines, fenestration, and materials
- Have residential buildings share some commonality with commercial or office designs and avoid discord between structures
- Traditional multi-story commercial buildings line the core area and buildings reduce in size and increase in spacing in distance from the central point
- Preserve the existing tobacco barns as part of the Town's cultural heritage and incorporate them into the plan concept

12. Streetscape

- Public space (e.g., broad, landscaped sidewalks with public amenities) along the street is the center of activity and should be designed to create a safe, visually appealing and physically comfortable experience
- Utilize "build-to" setbacks to reinforce the street wall to enclose the street space
- Use sidewalks on all streets and broad sidewalks around the central green to encourage walking and sitting

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

See page 101 for the preferred strategy for the Southern Gateway.

Southern Gateway (alternative strategy)

Overview

Beginning at the Avon town line and traveling north to the intersection of Old Meadow Plain Road the land to the east is zoned Restricted Industrial for large-scale industrial uses and to the west is zoned largely Single Family Residential and to a lesser extent Designed Multiple Residence. The large single parcel east of the road of approximately 60 acres varies from 1100 feet deep at the south to 750 feet deep at the north as measured from Hopmeadow Street to the rails-to-trails path. Beyond the public path the grade drops off rapidly to a floodplain and the Farmington River. The rails-to-trails path effectively forms the eastern building limitation of the property. There is an existing single-story large structure at the center of the site of approximately 40,000 square feet in footprint with some higher structures in the rear. The existing building setback is approximately 500 feet. The Restricted Industrial zone continues north of the site and currently supports multiple office buildings including two large insurance companies. The land south in Avon has an array of small, two story office buildings followed by a retail shopping complex designed in a rural-style building typology.

The most dominant feature on this eastern landscape is the quality of the open space with a virtually unobstructed view of the Avon Mountain ridge and signature Heublein Tower across a largely undeveloped meadow and a roadside vista at an important gateway. The road, Route 10/Hopmeadow Street, is a two-lane arterial with only one turning lane at the traffic signal at Old Meadow Plain Road.

Opportunities and Constraints

The industrial-zoned area of approximately 60 acres represents an opportunity for an extensive new development on the most buildable type of land – flat, sizable, and access to significant town infrastructure. However, rural areas are not “designed” in the same sense that urban areas are planned with specific aesthetic goals in mind. The challenge as more areas become suburbanized is to design in concert with the rural character and not in trade for it.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Form District - The Planning Commission also recommends an alternative development scenario that could be beneficial to the town: the concept of a mixed-use Hamlet Settlement or Village Center on the site. However, it is imperative that any such mixed-use development must be of a scale to harmonize with the adjacent areas and the town as a whole and to protect the general welfare of these areas.

The placement of the open space again is the primary tool that instills character. A wide greenbelt placed around a concentrated area of buildings of varying dimensions, communicates to the observer a more open, expansive and countryside type of development – e.g. a Hamlet or Village Center viewed across a meadow. Natural open space land is synonymous with countryside.

For this reason, the Planning Commission is of the opinion that mixed-use development in the Southern Gateway should, to the extent that use-based zoning continues, be allowed pursuant to either a zone change or a special permit to ensure that specific objective design criteria are satisfied.

As with a designed industrial development, the Planning Commission recommends that certain fundamental tenets be adhered to if the site is to be developed as a mixed-use development:

1. Require a Master Plan for the entire site, including a single parcel or contiguous, multiple parcel development, showing substantive details for site access, building design including scale and massing, internal streets, uses, parking areas, environmental impact and traffic analysis;
2. Ensure that the Southern Gateway Form District continue to be an important thematic, signature characteristic of Simsbury;
3. Protect scenic roadside vistas to the Avon Mountain Ridge, access to recreational activities, and other natural areas to the Farmington River;
4. Promote a compact mixed-use development with location of dwellings, shops, and workplaces in close proximity to each other surrounded by green space including a deep roadside greenbelt or “foreground meadow” along Route 10/Hopmeadow Street and termination vistas at the intersection of Old Meadow Plain; and
5. Preserve Route 10/Hopmeadow Street as a two-lane arterial when considering development capacity along Route 10/Hopmeadow Street.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

The following Policies are intended to work in tandem. "Village district" designation in Policy #1 may become the legal basis for establishing "character" as the guideline for development. Policy #2 as supplemented by the Southern Gateway Desirable Performance Objectives will define the planning detail of what should constitute that "character."

Policy 1	Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating the Southern Gateway as a "village district."
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The Southern Gateway is an area where the community desires to maintain an existing distinctive character by acknowledging and preserving the significant resources that directly affect that character and consequently impact the overall quality of life in the community. Designating the Southern Gateway as a "village district" under CGS Section 8-2j may be one way to do this since this type of zoning district allows greater consideration of (and authority over) design issues as part of land use approvals. Once designated as a "village district," new construction and substantial rehabilitation of existing properties can be regulated by the Zoning Commission as outlined in the statute.

Policy 2	Consider the concept of a mixed use, Hamlet Settlement or Village Center in this area provided that such development harmonizes with the adjacent areas and the town as a whole.
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As part of an establishment of a "village district" comply with the following Southern Gateway Performance Objectives:

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

SOUTHERN GATEWAY DESIRABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

1. Pre-existing Context

- Location: a symbolically important “Southern Gateway” area beginning at the Avon Town Line and extending north to pre-existing office development and from Route 10/Hopmeadow Street on the west to the floodplain and Farmington River beyond to the east.
- Size: approximately 60 acres in area varying from 1100 feet deep at the south to 750 feet deep at the north as measured from Route 10/Hopmeadow Street to the rails-to-trails path.
- Use: an industrial/office zoned site with a 40,000+/- square foot, single story structure set back from Hopmeadow Street approximately 500 feet located roughly at the center of the site with several garage structures in the rear
- Predominant feature: an unobstructed view of the Avon Mountain ridge and signature Heublein Tower across a predominantly undeveloped meadow currently used as agricultural fields
- Vulnerability: expansive and intense development that would necessitate changes to the two lane road (Rte 10/Hopmeadow Street), a disruption to the viewshed vista to the Avon Mountain ridge, and loss of a roadside open space recurring theme prevalent in Simsbury and a gateway feature
- Goal: utilize open space as the character development feature encouraging a Hamlet Settlement or Village Center set back from Route 10/Hopmeadow Street to preserve the symbolic countryside “Southern Gateway” and the vistas to the Heublein Tower

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

SOUTHERN GATEWAY DESIRABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (continued)

2. Design Context

- Reinforce a countryside character by utilizing natural open space as the dominant physical feature, particularly adjacent to Hopmeadow Street
- Preserve continuous views of the existing natural vistas, particularly as one travels along the Hopmeadow Street corridor by placing development away from the public right of way avoiding leaving only intermittent views of the ridgeline.
- Incorporate open space elements as terminating vistas, including opposite the intersection of Old Meadow Plain Road, or as a natural gateway at the Avon town line
- Promote a modest size and residentially-scaled mixed-use Hamlet Settlement or Village Center that accommodates and encourages pedestrian walkability
- Promote use of neighborhood greens, landscaped streets, and “single-loaded” parkways as part of the fabric and street pattern to provide space for social interaction, recreation, and visual pleasure
- Encourage a diversity of dwelling types by age groups, income range, and households
- Provide buildings or parks for civic or institutional uses as visual landmarks and symbols of identity
- Create a compact, physical settlement village center surrounded by a protected greenbelt used for recreational and environmental purposes as well as for the protection of the pre-existing adjacent residential neighborhood
 - Establish a deep, wide continuous roadside greenbelt along Hopmeadow Street as open space resource protection meeting the following objectives:
 - be a strong design feature that creates a park or green space with a variable depth from the street equivalent to the width of a regulation soccer field where residents will have the opportunities for significant and varied active recreation
 - maintain a substantive transition area between the mixed-use development and residences to the west;
 - project the sense to those driving along Hopmeadow Street that the roadside greenbelt and a continuous view of the ridgeline vista – and not the mixed-use development – is the defining feature
 - Restrict the roadside greenbelt with a conservation easement
 - Define the Hamlet Settlement or Village Center edges with open space to secure site identity

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

SOUTHERN GATEWAY DESIRABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (continued)

3. Functional areas

- Conservancy Areas - Protected open space, including, e.g., greens, commons, and private non-commons on parcels used for agriculture, public recreation, and gardens - up to 10%
- Residential Area - Variety of housing options with a broad range of housing types such as apartments, town-houses, duplexes, and small lot single family - 40-50%
- Commercial Office and Non-Office - The primary intention is to provide uses that meet the office, retail and service needs of a traditional Village Center and vicinity - 12-30%
- Mixed-Use Area - These occupancies may contain other compatible uses such as commercial and institutional uses of community-wide importance and second-floor office and/or residential uses - 10-30%

4. Form Context

- Locate commercial activities within a consolidated core area for walkability and convenience with the following objectives:
 - Create attractive streetscapes with combinations of wide sidewalks and street trees;
 - Spacing dimensions between buildings on opposite sides of the street should be in the order of two (2) times the building heights
- Provide for a complementary mix of building sizes between one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half stories above grade for variety, visual interest, and human scale proportions:
 - Avoid the monolithic and repetitive types of structures
 - Utilize village scale proportions for building widths, depths, and heights
 - Smaller building footprint width and/or depth dimensions should be approximately 1 ½ times the building height
 - Larger building footprint width and/or depth dimensions should be no greater than 4 ½ times the building height
 - One-and-one-half story building should be approximately 25 feet in height
 - Two-and-one-half story buildings should be approximately 35 feet in height

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

SOUTHERN GATEWAY DESIRABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (continued)

5. Roads

- Minimize access curb cuts to the site along Route 10/Hopmeadow Street, while nonetheless providing adequate access management
- Design the road network to enhance a Rural District character; *e.g.*, curvilinear, following the lay of the land, and side swales. Provide a sense of arrival by revealing views of open space and terminating vistas
- Design interior road system to be a continuous loop or an informal interconnected network eliminating cul-de-sacs or dead ends
- Keep road widths as narrow as possible to maintain safety while including a bicycle lane as part of the primary road system
- Utilize street tree plantings as a strong design feature both in the Village Center and along the side streets

6. Parking

- Provide for short term on-street parking for the shops and restaurants
- Conceal off-street parking areas from the Route 10/Hopmeadow Street corridor
- Utilize consolidated parking between office uses, residents, and visitors
- Locate parking around sides and rear of buildings avoiding locations between the building and the street

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

SOUTHERN GATEWAY DESIRABLE PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES (continued)

7. Architecture

- Incorporate pitched roofs, complex and irregular massing, and traditional fenestration to help blend in with adjacent existing buildings
- Include a variety of building types to reinforce the authenticity of the development
- Place smaller scale buildings toward the frontage along Route 10/Hopmeadow Street with larger structures situated in the rear of the site
- Place larger commercial or civic buildings at more visible locations (for example, at a key intersection) to establish a visual and functional focus
- Maintain height limitations in order to preserve substantial views of the Talcott Mountain ridgeline, including the Heublein Tower

8. Streetscape

- Plan each street according to proposed use with regard to need for on-street parking and traffic demand
- Locate sidewalks on all streets on both sides of the street within the center and on at least one side outside the center

See page 85 for the preferred strategy for the Northern Gateway.

Possible Single Use Districts

Northern Gateway (alternative strategy)

Single Use - Office / Industrial - The Planning Commission believes that an Alternative Strategy for the Northern Gateway site is as an Office / Industrial park. The site is currently zoned I-1 and the as-of-right use of the property should remain essentially unchanged.

Under the current I-1 regulations, both the Planning and the Zoning Commissions have the obligation to review the proposed site plan under various criteria, including, but not limited to, the location of main and accessory buildings in relation to one another, the height and bulk of buildings in relation to other structures in the vicinity, and possible circulation problems on existing streets. The commissions also have the power to require screening if it is necessary to protect nearby residential areas. Landscaping, screening, or other appropriate screening material may be specified. With this in mind, the Planning Commission makes the following recommendations that should be incorporated into any Office or Industrial site plan:

1. Require a Master Plan for the entire site, including a single parcel or contiguous, multiple parcel development, showing substantive details for site access, building design, internal streets, uses, parking areas, environmental impact and traffic analysis;
2. Ensure that the Northern Gateway continues as an important thematic characteristic of Simsbury;
3. Protect scenic roadside views to existing woodlands and open space areas toward the western perimeter and encourage a landscaped buffer along Route 10/Hopmeadow Street;
4. Preserve Route 10/Hopmeadow Street as a two-lane arterial when considering development capacity along Route 10/Hopmeadow Street; and
5. Structures should be located to the center and rear of the property, thereby creating the largest front setback as feasible to limit the view of the buildings from Route 10/ Hopmeadow Street.
6. Retain the five barns along Hopmeadow Street to the extent feasible.

