



# SOMERS

2015 Plan of Conservation and Development  
Effective June 30, 2015





## **Introduction**

---

<b>1</b>	Introduction	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	Context	<b>3</b>

## **Plan Strategies**

---

<b>3</b>	Protecting Important Resources	<b>13</b>
<b>4</b>	Guiding Appropriate Development	<b>31</b>
<b>5</b>	Addressing Community Needs	<b>47</b>

## **Conclusion**

---

<b>6</b>	Future Land Use Plan	<b>57</b>
<b>7</b>	Implementation	<b>63</b>
<b>8</b>	Conclusion	<b>67</b>



June 2015

Welcome!

This is the 2015 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for Somers.

Over the course of many months, a POCD Steering Committee reviewed the 2004 POCD and refined policies and action items in to reflect the circumstances affecting Somers today and anticipated in the future. There were a number of opportunities for community input during this process. Once a draft POCD was prepared, it was forwarded to the Planning Commission for adoption.

Following a public hearing on June 11, the Planning Commission adopted this Plan with an effective date of June 30, 2015. The Planning Commission believes this POCD reflects the consensus of the community and establishes a working blueprint for the future of Somers. The recommendations in the Plan are intended to maintain and enhance:

- the overall quality of life in Somers, and
- the character of Somers.

We hope that all Somers residents will now work together to implement the Plan.

Sincerely,

Greg Genlot, Chair  
Planning Commission







## Purpose of the Plan

This Plan of Conservation and Development is a tool for guiding the future physical development of Somers. Since the physical environment influences many other aspects of daily life, this Plan also considers the future economic and social development of Somers.

This Plan for Somers is intended to:

- Organize and state the community's vision for its future,
- Recognize strategies which will make Somers an even better place, and
- Identify action steps that, when implemented, will help attain that vision.

As Somers residents and officials implement this Plan, those efforts will help protect important resources, guide appropriate development, address community needs, protect community character, and enhance the quality of life of current and future residents.

Rural Character



## Overall Plan Direction

Based on input from participants in the planning process, the overall guiding philosophy of the Plan will be the same as that expressed in the 2004 Plan of Conservation and Development:

***Balance conservation and development to protect and enhance community character and improve Somers' quality of life.***

To help demonstrate how this overriding philosophy will be applied, the plan has been organized around the following strategic themes:

- Protecting Important Resources
- Guiding Appropriate Development
- Addressing Community Needs

Scenic Views



## Preparation of the Plan

---

A Steering Committee made up of representatives of Town boards and commissions and other Somers residents worked together to prepare this update. Over the course of several years, the Committee reviewed the 2004 Plan and discussed the strategies and recommendations in that Plan.

Somers residents helped guide the overall process through participating in public meetings and workshops and participating in a community survey.

Then, with the assistance of a planning consultant, this Plan document was prepared.

The Steering Committee reviewed and modified the draft Plan before turning it over to the Planning Commission for their review. Before adopting the Plan, the Planning Commission referred the Plan to the Board of Selectmen for its review and comment before holding a public hearing of their own for its adoption.

***This Plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes ...***

## Use of the Plan

---

This Plan is intended to provide a framework for consistent decision-making by all Somers officials, boards, commissions, and residents.

Although the Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission, other boards and commissions have been involved in its preparation so that it represents a broad view of strategies and outcomes that are considered beneficial for the long-term health and success of the entire community.

While generally intended to guide conservation and development over the course of a decade, this Plan will lay the foundation for long-term goals reaching far into the future.

## Maintenance of the Plan

---

This Plan is intended to be a dynamic document. As circumstances change in Somers and as strategies are implemented and evaluated, the Plan should be refined to address new issues, adjust a course of action, or refine strategies.

The challenge for the Planning Commission will be to keep the Plan up-to-date and implementation on-course in the face of changing community priorities.

***This Plan was adopted on June 11, 2015 with an effective date of June 30, 2015.***



## Overview

---

This chapter of the Plan of Conservation and Development summarizes conditions and trends affecting Somers at the time the Plan was being prepared.

## Historical Context

---

While the landscape of Somers was formed over millions of years, human settlement has existed for only about 10,000 years or so.

European settlement of New England began in 1620 at Plymouth Rock and in 1634 along the Connecticut River near present day Hartford. European settlement did not reach the area we now know as Somers until about 1706.

Due to the fertile lands here, settlement grew quickly. In 1724, residents formed their own parish so that they would not need to travel to Enfield for religious services each week. In 1734, the Town of Somers was carved off from Enfield. In 1749, Somers was separated from the Massachusetts Bay Colony and annexed by the Colony of Connecticut.

Until the last few decades, Somers was primarily an agricultural community. Residents worked the land as subsistence farmers and traded with their neighbors. Various gristmills and sawmills were established to meet community needs.

In 1839, the Billings Mill was constructed on the Scantic River, effectively creating the village of Somersville. The mill grew over time and attracted immigrants from other areas to the jobs located there.

Eventually, a trolley line connected Somers to Enfield broadening the education, shopping, and recreation opportunities for residents.

Following World War II, the proliferation of the automobile and a desire for suburban living brought changes to Somers. People could live in Somers and commute to jobs in Enfield, Springfield, and other areas. Population grew and farms were turned into subdivisions and horse estates.

Today, Somers is primarily a residential community with fewer jobs in the community than residents who are in the work force. While the establishment of a Connecticut prison in the 1960s brought more jobs to Somers, most residents still travel elsewhere for employment.

***“If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it.”***

Abraham Lincoln



## Demographics

According to the Census, Somers had a population of 11,444 people in the year 2010. This includes approximately 9,081 residents and about 2,363 persons living in group quarters (most of them being inmates at two State correctional institutions - Northern and Osborn).

While much of the population growth in Somers in the last several decades resulted from an increase in the number of inmates, there was robust growth (+961 people) in the number of residents in the last decade.

Historic Population (estimated)

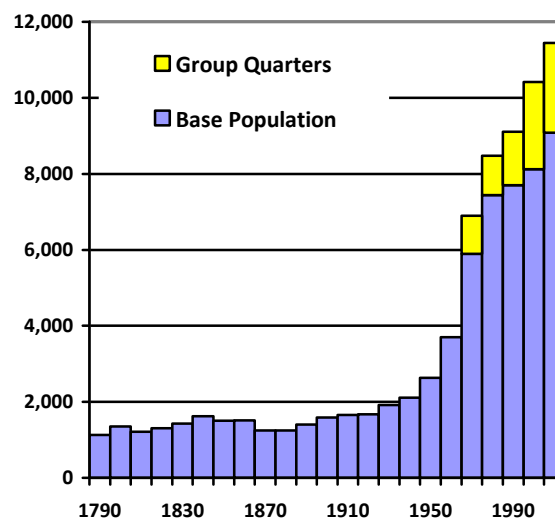
Year	Resident Population	Group Quarters	Total Population
1790	1,127	0	1,127
1800	1,353	0	1,353
1810	1,210	0	1,210
1820	1,306	0	1,306
1830	1,429	0	1,429
1840	1,621	0	1,621
1850	1,508	0	1,508
1860	1,517	0	1,517
1870	1,247	0	1,247
1880	1,242	0	1,242
1890	1,407	0	1,407
1900	1,593	0	1,593
1910	1,653	0	1,653
1920	1,673	0	1,673
1930	1,917	0	1,917
1940	2,114	0	2,114
1950	2,631	0	2,631
1960	3,702	0	3,702
1970	5,898	995	6,893
1980	7,438	1,035	8,473
1990	7,704	1,404	9,108
2000	8,120	2,297	10,417
2010	9,081	2,363	11,444

1790 – 2010 Census adjusted to remove the prison population from 1970-2010

The Connecticut State Data Center is projecting a decrease of the resident population in the future, mostly due to an aging population (households tend to get smaller as they age).

Over the next twenty to thirty years, the major demographic trend in Somers is expected to be an increase in the number of older residents. The main reason for this is the aging of the “baby boomers” (people born between about 1945 and about 1965). In the year 2020, the “baby boomers” will be aged 55 to 75.

Historic Population (estimated)



Since different age groups have different needs and desires, the changing age composition of Somers will likely be an important consideration. Somers might anticipate increased interest in housing options, tax relief and programs for older persons (adult education, passive recreation, social programs, etc.) over the next 20 to 30 years.

***An increase in the number of older residents is expected to be the major demographic trend in Somers over the next 20 to 30 years ...***

## Additional Demographic Data

The following demographic information was provided to the Town based on the 2005-09 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates.

- *The median age (half the population was older and half was younger) was 41.4 years*
- *About 12 percent of Somers residents were age 65 or older*
- *About 1 percent of Somers residents were age 85 and older*
- *The average household size in Somers was 2.84 people*
- *The average family size was 3.07 people*
- *Of the 65 and older population, about 6 percent were living alone*
- *On average, about 2 percent of households included single mothers and children and about 1 percent of households with children were led by single fathers*
- *Somers is a family-oriented town, with about 87 percent of its households identifying themselves as families*
- *In 76 percent of families with children ages six to 17, both parents worked*
- *In Somers, about 78 percent of families include married couples, and about 37 percent of that group has children younger than the age of 18.*
- *About 88 percent of people 25 years and older had graduated from high school or higher*
- *About 30 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher*
- *About 97 percent of the people living in Somers were born in the United States*
- *About 49 percent of the people living in Somers were born in Connecticut*
- *About 3 percent of the people living in Somers were foreign born*
- *About 89 percent of all households in Somers speak English at home*
- *About 11 percent of all households spoke a language other than English at home*
  - *About 7 percent spoke Spanish*
  - *About 4 percent spoke some other language*
- *About 84 percent of the population indicated they were white*
- *About 8 percent were black or African-American*
- *About 1 percent were Asian*
- *About 5 percent were some other race*
- *About 2 percent of the population reported two or more races*

Four Town Fair



## Housing

Even though economic conditions slowed housing production in many communities in the last decade, housing growth continued, and even accelerated, in Somers.

**Housing In Somers**

Year	Units	Percent Change
1980	2,390	-
1990	2,739	15%
2000	3,012	10%
2010	3,479	16%

Source: 1980-2010 Census

Most housing in Somers is owner-occupied, detached housing. Somers has less multi-family housing (which might be of interest to an older household) than surrounding communities.

**Percent Multi-Family**

Ellington	32%
Enfield	24%
Stafford	23%
E Longmeadow, MA	11%
Hampden, MA	11%
<b>Somers</b>	<b>7%</b>

Source: Partnership For Strong Communities (ACS)

Since less than 10 percent of the housing in Somers is governmentally assisted or deed-restricted to be affordable to persons earning up to 80 percent of the area median income, Somers is subject to the "affordable housing appeals process" (CGS Section 8-30g) whereby an affordable housing development may be proposed in almost any location, regardless of current zoning.

## Additional Housing Data

The following information was reported to the Town based on the 2005-09 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates.

- *About 33 percent of owner-occupied homes were valued between \$200,000 and \$299,999 by their owners*
- *About 44 percent of owner-occupied homes were valued between \$300,000 and \$499,999 by their owners*
- *About 14 percent of owner-occupied homes were valued between \$500,000 to \$999,999 by their owners*
- *There were 10 homes in Somers estimated by to be worth more than \$1 million*
- *About 85 percent of homes in Somers were heated by fuel oil*
- *About 5 percent of homes in Somers were heated by electricity*
- *About 4 percent of homes in Somers were heated by bottles, tanks or liquid propane*
- *About 6 percent of homes in Somers were heated by wood or other fuel*

***In the future, Somers might anticipate interest in other types of housing with less maintenance and lower costs ...***

**House In Somers**





## Economy

While Somers is not a major employment center, there were approximately 2,457 jobs in Somers in 2010. Many of these jobs are located at the correctional institutions.

**Jobs In Somers**

	#	% Change
<b>1970</b>	1,820	-
<b>1980</b>	1,460	-20%
<b>1990</b>	1,720	18%
<b>2000</b>	2,230	30%
<b>2010</b>	2,457	10%

Source: CT Labor Dept

At \$100,100, Somers' median household income is the highest of surrounding towns. This is a reflection of the perceived desirability of the community and its quality of life.

**Median Household Income**

<b>Somers</b>	<b>\$100,100</b>
Ellington	\$84,934
E Longmeadow, MA	\$82,451
Hampden, MA	\$80,917
Enfield	\$68,356
Stafford	\$63,672

Source: American Community Survey, 2008-12

### Additional Economic Data

The following information was reported to the Town based on the 2005-09 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates.

- *About 8 percent of the households in Somers earned \$200,000 per year or more*
- *Nearly 34 percent of Somers households received some Social Security income*
- *The average income from Social Security was \$17,078*
- *About 28 percent of all Somers households received retirement income other than Social Security*

- *The most common occupations of residents were:*

#### Occupation

<i>Management, professional and related occupations</i>	<b>47%</b>
<i>Sales and office occupations</i>	<b>22%</b>
<i>Service occupations</i>	<b>16%</b>
<i>Production, transportation and material moving occupations</i>	<b>8%</b>
<i>Construction, extraction, maintenance and repair occupations</i>	<b>7%</b>
<i>Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations</i>	<b>1%</b>

Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

- *The most common type of employment of residents was:*

#### Type of Employment

<i>Private wage and salary workers</i>	<b>76%</b>
<i>Federal, state or local government workers</i>	<b>16%</b>
<i>Self-employed</i>	<b>8%</b>

Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

- *Just over 88 percent of Somers workers drove to work alone*
- *About 6 percent of Somers residents car-pooled to work*
- *About 3 percent worked at home*
- *About 3 percent of Somers workers walked or took public transportation to work*
- *For those Somers residents who commuted to work, it took them an average of approximately 25 minutes to get to work*

## Land Use in Somers

---

As can be seen from the map on the facing page, much of the land in Somers is committed to specific land uses such as single-family homes, agricultural uses, and open space. However, there are a number of parcels that are vacant or over-sized and these parcels may have the potential to support additional development in the future.

**Single Family Residential Neighborhood**



**Multi-Family Residential Development**



**Farms**



**Business / Industry**



**Community Facility / Institutional Use**



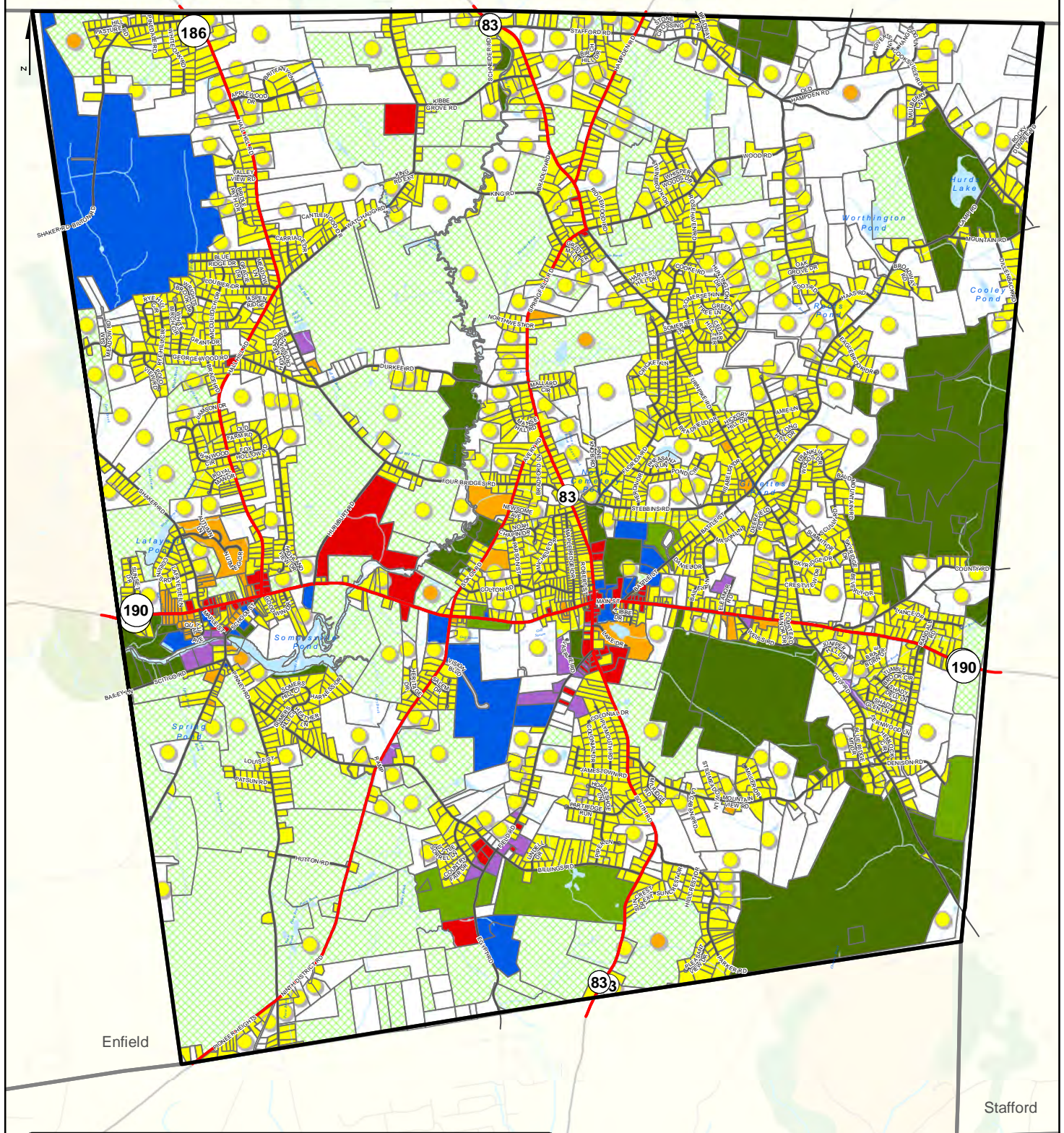


# Land Use

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Legend

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Business
- Industrial / Utility
- Institutional
- Dedicated Open Space
- Farm
- Managed Open Space
- Vacant

2,900

Feet



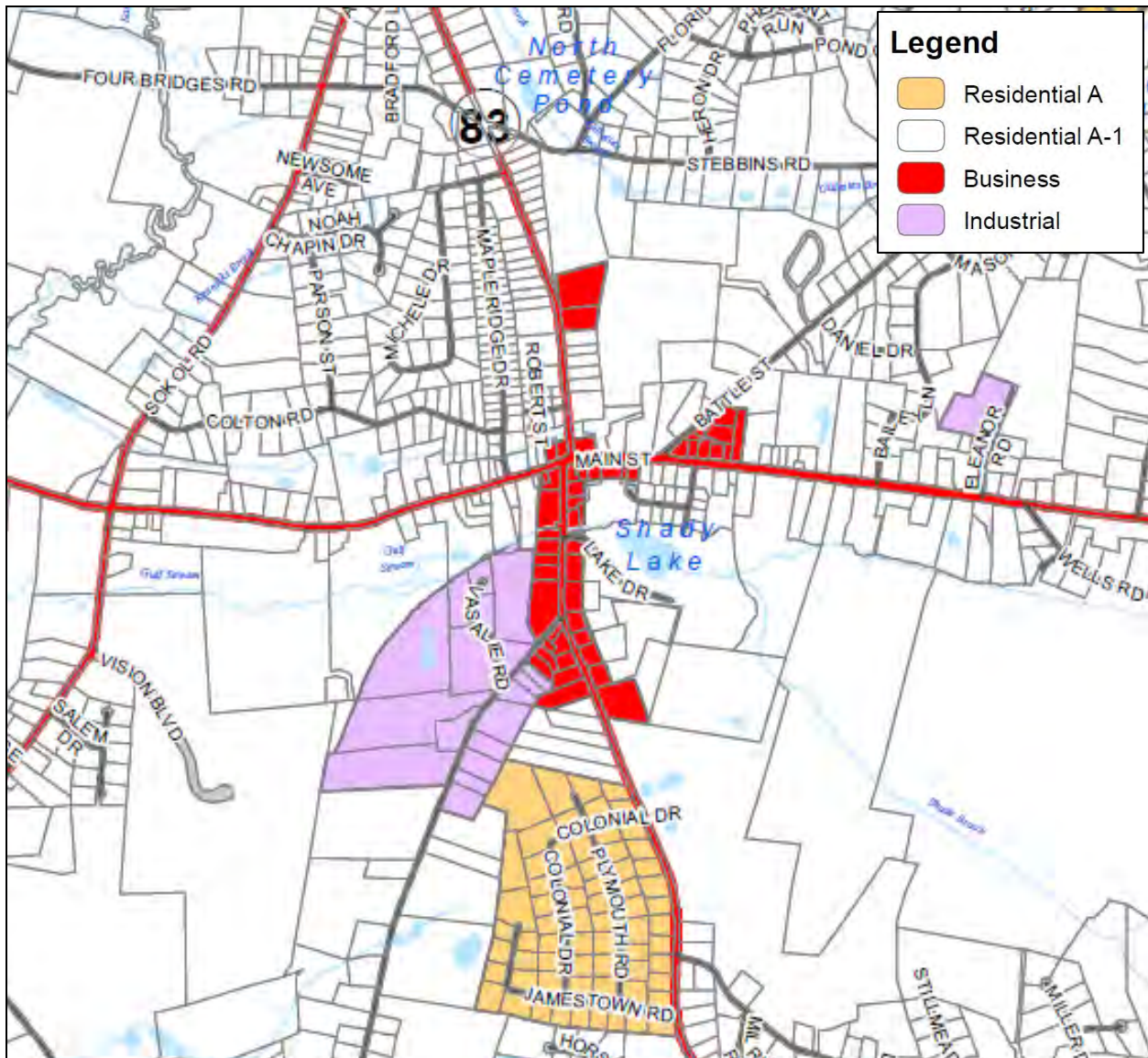
## Zoning in Somers

The key difference between the residential zones is that the A-1 District allows two-family residences (on a double-sized lot).

