

WETHERSFIELD



2013 Plan of Conservation & Development

Planning & Zoning Commission

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

1	Introduction / Executive Summary	1
2	History Of Wethersfield	5
3	Conditions And Trends	23
4	Community Issues And Concerns	33

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

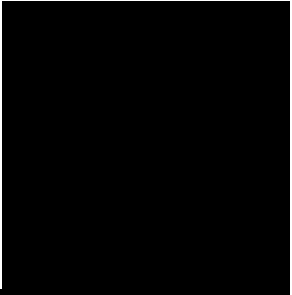
5	Maintain Community Character And Quality Of Life	37
	Maintain Community Character	
	Protect Residential Character	
	Provide For Facilities For Community Needs	
	Extend Sidewalks And Trails	
	Establish Bicycle Routes	
	Expand Community Events	
	Promote Architectural Character	
	Protect Cultural Resources	
	Enhance Transit Services	
	Enhance Streets	

6	Guide Development	57
	Encourage Redevelopment Of The SDH	
	Create A “Town Center Node” On The SDH	
	Encourage Berlin Turnpike Redevelopment	
	Encourage Redevelopment of Key Sites	
	Encourage Appropriate Business Development	
	Allow For “Evolution” Of The Housing Stock	
	Encourage Housing Diversity	

7	Address Other Issues	75
	Protect Natural Resources	
	Preserve Open Spaces	
	Manage The Roadway System	
	Support Farms and Farming	
	Promote Sustainability And Resiliency	
	Maintain and Enhance Utility Infrastructure	
	Manage Wethersfield Cove	

CONCLUSION

8	Future Land Use Plan	85
9	Plan Implementation	91
10	Conclusion	119
	Acknowledgments	



May 2013

To The Residents of Wethersfield,

The Planning & Zoning Commission is pleased to present the 2013 Plan of Conservation & Development. The Plan sets forth principles, policies, and strategies to guide future conservation and development in Wethersfield and recommends ways to implement the Plan. The Commission intends to periodically review and update this Plan in order to keep it current and tuned to the needs of the community.

Preparation of the Plan occurred over an 18-month period and included special meetings of the Commission and sessions specifically for public input and comment. The Plan reflects the work of the Commission, Town Staff, and the many residents who participated during the process.

The Commission is proud of this Plan and believes it will help maintain and improve the overall quality of life and maintain the unique character of Wethersfield. We hope that you will join with us in implementing the Plan.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Harley, Chair
Planning and Zoning Commission

Introduction / Executive Summary

1

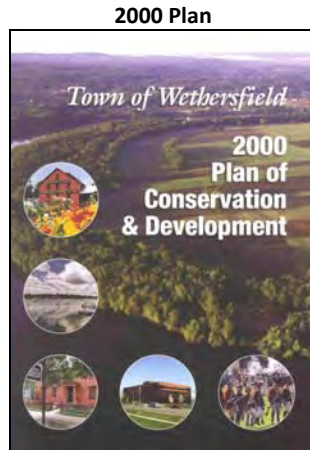
Overview

A Plan of Conservation and Development is a strategic plan for the physical development of a community. It is an advisory document prepared by the Planning and Zoning Commission which is intended to guide local actions and to provide a framework for consistent decision-making over the next decade or so.

Since 1928, Wethersfield has regularly prepared strategic plans looking at the future of the community.

Since circumstances facing a community can change over time, these strategic plans are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they address the issues and opportunities facing the community at that time. This Plan is no different.

During the process of preparing this Plan, Wethersfield residents consistently advocated for maintaining the overall character and quality of life in Wethersfield. Those attributes are what attracted them to the community and they clearly indicated they wanted to pass them along for future residents and generations. The following philosophy emerged as the foundation for this Plan of Conservation and Development:



Guide the conservation and development of Wethersfield in ways that will maintain and enhance its character and quality of life.

Plan Guidelines

The preparation of a Plan of Conservation and Development is authorized (and required) by Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Some key excerpts from that statute are presented below:

**Excerpts From Connecticut General Statutes
Section 8-23 - Plan Of Conservation And Development**

The Plan shall:

- be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality, ..
- show the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality
- be designed to promote with the greatest efficiency and economy the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people.

The Plan may:

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

Preparation Of This Plan

A Plan of Conservation and Development is officially adopted by the Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission. However, this POCD was prepared with community input so that the planning process would include a wide variety of viewpoints and opinions and represent the best ideas and strategies for the future of the community.

Following a number of meetings where Plan ideas were discussed and Plan strategies were formulated and refined, an initial draft Plan was prepared. Several iterations of draft Plans were discussed and refined by the Planning and Zoning Commission prior to adoption.

Following a public hearing held on April 2 and April 16, the Plan was adopted at the May 7, 2013 meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission with an effective date of June 1, 2013.

Policies And Tasks

In the chapters containing policy recommendations, a grid similar to that below is used to distinguish between policies and tasks:

Plan Strategy	
Policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term and continuing strategies that do not readily lend themselves to a specific schedule or measurement • Can be difficult to determine whether such ongoing strategies are ever fully implemented
Tasks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific actions that can typically be scheduled and measured • Implementation can usually be readily identified

Executive Summary

Overall Process

Since the preparation of the first Town Plan over 80 years ago, Wethersfield has had a tradition of preparing and implementing plans for its physical development in order to enhance the character of the community and the quality of life of its residents. It is in that spirit that this Plan of Conservation and Development was prepared.

Public meetings and community surveys provided information about the issues important to residents and property owners. Independent research and evaluation of trends provided insight to the types of issues likely to affect the community in the coming years.

The Planning and Zoning Commission considered this information in preparing a strategic vision for the community and the policies and tasks which will help make that vision come to fruition. This vision was crafted over the course of a number of working sessions and discussions.

Public Meeting Exercise



Major Findings

- Wethersfield is already doing many things well in terms of implementing the policies and programs of the Town and this capability will serve the Town well.
- Wethersfield has excellent facilities and services for residents (from schools to parks and from the library to Wethersfield Cove) and these amenities enhance the overall quality of life.
- Wethersfield can anticipate changes resulting from an aging population and people living longer and healthier lives.
- Wethersfield grew rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s and most of the housing units built in that time period are smaller and configured differently than the typical home of today.
- Wethersfield has great opportunities to capitalize on its metropolitan location, transportation connections, and quality of life provided that its housing stock remains relevant to current occupants and future purchasers.

Community Character



Key Strategies

Based on community input and Commission discussion, the strategies of the Plan revolved around three key themes:

- Maintaining Community Character And Quality Of Life – the issues within this theme were considered to be important to the overall quality of life in the community, both at present and in the future. Implementing the recommended policies and completing the identified tasks will help keep Wethersfield the attractive and desirable community it has been for hundreds of years.
- Addressing Development Issues – even though Wethersfield is predominantly developed, there are still issues related to ensuring that growth and change is managed in a positive way so that Wethersfield remains an attractive and desirable community. The key issues identified here relate to encouraging redevelopment of a portion of the Silas Deane Highway into a more pedestrian-friendly “Town Center” configuration and ensuring that the housing stock in the community can be adapted to current lifestyles and to people’s changing housing needs.
- Addressing Other Issues – Wethersfield must also devote attention to protecting important resources (such as natural resources, open space, and farms) and providing for community needs (such as roadways and utilities).

Implementation

With the tradition of planning in Wethersfield, the input and support from residents, and the identification of key strategies, the only missing ingredient may be implementation. The Plan identifies implementation guides which indicate the parties most responsible for seeing that individual policies and tasks are implemented.

With this approach, it is hoped that the Plan will maintain and enhance Wethersfield as the desirable residential community it has always been.

Community Character



History Of Wethersfield

2

Overview

Before planning for the future, it is often helpful to consider the past.

By learning about what has happened in Wethersfield in the past, it is possible to better understand why things are the way they are now and how important ideas and events resulted in the community of today.

The illustrations on the following pages were created by Phil Lohman, artist and Wethersfield resident. These birds-eye views are intended to depict, in a simplified way, the development of Wethersfield and to highlight some noteworthy events.

Pre-European Settlement

The basic landscape of Wethersfield evolved over millions of years as a result of geologic processes. Human settlement is believed to date back about 10,000 years or so.

By the early 1600s, human settlements in this area had organized into several Native American tribes. The Wongunk tribe, inhabitants of the area we now know as Wethersfield, were primarily hunters and gatherers although they also fished and did basic agriculture. They apparently called this area “Pyquaug”, meaning “cleared land.”

Recreation Of A Native American Settlement



1600-1650

Early Settlement

In 1614, Dutchman Adriaen Block sailed through Long Island Sound and up the Connecticut River (reportedly past Wethersfield). The sight of a sailing vessel on the Connecticut River was surely a great surprise to the Native Americans.

European Sailing Ship



The desire for exploration of the “New World” also set off a race between the Dutch and the English to trade blankets, utensils, and other goods with the Native American tribes for furs and native craft products.

Competition for trade was also occurring among the Native American tribes. Eventually, efforts by the war-like Pequot tribe to dominate trade with the Europeans resulted in conflicts among tribes. In 1631, some of the less powerful tribes in the Connecticut River area (such as the Wongunks) forged an alliance with the Massachusetts Bay Colony and invited settlers to the region in the hopes of gaining some protection from the Pequots.

In 1634, John Oldham and 11 other hardy settlers travelled overland from Watertown Massachusetts to establish a settlement with the Wongunks at a strategic bend in the Connecticut River. This new settlement was supported by the hunting and fishing opportunities and the fertile soil of the Connecticut River floodplain for growing of crops. Structures were soon built in a small village area for protection and crops were planted in outlying areas to support this new settlement.

In 1637, perhaps upset by being excluded from trade arrangements, a Pequot raiding party attacked and killed several Wethersfield settlers in the fields. These events threatened the early settlers and a group from Wethersfield, Hartford, and Windsor assembled to strike back. Joined by some other Native American tribes, this war party attacked a Pequot settlement in what is now Groton. This conflict, now referred to as the Pequot War, resulted in the decimation of the Pequot tribe and set the stage for accelerated European settlement of the New World.

The illustration on the facing page shows how the area we now know as Wethersfield might have been settled around 1634.

The first settlers are thought to have wintered on the west side of the river. A Wongunk settlement is nearby. Note the different configuration of the Connecticut River at that time.

1633 PILGRIMS FROM PLYMOUTH BUILD A TRADING POST WHERE THE FARMINGTON RIVER MEETS THE CONNECTICUT... BECOMES WINDSOR

1636 THOMAS HOOKER
FOUNDS HARTFORD

LITTLE RIVER

WONGUNKS

1634

10 "ADVENTURERS" TRAVEL OVERLAND FROM MASSACHUSETTS. ('ADVENTURERS' BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T GET OFFICIAL PERMISSION TO RELOCATE.)

WELCOMED BY THE WONGUNKS, THEY WINTER OVER IN ROUGH SHELTERS.

1633

DUTCH BUILD A FORTIFIED TRADING POST AT WHAT IS NOW KNOWN AS DUTCH POINT. IT IS CALLED: THE HOUSE OF GOOD HOPE... THINK: HOYSHOPE AVENUE...

COLE, STANDISH OR FROTE ISLAND

ADVENTURERS CAMP

MORE SETTLER FAMILIES ARRIVE THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

QUINNIPIAC SUCKIAG PATH

PYQUAUG PATH

OLD FORT

1637 PEQUOTS RAID WETHERSFIELD KILLING SETTLERS AND LIVESTOCK AND TAKE THE SWAIN GIRLS CAPTIVE LEADING TO COLONIAL MILITIA ATTACKS THAT VANQUISH THE PEQUOTS.

SOWHEAG'S 1635 CAMP

WRIGHT'S ISLAND

BEAVER BROOK

BEAVER MEADOW

QUINNIPIAC MATTABASSETT PATH

1631 WONGUNK LEADER SOWHEAG GOES TO MASSACHUSETTS TO INVITE THE ENGLISH PURITANS TO COME AND SETTLE AND HE'LL HELP THEM GET STARTED... AND BY THE WAY, BRING YOUR GUNS...

CONNECTICUT RIVER

MOHEGAN NAME IS QUINIHTUKQUT... MEANS: "LAND OF THE LONG TIDAL RIVER" 410 MILES LONG FROM CANADA TO LONG ISLAND SOUND... MAIN HIGHWAY OF ITS TIME THOUGH PATHS CONNECTED NATIVE COMMUNITIES.

1614

400 YEARS AGO DUTCH EXPLORER & TRADER ADRIAEN BLOCK SAILED THE 'ONRIST' UP WHAT HE NAMED 'THE FRESH RIVER'. (ONRIST IS DUTCH FOR RESTLESS) THE DUTCH WERE MORE INTERESTED IN FUR TRADING THAN SETTLEMENT.

YEARS LATER THE ENGLISH PUSHED THEM OUT... THEN THEY CONCENTRATED ON TRADE IN THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY.

AT THE TIME OF THE ARRIVAL OF THOUSANDS OF SETTLERS TO THE NEW WORLD, NATIVE AMERICANS HAD THRIVED ALONG THE CONNECTICUT RIVER FOR 10,000 YEARS. THE WONGUNK TRIBE HUNTED & FISHED HERE AND CULTIVATED CORN, BEAN & SQUASH. THEY CONNECTED WITH OTHER TRIBES ALONG ANCIENT PATHS... SADLY, EXPOSURE TO EUROPEAN DISEASES DECIMATED NATIVE PEOPLES. THE WEAKENED WONGUNKS WERE THREATENED BY THEIR AGGRESSIVE PEQUOT NEIGHBORS, SO THEY INVITED THE NEW PEOPLE TO SETTLE NEAR THEIR FERTILE, CLEARED MEADOWS AND HELP RESIST THE PEQUOTS. LAND CHANGED HANDS, SETTLEMENTS EXPANDED, TENSIONS DEVELOPED. THE WONGUNKS MOVED AWAY AND WERE ALL GONE BY 1785.

1650-1700

From Village To Farmsteads

With the decreased threat of attacks by Native Americans, people felt more comfortable moving to outlying areas instead of living in a village and traveling to their fields every day.

A grist mill was established along Two Stone Brook in what later became known as Griswoldville. Water-powered mills such as this were important community assets.

Griswoldville Mill



Even though settlers were becoming more dispersed, the village area along the bend in the Connecticut River was the center of community life. The “meeting house” which had been built at the corner of Main and Marsh streets was the center of both religious teachings and governmental affairs. People travelled to the meetinghouse regularly for church.

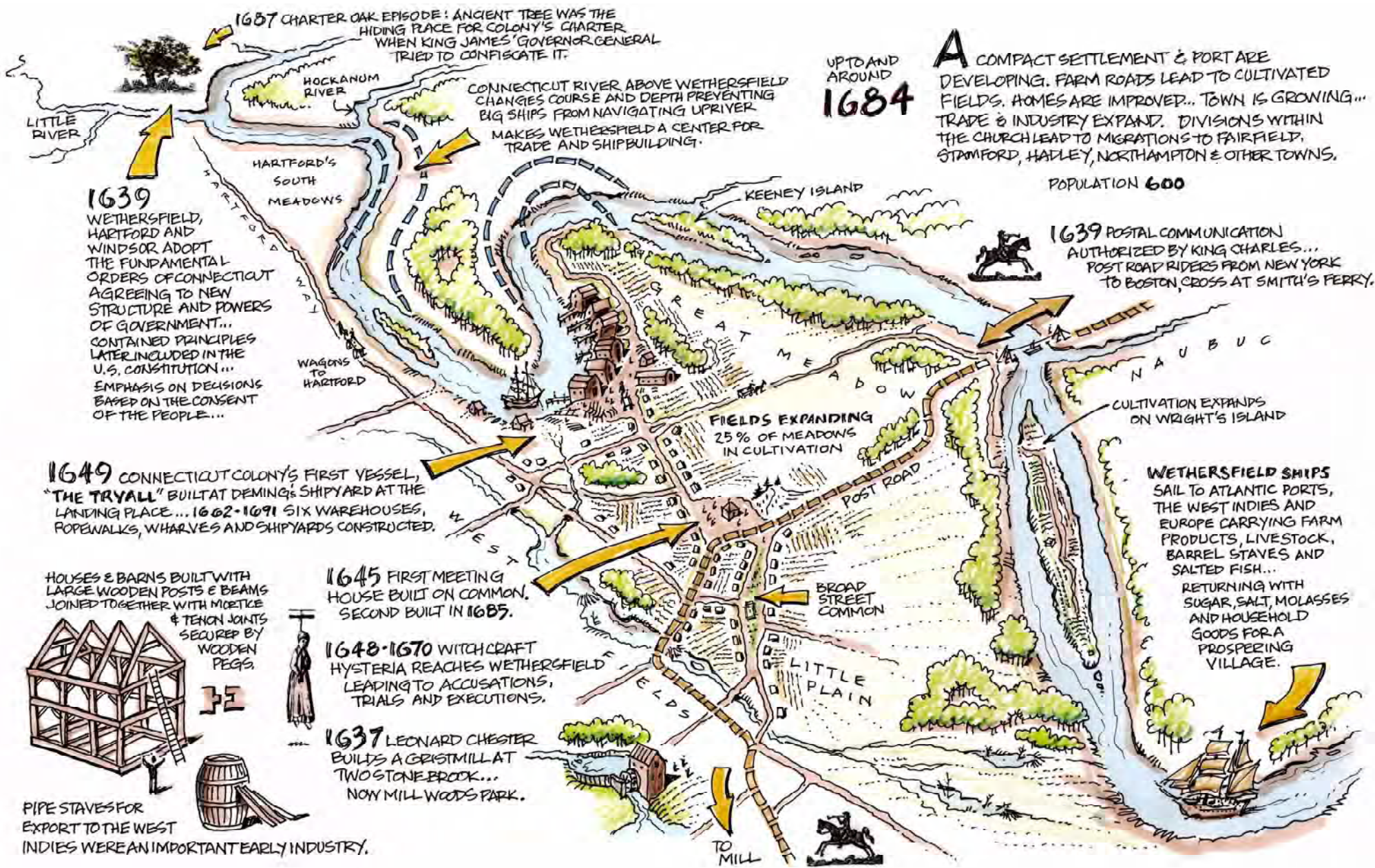
Wethersfield was very much a maritime community also. The curve of the Connecticut River created a natural port with deep water. Wethersfield became a “port of distribution for the interior” and cargo bound to and from the West Indies and other distant ports passed through Wethersfield. Several warehouses were established in this area as part of the port operations. What is said to be the first ship built in Connecticut, *The Tryall*, was constructed at a shipyard in Wethersfield.

Flooding frequently changed the course of the Connecticut River and this complicated port operations. For example, a major flood in 1692 straightened the course of the river and may have resulted in the creation of what we now call Wethersfield Cove.

The illustration on the facing page shows how Wethersfield might have been settled around 1684. The river has changed course.

A witch trial might have been going on at the meetinghouse. The mid 1600s were a time for “witch hysteria”. Four witch trials and three executions for witchcraft occurred in Wethersfield.





1637 CHARTER OAK EPISODE: ANCIENT TREE WAS THE HIDING PLACE FOR COLONY'S CHARTER WHEN KING JAMES' GOVERNOR GENERAL TRIED TO CONFISCATE IT.

UP TO AND AROUND **1684** A COMPACT SETTLEMENT & PORT ARE DEVELOPING. FARM ROADS LEAD TO CULTIVATED FIELDS. HOMES ARE IMPROVED... TOWN IS GROWING... TRADE & INDUSTRY EXPAND. DIVISIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH LEAD TO MIGRATIONS TO FAIRFIELD, STAMFORD, HADLEY, NORTHAMPTON & OTHER TOWNS.
POPULATION 600

1639 WETHERSFIELD, HARTFORD AND WINDSOR ADOPT THE FUNDAMENTAL ORDERS OF CONNECTICUT AGREEING TO NEW STRUCTURE AND POWERS OF GOVERNMENT... CONTAINED PRINCIPLES LATER INCLUDED IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION... EMPHASIS ON DECISIONS BASED ON THE CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE...

1639 POSTAL COMMUNICATION AUTHORIZED BY KING CHARLES... POST ROAD RIDERS FROM NEW YORK TO BOSTON, CROSS AT SMITH'S FERRY.

1649 CONNECTICUT COLONY'S FIRST VESSEL, "THE TRYALL" BUILT AT DEMING'S SHIPYARD AT THE LANDING PLACE... 1662-1691 SIX WAREHOUSES, ROPEWALKS, WHARVES AND SHIPYARDS CONSTRUCTED.

CULTIVATION EXPANDS ON WRIGHT'S ISLAND

WETHERSFIELD SHIPS SAIL TO ATLANTIC PORTS, THE WEST INDIES AND EUROPE CARRYING FARM PRODUCTS, LIVESTOCK, BARREL STAVES AND SALTED FISH... RETURNING WITH SUGAR, SALT, MOLASSES AND HOUSEHOLD GOODS FOR A PROSPERING VILLAGE.

HOUSES & BARNs BUILT WITH LARGE WOODEN POSTS & BEAMS JOINED TOGETHER WITH MOISTICE & TENON JOINTS SECURED BY WOODEN PEGS.

1645 FIRST MEETING HOUSE BUILT ON COMMON. SECOND BUILT IN 1685.

1648-1670 WITCHCRAFT HYSTERIA REACHES WETHERSFIELD LEADING TO ACCUSATIONS, TRIALS AND EXECUTIONS.

1637 LEONARD CHESTER BUILDS A GRISTMILL AT TWO STONE BROOK... NOW MILL WOODS PARK.

PIPE STAVES FOR EXPORT TO THE WEST INDIES WERE AN IMPORTANT EARLY INDUSTRY.

1700-1750

Shipping And Onions

Even though shipbuilding and maritime trade continued, the changing configuration of the Connecticut River affected the operation of the port and facilities began to be established elsewhere (on the main channel of the Connecticut River at the end of River Road and in what we now know as Rocky Hill).

Most families in Wethersfield at this time supported themselves with subsistence agriculture. Some others were merchants and involved in maritime trades, including shipbuilding.

Shipbuilding



While subsistence farming had always been important in Wethersfield, the availability of maritime transportation created an opportunity to sell local products to a much larger market. Residents responded and started growing more products and exporting them to distant lands.

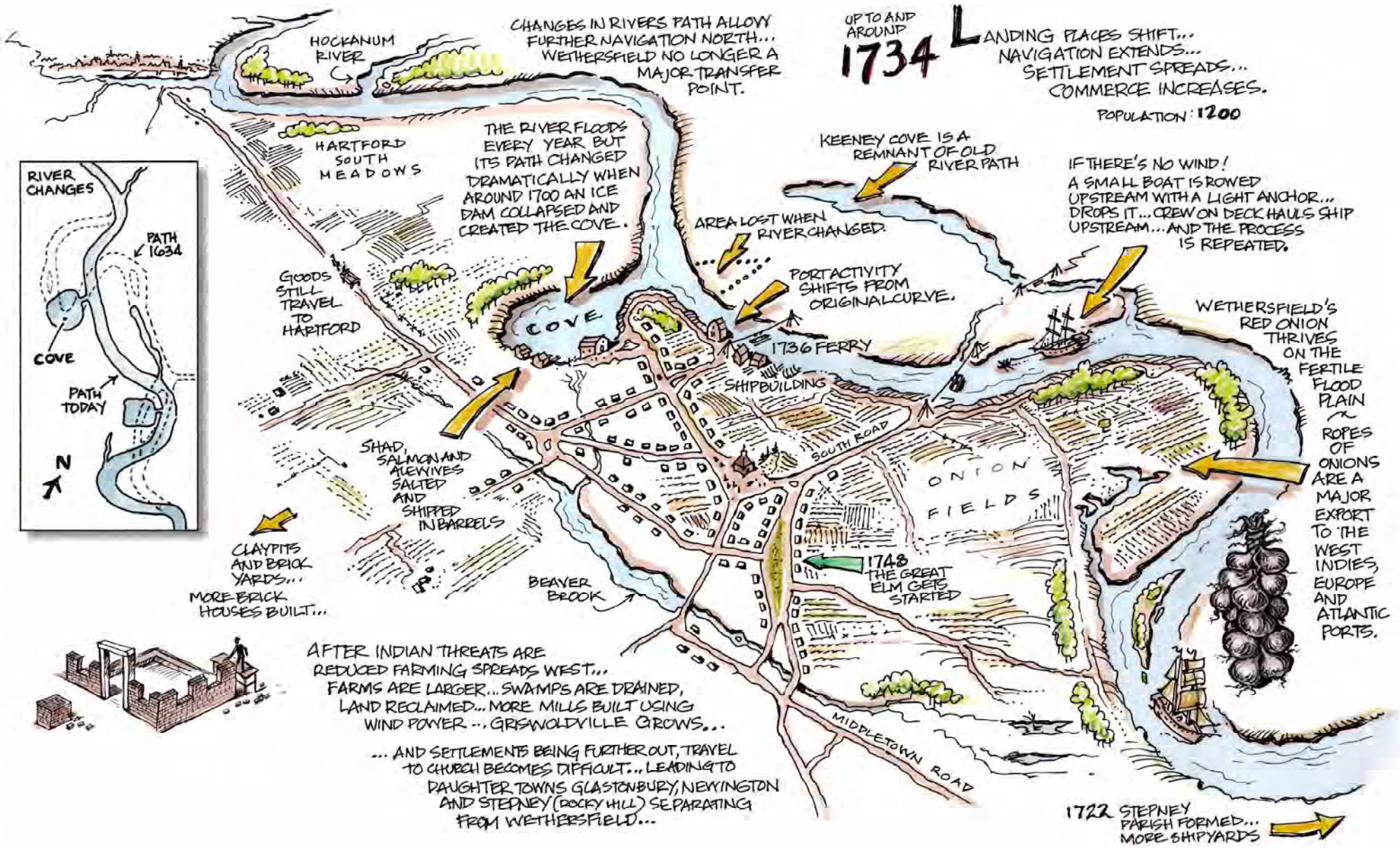
About this time, the “Red Wethersfield Onion” became an agricultural focus and it became widely known and traded. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the onion trade had brought considerable wealth to Wethersfield and “luxuries of considerable sophistication, fine fabrics, ceramics, glass, cutlery and books were imported and sold in Wethersfield.”

Red Onion Farming



The illustration on the facing page shows how Wethersfield might have been settled around 1734.

Note the configuration of the Connecticut River and the farm fields surrounding the growing village area. Note also the homesteads in outlying areas.



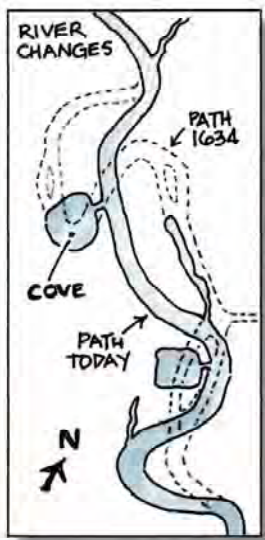
CHANGES IN RIVERS PATH ALLOW FURTHER NAVIGATION NORTH... WETHERSFIELD NO LONGER A MAJOR TRANSFER POINT.

UP TO AND AROUND **1734** LANDING PLACES SHIFT... NAVIGATION EXTENDS... SETTLEMENT SPREADS... COMMERCE INCREASES. POPULATION: 1200

THE RIVER FLOODS EVERY YEAR BUT ITS PATH CHANGED DRAMATICALLY WHEN AROUND 1700 AN ICE DAM COLLAPSED AND CREATED THE COVE.

KEENEY COVE IS A REMNANT OF OLD RIVER PATH

IF THERE'S NO WIND! A SMALL BOAT IS ROWED UPSTREAM WITH A LIGHT ANCHOR... DROPS IT... CREW ON DECK HAULS SHIP UPSTREAM... AND THE PROCESS IS REPEATED.



AREA LOST WHEN RIVER CHANGED

PORT ACTIVITY SHIFTS FROM ORIGINAL CURVE.

WETHERSFIELD'S RED ONION THRIVES ON THE FERTILE FLOOD PLAIN ~ ROPES OF ONIONS ARE A MAJOR EXPORT TO THE WEST INDIES, EUROPE AND ATLANTIC PORTS.

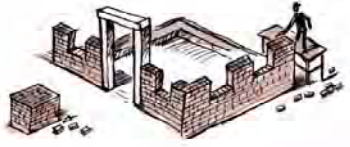
GOODS STILL TRAVEL TO HARTFORD

1736 FERRY

SHAD SALMON AND SLEWIVES SALTED AND SHIPPED IN BARRELS

1748 THE GREAT ELM GETS STARTED

CLAYPITS AND BRICK YARDS... MORE BRICK HOUSES BUILT...



AFTER INDIAN THREATS ARE REDUCED FARMING SPREADS WEST... FARMS ARE LARGER... SWAMPS ARE DRAINED, LAND RECLAIMED... MORE MILLS BUILT USING WIND POWER... GRISWOLDVILLE GROWS...

... AND SETTLEMENTS BEING FURTHER OUT, TRAVEL TO CHURCH BECOMES DIFFICULT... LEADING TO DAUGHTER TOWNS GLASTONBURY, NEWINGTON AND STEPNEY (ROCKY HILL) SEPARATING FROM WETHERSFIELD...

1722 STEPNEY PARISH FORMED... MORE SHIPYARDS

1750-1800

Incubator of Independence

By the late 1700s, Wethersfield's influence was waning in maritime trade but increasing in governance and diplomacy. Wethersfield residents were important participants in the affairs of the Connecticut Colony.

Silas Deane, a Wethersfield resident, represented Connecticut in the first Continental Congress (a meeting of the 13 colonies). At the second Continental Congress in 1776, American colonists declared the independence of a new sovereign nation, the United States of America.

Silas Deane was not a participant at the second Continental Congress because he had been dispatched to France on behalf of the Continental Congress to enlist France as an ally should war break out with England.

Silas Deane



In France, Deane organized shipment of many shiploads of arms and ammunition to America and cultivated the alliance. It is unclear if America could have won the Revolutionary War without the assistance of the French.

