



# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Aerial Image

### Site H - Center Parcels

Map H-2

#### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
parcels.

Capital Region COG:  
aerial image, 2009.

*Note: This aerial imagery is a preliminary release and has not been lined up with other data.*

Oct. 9, 2009

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1 inch = 100 feet

# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - OPM Policies Plan

### Site H - Center Parcels

Map H-3



Note:  
This map shows a close-up of the CT OPM Conservation and Development Policies Plan, June 2005.

#### Sources:

Site boundary: Simsbury  
All other data: OPM

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# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Existing Zoning

### Site H - Center Parcels

Map H-4

#### Legend

Site Boundary

Parcels

Zoning District:

R40

SCZA

SCZB

SCZC



#### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
parcels, zoning.  
CSP&D: site boundaries.

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# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Potential IHZ Units

### Site H - Center Parcels

Map H-5

#### Sources:

CSP&D: site boundaries.  
Capital Region COG:  
aerial image, 2009.  
*Note: This aerial imagery is a  
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# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Potential IHZ Development

### Site H - Town Center Charette

#### Map H-6



This view shows the charette sketch plan prepared by Code Studio for this area, with the approximate parcel boundaries added.

In this sketch, the existing buildings are dark gray and the potential new buildings are shown with brown roofs. The light gray is surface parking and the tan is potential parking deck.

This view shows the charette sketch plan with the approximate potential IHZ boundary added.



#### Sources:

Code Studio, Inc: excerpt of final plan sketch as presented at the 9-16-09 public meeting; photo by CSP&D.  
CSP&D: parcel and site boundaries.

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**Site L  
“Northeast Utilities”**

Site L, owned by Infinity IV but better known as the “Northeast Utilities” site, is located on Hopmeadow Street at the Avon town line. This site is just over 60 acres and has over 3,000 feet of frontage on Hopmeadow Street (Route 10) and over 2,300 feet of frontage on the Farmington Valley Greenway rail trail. The center of the site is currently occupied by a Connecticut Light & Power facility (roughly 13 acres). Map L-1 shows the existing conditions on and directly adjacent to the site.

A significant portion of the site is within Natural Diversity Database area and the site is adjacent to a primary habitat area. The majority of that area is owned by the State of Connecticut DEP and managed as a wildlife area (Nod Brook Management Area), with the primary purpose of training and field trials for hunting dogs. On Map L-1, this area is shown as “open space”, and the management area extends south into Avon. An Environmental Inventory and Assessment prepared by Environmental Planning Services of West Hartford in March 2007 concluded that four species listed by the state as special concern may inhabit this or adjacent sites. At this point it is not anticipated that presence of such species or their habitat will significantly impact the opportunity to develop this site.

Much of the extensive frontage of the property has good views of the Heublein Tower on Talcott Mountain, and the community has expressed desires to preserve at least some of the views of the mountain ridge to the east. The southern field lies about 10 feet lower than Hopmeadow Street but the existing wooded wetland already blocks the view of the tower along a substantial portion of the frontage near the Avon town line. The viewshed can be protected by creation of a town common style park/green space along the western edge of the site from approximately 500 feet north of the Avon town line to the northern property boundary (at the entrance to the Chubb facility), in combination with establishment of a graduated “view shed buffer” with taller buildings located on the eastern side of the site.

The site has both sewer and water, and has gently rolling topography with slopes generally less than 5 percent. Currently zoned I1, permitted uses are limited on the site. Across Hopmeadow Street the zoning is residential, with single family density at .92 du/a (in the R-40 district) and a townhouse development at about 3.9 du/a (in an RD zoning district). Across the town line in Avon, the zoning adjacent to this site is CP-B, Commercial Park; the site is occupied by an office complex with ten clustered buildings. To the north, the site is also bounded by office uses – the Hopmeadow Business Center and the Tower Business Park.

Map L-2 shows an aerial image of this property, which clearly shows the open nature of the northern and southern portions (currently agricultural fields), as well as the central developed portion of the site. Map L-3 shows the State Policies Plan, which indicates the entire site is within a Neighborhood Conservation area; an IHZ would be consistent with the Plan.

Concord Square believes that this site is suitable for mixed uses including residential, retail, and office. However, given the densities required by the legislation and the property owner’s desire to limit the number of residential units to around 250, creating an IHZ on this 60 acre site will be a challenge that requires substantial cooperation between the Town and the property owner to negotiate a master plan for the site that meets the needs of both. Sub-

districts will need to be designated that are sized appropriately for the number and type of units proposed for each area of the site, as well as for permitted non-residential uses. For example, one master plan scenario might be:

- an IHZ with three subdistricts:
  - a single family detached subdistrict of 14 acres with 84 homes, of which 16 would be affordable;
  - a townhouse or mixed use district (that allowed only townhouse type units) of 12 acres with 120 townhouse units, of which 24 would be affordable;
  - a multi-family or mixed use district (with multi-family units on upper floors) of 2.5 acres with 50 units, of which 10 would be affordable;
- one or more non-residential areas that would not be part of the IHZ; and
- one or more permanent open space areas that also would not be part of the IHZ.

As a point of reference, under the IHZ legislation, if the entire 60 acre site were designated an IHZ for single family detached homes, there would be potential for up to 360 homes, of which 72 would be affordable. If the entire site were designated for townhomes, there would be potential for 600 housing units (120 affordable), and if multi-family the number of units rises to 1,200 (240 affordable) – clearly much higher than any municipality could absorb within a relatively short period of time, which, as discussed at the beginning of this report, is the intent of the legislation.