Policy	Maintain the existing regulatory requirements for the I-1 Zone in order to promote the ideal alternative use of this area as an Office / Industrial park.
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How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Southern Gateway (preferred strategy)

Single Use - Office / Industrial - The Planning Commission believes that the ideal use of the site is as an office park. Because the site is currently zoned for this purpose, the Planning Commission is of the opinion that the “default” as of right use of the property should remain essentially unchanged from its I-1 zoning. Therefore, the Planning Commission recommends that, to the extent that use-based zoning continues, the Zoning Commission maintain the existing regulatory requirements for the I-1 zone.

Under the current I-1 regulations, both the Planning and the Zoning Commissions have the obligation to review the proposed site plan under various criteria, including, but not limited to, the location of main and accessory buildings in relation to one another, the height and bulk of buildings in relation to other structures in the vicinity, and possible circulation problems on existing streets. The commissions also have the power to require screening if it is necessary to protect nearby residential areas. Landscaping, screening, or other appropriate screening material may be specified. With this in mind, the Planning Commission makes the following recommendations that should be incorporated into any Office or Industrial site plan:

1. Require a Master Plan for the entire site, including a single parcel or contiguous, multiple parcel development, showing substantive details for site access, building design, internal streets, uses, parking areas, environmental impact and traffic analysis;
2. Ensure that the Southern Gateway continues to be an important thematic, rural signature characteristic of Simsbury;
3. Protect scenic roadside vistas to the Avon Mountain Ridge, access to recreational activities, and other natural areas to the Farmington River;
4. Preserve Route 10/Hopmeadow Street as a two-lane arterial when considering development capacity along Route 10/Hopmeadow Street; and
5. Structures should be located to the rear of the property, thereby creating the largest front setback as feasible, with berming to limit the view of the buildings from Route 10/ Hopmeadow Street.

See page 92 for the alternative strategy for the Southern Gateway.

Policy	Maintain the existing regulatory requirements for the I-1 Zone in order to promote the ideal use of this area as an Office park.
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How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Wolcott Road / Simsbury Airport

The Simsbury Airport area has developed into a vibrant manufacturing and commercial area of for businesses from small to medium occupying one and two story buildings. Although less visible to many, the area provides a high-density commercial district. The larger businesses there have room for expansion.

The centerpiece of the area is the airport. It is zoned as an I-1 Restricted Industrial Zone and currently provides a generous measure of open land that looks like “open space” (but it is not preserved as open space). It primarily serves recreational and business purposes; it has minimal use for commercial delivery of goods or products.

While the airport is a long-standing feature of the Town, its long term status is less certain. It has been owned by family members who lease the property to the Simsbury Flying Club. The lease may be terminated on six months’ notice, permitting the owners or their successors to change the use quickly. Currently, the Town is conducting a feasibility study as to whether the airport should be municipally owned.

Wolcott Road / Simsbury Airport



How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

In the event that the airport use is discontinued, the site would be available for use as office buildings, warehouses, manufacturing facilities and research laboratories. Future development of the site should preserve some aspect of the open field and unobstructed vistas that now exist. Clustered buildings could preserve the open atmosphere of the area, providing valuable economic development while retaining some elements of the natural state of the land.

Policy	
1	Preserve the Simsbury Airport.

Objective A: Consider whether the Town should obtain a municipal interest in the airport site or acquire a right-of-first refusal in the event that the airport is abandoned and the land put on the market.

Objective B: If the Town does not wish to acquire an interest in the Simsbury Airport, explore alternative strategies to preserve it.

Objective C: Support the augmentation of capabilities and services at the Simsbury airport to foster opportunities such as air taxis.

Objective D: Study the potential for the expanded use and improvement of the Simsbury Airport in recognition of its capability to become a transportation hub and to support economic development.

Policy	
2	Support an expansion of, and other improvements to, the Simsbury Airport as needed.

Objective: To help accommodate a new generation of low-cost, lighter, quieter, 6+ passenger jet airplanes explore increasing runway length, adding parking, enhancing road access to the Simsbury Airport, and supporting the expansion of commercial/industrial land use around Simsbury airport.

How We Want To Grow - Special Areas

Southwest Corner

Policy	Consider rezoning some residential land to commercial in the Bushy Hill Lane area.
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The land in the southwest corner of Simsbury provides Simsbury's only direct access to Route 44. This area should remain commercial/retail.

Eventually, the residential triangle created by Bushy Hill Road (Route 167), West Mountain Road, and Bushy Hill Lane should be rezoned commercial and a buffer created to protect residences to the North and West. Access management strategies are of paramount importance, especially in any redevelopment of the Hoffman Auto property.

Southwest Corner



Economic Development



Overview

New economic development in Simsbury enhances the community by adding new jobs, by diversifying land use and by increasing the grand list. Locally produced goods and services add to the quality of life and strengthen the fabric of the community.

The tax benefit of commercial and industrial property is important. New economic development policies must be adopted to encourage commercial and industrial activity, thereby shifting some of the tax burden from homeowners. This point has been stressed by the Economic Development Commission and the Board of Finance. At the same time, our community cannot have a singular focus on simple percentages. Grand list growth is only one half of the equation. It is the “net economic impact” of development (the revenues generated by a development over time netted against the costs incurred as a result of that development) that ultimately affects our taxes, and that is why it is important to identify land uses that will have the most positive “net economic impact” on the Town. At the same time, however, it also important to consider the “net economic impact” to the region in terms of gross regional product, property values, personal income, sales volumes, or other metrics.

In order to achieve this goal, while preserving and enhancing the quality of life we treasure, the policies and objectives within the Economic Development section of the 2007 Plan focus on:

- improving the development approval process,
- improving local regulations,
- providing appropriate incentives, and
- encouraging the use of “green building” technologies.

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Improving the Development Approval Process

Any significant economic development project will include an application to at least one land use board or commission. In many instances, however, a proposal will include reviews by the Design Review Board, the Conservation and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission.

Without sacrificing the due diligence required of these commissions and board, it is incumbent on all land use agencies to work together to continuously review and improve the process by which applications are processed. Pre-applications, joint meetings, standard application forms, and guidebooks keyed to each type of application are just a few of the ways the Planning Commission intends that the process will be streamlined to produce better results and a better process.

Improving Local Regulations

For seventy years, the paradigm of land use regulation has focused on the use of the land (i.e., is the land suitable for a factory, or a store, or a single-family home, or an apartment complex?) rather than the form of the structures on the land (i.e., how does the appearance of new development interrelate with the existing development around it?).

The 2007 Plan encourages a change to “form-based” regulation together with simplified “use-based” regulation. The beneficial effect will be two-fold.

First, the net effect will be to reduce the number of zones and the restrictions of uses within those zones, thereby giving developers better-defined expectations as to how to develop their land. For those areas of town where we have a clear vision for future development, it is incumbent upon us to coherently express that vision.

Second, the focus on form will ensure that new development will harmonize, not contrast, with the character of its environs, thereby preserving the unique character of Simsbury’s neighborhoods and village centers.

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Providing Appropriate Incentives

In recent years, private investment in commercial properties has increased and the business climate in Simsbury has improved.

Although it is true that economic development fundamentally relies on private investors with private dollars, the Town must continue to capitalize on this market for growth by providing incentives that will enhance Simsbury's place in the market. Tax abatement and infrastructure reimbursement programs are essential and must be continued.

Proactive approvals that lead to "shovel-ready" sites will set expectations and decrease overall development costs. Another imperative is to achieve state-of-the-art infrastructure, especially in terms of telecommunications. Each of these initiatives will enhance the market for development in Simsbury.

Encouraging "Green Building" Technologies

As part of its economic development strategy, Simsbury should encourage the use of green building technologies and encourage sustainable development practices. "Green building" strategies are design practices that result in structures that have a minimal impact on the environment (such as solar energy). The phrase "sustainable development" is often used to define the use of best practices in the built environment.

Goals, Policies & Objectives

GOAL

Foster a dynamic and prosperous climate in which economic development strategies are linked to efficient, disciplined and timely actions. The result will be new and expanding enterprises offering highly desirable goods and services together with employment opportunities and significant growth in the commercial tax base.

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Policy 1	Capitalize on the market for economic development in Simsbury.
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Objective A: Develop and implement, through the Economic Development Commission, a plan for economic growth and retention.

Objective B: Ensure periodic review of economic opportunities and market conditions so that Simsbury can adapt to changing economic conditions and the marketplace.

1. Continuously study what types of economic development are most feasible in order to most effectively focus Simsbury's development efforts.
2. Periodically review and amend land use regulations in order to adapt to changes in economic conditions and the marketplace.

Objective C: Simsbury land use commissions—in consultation with Planning staff, the Economic Development Commission, and property owners—should proactively approve development for large sites in Simsbury in order to make them ready for development.

Objective D: Ensure that an adequate infrastructure exists which will allow businesses to prosper.

1. Recognize the crucial importance of telecommunications infrastructure to business development in Simsbury, and ensure these needs are met.
2. Maintain and expand relationships with all existing businesses.
3. Continue to improve transportation (foot, bike, auto, air) in and out of, and within, Simsbury.

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Objective E: Encourage local boards to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of establishing a local “development authority” under Chapter 132 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS Sections 8-186 to 8-200) to help promote economic development.

- Consider locations where a “development authority” might help grow and expand the local economy in appropriate ways.

Summary of Chapter 132 - Municipal Development Projects

Purpose - to allow municipalities to plan and implement the acquisition and improvement of unified land areas to be used principally for industrial or business purposes.

Powers - The development agency designated by the municipality:

1. may purchase, lease, exchange or gift real property within the project area.
2. may, with the approval of the legislative body, and in the name of the municipality, acquire real property by eminent domain.
3. may, with the approval of the legislative body, and in the name of such municipality, transfer by sale or lease at fair market value or fair rental value, as the case may be, the whole or any part of the real property in the project area to any person, in accordance with the project plan and such disposition plans.
4. may, with the approval of the legislative body, issue bonds, accept grants, advances, loans or other financial assistance from the federal government, the state or other source, and may do any and all things necessary or desirable to secure such financial aid.
5. shall have all the powers necessary or convenient to undertake and carry out development plans and development projects.

Process -

1. Establish a development agency
2. Prepare a project plan in accordance with statutory requirements.
3. Conduct a public review process.
4. Send to local and regional planning agency for review and approval.
5. Adopt the project plan.
6. Send project plan to legislative body for approval.
7. Implement the project plan.

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Policy 2	Reduce the tax burden on property owners by diversifying Simsbury's tax base and by growing the grand list through expanded economic development strategies.
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Objective A: Retain, expand and recruit businesses.

1. Strive to lower the tax burden on homeowners by enlarging the non-residential share of the tax base and by recruiting development that has a net economic benefit on the Town budget.
2. Encourage the Town to establish and maintain positive relationships with local businesses and business organizations.
3. Promote policies that will lead to the expansion of existing businesses and to the start-up of new enterprises.
4. Support the Office of the First Selectman, and its designee, if any, in its responsibility for Simsbury's economic development/recruitment activities.
5. Celebrate and publicize successes.

Objective B: Employ incentives for new and expanding businesses, such as property tax abatements and the infrastructure reimbursement fund.

Objective C: Promote Simsbury as a cultural, educational, historic, recreational and tourist destination, as a whole and in its parts, e.g., Simsbury Center, Tariffville, West Simsbury.

1. Support the efforts of the Simsbury Tourism Committee and the Farmington Valley Visitors Association.
2. Expand the amount and level of tourism resources available to visitors to Simsbury. Cultural tourism is an economic booster to all business and should be promoted.
3. Promote the refurbishment and adaptive reuse of historic structures such as has been accomplished with the Tariffville Mill and Fiddler's Green.
4. Promote recreational and cultural opportunities such as Simsbury Meadows.

