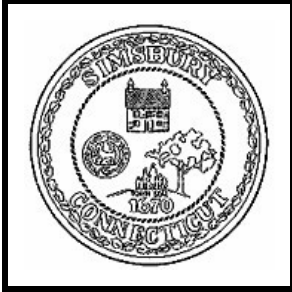


SIMSBURY



PROPOSED PLAN FOR PUBLIC HEARING
2023 - 2033 PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

August 11, 2023 – REVISED DRAFT



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POCD Pictures



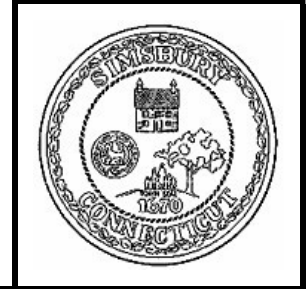
The cover photograph shows an evening jazz concert at the pavilion adjacent to the Flower Bridge. The concert series is sponsored by the Simsbury Parks and Recreation Department.

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

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WELCOME



August 2023

Greetings!

This document is the Proposed 2023-33 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for Simsbury, Connecticut. This update of the 2017-27 POCD was undertaken by the Planning Commission with assistance from Town Staff and a consultant.

This Proposed POCD is an important advisory document. Over the coming years, the Plan is intended to:

- guide the Town of Simsbury and residents, property owners, and businesses towards actions which are more likely to result in positive outcomes for the community, and
- provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation, development, and infrastructure policies and action steps.

This Proposed POCD will be the subject of a public hearing to consider adoption at a Planning Commission meeting on :

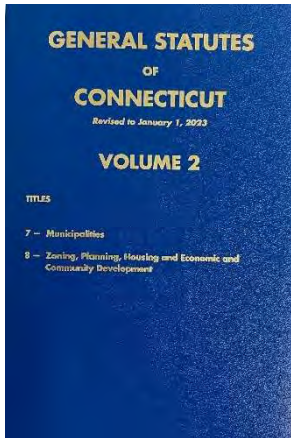
**Public Hearing On Proposed POCD
Tuesday October 24 @ 7:00 PM
Simsbury Library – Lower-Level Meeting Room**

Thank you for your interest and we hope you will join with us in working to implement the Plan!

Sincerely,

Erin Leavitt-Smith, Chair
Simsbury Planning Commission

Map / Plan Index



Please refer to Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes for information on the statutory requirements for municipalities to prepare and adopt a Plan of Conservation and Development.

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PLAN SUMMARY

1

Overview

This is Simsbury’s 2023 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

This 2023 POCD is a strategic update of the 2017 POCD. While State statutes require that a POCD be updated at least once every ten years – and municipalities commonly wait for the full ten years to do so – Simsbury felt it important to revisit local strategies sooner.

The Planning Commission felt that many of the policies and action steps in the 2017 POCD were still relevant so a wholesale revision was not needed. On the other hand, there was a realization that it made sense to review and evaluate the POCD strategies for a variety of reasons:

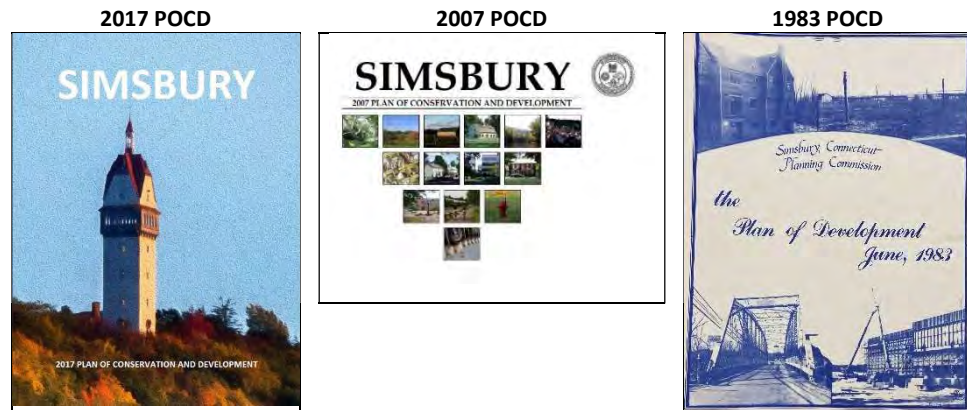
- A global pandemic which changed many of the ways Simsbury residents interact with their neighbors and their community,
- Increased recognition of the impacts that spiraling housing costs have on a large number of households and that Simsbury can and should look for ways to diversify its housing portfolio to meet the needs of its residents and support local businesses and institutions.
- A fundamental shift in living and working patterns brought on by the pandemic (students participating remotely in school, people working virtually from home offices, etc.) which changed housing patterns, reduced the demand for office space, and reduced traffic volumes.
- A transition away from a “bricks and mortar” retail economy to a more virtual economy where people sought goods and services from on-line platforms and rely on localities more for food, beverage, and experiential retail activities.
- A desire to recognize and incorporate the overall concepts of social equity, diversity, and inclusion into the POCD (and review strategies to see if they aligned with this approach).
- Interest in expanding the concepts of sustainability and resiliency from a chapter in the POCD focused on energy / resource sustainability to an overall theme that embraces ecological, economic, and social sustainability and resiliency.
- A desire to enhance the implementation of the POCD and involve more municipal entities in prioritizing POCD strategies and taking concrete actions to implement policies and action steps identified in the POCD.

Introduction – Plan Summary

Simsbury has a tradition of planning for the future of the community and many of the strategies in past POCDs have guided the town toward accomplishing many of the things that continue to attract new residents as well as keep residents here for decades. The process of preparing these past plans typically involves engaging the community in discussing their aspirations for the future of the community.

Given some of the changes over the past six or seven years, it makes sense to:

- Review the POCD more often than once every decade, and,
- Continue the history of involving the community in discussing policies and action steps for the future.



As was stated in these and other Simsbury plans, the POCD is intended to promote a common vision for the future of a community and then recommend policies and action steps that will help attain that vision. While its key purpose and function is to address the physical development of a community, it will often address issues related to the economic development and social development.

The goals and recommendations of the POCD are intended to reflect our values and an overall consensus of what is considered desirable for the town of Simsbury and its residents in the future. The overall consensus is based on the 2022 on-line community survey, 2023 community meetings, interviews with key local officials and entities, and working sessions with the Planning Commission.

It is important to note that the POCD is not a regulation or a mandate, but it is an important advisory document. It is intended to guide the community towards positive outcomes and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making with regard to conservation and development activities.

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

Mission Statement

This 2023 POCD is the Town’s statement of what we want Simsbury’s future to be and how we propose to achieve and manage it. Overall, the mission statement embodied in this POCD is:

POCD Mission Statement

Preserve the best from Simsbury’s past ...

... Ensure the best for Simsbury’s future.

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

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

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

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

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

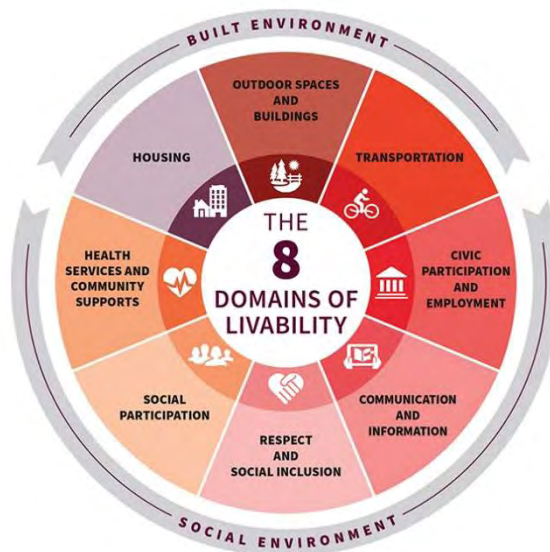
This 2023 POCD provides a framework for making informed decisions that will allow Simsbury to continue to be attractive, functional and economically and environmentally healthy. The POCD should inspire residents, reflect their values, and help the town to be an increasingly desirable place to live, work, attend school, play, visit, shop, and invest in the development of the community. The goal is to build a community that remains healthy and prosperous over the long term, benefiting the local economy as well as present and future residents.

Over-Arching Principles

Livability

Simsbury has long prided itself on being a livable community which is renowned for its overall ambience and excellent amenities and services. Maintaining and enhancing this concept of “livability” has been part of past Simsbury POCDs but it has generally been embraced by residents. This 2023 POCD explicitly states that livability is an over-arching principle of this POCD.

AARP, an interest group in the United States focusing on issues affecting those over the age of fifty, has done a great deal of research on what they consider to be the eight “domains of livability” with regard to the built environment and the social environment.



The logo above is used in the POCD to highlight strategies intended to maintain and enhance Simsbury’s livability in the future for people of all ages, genders, races, incomes or other characteristics.

Introduction – Plan Summary

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The POCD recognizes the growing awareness of equity, diversity, and inclusion issues and expresses Simsbury's commitment to addressing them. The vision of the Simsbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council, a vision which is embraced as part of this POCD, is:

Simsbury is a town that welcomes, celebrates, and takes action to support diversity and inclusion among current and future community members.

The mission of the Simsbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council (formerly known as the Simsbury SPIRIT Council) includes:

- representing the community at large,
- serving as diversity champions to help Simsbury become more welcoming and inclusive, and
- fostering awareness, action, and a community where all voices are welcome and each and every individual can live, work, learn, and play in a safe environment with meaningful and healthy relationships.

Since this POCD addresses the physical, economic, and social development of the community, it is important that the POCD incorporate the equity, diversity, and inclusion principles within the DEI Council's mission.

The logo in the sidebar is used to highlight diversity, equity, and inclusion concepts in the POCD.



Diversity - the presence and celebration of variety (such as in gender, race, age, identity, or opinion) within the community.

Equity – the establishment and maintenance of fairness and justice within the community so that all people are treated equally, especially for groups that have historically been disadvantaged, so that the end result is equal.

Inclusion – creation of a culture and an environment that results in a sense of opportunity for all and a sense of belonging where all people feel their voices are heard,





For the purposes of this Plan, “sustainability” is a set of environmental, economic and social policies and programs in which a community has the capacity and opportunity to maintain and improve their quality of life indefinitely without degrading the quantity, quality or the availability of natural, social and economic resources.

The term “resiliency” refers to the community’s ability to adapt to new circumstances and/or recover from sudden changes or adversity.

Sustainability & Resiliency

The 2017 POCD contained a chapter on sustainability / resiliency. In the years since then, the concepts of sustainability and resiliency have grown in visibility and importance and, perhaps more importantly, recognition that Simsbury and other jurisdictions have important roles to play in addressing them.

As a result, the Planning Commission decided to elevate the concepts of sustainability / resiliency to an over-arching principle of this POCD. These concepts have been integrated into chapters of the POCD as part of this strategic update. The logo in the sidebar is used to highlight where this has been done.

However, in addition to the ecological and environmental perception of the word “sustainability”, the Planning Commission also decided to expand the concepts of sustainability and resiliency to include:

- Ecologic sustainability
- Economic sustainability
- Community sustainability

This expanded philosophy is similar to the approach used by SustainableCT (reflected in the 13 categories presented below) and other organizations to embrace the principles of sustainability more broadly.

1. Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts
2. Thriving Local Economies
3. Well-Stewarded Land and Natural Resources
4. Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems
5. Dynamic and Resilient Planning
6. Clean and Diverse Transportation Systems and Choices
7. Renewable and Efficient Energy Infrastructure and Operations
8. Inclusive Engagement, Communication and Education
9. Strategic Materials Management
10. Optimal Health and Wellness Opportunities
11. Healthy, Efficient and Diverse Housing
12. Effective, Compassionate Homelessness Prevention
13. Innovative Strategies and Practices

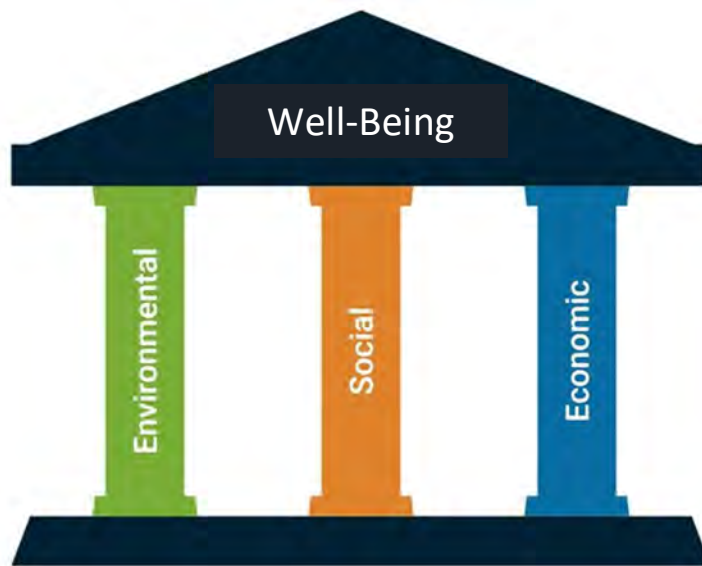
Introduction – Plan Summary

Community Well-Being

Successful communities like Simsbury seek ways to balance various community objectives in ways that maximize community well-being including, but not limited to:

- Environmental objectives,
 - Conserve natural resources,
 - Restore an ecological balance. and
 - Implement more sustainable development practices,
- Social objectives,
 - Meet societal needs,
 - Promote equity, diversity
- Economic objectives
 - Jobs, goods and services for people
 - Support for community facilities and services

The diagram below illustrates how these elements contribute to overall community well-being:



Considering a diversity of perspectives and input can optimize social, environmental, and economic benefits. The POCD is a chance to recognize these values and promote the commitment to a future that benefits everyone.

Introduction – Plan Summary

Nature is essential to our long-term well-being, and protecting it is a key topic within this POCD. The Town of Simsbury sees preserving and stewarding critical lands as an important objective. Overarching goals are:

- to preserve, enhance and expand the natural lands, water resources, and agricultural lands of Simsbury to ensure a healthy and safe environment that serves and educates the community; and
- to steward these ecosystems, farms, clean waters, scenic views and historic sites for the benefit of all members of current and future generations.

Simsbury has been a leader in conservation for decades and open space is a key reason why people visit the town and choose to live here. The value to the Town's citizens is affirmed by donations (time and money), public votes, and public opinion polls.

350th Anniversary Commemorative Medallion

The values of our land and our community are recognized in the Town's 350th custom medallion (1670-2020) accompanied by this text:

Simsbury's 350th commemorates the past, present, and future. The plating highlights Simsbury as the birthplace of the copper industry. The images showcase icons and vistas - fields, traprock ridges, the Heublein Tower, the Pinchot Sycamore.

We celebrate our enduring relationship to the land and the natural world that sustains us – farmland, grassland and wetlands, a Wild and Scenic River, and beautiful old forests.

Simsbury's 350th medallion was custom designed and manufactured entirely in the United States by independent small businesses.



Plan Organization

The POCD contains five main sections:

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



Summary Of Strategies

Introduction

1. **Growth Is Happening (page 18)** – There has been visible housing growth in Simsbury in the last decade (over 900 units) and the population has grown. This housing generally attracted younger households to Simsbury.
2. **Age Composition Is Changing (page 19)** – At the same time, there were changes in the 9,000 other housing units in Simsbury as, due to improvements in healthcare and lifestyles, the “baby boomers” got older (older households generally contain fewer people). As a result, it is anticipated that the number of older residents will continue to increase as well.
3. **Room For Growth (page 22)** – Simsbury has room for additional residential and business growth so the POCD focuses on how land is zoned and used since these two factors will influence how Simsbury will grow in the future.
4. **Resident’s Concerns (page 25)** - In the 2022 on-line survey and the 2023 community meetings, residents indicated their top three concerns included:
 - Maintain and enhance community ambience and sense of place.
 - Encourage additional business development.
 - Maintain and enhance community facilities.



What We Want To Protect (Conservation)

5. **Protect Natural Resources And Enhance Ecological Health (page 31)** – Simsbury will continue efforts to protect natural resources and enhance ecological health (including water, land, air, plants, and animals) and will remain diligent in its efforts to protect water quality.
6. **Preserve Open Space (page 37)** – Simsbury will focus on a strategic approach to preserving open space in order to create a meaningful overall open space system while preserving important natural resources and the overall ambience of the community.
7. **Maintain And Enhance Community Ambience / Sense Of Place (page 45)** – Simsbury will seek to protect resources that contribute to community ambience:
 - historic resources (buildings and sites),
 - farms and farming,
 - scenic views and scenic roads, and
 - community spirit (community pride, events, and activities).

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

Introduction – Plan Summary

How We Want To Grow (Development)

8. **Promote Places With A Sense of Place (page 59)** – Simsbury will seek ways to guide development so that it maintains and enhanced places with a “sense of place.” This means recognizing the special places that Simsbury already has and making them even better in the future:
 - Simsbury Center
 - Tariffville and Weatogue Center,
 - Hoskins and West Simsbury.
 - Other unique places in the community.
9. **Promote Economic Development (page 81)** – Simsbury will encourage and promote economic development that benefits the community (jobs, goods and services, tax base). Some areas will be investigated for expansion of business zoning in order to take advantage of Simsbury’s locational advantages.
10. **Address Housing Needs / Guide Residential Development (page 87)** – Over the past few decades, a lack of housing production has resulted in a housing shortage and an affordability crisis – in Simsbury and elsewhere. At the same time, more and more people of all ages and circumstances are interested in housing options and choices to meet their needs. As part of this POCD, it is recommended that Simsbury guide residential development to address housing needs while promoting places with a sense of place.
11. **Promote Sustainability & Resiliency (page 99)** – Simsbury will continue to become an even more sustainable community and a more resilient community in the future. Not only has Simsbury found this the right thing to do ecologically, it is the right thing to do fiscally and economically.



Simsbury Center



Residential Development





What We Want To Provide (Infrastructure)

12. **Enhance Community Facilities (page 105)** – Community services and facilities help make Simsbury a great community. Simsbury intends to continue providing community services and facilities that meet community needs and enhance the quality of life as cost-efficiently as possible.
13. **Address Transportation Needs (page 111)** – Simsbury intends to address transportation issues in order to address problem areas and enhance the overall quality of life in the community. The POCD also recognizes how much Simsbury has achieved in terms of bicycle and pedestrian improvements and seeks to continue this progress.
14. **Address Utility Infrastructure Needs (page 119)** – Simsbury intends to encourage the provision of adequate utility infrastructure to meet community needs. In addition to water and sewer services, this also includes storm drainage and internet capacity.



Looking Ahead

15. **Implement The Plan (page 127)** – As part of this POCD update, Simsbury intends to seek ways to invigorate implementation of the policies and action steps identified in the POCD. Many recommendations can and will be implemented for little or no expense. Simsbury is considering establishing a “Plan Implementation Committee” made up of representatives of local boards and commissions as a way to promote and coordinate implementation of POCD strategies.

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

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

A [glossary](#) in the Appendix defines some of the terms used in the POCD.

CONDITIONS & TRENDS

2

Overview

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

History of Simsbury

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

European Settlement

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

After 1630, trading posts and permanent settlements were established by the English and Dutch at the locations of present-day Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield. Even though trade was welcomed by both Europeans and Native Americans, there were occasional skirmishes that raised tensions. After the Pequot War of 1637, European settlement began to extend to other areas of what we now know as Connecticut.

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

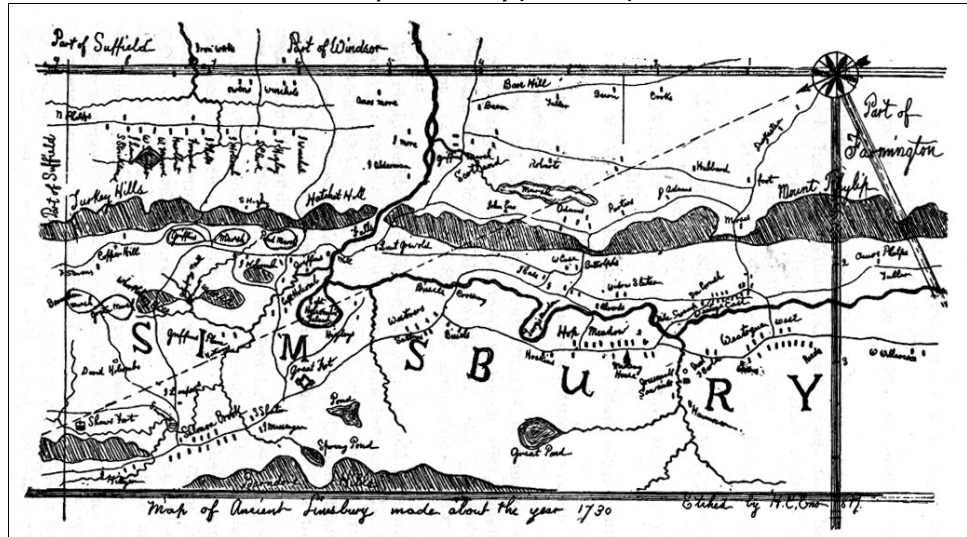
Formation Of A Town

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

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

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

Map of Simsbury (after 1730)



1766 Map of Connecticut



Re-Enactment Of Colonial Agriculture



Introduction - Conditions & Trends

The advances of European settlers into new areas were not always welcomed . In 1676, Simsbury was the target of an organized Native American attack (one of the last of its kind in New England) where 40 houses were burned. This attack deterred some existing settlers and slowed the arrival of new settlers. However, taxes were abated for a period and settlement activity resumed.

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

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

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

Age of the Automobile

After 1900, the advent of the automobile and paved roadways supported the continued growth of Simsbury. Following World War II, Simsbury experienced the same surge of growth that affected other communities in the region. A cultural trend toward suburban living and the flexibility offered by the automobile supported the development of Simsbury. Former farms were subdivided and developed and the population more than doubled between 1950 and 1960 and almost quadrupled between 1950 and the “tri-centennial” celebration in 1970. Simsbury celebrated its 350th anniversary in 2020.

By the year 2000, Simsbury had grown to be a community of over 21,000 people and the overall pattern of the community was established.

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

Simsbury's Population

| | |
|------|--------|
| 1790 | 2,576 |
| 1800 | 2,956 |
| 1810 | 1,966 |
| 1820 | 1,954 |
| 1830 | 2,221 |
| 1840 | 1,895 |
| 1850 | 2,727 |
| 1860 | 2,410 |
| 1870 | 2,051 |
| 1880 | 1,830 |
| 1890 | 1,874 |
| 1900 | 2,094 |
| 1910 | 2,537 |
| 1920 | 2,958 |
| 1930 | 3,625 |
| 1940 | 3,941 |
| 1950 | 4,822 |
| 1960 | 10,138 |
| 1970 | 17,475 |
| 1980 | 21,161 |
| 1990 | 22,023 |
| 2000 | 23,234 |
| 2010 | 23,511 |
| 2020 | 24,517 |

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

People Of Simsbury / Demographics

According to the Census, Simsbury had a year 2020 population of 24,517 persons. This represents an increase of 1,006 people from the 23,511 persons reported in the 2010 Census.

There are two major demographic forces affecting Simsbury's population composition. An aging population (resulting in fewer births and fewer people per housing unit) can result in a decreasing number of residents (called a natural decrease). On the other hand, new housing construction can result in a population increase from more people moving in than moving out (called net in-migration).

The 2020 Census results revealed the following:

- The number of births in the last decade was lower than prior decades due to an older population (fewer women of child bearing age).
- In addition, the number of deaths was higher due to an older population ("baby boomers" were reaching the age of 55 to 75 years)
- As a result, the population change by natural increase (births minus deaths) was lower than it has been in prior decades.
- As a result, almost all of the population change in Simsbury over the past decade was the result of net in-migration;
- This is a reversal of net out-migration in the prior three decades but the net in-migration is still at a lower level than what was experienced in the 1950s through the 1970s.

Components of Population Change

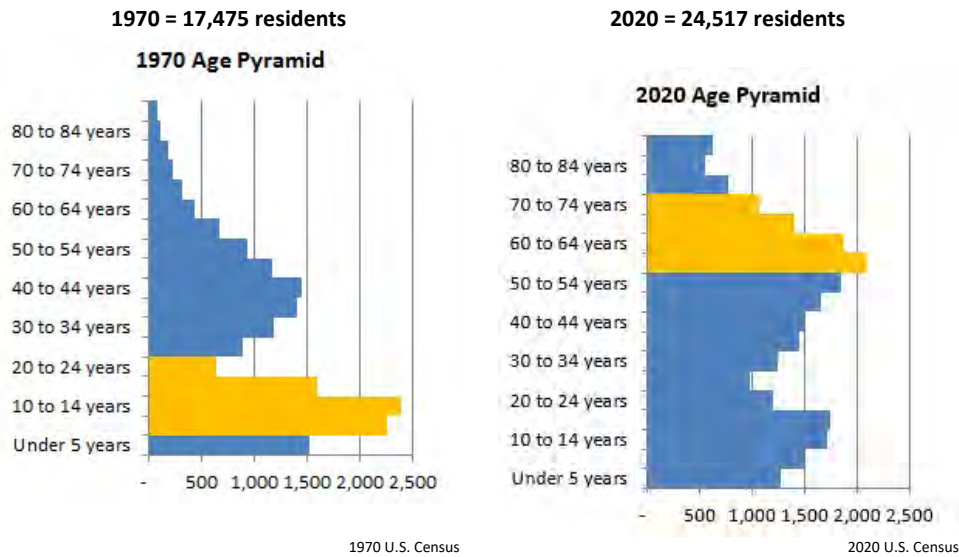
| | 1950s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s | 2000s | 2010s |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Total Change (from Census) | +5,316 | +7,337 | +3,686 | +862 | +1,211 | +277 | +1,006 |
| Births | 1,784 | 2,356 | 1,967 | 2,382 | 2,688 | 2,123 | 1,853 |
| Deaths | 499 | 713 | 954 | 1,182 | 1,496 | 1,480 | 1,790 |
| Change By Natural Increase | +1,285 | +1,643 | +1,013 | +1,200 | +1,192 | +643 | +63 |
| Change By Net Migration | +4,031 | +5,694 | +2,673 | (338) | (19) | (366) | +943 |

US Census, Connecticut Health Department reports,

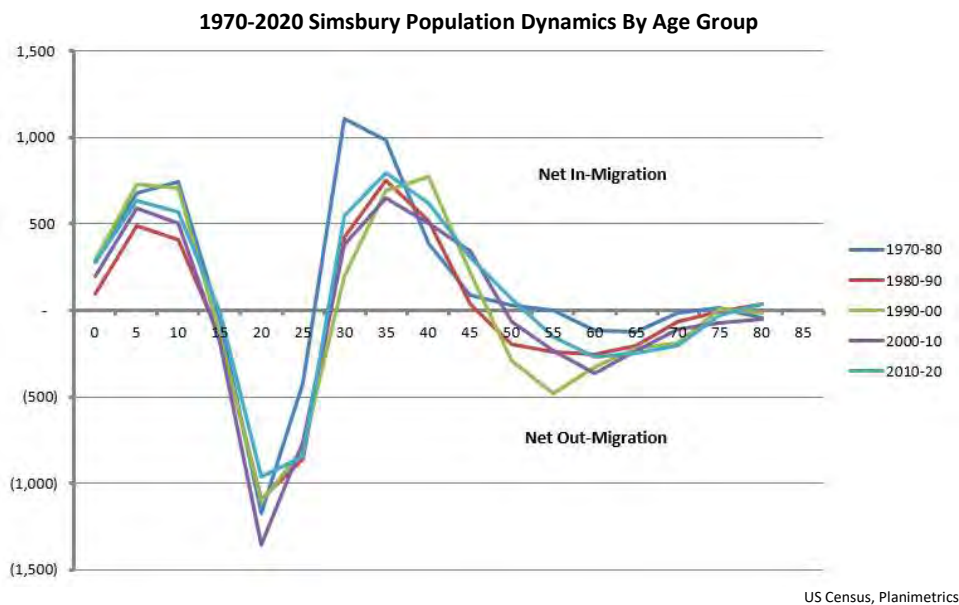
Introduction - Conditions & Trends

Age Composition

The age composition of Simsbury changes over time as a result of births, deaths, net migration, and natural aging. The following charts show the change in the age composition between 1970 and 2020 and the impact of the “baby boom” (people born between about 1945 and about 1965, shown in orange below).



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



Migration Patterns

Simsbury probably attracts households with children due to:

- community amenities,
- the overall attractiveness of the school system, and
- Simsbury’s location.

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

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

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

Housing Units

| | |
|------|--------|
| 1980 | 6,837 |
| 1990 | 8,175 |
| 2000 | 8,739 |
| 2010 | 9,123 |
| 2020 | 10,057 |

US Census. Data for 1980 to 2020 reflects number of units. Due to data availability, data for 1960 and 1970 reflects number of households.

Average Household Size

| | |
|------|------|
| 1980 | 3.09 |
| 1990 | 2.69 |
| 2000 | 2.66 |
| 2010 | 2.57 |
| 2020 | 2.56 |

US Census. Data for 1980 to 2020.

Housing Tenure

| | Own | Rent |
|----------|-----|------|
| Simsbury | 79% | 21% |
| State | 68% | 32% |

CERC, 2023 (2019 data)

Percent Multi-Family

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| State | 35% |
| Bloomfield | 27% |
| Canton | 20% |
| East Granby | 23% |
| Simsbury | 19% |
| Avon | 16% |
| Granby | 5% |

CERC, 2023 (2019 data)

Affordable Housing

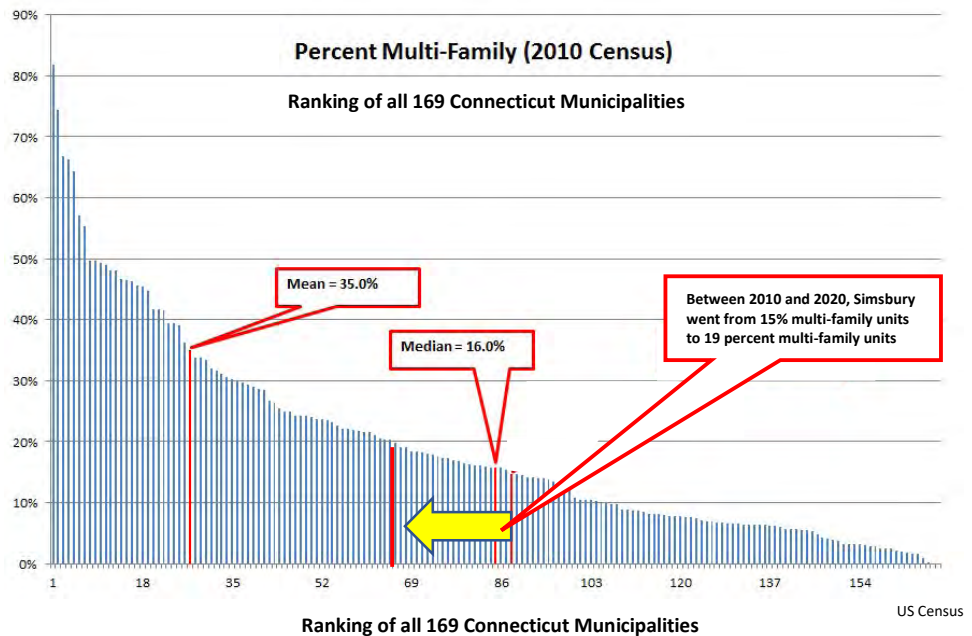
| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| State | 11.7% |
| Bloomfield | 11.0% |
| Canton | 8.3% |
| East Granby | 5.4% |
| Simsbury | 4.8% |
| Avon | 4.1% |
| Granby | 3.2% |

CT Department of Housing, 2023

Housing In Simsbury

According to the U.S. Census, Simsbury had about 10,057 housing units in 2020 – an increase of 934 units since 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, Simsbury added an average of about 93 housing units per year, roughly double the 1990-2010 annual average of about 47 housing units per year. Prior to 1990, Simsbury added an average of over 130 units per year.

Although the housing stock in Simsbury consists primarily of single-family detached homes, a large part of the housing growth in the last decade was multi-family units. According to the 2020 Census, about 19 percent of the residential units in Simsbury were multi-family units (in structures containing more than one dwelling unit).



Affordable Housing

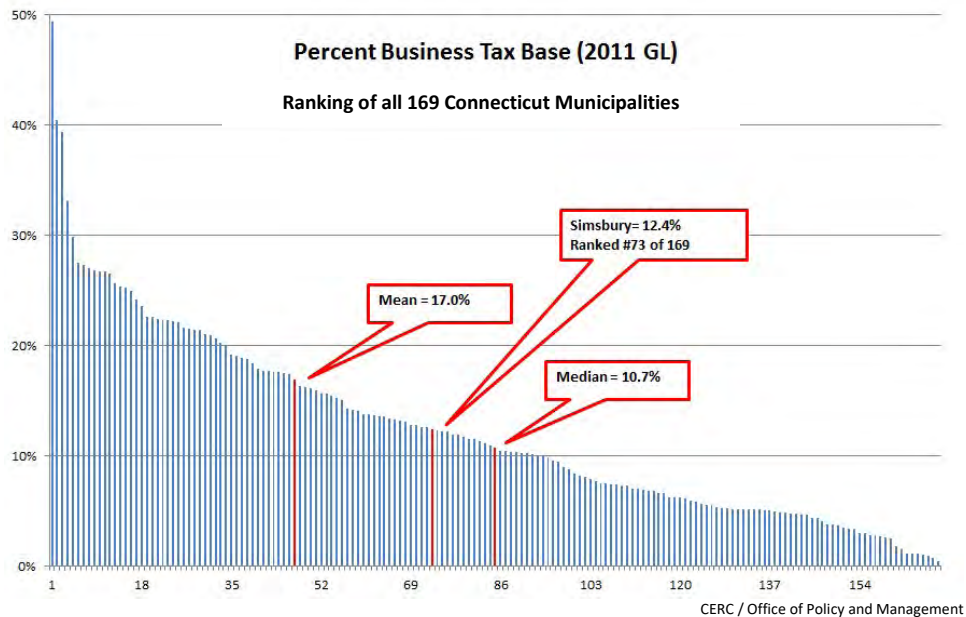
About 4.8 percent of the housing units in Simsbury meet the State definition of “affordable housing” per CGS Section 8-30g and CGS Section 8-39a (rental rate or sale price restricted by deed to remain affordable to households earning 80 percent or less of the area median income). Since less than ten percent of the housing units in Simsbury meet the State definition, Simsbury is subject to the State’s Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (codified as Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes).

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

Economy of Simsbury

While Simsbury is not recognized as a major employment center, there are many jobs in the community. Data from 2020 shows that Simsbury, like other communities, was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and job loss was experienced.

Since Simsbury is predominantly a residential community, the Grand List (the value of taxable property) is heavily influenced by the value of residential real estate. Since 2017, according to data from the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, the business component of the tax base decreased from about 11.5 percent to about 10 percent due to an increase in residential property values and a reduction in business property values. It is important to Simsbury to maintain a strong tax base with a solid business component.