A number of Wethersfield residents fought in the war and local farms helped make Connecticut a "bread-basket" of the war effort.

In 1781, General George Washington met in Wethersfield with Count Rochambeau of France to coordinate their activities for the decisive battle of Yorktown.

Reenactment of Washington - Rochambeau Meeting In Wethersfield



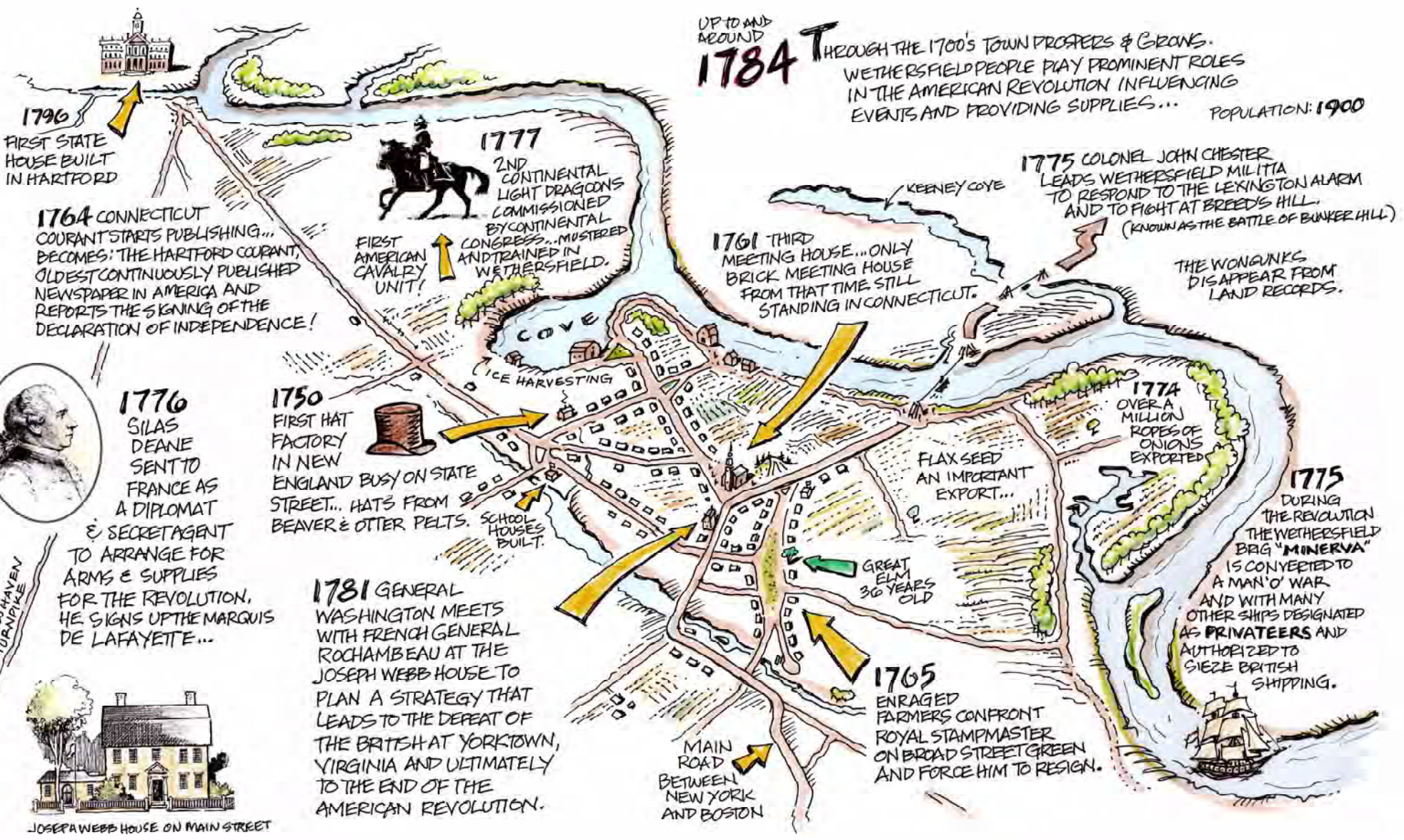
The British defeat at Yorktown led to negotiations to end the conflict and an eventual treaty recognizing America.

The illustration on the facing page shows how Wethersfield might have been settled around 1784.

An inset shows Washington and Rochambeau meeting while their travel parties camp in nearby fields.

UP TO AND AROUND
1784

THROUGH THE 1700'S TOWN PROSPERS & GROWS.
WETHERSFIELD PEOPLE PLAY PROMINENT ROLES
IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION INFLUENCING
EVENTS AND PROVIDING SUPPLIES... POPULATION: 1900



1796
FIRST STATE HOUSE BUILT IN HARTFORD

1764 CONNECTICUT COURANT STARTS PUBLISHING... BECOMES: THE HARTFORD COURANT, OLDEST CONTINUOUSLY PUBLISHED NEWSPAPER IN AMERICA AND REPORTS THE SIGNING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE!



1776
SILAS DEANE SENT TO FRANCE AS A DIPLOMAT & SECRETAGENT TO ARRANGE FOR ARMS & SUPPLIES FOR THE REVOLUTION. HE SIGNS UP THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE...

NEW HAVEN TURNPIKE



JOSEPH WEBB HOUSE ON MAIN STREET

1750
FIRST HAT FACTORY IN NEW ENGLAND BUSY ON STATE STREET... HATS FROM BEAVER & OTTER PELTS.



SCHOOL HOUSES BUILT.

1781 GENERAL WASHINGTON MEETS WITH FRENCH GENERAL ROCHAMBEAU AT THE JOSEPH WEBB HOUSE TO PLAN A STRATEGY THAT LEADS TO THE DEFEAT OF THE BRITISH AT YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA AND ULTIMATELY TO THE END OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

1777
2ND CONTINENTAL LIGHT DRAGOONS COMMISSIONED BY CONTINENTAL CONGRESS... MUSTERED AND TRAINED IN WETHERSFIELD.

FIRST AMERICAN CAVALRY UNIT!



1761 THIRD MEETING HOUSE... ONLY BRICK MEETING HOUSE FROM THAT TIME STILL STANDING IN CONNECTICUT.

1775 COLONEL JOHN CHESTER LEADS WETHERSFIELD MILITIA TO RESPOND TO THE LEXINGTON ALARM AND TO FIGHT AT BRED'S HILL, (KNOWN AS THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL)

THE WONGUNKS DISAPPEAR FROM LAND RECORDS.

1774
OVER A MILLION ROPES OF ONIONS EXPORTED

FLAX SEED AN IMPORTANT EXPORT...

GREAT ELM 30 YEARS OLD

1765
ENRAGED FARMERS CONFRONT ROYAL STAMPMASTER ON BROAD STREET GREEN AND FORCE HIM TO RESIGN.

1775
DURING THE REVOLUTION THE WETHERSFIELD BRIG "MINERVA" IS CONVERTED TO A MAN'O WAR AND WITH MANY OTHER SHIPS DESIGNATED AS PRIVATEERS AND AUTHORIZED TO SIEGE BRITISH SHIPPING.



1800-1850

Becoming The Seed Capitol

The early 1800s was a fertile time for the establishment of new municipalities in Connecticut. As one of the first communities in Connecticut, Wethersfield was the parent of several other towns in Connecticut (Rocky Hill, Newington, part of Berlin).

During this period, Wethersfield also found a new agricultural focus – seed companies!

Seed-related businesses started in Wethersfield as early as 1811 and the Wethersfield Seed Garden Company was established about 1820. This company and its business success led to a number of other seed enterprises over the years including Comstock-Ferre Company and Chas. C. Hart Seed Company. For many years and for many people, Wethersfield was considered to be the “seed capital” of North America.

Seed Company



Transportation of this era consisted primarily of horse, carriage, and boat. Steamboat service to and from New York City stopped in Wethersfield. The arrival of the railroad in 1839 came at roughly the same time as the Industrial Revolution, a period of economic transformation in the country and the world. As a primarily agricultural community, Wethersfield was not affected to the same extent as some other communities.

In 1827, Wethersfield became the home of a major state facility when the State established a prison on a parcel of land adjacent to Wethersfield Cove.

After some devastating fires in the village area, a volunteer fire department was organized to be available to respond to fire alarms. The department is considered to be the oldest volunteer fire department in continuous existence in Connecticut, and New England.

The illustration on the facing page shows how Wethersfield might have been settled around 1834.

Many of the fields are devoted to seed production in addition to subsistence farming. Ice was harvested from the Cove in the winter.

±1810 WOODEN BRIDGE
CROSSES RIVER
AT HARTFORD

THE NEPTUNE,
TOWN'S FIRST
FIRE ENGINE
1858

UP TO AND
AROUND
1834

SETTLEMENT CONTINUES IN OUTLYING AREAS...
POPULATION NOT CHANGING... FIELDS ARE OVERWORKED
AND LESS PRODUCTIVE ... KILLING FROST IN 1816
RUINS CORNCROP... FOLKS EMIGRATE TO WEST FOR
BETTER SOIL AND CLIMATE... LABOR SHORTAGES RESULT...
FARMERS TURN TO SMALLER AND MORE SPECIALIZED CROPS.

RAIL-LINE
TO NEW HAVEN



1821
SOPHIA WOODHOUSE
PATENTS & MANUFACTURES
HER AWARD-WINNING
LEGHORN BONNET.
(LEGHORN = LIVORNO IN ITALIAN)
IT WAS MADE FROM TREATED
WETHERSFIELD MEADOW
SPEED GRASS

1803 & 1834
OLDEST VOLUNTEER FIRE
DEPARTMENT IN CONTINUOUS
EXISTENCE IN NEW ENGLAND
(OR MAYBE IN THE UNITED STATES)
CHARTERED... THEN REVITALIZED
AFTER CATASTROPHIC FIRES
IN 1831 AND 1834 DESTROY
WHOLE BLOCKS IN
TOWN CENTER.

POPULATION: STILL 1,900

1815
STEAMBOATS BOUND
FOR NEW YORK
STOP AT LATIMER'S
WHARF



1804
OLD ACADEMY
SERVED AS
SCHOOL-HOUSE,
TOWN OFFICES,
LIBRARY...
NOW THE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY.

1820
THERE ARE
5 DISTILLERIES
IN TOWN.

COMMERCIAL
FISHING AND
ICE HARVESTING
EMPLOY MANY.

1838
ALMHOUSE AND
WORKFARM
ADDRESS
FARM
FAILURE
AND
POVERTY.

1827
137 PRISONERS MARCH
FROM NEWGATE PRISON
IN EAST GRANBY TO THE
NEW WETHERSFIELD
STATE PRISON.

GREAT ELM
NOW
86 YEARS
OLD

1811-97
SEED BUSINESS
EXPANDS TO 10 COMPANIES
SERVING THE NATIONAL
DEMAND... WETHERSFIELD
BECOMES KNOWN AS THE
"CRADLE OF AMERICAN
SEED COMPANIES"

1849
STEPNEY PARISH
INCORPORATES
AS ROCKY HILL.

1820 FIRST AMERICAN
PLOWS ARE MANUFACTURED
IN WETHERSFIELD.

NEW
HAVEN-
HARTFORD
TURNPIKE

GRISWOLDVILLE BECOMES THE
INDUSTRIAL SECTION OF TOWN... WATER
& STEAM POWER DRIVE GRISTMILLS,
SAWMILLS, WOOL PROCESSING MILLS, TOOL
MAKING AND HEMP FACTORIES (HEMP FOR ROPE)
AND CARRIAGE MAKING OPERATIONS.



1850-1900

Connections To Hartford

By 1850, Hartford was embracing the opportunities offered by the economic expansion of the times. As a result, Hartford began to grow significantly as new residents were attracted to the new jobs and grew the city from about 14,000 residents in 1850 to about 29,000 residents (more than double in 1860).

No such rapid growth occurred in Wethersfield. Instead, the community provided agricultural products to the growing city next door and to other areas. The availability of rail service supported the expansion of the seed businesses in the community and the export of other agricultural goods.

Like many other communities, Wethersfield was affected by the events that occurred during the American Civil War (1861 – 1865). It is estimated that about one-half of the eligible Wethersfield men served in the Union forces.

Even though Wethersfield was a fairly self-sufficient community, the growing economy of Hartford created some new connections which would lead to greater changes in later years.

Some of the key events in Wethersfield around this time included:

- Scheduled stagecoach service established to Hartford (1852)
- Telephone service established (1882)
- Horse-drawn trolley service to Hartford established (1884)
- Electric trolley service established (1893)

General Store / Post Office / Stage Coach



The illustration on the facing page shows how Wethersfield might have been settled around 1884.

The first telegraph and phone lines are being installed and the horse-drawn trolley service connecting Wethersfield to Hartford begins to set the stage for Wethersfield to become a “suburban” community.



UP TO AND AROUND

1884

EXPANDING INDUSTRY & IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION & A GROWING HARTFORD START THE CHANGE OF WETHERSFIELD FROM A FARMING COMMUNITY TO A RESIDENTIAL SUBURB... FOLKS CAN NOW COMMUTE TO WORK & SHOP IN HARTFORD...

POPULATION: 2,200

1875
HARTFORD BECOMES SOLE CAPITAL CITY AND GROWS WITH THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION... MORE IMMIGRATION... NEW STATE CAPITOL BUILDING COMPLETED



1855 SAM COLT COMPLETES HIS ARMORY... MANUFACTURES GUNS WITH INTERCHANGEABLE PARTS AND ASSEMBLY LINE PRODUCTION.

1871 TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH ARRIVE

1895 ELECTRICITY COMES TO STATE PRISON.

1852 STANDISH BROTHERS MAKE DAILY STAGE COACH TRIPS FROM WETHERSFIELD TO HARTFORD.



1860 WETHERSFIELD WHARF COMPANY TAKES OVER LATIMER'S WHARF

1847 FERRY DISCONTINUED... CROSS AT ROCKY HILL

1877 FIRST BICYCLE FACTORY IN HARTFORD



1863 to 1893 HORSE TROLLEYS FROM STATE HOUSE TO TOWN CENTER AND WOLCOTT HILL

TRANSPORTATION MODES

WALKING... 1634 →

HORSEBACK... 1634 →

WAGON... 1634 →

STAGE COACH... 1850's

HORSE TROLLEY... 1860's

RAIL ROAD... 1870's

ELECTRIC TROLLEY... 1890's

AUTOMOBILE... 1900's

BUS... 1930's

1871 HARTFORD/CONNECTICUT VALLEY RAILROAD ESTABLISHED. CHURCH STREET OPENED TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO RR STATION.

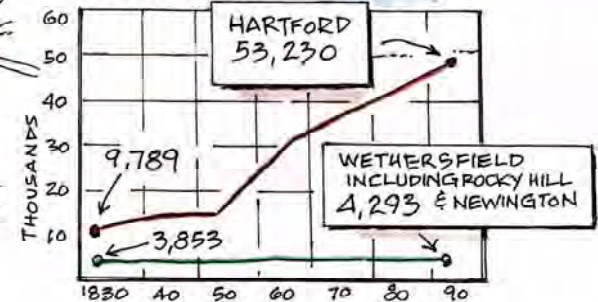
1861 WETHERSFIELD MEN GO OFF TO FIGHT IN THE CIVIL WAR.

CEMETERY EXPANDS

1883 VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION RAISES FUNDS FOR SIDEWALKS AND STREET LIGHTS.

GREAT ELM IS 136 YEARS OLD

POPULATION



1885 IRON BRIDGE AT GOFF BROOK COLLAPSES & REBUILT 1887

1900-1950

Suburban Emergence

In the early 1900s, the pace of change began to accelerate in Wethersfield. With the convenience afforded by scheduled trolley service, people realized they could work in Hartford and live in Wethersfield. Two trolley lines connected Wethersfield and Hartford:

- Old Wethersfield to Hartford along Hartford Avenue, and
- Griswoldville to Hartford along Wolcott Hill Road.

Between 1900 and 1930, Wethersfield's population almost tripled from about 2,600 people to about 7,500 people. This growth trend was also facilitated by the automobile.

Speculative house building occurred due to the strong interest in Wethersfield and a number of new homes were built in and near the village. This growth created the need for new schools - five new schools were built in a span of 20 years.

An Early Subdivision – “Hubbard Houses”



The increased use of the automobile spurred other changes in Wethersfield. Traffic volumes increased as automobiles from Hartford and points north had to travel through the village to get to Middletown and shoreline areas. The increasing congestion was a concern to residents and they lobbied the Connecticut Highway Department to relieve this pressure. The end result was the construction of the Silas Deane Highway in 1930 – an early “bypass route” within Connecticut.

Concerned about growth, the Town of Wethersfield commissioned Herbert Swan– a renowned city planner of the day – to come to Wethersfield and prepare the first community plan for Wethersfield (1928).

Silas Deane Highway Intersecting Church Street



The illustration on the facing page shows how Wethersfield was settled around 1934.

Speculative subdivisions are occurring on old farmsteads. The Silas Deane Highway has been constructed and there are a number of houses built adjacent to the trolley lines (Hartford Avenue and Wolcott Hill Road).

1950-2000

Suburban Transformation

The post-World War II suburbanization trend which affected the entire country resulted in explosive growth in Wethersfield. In just two decades, Wethersfield population grew from 12,000 to 26,000 people. During the 1950s, Wethersfield was adding an average of about one new house per day!

1950s-Type Housing



The land along the Silas Deane Highway was a blank canvas and new uses for a growing community went to where land was available. This included an early auto-oriented suburban shopping plaza (Wethersfield Shopping Center), Town Hall, the Library, the post office, and a number of other uses. Even though Interstate 91 opened in the mid-1960s, the “center of gravity” for Wethersfield had shifted west.

By Wethersfield’s 350th anniversary in 1984, there was some concern over the character of the Silas Deane Highway. The Town sponsored a national design competition with prize money for suggestions about how to “re-design the Silas Deane Highway ... to a main street that reflects and enhances the community.” Fifty-five entries were received with a variety of recommendations. These were widely discussed and the most favored suggestions were combined into a report.

Since 1970, the population of Wethersfield has stayed fairly constant. Housing development slowed significantly as the amount of land available for development diminished.

The illustration on the facing page shows how Wethersfield was settled around 1984.

The embankment built as part of the construction of Interstate 91 now confines the Connecticut River so its course is more certain. Earth excavated for the embankment created the large “cove” at Crow Point. The embankment also separated Wethersfield from the Connecticut River.

Development along the Silas Deane Highway is essentially complete and there are numerous houses in the surrounding areas. Subdivisions have spread far afield from the historic settlement area.

2000-

Lessons Of History

Long an agricultural community, Wethersfield became a suburban community in the early 20th century as a result of its proximity to Hartford and the quality of life it offered.

The preceding illustrations show that the major growth and change of the development pattern of Wethersfield has really happened over the last 100 years or so with the availability of transit service to Hartford, the proliferation of the automobile, and a tendency toward suburban living.

Today, Wethersfield is a mature “inner-ring” suburb with the following attributes:

- proximity to Hartford
- easy access to the highway system and jobs in surrounding areas
- diverse housing stock
- recreational and educational amenities
- community character
- recognized “brand image”
- overall quality of life

Source information used in preparing the illustrations and text on the preceding pages included:

History of Ancient Wethersfield by Sherman Adams and Henry Stiles

The Wethersfield Story by Lois M. Wieder

A Pleasant Land – A Goodly Heritage by Lois M. Wieder

Stories of Wethersfield by Nora Howard

Wethersfield Volunteer Fire Department 200th Anniversary Commemorative Book by Captain Dick Fippinger

First Hundred Years, Transit to Wethersfield by Connecticut Valley Chapter of National Railway Historical Society

Willard's Wethersfield by John Willard

On-line Information at <http://hpi.wethersfieldct.com/index.cgi/432>

Also, thanks to the Wethersfield Historical Society.

Conditions And Trends

3

Overview

An overview of conditions and trends affecting Wethersfield provides some context to the Plan and the planning process.

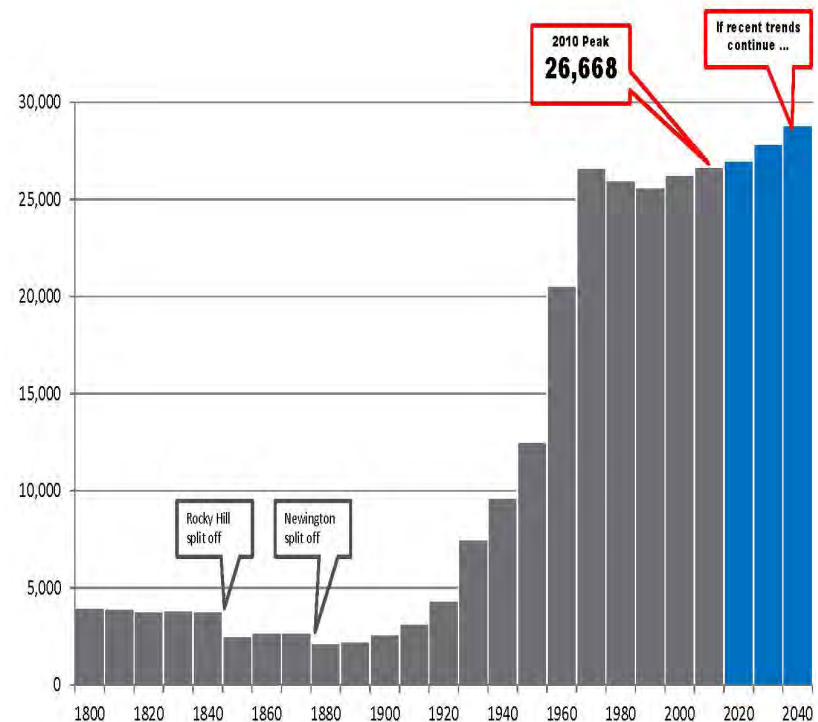
Demographics

Wethersfield had 26,668 residents in 2010 according to the United States Census.

As can be seen from the adjacent chart, Wethersfield experienced rapid population growth from about 1920 to 1970. The number of residents has stayed fairly constant since 1970 although there has been a modest increase since 1990.

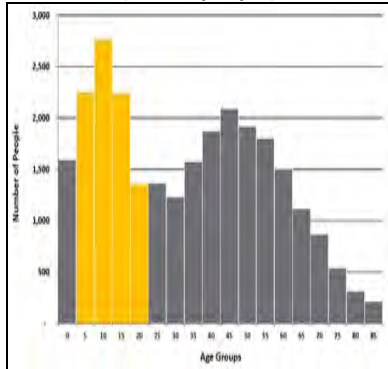
Since a limited amount of land area is available for development, future demographic changes will likely be the result of the age and size of households moving into Wethersfield compared to the age and size of households leaving Wethersfield. If recent trends continue, Wethersfield may have about 28,000 people by the year 2040.

Historic Population Growth and Projections (1800 – 2040)

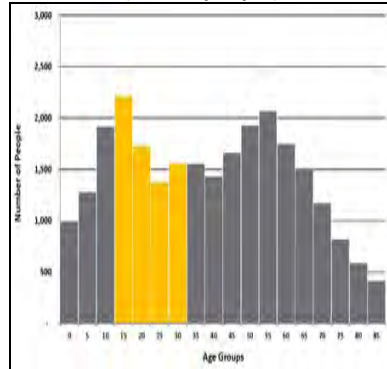


While Wethersfield’s total population has not changed much since 1970, the age composition of the community has been changing. In the following charts, the orange columns represent people in the “baby boom” (born between 1945 and 1965).

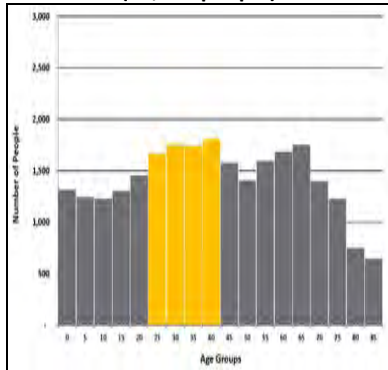
**1970 Age Composition
(26,662 people)**



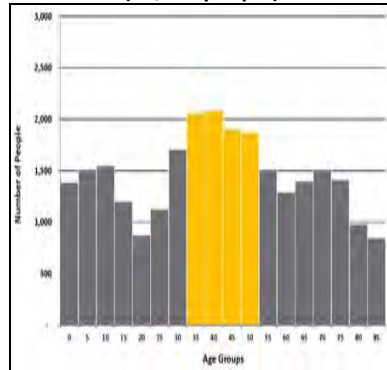
**1980 Age Composition
(26,013 people)**



**1990 Age Composition
(25,651 people)**



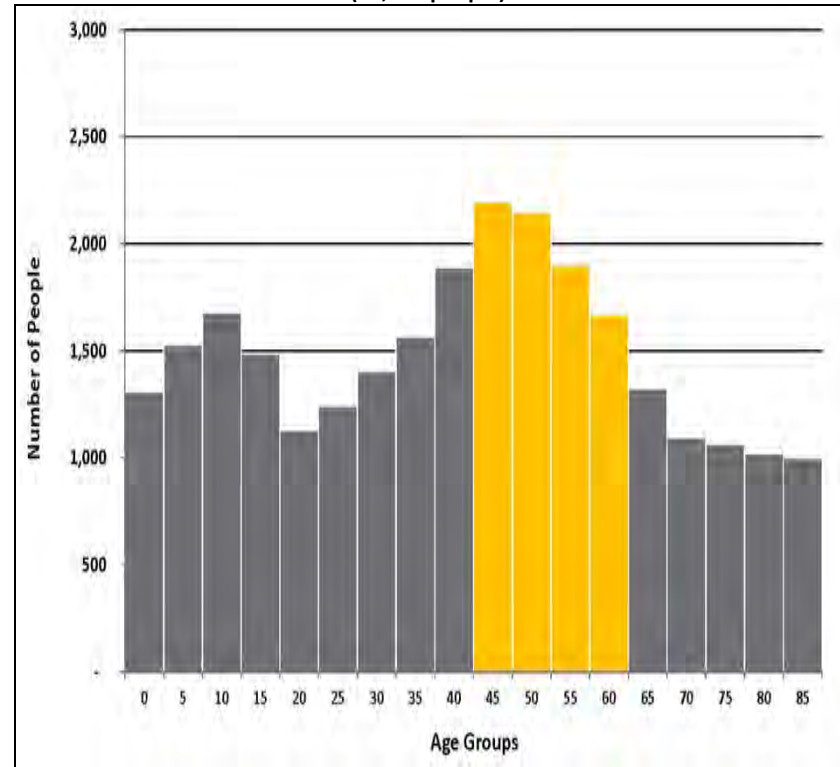
**2000 Age Composition
(26,271 people)**



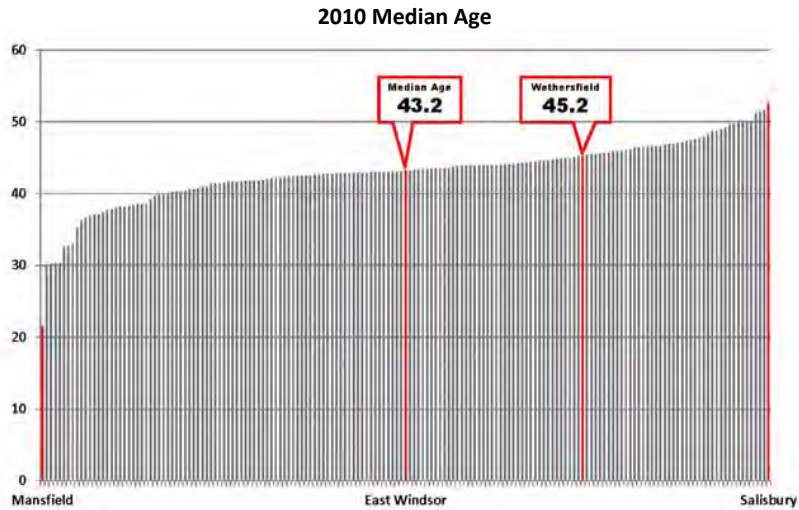
The following chart showing the age composition of Wethersfield in 2010 indicates that adults aged 40 to 65 and children aged 0 to 20 are the dominant age groups (generally indicative of a family-friendly community).

However, there has also been significant growth in the older age cohorts compared to what Wethersfield has seen previously. This is because improvements in health care and lifestyles allow people to live longer. This increase in older age groups is consistent with trends around the country and reflects people who moved to Wethersfield years ago that are “aging in place.”