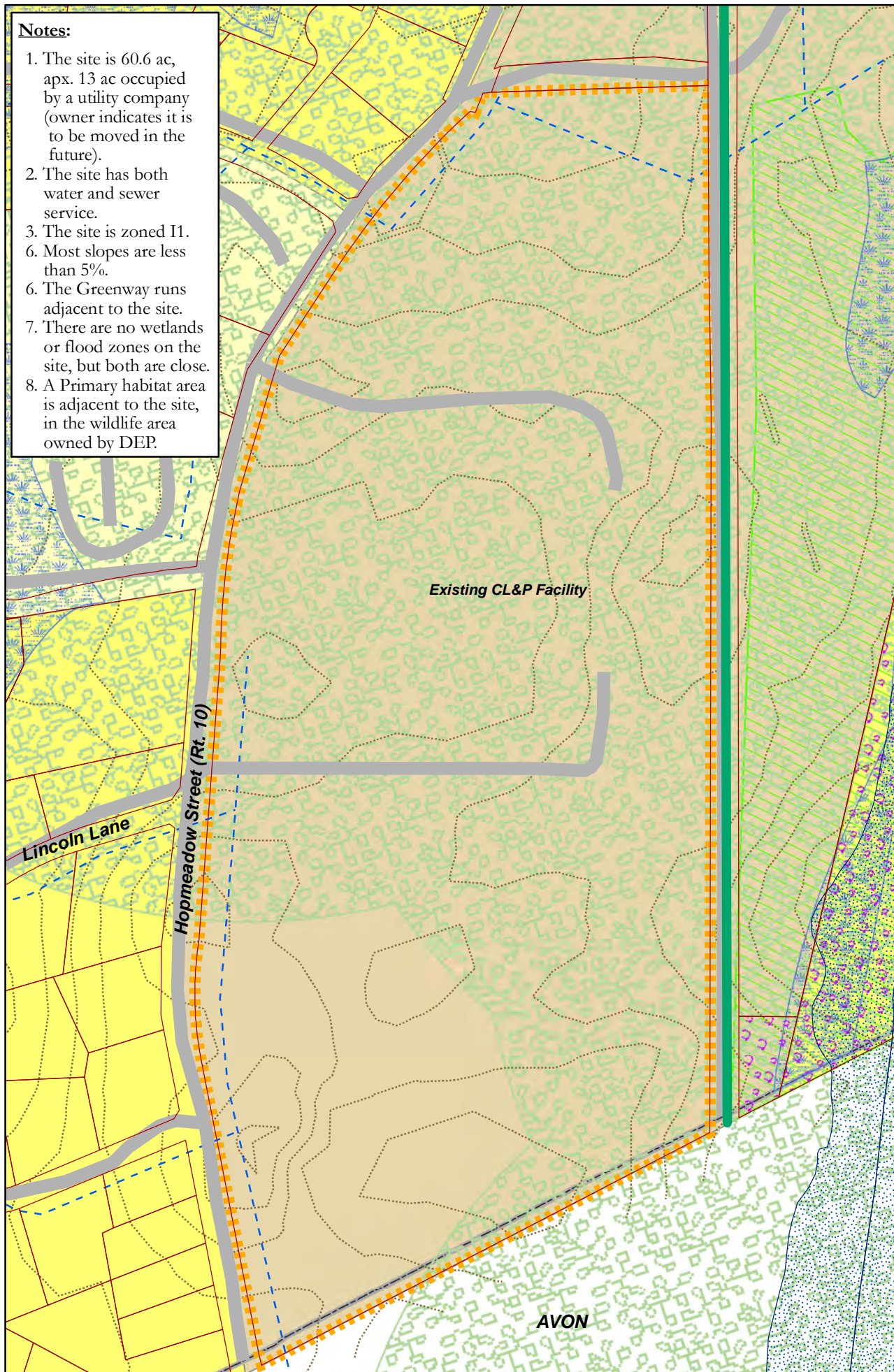
If the Town decides to move forward with an IHZ on this site at this time or in the future, Concord Square recommends that a master plan for the entire 60 acre site be created through negotiations with the Town and the property owner. This master plan should:

- Set the location, type, and number of housing units;
- Identify any non-residential uses permitted and set their locations, floor area ratios, and maximum building sizes;
- Set aside a buffer area along Hopmeadow Street to maintain the sense of open space;
- Create a view shed for the Heublein Tower to protect the views of the tower from Hopmeadow Street, implemented through a graduated buffer where the further east on the site, the taller the buildings can be;
- Identify key issues for the creation of design standards, including setting the scale and massing of buildings, the general location of parking areas, etc.



### Notes:

1. The site is 60.6 ac, apx. 13 ac occupied by a utility company (owner indicates it is to be moved in the future).
2. The site has both water and sewer service.
3. The site is zoned I1.
6. Most slopes are less than 5%.
6. The Greenway runs adjacent to the site.
7. There are no wetlands or flood zones on the site, but both are close.
8. A Primary habitat area is adjacent to the site, in the wildlife area owned by DEP.



# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Existing Conditions

### Site L - Infinity IV

### Map L-1

### Legend

- Site Boundary
  - Parcels
  - 1% Flood Zone
  - Wetlands
  - Open Space
  - NDDDB Areas - 6/09
  - Primary Habitat Areas
  - Greenway
  - Roads
  - Contours (10')
  - Water Pipes
  - Town Boundary
- Zoning:**
- RD
  - R40
  - I1

### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
site boundary, parcels,  
primary and secondary  
habitats, water lines,  
sewer area, Greenway,  
zoning, topo.

CT DEP:  
town boundary, wetlands,  
natural diversity data,  
DEP owned property.

FEMA:  
flood zones from DFIRM  
database downloaded  
6-27-09.

Sept. 10, 2009

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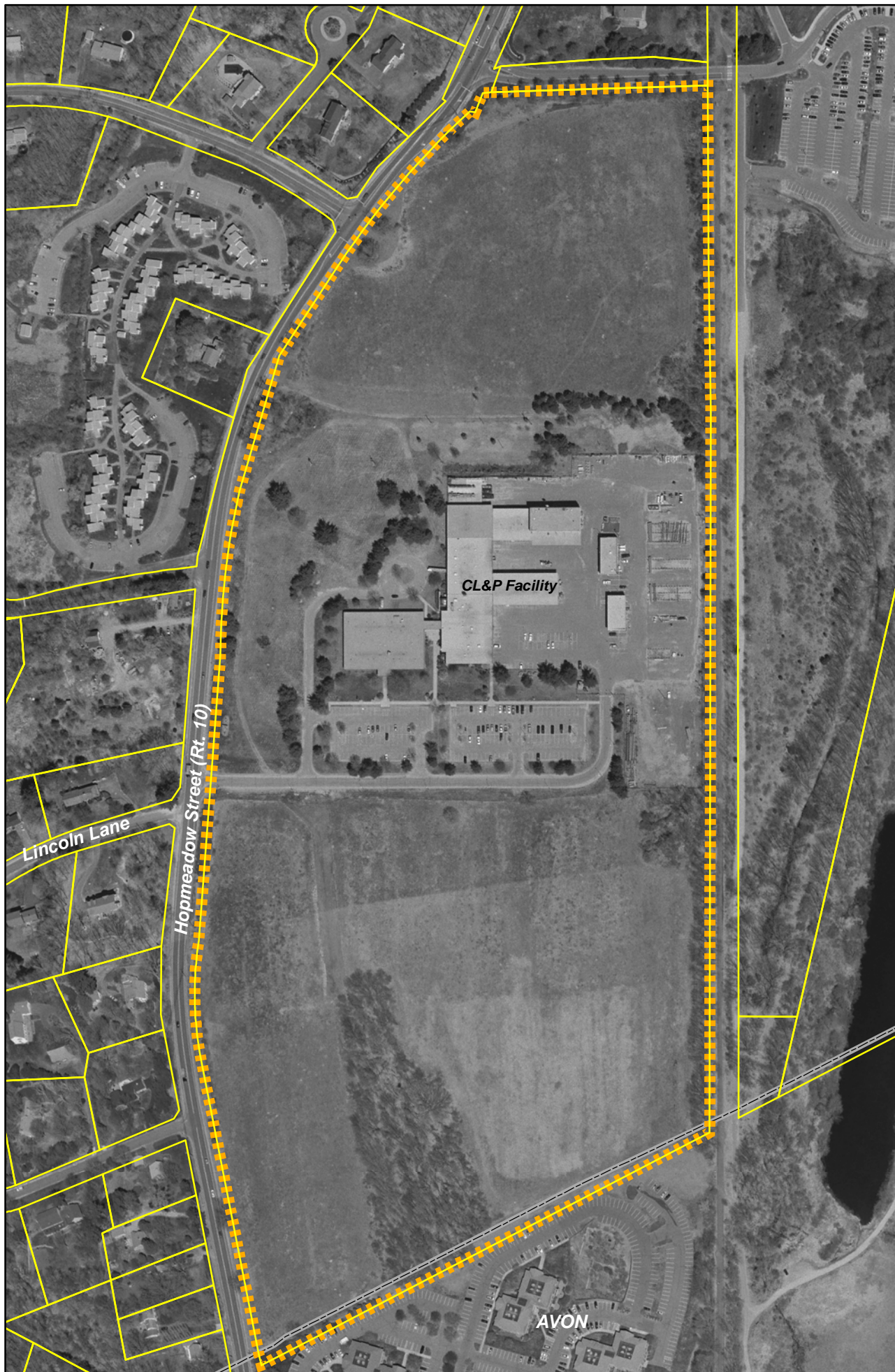


# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Aerial View

### Site L - Infinity IV

Map L-2



#### Legend

- Site Boundary
- Town Boundary
- Parcels

#### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
site boundary, parcels.  
CT DEP:  
town boundary.  
CT DOT:  
aerial imagery.