Local Employer



Goods and Services Providers



Jobs In Simsbury

| | |
|------|--------|
| 1970 | 3,473 |
| 1980 | 5,050 |
| 1990 | 9,500 |
| 2000 | 11,080 |
| 2010 | 9,929 |
| 2020 | 8,412 |

CT Labor Dept. (Note - 2020 data was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic)

Jobs

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Bloomfield | 19,821 |
| Avon | 8,458 |
| Simsbury | 8,216 |
| East Granby | 3,747 |
| Canton | 3,555 |
| Granby | 2,520 |

CERC, 2023 (2019 data)

Business Tax Base

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Bloomfield | 25% |
| East Granby | 16% |
| Canton | 13% |
| Avon | 11% |
| Simsbury | 10% |
| Granby | 5% |

CERC, 2023 (2019 data)

Median Household Income

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Avon | \$131,130 |
| Simsbury | \$123,905 |
| Granby | \$121,250 |
| East Granby | \$104,336 |
| Canton | \$87,567 |
| Bloomfield | \$76,717 |

CERC, 2023 (2019 data)

Land Use In Simsbury

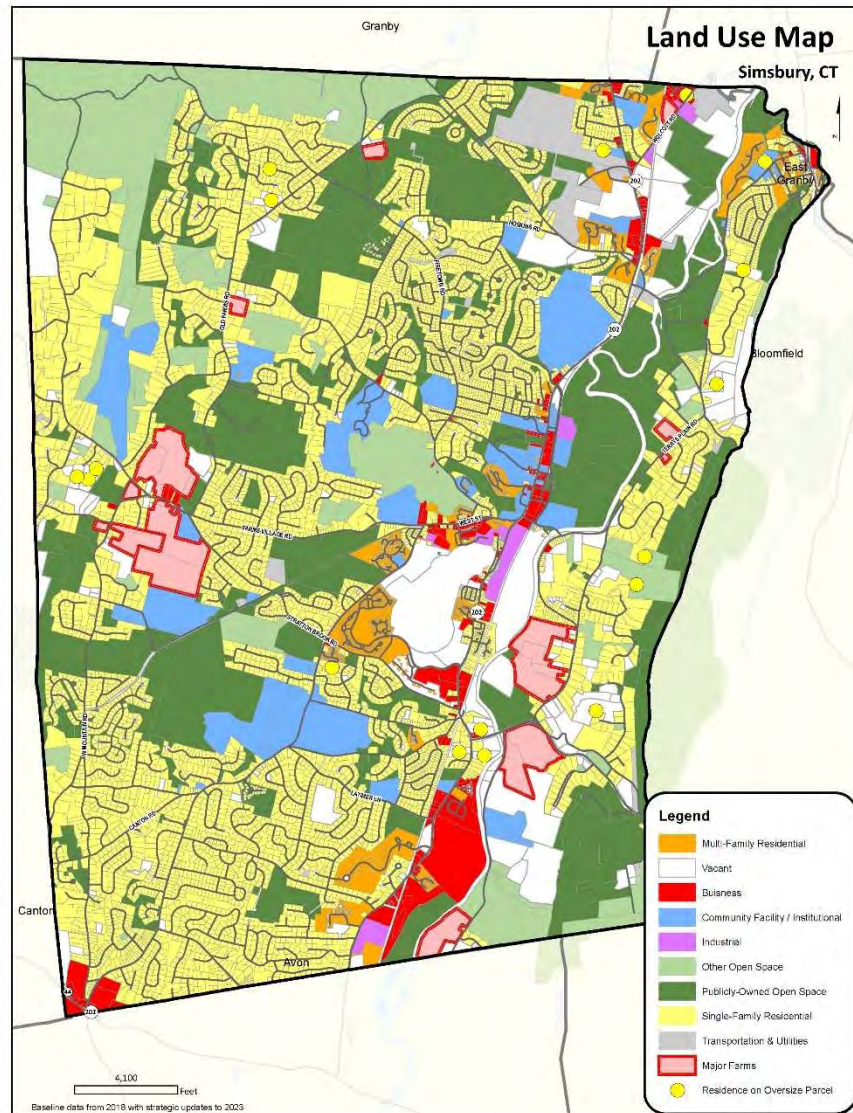
This map generally illustrates how land parcels in Simsbury were being used. A larger scale version of a land use map (and other maps) may be found on the Town GIS website by [clicking here](#).

Based on this map, it is estimated that about 90 percent of the land in town is:

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

About 10% of the Town's land area may not be committed to a specific land use at this time. Existing developed parcels could be redeveloped for new uses in the future.

Generalized Land Use Map



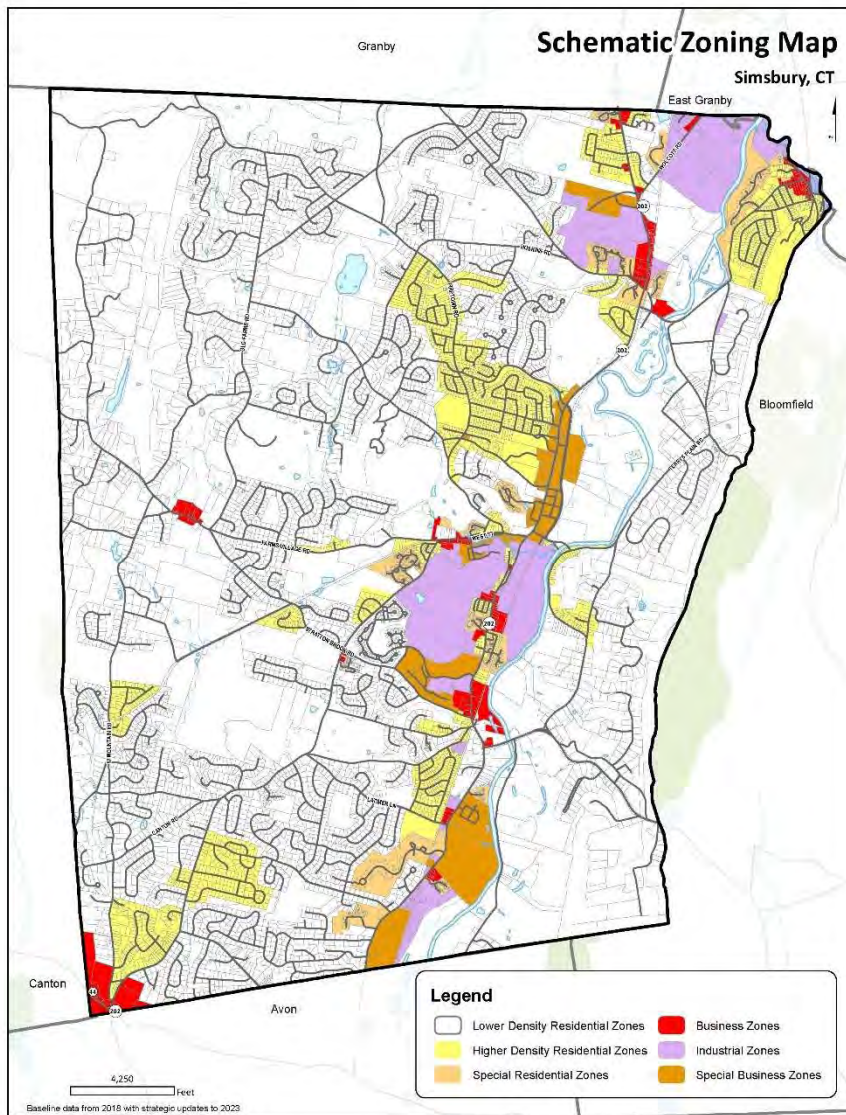
Existing Zoning

This map generally illustrates how land parcels in Simsbury were zoned. A larger scale version of a zoning map (and other maps) may be found on the Town GIS website by [clicking here](#).

From this map, it is estimated that:

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

Generalized Zoning Map



Per Capita Tax Base (ENGL)

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Avon | \$203,192 |
| East Granby | \$166,154 |
| Canton | \$151,403 |
| Simsbury | \$146,925 |
| Bloomfield | \$140,694 |
| Granby | \$128,796 |

CERC, 2023 (2019 data)

Per Capita Tax

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Avon | \$4,383 |
| East Granby | \$3,690 |
| Bloomfield | \$3,569 |
| Simsbury | \$3,493 |
| Canton | \$3,329 |
| Granby | \$3,206 |

CERC, 2023 (2019 data)

Effective Tax Rate

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Bloomfield | 25.36 |
| Granby | 24.89 |
| Simsbury | 23.77 |
| East Granby | 22.21 |
| Canton | 21.99 |
| Avon | 21.57 |

CERC, 2023 (2019 data)

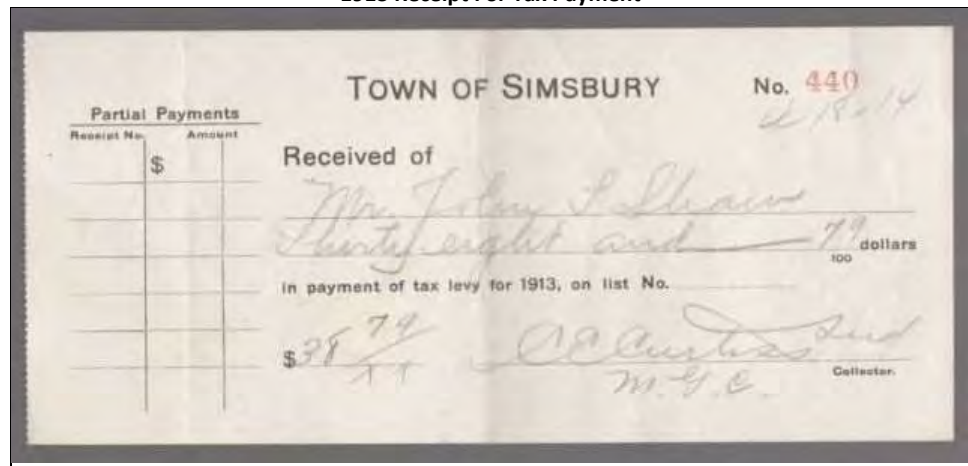
Fiscal Conditions

In terms of tax base, Simsbury’s overall grand list (the value of all taxable property in the community) is about \$3.4 billion. On a per capita basis, Simsbury’s tax base is less robust than some adjacent communities.

In terms of expenditures, Simsbury’s overall budget was \$105 million in 2022-23 for schools (about \$73 million) and general government (about \$32 million).

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

1913 Receipt For Tax Payment



COMMUNITY ISSUES & CONCERNS

3

Overview

This chapter summarizes issues and concerns which were identified as part of the 2023 POCD update. These issues and concerns were identified through:

- responses to the 2022 on-line survey,
- input from the 2023 community meeting,
- interviews with some Town department heads, local officials, and organizations (such as the Main Street Partnership and others),
- working sessions of the Planning Commission, and
- joint meetings with other boards and agencies



In the 2022 on-line survey, participants gave Simsbury high marks for overall quality of life.

- Excellent 44%
- Very good 49%
- Good 6%
- Fair / Poor 1%

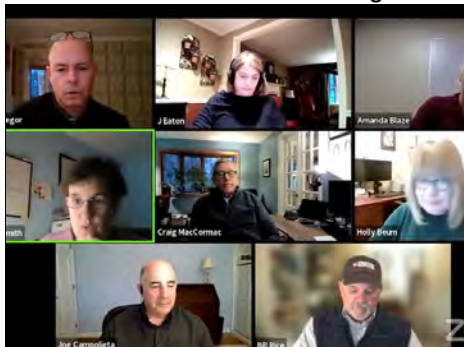
Community Meetings



Community Surveys



On-Line Commission Meeting



Commission Working Session



Community Meeting

As part of preparing the POCD update, a community meeting was held in 2023 to learn about issues that Simsbury residents felt were important to consider. Over 100 residents from all parts of Simsbury attended the meeting.

What People Are Proud Of And Sorry About

Exercises conducted at the meeting involved asking residents to think of things about Simsbury they were:

- proud of (things that people appreciate in Simsbury and/or might want to encourage more of in the future)
- sorry about (things that people do not feel favorably about and/or might want to discourage in the future).

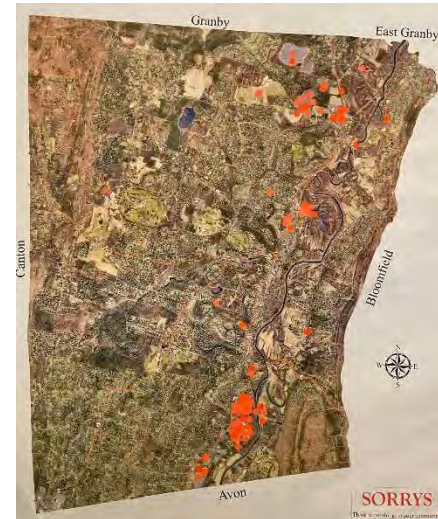
“Prouds”

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Community Facilities | 81 |
| Open Space | 37 |
| Community Character | 29 |
| Simsbury Center | 20 |
| Pedestrian / Bike / Transit | 11 |
| Business / Economic Development | 4 |
| Natural Resources | 5 |
| Housing Affordability / Needs | 3 |
| Sustainability | 1 |
| Utility Infrastructure | 1 |
| Vehicular Transportation | 1 |
| Villages | 1 |



“Sorries”

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Community Ambience | 79 |
| Business / Economic Development | 16 |
| Community Facilities | 12 |
| Housing Affordability / Needs | 9 |
| Sustainability | 9 |
| Villages | 5 |
| Vehicular Transportation | 5 |
| Pedestrian / Bike / Transit | 4 |
| Simsbury Center | 3 |
| Open Space | 2 |
| Natural Resources | 2 |
| Utility Infrastructure | 1 |



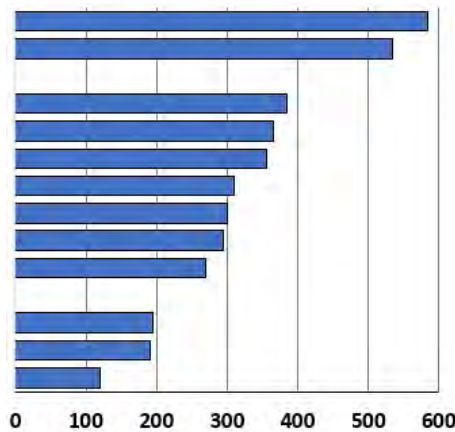
Introduction – Community Issues

Issues / Priorities

Participants at the meeting were then asked to use “planning points” to express their feeling about the importance of topics typically considered as part of a POCD. The sidebar describes the exercise, and the results are presented below (top four topics for each column in red):

When ranked in the order of points received, the topics identified as being **most important** to participants at the meeting included (grouped into three categories based on number of planning points received):

1. Open Space (585 points)
2. Business / Economic Dev. (535 points)
3. Sustainability (385 points)
4. Housing Afford. / Needs. (365 points)
5. Community Character (355 points)
6. Community Facilities (310 points)
7. Simsbury Center (300 points)
8. Natural Resources (295 points)
9. Walking / Biking / Bus (270 points)
10. Water / Sewer / Utilities (195 pts)
11. Simsbury Villages (190 pts)
12. Traffic / Circulation (120 points)



These results of the planning points exercise were presented at the meeting and the remainder of the meeting was devoted to discussing the topics that got the most points.

Although the categories changed somewhat, the relative priorities also changed compared to similar exercises conducted as part of the 2017 POCD:

| Top Issues In 2023 | Top Issues In 2016 |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Open Space | 1. Business / Economic Development |
| 2. Business / Economic Development | 2. Community Character |
| 3. Sustainability | 3. Transportation |
| 4. Housing Affordability / Needs | 4. Open Space |
| 5. Community Character | 5. Simsbury Center / Villages |
| 6. Community Facilities | 6. Natural Resources |
| 7. Simsbury Center | 7. Community Facilities |
| 8. Natural Resources | 8. Residential Development |
| 9. Walking / Biking / Bus | 9. Utility Infrastructure |
| 10. Water / Sewer / Utilities | |
| 11. Simsbury Villages | |
| 12. Traffic Circulation | |



At a public meeting, sustainability was the third-ranked issue important to participants according to an exercise conducted as part of this POCD.



Participant at the 2023 community meeting identified economic development and housing affordability and needs – two issues that are inter-related with diversity, equity, and inclusion.



This icon is used throughout the POCD to identify where survey results are presented.

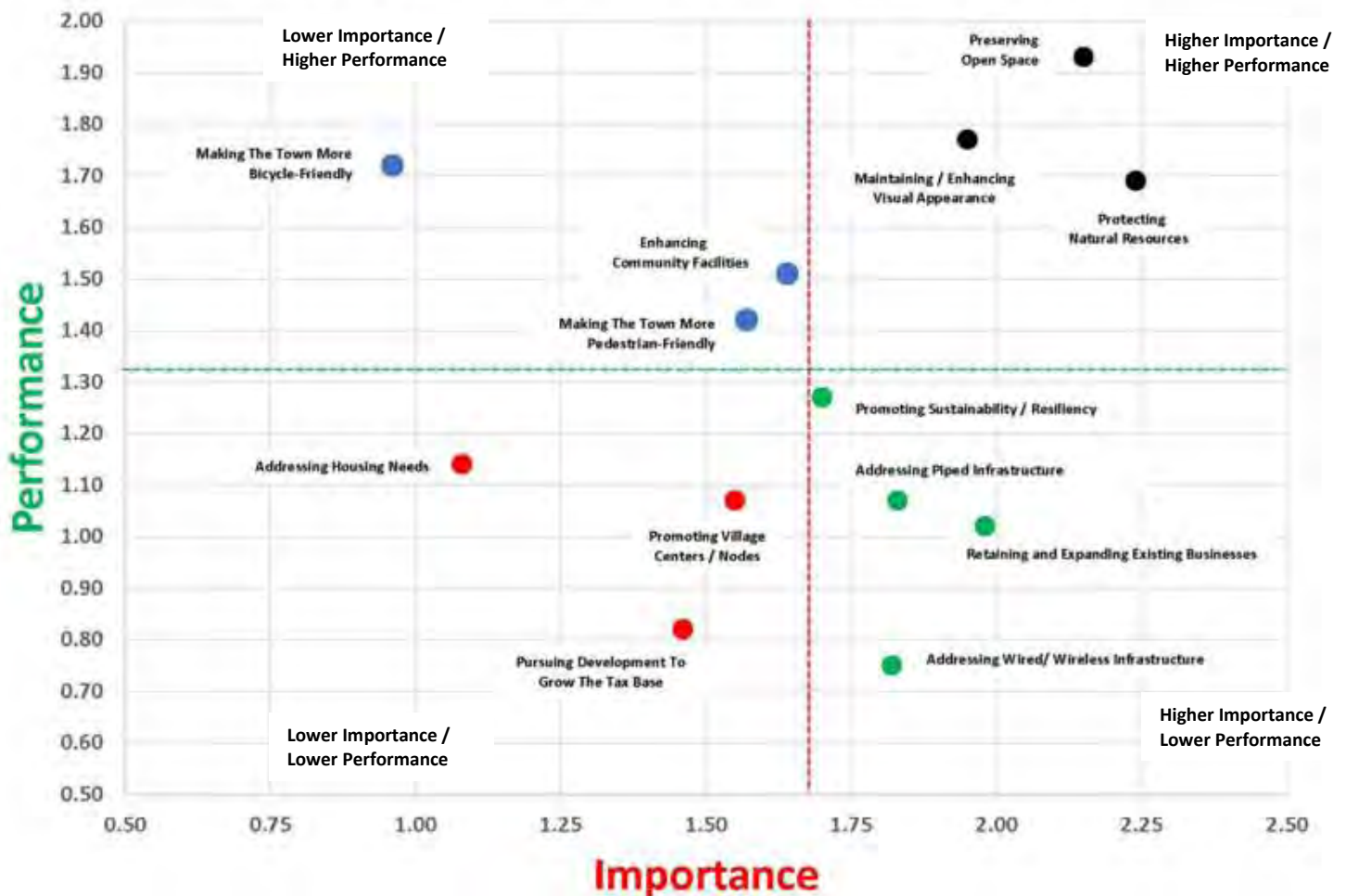
On-Line Survey

In December 2022, the Planning Commission conducted an on-line survey to get input as part of the POCD process. The survey attracted 716 participants.

Most of the survey results are presented throughout this POCD in the chapters where the survey responses are relevant to the topic. The icon shown in the sidebar is used to identify where survey results are presented.

As part of the 2022 on-line survey, participants were asked to consider thirteen different topics in terms of how important that topic was to them or the town (importance) and how good a job was being done with regard to that topic (performance). The information was helpful in establishing priorities for this POCD although the POCD gives greater importance to some issues (housing, for example) than were expressed by residents in the on-line survey.

IMPORTANCE / PERFORMANCE COMPARISON



POCD Approach

As part of the 2023 POCD update, the Planning Commission decided to retain the organization of the 2017 POCD with the following refinements:

1. Identify the following as over-arching principles in the 2023 POCD
 - a. Livability.
 - b. Diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - c. Sustainability and resiliency (ecologic, economic, and social).
 - d. Ecological systems
2. Incorporate the following documents in the 2023 POCD:
 - a. 2021 Affordable Housing Plan.
 - b. Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
 - c. Facilities Master Plan.
 - d. Bicycle / Pedestrian Master Plan.
3. Update conditions and trends data based on best available information.
4. Incorporate input from interviews, the 2022 on-line survey, the 2023 community meeting, and meetings with other boards.
5. Revisited the use of the term “character” which had been historically used in Simsbury POCDs to reflect the overall aspects of Simsbury’s ambience and sense of place. However, Public Act 21-29 removed this word from the statutes and purposes of zoning since it had been used to oppose affordable housing and other community changes.
6. Revisit the PA-490 “open space assessment” program.
7. Create a more specific and forward-thinking Future Land Use Plan.
8. Recommend a more robust implementation approach (with an action plan) so that Simsbury can leverage its investment in community input and planning towards results from implementation,

POCD Recommendations

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

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

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

The diagram illustrates the components of a POCD recommendation and how they are represented in a sample document. On the left, five boxes with labels and arrows point to specific parts of the document on the right:

- Goal**: Points to the top section titled "Goal / Strategies" which contains the text: "Maintain an appropriate balance between the use of land and the conservation of natural resources."
- Strategy**: Points to the numbered list of strategies (4.1-4.4) within the "Goal / Strategies" section.
- Leader / Partners**: Points to the "Policies AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS" table, specifically to the "Leader" and "Partners" columns.
- Policy (black text)**: Points to the text of a policy item (e.g., "Continue to maintain and enhance surface water and groundwater quality.") within the "Policies AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS" table.
- Action Step (red text)**: Points to the "ACTION STEPS" table, specifically to a red-texted item: "Investigate the costs and benefits of participating in FEMA's Community Rating System."

The sample document contains the following tables:

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--------------------------------|---|----------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Protect Natural Resources | | | | |
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Continue to maintain and enhance surface water and groundwater quality. | | CWV | DEEP, FVHD |
| B. | Require use of "low impact development" (LID) approaches and other strategies to help protect water quality. | | ZC | PC, PW |
| C. | Promote proper maintenance of on-site sewage disposal systems. | | FVHD | |
| D. | Preserve and protect watercourses, wetlands, and floodplains and their functions. | | CWC | ZC, PC |
| E. | Continue to closely regulate activities in flood-prone areas. | | ZC | |
| F. | Protect trap rock ridges and steep slopes (grade over 20%) from development. | | ZC | |
| G. | Seek to preserve environmentally sensitive areas identified in the DEEP Natural Diversity Database or in similar inventories. | | ZC | PC, CWC |
| H. | Implement the "native plant", "meadow mowing", and other policies prepared by the Conservation / Wetlands Commission. | | CWC | CPR |
| I. | Coordinate with other organizations to protect other natural resources. | | CWC | DEEP, FVHD |
| J. | If a property will be developed, encourage open space development where such development will still preserve important resources. | | ZC | |

| ACTION STEPS | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|---------------------------|--|----------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Protect Natural Resources | | | | |
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Modify land use regulations to incorporate LID approaches. | | ZC | PC, LU / PW |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Investigate the costs and benefits of participating in FEMA's Community Rating System. | | LU | ZC, BIOS |

PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES & ENHANCE ECOLOGICAL HEALTH



Overview

Natural resources are a barometer of overall environmental / ecological health in Simsbury and contribute to the long-term well-being, ambience, and sense of place in Simsbury. Protecting natural resources and enhancing ecological health is important to residents and is a key part of the POCD. Simsbury residents have recognized the importance of protecting natural resources and ecological health and it is important that these efforts continue.



Protecting natural resources will help Simsbury be more ecologically sustainable.

Land Resources



Water Resources



Community well-being depends on protecting and stewarding natural resources and enhancing ecological health.

Flora



Fauna



Water Resource Protection

Simsbury adopted a policy requiring an intact buffer on wetlands, streams, and rivers when leasing town farmland - benefitting farmers while enhancing protection for water resources.

To preserve and protect water quality and promote groundwater recharge, Simsbury strives to preserve land in its natural state and to address stormwater runoff. This also helps address the possible threats posed by drought and flooding.

Simsbury residents mobilized to protect aquifers and prevent water diversions, demonstrating public awareness of the value of water, not only for public consumption but for the ecological health of our waterways.

Groundwater Protection

In the 1980s, Simsbury was ahead of many other communities in Connecticut in terms of being concerned about aquifer protection. Simsbury worked with the United States Geological Survey to drill test borings and study aquifer potential.

Based on that work, Simsbury adopted some groundwater protection regulations which were advanced for their time.

Water Resources

The Farmington River is the main watercourse in Simsbury. It flows north through Simsbury before turning south and east through the Tariffville Gorge on its way to the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. Simsbury has numerous other surface water resources (brooks, streams, ponds, wetlands, etc.).

Groundwater resources are just as important. Simsbury has large areas of aquifers (geologic formations capable of holding large amounts of water) and these provide drinking water to public water supplies and private wells.

Protecting water quality is one of the key recommendations of the POCD.

Land Resources

In terms of landform, Simsbury contains several prominent features:

- The Talcott Mountain ridgeline on the eastern side of Simsbury,
- Onion Mountain / Sugarloaf / Hedgehog / West Mountain on the western side of Simsbury, and
- a broad valley between these two ridgelines containing the Farmington River.

Water Resources



Water Resources

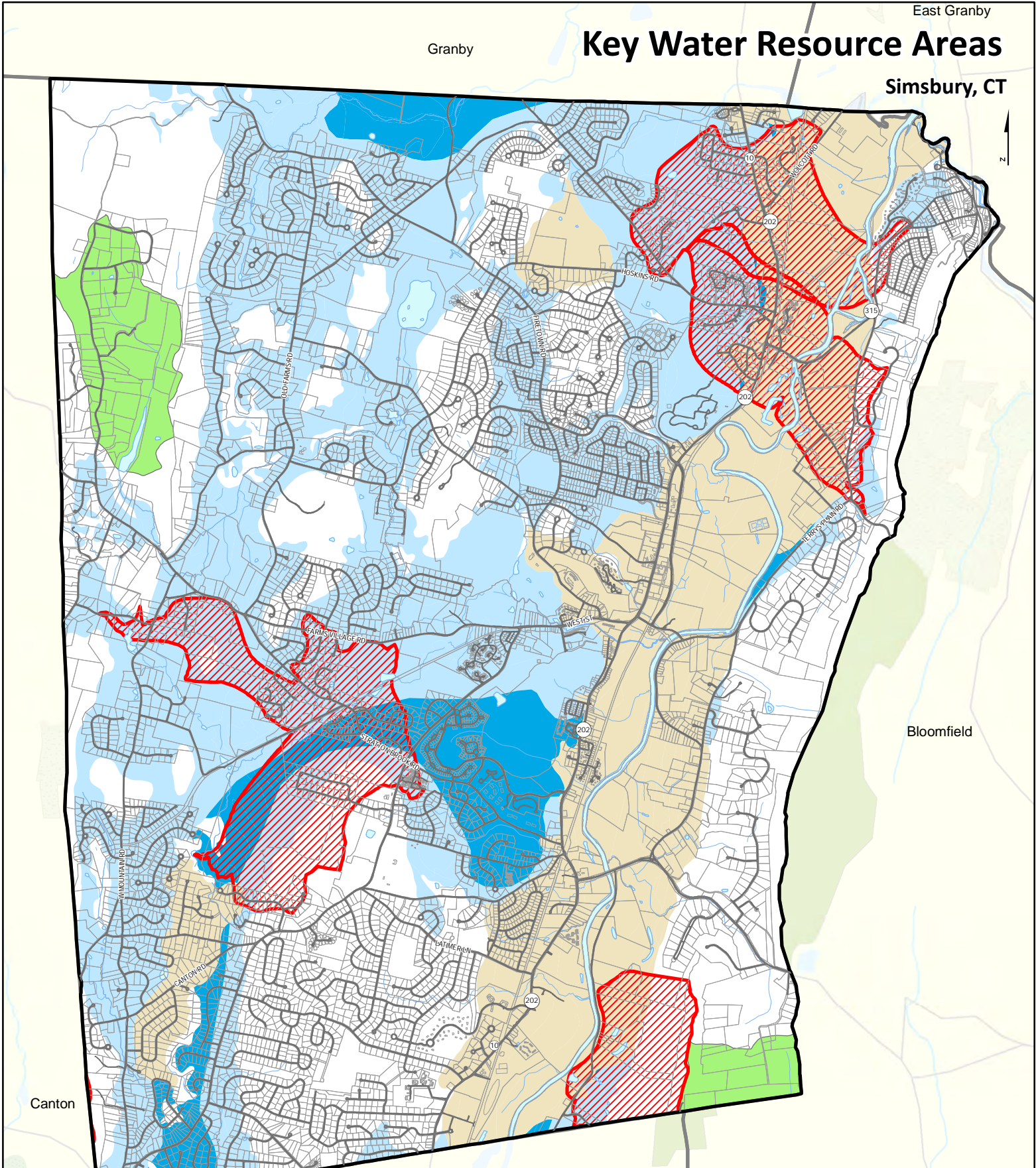


Key Water Resource Areas

Granby

East Granby

Simsbury, CT









Canton

Bloomfield

Avon

Legend

-  Public Well Recharge Areas (CT Level A Aquifer Protection Area)
-  Public Water Supply Watersheds
-  Highest Potential Aquifer Yield
-  Moderate Potential Aquifer Yield
-  Lower Potential Aquifer Yield
-  Non-Aquifer Areas

4,250

Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

Healthy Plant Communities

Healthy plant communities are areas which contain an ensemble of native plant species which function together to support native animals and a healthy ecology.

Healthy plant communities are a function of:

- Local geography, soils, geology, and climate,
- Natural disturbance and succession patterns,
- Absence of non-native and invasive species, and
- Land management by humans.

Native plants are those that occur naturally in a region in which they evolved. They are the base of local food chains and support native wildlife. Non-native plants, plants from other continents with similar climates, introduced because of their beauty, do not support the life cycles of native wildlife. Non-native plants can become invasive, outcompeting native species and adversely affecting habitat in remaining natural areas.

The choice of plants and landscape decisions have profound effects on the populations of birds and the insects they need to survive. Property owners can benefit birds and other wildlife by simply selecting native plants when making their landscaping decisions.

Simsbury adopted a Pollinator Pathway Proclamation to promote the ecological health of the area through the planting of native species that benefit our native pollinators.

Air Resources

While there may be little that a Town can do directly with regard to air quality (air quality is regulated by State and Federal agencies), it is an important natural resource consideration. To the extent that it can, Simsbury should continue to promote policies and programs to maintain and improve air quality.

Biological Resources

Simsbury contains a number of diverse habitats that sustain a variety of plants and animals. In each type of habitat, **healthy plant communities are vital to the health of the wildlife native to this region (and vice versa). Unfortunately, this natural balance has been threatened by non-native invasive plants that do not support local wildlife and degrade local ecosystems.**

Some areas in Simsbury are on the State's Natural Diversity Database meaning that such areas sustain rare or endangered species or support the species of special concern.

Pollinator



Grassland Birds



Recognized Accomplishments

Simsbury's natural resources, ecosystems and stewardship are recognized and reflected in regional and national designations, databases and reports, and legislation. Examples include:

- Prime Farmland (ongoing)
- East Coast Greenway (1991)
- An Act Concerning Protection of Ridgelines (1995)
- New England National Scenic Trail (2009)
- Wild and Science River (2019)
- Old Growth Forest Network (2019)
- Eastern Wildways (2020)
- Wildlands in New England: Past, Present, and Future (2023)

Natural Resources Plan

Granby

Simsbury, CT






East Granby

Bloomfield

Avon

Canton

Legend

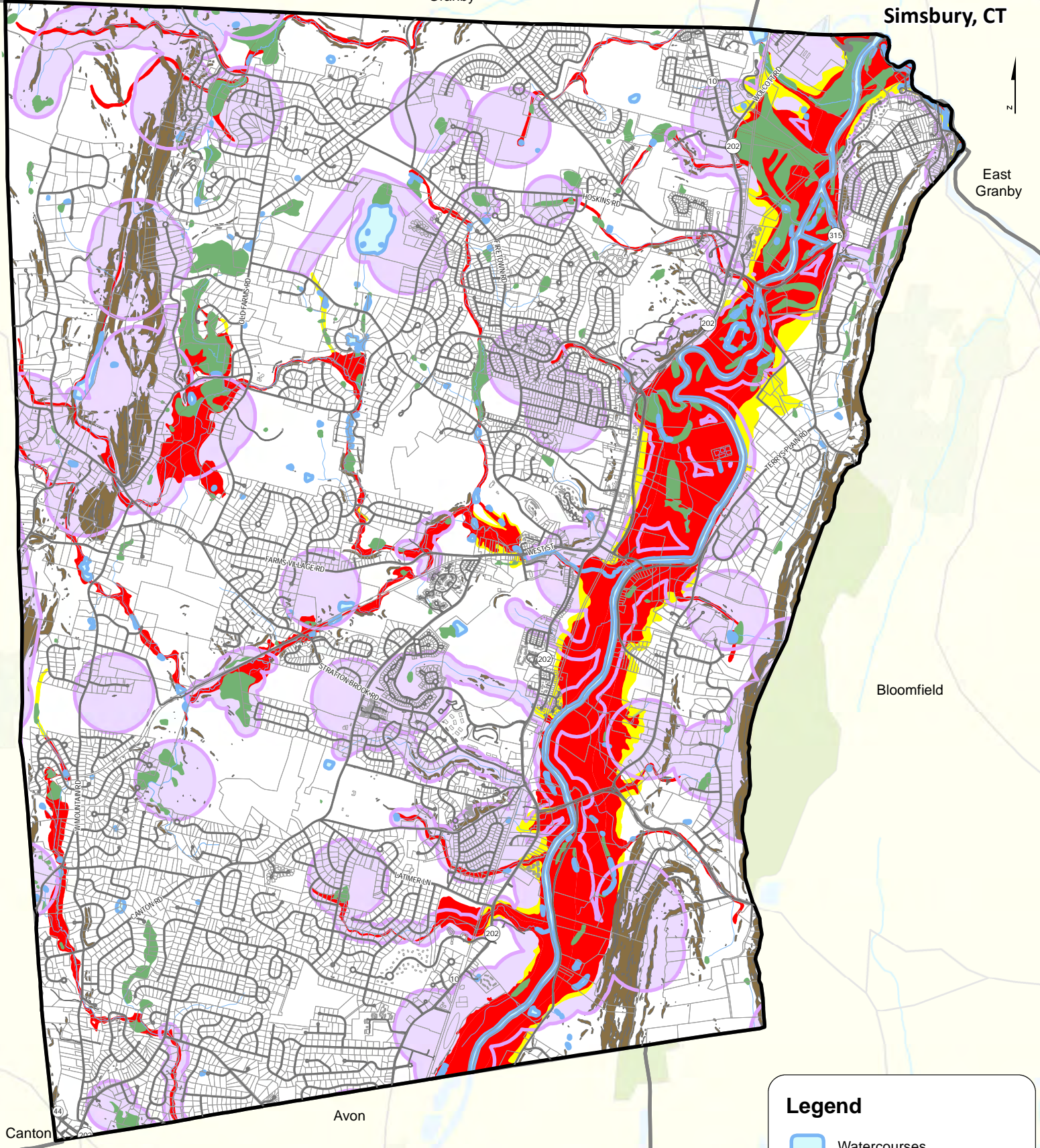
-  Watercourses
-  Wetlands
-  Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) Areas
-  FEMA 100 Year Flood Zone
-  FEMA 500 Year Flood Zone

4,250

Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

Not all wetland areas shown due to map scale



Goal / Strategies

Maintain a thoughtful balance between the use of land and the conservation of natural resources.

4.1 *Protect water quality and other significant water-related resources.*

4.2 *Protect significant land-related natural resources.*

4.3 *Protect other significant natural resources.*

4.4 *Preserve and enhance biodiversity and ecological health.*

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Protect Natural Resources And Enhance Ecological Health | | Legend on inside back cover | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|--------|--------------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Continue to maintain and enhance surface water and groundwater quality. | | CWC | DEEP FVHD |
| B. | Implement “low impact development” (LID) approaches and other strategies to help protect water quality. | | ZC | PC PW |
| C. | Promote proper maintenance of on-site sewage disposal systems. | | FVHD | |
| D. | Preserve and protect watercourses, wetlands, and floodplains and their functions. | | CWC | ZC PC |
| E. | Protect trap rock ridges and steep slopes (grade over 20%) from development. | | ZC | |
| F. | Seek to preserve environmentally sensitive areas identified in the DEEP Natural Diversity Database or in similar inventories. | | ZC | PC CWC |
| G. | Coordinate with other organizations to protect other natural resources. | | CWC | DEEP FVHD |
| H. | If a property will be developed, encourage “conservation development” patterns (see Glossary) where such development will still preserve important resources. | | ZC | |
| I. | Protect / enhance biological diversity by the elimination of invasive species. | | CWC | |
| J. | Implement the “native plant”, “meadow mowing”, and other policies on Town-owned properties. | | CWC | CPR |

| ACTION STEPS Protect Natural Resources And Enhance Ecological Health | | Legend on inside back cover | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|--------|---------------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>1. Modify land use regulations to incorporate LID approaches.</i> | | ZC | PC LU / PW |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>2. Investigate the costs and benefits of participating in FEMA’s Community Rating System.</i> | | LU | ZC BOS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>3. Develop programs to control invasive species and encourage residents and property owners to address these issues on their property.</i> | | CWC | |

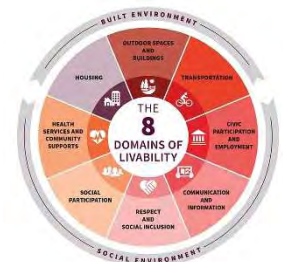
PRESERVE OPEN SPACE



Overview

For the purposes of the POCD, the term “open space” is generally used to describe undeveloped land with some protection against development (such as designation as a park or forest, a restrictive covenant, or ownership by a land trust or other conservation-oriented organization).