**2010 Age Composition
(26,668 people)**



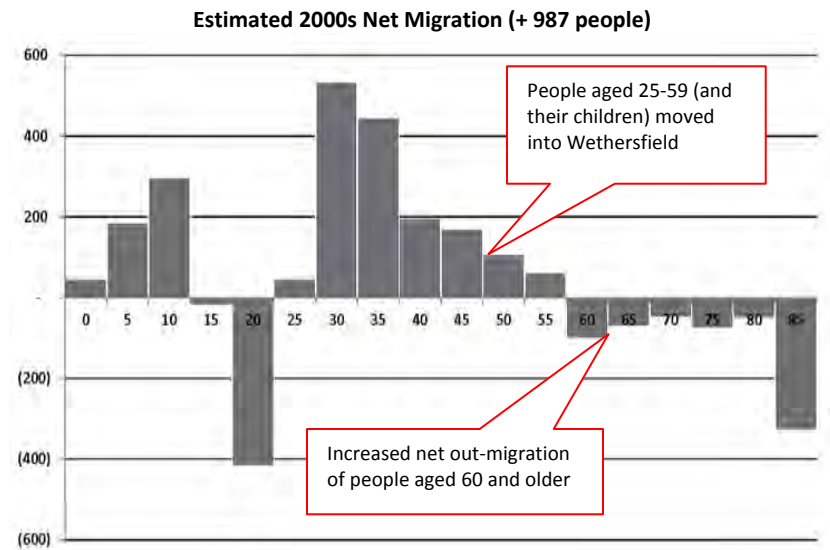
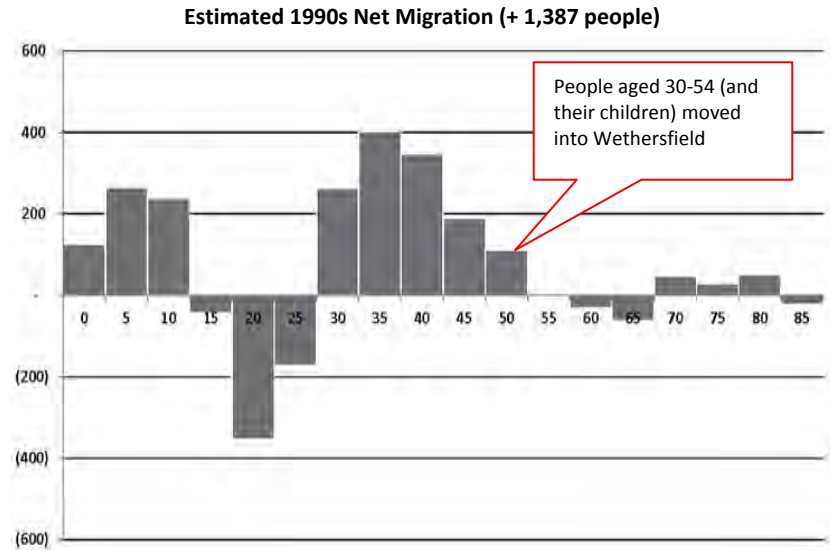
In 2010, the median age in Wethersfield (45.2 years) was older than the state median age (40.0 years).



When households do change over (house sales etc.), information suggests that Wethersfield is attractive to younger households. The adjacent charts compare the actual age composition of Wethersfield in 2000 and 2010 with the “expected” age composition (people in the prior Census aged 10 years, births added, deaths subtracted). The differences reflect net migration.

When the value is positive, there were more people than expected and so Wethersfield attracted more people in those age groups than it lost. When the value is a negative number, there were fewer people than expected and Wethersfield lost more people in those age groups than it attracted.

From these charts, it can be seen that Wethersfield tended to “attract” families (people aged 30 to 55 with children aged 0 to15) between 1990 and 2010. In other words, when a household in Wethersfield moved out, historical data suggests a younger family moved in.



Housing

According to the Census, Wethersfield contained 11,677 housing units in 2010. Housing growth has slowed in recent decades since most land area has already been built upon.

Many people may be surprised to learn that almost *two-thirds* of the housing units in Wethersfield are occupied by one or two people. Many people assume that most housing units are occupied by three or more people.

Household Size	Number	Percent
1-person	3,469	31%
2-person	3,694	33%
3-person	1,692	15%
4-person	1,554	14%
5-person	565	5%
6-person	173	2%
7-or-more-person	57	1%

Over the past 50 years or so, the number of people per housing unit (called household size) has been decreasing in Wethersfield and elsewhere. Interestingly, if household sizes returned to what they were in 1960, Wethersfield would have been a community of almost 40,000 people in 2010!

Census Year	Median Household Size
1960	3.40
1970	3.18
1980	2.72
1990	2.40
2000	2.31
2010	2.36

In 2009, the median home sale price in Wethersfield was more affordable than other communities in Connecticut.



According to state criteria, about eight percent of the housing units in Wethersfield are categorized as “affordable” (financially-assisted, mortgage-assisted, or deed-restricted). On the other hand, assessment data from 2008 indicates there are a number of houses in Wethersfield at prices that are considered affordable.

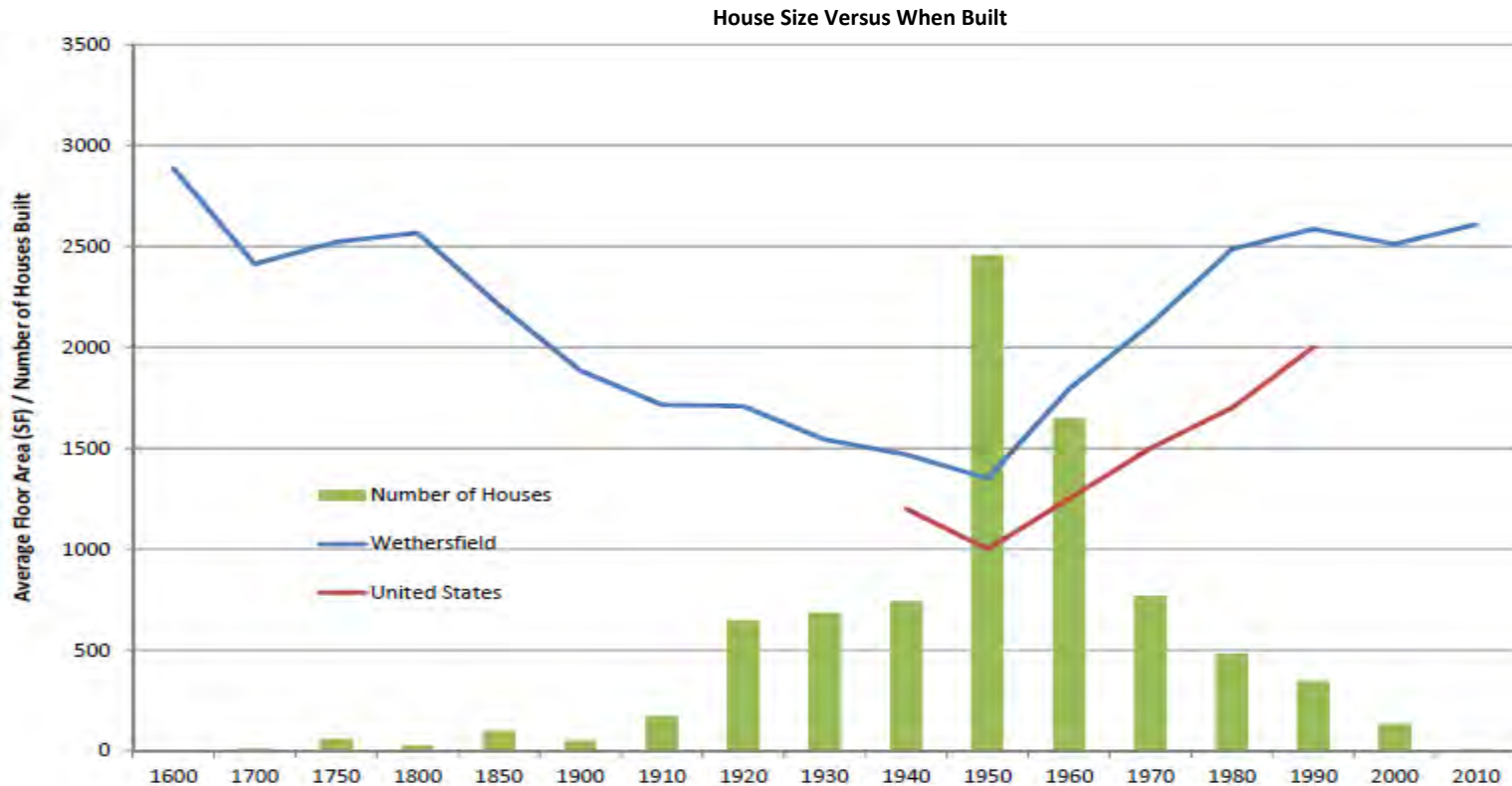
Assessment data also reveals some interesting information about house age and sizes in Wethersfield. In the chart below, the green columns show the number of housing units built in Wethersfield in different decades. The significant growth in Wethersfield in the 1950s and 1960s is clearly evident.

The “blue line” in the chart shows the average amount of floor area which exists in 2010 for housing units which were built in Wethersfield in each of those decades (the “red line” shows estimates of the national average of floor area for homes built at those times).

What is interesting is that the majority of homes in Wethersfield were built at a time when housing sizes were the most compact. Due to housing pref-

erences at those times, many housing units in Wethersfield may not be well configured for the housing desires and lifestyles of modern households (room configuration, kitchen size, bathroom size, closet space, garage space, insulation, etc.).

Thus, while Wethersfield offers some significant locational advantages for households of all ages (proximity to Hartford, accessibility to highways, bus service, nearby employment, local schools, quality of life, etc.), the size and character of the housing stock may not be well-configured to some of the housing styles considered desirable today.



Economy

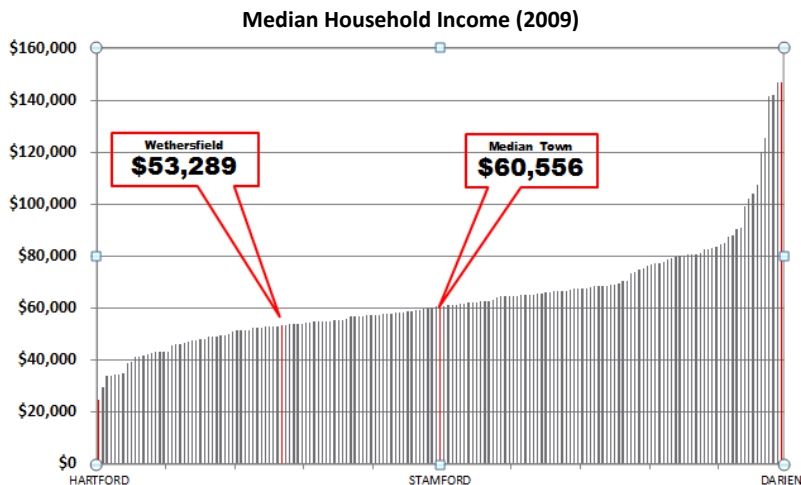
Although Wethersfield considers itself to be a residential community, there are a number of jobs located in the community. In 2010, there were approximately 10,085 jobs reported in Wethersfield.

Even though the largest employers may be government entities (including three state agencies), they are only a small part of the jobs available:

- about 40% of all jobs are in the services sector.
- about 25% of all jobs are in retail/wholesale trade.
- about 13% of all jobs are in finance, insurance, real estate.
- about 11% of all jobs are in government.

With approximately 13,345 residents in the labor force (employed or looking for work), Wethersfield is reliant on the larger region to provide jobs for residents. In this regard, Wethersfield has a great location and is well served by the regional road network.

The 2009 median household income in Wethersfield (\$53,289) was lower than the statewide median income (\$53,935) and lower than the median town (\$60,556). This may be a reflection of the older population.



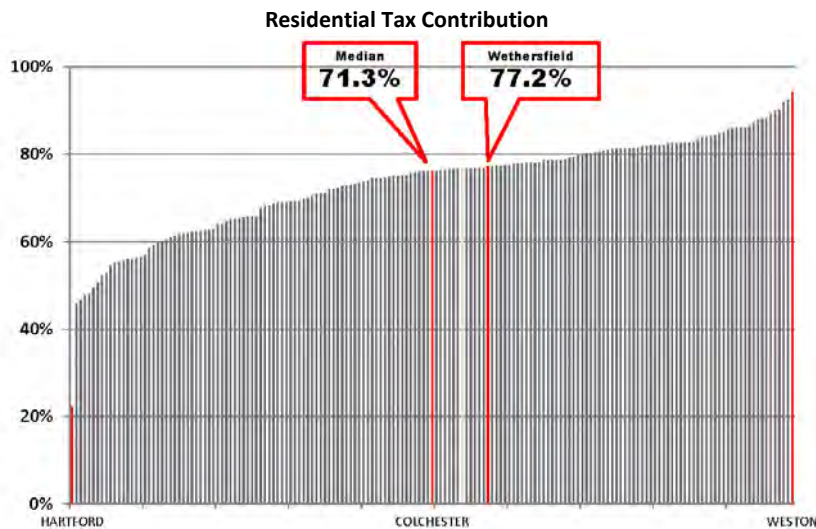
Wethersfield has a fairly strong retail economy also. In terms of typical retail sales (excluding automobiles), Wethersfield attracted more sales on a per capita basis than the state average (\$11,567) and more per capita sales than the median community (\$9,273). In other words, Wethersfield probably attracts shoppers from surrounding communities.

**Per Capita Retail Sales (2009)
(excluding automobile related items)**



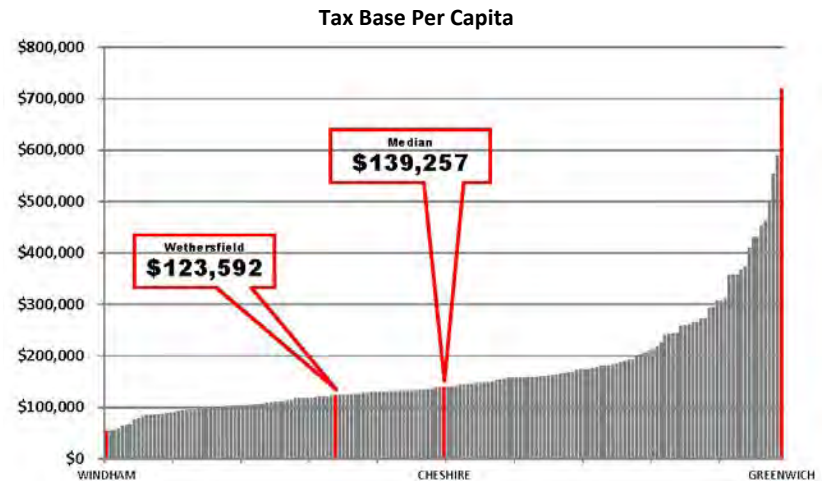
Fiscal

According to information compiled by the Office of Policy & Management, Wethersfield is slightly more reliant on the residential portion of the tax base (77%) compared to other communities (71%). This means that residential properties are primarily responsible for funding local spending.



Since Wethersfield has a slightly higher business share of the tax base (13%) compared to other communities (11%), the key areas where its tax base may be lower than the state average is motor vehicles and personal property (10% in Wethersfield compared to 18% elsewhere).

In terms of the size of the tax base, Wethersfield has a smaller tax base on a per capita basis (\$123,592) than the state average (\$139,257). Finding ways to enlarge the tax base (increasing the value of property and/or the amount of property) would help spread the tax burden over a larger base.



Land Usage

As shown on the map on the facing page, most of the land in Wethersfield (96%) was developed or committed to various uses at the time this Plan was prepared.

Land was considered to be “developed” if it had buildings, structures, or improvements used for a particular economic or social purpose (such as residential or institutional). Land was considered to be “committed” if it was used for a particular economic or social purpose (including open space, cemetery, or agricultural). For example, the land owned by the Great Meadows Conservation Trust was considered committed land. Land was considered “vacant” if it was not developed or committed.

Land was classified as “dedicated open space” if it was owned by an organization (such as the Town, the State, or the Great Meadow Conservation Trust) and kept for park or open space purposes. Land was considered to be “managed open space” if it was used for another purpose (such as a golf course or cemetery) but provided aesthetic value or some other open space characteristic or benefit. It is possible that “managed open space” could be converted to another land use category in the future.

Land Use Classification (2011)

Use	Acres	Percent of Total Land
Residential	3,246	39%
Business / Industry	379	5%
Public / Institutional Uses	309	4%
Dedicated / Managed / Other Open Space	1,817	22%
Agriculture	552	6%
Public Utility / Transportation / Roads / Water	1,769	21%
Developed / Committed	8,071	96%
Vacant / Under-Developed	320	4%
Total Land Area	8,391	100%

Planimetrics based on Wethersfield GIS and assessment data (totals may not add due to rounding.)

With the amount of land devoted to residential uses, open space, and roadways, this tabulation confirms the overall sense of Wethersfield as a residential community.

Residential Neighborhoods



Open Space



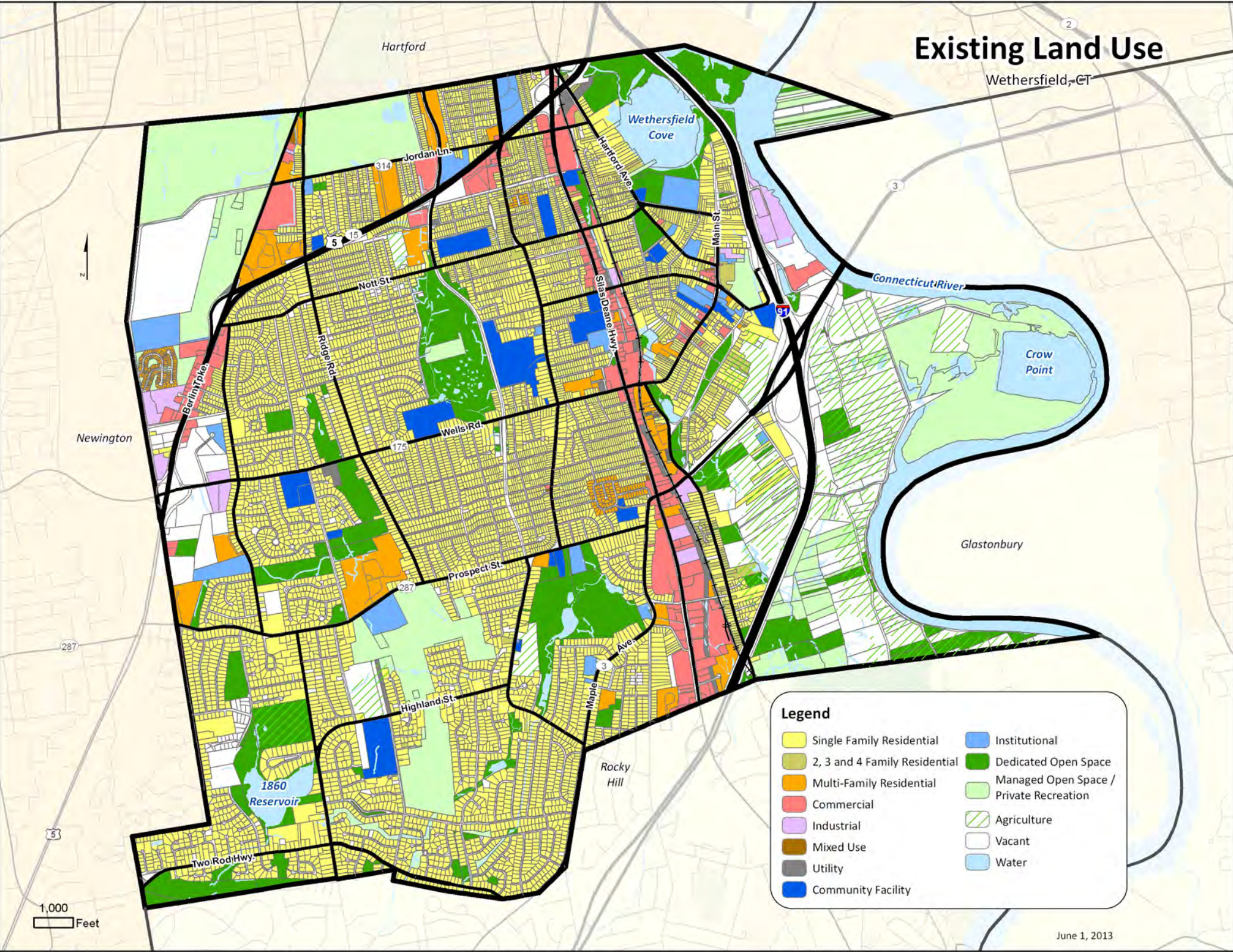
Business Areas



Agriculture / Farming



Existing Land Use



Key Findings

Demographics / Population

- Wethersfield can anticipate an increase in older age groups as the “baby boomers” age.
- Eventually, these households will be replaced by new households which are expected to be younger and larger than households leaving.
- Overall, the population of Wethersfield is expected to grow slightly in the future.

Housing

- Wethersfield has a number of locational advantages supporting its role as a residential community.
- Some housing units built in the 1950s and 1960s may not be well-configured for the housing needs of today’s households.
- Wethersfield has a diverse housing stock with a number of housing units within “affordable” price ranges.

Economy

- Wethersfield has a strong employment base.
- Median household income in Wethersfield is lower than statewide figures.
- When spending on automobile-related items is taken out of the mix, Wethersfield is above the state average in per capita retail spending indicating it is probably attracting people from other communities to shop here.

Fiscal

- Wethersfield’s tax base is lower than statewide figures on a per capita basis
- Wethersfield can grow its grand list in three key ways:
 - enhancing the value of residential properties.
 - enhancing the value of business properties.
 - expanding the valuation of motor vehicle / personal property.

Land Use

- Since most developable land area in Wethersfield has already been committed, the focus in the future should probably be on appropriate redevelopment of existing properties.

Community Issues & Concerns

4

Overview

Understanding the issues and concerns of residents is important so that a Plan of Conservation and Development can be tuned to the needs and wants of residents.

Notice Signs



Meeting Participation



Community Scoping Meeting

As part of preparing this Plan of Conservation and Development for Wethersfield, a public meeting was held on January 31, 2012 at the Pitkin Community Center. Approximately 110 people from all parts of Wethersfield attended the meeting.

As part of an exercise conducted at the meeting, people indicated that the following things made them “proud” of their community:

- Community facilities (schools, recreation areas, library, etc.)
- Historic character (Old Wethersfield, historic feeling, etc.)
- Open spaces (Wethersfield Cove, The Meadows, parks, etc.)
- Overall Reputation / Perception of Wethersfield

In a similar exercise, people indicated that the following things made them “sorry” about Wethersfield:

- Silas Deane Highway (uses, appearance, vacancies, etc.)
- Community facilities (need for improvements, maintenance, etc.)
- Conflicts with character (unkempt property, eyesores, etc.)

Attendees at the meeting also participated in an exercise where they had an opportunity to identify issues they felt were important to the community as part of the planning process. Although each resident participated individually, the results were tabulated in order to help identify things important to the community as a whole.

Issues Considered Important By Attendees

Top Tier Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Development • Community Facilities • Pattern / Structure
Second Tier Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Character • Open Space • Natural Resources
Other Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian / Bicycle / Transit • Utilities • Traffic / Circulation • Agriculture • Residential Development • Housing Needs

This exercise and a subsequent discussion found the following were “top tier” issues:

- Business development was widely recognized as an important issue in Wethersfield due to its contribution to the tax base and due to the overall perception that more could be done to enhance the quality of business areas (appearance, function, occupancy).
- Community facilities are seen as important due to the fact that they are highly valued by residents and that more could / should be done to maintain such facilities.
- Wethersfield residents expressed interest in redeveloping business areas such as the Silas Deane Highway.
- Wethersfield residents expressed interest in creating a more walkable community.

Meeting Exercises



Meeting Exercises

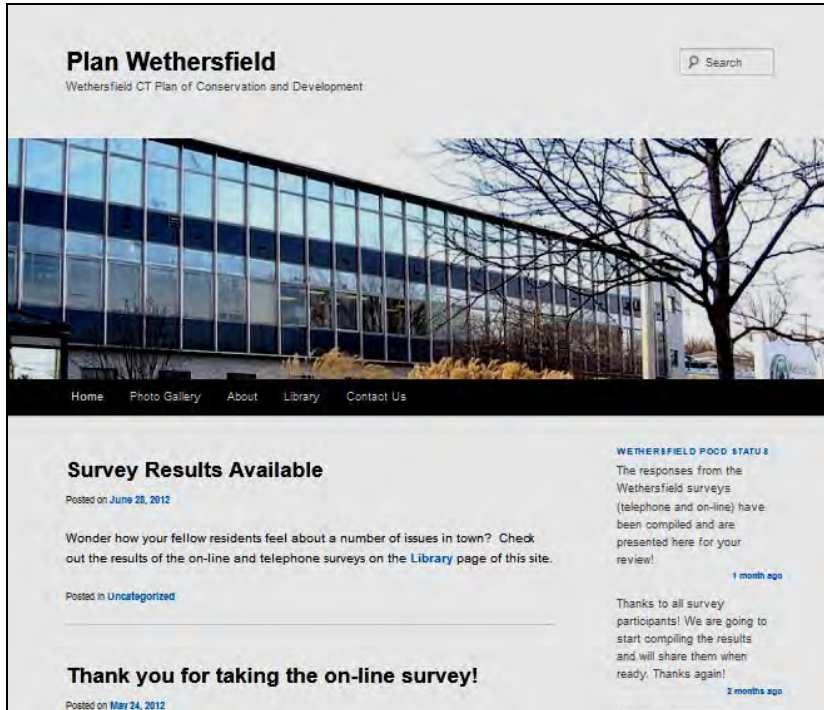


Community Surveys

As part of preparing this Plan, the Planning and Zoning Commission undertook two community surveys.

One was a random sample telephone survey of 100 Wethersfield households conducted in May 2012. This survey was conducted in order to reach out to a variety of households, including those that might not normally participate in public meetings or other activities. Care was taken to get a representative sample of Wethersfield households, both by neighborhood and by age composition.

PlanWethersfield.com Website



Following the telephone survey, an on-line version of the same survey was made available. People were notified about the on-line survey through newspaper articles, community television, and other methods. Over a 30-day window, people could access the survey through the Town’s website or through a “planwethersfield.com” website. Over 240 people participated in the on-line survey.

The responses to these questions are contained in the relevant chapters of this Plan. Since the results from both surveys were very similar, the survey results are reported as a “merged result” (the average of the responses) unless there was a difference of more than about five percentage points in the level of agreement. When there were differences between the level of agreement, some of this may be attributable to:

- the telephone survey being a random sample and an auditory survey where participants heard the question and may have felt that an answer was anticipated in a shorter timeframe.
- the on-line survey being a self-selecting sample and a visual survey where participants read the question and may have felt they could take more time to respond or could make use of other resources or contacts when formulating a response.

Overall, the survey results would be expected to have a margin of error of about plus/minus five percent given the sample size and methodologies.

Detailed information on the responses to each survey is on file at the Town Hall.

Key Findings

Community Meeting

- Residents of Wethersfield love their community and want to find ways to enhance it.
- Residents were “proudest” of:
 - Community facilities (including parks / open spaces).
 - Historic character / Old Wethersfield.
 - Overall reputation / perception.
- Residents were “sorriest” about:
 - The character of business development / vacant buildings.
 - Lack of maintenance of some areas / facilities.
 - Specific issues that did not comport with their sense of Wethersfield’s character.
- Residents expressed a desire to redevelop existing business areas to enhance the appearance and function of their community.
- Residents expressed a desire to expand the tax base.
- People would like to improve community facilities and provide other amenities (open space, trails) to enhance their overall quality of life.
- People expressed a desire to enhance the overall structure of the community (a Town Center) and make Wethersfield a more walkable community.

Community Surveys

- In both surveys, about 95% of participants felt the overall quality of life was good or very good.
- Participants felt the most important issues facing the town were:
 - Taxes / spending.
 - Education / school system.
 - Economy / economic development.
- Residents want to:
 - Encourage good community facilities to support quality of life.
 - Enhance the overall character of the community (especially historic character).
 - Redevelop business areas.
 - Support residential neighborhoods.
 - Provide parks and open space amenities (trails) to support community character.
 - Maintain the reputation and perception of the community.
- Residents want to:
 - Discourage or change unattractive business areas.
 - Change or eliminate negative influences on community character.
 - Address a lack of maintenance.
 - Reduce taxes.

Maintain Community Character And Quality Of Life

5

Overview

People who move to Wethersfield are attracted by the overall character of the community and the quality of life. It is a key focus of the Plan to preserve and enhance the character and quality of life in Wethersfield.

While the components of community character and quality of life are unique to each person, some of the common elements seem to include:

- providing facilities to meet community needs,
- providing for open spaces and trails,
- preserving historic resources, and
- promoting community spirit (including community events).

Since these community characteristics are important to residents, this Plan recommends the Town use every possible approach that will enable Wethersfield to retain and protect its broad character assets.

Residential Neighborhoods



Community Facilities



Community Events



Overall Character



Maintain Community Character

During this planning process, Wethersfield residents clearly and strongly indicated that maintaining and enhancing community character was important to them. While the elements of community character may be different for everybody, there appear to be some common themes.

Protect Scenic Resources

Wethersfield residents appreciate the various types of scenic resources in the community including scenic areas, scenic views, and scenic features (such as farm fields, stone walls, barns, fences, and tree canopies).

Surveys conducted as part of the planning process found the following:

Survey Question	Do More In The Future	Keep Same Effort	Do Less In The Future
Enhancing the overall character of the community	60%	35%	5%
Protecting scenic areas	44%	51%	5%
Protecting the character of Old Wethersfield	37%	51%	12%
Promoting Wethersfield's special character to others	54%	36%	10%

Wethersfield should continue to initiate and implement programs which will help protect scenic resources.

Enhance Gateways And Wayfinding

Community character can be enhanced by recognizing and enhancing "gateways" to the community and by facilitating wayfinding to key destinations. Wethersfield should continue its efforts in these areas.