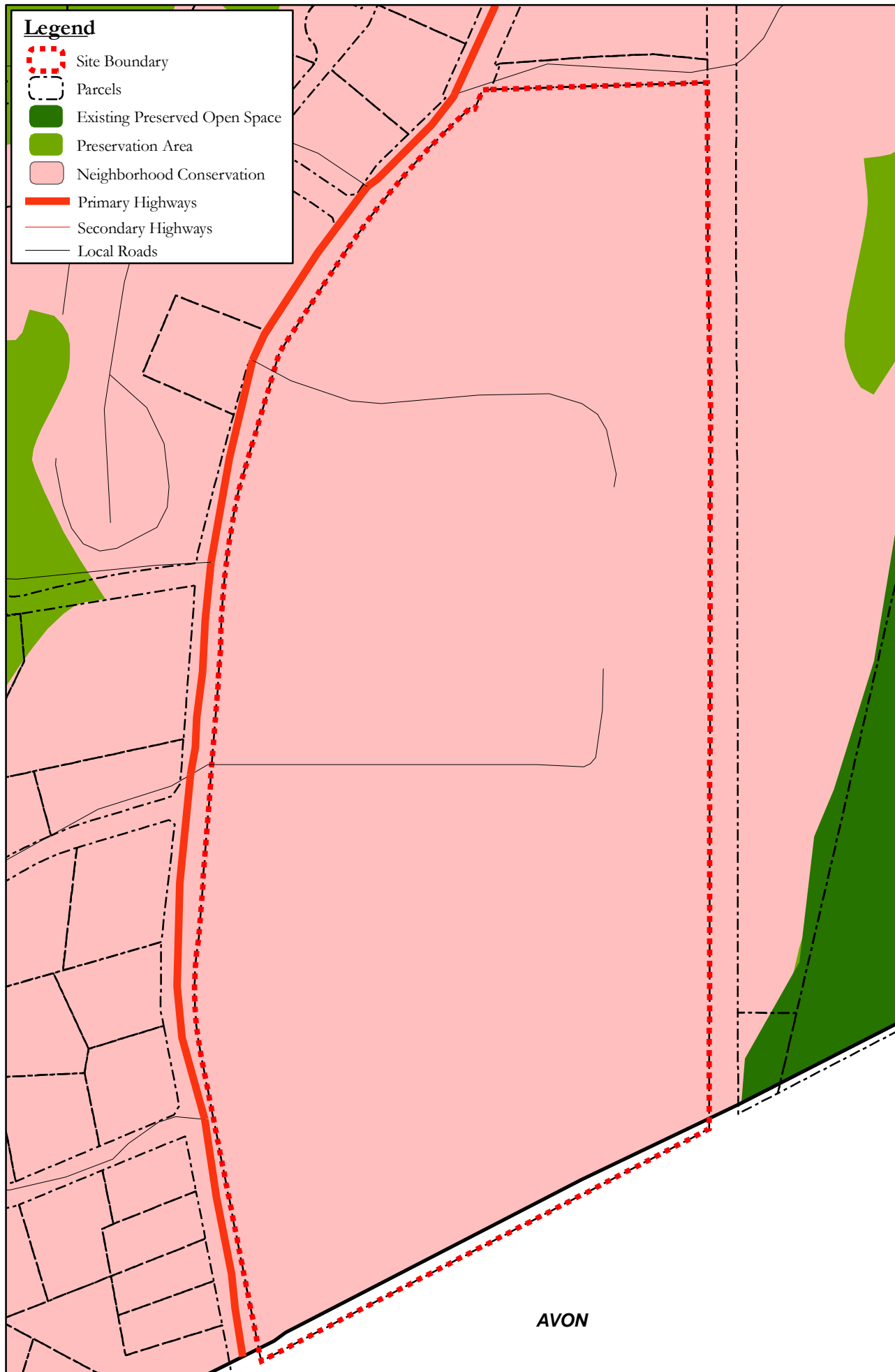
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0 50 100 150

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# Legend

- Site Boundary
- Parcels
- Existing Preserved Open Space
- Preservation Area
- Neighborhood Conservation
- Primary Highways
- Secondary Highways
- Local Roads

## Simsbury IHZ Study Site Analysis - OPM Policies Plan Site L - Infinity IV

### Map L-3

Note:  
This map shows a close-up of the CT OPM Conservation and Development Policies Plan, June 2005.

#### Sources:

Site boundary: Simsbury  
All other data: OPM

Oct. 7, 2009

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**Site N**  
**Ensign-Bickford**

Site N, the Grist Mill site owned by Ensign-Bickford, is a relatively narrow 8.1 acre area with Hop Brook running through the site. Map N-1 shows the existing conditions on the site and Map N-2 shows a recent aerial view. Roughly 1.1 acres are open water, an additional 1.5 acres are in the floodway, and 2.5 acres are slopes over 15%, leaving 3 acres as developable, much of which is already developed. Currently there is a mill building built in 1900 and a one-way drive with parking located on the north (West Street) side of the brook, and two parking lots on the south side of the brook. A pedestrian bridge connects those parking lots directly to the mill building, which was a restaurant but is now vacant and for sale. Nearly the entire building sits in the floodway (see Map N-3), which presents significant regulatory and financing issues for conversion of any of the building for residential use.

Map N-4 shows the OPM Policies Plan for this site, which clearly indicates the brook area as Conservation Area and the remainder of the site in the Growth Area, thus an IHZ on this site would be consistent with the Policies Plan.

This site originally included just the mill building and parking lots, but was expanded to include some of the land area nearby (essentially Site O of the site selection analysis, see Map 1). This was done when it became clear that residential use of the mill building was probably not feasible and there might be a possibility to create a broader mixed use area. Several adjacent undeveloped land areas were analyzed for potential inclusion in a mixed use IHZ where the mill building would be the non-residential portion and the undeveloped land would be the residential portion. The number of potential units was calculated based on a mix of single family detached and townhouse – under that particular scenario, 76 units would be feasible. However, given the layout of the area as well as the topography and wetlands and waterbodies, these residential areas would not be in close proximity to or otherwise have a reasonable relationship with the mill building, thus the idea of a mixed use development to encompass the whole area is not realistic. Both of these undeveloped areas are suitable for residential development, but the use of IHZ is not necessarily the right tool to accomplish that. Remember, site O did not rank in Tier 1 in the site selection analysis and it is inappropriate to consider it now.