Preservation of open space is important to Simsbury residents and has been for many years. Some open space helps to preserve healthy ecosystems, conserve important natural resources, provide wildlife habitat and corridors, protect water quality, provide vital ecological services and areas for passive recreational use. Other open space provides areas for more active recreation and the use of natural resources. Open space also provides a sense of place, fiscal and economic benefits, and shapes development patterns.



Preserving open space will help Simsbury be more ecologically sustainable if properly stewarded.

Town Park



State Park



Preserving open space will help Simsbury be more ecologically sustainable.

Land Trust



Trails



Preservation of open space can enhance overall community well-being.

What We Want To Protect – Preserve Open Space



A rough tabulation conducted during the planning process estimated that about 34% of Simsbury’s total area can be categorized as open space:

| Open Space Category | Percentage |
|---|------------|
| Public Land (Town, State, etc.) | 18% |
| Land Trusts | 7% |
| Public / Semi-Public Facilities | 4% |
| Managed Open Space (private properties) | 2% |
| Development Rights Acquired | 2% |
| Total | 34% |

In 2019, an on-line survey (1,019 participants) was conducted as part of preparing the 2020 Simsbury Parks & Open Space Master Plan. While many questions related to recreation facilities, some of the findings relative to open space are summarized below:

- Open Space – Survey respondents rated their satisfaction with the quality of parks and open spaces as a 3.7 on a 5-point scale (noting not easily accessible, insufficient parking, safety concerns)
- Trails – Survey Respondents rated their satisfaction with the trails as a 3.3 on a 5-point scale (noting poor connectivity, desires for connection to neighborhoods, trails along water, signage, parking)
- Open Space Priorities – Preserve natural areas, public access to water bodies, more passive recreation (hiking, picnicking, etc.) opportunities.

In the 2023 community meeting held as part of preparing the POCD, the topic of “open space” received the most planning points. Some of the key points identified in the discussion included:

- Open space is an important part of Simsbury’s ecological health and its attractiveness . Open space helps define different areas and some spaces are iconic and memorable.
- Simsbury needs to be vigilant about open space. When land is developed, it is no longer perceived as open space and is gone for good.
- Simsbury should continue to work with partners such as the Land Trust.
- In addition to funds for acquisition, Simsbury also needs to have adequate resources (funds, people, etc.) for stewardship, maintenance, etc.
- Many people would like to preserve more open space in Simsbury and feel the POCD should identify important tracts of land to preserve as open space.

Open Space Organizations

The Town of Simsbury has several organizations that collaborate on open space issues. For example, the Open Space Committee helps guide:

- Possible open space acquisition, and
- Stewardship of existing open space holdings.

Open space efforts in Simsbury are also supported by the Conservation Commission and the Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission.

Open Space Map

Simsbury, CT

Granby

East Granby

Bloomfield

Canton

Avon

Legend

-  Land Trusts
-  Public Land
-  Managed OS
-  Development Rights Acquired
-  Public / Semi-Public Facilities

4,100

Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

Open space parcels on this map subject to verification

What We Want To Protect – Preserve Open Space

Parks & Open Space Master Plan



Starting in 2019, a Master Plan Committee made up of representatives of different local organizations worked with a consultant to prepare a Parks & Open Space Master Plan to help guide parks and open space efforts.

That Plan is hereby incorporated into this chapter of the POCD as a reference.

As part of their work, the Open Space Committee worked with the Board of Selectmen to adopt “Criteria and Guidelines for Acquisition of Open Space” in 2021 which indicated, when the Town of Simsbury is considering acquiring a property for open space purposes the following (in no particular order) will be considered:

1. Protection of surface water quality.
2. Enhance connection to existing open spaces.
3. Create trail linkages between isolated open spaces.
4. Enhance wildlife corridors between open space parcels.
5. Protect critical habitat, importance placed on areas which provide habitat to endangered or threatened species as defined on Connecticut Natural Resource Database and/or federally recognized species.
6. Protect public drinking water (aquifers or reservoirs).
7. Protect natural drainage patterns and manage stormwater.
8. Protect lands of social or cultural importance.
9. Provide sites for active recreation.
10. Provide sites for passive recreation.
11. Protect unique natural features that help define [Simsbury’s] ambience and sense of place.
12. Preserve prime agricultural lands/soils.
13. Preservation of areas of core forests.
14. Prevention of long-term soil erosion.
15. Promote and preserve old-growth forests.

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

For example, the Town recently partnered with the Trust for Public Land and the State of Connecticut to preserve 280+ acres of former tobacco farm properties (the “Meadowood” land) in the north part of Simsbury for open space, athletic fields, farmland preservation, and an interpretive center honoring Martin Luther King’s history as a farm worker in Simsbury during his youth.

The Town’s participation resulted from meaningful citizen involvement, a special town meeting, and a referendum ballot where Simsbury residents authorized \$2.5 million for the purchase of the Meadowood property for open space and other purposes.

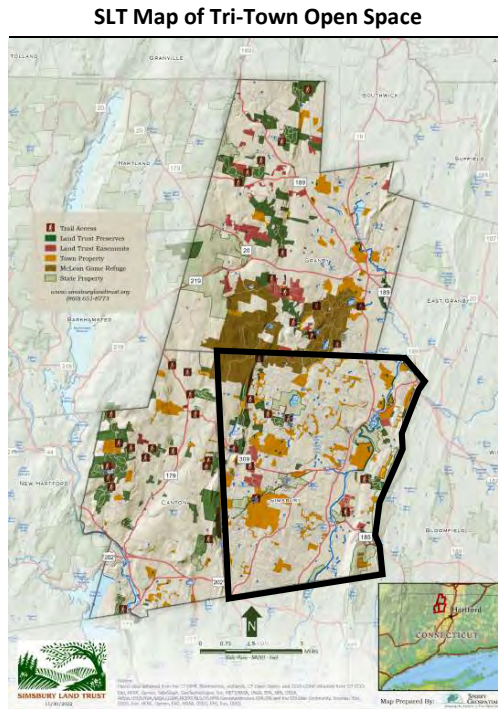
Location Of Meadowood Land



What We Want To Protect – Preserve Open Space

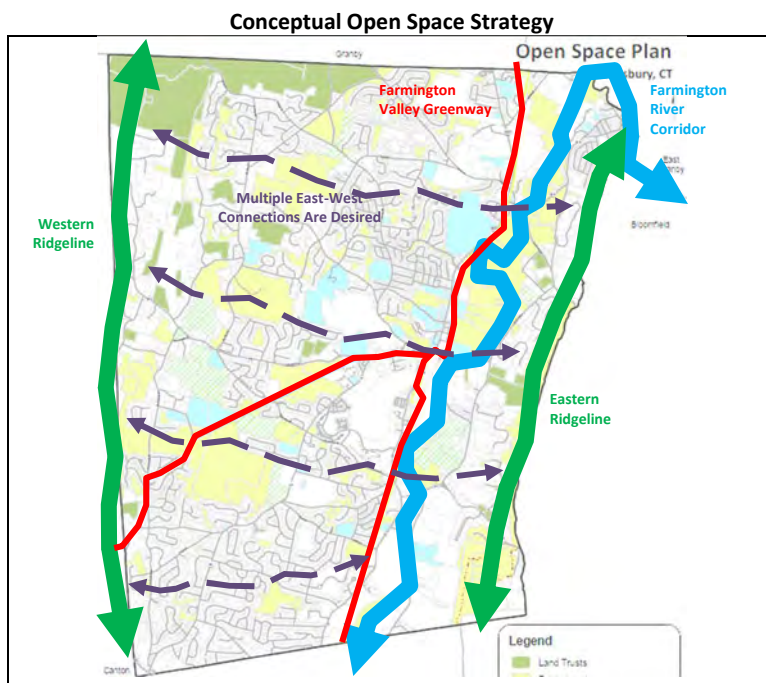
Open space preservation is also important regionally. The adjacent map, prepared by the Simsbury Land Trust, shows how preserved lands in Simsbury contribute to a regional system of open space and wildlife corridors that extends far beyond Simsbury's borders.

As open space holdings in other communities beyond those shown are included as part of this effort, it will become clear that “the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.” These efforts should continue.



Overall, Simsbury's “vision” is to create an open space system consisting of:

- The eastern and western ridgelines and hillsides
- The Farmington River corridor
- As many east-west connections as possible to create wildlife corridors, greenway trails, riparian corridors, etc.



Goal / Strategies

Preserve open space to protect and enhance the health of natural ecosystems, steward natural resources, enhance community ambience, and enhance the quality of life.

5.1 *Preserve important areas as open space.*

5.2 *Strive to create an open space system with inter-connected trails and other amenities.*

5.3 *Manage, maintain, and enhance open space areas.*

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Preserve Open Space | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--|----------|--------------------------------|------------|
| | | Leader | Partners |
| A. Implement the recommendations of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. | | OSC | CPR SLT |
| B. Enhance funding for the Open Space Fund from the Operating Budget and/or a municipal bond issue for that purpose. | | BOS | OSC CWC |
| C. Greenbelts / Greenways – 1) Seek to interconnect open spaces to the greatest extent possible to establish an overall greenway system. 2) Seek to establish “greenway” systems along the trap rock ridges on both the east and west side of town. 3) Seek to preserve parcels of open space that will provide linkage between the east and west ridgeline systems. | | OSC | CPR BPA |
| D. Bluebelts / Blueways – 1) Promote a multi-town “blueway” along the Farmington River for canoeing, kayaking, tubing, rafting, and fishing. 2) Increase public access to the Farmington River for launching and landing small boats, for fishing, and for other active and passive recreation. | | CPR | OSC |
| E. Trails / Connections – 1) Seek to create an interconnected network of multi-purpose trails and other public ways for residents and visitors. 2) Seek to establish a “wayfinding” system for trails for residents and visitors. 3) Seek to more directly connect the Metacomet Trail Tariffville village. | | BPA | OSC CPR |
| F. Partnerships – 1) Coordinate and collaborate with the Simsbury Land Trust and other entities to preserve open space. 2) Work with adjoining towns and land trusts to enhance the connectivity of open space areas and reduce habitat fragmentation. | | OSC | SLT |
| G. Stewardship - Provide adequate resources to maintain / steward open space areas and monitor and enforce protective easements. | | BOS BOF | OSC CPR |

(continued on next page)

Greenway / Blueway Trails Map

Granby


Simsbury, CT


East Granby


Bloomfield


Canton

Avon

 Farmington Valley Greenway Trail / East Coast Greenway

 Farmington River Trail

 FV Greenway / EC Greenway Extension (conceptual location)

 Possible Northern Loop (conceptual location)

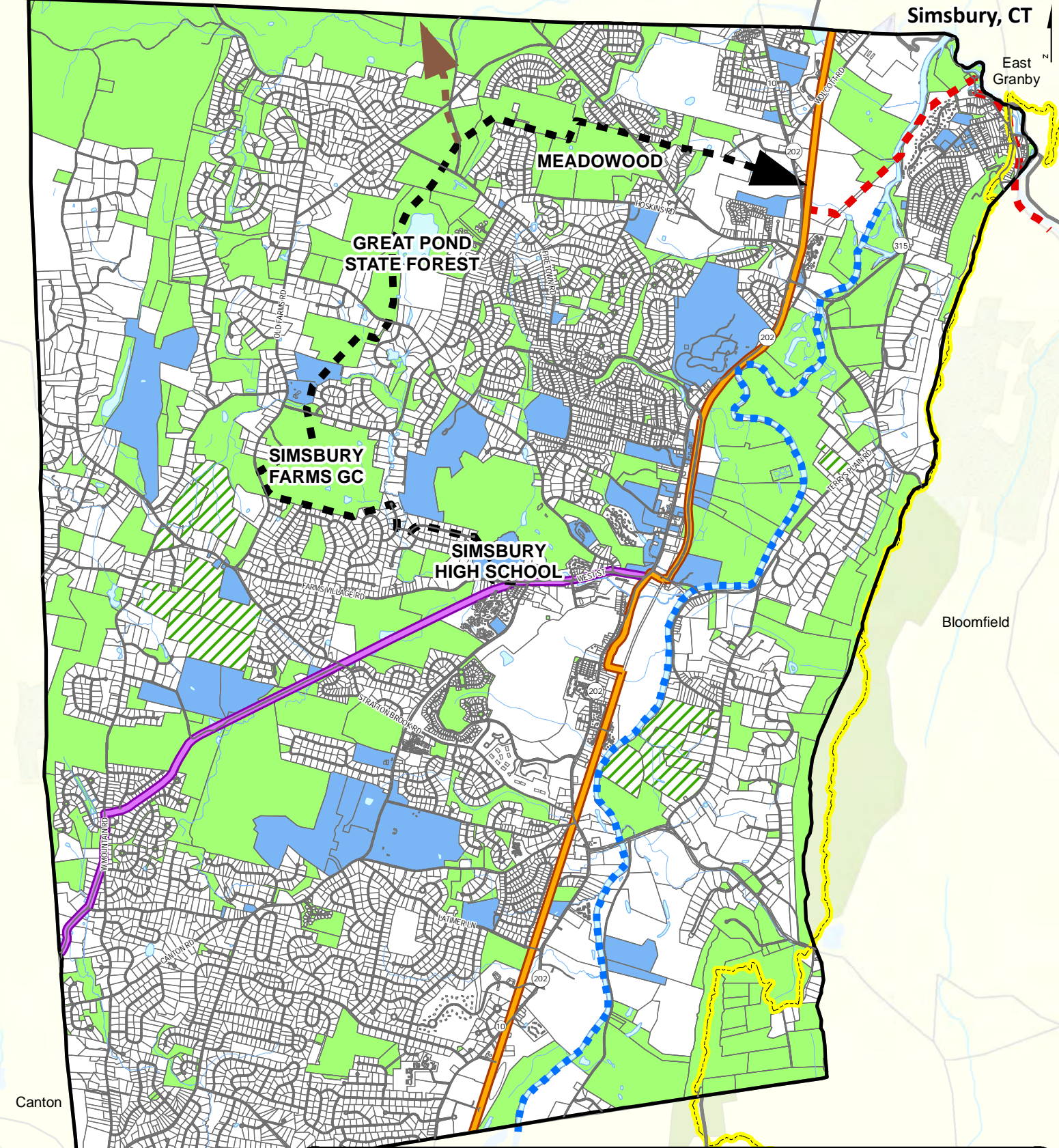
 McLean Refuge Connection

 Blueway

 Metacomet Trail

4,100 Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023
Open space parcels on this map subject to verification



What We Want To Protect – Preserve Open Space

(continued from prior page)

| ACTION STEPS Preserve Open Space | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------|--------------------------------|------------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Open Space Action Plan – Create an Open Space Action Plan / Program for Town-owned parcels that identifies and prioritizes such parcels for management / stewardship. | | OSC | CPR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Trail Connections / Extensions / Improvements – | | BPA | OSC CPR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | a) Complete the extension of the East Coast Greenway / Farmington Canal Heritage Trail to Tariffville and on to Bloomfield. | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | b) Establish a trail connection from Simsbury High School to Simsbury Farms. | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | c) With the recent Meadowood acquisition, establish trails extending from Simsbury Farms to McLean Game Refuge and other parts of North Simsbury (the “northern loop”). | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | d) Investigate providing sanitary facilities at trails, where practical, to support trail users for as much of the year as possible. | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Rezone Meadowood to an open space category | | ZC | LU |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Complete a study evaluating the health of Town-owned open spaces, Town stewardship practices, and the need for additional wildlife corridors. | CWC | OSC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Establish funding for the Open Space Fund from the Operating Budget | BOS | OSC CWC | |

McLean Game Refuge



Woods Trail



MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE COMMUNITY AMBIENCE



Overview

Simsbury has a number of things that contribute to its overall ambience and sense of place and contribute to the quality of life of residents. The POCD acknowledges that the concept of “place” is abstract, and defining it is elusive; however, you know it when you see it. In Simsbury, place may be found in:

- the physical landscape,
- signature brownstone buildings,
- winding secondary roads,
- active farms,
- historic mills, etc.

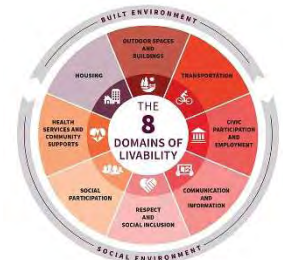
At the same time, the POCD also acknowledges that “place” and ambience is more than just the way the town “looks”. It also includes the experience of a community—the sounds (livestock and concerts), the smells (freshly mown hay), and the history associated with land owned by the same family for generations or renowned for its organic produce.

In the 2022 on-line survey conducted as part of preparing this POCD, 75% of participants identified community appearance / ambience as very important in their decision to live in Simsbury (and another 23% identified it as somewhat important).

Sense of Place



Sense of Time



Areas that contribute to the overall ambience and sense of place enhance the livability of Simsbury.



Preserving and enhancing community ambience can enhance overall community well-being.

What We Want To Protect – Maintain And Enhance Community Ambience

Community Ambience

In a 2023 community meeting held as part of preparing the POCD, the discussion of ambience and community “character” included:

1. Ambience is more than just physical appearance.
2. Inclusivity is something that also contributes to Simsbury’s ambience.
3. It is also the sense of community and the types of events here that contribute to the ambience of Simsbury and makes it charming.
4. The concept of ambience should not be used to prevent the change that Simsbury needs. We must promote ambience as part of change not as a reason not to change.
5. The concept of ambience ties into other topics in the POCD.

Community ambience is consistently cited as one of the features which makes Simsbury special to residents. Maintaining and enhancing community ambience is an important element of this POCD.

Some of the features that contribute to community ambience and sense of place in Simsbury include:

- Natural features such as the topography of Talcott Mountain and the western ridges and the Farmington River
- Open space resources
- Scenic views, scenic roads, and other scenic resources including views of the ridgelines, hillsides, and the river valley
- Farms and farming
- Historic buildings and sites
- Settlement patterns such as villages and other unique places
- Community services and facilities (such as schools and other Town services)
- Private schools (Westminster, Ethel Walker, Masters, St. Marys)
- Community amenities (such as the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and Simsbury Farms)
- Community events (such as events at the Performing Arts Center)

Listings of some specific features are presented on the following pages.

Yet, in reality, community ambience is not just any one of these things. It is the totality of all of these things. Simsbury has a “sense of place” because these elements (and many others) are all interwoven into the fabric of the community.

This “sense of place” is part of what draws people to Simsbury. People make a conscious choice to live here or visit here or stay here because of its small town ambience and sense of community and all of the things that contribute to ambience and sense of place.

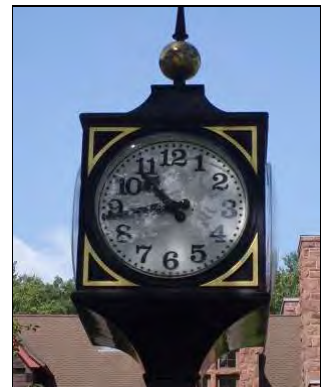
Heublein Tower



Fountain in Weatogue



Town Clock



What We Want To Protect – Maintain And Enhance Community Ambience

Listing of Some Current And Former Ambience Resources

Buildings (see black outline numbers on map on page 47)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Ensign House (Rt.10 @ Drake Hill Rd.) | 9. Tobacco Fields |
| 2. Simsburytown Shops – example of village style/scale center | 10. The Tariffville Mill |
| 3. Former Ensign Bickford complex | 11. Former Pettibone’s Tavern (Abigail’s) |
| 4. Railroad station buildings | 12. St. Mary’s Church |
| 5. Former Tobacco Barns on Route 10 | 13. Methodist Church |
| 6. Central School | 14. Congregational Church |
| 7. Town Offices (Belden School) | 15. St. Bernard’s Church |
| 8. Hop Brook Mill / Brownstone Building | 16. Trinity Episcopal Church |
| | 17. “Courtyard Building” |

Aesthetic Places (see red numbers on map on page 47)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Hop Brook waterfall | 23. Pinchot Sycamore tree |
| 2. King Philip’s Cave | 24. Old quarry |
| 3. Massaco Plantation | 25. Route 185 Bridge |
| 4. Militia Training Band Field | 26. Waterfall at McLean Game Refuge |
| 5. Sycamores along Route 10 | 27. West Simsbury Center |
| 6. Hillsides, ridgelines and escarpments | 28. Barndoor Hills view |
| 7. The Farmington River flood plain | 29. Grave site on East Weatogue Street (ox cart death) |
| 8. Stone walls (townwide) | 30. Tobacco fields / barns - Firetown Road, Hoskins |
| 9. Bartlett’s Tower site | 31. Old barn on Terry’s Plain Road, formerly Bartlett Farm |
| 10. Sugarloaf Mountain | 32. Scenic road along East Weatogue Street, Terry’s Plain Road, Ferry Lane |
| 11. Curtis Park | 33. Views of the Farmington River along Riverside Road, Terry’s Plain Road |
| 12. Simsbury Meadows | 34. Nod Brook field |
| 13. Case Meadow / Ethel Walker Woods | 35. Public school properties (see details on Community Facilities Plan) |
| 14. Simsbury Center | 36. Simsbury Farms recreation complex |
| 15. Garrett stairs at McLean Game Refuge | 37. Private school properties (such as Westminster, Ethel Walker, Masters) |
| 16. Heublein Tower | |
| 17. Intersection of Laurel Ln / Great Pond | |
| 18. Drake Hill Flower Bridge | |
| 19. Farmington Canal Heritage Trail | |
| 20. Site of former Farmington River Canal | |
| 21. Fountain in Weatogue | |
| 22. Silo and Sycamore at Folly Farm | |

Community Events (not mapped in POCD)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center / Talcott Mountain Music Festival (Hartford Symphony) | 5. Simsbury Fly-In |
| 2. Memorial Day Parade | 6. Simsbury Celebrates (First Night) |
| 3. Simsbury Light Opera | 7. Luminary Night |
| 4. Simsbury Summer Theater For Youth | 8. River Run |
| | 9. Simsbury Bike Month (May) |
| | 10. Park and Recreation music offerings |

(continued on next page)

“Dark Skies”

The term “dark skies” is used to draw attention to light pollution and its impact upon night skies. Excessive night lighting has been found to have substantial negative impacts on human health as well as on insect, amphibian and bird populations. It also wastes electricity. More information is available from the International Dark Sky Association.

A dark-skies ordinance or regulation typically:

- requires all outdoor light fixtures to shine downward only (full cut-off fixtures with no light trespass).
- regulates wavelength, duration, and intensity of outdoor lighting.

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 or multi-family housing.
- An older building could be re-purposed for affordable housing.

What We Want To Protect – Maintain And Enhance Community Ambience

Volunteer Efforts

The importance placed on community ambience is pervasive in the community and supported by many local organizations.

For example, volunteers associated with the Beautification Committee maintain more than 60 flower gardens and planters on Town land throughout Simsbury including:

- Schultz Park
- Town Hall
- Simsbury Public Library
- Simsbury Farms recreation complex
- Welcome signs and brownstone pillars at gateways
- At various islands, intersections and triangles throughout town
- Eno Memorial Hall
- Entrance to the Flower Bridge
- Key corners

Listing of Some Current And Former Ambience Resources (continued)

Historic Districts (see map on page 48)

1. Simsbury Center Historic District (*National Register*)
2. Tariffville Historic District (*National Register*)
3. East Weatogue Historic District (*National Register*)
4. East Weatogue Local Historic District (*regulatory*)
5. Terry's Plain Historic District (*National Register*)

Surface Water Features (all maps)

1. Farmington River
2. Meadow Pond
3. Tariffville Gorge
4. Great Pond
5. Streams and brooks
6. Ponds

Farms (see numbered diamonds on maps on pages 47 and 50)

1. Tulmeadow Farm
2. Flamig Farm
3. George Hall Farm
4. Joseph Hall Farm
5. Rosedale Farm
6. Pickin' Patch Farm
7. Town Farm
8. Folly Farm
9. Ryan's Flower Farm
10. Anthony's Farm

Parks / Recreation (see green numbers on map on page 47)

1. Town Forest
2. Stratton Brook State Park
3. Schultz Park
4. Tariffville Park
5. Tariffville Green
6. State Wildlife Management Area
7. McLean Game Refuge
8. Metacomet Trail
9. Curtiss Park (south)
10. Curtiss Park (north)
11. Memorial Park
12. Hopmeadow Country Club
13. Talcott Mountain Collective
14. Onion Mountain Park
15. Belden Forest
16. Talcott Mountain State Park
17. Penwood State Park
18. Metacomet Trail overlook
19. The Hedgehog
20. The Sugarloaf

Gateway Signage



Schultz Park



Rotary Park

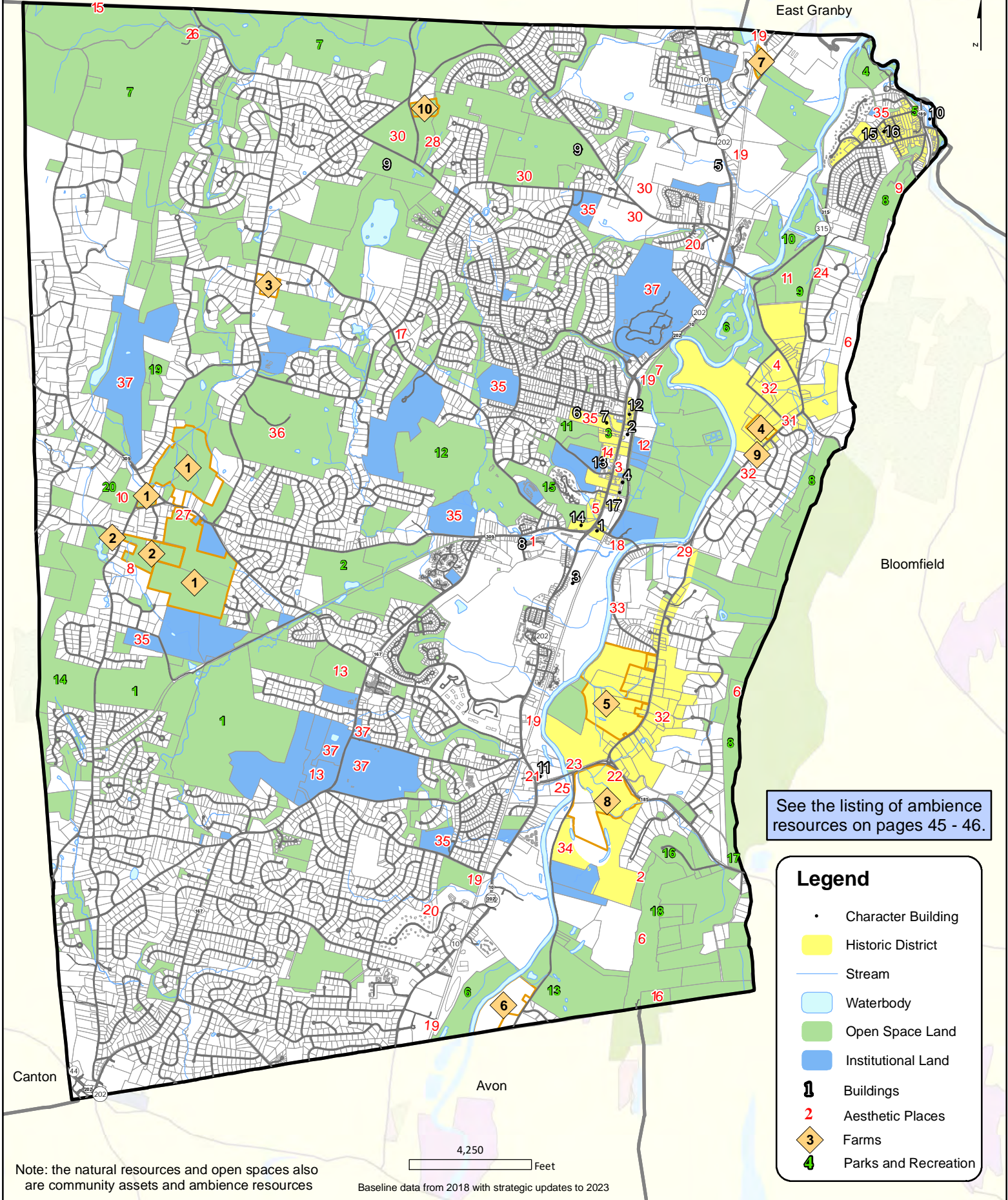


Community Assets - Ambience Resources

Granby

Simsbury, CT

East Granby



See the listing of ambience resources on pages 45 - 46.

Legend

- Character Building
- Historic District
- Stream
- Waterbody
- Open Space Land
- Institutional Land
- 1** Buildings
- 2** Aesthetic Places
- Farms
- 4** Parks and Recreation

Note: the natural resources and open spaces also are community assets and ambience resources

4,250 Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

Community Assets - Historic Places

Granby

Simsbury, CT

East Granby

Bloomfield

Canton

Avon

Tariffville Historic District

Simsbury Center Historic District

Terry's Plain Historic District

East Weatogue Local Historic District

East Weatogue NRHP District

Legend

Historic Points

- National Register of Historic Places
- Locally Important

Historic Districts

- National Register Of Historic Places (Non-Regulatory)
- Locally Important (Regulatory)

Sites

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Town Farm Cemetery 2. Stone Railroad Arch at Town Farm 3. Bartlett's Tower 4. Visible Bed of Farmington Canal 5. Governor's Bridge Railroad Crossing 6. Stone Quarry at Quarry Road 7. Grave Marker (Russell) 8. Pent Road Ferry 9. Horace Belden/ Central Schools - NRHP 10. Old Drake Hill Bridge - NRHP 11. Saw and Grist Mills at Hop Brook 12. Canal Arches Over Hop Brook 13. Cooper, Smelter, and Steel Mill 14. Grave Marker (Mindwell Adams) 15. Grave Marker (Jared Bradley) 16. Civil War Monument | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. White Memorial Fountain 18. Heublein Tower - NRHP 19. Cannon Medical Center - NRHP 20. Eno Memorial Hall - NRHP 21. Englewood (Simsbury 1820 Home) - NRHP 22. Farmington Canal - NRHP 23. John Humphrey House - NRHP 24. Pilfershire Cider Mill 25. First Fairground 26. Manto Meadow 27. Old Fuse Factory 28. Militia Training Ground 29. Militia Training Ground 30. Carpet Company 31. Central New England Station - NRHP 32. New Haven and Northampton Station - NRHP 33. Original Wintonbury Road | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 34. Wire Mill 35. 1734 Toll Bridge 36. Cullman Brothers Inc. Plantation 37. Bissell's Landing 38. 1788 Bridge 39. Probable Location of Potash Works 40. Stone Quarry 41. Calvin Barber Stone Quarry 42. Ferry Site 1673 43. Probable Location of Indian Fort 44. King Phillip's Cave 45. American Sumatra Tobacco Plantation 46. Stoddard Reservoir 1907 47. Simsbury Bank and Trust - NRHP 48. Boy Scout Hall - NRHP 49. Massaco Forest Pavilion - NRHP 50. Phelps Tavern - NRHP |
|---|--|---|

4,900

Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

What We Want To Protect – Maintain And Enhance Community Ambience

Historic Resources

Simsbury has a number of historic resources and these contribute to overall community ambience and sense of place. The POCD recommends that Simsbury continue to preserve and protect historic and archeologic resources.

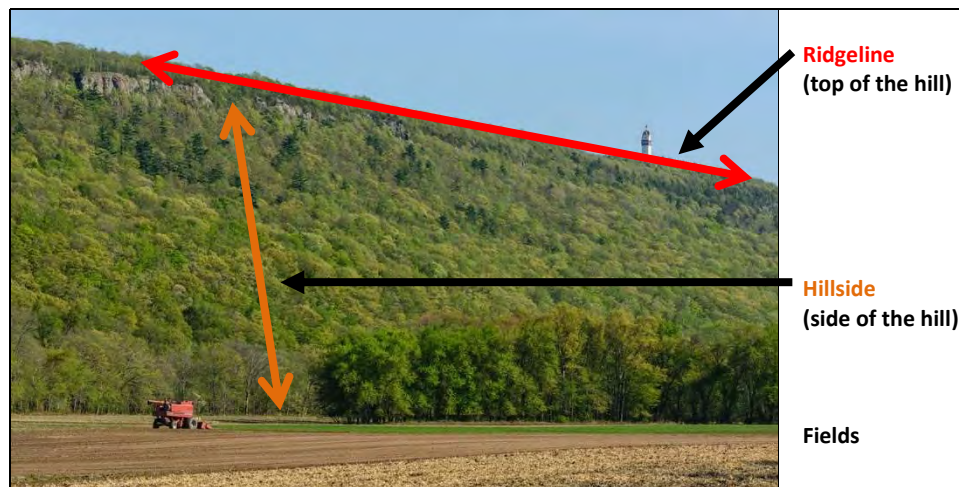
Farms And Farming

There are a number of major (and smaller) farms in Simsbury which contribute to overall community ambience and sense of place. These farms are also historic resources that are integral to Simsbury’s long-term sustainability and resilience. The POCD recommends Simsbury continue to help local farmers and others to preserve agricultural lands.



Scenic Resources

Simsbury has a variety of scenic resources (see sidebar) and the POCD recommends that efforts to preserve and enhance these scenic resources continue. This is especially true for the ridgelines and hillsides which are such a key part of Simsbury’s setting.



Scenic Views / Vistas

- the Talcott and West Mountain hillsides and ridgelines;
- the Farmington River valley from the hillsides and ridgelines;
- the farm fields in West Simsbury;
- the Ethel Walker hillside and fields along Bushy Hill Road;
- other vistas that embody the rural characteristics of Simsbury.

Scenic Road Ordinance

Simsbury’s Scenic Road Ordinance allows the Planning Commission to designate scenic roads in Simsbury, after receiving consent of the owners of a majority of lot frontage along the road.

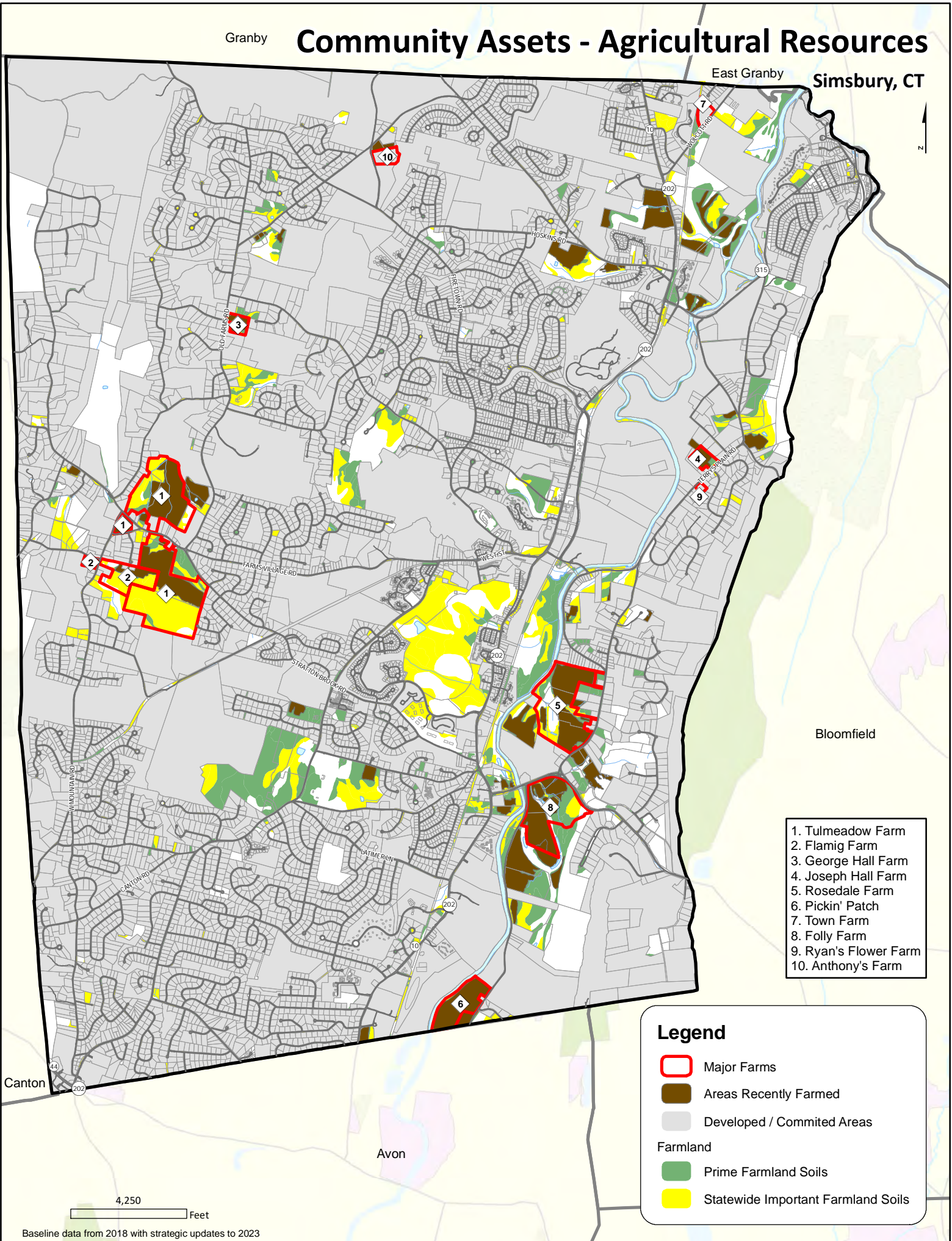
Such designation helps protect that roadway from inappropriate changes.

