

NEW FAIRFIELD

2024 Plan of Conservation & Development

REVISED PLAN – August 2, 2024

For Community Review

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Planning Commission
Town of New Fairfield
4 Brush Hill Road
New Fairfield, CT 06812

August 2024

Greetings!

This document is the **REVISED DRAFT** of a 2024-34 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for New Fairfield, Connecticut. This update of the 2014 POCD was undertaken by the Planning Commission.

A POCD is not a regulation or a mandate, but it is an important advisory document intended to guide New Fairfield towards positive outcomes by providing a framework for consistent decision-making.

This POCD update recommends strategies to guide the physical, economic, and social development of New Fairfield. Many of the strategies are rooted in the results of an on-line survey and then refined by Town boards and agencies.

This **REVISED DRAFT** will be the subject of a public information meeting to get community input and feedback. That meeting is scheduled for:

Monday September 9 at 7:00 PM

Meeting Room at the Firehouse at 302 Ball Pond Road.

Following the public information meeting, it is envisioned that the Planning Commission will make further refinements and then move towards adoption of an updated POCD sometime in the fall of 2024.

Sincerely,

New Fairfield Planning Commission

Gallery Of Previous Town Plans For New Fairfield

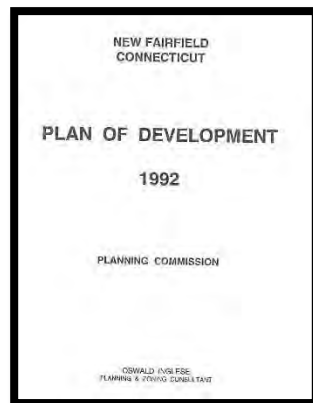
1976 Plan



1988 Plan



1992 Plan



2003 POCD



2014 POCD



2024 POCD



1.0 INTRODUCTION



ON-LINE SURVEY

How Should New Fairfield Plan For Its Future?

The Town of New Fairfield is updating the 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development.

Please participate in the on-line survey and tell us what you think!

Go to the front page of Town website at newfairfield.org or to surveymonkey.com/r/New_Fairfield_Plan

Or use the QR Code!



The survey will be open through midnight on September 17, 2023

COMMUNITY SENTIMENTS

1.1 Overview

This document is the 2024-34 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for New Fairfield, Connecticut. This POCD presents:

- A general consensus / vision of what is considered desirable for the New Fairfield community in the future, and
- Policies that will help attain that vision.

The statutory provisions for a POCD can be found in Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes. While the key purpose and function of a POCD is to address the physical development of a community, it also addresses economic issues and social issues.

This POCD was prepared and adopted by the New Fairfield Planning Commission and became effective on [REDACTED]. The process included a number of activities to involve the community in planning for the future:

- An on-line survey of residents,
- Listening sessions for local boards, agencies, and officials,
- Independent research by a planning consultant,
- Working sessions of the Planning Commission, and
- Community meetings to get input and feedback on the POCD strategies.

The POCD is intended to help New Fairfield make informed decisions about how the community should approach the future in order to:

- * Protect things which are important to the community (conservation), and
- * Attain the things which will enhance the overall health and well-being of the community and the quality of life of its residents (development and infrastructure).



1.2 Demographic Conditions And Trends

From a demographic perspective, New Fairfield is changing.

Prior to 1930, New Fairfield was essentially a farming community with fewer than 500 residents. However, the creation of Candlewood Lake and the growing prevalence of the automobile resulted in significant growth over the next 70 years. New Fairfield grew by about 6,000 residents between 1940 and 1970 and by another 7,000 residents between 1970 and 2000 due to construction of new homes as “baby boomers” (people born between 1945 and 1965) were born, grew up, and entered the housing market. People were attracted to New Fairfield’s appearance and characteristics and its community amenities.

However, New Fairfield is a maturing community and population decreased after peaking at 13,953 residents in the year 2000. Between 2000 and 2020, there was a natural increase of about 900 people (more births than deaths) but this was more than offset by 1,300 more people moving out than moving in, resulting in a 2020 population of 13,579 residents. The 2023 population was estimated 13,483 people by the Connecticut Department of Health.

Data shows the pattern of those moving in and moving out has been fairly consistent since at least 1980 (four decades):

- Net in-migration of families and their children (ages 30-49 and 0-15),
- Net out-migration of teenagers and young adults (ages 15-29),
- Net out-migration of persons ages 50+.

These trends are likely a result of changing location preferences, changing housing preferences, higher housing costs, fewer housing choices, higher taxes, less housing construction locally, and/or other factors.

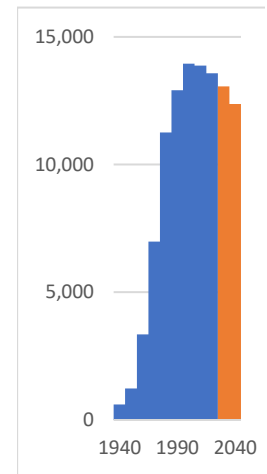
As a result of these trends, the median age of New Fairfield’s population has increased from about 28 years of age in 1970 to about 46 years of age in 2020. In fact, New Fairfield has the second oldest median age among surrounding communities. Interestingly, residents aged 55 and older constituted only about 16 percent of New Fairfield’s population in 1980 (1 in 6 people) and this increased to about 37 percent in 2020 (more than one in 3 people).

Over the next 10-20 years, it is anticipated these demographic trends (an aging population and a decreasing number of people) will continue.

More recent Census estimates can be found at <https://censusreporter.org> although these estimates are based on a very small sample size each year over a 5-year period and have a “margin of error” as a result.

New Fairfield’s population is contracting and the median age is increasing ...

Historic Population



Median Age

Sherman	51.6
New Fairfield	46.4
Brookfield	45.5
New Milford	44.0
STATE	41.0
Danbury	38.3

CERC Town Profile, 2021

Median Housing Value

Sherman	\$466,200
Brookfield	\$377,900
New Fairfield	\$348,800
New Milford	\$301,300
Danbury	\$299,600
STATE	\$275,400

CERC Town Profile, 2021

Pct. Owner Occupancy

New Fairfield	93%
Sherman	86%
Brookfield	84%
New Milford	78%
STATE	66%
Danbury	58%

CERC Town Profile, 2021

Units For Seasonal Use

Sherman	12.9%
New Fairfield	12.4%
Brookfield	3.9%
New Milford	3.4%
STATE	1.9%
Danbury	2.0%

Census Reporter, B25002 / B25004

Pct. Affordable Housing

STATE	11.7%
Danbury	11.4%
Brookfield	5.7%
New Milford	4.3%
New Fairfield	1.2%
Sherman	0.3%

DOH Affordable Housing List, 2024

Cost Burdened HH (All Incomes)

Danbury	40%
Brookfield	34%
New Milford	34%
Sherman	32%
New Fairfield	27%
STATE	18%

NF AH Plan 2024

1.3 Housing Conditions And Trends

New Fairfield had about 5,304 housing units in the year 2021. As can be seen from the data presented in the sidebar, New Fairfield has:

- A high median house value (i.e., a high purchase price),
- About 12.4% of all housing units kept for seasonal, occasional, or recreational use,
- Few price-limited homes for modest income households, and
- About one in four households spending more than 30% of their income on housing (cost burdened).

New Fairfield has a fairly homogenous housing portfolio. Overall, New Fairfield’s housing stock is dominated by:

- Single-family homes (99%) rather than multi-family homes or other configurations (1%).
- Owner occupancy (93%) in houses or condominiums with about 7 percent of all households renting places to live.

While single-unit housing types may have met the housing needs of “baby boomers” and other incoming residents from 1950-2000, it may not best meet the needs in 2020 and beyond of:

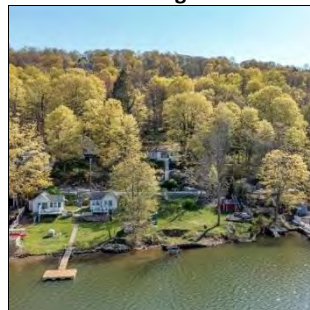
- An aging population (again, about 1 in 3 New Fairfield residents were over the age of 55 in 2020) who may be seeking smaller homes, less expensive homes, or homes with maintenance provided, or
- Younger persons and families looking to establish roots in New Fairfield.

For a number of reasons, housing growth in New Fairfield has slowed:

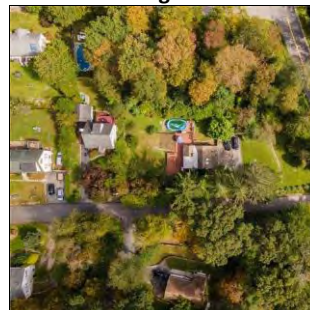
- Limited supply of land / high cost of land.
- Increase in construction costs / reduction in developer return for single family home construction.
- Lack of opportunity for multi-family home construction.

The lack of new housing construction is one of the reasons why New Fairfield’s population decreased over the last several decades.

Lakefront Neighborhood



Inland Neighborhood



Multi-Family Home



1.4 Economic Conditions And Trends

New Fairfield is more of a residential community with a modest economic presence or level of economic activity based on comparing:

- The number of jobs New Fairfield to the number of housing units (see jobs / housing ratio in sidebar).
- The number of New Fairfield residents who are working (6,889 people) with the number of jobs available locally (1,571 jobs).
- The contribution of business property to the overall assessed value of all property in New Fairfield (Grand List).

On the other hand, New Fairfield has a robust median household income compared to surrounding communities. With 4,590 households in New Fairfield, the total income could be over \$500 million per year. Even though actual retail spending is a fraction of this estimate (some share of income goes to housing, taxes, and other expenses), very little retail spending occurs in New Fairfield and is most likely spent in surrounding communities and at on-line sources of goods and services .

Jobs / Housing Ratio

Danbury	1.35
STATE	1.08
Brookfield	1.04
New Milford	0.67
New Fairfield	0.30
Sherman	0.24

Computed from CERC Profile, 2021

Business Share Of Grand List

Danbury	25%
Brookfield	15%
New Milford	13%
New Fairfield	2%
Sherman	0%
STATE	--

CERC Town Profile, 2021

Median HH Income

Brookfield	\$114,615
New Fairfield	\$112,457
Sherman	\$101,818
New Milford	\$89,969
STATE	\$78,444
Danbury	\$73,297

CERC Town Profile, 2021

Retail / Hospitality



Retail / Service



Office / Industry



Recreation



In terms of land use, New Fairfield is primarily a single-family residential community ...

1.5 Land Use Pattern

As can be seen from the yellow areas on the map below, New Fairfield is primarily a residential community. The yellow color represents areas which contain single-family residential uses.

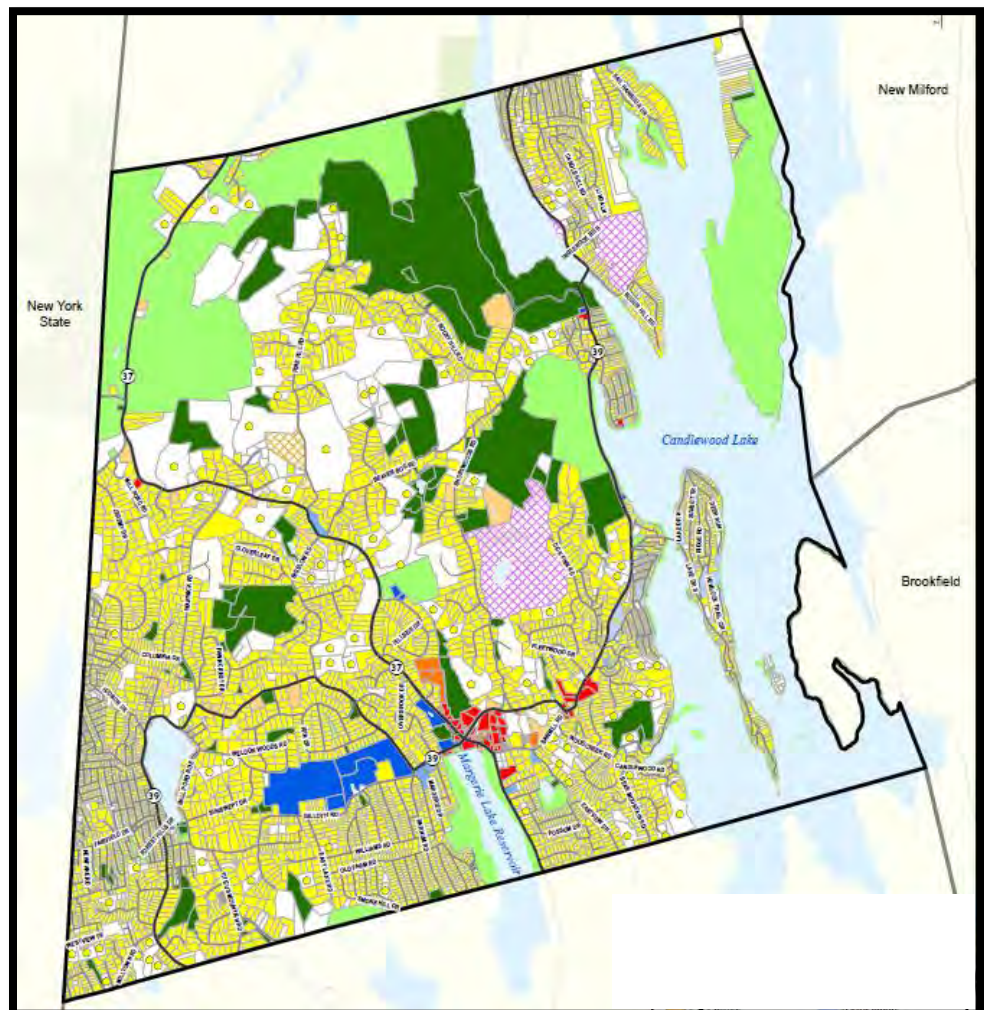
Other notable features of the land use pattern in New Fairfield include:

- The light blue areas are water features (such as Candlewood Lake in the eastern part of the community).
- The green areas are dedicated open space lands (such as State parks) and managed open space lands (such as nature centers) predominantly in the northern part of New Fairfield.

2023 Land Use Map

Land Use Map Legend

- Residential**
 - Single-Family
 - Single-Family
 - 2-4 Family
 - Multi-Family
- Open Space**
 - Dedicated Open Space
 - Managed Open Space
- Business**
 - Business
- Institutional**
 - Community Facility
 - Institutional
 - Association
- Other**
 - Camp / Seasonal Rent
 - Utility
 - Farm
- Vacant**
 - Vacant



Larger scale maps are available on the Town website.

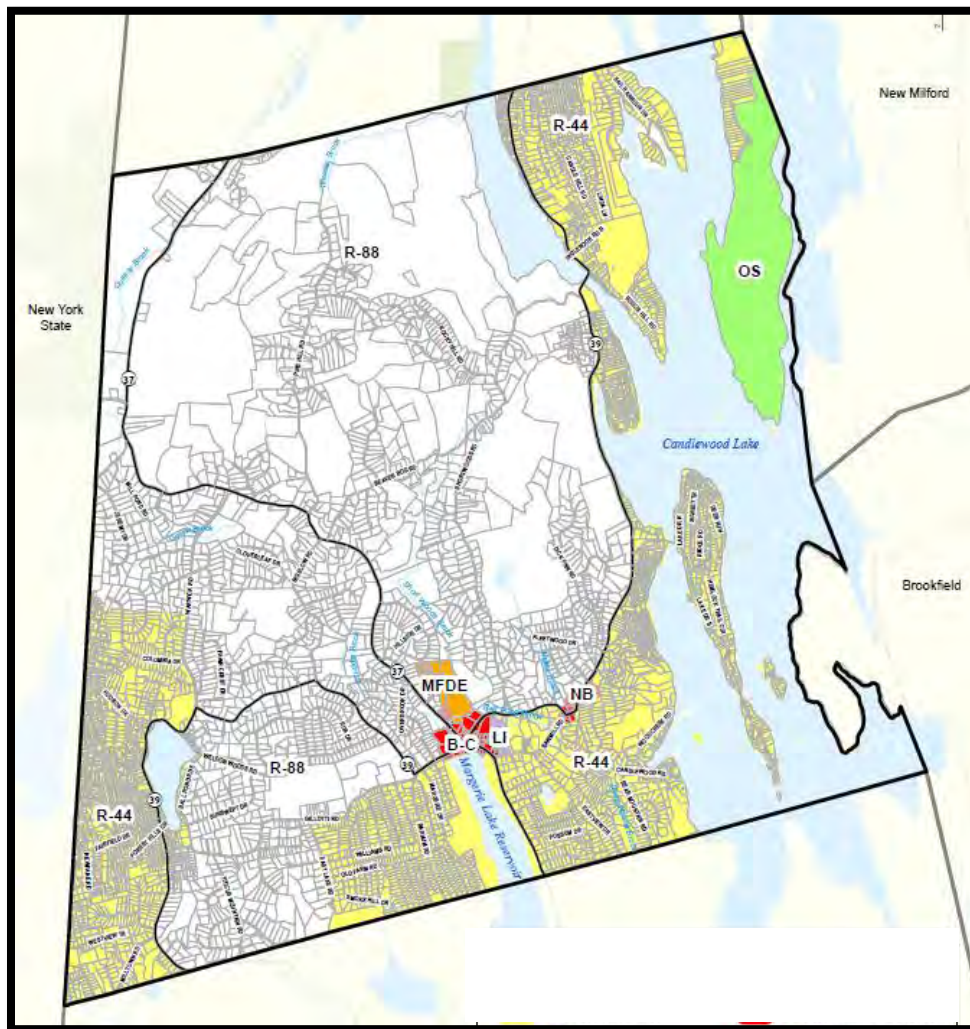
1.6 Zoning Framework

Zoning regulations are the main tool communities use to guide growth and change. Zoning districts specify the uses permitted in each area and the dimensional standards that apply. Notable features on the map below include:

- White areas – most of New Fairfield is zone R-88 allowing single-family residential development on lots of 2+ acres.
- Yellow areas – the R-44 zone allows single-family residential homes on lots of 1+ acres. While hard to discern from the map, most of the lakeshore neighborhoods have lot sizes which are much smaller than prescribed by the Zoning Regulations (see map on page 41).
- Red / pink / purple areas – areas where business uses are permitted.