Given the topography and proximity to the brook, the only portion of the site that would be suited for residential buildings is in the parking lots on the south side of the brook. After meeting with the property owners, Concord Square did an analysis to determine whether there were any realistic scenarios where residential buildings could be constructed on the site. To do this, first the amount of parking that would be needed for the existing mill building if the restaurant was reduced to 5,000 square feet and the remainder of the building was used for office space was determined, which resulted in a total of 105 spaces for the mill building. The site currently has 111 spaces total, or 6 more than needed for the reconfigured (uses) mill building.

Then, an analysis of how large of a building footprint could be located without reducing the existing parking by more than 6 spaces was done, in conjunction with an analysis of what size building would be needed to accommodate parking at a rate of 2 spaces per unit under the building. The result of this was a footprint of two offset rectangles of 100' x 60'; each one with two stories, five units per story, for a total of 20 housing units. See Map N-5. As

shown on that map, four new parking spaces would be needed on the West Street side of the brook, and the space to do so is limited by incompatible zoning (the easternmost triangle is within the R-15 district, and parking as an accessory to non-residential uses is not permitted). The buildings were sited to avoid encroachment into the 100 foot buffer from the brook.

The next step in this analysis was to designate a one acre area for the IHZ boundary, which is also shown in Map N-5. While it may seem odd to have an IHZ designated in the middle of a parcel, without any public access (no frontage on a public way), it is the only way to include this site as an IHZ. There may be other zoning mechanisms in Simsbury that would allow a cleaner district designation than this, although they would not have the benefits of IHZ – design standards and 20% affordable units. If this IHZ is to be pursued, then it is highly recommended to subdivide the site to create not only a separate parcel for the IHZ, but also to provide permanent legal access to the IHZ, either through a new public right-of-way where the existing driveway to the adjacent office building is located, or a permanent public access easement over the upper parking lot for the mill building.

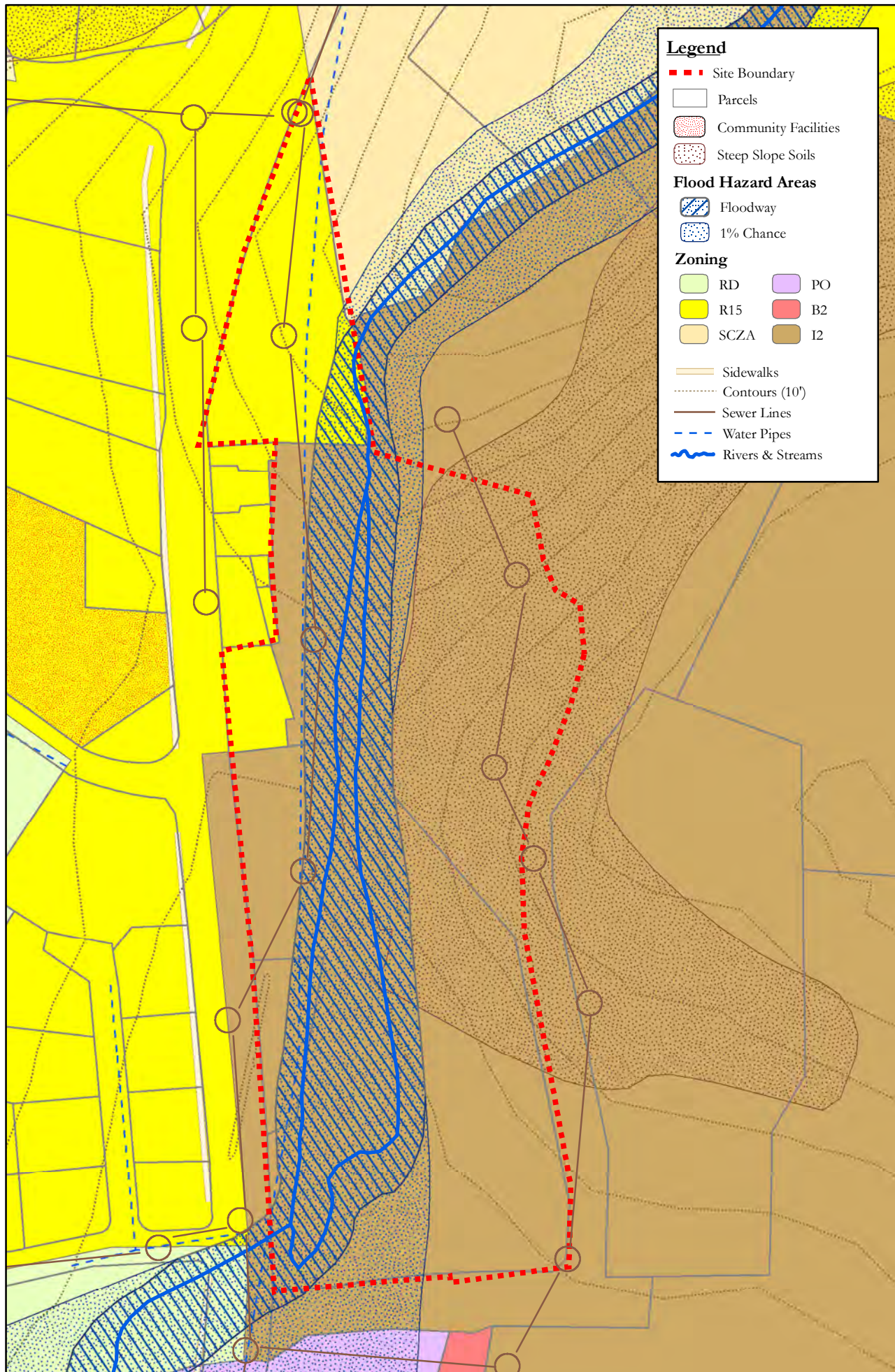


# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Existing Conditions

### Site N - Ensign-Bickford Mill

Map N-1



#### Notes:

1. The building and site are listed as Character Building and Place, for aesthetics.
2. The site has both water and sewer service.
3. Slopes range from 2% to 15%, but the site has been terraced.
4. There are no wetlands or habitat areas on the site, but are within 200' (to the west).

#### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
site boundary, parcels, primary and secondary habitats, water lines, sewer lines, sidewalks, community facilities, zoning, topography.

CT DEP:  
town boundary, wetlands, natural diversity data, DEP owned property.

FEMA:  
flood zones from DFIRM database downloaded 6-27-09.