Objective D: Seek grants that will support economic development efforts.

Objective E: Participate with state and regional economic development agencies to foster economic development for the benefit of Simsbury.

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Objective F: Promote Simsbury's location with respect to Bradley International Airport for economic development opportunities.

1. Promote Simsbury's proximity to Bradley Airport.
2. Transfer State Route 315 from Tariffville Road to Wolcott Road.
3. Encourage the State to then extend Route 315 along Floydville Road and Holcomb Street in East Granby to connect to Route 20.

Objective G: Introduce, maintain and expand digital and wireless communication technologies throughout the Town.

Objective H: In addition to addressing a housing need, support the development of age-restricted housing since such housing can also produce a net economic benefit to the community.

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Policy 3	Understand the Net Economic Impact of new development in the Town of Simsbury.
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Objective A: Establish a system to objectively gauge the “net economic impact” of specific development proposals:

- hire a consultant to create and maintain an overall Net Economic Impact (NEI) model for Simsbury, and
- require that applicants use the Town’s consultant and NEI model to ensure that all projects are reviewed on a consistent basis.

Objective B: Encourage the Zoning Commission to require that proposed developments of scale submit a Net Economic Impact analysis as part of any zone change application or Design District development plan.

Objective C: Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider the results of the Net Economic Impact analysis in making its decision on these applications.

Objective D: Foster discussion with the Simsbury Board of Education, Board of Finance, and Economic Development Commission to structure long term solutions for closing the gap between increasing residential expenses and declining commercial tax revenues. Since the Board of Education spends about 80 percent of Simsbury’s tax revenue, it should be involved in finding a solution.

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Policy 4	Encourage economic development to harmonize with the natural surroundings, adjoining uses, and any surrounding residential areas.
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Objective A: Ensure adequate protection of the environment, historic resources, open space and recreation.

Objective B: Blend development in village areas to be in character with surrounding structures and uses.

Objective C: Require aesthetically pleasing buffering between different types of land uses and along roads.

Objective D: In developments of scale, encourage clustering of buildings to maximize open space and to minimize impervious surfaces and curb cuts.

Objective E: The design of structures, signs, and lighting fixtures should conform to the Design Review Board's publication "Guidelines for Community Design", and the Zoning Regulations.

Objective F: Encourage future business development to provide pedestrian access by adding and/or improving walkways, courtyards and park-like settings.

Objective G: Move retail building fronts toward the street where feasible and allow parking behind the building.

Objective H: Work cooperatively with the Town of Simsbury and the Simsbury Main Street Partnership to increase the economic success of Simsbury Center and other historic commercial centers.

1. Encourage completion of the Simsbury Center Streetscape Study, including pedestrian access, landscaping, lighting, signage, and gateway structures.
2. Promote and encourage preservation and development of Tariffville as a nationally recognized historical Victorian village at the intersection of the Metacomet Trail, the Farmington River Greenway biking trail, the Farmington River canoe/kayak trail, and the whitewater rapids of the Tariffville Gorge.
3. Encourage façade improvements with financial incentives.
4. Provide signs to direct residents and tourists to sites of historic significance within the Center.

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Policy 5	Explore the creation of “Special Services Districts” in Simsbury.
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Objective A: Explore the creation of a Special Services District in Simsbury Center as authorized by CGS Chapter 105 (Section 7-339m et seq.) in order to facilitate funding and coordination within Simsbury Center for marketing, streetscape improvements, and other programs to benefit the merchants and the overall area.

Objective B: Support the residents of Tariffville if they wish to create a Special Services District for their village.

Policy 6	Amend the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations in a manner that will responsibly foster a dynamic and prosperous business climate.
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Objective A: Encourage the Zoning Commission to develop mixed use zoning districts for certain areas of town.

1. Minimize the necessity of possible zone change procedures for future commercial development.
2. Develop special exception regulations for specific uses that deserve more scrutiny.
3. Allow for alternative development possibilities, within defined bounds, on undeveloped industrially zoned land.

Objective B: Encourage the Zoning Commission to create mixed-use zones (retail, professional office, residential) appropriate to Tariffville, West Simsbury, and possibly other village areas (such as Weatogue Center and West Street) in combination with specific design criteria appropriate to the character of each area. Consider other areas for similar design and regulatory treatment.

Objective C: Encourage the Zoning Commission to identify residential zones along arterial roads that may be candidates for re-zoning or overlay zoning. For example, re-zone the parcel bounded by West Mountain Road, Bushy Hill Road (Route 167) and Bushy Hill Lane for commercial use, contingent upon the submission of a unified site plan that includes each of the parcels in this area and that demonstrates sound access management.

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Policy 7	To the extent that use-based zoning continues, encourage the Zoning Commission to consolidate the number and types of non-residential zones in order to simplify the zoning regulations and to facilitate economic development.
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Objective A: To the extent that use-based zoning continues, recommend that the Zoning Commission create a single Industrial Zone, similar to the existing I-1 zone and consider:

1. making higher-impact uses such as those in the current I-2 zone available only by special exception,
2. reviewing the uses that are currently available by special exception to determine their appropriateness, and
3. incorporate specific lot, bulk, coverage and design standards into the regulations.

Objective B: To the extent that use-based zoning continues, recommend that the Zoning Commission review and simplify the current B-1, B-2, B-3 and PO zoning structure and consider:

1. whether the use of two business zones, plus a Professional Office Overlay Zone for use adjacent to or within residential areas, could achieve this objective, and
2. incorporating specific lot, bulk, coverage and design standards into the regulations.

Objective C: To the extent that use-based zoning continues, recommend that the Zoning Commission establish new zoning districts that would permit the development of a mix of uses consistent with the site characteristics of each area including the natural and built environment. These regulations may, in some instances, be in lieu of the existing Designed Development District regulations, or they may be specific districts for Simsbury's village centers. Any such district should include specific design standards to mitigate undesirable impacts on these areas and to ensure that the form of new development is appropriate for each site. The proposed new mixed-use zoning districts can be grouped into two general categories:

- Village Center Zones: Village Centers (including, but not limited to, Simsbury Center, Tariffville, and West Simsbury, as well as possibly West Street and Weatogue Center); and
- Design Districts: Parcels suitable for developments of scale (including, but not limited to, Southern Gateway, Northern Gateway, and Powder Forest areas).

How We Want To Grow - Economic Development

Policy 8	Encourage non-residential zones to be centered around major transportation routes and facilities.
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Objective A: Enhance the likelihood of commercial success by encouraging business development on sites with ready access to customers, suppliers and labor.

Objective B: Support creative commercial and/or industrial developments in locations with good transportation access such as in southwestern and southeastern Simsbury.

Policy 9	Encourage the use of “green building” technologies and encourage sustainable development practices.
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Housing



Overview

Though Simsbury was historically a farming community, between 1950 and 1980 Simsbury's population more than quadrupled, growing from under 5,000 to over 21,000. In the process, Simsbury clearly became established, first and foremost, as a place to live, raise and educate a family. In 2005, approximately 63 percent of Simsbury's developed land (i.e., land that was neither vacant, nor dedicated open space, nor used for agriculture) is being used for residential purposes. By contrast, commercial and industrial uses combine for approximately 10 percent.

By far, the primary use of Simsbury's residential land has been single-family neighborhoods. Though Simsbury's inventory of apartments and condominiums grew significantly through the late 1970s and the 1980s, as of 2000, "multi-family" housing units (apartments, condominiums, and other non-single family dwelling units) accounted for only about 14 percent of all housing units. The result has been a lack of diversity in Simsbury's housing stock. Moreover, due to zoning regulations that strictly segregate residential areas from other uses, few of these housing units are within walking distance of commercial areas.

How We Want To Grow - Housing

Two of the primary changes in the 2007 Plan are:

- 1) to enable greater diversity in Simsbury's housing options since about 85 percent of all housing units in Simsbury are single-family detached units - a percentage that has stayed fairly constant since the 1970s , and
- 2) to allow mixed-use developments that will bring residents closer to - and within - commercial areas.

To that end, the Planning Commission has incorporated a number of recommendations into this section:

- creating mixed-use zoning districts that will allow residential uses within our village centers, including Simsbury Center, Tariffville, West Simsbury, West Street, and Weatogue;
- recommending amendments to the Zoning Regulations to permit mixed use within single structures to allow both residential and non-residential uses in buildings such as the Tariffville Mill;
- permitting residential uses to be a primary element of any future development of scale;
- consolidating and expanding regulations that will support the full range of age-restricted housing types and thereby increase housing options within the town for Simsbury's seniors; and
- emphasizing "market-affordable" housing in new residential developments where the income and sale price restrictions and percentage of affordable units are determined locally rather than by a state or federal program or policy.

How We Want To Grow - Housing

Goals, Policies & Objectives

GOAL

Improve, facilitate, and sustain a living environment that is safe, healthful, aesthetic and distinctive.

Provide for a range of housing choices that meets the needs and preferences of Simsbury's residents of all ages and economic circumstances.

Policy

1

Maintain residential development as the primary use of land within Simsbury.

Objective A: Encourage the Zoning Commission to maintain the integrity of existing residential areas until other uses consistent with the Plan can be demonstrated to be appropriate.

Objective B: Encourage the Zoning Commission to enact zoning regulations that will enable development of housing appropriate for Simsbury Center, Tariffville Center, and other village areas.

1. Consider adaptive reuse of the Tariffville Mill and adjacent property to permit a mixture of residential and non-residential uses.
2. Adopt regulations that will permit residential use as a principal component of new development and redevelopment within the Simsbury Center area.
3. Establish separate zoning districts that will permit mixed-use development appropriate to West Simsbury and Tariffville. Study whether additional mixed-use zoning districts would be suitable for other areas of Simsbury, such as Weatogue Center and West Street.
4. Review and expand existing regulations to support the full range of age-restricted housing types as part of thoughtful planning to assist Simsbury's seniors.

How We Want To Grow - Housing

Policy 2	Maintain and protect the quality of residential neighborhoods.
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Objective A: Encourage the Zoning Commission to minimize negative impacts on residential areas from non-residential development such as noise, lighting spillage, road congestion, environmental contamination and industrial/commercial activities.

Objective B: Encourage the Zoning Commission to maximize the use of buffering between transitional uses.

Objective C: Preserve the historic character of structures and sites through measures such as restoring/maintaining old buildings in an appropriate setting. New development should complement nearby historic structures and sites.

How We Want To Grow - Housing

Policy 3	Encourage the availability of a range of housing types and densities.
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Objective: Designate areas for a variety of residential densities according to the following guidelines:

1. Very-Low Density (R-160 Zone) - up to 0.27 units/acre in areas where slope exceeds 20 percent; scenic vistas, views, and ridge lines are to remain unobstructed; water supplies are to be protected; elevations are 350 feet or more on the western and 250 feet on the eastern perimeters of town; or where soils present severe limitations for on-site septic systems as defined by the Soil Conservation Service.
2. Low Density (R-80 Zone) - up to 0.54 units/acre in areas where slope exceeds 20 percent; soils present moderate to severe limitations for on-site septic systems as defined by the Soil Conservation Service; scenic vistas, views, and ridge lines are to remain unobstructed; water supply and aquifers are to be protected; or where elevations are 350 feet or more on the western and 250 feet on the eastern perimeters of town.
3. Medium-Low Density (R-40 Zone) - up to 1.09 units/acre where slope is less than 20 percent; soils are considered suitable for on-site septic systems; or where sewers are available.
4. Medium Density (R-30 Zone and R-25 Zone) - up to 1.74 units/acre where slopes do not exceed 10 percent and where public sewers and water supply are provided.
5. Medium-High Density (R-15 Zone) - up to 2.90 units/acre where slopes do not exceed 10 percent and where public sewers and water supply are provided.
6. Village Cluster Zone and Single-Family Cluster Zone - underlying zoning density where slopes do not exceed 10 percent; public sewers and water supply are provided; frontage is on roads designated in the Plan of Development as arterial or collector; and where existing residential densities are 1.09 units/acre or greater.
7. Multiple family housing within the sewer service area along collector and arterial streets.