Minimize Character Detractions

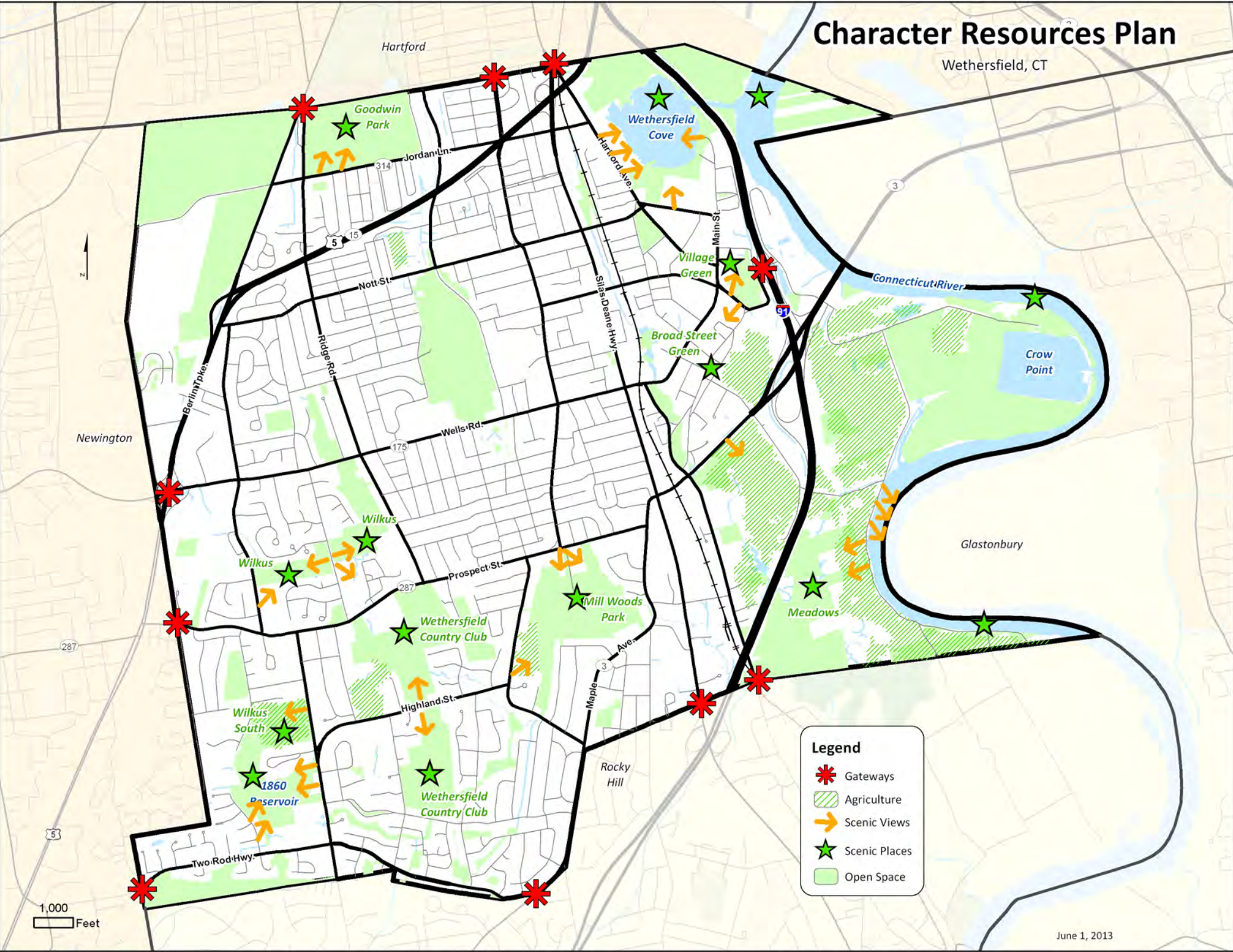
Promoting character can also mean eliminating or minimizing things that detract from the community. Property maintenance is important since a property in disrepair can have a negative effect on adjacent properties and entire neighborhoods. Enforcing zoning regulations and health codes are one way to help address these situations.

Maintain Community Character	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance the overall character of Wethersfield. 2. Protect scenic resources. 3. Protect the historic character of Old Wethersfield. 4. Enhance local gateways and enhance wayfinding. 5. Encourage sustainable and appropriate landscaping of properties, especially at the time of development. 6. Beautify commercial areas. 7. Continue efforts to minimize character detractions. 8. Strive to enhance the maintenance of improvements within public rights of way.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create and maintain an inventory of scenic resources in Wethersfield. 2. Amend local regulations to include scenic resources as a consideration in land use applications. 3. Undertake programs to promote Wethersfield's special character to others.

The distinction between "policies" and "tasks" is discussed on page 2 of the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Character Resources Plan

Wethersfield, CT



Legend

- Gateways
- Agriculture
- Scenic Views
- Scenic Places
- Open Space

1,000 Feet

Protect Residential Character

Since the 1928 *Plan For A Residence Suburb* (and possibly earlier), Wethersfield has seen itself as primarily a residential community. This overall approach and philosophy has attracted numerous people to the community over the years and has guided many municipal actions.

A basic tenet of this philosophy is to strive to protect the residential character of the community and neighborhoods in order to afford the people who choose to live here an opportunity to enhance their “pursuit of happiness” and quality of life. This Plan recommends that Wethersfield continue this basic approach.

Wethersfield residents strongly support this approach. In the community surveys:

- about 47% of participants felt that Town should do more to protect the integrity of residential neighborhoods.
- about 50% felt the current level of effort was satisfactory.

Protect Residential Character	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect residential character. 2. Maintain residential density structure in existing neighborhoods. 3. Enhance the character of residential neighborhoods (tree planting, walkability, etc.) through the local capital improvements program and other funding sources.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review uses permitted in residential zones to ensure appropriateness for residential neighborhoods. 2. Consider ways to encourage housing maintenance, such as through low-interest housing rehabilitation loans or other programs.

Old Wethersfield



Wolcott Hill



Griswoldville

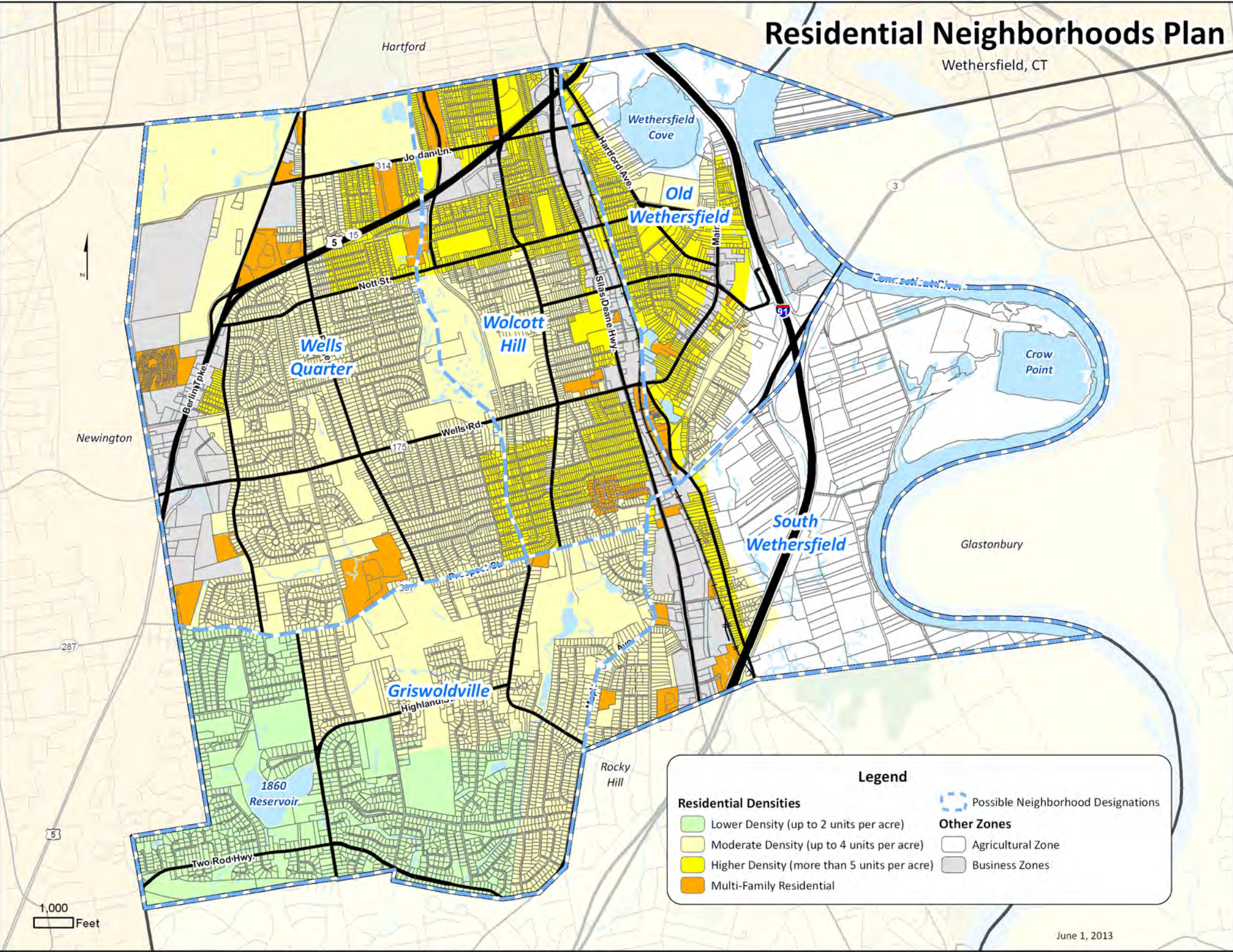


Ridge Road



Residential Neighborhoods Plan

Wethersfield, CT



Legend

Residential Densities

- Lower Density (up to 2 units per acre)
- Moderate Density (up to 4 units per acre)
- Higher Density (more than 5 units per acre)
- Multi-Family Residential

Other Zones

- Agricultural Zone
- Business Zones

Possible Neighborhood Designations

1,000 Feet

Provide Facilities For Community Needs

Community facilities such as schools, recreation, library, public works, public safety, and other facilities contribute to the overall character and quality of life in Wethersfield. Ensuring that these facilities are adequate to meet community needs is an important part of a planning process.

In the surveys conducted as part of the planning process, about 80% of participants felt that Wethersfield has good community facilities. Further, about two-thirds of participants felt Wethersfield was doing a good job maintaining its community facilities.

The Plan recognizes that these facilities contribute to the overall attractiveness, character, and quality of life in Wethersfield and recommends that they continue to be maintained and enhanced.

Provide Facilities For Community Needs	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain community facilities and services (parks, schools, public safety, public works, etc.) to meet community needs. 2. Regularly evaluate and prioritize community facility needs in order to address needs in an efficient and economical way. 3. Project and monitor school population. 4. Allow use of school facilities to meet local community and recreational needs. 5. Consider acquiring the Department of Motor Vehicles site on State Street should it become available. 6. Continue to use the Capital Improvements Program as a way to fund improvements to community facilities.

Community Facilities Legend	
Education	Parks and Recreation
1 Charles Wright Elementary School	21 1850 Reservoir
2 Emerson Williams School	22 Beaver Brook Linear Park
3 Hanmer Elementary School	23 Charles Wright School Grounds
4 Highcrest Elementary School	24 Colonel John Chester Grounds
5 Silas Deane Middle School	25 Community Garden Plots
6 Webb Elementary School	26 Cove Park
7 Wethersfield High School	27 Emerson Williams School Grounds
	28 Farms Village
General Community Facilities	29 Hanmer Park
8 Board of Education Offices	30 Harvey Fuller Grounds
9 Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center	31 Heritage Way Bike Trail
10 Town Hall	32 Highcrest School Grounds
11 Wethersfield Art League	33 Keeney Cultural Center
12 Wethersfield Historical Society	34 Mill Woods Park
13 Wethersfield Housing Authority	35 Old Reservoir Road
14 Library	36 Ridgecrest Circle
	37 Webb / Deane / Stevens Museum
Public Safety	38 Silas Deane Middle School Grounds
15 Wethersfield Fire Company #1	39 Solomon Welles House
16 Wethersfield Fire Company #2	40 Standish Park
17 Wethersfield Fire Company #3	41 Stephen Mix Mitchell Grounds
18 Wethersfield Police Department	42 Tanglewood Nature Preserve
19 Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance	43 W.J. Pitkin Community Center
	44 Broad Street Green
Public Works	45 Wethersfield High School Grounds
20 Transfer Station / Public Works Garage	46 Wilkus House and Barns
	47 Wilkus South
	48 Wintergreen Woods

Community Facilities Map

Wethersfield, CT

Hartford

Newington

Glastonbury

Rocky Hill

Wethersfield Cove

Crow Point

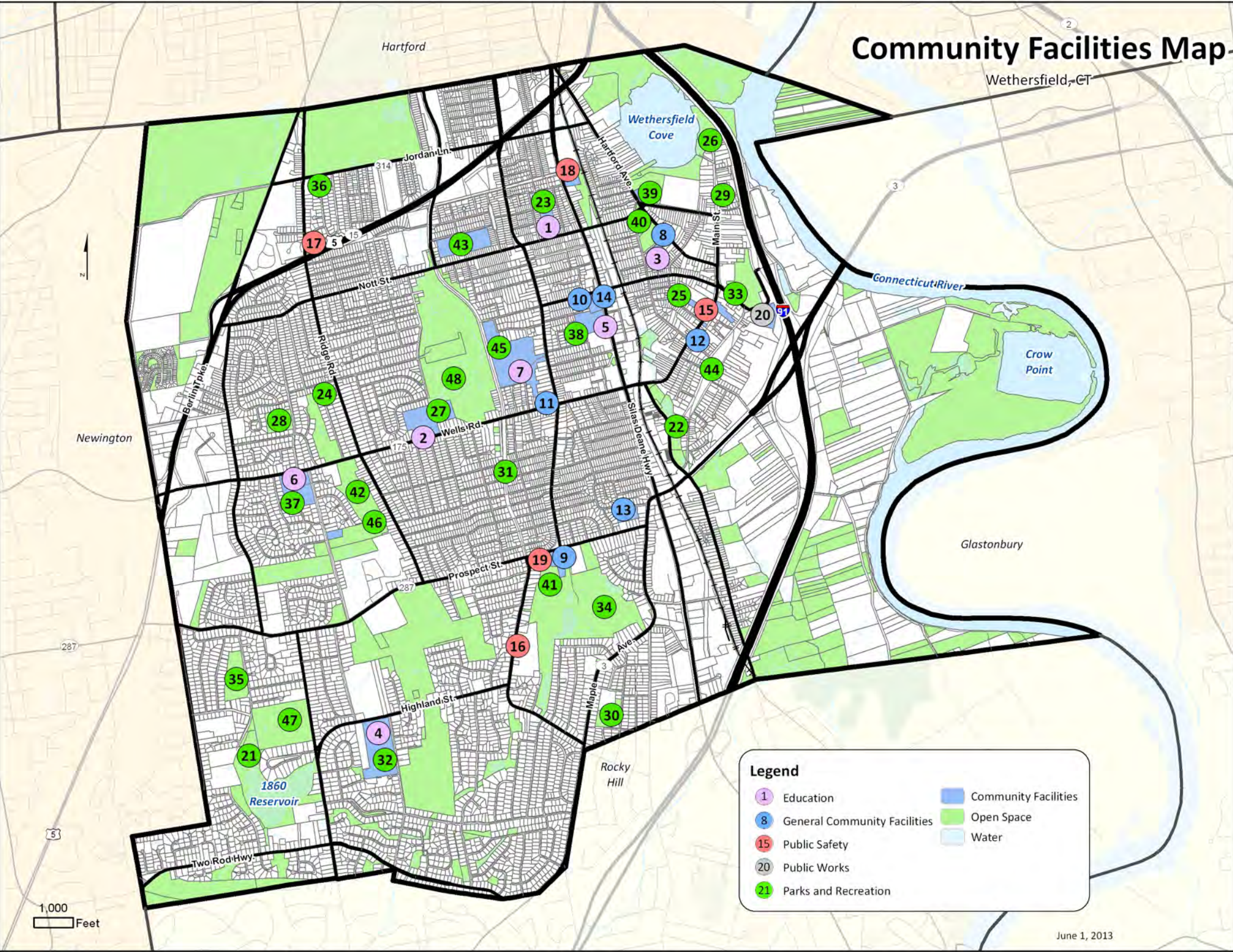
1860 Reservoir

Legend

- 1 Education
- 8 General Community Facilities
- 15 Public Safety
- 20 Public Works
- 21 Parks and Recreation
- Community Facilities
- Open Space
- Water

1,000 Feet

June 1, 2013



Extend Sidewalks And Trails

Sidewalks help support walking for recreational, health, and other purposes. In addition, studies have found that property values are enhanced by “walkability” (a measure of destinations and pedestrian accommodations). For both of these reasons, sidewalks enhance the overall quality of life.

At the present time, sidewalks are located in many Wethersfield neighborhoods. However, they are not provided in some key areas where they might be desirable for:

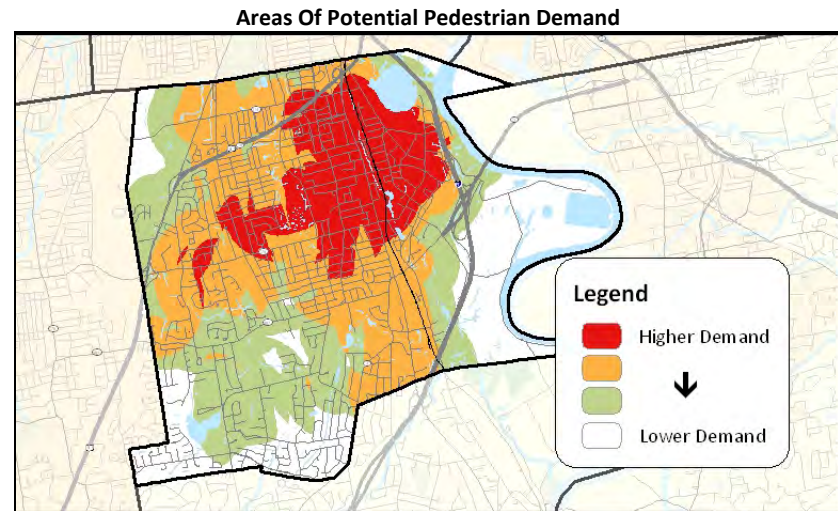
- safety (near schools, on busy streets),
- connectivity (knitting the community together), or
- where they might enhance commerce (in business areas).

In the surveys, about 50% of participants supported expanding the overall sidewalk network. Wethersfield should seek ways to extend the sidewalk network where appropriate.

Wethersfield has some off-road trails at the present time (Folly Brook, Mill Woods Park, land trust properties). These trails complement the sidewalk system in Wethersfield and provide additional recreational opportunities. Opportunities to extend trails should be pursued.

Establishing recreational trails along the Connecticut River would provide for a significant community amenity in Wethersfield. In the surveys, about three-quarters of residents supported providing for recreational trails along the Connecticut River.

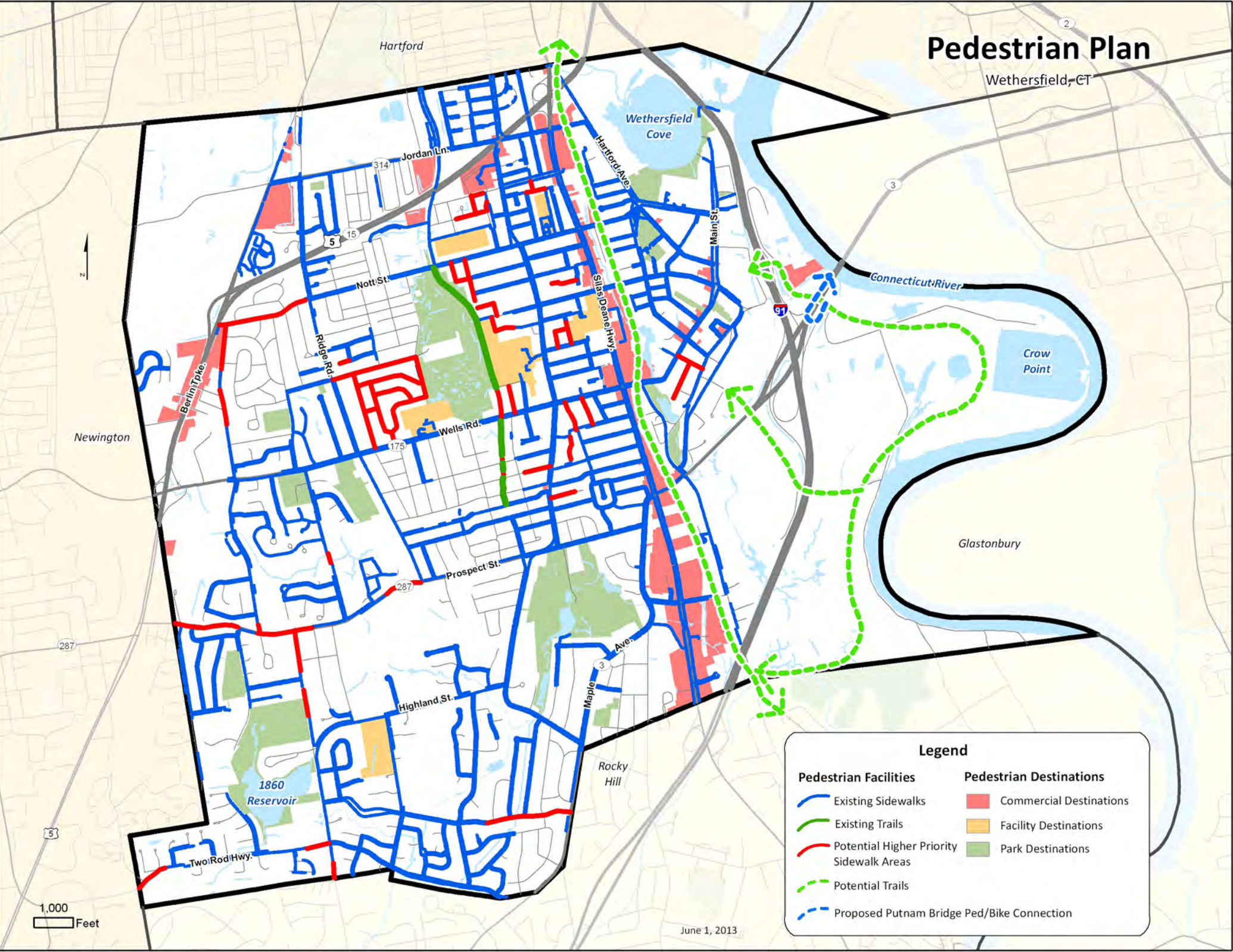
The following map shows areas in Wethersfield which may have higher potential for pedestrian demand because of their proximity to parks, schools, shops, business areas, higher density housing, community facilities, institutions (such as churches), and other potential destinations.



Extend Sidewalks And Trails	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage walkability in Wethersfield. 2. Prioritize the interconnection all of the pedestrian ways in Wethersfield into a cohesive overall system. 3. Set aside funds annually for the extension and improvement of sidewalks, walkways, and trails. 4. Work with CTDOT to establish and improve sidewalks on State highways (see PA 09-154).
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a trail system along the Connecticut River and throughout the Meadows area using materials appropriate for pedestrians, bicycles, and other users.

Pedestrian Plan

Wethersfield, CT



Legend

Pedestrian Facilities	Pedestrian Destinations
Existing Sidewalks	Commercial Destinations
Existing Trails	Facility Destinations
Potential Higher Priority Sidewalk Areas	Park Destinations
Potential Trails	
Proposed Putnam Bridge Ped/Bike Connection	



1,000 Feet

June 1, 2013

Establish Bicycle Routes

Many people are interested in riding bicycles and making appropriate provisions will help enhance Wethersfield and the quality of life. In the community surveys, about 69% of participants felt that Wethersfield should make it easier for people to get around by bicycle.

Bicycles can be accommodated on local roads and State highways. On State highways and major local roads, the preferred way to do this would be a shoulder bikeway (the use of the paved shoulder for bicycles) provided that a painted stripe can be installed to visually separate it from the vehicle lanes and marked and signed for bicycles. On local roads with less traffic and lower speeds, a “sharrow” (a shared use of the pavement for bicycles and vehicles) may be the best solution where the necessary paved width may not be available.

The map on the facing page identifies some State roads that may have potential for bicycle routes (information adapted from www.ctbikemap.org). A similar approach could be used to categorize local roads. In several communities, local cyclists have gotten together to ride all major roads and assess their potential for bicycle use. In many situations, simple upgrades (such as signage, pavement markings; re-stripping the shoulder) can make the roads suitable for bicyclists.

Shoulder Bikeway



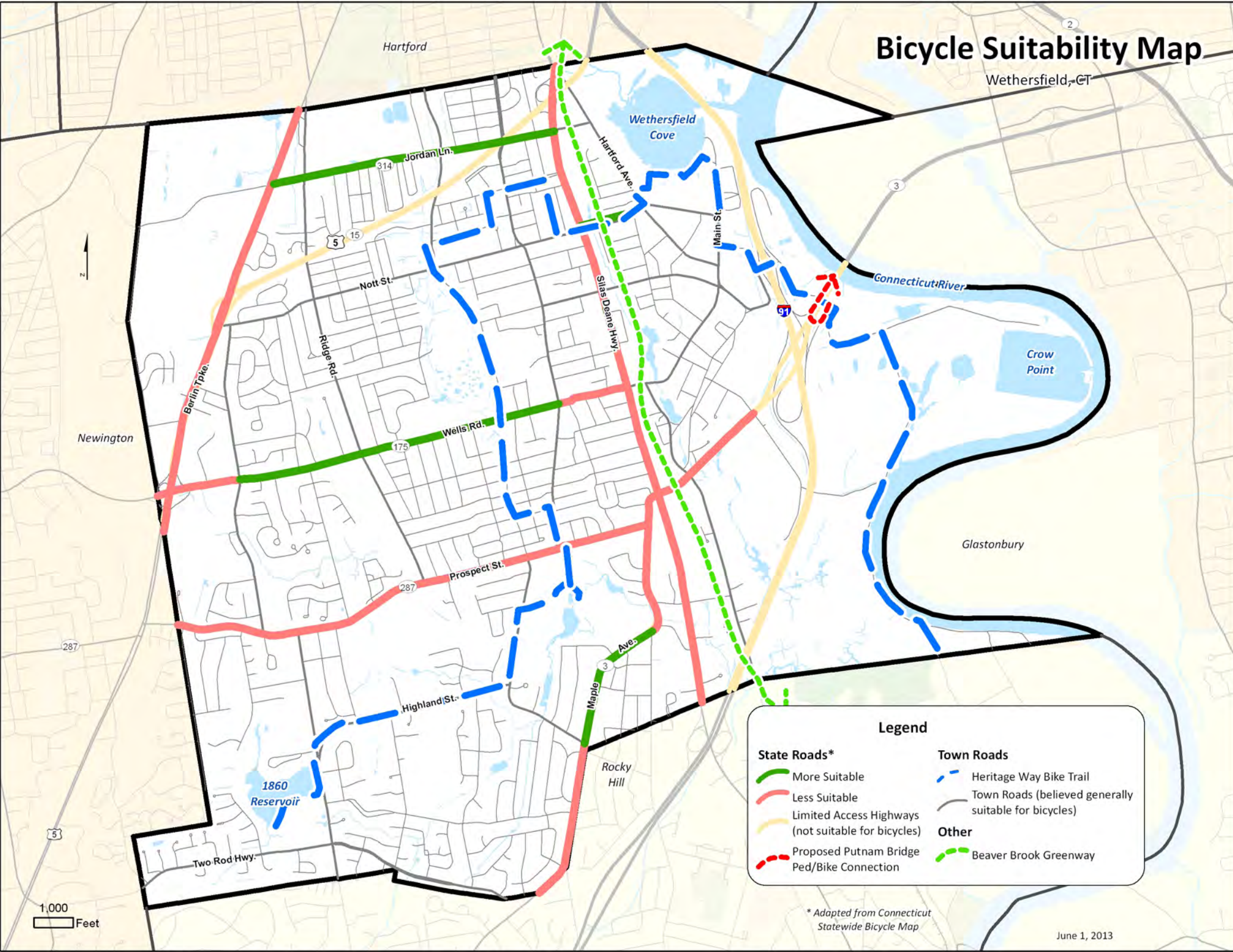
Shared Road (Sharrow)



Establish Bicycle Routes	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage bicycling in Wethersfield. 2. Set aside funds for the establishment of bicycle routes, where appropriate (with line striping, roadway markings and signage as needed). 3. Provide appropriate bicycle facilities (shared roadway, bicycle lanes, etc.) whenever road improvements (such as restriping) are undertaken. 4. Work with CTDOT to establish and improve bicycle routes on State highways (see PA 09-154).
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare and maintain a map of recommended bicycle routes in Wethersfield local streets and state roads). 2. Work with the CTDOT to maximize “shoulder width” on roads in order to expand opportunities for bicycle routes, where appropriate. 3. Apply to be designated a "Bicycle-Friendly Community" by the League of American Bicyclists. 4. Re-examine the Heritage Way Bike Trail and ways to enhance it (overall awareness, signage, trail extensions, etc.).

Bicycle Suitability Map

Wethersfield, CT



Legend

State Roads*	Town Roads
More Suitable	Heritage Way Bike Trail
Less Suitable	Town Roads (believed generally suitable for bicycles)
Limited Access Highways (not suitable for bicycles)	Other
Proposed Putnam Bridge Ped/Bike Connection	Beaver Brook Greenway

* Adapted from Connecticut Statewide Bicycle Map

1,000 Feet



Expand Community Events

The Town of Wethersfield and other organizations conduct special events and activities throughout the year including “Scarecrows on Main”, “Holidays On Main”, “Cornfest”, Fall Craft Fair, Memorial Day Parade, local fireworks displays, community concerts and other special events. Community events such as these provide a common experience or opportunity for residents and help contribute to:

- an overall sense of community,
- participation by residents in local events,
- willingness by residents to volunteer in the community, and
- the overall quality of life.

These events and activities also contribute to the overall perception of the community by others.

In the community surveys:

- about 40% of participants felt that Wethersfield should do more arranging of community events and activities
- about 54% of participants felt that Wethersfield should continue the same level of community events and activities.

These events add to community spirit and community character and should continue to be encouraged.

The Town (and other organizations) should continue efforts to keep residents informed of upcoming events through Facebook, Twitter, web page, community television, etc.). In the community surveys:

- about 51% felt that Wethersfield should communicate more with residents about local events and activities.
- about 46% of participants felt Wethersfield should continue the same level of communicating with residents about local events and activities.

Expand Community Events	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote events and activities that contribute to community pride and spirit. 2. Promote and encourage volunteer organizations. 3. Inform residents about important civic events and activities. 4. Maintain programs to develop community volunteers. 5. Celebrate our heritage as the oldest permanent settlement in Connecticut. 6. Create more partnerships for sponsoring community events.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the possibility of constructing a bandshell or similar structure for local events.