Most of New Fairfield is zoned for large lot residential development, even though lakeshore areas generally have much smaller lot sizes ...

2024 Zoning Map



Zoning Map Legend

- Residential**
- R-44 Residential Zone
 - R-88 Residential Zone
 - Open Space (Residential) Zone
 - Multi-Family District For The Elderly
- Business**
- Business - Commercial District
 - Neighborhood Business District
 - Light Industrial District

Larger scale maps are available on the Town website.

Responses to the on-line survey were instrumental in prioritizing Plan strategies ...

1.7 Community Sentiments

Early in the planning process, an on-line survey was conducted to learn about issues important to residents. Overall, 564 people participated in the survey.

Some of the key findings from the survey were:

1. The features which most attracted people to New Fairfield included housing type / value, community appearance / ambience, outdoor amenities, and water amenities (such as Candlewood Lake).
2. Key “conservation” priorities included protecting water quality, maintaining community ambience / sense of place, preserving open space, and protecting other natural resources.
3. Key “development” priorities included enhancing the Town Center, promoting business and economic development, promoting sustainability / resiliency, and addressing housing needs. Interestingly, about 50% of participants saw themselves living in a different type of housing unit in 10 years – mostly in smaller homes and/or with services/maintenance provided.
4. Key “infrastructure” priorities included maintaining and enhancing community facilities / services, addressing utility infrastructure, and enhancing provisions for pedestrians and bicycles.
5. Participants indicated they were proud of the character/ambience of New Fairfield, the sense of community, the school system, and other community facilities / services.
6. Participants said they were sorry about the lack of business activity/ options in the Town Center, lack of some amenities, services, and condition of some community facilities and services.
7. Participants felt the greatest challenge or need facing New Fairfield over the next 10 to 20 years would include controlling spending / taxes, retaining ambience / character, and addressing housing affordability.
8. If the POCD could make one thing happen, participants wanted this to be enhancing community facilities, addressing the Town Center / attracting more business development, and addressing housing affordability.

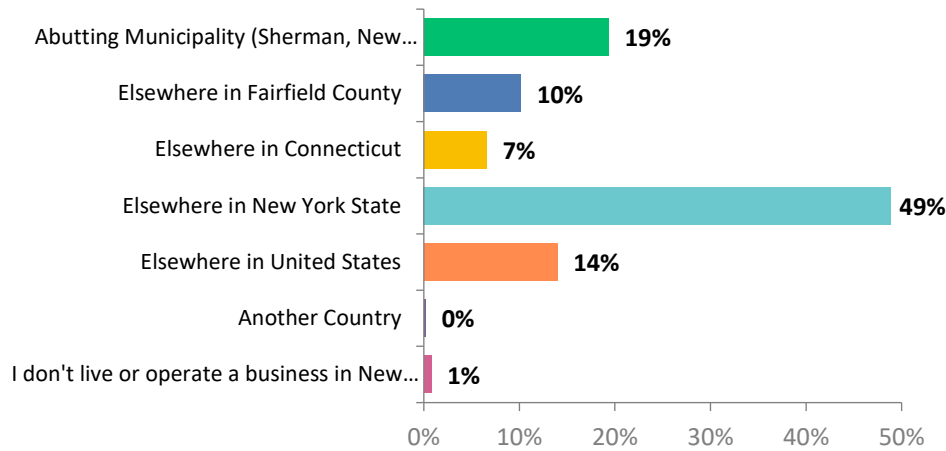
Survey Overview

The survey was open over a four-week period from mid-August to mid-September 2023.

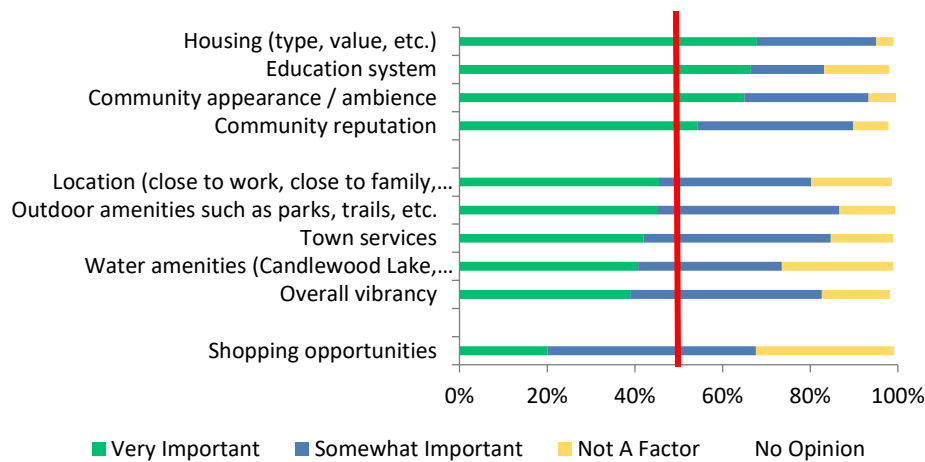
The survey contained a mix of multiple-choice questions as well as questions where participants could submit their own responses.

Residents were made aware of the survey through press releases, social media posts, curb signs (swapped regularly), the Town website, and other methods.

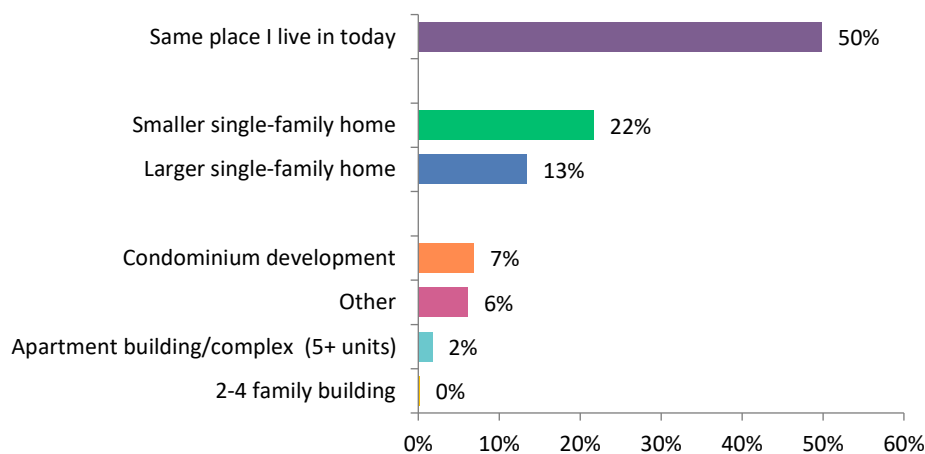
Q5 - ... Where did you live before coming to live [in New Fairfield]?



Q7 - ... [How important were] the following factors in your decision to live here ...?



Q12 - What type of housing do you see yourself living in 10 years from now?



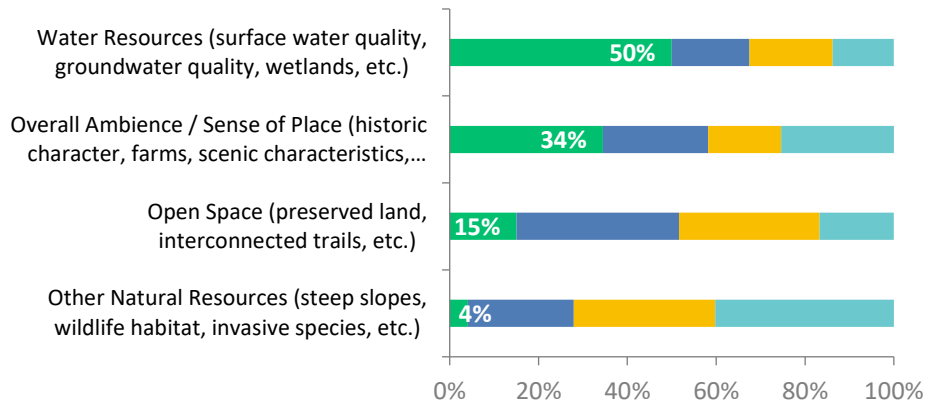
Legend

The graphics on this page were all based on participants prioritizing (or ranking) the various topics within the overall theme.

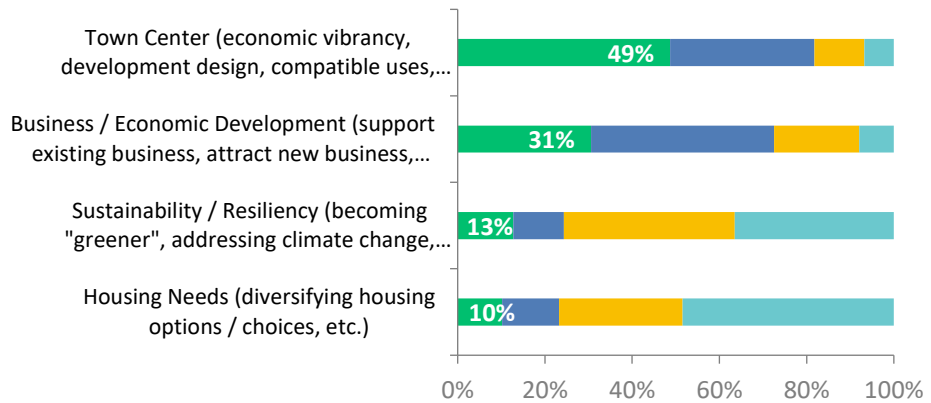
The color legends are:

- #1 Rank
- #2 Rank
- #3 Rank
- #4 Rank

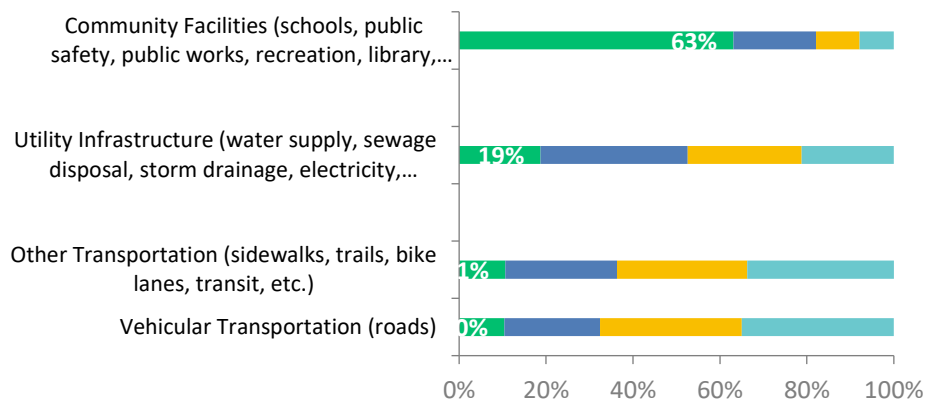
Q13 - How would you rank the following [“CONSERVATION”] topics in terms of how important you feel they are to you or to the future of New Fairfield ?



Q14 - How would you rank [the following “DEVELOPMENT” topics] in terms of how important you feel they are to you or to the future of New Fairfield.



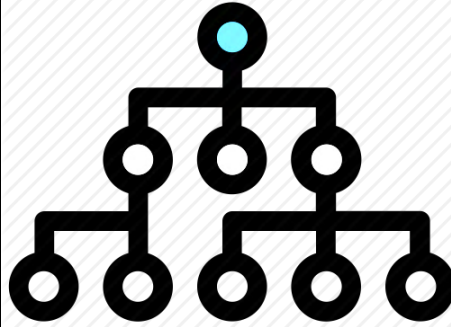
Q16 - How would you rank [the following “INFRASTRUCTURE” topics] in terms of how important you feel they are to you or to the future of New Fairfield.



2.0 POCD FRAMEWORK



OVERALL GOALS



POCD ORGANIZATION



OVER-ARCHING THEMES



FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION

The real value from the planning process is not whether a plan gets adopted, it is whether a plan gets implemented ...

Who Implements?

While the statutory responsibility to adopt the POCD rests with the Planning Commission, implementation will only occur with the diligent efforts of the residents and boards, commissions, and officials of the Town of New Fairfield.

The Plan will only be effective if it is understood and supported by the people of New Fairfield and implemented by local boards and commissions.

2.1 Overall Goal

During the process of preparing this POCD, the following statement was selected for the overall goal of the POCD:

Implement policies and action steps identified in the POCD in order to:

- Address issues important to the future of New Fairfield,
- Conserve important resources and enhance community ambience,
- Guide development / change to meet community needs and desires,
- Provide facilities and services important to the overall quality of life of current and future residents, and
- Become a more sustainable and resilient community.

The focus on implementation for the overall goal statement was deliberate and intentional. The real value from the planning process is not whether a plan gets adopted, it is whether a plan gets implemented.

There is a separate chapter on implementation to help organize strategies.

While a POCD is primarily an advisory document, *this* POCD is intended to guide actions by New Fairfield boards, commissions, and officials over the next decade or so in order to accomplish the things which participants feel are important to the community.



Introduction	POCD Framework	Main Strategies	Other Strategies	Conclusion
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As highlighted below, there are several important features of this POCD which are intended to facilitate implementation.

<p>Policies And Action Steps</p> <p>Each policy chapter of the POCD identifies <i>policies</i> and <i>action steps</i> related to that specific topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies – Statements which are used to determine “consistency” with the POCD. Policies are essentially <i>passive and reactive</i> in nature since they are used to evaluate proposals when they arise. As a result, policies are <i>on-going</i> and may never be characterized as implemented. • Action Steps – Statements describing <i>specific discrete tasks</i> which can be identified, initiated, managed, monitored, and completed. Action steps are specific <i>pro-active</i> things that can be done to implement the POCD.
<p>Leaders And Partners</p> <p>Each policy and action step in the POCD identifies recommended leaders and partners. The “leader” will be the organization, entity, or person with primary responsibility for implementation of that policy or action step. A “partner” is another organization, entity, or person involved in implementation.</p> <p>Leaders and partners identified in this POCD tend to be permanent entities although some policies and action steps could also be assigned to ad hoc entities created specifically to promote implementation.</p> <p>There may be some instances where an organization, entity, or person may not currently be tasked implementing with a policy or action step, but they may be the most logical advocate or proponent. The Planning Commission can review and refine the leaders and partners, if necessary or desirable.</p>

Modular Format

The POCD has been laid out in a modular format in order to facilitate updating.

As policies and action steps are implemented or as important issues evolve, the community can update one or more sections of the POCD to refresh strategic directions or to address important initiatives.

This process would, of course, be led by the Planning Commission or a multi-disciplinary planning group led by them.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a term that can mean different things to different people.

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

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

To help guide actions that promote sustainability, an organization called SustainableCT has developed a framework to promote overall sustainability.

Their website can be accessed here:

www.sustainablect.org



2.2 Over-Arching Themes

This POCD incorporates several themes which are integral to the overall approach to the future of New Fairfield:

- Sustainability / Resiliency,
- Community Well-Being
- Livability, and
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Sustainability & Resiliency

In recent years, the concepts of sustainability and resiliency have grown in visibility and importance and, perhaps more importantly, recognition that New Fairfield and other jurisdictions have important roles to play in addressing them due to our changing climate. In the POCD, the word “sustainability” includes:

- Environmental sustainability
- Economic sustainability
- Social sustainability

Some sustainability / resiliency recommendations may be found on pages 58-59.

Community Well-Being

Communities like New Fairfield seek ways to balance various community objectives in ways that maximize community well-being including, but not limited to:

- **Environmental objectives:**
 - Conserve natural resources,
 - Restore an ecological balance, and
 - Implement more sustainable development practices.
- **Social objectives:**
 - Meet societal needs,
 - Promote equity, diversity, and inclusion, and
 - Improve accessibility (physical and otherwise) to facilities and services.
- **Economic objectives:**
 - Support jobs, goods. and services for people, and
 - Provide for community facilities and services.

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

Livability

It is an express desire of this POCD that New Fairfield be an even more “livable” community in the future. Research by AARP on what makes communities more livable include the following eight “domains of livability”:

1. **Outdoor Spaces and Buildings** - accessible public spaces and places for people of all ages to gather - indoors and out.
2. **Diverse Transportation / Mobility Options** – Safe and convenient ways for people to get around by vehicles, walking, bicycles, wheelchairs, buses, shuttles, transit, ride share services, and other choices.
3. **Housing** - Housing options suitable for differing incomes, ages and life stages and homes configured to allow for aging in place as long as possible.
4. **Social Participation** – Accessible, affordable, and fun social activities and other opportunities to socialize to combat loneliness, sadness and isolation.
5. **Respect and Social Inclusion** – Ways for people to work with others, learn from one another, and feel valued and good about themselves.
6. **Work and Civic Engagement** – Opportunities for people of all ages to be actively engaged in community life, whether for pay or as volunteers.
7. **Communication and Information** – Programs to share information through a variety of methods (not just digitally) so that all can be involved.
8. **Community and Health Services** – Availability of affordable assistance in the community or nearby so that residents have access to services required.