Somers has four zoning districts at present:

- two residential districts (about 98 percent of the land area),
- one commercial district (about 0.4 percent of the land area), and
- one industrial district (about 1.3 percent of the land area).

Zoning In Somers Center

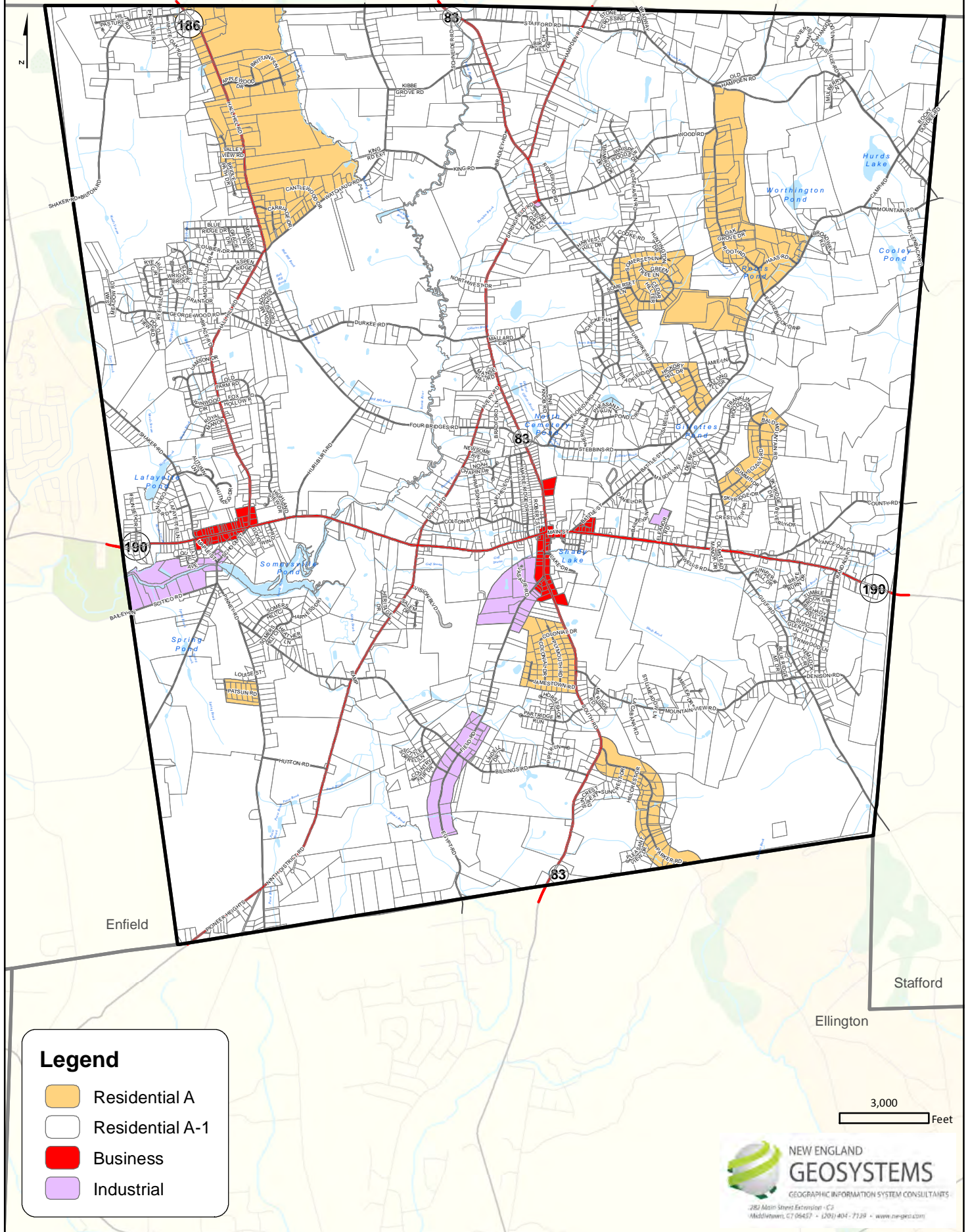


# Zoning Map

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Community Concerns

In the spring of 2012, a survey was mailed out to 3,325 postal box-holders in Somers. The results from the 1,459 responses are summarized below:

- About 95 percent of respondents felt the quality of life in Somers was “excellent” (about 39 percent) or “good” (about 56 percent)
- About 64 percent of respondents felt the pace of development in Somers was “just right” (about 26 percent felt it was “too fast” and about 10 percent felt it was “too slow”)
- About 82 percent of respondents saw themselves living in Somers 10-15 years from now and of those:
  - 78 percent thought they would remain in their current home
  - 10 percent thought they would be in a smaller home
  - 8 percent thought they would be in an “active adult” community
  - 3 percent thought they would be in a larger home
  - 2 percent thought they would live in an apartment or rental unit
- In terms of future development in Somers, respondents indicated support or opposition to the following:

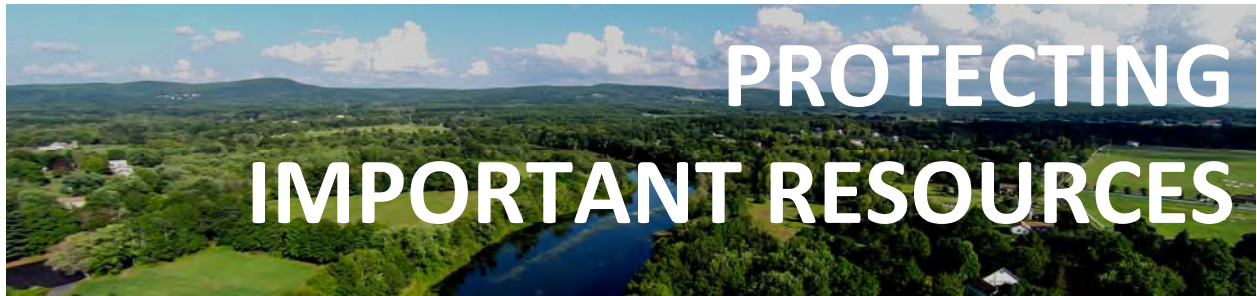
	Support	Oppose
Owner occupied homes on 1 acre lots	62%	38%
Owner occupied homes on less than 1 acre, but with equivalent surrounding open space	20%	80%
Affordable housing	16%	84%
55+ developments	23%	77%
Condominium units	13%	87%

- When asked if Route 190 should be zoned commercial between Somers and Somersville to connect the two business zones in town, about 50 percent agreed, about 40 percent disagreed and about 10 percent felt that other areas made more sense
- When asked if they would be willing to pay an additional \$100 per year in property taxes for specific actions, respondents indicated support or opposition as follows:

	Support	Oppose
Provide revenue for the open space fund	32%	68%
Finance a road improvement plan in Somers	31%	69%
Increase the maintenance of the sports / recreation fields	27%	73%
Provide more sports fields in Somers	21%	79%

- About 68 percent of respondents felt the condition of the town infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, sewage drains, etc.) was either “good” or “excellent”
- About 87 percent of respondents rated the overall quality of care or maintenance of town buildings as either “good” or “excellent”
- About 44 percent of respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay additional property taxes in order to maintain existing educational and other programs if state funding decreased





## Overview

Somers derives much of its character and quality of life from its unique combination of natural, historic, and scenic resources.

By protecting these important resources and guiding future development, Somers can maintain and enhance community character and quality of life for generations to come.

***Protecting important resources is a critical element in maintaining community character and ensuring quality of life for current and future generations.***

Natural Resources



Open Space



Community Character



## Protect Natural Resources

Conservation of natural resources in Somers is important for preserving environmental functions, maintaining biodiversity and preventing damage to the environment.

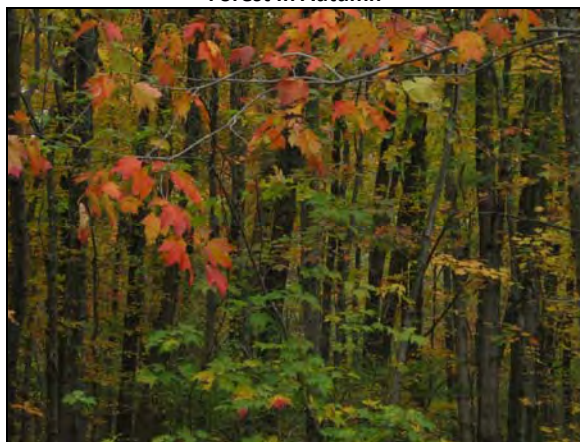
***Protecting natural resources is important to maintaining community character and the overall quality of life in Somers.***

Protecting water quality is Somers highest natural resource protection priority. Somers' surface and groundwater resources provide potable water, contribute to biological diversity, and add to the overall quality of life for residents.

Somers can accomplish this by:

- incorporating "low impact development" (LID) strategies into local regulations to reduce the water quality of impacts of new development,
- enhancing regulations to protect aquifer areas,
- preserving riparian buffers along wetlands and watercourses, and
- ensuring that local septic systems function effectively.

Forest In Autumn



Protect Natural Resources	
Policies	
1.	Continue to protect water quality in Somers.
2.	Implement "low impact development" practices to help manage water quality and water quantity issues.
3.	Maintain upland review areas and vegetated buffers adjacent to wetlands and watercourses in order to protect these resources.
4.	Continue to protect other natural resources in Somers.
5.	Discourage the introduction of non-native species in Somers.
Initial Action Items	
6.	Incorporate LID stormwater management standards into existing town land use regulations.
7.	Educate design professionals and homeowners about LID tools and techniques.
8.	Consider establishing a septic management program to identify possible septic problems and avoid potential pollution.
9.	Conduct public education about protecting water quality (including reducing fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide use).
10.	Adopt an aquifer protection zone for identified aquifer areas once Level A mapping is completed.
11.	Include consideration of "Natural Diversity Database" sites (as identified by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection) in local land use applications.

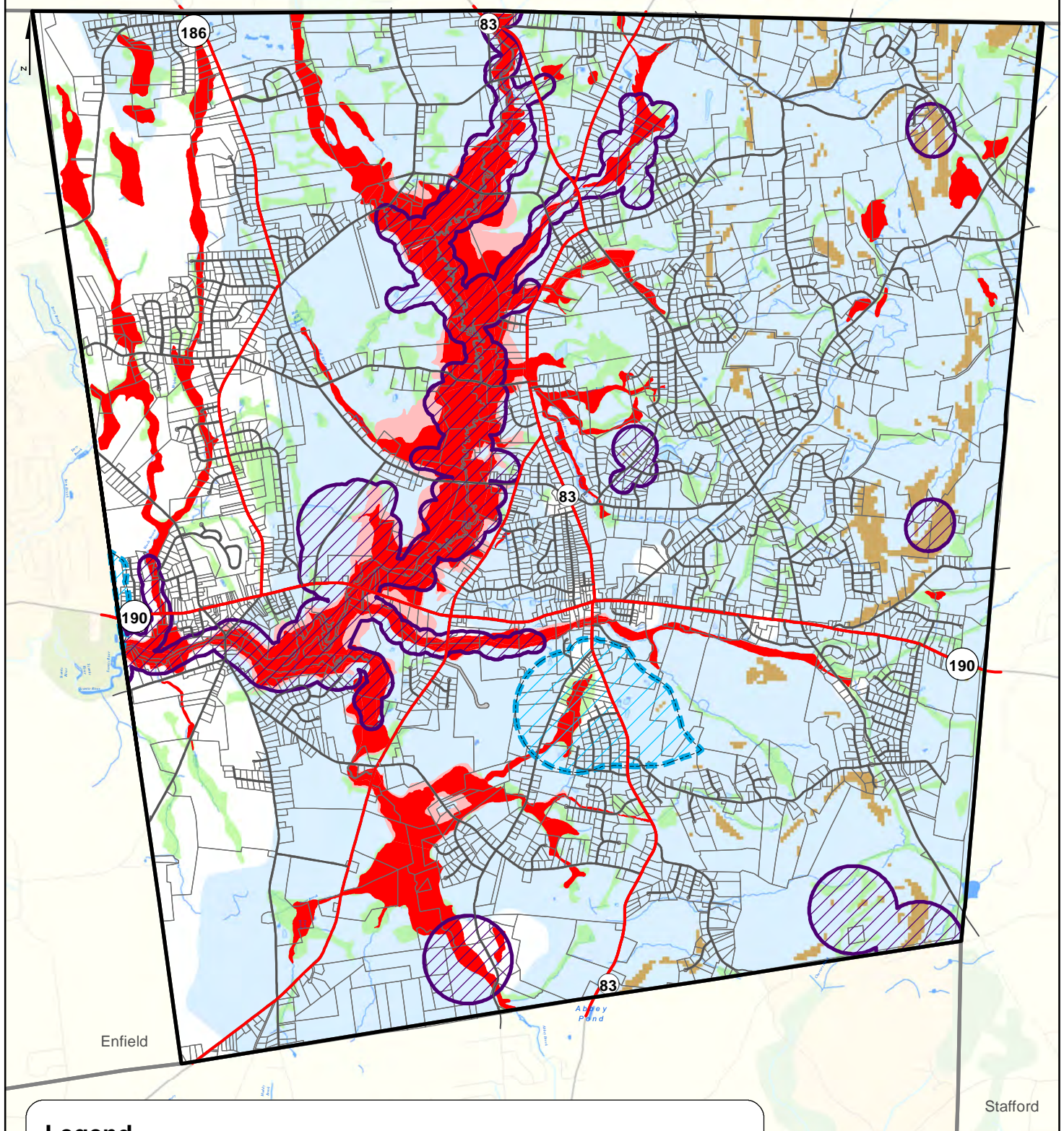


# Natural Resources Map


Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Legend

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Natural Diversity Database Site   |  100 Year Flood Zone                      |
|  Aquifer Protection Area (Level B) |  500 Year Flood Zone                      |
|  Slopes > 15%                      |  Public Water Supply Watershed Area (GAA) |
|  Inland Wetland Soils              |  Water                                    |

2,900  
Feet

## Preserve Open Space

Preserving open space in Somers will help conserve important natural resources, protect community character, provide fiscal benefits, and enhance the quality of life for residents.

***Preserving open space is important to maintaining community character and the overall quality of life.***

Over the past 10 years, the Town has acquired almost 500 acres of open space. A significant part of this was the former YMCA Camp Aya-Po acquisition (182 acres), which will help establish a “greenbelt” in the eastern half of Somers.

In 2014, the Town established an Open Space and Trails Committee to help plan for additional open space preservation in Somers.

Somers should effectively utilize provisions in State statutes that allow for the preservation of open space at the time of development. Even though Somers has a regulation requiring the set-aside of 20 percent of the land, they often waive this in favor of payment of a fee by the developer. While this may be advantageous if there is no desirable open space area on the parcel, it can result in more houses and less open space in the long run. Somers should acquire the land when it contributes to an overall open space system (such as a greenway) but accept the fee if there is little prospect of an open space system being established or an important open space area (such as ridgelines) is being preserved.

Another approach would be to encourage “open space development patterns” where the overall development pattern will result in the preservation of meaningful amounts of open space. The case study on the following pages describes this approach.

This type of development pattern should be encouraged or required in Somers in the future. At present, the calculation for the number of units (Section 214-141 of the Zoning Regulations treats open space development patterns differently than conventional subdivisions and this may be a deterrent to its use.

Preserve Open Space
Policies
1. Continue efforts to preserve open space in Somers.
2. Continue efforts to interconnect open space areas into greenways accessible to the public.
3. Seek to maximize the preservation of open space as part of new development.
4. Encourage “open space developments” as opposed to conventional subdivisions.
5. Continue to enhance the open space acquisition fund through annual contributions in the budget and other means.
6. Pursue state and/or federal open space grants.
7. Continue to identify and prioritize open space parcels for acquisition.
8. Encourage other organizations to allow for public access and use.
Initial Action Items
9. Amend the regulations to encourage “open space developments”.
10. Adopt regulations to allow off-site dedication and/or banking of open space.