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

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

Community Assets - Agricultural Resources



1. Tulmeadow Farm
2. Flamig Farm
3. George Hall Farm
4. Joseph Hall Farm
5. Rosedale Farm
6. Pickin' Patch
7. Town Farm
8. Folly Farm
9. Ryan's Flower Farm
10. Anthony's Farm

Legend

- Major Farms
- Areas Recently Farmed
- Developed / Committed Areas

Farmland

- Prime Farmland Soils
- Statewide Important Farmland Soils

4,250
Feet

Scenic Resources Map

Granby

Simsbury, CT

East Granby

Bloomfield

Avon

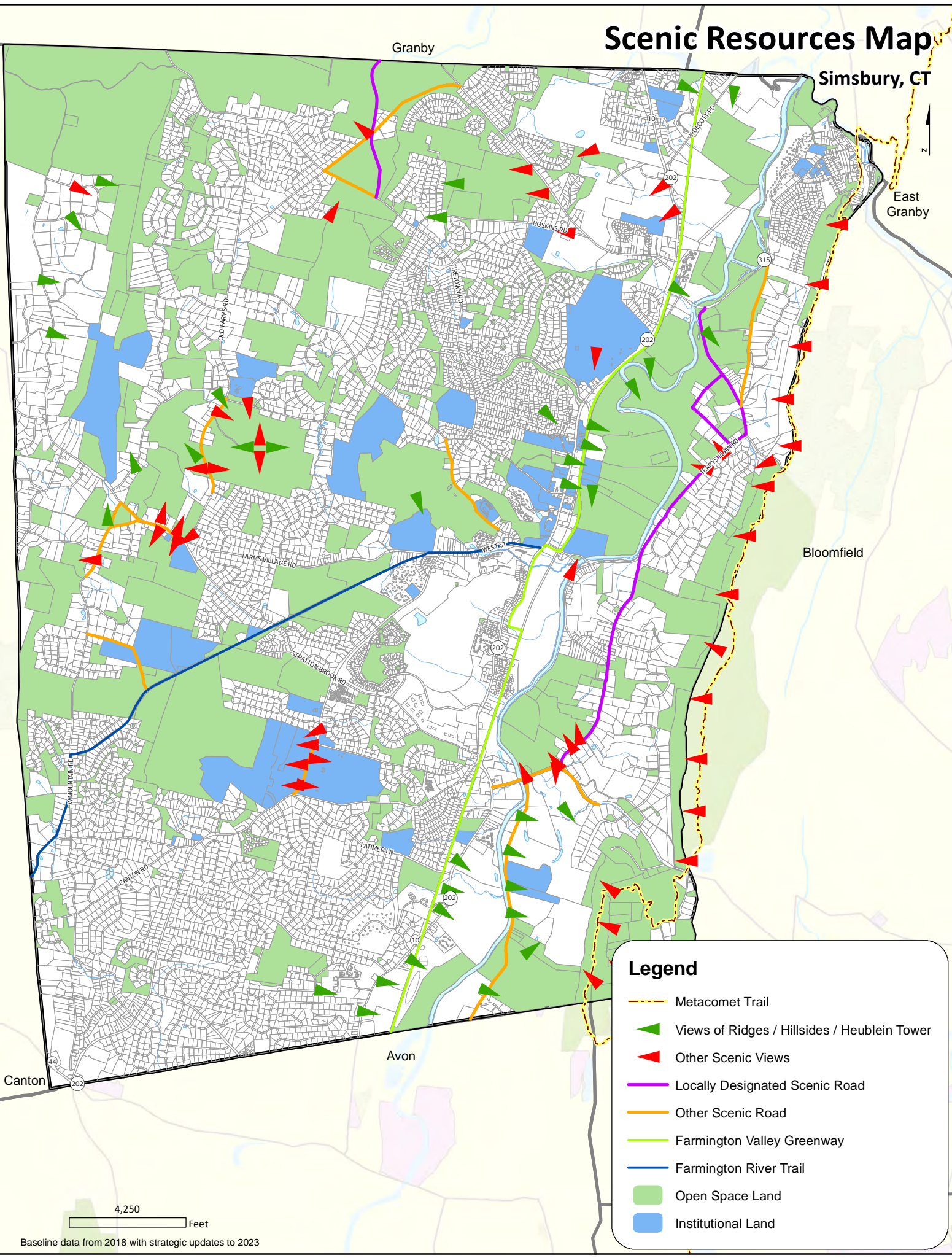
Canton

Legend

- Metacomet Trail
- Views of Ridges / Hillsides / Heublein Tower
- Other Scenic Views
- Locally Designated Scenic Road
- Other Scenic Road
- Farmington Valley Greenway
- Farmington River Trail
- Open Space Land
- Institutional Land

4,250 Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023



What We Want To Protect – Maintain And Enhance Community Ambience

PA-490 Assessment

As of October 2022, there were a number of parcels in Simsbury participating in the PA-490 program:

- 50 parcels (totaling 1,006 acres) receiving the farm assessment,
- 13 parcels (totaling 541 acres) receiving the forest assessment,
- 0 parcels (0 acres) receiving the open space assessment.

Undeveloped Land

Simsbury recognizes that undeveloped natural areas and certain other uses contribute to the aesthetics of the community as well as the ecological health of the local environment and the quality of life of residents.

Privately owned parcels that are undeveloped or are working land (farms and forests) contribute to Simsbury's overall ambience and sense of place. In reality, the fact that these lands remain undeveloped or as working lands benefits most every property owner in Simsbury by enhancing the ambience and sense of place (and maybe even property values).

However, it can be hard for private property owners to keep land undeveloped given the costs of ownership (taxes, etc.). To help make undeveloped land less expensive to own (and reduce the chances that such land would be forced into development), the Connecticut legislature established a "use assessment program" in the 1960s (called the PA-490 program and codified in CGS Section 12-107) which provides for reduced assessments in certain situations:

- Land used for farming (farm assessment) based on statutory criteria,
- Parcels of 25 acres or more with a forest management plan (forest assessment) based on statutory criteria, and
- Other land in a municipality based on local criteria provided such land is designated in the POCD and the legislative body has approved the overall program (open space assessment).

Over the 60 or so years that the PA-490 program has been in existence, a number of Simsbury properties have participated in the program and some still participate in the "farm assessment" and "forest assessment" programs.

However, as of 2023, there were no properties using the open space assessment and the criteria that may have been used in decades past were not apparent. An analysis was conducted of residentially-zoned parcels (whether built on or vacant) to evaluate whether it made sense for Simsbury to update / refresh the PA-490 open space program. The analysis showed that most of the parcels that might be eligible to participate in the program were environmentally constrained and already being assessed at a low value because of those constraints. In other words, it was felt that there were few parcels that would benefit from the open space assessment program that did not already receive those benefits in other ways.

As a result, the 2023 POCD makes no recommendations for properties or criteria related to the open space assessment program. Should the Town wish to reestablish this program in the future, the POCD can be amended to incorporate the recommended approach.

The POCD supports the continued use of the farm assessment and forest assessment components of the PA-490 program.

Granby

PA-490 Map

Simsbury, CT



East
Granby

Bloomfield

Canton

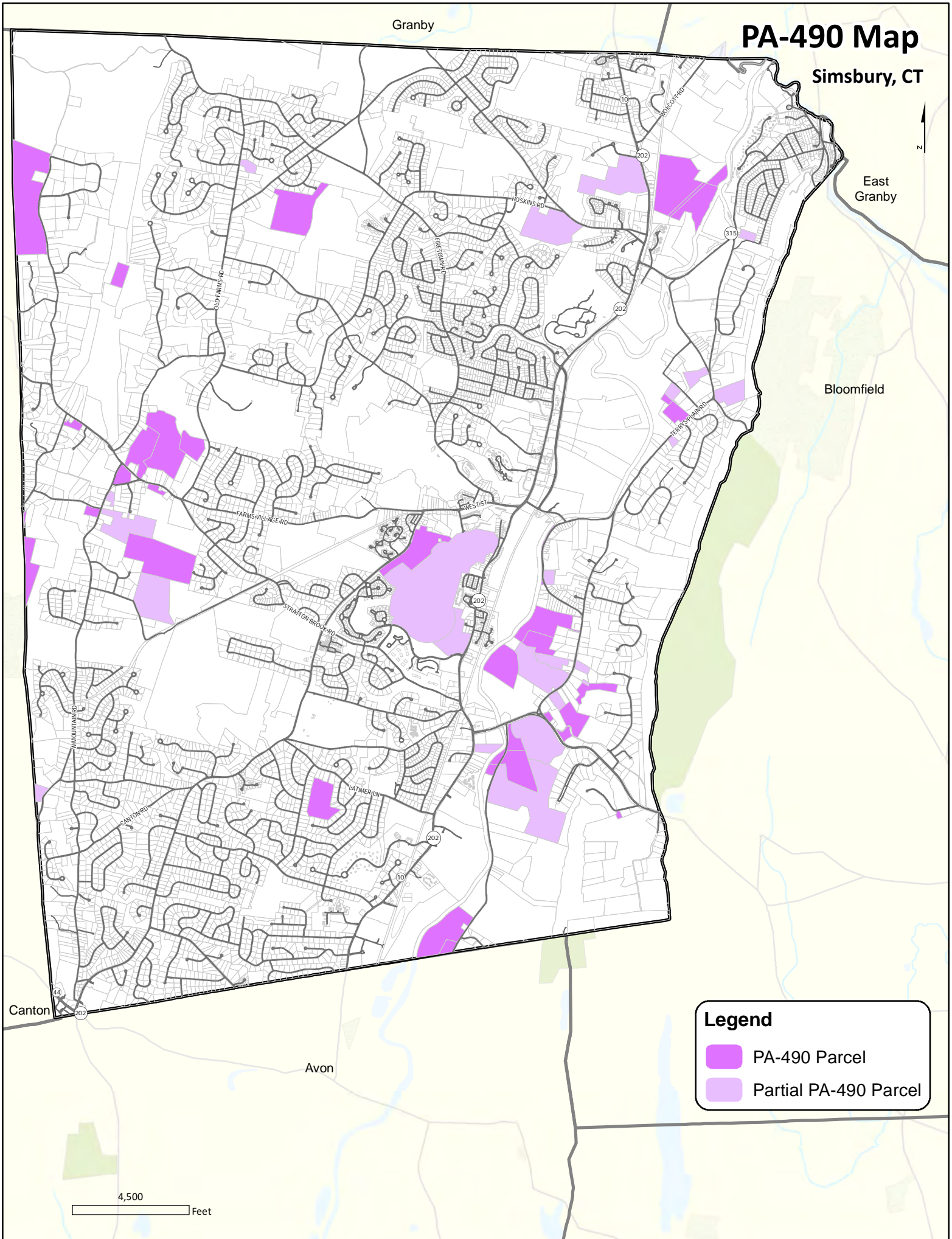
Avon

Legend

-  PA-490 Parcel
-  Partial PA-490 Parcel

4,500

Feet



Village Districts

A “village district” is a special type of zoning district in Connecticut (see CGS Section 8-2j) where, under certain circumstances, a Zoning Commission may apply design controls on development in a prescribed area.

The circumstances are:

- The POCD must identify the specific area(s).
- The POCD must identify the distinctive characteristics that resulted in the designation.
- Any village district review must involve a design review committee (like Simsbury has) or retain an architect or other qualified professional to provide design guidance.

New Development And “Sense Of Place”

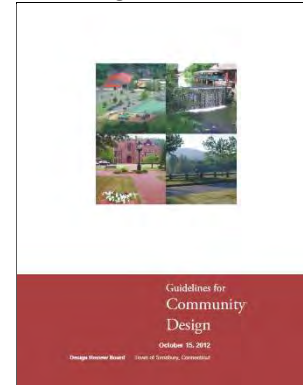
Simsbury has long recognized that the aesthetic aspects of development affect the overall ambience of the community. If a development does not maintain or enhance community design and sense of place in some meaningful way, it is actually detracting from community ambience in Simsbury.

Simsbury has had a Design Review Board for many years. The Board has prepared award-winning design guidelines that serve to guide its efforts and inform applicants of how to prepare applications. The work of this Board should continue to ensure that new development fits into the community well.

While many areas of Simsbury certainly meet the statutory criteria for establishment of “village districts” (legislatively authorized aesthetic review), the design review process has been effective for many years. Should the Zoning Commission wish to establish village districts in the future however, the POCD supports that strategy also.

The POCD takes the position that new development in Simsbury should maintain or enhance community ambience and sense of place in some meaningful way. Design review is critical to maintain and enhancing community ambience and these efforts should continue and be strengthened as needed.

Design Guidelines



Goal / Strategies

Maintain and enhance the overall ambience of Simsbury by preserving and protecting the characteristics that contribute to its overall ambience and quality of life.

- 6.1 Identify and protect the resources, “sense of place”, and quality of life that contribute to the overall ambience of Simsbury.**
- 6.2 Protect historic and archeologic resources and celebrate their contribution to community ambience and sense of place.**
- 6.3 Support the preservation of working farms and the availability of farmland soils.**
- 6.4 Preserve and enhance the scenic characteristics of Simsbury.**

What We Want To Protect – Maintain And Enhance Community Ambience

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Maintain And Enhance Community Ambience | | <i>Legend on inside back cover</i> | |
|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| | | Priority | Leader Partners |
| A. Preserve and protect resources that contribute to community ambience and sense of place. | | Town | CWC |
| B. Maintain and improve the design review process in Simsbury to ensure new developments reflect, complement and enhance the overall ambience of Simsbury. | | DRB | |
| C. Manage artificial lighting to maintain and enhance community ambience and help reduce light pollution. | | ZC | |
| D. Seek ways to maintain and enhance community pride and spirit. | | Town | CPR PAC |
| E. Encourage community and civic activities that promote and enhance community spirit. | | Town | CPR PAC |
| F. Continue programs to recruit volunteers (for boards and commissions, fire staffing, ambulance staffing, local events, etc.). | | BOS | |
| G. Continue programs to recognize “hometown heroes” who have made a difference in the community. | | BOS | |
| H. Preserve and protect historic and archeologic resources since they contribute to Simsbury’s overall ambience and sense of place. | | Town | HDC SHS |
| I. Support the listing of qualified buildings, sites, structures, and districts on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places. | | HDC SHS | |
| J. Maintain Simsbury’s designation as a Certified Local Government for historic preservation in order to be eligible for grants and other assistance. | | HDC | SHS |
| K. Work with local farmers and others to identify specific mechanisms to preserve agricultural lands. | | Town | |
| L. Help aspiring farmers get access to local farmland. | | Town | |
| M. Lease Town-owned agricultural land to farmers on a multi-year basis to encourage investment in the fertility of the land and promote farming uses on those lands. | | BOS | |
| N. Preserve scenic resources that enhance the overall ambience of Simsbury. | | Town | CWC OSC |
| O. As opportunities arise, seek to put wire utilities underground in Simsbury Center and other village centers in order to enhance community ambience. | | Town | |
| P. Establish, maintain and enforce regulations to protect hillsides and ridgelines and the scenic views to and from these areas. | | ZC | |
| Q. Continue to use the “PA-490” assessment reduction program (CGS 12-107) to help preserve farm and forest lands. | | Town | |
| R. Recognize the importance of native trees and vegetation to Simsbury’s overall ambience and environmental health. | | CWC | DRB |
| S. Seek to preserve and enhance the major “gateway” approaches to and within Simsbury. | | Town | |

(continued on next page)

What We Want To Protect – Maintain And Enhance Community Ambiance

(continued from prior page)

| ACTION STEPS Maintain And Enhance Community Ambiance | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|---|--|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ 1. Review and update the “Guidelines for Community Design” and showcase them effectively on the Town website. ❑ 2. Zoning Regulations – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Incorporate “dark sky” principles into the zoning regulations in order to minimize negative impacts of artificial lighting. b) Modify the zoning regulations to address LED lighting and standards for color “temperature” and lighting intensity. ❑ 3. Develop a comprehensive program for maintenance / replacement of street trees along major roadways (especially the iconic sycamore trees along Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury Center) with a preference for native tree species. ❑ 4. As authorized by PA 95-239 and CGS Section 8-2, consider enactment of development restrictions in ridgeline setback areas as defined therein. | | DRB | LU | |
| | | ZC | LU | |
| | | PW | CWC | |
| | | ZC | LU CWC | |

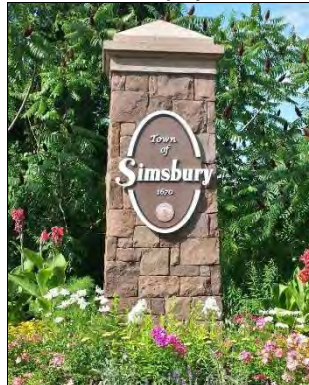
Simsbury Fly-In



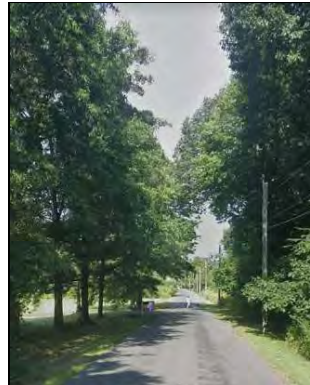
Simsbury Celebrates



Gateway Pylon



Scenic Road



Sycamore Tree

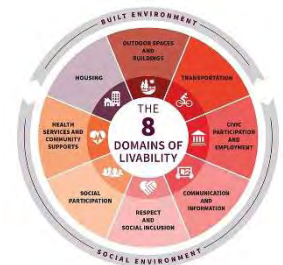


PROMOTE PLACES WITH A SENSE OF PLACE



Overview

As indicated in *Chapter 6 – Maintain and Enhance Community Ambience*, Simsbury is intent on maintaining and enhancing its “sense of place”. Nowhere is this more important than in Simsbury Center and the other village centers and unique places in the community. In the 2022 on-line survey, Simsbury Center and the village areas were considered important areas for development.



Areas with a sense of place enhance the livability of Simsbury.

Simsbury Center



Tariffville



Weatogue



West Simsbury Center



Supporting and enhancing areas with a sense of place will contribute to overall community well-being.

Hoskins



Hopmeadow Street



Overall Goal / Strategies

Guide future growth or change in Simsbury in ways that will promote places with a “sense of place,” strengthen Simsbury Center and other village centers and unique places, and maintain and enhance the ambience of the community.

7.1 *Guide development in ways that reflects and respects historical development patterns and creates areas with a “sense of place.”*

7.2 *Ensure that future development will reflect and/or enhance the form of its surrounding area as well as uses compatible with that area.*

Strategies for specific areas are located on the following pages.

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Promote Places With A Sense Of Place | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--|---|----------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Promote and strengthen villages and other unique places to sustain and enhance quality of life and honor and respect the historic elements of Simsbury. | | Town | DRB |
| B. | Ensure the scale and form of new development is compatible with the surrounding areas and the architecture of new development complements or enhances the existing developed environment. | | Town | DRB ZC PC |

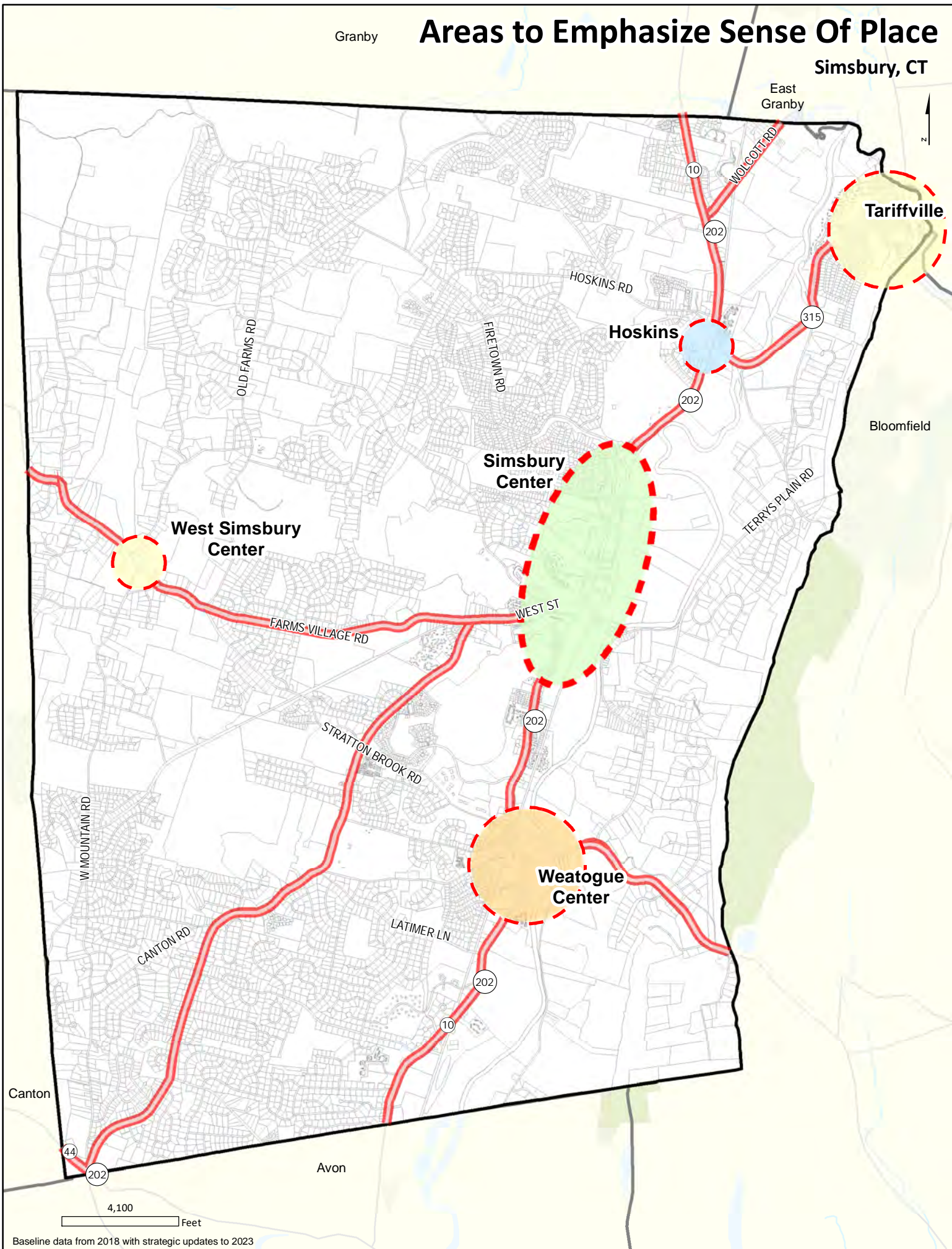
| ACTION STEPS Promote Places With A Sense Of Place | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--|---|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| □ | 1. <i>[see following pages for action steps for specific areas]</i> | | | |

Granby

Areas to Emphasize Sense Of Place

Simsbury, CT

East Granby



Tariffville

Hoskins

Simsbury Center

West Simsbury Center

Weatogue Center

Canton

Avon

Bloomfield

4,100

Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023



Simsbury Center

Simsbury Center is a key focal point in the community.

In 2009, an intensive design-based study (a “charrette”) was conducted for Simsbury Center. Hundreds of residents participated in order to look at opportunities for encouraging development in the Center and strengthening its role in the community. Based on community input, conceptual plans were presented for discussion and feedback and an illustrated master plan was shared with the community.

Based on the results of the charrette, a “form-based code” was prepared for Simsbury Center to guide development. The code focused attention more on the “form” of development (as in the design of new buildings) more than the uses that would occur within the buildings. Activities consistent with the code could be eligible for an expedited approval process.

Overall, Simsbury residents expressed support (at the charrette in 2009 and in the 2017 survey conducted as part of preparing this POCD) for development in and near Simsbury Center that would enhance and strengthen the Center ***provided*** the design of buildings and improvements will be consistent with the overall ambience of the Center. Graphics on the following pages illustrate this concept.

91%

In the 2016 telephone survey, 91% of participants felt that the design of buildings is an important consideration in any new development in Simsbury Center.

73%

In the 2016 telephone survey, 73% of participants agreed that Simsbury should encourage development in and near the town center to help make downtown stronger.

36%

In the 2016 telephone survey, only 36% of participants felt that Simsbury should look at how to provide for more housing in Simsbury Center. About 56% of participants disagreed with this concept.

Charrette Process

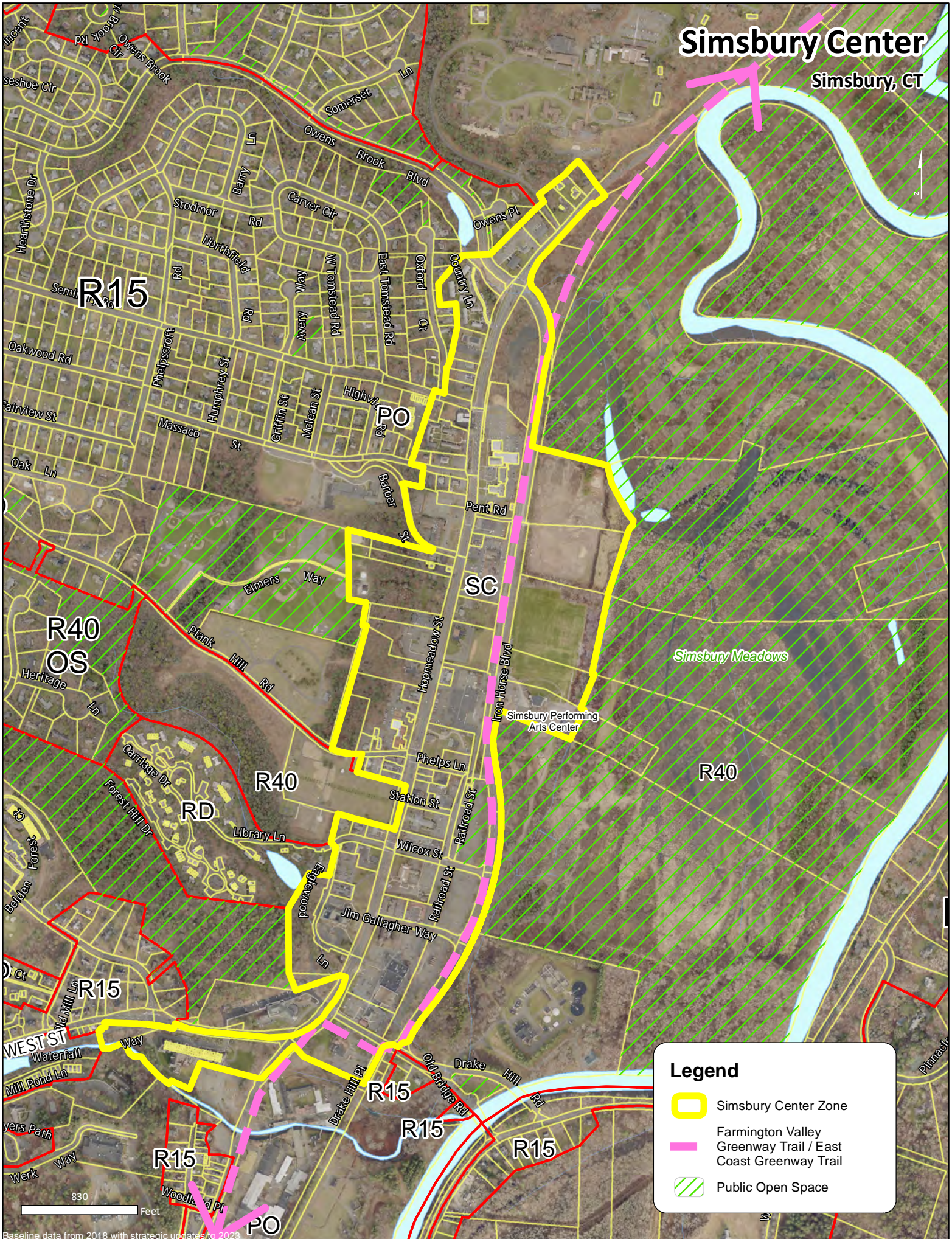


Charrette Product






Simsbury Center

Simsbury, CT



Legend

-  Simsbury Center Zone
-  Farmington Valley Greenway Trail / East Coast Greenway Trail
-  Public Open Space

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

How We Want To Grow – Promote Places With A Sense of Place

Please note that these maps were prepared as part of the 2009 charrette to illustrate alternative concepts and do not necessarily represent specific recommendations of this POCD.

Simsbury Charrette (2009) Illustrative Concepts (full report available at Town Hall and/or on Town website)

Drake Hill To Wilcox



- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) New welcome center and tourist information hub. (B) New bank with drive-thru, screened by signature corner building, gateway to downtown. (C) Existing commuter parking lot retained. (D) Stormwater pond based on original library plan. Allows for ice skating in winter. New connection to church. (E) Existing shopping center reconfigured. Opportunity for new grocery with office or residential above. New street connects Hopmeadow to Iron Horse and library. (F) To improve connectivity, formalize driveway as a street. (G) Building setbacks create a consistent street edge along Iron Horse. New sidewalk added on west side of street. Parking screened behind buildings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (H) New extension of Railroad to the south. Opportunity for small office condos or live/work units. (I) Liner building screening parking lots. Deeper building setbacks preserve green, open feeling along Hopmeadow. Parking eliminated between buildings and street. (J) New residential with corner retail wrapping shared parking structure. (K) Wilcox designated as a key retail street. | | | | | | |
| <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #c0392b; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="padding-left: 5px;">New building</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #95a5a6; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="padding-left: 5px;">Existing building</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px; background-color: #f1c40f; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td style="padding-left: 5px;">Parking structure</td> </tr> </table> | | | New building | | Existing building | | Parking structure |
| | New building | | | | | | |
| | Existing building | | | | | | |
| | Parking structure | | | | | | |

How We Want To Grow – Promote Places With A Sense of Place

Simsbury Charrette (2009) Illustrative Concepts (full report available at Town Hall and/or on Town website)

Wilcox To Schultz Park



- A** New residential with corner retail. With the exception of corner sites, Iron Horse is primarily residential in character.
- B** Parking structure added to rear of Eno Hall, incorporates ground level entrance into building, senior center above.
- C** Station becomes two-way, sidewalk widened, on-street parking added and street trees planted.
- D** Shared surface parking serves surrounding buildings.
- E** Parking eliminated between buildings and street.
- F** Phelps becomes a two-way yield street with a shared parking/travel lane.
- G** Improve to allow for more frequent parking and to accommodate special events.

- H** New street links Iron Horse to Hopmeadow, improves visibility to Phelps Tavern Museum.
 - I** Reconfigure existing shopping center and replace gas station with mixed use development.
 - J** Upgrade driveway to a street, improves access between Hopmeadow and Iron Horse.
 - K** New residential development on vacant land behind funeral home.
 - L** Townhouses overlooking park, resulting in improved access and visibility. Topography allows for taller buildings tucked into hillside.
- New building
 Existing building
 Parking structure




Please note that these maps were prepared as part of the 2009 charrette to illustrate alternative concepts and do not necessarily represent specific recommendations of this POCD.

Please note that these maps were prepared as part of the 2009 charrette to illustrate alternative concepts and do not necessarily represent specific recommendations of this POCD.

Simsbury Charrette (2009) - Illustrative Concepts
(full report available at Town Hall and/or on Town website)

Schultz Park To Seminary



- A** New residential infill on vacant land behind ice cream shop. Grade change allows for shared structured parking with adjacent center.
 - B** Liner buildings screen parking structure and mimic historic character present along Hopmeadow.
 - C** Shopping center redeveloped to include a mix of higher intensity residential units. New street aligned with park street below, improves connectivity.
 - D** New one-sided park street preserves view to Simsbury Meadows.
 - E** Post office replaced, pedestrian way takes the place of Pent Road, enhances connectivity between elementary school and Simsbury Meadows.
 - F** New mixed residential development replaces Simscroft-Echo Farms. Pedestrian spine runs through development, linking Simsbury Meadows to Town Center.
 - G** Trailhead and parking area. Paths extend through Simsbury Meadows to river.
 - H** Preserve green buffer along Iron Horse
 - I** New civic building provides expansion space for Town Hall. Parking hidden behind.
 - J** New street aligned with Massaco, links Iron Horse and Hopmeadow.
 - K** Multifamily residential project replaces St Mary's school.
 - L** New office and residential buildings mimic the scale of original houses.
-  New building
 -  Existing building
 -  Parking structure

How We Want To Grow – Promote Places With A Sense of Place

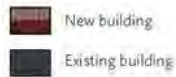
Simsbury Charrette (2009) Illustrative Concepts

(full report available at Town Hall and/or on Town website)

Seminary To Westminster School



- (A) Storm pond, cleaned up and expanded. Gazebo serves as overlook.
- (B) Picnic shelters with small adjacent parking area.
- (C) New multifamily project serves as a gateway to downtown.
- (D) Potential site for relocation of Masonic Lodge.



Please note that these maps were prepared as part of the 2009 charrette to illustrate alternative concepts and do not necessarily represent specific recommendations of this POCD.

How We Want To Grow – Promote Places With A Sense of Place

Photo-Simulation
Looking South On Hopmeadow Street
From Vincent Funeral Home

Existing Conditions



Intermediate Stage



Removal of overhead wires. addition of brick sidewalks and “bumpouts” to narrow travel lanes, addition of crosswalks, streetlights, street trees, and on-street parking

Future Condition



Addition of new buildings on east and west sides of Hopmeadow Street

Photo-Simulation
Looking West On Wilcox Street
From Iron Horse Boulevard

Existing Conditions



Intermediate Stage



Addition of sidewalks, streetlights and street trees

Future Condition



Addition of new buildings on corners plus addition of street trees

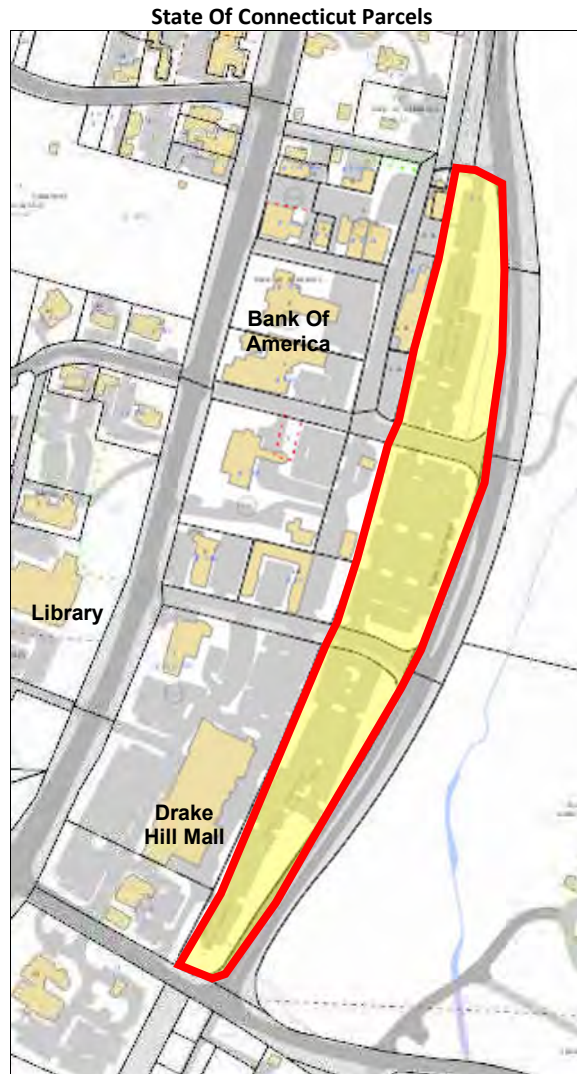
All graphics prepared by UrbanAdvantage as part of the Simsbury Center charrette process

How We Want To Grow – Promote Places With A Sense of Place

One of the challenges with the development and/or redevelopment of Simsbury Center is the availability of land. Much of the land area within the Center is already built on or committed (although some of the land is “underdeveloped” in terms of its potential). Redevelopment can be a challenge due to development costs and the time involved.