Overall Livability Index Score



In 2024, AARP scored New Fairfield as “average” for overall livability.

More information can be found at:

www.livabilityindex.aarp.org

The AARP website also contains livability scores for:

- Housing
- Neighborhood
- Transportation
- Environment
- Health
- Engagement
- Opportunity

It is important to note that livability includes the concepts of inclusiveness, shared visions, and fairness.



2.3 POCD Organization

Based on the planning process (and the survey question related to making one thing happen), key initiatives recommended in the POCD include:

- 1. ENHANCE COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES–**
 - a. **Town Hall**
 - b. **Volunteer Responders**
 - c. **Public Works Facilities**
 - d. **Community Center**
 - e. **Other (Parks / Recreation, Library, Schools, Etc.)**

- 2. TOWN CENTER –**
 - a. Undertaking a special study of the Town Center area to establish an overall vision and recommend regulation changes to help make the vision a reality.
 - b. Initiate the Town Center sewer project by:
 - Obtaining a sewage allocation amount from Danbury,
 - Allocating such amount among properties to be served, and
 - Constructing the pump station and other Phase 1 improvements.
 - c. Initiate a phased program for creating an interconnected sidewalk system in the Town Center area, including connecting to schools.

- 3. HOUSING -** Seek to diversify the range of housing types available in New Fairfield to provide more choices for existing and future residents.

- 4. OPEN SPACE / TRAILS –**
 - a. Plan for eventual completion of a trail system which could extend from the Danbury line to the Sherman line and from Candlewood Lake to the New York state line:
 - Margerie Reservoir Trail (and loop)
 - Great Hollow
 - Pootatuck State Forest
 - Squantz Pond State Park

Other POCD recommendations are summarized topically in Section 4 which starts on page 49 (or by click link below for “Other Strategies.”

3.0 MAIN STRATEGIES



Demographic Factors

Community facility and service needs can be expected to change due to changing demographics. For example, the time may come to consider ways to provide / promote supplemental services for seniors including:

- Ways to become more of an age-friendly / livable community (see Section 2.2 on page 15 and/or the AARP initiative for additional information)
- Ways to prepare and maintain a resource list for aging homeowners (handymen, tree removal, teenage lawn services, etc.)

3.1 Address Community Facilities And Services

New Fairfield has a number of community facilities and services where improvements are desired over the next 10 to 20 years.

In the on-line survey:

- Participants identified “enhancing community facilities” to be one of the top things they wished the POCD could make happen.
- Maintaining and enhancing community facilities / services was identified as one of the key “infrastructure” priorities.
- Participants indicated they were proud of the school system and other community facilities / services.
- Participants said they were sorry about the condition of some community facilities and services.

Some of the main community facility and service needs are summarized below:

Facility / Service	Summary
Town Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical need for vault space and office / meeting space has been recognized for many years. • Accessibility within the building can be a challenge. • Some departments located in other buildings. • Facility needs studied again in 2024
Fire Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing of all volunteer department is hindered by aging population, high housing costs, training requirements • Equipment / maintenance is expensive
Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment is adversely affected by lack of enclosed storage. • Larger, more efficient building would help most along with adequate space for material storage
Community Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Center facility desired by many residents. • Possibility of combining with Town Hall, Social Services (food bank), and other needs

Town Hall



Fire Response

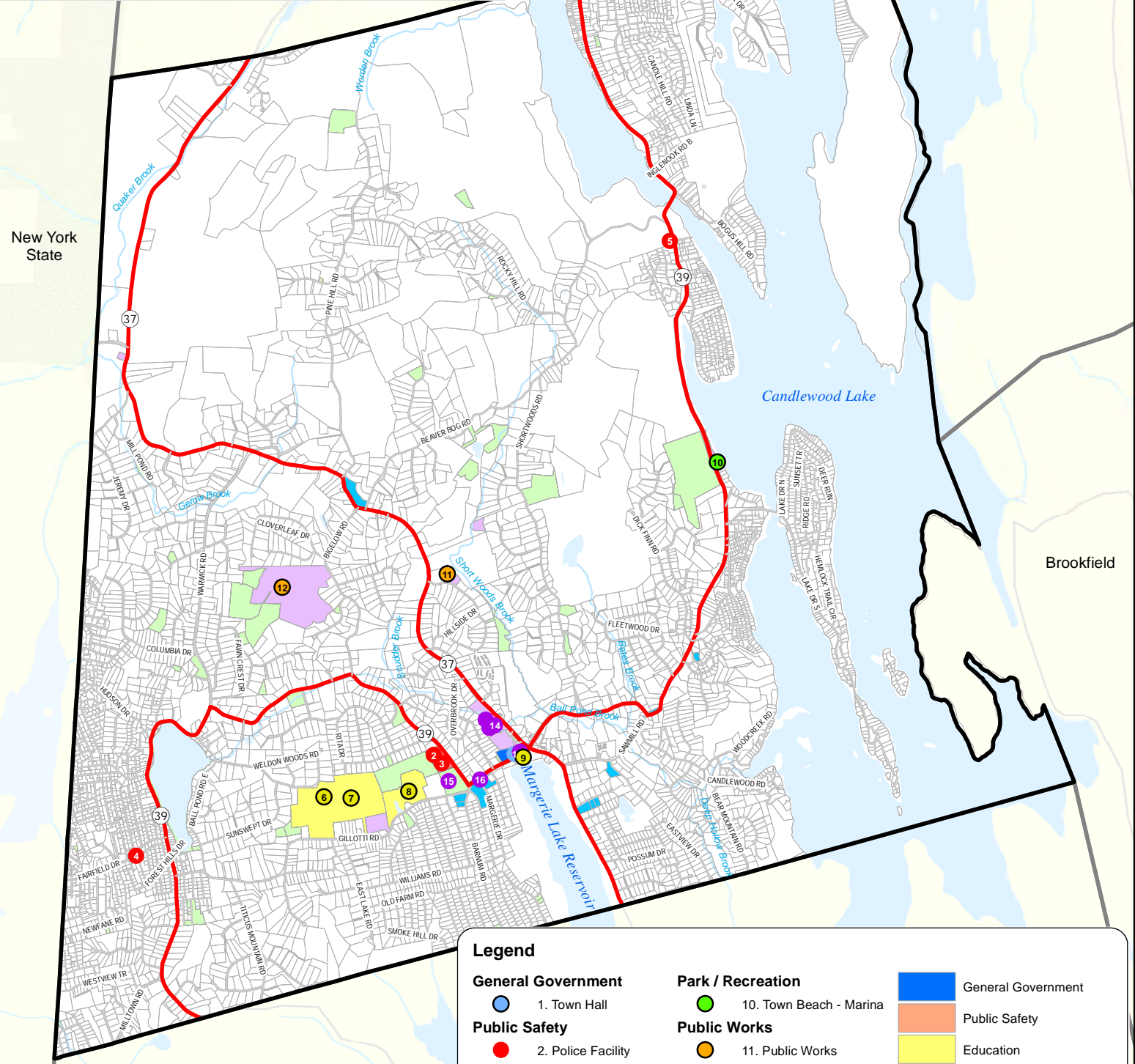
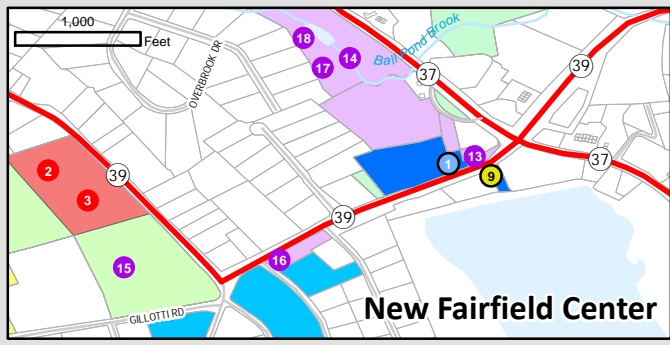


Public Works



Community Facilities Map

New Fairfield, CT



New York State

Sherman

New Milford

Brookfield

Danbury

Legend

General Government

1. Town Hall

Public Safety

- 2. Police Facility
- 3. Fire - Main Station
- 4. Fire - Ball Pond
- 5. Fire - Squantz Pond

Education

- 6. High School
- 7. Middle School
- 8. Meeting House Hill
- 9. BOE Offices

Park / Recreation

10. Town Beach - Marina

Public Works

- 11. Public Works
- 12. Transfer Station

Other

- 13. Library
- 14. Senior Center
- 15. Consolidated Building
- 16. Historic Schoolhouse
- 17. Hubbell House
- 18. Parsonage

- General Government
- Public Safety
- Education
- Public Works
- Institutional Land
- Other Municipal
- Other Town-Owned Land / Facility

4,000

Feet

Permanent Building Committee

A number of years ago, New Fairfield established a Permanent Building Committee (PBC) to help plan for and oversee community building projects.

At this time, the PBC does two main things:

- Regularly inventory evaluate town facilities to identify needs.
- Oversee construction projects above a certain dollar value.

However, an important intermediate step of prioritizing facility needs is not presently part of the PBC scope.

If New Fairfield is to be able to efficiently and cost-effectively identify, prioritize, and manage important building projects, the important step of prioritizing identified needs would seem to be an important PBC function.

Other community facility and service needs to be considered include:

Facility / Service	Summary
Parks & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of beach house needed • Expansion of number of slips at marina desired • Desire space to expand offerings (pool, gym, rooms, camps, etc.) plus provide storage • Received grant for improvement of Town Green
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space constraints hinder ability to adapt to community desires (areas for quiet study and small meeting rooms) • Struggle with parking issues (location, number, safety)
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student capacity expected to be adequate for next 10 years • Working through a program to maintain facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Renovate Middle School ○ Replace high school turf fields and track ○ Find bus storage solution ○ Update / replace septic systems (sewer extension to the Town Center, which will also serve school buildings, is discussed on page 30)
Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio communications are a topic of interest for multiple departments (police, fire, public works, etc.).

Since New Fairfield relies primarily on residential property taxes to fund local services, the Town has found it challenging to meet resident’s desires for facilities and services without exceeding resident’s willingness to pay for those facilities and services. While schools and public safety facilities and services tend to be funded, some other facilities and services can struggle to maintain (never mind enhance) their facilities and services.

The POCD recommends that New Fairfield continue to strive to maintain and enhance community services and facilities but to complement past and present efforts with two initiatives:

1. **Community Facility Needs Study** - Undertake a study to evaluate community facility needs across all departments and functions in order to have a complete list of needs (including estimated costs and priorities), and
2. **Capital Planning Process** - Initiate and maintain a long-term (10 years or longer) capital planning process in order to be able to anticipate and manage capital expenses related to facilities and equipment and to coordinate those needs with the Town’s ability to fund them (see the following pages for additional information on capital improvement programming).

Capital Improvement Programming

Spending on capital projects is an important part of New Fairfield’s vision for the future and deserves additional discussion. When New Fairfield invests in projects and programs which are closely aligned with the policies and action steps identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development, the community moves closer to achieving its overall goals and objectives. This includes maintaining the facilities New Fairfield already has.

Capital projects can be of three general types:

- Spending to maintain a capital asset and maintain or extend its useful life or level of service.
- Spending to physically expand an existing capital asset (such as a school building).
- Spending to provide a new facility to meet present or future community needs.

Creating a multi-year financial plan with *estimations* of capital funding needs and how to pay for them (based on assumptions about operating expenditures, revenues, assessed value, reserves, and known debt service commitments) is an important way for a community to efficiently and cost-effectively address the maintenance of its capital assets and address the needs and desires of residents.

In fact, if New Fairfield did not invest towards meeting its capital needs:

- Infrastructure (such as roads or utility systems) may deteriorate or fail affecting the basic health and safety of residents.
- Building systems (such as roofs or mechanical systems) may deteriorate affecting the usability of the facility.
- Operating costs and/or future replacement costs may be higher and reduce funds available to provide other services.
- The Town runs the risk of having to respond to emergencies in response to failures and pay higher costs rather than anticipate and plan for capital needs in a cost-effective way.
- The community may not be in a position to maximize its economic potential.
- The visual attractiveness of the community may suffer.
- The Town may not be able to take advantage of state or federal grants to offset the cost to local property owners.
- The quality of life may be reduced.

(continued)

Key Definitions

Capital Asset - Land, land improvements, infrastructure, equipment, or other assets that have a long-term lifespan.

Capital Project - A project which results in the acquisition or increased value or lengthened lifespan of a capital asset.

Capital Budget - The amount of money to be spent in the current fiscal year for capital projects.

Capital Improvements Plan -

A multi-year financial plan that:

- Lists and describes capital projects a local government plans to undertake,
- Indicates how projects will be funded, and
- Projects the effects of the plan on key financial variables, such as the real property tax rate.

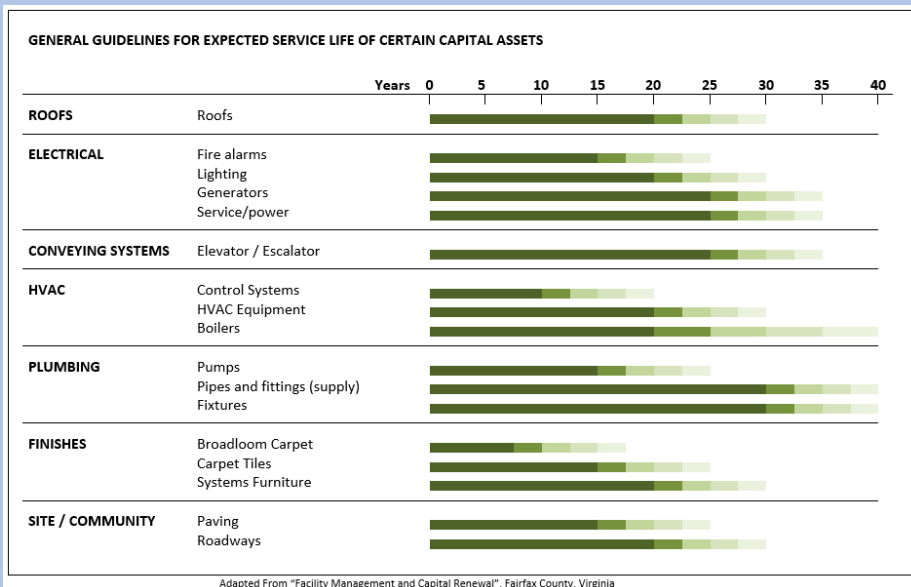
Capital Improvement Programming (cont.)

Developing and funding a multi-year financial and capital plan has clear benefits to New Fairfield:

- Allowing for better project ranking and affordability measures,
- Clearing up uncertainty about current levels of investment,
- Resolving the problem of dealing with the same issues repeatedly, and
- Improving the annual budget and budget process since the amount of funding required for debt service and capital spending can be balanced in current and future years.

A multi-year financial and capital plan is also a useful budgeting and managing tool since it allows the Town to:

- Balance capital investments with available financing, thereby receiving the optimum benefits for the available public revenue.
- Align the capital improvement program with operating resources and facilitate coordination between Town departments.
- Take advantage of government, foundation, and other grant programs and leverage project-specific funding resources.
- Undertake a logical process of assigning priorities to projects based on their overall importance to the Town.
- Coordinate activities with federal, state and regional organizations, utility companies, and the private sector, and make decisions and plan investments accordingly.



(continued)

Capital Improvement Programming (cont.)

In some communities, capital projects are scored as to their overall priority based on such considerations as:

Criteria / Description	Weight
1. Health, Safety & Welfare An assessment of the degree to which the project improves health and safety factors associated with the asset. For example, projects that result in the reduction of accidents, improved structural integrity, and mitigation of health hazards would score higher	25%
1. Regulatory Or Legal Mandates An assessment of the degree to which the project is under a regulatory order or other legal mandate, or meets a federal, State or local safety requirement. For example, projects that are required by consent decrees, court orders, or other legal mandates would score higher.	25%
2. Operational Necessity An assessment of the degree to which the project sustains (5 points max.) or improves (10 points max.) operational efficiency and effective delivery of services.	10%
3. Implication Of Deferring The Project (Opportunity Costs) An assessment of costs associated with deferring the project, such as inflationary construction costs or additional annual operating / maintenance costs for each year the project is not funded. For example, projects that would have significantly higher future costs, negative community aspects, or negative public perception, should they be deferred, would score higher.	10%
4. Budget Impact An assessment of the project’s budget impact, ie. the degree to which it affects operations and maintenance costs positively or negatively. For example, a roof replacement project that reduces both maintenance requirements and energy consumption or a storm drain that reduces the need for periodic cleaning would score higher. On the other hand, a new facility that increases maintenance, energy and staffing costs would score lower.	5%
5. Strategic Goals An assessment of the degree to which the project furthers the strategic goals as adopted in the POCD.	6%
6. Grant Funding Opportunity An assessment of the amount of funding in the project compared to the amount of funding provided by grant funds from outside agencies. This should include an assessment of the amount of funding needed to complete the current project phase and the entire project. For example, a project that would bring grant funds from an outside agency into the Town would score higher, while a project that relies only on Town funds would score lower.	7%
7. Community Demand An assessment of the degree to which the project meets a community need or responds to community demand. How need/demand was assessed or measured will be noted.	7%
8. Implementation Readiness An assessment of: project complexity; internal decisions/commitments that are required; review requirements by boards/commissions; agreements or approvals required by non-Town entities; timing considerations with other capital projects (if applicable); the degree to which the project is in compliance with Town-adopted plans; and level of public support. Whether a public information strategy is recommended will be noted.	5%

Adapted from City of Annapolis, Maryland

(continued)

Sources of Revenue

Revenue to fund capital spending can come from:

- Property taxes that directly fund capital projects (pay cash)
- Property taxes that fund debt service expenses for projects that were bonded
- Special assessments
- User fees
- State grants
- Federal grants

Capital Improvement Programming (cont.)