Kids Fun Run At Cove Park



Memorial Day Parade



Promote Architectural Character

Building architecture and site design influence people’s perception of the overall character of a community. People respond favorably and have positive feelings towards places where architecture and site design are harmonious and complement each other. When buildings are discordant and compete with each other for attention, it can detract from the appearance and attractiveness of a community.

In order to further architectural character and good design, Wethersfield has a design review process (Section 6.12 of the Zoning Regulations). The Design Review Advisory Committee reviews applications for major uses in order to “encourage higher quality building and site design and result in development which is compatible with the character of the community.”

In the community surveys, about three-quarters of participants agreed that Wethersfield should have design guidelines for business uses so that they fit into the character of Wethersfield.

This design review process should be continued and expanded to help promote architectural character and site design.

**With Design Guidelines
(McDonalds in Freeport Maine)**



**Without Design Guidelines
(McDonalds Prototype)**



Wethersfield has also established façade improvement program to help support the redevelopment of existing buildings. In the community surveys, about 64% of participants agreed that Wethersfield should help improve the appearance of commercial buildings through the façade improvement program.

The façade improvement program should be continued to help promote architectural character and site design.

Before Façade Improvement



After Façade Improvement



Promote Architectural Character

Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote good design of buildings and sites. 2. Maintain the Design Review Advisory Committee to provide input on building architecture and site design. 3. Maintain the Façade Improvement Program in order to help support the redevelopment of existing buildings.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a manual of design guidelines to help inform applicants of desirable (and undesirable) design treatments for areas of Wethersfield.

Protect Cultural Resources

Historic buildings and areas and archeological sites contribute to the overall character of Wethersfield. As “the most ancient town” in Connecticut and the municipality which adopted the first (and largest) local historic district in Connecticut, Wethersfield is recognized as having an impressive diversity of historic resources. There are also a number of archeological resources here because of the Native American settlements once located here and the different eras of American history which occurred here. Efforts to protect these historic and archeological resources should continue.

Wethersfield has also studied how people can become more aware of the historic and archeological resources in Old Wethersfield and how these resources can help contribute to the overall economy of Wethersfield. The Plan of Conservation and Development supports the strategies recommended in the *Old Wethersfield Master Plan* to:

- enhance the streetscape,
- create a viable village center,
- preserve community character,
- interpret history, and
- attract visitors and marketing assets.

Keeney Memorial Building

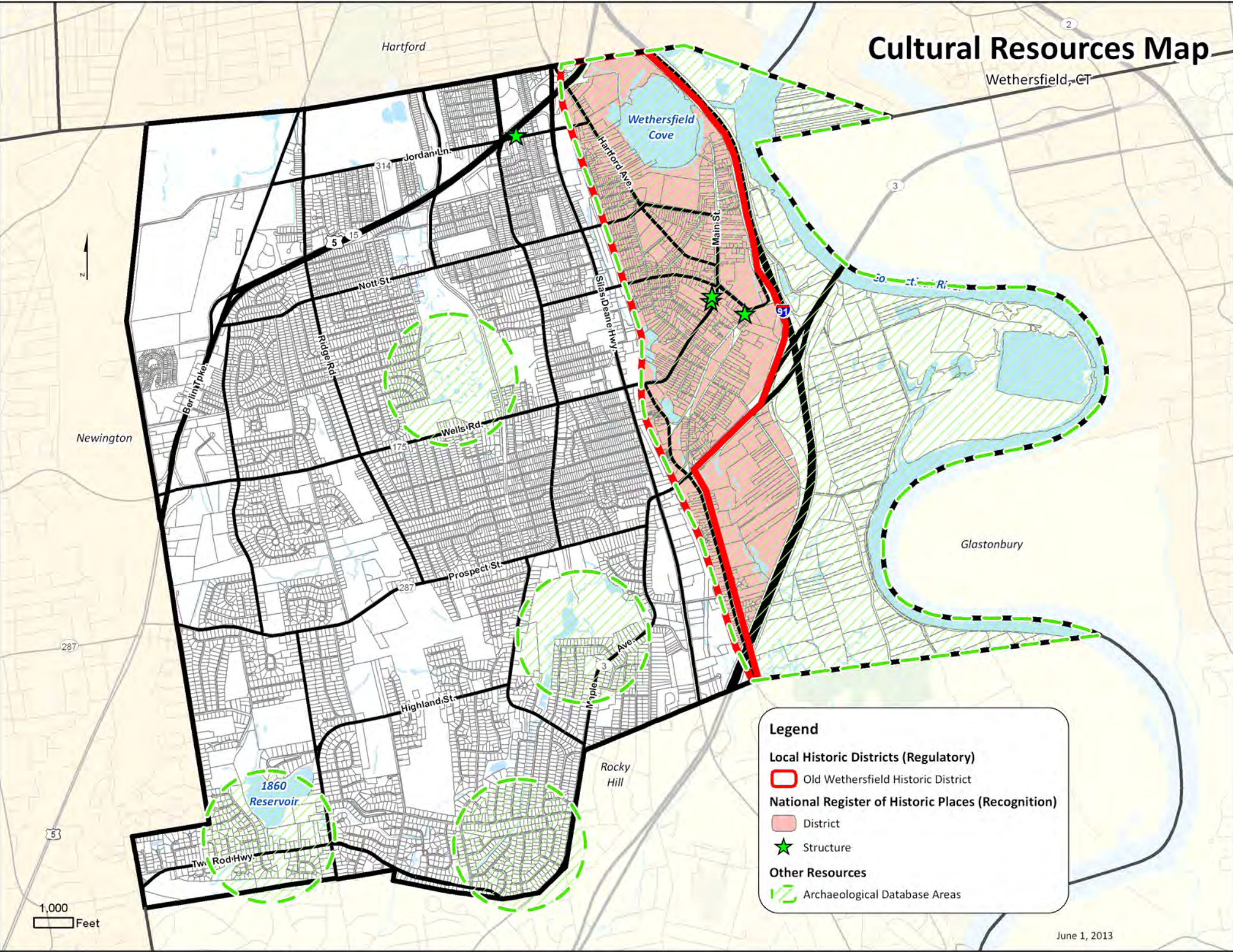


Silas-Robbins House



Protect Cultural Resources	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect historic resources. 2. Work with the Wethersfield Historical Society and other organizations that promote historic preservation. 3. Promote educational programs on historic preservation and local historic resources. 4. Encourage and support owners of historical resources in preserving those resources. 5. Consider allowing adaptive re-use of historic structures, where appropriate. 6. Continue to market Wethersfield’s history and celebrate our heritage as the oldest permanent settlement in Connecticut. 7. Maintain the historic character of Old Wethersfield. 8. Implement the <i>Old Wethersfield Master Plan</i>.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider adopting regulations which would include consideration of archeological factors as part of major site developments.

Cultural Resources Map



Legend

- Local Historic Districts (Regulatory)**
 - Old Wethersfield Historic District
- National Register of Historic Places (Recognition)**
 - District
- Other Resources**
 - Structure
 - Archaeological Database Areas

Enhance Transit Services

Even though most Wethersfield households rely on private automobiles for transportation, having transit services available is a tremendous asset in terms of providing transportation options for all residents. At this time, the transit services available in the community include:

- five CT Transit bus routes that travel from Hartford to and through Wethersfield,
- Weekday school buses for children attending schools,
- Weekday dial-a-ride services for elderly and disabled persons, and
- A trolley bus for tourists and group tours.

These transit services are important for meeting the transportation needs and desires of some Wethersfield residents and employers. Having the opportunity to use transit enhances the desirability of Wethersfield as a place to live and/or work. The Plan of Conservation and Development supports two initiatives which are currently underway:

- Providing more east-west services to complement the predominantly north-south services presently offered, and
- Providing bus shelters on all transit routes in Wethersfield.

About 39% of participants in the on-line survey and about 51% of participants in the telephone survey felt that Wethersfield should seek ways to increase bus services within the community. Since local transit ridership increased when gasoline prices escalated rapidly, transit services are an important transportation option in Wethersfield that are valuable to residents and provide a locational advantage not available in other communities.

Wethersfield also has a rail line (currently inactive) which parallels the Silas Deane Highway and had several streetcar lines at one time. Opportunities to re-establish rail service or streetcar service could benefit the overall community and should be considered if and when the opportunity arises.

Opportunities to expand transit services should be supported.

Enhance Transit Services	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek to increase transit service to Wethersfield. 2. Seek to increase transit service within Wethersfield. 3. Maintain and expand bus service options and accessibility. 4. Enhance dial-a-ride service.

CT Transit Bus Service

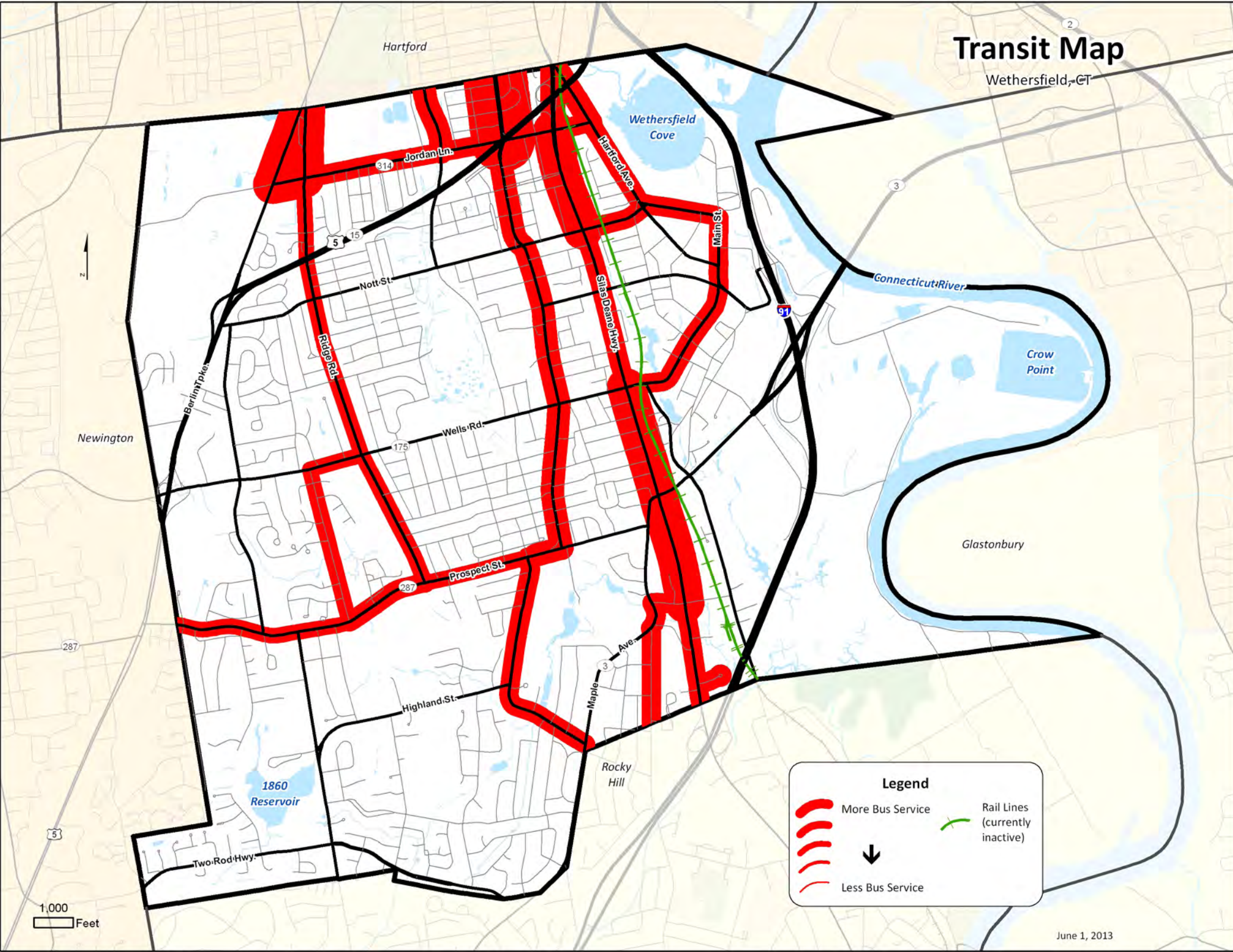


Trolley Bus



Transit Map

Wethersfield, CT



Legend

-  More Bus Service
-  Less Bus Service
-  Rail Lines (currently inactive)

↓

Enhance Streets

Streets comprise about 15% of the land area of Wethersfield and have a significant impact on the perception of community character.

Many of the streets in Wethersfield were built in the 1950s and 1960s as housing was built in the community. The street construction requirements at that time required that the streets be built fairly wide in terms of pavement width. While wide streets may be necessary in neighborhoods with small lots (to allow for on-street parking, for example), wide streets can encourage higher travel speeds and can detract from neighborhood character. Wider streets can also exacerbate runoff and flooding issues.

Street trees make an important contribution to community character (and property values) and opportunities to plant more street trees should be explored. Wethersfield has already been designated as a Tree City USA and it should continue to participate in this program.

Wethersfield should consider strategies (such as pavement narrowing and/or street tree planting) that will enhance the appearance of local streets. In addition to creating a “greener” situation in terms of environmental benefits, this type of approach can also produce “greener” benefits in terms of increasing property values along the roadway and in the neighborhood and lowering long term maintenance costs.

In the community surveys:

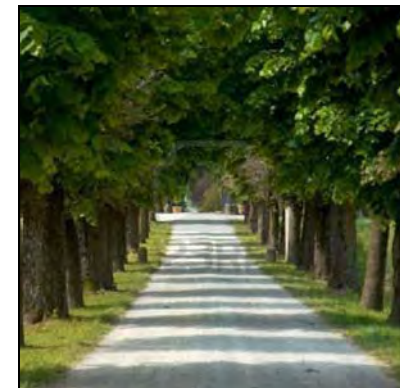
- about 82% of participants in both surveys felt the Town should continue the same level of effort in terms of promoting planting of more trees along the streets in residential neighborhoods or do more in the future.
- about one-third of participants agreed with a statement that the pavement on some residential side streets could be narrowed to improve aesthetics, reduce runoff, or lower maintenance costs (about 25% of participants did not have an opinion and may want additional information before deciding).

Enhance Streets	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whenever road improvements are undertaken, investigate the opportunity to narrow the paved width. 2. Strive to preserve and enhance street trees. 3. Maintain designation as a Tree City USA community.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake an analysis of streets most eligible for pavement narrowing. 2. Undertake a pilot project to explore the economic and environmental benefits of pavement narrowing. 3. Seek State and/or Federal funding to narrow pavement width and enhance drainage and tree planting as environmentally friendly solutions to urban drainage issues. 4. Establish a tree planting program to encourage residents to plant street trees. 5. Consider starting a tree nursery.

Mature Street Trees



Mature Street Trees



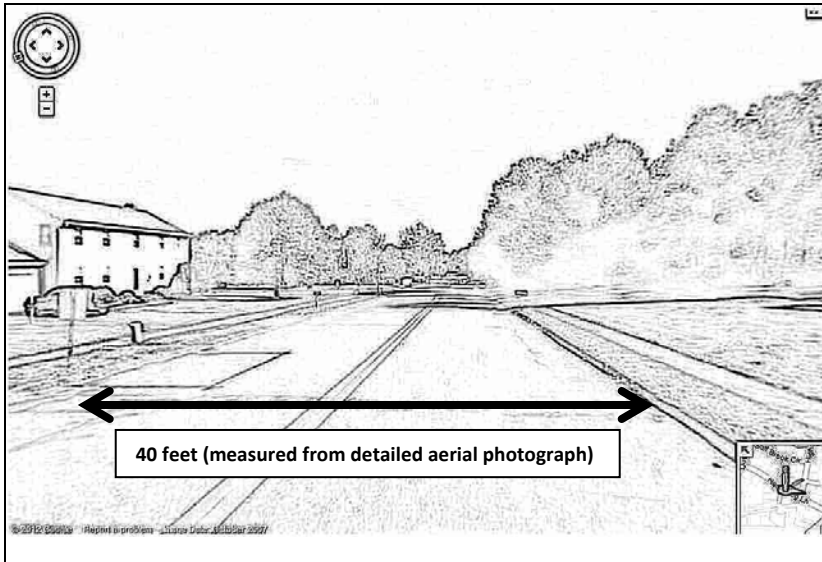
Existing Street



Narrower Pavement (24 Feet) With Street Trees



Dimensions



Narrower Pavement (24 Feet) With Street Trees and Bike Lanes (4 Feet Each)



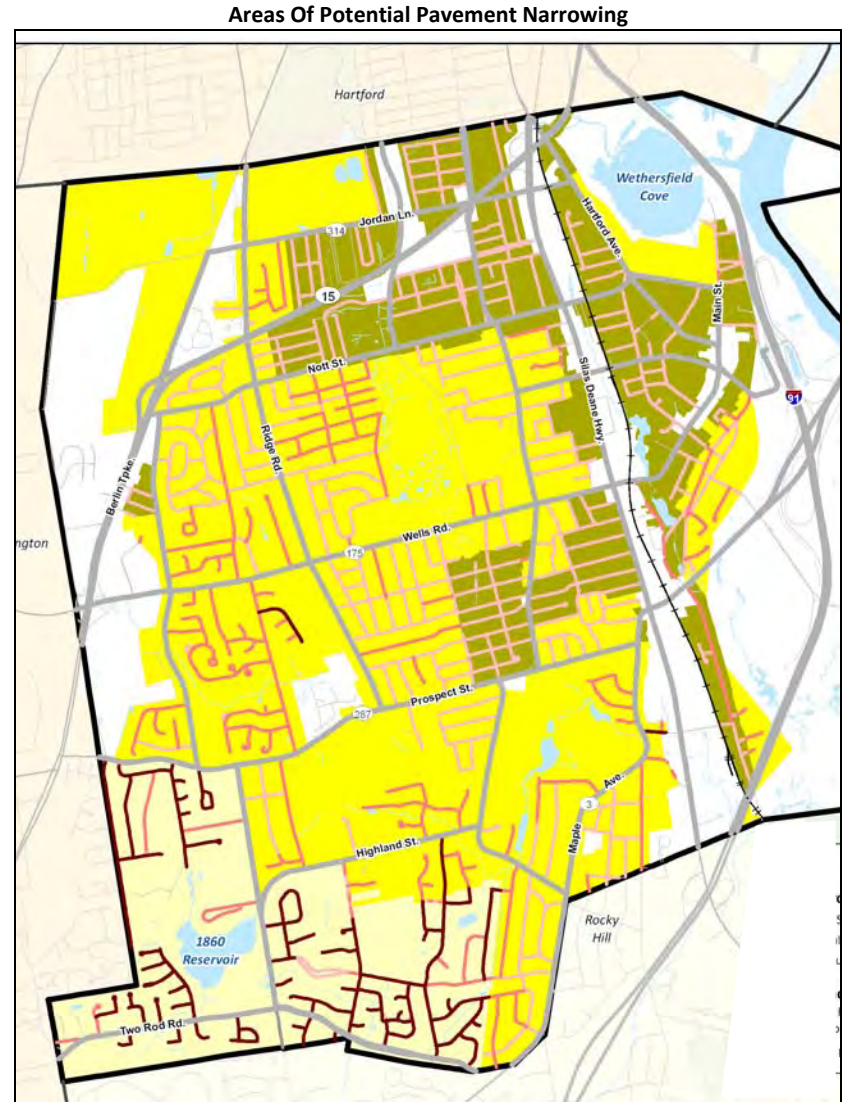
The adjacent map suggests some areas of Wethersfield which may be appropriate for pavement narrowing in the future.

A street may be considered to have *higher* potential for road narrowing if:

- it was in a residential area,
- it was in a lower density area where there might be limited demand for on-street parking, and/or
- the pavement was wider to begin with.

A street may be considered to have *lower* potential for road narrowing if:

- it was in a business area,
- it was in a higher density area where there might be more demand for on-street parking, and/or
- the pavement was narrower to begin with.



Guide Development

6

Overview

Although Wethersfield is predominantly developed, there are some development-related issues important to the community and residents.

At the community meeting and in the community surveys, residents expressed a desire to redevelop existing business areas to enhance the appearance and function of their community. In addition, residents expressed a desire to promote economic activity, economic development, and expand the tax base. Residents indicated they desire a walkable, pedestrian-friendly Town Center type area. Residents also indicated that the character of development is important to them.

In addition, it may make sense for Wethersfield to look at ways to allow the housing stock to be adapted to current and future lifestyles. Some of the Wethersfield zoning requirements have been around since the adoption of zoning (1928) and a number of housing units reflect lifestyle choices of the 1950s and 1960s. Allowing these homes to adapt to current and future lifestyle needs allows Wethersfield residents to capitalize on our excellent location and amenities and enhance the overall housing values in the community.

Silas Deane Highway



Town Center



Porch Additions



Housing Additions / Adaptation



Encourage Redevelopment Of The SDH

From public meetings and community surveys during this planning process, it is clear that Wethersfield residents would like to encourage redevelopment of the Silas Deane Highway. In fact, in the community surveys, about 87% of participants agreed with the following statement:

I wish Wethersfield could improve the overall appearance of the Silas Deane Highway and the buildings along it.

This sentiment is not new.

In 1984, as Wethersfield was preparing to celebrate its 350th anniversary, there was some concern about the “automobile orientation” and overall arrangement of the Silas Deane Highway and there were calls for improvements. What makes this somewhat remarkable is that, at that time, the Silas Deane Highway had only been in existence for about 50 years and the major development along the highway was only about 25 years old.

Interest in redeveloping the highway at that time was so high that Wethersfield undertook a design competition about changing the character of the roadway. Cash awards were offered for the entries judged to be best.

Over 200 groups expressed interest and about 55 entries were submitted. There was considerable local interest in the competition (see adjacent picture) and a design panel selected the top entries for several exhibitions around town. Prizes were awarded and the Town had a *Silas Deane Highway Master Plan* (1987) prepared by a nationally recognized design firm (Skidmore Owings and Merrill) to incorporate what were considered to be the best elements from the various entries.

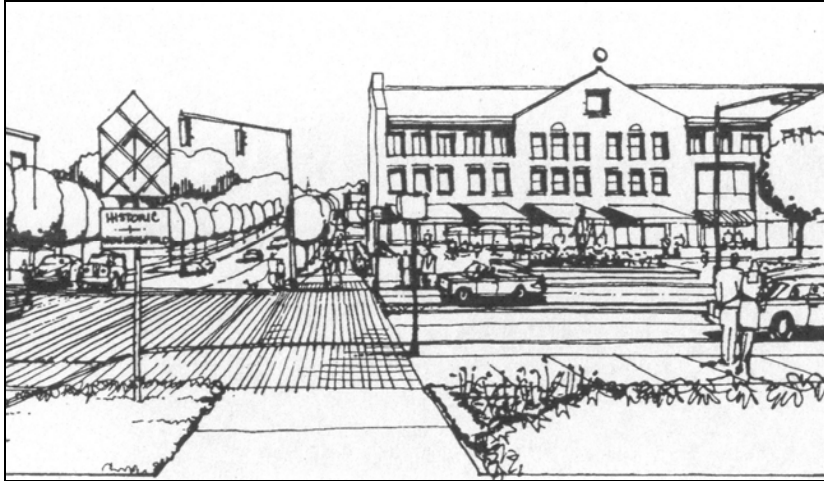
Then, in 2006, Wethersfield (in conjunction with Rocky Hill) undertook a study of Silas Deane Highway in both towns with funding from the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT).

Newspaper Supplement (circa 1985)



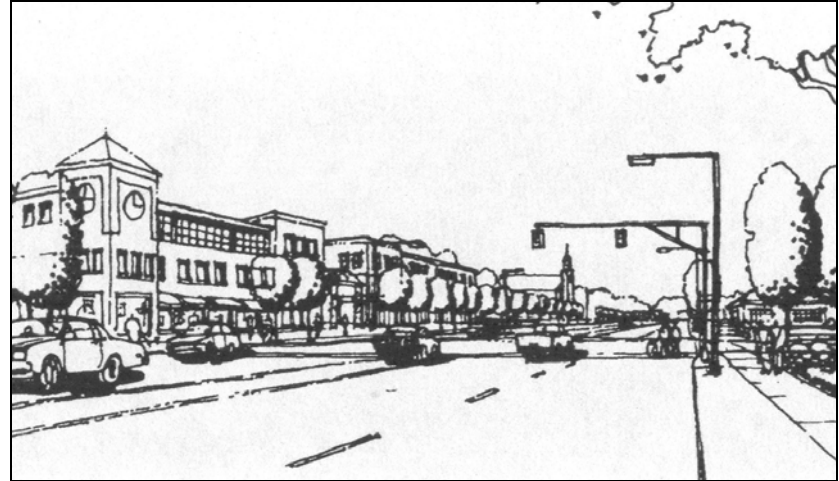
It is recommended that property owners and developers review and consider the recommendations of the 1987 *Silas Deane Highway Master Plan* (Skidmore Owings and Merrill) and the 2006 *Silas Deane Highway – A Vision For Reinvestment* (Fuss & O’Neill).

**Silas Deane Highway At Church Street
(looking east towards Old Wethersfield)**



Skidmore, Owings & Merrill / 1987

**Silas Deane Highway At Wells Road
(looking north towards Hartford)**



Skidmore, Owings & Merrill / 1987

**Silas Deane Highway At Church Street
(looking south towards Rocky Hill)**



Skidmore, Owings & Merrill / 1987

**Silas Deane Highway At Maple Street
(looking north towards Hartford)**



Skidmore, Owings & Merrill / 1987

Since there are a number of factors affecting redevelopment of the Silas Deane Highway, it cannot and will not happen overnight. On the other hand, with a commitment on the part of the Town to encouraging and enabling positive changes, good things can and will happen in the future.

Thus, a key issue for this Plan is to identify steps towards accomplishing these visions for the Silas Deane Highway.

The following tables suggest some steps that can be accomplished and implemented over time and contribute to the larger vision for the Silas Deane Highway.

Transitioning (Public Realm / Streets)

Shorter Term	Longer Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add street trees • Street lamps • Street furniture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider sidewalks • Landscaped median • Underground utilities • On-street parking

Transitioning (Private Realm / Properties)

Shorter Term	Longer Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower setback requirements • Allow higher buildings • Lower parking requirements • Restrict parking in front of buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate curb cuts • Share parking • On-street parking

Silas Deane Beautification

Over the years, the Silas Deane Highway Beautification Committee and other groups and agencies have devoted countless hours towards improving the appearance of the roadway.

While the zoning designations along the Silas Deane Highway were reconfigured in 2004 as part of a comprehensive reorganization of the Zoning Regulations and some new regulations were adopted following the 2006 corridor study, it makes sense to review these regulations on a regular basis to ensure that they allow and encourage appropriate development and redevelopment. Since parking requirements can be one of the biggest impediments to redevelopment, these standards should be reviewed and might be lowered when there is shared parking and access and/or a village-type configuration is being established.

In addition, Wethersfield may wish to consider flexible zoning techniques (such as a planned development district approach) whereby redevelopment of properties can occur without micro-management of dimensional or other standards.

Although façade improvement does not resolve some of the underlying issues related to development patterns (building placement, parking location, driveway placement, etc.), it helps improve the appearance of buildings along the Silas Deane Highway and should be continued.

Perception Of Character

People define community character based on what they observe about a community. Most residents tend to perceive character based on their favorite places in the community. On the other hand, visitors tend to perceive community character based on what they see from the roadway.

In other words, other people’s perception of the character of Wethersfield may be most influenced by the appearance of State highways and commercial areas.

Silas Deane Highway At Church Street
(looking south towards Rocky Hill)



Fuss & O'Neill / 2006

Encourage Redevelopment Of The Silas Deane Highway

Policies:

1. Implement the recommendations of past studies (Skidmore Owings and Merrill and Fuss & O'Neill).
2. Continue the façade improvement program.
3. Encourage consolidation of parcels for development purposes and consider requiring that parcels share access and parking.
4. Consider the possible future need for on-street and off-street public parking areas (including parking decks or structures) to support additional development.

Tasks:

1. Review zoning regulations to ensure they are encouraging appropriate development and/or redevelopment.
2. Encourage larger-scale higher-density housing along the Silas Deane Highway north of Maple Avenue as a form of economic growth and as a catalyst for change.
3. Review and/or reduce parking requirements to remove potential impediments to redevelopment.

Create A “Town Center Node” On The SDH

Since the Silas Deane Highway in Wethersfield is about three miles in length, any redevelopment activity has the potential to get lost in within the overall context of the roadway. On the other hand, if redevelopment activity could be concentrated in a smaller area, there would be a meaningful and noticeable change in the corridor. This might help to spur redevelopment of other areas within the corridor.

As part of this planning process, Wethersfield residents expressed interest in development patterns that were more pedestrian-friendly and that offered uses of interest to residents. Residents wanted more of a “down-town-type” feeling on the Silas Deane Highway.

While the scale of the development in Wethersfield would be different, some residents expressed interest in what West Hartford has accomplished at “Blue Back Square” and what some other communities are encouraging in terms of village-type development patterns.

As stated previously, Wethersfield has been considering doing something like this since at least 1984. Two studies have recommended this and the zoning was updated to enable this.