How We Want To Grow - Housing

Policy 4	Promote housing programs and development efforts that directly benefit residents who have limited economic means and/or limiting physical conditions, including first time home buyers, low-income individuals and families, and elderly and handicapped persons.
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Objective A: Review the Subdivision Regulations to ensure that they reflect policies of the current Plan of Conservation and Development, changing economic and demographic conditions, and new development and design philosophies; and to ensure that they encourage affordable housing on a long-term basis.

Objective B: Encourage the Zoning Commission to review the Zoning Regulations to ensure that they reflect policies of the current Plan of Conservation and Development, changing economic and demographic conditions, and new development and design philosophies; and to ensure that they encourage affordable housing on a long-term basis.

1. Encourage new residential development to include units for very low, low, and moderate-income families as defined for Simsbury by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, perhaps up to ten percent (10%) of the number of units proposed.
2. Evaluate the legal basis and need for minimum and maximum floor area requirements in residential zones.
3. Allow a structural addition to residences or the conversion of residences on a case-by-case basis through a permitting process to include one accessory apartment, so long as one living unit remains owner-occupied.
4. Allow on a Special Exception basis the construction of two living units in a single structure and the conversion of an existing structure into two or more living units on one lot where public water and sewers are available.
5. Apply for or participate in available federal, state, and non-profit organization or foundation grants that would, for very low, low, and moderate income persons (including elderly), provide for:
 - rehabilitation of existing housing units; or
 - construction of new units.
6. Encourage non-profit public housing at densities specified within multi-family districts recommended within this Plan.

How We Want To Grow - Housing

Policy 5	Encourage diverse housing patterns where public water and sewers are available.
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Objective A: Encourage the evaluation of all proposed residential developments for their feasibility as open space cluster development options, in order to recommend the more appropriate development pattern.

Objective B: Support development under the Single-Family Cluster Zone and the Village Cluster Zone where such development techniques are desirable to preserve tracts of prime and important farmlands, scenic areas, wetlands, streambelts, fields and woodlands, and other open spaces and natural conditions. Such development should be buffered from different land uses and the impacts of traffic and noise.

Objective C: Encourage the Zoning Commission to adopt regulations for multi-family residential development to serve the needs of the age-restricted market.

Objective D: Encourage the Zoning Commission to adopt regulations to enable housing to meet the needs and preferences of residents of all economic circumstances.

Objective E: Encourage the Zoning Commission to adopt regulations to enable and encourage residential development to be considered a principal component of development projects in locations recommended within the Special Areas and Economic Development sections of this plan.

Income Definitions

Income definitions from the Department of Housing and Urban Development can be found at the following web address:

www.huduser.org/datasets/il.html

Simsbury is located in the Hartford Metropolitan area. While the median income in Simsbury is higher than that for the region as a whole, most housing programs are geared towards the regional income information.

In general:

- moderate income is defined as 80-100% of median income
- low income is defined as 50-80% of median income
- very low income is defined as less than 50% of median income

How We Want To Grow - Housing

Policy 6	Consider whether undeveloped residential areas outside the sewer service area should be rezoned to R-80.
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Objective: Within these districts, such rezoning could help to:

1. Assure adequate water supply and sewage disposal.
2. Maintain rural character.
3. Minimize impact on agricultural uses.
4. Protect historic resources.
5. Protect the general welfare and preserve property values.

Community Facilities & Recreation



Overview

Healthy and prosperous communities are supported and enhanced by informed and intentional choices based on a comprehensive, long-term plan. Community facilities are, by and large, Town-owned facilities that directly influence Simsbury's "sense of place" and the quality of life of its residents.

The Planning Commission has a statutory duty to review capital improvement projects to ensure that the proposed projects reflect community needs and are consistent with the Plan. The goal and policies also reflect the Planning Commission's commitment to sustaining the excellence of our library, public schools and other Town-owned facilities. In a similar vein, the Planning Commission intends to take a proactive role in developing plans for the future development and redevelopment of Simsbury Center, Tariffville and other village centers within our community, each of which is vital to the overall character of Simsbury.

Active and passive recreational opportunities are also important to the quality of life of Simsbury's residents. In addition to indoor facilities and outdoor fields, the 2007 Plan promotes:

- providing greater access to, and use of, the Farmington River. Simsbury is a river valley town, and we need to seize the opportunity to take advantage of the Farmington River and to provide more recreational opportunities along and upon the River in coming years; and
- linking and interconnecting existing trails, paths, parks and open spaces to create a town-wide network which will provide increased flexibility and use for Simsbury's residents.

Initiatives in these areas will contribute to the health and enjoyment, in general, of Simsbury's residents and visitors, and in particular, of the Town's pedestrians, joggers, runners, bicyclists, rollerbladers, rowers, and canoeists.

What We Want To Provide - Community Facilities & Recreation

Goals, Policies And Objectives

GOAL

Provide, maintain and promote the development of community facilities that sustain and enhance community character and the social, mental, educational, and physical well being of the community.

Policy

1

Review the Capital Improvement Program no later than the second quarter of each fiscal year to ensure it reflects community needs and is consistent with the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Policy

2

Evaluate the utilization of existing public facilities (including schools) and seek ways to expand their functions and uses.

What We Want To Provide - Community Facilities & Recreation

Policy 3	Provide sites for community facilities reflecting present and future needs.
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Objective A: Consider using Town-owned land when expanding Town facilities.

Objective B: Consider adaptive reuse and/or expansions to existing community facilities, where appropriate, as alternatives to new construction.

Objective C: Retain ownership of Town-owned buildings unless studies determine the building will serve no useful public function.

Objective D: Identify land in new residential areas that is suited for recreational facilities, future school sites, and other institutional uses.

Objective E: Identify sites for key community facilities that will enhance the aesthetic environment as well as commercial vitality.

1. Develop a master plan for appropriate use and possible development of a cultural/recreational facility in Simsbury Center, on Iron Horse Boulevard, to serve as a focal point for public events and to enhance tourism in town.
2. Continue to plan, invest in and improve all public recreational facilities, including a town-wide network of trails and bike paths, a new boathouse, and improved access to the Farmington River.
3. Work collaboratively with the Postal Service to determine possible locations for a new central post office that promote convenience of use, improved traffic safety, and provide a destination within the Simsbury Town Center.

What We Want To Provide - Community Facilities & Recreation

Policy 4	Analyze the impact of large, new developments on the infrastructure of community facilities and services. If a large development is proposed, encourage the developer to contribute to the facilities and services impacted.
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Policy 5	Monitor and analyze the absorption of the existing housing stock and changes in the age distribution of the local population in order to anticipate specific needs for schools, recreational, and other community facilities.
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Policy 6	Support and sustain educational excellence in the Simsbury Public School system.
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Objective A: Ensure that sufficient classroom capacity exists in all areas of the Town.

Objective B: Schools should be located within neighborhoods in order to enhance community identity and to distribute community facilities geographically.

Policy 7	Encourage adequate fire protection be provided to all areas of town.
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Objective: Support the Simsbury Fire District by periodically reviewing the need for new and expanded facilities.

What We Want To Provide - Community Facilities & Recreation

Policy 8	Encourage adequate recreation facilities be provided to meet community needs.
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Objective A: Inventory all existing recreational facilities and assess their adequacy for meeting present and anticipated future recreational needs.

Objective B: Identify potential opportunities to acquire land or easements for recreational facilities all over Town.

Objective C: Continue to review demand for, use of, and maintenance requirements of athletic fields and parks.

Objective D: Encourage property owners of land suitable for active or passive recreation to offer the Town the right of first refusal when contemplating sale.

Policy 9	Encourage greater use of recreation facilities in Town.
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Objective A Rehabilitate existing recreation facilities as needed to encourage more use, improve safety and to reduce energy and maintenance costs.

Objective B: As needed, maintain toilet facilities at all recreational sites to support users, for as much of the calendar year as possible.

Policy 10	Support and sustain the Simsbury Public Library.
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What We Want To Provide - Community Facilities & Recreation

Policy 11	Encourage and plan for increased facilities and opportunities for daycare, before and after school care, youth/teen-oriented culture and recreation, and facilities for the social and recreational needs of seniors.
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Policy 12	Encourage the design of all public buildings and facilities, particularly in the Simsbury Center Zone and other village centers, reflects the recommended design standards for lighting, landscaping, signage, handicapped, and vehicular and pedestrian circulation.
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Policy 13	Operate effective maintenance programs to protect capital investment in public buildings and facilities.
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Objective: Modernize Town buildings to promote efficiency of use, energy conservation, and improve handicapped accessibility.

1. Monitor energy conservation measures completed in response to energy audits of all public buildings and implement cost-effective upgrades and improvements when needed.
2. Stress energy conservation in the planning, development, and rehabilitation of all community facilities.

Policy 14	Study the feasibility of establishing a Town wide facilities management function that would consolidate all Town activity under one department to save on the necessity of duplicate functions.
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Policy 15	Foster energy conservation in all development by encouraging developers to outline (in the site plan application) features that promote energy savings.
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Transportation



Overview

When the reader first encounters the topic entitled “Transportation,” it is likely that a car or SUV will come to mind. What may also come to mind is the personal freedom that our automobiles enable us to enjoy. On the other hand, we have all experienced the toll that traffic congestion can take. In Simsbury, the Connecticut Department of Transportation is already pursuing the expansion and overhaul of key intersections along Route 10/Hopmeadow Street as a result of increased traffic. As Simsbury benefits from economic development and infill, the Town will also struggle with the impact of increasing congestion.

As noted elsewhere in the Plan, “place is manifested in the interaction between human and habitat.” Simsbury is fortunate to have such a unique sense of place that we should make every effort to create opportunities to extract ourselves from our automobiles and achieve this interaction.

A goal of the Planning Commission in the 2007 Plan is to place a renewed focus on alternate modes of transportation and the beneficial effects that they have on our quality of life:

- The Commission seeks to encourage and implement “park and walk” opportunities in our village centers including Simsbury Center and Tariffville to reduce the reliance on the automobile within our village centers, and to promote the economic vitality of these areas.
- The Commission will also seek to expand Simsbury’s sidewalk network connecting neighborhoods, schools, village centers, parks, and senior housing developments. The Commission will also actively study the feasibility of creating clearly marked bicycle lanes on our roadways and/or designated multi-use paths to be used for transportation in lieu of automobiles. Whereas “park and walk” still requires a vehicle to get to a destination area, sidewalks and bicycle lanes, and multi-use paths will allow more residents and visitors to travel to destination points without the use of a vehicle.

What We Want To Provide - Transportation

Goals, Policies & Objectives

GOAL

Enhance the efficiency, safety, aesthetics, environmental sensitivity and character-defining aspects of the transportation of persons and goods within and through the community.

Policy
1

Study and implement new designs for the existing state and local road system to maximize efficiency, implement access management techniques, enhance road and roadway aesthetics, and generally provide for the safe and efficient flow of people and vehicles to meet the current and future demands of Simsbury's residents, businesses, and visitors.

Objective A: Support implementation of the following planned projects:

1. Improvements to:
 - a. Great Pond Road between Washburn Drive and Owens Brook Boulevard;
 - b. the intersection of Bushy Hill Road and Stratton Brook Road and the intersections in the Hoskins Road/Ely Place/Hopmeadow Street area;
 - c. the intersection in the area of Hartford Road, Nod Road and East Weatogue Street; and
 - d. the intersection of Westledge Road and North Canton Road.
2. Improvements to the streetscape, gateway entry, and road improvements at the intersection of Hopmeadow Street with West Street and Drake Hill Road and their conformance to the Streetscape Plan.
3. New access road to the Clubhouse at Simsbury Farms to improve pedestrian safety.
4. The transfer of the State Highway designation of State Route 315 from its present location at Tariffville Road, to Wolcott Road between State Route 10 and State Route 189.
5. The construction of the following new roads:
 - a. a collector road between the intersections of Wolcott Road/Hopmeadow Street and Hoskins Road/County Road, along with the necessary intersection improvements; and
 - b. completion of the Powder Forest internal circulation road.

What We Want To Provide - Transportation

6. Encouraging the use of commuter lots, and continue to monitor their usage and demand.
7. Maintaining the availability of rail rights-of-way for recreation, commuting, and utility purposes.
8. Utilizing a "pavement management system" to ensure cost-effective maintenance and safe operation of roadway surfaces.

