



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.

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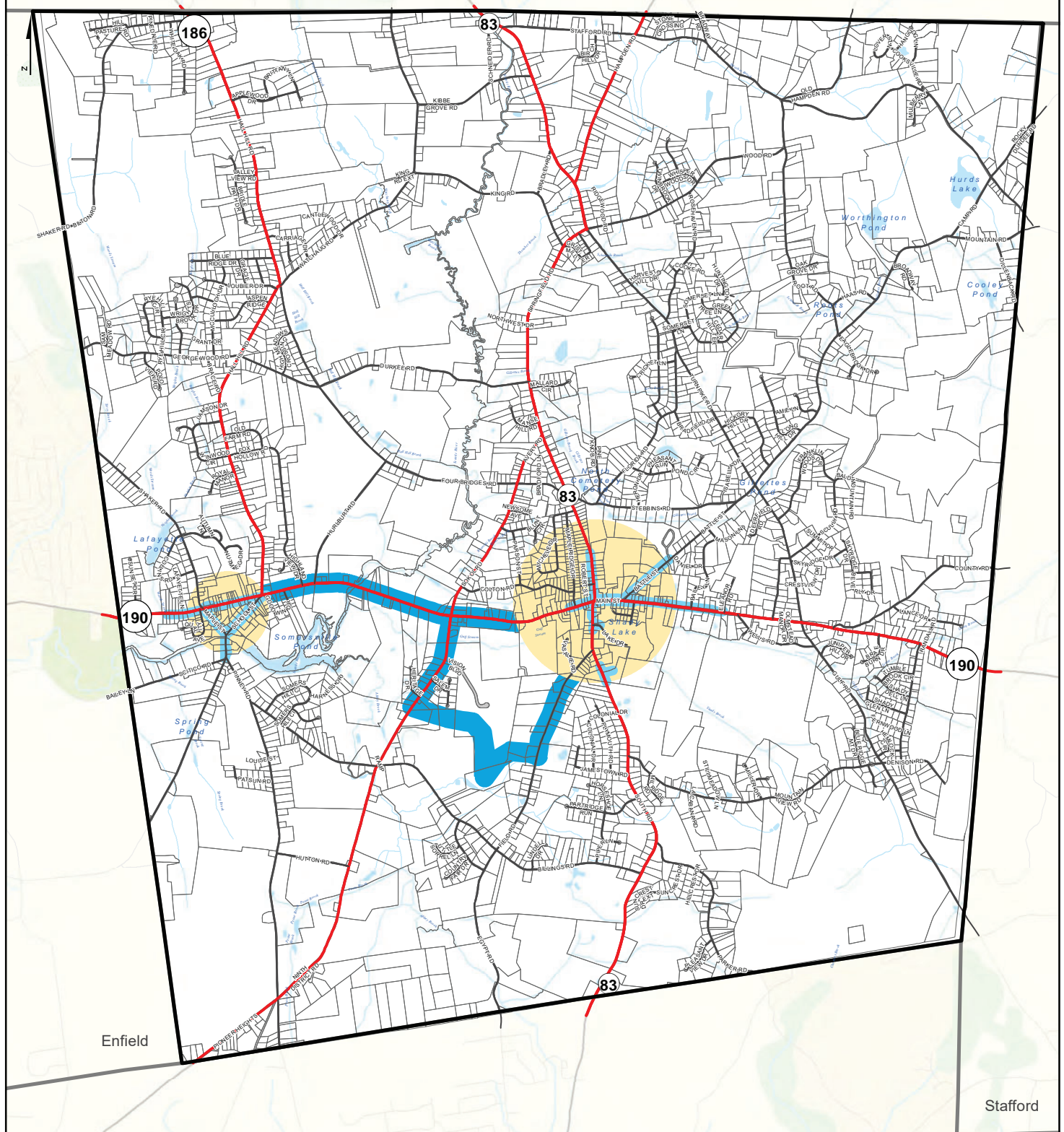
The following Pedestrian / Bicycle Map from the POCD shows the Sidewalk Priority Areas

Pedestrian / Bicycle Map

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA


Hampden, MA



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.

