



# Somers Sidewalk Expansion

## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Somers currently has a small, disconnected sidewalk system. Many areas with “sidewalks to nowhere” were built as a requirement during development. No connections were made to these disconnected systems to allow pedestrians to walk around Somers reliably and safely.

Over the last fifteen years, the Town has received complaints and requests to correct this issue. Because of this, the Board of Selectmen created the Somers Sidewalk Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) on January 12, 2023, and charged the committee with the following:

- Make recommendations for improvement of the existing sidewalk network,
- Ensure the existing sidewalks meet today’s ADA requirements,
- Make recommendations for the expansion of the sidewalk network,

## **PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

One of the goals of the current Plan of Conservation and Development is to Promote Transportation Alternatives. Sidewalks are a vital part of that plan.

The following is an excerpt from the current POCD:

### **Sidewalks / Trails / Multi-Use Paths**

Somers intends to provide for sidewalks (surfaced walkways located along streets) primarily in the village areas of Somers and Somersville. These areas will benefit from encouraging a pedestrian-friendly environment and from providing sidewalks and crosswalks. Sidewalks should be required on both sides of the street as part of new developments in these areas, and gaps in the sidewalk network in these areas should be addressed when possible. Sidewalks should be of adequate width to enhance the pedestrian experience (such as 5 feet in width).

Somers seeks to establish a system of off-road trails and multi-use paths to interconnect open space areas and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the landscape of Somers. These trails could also be used to connect the villages to each other and connect each village to other activity nodes such as the Recreation Park or School/Library Campus. These efforts will help to make Somers a “heart-healthy” community by encouraging people to walk more and be more active.

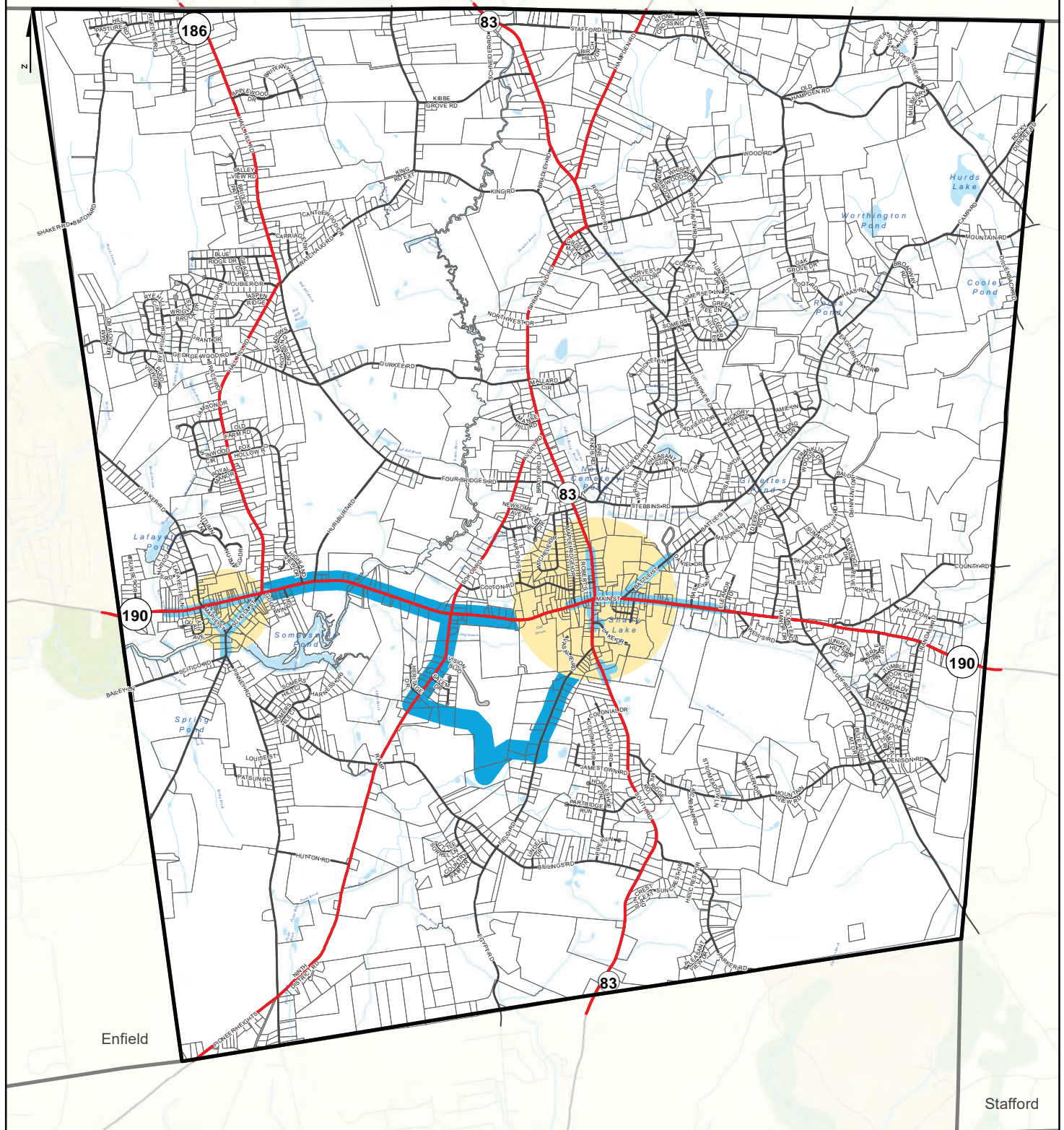
**The following Pedestrian / Bicycle Map from the POCD shows the Sidewalk Priority Areas.**