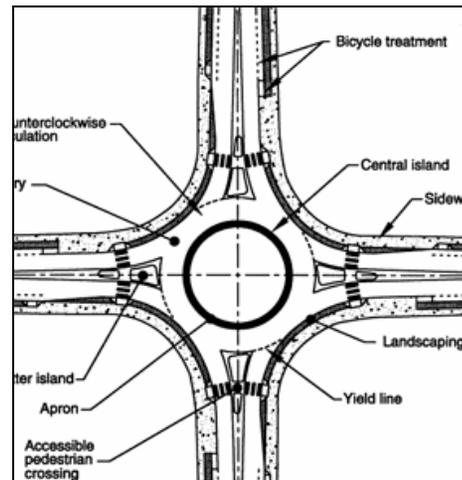
Objective B: Support the study of solutions to possible future transportation impacts in the following areas:

1. The northern and southern entry areas along Hopmeadow Street.
2. The extension of Iron Horse Boulevard south to Hopmeadow Street near Woodland Street.
3. Roads surrounding Powder Forest, including Hopmeadow Street, Bushy Hill Road, Stratton Brook and West Street.

Objective C: To the extent possible, maintain Hopmeadow Street as a two-lane to maintain its aesthetic quality.

1. Minimize the number of curb cuts.
2. Minimize turning movements.
3. Encourage or require shared driveways.
4. Locate curb cuts in the most desirable places.
5. Where desirable, use roundabouts and other techniques in lieu of signalized intersections and turning lanes.

Objective D: Consider the use of roundabouts and construct them where feasible.



What We Want To Provide - Transportation

Objective E: Study and implement new designs for the following intersections of Tariffville:

1. Reconstruct the intersection of Main and Winthrop Streets to slow traffic and improve line-of-sight for vehicles entering Main from Winthrop.
2. Reconstruct the Intersection of Main Street and Route 189 to slow vehicles entering Main and improve safety for vehicles entering Route 189.
3. Provide safe pedestrian crossing of Route 189 to access the Tariffville Mill.
4. Reconstruct the intersection of Winthrop Street and Elm Street to slow vehicles entering Winthrop.

Policy 2	Maintain or enhance the aesthetic and environmental qualities of the community when improving roads.
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Objective A: Improve and maintain Town roads in such a manner as to minimize tree removal, minimize slope disturbances, require adequate slope stabilization, and minimize road widths while maintaining safety wherever possible.

Objective B: Identify road segments to be designated as scenic roads in accordance with criteria defined in the Town Ordinance.

What We Want To Provide - Transportation

Policy	
3	Expand the choice of transportation available to Simsbury residents, employees and patrons.

Objective A: Encourage the use of commuter buses and expansion of service to towns that employ a large number of Simsbury residents.

Objective B: Support the creation of additional commuter parking lots, or rehabilitation or expansion of existing lots, on appropriate parcels in response to demonstrated need.

Objective C: Encourage private companies in Simsbury to allow use of their parking facilities for commuter parking and commuter bus pick-up points.

Objective D: Encourage private companies to use vans and car pools as alternatives to public and private transportation.

Objective E: Encourage the Connecticut Department of Transportation to provide more flexible commuter bus service to and from Simsbury and other Farmington Valley communities through localized service, including weekends.

Objective F: Project transportation needs generated by land use activities.

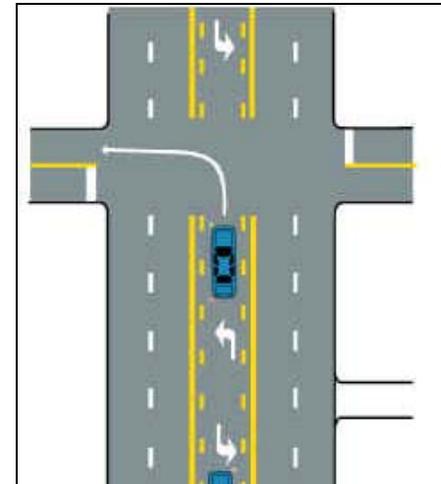
What We Want To Provide - Transportation

Policy 4	Support policies that enable the safe and convenient movement of traffic into and through the Simsbury Town Center.
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Objective A: Implement transportation/circulation recommendations as outlined in the 1983 Simsbury Center Design Study, especially to encourage opportunities for “park and walk” options, and to allow residents to reach the Center by foot or bicycle.

Objective B: Develop and implement access management techniques for the street system to be implemented through the Simsbury Zoning Regulations, Simsbury Subdivision Regulations, and/or the Capital Improvement Program. Controlling location and design of access onto community roadways is integral to managing the impacts of development on the community. Therefore, access management strategies should consider the following:

1. Driveway spacing and the consolidation of curb cuts where applicable.
2. Comprehensive access management strategies for developments of scale.
3. Requiring that unsafe or substandard access points be improved as part of any proposed development plan.
4. The creation of a flush median in the center of Hopmeadow Street to serve as a protected left turn lane to reduce traffic conflicts as recommended within the 1998 Simsbury Center Design Charrette.



What We Want To Provide - Transportation

Policy 5	Promote community wellness and physical activity by providing pedestrian and bicycle movement on safe and convenient sidewalks, multi-use paths and roadway lanes.
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Objective A: Study the feasibility of installing a sidewalk network between neighborhoods and within a 1-mile radius of schools and senior housing.

Objective B: Whenever roads are improved, consideration should be given to designate marked lanes for the safe movement of bikers and walkers.

Objective C: Review the sidewalk maintenance and repair policy and amend if necessary.

Objective D: Implement the recommendations concerning pedestrian movement outlined in the 1983 Tariffville Center Design Study. These include the following:

1. Repair and/or reconstruction of sidewalks found to be in poor condition to overcome existing difficulties with pedestrian circulation.
2. Install new sidewalks and safe pedestrian ways to support the linkage between destinations within Tariffville including Tariffville Park, Tariffville School, the mill, the village center, and similar locations.

Objective E: Implement the recommendation concerning pedestrian movement outlined in the 1983 Simsbury Center Design Study and the 1998 Simsbury Center Design Charrette. These include the following:

1. Complete a system of sidewalk, crosswalk, and streetscape improvements through the Town Center to facilitate linkage between destinations in the Town Center including Town Hall, the Town Library, Eno Memorial Hall, the Post Office, Shultz Park, the Phelps Homestead and Research Center, and the various shopping destinations.
2. Link and maintain existing Farmington River trails easterly of Iron Horse Boulevard as part of the evolving network of local and regional pathways.
3. Provide a location for a canoe pullout with a publicly accessible picnic area.

Objective F: Study the feasibility of implementing an “in lieu of” sidewalk plan/policy for developers whereby each development must make provision for pedestrian circulation, either on site or elsewhere in the community.

What We Want To Provide - Transportation

Objective E: Amend the Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations to enable the creation of development patterns that emphasize the importance of pedestrian and bicycle mobility and encourage physical activity including mixed-use village centers with the following characteristics:

1. Sidewalks, trails, and/or bike paths,
2. Linkage of open spaces,
3. Instituting of traffic calming measures where appropriate, and
4. Connectivity of streets.

Objective F: Advocate for an interconnected town-wide network of multi-purpose trails and other public ways to create non-vehicular connectivity between Simsbury' residential areas and key destinations, such as Simsbury's schools, Simsbury Farms, Tariffville, West Simsbury, Simsbury Center, Weatogue Center, parks, athletic fields and similar destinations.

Objective G: Place signs in Center Zone to direct pedestrians to places of historic or special interest.

Policy	6 Support additional public transportation facilities within the town.
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Objective A: Continue operation of the Simsbury Dial-A-Ride Program.

Objective B: Encourage and support the organization of car/van pools.

Objective C: Support and encourage shuttle bus service.

Objective D: Support after-school transportation opportunities for children.

What We Want To Provide - Transportation

Policy 7	Cooperate with state and regional agencies in the transportation planning process, including identifying alternative transportation modes to serve the needs of the community.
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Objective A: Continue to work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the Capitol Region Council of Governments in the transportation planning process by examining all feasible modes of transportation for Simsbury.

Objective B: Encourage the implementation of the Route 10 Corridor Study improvements for Hopmeadow Street (Route 10/202), with special emphasis on the Simsbury Center area, Route 10/202 and Route 315 area, and Route 10/202 and Route 185 area.

Objective C: Support studies that would address the viability of activating a regional exclusive bus or commuter rail service.

- Encourage establishment of bus service through Tariffville on Route 189 to Hartford and to Bradley International Airport. Encourage future studies of the Griffin Line transportation corridor to include this element.

Objective D: Improve access to Bradley International Airport and work in cooperation with other communities to achieve this objective.

Objective E: Encourage and support the organization of car/van pools.

What We Want To Provide - Transportation

Policy 8	Relate transportation facilities maintenance or expansion to a Capital Improvement Program.
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Objective: Implement through the Capital Improvement Program projects for the long-range maintenance and improvement of Town roads. Such projects should respect the aesthetic, environmental, and character-defining aspects of Simsbury.

Infrastructure



Overview

Most of Simsbury's infrastructure—from telecommunications and water mains to natural gas lines and solid waste disposal—are directly controlled by private utilities and quasi-public agencies and less so by the Town.

It is, in part, this distinction that led the Planning Commission to prepare this section of the Plan differently than in the 1994 Plan - by clearly separating Infrastructure from Community Facilities.

Though the Town will continue to act proactively when it comes to infrastructure - the drafting and use of Simsbury's Wireless Telecommunications Policy Preferences is an example - the Plan clearly recognizes the need to be collaborative when planning for the development and maintenance of Simsbury's infrastructure.

Goals, Policies And Objectives

GOAL

Plan for and monitor the town infrastructure, including but not limited to sewer, facilities, solid waste disposal, water supply, natural gas supply, fire protection, high-speed data communications, wireless communications, and public service utilities.

What We Want To Provide - Infrastructure

Policy 1	Ensure that an adequate and safe public water supply for consumption and fire protection exists to serve current and future users.
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Objective A: Encourage the Aquarion Water Company and the Tariffville Water District to maintain a safe and adequate water supply and distribution system.

Objective B: Protect all public water supply wells through appropriate land use controls utilizing the Aquifer Overlay Zone with State mandated Aquifer Protection Land Use Regulations, and the Ordinance Regarding Residential Storage and Handling of Petroleum Liquids.

Objective C: Encourage installation of “looped” piping systems in new construction and other specific areas to maintain adequate water pressure and maintain a continuous flow of fresh water.

Objective D: Ensure town water companies to monitor water quality and comply with strictest applicable Federal and State Water Quality Standards for public water supplies.

Objective E: Extend public water mains to areas with service needs.

Objective F: In cooperation with the Aquarion Water Company and the Tariffville Water District, devise and implement a town-wide water-conservation plan, to include public awareness education.

What We Want To Provide - Infrastructure

Policy 2	Use existing sewer facilities effectively.
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Objective A: Monitor sewer-plant flows to continually assess the remaining capacity allotted to Simsbury and implement the Capital Improvement Program to maintain efficiency.

Objective B: In areas where sewer service is available, allow development densities consistent with the standards for sewage discharge established by the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA).

Objective C: In accordance with the Water Pollution Control Authority Plan, limit sewer service to the area as designated in the Plan of Conservation and Development Sewer Service Area.

Objective D: Recommend that sewer service not be extended to areas where density is planned to be less than 1.09 units/acre, and/or inconsistent with the recommendations of the Statewide Plan of Conservation and Development.

Objective E: Maintain allocation of flow from sites based on Flow Study, including establishing an allocation for areas within the Center Area that have not been assigned an allocation.

Objective F: On developments involving the proposed transfer of sewer allocations, evaluate the impact of the transfers on other land uses, the long-term use of impacted properties, Sewer Treatment Plant capacity, and flow intensity.

1. To maintain the integrity of the Plan of Conservation and Development, discourage transfers between properties with dissimilar zoning classifications.
2. Maintain and repair existing sewer treatment facilities to protect the quality of the system, including the five (5) existing pump stations.

What We Want To Provide - Infrastructure

Policy 3	Provide for solid waste disposal with minimal environmental impacts.
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Objective A: Continue the current recycling program and modify for cost-effectiveness.

Objective B: Encourage an on-going public awareness education and information program to realize the town's full recycling potential.

Objective C: Continue to collect and compost biodegradable material, and provide compost for community use.