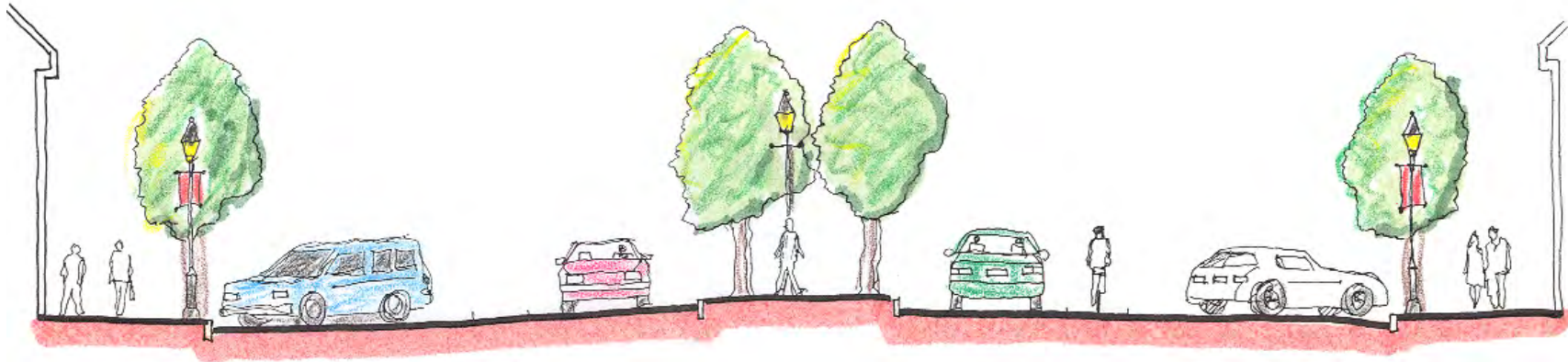
Wethersfield should investigate ways to encourage the creation of a “Town Center node” with pedestrian-friendly and village-type development patterns along the Silas Deane Highway. The area between Church Street and Wells Road might be a good area for investigation. However, since some of the road frontage in this area is devoted to municipal and institutional uses, areas to the north (Church Street) or to the South (Wells Road) may also be worthy of consideration.

In the community surveys, 67% of participants in each survey agreed that the Silas Deane Highway near the Town Hall should become a more walkable pedestrian area with a broader mix of uses.

Suggested “Town Center Node” Location
(Silas Deane Highway between Church Street and Wells Road)



Possible Roadway Configuration For Silas Deane Highway



Sidewalk	Parking Area	Bike Lane	Travel Lane	Landscape Median / Pedestrian Refuge	Face-To-Face Building Width = 110'
12' wide with 8' pedestrian zone and 4' amenity zone	19' wide for 45-degree diagonal parking plus maneuver zone (shared)	4' wide (shared)	12' wide	16' wide (turning lane, if needed)	Approximately 8 on-street spaces per 100 feet of curbing

Change The Street

One of the first things that might need to happen would be to change the configuration of the Silas Deane Highway in this location. The feeling of a pedestrian-friendly area will be difficult or impossible to attain if the current roadway configurations remains as it exists today.

When the Silas Deane Highway was widened in the late 1980s, a five-lane cross-section was created. This roadway configuration does a good job accommodating automobiles but is hostile to pedestrians. In addition, there is the perception of a lack of convenient parking in some locations.

While it might be desirable to reduce the distance between buildings across the Silas Deane Highway (ie - face-to-face), it might be a challenge because it could involve giving up CTDOT property currently used for the road right-of-way. Thus, it is important to ensure the roadway design within the right-of-way is as inviting and pedestrian-friendly as possible.

An alternative configuration *might* be as follows:

- A landscaped center median (with turning lanes at intersections)
- One travel lane in each direction
- Diagonal on-street parking with an area outside the travel lane for “backing out” or “backing in” (diagonal parking is recommended for consideration because it results in the most on-street parking spaces per section of street)
- Bicycle travel area (“sharrow”)
- Wide sidewalks

Eliminating the median might provide an opportunity for additional travel lanes or for wider sidewalks.

Studies of downtown-type areas have found that having active first-floor uses with visible on-street parking starts to create interest in development opportunities along the roadway.

Since there are a number of travel routes around this section of the Silas Deane Highway, this roadway configuration should not be a major impediment to traffic circulation from a local or regional perspective. In fact, this roadway arrangement will:

- Provide “traffic calming” by slowing down the speed of traffic
- Divert through traffic to other roadways
- Provide additional parking for new buildings
- Provide a protected pedestrian space for window shopping, outdoor dining, and other amenities
- Provide safe places for pedestrians crossing the street

This new roadway configuration is intended to be different than what exists today. If Wethersfield is to create a pedestrian-friendly and village-type area, it needs a roadway that supports this overall approach rather than the “through-way”-type automobile orientation that exists today.

There are several examples from around Connecticut where State highways carry similar traffic volumes (20,800 vehicles per day, or average daily traffic (ADT)) and have a similar configuration to what is being suggested for the Silas Deane Highway. While these areas can experience some congestion at peak hours, they are recognized for being areas that have a lot of character and a “sense of place” – qualities that Wethersfield is hoping to create.

While Wethersfield may not want to enable the development yield achieved at Blue Back Square or at Storrs Town Center (about 30,000 SF of floor area per acre of land), enabling and encouraging a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly environment can result in yields far in excess of what exists today along the Silas Deane Highway.

Route 1 - Greenwich, CT



18,000 ADT



Route 1 – Darien, CT



17,800 ADT



Route 1 – Fairfield, CT



19,600 ADT



Route 63 – Westville / New Haven



15,500 ADT



Farmington Avenue – West Hartford, CT



18,000 ADT



Route 83 (Main Street) - Manchester, CT



17,200 ADT



Create A “Town Center Node” On The Silas Deane Highway

- Policies:**
1. Implement the Silas Deane Highway studies (Skidmore Owings and Merrill and Fuss & O’Neill) which recommend creation of “nodes.”
 2. Seek to create a “Town Center node” on the Silas Deane highway between Wells Road and Nott Street.
 3. Work with CRCOG and CTDOT to evaluate ways to renovate the Silas Deane Highway between Wells Road and Nott Street in order to help create a "Wethersfield Town Center".
 4. Consider ways to promote additional development desired by residents (walkability, restaurants, stores, activities, “destination” uses).
 5. Consider the desirability of public parking accommodations.
 6. Seek to locate higher density housing in “node” areas along the Silas Deane Highway as a form of economic growth and as a catalyst for change.

- Tasks:**
1. Refine the “vision” for a town center on the Silas Deane Highway and publish the vision so that developers and property owners can see the types of things acceptable to the community.
 2. Change existing regulations and/or implement new regulations, if needed, to help create a "Wethersfield Town Center" on the Silas Deane Highway.

Encourage Berlin Turnpike Redevelopment

The desire to encourage redevelopment of the Silas Deane Highway also applies to the section of the Berlin Turnpike in Wethersfield. There are several locations along the Berlin Turnpike where new uses could be established which would:

- Make more of a contribution to the tax base
- Enhance community character
- Meet community needs, including housing needs
- Address some problematic land use issues

Redevelopment of these sites should be encouraged also.

Encourage Redevelopment Of The Berlin Turnpike	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement the recommendations of the <i>Route 5/15 Berlin Turnpike Corridor Study</i>. 2. Encourage redevelopment of properties on the Berlin Turnpike.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review zoning regulations and zoning designations to ensure they are encouraging appropriate development and/or redevelopment. 2. Continue the façade improvement program. 3. Consider requiring that parcels share access and parking. 4. Review parking requirements to remove or reduce potential impediments to redevelopment.

Berlin Turnpike



Encourage Redevelopment of Key Sites

Wethersfield has a limited amount of land area which it can devote to business and economic development. As a result, it will be important for the community to support (and fund, if necessary) the redevelopment of key sites in order to remove blight and/or set the stage for new development.

Wethersfield residents understand the need for these efforts. Consider the following results from the community surveys:

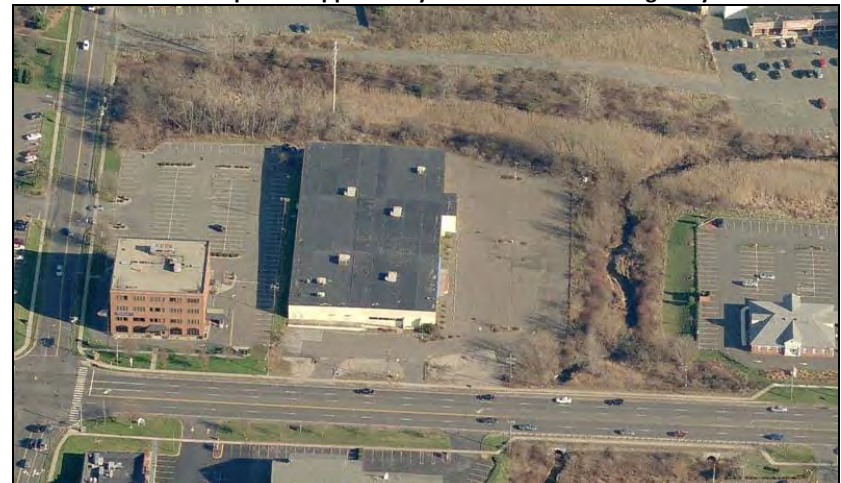
- about three-quarters of participants feel the Town should do more in terms of encouraging redevelopment of commercial sites.
- about 65% of participants in the telephone survey and about 74% of participants in the on-line survey feel the Town should do more in terms of enhancing the appearance of commercial areas.
- about 64% of participants agreed that the Town should provide funding to promote the redevelopment of commercial sites

Encourage Redevelopment Of Key Sites	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage redevelopment of properties. 2. Maintain a Redevelopment Agency in order to assist with the redevelopment of properties. 3. Pursue funds for redevelopment of properties where considered vital to encouraging appropriate development.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When warranted, undertake feasibility studies for the redevelopment of key sites.

Redevelopment Opportunity – 1000 Silas Deane Highway



Redevelopment Opportunity – 1178 Silas Deane Highway



Encourage Appropriate Business Development

Business development provides three key benefits to Wethersfield:

- Jobs for residents
- Goods and services for residents
- Net tax revenue to fund local services

At a public meeting held as part of the planning process, residents indicated that all three of these benefits were important to them. Wethersfield should strive to support and attract business development and other activities which provide similar benefits to the community.

Small neighborhood general stores are an integral part of the character of some parts of Wethersfield. Allowing for the establishment of new neighborhood general stores or the expansion of existing general stores might be appropriate if such activities fit into the character of the neighborhood and minimize potential problems.

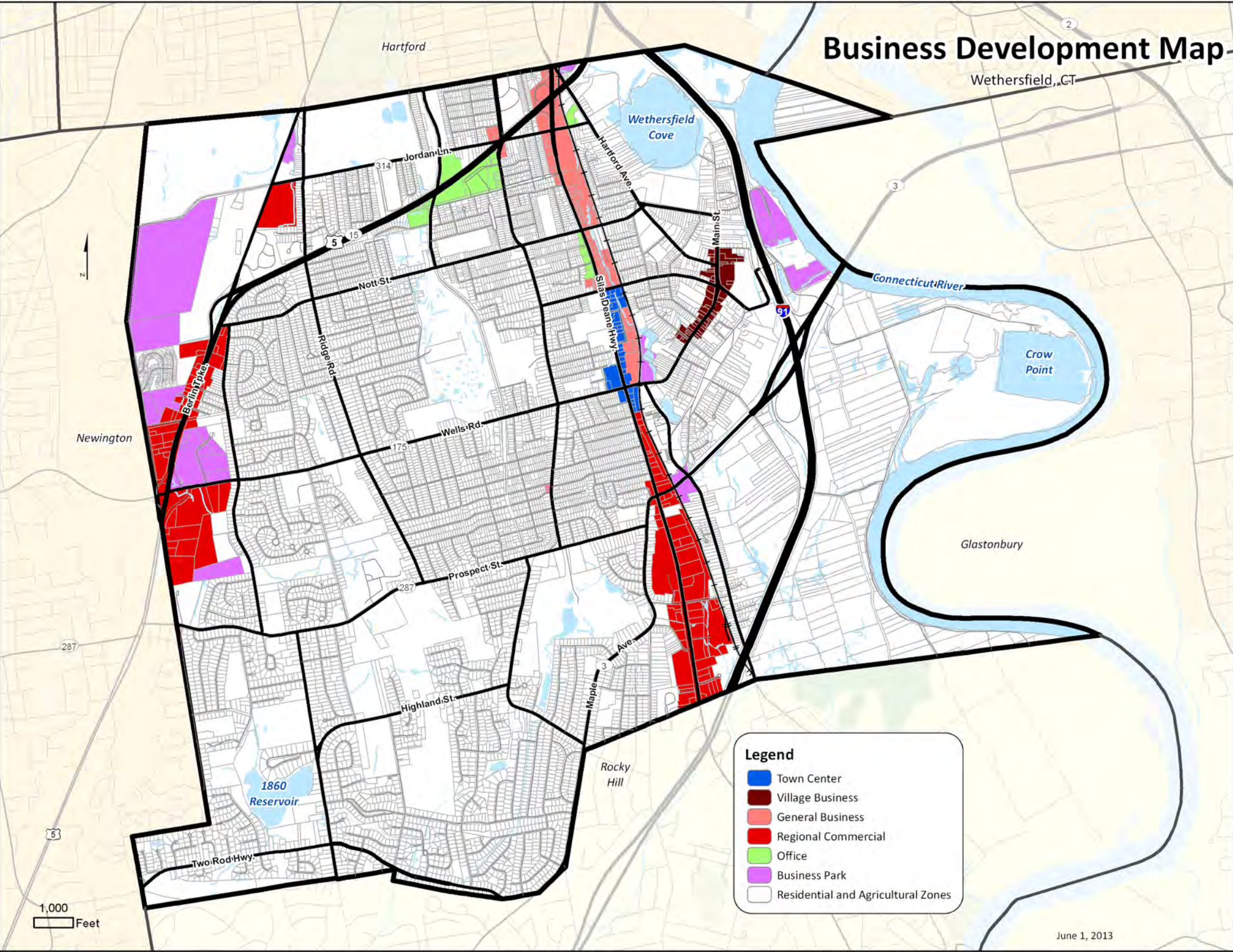
Neighborhood General Store (Bliss Market)



Encourage Appropriate Business Development	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Help existing businesses stay in Town and grow and expand the tax base through recruitment of compatible business and industry. 2. Continue to work with existing organizations (such as the Chamber of Commerce) in order to help create a business friendly environment. 3. Seek to maximize utilization of business sites and zones and promote the development and redevelopment of underutilized commercial properties. 4. Develop “vision” plans for economic development areas to help guide potential businesses and developers. 5. Promote private redevelopment of sites but consider public partnerships if necessary. 6. Encourage consolidated development with shared access, parking, and circulation. 7. Carefully manage redevelopment / reuse of houses along the Silas Deane Highway into commercial use. 8. Seek opportunities to implement the Town’s Economic Development Initiative Program. 9. Consider the possibility of allowing for the development of small neighborhood general stores at some time in the future.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review regulations regarding home-based businesses in order to maintain an appropriate balance in residential areas.

Business Development Map

Wethersfield, CT



1,000 Feet

Legend

- Town Center
- Village Business
- General Business
- Regional Commercial
- Office
- Business Park
- Residential and Agricultural Zones

Allow For “Evolution” Of The Housing Stock

Wethersfield is primarily a residential community and residents want it to stay that way. However, a large number of homes were built in the 1950s and 1960s when housing sizes were smaller than is considered typical today. The features of these homes also reflect lifestyles and societal trends of the era when they were built. Sometimes, these features (or lack thereof) may not mesh well with current needs or desires.

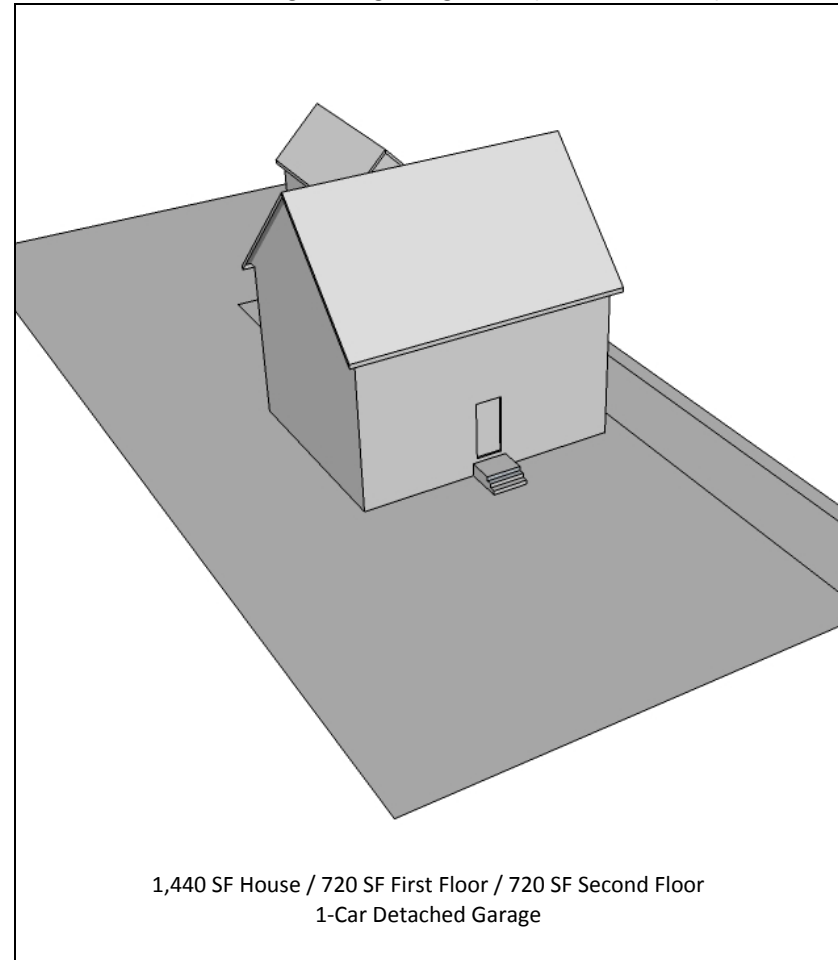
At some point in the future, it might be important for Wethersfield to consider ways to allow the housing stock to be adapted to the current and future needs of residents. This could help enable homes in Wethersfield to adapt to changing societal needs and not be perceived in the marketplace as being “out of touch” with current lifestyles.

In fact, with Wethersfield’s excellent location and with smaller household sizes (or older households) becoming more prevalent, allowing existing housing units to be modernized in appropriate ways might attract more people and new demographic groups to Wethersfield.

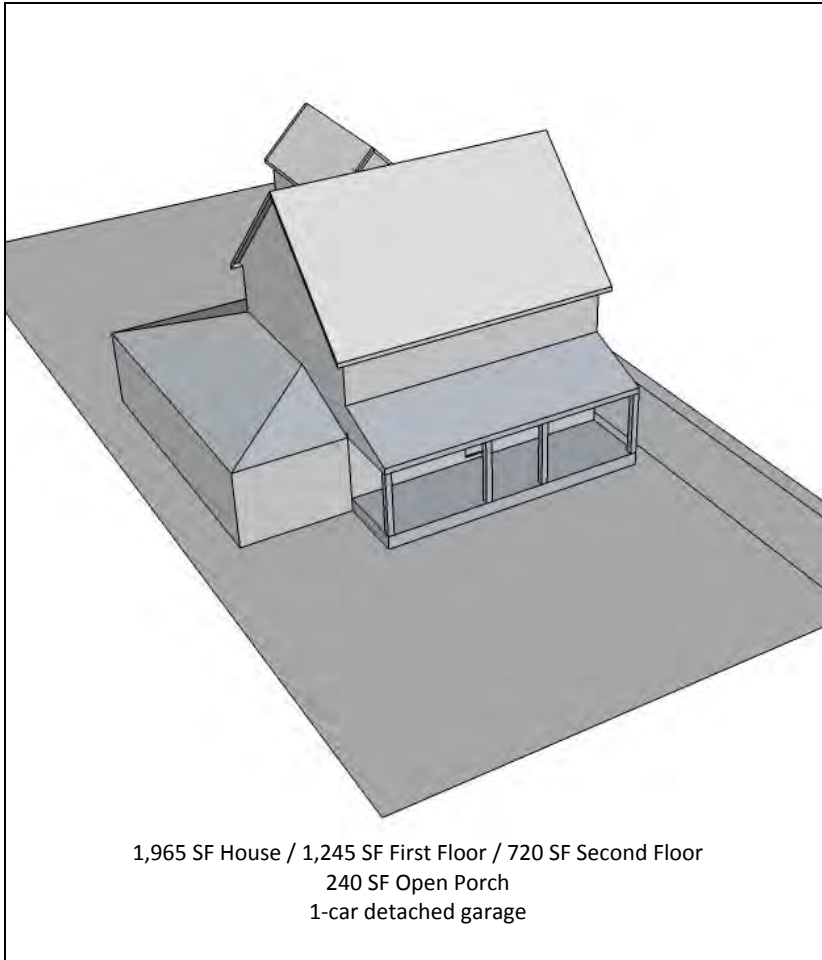
At the present time, the yard setback and/or building coverage limitations in the zoning regulations might be limiting the ability of homeowners to adapt housing to meet their needs. If flexibility could be provided to some of these standards (within specific limits), homeowners could continue to adapt housing units to current and future lifestyle needs:

- Add exterior insulation
- Porches in front
- More generous amount of living area / expand number of rooms / expand size of rooms
- First floor master bedroom (for an aging population)
- Larger kitchen / expand space for appliances
- More bathrooms / larger bathrooms
- Attached garage (rear / side / or front provided garage doors so not face the street)
- More storage / add closets / enlarge closets

Possible Existing Building Configuration (B Residence Zone)



Possible Future Building Configuration (B Residence Zone)



Initially, it would seem best to configure the process to allow only for one-story additions into existing side-yard setbacks while still keeping at least the minimum setback for the zone (i.e. 5 feet in the B Residence Zone).

One-story “open” porches (no windows or screens) on the front of a house could also be allowed provided at least 75% of the front yard setback remains (i.e. – a 30’ setback in most zones).

Allow For Evolution Of The Housing Stock	
New Policies:	1. Consider seeking ways to allow for the evolution of the housing stock in Wethersfield to meet current and future lifestyle needs.
Tasks:	1. Consider modifying zoning regulations so that homes can be adapted to changing lifestyles and needs, when and where appropriate. 2. Review dimensional standards in residential zones in order to allow for adaptation of houses to meet possible current and future needs (one-floor living, adding insulation, handicapped accessibility, etc.).

Encourage Housing Diversity

Wethersfield is fortunate to have a fairly diverse housing stock. Maintaining a diverse housing stock will help meet the needs of individuals at different times in their lives and help meet overall community needs in terms of providing for a diverse population in terms of age and other variables.

Wethersfield's housing "portfolio" is already weighted towards single family detached dwellings. While many people aspire to live in these types of housing units, it is not always the optimal choice for people who are young or old or for smaller households. Some other housing options which may be appropriate for Wethersfield include:

- Multi-family housing (apartment, condominium, townhouse, etc.)
- Independent retirement housing
- Congregate housing
- Assisted living complexes
- Continuing care retirement communities
- Nursing home

Since much of the land in Wethersfield is already developed, the creation of new housing opportunities may only occur through redevelopment of existing areas. The types of area which might be most appropriate for redevelopment with housing choices include land which:

- Is located on or near bus routes
- Could contribute to redevelopment of the Silas Deane Highway or the Berlin Turnpike
- Would serve as a "transitional use" between non-residential uses and single-family residential areas
- Would serve as a "transitional density" between higher density areas and lower density areas
- Would address local housing needs

The map on the facing page depicts some area in Wethersfield which might be most appropriate for creation of new housing opportunities.

Housing Options

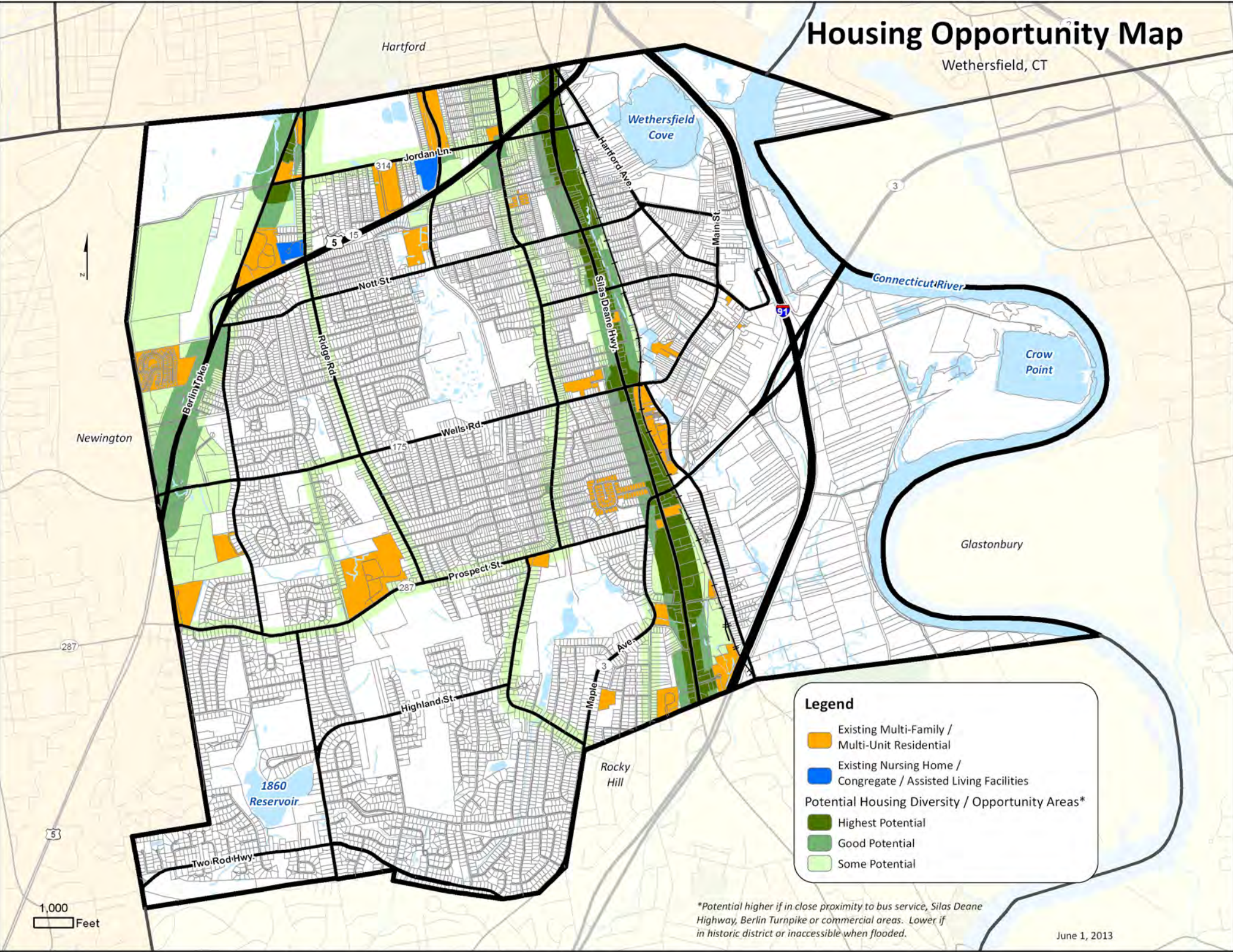


Housing Option



Housing Opportunity Map

Wethersfield, CT



Legend

- Existing Multi-Family / Multi-Unit Residential
- Existing Nursing Home / Congregate / Assisted Living Facilities
- Potential Housing Diversity / Opportunity Areas*
 - Highest Potential
 - Good Potential
 - Some Potential

*Potential higher if in close proximity to bus service, Silas Deane Highway, Berlin Turnpike or commercial areas. Lower if in historic district or inaccessible when flooded.

1,000 Feet



Housing For An Aging Population

As people are now living longer, it is important to see that housing options are available for an aging population. The housing desires of older residents can range from minor modifications to their existing home (first floor master bedrooms, accessibility ramps, etc.), relocation to housing with maintenance included, independent housing which is less expensive, housing with a fuller range of services available, and other options.

In addition, as more live longer lives, it can be anticipated that there will be a growing need for elderly housing for people with limited economic means. Providing additional housing opportunities for such situations should be explored. In addition, ensuring that social services are available for residents that need them (such as “meals on wheels”) can also help sustain people in their home.

During the planning period, Wethersfield should investigate ways to help accommodate the changing housing needs which can be anticipated.

Wethersfield residents support these efforts. In the community surveys:

- about 26% of participants in the on-line survey and about 45% of participants in the telephone survey want the Town to do more in terms of encouraging more housing options for seniors.
- Only about 22% of participants in both surveys felt the Town should do less in terms of encouraging housing options for seniors.

Housing Which Is More Affordable

In terms of “affordability”, Wethersfield has housing at a variety of price points so there is “naturally occurring” affordable housing in the community. In fact, assessment data suggests that there are over two thousand housing units in Wethersfield with an estimated market value of \$175,000 or less. In the last two years, over 200 housing units sold for less than \$200,000.

Still, Wethersfield residents understand the value of having a diverse “housing portfolio” and support the concept of helping first-time homebuyers:

- about 21% of participants in the on-line survey and about to 42% of participants in the telephone survey want the Town to do more in terms of encouraging more housing options for first-time homebuyers.
- about 60% of participants in the on-line survey and about to 40% of participants in the telephone survey felt the Town should maintain the same level of effort in terms of encouraging more housing options for first-time homebuyers.

Encourage Housing Diversity	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Help accommodate the housing needs of older residents and encourage a variety of housing opportunities for senior citizens.2. Help address identified local needs for affordable housing.3. Continue to provide social services and other support services for people that choose to remain in their homes as they age.

Address Other Issues

7

Overview

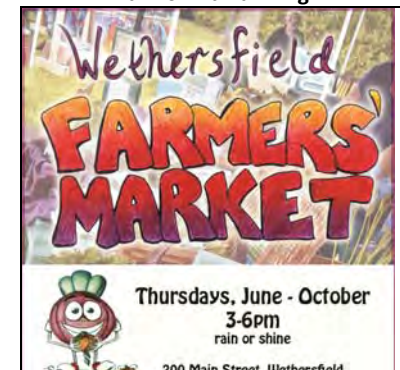
There are also other issues and topics for Wethersfield to address. These issues and topics include:

- Protection of natural resources
- Preservation of open space
- Managing the roadway system
- Support farms and farming
- Promoting sustainability and resiliency
- Maintaining and enhancing utility availability
- Managing Wethersfield Cove

Natural Resources



Farms And Farming



Roadways



Utilities



Protect Natural Resources

Protecting natural resources in Wethersfield is important to overall environmental health and community character. Important resources include:

- Watercourses,
- Inland wetlands,
- Floodplain (“100-year”),
- Slopes exceeding 25% (10 feet of rise in 40 feet of distance), and
- Special inland habitat areas (such as endangered species).