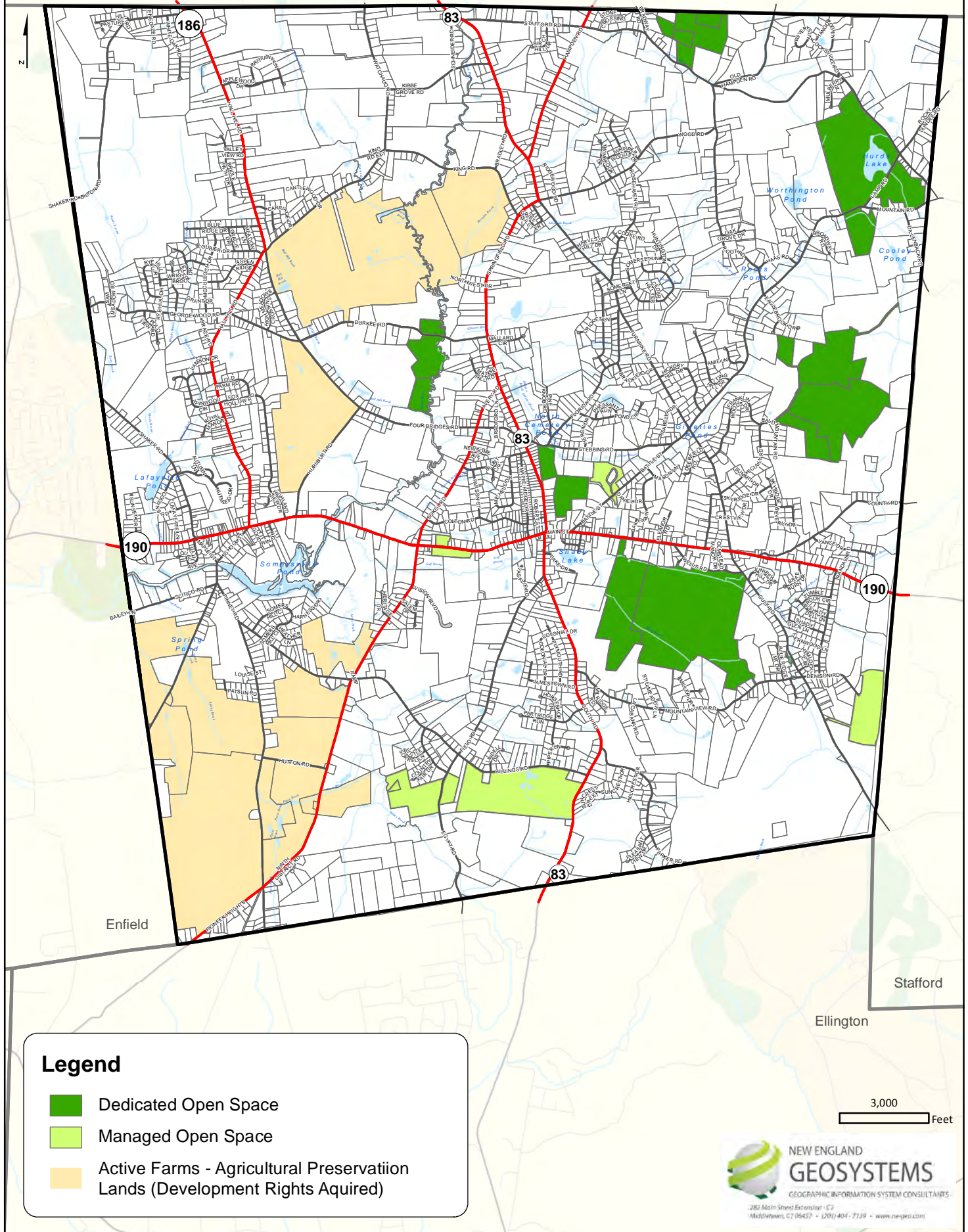


# Open Space

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## CASE STUDY – Open Space Development

Open space development is an approach that allows development to occur while protecting a site's important features. Such features may include sensitive natural resources, wildlife habitat, farmland, scenic views, or areas that contribute to the overall character of the community. It may also include open space connectivity and the establishment of greenways. The sensitive areas are typically preserved as "open space" owned by conservation organizations or by local government.

A key element of open space development is that areas to be protected are typically identified first and then development occurs around the protected areas. This contrasts with a conventional approach where development is often laid out first and conservation areas are defined by what is left over.

Open space development can help protect important natural resources and community character. Greenway systems and wildlife corridors can be established. Stormwater management systems can be used to promote natural flow patterns and infiltration. Studies have shown that development in close proximity to preserved open space is considered more valuable and appreciates more rapidly than other development patterns.

The graphics on these pages illustrate how "open space design" subdivisions are related better to the natural attributes of the land and characteristics of the community than "conventional design" development patterns:

The information on the following pages suggests how a site analysis might be conducted as part of a conservation design process.

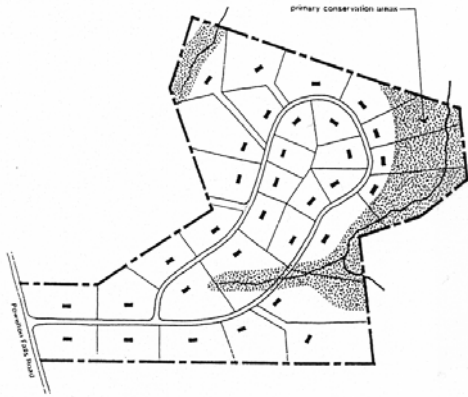
**Parcel Prior To Development**



Graphics by Randall Arendt

## CASE STUDY (continued)

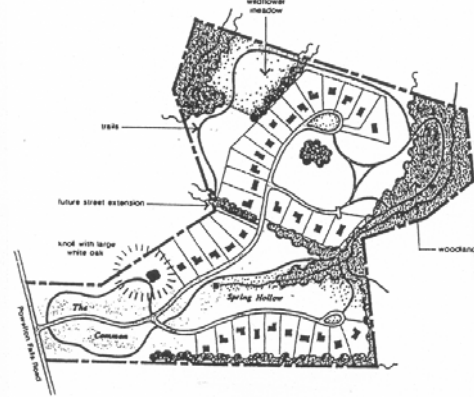
### Conventional Subdivision Development



- 16 lots on 41 acre parcel
- Average lot size = 2.5 acres
- No open space preserved
- Scenic features converted into lots



### Open Space Subdivision Development



- 16 lots on 41 acre parcel
- 16 acres in lot areas / average lot size = 1.0 acre
- 25 acres preserved as open space (60% of parcel area)
- 25 acres of publicly accessible open space
- Scenic features preserved



## CASE STUDY - Site Analysis Approach

Unfortunately, many subdivisions are laid out as a “geometric resolution of dimensional constraints” and are then placed on the land almost regardless of environmental constraints.

Developments that are laid out in response to the character of the land are usually better visually and environmentally.

To help promote this approach, one Connecticut town adopted the regulation shown in the case study as a way to guide the site planning process. Rather than lay out lots first and then mitigate environmental impacts, it requires that important resources be identified first and then lots laid out.

1. Unless waived by the Commission, any application for a residential subdivision ... shall include the following materials prepared by a landscape architect, civil engineer, or surveyor licensed to practice in Connecticut:
  - a. a site inventory / analysis map as described below, and
  - b. an overall ... layout plan which responds to the site inventory / analysis map.
2. A pre-application meeting with Town Staff and the Commission is strongly encouraged.
3. If the Commission is not satisfied with the quality of the analysis submitted with the application, it may hire another landscape architect, civil engineer, or surveyor licensed to practice in Connecticut to prepare such analysis and charge the applicant for the cost of such services.
4. The site inventory / analysis map shall identify:
  - a. Primary Conservation Areas:
    - Wetlands, watercourses, and vernal pools,
    - steep slopes (15 percent or more), and
    - 100-year floodplain.
  - b. Secondary Conservation Areas ...:
    - areas within 50 feet of a wetland,
    - areas within 100 feet of a watercourse or a vernal pool,
    - 500-year floodplain,
    - Natural Diversity Database sites,
    - wildlife corridors, mature woodlands, notable individual trees (>18" DBH),
    - ridgelines, scenic views and vistas,
    - stone walls and /or farm hedgerows,
    - key resources identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development ...,
    - proposed open space areas, and
    - soils with moderate to high infiltrative capacities.
5. Areas of the site that are considered Primary Conservation Areas or Secondary Conservation Areas shall be considered for permanent protection, which may include preservation as open space, deeded to the Town, the ... Land Trust, or another conservation organization acceptable to the Commission.
6. Areas of the site that are not considered Primary Conservation Areas or Secondary Conservation Areas shall be considered potential development areas and lots, streets, trails, and other improvements may be sited in these areas.



## CASE STUDY - Environmentally-Friendly Site Planning

An appendix in another Connecticut community's Subdivision Regulations encourages applicants to use the following site design process:

1. Obtain appropriate background information (topography, wetlands, etc.).
2. Create a base map of Primary and Secondary Conservation Areas.
3. Prepare plans for development of the site utilizing the following guidelines:
  - **Avoiding impacts** by protecting natural drainage systems, minimizing the extent of land clearing and disturbance of natural soils, preventing the compaction of natural soils, and preserving soils with infiltrative capacity.
  - **Reducing impacts** by maximizing the extent of pervious areas on the site, increasing the "time of concentration" of drainage systems, and utilizing low maintenance landscapes.
  - **Managing impacts** by using vegetated stormwater systems as close as possible to the source of the runoff, reducing the use of fertilizers and pesticides, and utilizing stormwater treatment systems to reduce pollutant loads and infiltrate runoff.
4. Utilize the following guidelines for site layout:
  - Have road and driveway alignments follow the existing contours to the maximum extent practical to minimize excessive cuts and fills,
  - Use vegetated road shoulders to accept and treat stormwater runoff as close to the paved surface as possible and reduce the size of drainage pipes
  - Layout site improvements (houses, driveways, etc.) in such a manner as to minimize site clearing, soil disturbance, and grading.
  - Preserve the infiltrative capacity of native soils by avoiding disturbing areas of the site where it is not necessary.

State Forest



Scenic View



## Support Farms and Farming

Somers has been an agricultural community for nearly 300 years. Farms and farming are an important part of the local economy, reflect our agricultural heritage, and enhance the overall character of Somers.

Somers has been fortunate that local landowners have participated in the State's "purchase of development rights" program for farmland. To date, thousands of acres in Somers have been preserved in this way.

Somers should continue to support farms and farming.

**Horse Farming**



## Support Farms And Farming

### Policies

1. Continue to support local farms and farming.
2. Continue to encourage local landowners to participate in the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program.

**Farming**

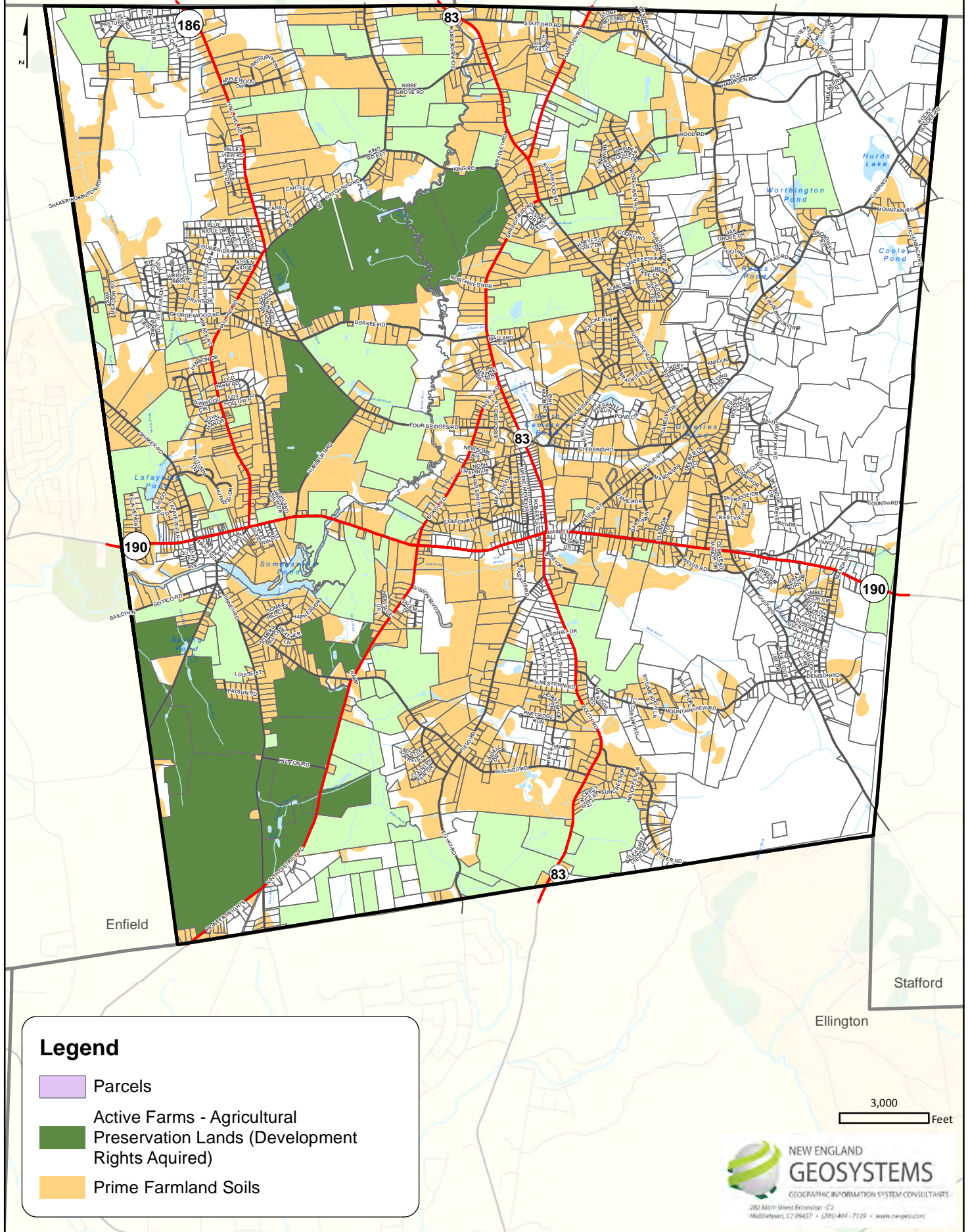


# Agricultural Resources Map

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA





## Preserve Character Resources

The “character” of Somers is something that is commonly mentioned by residents and visitors as one of the defining attributes of the community. Preserving and enhancing the things that contribute to this sense of character is a key recommendation of the Plan.

The “case study” on the facing page outlines a few tools available for Somers to consider as part of implementing this Plan.

### Historic Resources

Residents are appreciative and protective of historic buildings in Somers since they contribute to the overall character of the community.

However, the only designated resources are two areas listed on the National Register of Historic Places (in Somers Center and Somersville). However, such designation is essentially an honorary designation and does not restrict the property. While a property owner could be cited for “unreasonable destruction” of a designated property, this may not prevent the loss of the resource.

### Community Events

Community events contribute to the overall character of the community and these events should be continued and maintained.

Four Town Fair



## Undeveloped Land

The amount of land in Somers that is forest and fields certainly contributes to community character. As a result, retaining undeveloped land will help preserve community character.

Somers participates in the PA-490 assessment program where land that is farm, forest, or “open space” receives a reduced assessment because of its use (as opposed to being assessed at fair market value). Any land that is sold or developed within 10 years of its designation is subject to a repayment provision of the taxes foregone. The PA-490 program makes large parcels of land more affordable to retain and this helps preserve the overall character of the community.

The designation of land as PA-490 Farm or as PA-490 Forest is determined by statutory criteria (CGS Section 12-107). On the other hand, the designation of land as PA-490 Open Space is a local option and Somers has chosen to make the assessment available to residentially zoned parcels of land which are more than twice the minimum lot size required (i.e. – more than 1.84 acres in area). The reduced assessment is available for that portion of the lot after the first acres.

The PA-490 program and the PA-490 Open Space policy should be continued.

***Character resources contribute to Somers’ character and quality of life.***

## CASE STUDY – Character Preservation Tools

### National Register of Historic Places - District

- Largely ceremonial / recognition
  - District typically nominated by State Historic Preservation Office
- 
- Little implication for activities of owners
  - May affect public projects funded with state or federal monies
  - May allow for tax credits for rehabilitation of income-producing properties
  - In rare cases, may be cited for “unreasonable destruction”

### Village District

- Regulatory
  - Activities in view from public streets must obtain approval from the zoning commission
  - Application must be referred to a “village district consultant”
- 
- POCD *must* recommend
  - Zoning commission establishes boundary
  - Provisions described in statute are incorporated in regulations
  - Regulations typically contain design considerations and/or guidelines
  -

### Local Historic District

- Regulatory
  - Activities in view from public streets must obtain a “certificate of appropriateness” from a local historic district commission
- 
- Study committee prepares report
  - Property owners affected vote by ballot (2/3rds vote required to authorize)
  - Legislative body establishes district
  - A “historic district commission” replaces study committee
  - HDC may prepare a local manual of design considerations and/or guidelines

### Design Review Board

- Advisory but influential
  - Typically provide report to zoning commission to consider as part of application review
- 
- Most successful with illustrated guidelines
  - Zoning Commission can serve as the design review “board or appeals”
  - Committee may be appointed by:
    - Zoning Commission (Simsbury)
    - First Selectman (Westport)
    - Town Council (East Hampton)
    - Ordinance (Stonington)

### Property Maintenance Code

- Regulatory
  - Can be used to address circumstances where the lack of property maintenance may be a concern
  - Typically focuses on health and safety issues
- 
- Ordinance adopted by Town Meeting

## Design Review

In order to help preserve and enhance the character of the community, Somers should complete the establishment of a design review process in the community.

Residents have indicated they care about the design of new commercial, industrial, multi-family, and institutional development and experience in many communities demonstrates that a design review process is an effective way to accomplish this.

Somers should establish a design review process as soon as possible. While such a process was almost fully instituted following adoption of the 2004 POCD, the passage of time since those efforts suggests that the process may need to start anew.

Within 12 months of setting up the Design Review Board, the new Board should be required to have adopted design guidelines to help them and applicants. Given the number of communities that have established design review processes, it should be relatively simple to adapt what others have done rather than start fresh.

The Design Review Committee will review applications for conformance with these guidelines and make non-binding recommendations to the Zoning Commission based on their findings.

## Scenic Resources

Scenic character plays a significant role in the overall character of Somers and efforts should continue to be devoted to protecting scenic features and resources.

Hill tops and hillsides are prominent scenic features. So are the open fields that are part of Somers agricultural character.

Undeveloped land (farms, forests, and other undeveloped lands) make a significant contribution to the overall character of the Somers. Since the 1960s, when the Connecticut legislature realized that increasing taxes were forcing land into development, Somers has participated in the Public Act 490 program whereby large landowners can receive a reduced assessment. If the land is developed within 10 years of its enrollment in the program, the Town recoups a prorated share of the taxes that would have otherwise been paid without the tax reduction. Somers should continue to participate in this program and consider ways to enhance this program to help preserve the rural character of the community.

Somers also has many scenic roads (i.e. narrow, winding, tree lined, etc.). The Scenic Road Ordinance offers a degree of protection for designated roads by limiting road improvements that might alter a road's scenic character. More roads should be considered for designation.