Capital spending to maintain or achieve a certain level of service is an important consideration. A regular planning process (such as preparing the capital improvement plan) should:

- Inventory and assess particular types of physical infrastructure,
- Identify deficiencies,
- Establish a desired “level of service” or other metric for facilities, and
- Prioritize needed investments.

This analysis should also include consideration of the desired level of service. How to measure level of service for each of the various types of capital assets maintained by the Town will be an on-going endeavor ((public water, public sewer, roadway pavement, sidewalks, trails, recreation facilities, fire / police / emergency medical, open space, public works, education, etc.).

If the demands placed on a capital asset exceed its capacity, the level of service might be expected to decline. Thus, it will be important for New Fairfield to monitor the qualitative aspects of the community’s capital assets LOS in order to:

- Assure that development occurs in concert with the capacity of local facilities,
- Enable adequate public facilities to be provided in a timely manner
- Help achieve the growth objectives of the POCD, and
- Correct deficiencies in providing adequate levels of service as opportunities arise.

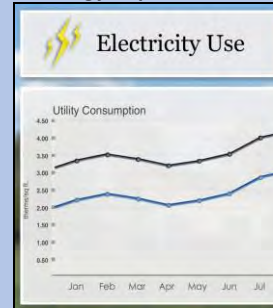
Sealing Roadway Cracks



Roof Replacement



Energy Improvements



GOAL	<i>Provide community facilities and services to meet community needs and desires.</i>
LEAD AGENCY	Board of Selectmen

POLICIES & ON-GOING PROGRAMS	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Continue to maintain and enhance community facilities and services to meet community needs as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.	BOS BOE	<i>BOF PBC SC LIB P&R PW SS</i>
B. Seek to identify and prioritize community facility needs over the long term.	PBC	<i>BOF BOS BOE</i>
C. Continue to monitor school enrollment trends to anticipate possible enrollment increases (or decreases).	BOE	<i>BOS BOF</i>
D. Continue to explore ways to attract and retain public safety volunteers (fire and ambulance).	BOS	<i>FIRE BOF</i>
E. Anticipate how facility and service needs will change as a result of the changing age composition of New Fairfield’s population (older median age, enrollment increases, younger families moving in, etc.)	BOS	<i>BOF PBC COA</i>
F. Seek to hire a grant writer to help obtain funding for maintaining and improving community facilities and services (<i>see implementation section for more information</i>).	FS	<i>BOS BOF</i>

ACTION STEPS	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Undertake a comprehensive study to evaluate and prioritize community facility needs across all departments and functions, including but not limited to: a. Town Hall b. Volunteer Responders c. Public Works Facilities d. Community Center e. Other (Parks / Recreation, Library, Schools, Etc.)	PBC	<i>BOS BOF PC</i>
2. Initiate and maintain a long-term capital planning process in order to be able to anticipate and manage capital expenses related to facilities and equipment.	BOF	<i>BOS PBC</i>
3. Identify and acquire land for possible future community facility needs (such as for a school site) for long-term planning flexibility.	BOS	<i>BOF PBC</i>

Relevant Issues

Since the Town Center area is where most of the businesses uses in New Fairfield are located, this element of the POCD looks at:

- The physical aspects of the Town Center area, and
- Strategies related to business / economic development.

3.2 Enhance Town Center / Economic Development

The Town Center area is a key focal point in New Fairfield and serves as the business, government, social, and civic hub of the community. Since most of the businesses in New Fairfield are located in the Town Center area, addressing the Town Center will also related to enhancing economic development.

Residents have a strong affinity for the Town Center and are supportive of the uses located there. At the same time though, residents seem to feel the area is not providing all that they want for their Town Center. Participants in the 2023 on-line survey indicated:

- The lack of business activity in the Town Center was the top-listed thing that made people “sorry” about their community.
- A lack of business variety and a lack of additional options (such as eating establishments) were cited by a number of participants.
- In the on-line survey, the Town Center was the most important “development” priority expressed by participants.

Town Center Development



Town Center Development



Town Center Development

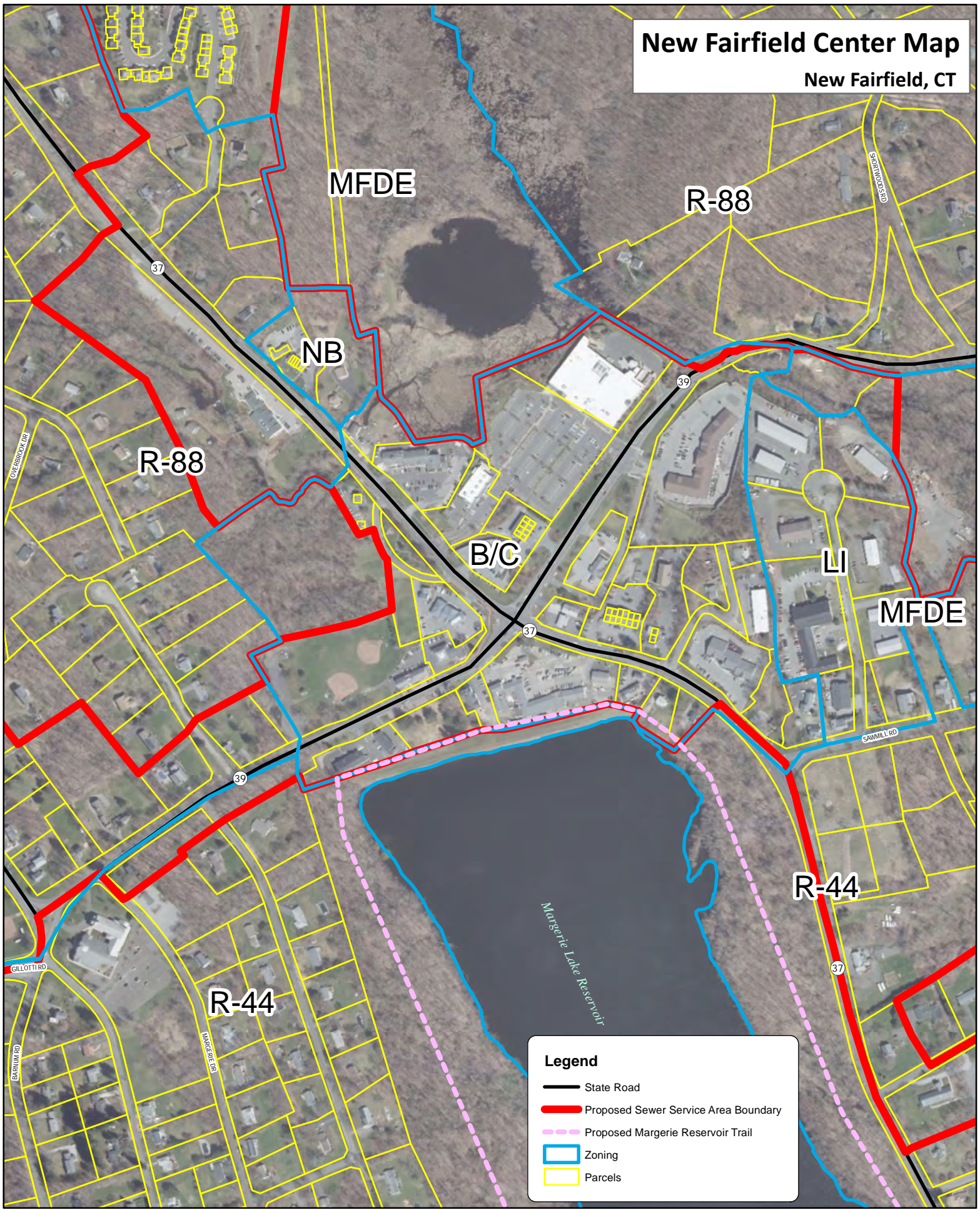


Town Center Development



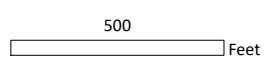
New Fairfield Center Map

New Fairfield, CT



Legend

- State Road
- Proposed Sewer Service Area Boundary
- Proposed Margerie Reservoir Trail
- Zoning
- Parcels



2019 EDC Survey Results

In a 2019 EDC survey regarding the Town Center area, residents expressed interest in:

- Eateries (49%)
- Entertainment venues (41%)
- Recreation and tourism (40%)
- Retail stores (36%)
- Infrastructure Improvements (32%)

Candlewood Corners

Recent POCDs have recommended study of Candlewood Corners and possible zoning changes in that area.

While such evaluation may take place during the planning period, the study of the Town Center is more important.

From an overall perspective, New Fairfield’s Town Center has some strengths, challenges, and potential opportunities to be considered as part of the POCD:

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good location at a key crossroads • Convenient location for residents / visitors • Summertime recreation activity levels provide support
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of septic capacity for existing / future uses (such as restaurants) means water-intensive uses are prevented from even opening • Residents seem fearful that any change would only be a negative change (some concerned that change might get out of control) • Modest local population base in the community • Limited population within walking distance of the Town Center area • Off-season decrease in visitation • Local spending power often directed to other locations • Competition from on-line businesses and nearby areas
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewer service could be established (sewerage study underway) • Water supply could be enhanced • Could create a mixed-use area with housing and additional businesses to increase activity, vibrancy, tax base, etc. • Compact area could be made pedestrian-friendly • Additional development could be allowed on existing sites

With regard to the Town Center, the overall strategy of the POCD is to:

- Build on existing strengths,
- Address some or all of the challenges, and
- Seize opportunities to enhance the Town Center physically and strengthen the Town Center economically.

In order to accomplish this, there are several key strategies for New Fairfield to consider:

- **Utility Infrastructure** - Extend public water and sewers to the Town Center area to support the types of uses the community wants and to protect water quality here and downstream in Candlewood Lake (see page 64).
- **Zoning** - Amend zoning to allow for additional development (including *mixed use buildings* on upper floors above businesses) by expanding permitted uses, reducing parking ratios and parking stall sizes, etc.
- **Development** - Encourage redevelopment / intensification so that more activity and tax revenue (and village character) can occur via redevelopment of existing sites.
- **Pedestrian Streetscape** - Upgrade sidewalks and other pedestrian and streetscape improvements. In a 2019 EDC survey, 83% of participants said they would approve the use of Town funds to upgrade existing infrastructure (roads, sewers, water, sidewalks, walkways) in the Town Center area. This will also improve the value of existing buildings.

However, since it may take some time for the community to coalesce on a vision for the Town Center area, a key recommendation of the POCD is to undertake a Town Center Vision study to explore the potential to re-envision the Town Center as a mixed use “village” with housing, sidewalks, trails, restaurants, etc.

Potentially Key Town Center / Village Attributes

**Creating Walkable
Pedestrian-Friendly
Streetscape**



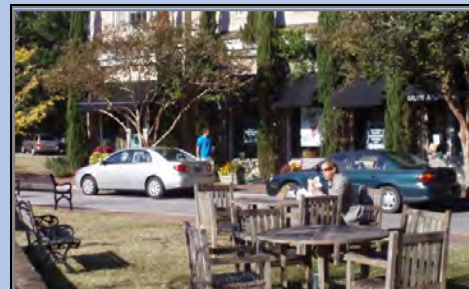
**Supporting Active
Uses / Engaging
Environment**



**Providing For Or
Requiring A
Mixture Of Uses
(retail, restaurant,
office, residential,
institutional, civic,
etc.)**



**Supporting
Desirable
Amenities**



Sewerage-Related Issues

Some of the issues currently identified in the Town Center area as a result of a lack of sewage treatment capacity:

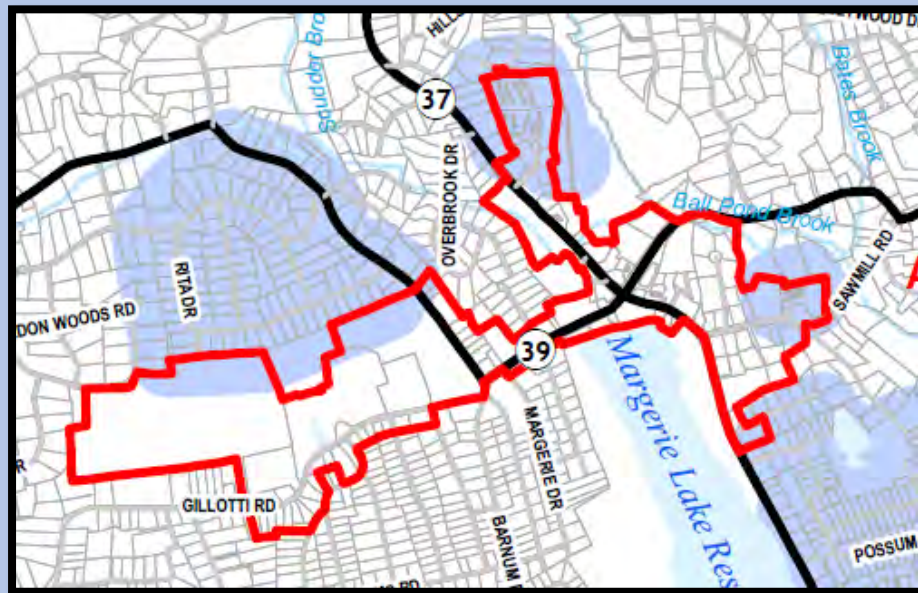
- Some septic systems experiencing failures,
- Septic failures in the area located above the largest drinking water aquifer in New Fairfield,
- Potential contamination of Ball Pond Brook which discharges directly to Candlewood Lake,
- Severe restrictions on both the types of businesses that can operate in Town and the potential growth of existing small businesses.

Extension Of Sewers To The Town Center Area

For the past several *decades*, Town POCDs have recommended that New Fairfield explore / install a sewer system in the Town Center area. Over the years, the Town Center has been challenged by a lack of septic capacity and/or a lack of water supply and, yet, over time, little progress was made.

Then, as a result of the COVID pandemic in 2020, the federal government created the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) and funds were made available to local communities to invest in important projects. At a Town Meeting, New Fairfield residents decided to invest \$1.8M (about 40% of the ARPA funds received by the Town) into a detailed sewer study and that study is in the process of being completed.

The basic plan is for a limited service area (Town Center, school sites, etc.) and a sewer capacity allocation based on existing zoning.



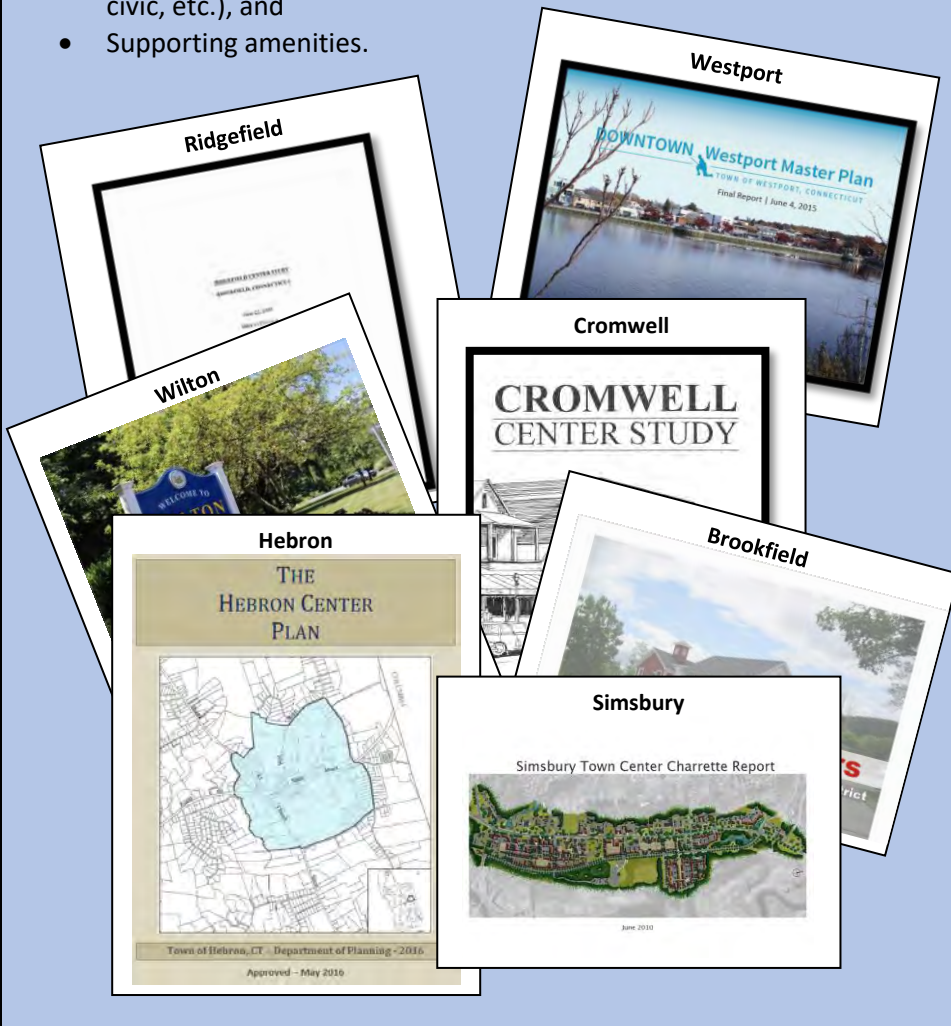
The POCD supports the multi-year process of extending sewers to and throughout the proposed area (shown above).