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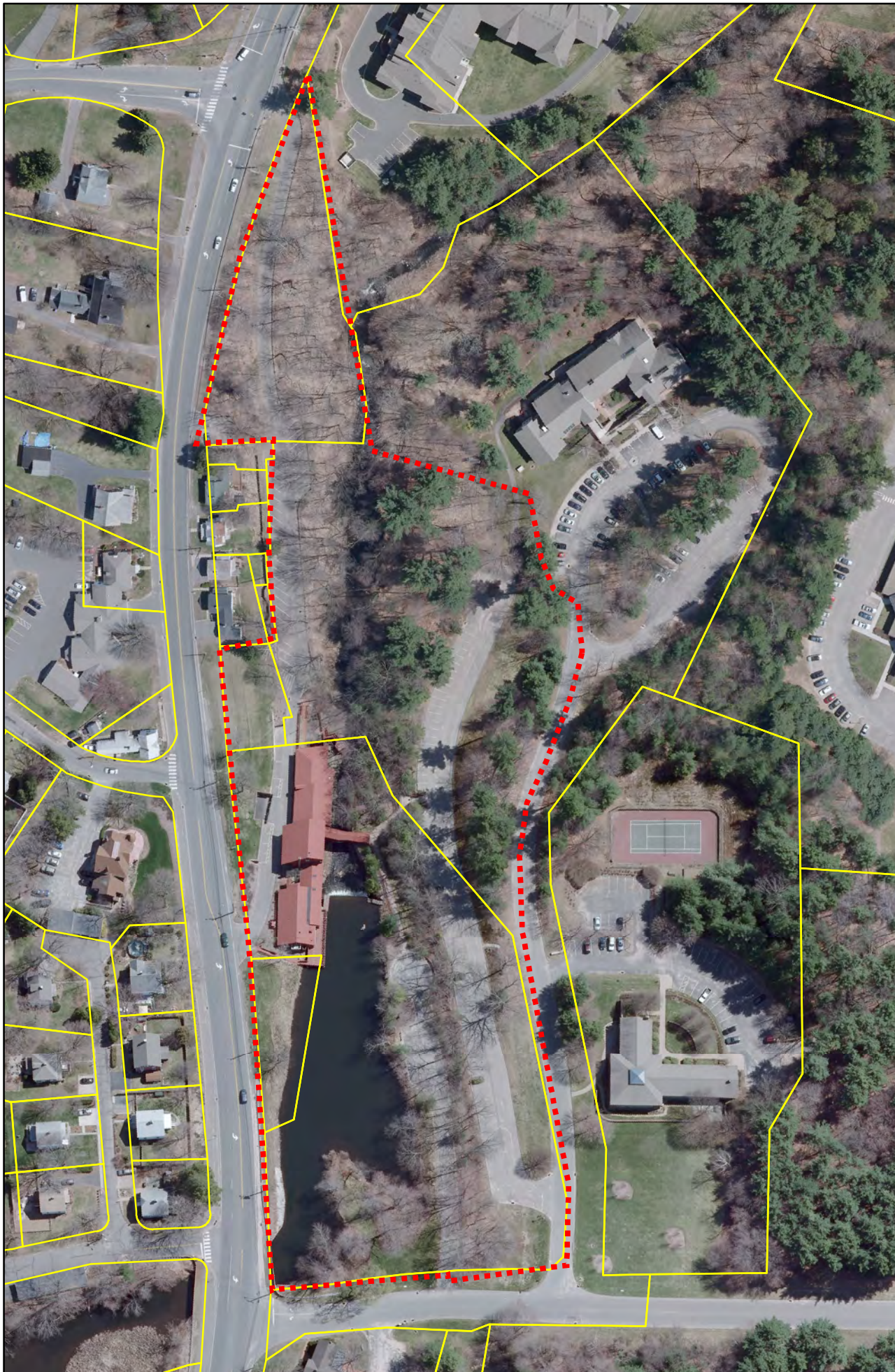


# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Aerial Image

### Site N - Ensign-Bickford Mill

Map N-2



#### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
parcels.

Capital Region COG:  
aerial image, 2009.

*Note: This aerial imagery is a  
preliminary release and has not  
been lined up with other data.*

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1 inch = 150 feet







# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Flood Zones

### Site N - Ensign-Bickford Mill

Map N-3

#### Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  Parcels
- Flood Hazard Areas:**
  -  Floodway
  -  1% Chance

#### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
parcels.  
FEMA: Flood zones  
from DFIRM data-  
base downloaded  
6-27-09.  
Capital Region COG:  
aerial image, 2009.  
*Note: This aerial imagery is a  
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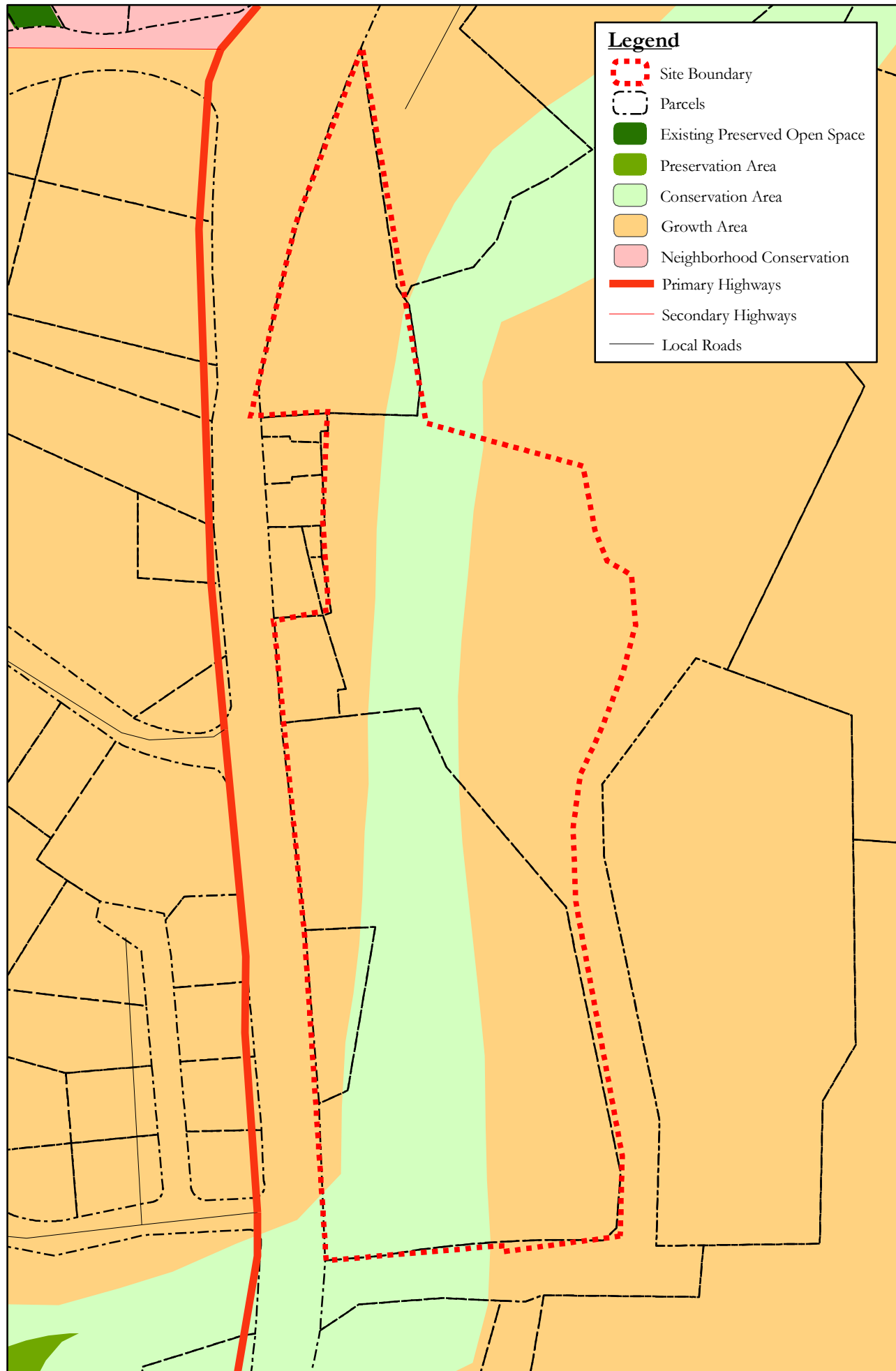


# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - OPM Policies Plan

### Site N - Ensign-Bickford Mill

Map N-4



Note:  
This map shows a close-up of the CT OPM Conservation and Development Policies Plan, June 2005.