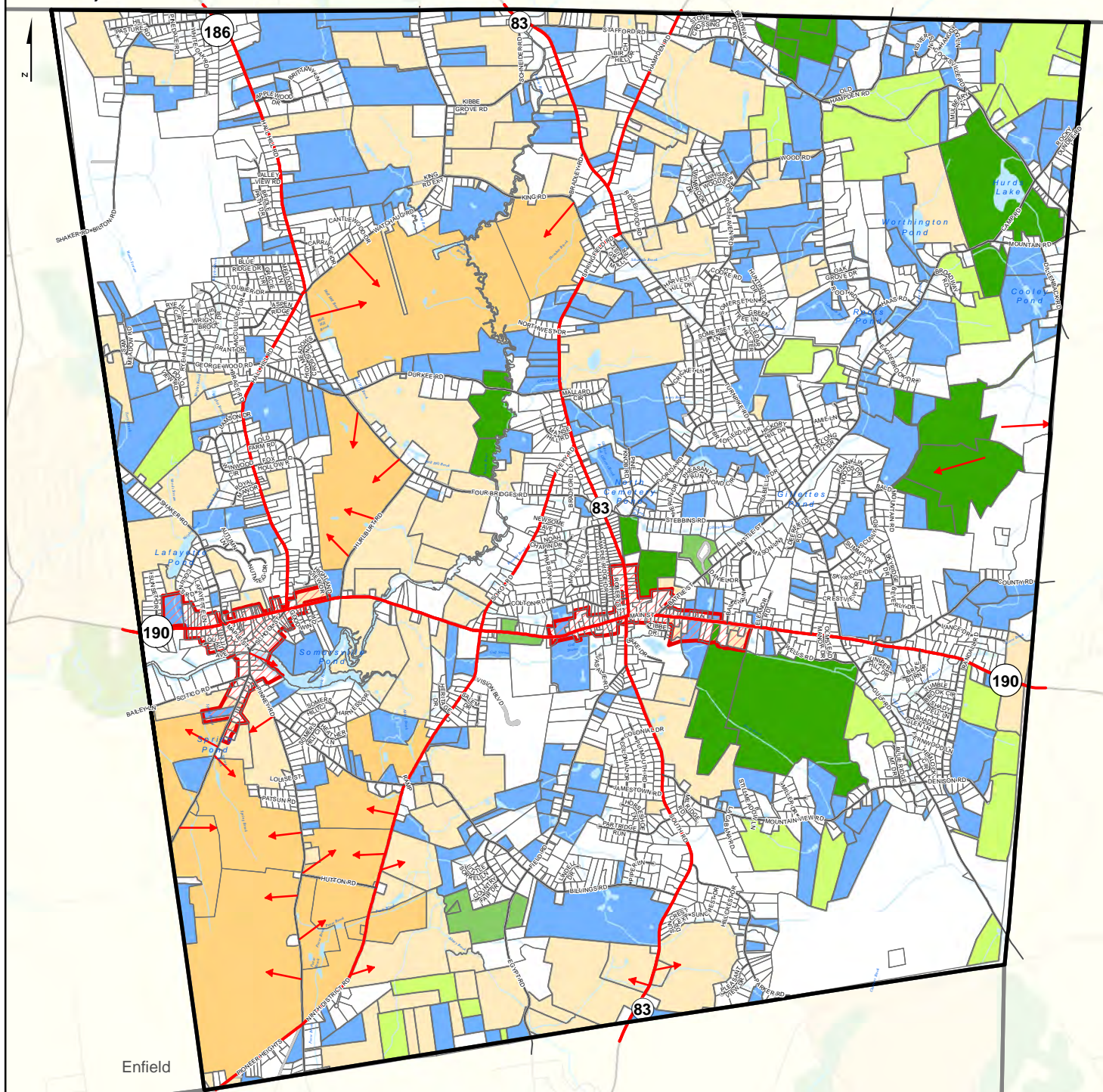


# Community Character Map

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Legend

- Scenic View
- Historic District
- PA 490 Farm
- PA 490 Forest
- PA 490 Open Space
- Dedicated Open Space
- Managed Open Space
- Active Farms - Agricultural Preservation Lands (Development Rights Aquired)

As development occurs, consideration should be given to protecting scenic elements through conservation easements, open space acquisition, or other means to limit the disturbance of stone walls, street trees, and other scenic features.

Utility maintenance is also a threat to scenic roads. Utility companies and their contractors often trim street trees for utility reliability without consideration of the overall impact on the character of the community.

**Old Postcard**



**Scenic View**



Preserve Character Resources	
Policies	
1.	Continue to encourage “sensitive stewardship” (pride in ownership) as the most effective means of preserving historic resources.
2.	Establish and maintain a design review process in Somers to provide design guidance to commercial, industrial, multi-family, and institutional development.
3.	Continue efforts to protect scenic features and resources.
4.	Continue efforts to promote property maintenance and discourage “blighting” influences on adjacent properties.
Initial Action Items	
5.	Consider adopting regulatory incentives (such as adaptive re-use provisions in zoning regulations) to encourage the preservation and repurposing of historic structures.
6.	Consider adopting a demolition delay ordinance.
7.	Establish a design review process.
8.	Endorse design guidelines to help guide applicants and the Design Review Board.
9.	Inventory scenic resources and establish policies and regulations to protect them.
10.	Consider expanding the P.A. 490 open space program.
11.	Work with utility companies to preserve scenic streetscapes.
12.	Modify lighting requirements to reduce excessive lighting and adopt an ordinance to prohibit off-site floodlights.



## **Promote Sustainability / Resiliency**

For the purposes of this Plan, “sustainability” refers to the philosophy of encouraging activities that allow present generations to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The term “resiliency” refers to the community’s ability to readily recover from sudden changes or adversity.

Much of Somers was built during a time when it was assumed that resources to support growth and development patterns were unconstrained and that major changes were unlikely to occur and that the environment would support such growth. While this still may be the case, it seems prudent to evaluate alternative scenarios and the possible implications of those scenarios. If we are to enhance the character and quality of life for present and future generations, being a sustainable and resilient community – able to adapt to possible future changes – may be especially important.

**Solar Farm On Route 83**



## **Promote Sustainability**

Promote Energy Conservation / Sustainability - Energy availability and cost are likely to be more significant issues in Somers in the future. This has financial implications for the Town and for all its residents and businesses.

To help be a leader in this effort, the Town should evaluate alternative approaches (space heating, lighting, controls, equipment, building envelope, electrical consumption, electrical generation, and vehicles) and make recommendations to reduce energy usage, increase reliability, and save money:

- Reducing operating / lifecycle costs
- Lowering the “carbon footprint”
- Reducing energy use and cost
- Generating energy (solar, wind, fuel cell, etc.)
- Transitioning to renewable energy for town vehicles (natural gas, electric, bio-fuels, and hybrids)

Promote Water Conservation - Simple changes to some everyday activities can reduce most people’s domestic water use by 10% or more. Somers should encourage and promote water conservation especially since most areas of the community rely on groundwater from individual wells for domestic use.

Promote Waste Reduction / Recycling - The overall waste stream and recycling is another potential area for investigation and education in Somers. Reducing the waste stream and promoting recycling will be promoted.

Educate Residents About Sustainability Concepts - Efforts will be devoted towards educating residents and schoolchildren about sustainability concepts.



## Promote Resiliency

One of the lessons for Somers from some recent major storms was the value of emergency response capability and emergency preparedness planning. In some of these situations, electrical power was lost to sections of the community and some residents were without heat or water. The Town of Somers activated its emergency response procedures and was able to have emergency shelters, bottled water, and other supplies and services for people that needed it.

Somers will continue to review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events, such as flooding. For example, Somers was involved in preparation of the Capitol Region Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan Update 2014 – 2019 in order to help identify and mitigate potential impacts from natural events. Somers will continue efforts to assess the vulnerability of public and private infrastructure (e.g., utilities, transportation, structures) to such events, prepare for recurring events, and respond to such events when they occur.

Somers will also continue to review and improve emergency preparedness plans (single events) in order to be able to respond to these events in the future. Evaluating possible scenarios and preparing for unknown events before they occur is a useful exercise for a community. Such approaches help the community respond in a timely manner with the appropriate tools and resources.

Promote Sustainability / Resiliency	
Policies	
1.	Promote energy conservation / sustainability.
2.	Promote water conservation.
3.	Promote waste reduction / recycling.
4.	Educate residents about sustainability concepts.
5.	Continue to review and improve hazard mitigation plans for recurring events, such as flooding.
6.	Continue to review and improve emergency preparedness plans.
Initial Action Items	
7.	Assess the vulnerability of infrastructure (e.g., utilities, transportation, structures) to natural events, prepare for recurring events, and respond to such events when they occur.
8.	Investigate opportunities to install additional solar panels on Town facilities.
9.	Consider ways to provide redundant power supplies for shelters and other community facilities.

**Solar Installation**





## Overview

---

Somers is a desirable community and growth is expected to continue. How this growth is managed will have a significant impact on Somers community character and the quality of life for its residents.

***Somers seeks to guide development in ways that will address community needs and contribute to our character and quality of life.***

Villages



Business Development



Housing



## Enhance Somers Center

---

Somers Center has been the focus of community life for almost 300 years. Churches, civic functions, shops, and a variety of other uses central to the daily life of the community are all located here. It is a major goal of the Plan to ensure that Somers Center continues to be the focal point of the community in the future.

**Somers Inn**



**Somers Town Hall**



## Create Walkable Villages

At the present time, the function of the village is challenged by the automobile focus that has emerged. While Somers Center has some sidewalks, they are narrow in places and do not serve the full extent of the village.

Enhancing pedestrian access throughout Somers Center will add to community character and quality of life by reducing dependence on motor vehicles (traffic and parking) as well as promoting a healthier, more convenient environment for residents and visitors. In the 2004 Plan, 70 percent of residents surveyed felt the Town should do more to create walkable villages.

In order to make Somers Center a more walkable village, Somers should encourage:

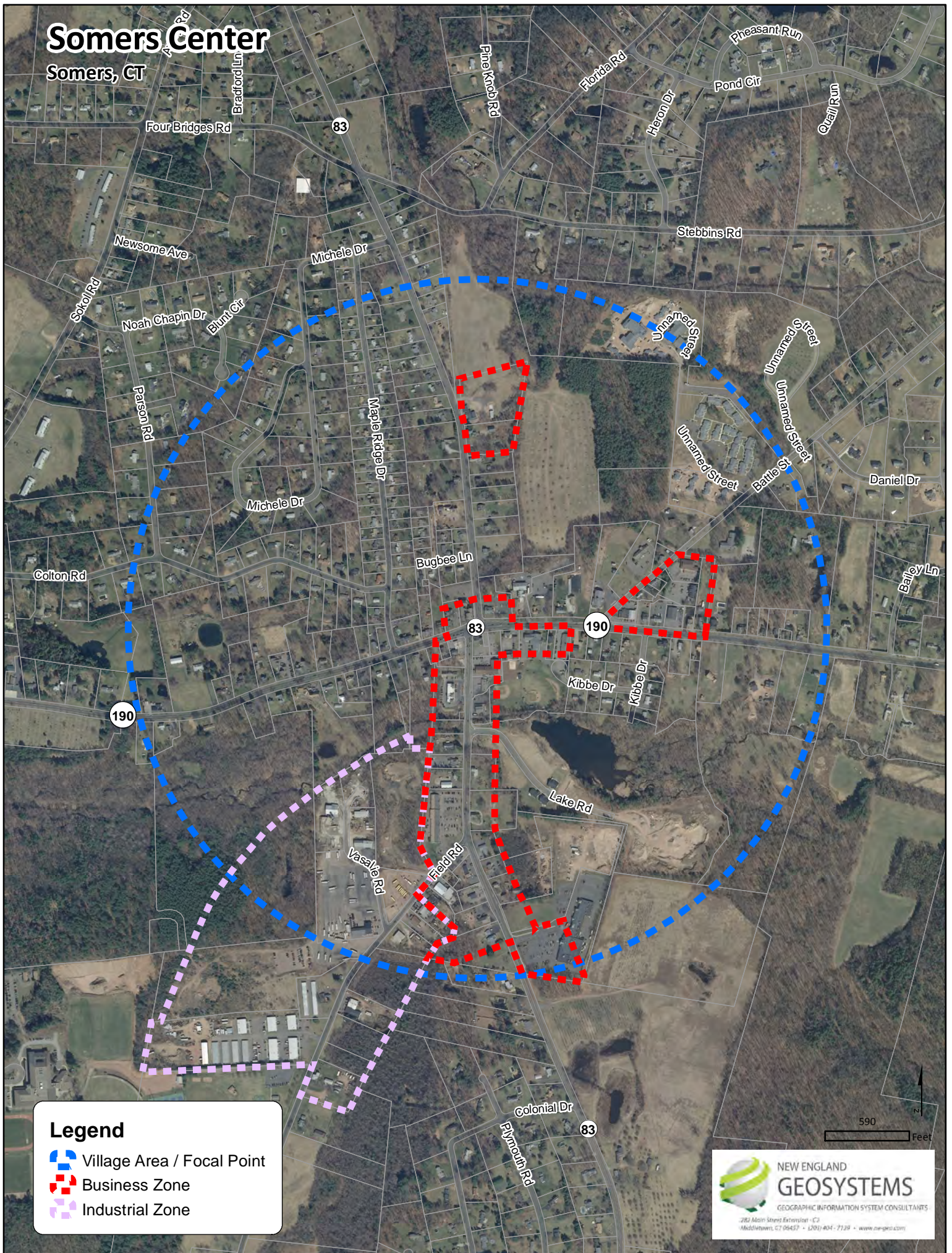
- buildings that are oriented to the street in ways that invite and support pedestrians more than automobiles,
- sidewalks throughout the area that are appropriately sized for their use,
- safe pedestrian street crossings,
- streetscape amenities such as shade trees, seating areas, and pedestrian scaled lighting, and
- pedestrian oriented business signage such as on windows and awnings.

Many of these improvements can and should be installed as improvements are made to Routes 190 and 83 or required as properties within the villages are redeveloped. Grants are also available to support these types of programs.






# Somers Center

Somers, CT



## Legend

-  Village Area / Focal Point
-  Business Zone
-  Industrial Zone



### **Establish A Village District**

One tool which is available to help preserve the character of Somers Center is a “village district” as authorized by Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes.

A “village district” allows the Zoning Commission to have greater control over the design of future development in an area and to regulate:

- the design and placement of buildings,
- the maintenance of public views,
- the design, paving materials and placement of public roadways, and
- other elements that the Commission deems appropriate to maintain and protect the character of the village district.

A “village district” is appropriate for Somers Center in order to preserve the distinctive character of this area and enhance its appearance as a traditional New England village.

**Somers Flower Shoppe**



### **Encourage Housing In and Near Somers Center**

Housing is a critical element of a successful and vibrant village center. Residents living in or near villages are less dependent on automobiles, patronize village businesses, and contribute to the vitality and sense of place that makes villages attractive.

Higher density housing (multi-family, assisted living facilities, etc.) should be focused in or near the villages not only because of their symbiotic relationship with businesses and other village functions but also because of the availability of utilities to serve them.

Mixed-use development is another way of adding to the vitality of a village. By allowing housing in combination with commercial businesses, business owners can live and work on the same premises or create rental opportunities within walking distance of village services.

**Geissler's Plaza**



In the late 1990s, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) undertook a special study of the Route 190 corridor in Enfield and Somers with the goal of solving transportation problems while maintaining and enhancing the unique characteristics of the corridor and its village centers.

The study felt that the improvements in Somers Center should be designed and constructed in a way to preserve and enhance the village character. Proposed improvements include traffic calming in the villages, and provisions for bicyclists and pedestrians.

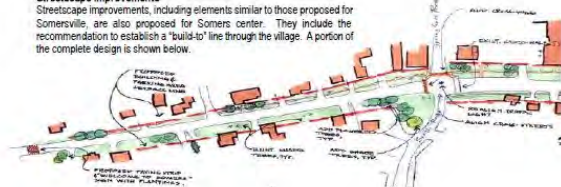
## CRCOG Strategies For Consideration For Somers Center

The primary safety and congestion problems in Somers center are associated with the offset intersection of Route 190 and Route 83. The proposed approach to correcting the problems were guided in large part by the goal of preserving the village character of Somers center. Recommended improvements are summarized below.

Realign the offset intersection by relocating the southern leg to the east, installing left-turn lanes on all four approaches, reducing the length of crosswalks, and providing more greenspace in areas where the roadway is reduced or removed. The Woodward House, which is part of this National Historic District, must be removed due to road realignment, but it should be relocated within the Historic District. Two options for the realignment were developed for the study, but the exact realignment will be determined during the design phase. Cost: \$1.52 – \$1.55 million

In the longer term, add a left-turn lane at Battle Street (not shown.) Since this is a long-term proposal, a cost estimate was not developed.

Streetscape improvements, including elements similar to those proposed for Somersville, are also proposed for Somers center. They include the recommendation to establish a "build-to" line through the village. A portion of the complete design is shown below.



-10-

**Option 1: Curved alignment of Route 83,**  
allows for provision of more greenspace.

**Option 2: Straight alignment of Route 83.**

*Option 1: Curved alignment of Route 83 allows for provision of more greenspace.*

Option 2: Straight alignment of Route 83

-1-



## Guide Development

In order to ensure the best tools are in place to guide development, a special study of Somers Center should be undertaken. The end result could be a special commercial zoning district for Somers Center.

In the meantime, the Zoning Commission should discourage retail, restaurant, and personal service uses in the I-Zone on Egypt Road and Field Road) in order to help focus commercial activity in Somers Center.

### Enhance Streetscape

The Town should devote efforts to improving the streetscape in Somers Center. Coordinated streetscape elements such as lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and tree grates, can create an attractive, comfortable pedestrian environment and add significantly to community character and sense of place.

Burial of overhead utilities can also greatly enhance the streetscape by eliminating overhead wires and allowing the unimpeded growth of street trees.

During the planning period, the Town will pursue grants and other funds to promote streetscape improvements and other programs to help promote development and redevelopment in Somers Center.

Enhance Somers Center	
Policies	
1.	Seek to make Somers Center a walkable, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use area with a sense of place.
2.	Enhance pedestrian access throughout Somers Center.
3.	Seek to create streetscape amenities such as shade trees, seating areas, and pedestrian scaled lighting to enhance Somers Center.
4.	Encourage housing within and near Somers Center.
5.	Encourage mixed-use development (business on lower floors with apartments on upper floors) within Somers Center.
Initial Action Items	
6.	Undertake a special study of land use, zoning, transportation, and other issues affecting Somers Center.
7.	Consider establishing a special commercial zoning district for Somers Center.
8.	Consider establishing a “village district” in Somers Center to ensure that new development enhances the overall village character.
9.	Encourage or require buildings in Somers Center be oriented to the street to support pedestrians more than automobiles.
10.	Adopt standards to ensure that sidewalks throughout the area are appropriately sized for their use.
11.	Seek to require pedestrian oriented business signage such as on windows and awnings.
12.	Discourage retail, restaurant, and personal service uses in the I-Zone in order to help focus commercial activity in Somers Center.
13.	Consider allowing outdoor dining within Somers Center.
14.	Pursue grants and other funds to promote streetscape improvements in Somers Center.

## Enhance Somersville Center

---

Somersville, a secondary village within Somers, came into existence in the mid- to late-1800s when a textile mill was established along the Scantic River. As the business grew and flourished in the following years, housing was built nearby for employees. Businesses to serve this population were established and the village emerged.

However, there were a number of setbacks in recent years that affected Somersville. First, the mill closed in the 1960s due to changes in the textile industry. For a number of years, the building was rented to a variety of small business operations but the employment levels never returned to the levels provided by the mill.

In the late 1980s, there was a proposal to redevelop the mill building for housing but issues related to how the floodplain elevation had been established stalled development. Then, in 2005, there was a significant flood on the Scantic River, which severely impacted the property and the adjacent roads.

Although the Town worked to have the floodplain elevations revised to allow development of the property and to establish sewage capacity for such development, the property owners did not proceed. Then in June 2012, there was a fire caused by vandalism that destroyed the mill building.

While this sequence of events changed the short-term outlook for the property, it had not changed the long-term vision for the village of Somersville.