While the sewer will undoubtedly require some municipal funding (in addition to state and federal grants and loans), this investment in the Town Center will pay dividends for years to come in terms of supporting economic development and the type of Center residents have indicated they want.

Examples of Town Center Studies

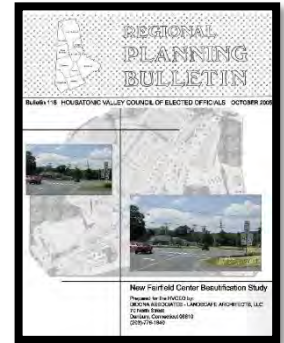
A number of municipalities around Connecticut have undertaken Town Center studies and New Fairfield could and should consider doing something similar. While a Town Center Beautification Study was completed in 2005 with the assistance of HVCEO, the recommended study should seek to investigate development opportunities in order to create:

- Walkable pedestrian-friendly streetscapes,
- Active uses / engaging environment,
- Mixture of uses (retail, restaurant, office, residential, institutional, civic, etc.), and
- Supporting amenities.



Beautification Study

A Beautification Study for New Fairfield Center was created in 2005 with the assistance of HVCEO.



Village District

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

The circumstances are:

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

Importance of Design

Design of buildings and sites is important to the Town Center area – especially if the overall vision is to create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use area that will attract people from New Fairfield and beyond to live, work, and play here.

New Fairfield recognizes that the aesthetic aspects of development, especially in the Town Center area, affect the overall ambience of the community. If Town Center development does not maintain or enhance community design and sense of place in some meaningful way, it is actually detracting from community ambience in New Fairfield.

New Fairfield does not have a Design Review Board and it may not be necessary to establish one since there will likely be sporadic developments where design review might be beneficial.

On the other hand, New Fairfield could benefit from the establishment of a “village district.” A village district is a special type of zoning district in Connecticut where a Zoning Commission can, with the assistance of a village district consultant retained only for the applications where needed, have considerable design discretion over a new development.

The Town Center area would meet the statutory criteria (CGS Section 8-2j) of being “... located in areas of distinctive character, landscape or historic value ...” For New Fairfield to designate a zoning district as a village, it must be designated as such in the POCD. This POCD does so designate.

The regulations establishing village districts shall protect the distinctive character, landscape and historic structures within such districts and may regulate ... new construction, substantial reconstruction and rehabilitation of properties within such districts and in view from public roadways, including, but not limited to:

- (1) the design and placement of buildings,*
- (2) the maintenance of public views,*
- (3) the design, paving materials and placement of public roadways, and*
- (4) other elements that the commission deems appropriate to maintain and protect the character of the village district.*

The POCD takes the position that new development in the Town Center area should maintain or enhance community ambience and sense of place in some meaningful way. Village district review will be critical to maintaining and enhancing community ambience in the Town Center area.

Possible Design Guidelines

Appropriate Scale	<i>Designed for people (not automobiles) with streets, buildings, and spaces (including the ratio of street width to building height) proportional to human users.</i>
Pedestrian-Friendly Network	<i>A comprehensive pedestrian network (sidewalks and paths) with amenities (such as planters, benches, lighting, overhangs, display windows) is important to establishing a “pedestrian-friendly” environment.</i>
Building Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Buildings that are close to and face the street to present a continuous facade for pedestrians</i> • <i>Buildings with inviting entrances, windows, and sidewalk activities (such as dining areas)</i> • <i>Building materials appropriate for village setting (such as brick and clapboard siding).</i>
Critical Mass of Uses	<i>There must be an amount and intensity of use (a critical mass) in the village that creates a focal point.</i>
Variety / Mix of Uses	<i>There must be a variety and mix of uses (such as business, residential, etc.) that creates an active environment. Community focal points such as libraries, schools, recreation areas, fire houses, and places of worship should be a part of any village.</i>
Appropriate Parking	<i>Ample parking, both visible on the street and coordinated to the rear of buildings, invites people, encourages retail activity, and buffers pedestrian areas from through traffic.</i>
Traffic Volumes	<i>A village should have moderate traffic volumes with vehicles travelling at appropriate speeds.</i>
Transit Linkages	<i>Bus, rail, and other forms of transit, where present, should be integrated into the village core.</i>
Appropriate Infrastructure	<i>Utility services (sewage, water, electricity, etc.) should be available and of adequate capacity to serve local needs</i>



TOWN CENTER GOAL	<i>Enhance the Town Center as the economic, social, cultural, and governmental focal point.</i>
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL	<i>Promote business and economic development to support local employment, help make goods and services available locally, and enhance the tax base.</i>
LEAD AGENCIES	Planning Commission Zoning Commission Economic Development Commission

POLICIES & ON-GOING PROGRAMS		
TOWN CENTER	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Continue to promote New Fairfield Center as the primary business location in New Fairfield.	EDC	PC ZC
B. Seek to extend sewer service to New Fairfield Center in order to support a vibrant, walkable, and pedestrian-friendly Town Center with a "sense of place."	EDC	WPCA PC Town
C. Promote compact <i>mixed-use</i> development in the Town Center area to create additional activity that could help support local businesses and provide opportunities for additional tax base development.	EDC	Town ZC PC
D. Promote housing options in and near the Town Center area.	EDC Town	Town ZC PC
E. Encourage greater density and intensity in the Town Center to help create a larger "critical mass" and a greater sense of activity provided it enhances the ambience of the Center.	EDC	Town ZC PC
F. Seek to provide for a system of sidewalk, crosswalk, and streetscape improvements throughout the Town Center to establish a safe and welcoming pedestrian environment.	Town	EDC ZC DOT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Continue to support existing businesses that are important for the Town's economic future.	EDC	Town
B. Encourage residents to spend money in local businesses to support a vibrant community.	EDC	Town
C. Strive to capitalize on the potential for recreation based economic development associated with Candlewood Lake, Ball Pond and Squantz Pond and promote tourism through seasonal events, local open space and trails, and natural assets and features.	EDC	Town

ACTION STEPS		
TOWN CENTER	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Complete the investigation of installing public water and sewer systems for a compact geographic area in order for more intensive economic development to occur in the Town Center area.	WPCA	EDC PC BOS BOF HD
2. Undertake a comprehensive Town Center Study to explore alternative development patterns in the Center including as potential location for more diverse housing types as part of mixed-use development.	Town	PC ZC
3. Consider establishing a Town Center Study Committee to involve Town boards, property owners, business owners, and residents in formulating a vision for the Town Center.	PC	BOS EDC ZC
4. Following the Town Center study, adopt new zoning regulations to allow development with a strong “sense of place”.	ZC	Town PC
5. The POCD recommends designating the Town Center as a “village district” (CGS Section 8-2j) in order to guide the design of new developments.	ZC	Town PC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Adopt new parking requirements for business uses to ensure that new development / redevelopment is not being prevented by excessive parking requirements.	ZC	Town EDC
2. Once a vibrant, mixed-use Town Center is evident, undertake a study of the development potential in the Candlewood Corners area to promote a compact, lower intensity, mixed use node to help support existing businesses.	PC	EDC ZC
3. Seek to hire an Economic Development Person + Grant Writer + Town Planner (see implementation section for more information)	BOS	BOF

Possible Town Center Redevelopment



Possible Town Center Redevelopment



Housing Challenges

People who have housing may not always be aware of the housing needs of other people or the housing needs of their community until someone close to them cannot find housing that meets their needs.

However, housing takes a long time to produce and it makes more sense for New Fairfield to take steps to diversify the local housing mix rather than waiting until more people struggle to find housing that meets their needs .

While affordability is an issue for some people, the types of housing available are also important.

3.4 Diversify Our Housing Portfolio

The housing element of the POCD has two main strategies:

- Seeking ways to provide for other types of housing to meet the diverse housing needs of an aging population, and
- Seeking ways to reduce the number of lots that are non-conforming as to lot size while still protecting public health and safety.

Strategy #1 - Housing Diversity

New Fairfield is a residential community and housing units have contributed to the historic growth and overall flavor of the community. In fact, the on-line survey found that housing type / value was one of the main features that attracted participants to New Fairfield.

However, there have been some major socio-economic trends which indicate that housing needs and desires may have evolved and that New Fairfield should consider diversifying its housing portfolio. Consider the following:

- The median age of residents is increasing (more than 1 in 3 residents were age 55 or older in 2020) and older residents may prefer options other than single family detached homes (such as smaller housing units, housing with outside maintenance provided, and/or housing with a sense of community). While 50% of participants in the on-line survey indicated they saw themselves living in the same home 10 years from now, 22 percent indicated they saw themselves living in a smaller home and 9 percent saw themselves living in an apartment or condominium. In other words, almost one-third of participants felt that another “flavor” of housing might better meet their needs in the future. The lack of housing diversity in New Fairfield may force people to have to decide whether to stay in a home not well suited to their needs or relocate to another municipality.
- The cost of housing has risen faster than incomes and so many younger people (the historic “growth engine” of New Fairfield and volunteers for the fire department and local boards and organizations) may have been priced out of the New Fairfield housing market. The issue of affordability can also affect older residents who already have housing in New Fairfield but are concerned about the rising costs of housing (mortgage, taxes, utilities, maintenance, etc.).

The 2024 Housing Plan made the same finding:

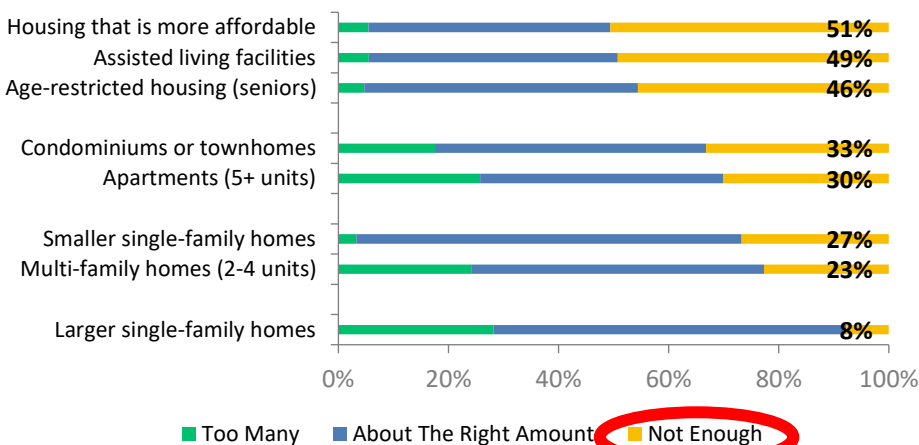
“While New Fairfield will remain a community of predominantly single-family homes on large lots, the Town recognizes the need to provide more variation in its housing stock. Diversifying New Fairfield’s housing stock can potentially allow young people to live in the community where they grew up, allow seniors to downsize within their community, and provide housing opportunities for firemen, teachers, and others who serve or work in New Fairfield.”

In 2023, the New Fairfield Housing Opportunities Committee conducted an on-line survey to collect feedback from residents. A total of 447 households participated and some of the findings included:

- 48% of participants anticipated that they, their children, or their parents will have to move out of New Fairfield to find the housing they need.
- **Seniors:**
 - 57% of participants think the town needs options that allow older adults to “downsize”.
 - 37% of participants think the town needs rental housing options for seniors.
- **Younger Persons:**
 - 46% of participants think the town needs housing options that are affordable to entry level teachers and other workers who provide essential services.
 - 36% of participants think town needs rental housing options young families and young adults can afford.

Similar results were found in the results from the POCD on-line survey:

Q15 - In terms of housing, do you feel New Fairfield has too much, not enough, or about the right amount of the following types of housing?



Housing Cost Burden

Households which spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing are considered “housing cost burdened” since less money is available for other living expenses (transportation, health care, child care, education, food, , etc.).

According to the 2024 Housing Plan:

- 1,280 households (26% of all households in New Fairfield) were spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs
- 485 of those households (10% of all households) were severely cost burdened, spending more than 50% of their
- Income on housing

Finding and keeping housing that is affordable is most challenging for households that earn under 80% of the area median income (AMI). New Fairfield has 1,405 households that earn less than 80% of the Danbury area median income.

Local Preferences

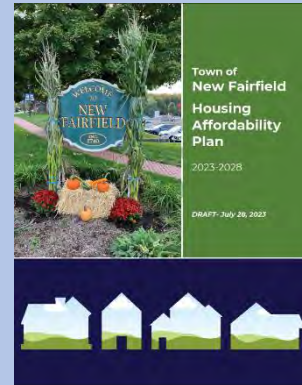
During the planning process, community members expressed stronger preferences for housing options such as:

- Housing affordable to seniors
- Accessory dwelling units
- Preferences for local residents

2024 Affordable Housing Plan

State statutes require that each municipality in Connecticut prepare and adopt an affordable housing plan and update it every five years thereafter. New Fairfield created a Housing Opportunities Committee for this task.

The planning process found that there are a number of housing needs in the community and several ways to address those needs. Addressing housing options and choices may be one of New Fairfield’s biggest challenges over the next 10 years and beyond.



Key strategies in the 2024 Affordable Housing Plan included:

1. Support the New Fairfield Housing Trust.
2. Support affordable first-time homebuyer options.
3. Allow the development of smaller sized homes that could be downsizing options for older adults.
4. Increase awareness about the housing opportunity that accessory dwelling units can create.
5. Continue to raise awareness about housing needs and solutions.
6. Make sure the strategies in the Affordable Housing Plan are implemented.

It is envisioned that the 2024 Affordable Housing Plan (and future updates) will be key reference documents and that both documents (AH Plan and POCD) will support housing strategies.

The POCD advocates for more housing, more diversity of housing types, and more affordable housing units in New Fairfield since doing so will:

- Help make New Fairfield a stronger community
- Expand the tax base
- Bring additional residents to support businesses in town
- Provide for a larger (and younger) volunteer pool for local fire department and local boards and organizations

See map on page 41 for areas with non-conforming lot sizes

Residential Development Map

New Fairfield, CT



New York State

New Milford

Brookfield

Danbury

Candlewood Lake

Margerie Lake Reservoir

4,000

Feet

Legend

Residential Zones

- R-44 Residential Zone
- R-88 Residential Zone
- Open Space (Residential) Zone
- Multi-Family District For The Elderly

Open Space

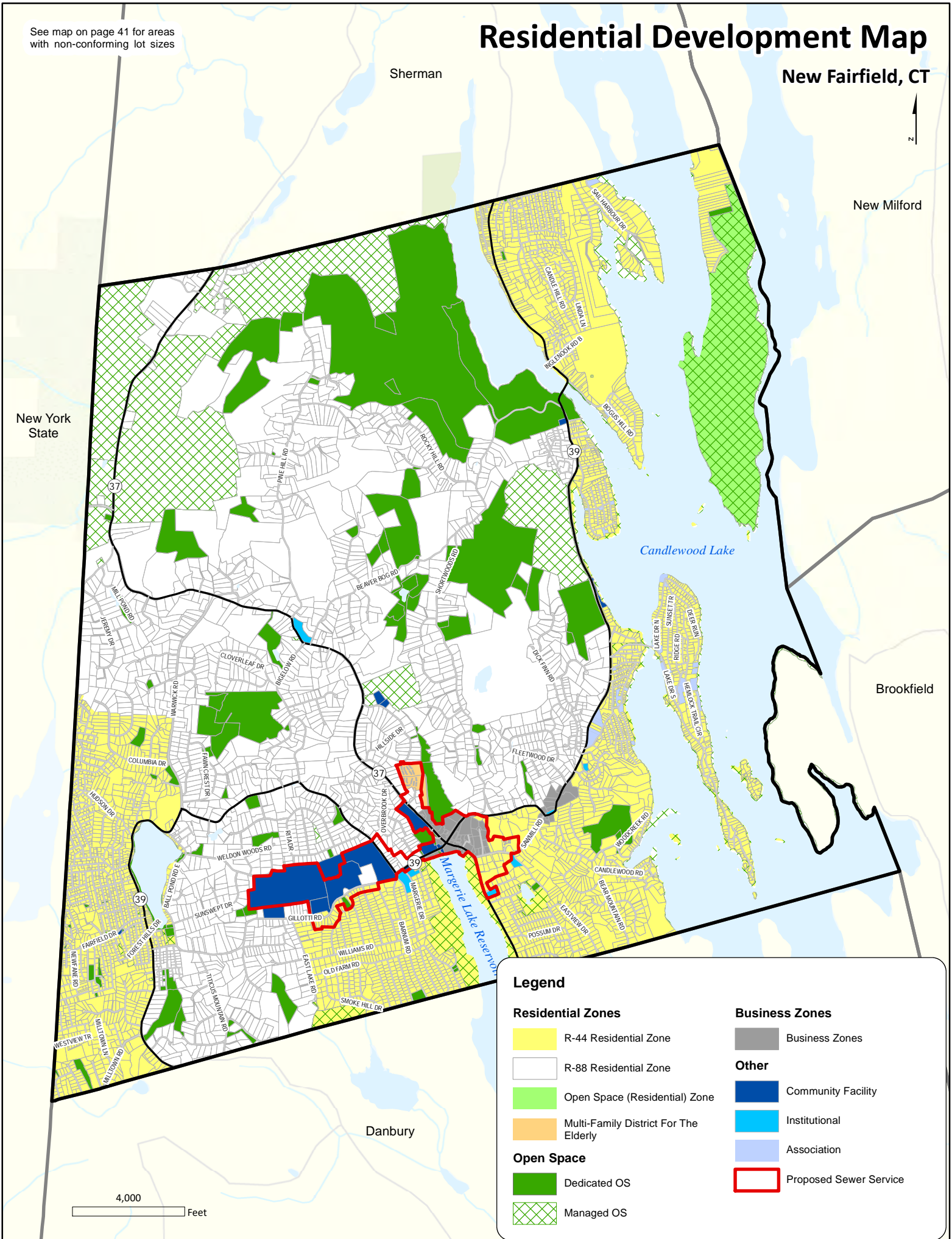
- Dedicated OS
- Managed OS

Business Zones

- Business Zones

Other

- Community Facility
- Institutional
- Association
- Proposed Sewer Service



Strategy #2 - Zoning Conformity

In addition to encouraging more housing diversity, the POCD also advocates for New Fairfield to review and revise its current residential zoning framework.