Objective D: Continue acceptance of brush, bulky waste, and small trees at the transfer facility. Review types of bulky waste items that can be economically received based on EPA requirements.

Objective E: Review alternatives for disposal of certain bulky wastes.

Objective F: Monitor the landfill and take appropriate action to ensure that surface and ground waters are protected to minimize pollution.

Objective G: Evaluate the former landfill for suitable adaptive reuse, including open space and recreation.

What We Want To Provide - Infrastructure

Policy 4	Collaborate with State Agencies, public service utilities, and other providers to maximize communication services and promote public safety, and recognize the benefits of this infrastructure to the enhancement of the economic base.
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Objective A: Promote the siting of wireless telecommunications facilities to maximize coverage in accordance with stated Wireless Telecommunications Policy Preferences.

Objective B: Promote the availability of high-speed data communication technologies.

What We Want To Provide - Infrastructure

Policy 5	Encourage the extension of natural gas lines as originally planned, to outlying areas of town currently served by propane tanks.
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Policy 6	Seek ways to bury wired utilities underground whenever and wherever possible.
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Implementation



Overview

Implementation of the strategies and recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development is the main purpose of the planning process. Implementation of a Plan typically occurs in two main phases:

- some of the recommendations can and should be given high priority since they are critical to the implementation of the Plan;
- other recommendations will be implemented over time because they may require additional study, coordination with or implementation by others, or involve the commitment of significant financial resources.

The Planning Commission has the primary responsibility of promoting the implementation of all of the Plan's recommendations. The Commission can also implement some of the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development through amendments to the Subdivision Regulations, application reviews, and other means.

Since many of the Plan recommendations address issues related to the use of property, the Zoning Commission will need to implement many of the recommendations of the Plan through amendments to the Zoning Regulations and/or Zoning Map, application reviews, and other means. Other recommendations may require cooperation with and action by other local boards and commissions such as the Board of Selectmen, Conservation and Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission, and similar agencies.

However, if the Plan is to be realized, it must serve as a guide to all residents, businesses, developers, applicants, owners, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly conservation and development of Simsbury.

Implementation Tools / Strategies

GOAL

Implement the policies and objectives of the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development.

Policy 1	Commit adequate resources to accomplish the goals of the Plan and to continue overall planning for Simsbury.
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In order to implement the recommendations of the Plan and help anticipate and provide for the Simsbury's future needs, the Town needs to have adequate resources (staff and budget) dedicated to the task.

At a time when our vision for the future has never been clearer and there is a willingness to move forward with implementation, Simsbury needs to devote the necessary resources to the land use functions of the Town.

First, the Town requires adequate land use staff. An evaluation of staffing of land use departments in Connecticut (by Simsbury staff) indicated that a ratio of 0.2 staff people per 1,000 residents was typical for Connecticut communities. By this measure, Simsbury should have 4.6 professional land use staff people while there are presently two (2.0) land use professionals. Simsbury needs to have adequate staff to support well-reasoned decision-making and effective implementation.

Second, the Town needs to plan for and allocate the necessary funding to conduct the studies and engage the professional consultants essential to an integrated planning and development process. There are several examples (such as the Simsbury Center Charrette) where professional assistance and community participation have helped the Town produce positive strategies for the future of the community. These efforts should continue and, to continue, adequate funding is needed. The table on the facing page identifies some of the studies that might be considered during the next ten years. For studies alone, annual funding of \$25-50,000 per year (in 2007 dollars) is recommended.

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Possible Planning Studies / Initiatives

Grants

Obtain “seed money” to use to apply for State, Federal and private grants that can pay for studies or for other initiatives (such as open space purchases, etc.)

Future By Design

- Master Plan (Simsbury Center / Iron Horse Boulevard)
- Charrettes for other important areas in town
- Guidelines For Community Design update

Environment

- Aquifer protection areas / regulations
- Assessment of areas of water contamination (surface / ground)
- Non-point sources of pollution (inventory / assessment)
- Noise ordinance
- Dark skies ordinance

Economic Development

- Create a model of Net Economic Impact Analysis of different land uses
- Build-out study for the town with impacts

Transportation

- Traffic analysis/studies of major traffic areas (such as Route 10)
- Connectivity study for the Bike Paths / Rails to Trails / Sidewalks

Other Studies

- Community Facilities - independent studies of need/expansion
- Community Character - scenic roads, scenic areas
- Infrastructure - update of needs based on anticipated development
- Open Space - open space plan, set-aside increase
- Housing - housing needs assessment

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Plan Implementation Committee

A Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) to be appointed by the Planning Commission and to be organized as soon as feasible shall include representatives of various boards and commissions and would:

- prioritize, coordinate, and refine implementation of the Plan,
- initiate efforts with other organizations to complete the implementation plans (see tables on pages 156-170), and
- follow up on a semi-annual basis to monitor implementation and make adjustments, if needed.

The Committee could meet two to four times a year to establish priorities and guide implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

In addition, the Committee could assess the status of specific recommendations, establish new priorities, and even suggest new implementation techniques.

Policy 2	Establish a Plan Implementation Committee with responsibility for developing an annual work program.
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The Planning Commission has the responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

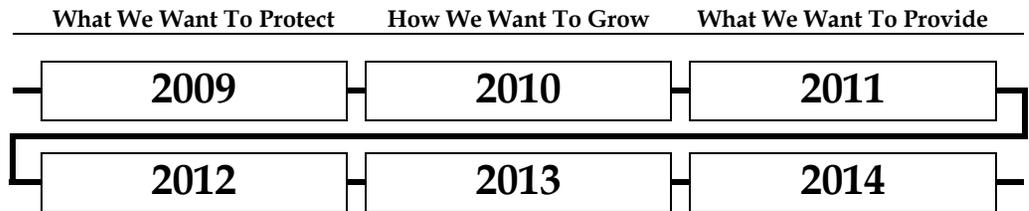
The Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) will be an effective way to help implement the Plan. The PIC's role shall be to facilitate the implementation of the Plan by using the implementation tables which follow to develop an annual and on-going program of initiatives and schedules for various boards and commissions to implement.

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Policy 3	Consider maintaining the Plan in small incremental steps over a ten-year period rather than in one major initiative.
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A Plan of Conservation and Development should be a dynamic document that is used, reevaluated, and amended as necessary. When a Plan is considered strictly a reference document rather than a working document, its effectiveness in guiding the community can diminish over time.

Simsbury should consider keeping this Plan current and not waiting to update it every ten years. A preliminary schedule might be as follows:



The simplest way to maintain the Plan might be to review major sections of the Plan every year by:

1. holding a public meeting to summarize the Plan recommendations and receive feedback from the community,
2. holding a workshop session to discuss Plan strategies and suggest alternative language,
3. revising Plan sections including any changes to the Future Land Use section, as appropriate, and
4. re-adopting the Plan.

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Policy 4	Encourage local land use boards to consider the recommendations of the POCD when reviewing applications.
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Using the Plan of Conservation and Development as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission will also help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan. All land use proposals should be measured and evaluated in terms of the Plan and its various elements.

Policy 5	Update the zoning and subdivision regulations.
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Since the Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations provide specific criteria for land development at the time of applications, these regulations are important tools to implement the recommendations of the Plan. However, this is only true if the regulations reflect the recommendations of the Plan.

In the near future, the Planning Commission should undertake a comprehensive review of the Subdivision Regulations, making whatever revisions are necessary to:

- make the regulations more user-friendly (such as using graphics, reorganization, and definitions to make them more intuitive),
- implement Plan recommendations, and
- promote consistency between the Plan and the Regulations.

Even though the Zoning Commission is in the process of revising their regulations at the same time this Plan is being prepared, a further review should be scheduled and funded once this Plan has been adopted.

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Policy 6	Involve other organizations in implementing the Plan.
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Municipal agencies alone cannot implement the Plan. In fact, the most successful implementation will likely involve local organizations, businesses, and residents in ensuring that the Plan is implemented.

Policy 7	Encourage consistency between the annual operating budget and the long term goals of the POCD.
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The annual budget is the blueprint for spending in Simsbury and is one of the main ways that municipal policy objectives are implemented. The annual budget can be an effective way to assist with implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

The Planning Commission should consider ways to complement the work done each year by the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance in establishing budget priorities and strategies.

If the annual budget reflects the priorities and recommendations of the Plan, Simsbury will surely be successful in accomplishing its overall strategic objectives and "leveraging" private investment in the community.

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Policy 8	Encourage consistency between municipal improvements and the capital improvement program and the long term goals of the POCD.
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Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that municipal improvements (as defined in the statute) be referred to the Planning Commission for a report before any local action is taken. A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a tool for planning the major capital expenditures of a municipality so that local needs can be identified and prioritized within the fiscal constraints that may exist. The CIP is used to coordinate the financing of major public improvements and other long-term capital investments in a community.

The Planning Commission has statutory authority for review of municipal improvements and the CIP budget. The Commission should strive to ensure that spending on capital projects also reflects the priorities and recommendations of the Plan.

Policy 9	Encourage consistency with programs of other communities, the region, and the state.
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Simsbury can continue to work with other communities in the region, the Capital Region Council of Government, the State of Connecticut, and other agencies to explore opportunities where common interests coincide.

Policy 10	Continuously improve the land use review process.
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Objective A: Regardless of the eventual disposition, and without undermining the due diligence required by each commission, endeavor to provide the applicant with the most expeditious resolution to its application as is reasonably possible.

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Objective B: Encourage applicants to take advantage of the pre-application process which allows an applicant to identify the important issues and lets commission members obtain answers to the most common questions posed to applicants.

Objective C: Develop specific application forms for each type of common application (such as subdivisions, zone changes, site plan approvals, wetlands permits, special exceptions and variances).

Objective D: Develop guidebooks and application checklists which will assist applicants in understanding and progressing through Simsbury's land use review process, and which will establish a set of clear expectations with respect to this process.

Objective E: Maintain cooperation and communication among Simsbury's land use boards.

1. Allow applicants to request joint pre-application meetings and/or joint public hearings where the applicant is seeking approvals from both the Planning and Zoning Commissions.
2. Hold annual or semi-annual combined meetings of the Planning, Zoning and Conservation / Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commissions, the Design Review Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Economic Development Commission, the Open Space Committee, and the Simsbury Land Trust in order to further foster cooperation, communication and education.

Objective F: The Planning, Zoning and Conservation / Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commissions, and the Design Review Board, together with the Economic Development Commission, shall solicit and utilize applicant feedback to improve both content and process.

Objective G: Explore amendments to the regulations that would allow small changes to be approved at the staff level, thereby expediting the process of making minor modifications to a site plan.

Objective H: Adopt an application fee schedule which requires supplemental fees be provided with large and/or complex land use applications in order to defray the cost of reviewing such applications.

Objective I: Encourage the funding of additional Town land use staff for the specific purpose of monitoring and administering biodiversity efforts, erosion and sediment control, and other important programs.

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Responsibility Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
BOF	Board of Finance
BOE	Board of Education
CC	Conservation Commission
DRB	Design Review Board
EDC	Economic Dev. Commission
HDC	Historic District Commission
LB	Library Board
PRC	Parks and Rec. Commission
PC	Planning Commission
Staff	Town Staff
WPCA	Water Pollution Control Authority
ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals
ZC	Zoning Commission

Implementation Tables

Implementation of the Plan is an ongoing process. While the Town can carry out some recommendations in a relatively short period, others may only be realized by the end of the planning period or beyond. Since some recommendations may involve additional study or a commitment of fiscal resources, their implementation may take place over several years or occur in stages.

The implementation tables on the following pages assign primary responsibilities and preliminary schedules to the Plan's recommendations. In many instances, the responsibilities are shared by a number of entities (see sidebar). While these implementation tables only present the goals and policies of this Plan of Conservation and Development, it is envisioned that the Plan Implementation Committee will also consider the various objectives that are contained in the Plan.

Priorities are identified in the tables and ranked according to a three-step scale. High priorities are items that are either critical to the success of a planning strategy or are relatively easy to implement and can be handled within one to two years. Moderate priorities are policies and tasks that are not as time sensitive as high priorities and may be more difficult to implement due to funding constraints or complexity. Moderate priorities should generally be addressed within two to four years from adoption of this Plan. Lower priorities are typically longer-range items that might require a "wait and see" approach or are preceded by higher funding priorities. Lower priorities may be addressed towards the end of the planning period.