Historical Picture



Before The Fire



After The Fire


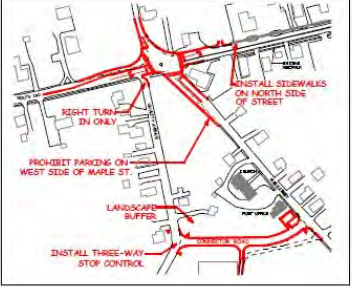

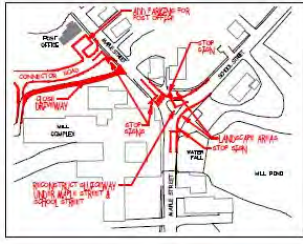
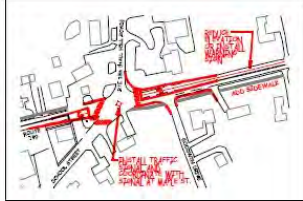
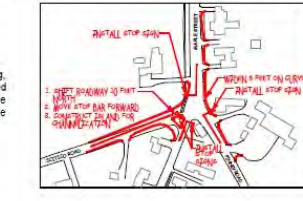
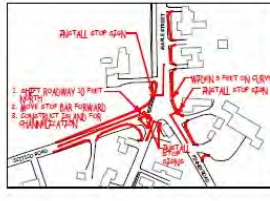


## Make Roadway Improvements

As previously indicated, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) undertook a special study of the Route 190 corridor in Enfield and Somers in the late 1990s. As for Somers Center, the study felt that improvements in Somersville Center should be designed and constructed in a way to preserve and enhance the village character.

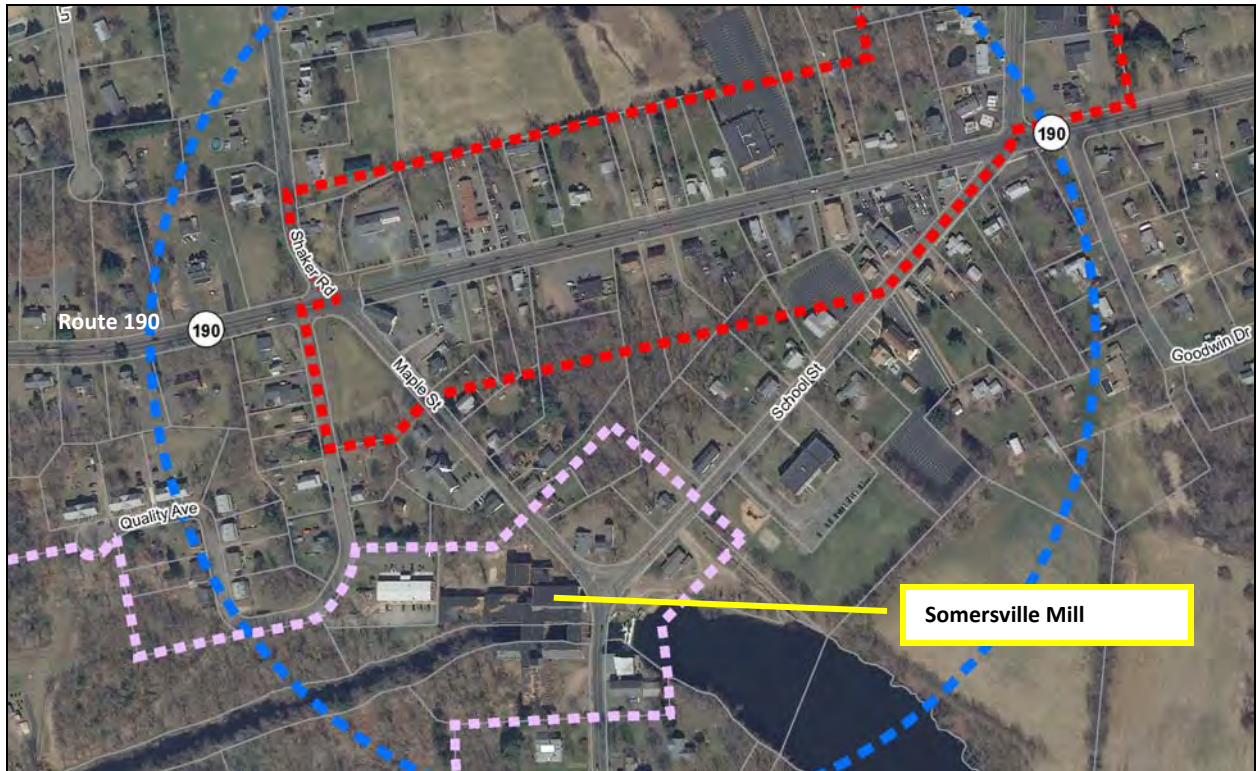
The POCD supports the implementation of roadway improvements in ways that preserve and enhance the character of Somersville Center.

### CRCOG Strategies For Consideration For Somersville Center

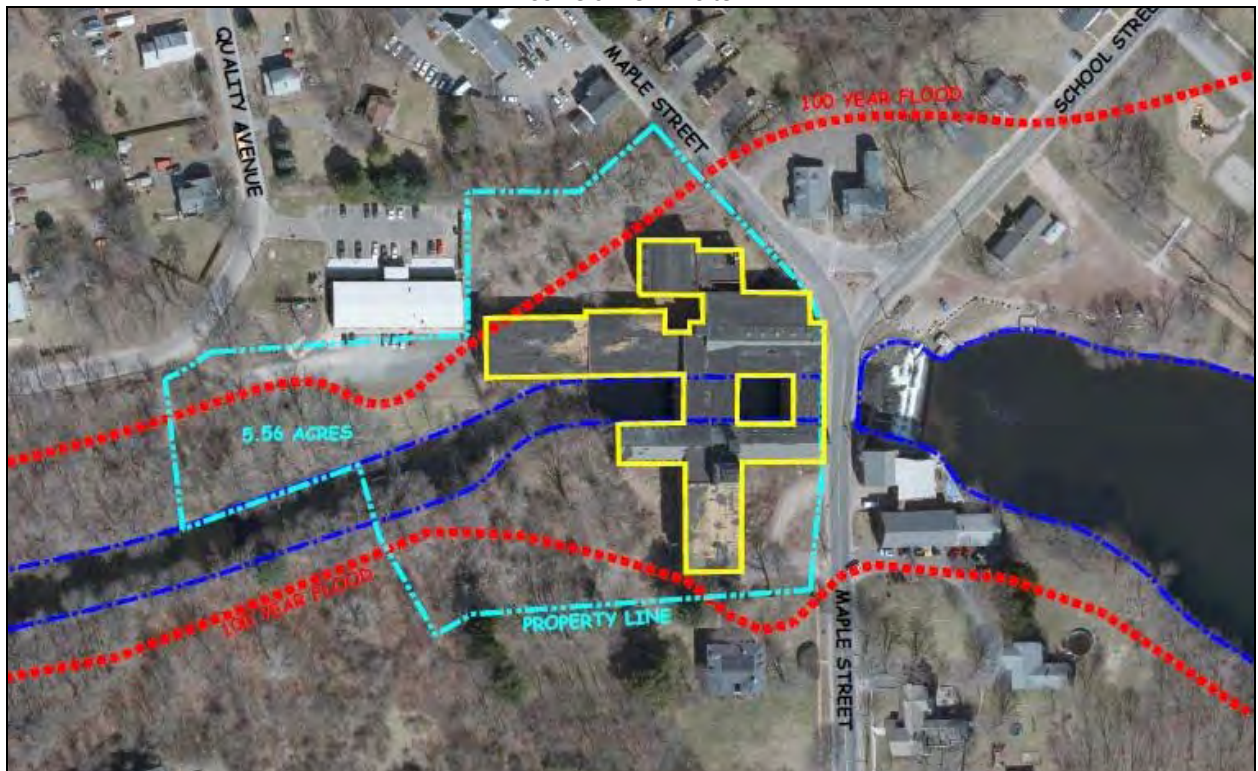
<p><b>Somers - Somersville</b></p>  <p>The village of Somersville includes a small commercial district on Route 190 and a more traditional village setting just south of Route 190. This area includes an old mill, a millpond, a historic blacksmith shop and a mix of residential and institutional uses including two churches, a school, and a post office. Suggested improvements address safety concerns throughout the village and congestion issues at the major intersections. Total cost for all items, except where noted: \$3.5 million</p> <p><b>Route 190 and Maple Street Intersection</b> Improve the Route 190, Maple Street, and Shaker Road intersection by providing left-turn lanes along Route 190, realigning Maple Street, eliminating the Quality Avenue approach to Route 190, and providing alternate access to Quality Avenue via Maple Street. Also, install sidewalks on north side of Route 190 between Shaker and Hall Hill Roads.</p>  <p><b>Streetscape Improvements</b> Streetscape improvements are proposed to enhance the village character. They include the addition of flowering and shade trees, textured crosswalks, new sidewalks and a welcome sign and special plantings at the east and west entrances to the village. A typical section of the plan is depicted to the right.</p>  <p>The plan also includes a recommendation that the town adopt a "build to" zoning regulation in which all future development is required to be built along a designated line matching the front facade of the existing buildings.</p>	<p><b>Somers - Somersville (cont.)</b></p> <p><b>Maple Street and School Street Intersection</b> Improve the intersection of Maple and School Streets by eliminating the traffic island and creating a standard T-type intersection with 3-way stop control. The proposed stop signs have already been installed by the Town.</p>  <p><b>Route 190 and School Street Intersection</b> Add a traffic signal at this intersection, with an advance warning sign on the western approach. This is an approved State project, presently under design.</p> <p>Recommended long-term improvements include adding left-turn lanes and possibly adjusting the road profile east of the intersection to improve the sight line. Cost: \$1,115,500</p>  <p><b>School Street Traffic Calming</b> Reduce traffic speeds along this village street by narrowing the roadway to 28 feet and installing raised crosswalks. Cost: \$76,000-\$87,500</p>  <p><b>Maple Street and Pinney Street Intersection</b> Improve this intersection through minor widening, channelization, and 4-way stop control. This proposed design concept has taken into consideration the sensitive nature of the historic blacksmith shop on the southeast corner of this intersection. Cost: \$82,000</p> 
---	---



### Somersville



### Somersville Mill Site



## Encourage Repurposing Of The Mill Property

The Plan of Conservation and Development recommends that the mill property be re-purposed and that efforts continue to be devoted to promoting the development and redevelopment of Somersville Center. This includes the mill area and areas of Somersville along Route 190 and adjacent streets.

In 2007, the Zoning Commission established the Somersville Center Overlay District (Section 214-86 of the Zoning Regulations) to help guide redevelopment of the mill. With the mill building slated for demolition, it may make sense to reconsider the regulatory approach. An alternative way to promote re-purposing of the mill site might be through establishment of a special zoning district (often referred to as a “planned development district” or a “design development district”). This is discussed as part of the case study on the facing page.

The location and character of the mill property make it ideal for a number of alternative uses. In addition to contributing to the overall economic base of the community, this redevelopment will also provide an “anchor” for the village of Somersville.

### Establish A Riverway

Concepts for re-purposing the mill property should consider the possibility for establishing a “riverway” along the Scantic River.

### Establish A Village District

A “village district” is appropriate for Somersville Center in order to preserve the distinctive character of this area and enhance its appearance as a traditional New England village.

## Enhance The Streetscape

Coordinated streetscape elements such as lighting, benches, trash receptacles, and tree grates, can create an attractive, comfortable pedestrian environment and add significantly to community character and sense of place. The Town will continue to pursue grants and other funds to promote streetscape improvements and other programs to help promote development and redevelopment in Somersville. To date, the Town has obtained over \$3,000,000 in State and Federal grants for bridge improvements, streetscape improvements (sidewalks, lighting, street trees, etc.) and environmental testing.

Burial of overhead utilities can also greatly enhance the streetscape by eliminating overhead wires and allowing the unimpeded growth of street trees.

Enhance Somersville Center
Policies
1. Seek to make Somersville Center a walkable, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use area with a sense of place.
2. Promote appropriate development and redevelopment within Somersville Center.
3. Encourage and promote re-purposing of the Mill site.
4. Promote development of a pedestrian-friendly streetscape in Somersville.
5. Seek opportunities to enhance the natural beauty of the Scantic River corridor and create opportunities for public access along the river.
6. Consider a design development district for the Somersville Manufacturing Company site.
Initial Action Items
7. Continue to pursue grants and other funds to improve the streetscape in Somersville.

### **CASE STUDY – Planned Development District**

A “planned development district” is a zoning district where the requirements for the zone once established would be the actual site plan being reviewed by the Zoning Commission. This is considered to be a “floating zone” and has been authorized by the Connecticut courts. This type of approach offers maximum flexibility in allowing and regulating a specific development proposal.

Since the Zoning Commission has considerable discretion when it acts in a legislative capacity (such as for zone changes and regulation changes), reviewing and approving the actual site plan is much more definitive than reviewing words or numbers.

This type of approach may be most applicable when used for special or unique developments that may be appropriate in one location but might not be appropriate everywhere within the district. This approach gives the Zoning Commission significantly more control over an application than either a Special Permit or a Site Plan application.

This type of approach might be considered for the Somersville Mill site.

A number of communities around Connecticut have adopted “planned development districts” (sometimes called “special development districts” or by other names):

- West Hartford
- Stonington
- Mansfield
- Southbury
- Windsor
- Branford
- Ridgefield
- Simsbury
- New Haven
- Stamford



## Promote Economic Development

Business development is important to Somers residents for a number of reasons:

- making goods and services available,
- providing jobs, and
- growing the tax base in order to support local services.

While Somers may not become a major business destination, it still has economic development potential and needs to make the most of the opportunities it does have to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses. Overall, there is enough demand in Somers to support more local businesses provided:

- local businesses provide what people want and need (especially the basic necessities of daily living), and
- residents shop locally rather than travel to other places.

Somers can seek to maintain and grow the local economy through:

- supporting start-ups and home-based businesses,
- seeking to develop destinations attractive to tourists and visitors,
- providing for “fiscal positive” types of housing (with few school children), and
- retaining State PILOT payments (for the correctional institutions and other State facilities).

### Guide Building And Site Design

While residents have indicated they want more business development, they have also indicated they care about the appearance of such development. The Plan recommends the establishment of “village districts” in Somers Center (see page 34) and Somersville Center (see page 40) and the establishment of a design review process (see page 26).

## Improve Development Standards

Somers should also review other development standards that guide business and industrial development to ensure that appropriate standards are in place for such things as parking, landscaping, buffers, lighting, waste disposal, and signage.

### Encourage Property Improvements

Community character and appearance can also be enhanced by encouraging and supporting the improvement and renovation of existing properties. For example, some towns have established facade improvement programs funded by State grants. Other towns have adopted a tax abatement program under CGS Section 12-65 to reduce the tax increase that could otherwise result from building improvements.

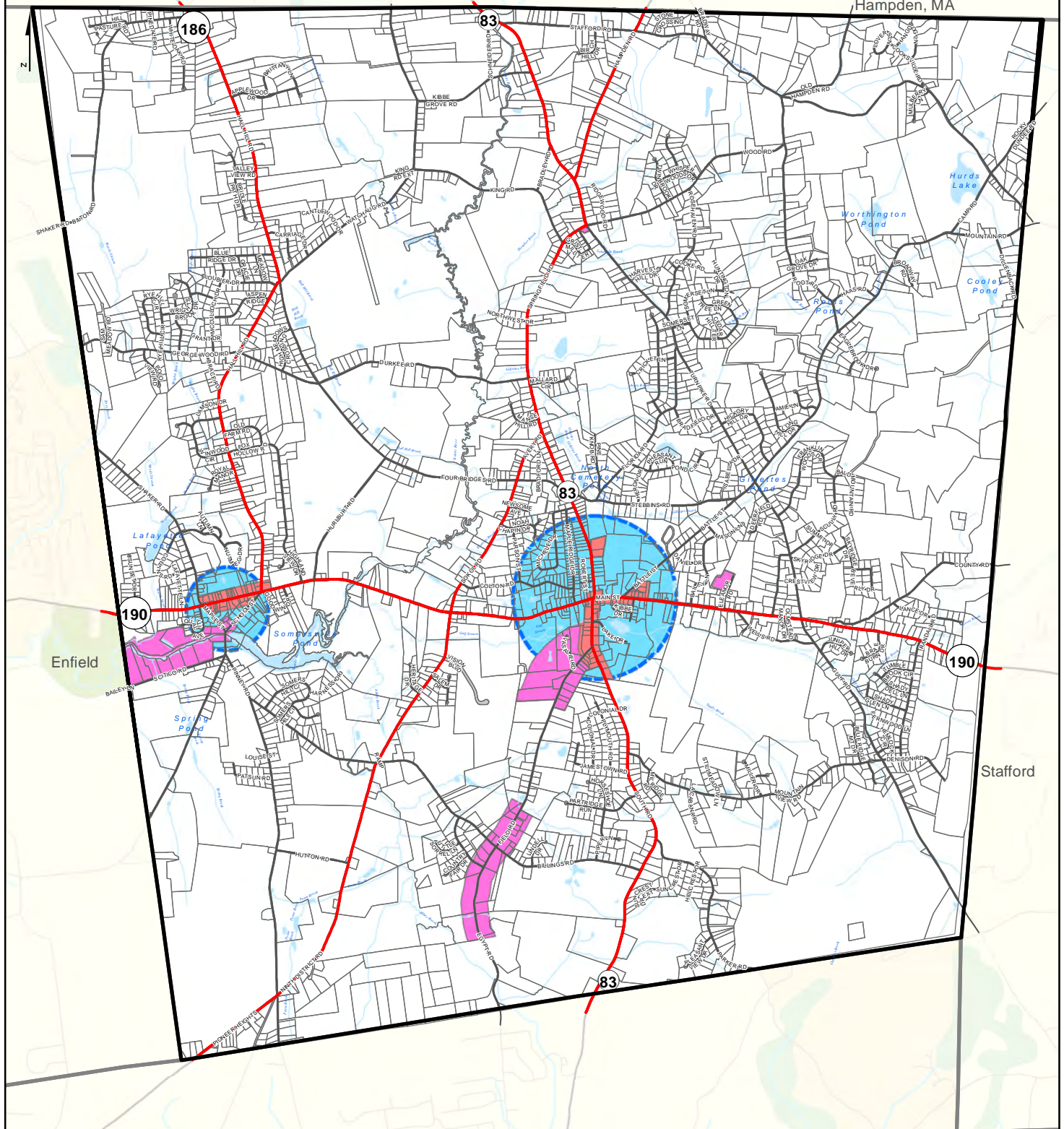
Promote Economic Development	
Policies	
1.	Seek to attract and encourage businesses that meet residents everyday needs.
2.	Seek to diversify the tax base.
3.	Promote home-based businesses.
4.	Encourage tourist-based businesses.
5.	Pursue restoration of statutory PILOT payment funding levels.
6.	Guide business development in ways that will enhance overall character of the community.
7.	Encourage property improvements.
Initial Action Items	
8.	Revise, as necessary, the development standards located in the Zoning Regulations to ensure that future development is compatible with the character of the community.
9.	Consider establishing programs to support and encourage property improvements.

# Business Development Map





Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Legend

-  Village Area / Focal Point
-  Existing Business Zones
-  Existing Industrial Zones
-  Residential Zones

2,900  
Feet

## Improve Residential Patterns

If Somers wishes to preserve its overall character, it should consider encouraging or requiring “open space development” patterns. See pages 18-19 for a discussion of this concept.

In order to make the choice of development pattern neutral, Somers should consider utilizing the same approach to limit the number of lots in a subdivision as is codified in Section 214-141.

Some town have made “open space development” patterns the default approach and required a special permit for a “conventional” type development. Somers may wish to consider doing the same.

During the planning period, Somers may wish to revisit the A-1 zoning district and determine whether this district, which is so similar to the A zoning district serves a useful purpose.

## Improve Residential Patterns

### Policies

1. Promote residential development patterns that preserve Somers rural character.
2. Consider utilizing the same approach to limit the number of lots in a conventional subdivision and an open space subdivision as is codified in Section 214-141 of the Zoning Regulations.