The areas of New Fairfield intended for residential use currently fall into one of four zoning districts:

- R-88 district which requires new lots to be two acres in size (87,120 SF),
- R-44 district which requires new lots to be one acre in size (43,560 SF),
- OS district which requires new lots to be 10 acres in size, and
- Multi-Family District For Elderly (MFDE) at up to 6 bedrooms/acre.

While the Zoning Regulations have a heading (Section 3.3) for Waterfront Residential District, there is no language under that heading and it is noted as “Open for Future Use.”

However, many parts of New Fairfield, particularly the lakeside residential areas, were established and/or built on prior to the adoption of zoning and many of the lots do not conform to the minimum lot size standards summarized above. Overall, about 73% of residential lots in New Fairfield are non-conforming as to lot area (3,539 out of 4,829 lots) and this may cause issues for local property owners:

- 82% of lots in R-44 are non-conforming as to lot area (2,594 / 3,165)
- 57% of lots in R-88 are non-conforming as to lot area (945 / 1,664)

These undersized lots are considered “non-conforming” and this can create regulatory challenges since standards (setbacks, lot coverage, etc.) proportional for a larger lot can create difficulties / limitations on a smaller lot.

As a result, it is likely that new building (small additions, adding a garage, adding a first floor master bedroom, adding a bathroom, adding a dormer, etc.) may require a variance of the regulations. Under zoning law, variances must be based on a showing of unusual physical difficulty and/or physical hardship and showing a technical hardship can be hard to prove.

The POCD recommends that New Fairfield institute a Waterfront Development District (or other zoning approach) with rules proportional to the lot sizes in order to allow property owners to make reasonable use of their property while ensuring proper protections for the lakes (building setbacks, stormwater runoff, vegetative buffers, etc.).

Lot Area And Residential Zoning Districts

Sherman

New Fairfield, CT



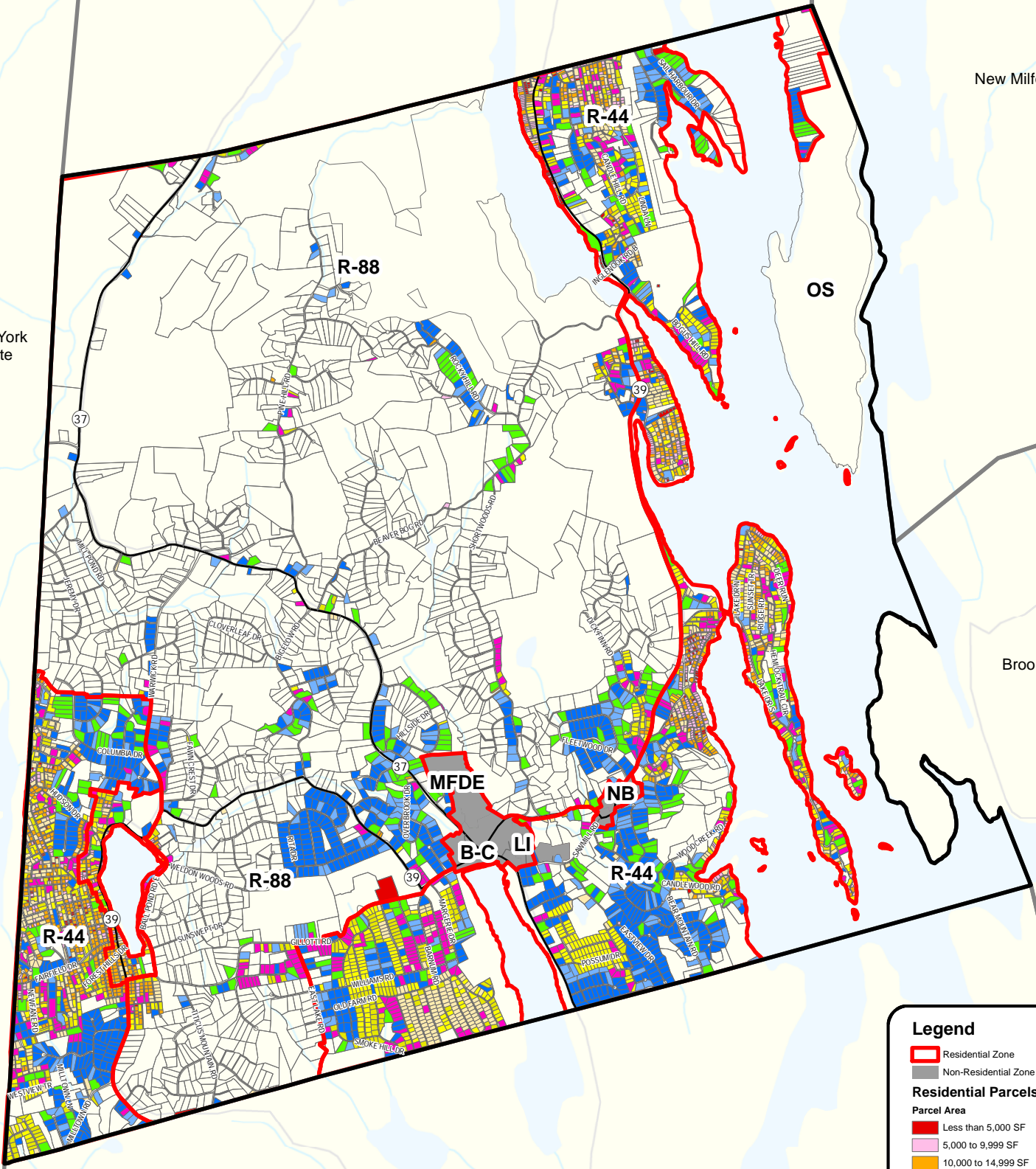
New Milford

New York State

OS

Brookfield

Danbury



Legend

- Residential Zone
- Non-Residential Zone

Residential Parcels

Parcel Area

- Less than 5,000 SF
- 5,000 to 9,999 SF
- 10,000 to 14,999 SF
- 15,000 to 19,999 SF
- 20,000 to 24,999 SF
- 25,000 to 29,999 SF
- 30,000 to 39,999 SF
- 40,000 to 49,999 SF
- 50,000 to 59,999 SF
- 60,000 to 79,999 SF
- 80,000 SF and larger

4,000

Feet

Lot areas are approximate. Any colored lot (< 80,000 SF) is likely non-conforming in the R-88 Zone. Any lot colored other than blue or green is likely non-conforming in the R-44 Zone. Any lot < 10 acres is likely non-conforming in the OS Zone.

GOAL	<i>Provide for a diversity of housing opportunities in New Fairfield consistent with local architectural design and physical constraints</i>
LEAD AGENCY	Zoning Commission (or a Housing Opportunities Committee, if established)

POLICIES & ON-GOING PROGRAMS		
HOUSING DIVERSITY	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Seek ways to provide for a diversity of housing opportunities in New Fairfield (unit size, unit configuration, unit cost, etc.).	Town	ZC PC
B. Educate the community about ways to address housing needs consistent with physical constraints (soil types, terrain, and infrastructure capacity) and the overall ambience of the community (density, architectural design, etc.).	Town	ZC PC DOH
C. Establish provisions to allow accessory dwelling units in residential zones.	ZC	
D. Seek to increase the number of subsidized elderly housing to meet local needs.	Town	
E. Implement the Affordable Housing Plan.	Town	ZC PC
F. Maintain the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program to help lower income owners maintain their housing units.	BOS	

Visual Guidelines







Illustrative WHOZ Design Guidelines – Duplex / Townhouse Dwellings

Favorable Design Treatments	Townhouse Dwellings	Unfavorable Design Treatments
  	  	  
<p>Design Elements Which Are Encouraged / Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.0 to 2.5 story buildings (or as appropriate to site context) • Articulated forms and facades and materials • Good architectural details (porches, awns, shutters, columns, dormers, other views, etc., etc.) • Well-proportioned facades • Good building materials • Pitched roofs • Windows with vertical proportions • Strong relationship to street / sidewalk • Parking on street or behind building • Single-family appearance for duplex buildings • Integrate into the street. 		<p>Discouraged Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.0 story buildings • Monolithic forms • Overly repetitive forms • Monotonous materials • Flat facades • Limited architectural detailing • Flat facades • Flatter roofs • Windows with horizontal proportions • Weak relationship to street / sidewalk • Dominant garage / parking • Integrate into architecture.

7

“Pattern Book”

DUPLEX – STACKED

 <small>PROVIDED BY: BIRCHDALE, VA</small>	 <small>PROVIDED BY: BIRCHDALE, VA</small>
 <small>PROVIDED BY: BIRCHDALE, VA</small>	 <small>PROVIDED BY: BIRCHDALE, VA</small>
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14

ACTION STEPS		
HOUSING DIVERSITY	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Explore creating a permanent Housing Opportunities Committee to advocate for, and monitor the creation of, housing opportunities (and prepare the next housing plan in 5 years).	BOS	Town
2. Investigate adopting regulations to enable age-restricted developments with an affordable set-aside.	ZC	Town PC
3. Investigate adopting regulations to allow moderate density multi-family development in smaller scale projects in and near New Fairfield Center.	ZC	Town PC
4. Investigate adopting an inclusionary zoning requirement requiring provision of affordable units or a payment in lieu of providing such units.	ZC	Town PC
5. Consider creating an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.	BOS	BOF
6. Review and update programs related to providing tax relief to elderly homeowners.	BOS	BOF
ZONING CONFORMITY	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Explore instituting a Waterfront Development District with rules proportional to the lot sizes in order to allow property owners to make reasonable use of their property while ensuring proper protections for the lakes (building setbacks, stormwater runoff, vegetative buffers, etc.).	ZC	PC

Examples Of Diverse Housing Types

Cottage Court



Cottage Court



Mixed Use Building



Mixed Use Building



Open Space Terminology

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

Dedicated Open Space has significant protection through ownership or deed restriction. Such lands are unlikely to be developed in the future. Such lands often allow for public access.

Managed Open Space is land which is used for another purpose (water company land, nature center, cemetery, golf course, etc.) but which provides open space benefits while that use or ownership continues. It is possible that such land could be developed in the future since it is not restricted. Such lands may allow for public access.

3.5 Preserve Open Space / Extend Trails

Preservation of open space is important to New Fairfield residents. In the on-line survey, about half of all participants ranked it as their #1 or #2 priority. Some open space helps to preserve healthy ecosystems, conserve important natural resources, provide wildlife habitat and corridors, protect water quality, and areas for passive recreational use such as trails. Other open space provides areas for more active recreation and the use of natural resources. Open space also provides a sense of place, fiscal and economic benefits, and shapes development patterns.

Interestingly, the Economic Development Commission also identified open spaces and trails as important since these amenities can help attract people from other communities to New Fairfield and those people can help support existing businesses and new businesses desired by residents.

Open Space Preservation

The main open space goal in New Fairfield should be to interconnect open spaces to the greatest extent possible to establish an overall greenway system.

Strategies to preserve open space (in order of cost to the Town) may include:

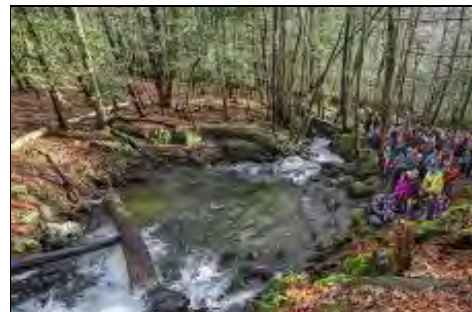
- Receive donations of land
- Receive a “fee *in lieu of* open space” at time of subdivision
- Obtain 20% open space set-aside at time of subdivision
- Get 30-50% open space set-aside at time of conservation development
- Partner with other open space organizations (land trust, etc.)
- Purchase land with State grants, fund-raising, etc.
- Purchase land with Town funds

If it is not possible to purchase (or receive) land for open space, the best option may be to encourage or require the preservation of 30-50% of a land parcel as open space at the time of development. Some communities require conservation development patterns (especially in large lot districts) and New Fairfield may wish to consider the same thing.

Open Space Overlooking Squantz Pond



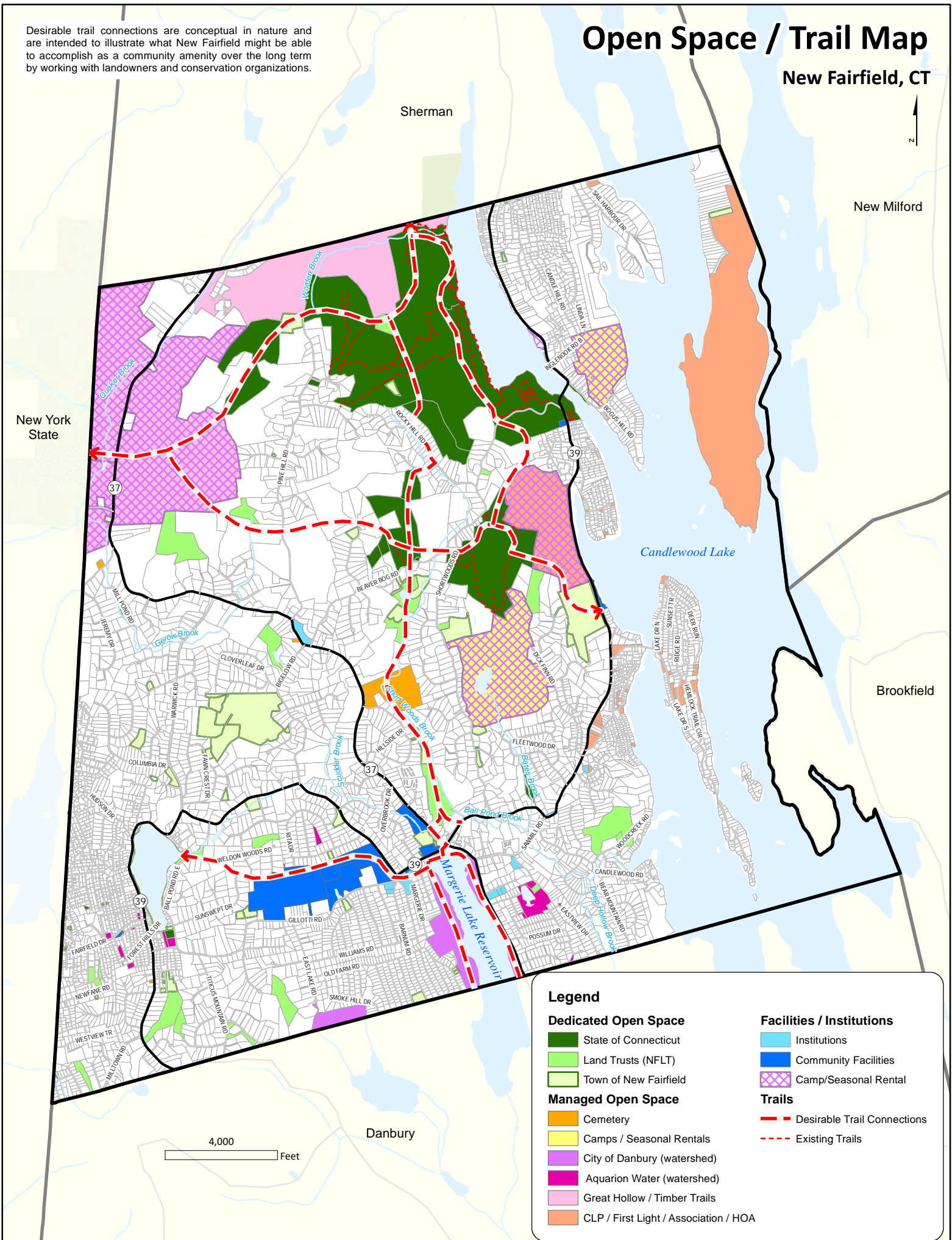
Great Hollow Nature Preserve



Desirable trail connections are conceptual in nature and are intended to illustrate what New Fairfield might be able to accomplish as a community amenity over the long term by working with landowners and conservation organizations.