Wethersfield residents feel strongly about the value of protecting natural resources. In community surveys:

- about 31% of participants felt that Wethersfield should do more effort in terms of protecting natural resources.
- about 21% of participants felt that Wethersfield should apply a lower level of effort in terms of protecting natural resources such as wetlands and natural habitats.

Wethersfield already has good regulations and programs in place to protect natural resources and should continue these efforts.

In the future, a key initiative which the Town should evaluate is “low impact development” provisions for drainage systems. LID is an approach that aims to replace the historic emphasis on structured drainage (curbs, catch basins, pipes, large retention basins discharges to watercourses) with a more natural approach emphasizing runoff reduction, water infiltration, and pollutant removal.

Although Wethersfield is predominantly developed, finding appropriate opportunities to revert back to more natural drainage approaches could pay dividends to the community.

Protect Natural Resources	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect natural resources such as inland wetlands, watercourses, floodplains, natural diversity sites, etc. 2. Educate residents on the importance of protecting natural resources. 3. Coordinate natural resources conservation efforts with neighboring towns and other organizations. 4. Work with the Metropolitan District Commission to stop discharges of combined sewage and stormwater “overflows” to Wethersfield Cove. 5. Recognize the designation of the Connecticut River as a “National Blueway” and support efforts to protect and enhance the river and to build upon the conservation, recreation, education, and economic benefits it provides.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement low impact development strategies.

Wethersfield Cove

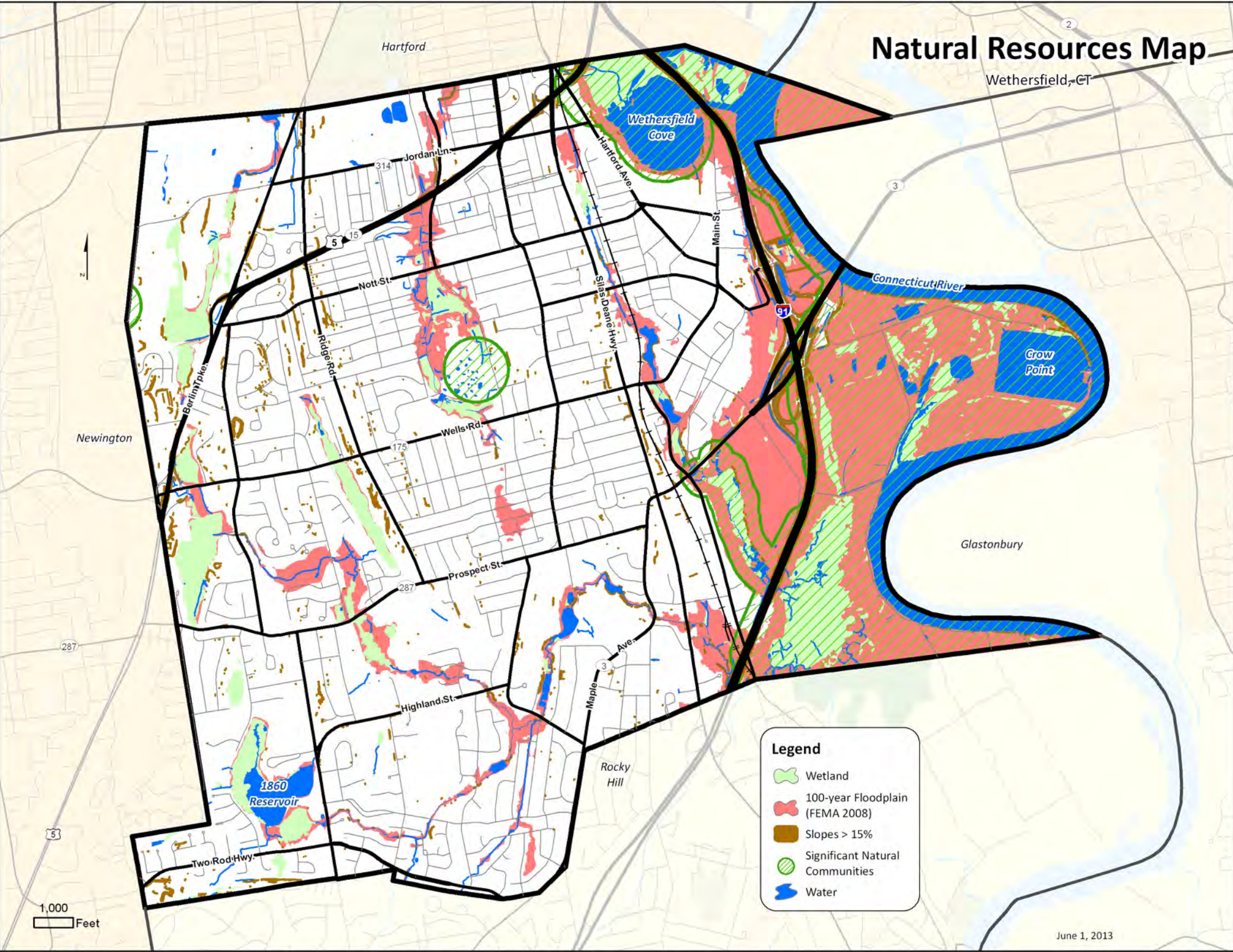


Vernal Pool / Wetland Area



Natural Resources Map

Wethersfield, CT



Legend

- Wetland
- 100-year Floodplain (FEMA 2008)
- Slopes > 15%
- Significant Natural Communities
- Water

Preserve Open Spaces

Wethersfield residents value the contribution of “open space” to the character of the community and its quality of life. In community surveys:

- about 32% of participants felt that Wethersfield should do more in terms of providing land for parks or open space.
- about 13% of participants felt that Wethersfield should apply a lower level of effort in terms of providing land for parks or open space.

When asked if Wethersfield should try to acquire more land for such things as parks, open space areas, or wildlife habitat, both surveys found that about 52% of the participants were in favor of this strategy. However, the level of support dropped if people felt that taxes would be increased to support the acquisition of land. Fortunately, there are organizations (such as the Great Meadows Land Trust) also working to preserve open space in Wethersfield.

Wethersfield should continue to preserve open space in conjunction with other organizations.

1860 Reservoir



Mill Woods Park



Preserve Open Spaces	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the acquisition of property and/or the dedication of open space as a way to help protect important natural resources, enhance character, and/or contribute to an overall open space system. 2. Support land preservation efforts of other organizations (Great Meadows Land Trust, etc.). 3. Maintain the “open space fund” with adequate financial resources.

Wilkus Farm



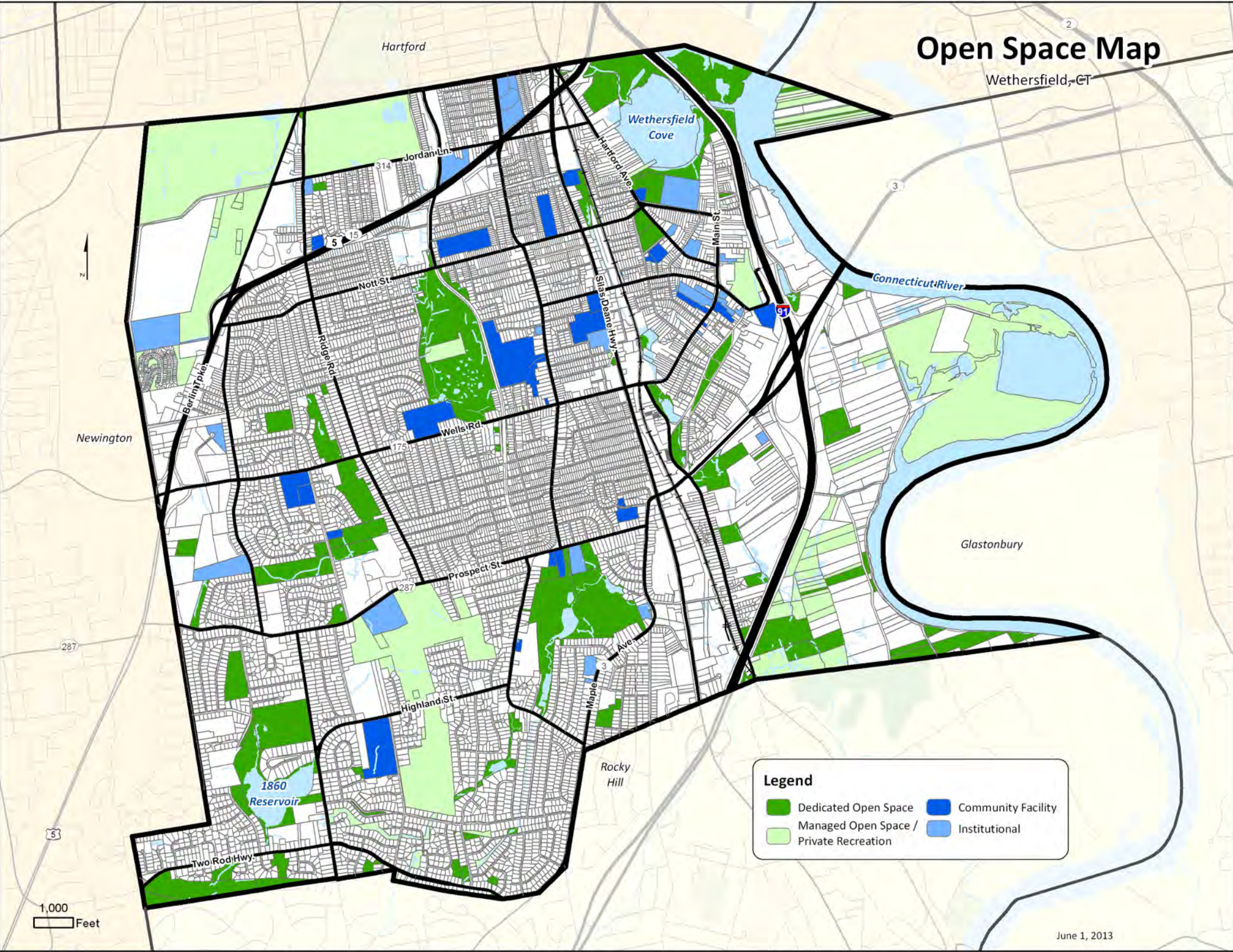
Wethersfield Cove



As discussed in the “Conditions and Trends” section of the Plan, land was classified as “dedicated open space” if it was owned by an organization (such as the Town, the State, or the Great Meadow Conservation Trust) and kept for park or open space purposes. Land was considered to be “managed open space” if it was used for another purpose (such as a golf course or cemetery) but provided aesthetic value or some other open space characteristic or benefit. It is possible that “managed open space” could be converted to another land use category in the future.

Open Space Map

Wethersfield, CT



Legend

- Dedicated Open Space
- Managed Open Space / Private Recreation
- Community Facility
- Institutional

Manage The Roadway System

A roadway is both a utility and an amenity. The utility component relates to the roadway providing access to property and mobility to people. The amenity aspect relates to how the roadway affects community character. Roadways comprise about 15% of the land area in Wethersfield and thus have a significant impact on the perception of the overall character of the community.

Wethersfield already has programs in place to manage the roadway system it has and has dedicated a portion of the mill rate for road maintenance (currently 0.39 mills). Still, residents support the Town doing more. In the community surveys:

- about 63% of participants want the Town to do more in terms of maintaining existing roads and streets.
- Only about 1% of participants felt the Town should apply a lower level of effort in terms of maintaining existing roads and streets.

The goal for the future is to manage the roadway system to provide good utility and enhance its amenity value.

Business Street With High Utility Value



Business Street With High Character Value



Manage The Roadway System	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain roads in good condition using the “pavement management system.” 2. Over time, seek to narrow paved widths of existing residential streets, where appropriate. 3. Ensure that roadway improvements will maintain or enhance community character. 4. Continue to work closely with CRCOG and CTDOT regarding transportation issues. 5. Seek ways to facilitate east-west circulation. 6. Improve problem intersections and make other needed roadway improvements. 7. Preserve the potential for future roadway connections (such as Old Reservoir Road, Folly Brook Boulevard, etc.).
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop curb cut regulations / guidelines.

Residential Street With High Utility Value



Residential Street With High Character Value



Road Classification Plan

Wethersfield, CT

Hartford

Connecticut River

Crow Point





Glastonbury

Rocky Hill

1860 Reservoir

Legend

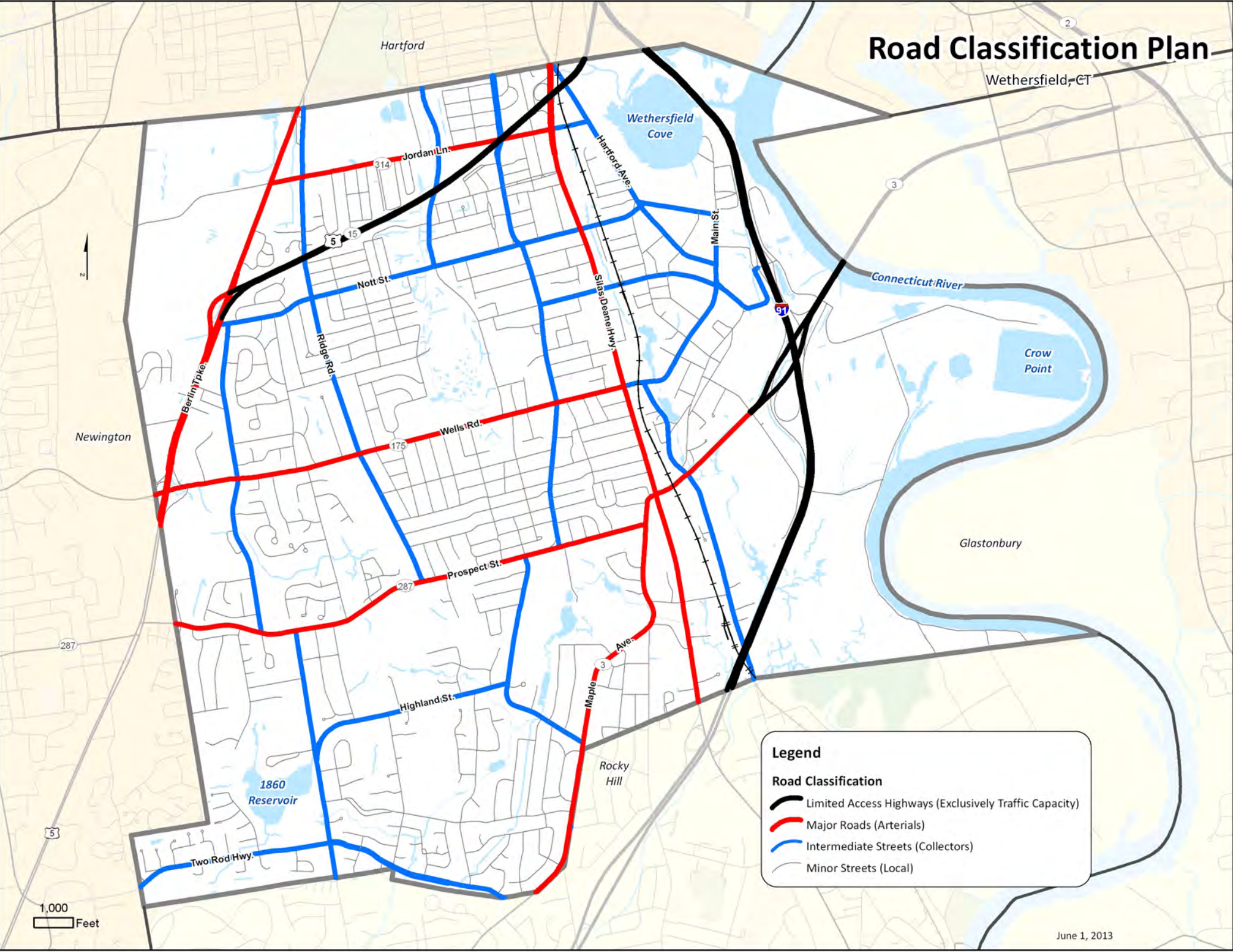
Road Classification

-  Limited Access Highways (Exclusively Traffic Capacity)
-  Major Roads (Arterials)
-  Intermediate Streets (Collectors)
-  Minor Streets (Local)



1,000 Feet

June 1, 2013



Support Farms and Farming

Wethersfield has a strong agricultural history ranging from subsistence agriculture to the famous “Wethersfield Red Onion” and the seed companies that have existed here for almost 200 years. Due to the significant flooding which can occur along the Connecticut River, this area of the community is most appropriate for continuation of agricultural uses.

In community surveys:

- about 33% of participants in the on-line survey and about 40% of participants in the telephone survey felt that Wethersfield should do more in terms of supporting agriculture and farming.
- about 55% of participants felt that Wethersfield should maintain the same level of effort in terms of supporting agriculture and farming.

Support Farms and Farming	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support farming, local farms and farmers. 2. Seek to acquire development rights for farms to aid in preservation. 3. Maintain and enhance the farmers market. 4. Preserve the extent of the Agricultural Zone.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prioritize farms and farmlands for preservation. 2. Review Agricultural Zone regulations and other regulations related to farms and farming so as not to hinder agricultural viability. 3. Consider becoming pre-qualified for the Community Agricultural Preservation Program in order to access potential funding for farmland preservation.

Promote Sustainability And Resiliency

Issues which have emerged since the 2000 Plan of Conservation and Development include “sustainability” and “resiliency.” Sustainability refers to “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations, 1987). Similarly, resiliency refers to the ability to recover readily from adversity.

Wethersfield residents appear to embrace these concepts. In the community surveys:

- about 83% of participants felt that Wethersfield should do more to promote energy efficiency and water conservation (sustainability).
- about 45% of participants in the on-line survey and about 59% of participants in the telephone survey felt Wethersfield should do more in terms of preparing for emergency events such as storms.
- few participants felt that Wethersfield should apply less effort to preparing for emergency events such as storms.

Promote Sustainability And Resiliency	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage and promote “sustainable” practices (energy conservation, water conservation, recycling, renewable energy, etc.). 2. Encourage and promote “resilient” practices (hazard mitigation planning, emergency preparedness / response, etc.). 3. Educate the community on sustainable concepts and implementation measures.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement an energy conservation plan to reduce lifecycle costs of town facilities and operations.

Maintain and Enhance Utility Infrastructure

Utility infrastructure is important to supporting the desired community structure and development of Wethersfield. This includes:

- Piped utilities such as water, sewer, and natural gas
- Storm water drainage
- Wired utilities such as electricity, telephone, cable services
- Wireless services such as satellite communications, cellular phones, and wi-fi networks

Wethersfield is fortunate in that water and sewer services are available in most areas of the community. These utilities are provided by the Metropolitan District Commission, a regional organization.

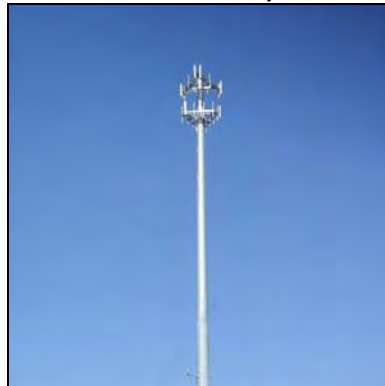
The key utility issues for Wethersfield to address may include:

- Storm Drainage - considering implementing “low impact development” (LID) strategies to help address drainage issues and promote groundwater infiltration and water quality, where appropriate, and
- Enhancing communications capabilities, both wired and wireless, as the need for communications capabilities continues to grow.

Piped Utility



Wireless Utility



Maintain And Enhance Utility Infrastructure	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the Metropolitan District Commission to provide for public water supply and public sewer service for residents and businesses. 2. Implement Wethersfield’s 2004 Stormwater Management Plan, as may be amended. 3. Work with Connecticut Light & Power to improve electrical service and reliability for residents and businesses. 4. Work toward moving power lines underground as opportunities present themselves. 5. Encourage improvements in wired communication infrastructure (capacity, telephone, CATV, etc.) to meet the needs of residents and businesses. 6. Encourage improvements in wireless communication infrastructure (mobile phones, wi-fi networks) to meet the needs of residents and businesses. 7. Continue to minimize the number of wireless communication towers and encourage co-location on any tower.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the telecommunications principles in the Zoning Regulations.

Manage Wethersfield Cove

For a number of reasons, some dating back to the original reasons a port was established here, Wethersfield Cove has become a waterfront destination for boaters, fishermen, and tourists. This interest poses a number of challenges since there are only a few ways to access the Wethersfield Cove area and to access the water.

Some of the issues raised include:

- Need for a dock system,
- Increased mooring capacity,
- Expansion / improvement of the boat launch,
- Maintaining the entrance channel depth,
- Canoe and kayak accessibility
- Insensitive use of jet skis
- Conflicts with wildlife

In response to these and other issues, the Harbor Management Commission, in cooperation with other town agencies and citizens groups, undertook the development of a Harbor Management Plan.

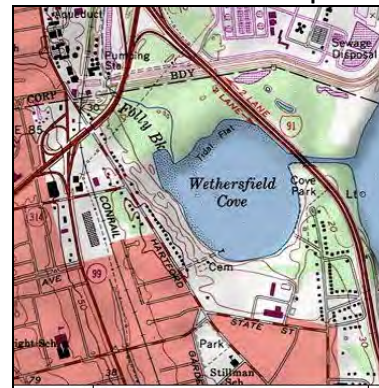
This Harbor Management Plan should be maintained and implemented in order to balance the needs of interested groups and appropriately manage this resource.

Manage Wethersfield Cove

Policies:

1. Maintain and implement the Harbor Management Plan.
2. Implement the Plan for the marina and the boat launch.
3. Dredge the Cove and the channel, as appropriate, in order to maintain navigation.

Wethersfield Cove Map



Wethersfield Cove Yacht Club



Future Land Use Plan

8

Overview

The recommendations of each of the preceding chapters can be combined to present an overall Future Land Use Plan for Wethersfield.

The Future Land Use Plan is a reflection of the stated goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Plan as well as an integration of the preceding elements of the Plan of Conservation & Development. In essence, the Future Land Use Plan is a statement of what the Wethersfield of tomorrow should look like.

As required by statute, the Future Land Use Plan shows "... the commission's recommendation for the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial and other purposes and for the most desirable density of population in the ... parts of the municipality."

Since Wethersfield is predominantly developed, the Future Land Use Plan looks much like the current land use map and the current zoning map.

Open Space



Residential



Business



Community Facilities



Descriptions Of Future Land Use Categories

Open Space

Existing Open Space	Areas that are currently preserved or used for open space purposes.
Natural Resources	Wetland, watercourse, steep slope, and floodplain areas which are high priorities for conservation.

Residential

Low Density Residential	Areas with residential development at densities generally less than two units per acre.
Medium Density Residential	Areas with residential development at densities generally less than four units per acre.
Higher Density Residential	Areas with residential development at densities generally less than six units per acre.
Multi-Family / Other Residential	Areas with residential development in multi-family buildings or on common land (densities vary).

Business

Town Center	The area on the Silas Deane Highway (between Church Street and Wells Road) generally intended to be redeveloped as more of a mixed use, pedestrian-friendly place.
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Business	Areas that have developed or are intended to develop with business facilities (or possible redevelopment with mixed uses and or residential developments).
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Village Business	The area of Old Wethersfield that is intended for business facilities (or with mixed uses under certain circumstances).
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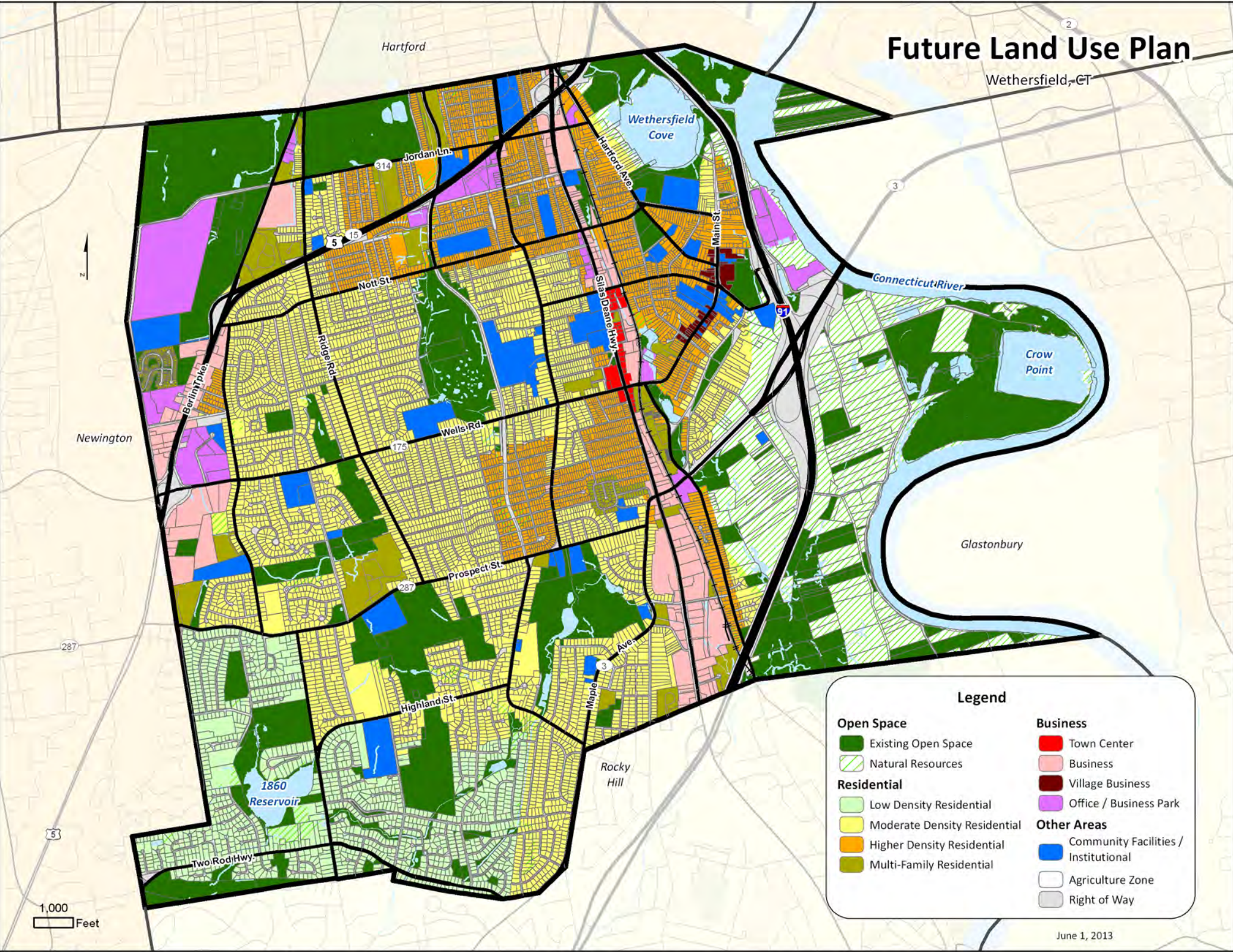
Office / Business Park	Areas that have developed or are intended to develop with office or business park uses.
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Other Uses

Community Facility / Institutional Uses	Areas containing existing community facilities. And/or institutional uses
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Future Land Use Plan

Wethersfield, CT



Legend

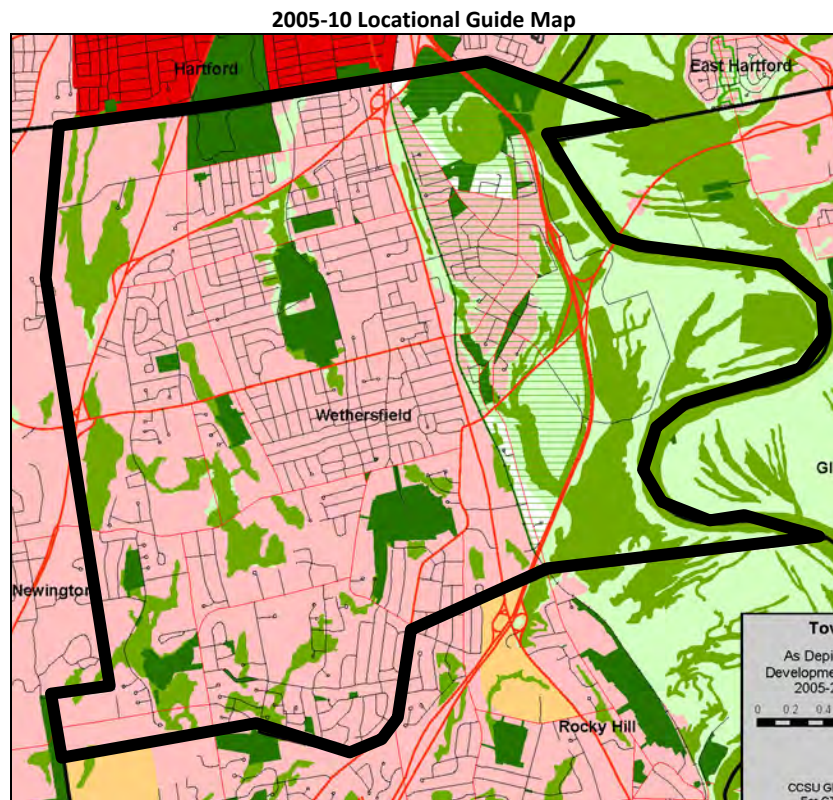
Open Space	Business
Existing Open Space	Town Center
Natural Resources	Business
Residential	Village Business
Low Density Residential	Office / Business Park
Moderate Density Residential	Other Areas
Higher Density Residential	Community Facilities / Institutional
Multi-Family Residential	Agriculture Zone
	Right of Way

1,000 Feet

Consistency With Other Plans

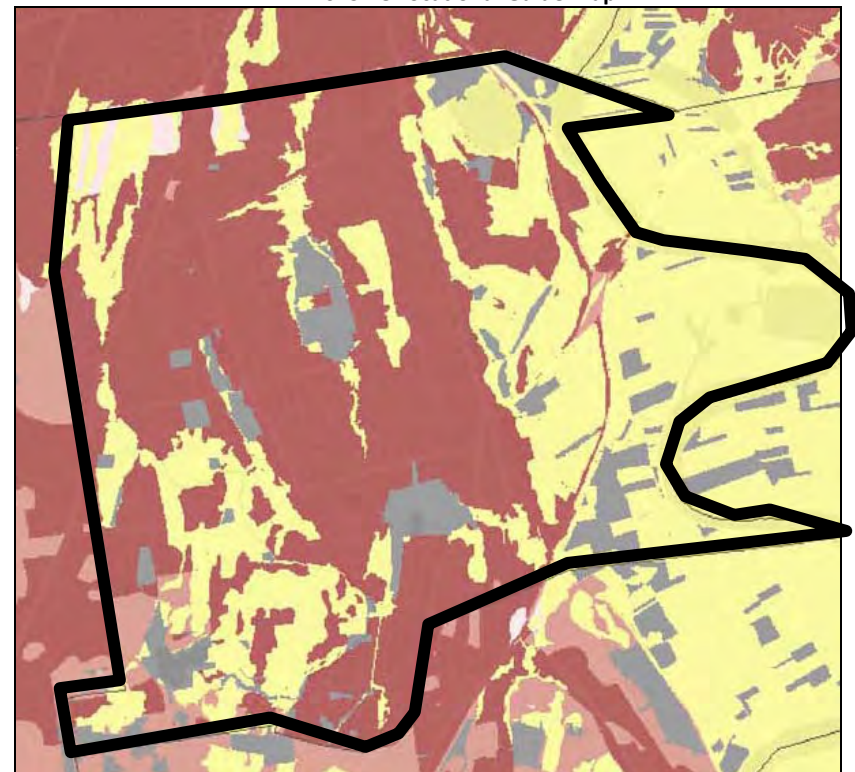
State Plan - Locational Guide Map

In accordance with CGS Section 8-23, this Plan of Conservation and Development was compared with the 2005-10 State Conservation & Development Policies Plan and found to be generally consistent with that Plan and its Locational Guide Map. Areas considered conducive to conservation are shown in greenish colors while areas considered conducive to development are portrayed in reddish colors.