#### Sources:

Site boundary: Simsbury  
All other data: OPM

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# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Potential IHZ District

### Site N - Ensign-Bickford Mill

Map N-5

#### Legend

- Original Site Boundary
- Potential IHZ District
- Potential MF Buildings
- 100' IWV Buffer
- Parcel Lines
- Contours (10')

#### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
parcels.  
Capital Region COG:  
aerial image, 2009.  
*Note: This aerial imagery is a preliminary release and has not been lined up with other data.*

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## Site P Town Center Parking Lots

The last site analyzed was the parking lots along Iron Horse Blvd. in the Town Center. This area has been a primary site for a potential IHZ from the beginning of this study, given its proximity to the services of the town center, the active and passive recreational facilities nearby (Farmington River Greenway, soccer fields, performing arts center, and Simsbury Meadows), and the bus stop for the Hartford line. It is currently an underutilized area, consisting of 479 parking spaces with a very low utilization rate except during concerts and special events that are held in the lots.

If the majority of the existing parking were accommodated elsewhere, such as on the Town owned land on the east side of Iron Horse Blvd. (using pervious pavers or simply grass areas), then these parking areas could be developed with housing and possibly limited retail at the street corners. This would enliven this end of Iron Horse Blvd. and help to establish a connection between the greenway trail and the town center.

Map P-1 shows the existing conditions in this area. A substantial amount of the site is within the NDDDB area, so the appropriate request should be made to DEP to inquire as to the potential species that may inhabit the site. Given the existing conditions (mostly pavement, see aerial image in Map P-2) it is unlikely there will be any detrimental impact on any species with new development here. Other than that, the site has no physical features that would interfere with development.

The OPM Policies Plan shows this site within the Neighborhood Conservation area, although the state used parcel lines for the boundaries between the different areas and thus a sliver of Existing Preserved Open Space appears to be on this site. As noted on the maps, the parking lots are not within parcels, they are within a right-of-way. When Iron Horse Boulevard was constructed, there were apparently land swaps between various entities (the town, state, and railroad company at least), and the legalities of who owns what is a question currently under investigation by the Town. Adoption of an IHZ in this location cannot occur until ownership is clearly established, and if owned by the State, purchased or transferred to either the Town or some other entity (e.g. housing trust, private owner).

Similarly, Map P-4 shows the existing zoning, which follows parcel lines that do not reflect the current on-the-ground conditions. The land on the east side of Iron Horse Blvd. is zoned R-40, although it is in Town ownership and is the location of the wastewater treatment facility and The Meadows, an open space wetland area associated with the Farmington River. This area is also within the Town Center Charette boundary, and is expected to be rezoned to a new district allowing mixed uses.

For the analysis of this site for potential IHZ units, the three parking lot “parcels” (as shown on the maps) were assigned a density of 20 units per acre, yielding a total of 149 housing units (see Map P-5). These units would be in two, three, or four story multi-family buildings, some with parking underneath, and the option exists for small retail spaces to be located on the street level at the street corners, for businesses such as book stores, coffee shops, ice cream shops, and the like – the type of establishment that would attract passers-by on the road as well as the Greenway trail. The concept is to draw people up from Iron Horse Blvd. into the town center.



Map P-6 shows one example of how this area could be developed, as drawn by Code Studio for the final presentation at the Town Center Charette. In this example, the southernmost end of the parking lot remains parking. While this drawing was for conceptual purposes only and unit counts or square footages were not considered during its preparation, it is reasonable based on rough measurements and calculations to conclude this example would consist of two and three story buildings to house 149 housing units and a few commercial spaces. Given the 30 foot plus drop from Hopmeadow Street to Iron Horse Blvd. in this section, a three story building would hardly be noticeable from the town center, and a four story building would be fine – neither would rise above the top of Eno Hall. The design standards for an IHZ on this site would need to reflect the architectural characteristics as well as the massing of the existing buildings in the town center, particularly those which are considered to be iconic.

Concord Square believes that one of the most important factors to revitalization of the town center is to increase the activity level by getting more people to live, work, shop, and play there – the “feet on the street” concept. While a density of 20 units per acre will help accomplish that, in general higher densities – up to 40 units per acre – will make a more significant impact. Not all sites could accommodate such a high density, but for those that could have more than 20 du/a, it is sensible to provide the opportunity for that to happen. If these three parking lots were developed at that higher density, the result would be up to 298 housing units, 59 of which would be affordable. The Town should consider during its deliberations whether to provide the opportunity for densities higher than 20 du/a for this site.