Open Space / Trail Map

New Fairfield, CT



New York State

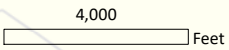
Sherman

New Milford

Candlewood Lake

Brookfield

Danbury



Legend

Dedicated Open Space

- State of Connecticut
- Land Trusts (NFLT)
- Town of New Fairfield

Managed Open Space

- Cemetery
- Camps / Seasonal Rentals
- City of Danbury (watershed)
- Aquarion Water (watershed)
- Great Hollow / Timber Trails
- CLP / First Light / Association / HOA

Facilities / Institutions

- Institutions
- Community Facilities
- Camp/Seasonal Rental

Trails

- Desirable Trail Connections
- Existing Trails

Open Space / Trails As Economic Development

Recreation can be a catalyst for economic development. This is already evident in New Fairfield due to activities associated with Candlewood Lake.

While New Fairfield can (and should) continue to build on these water-based opportunities, other attractions and amenities can complement and supplement those activities:

Some examples which have been used by other communities include:

- Trail systems
- Treasure hunts to find hidden objects
- Letterboxing where people “collect” ink stamps from hidden boxes either for fun or to be eligible for a prize

Special Case - Squantz Pond

Squantz Pond is a State-owned park in New Fairfield (northern part of Candlewood Lake) . With a sandy beach and a swimming area with lifeguards, it has proven to be very popular with visitors from as far as New York City.

However, the park has limited parking capacity (250 cars) and, on summer days, many cars can be lined up on Route 39 before the park opens. On busy days, all spaces can be taken by 9:00 AM and people arriving later have been known to drop passengers, park their cars elsewhere, and walk along roadways back to the park. The overall traffic congestion and pedestrian hazards are major concerns. In addition, negative publicity related to overcrowding, swimming incidents, and park management may have affected people’s impression of New Fairfield.

In past years, it can be seen that the State has not done a good job controlling impacts at Squantz Pond. In 2024, it is understood that the State will be implementing a reservation system for vehicles and people in an attempt to better manage this popular attraction.



Trails

While open space areas are important, open space trails have the ability to magnify the value of an open space system by providing access to people. New Fairfield has a number of trails already but they are not well known and are certainly not well sign-posted.

The main strategies of the POCD are to:

- Promote trails.
- Interconnect the trails New Fairfield already has.
- Seek to make strategic trail connections and create an overall “Newfie” trail system in New Fairfield which extends from the Danbury Town Line to the Sherman Town Line and interconnects the different parts of New Fairfield.

“Newfie” Trail System

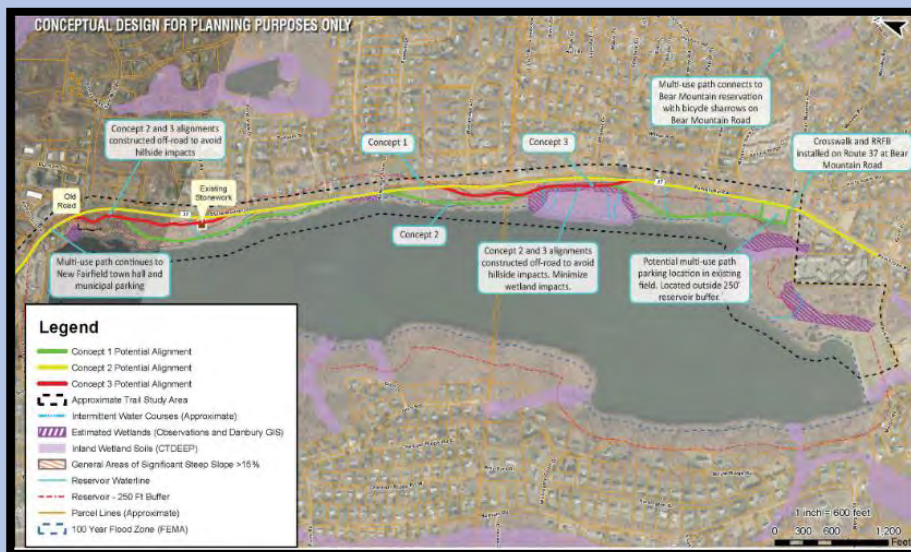
It is possible that some sort of “branding” will help raise awareness of the existing and future trails in New Fairfield and this could pay dividends in terms of attracting people to New Fairfield for recreation (economic development) and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Playing off New Fairfield’s initials sparked an idea of a “NF trail system” with the image of a Newfoundland dog (a “Newfie”).

Margerie Reservoir Trail

For a number of years, New Fairfield and Danbury (in conjunction with the Western Connecticut Council of Governments) have been planning for a trail system at Margerie Reservoir. The State of Connecticut awarded a \$2.28 million grant to support this effort.

Design is being finalized and it is hoped that construction will be completed as a key component of the “Newfie trail system” (see sidebar).



Concept plan as of Spring 2024.



GOAL	<i>Seek to increase the amount of dedicated / protected open space in New Fairfield.</i>
LEAD AGENCY	Planning Commission / Conservation - Inland Wetlands Commission / Park and Recreation Commission / CVR Land Trust

POLICIES & ON-GOING PROGRAMS	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Continue to seek ways, <i>to the greatest extent possible</i> , to preserve more open space and interconnect open space areas with a cohesive overall trail system.	PC	Town CVRLT MRTAC
B. Seek to create a “Newfie” trail system throughout New Fairfield from Danbury to Sherman.	Town	CVRLT MRTAC
C. Work with landowners to see if there are ways to interconnect trails through private lands	Town	CVRLT
D. Continue to seek funding for open space acquisition and trail development to extend the greenway / trail system through New Fairfield.	Town	CVRLT MRTAC
E. Continue to promote preservation of <i>dedicated</i> open space through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Donation of land to the Town or a non-profit land conservation organization (such as a land trust) b. Purchase / acquisition of open space by the State, the Town, or a non-profit land conservation organization c. Open space set-aside (or fee-in-lieu of open space) as part of any new residential subdivision (including “conservation” subdivisions where 30% to 50% of the parcel area would be preserved as open space) 	-	PC CIWC CVRLT P&R DEEP
F. Continue to partner with, and encourage the activities of, land trusts and other open space preservation organizations:	Town	CVRLT DEEP CLA
G. Continue to promote conservation development patterns in order to protect natural resources and preserve open space.	PC	CVRLT CLA

ACTION STEPS	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Seek funding to establish greenway trails as part of the “Newfie” system (starting with completion of the Margerie Reservoir Loop Trail).	Town	CVRLT MRTAC
2. Explore establishing an Open Space Acquisition Fund.	BOS	BOF
3. Each year, set aside municipal funds for open space so that the funds are available when needed for acquisition and/or improvements (including trails and parking areas).	BOS	BOF
4. Explore adopting regulations which require “conservation development” in the R-88 District unless this requirement is waived by the Planning Commission.	PC	ZC

4.0 OTHER STRATEGIES



NATURAL RESOURCES



ASSETS & AMBIENCE



**SUSTAINABILITY &
RESILIENCY**



TRANSPORTATION
(Vehicle, Walk, Bike, Transit)



UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

FirstLight / “440 Line”

It is important to note that Candlewood Lake is a pump storage reservoir created a century or so ago for electrical generation. As part of its creation, the facility operator (FirstLight Power) owns all land up to the elevation of 440 feet above sea level.

First Light has a Shoreline Management Plan which guides the use of properties that abut the lake.

Water Quality Protection

The Candlewood Lake Authority is a strong advocate for protecting the water quality of Candlewood Lake (and other water resources).

For example, their homeowner’s guide provides strategies to help residents protect water quality.



Protect Natural Resources

Natural resources are a barometer of overall environmental / ecological health in New Fairfield and contribute to the long-term well-being, ambience, and sense of place. Protecting natural resources and enhancing ecological health is important to residents.

Water Resources

While Candlewood Lake is the main water feature, New Fairfield has numerous other surface water resources (brooks, streams, ponds, wetlands, etc.) as well as groundwater resources.

Protection of water resources is the most important natural resource strategy for New Fairfield and was the most important “conservation” priority expressed by survey participants.

Protection of water quality is important for a number of reasons. Not only do most New Fairfield properties rely on well water (groundwater) for domestic use, but much of New Fairfield is located in areas where rainfall drains to reservoirs (public water supply watersheds) serving Danbury and New York City. Protection of water quality is also critical to the long-term health of Candlewood Lake, Ball Pond, and other local water features.

Protecting water quality (and addressing water quantity) can be accomplished a number of ways:

- Preserving land in its natural state
- Continuing the septic management program (requiring regular septic pumping and regular inspection of septic systems)
- Maintaining / enhancing vegetated buffers and setbacks (riparian buffers) next to watercourses / waterbodies
- Implementing “low impact development” (LID) techniques of managing stormwater runoff
 - Capturing and remediating pollutants in storm water runoff
 - Increasing ground water recharge following rain events (and reducing runoff volume)
 - Avoiding / reducing nutrients / fertilizers / road salt / pollutants (including regular pumping of septic tanks)

The Candlewood Lake Authority (CLA) is a key resource and partner also concerned with protecting water quality.

Natural Resources Map

Sherman

New Fairfield, CT



New Milford

New York State

Brookfield


Danbury

Candlewood Lake

Margerie Lake Reservoir


Legend

Water Resources

 Water Resources

 Wetlands


 Stratified Drift Aquifer

 Public Water Supply Watershed

 FEMA 100 Year Flood Zone

 FEMA 500 Year Flood Zone

Land Resources

 Slopes Exceeding 25%

Biologic Resources

 Natural Diversity Database

4,000

Feet

Not all wetland areas shown due to map scale

Plant-Type Categories

Native plants are those that occur naturally in a region in which they evolved. They are the base of local food chains and support native wildlife.

Non-native plants are typically plants from other continents with similar climates, introduced because of their beauty. Such plants do not support the life cycles of native wildlife.

Non-native plants can become invasive, outcompeting native species and adversely affecting habitat in remaining natural areas.

Biological Resources

New Fairfield contains a number of diverse habitats that sustain a variety of plants and animals. However, this natural balance has been threatened by non-native and/or invasive plants that do not support local wildlife and can harm local ecosystems. New Fairfield should continue to encourage native species and discourage / prevent the use of non-native/invasive species.

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

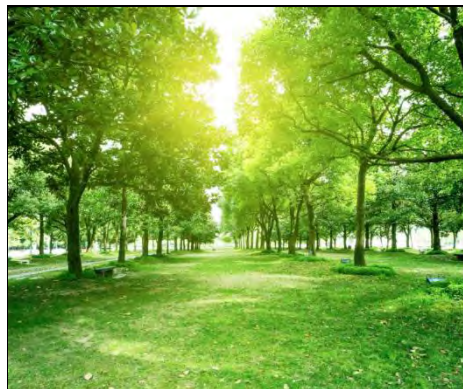
**Water Resources
(Ball Pond)**



**Land Resources
(Landforms / Slopes / Vegetated Hillside)**



Flora



Fauna



GOAL	<i>Preserve and protect natural resources and important natural features in New Fairfield.</i>
LEAD AGENCY	Conservation / Inland Wetlands Commission

POLICIES & ON-GOING PROGRAMS	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Maintain the Septic Management Program to help minimize the impact of septic systems on water quality and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with Danbury to retain “ticketing” of septic pump-outs to help enforce the ordinance), or b. If Danbury ceases ticketing of septic pump-outs, initiate a program to notify property owners every 3 years and/or require septic pumping businesses to notify the Health Department. 	HD	BOS CLA DEEP
B. Maintain and enhance water quality (surface and groundwater). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to implement LID/MS4 approaches to stormwater management b. Maintain the requirement for a stormwater management plan for new development (ZR Section 1.5.4 and Section 6.7) c. Continue to educate residents and businesses about water quality impacts that result from everyday activities such as. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Septic systems, • Lawn and garden fertilizers / chemicals. 	CWC	ZC PC HD CLA FLPR DEEP
C. Continue to work with other water resource-related agencies to support watershed protection and water quality monitoring efforts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Candlewood Lake Authority b. First Light Power c. Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) 	CWC	HD CLA FLPR DEEP
D. Continue to protect other important natural resources and natural features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Wetlands and watercourses, b. Floodplains, c. Steep slopes, d. Flora and fauna including using the Natural Diversity Database to help preserve and protect important natural resources 	CWC	ZC PC CLA FLPR DEEP
E. Continue to promote conservation development patterns to protect natural resources and preserve open space.	ZC	PC
F. Continue to discourage/prohibit the planting of invasive species and encourage/require the planting of native species.	CWC	ZC PC
G. To help address threats to water quality, strongly encourage (or require) the use of organic lawn care and discourage/prohibit the use of chemical fertilizers	CWC	CLA BOS

ACTION STEPS	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Update the Zoning Regulations to refer to the 2024 Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual and the 2024 Erosion and Sediment Control Manual	ZC	

Historic Resources

Several New Fairfield organizations help with preservation of historic resources

- Historic Properties Commission - A Town commission which has gotten grants for historic inventories
- Historical Society – A non-government organization advocating for protection of historic resources
- Preserve New Fairfield – A non-government organization created to preserve 2 houses in Town Center

4.2 Maintain / Enhance Assets & Ambience

New Fairfield has a number of things that contribute to its overall ambience and sense of place and that contribute to the quality of life of residents. Maintaining and enhancing community ambience is an important element of this POCD.

In the 2023 on-line survey conducted as part of preparing this POCD:

- 65% of participants indicated that community appearance/ambience was very important to their decision to come to New Fairfield (or to stay in New Fairfield),
- 69% of participants indicated that maintaining / enhancing visual appearance and characteristics was extremely important or very important to the future of New Fairfield,
- On the other hand, only 7% of participants felt the town was doing an excellent job of this and 40% felt the town was doing a good job at this.
- that maintaining / enhancing visual appearance and characteristics was extremely important or very important to the future of New Fairfield,

Also in that on-line survey:

- Character / ambience / sense of community were the top three things identified that made people “proud” of their community.
- Desire for more amenities / activities were identified as things that made people “sorry” about New Fairfield.
- Survey participants identified a number of facilities / services / features that contribute to overall ambience and quality of life.
- Participants also indicated that maintaining ambience / character was identified one of the greatest challenges facing New Fairfield.

**Scenic View
(Route 39 Crossing At Squantz Pond)**



**Scenic Place
(Great Hollow Nature Preserve)**



Community Assets / Ambience Map

New Fairfield, CT

Sherman



Dedicated Open Space lands and Managed Open Space lands are also community assets and contribute to overall ambience. Please see the Open Space Map for the locations of these areas.

Please see map on page 19 for information on community facilities

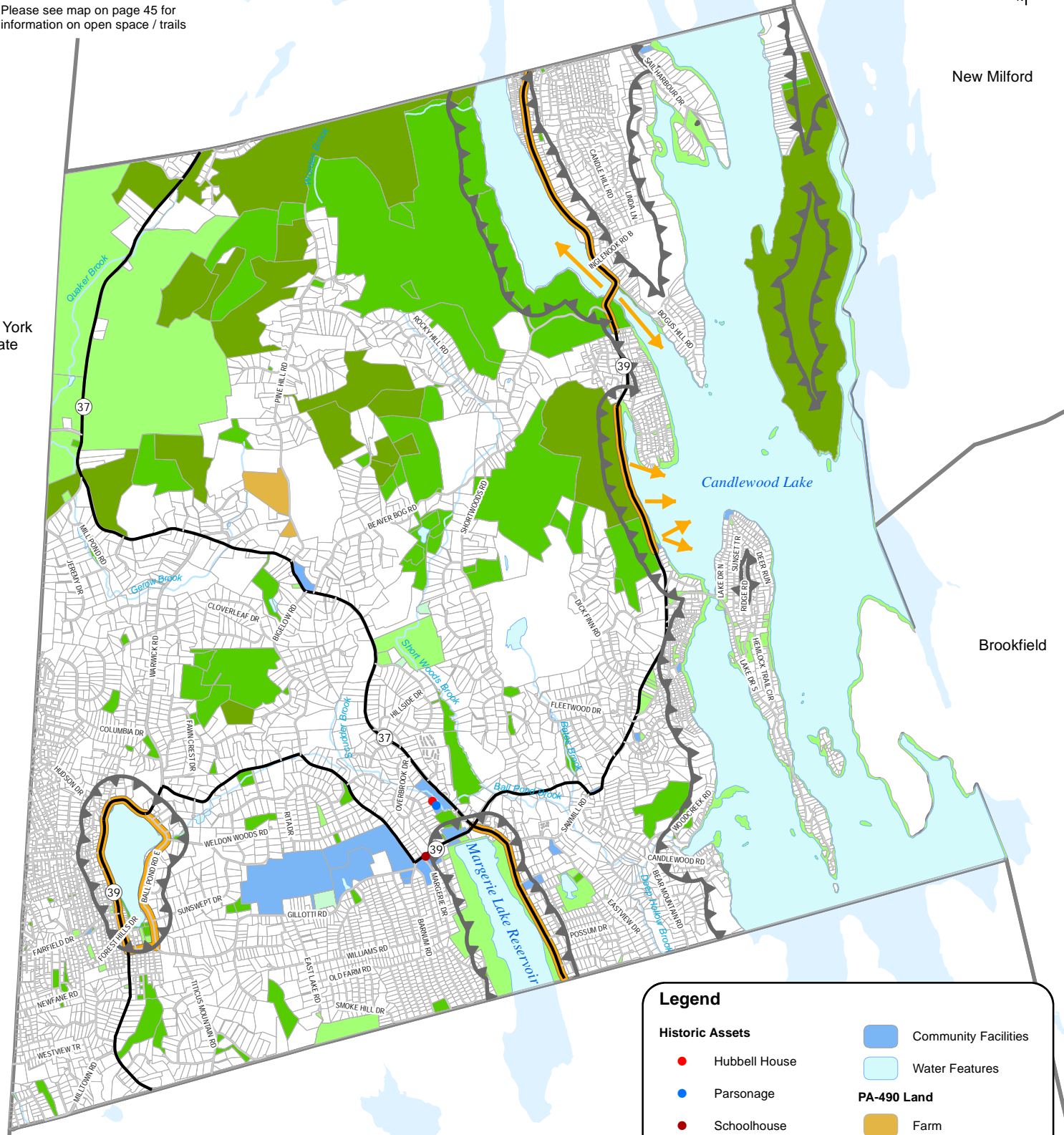
Please see map on page 45 for information on open space / trails

New York State

New Milford

Brookfield

Danbury



Legend

Historic Assets

- Hubbell House
- Parsonage
- Schoolhouse

Scenic Assets

- ➔ Scenic Views
- Scenic Roads
- Scenic Areas Within 750 Feet Of Major Water Features

Community Facilities

Water Features

PA-490 Land

Farm

Forest

Open Space

Dedicated Open Space

Managed Open Space

4,000

Feet

Open Space Assessment

Survey participants noted that parcels that are undeveloped or are working land (farms and forests) contribute to New Fairfield’s overall ambience and sense of place.