### Initial Action Items

3. During the planning period, revisit the A-1 zoning district and its locations to determine whether this district (which is so similar to the A zoning district) serves a useful purpose.

**New House Under Construction**



**Existing Home**



**Woodcrest Senior Housing**



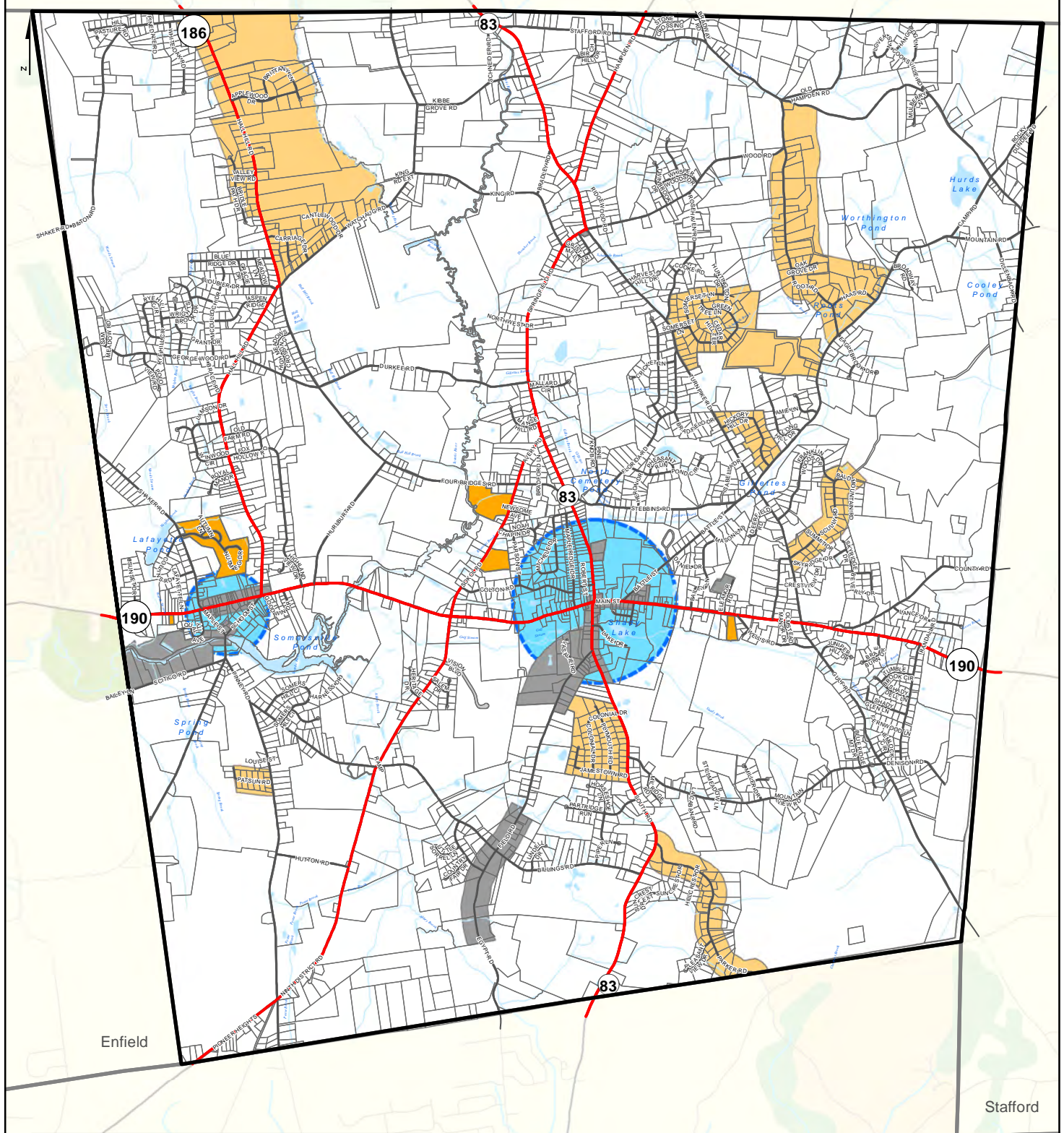


# Residential Development Map

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Legend

- Low Density - Single Family
- Low Density - Single Family / Two-Family
- Existing Multi-Family Residential Use
- Possible Housing Opportunity Area
- Non-Residential Zones

2,900 Feet

## Address Changing Housing Needs

There are two housing needs that should be considered in Somers:

- Housing units suitable for an aging population, and
- Housing for moderate-income households and first-time buyers.

### Housing For An Aging Population

As Somers' age composition changes and as the number of households comprised of older residents increases, experience in other communities suggests that there will be increasing interest in alternative forms of housing.

During the planning period, Somers should consider ways to provide for some housing diversity (condominiums, apartments, congregate care, etc.) designed to meet the needs and desires of older residents. This can include such features as first floor master bedrooms, no threshold entries, "universal design", and similar features.

There may also be increased interest in accessory apartments and housing for income-limited elderly households.

For those people who choose to remain in their existing home, Somers might anticipate increased demand for elderly programs such as meals-on-wheels, dial-a-ride, and other services which allow these residents to maintain their relative independence.

There may also be increased interest and demand for elderly tax relief programs for age- and income-eligible residents.

## Housing for a Diversity of Incomes

Somers may also have a need during the planning period for housing for moderate-income households and first-time homebuyers.

Some communities have addressed this need by the following types of programs:

- Requiring all new residential developments to address housing affordability by creating units or paying a fee ("inclusionary zoning")
- Charging an affordable housing fee as part of any zoning permit
- Establishing a "housing fund"
- Establishing an "incentive housing zone" as authorized by CGS Section 8-13m
- Working with Habitat for Humanity, churches or other organizations to construct small-scale projects,

Somers may wish to consider similar approaches or other approaches.

Address Changing Housing Needs	
Policies	
1.	Recognize the need for housing options for an aging population.
2.	Recognize the need for housing options for a diversity of incomes.
3.	Monitor the availability of adequate housing options for seniors.
Initial Action Items	
4.	Consider clearly allowing accessory apartments in residential zones.
5.	Explore ways to diversify Somers' housing portfolio.



## Overview

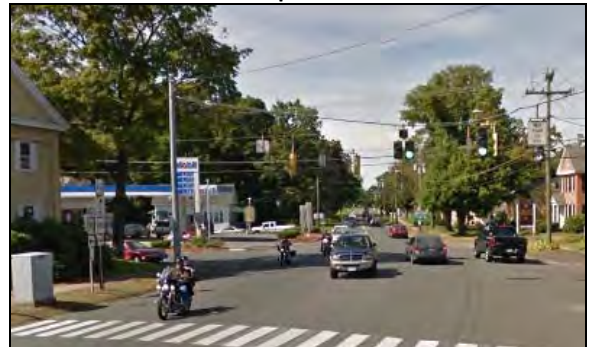
Services and facilities such as municipal buildings, roadways, and utilities help support the type of community that Somers has indicated it wants to be. Such services and facilities also affect residents' quality of life.

***By providing for adequate facilities and services, Somers can maintain and enhance residents' quality of life.***

### Community Facilities



### Transportation



### Infrastructure





## Address Community Facility Needs

Community facilities support important community functions such as education, public safety, and recreation and contribute significantly to the quality of life in Somers.

Somers has addressed a number of community facility needs in recent years and these efforts should continue.

***Community facilities and services are major contributing factors in determining the overall quality of life in Somers.***

Some community facility issues may warrant consideration during the planning period:

- maintaining existing buildings and facilities
- providing adequate storage space for Town records
- providing adequate storage space for Town equipment
- providing adequate sports fields
- monitoring the need for a firehouse to better serve northern Somers
- anticipating staff and space needs at the Senior Center due to the growing senior population
- maintaining adequate staffing for fire and emergency medical services (EMS)
- monitoring school enrollment trends and projections

For all municipal facilities, consideration should be given to acquiring additional land adjacent to each facility as it becomes available in order to be able to provide for possible future expansion.

Address Community Facility Needs	
Policies	
1.	Maintain the buildings and facilities already existing.
2.	Provide adequate storage space for Town records.
3.	Provide adequate storage space for Town equipment.
4.	Provide adequate sports fields, preferably in close proximity to existing fields.
5.	Monitor the need for a firehouse to better serve northern Somers.
6.	Anticipate staff and space needs at the Senior Center due to the growing senior population.
7.	Maintain adequate staffing for fire and emergency medical services (EMS).
8.	Monitor school enrollment trends and projections.
9.	For all municipal facilities, consider acquiring additional land adjacent to each facility as it becomes available in order to be able to provide for possible future expansion.
10.	Update municipal facilities to meet anticipated needs.

**School Campus**

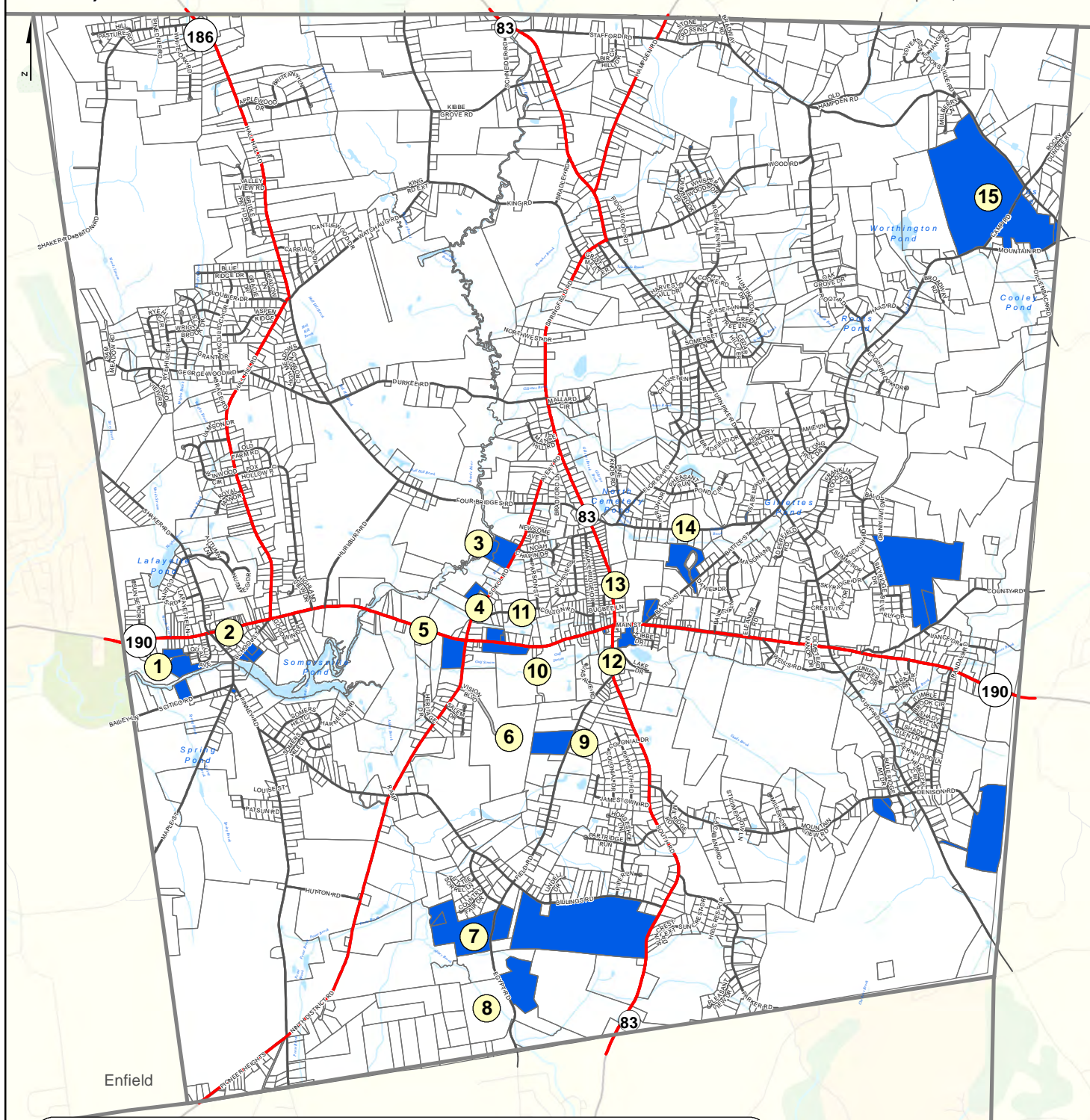


# Community Facilities

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Legend

### Other

1. Sewer Treatment Plant
2. Mill Pond Playhouse
4. Cemetery
6. School/Library Campus
7. Highway Garage
8. Transfer Station and Dog Pound
10. Cemetery
13. Historical Society
14. Cemetery

### Public Safety Facilities

5. Firehouse
11. Somer's Police Department

### Town Hall/Community Centers

12. Town Hall and Piedmont Hall
13. Kibbe-Fuller Community Center, Historical Society and Senior Center

### Schools

6. School/Library Campus

### Recreation

2. Ballfields
3. Soccer/T-Ball Fields
9. Recreational Park
12. Ballfields

Stafford

Ellington

2,900  
Feet

## Address Vehicular Transportation

Overall, Somers has a well-connected road network allowing relatively easy north-south and east-west travel.

Roads primarily intended to carry regional traffic and serve major activity centers are called arterial roads. In Somers, these roadways include:

- Main Street (RT 190)
- Springfield/South Roads (RT 83)
- Hall Hill Road (RT 186)
- Turnpike Road (SR 528)

Roads intended to serve business areas and/or distribute traffic between arterial roads and neighborhoods are called collector roads. In Somers, these roadways include:

- Avery Road
- Battle Street
- Billings Road
- Bilton Road
- Bradway Road
- Egypt Road
- Field Road
- Four Bridges Road
- George Wood Road
- Gulf Road
- Hampden Road
- King Road
- Maple Street
- Mountain Road
- Mountain View Road
- Ninth District Road
- Pinney Road
- Pioneer Heights
- Root Road
- School Street
- Shaker Road
- Sokol Road
- Stafford Road
- Stebbins Road
- Watchaug Road (east of Hall Hill Road)
- Woods Road

Other roads in Somers (local roads) are primarily intended to provide access to abutting properties and not serve major through traffic.

Road network issues facing Somers include:

- Somers and Somersville are in need of transportation improvements to calm traffic, enhance walkability and create/maintain a sense of place;
- promoting access management along major roadways;
- maintaining pavement quality; and
- changes in road design and parking standards (including lighting) may be desirable to reduce stormwater runoff and enhance community character.

Address Vehicular Transportation
Policies
1. Make road improvements as necessary to maintain public safety.
2. On arterial and collector roads, consider the need for shared driveways, interconnected parking lots, and similar measures to reduce curb cuts and maximize the movement of through traffic.
3. Keep road maintenance funded and on schedule to avoid more costly repairs in the future.
4. Reduce impervious surfaces using porous pavement systems, deferred parking and shared parking requirements where appropriate.
5. Encourage implementation of the recommendations from the CROG Route 190 Study (see page 35 and page 38).
Initial Action Items
6. Pursue improvements to the intersection of Route 190 at Route 83 with the Connecticut Department of Transportation.
7. Reevaluate parking requirements and standards and make adjustments as necessary.

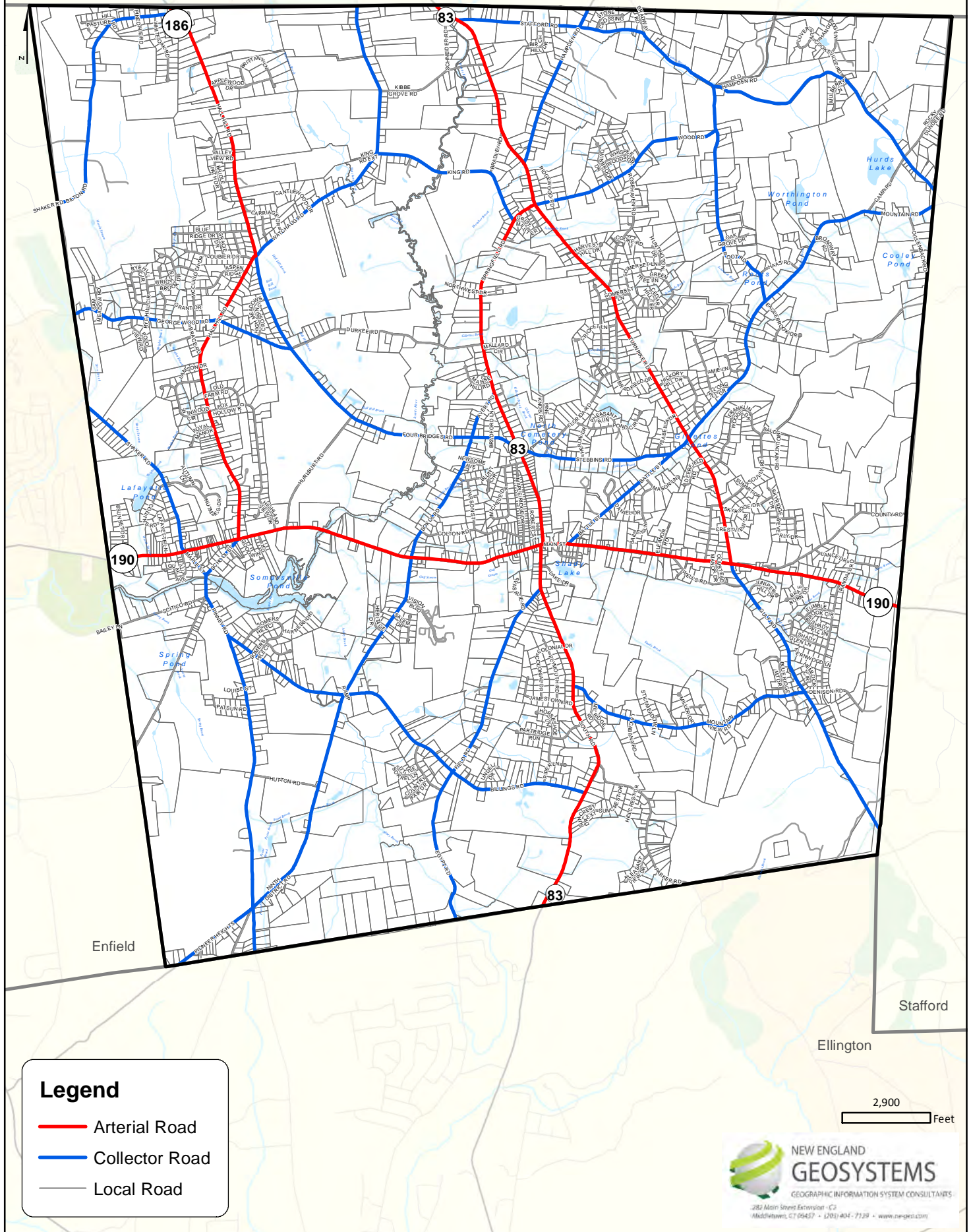


# Vehicular Transportation Map

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Promote Transportation Alternatives

### 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.

### Bicycle Routes

Due to scenery, terrain and lower traffic volumes, Somers has significant potential to be recognized as a bicycle-friendly community. The types of bicycle facilities that may be appropriate in Somers include:

- shared roadway,
- wide curb lane,
- shoulder bikeway, or
- multi-use trails.

Whenever practical, road improvement projects should consider bicycle circulation by providing such measures as wide paved shoulders (even by narrowing lane widths for cars).