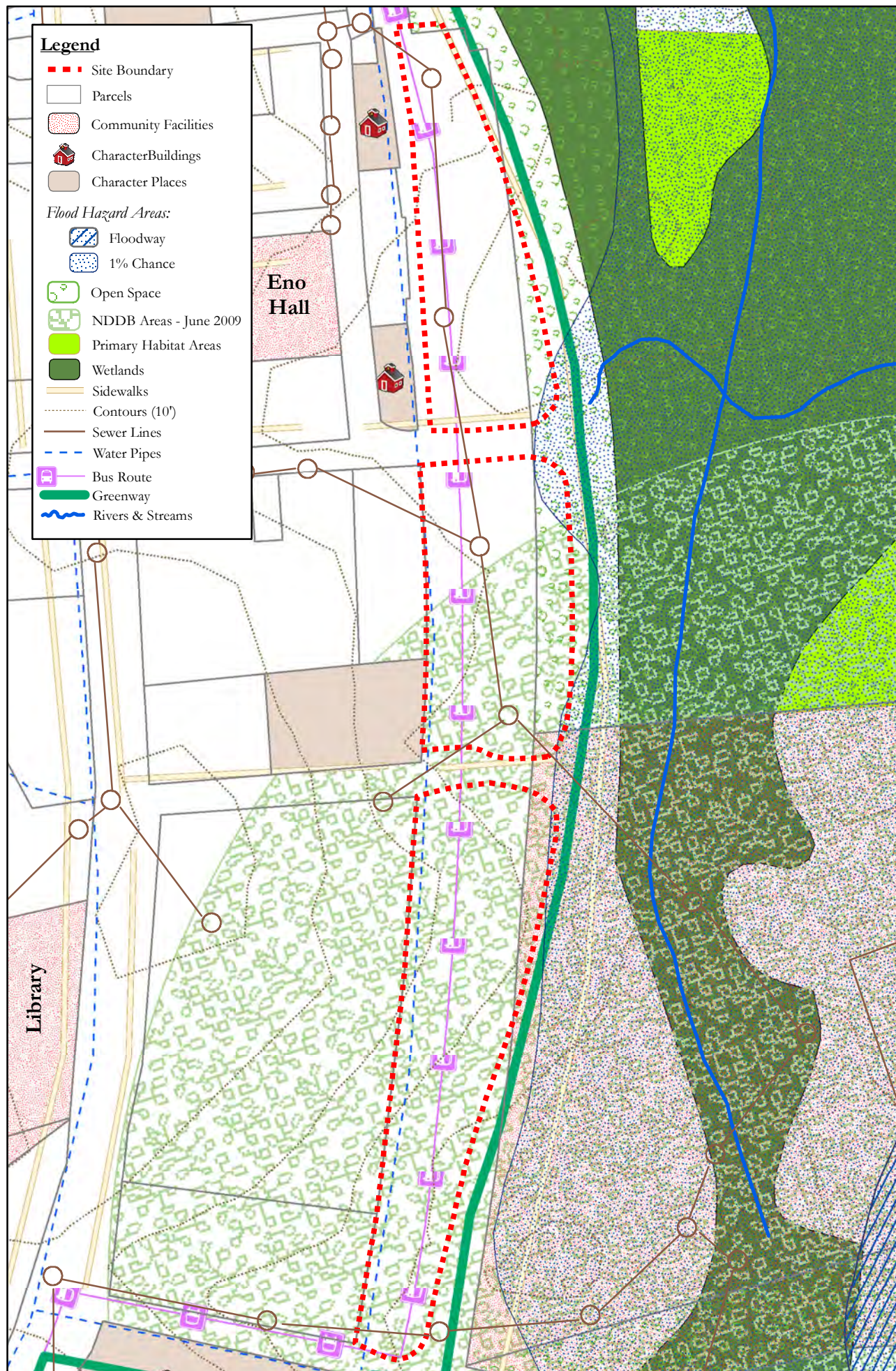


# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Existing Conditions

### Site P - Parking Lots

Map P-1



#### Notes:

None of the GIS data reflects the existence of Iron Horse Boulevard.

The Parking Lots are not parcels; the site boundary depicted here was created by CSP&D by tracing the aerial imagery.

#### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
site boundary, parcels, primary and secondary habitats, water lines, sewer lines, sidewalks, community facilities, zoning, topography.

CT DEP:  
town boundary, wetlands, natural diversity data, DEP owned property.

FEMA:  
flood zones from DFIRM database downloaded 6-27-09.

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# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Aerial Image

### Site P - Parking Lots

#### Map P-2

#### Notes:

None of the GIS data reflects the existence of Iron Horse Boulevard.

The Parking Lots are not parcels; the site boundary depicted here was created by CSP&D by tracing the aerial imagery.

#### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
parcels.

Capital Region COG:  
aerial image, 2009.

*Note: This aerial imagery is a preliminary release and has not been lined up with other data.*

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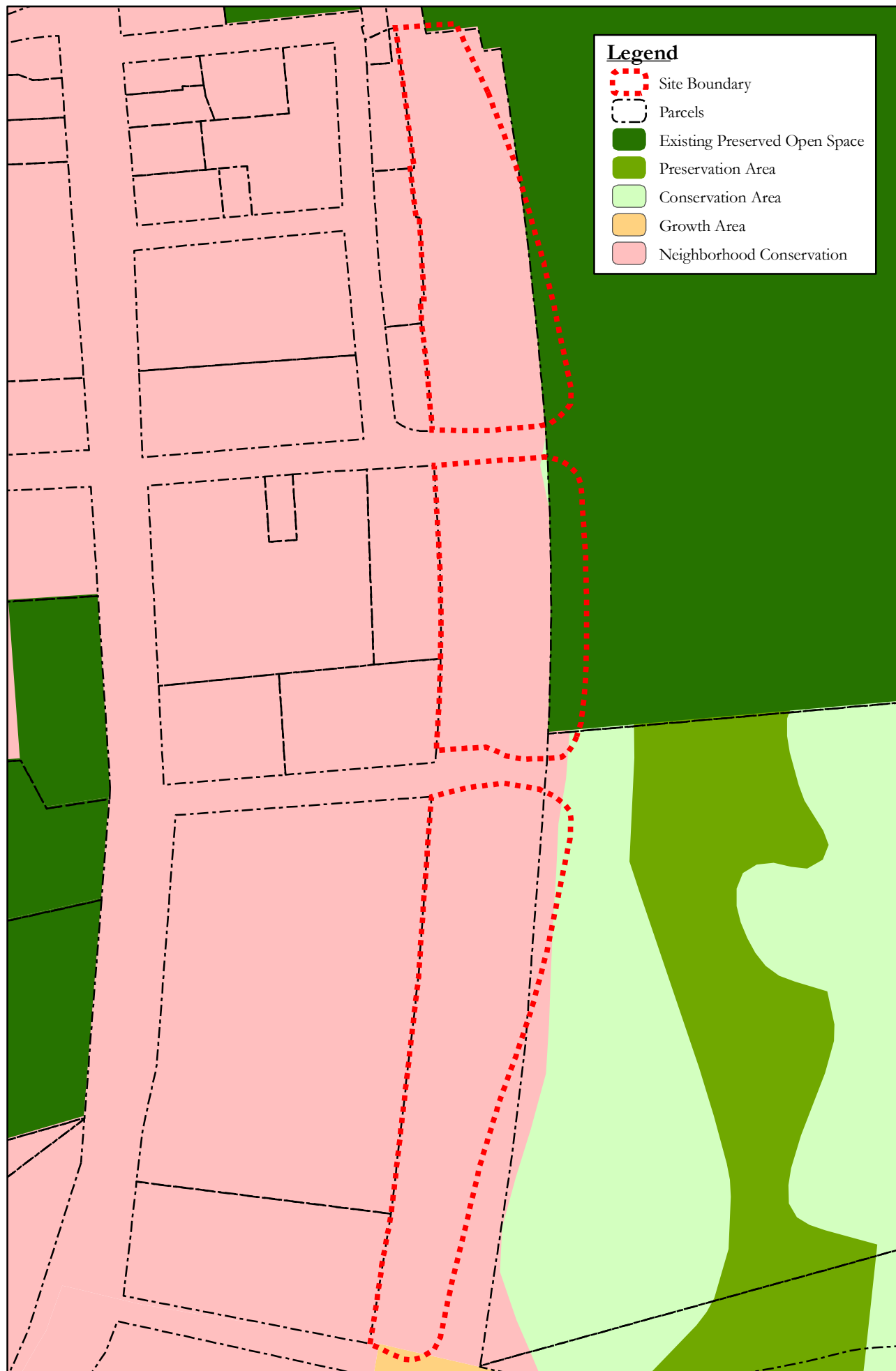


# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - OPM Policies Plan

### Site P - Parking Lots

**Map P-3**



#### Notes:

This map shows a close-up of the CT OPM Conservation and Development Policies Plan, June 2005.

None of the GIS data reflects the existence of Iron Horse Boulevard.

The Parking Lots are not parcels; the site boundary depicted here was created by CSP&D by tracing the aerial imagery.

#### Sources:

Site boundary: Simsbury  
All other data: OPM

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# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Existing Zoning

### Site P - Parking Lots

Map P-4

#### Legend

Site Boundary

Parcels

#### Zoning District:

R40

SCZA

SCZB

SCZC

I2

#### Notes:

None of the GIS data reflects the existence of Iron Horse Boulevard.