On the other hand, there is land owned by the State of Connecticut adjacent to Iron Horse Boulevard (between Plan B Restaurant to the north and Fitzgerald’s Market to the south) which could be acquired by the Town to support redevelopment.

While the legislature authorized this transaction to occur (a key first step), the appraised value of the property and concern over possible environmental issues slowed up resolution of this matter.



This land could, perhaps, be sold or leased to private developers, used for municipal purposes (such as a community center or a police station), or it could be used for other purposes. Development of housing or businesses or mixed-use buildings would have the potential to greatly enhance Simsbury Center and maintain / enhance the overall vitality of this area.

Simsbury should seek to move ahead with resolving the remaining issues with the appraised value and possible environmental issues so that development of these parcels could commence. Given the incredible location of these properties and their development potential, this could be a desirable venture for the Town in terms of sale prices or land lease rates and also future tax revenues. The form-based code adopted for Simsbury Center could ensure quality developments that would enhance Simsbury for years to come.

Goal / Strategies

Strengthen and enhance Simsbury Center as the primary focal point in the community.

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Simsbury Center | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|---|---|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Promote compatible development in Simsbury Center and recognize that development elsewhere could impede the ability to improve Simsbury Center. | | ZC | PC EDC |
| B. | Maintain a “form-based” approach to development in Simsbury Center. | | ZC | PC EDC |
| C. | Encourage greater density and intensity in Simsbury Center to help create a larger “critical mass” and a greater sense of activity provided it enhances the ambience of the Center. | | ZC | PC EDC |
| D. | Encourage infill development between Hopmeadow Street and Iron Horse Boulevard. | | ZC | PC EDC |
| E. | Encourage or require multi-story buildings in Simsbury Center, preferably mixed-use buildings . | | ZC | PC EDC |
| F. | Strengthen the “pedestrian-friendly environment” in Simsbury Center. | | Town | PW DOT |
| G. | Provide for a system of sidewalk, crosswalk, and streetscape improvements throughout Simsbury Center to establish a safe and welcoming pedestrian environment. | | Town | PW DOT |
| H. | Complete landscaping, lighting, signage, and gateway improvements recommended in the Simsbury Center Streetscape Study. | | Town | PW DOT |
| I. | Continue to support other improvements in and near Simsbury Center (such as at the Performing Arts Center) that will help create a vibrant and interesting area. | | Town | |
| J. | If or when needed, explore creation of a Special Services District in order to coordinate marketing, streetscape improvement, and other programs to benefit the Town Center. | | Town | |

| ACTION STEPS Simsbury Center | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| □ | 1. <i>Seek to make state-owned land in Simsbury Center available for local development purposes.</i> | | BOS | EDC |
| □ | 2. <i>Revisit the “form-based code” for Simsbury Center to see if any changes are warranted (such as adding architectural and/or landscape guidelines).</i> | | ZC | LU |
| □ | 3. <i>Investigate ways to provide incentives for development in Simsbury Center.</i> | | BOS | EDC |
| □ | 4. <i>Revisit the goals and recommendations of the 2009 Charrette to see what has been completed and what could be improved for the future.</i> | | ZC | LU DRC |

Tariffville

Tariffville became a village in the early 1800s when the Tariff Manufacturing Company built a mill along the Farmington River to harness the abundant water power. As employment grew, the company built housing to attract workers. At one time, Tariffville had the largest concentration of population (and employment) in Simsbury.

Maintaining and enhancing Tariffville is an important strategy in the POCD.

Historic Register Architecture



Main Street Businesses



Tariffville School



Kayaking In Tariffville Gorge



Goal / Strategies

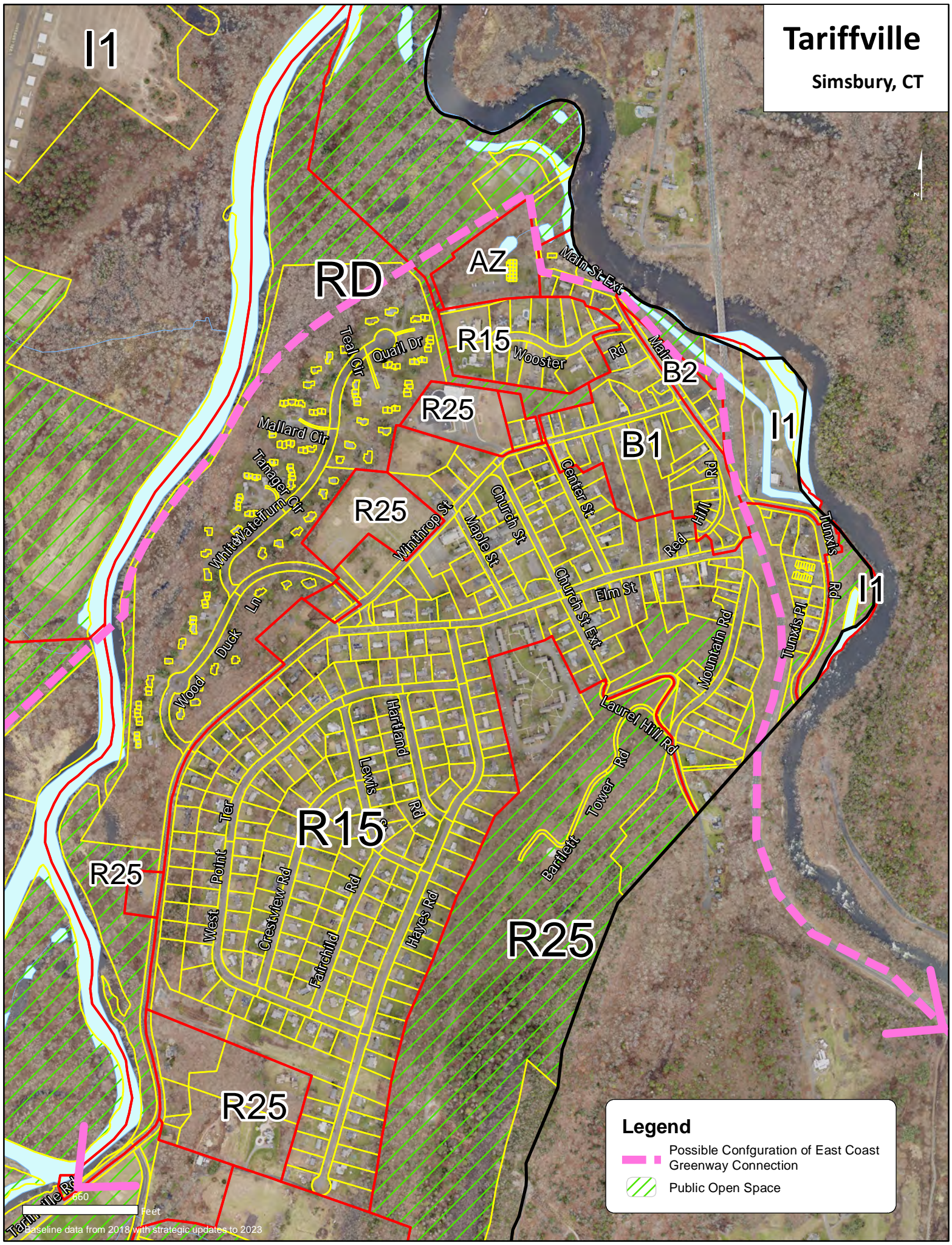
Maintain and enhance Tariffville as a village center in Simsbury with a “sense of place.”

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Tariffville | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|---|---|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Promote development of Tariffville while encouraging preservation of its village ambience. | | ZC | TVA |
| B. | Work cooperatively to increase the economic vitality of Tariffville. | | EDC | TVA |
| C. | Encourage façade improvements for business buildings in Tariffville, including financial incentives. | | EDC | TVA |
| D. | Seek to repair existing sidewalks in poor condition to overcome difficulties with pedestrian circulation in Tariffville. | | PW | CTDOT |
| E. | Seek to install new sidewalks and safe pedestrian ways to interconnect destinations within Tariffville including Tariffville Park, Tariffville School, the mill, the village center, and similar locations. | | PW | CTDOT |

| ACTION STEPS Tariffville | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|-----------------------------|---|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| □ | 1. Undertake a special study of Tariffville to: a. Retain the village characteristics, b. evaluate issues and opportunities in the village, c. review the zoning designations relative to lot sizes to see if yard setbacks and other requirements are reasonable. | | PC | TVA |
| □ | 2. Upon completion of the study, consider establishing a new zoning district for Tariffville to implement recommendations (possibly including establishment of a “village district”). | | ZC | TVA LU |

Tariffville

Simsbury, CT



I1

RD

AZ

R15

B2

R25

B1

I1

R25



R15

R25

R25

R25

Legend

-  Possible Configuration of East Coast Greenway Connection
-  Public Open Space



Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

Weatogue Center

Weatogue Center evolved as a small settlement area near what appears to be a river crossing on early maps. Over time, it became a focal point at the confluence of several roads and the site of a train depot. Maintaining and enhancing Weatogue is an important strategy in the POCD.

Goal / Strategies

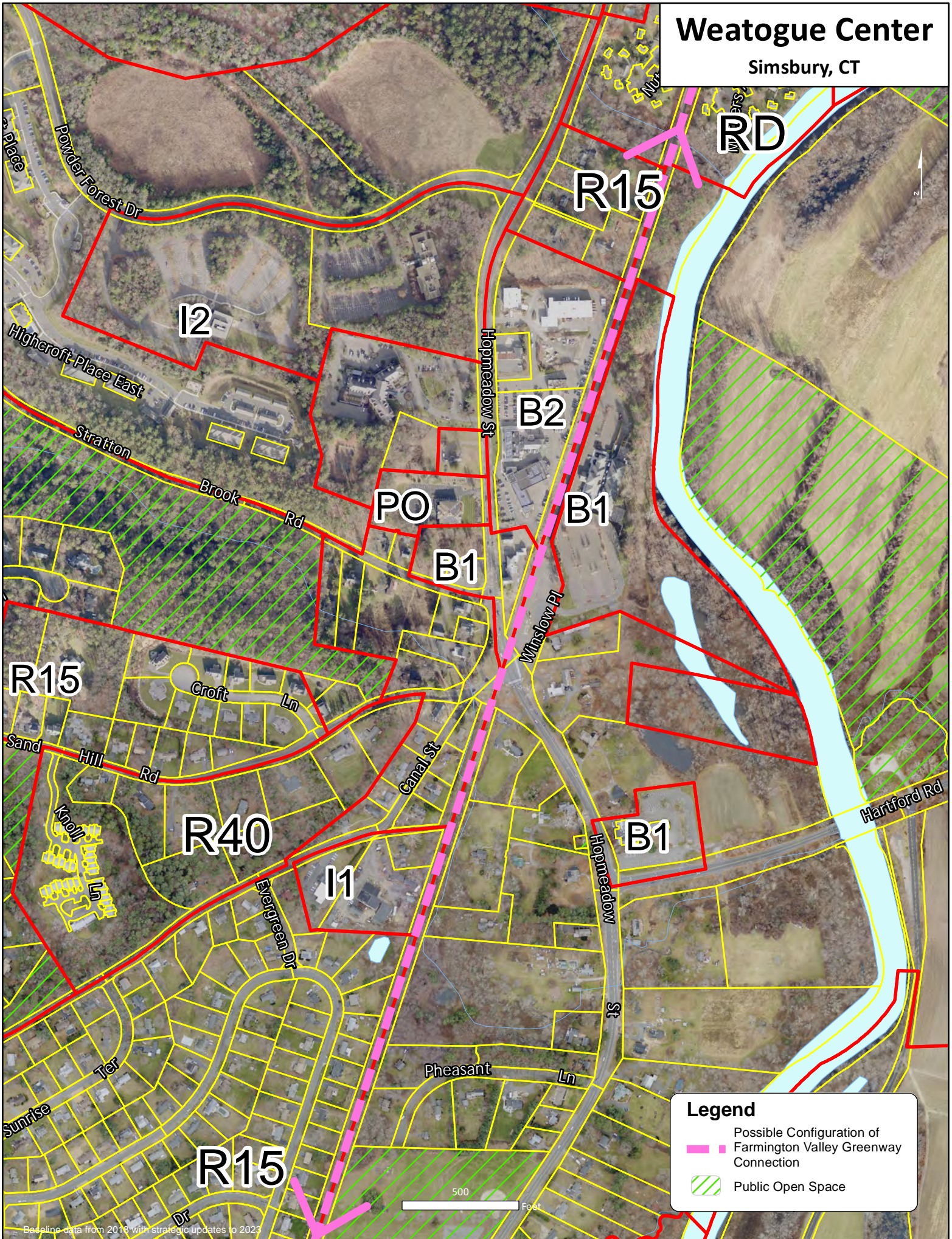
Maintain and enhance Weatogue Center as a unique place in Simsbury with a “sense of place.”

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Weatogue Center | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|---|---|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Promote development of Weatogue Center to establish a pedestrian-friendly place with a “sense of place.” | | ZC | |
| B. | Work cooperatively to increase the economic vitality of Weatogue Center. | | EDC | |
| C. | Require new sidewalks as part of new development to interconnect destinations within Weatogue Center. | | ZC | |
| D. | Work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to address traffic issues on Route 10 and Route 185 while utilizing “context-sensitive” design and other approaches to maintain and enhance the ambience of Weatogue Center. | | PW | |

| ACTION STEPS Weatogue Center | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Undertake a special study of Weatogue Center to evaluate issues and opportunities in the area. | | PC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Upon completion of the study, consider establishing a new zoning district for Weatogue Center to implement recommendations (possibly including establishment of a “village district”). | | ZC | |

Weatogue Center

Simsbury, CT



Legend

- Possible Configuration of Farmington Valley Greenway Connection
- Public Open Space

500 Feet

West Simsbury Center

West Simsbury Center is a unique place within the overall fabric of Simsbury and is appreciated by most residents for its simple charm. The POCD recommends that this charm and ambience be maintained and/or enhanced.

Goal / Strategies

Maintain and enhance West Simsbury Center as a unique place in Simsbury with a “sense of place.”

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS West Simsbury Center | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|---|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | | Leader | Partners |
| A. Promote development of West Simsbury Center to enhance “sense of place.” | | ZC | |

| ACTION STEPS West Simsbury Center | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|---|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | | Leader | Partners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Undertake a special study of West Simsbury Center to evaluate issues and opportunities in the area. | | PC | LU |



Hoskins

The Hoskins area is a modest commercial node that built up around what was a former rail stop (Hoskins Station). The POCD recommends this area continue to be improved and enhanced as a place with a “sense of place.” Redevelopment of the Wagner property would also have a beneficial impact on this area.



Goal / Strategies

Seek to create a place with a “sense of place” in the Hoskins area of Simsbury.

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS West Simsbury Center | | Legend on inside back cover | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|--------|----------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Promote development of the Hoskins area to create a place with a “sense of place.” | | ZC | |

| ACTION STEPS West Simsbury Center | | Legend on inside back cover | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------|----------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Undertake a special study of the Hoskins area in order to evaluate the issues and opportunities. | | PC | LU |

Focus Areas

See pages 60-68 for discussion of Simsbury Center.

See pages 72-73 for discussion of Weatogue Center.

See page 75 for discussion of the Hoskins area.

Hopmeadow Street

Hopmeadow Street (CT Route 10) is the main north-south arterial road in Simsbury. There are business, industrial and residential zones along the roadway and the ambience of the roadway changes quite a bit from the Avon town line to the south through Simsbury Center to the Granby town line to the north. As a result, the POCD suggests some different approaches to different roadway segments.

Due to congestion and other issues along the roadway, this corridor was the subject of a special study funded by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

Goal / Strategies

Ensure development of the different areas along Hopmeadow Street in ways that enhance sense of place.

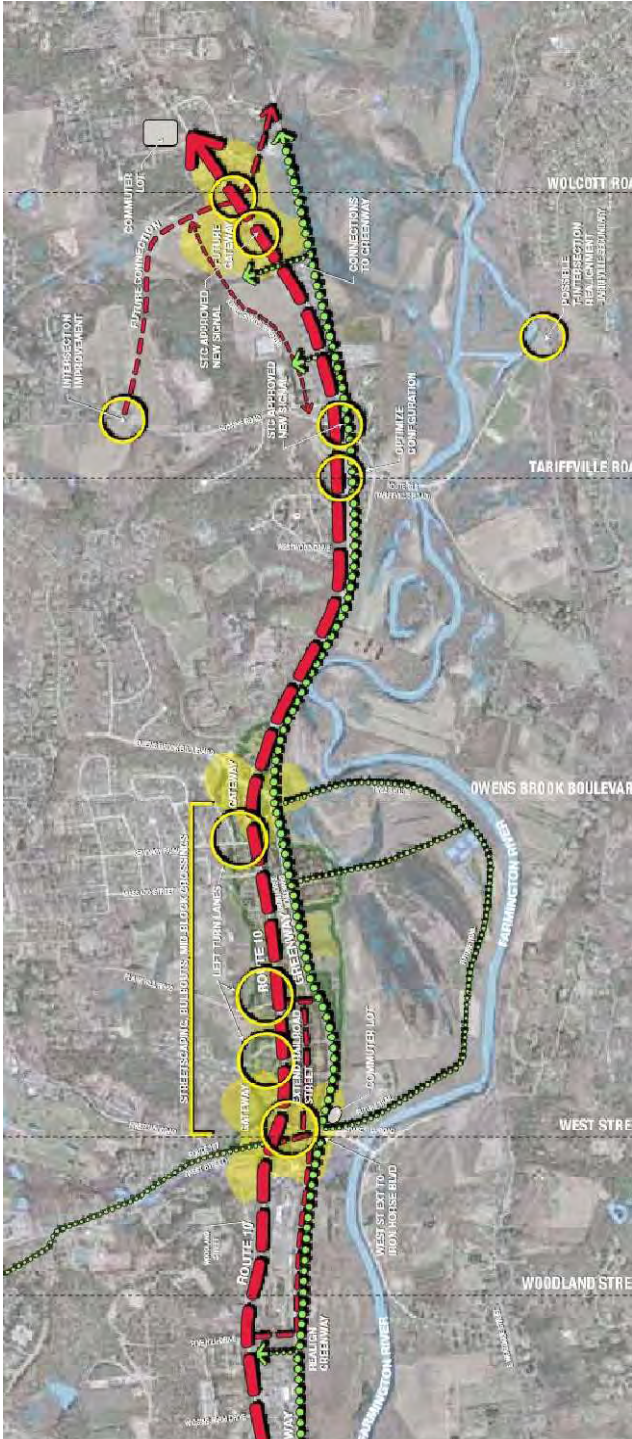
| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Hopmeadow Street (Route 10) | | Legend on inside back cover | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Retain Route 10 as a two-lane roadway to the extent practical and feasible. | | Town | CRCOG DOT |
| B. | Promote the development of all sections of Hopmeadow Street in ways that enhance sense of place. | | ZC | EDC DRB |

| ACTION STEPS Hopmeadow Street (Route 10) | | Legend on inside back cover | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| 1. | <i>Revisit the “form-based code” on Hopmeadow Street in southern Simsbury to determine whether it is accomplishing what was intended and/or what the community desires.</i> | | ZC | LU |

How We Want To Grow – Promote Places With A Sense of Place

Route 10 Study (2014) Illustrative Concepts
 (full report available at Town Hall and/or on CROG website)

**Wolcott Road To
 Ensign-Bickford Complex**



**Ensign-Bickford Complex To
 Avon Town Line**



West Street

West Street has a collection of small commercial enterprises and mixed residential housing types. At one time, property owners on West Street suggested that the Center Zone be expanded to encompass this area. Though such an expansion was not recommended at that time (2007 POCD), West Street would benefit from the enactment of flexible zoning techniques specific to this area.

Goal / Strategies

Guide the development of West Street in ways that enhance sense of place.

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Hopmeadow Street (Route 10) | | Legend on inside back cover | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|--------|----------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| A. Encourage the future development of West Street in ways that enhance sense of place. | | | ZC | |

| ACTION STEPS Hopmeadow Street (Route 10) | | Legend on inside back cover | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|--------|----------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| 1. Undertake a special study for the West Street area | | | PC | LU |



PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Overview

Economic development in Simsbury enhances the community by providing jobs, providing for goods and services, increasing the grand list, and by providing net tax revenue to support local government services.

There have been several changes of note since adoption of the 2017 POCD:

- The COVID-19 pandemic caused a transition to many people working from home and this resulted in reduced office occupancy and reduced demand for office space.
- The transition from physical retail stores to on-line shopping continued and perhaps accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Increased interest in “experiential” retail and dining establishments (activities which cannot be replaced by on-line sources).

So, while Simsbury still encourages and promotes the economic development of the community, this overall goal has become more challenging in the modern world.



Economic development will help Simsbury be more economically sustainable.



Economic development helps support community well-being by providing jobs, goods and services, and tax revenue to the community.

Shopping



Hospitality



Manufacturing / Technology



Corporate Office



How We Want To Grow – Promote Economic Development



In the 2022 on-line survey, 61% of participants gave business and economic development a #1 or #2 ranking when compared to other development topics.

| | #1 / #2 Rank | #3 / #4 Rank |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Center / Villages | 70% | 30% |
| Bus. / Econ. Development | 61% | 40% |
| Sustainability | 47% | 53% |
| Residential Development | 24% | 76% |

Cultural Opportunities

Simsbury has great potential to promote itself as a cultural destination as a result of the Martin Luther King memorial, the Simsbury Free Library, the Simsbury Historical Society, First Church (where Dr. King worshipped), the Meadowood barns, the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center, Eno Hall, the Flower Bridge, the International Skating Center, local farms, the Simsbury Land Trust hiking trails, and other important cultural sites

At the 2023 community meeting, participants felt that:

- net tax revenue which supports Town services was the predominant reason for supporting economic development.
- Simsbury should look for new opportunities for economic development.
- Simsbury should attract businesses who are attracted by the amenities and location and quality of life.
- Simsbury should offer incentives for keeping existing businesses here and not just focus on attracting new businesses.
- Simsbury should offer stronger support for small businesses.
- Simsbury needs to increase diversity/inclusion in town to promote the community as a place for business / economic development.

In addition to business and industrial uses, assisted living facilities and some multi-family developments also pay more in taxes than they require in services and have a positive “net fiscal impact”.

The POCD recommends that new development proposals in Simsbury (perhaps based on size or use category) be required to prepare a “community impact analysis” of some sort so that the overall implications can be evaluated.

But residents have also indicated they don’t want economic development for the sake of taxes if it detracts from or dilutes community ambience. Simsbury has to attract the development that enhances ambience and sense of place.

Since many other communities are attempting to do the same thing, Simsbury must be pro-active in terms of finding approaches that produce results the community will admire and embrace. Simsbury cannot simply sit back and hope for things to happen. Pro-active approaches might include:

- Improving local land use regulations and the associated approval processes.
- Tax incentives may be useful in some circumstances, but should be targeted, transparent, evaluated regularly for effectiveness, and limited to those businesses that “if not for” the incentive would not locate in or invest in Simsbury. Careful use of tax incentives avoids depleting the tax base, unnecessary cost shifting, and ensures the incentives promote economic development.
- Simsbury should continue cultivating a competitive advantage by using its unique assets to attract new investment and support existing businesses.
- Simsbury should continue to improve infrastructure and redeveloped housing to support the needs of workers and businesses, improve streetscape improvements and quality of life assets, including biking and walking, parks and open space, and supporting activities that bring people downtown to help retain businesses by broadening the customer base.

How We Want To Grow – Promote Economic Development

Organizations

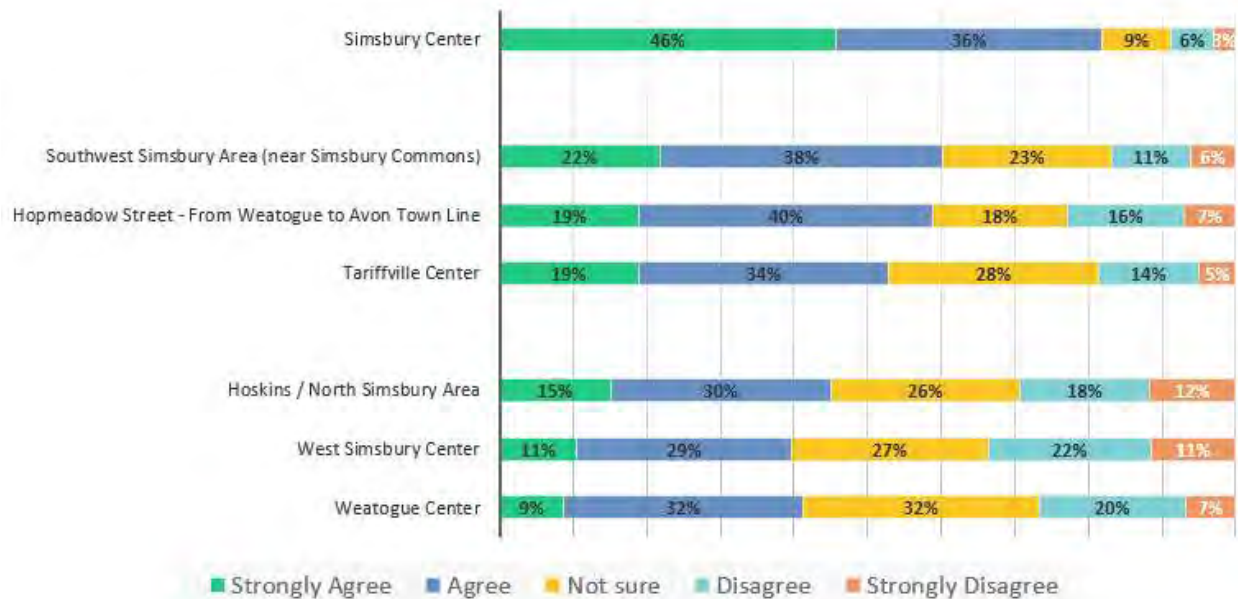
Simsbury has three entities engaged in economic development:

- Economic Development Commission (a task-oriented committee advisory to the Board of Selectmen).
- Main Street Partnership (private non-profit).
- Chamber Of Commerce (private non-profit).

At some point in the future, it may make sense for Simsbury to review the approach of three economic development agencies / entities to ensure that it creates the best overall results for the community.

Location / Type

In the 2022 on-line survey, participants strongly supported Simsbury Center as being a good place for economic development:



In a 2016 telephone survey, participants indicated they wished there were more retail stores (small and large) and more large offices and technology facilities.

| | Too Few | About Right | Too Many | Unsure |
|------------------------------------|---------|-------------|----------|--------|
| Small retail stores or shops | 42% | 53% | 3% | 2% |
| Technology / industrial facilities | 35% | 45% | 5% | 15% |
| Large retail stores | 33% | 57% | 9% | 1% |
| Large business offices | 33% | 51% | 5% | 11% |
| Restaurants | 28% | 68% | 3% | 1% |
| Hotels | 23% | 72% | 2% | 4% |
| Small business offices | 21% | 65% | 6% | 9% |

Goal / Strategies

Foster a dynamic and prosperous climate for economic development in order to provide for goods and services, employment opportunities, and fiscal benefits to the community.

8.1 Promote economic development in Simsbury in order to provide jobs, goods and services, and net tax revenue.

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Promote Economic Development | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--|----------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | Leader | Partners |
| A. Seek to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> retain existing businesses and support their growth and expansion in Simsbury, support and promote tourism, and attract new businesses to Simsbury. | | Town | EDC MSP COC |
| B. Strive to maintain Simsbury’s strong financial situation and reduce the tax burden on property owners by continuing to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grow the grand list, diversify the tax base, attract uses that pay more in taxes than they require in services. | | Town | BOS BOF |
| C. Encourage economic development that harmonizes with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simsbury’s “sense of place” and the natural environment, and surrounding structures and uses. | | Town | EDC MSP COC |
| D. As appropriate, employ incentives for new and expanding businesses, such as property tax abatements and the infrastructure reimbursement fund. | | Town | EDC |
| E. Seek grants that will support economic development efforts. | | Town | EDC |
| F. Consider rezoning land to commercial in the Bushy Hill Lane area (across from Simsbury Commons) contingent upon the submission of a unified master plan that includes all the land this area and demonstrates good access management. | | ZC | |
| G. Promote Simsbury as a cultural, educational, historic, recreational and tourist destination. | | Town | EDC MSP PAC |
| H. Support the efforts of the Simsbury Tourism Committee and the Farmington Valley Visitors Association. | | Town | COC |
| I. Promote recreational and cultural opportunities such as at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center. | | PAC | Town |

(continued on next page)

Economic Development Plan

Granby

Simsbury, CT








East Granby

Bloomfield

Cantor

Avon

Legend

-  Simsbury Center
-  Other Business Zone
-  Industrial Zone
-  Special Zone (such as PAD)
-  Non-Business Zone
-  Open Space / Institutional Land within Economic Development Areas
-  Limit of Possible Sewer Service Area

4,100 Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

How We Want To Grow – Promote Economic Development

(continued from previous page)

| ACTION STEPS Promote Economic Development | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--|---|----------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| ❑ | 1. Review the advantages and disadvantages of using three economic development organizations for Simsbury. | | BOS | EDC MSP COC |
| ❑ | 2. Create a written economic development strategy that can be used as an annual work program and to measure economic development results in Simsbury. | | BOS | EDC |
| ❑ | 3. Consider the merits of adopting a Planned Development District (PDD) regulation to replace the Planned Area Development (PAD) regulation. | | ZC | EDC MSP |
| ❑ | 4. Review the “home office” and other home-based occupation regulations to see if they reflect the new realities of people working from home. | | ZC | EDC |
| ❑ | 5. Review the sign regulations to see if they can be streamlined to better meet business and community desires. | | ZC | DRB COC |
| ❑ | 6. Adopt a requirement that property owners and/or developers be required to present a “community impact analysis” to determine how the proposed development (or zone change) will affect fiscal and economic parameters. | | ZC | EDC |
| ❑ | 7. Evaluate the creation of a State of Connecticut Cultural District and Commission to help promote Simsbury as a cultural destination. | | EDC | BOS |

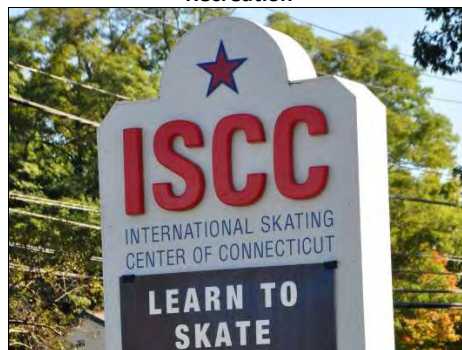
Hospitality



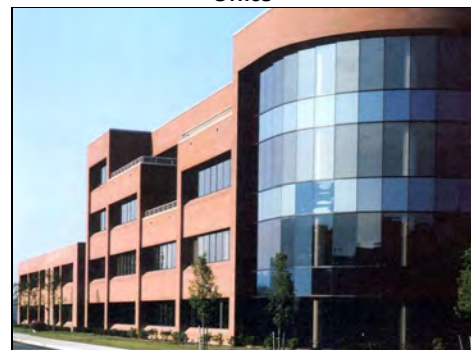
Retail



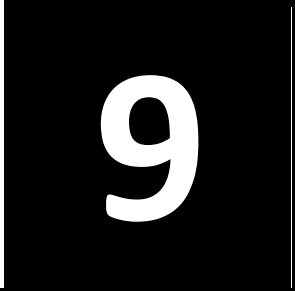
Recreation



Office



ADDRESS HOUSING NEEDS



Overview

Whether counted by population or by land area or by overall impression, Simsbury is a primarily residential community and the primary use of Simsbury’s residential land is single-family neighborhoods. Even though apartments and condominiums had been added over the years, non-single family dwelling units account for only about 19 percent of all housing units.

However, the POCD recognizes that, due to an aging population and changing housing preferences and other factors, single-family homes do not meet everyone’s housing needs. The POCD recognizes that there is an interest and a need for more housing options and choices, including housing that is affordable – now and in the future.



Providing for a more diverse (and affordable) housing stock is a key initiative to further Simsbury’s goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Smaller Single Family



Larger Single Family



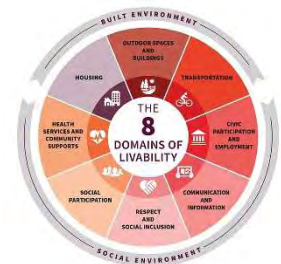
Condominiums



Apartments



Having a diverse housing stock will support the long-term well-being of existing and future residents.



Housing choices and options will enhance the livability of Simsbury for all.

How We Want To Grow – Address Housing Needs



In a public meeting held as part of the planning process, housing needs were identified as one of the top three issues of concern to participants.

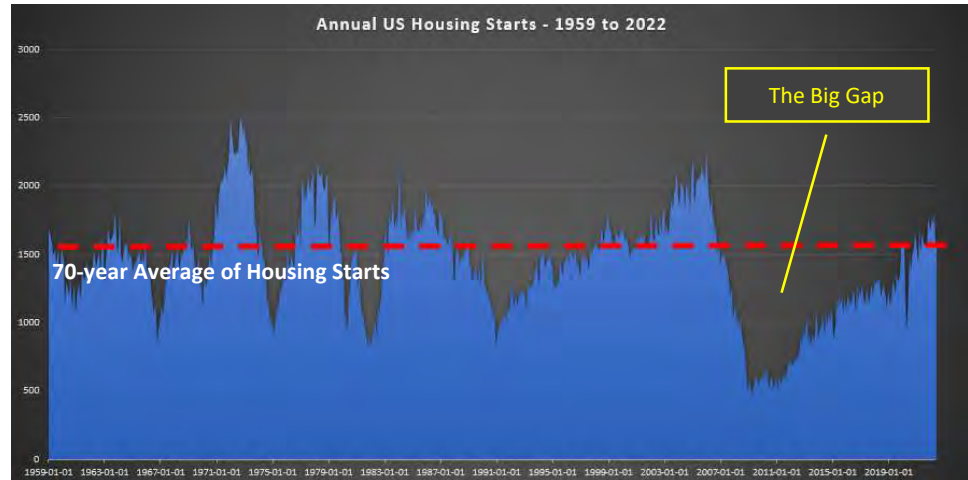


In the 2022 on-line survey, about 90% of participants said they lived in a single-family house. About 10% lived in a condominium or apartment.

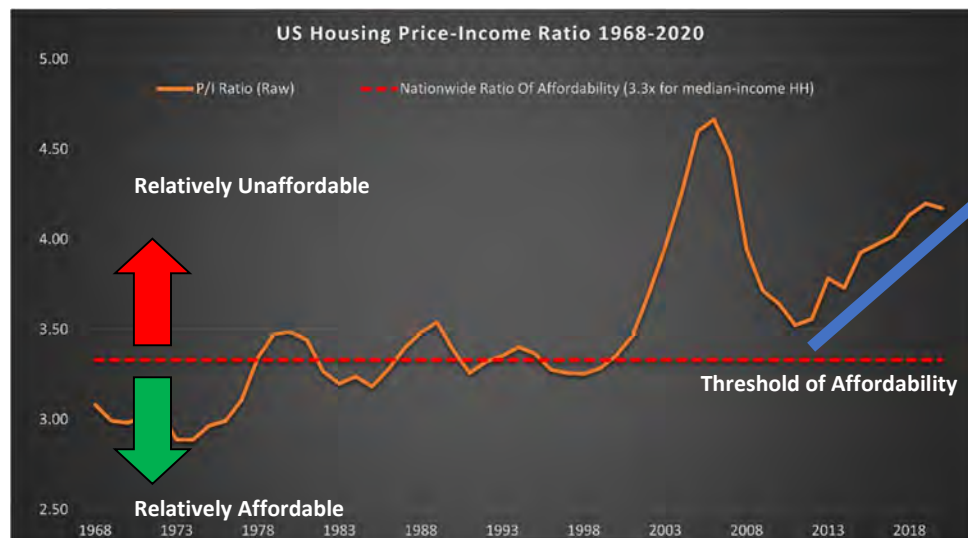
80% of participants thought they would still be living in Simsbury in 10 years.