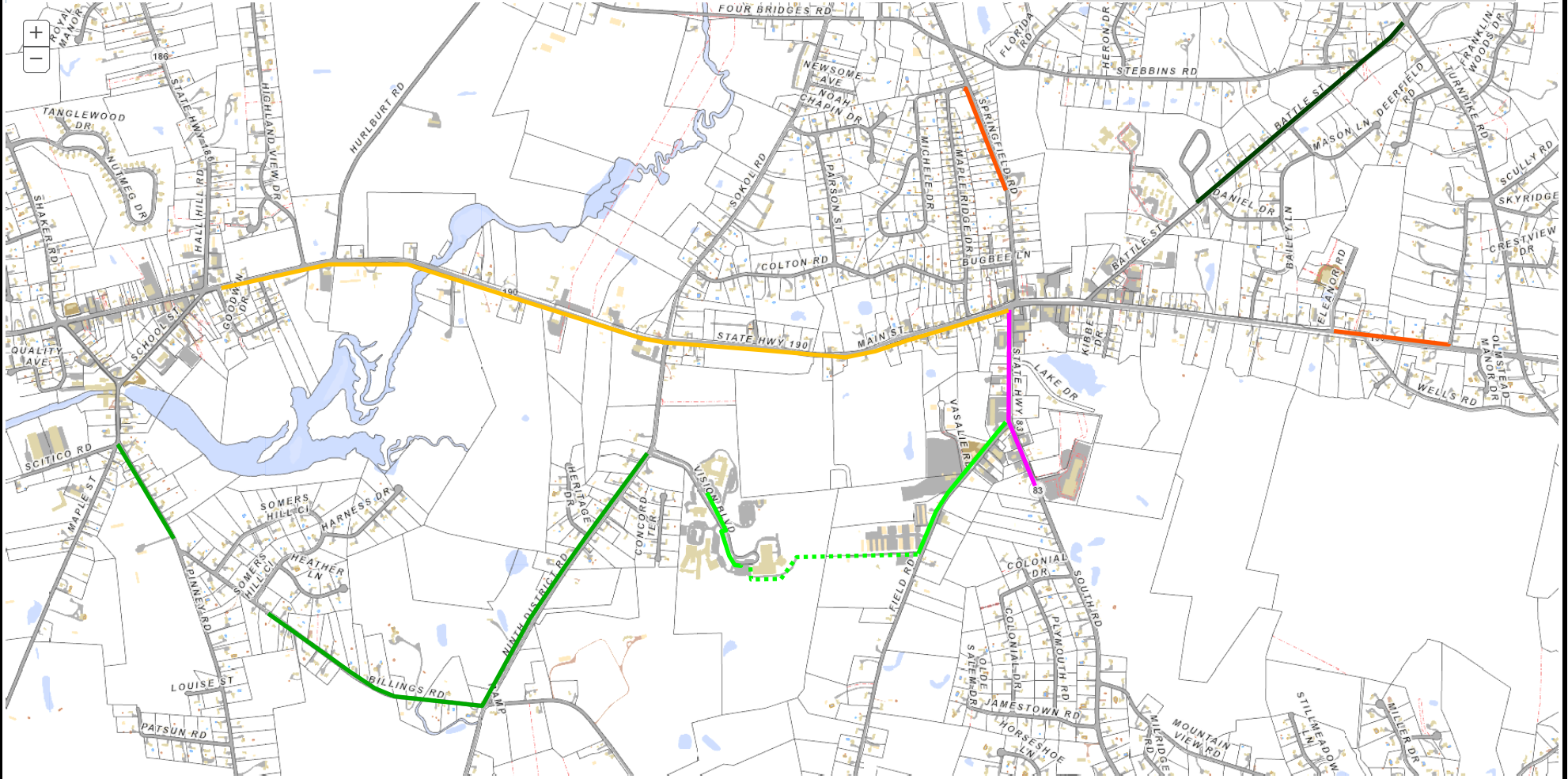
Sidewalks on Local Roads:

- Phase 1, Field Rd. & Vision Blvd,
- Phase 2, Billings, 9th 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 phases of each category



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 Bloulevard 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, 9th 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:

Somers Local Road Sidewalk List							
Road	Side of Road	Starting Point	Direction	Ending Point	Approx. Length in Feet	Square feet	Est. Constr. Cost
<i>Phase One (1)</i>							
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
							362,500
<i>Phase Two (2)</i>							
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
							950,000
<i>Phase Three (3)</i>							
Battle Street	West	End of Existing Sidewalk at	North	Turnpike Road (Rt. 528)	3,350	16,750	418,750
							<u>418,750</u>
Total							1,731,250

The proposed phases for State Road Sidewalks are:

Somers State Road Sidewalk List							
Road	Side of Road	Starting Point	Direction	Ending Point	Approx. Length in Feet	Square feet	Estimated Constr. Cost
<i>Phase One (1)</i>							
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
							425,000
<i>Phase Two (2)</i>							
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
							1,312,500
<i>Phase Three (3)</i>							
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
							343,750
							Total 2,081,250

NEXT STEPS

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

I contacted Nick Lapointe of Fuss & O'Neil. 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. This proposal estimate is **\$44,900.00**.

We have available funding in the Engineering line item of the Department of Public Works budget we can use for this. With a study from Fuss & O'Neil, we can apply for funding in a phased approach, first focusing on local road sidewalks.

Funding

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

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).

Once we have secured funding commitments, we will:

1. Contract with an engineering firm for the design and bid documents for the construction of each phase,
2. As part of the design work, we will notice abutting property owners and hold public information sessions for public input and feedback,
3. Alter, change, or redesign our proposals after public input,
4. Finalize the designs for each section,
5. Go out to bid for the construction of each section,
6. Secure a winning bidder and construct each section of new sidewalk.

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