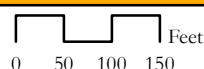
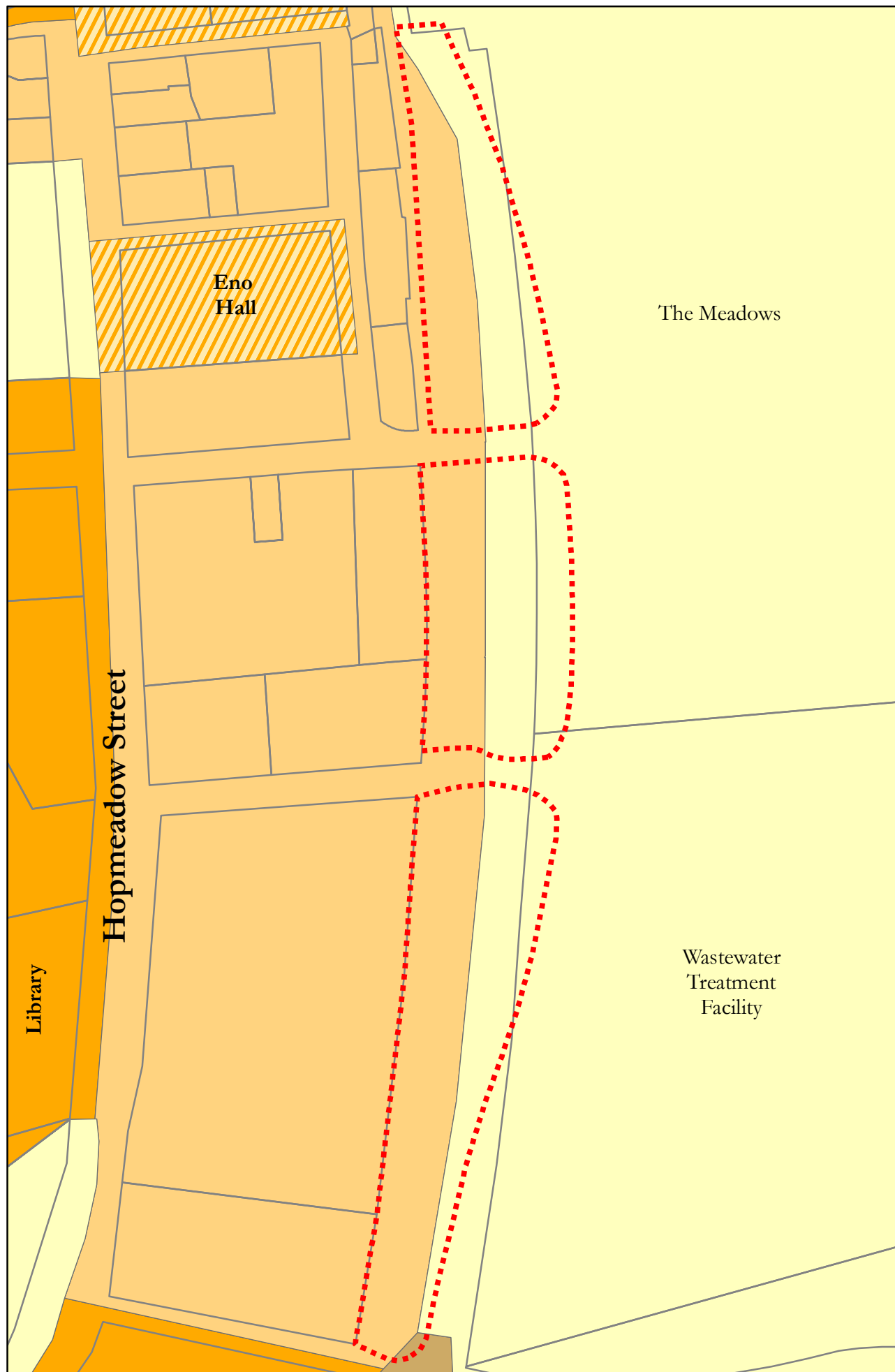
The Parking Lots are not parcels; the site boundary depicted here was created by CSP&D by tracing the aerial imagery.

#### Sources:

Simsbury GIS Data:  
parcels, zoning.  
CSP&D: site boundaries.

Oct. 9, 2009

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1 inch = 200 feet





# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Site Analysis - Potential IHZ Units

### Site P - Parking Lots

**Map P-5**

#### Notes:

The number of units is based on 20 du/a, the minimum required for IHZ.

The Parking Lots are not parcels; the site boundary depicted here was created by CSP&D by tracing the aerial imagery.

#### Sources:

CSP&D: site boundaries.

Capital Region COG:

aerial image, 2009.

*Note: This aerial imagery is a preliminary release and has not been lined up with other data.*

Oct. 9, 2009

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1 inch = 200 feet



This view shows the charette sketch plan prepared by Code Studio for the parking lot area.

In this sketch, potential new buildings are shown with brown roofs. The light gray is surface parking and tan is a parking deck, while white denotes sidewalks. This concept shows multi-family buildings with limited retail at the street level at the corners of Iron Horse Blvd. and the side streets.



# Simsbury IHZ Study

## Potential IHZ Development

### Site P - Town Center Charette

Map P-6

#### Sources:

Code Studio, Inc: excerpt of final plan sketch as presented at the 9-16-09 public meeting; photo by CSP&D.  
CSP&D: parcel and site boundaries.

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Summary

The following table shows a summary of these seven sites.

Site	IHZ Area (acres)	Housing Type	Potential Units
<b>A – Tariffville Mill</b>	2.1 or 4.4	Multi-family	41 or 87 <sup>1</sup>
<b>F – Firetown Road</b>	1.1	Single family detached	6
<b>G – Simcroft-Echo</b>	14.7	Single family detached and multi-family mix	113
<b>H – Center Parcels</b>	1.5	Multi-family	30
<b>L – Northeast Util.</b>	60.2	Mixed use with single family detached, townhouse, and multi- family	250
<b>N – Ensign-Bickford</b>	1.0	Multi-family	20
<b>P – Parking Lots</b>	<u>7.5</u>	Multi-family	<u>149 to 298</u> <sup>2</sup>
<b>Grand Total</b>	88.1		609 to 953

<sup>1</sup> The lower number is for the undeveloped area alone; the higher number includes the existing building.

<sup>2</sup> The lower number is 20 du/a, the higher number is 40 du/a.

If all seven sites are designated as Incentive Housing Zones, the opportunity would exist for up to 609 new housing units to be created, 121 of which would be affordable. If the entire Tariffville Mill site was designated IHZ and the Parking Lot site was zoned at the higher density of 40 du/a instead of the minimum required of 20, the potential would exist for up to 953 units, 190 of which would be affordable.

While the incentive payments to the Town from the State are not the primary impetus of creating IHZ's in Simsbury, the potential exists for a zone adoption payment of \$1,218,000 (based on the lower 609 unit figure). The current economic and fiscal conditions of the state will not support this payment at this time, however it is possible such payment may be made in the future. In addition, there is the potential – if all 609 units were built within five years of zone adoption – for up to \$1,593,000 to come to the Town in building permit payments. The likelihood of all 609 units receiving building permits within five years of zone adoption is not that high, as market conditions will be the driving force behind actual construction.

Once a final decision is made of which of these sites, if any, will be proposed for IHZ districts, Concord Square will draft the zoning language and assist the town's Design Review Board with drafting the design standards. That process will require extensive coordination with property owners, to ensure all parties are in agreement or at minimum understand that the standards will and will not say. In all cases, care should be taken to ensure that the design standards are not so restrictive as to unreasonably impair the economic or physical feasibility of an Incentive Housing Development. The design standards should reflect the character of any existing buildings on the site or in close proximity to it, including massing and architectural details, as well as deal with the details of site design.

Simsbury has an opportunity to create overlay zoning districts that could have significant positive impacts on the town for years to come, not the least of which is the increase in the supply of truly affordable housing units within the community.