### Transit Services

As a rural community, Somers has very little in the way of transit services for residents.

However, there is a “dial-a-ride” service for elderly or disabled residents that allows them to shop, visit doctors and perform other activities. Somers should monitor usage of this service due to the anticipated growth in the senior population.

Promote Transportation Alternatives	
Policies	
1.	Require or provide for sidewalks in Somers Center and Somersville Center (including crosswalks and other safety enhancements).
2.	Provide multi-use trails between villages and activity nodes.
3.	Enhance and protect the existing hiking trail system throughout Town.
4.	Accommodate bicycles whenever practical in road and site development projects.
5.	Monitor the dial-a-ride service to anticipate future demand.
Initial Action Items	
6.	Review and revise sidewalk standards as appropriate.
7.	Seek to be recognized as a “heart healthy” community.
8.	Seek to be designated as a bicycle-friendly community.

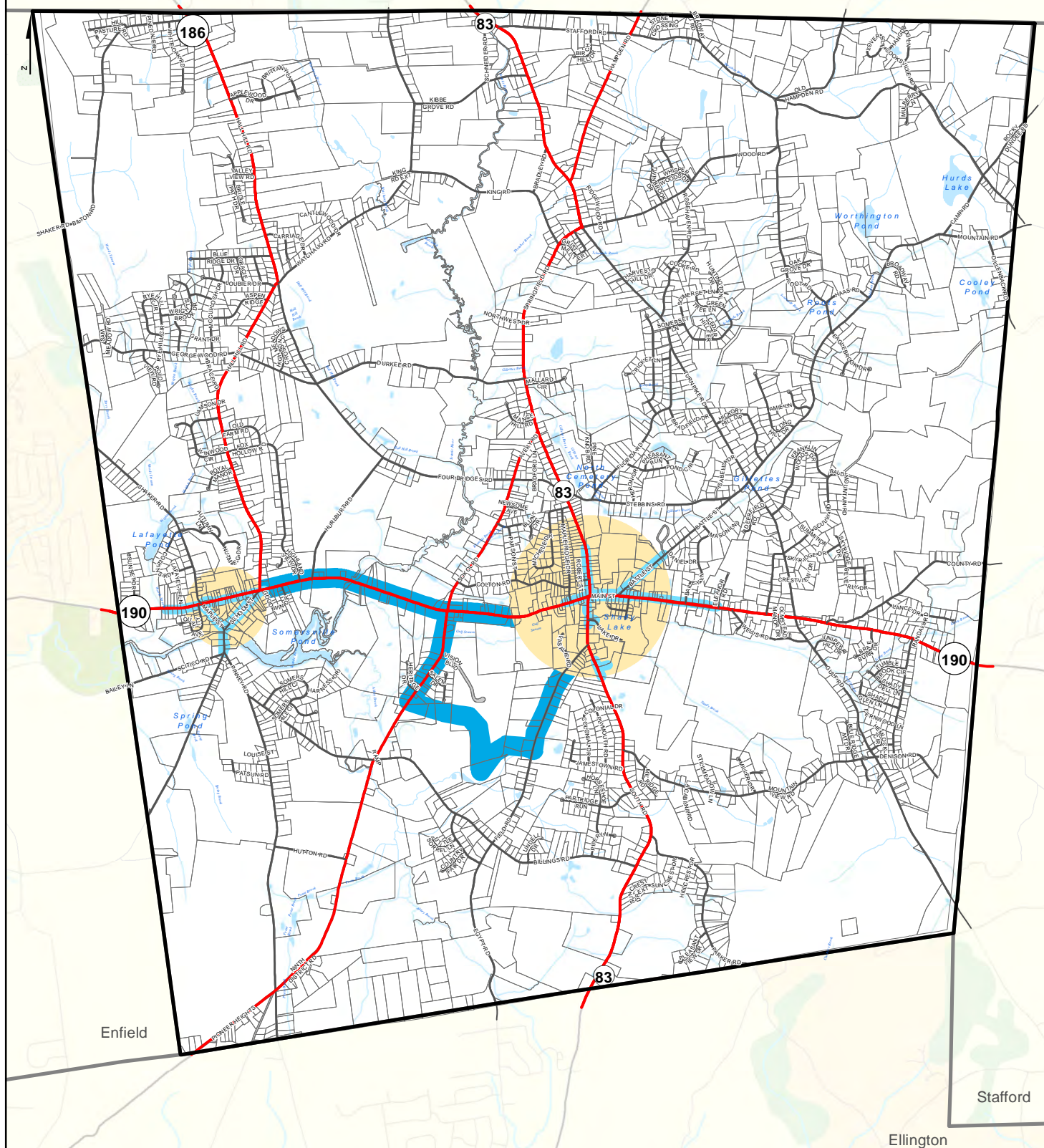


# Pedestrian / Bicycle Map

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Legend

- Existing Sidewalks
- Sidewalk Priority Areas
- Important Pedestrian Connections

2,900

Feet



NEW ENGLAND  
**GEOSYSTEMS**

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM CONSULTANTS

282 Main Street Extension • C2  
Middlebury, CT 06457 • (802) 404-7139 • [www.nengs.com](http://www.nengs.com)



## **Provide For Utility Services**

---

### **Water Service**

While most properties in Somers rely on private wells, public water service is available in Somers Center, Somersville and some adjacent areas from the Connecticut Water Company and the Hazardville Water Company.

Both water systems have adequate capacity to meet demand over the next decade and beyond. Efforts are being dedicated to providing fire hydrants in the villages and water supplies for fire response in outlying parts of the community. Interconnection of the two water systems is also recommended for possible future emergency use.

### **Sewer Service**

While most properties in Somers rely on private septic systems, sewer service exists in three areas in Somers:

- Somersville (managed by the Somers Water Pollution Control Authority),
- State correctional facilities in the northwest corner of Somers (through an independent arrangement with Enfield), and
- the Maple Ridge Road area in Somers Center (served by a community septic system managed by the Somers Water Pollution Control Authority).

The treatment plant on the Scantic River in Somersville has been expanded to accommodate future development in this area and the repurposing of the Somersville Mill property.

These arrangements are expected to be adequate for the planning period.

### **Stormwater Drainage**

Storm drainage in most areas of Somers is accomplished by structural systems (catch basins, pipes, and culverts) or by sheet flow off impervious surfaces such as roads, roofs and parking areas.

During the planning period, it is anticipated that Somers will transition to “low impact development” (LID) approaches where storm water quality and quantity is managed more by non-structural systems. By addressing stormwater runoff closer to where the raindrop falls, LID approaches can help promote groundwater recharge, reduce the frequency or severity of flooding, and address water quality.

### **Natural Gas**

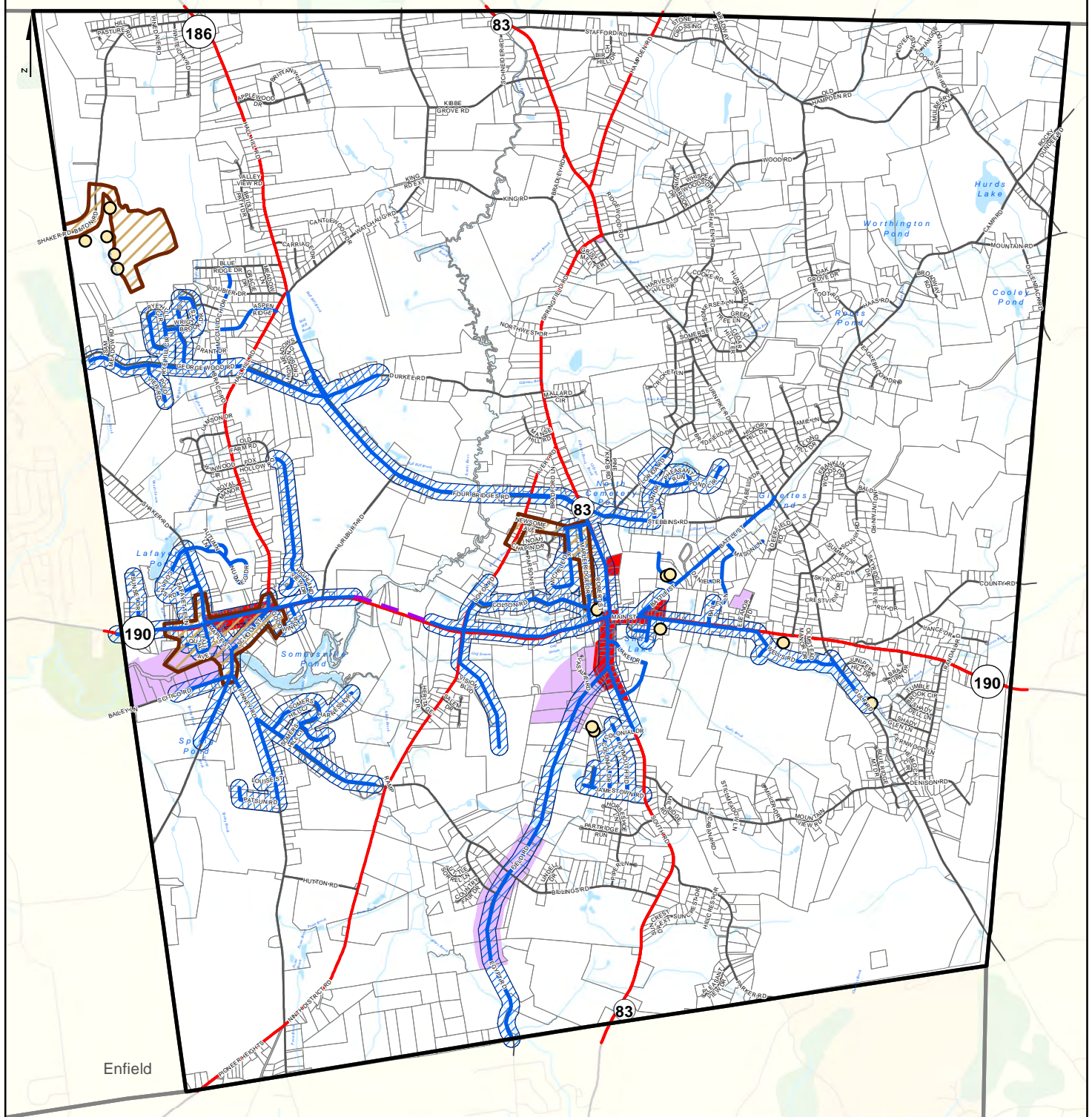
While natural gas service is not presently available in Somers, there are plans to extend natural gas from Enfield to Stafford along Route 190. Somers should support this project since it will make natural gas service available within Somers in the future.

# Utilities Infrastructure

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Legend

Community Well



Sewer Service Area

Existing Water Service Line



Business Zone

Recommended Water Service Line



Industrial Zone



Water Service Area



Water and Watercourses

2,900

Feet



NEW ENGLAND  
GEOSYSTEMS

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM CONSULTANTS

282 Main Street Extension • C2  
Middlebury, CT 06457 • (802) 404-7139 • www.nengs.com

## Electrical Service

Electricity is delivered locally by Connecticut Light and Power Company. Electric service in Somers is reported to be reliable town-wide and should be able to meet both current and anticipated future needs.

The main threat to electrical reliability in Somers is downed power lines due to storm events. Electrical lines can be protected by placing them underground as opportunities present themselves although this can be very expensive. Finding an appropriate balance between tree-lined streets and electrical reliability will be an on-going issue.

## Wired Communication

Wired communication services (telephone, cable, internet) are available town-wide to meet current and anticipated future needs. As the use of digital communication devices grows, Somers should seek ways to enhance the capacity and speed of wired communication services.

## Wireless Communication

More and more communications are happening on wireless devices and Somers should seek to enhance the coverage, capacity and speed of wireless communication services.

As people may migrate away from “wired” communications in the future to wireless devices, Somers should evaluate the best ways to address this trend. Finding an appropriate balance between a rural landscape and the quality and reliability of wireless communications will be an on-going issue.

Provide For Utility Services	
Policies	
1.	Continue efforts to providing fire hydrants in the villages and water supplies for fire response in outlying parts of the community.
2.	Encourage interconnection of the water systems for possible future emergency use.
3.	Maintain sewage capacity to address community needs.
4.	Transition to “low impact development” (LID) approaches.
5.	Support the extension of natural gas from Enfield to Stafford along Route 190.
6.	Seek to find an appropriate balance between tree-lined streets and electrical reliability.
7.	Seek to place electrical lines underground as opportunities present themselves.
8.	Seek ways to enhance the capacity and speed of wired communication services.
9.	Seek to enhance the coverage, capacity and speed of wireless communication services.
10.	Find an appropriate balance between a rural landscape and the quality and reliability of wireless communications.





## Overview

---

The recommendations of each of the preceding chapters can be combined to present an overall Future Land Use Plan for Somers. The Future Land Use Plan is a reflection of the stated goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Plan.

In essence, the Future Land Use Plan is a statement of what the Somers of tomorrow should look like.

***The Future Land Use Plan  
depicts the Plan's recommendations  
for the future conservation and  
development of Somers...***

**Conservation**



**Development**



**Infrastructure**



## Future Land Use Categories

---

### NATURAL RESOURCES / OPEN SPACE

<b>Natural Resources</b>	Areas with significant environmental constraints (wetlands, watercourses, steep slopes, floodplains, etc.) that are high priorities for conservation.
<b>Open Space</b>	Areas currently preserved and/or used for open space purposes including farmland that protected from future development by the purchase of development rights.

### AGRICULTURE

<b>Existing Farms</b>	Areas currently being farmed and where farming is desired in the future.
-----------------------	--

### RESIDENTIAL AREAS

<b>Low Density</b>	Areas where environmental conditions are suitable for residential densities of approximately one dwelling unit per acre or less.
<b>Multi-Family</b>	Areas where multiple dwelling units exist.

### BUSINESS AREAS

<b>Business</b>	Areas that have been, and are intended to be, developed with retail, personal service, and office facilities. Residential uses may be allowed in combination with these uses in village environments.
<b>Industrial</b>	Areas that have been, and are intended to be, developed with office and industrial development and similar facilities.

### OTHER AREAS

<b>Community Facility / Institutional</b>	Areas that have been developed or are intended to develop with community facilities and/or institutional uses.
<b>Village Area / Focal Point</b>	Areas which may have potential for mixed uses and more intensive development in a pedestrian-oriented and village-type setting.

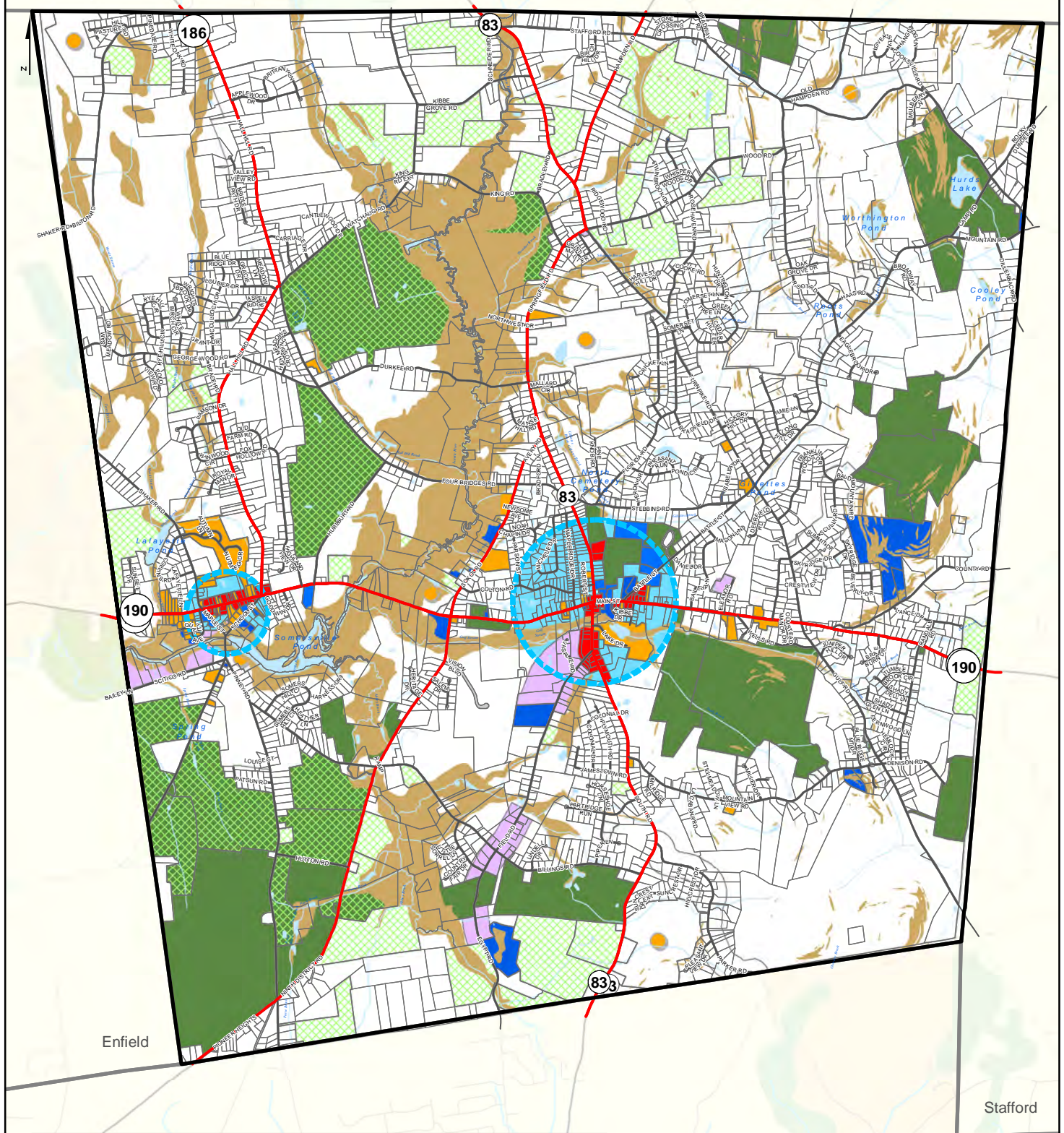


# Future Land Use Plan

Somers, CT

East Longmeadow, MA

Hampden, MA



## Legend

- |                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Natural Resources        | Business                           |
| Open Space               | Industrial                         |
| Existing Farms           | Community Facility / Institutional |
| Low Density Residential  | Village Area / Focal Point         |
| Multi-Family Residential |                                    |



## Plan Consistency

### State - Locational Guide Map

In accordance with CGS Section 8-23, this POCD was compared with the 2013-18 State Conservation and Development Policies Plan and found to be generally consistent with that Plan and its Locational Guide Map except that the “priority funding areas” do not reflect Town desires.

Somers believes the Village Area / Focal Points” identified in this POCD should be identified and designated as “priority funding areas.”