Since the State of Connecticut is in the process of updating the State Plan, this Plan was also compared with the DRAFT 2013-18 State Conservation & Development Policies Plan and found to be generally consistent with that Plan and its Locational Guide Map. Areas considered conducive to conservation are shown in yellowish colors while areas considered conducive to development are portrayed in purplish colors.

DRAFT 2013-18 Locational Guide Map



State Plan – State Growth Principles

In accordance with CGS Section 8-23, the Plan of Conservation and Development has been evaluated for consistency with statewide growth management principles.

<p>Principle 1 –</p> <p>Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>Most of Wethersfield has existing physical infrastructure and the Plan encourages growth in these areas. Wethersfield does not have a designated “regional center”.</p>
<p>Principle 2 –</p> <p>Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.</p>	<p>FINDING –Consistent</p> <p>Wethersfield already has a diverse housing stock and the Plan recommends that Wethersfield continue to diversify its housing “portfolio” and address recognized housing needs – housing that is affordable and housing for an aging population.</p>
<p>Principle 3 –</p> <p>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>Wethersfield is fortunate to have bus transportation routes through many areas and the Plan recommends development in these areas and areas served by interstate highways and arterial roads.</p>

<p>Principle 4 –</p> <p>Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan identifies the importance of protecting important community resources such as the natural environment, open spaces, cultural and historical resources.</p>
<p>Principle 5 –</p> <p>Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.</p>	<p>FINDING – Consistent</p> <p>The Plan contains recommendations to protect environmental assets.</p>
<p>Principle 6 –</p> <p>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.

Regional Plan Of Conservation and Development

In addition, this Plan was compared with the 2009 Plan of Conservation and Development prepared by Capital Regional Council of Governments Plan and found to be generally consistent with that Plan.

Areas considered conducive to conservation are shown in greenish colors while areas considered conducive to development are portrayed in brownish colors. The red hatching reflects a “municipal focus area” (such as Old Wethersfield, the Silas Deane Highway, the Berlin Turnpike, etc.). The blue hatching reflects the 100-year flood zone.

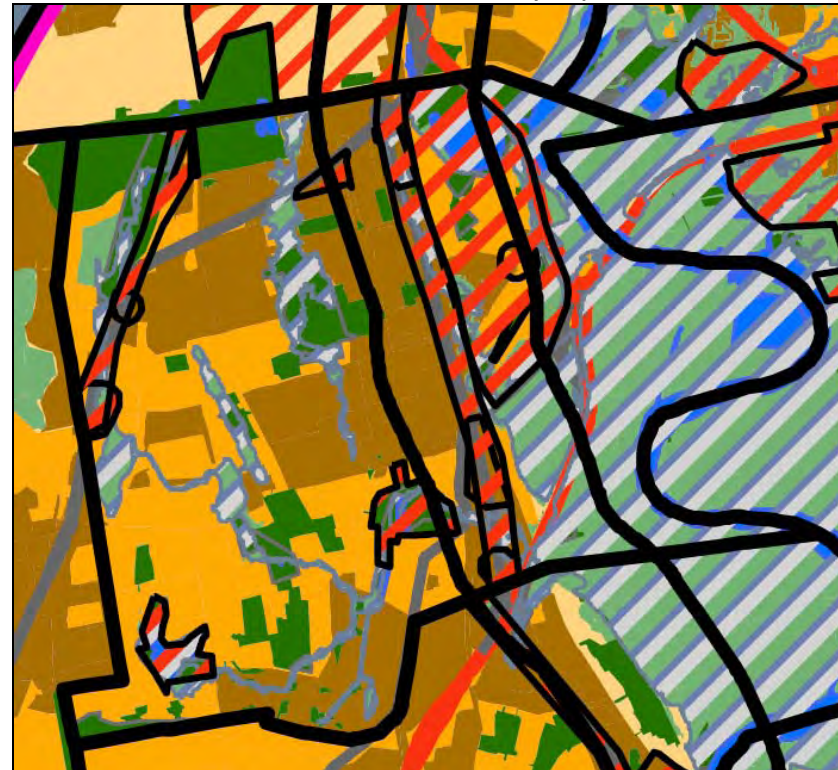
Overall Consistency

Overall, this Plan was found to be generally consistent with the State Plan and the Regional Plan. Likewise, those Plans were found to be generally consistent with this Plan.

Any inconsistencies can be attributed to:

- * differences in definitions of desirable uses or development densities,
- * local (as opposed to State or regional) desires about how Wethersfield should grow and change in the coming years, or
- * the fact that the State Plan and the Regional Plan make policy recommendations for land use intensity and environmental sensitivity while this Plan suggests specific land use types.

2009 CROG Land Use Policy Map



Plan Implementation

9

Overview

Implementation of recommendations is the main goal of the planning process. While a number of the recommendations can be implemented by the Planning and Zoning Commission, other recommendations require the cooperation of, and actions by, other Town boards and commissions.

Implementation



Implementation



Implementation Tools

Implementation Committee

The key recommendation for implementation is for the Town to establish a Plan Implementation Committee which meets regularly to review implementation of recommendations, coordinate local activities, and prioritize next steps.

The Implementation Committee would be made up of representatives of a number of local boards and commissions (such as those identified in the implementation schedules) and Wethersfield residents. Broad participation will help the overall discussion as current priorities are discussed. This broad participation will also help with implementing recommendations. This Committee could be established by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Establishing such a committee is a significant step towards beginning implementation of the Plan and monitoring progress. This committee could provide status reports to the Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, and others. This implementation process may be most successful if there is one person designated as chair of the committee.

Land Use Regulations / Enforcement

The Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations are key tools for guiding the development of Wethersfield and for implementing the recommendations of the Plan.

Where the Plan makes specific recommendations for amending these regulations, those updates should occur as soon as practical given other priorities.

In general, these regulations should also be reviewed regularly to ensure they are accomplishing the overall goals of the community and helping attain the overall vision for the future of Wethersfield.

Enforcement of regulations is an important related issue. It makes little sense to plan for the future of Wethersfield and develop regulations to encourage positive results if a lack of enforcement or implementation means that little progress is made. Special efforts should be made to support enforcement of local regulations and programs.

Operating Budget / Capital Budget / Referral of Municipal Improvements

Communities that use the recommendations of their Plan of Conservation and Development to guide municipal spending priorities achieve the greatest success plan implementation and achieve the most benefit from plan preparation.

Wethersfield can achieve similar results and should strive to do so.

Implement The Plan	
Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development. 2. Use the Plan of Conservation and Development as a guide for municipal spending priorities. 3. Use the application review process to implement recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development. 4. Continue to enforce local regulations. 5. Expand the capacity and tools to enforce local regulations. 6. Regularly review zoning and subdivision regulations.
Tasks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee. 2. Amend the Zoning Regulations and/or the Subdivision Regulations as recommended in the Plan of Conservation and Development.

Legend For Implementation Tables

The following pages contain implementation tables indicating leaders and partners responsible for implementing Plan recommendations. The following table summarizes the codes for some of the organizations expected to participate in implementation:

Code	Description	Code	Description
All	All boards, commissions, agencies, departments and residents	PIC	Plan Implementation Committee
BOE	Board of Education	PW	Public Works Department
CC	Conservation Commission	PZC	Planning And Zoning Commission
CCHD	Central Connecticut Health District	Res.	Wethersfield Residents
CEC	Citizen’s Energy Committee	P&R	Park and Recreation
COC	Chamber of Commerce	SCAC	Senior Citizens Advisory Committee
CRCOG	Capital Regional Council of Governments	TC	Town Council
DRAC	Design Review Advisory Committee	TM	Town Manager
EDIC	Economic Development and Improvement Commission	Town	Town Departments / Staff
FD	Fire Department	TP	Town Planner
HA	Housing Authority	TW	Tree Warden
HDC	Historic District Commission	Util.	Utility Providers
IWC	Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Commission	WHS	Wethersfield Historical Society
Other	Other Boards, Agencies, or Persons	WRA	Wethersfield Redevelopment Agency
PD	Police Department		

Policies and Tasks

- As used in this Plan, “policies” are long-term and continuing strategies that do not readily lend themselves to a specific schedule or measurement. While these are important things for Wethersfield to be doing to enhance the overall community, it can be difficult to determine whether such ongoing strategies are ever fully implemented. Policies tend to stay stable over time.
- As used in this Plan, “tasks” are specific actions that can typically be scheduled and measured and implementation can usually be readily identified. Tasks can and should be regularly reviewed and updated over time as new information or tools become available.

Implementation Schedules

I. Maintain Community Character And Quality Of Life

Reference Pages

A. Maintain Community Character

38 - 39

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Enhance the overall character of Wethersfield.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	All	TC PZC DRAC HDC
B	2. Protect scenic resources.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	HDC CC IWC
B	3. Protect the historic character of Old Wethersfield.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	HDC	PZC TC
C	4. Enhance local gateways and enhance wayfinding.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	PZC DRAC
B	5. Encourage sustainable and appropriate landscaping of properties, especially at the time of development.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	DRAC TP
B	6. Beautify commercial areas.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	COC
B	7. Continue efforts to minimize character detractions.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	TC PZC
B	8. Strive to enhance the maintenance of improvements within public rights of way.	01/2013	Ongoing	n/a	Town	TC PW

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Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
TASKS						
2	1. Create and maintain an inventory of scenic resources in Wethersfield.	11/2012	Ongoing	2016	CC	
2	2. Amend local regulations to include scenic resources as a consideration in land use applications.	11/2012	Ongoing	2014	PZC	
3	3. Undertake programs to promote Wethersfield's special character to others.	11/2012	Ongoing	2016	Town	TC

B. Protect Residential Character

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Protect residential character.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	DRAC
A	2. Maintain residential density structure in existing neighborhoods.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TP
B	3. Enhance the character of residential neighborhoods (tree planting, walkability, etc.) through the local capital improvements program and other funding sources.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	PW TW
TASKS						
2	1. Review uses permitted in residential zones to ensure appropriateness for residential neighborhoods.	11/2012	2014		PZC	TP
2	2. Provide for a low-interest housing rehabilitation loan program for single-family homeowners through the Small Cities Development Block Grant Program.	11/2012	2015		TC	Town TP

C. Provide Facilities For Community Needs

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Maintain community facilities and services (parks, schools, public safety, public works, etc.) to meet community needs.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	BOE TM P&R
B	2. Regularly evaluate and prioritize community facility needs in order to address needs in an efficient and economical way.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	TM
B	3. Project and monitor school population.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	BOE	TC
B	4. Allow use of school facilities to meet local community and recreational needs.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	BOE	TC
C	5. Consider acquiring the Department of Motor Vehicles site on State Street should it become available.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	TM
B	6. Continue to use the Capital Improvements Program as a way to fund improvements to community facilities.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	TM

D. Extend Sidewalks And Trails

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Encourage walkability in Wethersfield.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	All	Town TC PW P&R
A	2. Prioritize the interconnection all of the pedestrian ways in Wethersfield into a cohesive overall system.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	PW
B	3. Set aside funds annually for the extension and improvement of side-walks, walkways, and trails.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	TM PW P&R
B	4. Work with CTDOT to establish and improve sidewalks on State highways (see PA 09-154).	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	TM PW
TASKS						
3	1. Establish a trail system along the Connecticut River and throughout the Meadows area using materials appropriate for pedestrians, bicycles, and other users.	11/2012	2018		TC	TM PW P&R

E. Establish Bicycle Routes

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners			
A	1. Encourage bicycling in Wethersfield.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	All	Town	TC	PW	P&R
B	2. Set aside funds for the establishment of bicycle routes, where appropriate (with line striping, roadway markings and signage as needed).	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	TM	PW		
B	3. Provide appropriate bicycle facilities (shared roadway, bicycle lanes, etc.) whenever road improvements (such as restriping) are undertaken.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC	TM		
B	4. Work with CTDOT to establish and improve bicycle routes on State highways (see PA 09-154).	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	TM	PW		
TASKS									
1	1. Prepare and maintain a map of recommended bicycle routes in Wethersfield local streets and state roads).	11/2012	2015		Town	TP	P&R		
2	2. Work with the CTDOT to maximize "shoulder width" on roads in order to expand opportunities for bicycle routes, where appropriate.	11/2012	2016		PW	TP	PZC		
3	3. Apply to be designated a "Bicycle-Friendly Community" by the League of American Bicyclists.	11/2012	2014		Town	TP	P&R		
2	4. Re-examine the Heritage Way Bike Trail and ways to enhance it (overall awareness, signage, trail extensions, etc.).	4/2013	2014		Town	TP	P&R		

F. Expand Community Events

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Promote events and activities that contribute to community pride and spirit.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	TC TM P&R
B	2. Promote and encourage volunteer organizations.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	All	Town TC TM Res.
B	3. Inform residents about important civic events and activities.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	
B	4. Maintain programs to develop community volunteers.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	TC TM
B	5. Celebrate our heritage as the oldest permanent settlement in Connecticut.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	WHS	EDIC TC Town
B	6. Create more partnerships for sponsoring community events.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	All	Town P&R
TASKS						
2	1. Consider the possibility of constructing a bandshell or similar structure for local events.	4/2013	2015		Town	P&R

G. Promote Architectural Character

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Promote good design of buildings and sites.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	DRAC	PZC TP
B	2. Maintain the Design Review Advisory Committee to provide input on building architecture and site design.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC EDIC TP
B	3. Maintain the Façade Improvement Program in order to help support the redevelopment of existing buildings.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	EDIC TP
TASKS						
2	1. Prepare a manual of design guidelines to help inform applicants of desirable (and undesirable) design treatments for areas of Wethersfield.	11/2012	2015		DRAC	PZC TP

H. Protect Cultural Resources

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Protect historic resources.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	HDC	WHS Town
B	2. Work with the Wethersfield Historical Society and other organizations that promote historic preservation.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	HDC	Town
B	3. Promote educational programs on historic preservation and local historic resources.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	WHS	HDC Town
B	4. Encourage and support owners of historical resources in preserving those resources.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	All	WHS HDC Town
B	5. Consider allowing adaptive re-use of historic structures, where appropriate.	01/2013	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	HDC WHS Town
B	6. Continue to market Wethersfield's history and celebrate our heritage as the oldest permanent settlement in Connecticut.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	WHS	EDIC Town
B	7. Maintain the historic character of Old Wethersfield.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	HDC	WHS Town
B	8. Implement the <i>Old Wethersfield Master Plan</i> .	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	EDIC HDC
TASKS						
2	1. Consider adopting regulations which would include consideration of archeological factors as part of major site developments.	11/2012	2014		PZC	TP

I. Enhance Transit Services

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Seek to increase transit service to Wethersfield.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	CRC-OG Town
B	2. Seek to increase transit service within Wethersfield.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	CRC-OG Town
B	3. Maintain and expand bus service options and accessibility.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	CRC-OG Town
B	4. Enhance dial-a-ride service.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	CRC-OG Town

J. Enhance Streets

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Whenever road improvements are undertaken, investigate the opportunity to narrow the paved width.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC
B	2. Strive to preserve and enhance street trees.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TW	PW
B	3. Maintain designation as a Tree City USA community.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TW	TC
TASKS						
2	1. Undertake an analysis of streets most eligible for pavement narrowing.	11/2012	2015	n/a	PW	TC Town
2	2. Undertake a pilot project to explore the economic and environmental benefits of pavement narrowing.	11/2012	2016	n/a	PW	TC TM
2	3. Seek State and/or Federal funding to narrow pavement width and enhance drainage and tree planting as environmentally friendly solutions to urban drainage issues.	11/2012	2015	n/a	PW	TC TM
2	4. Establish a tree planting program to encourage residents to plant street trees.	11/2012	2015	n/a	TW	Town TC
2	5. Consider starting a tree nursery.	11/2012	2015	n/a	TW	Town TC

II. Guide Development

Reference Pages

A. Encourage Redevelopment Of The Silas Deane Highway

58 - 61

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Implement the recommendations of past studies (Skidmore Owings and Merrill and Fuss & O'Neill).	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC EDIC WRA Town
B	2. Continue the façade improvement program.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	Town
A	3. Encourage consolidation of parcels for development purposes and consider requiring that parcels share access and parking.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	EDIC WRA Town
B	4. Consider the possible future need for on-street and off-street public parking areas (including parking decks or structures) to support additional development.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	EDIC WRA PZC Town
TASKS						
2	1. Review zoning regulations to ensure they are encouraging appropriate development and/or redevelopment.	11/2012	2014		PZC	TP
2	2. Encourage larger-scale higher-density housing along the Silas Deane Highway north of Maple Avenue as a form of economic growth and as a catalyst for change.	11/2012	2014		PZC	TP EDIC WRA
2	3. Review and/or reduce parking requirements to remove potential impediments to redevelopment.	11/2012	2014		PZC	TP

B. Create A "Town Center Node" On The Silas Deane Highway

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Implement the Silas Deane Highway studies (Skidmore Owings and Merrill and Fuss & O'Neill) which recommend creation of "nodes."	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC EDIC WRA Town
A	2. Seek to create a "Town Center node" on the Silas Deane highway between Wells Road and Nott Street.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC EDIC WRA Town
A	3. Work with CRCOG and CTDOT to evaluate ways to renovate the Silas Deane Highway between Wells Road and Nott Street in order to help create a "Wethersfield Town Center".	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC EDIC WRA Town
A	4. Consider ways to promote additional development desired by residents (walkability, restaurants, stores, activities, "destination" uses).	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC EDIC WRA Town
A	5. Consider the desirability of public parking accommodations.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC EDIC WRA Town
B	6. Seek to locate higher density housing in "node" areas along the Silas Deane Highway as a form of economic growth and as a catalyst for change.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC EDIC WRA Town
TASKS						
2	1. Refine the "vision" for a town center on the Silas Deane Highway and publish the vision so that developers and property owners can see the types of things acceptable to the community.	11/2012	2015		PZC	DRAC TP
2	2. Change existing regulations and/or implement new regulations, if needed, to help create a "Wethersfield Town Center" on the Silas Deane Highway.	11/2012	2015		PZC	TP

C. Encourage Redevelopment Of The Berlin Turnpike

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
B	1. Implement the recommendations of the <i>Route 5/15 Berlin Turnpike Corridor Study</i> .	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC EDIC WRA Town
B	2. Encourage redevelopment of properties on the Berlin Turnpike.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC EDIC WRA Town
TASKS						
2	1. Review zoning regulations and zoning designations to ensure they are encouraging appropriate development and/or redevelopment.	11/2012	2015		PZC	TP
2	2. Continue the façade improvement program.	11/2012	2015		TC	Town
2	3. Consider requiring that parcels share access and parking.	11/2012	2015		PZC	TP
2	4. Review parking requirements to remove or reduce potential impediments to redevelopment.	11/2012	2015		PZC	TP

D. Encourage Redevelopment Of Key Sites

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Encourage redevelopment of properties.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	EDIC WRA Town
B	2. Maintain a Redevelopment Agency in order to assist with the redevelopment of properties.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	EDIC Town
B	3. Pursue funds for redevelopment of properties where considered vital to encouraging appropriate development.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	WRA	Town
TASKS						
2	1. When warranted, undertake feasibility studies for the redevelopment of key sites.	11/2012	As Needed		WRA	Town

E. Encourage Appropriate Business Development

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Help existing businesses stay in Town and grow and expand the tax base through recruitment of compatible business and industry.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	EDIC	COC TC PZC Town
B	2. Continue to work with existing organizations (such as the Chamber of Commerce) in order to help create a business friendly environment.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	EDIC	TC PZC Town
A	3. Seek to maximize utilization of business sites and zones and promote the development and redevelopment of underutilized commercial properties.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	EDIC	PZC Town
B	4. Develop "vision" plans for economic development areas to help guide potential businesses and developers.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	EDIC	WRA PZC Town
A	5. Promote private redevelopment of sites but consider public partnerships if necessary.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	EDIC	WRA PZC Town
B	6. Encourage consolidated development with shared access, parking, and circulation.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	Town
A	7. Carefully manage redevelopment / reuse of houses along the Silas Deane Highway into commercial use.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	EDIC	WRA PZC Town
B	8. Seek opportunities to implement the Town's Economic Development Initiative Program.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	EDIC	TC Town
B	9. Consider the possibility of allowing for the development of small neighborhood general stores at some time in the future.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TP

(continued on next page)

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Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
TASKS						
2	1. Review regulations regarding home-based businesses in order to maintain an appropriate balance in residential areas.	11/2012	As Needed		PZC	TP

F. Allow For Evolution Of The Housing Stock

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
B	1. Consider seeking ways to allow for the evolution of the housing stock in Wethersfield to meet current and future lifestyle needs.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	Town SCAC
TASKS						
2	1. Consider modifying zoning regulations so that homes can be adapted to changing lifestyles and needs, when and where appropriate.	11/2012	2015		PZC	TP
2	2. Review dimensional standards in residential zones in order to allow for adaptation of houses to meet possible current and future needs (one-floor living, adding insulation, handicapped accessibility, etc.).	11/2012	2015		PZC	TP

G. Encourage Housing Diversity

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
B	1. Help accommodate the housing needs of older residents and encourage a variety of housing opportunities for senior citizens.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	Town SCAC HA
B	2. Help address identified local needs for affordable housing.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TC Town
B	3. Continue to provide social services and other support services for people that choose to remain in their homes as they age.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	SCAC TC

III. Address Other Issues

Reference Pages

A. Protect Natural Resources

76 - 77

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Protect natural resources such as inland wetlands, watercourses, flood-plains, natural diversity sites, etc.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	IWC	CC PZC Town
B	2. Educate residents on the importance of protecting natural resources.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	CC	IWC PZC Town
C	3. Coordinate natural resources conservation efforts with neighboring towns and other organizations.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	CC	IWC PZC Town
A	4. Work with the Metropolitan District Commission to stop discharges of combined sewage and stormwater “overflows” to Wethersfield Cove.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	TM PW
C	5. Recognize the designation of the Connecticut River as a “National Blue-way” and support efforts to protect and enhance the river and to build upon the conservation, recreation, education, and economic benefits it provides.	4/2013	Ongoing	n/a	Town	TP
TASKS						
2	1. Implement low impact development strategies.	11/2012	2014		PZC	PW TP

B. Preserve Open Spaces

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Support the acquisition of property and/or the dedication of open space as a way to help protect important natural resources, enhance character, and/or contribute to an overall open space system.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	CC	PZC TC Town Res.
B	2. Support land preservation efforts of other organizations (Great Meadows Land Trust, etc.).	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	CC	PZC TC Town Res.
B	3. Maintain the “open space fund” with adequate financial resources.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	TM

C. Manage The Roadway System

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Maintain roads in good condition using the "pavement management system."	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC
B	2. Over time, seek to narrow paved widths of existing residential streets, where appropriate.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC
B	3. Ensure that roadway improvements will maintain or enhance community character.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC
B	4. Continue to work closely with CRCOG and CTDOT regarding transportation issues.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC
C	5. Seek ways to facilitate east-west circulation.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC
B	6. Improve problem intersections and make other needed roadway improvements.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC
B	7. Preserve the potential for future roadway connections (such as Old Reservoir Road, Folly Brook Boulevard, etc.).	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	PW TC
TASKS						
2	1. Develop curb cut regulations / guidelines.	11/2012	2014		PW	PZC TP

D. Support Farms and Farming

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Support farming, local farms and farmers.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	All	CC TC Town
B	2. Seek to acquire development rights for farms to aid in preservation.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	CC	TC TM
B	3. Maintain and enhance the farmers market.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	
B	4. Preserve the extent of the Agricultural Zone.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TP
TASKS						
2	1. Prioritize farms and farmlands for preservation.	11/2012	2014		CC	Town
2	2. Review Agricultural Zone regulations and other regulations related to farms and farming so as not to hinder agricultural viability.	11/2012	2014		PZC	Town
2	3. Consider becoming pre-qualified for the Community Agricultural Preservation Program in order to access potential funding for farmland preservation.	4/2013	2014		Town	TP

E. Promote Sustainability And Resiliency

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Encourage and promote “sustainable” practices (energy conservation, water conservation, recycling, renewable energy, etc.).	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	CEC	TC Town
B	2. Encourage and promote “resilient” practices (hazard mitigation planning, emergency preparedness / response, etc.).	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	PD FD Town
B	3. Educate the community on sustainable concepts and implementation measures.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	TC PD FD
TASKS						
2	1. Implement an energy conservation plan to reduce lifecycle costs of town facilities and operations.	11/2012	2014		CEC	TC Town

F. Maintain And Enhance Utility Infrastructure

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Work with the Metropolitan District Commission to provide for public water supply and public sewer service for residents and businesses.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC
B	2. Implement Wethersfield's 2004 Stormwater Management Plan, as may be amended.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC Town
B	3. Work with Connecticut Light & Power to improve electrical service and reliability for residents and businesses.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	TC PW
B	4. Work toward moving power lines underground as opportunities present themselves.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Util.	TC PW
A	5. Encourage improvements in wired communication infrastructure (capacity, telephone, CATV, etc.) to meet the needs of residents and businesses.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	Util.
B	6. Encourage improvements in wireless communication infrastructure (mobile phones, wi-fi networks) to meet the needs of residents and businesses.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	Util.
B	7. Continue to minimize the number of wireless communication towers and encourage co-location on any tower.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	Town
TASKS						
2	1. Review the telecommunications principles in the Zoning Regulations.	11/2012	2014		PZC	TP

G. Manage Wethersfield Cove

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Maintain and implement the Harbor Management Plan.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC Town P&R
B	2. Implement the Plan for the marina and the boat launch.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC Town P&R
B	3. Dredge the Cove and the channel, as appropriate, in order to maintain navigation.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PW	TC Town P&R

IV. Plan Implementation

Reference Pages

A. Implement The Plan

91 - 92

Priority	Description	Date Added	Target Date	Percent Complete	Leader	Partners
A	1. Implement the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PIC	PZC TC Town
B	2. Use the Plan of Conservation and Development as a guide for municipal spending priorities.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	TC	TM
A	3. Use the application review process to implement recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TP
B	4. Continue to enforce local regulations.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	TC PZC IWC
B	5. Expand the capacity and tools to enforce local regulations.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	Town	TC PZC IWC
B	6. Regularly review zoning and subdivision regulations.	11/2012	Ongoing	n/a	PZC	TP
TASKS						
1	1. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee.	11/2012	2013		PZC	TC
2	2. Amend the Zoning Regulations and/or the Subdivision Regulations as recommended in the Plan of Conservation and Development.	11/2012	2014		PZC	TP

Overview

This Plan of Conservation and Development contains a number of recommendations intended to guide the future conservation and development of Wethersfield.

In preparing this Plan, the Planning and Zoning Commission:

- conducted public meetings and surveys to determine residents' attitudes,
- discussed conditions, trends, and issues affecting the community,
- reviewed and discussed information about Wethersfield, and
- prepared and refined a number of strategies to help address community needs and aspirations.

As a result of the public participation, this Plan is believed to reflect the consensus of the community in terms of where Wethersfield should devote much of its effort over the next ten to twenty years to enhance the character and quality of life in the community. While situations and conditions will undoubtedly change, this Plan establishes goals for all Wethersfield residents to work towards.

The most critical step in bringing the Plan to fruition is implementing its recommendations. While that task rests with all residents of Wethersfield, it is also coordinated by the Planning and Zoning Commission and other Town agencies.

By preparing this Plan of Conservation and Development, the Planning and Zoning Commission feel that Wethersfield has taken a significant step forward towards enhancing the character and quality of life in Wethersfield.

Acknowledgements

The Residents of Wethersfield

and the

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