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Natural Resources

GOALS

Maintain a balance between the use of land and the need to conserve natural resources.

Maintain the ecological integrity of the landscape, both in Simsbury and on the regional level.

	Page	Who	Priority
1. CONSERVATION - Identify and protect wildlife corridors, significant geologic and natural features, and significant natural communities and habitats.			
2. CONSERVATION - Encourage land uses compatible with the conservation of the Farmington River, its tributaries, and its floodplain.			
3. CONSERVATION - Protect surface and groundwater quality.			
4. CONSERVATION - Improve surface water quality in the town's drainage network prior to its discharge to the Farmington River.			
5. CONSERVATION - Actively participate in regional conservation planning meetings and workshops to promote the protection and enhancement of the environment.			
6. CONSERVATION - Encourage the use of "green building" strategies for new and redeveloped properties using recognized best practices.			
7. DEVELOPMENT - Ensure that developments and development patterns take into consideration the natural features and conditions of the land.			
8. DEVELOPMENT - Encourage development away from conservation areas or areas that are unsuitable due to the presence of sensitive natural conditions.			
9. DEVELOPMENT - Encourage land use and development patterns and practices that protect air quality.			
10. DEVELOPMENT - Evaluate adverse environmental impacts generated from construction in new or existing developed areas.			
11. MAINTENANCE - Promote proper maintenance of existing on-site water and sewage disposal systems.			
12. REMEDIATION - Establish criteria for the assessment and remediation of properties that, if developed, could pose a contamination risk to the natural or built environment.			
13. REMEDIATION - Ensure suitable soil remediation as a precondition to residential development in order to protect the health and safety of potential residents.			

Responsibility Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
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Priorities Legend

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Responsibility Legend

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Open Space

GOALS

Provide sufficient open space to:

- *advance the physical and mental well-being of our citizens,*
- *preserve the natural and rural characteristics of the community, and*
- *provide a range of recreational opportunities for our citizens and for tourists.*

	Page	Who	Priority
1.			Continue current practices to encourage and implement acquisition of open space and easements.
2.			Encourage greater use of the trails in Town by both residents and tourists, year-round and for multiple purposes.
3.			Pursue the specific objectives that the Planning Commission heard and adopted, such as advocating for a town-wide network of multi-use trails.
4.			Create a Master Plan for acquisition and intended uses of open space and easements while addressing the following objectives.

Priorities Legend

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Agricultural Resources

GOAL

Support farms and preserve farmland to help retain the rural characteristics of the community.

	Page	Who	Priority
1. Strongly support the preservation of working farms.			
2. Strongly support the conservation of agricultural lands recognizing the need for a continued agricultural presence.			
3. Continue to invest in and encourage the preservation of farmland and open spaces in cooperation with the Simsbury Land Trust and other public and semi-public organizations.			

Historic Resources

GOALS

Create an awareness of the historic character of Simsbury.

Preserve, enhance, and promote the historic character of Simsbury for its contribution to the quality of life and for its economic benefits.

	Page	Who	Priority
1. Ensure the protection of archeological resources.			
2. Ensure the protection of historic resources.			
3. Preserve and create awareness of Simsbury's prehistoric and historic sites, structures, buildings, and districts.			
4. Enhance the viability of Simsbury's historic resources as town assets.			
5. Encourage or require the preservation of stone walls, burial sites, cellar holes, and other historic resources when determined to be appropriate.			

Responsibility Legend

BOS	Board of Selectmen
BOF	Board of Finance
BOE	Board of Education
CC	Conservation Commission
DRB	Design Review Board
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Priorities Legend

1	High Priority
2	Moderate Priority
3	Lower Priority

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

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Scenic Resources

GOAL

Preserve and protect scenic resources in Simsbury.

	Page	Who	Priority
1. Preserve the scenic characteristics of Simsbury.			
2. Continue to utilize existing tools to preserve scenic resources.			
3. Ensure perpetual tree cover in Simsbury.			

Community Character

GOAL

Continue to maintain and enhance the established character of Simsbury.

	Page	Who	Priority
1. Continue to identify and protect the resources, “sense of place”, and quality of life that contribute to the overall character of Simsbury.			
2. Undertake a series of studies to identify the resources and places that contribute to the overall character of Simsbury.			
3. Continue to include the Design Review Board in local land use issues and continue to implement the Guidelines for Community Design.			

Priorities Legend

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

A Future By Design

GOAL

Guide future growth in ways that will provide for the orderly and compatible use of land and maintain and enhance the established character of Simsbury.

	Page	Who	Priority
1. Ensure that future development in Simsbury will reflect the form of its surrounding area as well as uses appropriate for that area.			
2. Develop regulations to promote “form-based” zoning where the “form” of what is proposed (the design) is at least as important as the “function” of what is proposed (the use).			
3. Develop appropriate design principles to guide activities proposed in “form-based” districts.			
4. Encourage aesthetic and functional compatibility between adjacent uses and structures throughout the town, within zones, in mixed-use areas, and particularly in areas of transition.			
5. Encourage property owners/developers to work with Town commissions, boards, officials and citizens in the preparation of their developments so that they are of a scale and form that is in harmony with the community and surrounding areas.			
6. Protect and enhance the major “gateway” approaches to and within Simsbury through the use of landscaping, maintaining a buffer (e.g., trees, open space or berm), town identification and signage, where appropriate.			
7. Pursue the use of grants and incentives, such as but not limited to tax abatements, infrastructure support reimbursement program, and density bonuses, in order to implement the Plan’s goals, policies and objectives.			
8. Enhance the land use application review and decision-making process.			
9. Promote the coordination of compatible land uses and consistent environmental protections along the Town’s borders.			
10. Coordinate State and Regional Land Use Plans with Simsbury’s Plan of Conservation and Development.			

Responsibility Legend

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Priorities Legend

- 1** High Priority
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-

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

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Priorities Legend

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

Special Areas

SIMSBURY CENTER

- | | Page | Who | Priority |
|---|------|-----|----------|
| 1. Establish a broad, conceptual master plan for Simsbury Center. | | | |
| 2. Expand the Simsbury Center Zone. | | | |
| 3. Encourage the Zoning Commission to designate Simsbury Center as a “village district”. | | | |
| 4. Encourage greater density in Simsbury Center. | | | |
| 5. Increase the residential component of Simsbury Center. | | | |
| 6. Continue efforts to make Simsbury Center even more pedestrian-friendly. | | | |
| 7. Ensure the provision of “green space” within the Simsbury Center Zone. | | | |
| 8. Strive to reduce or minimize the impact of less attractive features (such as utility wires). | | | |
| 9. Promote municipal ownership and management of parking areas currently owned by the State. | | | |

TARIFFVILLE

- | | Page | Who | Priority |
|---|------|-----|----------|
| 1. Consider zoning techniques for Tariffville that will enable its individual characteristics to stand out. | | | |
| 2. Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating Tariffville as a “village district.” | | | |

WEATOGUE

- | | Page | Who | Priority |
|--|------|-----|----------|
| 1. Consider zoning techniques for Weatogue that will enable its individual characteristics to stand out. | | | |
| 2. Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating Weatogue as a “village district.” | | | |

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

NORTHERN GATEWAY

	Page	Who	Priority
1. PREFERRED - Consider the concept of a mixed use, village-scale development in this area provided that such development harmonizes with the adjacent areas and the town as a whole.			
2. PREFERRED - Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating the Northern Gateway as a “village district” or a Special Development District or a Planned Development District.			
3. PREFERRED - Promote open space/cluster techniques and “traditional neighborhood design” for residential development located in the northwest part of this area.			
4. ALTERNATIVE - To the extent that use-based zoning continues, maintain the existing regulatory requirements for the I-1 zone in order to promote the office/industrial use of this area.			

WEST SIMSBURY

	Page	Who	Priority
1. Consider zoning techniques for West Simsbury that will enable its individual characteristics to stand out.			
2. Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating West Simsbury Center as a “village district.”			

WEST STREET

	Page	Who	Priority
1. Consider zoning techniques for West Street that will enable its individual characteristics to stand out.			
2. Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider designating West Street as a “village district.”			

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Priorities Legend

- 1** High Priority
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 - 3** Lower Priority
-

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

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HOPMEADOW STREET - SIMSBURY CENTER TO WEATOGUE

Page Who Priority

1. Develop a preliminary adaptive re-use plan to prepare for the possibility that the Dyno-Nobel campus might become a multi-user facility some day.
2. Encourage the Zoning Commission to consider overlay zoning or other techniques that would allow for business uses while maintaining the character of the existing streetscape.
3. Create a comprehensive plan to address access-management and pedestrian mobility in the corridor and to tie in with the Farmington Valley Greenway.

SOUTHERN GATEWAY

Page Who Priority

5. PREFERRED - To the extent that use-based zoning continues, maintain the existing regulatory requirements for the I-1 zone in order to promote the ideal use of this area as an office park.
6. ALTERNATIVE - Consider the concept of a mixed use, village-scale development in this area provided that such development harmonizes with the adjacent areas and the town as a whole.

WOLCOTT ROAD / SIMSBURY AIRPORT

Page Who Priority

1. Preserve the Simsbury Airport
2. Support an expansion of, and other improvements to, the Simsbury Airport as needed.

SOUTHWEST CORNER

Page Who Priority

Consider rezoning some residential land to commercial in the Bushy Hill Lane area.

Priorities Legend

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Economic Development

GOAL

Foster a dynamic and prosperous climate in which economic development strategies are linked to efficient, disciplined and timely actions. The result will be new and expanding enterprises offering highly desirable goods and services together with employment opportunities and significant growth in the commercial tax base.

	Page	Who	Priority
1. Capitalize on the market for economic development in Simsbury.			
2. Reduce the tax burden on property owners by diversifying Simsbury’s tax base and by growing the grand list through expanded economic development strategies.			
3. Understand the Net Economic Impact of new development in the Town of Simsbury.			
4. Encourage economic development to harmonize with the natural surroundings, adjoining uses, and any surrounding residential areas.			
5. Explore the creation of “Special Services Districts” in Simsbury.			
6. Amend the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations in a manner that will responsibly foster a dynamic and prosperous business climate.			
7. To the extent that use-based zoning continues, encourage the Zoning Commission to consolidate the number and types of non-residential zones in order to simplify the zoning regulations and to facilitate economic development.			
8. Encourage non-residential zones to be centered around major transportation routes and facilities.			
9. Encourage the use of “green building” technologies and encourage sustainable development practices.			

Responsibility Legend

- BOS** Board of Selectmen
- BOF** Board of Finance
- BOE** Board of Education
- CC** Conservation Commission
- DRB** Design Review Board
- EDC** Economic Dev. Commission
- HDC** Historic District Commission
- LB** Library Board
- PRC** Parks and Rec. Commission
- PC** Planning Commission
- Staff** Town Staff
- WPCA** Water Pollution Control Authority
- ZBA** Zoning Board of Appeals
- ZC** Zoning Commission

Priorities Legend

- 1** High Priority
 - 2** Moderate Priority
 - 3** Lower Priority
-

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Responsibility Legend

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Housing

GOALS

Improve, facilitate, and sustain a living environment that is safe, healthful, aesthetic and distinctive.

Provide for a range of housing choices that meet the needs and preferences of Simsbury's residents of all ages and economic circumstances.

	Page	Who	Priority
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Priorities Legend

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
- 3** Lower Priority

How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Community Facilities & Recreation

GOAL

Provide, maintain and promote the development of community facilities that sustain and enhance community character and the social, mental, educational, and physical well being of the community.

	Page	Who	Priority
1. Review the Capital Improvement Program each year to ensure it reflects community needs and is consistent with the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development.			
2. Evaluate the utilization of existing public facilities (including schools) and seek ways to expand their functions and uses.			
3. Provide sites for community facilities reflecting present and future needs.			
4. Analyze the impact of large, new developments on community facilities and services and encourage the developer to contribute to the facilities and services impacted.			
5. Monitor and analyze the absorption of the existing housing stock and changes in the age distribution of the local population in order to anticipate specific needs for community facilities.			
6. Support and sustain educational excellence in the Simsbury Public School system.			
7. Encourage adequate fire protection be provided to all areas of town.			
8. Encourage adequate recreation facilities be provided to meet community needs.			
9. Encourage greater use of recreation facilities in Town.			
10. Support and sustain the Simsbury Public Library.			
11. Encourage and plan for increased culture and recreation facilities and opportunities.			
12. Encourage the design of all public facilities reflects the recommended design standards for lighting, landscaping, signage, handicapped, and vehicular and pedestrian circulation.			
13. Operate effective maintenance programs to protect capital investment in public buildings and facilities.			
14. Study the feasibility of establishing a Town wide facilities management function that would consolidate all Town activity under one department.			
15. Foster energy conservation in all development by encouraging developers to outline (in the site plan application) features that promote energy savings.			