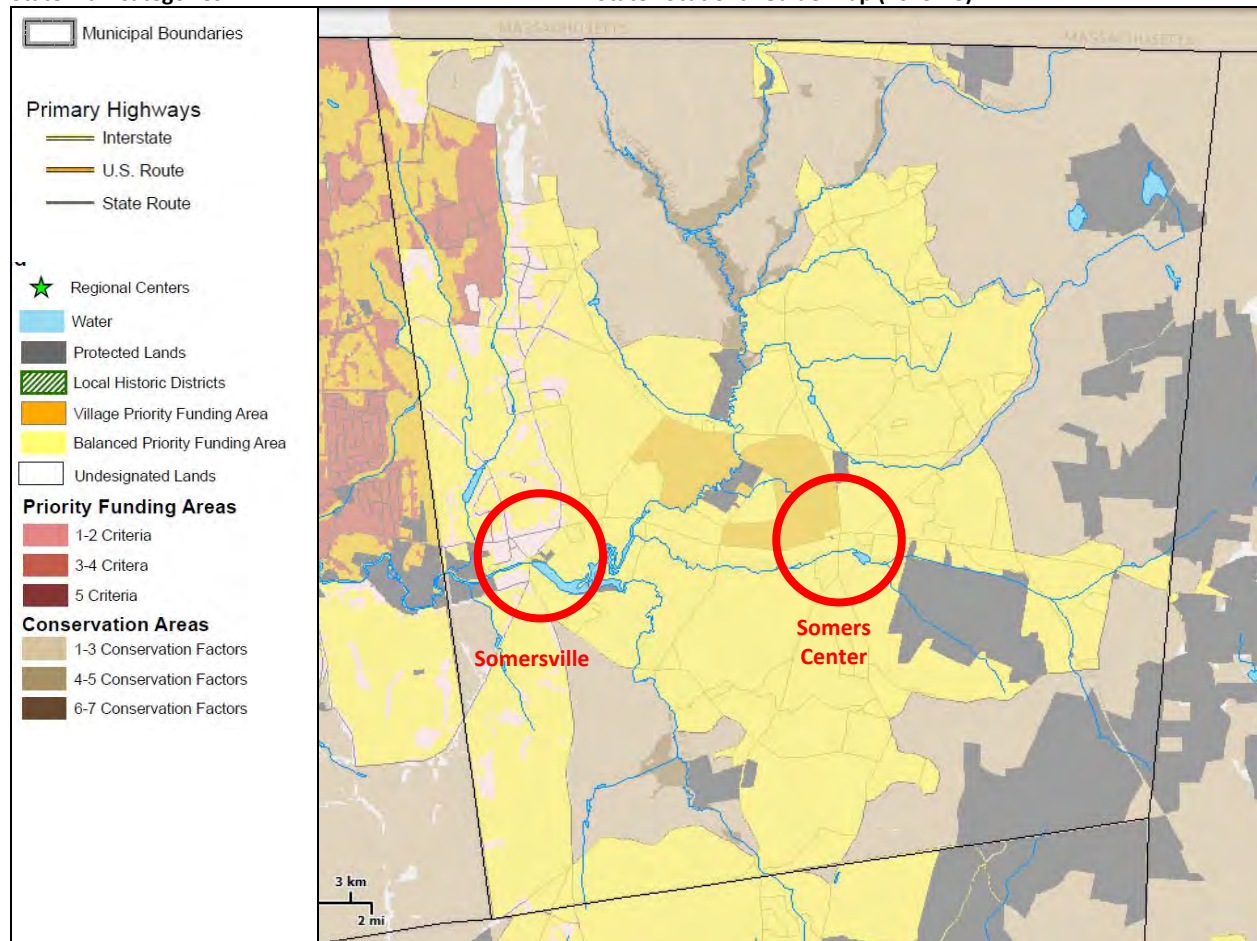
As part of the next State Plan update process, Somers will work with the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management to revisit the delineation of the “priority funding areas” shown in the State Plan.

***Somers’ vision for its future conservation and development is generally consistent with the State plan ...***

***... except that Somers Center and Somersville are not clearly designated as “Priority Funding Areas”***

### State Plan Categories

### State Locational Guide Map (2013-18)



## State Growth Principles

In accordance with CGS Section 8-23, the Plan of Conservation and Development was evaluated for consistency with statewide growth management principles and found to be generally consistent with those principles.

***Somers' vision is generally consistent with the State's growth management principles ...***

<b>Principle 1 – Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas of mixed-land uses with existing or planned physical infrastructure.</b>	<p><b>FINDING – Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan encourages appropriate growth in Somers Center and Somersville, which are mixed use areas. Development of each area will occur in accordance with soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity.</p>
<b>Principle 2 – Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.</b>	<p><b>FINDING –Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan recommends that Somers seek to diversify its housing “portfolio” and address recognized housing needs – housing that is more affordable and housing for an aging population.</p>
<b>Principle 3 – Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options and land reuse.</b>	<p><b>FINDING – Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan continues with the overall zoning framework of more intensive development in Somers Center and Somersville.</p>
<b>Principle 4 – Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.</b>	<p><b>FINDING – Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan identifies the importance of protecting important community resources such as the natural environment, farmland, open spaces, and historic resources.</p>
<b>Principle 5 – Protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety.</b>	<p><b>FINDING – Consistent</b></p> <p>The Plan contains recommendations to protect environmental assets critical to public health and safety. In particular, the Plan stresses the importance of protecting water quality.</p>
<b>Principle 6 – Integrate planning across all levels of government to address issues on a local, regional, and statewide basis.</b>	<p><b>FINDING – Consistent</b></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"> <li>• adjacent communities,</li> <li>• regional organizations, and</li> <li>• state agencies.</li> </ul>

## Regional Plan

In addition, this Plan was compared with the 2014-24 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development adopted by the Capitol Region Council of Governments and found to be generally consistent with that Plan except that the “municipal focus areas” do not reflect the “Village Area / Focal Point” locations identified in this POCD.

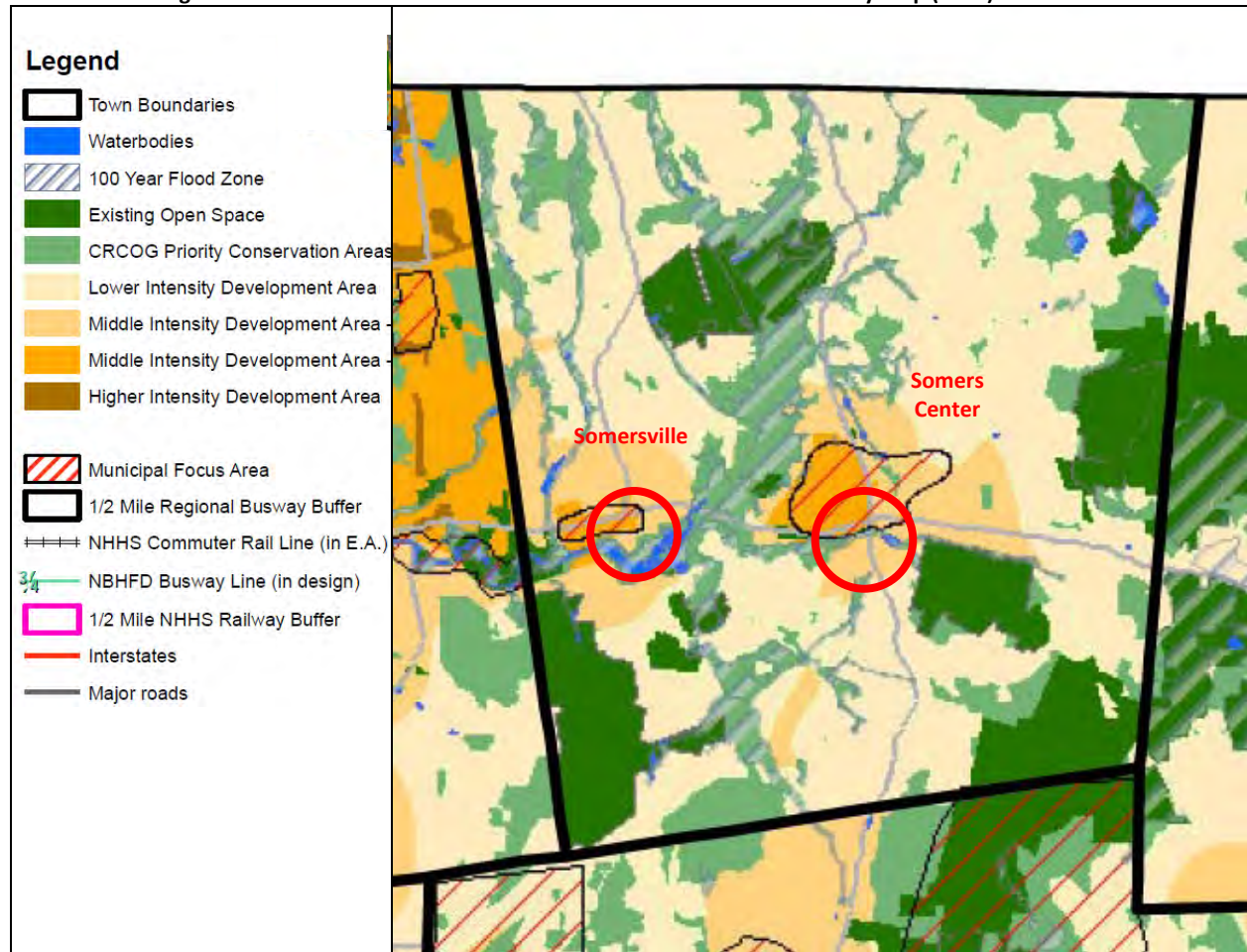
As part of the next regional plan update process, Somers will work with the Capitol Region Council of Governments to revisit the delineation of the “municipal focus areas” shown in the regional plan.

***Somers’ vision is generally consistent with CRCOG’s regional land use plan ...***

***... except that Somers Center and Somersville are not clearly designated as “Municipal Focus Areas”***

### CRCOG Plan Categories

### CRCOG Land Use Policy Map (2014)







## Overview

---

Implementation of the Plan, which is the main goal of the planning process, should be an ongoing priority.

While some recommendations can be carried out in a relatively short period of time, others may only be realized by the end of the planning period or beyond. Since some recommendations may involve additional study or a commitment of fiscal resources, their implementation may take place over several years or occur in stages.

The Planning Commission can implement many of the recommendations of the Plan of Conservation and Development through regulation amendments, application reviews, and other means and has the primary responsibility of overseeing the implementation of all of the Plan's recommendations.

Other recommendations may require cooperation with and action by other local boards and commissions such as the Zoning Commission, Board of Selectmen, and similar agencies.

However, if the Plan is to be realized, it must serve as a guide to all residents, businesses, builders, developers, applicants, owners, agencies, and individuals interested in the orderly conservation and development of Somers.

## Tools

---

The following tools have been shown to be effective at implementing POCD recommendations and are recommended for Somers.

### Plan Implementation Committee

A Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) is an effective way to help implement the Plan. An "ad hoc" committee made up of residents and representatives of local boards would be a significant step towards including a variety of Town agencies in implementing the Plan and monitoring progress. This Committee could provide status reports to the Planning Commission, Board of Selectmen, and others.

The PIC could meet two to four times a year to establish priorities and guide implementation of the Plan's recommendations. In addition, the Committee could assess the status of specific recommendations, establish new priorities, and suggest new implementation techniques.

The PIC can prepare implementation schedules and/or develop an annual implementation program of issues to be addressed by boards and commissions.

As the ultimate responsible agency, the Planning Commission can also assume the responsibility for coordinating implementation of the Plan's recommendations.

## **Using the Plan For Land Use Decisions**

Using the Plan of Conservation and Development as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission will help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Plan. All land use proposals should be measured and evaluated in terms of the Plan and its various elements.

## **Updating Zoning and Subdivision Regulations**

Many of the recommendations in the Plan of Conservation and Development can be implemented by the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission through application reviews. However, this is only true if the regulations reflect the recommendations of the Plan.

In the near future, the Planning Commission should undertake a comprehensive review of the subdivision regulations and the Zoning Commission should similarly review the zoning regulations and zoning map, making whatever revisions are necessary to:

- make the regulations more user-friendly,
- implement Plan recommendations, and
- promote consistency between the Plan and the regulations.

The importance of updating local regulations as soon as possible cannot be over-emphasized.

Compared to a number of other communities, the regulations in Somers lack some of the basic land use tools that will serve to promote the best possible conservation and development of the community.

## **Capital Improvement Program**

The Capital Improvement Program or CIP is a tool for planning major capital expenditures of a municipality so that local needs can be identified and prioritized within local fiscal constraints that may exist.

The Plan contains several proposals whose implementation may require the expenditure of Town funds. The Plan recommends that these and other items be included in the Town's CIP and that funding for them be included as part of the Capital Budget.

## **Referral of Municipal Improvements**

Section 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that municipal improvements (defined in the statute) be referred to the Planning Commission for a report before any local action is taken. A proposal disapproved by the Commission can only be implemented after a two-thirds vote by Town Meeting. All local boards and agencies should be notified of Section 8-24 and its mandatory nature so that proposals can be considered and prepared in compliance with its requirements and in a timely manner.

## **Inter-Municipal and Regional Cooperation**














Somers can continue to work with other towns in the region, the Capitol Region Council of Governments, the State of Connecticut, and other agencies to explore opportunities where common interests coincide.

## Implementation Schedules

As was done for the 2004 POCD (shown below), implementation tables can be prepared to organize POCD recommendations by the entity responsible, priority, desired completion date, or other metrics. These tables can be used by the Plan Implementation Committee to promote implementation of Plan recommendations.

***Somers should prepare implementation tables to encourage and facilitate implementation of the Plan ...***


Implementation Table Example

PROTECTING IMPORTANT RESOURCES				
Preserve More Meaningful Open Space				
Preserve More Open Space (Page 3-2)				
	Who	Priority	Done	
 1. Increase the mandatory open space "set-aside" to 15% as part of every residential development application.	PC ZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
 2. Enhance the open space acquisition fund through annual contributions in the budget and/or by bonding to have a more immediate effect.	BOF BOS	A		
 3. Pursue state and/or federal open space grants.	CC PC	A		
 4. Convert unprotected and perceived open space into protected open space by acquiring land or easements.	BOS CC PC ZC	B		
 5. Establish criteria in regulations to allow development flexibility for open space preservation.	PC ZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
 6. Continue to require conservation easements or other measures during approvals.	CC PC ZC	A		
 7. Adopt regulations to allow off-site dedication and/or banking of open space.	PC ZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
 8. Amend the regulations allow "open space developments" resulting in a higher percentage of open space by right and require a Special Use Permit from the Planning Commission for "conventional developments" that maximize lot sizes.	PC ZC	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
 9. Educate residents about benefits of open space donation and sale of development rights.	CC LUO OSTS PC	A		
Preserve Meaningful Open Space and Create a Greenway System (Page 3-5)				
	Who	Priority	Done	
 10. Identify and prioritize open space parcels for acquisition.	CC OSTS	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	
 11. Interconnect open spaces into a system of greenways.	All	A		
 12. Establish trails along greenways to encourage passive recreation.	All	A		
 13. Encourage other organizations to allow for public access and use.	OSTS	A		

**Legend**

AO Assessor's Office  
BOE Board of Education  
BOF Board of Finance  
BOS Board of Selectmen  
CC Conservation Commission  
COG Capital Region Council of Governments  
DOT Department of Transportation  
DPW Department of Public Works  
EDC Economic Development Commission  
FD Fire Department  
FM Fire Marshal  
HS Historical Society  
LB Library Board  
LUO Land Use Office  
OSTS Open Space/Trails Subcommittee  
PC Planning Commission  
RD Recreation Department  
ST State Trooper  
WC Water Companies  
WPCA Water Pollution Control Authority  
ZC Zoning Commission


**Priorities:**

 Task

1 High Priority

2 Moderate Priority

3 Lower Priority

 Policy

A High Priority

B Moderate Priority

C Lower Priority



Recommendations in each section of the POCD have been broken into “policies” and “initial action items.”

Policies are long-term guidelines that do not readily lend themselves to a specific schedule or measurement. Policies might be used by the Planning Commission or other agency to determine if a proposed activity is consistent with the POCD.

Action Items on the other hand, are specific actions that can typically be scheduled, completed, and evaluated. These are discrete work items, which can and should be completed to implement the strategies recommended in this POCD.

<b>Implement The Plan</b>	
<b>Policies</b>	
1.	Make implementation of the Plan an ongoing priority.
2.	Use the POCD as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission.
3.	Use the POCD as a guide when preparing the Capital Improvement Program.
4.	Use the POCD as a guide when reviewing referrals of municipal improvements under CGS Section 8-24.
5.	Continue to work with other towns in the region, the Capitol Region Council of Governments, the State of Connecticut, and other agencies to explore opportunities where common interests coincide.
<b>Initial Action Items</b>	
6.	Establish a Plan Implementation Committee to help implement the Plan.
7.	Prepare implementation schedules and/or an annual implementation program of issues to be addressed by boards and commissions.
8.	Undertake a comprehensive review of the subdivision regulations.
9.	Undertake a comprehensive review of the zoning regulations and zoning map.



## Overview

---

The Plan of Conservation and Development has been prepared to meet the challenges that will confront the Town of Somers over the next ten years and beyond.

The first step in the planning process was to review the previous POCD (2004) and identify work items that had been accomplished and new priorities for the community. Information was collected, presented, reviewed, and discussed as part of this process.

The second step was to determine what direction the residents of Somers want to take. A municipal survey was conducted to get input from residents about strategies for the future. From this, general goals were developed and refined.

The third step was to develop actions and policies to guide Somers' residents and agencies towards achieving their vision. These specific strategies are detailed throughout the Plan.

Despite all of the thought and effort that went into preparing this Plan, the most important step of the planning process is implementation. While the task of implementation falls on all Somers residents, the responsibility for implementing the Plan lies with the Planning Commission and other Town agencies.

The Plan is intended as a guide to be followed in order to enhance the quality of life and the community character of Somers. It is intended to be flexible in terms how specific goals and objectives are reached, provided that the long-term goals of the community are achieved.

During the next few years, many of the higher priority action items will be completed and hopefully goals will be achieved. Circumstances will inevitably arise that may suggest that it is time to reconsider the Plan or some of its elements. Such situations should be welcomed since it will mean that the Plan is being actively used and considered by residents.

By preparing this Plan of Conservation and Development, Somers has taken the first step towards creating a better future for its residents.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

## The Residents of Somers

### Plan of Conservation and Development Steering Committee

---

Clifford Bordeaux	Planning Commission
Richard Cheney	Economic Development Commission
Jill Conklin	Zoning Commission
John T. Curran Jr.	Planning Commission
Kathy Devlin	Board of Selectmen
Greg Genlot	Planning Commission
Dave Reed	Economic Development Commission
William Salka	Planning Commission
Adam Van Wingerden	Planning Commission

---

### Planning Commission

---

Greg Genlot	Chair
Clifford Bordeaux	Vice-Chair
William Salka	Secretary
John T. Curran Jr.	
Adam Van Wingerden	

---



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



---

## Town Staff

---

Lisa Pellegrini	First Selectman
Jeffrey Bord	Town Engineer / Director of Land Use
Michael D'Amato	Zoning Enforcement Officer (to October 2014)
Todd Rolland	Deputy Director of Public Works
Steven Jacobs	Town Sanitarian
Lt. Jose Claudio	Police Department
Gary Schiessl	Fire Chief
Robert Morpugo	Fire Marshal
Francine Aloisa	Library Director
Patricia Juda	Assessor
Dr. Maynard Suffredini, Jr.	Superintendent of Schools

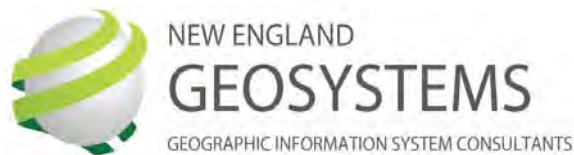
---

## Editing Assistance /Plan Preparation Provided by:



Glenn Chalder, AICP

## Mapping Assistance Provided by:



Alfredo Herrera