About 80% of participants thought they would be living in a single-family house in 10 years (in Simsbury or elsewhere). About 17% thought they would be living in some form of multi-family housing (apartment or condominium).

Much has changed in the past 20 years or so with regard to housing. Economic conditions after 2007 slowed housing development, particularly single family housing development and housing demand built up during that period. It has been estimated that at least 12 million fewer housing units were built in the United States compared to historical averages.



The result of this production shortfall was to turn a housing affordability situation which had been in existence for some time into what some describe as a housing crisis. The following graphic shows how the ratio of median house prices to median incomes in America has grown ever higher over time. Prior to 1980 or so, the median housing price was less than three times the median family income and was relatively affordable. However, since that time, the ratio has increased and housing has become relatively unaffordable.



Federal Reserve

How We Want To Grow – Address Housing Needs

Many people need or want a more diverse array of housing types and a variety of housing options and choices (including less expensive options and choices):

- People may no longer want to maintain a single-family home.
- Older residents may struggle to afford housing.
- Older residents may not want to move out of the community.
- Older residents may still want to contribute to their community.
- Younger households may want to live in the community they grew up in.
- Younger households may be attracted to Simsbury for the same reasons existing residents were.
- People working for Simsbury employers may want to live here also.
- Simsbury renters may become future home buyers.
- Such housing can be “economic development” to Simsbury since it typically produces more in tax revenue than it requires in service costs.



Since at least 2007, the POCD has recommended that Simsbury “diversify its housing portfolio” to address different housing needs such as those described above.

Community Discussion

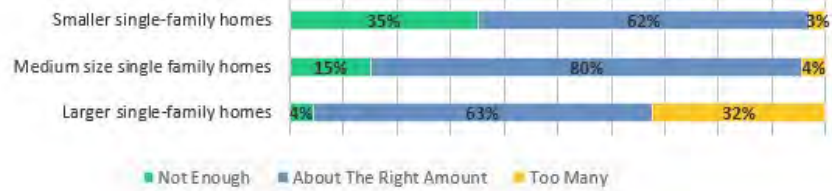
In the 2023 community meeting held as part of preparing the POCD, the discussion of housing affordability and housing needs included:

1. Affordability has become a critical issue in Simsbury (as well as regionally and nationally):
 - For overall diversity now and in the future.
 - Also for people who already live here.
2. Overall, affordability is an issue everywhere, not just in Simsbury.
3. Aging in place is also becoming more of a challenge given housing price inflation and overall cost of living.
4. How can Simsbury be more inclusive? How can we broaden the vision?
5. What can / should Simsbury do?
6. Could we find locations to provide for affordable housing? \
7. Years ago, there was a housing partnership that created the Eno Farms development.
8. Are accessory dwelling units, a good way for Simsbury to proceed.
9. People have misconceptions about what affordable housing is.
10. Also, have to consider state regulations such as CGS 8–30g.
11. How much naturally occurring affordable housing is there in Simsbury?

How We Want To Grow – Address Housing Needs

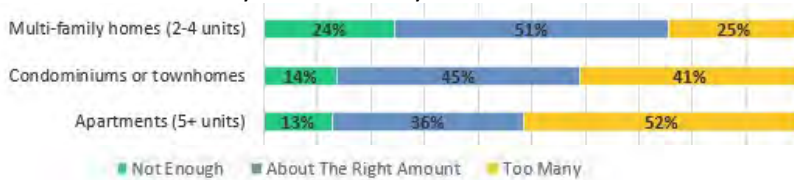
Housing Choices And Options

Simsbury residents are aware of (and expressed interest in) some different housing options. For example, in the 2022 on-line survey, participants were asked about the amount of different housing types in Simsbury. With regard to single-family housing, about 35% of participants were interested in having a larger number of smaller single-family homes.

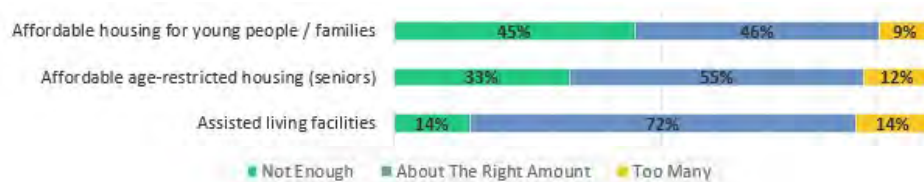


Although multi-family housing may be the type of housing best aligned with helping address future housing needs:

- about 52% of participants felt Simsbury had too many apartments, and
- about 41% felt Simsbury had too many condominiums.



In terms of affordable housing, about 45% of participants felt that Simsbury did not have enough housing affordable to young people and families and about 33% felt Simsbury did not have enough housing affordable to seniors.



In the 2016 telephone survey, residents were also asked whether they felt Simsbury had too many, about the right amount, or too few of different types of housing. Overall, it seems that participants, at that time, also felt there may be too few affordable housing units for elderly persons and for first-time buyers.

| | Too Few | About Right | Too Many | Unsure |
|--|---------|-------------|----------|--------|
| Housing affordable for first-time buyers | 48% | 39% | 3% | 12% |
| Housing affordable for elderly persons | 44% | 33% | 4% | 20% |
| Multi-family homes | 20% | 44% | 21% | 15% |
| Single-family homes | 6% | 83% | 4% | 8% |

Housing Affordability

For many years now, housing affordability has been a concern in Simsbury and many other communities for at least two reasons.

One reason is that people need housing that meets their needs. Housing that is priced beyond people’s ability to afford it creates a challenges for people seeking to find housing, companies trying to find workers, and other issues. When people have to live one place and work in another, it creates congestion on the roadways and contributes to pollution. It affects the quality of life for the people directly affected and others.

Another reason is that a lack of affordable housing can result in a community being subject to the “affordable housing appeals procedure” (codified as CGS Section 8-30g).

Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (CGS 8-30g)

Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes provides that a private developer may be able to over-ride local zoning regulations if less than 10 percent of the housing stock in a community meets State criteria as:

- Governmentally assisted affordable housing,
- Funded by housing programs for low / moderate income occupants, or
- Units deed-restricted to sell or rent at affordable levels.

The CT Department of Housing only counts 5% of the housing units in Simsbury as meeting the above criteria and thus being listed on the Affordable Housing Appeals list (see summary of 2023 Simsbury inventory on page 93). Since less than 10 percent of the housing stock in Simsbury meets the State criteria, a private developer may be able to over-ride local zoning regulations unless there is a substantial threat to public health or public safety or other legal considerations.

For a proposed development to be able to over-ride local zoning, at least 30 percent of the units in the proposed development must be deed-restricted to affordable levels for at least 40 years. Half of the affordable units must be set aside for households earning 80 percent or less of the area median income and the other half must be set aside for households earning 60 percent or less of the area median income.

Historic Affordable Housing

It is worth noting that Simsbury’s history has at least two examples (Tariff Manufacturing and Ensign-Bickford) where permanent affordable housing was made available to meet company needs and community needs.

In addition, Simsbury had a long history of tobacco farming where seasonal housing was provided to address housing needs.

Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing

There may be some housing units in Simsbury which naturally sell or rent at an affordable price due to size, age, condition, location, and/or other factors. However, such units are not counted on the State’s Affordable Housing Inventory unless they are deed-restricted to sell or rent at affordable prices in the future.

What is “Affordable Housing”?

At its most basic level, housing is considered affordable if a household spends less than 30% of its annual income on it. In other words, a household earning \$100,000 per year would have housing expenses of \$30,000 per year or less (\$2,500 per month).

However, this POCD (and most public policy initiatives) focus on the unique challenges faced by households earning low to moderate incomes – generally defined as 80% or less of the area median income. The reason is that, if housing is in short supply and priced for the median income and above, households earning low to moderate incomes struggle to find housing they can afford.

It is important to note that, according to CGS Section 8-30g and CGS Section 8-39a, the term “affordable housing” is housing that is deed-restricted to sell or rent at restricted prices to eligible households. The restriction on the sale price is so that housing will be affordable for the next household that occupies it and the ones after that.

For a household to be eligible to purchase or rent an affordable unit, they could not earn more than the following in 2023:

| ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS | 1 person | 2 people | 3 people | 4 people |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 80% of AMI | \$ 62,600 | \$ 71,550 | \$ 80,500 | \$ 89,400 |

Whenever an affordable is sold or rented, the sale price or rental rate is calibrated to the number of bedrooms and the then prevailing median income in the area.

In Simsbury in 2023, these parameters translate to about the following rental rates and sales prices (assuming a 20% downpayment and a 6% interest rate fixed for 30 years) using the State methodology:

| MAXIMUM PRICE | 1 BR | 2 BR | 3 BR | 4 BR |
|----------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Average Occupancy Assumed By DOH | 1.5 persons | 3 persons | 4.5 persons | 6 persons |
| Maximum Sales Price | \$ 183,269 | \$ 215,344 | \$ 243,464 | \$ 261,915 |
| Max. Monthly Gross Rent | \$ 1,677 | \$ 2,013 | \$ 2,325 | \$ 2,575 |

What Affordable Housing Does Simsbury Have?

While Simsbury has some housing units that may sell or rent at affordable prices, those units can increase in value in the future if they are not deed-restricted to sell or rent at affordable prices. That is why the Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure is based on deed-restricted housing.

If Simsbury had an inclusionary zoning requirement, perhaps 10-20% of the units in a number of recent developments could have been deed-restricted as “affordable housing.”

The following pictures show examples of housing in Simsbury that meets the State criteria as “affordable housing” (see 2023 listing in sidebar on page 93).

Ojakian Commons



Willow Arms



Owen Murphy Apartments



Virginia Connolly Residence



Housing Opportunities

One of the ways that Simsbury could participate in providing more housing opportunities might be to find ways to provide Town-owned land for the establishment of small-scale affordable housing developments.

In fact, Simsbury could seek ways to combine the desire for open space preservation with the need for land for affordable housing.

For example, some communities analyze potential open space acquisitions to see if there are some areas which could be used for addressing housing needs. Some communities find there are areas of existing open spaces that can be used for housing.

Such approaches can harmonize both goals and result in a win-win for the environment and for housing needs.

This may be a challenge for some people since, for many years, communities often generated support for open space acquisitions by characterizing housing as a negative.

Affordable Housing Plan

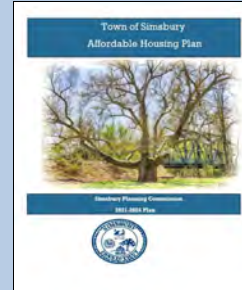
As stated in the foreword of the Affordable Housing Plan:

The creation of additional affordable housing units in Simsbury will benefit the community as a whole. More affordable housing units diversifies the housing stock in Simsbury. It creates options for citizens who choose to live in town whether its first home owners, renters, seniors wishing to age in place, or individuals that would otherwise not have the economic means to consider living in this community.

The Planning Commission is fully committed to assuring the goals and objectives concerning housing outlined in this plan and the Plan of Conservation and Development are met.

2021 Affordable Housing Plan

In 2021, Simsbury adopted an Affordable Housing Plan to recommend ways to increase the number of affordable housing units. Adoption of this Plan was required by State law and Simsbury is also required to review and update that Plan every five years thereafter.



The overall goal of the 2021 Affordable Housing Plan Was to “the incremental increase of affordable housing in town ... by 1 percentage point (or 90 units) over the next 5 years.”

Some strategies recommended in the 2021 Affordable Housing Plan included:

1. Zoning Commission

- a. Updating regulations (including the Town Center Code) to incentivize / require a set aside of “affordable” units in new residential development.
- b. Permitting two family dwelling units by Special Exception in logical locations (such as where water and sewer services exist).

2. Board Of Selectmen

- a. Establishing an advisory Affordable Housing Committee.
- b. Investigating whether there are town owned properties that can support the development of affordable housing and making such land available.
- c. Adopting a policy requiring that properties acquired through tax foreclosures be deed-restricted as affordable housing.
- d. Developing an affordable housing ordinance as is required by Simsbury’s participation in the Small Cities Community Block Grant Program.

3. Planning Commission

- a. Amend subdivision Regulations to require a percentage of new developments be deed restricted as affordable units.

4. Other

- a. Helping the Housing Authority explore expansion of the number of units at their facility.
- b. Re-establishing the program which provided financial assistance to low / moderate income households for rehabilitation of residential structures (and using CDBG program income to assist with creation of affordable housing units).
- c. Educating the community about affordable housing,

How We Want To Grow – Address Housing Needs

To enable opportunities to create affordable housing units, the Zoning Commission adopted a Workforce Housing Overlay Zone (WHOZ) in 2013. This regulation was used to approve the Cambridge Crossing development on Hoskins Road and the Hendricks Lane development on Climax Road.

In terms of existing affordable housing units, the State recognizes Simsbury as having 463 units as of 2023:

- 289 units of assisted housing which received state/federal funding (Simsbury Housing Authority is one example).
- 28 units which are deed-restricted to sell or rent at prices at prices which keep them affordable to households earning 80% or less of the area median income.
- 60 rental units occupied by low/moderate income households receiving rental assistance payments from the state or federal government.
- 86 homes which were purchased by households who qualified for and used a CHFA or USDA mortgage.

The State Department of Housing reports Simsbury's affordable housing percentage as 5.08% based on the 2010 Census housing count. When the 2020 Census is released, it is anticipated that Simsbury's percentage will decrease unless more units are recognized. Either number is below the 10% threshold where Simsbury would be exempt from the Affordable Housing Appeals Procedure (see page 89 of the POCD for a summary of CGS 8-30g).

Since 2010, the major changes in Simsbury's affordable housing percentage have occurred due to:

- The addition of 129 assisted units due to state and federal funding:
 - Ojakian Commons – a 48-unit private development for lower income persons with multiple sclerosis.
 - Willow Arms – an 81-unit apartment development originally built in 1982 which was converted to a mutual housing arrangement.
- The inclusion of 83 additional units because the renters or purchasers used rental assistance payments or CHFA mortgages.

Assisted Housing (289 units)

- Dr. Owen Murphy Apartments (40)
- Dr. Owen Murphy Apartments Ext. (30)
- Eno Farms (50)
- Ojakian Commons (48)
- Virginia Connolly (40)
- Willow Arms (81)

Deed-Restricted (28 units)

- Cambridge Crossing (4 units) expiring in 2051
- Hendricks Lane (6 units) expiring in 2061
- Aspen Green at 20 Hopmeadow Street (18 units) expiring in 2035

This POCD chapter is designated as the 2023-28 Affordable Housing Plan for Simsbury as provided in CGS Section 8-30j.

Goal / Strategies

Provide for a range of housing choices for people of all ages and economic circumstances while respecting the safe, healthful, aesthetic and distinctive living environment in Simsbury.

9.1 Increase the number of affordable housing units in Simsbury.

9.2 Seek ways to help meet the diverse housing needs of present and future residents.

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Address Housing Needs | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--|----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| | | Leader | Partners |
| A. Promote more housing choices in Simsbury for lower and moderate income households, including those at 60% AMI and below. | | Town | SHA |
| B. Help the Housing Authority explore renovation of existing units and expansion of the number of units they manage. | | Town | SHA |
| C. Educate the community about affordable housing needs and opportunities., | | AHC | |
| D. Seek opportunities to allow smaller lots and/or more units on existing residential properties, especially if one of the units will be deed-restricted as affordable. | | Town | ZC SHA |
| E. Provide for housing choices for seniors who wish to live in Simsbury, including those of limited means. | | Town | ZC SSS |
| F. Continue to support seniors who wish to “age in place” in their current home. | | ZC | |
| G. Continue to seek ways to simplify regulations for accessory dwelling units provided one unit is owner-occupied. | | ZC | |
| H. Consider ways to incentivize the provision of smaller houses (perhaps by regulating the amount of floor area rather than the number of units). | | ZC | |
| I. Consider allowing two-family dwelling units by Special Permit in logical locations where public water and sewers are available. | | ZC PC | |
| J. Consider adopting a requirement that any future multi-family housing implement “universal design” so that such units will be habitable by people of all ages and abilities. | | ZC | |
| K. Seek grants and loans in order to re-establish the program which provided financial assistance to low / moderate income households for rehabilitation of existing housing units | | AHC | LU |

(continued on next page)

Granby

Residential Development Plan

Simsbury, CT



East Granby

Bloomfield











Avon

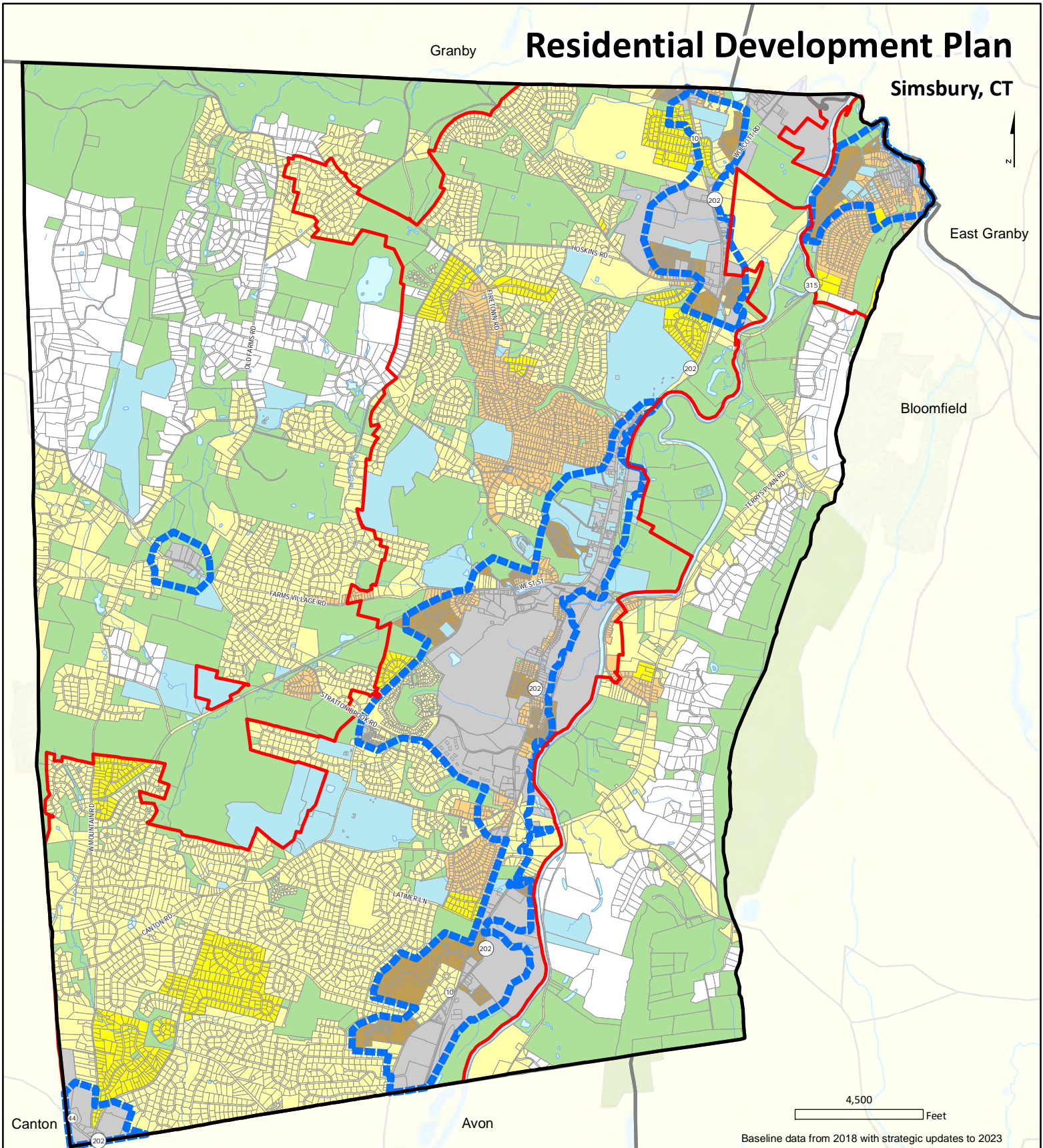
Canton

4,500 Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

Legend

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|--|
|  | Currently Non-Residential Zones |  | Moderate Density Residential Zones |  | Limit of Possible Sewer Service |
|  | Lowest Density Residential Zones |  | Higher Density Residential Zones |  | Possible Housing Opportunity Areas (excluding wetlands, floodplains, etc.) |
|  | Low Density Residential Zones |  | Special Residential Zones |  | Open Space Land |
| | | | |  | Institutional Land |

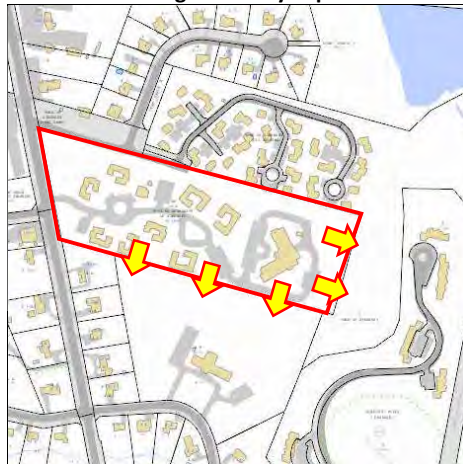


How We Want To Grow – Address Housing Needs

(continued from previous page)

| ACTION STEPS Address Housing Needs | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Establish an advisory Affordable Housing Committee. | | BOS | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Adopt zoning regulations to require new residential development to set-aside units for low/moderate income households. | | ZC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Revise the Town Center Code to incentivize / require set-aside of affordable units for low/moderate income households. | | ZC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Amend Subdivision Regulations to require a percentage of new developments be deed restricted as affordable units | | PC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Revisit the payment-in-lieu-of-taxes arrangement with the Housing Authority so that those funds can be applied toward maintenance, improvements, and programs. | | Town | SHA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Investigate whether there are Town owned properties that can support the development of affordable housing and making such land available. | | BOS | ZC PC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Adopt a policy requiring that properties acquired through tax foreclosures be deed-restricted as affordable housing. | | BOS | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Consider establishing zoning districts in specific locations to enable or require developments containing affordable units. | | ZC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Consider increasing the allowable building height for developments containing affordable units. | | ZC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Consider adopting an overlay zone where a development containing affordable housing can be approved by Special Permit in the identified housing opportunity focus areas. | | ZC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Prepare and adopt a standard "housing affordability plan" so that future deed-restricted developments will be subject to the same procedures unless modified by the Town | | ZC | LU |

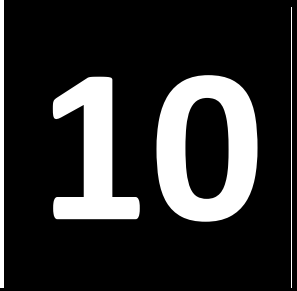
Possible Housing Authority Expansion Areas



Current Housing Authority Units



PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCY



Overview

While sustainability and resiliency have been made over-arching principles of this POCD (see page 8), this POCD chapter identifies strategies to promote:

- Environmental sustainability (including energy efficiency).
- Ecologic sustainability.
- Economic sustainability.
- Social sustainability.

In the 2023 community meeting conducted as part of the POCD process, participants noted:

- Sustainability needs to be a part of everything in the POCD.
- Simsbury needs to become more aware of the overall climate crisis and act in ways which are more efficient, enhance building performance, include vehicles/transportation, and renewables.
- The sense of sustainability should guide community growth.
- Local food/local farms are important.



Sustainability and resiliency – whether ecological, economic, or social – are important to Simsbury.



Being a more sustainable and more resilient community will enhance overall community well-being.

Sustainability



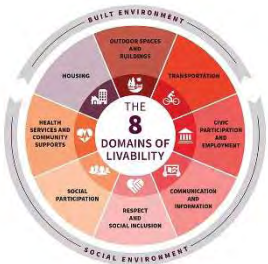
Resiliency



Sustainability



Resiliency



Being a more sustainable and more resilient community will enhance the long-term livability of Simsbury.



In the 2016 telephone survey, participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

84%

Simsbury should be a leader in promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy in Town buildings.

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 25% |
| Agree | 59% |
| Not sure | 6% |
| Disagree | 8% |
| Strongly disagree | 1% |

86%

Simsbury should encourage residents and businesses to be energy efficient and use renewable energy.

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 25% |
| Agree | 61% |
| Not sure | 4% |
| Disagree | 8% |
| Strongly disagree | 2% |

Sustainability

Energy Conservation – Simsbury is very fortunate to have an active and dedicated Sustainability Committee which has worked diligently since its establishment in 2008 to promote energy conservation and sustainability.

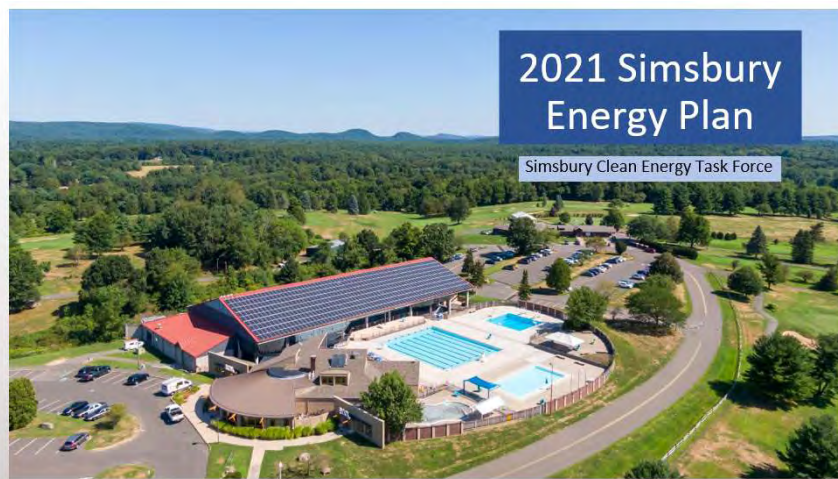
Over the years, the Sustainability Committee has undertaken a number of initiatives and had a number of accomplishments:

- acquiring 20 percent of the town’s energy through renewable sources.
- promoting the installation of solar arrays on residential, commercial, institutional, and Town buildings.
- converting streetlights to more efficient LED fixtures.
- Installing an electric vehicle charging station at Town Hall.

With preparation of the 2021 Simsbury Energy Plan, the Sustainability Committee is interested in helping Simsbury residents, businesses and government accelerate the transition from conventional energy approaches to more sustainable approaches:

- Reduce the amount of energy used through reduction, conservation, efficiency, and electrification.
- Source the energy we do use from clean, renewable sources with the goal of using 50% clean energy by 2030 and 100% clean energy by 2040.

The 2021 Simsbury Energy Plan, which is hereby incorporated into this chapter of the POCD as a reference, identifies five areas of actions:



How We Want To Grow – Promote Sustainability And Resiliency

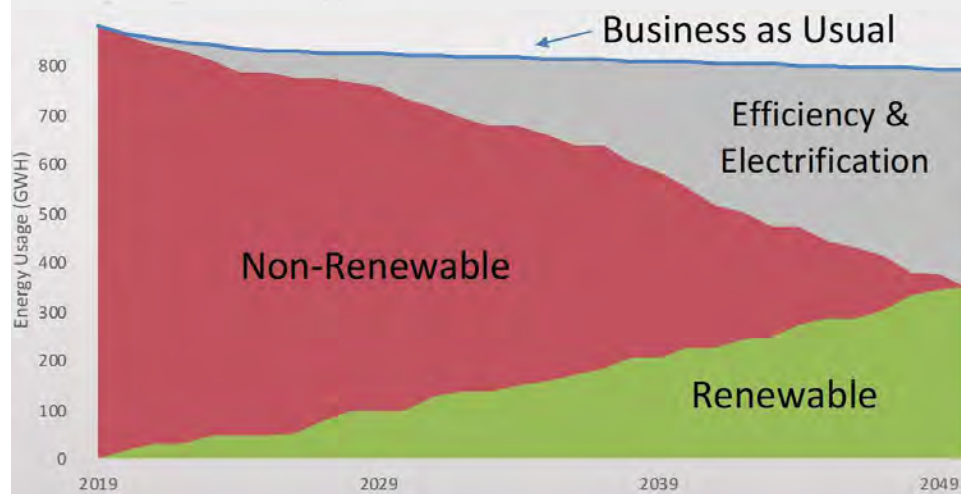
The following graphic in the Energy Plan suggests how Simsbury could transition to 100% renewable energy by 2050:

The transition to 100% renewable energy is shown over time in the chart below. The left end of this chart shows our total energy consumption (i.e., 884 GWH) and where we get this energy today. These sources include:

- A small amount of local solar
- Heating oil and natural gas for heating and cooking
- Gasoline to power our vehicles and
- The regional grid, consisting of non-renewable fuels (primarily natural gas,) nuclear and some solar and wind

Over time, as we transition our heating to electric heat pumps, our consumption of oil and natural gas declines dramatically. Similarly, as we transition to electric vehicles, our consumption of gasoline goes away.

In addition, over time, we get our energy from clean sources, including local solar and a clean regional grid, consisting primarily of solar and offshore wind.



As part of this transition, the Town and Board of Education could lead by example by:

- building (any new buildings or major renovations of existing buildings) to a high efficiency standard (e.g., net zero or passive house),
- using all-electric systems, and
- making buildings and sites ready for solar generation and for use of electric vehicles.

Clean Energy Transition

The transition to clean energy affects all aspects of town operations and presents an opportunity to improve energy efficiency, lower costs and improve public health. There is a role to be played by residents, businesses and town and school staff. Key measures include:

- Encourage all new buildings to use all-electric heating, cooling, cooking and hot water systems, and be built to a high level of energy efficiency.
- Promote energy efficiency in existing buildings (e.g., weatherization, energy retrofits),
- Replace all fossil fuel heating systems with efficient, electric heat pumps.
- Promote solar energy on rooftops, canopies and appropriate land parcels

The POCD recommends these types of approaches.

Solar Generation

There is a major solar facility in the north end of Simsbury (on 130 acres of former tobacco land) that has the potential to supply up to about 26 megawatts of electricity. That is enough to power about 5,000 housing units.

How We Want To Grow – Promote Sustainability And Resiliency

Natural Resources And Open Space

The sections of the POCD on “Protect Natural Resources And Enhance Ecological Health” (page 29) and “Preserve Open Space” (page 35) are related to sustainability and resiliency.

Electric Vehicle Charging

Electric vehicles are increasing in use (and popularity) and, in the next 15-20 years, there may come a time when a new vehicle fueled by gasoline will no longer be available.

In order to help create the infrastructure system which will be needed to support electric vehicles, the Zoning Regulations should be modified to:

- require them at business locations, institutions, and multi-family developments, and
- to allow them on residential properties.

Climate Change – Climate change is also part of the discussion of sustainability. Climate change has been occurring over time because of the use of “fossil fuels” (energy sequestered over millennia) at a rapid pace and in a way that the results in the emission of heat and other negative effects. Climate change has resulted in global warming, sea level rise, more frequent and more intense storm events, habitat changes, and other effects.

Fortunately, many of the energy conservation strategies also have a climate change benefit but only if they are implemented. The POCD promotes implementation of the 2021 Simsbury Energy Plan and other strategies that will address the root causes of climate change.

Water Conservation – Even though Connecticut has typically received 48 inches or so of rainfall annually, the state recently experienced a drought and water restrictions were established into a number of communities. There has been a growing awareness for many years about the need for water conservation and building codes now require and appliance manufacturers now provide low usage fixtures.

The next major area of improvement comes from changing individual behavior. Simsbury should continue to promote water conservation among residents, businesses and government to be as sustainable as possible.

Waste Reduction / Recycling – Simsbury has made great strides in recent decades in terms of transitioning from a “Town dump” to participating in a waste management process that focuses on converting trash to energy and recycling many waste materials.

The next major area of improvement comes from changing individual and collective behaviors to reduce the amount of trash entering the waste stream. The Town and Schools can lead by example by reducing food waste in public buildings and promoting reduction, composting and recycling. Simsbury should continue to promote waste reduction / recycling among residents, businesses and government.

Overall Sustainability – Becoming more sustainable will be enhanced by educational efforts in all areas. People (and businesses) learn and practice behaviors over long periods of time and so it will take multi-pronged efforts to instill new behaviors. Simsbury should continue educating residents about sustainability concepts and how to be as sustainable as possible.

Resiliency

As recurring storms and other events continue and as the world continues to change in ways that we cannot fully envision today (climate change, severe storms, health pandemics, economic upheavals etc.), it is important Simsbury address the issues raised and learn to become an even more resilient community in order to be able to adapt to new challenges and opportunities. Simsbury should continue to identify possible hazards so preparation (and mitigation, if possible) can be made beforehand.

In terms of natural hazards, Simsbury continues to participate in the preparation of a regional hazard mitigation plan (CRCOG, 2019) and is implementing various recommendations intended to:

- 1. Reduce the potential for loss of life and property as a result of flooding.**
 - a. Incorporate hazard mitigation strategies into new/existing projects.
 - b. Correct undersized drainage systems in repetitively flooded areas.
 - c. Investigate raising road elevations to maintain access.
 - d. Ensure the protection of private properties at greatest risk.
- 2. Reduce the potential for loss of life and property as a result of winter storms and wind.**
 - a. Continue to trim/remove hazard trees.
 - b. Provide planning and equipment for traffic rerouting.
 - c. Minimize risks vulnerable to populations as a result of power failure.
 - d. Coordinate back-up communications.
- 3. Address other important goals and objectives.**
 - a. Help local small businesses prevent the accidental release of chemicals stored at their facilities during natural hazard events.
 - b. Conduct a wildfire vulnerability and needs assessment.
 - c. Approve a new Drought Ordinance.

The same approach of identification and preparation holds for longer term issues as well (such as possible global climate change and more extreme storm events).

Goal / Strategies

Continue progress toward making Simsbury an even more sustainable and resilient community.

10.1 Encourage sustainable development practices.

10.2 Enhance efforts to be a resilient community.

How We Want To Grow – Promote Sustainability And Resiliency

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Promote Sustainability And Resiliency | | Priority | <i>Legend on inside back cover</i> | |
|---|--|-----------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Continue to promote energy conservation, energy efficiency, and the implementation of sustainable energy solutions in Simsbury. | High | SC | |
| B. | Transition Town and School vehicles to renewable energy (battery electric and plug-in hybrids). | | SC | |
| C. | Encourage all new buildings to be highly energy efficient, employ all-electric heating and cooling, and be ready for both solar and electric vehicles (EVs). | | SC | |
| D. | Promote energy efficiency in existing buildings (weatherization and energy retrofits) and advance the electrification of heating systems. | | SC | |
| E. | Promote the responsible deployment of solar energy (rooftop, canopy and ground mount) including a public discussion of land appropriate for solar development. | | SC | |
| F. | Discourage the expansion of residential natural gas heating in town. | | SC | |
| G. | Encourage water conservation especially since most areas of Simsbury rely on groundwater for domestic use. | | Town | |
| H. | Promote the use of drought resistant (and native) plant materials and encourage reduced lawn size, lawns mown less frequently, and avoiding lawn irrigation | | CWC | |
| I. | Encourage reduction of the waste stream and support solid waste disposal practices that minimize environmental impacts. | | Town | |
| J. | Continue to minimize, mitigate, prepare for, and respond to recurring hazards or threats (such as hurricanes, flooding, winter storms, etc.). | | Town | |
| K. | Participate with local organizations and regional agencies on updating and refining “hazard mitigation” strategies and climate adaptation strategies. | | Town | |

| ACTION STEPS Promote Sustainability And Resiliency | | Priority | <i>Legend on inside back cover</i> | |
|---|--|-----------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>1. Participate in the Sustainable CT Program, achieving Silver Level or higher.</i> | High | SC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>2. Report to the public on energy usage in Town and School facilities. Set targets for energy reduction and monitor progress against these targets.</i> | | SC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>3. Conduct regular campaigns to raise awareness among residents and businesses of energy efficiency, renewable energy and heat pumps.</i> | | SC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>4. Adopt regulations to require electric vehicle charging stations as part of new developments and allow them as accessory uses on all properties.</i> | | ZC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>5. Educate the community about diverting materials from the waste stream (composting, electronics recycling, options for reuse, reducing food waste at all public schools, etc.).</i> | | SC | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>6. Seek funding for a Town Sustainability Coordinator in future budgets.</i> | | SC | |

ENHANCE COMMUNITY FACILITIES



Overview

Healthy and prosperous communities like Simsbury are supported and enhanced by community facilities that directly influence “sense of place” and the quality of life of its residents.