# Pedestrian / Bicycle Map

Somers, CT


East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA




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**Legend**

-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Sidewalk Priority Areas
-  Important Pedestrian Connections

2,900 Feet



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## THE PROCESS

The Committee's activity since inception is:

- We conducted monthly meetings,
- We created a sidewalk survey with nine questions and space to add additional comments,
- We published the survey online,
- We mailed a hard copy of the survey to every household in town.

The Committee received 565 responses to the survey.

We categorized the responses into two categories: sidewalks on local roads and sidewalks on state roads.

We then broke each category into three (3) phases.

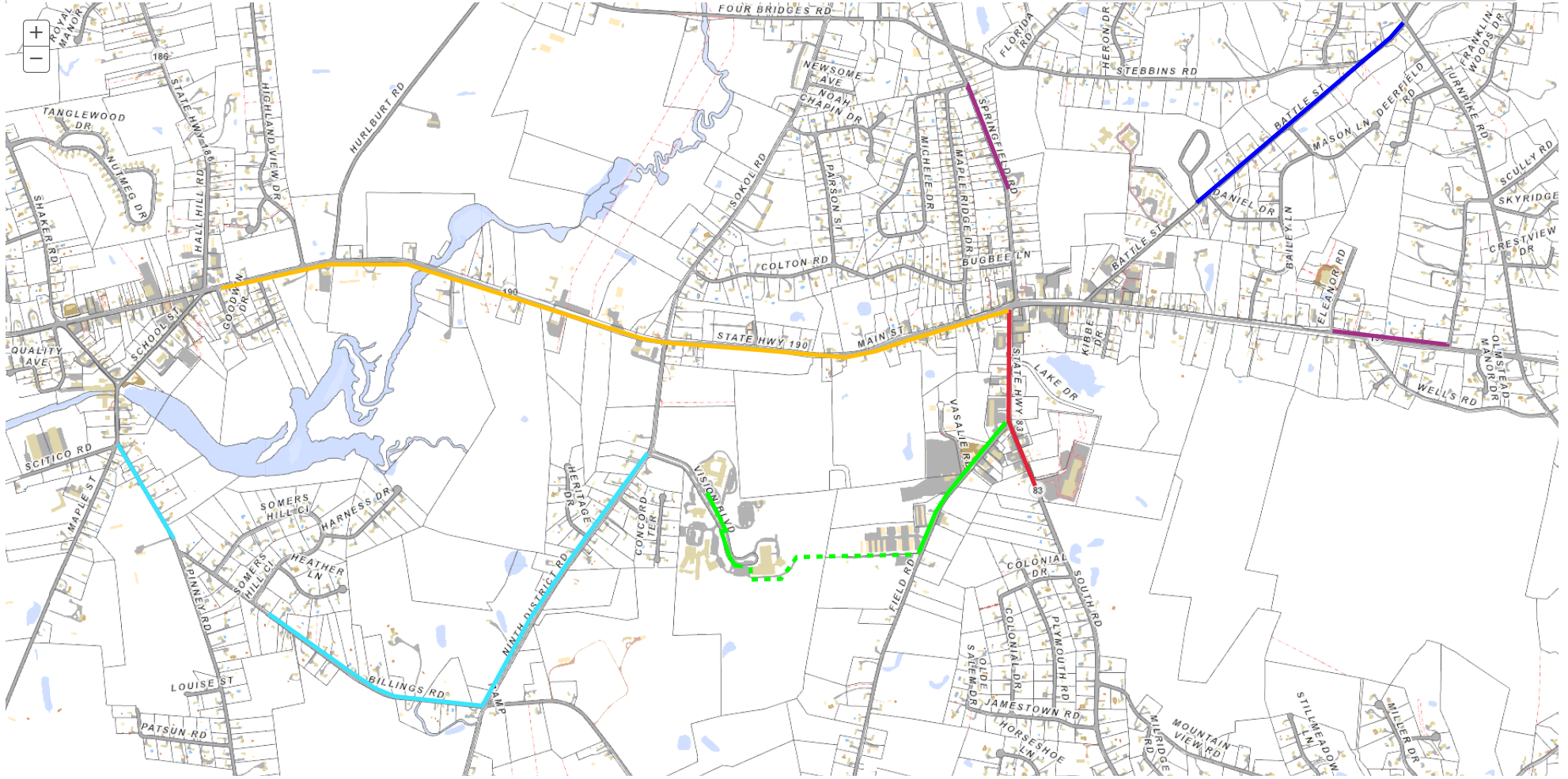
### Sidewalks on Local Roads:

- Phase 1, Field Rd. & Vision Blvd,
- Phase 2, Billings, 9<sup>th</sup> DST & Pinney,
- Phase 3, Battle Street.

### Sidewalks on State Roads:

- Phase 1, Rt. 83 South,
- Phase 2, Rt. 190 Main Street,
- Phase 3, Rt. 83 North & 190 East.

**The following map shows the categories and the phases of each.**



- Local Road Phase 1
- Local Road Phase 2
- Local Road Phase 3

- State Road Phase 1
- State Road Phase 2
- State Road Phase 3



## Road Safety Audits

We contacted Melissa Evans, the Safety Circuit Rider at UCONN’s Transfer Technology Center. Melissa and her team provide local road RSAs for municipalities. The Committee and Melissa’s team conducted an RSA on Vision Boulevard and Field Road. Melissa’s Team produced a Road Safety Audit of those roads, which is attached as exhibit A. The Committee will conduct RSAs on the remaining local roads.

State road RSAs must be conducted through the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT). We have applied for RSAs on Route 83 (South Road) and Route 190 (Main Street). When I spoke with representatives from DOT, they stated that they are currently in contract negotiations with a consulting firm. Once they have hired a consultant, they will begin local RSAs. They said we can likely expect more information in the spring of 2024.

## Construction Cost Estimates

We used \$25.00 per square foot for beginning cost estimates as a reference. This cost is based on the prices of our last sidewalk bid in 2021 plus 25% to reflect market cost increases and additional work needed for new sidewalk installation. These estimates are “rule of thumb” estimates only.

### Sidewalks on Local Roads:

- Field Rd. & Vision Blvd, Phase 1: \$ 362,500
  - Billings, 9<sup>th</sup> DST & Pinney Phase 2: \$ 950,000
  - Battle Street Phase 3: \$ 418,750
- \$1,731,250**

### Sidewalks on State Roads:

- Rt. 83 South Phase 1: \$ 425,000
  - Rt. 190 Main Street Phase 2: \$1,312,000
  - Rt. 83 North & 190 East Phase 3: \$ 343,750
- \$2,081,250**

**The proposed phases for Local Road Sidewalks are:**

<b>Somers Local Road Sidewalk List</b>							
<b>Road</b>	<b>Side of Road</b>	<b>Starting Point</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Ending Point</b>	<b>Approx. Length in Feet</b>	<b>Square feet</b>	<b>Est. Constr. Cost</b>
<b><i>Phase One (1)</i></b>							
Field Road	West	South Road (Rt. 83)	South	96 Field Road - Field Road Park	2,000	10,000	250,000
Vision Blvd	North & South	M.B.A. Middle School	East	Existing sidewalk across from SHS	900	4,500	112,500
							<b>362,500</b>
<b><i>Phase Two (2)</i></b>							
Billings Road	North	Ninth District Rd	West	Existing sidewalk in front of Somers Hill Circle	2,700	13,500	337,500
Ninth Dst Rd	East	Vision Boulevard	South	Billings Road	3,700	18,500	462,500
Pinney Rd	South	1 Pinney Road	South	Existing sidewalk in front of 39 Billings Road	1,200	6,000	150,000
							<b>950,000</b>
<b><i>Phase Three (3)</i></b>							
Battle Street	West	End of Existing Sidewalk at	North	Turnpike Road (Rt. 528)	3,350	16,750	418,750
							<b><u>418,750</u></b>
<b>Total</b>							<b>1,731,250</b>