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How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

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Transportation

GOAL

Enhance the efficiency, safety, aesthetics, environmental sensitivity and character-defining aspects of the transportation of persons and goods within and through the community.

	Page	Who	Priority
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Priorities Legend

- 1** High Priority
- 2** Moderate Priority
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How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

Infrastructure

GOAL

Plan for and monitor the town infrastructure, including but not limited to sewer, facilities, solid waste disposal, water supply, natural gas supply, fire protection, high-speed data communications, wireless communications, and public service utilities.

	Page	Who	Priority
1. Ensure that an adequate and safe public water supply for consumption and fire protection exists to serve current and future users.			
2. Use existing sewer facilities effectively.			
3. Provide for solid waste disposal with minimal environmental impacts.			
4. Collaborate with State Agencies, public service utilities, and other providers to maximize communication services and promote public safety, and recognize the benefits of this infrastructure to the enhancement of the economic base.			
5. Encourage the extension of natural gas lines as originally planned, to outlying areas of town currently served by propane tanks.			
6. Seek ways to bury wired utilities underground whenever and wherever possible.			

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Priorities Legend

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How We Will Make It Happen - Implementation

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Implementation

GOAL

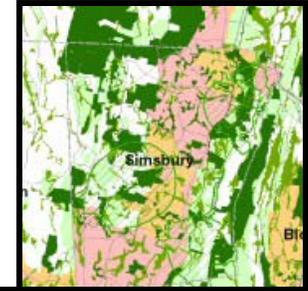
Implement the policies and objectives of the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development.

	Page	Who	Priority
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Future Land Use



Overview

As the Plan is implemented, the map on this “flip-up” page illustrates the location and intensity of *future* land uses that are desired. Since this map illustrates the stated goals, policies, objectives, and recommendations of each of the Plan sections when combined together, it is called the Future Land Use Plan for Simsbury.

Future Land Use Plan	
The Future Land Use Plan presented on the facing page contains the following categories:	
Natural Resources	Areas where natural resource protection is a priority of the Plan
Open Space / Trails	Areas with existing or desirable open space and greenway trails
Agricultural Lands	Areas where agricultural uses exist and are desired to remain
Village Centers	Community focal points and pedestrian-friendly village-type areas
Economic Development	Areas used or intended for development of business or industrial uses
Residential Areas	Areas used or intended for low, moderate, or higher density residential uses
Community / Institutional Uses	Existing or desired uses that will help meet community needs

Future Land Use Plan

(Flip page up)

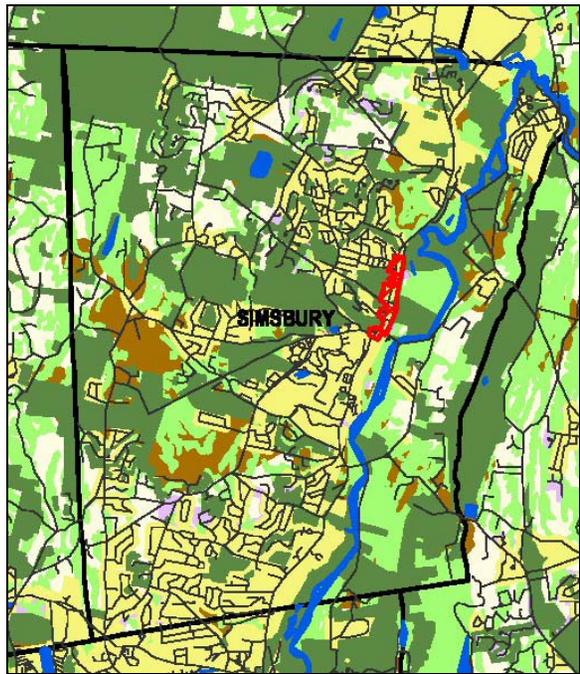
How We Will Make It Happen - Future Land Use

Consistency With State and Regional Plans

In accordance with CGS 8-23, the Future Land Use Plan has been evaluated for consistency with the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

As part of this review, the Future Land Use Plan was found to be generally consistent with both the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

Regional Plan of Conservation and Development



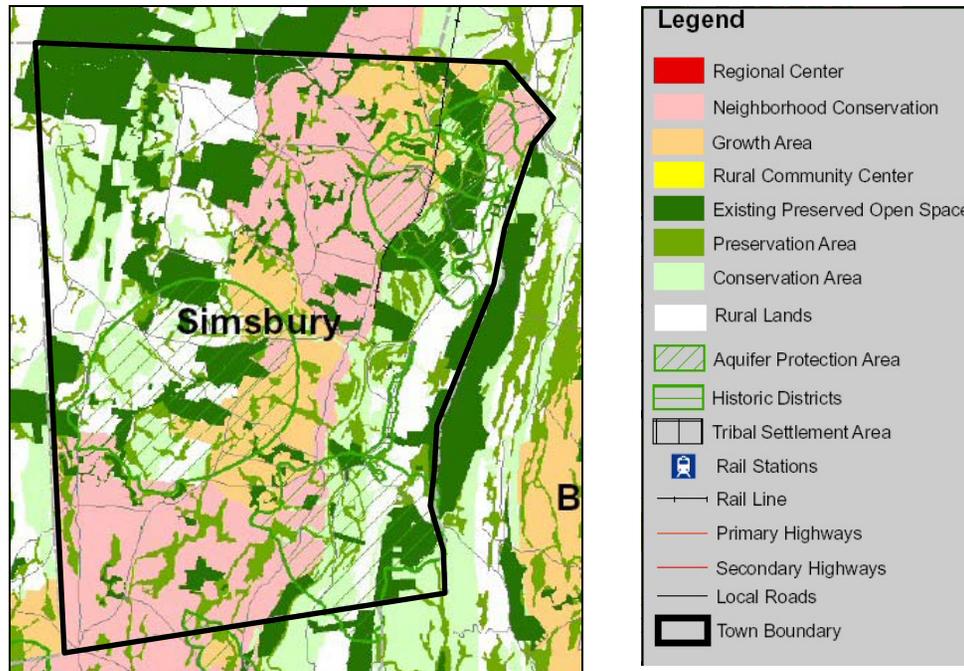
Legend

-  Larger State and Interstate Highways
-  Proposed Busway with 1/2 Mile Buffer Area
-  Proposed Springfield-New Haven Commuter Rail with 1/2 Mile Buffer Area
-  Bradley International Airport
-  Area of Municipal Focus
-  Streets and Roads
-  Water
-  Municipal Boundaries
-  Preserved Open and Recreation Land
-  Established Residential Areas and Existing Commercial and Industrial Zones
-  Development Constrained Land and Areas Suitable for Protection
-  Environmentally Sensitive Areas
-  Public Sewer and Water Service Areas
-  Undeveloped and Unpreserved

How We Will Make It Happen - Future Land Use

While the land use categories used are different, all three plans focus on the preservation of important natural resources and the enhancement of village areas in Simsbury. In addition, the Plans suggest that development occur in harmony with natural resource constraints in order to preserve and conserve important resources.

State Plan of Conservation and Development



How We Will Make It Happen - Future Land Use

Consistency With Growth Management Principles

In accordance with CGS 8-23, the Plan of Conservation and Development has been evaluated for consistency with statewide growth management principles.

As part of this review, the Plan was found to be generally consistent with all of the following statewide principles.

Principle 1 - Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.

Although Simsbury does not contain any “regional centers” as identified in the State Plan of Conservation and Development, the Simsbury Plan contains a number of strategies to redevelop, revitalize, and create mixed-use areas which have existing or planned physical infrastructure.

For example, the Plan recommends enhancement of Simsbury Center as a vibrant, mixed-use area accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles. The Center is considered appropriate for village-type development since it is an existing local commercial center and is served by public water and sanitary sewers. The Plan recommends additional development of this area in a pedestrian-friendly manner with retail and office on the ground level and housing on the upper floors, improved circulation, and improved parking and parking signage.

The Plan recommends enhancement of Tariffville and Weatogue as mixed use village centers. The Plan also supports mixed use development in other areas of Simsbury where adequate infrastructure is available.

Overall, the concept of revitalizing mixed use centers which have adequate infrastructure is one of the key elements of the Plan.

How We Will Make It Happen - Future Land Use

Principle 2 - Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.

The Plan of Conservation and Development promotes the following policies:

- 1) enable greater diversity in Simsbury's housing options,
- 2) promote strategies to help address the housing needs of an aging population and for housing options that are more affordable, and
- 3) allow mixed-use developments to provide opportunities for additional housing diversity.

In particular, the Plan recommends that the Subdivision Regulations and the Zoning Regulations be reviewed to ensure that they encourage affordable housing on a long-term basis. The Plan suggests encouraging new residential development to include units for very low, low, and moderate-income families and allowing accessory apartments and conversion to duplex structures where appropriate and where adequate infrastructure is available.

Principle 3 - Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.

The Plan of Conservation and Development recommends more intensive mixed-use development in "centers" (nodes) and along transportation corridors (such as Route 10) where commuter bus service is available.

This will help to support overall community structure as well as transportation options and land reuse within the recommended mixed-use village areas.

How We Will Make It Happen - Future Land Use

Principle 4 - Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.

The Plan of Conservation and Development contains an entire section (“What We Want To Protect”) which identifies strategies to:

- protect natural resources and preserve open space,
- protect historic and archeological resources,
- preserve agricultural resources, and
- preserve scenic views and community character.

These chapters, and the goals, policies and objectives within them, prescribe strategies to help conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.

Principle 5 - Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.

The Plan of Conservation and Development also contains recommendations to protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety. This includes goals, policies and objectives to protect public water supply watersheds (reservoirs), protect groundwater resources (aquifers), preserve floodplain areas, preserve sensitive hillsides, renovate storm water discharges, minimize runoff, and other similar strategies.

Principle 6 - Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.

The Plan of Conservation and Development suggests a number of strategies to integrate planning with other levels of government and with other agencies. The Plan suggests ways to coordinate efforts with:

- adjacent communities,
- regional organizations, and
- state agencies.

Looking Ahead



Overview

Planning is an ongoing process. It never stops. For Simsbury, this 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development (“The Plan”) is a milestone on that journey.

Simsbury’s Plan is a dynamic document that is intended to be updated and maintained so that it incorporates ideas that are deemed to advance the Town’s long-range best interests. Even while the Plan is in its early years of implementation, the Planning Commission will continue to encourage Town-wide discussion of the Plan recommendations and will seek suggestions of ways to make the Plan even better.

In the quest to achieve what is best for Simsbury, we also must answer the question, “How are we doing?” The Planning Commission intends that there will be an annual assessment. With the support and participation of Town officials, civic organizations, and residents, the Planning Commission will evaluate and report on progress in implementing the Plan’s recommendations. Among the scores of questions to be answered are these:

- What progress has the Zoning Commission achieved in updating the Town’s Zoning Regulations?
- Similarly, what progress has the Planning Commission achieved in updating the Subdivision Regulations?

Looking ahead, the Planning Commission, in conjunction with the Plan Implementation Committee, will concurrently 1) seek input for the Plan reviews (see page 151), and 2) evaluate the Plan’s output, i.e., determine how effectively the Plan’s recommendations are being implemented.

By paying attention to Plan input and keeping a close eye on Plan output, the Commission is convinced that Simsbury’s special qualities will be preserved and enhanced.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Bradford M. Mead, Alternate

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Richard L. Sawitzke, Town Engineer

With Major Contributions From:

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David R. Ryan, former Commission member

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Austin D. Barney, Chairman, Zoning Commission

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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Jessica Cushings, Planning Intern (to 3/06)

Consultants

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New England Geo-Systems (GIS Mapping) (from 9/06)