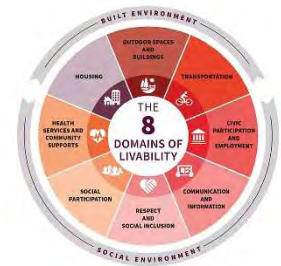


Community facilities and services enhance overall community well-being.

**General Government
(Town Hall)**



**Education
(Simsbury High School)**



Community facilities and services contribute to the livability of Simsbury and the quality of life of residents.

**Public Safety
(Fire Equipment)**



**Recreation
(Simsbury Farms Golf Course)**



What We Want To Provide - Enhance Community Facilities

Community facilities typically include buildings and sites used for:

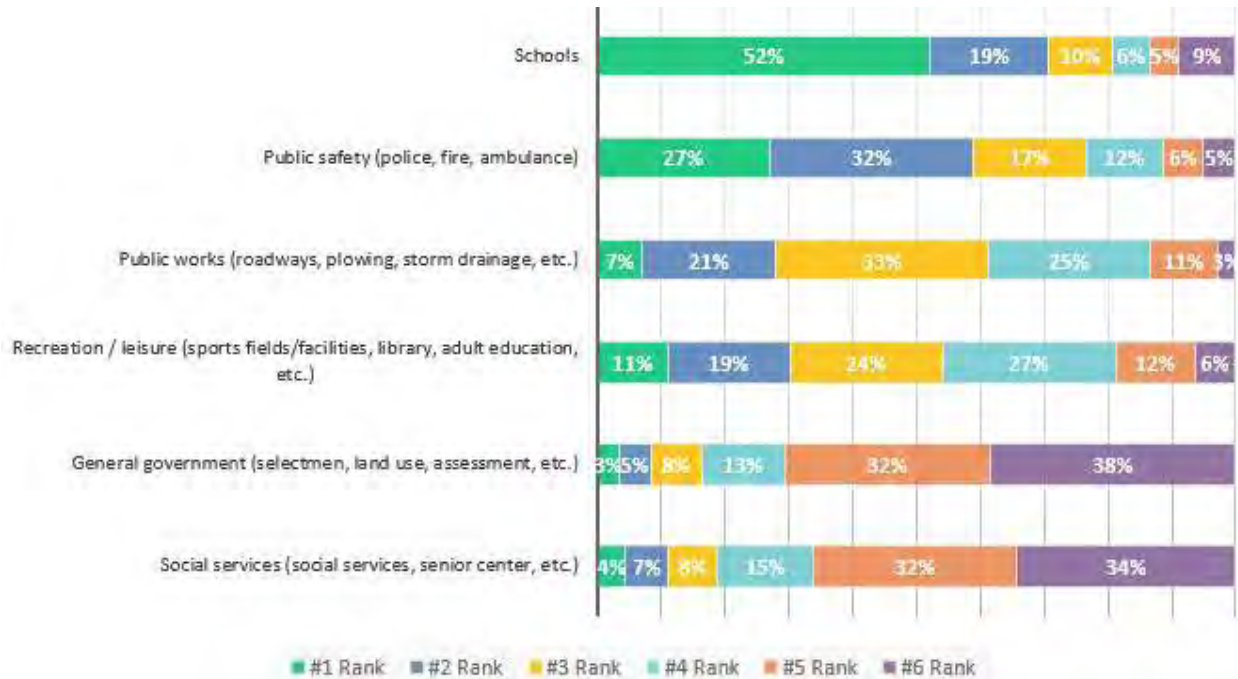
- General government (such as Town Hall).
- Educational facilities.
- Public safety facilities (police, fire, ambulance).
- Public works facilities.
- Indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.
- Other facilities (such as the library).

The POCD looks at these facilities to ensure they reflect community needs and are adequate to meet community needs into the future in order to sustain the excellence of the library, public schools and other Town-owned facilities.

At the 2023 community meeting, participants offered the following:

1. Park and recreation facilities are important to Simsbury. The town needs to maintain Simsbury Farms, the Golf Course, Simsbury Meadows, etc.
2. Simsbury needs to improve the accessibility of Town Hall, the senior center/social services.
3. The Senior Center is not meeting the needs of the growing population of seniors. The Senior Center shares space with social services and this doesn't work out well for either one.
4. Simsbury should have artificial turf fields for sports and recreation.

In the 2022 on-line survey, participants rated community facilities as follows in terms of importance to them (listed below percent ranked 1 through 3):



What We Want To Provide - Enhance Community Facilities

A facilities master plan was completed in 2020 and the findings and recommendations are being used to guide the maintenance and management of the 62 facilities which were part of the study. That Plan is hereby incorporated into this chapter of the POCD as a reference.

Most community facilities in Simsbury are expected to be adequate for community needs for the next 10-15 years. However, the following community facility needs are expected to be considered by the Town in the coming years:

- **Schools** – Anticipate possible capacity issues depending on the forecasted growth in school enrollments.

Latimer Lane School Renovation



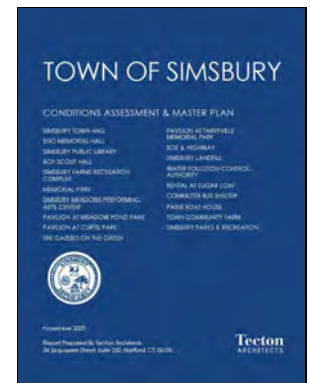
- **Community Center** – Construction of a community center / senior center (at a location to be determined) to meet community needs.

Possible Multi-Generational Community Center



- **Recreation Facilities** – Address the recommendations in the Park and Open Space Master Plan

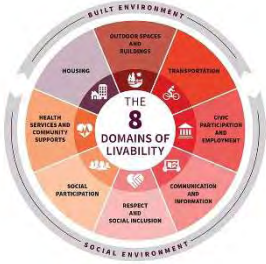
Facilities Master Plan



Parks & Open Space Master Plan



What We Want To Provide - Enhance Community Facilities



Livability Strategies

- Promote communication and information.
- Promote civic participation.
- Promote social participation.
- Provide health services and community support.
- Embrace respect and social inclusion.
- Expand the technological capacity of the Town to provide more (and better) services on-line and support municipal departments.
- Make improvements for people with mobility and other impairments (such as hearing) so that they may fully participate in public meetings and other community programs.

- **Town Office Building** –
 - Relocate the Town Office Building or renovate to better accommodate public meeting and gathering space needs as well as current and future administrative space needs.
 - Improve ADA-compliance in terms of overall accessibility, counter heights, etc.
- **Police Facility** – Address the space needs of the Police Department at the Town Office Building (if the Town offices are relocated) or at another location.
- **Other** –
 - Implementing the Facilities Master Plan
 - Redesigning and upgrading the Transfer Station on Wolcott Road.
 - Supporting emergency medical response (ambulance facility and staffing and equipment) to meet community needs.
 - Expanding parking availability at the Library by connecting to the Boy Scout Hall property.
 - Evaluate the disposition of small Town-owned parcels which do not contribute to overall Town goals.

Library – Boy Scout Hall Connection



Maintenance of existing and future community facilities at a high level is also important. Residents appreciate that good community facilities are important to the overall quality of life and ambience of the community and want to ensure the Simsbury's facilities are well-maintained.

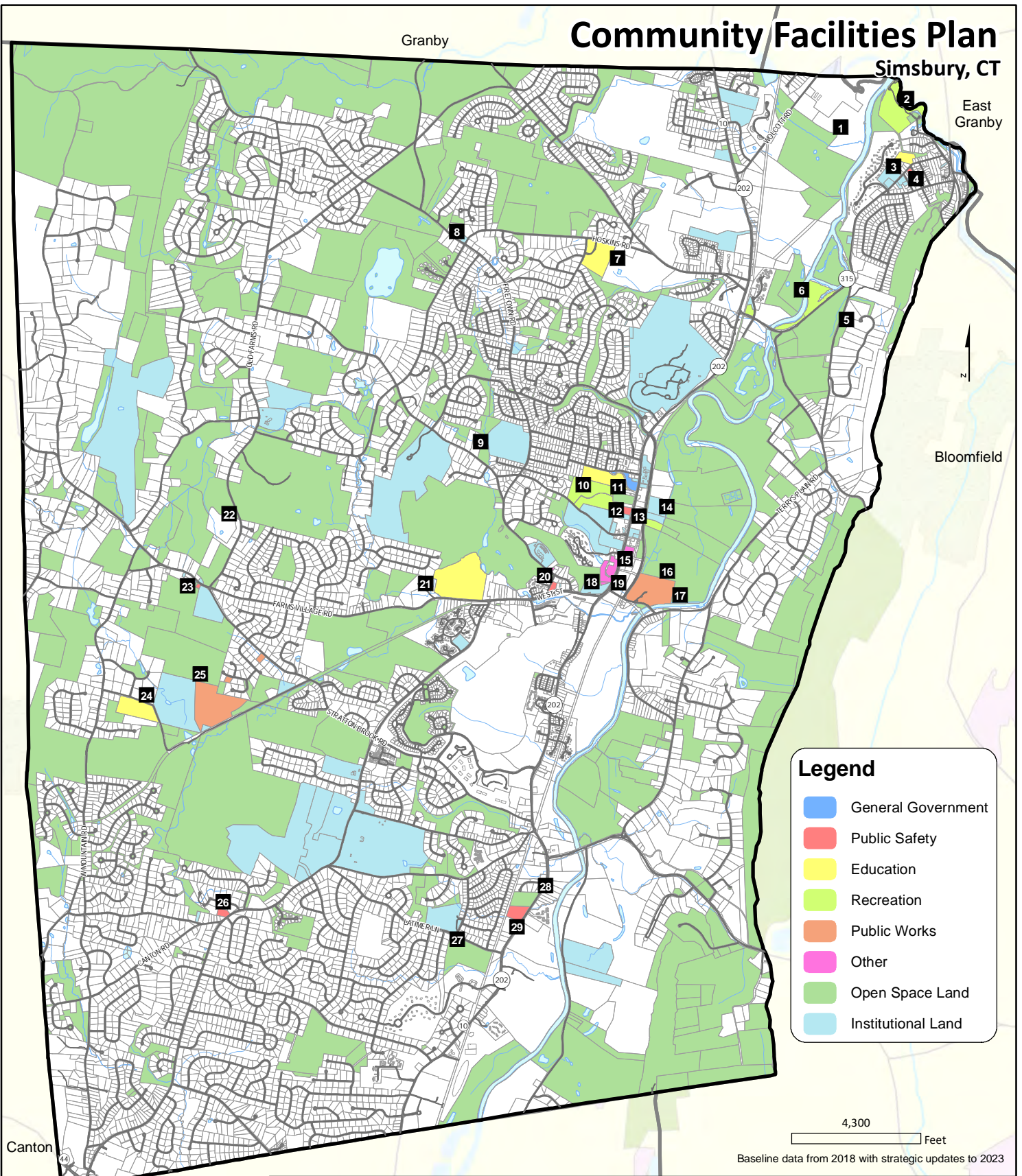
Community Facilities Plan

Simsbury, CT

Granby

East Granby

Bloomfield



Legend

- General Government
- Public Safety
- Education
- Recreation
- Public Works
- Other
- Open Space Land
- Institutional Land

4,300 Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transfer Station 2. Tariffville Memorial Park 3. Tarriffville School 4. Tariffville Fire Station 5. Patterson Park 6. Curtiss Park 7. Squadron Line School 8. Firetown Fire Station 9. Henry James Middle School 10. Central School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Town Office Building 12. Memorial Park / Schultz Park 13. Main Fire House 14. Simsbury Meadows 15. Eno Memorial Hall 16. Water Pollution Control 17. Boat House 18. Town Library 19. Boy Scout Hall 20. Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Simsbury High School 22. Simsbury Farms Rec Complex 23. West Simsbury Fire District 24. Tootin Hills School 25. Public Works Campus 26. Brushy Hill Fire Department 27. Latimer Lane School 28. Weatogue Park 29. Weatogue Fire Station |
|---|---|---|

Canton

Avon

Goal / Strategies

Provide for and maintain community facilities that sustain and enhance community ambience and the social, mental, educational, and physical well-being of the community.

11.1 *Provide community facilities to meet community needs and desires as effectively and efficiently as possible.*

11.2 *Address specific community facility needs.*

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Enhance Community Facilities | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--|--|----------|--------------------------------|------------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Continue to provide facilities and services to meet present and future needs of the community as efficiently and effectively as possible. | | BOS BOE | VFD SVA |
| B. | Maintain existing facilities as efficiently and effectively as possible. | | BOS BOE | VFD SVA |
| C. | Implement the Facilities Master Plan. | | Town | |
| D. | Address energy efficiency, lighting, handicapped access, and vehicular and pedestrian circulation when building or renovating public buildings and facilities. | | Town BOE | |
| E. | Continue to support the provision of fire protection to all areas of town (provided by the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company, an independent taxing district). | | Town | VFD |
| F. | Continue to support emergency medical response to all areas of town by the Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance, a non-Town organization). | | Town | SVA |
| G. | Continue to support and help sustain the Simsbury Public Library. | | Town | SPL |

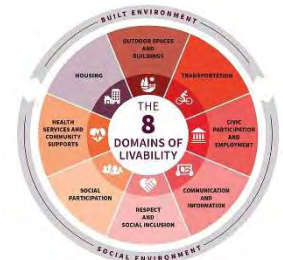
| ACTION STEPS Enhance Community Facilities | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--|---|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. <i>Plan for the construction of a community center / senior center to meet community needs.</i> | | Town | CPR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. <i>Address the long-term facility needs of the Police Department.</i> | | Town | PD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. <i>Renovate the Town Office Building and Eno Memorial Hall.</i> | | Town | BOS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. <i>Expand parking availability at the Library</i> | | Town | SPL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. <i>Address needs of the Social Services Department as part of renovation of Eno Memorial Hall / Town Office Building, or a new community center.</i> | | Town | SSS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. <i>Evaluate the disposition of small Town-owned parcels which do not contribute to overall Town goals.</i> | | Town | |

ADDRESS TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

12

Overview

The transportation systems in Simsbury are functionally important to the day-to-day life of residents, visitors, and businesses as well as being an important component of its ambience and self-image. This chapter of the POCD looks at the overall configuration of the vehicular transportation network and other transportation modes (pedestrian, bicycle, bus, etc.).



Vehicular Circulation



Pedestrians



Pedestrian and bicycle improvements have improved and enhanced the overall livability of Simsbury.

Bicycle



Transit





In the 2016 telephone survey, participants indicated their agreement with the following statements as follows:

83%

The roadway network in Simsbury is adequate for meeting community needs.

66%

Simsbury should seek ways to increase transit services for residents and businesses.

Vehicular Transportation

Simsbury has a good road system in place to meet the basic circulation needs of residents and business users. The main challenges to the road system are that travel patterns can be heavily oriented to the east (Hartford, Bradley International Airport, Interstate 91) and there are only three roads leading in that direction in Simsbury:

- Hartford Road (Route 185) over Talcott Mountain
- Tariffville Road (Route 315) through Tariffville
- Wolcott Road past Simsbury Airport.

As a result, traffic congestion can be an issue on some of these roadways at certain times of the day. For example, the Route 10 / 185 intersection can have backup in the morning as traffic tries to weave its way through Weatogue. Widening of these roadways is not recommended but spot improvements at major intersections could be.

A special study of Route 10 was completed in 2014. This study, prepared by Fuss & O'Neill and funded by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROG) and the Connecticut Department of Transportation, suggested some possible improvements along Route 10 to address vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and other improvements. Study recommendations should be reviewed and implemented as opportunities arise.

Roadway Connections - In terms of roadway connections, the POCD recommends establishment of a collector road connecting from the Route 10 / Wolcott Road intersection westerly to Hoskins Road near the intersection with County Road. The POCD also suggests the possible extension of Iron Horse Boulevard to the south through the Ensign Bickford campus to Route 10 if it will aid overall circulation and relieve congestion.

Pavement Management – In the 2016 telephone survey, 87% of participants rated the overall condition of Town-maintained roads as excellent or good. The POCD recommends that Simsbury continue to promote a “pavement management” philosophy and approach so that the roadway system (pavement quality) can be maintained as efficiently and economically as possible. By basing roadway maintenance on the depreciation characteristics of similar roadways, funds can be applied “just in time” to minimize the lifecycle cost of maintaining the roadway system.

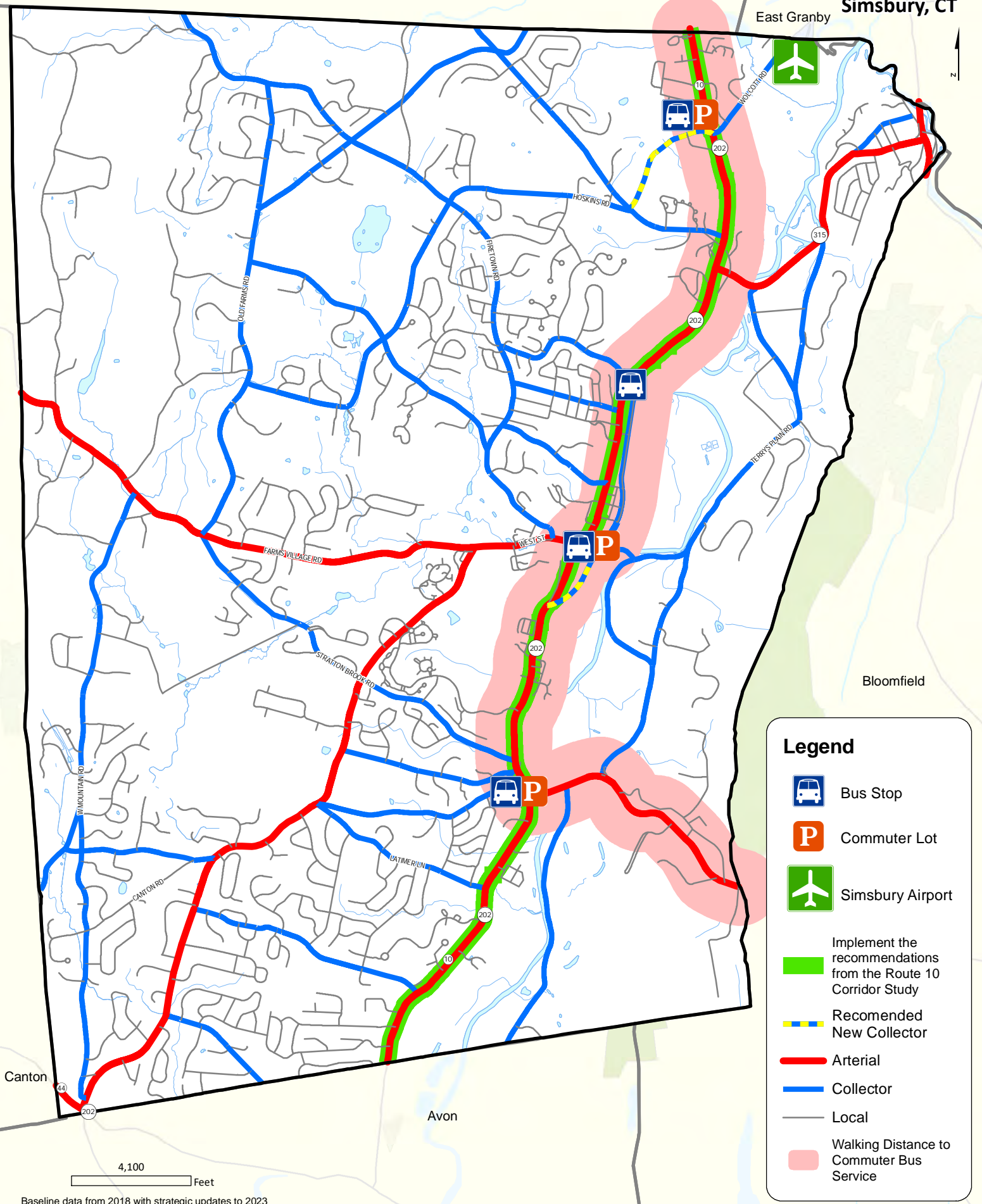
Access Management - The POCD recommends that Simsbury continue to promote an “access management” philosophy and approach to maintain capacity along major roadways. History has shown that a proliferation of driveways (especially in commercial areas) decreases the overall capacity of the roadways and leads to more accidents. If Simsbury can reduce and minimize the number of driveways that are created in such areas, overall traffic safety will be enhanced.

Granby

Vehicular Circulation Plan

Simsbury, CT

East Granby



Legend



Bus Stop



Commuter Lot



Simsbury Airport

Implement the recommendations from the Route 10 Corridor Study

Recommended New Collector

Arterial

Collector

Local

Walking Distance to Commuter Bus Service

Canton

Avon

Bloomfield

4,100

Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

What We Want To Provide - Address Transportation Needs



Bicycle / Pedestrian Transportation

Simsbury continues to advance bicycle and pedestrian awareness and activity and is well known around Connecticut for:

- Its walkable downtown.
- being designated as a Bicycle Friendly Community at the Silver level.
- the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (including the extension to Tariffville and Bloomfield as part of the East Coast Greenway).
- the BikeShare program.



In the 2016 telephone survey, participants indicated their agreement with the following statements as follows:

95%

Having a safe, walkable and bikeable community enhances the quality of life for Simsbury residents.

89%

Simsbury should continue to improve the pedestrian system such as sidewalks and trails.

Simsbury residents understand how being pedestrian-friendly and bicycle friendly has enhanced the community and made it a better place.

In 2018, Simsbury adopted a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan to help guide improvements in the community. The POCD supports the continued implementation of pedestrian and bicycle improvements throughout Simsbury:

- connecting sidewalk “gaps”.
- Extending trails to Tariffville, Bloomfield, West Simsbury, Simsbury Farms, etc.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan



That Plan is hereby incorporated into this chapter of the POCD as a reference.

“Complete Streets” – The POCD recommends that Simsbury continue to promote a “complete streets” philosophy and approach to roadways – treating them as corridors and places for all transportation modes (pedestrians, bicycles, transit, people), not just places for exclusively moving vehicles.

While Simsbury has endorsed “complete streets” through a Board of Selectmen resolution, the next step might be to adopt a “complete streets” policy that indicates the Town’s intention of integrating the need of people and places in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of transportation networks.

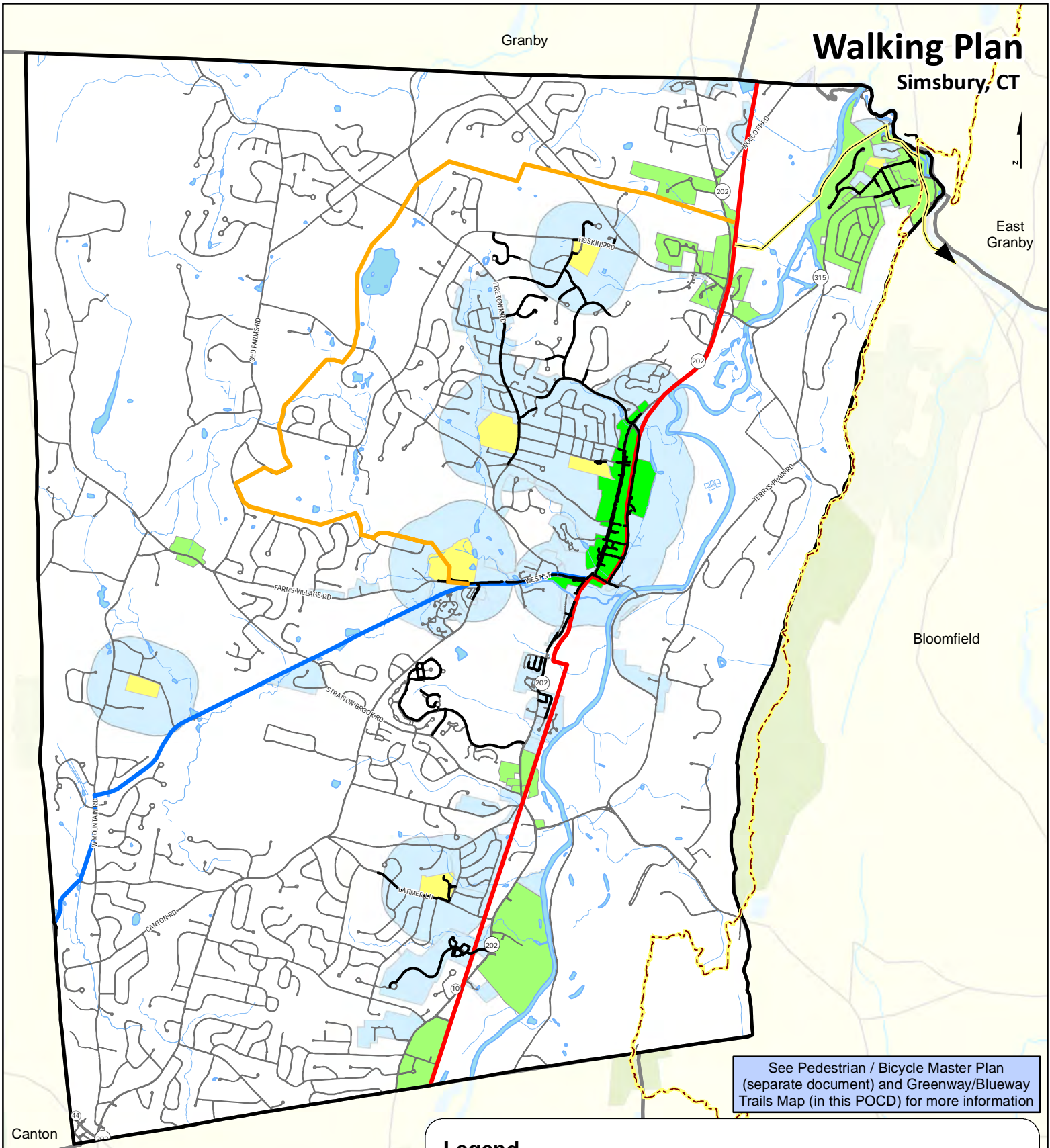
Other Transportation

The POCD also recommends that Simsbury seek to expand transit and other transportation options available to Simsbury residents, workers and visitors.

Commuter parking lots support bus transit and ride-sharing and adequate facilities (commensurate with the need) should be preserved or, in the case of the Town Center, relocated if redevelopment were to occur.

Walking Plan

Simsbury, CT



See Pedestrian / Bicycle Master Plan (separate document) and Greenway/Blueway Trails Map (in this POCD) for more information

Legend

- Existing Sidewalks
- Highest Priority Sidewalk
- Priority Sidewalk
- Areas Where Sidewalks Are
- Schools
- Farmington Valley Greenway / East Coast Greenway Trail
- FV Greenway / EC Greenway Extension (conceptual location)
- Possible Northern Loop
- Farmington River Trail
- Metacomet Trail

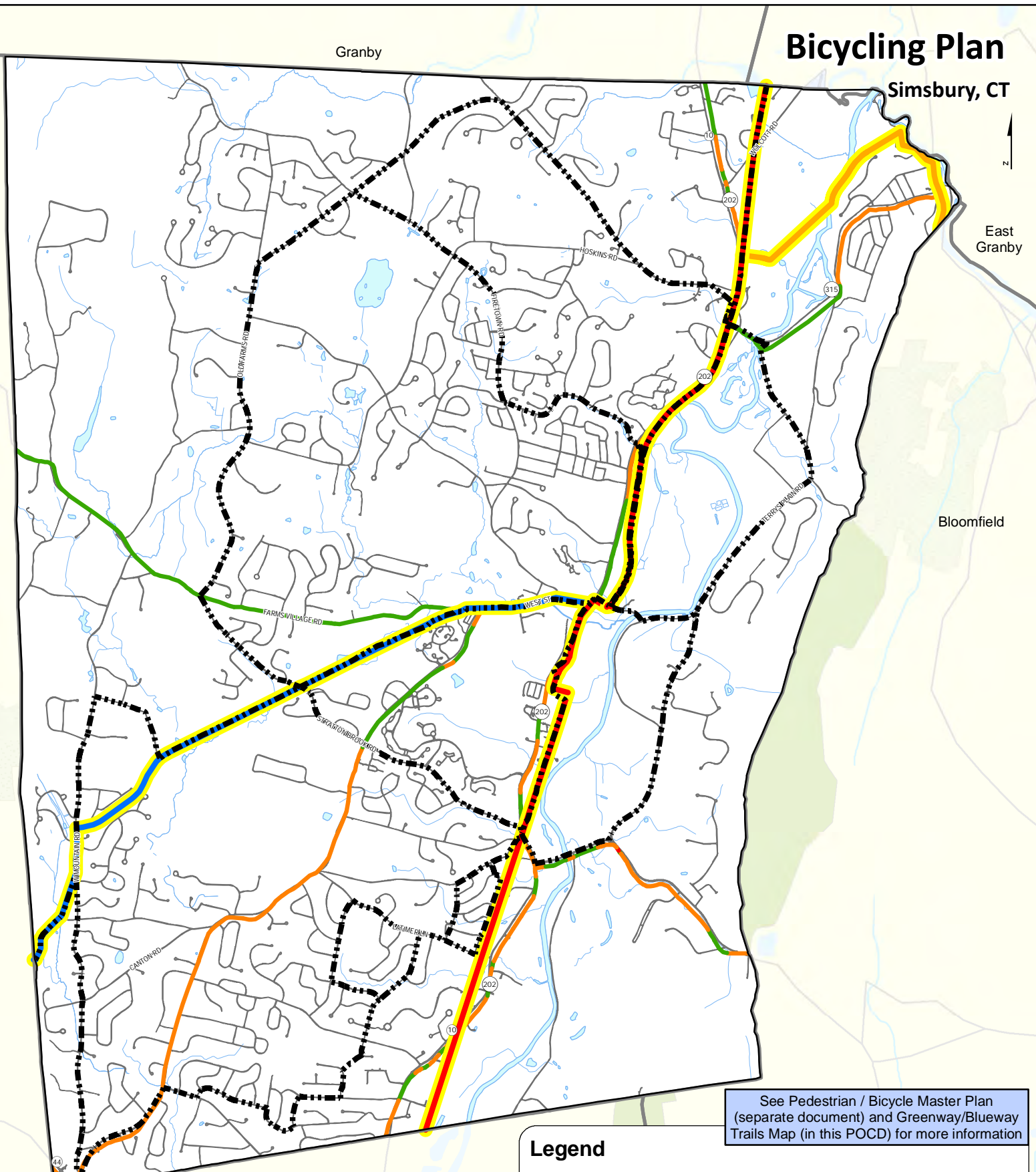
4,500

Feet

Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

Bicycling Plan

Simsbury, CT



East Granby

Bloomfield

Avon

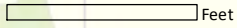
Canton

See Pedestrian / Bicycle Master Plan (separate document) and Greenway/Blueway Trails Map (in this POCD) for more information

Legend

- Locally Identified Bicycle Routes
- CT DOT Designated Bicycle Routes
- Suitable
- Less Suitable
- Least Suitable
- Farmington Valley Greenway Trail / East Coast Greenway Trail
- FV Greenway / EC Greenway Extension (conceptual location)
- Farmington River Trail

4,250



Baseline data from 2018 with strategic updates to 2023

Goal / Strategies

Enhance the efficiency, safety, environmental and ambience-defining aspects of the systems transporting persons and goods within and through the community

- 12.1** *Provide for and maintain a safe and efficient road-way circulation system to meet community needs.*
- 12.2** *Provide for and maintain safe and efficient circulation systems for pedestrians and bicycles.*
- 12.3** *Support transit and other transportation-related facilities within Simsbury.*

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Address Transportation Needs | | Legend on inside back cover | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| VEHICULAR CIRCULATION | | | | |
| A. | Seek to maintain and improve the level of service and overall function of the vehicular transportation within and through Simsbury. | | Town | DOT |
| B. | Maintain or enhance the aesthetic and environmental qualities of the community when improving roads. | | Town | PW |
| C. | Advocate for 11-foot lane widths on State and Town roads in order to provide space for other users (such as bicycles) and to calm traffic. | | Town | DOT |
| D. | On State roads, coordinate improvements with State and Regional agencies to minimize pavement expansion. | | Town | DOT CROG |
| E. | Continue to implement access management techniques in commercial areas to help minimize the number of driveways accessing onto roadways. | | Town | DOT |
| F. | Encourage or require completion of the roadway connecting Wolcott Road to Hoskins Road at the County Road intersection. | | Town | ZC PC |
| G. | Continue to utilize a "pavement management system" to ensure cost-effective maintenance and safe operation of roadway surfaces. | | PW | BOS BOF |
| <i>(continued on subsequent page)</i> | | | | |

What We Want To Provide - Address Transportation Needs

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Address Transportation Needs <i>(continued from previous page)</i> | | <i>Legend on inside back cover</i> | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| PEDESTRIAN / BICYCLE CIRCULATION | | | | |
| H. Seek to expand and improve the pedestrian and bicycle transportation options available to residents, workers, and visitors. | | Town | BPA | |
| I. Continue to implement the Bicycle / Pedestrian Master Plan. | | Town | BPA | |
| J. Seek to implement the recommendations of the Route 10 study. | | Town | DOT CRCOG | |
| K. Seek to close gaps in the sidewalk system in Simsbury and extend the system as opportunities arise. | | Town | PW BPA | |
| L. Advocate for an interconnected town-wide network of multi-purpose trails and other public ways for pedestrians and bicycles, with safe street crossings. | | Town | BPA CPR | |
| M. Consider bicycle lanes and/or markings whenever roads are improved or striped. | | Town | PW BPA | |
| N. Seek to maintain and upgrade Simsbury's designation as a bicycle-friendly community. | | BPA | | |
| OTHER TRANSPORTATION | | | | |
| O. Seek to expand transit options available to Simsbury residents, workers and visitors: 1) retain / expand the commuter bus service (on Route 10), 2) continue operation of the Simsbury Dial-A-Ride Program, and 3) support after-school transportation opportunities for children. | | Town | DOT SSS | |
| P. Retain and expand commuter parking lots and encourage carpools, vanpools, shuttle buses, and other forms of shared transportation. | | Town | DOT | |
| Q. Support preservation of Simsbury Airport by private entities. | | Town | EDC | |

| ACTION STEPS Address Transportation Needs | | <i>Legend on inside back cover</i> | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Priority | Leader | Partners |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Review roadways for appropriate speed limits relative to function, location, etc. | | PD | PW |

ADDRESS UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

13

Overview

Simsbury’s infrastructure—from water mains and sewer pipes to wired utilities and telecommunications—are very important to meeting the needs of residents and businesses and enhancing the overall quality of life in the community.

Many utility services are provided by private companies and are outside direct municipal control. However, the Town wants to ensure that adequate capacity (and quality) is available to meet local needs.

- **Storm Drainage** – Storm drainage systems in Simsbury are managed by the Town of Simsbury, the State of Connecticut, or by private property owners. More frequent and severe storm events (due to climate change) are expected to increase flooding and create a need for drainage improvements as resources permit (stormwater design criteria in years past did not anticipate the magnitude of the impact from climate change). At the same time, Simsbury is transitioning to a new drainage approach (called “LID”) where rainfall is infiltrated as close as possible to where the raindrop falls.