**The proposed phases for State Road Sidewalks are:**

<b>Somers State Road Sidewalk List</b>							
<b>Road</b>	<b>Side of Road</b>	<b>Starting Point</b>	<b>Direction</b>	<b>Ending Point</b>	<b>Approx. Length in Feet</b>	<b>Square feet</b>	<b>Estimated Constr. Cost</b>
<b><i>Phase One (1)</i></b>							
South Road (Rt. 83)	East	Main Street (Rt. 190)	South	Existing sidewalk in front of Geissler's Supermarket	1,950	9,750	243,750
South Road (Rt. 83)	West	Main Street (Rt. 190)	South	Field Road	1,450	7,250	181,250
							<b>425,000</b>
<b><i>Phase Two (2)</i></b>							
Main Street (Rt. 190)	South	180 Goodwin Drive at the end of the existing sidewalk	East	Big Y Express on Corner	10,500	52,500	1,312,500
							<b>1,312,500</b>
<b><i>Phase Three (3)</i></b>							
Springfield Road (Rt. 83)	West	End of Existing Sidewalk at	North	Michele Drive	1,300	6,500	162,500
Main Street	North	Eleanor Road	East	Scully Road	1,450	7,250	181,250
							<b>343,750</b>
							<b>Total 2,081,250</b>



## NEXT STEPS

### Concept, Feasibility, and Estimates of Probable Construction Costs for Local Road Sidewalks

We contacted Nick Lapointe of Fuss & O'Neill. Nick provided us with a proposal and scope of services for delivering concept and feasibility plans and an estimate of probable construction costs for the local road sidewalks.

From their proposal:

With a growing need for more non-motorized, accessible, and safer roadway networks, specifically facilities for pedestrians, the Town created an Ad-Hoc sidewalk committee to determine the highest priority areas for new sidewalks. The list resulted from feedback from a public survey and input from other municipal departments and public officials. It was noted that new sidewalks should be focused where pedestrian routes, desired lines, and volumes would be the highest. These locations are near schools, parks, and the town center. The town is initially planning to install new sidewalks on municipally owned roads. Although sidewalk needs on state-owned roadways are high, this project does not address Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) assets.

We understand that the Town would like to apply for grant funding to construct these new sidewalks. To support grant applications and, most importantly, to determine the feasibility of installing new sidewalks at the identified locations, the Town desires conceptual-level sidewalk plans to identify adjacent roadway corridors and property impacts to infrastructure that may result from new sidewalk installation. Opinions on construction costs will also be needed for capital planning and grant funding requests.

Upon completion of this feasibility and planning phase, the Town will be able to apply for construction grants and have a clearer picture of the level of engineering/design effort required for construction bid documents.

This scope will be consistent for all streets identified above.

- Compile GIS and aerial imagery base maps for sidewalk locations. Show the approximate location of roadway Right-of-way sidelines and property lines.
- Prepare layout plans of improvements showing project limits, dimensions, horizontal geometry, and alignment of new sidewalks.
- Show the location of adjacent roadway infrastructure impacts, including but not limited to curbing, driveways, grass buffers, lawns, guardrails, drainage systems (culverts and headwalls), retaining walls
- Show locations of crosswalks and pedestrian curb ramps, including warning and safety signage that may be warranted.
- Approximate locations of private utility impacts, such as electric/light poles, cable, telephone, or others, will be shown and quantified for estimating purposes. The conceptual design of these elements is not included.

This Fuss & O'Neill proposal estimate is **\$44,900.00**.

## **Funding**

These projects' scope and funding requirements put them out of reach of our local funding ability.

We are seeking a Planning Grant from the federal Safe Routes 4 All program. If awarded, we will direct Fuss & O'Neil to complete the concept and feasibility plans and an estimate of probable construction costs for the local road sidewalks.

Once we have these concept plans, we will notify the abutting property owners and hold public information sessions for public comment and feedback. We will consider all input and alter, change, or redesign our proposals.

For construction, we will seek funding from state and federal grants such as the CT Communities Challenge Grant, the DOT's Community Connectivity Program, the Safe Routes to Schools Program, and the DOT's Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) for the sidewalks on state roads.

We will bid out the construction phases once we have finalized the designs and secured construction funding.

We believe these sidewalk improvements are vital to expanding our sidewalk network, improving accessibility, and enhancing the walkability of all our residents, including children and seniors.

Respectfully,  
The Somers Sidewalk Ad-Hoc Committee.

Todd Rolland, Director of Land Use and Public Works  
Town Liason