Public Water



Public Sewer



Electric / Wired



Wireless



What We Want To Provide - Address Utility Infrastructure Needs



In the 2016 telephone survey, participants generally agreed with the following:

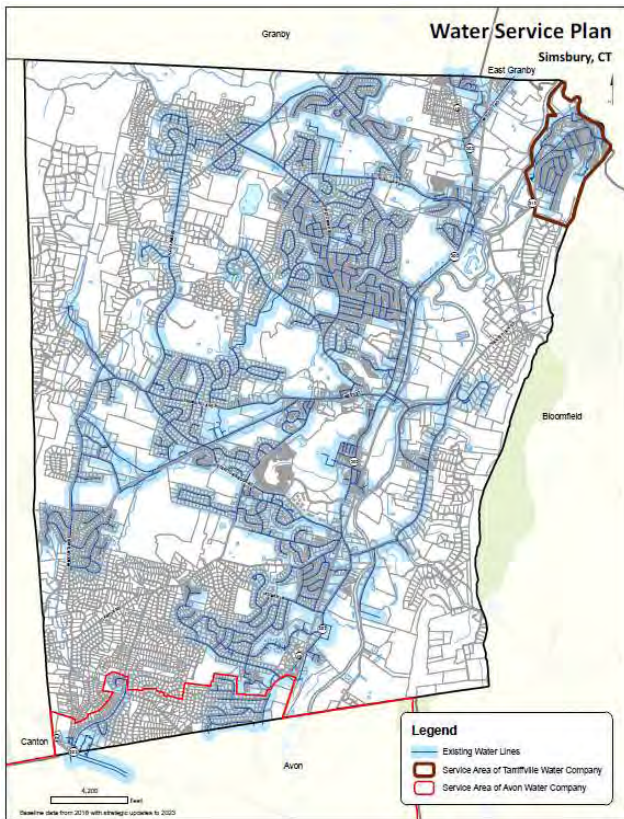
69%

The storm drainage system in Simsbury is adequate.

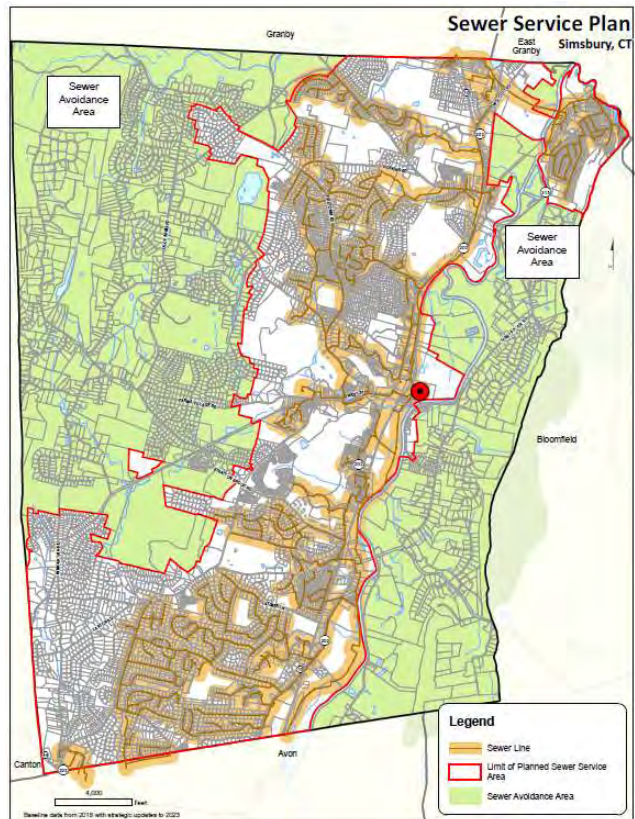
- Natural Gas Service - Natural gas service is available in some areas (service provided by Connecticut Natural Gas).
- Water Supply – Water service in Simsbury is provided by Aquarion Water Company, Avon Water Company, Tariffville Water Commission, and private wells. There is projected to be adequate water supply for Simsbury residents and businesses for the foreseeable future.
- Sewage Collection / Treatment – Simsbury has its own sewage treatment plant and operates the municipal sewer system. Through interlocal agreements, Simsbury also provides sewage treatment to parts of Granby and parts of Avon. For development proposals in Simsbury, the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) reviews the ability of the system to handle the anticipated flows. System flows are monitored and the capacity of the treatment plant is anticipated to be adequate for community needs through 2033 and beyond.

Areas outside of the sewer service boundary are considered to be “sewer avoidance areas” and developments in these areas will be required to utilize on-site septic systems in compliance with the Health Code.

Public Water Service Areas



Public Sewer Service Areas



What We Want To Provide - Address Utility Infrastructure Needs

- Electricity – Electrical service in Simsbury is delivered by Eversource and there are no major issues or concerns with reliability or capacity. Some individual properties have also installed solar panels for private use.
- Wired Communications Capacity – Wired communication services are generally provided by Comcast/Xfinity or by Frontier Communications. There is growing demand from both residential and business users for internet speed / capacity. Cable providers have been upgrading their systems in response to competition. As the world becomes more technologically advanced, the lack of speed / capacity is a hindrance and affects the overall quality of life and Simsbury supports upgrades in speed and capacity.
- Wireless Service / Capacity – There is growing use of “smart phones” and other wireless technologies and some households in Simsbury no longer use “land lines” and rely on cell phones. As a result, Simsbury intends to work with the Connecticut Siting Council and service providers to expand cellular service (coverage and capacity) in ways that best preserve the ambience of the community. Large towers in visible areas or along roadsides would not generally be compatible with Simsbury’s desired ambience. Some “Telecommunication Policy Preferences” are contained in the [Appendix](#).



In the 2016 telephone survey, participants generally agreed with the following:

76%

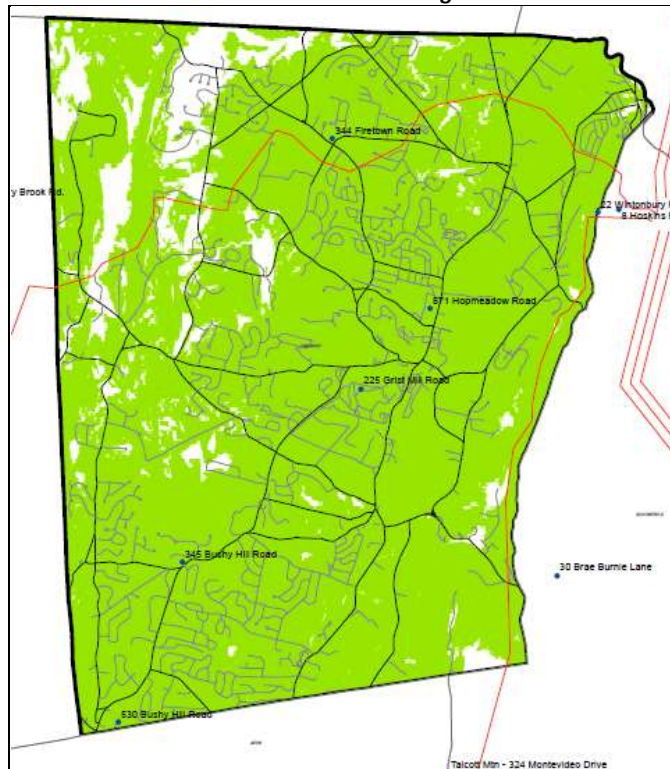
Simsbury should encourage improvements in internet speed and cell phone service.

Telecommunications Policy Preferences

Since 2004 or so, Simsbury has had wireless telecommunications policy preferences intended to guide the location and design of telecommunication facilities, especially new towers, in Simsbury.

These policy preferences are contained in the Appendix of the POCD.

2023 Wireless Coverage



Data obtained from the Connecticut Siting Council

Goal / Strategies

Encourage the provision of adequate utility infrastructure to meet community needs.

13.1 *Seek to ensure adequate utility services are available within the community.*

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Address Utility Infrastructure Needs | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--|--|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| A. | Continue to improve the stormwater drainage system through LID approaches and addressing areas where flooding can be alleviated. | | Town | PW |
| B. | Encourage public water providers to maintain a safe and adequate water supply (domestic consumption and fire protection) for current and future users. | | Town | |
| C. | Maintain the existing sewer treatment facilities to meet state and federal water quality guidelines. | | WPCA | Town |
| D. | Limit sewer service to the general area identified in the POCD and as further designated and delineated by the WPCA in the WPCA Plan and approved by DEEP. | | WPCA | |
| E. | Evaluate the desirability of extending natural gas lines to outlying areas of town currently served by propane tanks. | | Town | SC |
| F. | Encourage the continued improvement of electrical capacity and reliability within Simsbury. | | Town | |
| G. | Seek ways to bury overhead wired utilities whenever and wherever possible. | | Town | |
| H. | Encourage the improvement and expansion of wired and wireless communication technologies throughout Simsbury. | | Town | |

| ACTION STEPS Address Utility Infrastructure Needs | | Priority | Legend on inside back cover | |
|--|--|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
| | | | Leader | Partners |
| □ | 1. <i>Seek ways to increase broadband capacity and capability in Simsbury.</i> | | EDC | Town |
| | 2. <i>Seek ways to wireless coverage and service in Simsbury</i> | | EDC | Town |

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Overview

The map on page 123 illustrates the location and intensity of *future* land uses that are desired in Simsbury based on the recommendations of this POCD. Since this map illustrates the stated goals, policies, objectives, and recommendations of each of the Plan chapters when combined together, it is called the Future Land Use Plan for Simsbury.

Conservation



Places With A Sense of Place



Other Development



Infrastructure



Plan Comparison

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires comparison of Simsbury's Plan of Conservation and Development with:

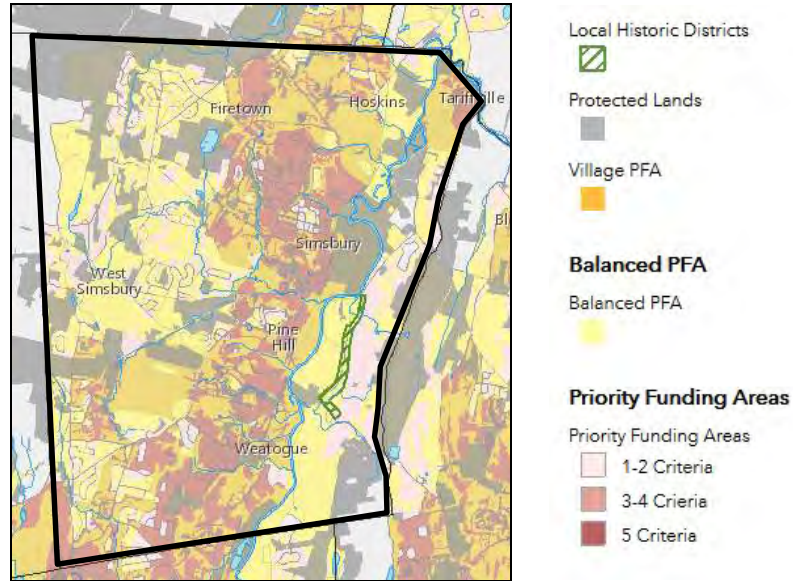
- the Locational Guide Map in the Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan, and
- the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development prepared by the Capitol Region Council of Governments.

In order to increase potential funding opportunities in the village areas, the Town will request that Simsbury Center, Tariffville and Weatogue Center be designated as "Village Priority Funding Areas" in order to promote their continued improvement and enhancement as "centers and areas of mixed land use with existing or planned physical infrastructure."

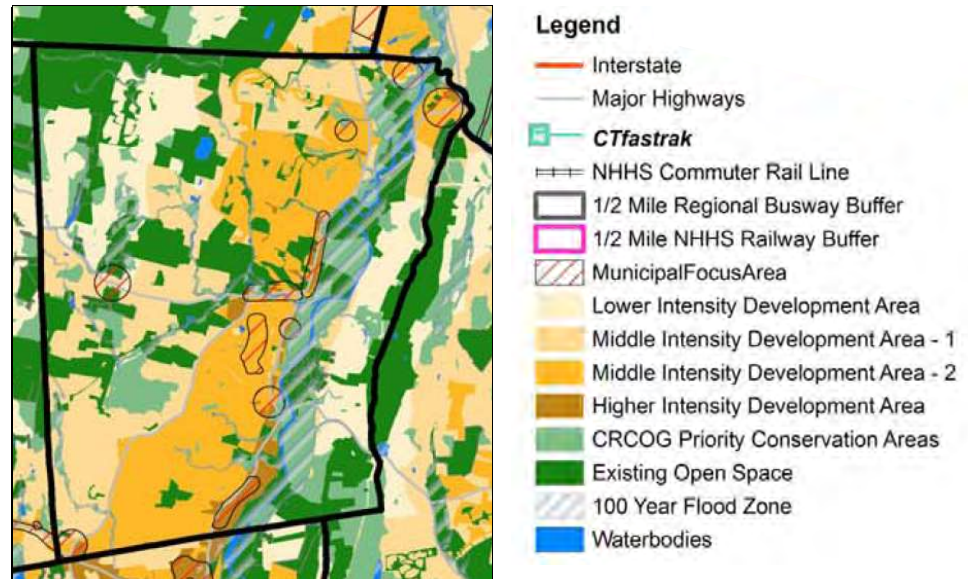
Consistency With State and Regional Plans

Simsbury's Future Land Use Plan was found to be consistent with State and regional plans in terms of identifying areas for conservation and development and relative intensities.

State Plan of Conservation and Development



Regional Plan of Conservation and Development



Future Land Use Plan

Granby

Simsbury, CT



East Granby

Tariffville

Hoskins

Bloomfield

West Simsbury Center

Simsbury Center

Weatogue Center















Canton

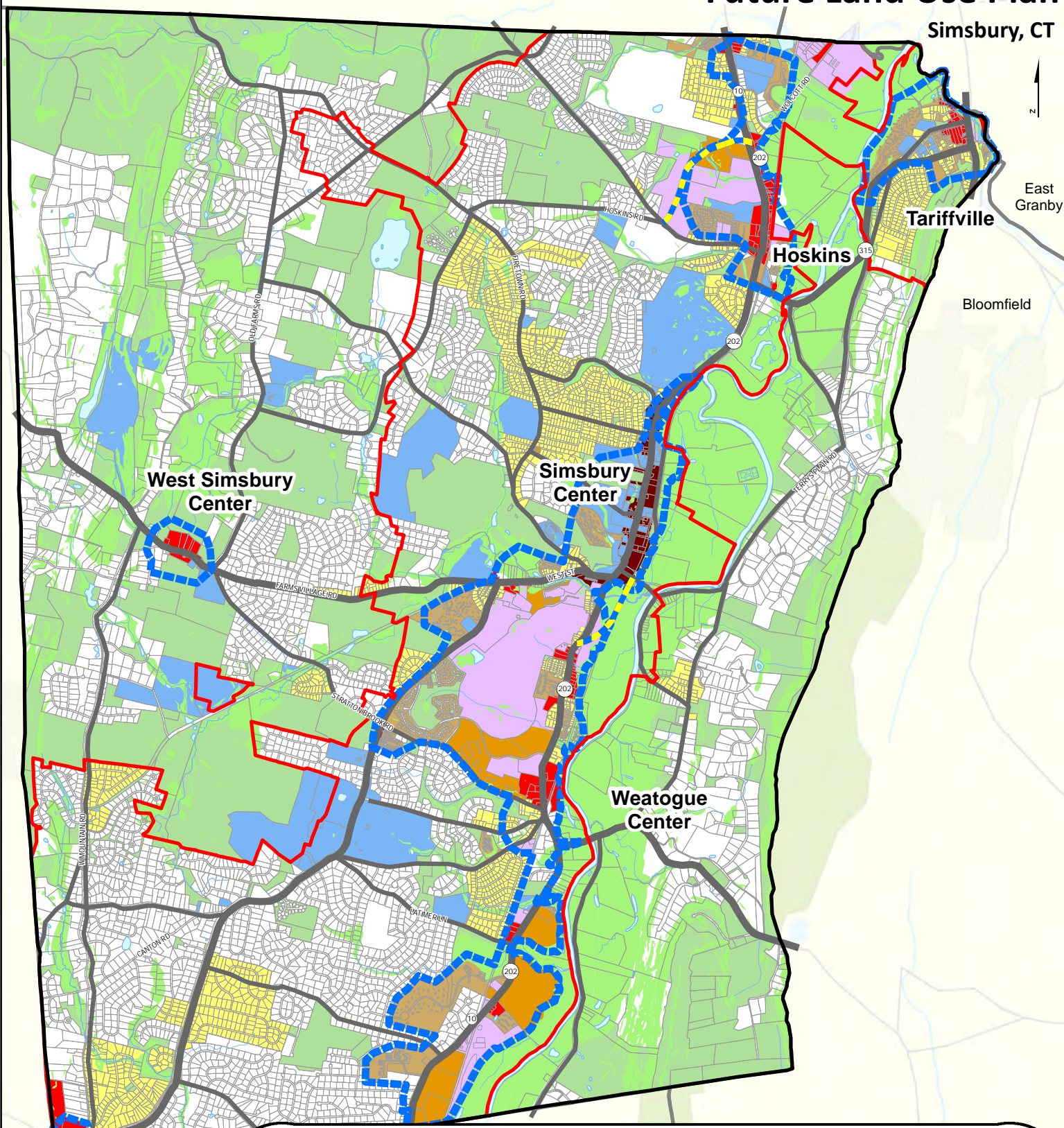
Avon

4,250

Feet
Baseline data from 2018
with strategic updates to 2023

Legend

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
|  | Lowest Density Residential Zone |  | Simsbury Center |  | Natural Resource Constraints |  | Recommended New Collector |
|  | Moderate Density Residential Zone |  | Other Business Zone |  | Open Space |  | Watercourses |
|  | Special Residential Zones |  | Industrial Zone |  | Institutional Land |  | Limit of Possible Sewer Service Area |
|  | Possible Housing Opportunity Areas |  | Special Zone (such as PAD) | | | | |



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 and found to be generally consistent with them.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Principle 1 – Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.</p> | <p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan recommends developing and strengthening “places with a sense of place” in Simsbury which are intended to be areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.</p> |
| <p>Principle 2 – Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.</p> | <p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan recommends addressing housing needs and expanding housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.</p> |
| <p>Principle 3 – Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.</p> | <p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan recommends developing and strengthening “places with a sense of place” which are along transportation corridors and are intended to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.</p> |
| <p>Principle 4 – Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.</p> | <p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan recommends conserving and restoring the natural environment as well as protecting and preserving cultural and historical resources.</p> |
| <p>Principle 5 – Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.</p> | <p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan recommends protecting environmental assets critical to public health and safety, such as aquifer protection areas, public water supply watersheds and other such resources.</p> |
| <p>Principle 6 – Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.</p> | <p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan is part of the process of integrating planning with other levels of government and with other agencies. The Plan will be used to coordinate efforts with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjacent communities, • regional organizations, and • state agencies. |

IMPLEMENTATION



Overview

Implementation is the most important part of the planning process. Even though the POCD is an advisory document, it is intended to:

- Provide a framework for consistent decision-making in Simsbury over the next decade, and
- Guide local boards and commissions in such efforts.

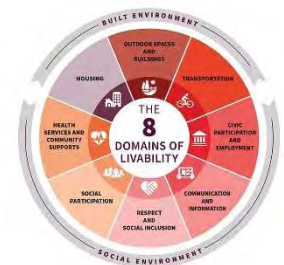
If strategies, policies, and action steps are identified but not implemented, the planning process will not have produced the changes desired by the community or addressed the issues identified during the planning process.

Implementation will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and officials of the Town of Simsbury. The Plan will only be effective if it is understood and supported by the people of Simsbury, ***and implemented*** by residents, applicants, agencies, local boards and commissions, and individuals interested in the future of Simsbury.

While policies are somewhat passive since they are used to evaluate possible decisions, action steps within the POCD are pro-active and can be itemized, scheduled, managed, and completed. Action steps lend themselves to monitoring implementation and measuring progress. The POCD anticipates that over time, Simsbury will continue to identify and undertake new action steps to help implement the Plan.



Implementing the POCD will enhance overall community well-being.



Implementing the POCD will help ensure there are improvements to the livability of Simsbury.

Groundbreaking When We Start



Ribbon Cutting When We Finish



Implementation Process

A Plan implementation process can be established by the Planning Commission. To be most effective, it is recommended that the process include representatives of various boards and commissions.

The process will:

- prioritize, coordinate, and refine implementation of the Plan,
- initiate efforts with other organizations to implement POCD policies and complete the identified action steps, and
- follow up on a semi-annual basis to monitor implementation and make adjustments, if needed.

The Planning Commission will meet regularly to guide implementation of the Plan's recommendations (perhaps two to four times a year). A meeting with representatives of other boards and commissions should occur once or twice per year.

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

Use The Implementation Tables

The chapters of the POCD contain implementation tables that identify leaders and partners responsible for implementing policies and action steps. Leaders will be the main entity responsible for the policy or action step. Partners are other entities that will likely be involved with implementing the policy or action step.

As part of the process of preparing this POCD update, a prioritization exercise was conducted to aid in implementation. Since policies and action steps are used differently, they were prioritized independently of each other. Prioritizing action steps and policies is intended to draw more attention to the policies and action steps which will have the greatest interest and impact and provide some guidance when multiple policies may be applicable.

Using these tables (or the Excel spreadsheet version maintained by Town Staff) to guide municipal actions will help implement the POCD.

Establish A Formal Plan Implementation Process

Having a formal process to implement the POCD will help ensure it is influential in guiding future actions of the town. The POCD recommends that Simsbury establish a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) made up of representatives of various Town boards and commissions in order to coordinate implementation of the POCD. In addition, the PIC should have a staff person to assist with the implementation process, including liaison and coordination with other Town departments and agencies.

The POCD implementation meeting(s) should occur regularly to review the implementation tables in the POCD and refine priorities based on local issues, funding opportunities, and/or other criteria.

Implement The POCD Through The Budget

Annual Operating Budget – The annual operating budget guides municipal spending and so it is an important indicator of municipal priorities. Simsbury should strive to incorporate POCD priorities into the annual operating budget and adequately fund them.

Capital Budget – Capital projects tend to be long-term investments in the future of a community. When these capital projects help accomplish recommendations in the POCD, the community benefits in a number of ways. Simsbury should strive to consider POCD recommendations in the preparation of the capital budget and prioritization of projects.

Looking Ahead – Implement The POCD

Consistency Checklists

Activities proposed in the Town of Simsbury can and should be reviewed for consistency with the major recommendations of the Plan. The checklist presented on the following page is intended to help evaluate public actions and private activities to determine consistency.

In particular, the Plan of Conservation and Development should be used as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission. Applicants should be encouraged to address how their proposal is consistent with the Plan’s recommendations, and the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission should do the same.

Goal / Strategies

Implement the POCD.

15.1 Implement the POCD.

| POLICIES AND ON-GOING PROGRAMS Implement The POCD | Priority | <i>Legend on inside back cover</i> | |
|--|----------|--|----------|
| | | Leader | Partners |
| A. Use the implementation tables in the POCD to implement the policies and action steps and guide municipal actions. | | PIC | Town |
| B. Monitor and amend POCD policies, as necessary. | | PC | PIC |
| C. Continue to identify and undertake new action steps to help implement the Plan. | | PC | PIC |
| D. Commit adequate budgetary resources to accomplish the goals of the Plan and to continue overall planning for Simsbury. | | BOS | BOF |
| E. Coordinate with other municipalities and state and regional agencies in accomplishing POCD recommendations. | | Town | PIC |
| F. Consider new approaches (such as reducing the number of Boards or allowing staff approval of some applications) to increase efficiency of the land use process. | | Town | |
| G. Consider the recommendations of the POCD when reviewing Special Permit applications as well as text change applications and zone change applications. | | ZC | |
| H. Maintain the Plan in small incremental steps rather than in one major initiative. | | PC | LU |

Looking Ahead – Implement The POCD

| ACTION STEPS Implement The POCD | | | Legend on inside back cover | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | | Priority | Leader |
| ☐ | 1. <i>Establish a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) or process to oversee and coordinate the POCD implementation process.</i> | | BOS | <i>PC</i> |
| ☐ | 2. <i>Schedule a meeting each year to receive and discuss a report on POCD implementation and inform other agencies of progress and next steps.</i> | | PC | <i>PIC LU</i> |
| ☐ | 3. <i>Amend land use regulations as necessary to incorporate POCD recommendations.</i> | | ZC PC | |

Maintaining The Plan

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

1. holding a community meeting to review the Plan recommendations in that thematic area and receive feedback from the community,
2. holding a community meeting to discuss new Plan strategies and suggest alternative language,
3. revising Plan sections including any changes to the Future Land Use chapter, as necessary, and
4. re-adopting the Plan (thereby refreshing the OPM 10-year date).

Since the Affordable Housing Plan (as required by CGS Section 8-30j) has been integrated into this POCD, that element of the POCD will need to be updated every five years and this can set the stage for review of other chapters as well.

Simsbury 2023-33 Plan Of Conservation And Development



POCD CONSISTENCY CHECKLIST

PROPOSER

PROPOSAL

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- A PUBLIC HEARING has been / will be held on the proposal.
- The proposed PUBLIC ACTION is proposed by or supported by the responsible agency as identified in the implementation tables.
- The proposed PRIVATE ACTIVITY is supported by other community groups and/or agencies.

SPECIFIC CONSISTENCY

- The proposed public action addresses a specific recommendation in the Plan, either a policy or an action step (please identify).

Looking Ahead – Implement The POCD

GENERAL CONSISTENCY

| Yes | | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| |
|--|
| Does The Proposal Protect Natural Resources And Enhance Ecological Health? |
| Does The Proposal Preserve Open Space? |
| Does The Proposal Maintain And Enhance Community Ambience? |

| Yes | | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| |
|--|
| Does The Proposal Promote Places With A Sense Of Place? |
| Does The Proposal Promote Economic Development? |
| Does The Proposal Address Housing Needs? |
| Does The Proposal Promote Sustainability And Resiliency? |

| Yes | | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| |
|---|
| Does The Proposal Enhance Community Facilities? |
| Does The Proposal Address Transportation Needs? |
| Does The Proposal Address Utility Infrastructure Needs? |

| Yes | | No | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| |
|---|
| Does The Proposal Implement The Plan Of Conservation And Development? |
|---|

NEXT STEPS

16

Overview

Planning is an ongoing process. It never stops. For Simsbury, this 2023 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 intends to establish a plan implementation process which will:

- seek input for POCD reviews and updates, and
- evaluate implementation of the POCD (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.



APPENDIX

Glossary

Access Management - Managing access to developed land (shared driveways, curb cuts, property connections, etc.) while preserving the flow of traffic on the surrounding road system.

Aquifer - A geologic formation, group of formations, or part of a formation that contains sufficient saturated, permeable materials to yield significant quantities of water to wells and springs. (CGS Section 22a-354h[6])



Aquifer Protection Area (APA) - An area delineated by a water utility company encompassing the groundwater recharge area for an active public drinking water supply well or for well fields serving more than 1,000 people that are set in stratified drift deposits.

Arterial Road - A roadway carrying large traffic volumes specifically for mobility, with limited or restricted service to local development.

“Baby Boomer” - A term used to refer to persons born between 1946 and 1964 because the large number of people born during this period had a significant effect on society.

CERC - Connecticut Economic Resource Center

Appendix

CGS - Connecticut General Statutes

Collector Road - A street whose function is equally divided between mobility and access, linking local streets to arterials.

Complete Streets - A transportation policy and design approach where streets are planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation.

Conservation Development- A pattern of development focused on recognizing the unique characteristics of the parcel being developed and the preservation of substantial amount of open space to protect important natural resources and ecological characteristics.

CRCOG - The Capitol Region Council of Governments – the regional planning agency that includes Simsbury.

DEEP - Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

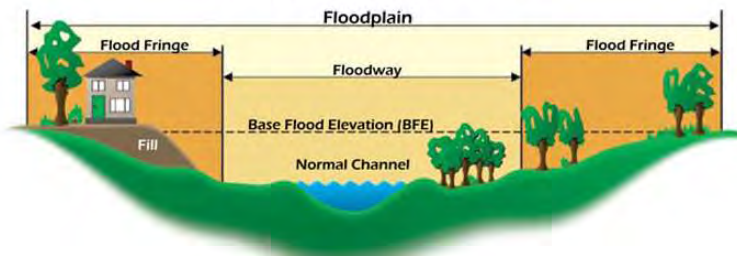
DOT - Connecticut Department of Transportation

FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency

Floodplain - An area land susceptible to being partially or completely inundated by water from any source.

Floodplain Zone - An area which has had a statistical probability of flooding calculated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), typically expressed as a recurrence interval (i.e. – a 100-year floodplain is an area with a 1 percent chance of being flooded in any given year).

Characteristics of a Floodplain



Geographic Information System (GIS) - A combination of computer software, hardware and data used to create maps and analyze and present data.

Green Infrastructure –An approach that highlights the importance of the natural environment and open space in decisions about land-use design.

Infill Development - New construction that occurs on scattered, vacant, or underutilized lots in areas which are already predominantly developed. Infill sites are typically already served by public infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewer lines.

Conventional Development



Conservation Development



Appendix

Invasive Species - Non-native plant or animals that exhibit an aggressive growth habit and can out-compete and displace native species.

Local Street - A street whose primary function is to provide access to a residence, business or other abutting property.

LID – Low-impact development, a term used to describe an approach to managing stormwater runoff which emphasizes conservation and use of on-site natural features to protect water quality by infiltrating, filtering, storing, evaporating, and detaining runoff close to its source.

Managed Open Space - Land that is used for another purpose but provides the community with open space benefits (such as land owned by utility companies, fish and game clubs, golf courses, cemeteries, etc.). Since such land may not allow public use of the land or may be sold or developed in the future, it is not considered dedicated open space.

Mixed Use - A situation where residential and business uses exist in the same development or in the same area.

Mixed Use Buildings - Where residential and business uses exist in the same structure, typically with business uses at street level and residential uses above.

Mixed Use Development - When residential and business uses exist on the same site or in the same development but not in the same structure.

Natural Features – Elements of the natural environment including, but not limited to,

- land-related resources (landforms slopes, soils, minerals, etc.),
- water-related resources (surface water, groundwater, water quality, etc.)
- air-related resources (particulates, etc.), and
- biologic resources (flora, fauna, etc.).

NDDB - The Natural Diversity Database maintained by CT-DEEP.

“NIMBY” - An acronym that stands for “not in my backyard”, NIMBY is the tendency for people to oppose certain developments near their home or in their neighborhood, even if they might consider them socially beneficial in general. Usually this fear is based on perceived quality of life or property value concerns.

Open Space – A term generally used to describe undeveloped land ***with some protection against development*** (such as designation as a park or forest, a restrictive covenant, or ownership by a land trust organization). Defined in CGS Section 12-107b as any area of land ..., the preservation or restriction of the use of which would (1) maintain and enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources, (2) protect natural streams or water supply, (3) promote conservation of soils, wetlands, ..., (4) enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations or sanctuaries or other open spaces, (5) enhance public recreation opportunities, (6) preserve historic sites or (7) promote orderly urban or suburban development;

Appendix

Place Making - An approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces that capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.

POCD - Plan of Conservation and Development.

Point Sources - Fixed sources of pollution (such as a wastewater outlet pipe).

Smart Growth – An approach to development that generally seeks to avoid sprawl by concentrating growth in compact walkable areas. Smart growth goals are to achieve a unique sense of community and place; expand the range of transportation, employment, and housing choices; equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; preserve and enhance natural and cultural resources; and promote public health.

Sprawl - A multi-faceted concept centered around the expansion of low-density and auto-dependent development, a high degree of separation of residential and commercial uses, and other design features which may encourage car dependency.

Sustainability - The capacity to endure. For humans, sustainability is the long-term maintenance of responsibility, which has environmental, economic, and social dimensions, and encompasses the concept of stewardship, the responsible management of resource use.

Walkability - A measure of how friendly an area is to walking with a concentration on the health, environmental, and economic benefits and the presence or absence of quality footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, and safety.

Watercourses - Rivers, streams, brooks, waterways, lakes, ponds, marshes, swamps, bogs and all other bodies of water, natural or artificial, vernal or intermittent, public or private.

Well-Being - Well-being is a positive state of being comfortable, healthy, and/or happy and is typically determined by social, economic and environmental conditions. On a personal level, it includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and being able to manage stress. It encompasses quality of life and the ability of people and societies to contribute to the world with a sense of meaning and purpose.

Wetlands - Land, including submerged land, which consists of any of the soil types designated as poorly drained, very poorly drained, alluvial and flood plain by the National Cooperative Soils Survey, as it may be amended from time to time, of the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Local Hearings

For applications to the Siting Council, the Town will seek to schedule a public informational meeting so that the wireless telecommunications provider can explain the need for and the impact of the proposed wireless telecommunications tower.

Based on the input received at this meeting and other information collected, the Town will prepare and provide testimony to the Siting Council for use during the permitting process.

Telecommunications Policy Preferences

Statement of Purpose

The Town of Simsbury recognizes that wireless communication services have become an important means of communication. The Town wishes to allow for the availability of adequate wireless communications service in Simsbury while seeking the least obtrusive means of having such services available.

The following policy preferences are intended to provide guidance to wireless telecommunications providers, the Connecticut Siting Council (which regulates the siting of new towers), and the Zoning Commission in terms of the siting of new wireless telecommunications facilities.

General Siting Preferences

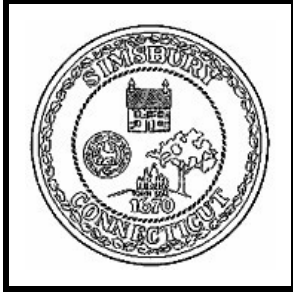
The Town of Simsbury seeks to encourage or require the siting of wireless telecommunications facilities in ways that will:

1. Allow for permitting of locations which are:
 - a. the least visually obtrusive.
 - b. least disruptive to the public health, safety, and welfare, and
 - c. consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development.
2. Protect the Town's visual quality and minimize any adverse visual impacts through proper design, siting, and screening.
3. Minimize the number of towers, especially ground-mounted towers, and instead encourage siting on office buildings or other tall structures such as silos.
4. Restrict the height to that needed to establish opportunities for co-location of multiple carriers.
5. Provide for the orderly removal of abandoned antennas and towers.

Appendix

Specific Siting Preferences For Towers

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| Location | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Towers should be located to serve areas lacking adequate wireless telecommunication service identified by the Connecticut Siting Council.2. Applications should evaluate suitable locations already identified by the Town and/or larger properties which can allow for more effective screening. |
| Protection of Important Resources | <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. The location should preserve the integrity of environmentally sensitive areas including unique wildlife habitats, wetlands, and historic and archaeological resources.4. A location within or adjacent to any officially designated historic areas including any resource on the National Register of Historic Places should be avoided.5. In order to evaluate potential impact to any scenic resource, especially those noted in the Plan of Conservation and Development, parties wishing to locate towers within Simsbury should fly a balloon from the proposed location so that visual impacts may be evaluated from various locations. |
| Design Considerations | <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Tower locations should include an adequate fall zone that will protect public safety.7. The use of stealth technologies should be employed whenever possible.8. Signage and lighting should be clearly disclosed and should not exceed what is clearly necessary for public safety.9. Site development should minimize impervious surfaces, avoid soil erosion and runoff problems, maintain natural buffers, and provide for security and safe access. |



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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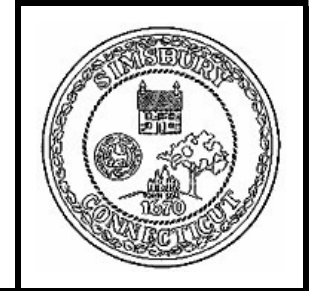
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LEGEND FOR LEADERS / PARTNERS



| Code | Entity |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| AHC | <i>Affordable Housing Committee</i> |
| APA | Aquifer Protection Agency |
| BOE | Board of Education |
| BOF | Board of Finance |
| BOS | Board of Selectmen |
| BPA | Bike / Pedestrian Advisory Comm. |
| COC | Chamber Of Commerce |
| CPR | Culture, Parks, and Rec. Comm. |
| CWC | Conservation / Wetlands Comm. |
| DEEP | CT Dept. of Energy / Env. Prot. |
| DOT | CT Dept. of Transportation |
| DRB | Design Review Board |
| EDC | Economic Development Comm. |
| FRWA | Farm. River Watershed Assoc. |
| FVHD | Farm. Valley Health District |
| HDC | Historic District Commission |
| LU | Land Use Staff |

| Code | Entity |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| MSP | Main Street Partnership |
| OSC | Open Space Committee |
| PAC | Performing Arts Center |
| PC | Planning Commission |
| PD | Police Department |
| PIC | <i>Plan Implementation Committee</i> |
| SC | Sustainability Committee |
| SHA | Simsbury Housing Authority |
| SHS | Simsbury Historical Society |
| SLT | Simsbury Land Trust |
| SPL | Simsbury Public Library |
| SSS | Social Services |
| SVA | Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance |
| Town | Town Agencies and Departments |
| TVA | Tariffville Village Association |
| VFD | Volunteer Fire District |
| WPCA | Water Pollution Control Auth. |
| ZBA | Zoning Board of Appeals |
| ZC | Zoning Commission |

New entities recommended in the POCD are highlighted in yellow in the above table.