To help make undeveloped land less expensive to own (and reduce the chances that such land would be forced into development), the Connecticut legislature established a “use assessment program” in the 1960s (codified in CGS Section 12-107) which provides for reduced assessments for:

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

The POCD supports the continued use of the farm assessment and forest assessment components of the PA-490 program. During the planning period, New Fairfield may wish to investigate whether it might help preserve undeveloped land if the Town were to offer a “local option” PA-490 program.

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

- Natural features such as water features and topography
- Undeveloped land and preserved open space
- Scenic views, scenic roads, and other scenic resources
- Community services and facilities
- Community events (such as parades, youth sports, etc.)

While New Fairfield has a number of notable “character” resources, some challenges were identified relative to lakes and ponds:

- Crowding (6000 resident boats, 7 public boat launches (2 state / 5 town) in the five towns surrounding Candlewood Lake)
- Boat operator behavior (speeding, noise, etc.)
- Water quality (algae, salinity, invasive species, etc.)
- Garbage and waste (especially Blueberry Island / Sand Island)

All of these resources contribute to an overall sense of community pride and spirit. Community pride and spirit should continue to be nurtured and sustained in New Fairfield since it helps strengthen the sense of community and helps encourage community participation and volunteerism.

Community pride and spirit can also be supported and strengthened by:

- Enhancing community communication.
- Encouraging community and civic activities that promote and enhance community spirit.

Historic Resource

(Little Red Schoolhouse on Brush Hill Road)



Historic Resource

(Preserve New Fairfield Historic Homes)



GOAL	<i>Continue to maintain and enhance the overall ambience and character of New Fairfield.</i>
LEAD AGENCY	Conservation / Inland Wetlands Commission Historic Properties Commission

POLICIES & ON-GOING PROGRAMS	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Continue to identify and protect scenic resources, especially as part of the development review process.	Town	ZC PC
B. Continue to identify and protect cultural resources, including historic resources.	HS	HPC PNF
C. Support local historic preservation organizations sustain their mission (such as the Historical Society seeking a climate controlled / fire protected place to store documents)	Town	HS HPC PNF
D. Continue to promote community pride and spirit, communication, and encourage community participation.	Town	
E. Encourage community and civic activities that promote and enhance community spirit.	Town	
F. Continue to preserve undeveloped land for a longer period through the PA-490 use assessment program (farm and forest).	Town	BOS BOF

ACTION STEPS	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Review the Zoning Regulations to see whether scenic resources are adequately considered as part of development reviews (similar to Section 3.01 of the Subdivision Regulations).	ZC	
2. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance to provide up to 90 days to explore alternatives to demolition, preserve architectural features, or document historical features.	BOS	
3. Consider enactment of a “local option” assessment policy (PA-490) to help preserve undeveloped land for a longer period. (see sidebar on page 56)	BOS	BOF

State Sustainability Plan

The GreenerGov CT initiative, launched in 2019, directs Executive Branch agencies to advance environmental leadership and cost savings for taxpayers by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other sustainability objectives in energy use in buildings and vehicles, water use, and waste disposal.

Sustainability goals include:

- A 45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2001 levels
- A 10% reduction in water consumption from a 2020 baseline
- A 25% reduction in waste disposal from a 2020 baseline

4.3 Promote Sustainability & Resiliency

During the process of preparing this POCD, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance indicated they would like to investigate energy options to reduce overall expenses and the Town’s “carbon footprint” (a measure of the amount of carbon dioxide and other carbon compounds emitted due to the consumption of fossil fuels). The Board of Finance also mentioned the importance of sustainability / resiliency in order for the Town to be able to manage the financial impacts of future events.

The overall concepts of sustainability and resiliency have been made an overarching theme that is intended to run through this POCD. Information on overarching themes may be found on pages 14-15.

1. Incorporate resiliency into the regional hazard mitigation planning process in order to be eligible for state / federal funds.
2. Investigate energy options to reduce town energy expenses and carbon footprint (including life-cycle costing of buildings so that the most cost-effective choices can be made).
3. Expand opportunities for “green infrastructure”:
 - Seek state/federal grants or private investment in EV chargers in Town Center.
 - Allow residential scale solar / wind generation in the Zoning Regulations as accessory uses.
4. Consider regular sustainability symposia (perhaps 2-4 times per year) with one official from each board to identify .
5. Consider developing and implementing an email or text message system (emergency broadcast system).

Sustainability



Resiliency



GOAL	<i>Become a more sustainable and resilient community.</i>
LEAD AGENCY	Town

POLICIES & ON-GOING PROGRAMS	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Encourage residents to become more knowledgeable and engaged in sustainability and resiliency efforts – both publicly and privately.	Town	BOS
B. Provide and maintain information for residents and businesses about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Improving energy efficiency, reducing waste, and other sustainable practices b. resiliency approaches 	Town	
C. Seek ways to use municipal buildings, facilities, and vehicle fleets to model sustainable practices for the rest of the community.	Town	
D. Proactively plan for the impacts of climate change and help create a more resilient community that is prepared for future events.	Town	
E. Reduce total energy use, and shift to more renewable energy sources.	Town	BOS BOE
F. Seek ways to increase recycling and composting to divert solid waste from needing collection and disposal.	Town	PW
G. Continue to implement the hazard mitigation plan and work with WestCOG to update the regional plan on a regular basis.	Town	TE

ACTION STEPS	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Consider establishing a Sustainability Committee	BOS	
2. By 2028, undertake an audit of energy use in existing municipal buildings, facilities, and vehicle fleets and identify short-term fixes as well as longer-range capital improvements with positive results (i.e., economic payback).	Town	PBC BOF
3. Create a Town webpage that informs and educates residents and businesses about sustainability and resiliency issues.	Town	

Pavement Management

The graphic on the bottom of page 22 suggests that:

- The useful life of pavement could be about 25-30 years before a total rehabilitation is needed
- Pavement deterioration accelerates after about 15-20 years and this might suggest the “preventative trigger”

Addressing roads before the “preventative trigger” is likely to be more cost effective than waiting until the “rehabilitation trigger.”

4.4 Manage Vehicle, Walk, Bike, Transit Transportation

The transportation systems in New Fairfield (vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, bus, etc.) are functionally important to the day-to-day life of residents, visitors, and businesses.

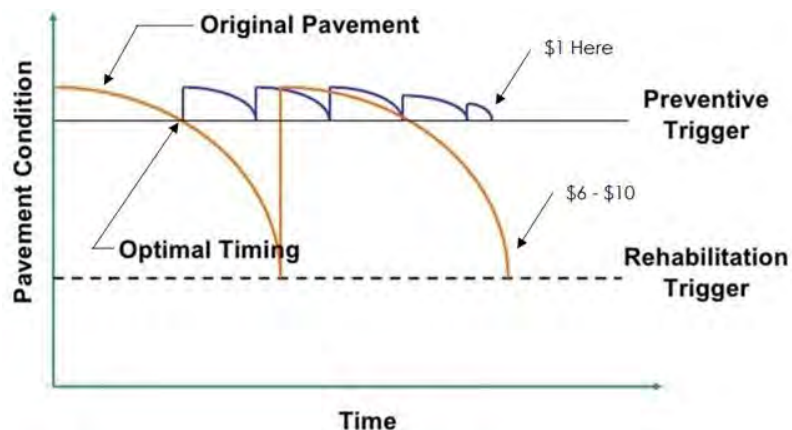
Vehicular Transportation

New Fairfield has a reasonably adequate road system in place to meet the basic circulation needs of residents and business users.

A special study of Route 37 (from I-84 in Danbury to New Fairfield center) was completed by WestCOG in 2021. In New Fairfield, the study suggested intersection improvements at the Route 37/39 intersection (which have been planned for some time) and at the Route 37/ Saw Mill Road intersection.

Roadway Connections - While the lack of cross-town connections in the northern part of New Fairfield may create some challenges, most traffic travels in a north-south direction. If there is development activity in northern New Fairfield, opportunities to make road connections (and reduce the length/number of dead-end streets) should be pursued.

Pavement Management - The POCD recommends that New Fairfield establish a “pavement management” approach so that the overall condition of the pavement can be tracked over time and the roadway system (pavement quality) can be maintained as efficiently and economically as possible. By basing roadway maintenance on the depreciation characteristics of similar roadways, funds can be applied “at the right time” to minimize the lifecycle cost of maintaining the roadway system. However, *adequate* annual funding is necessary to make this strategy successful. Otherwise, deferring funding in the short term only increases the overall cost in the long term.



Transportation Map

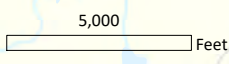
New Fairfield, CT

Sherman

New Milford

Brookfield

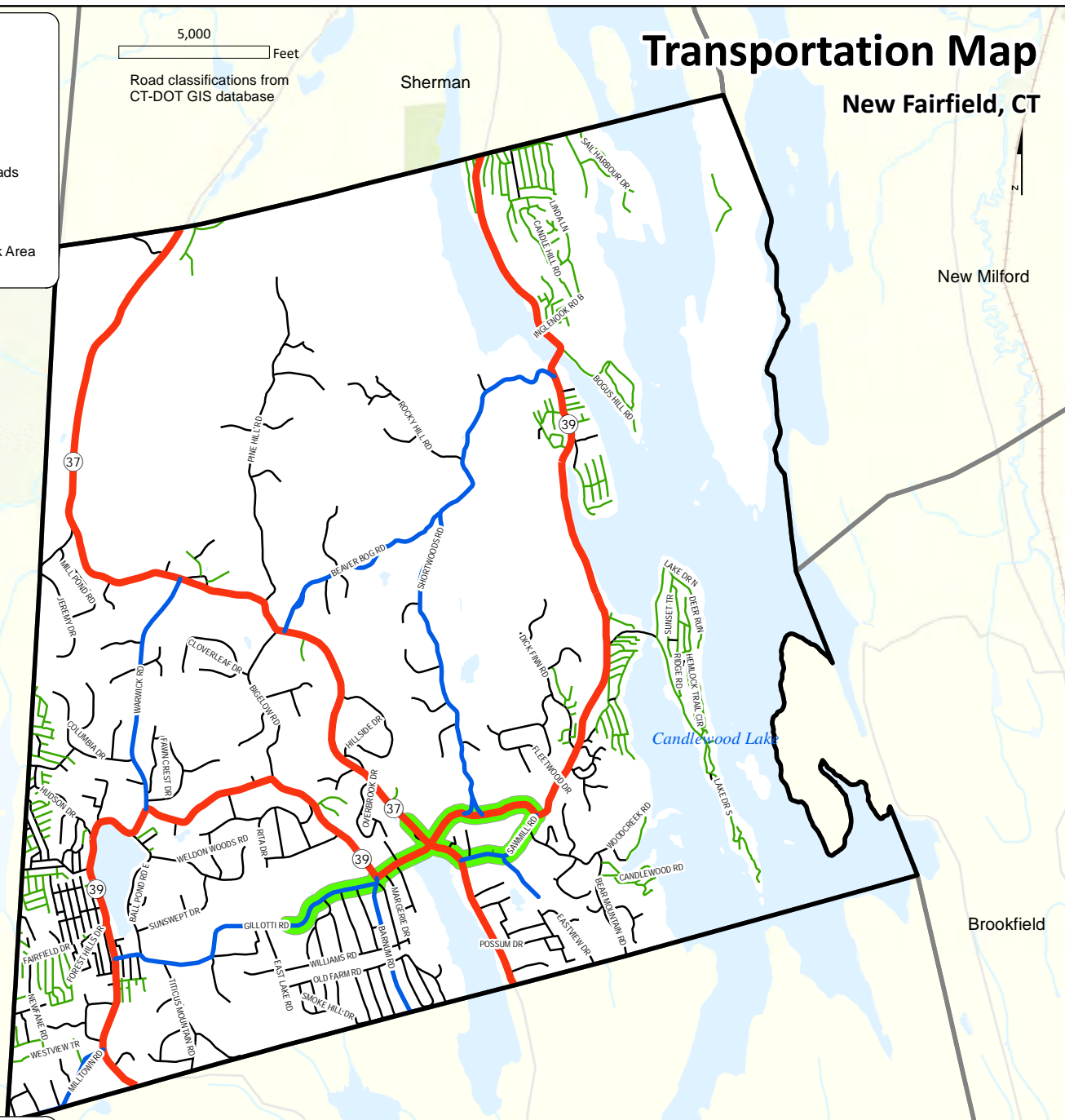
New York State



Road classifications from CT-DOT GIS database

Legend

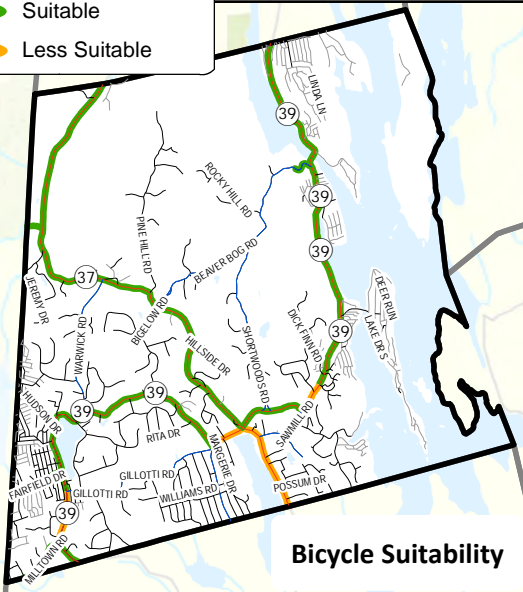
- Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- Local Public Roads
- Private Roads
- Priority Sidewalk Area



Bicycle Suitability

- Suitable
- Less Suitable

Priority Sidewalk Area



Pedestrian / Bicycle Transportation

The Route 37 Study mentioned earlier recommends:

- A 5’ wide sidewalk along the east side of Route 37 from Route 39 to Saw Mill Road, and
- A 10’ wide multi-use trail on the west side of Route 37 from Route 37 to the Danbury Town line (adjacent to Margerie Reservoir).

The POCD section on the Town Center (pages 26-35) also recommends sidewalks be extended throughout the Town Center. In essence, this is reflective of a “complete streets” philosophy and approach to roadways in the Town Center - treating them as corridors and places for all transportation modes (pedestrians, bicycles, transit, people), not just places for exclusively moving vehicles.

The POCD section on open space and trails (pages 44-48) recommends the establishment (over the long term) of a town-wide trail system.

Other Transportation

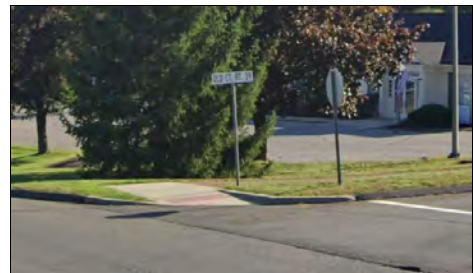
The POCD also recommends that New Fairfield seek to expand transit and other transportation options to residents, workers, and visitors. This might include:

- Continuing to support the Housatonic Area Rapid Transit (HART) commuter bus service to the Southeast, NY train station (with service to Grand Central Station in New York City).
- Continuing to coordinate with HART for senior transit.
- Continuing to support other organizations such as Friends In Service Here (FISH).

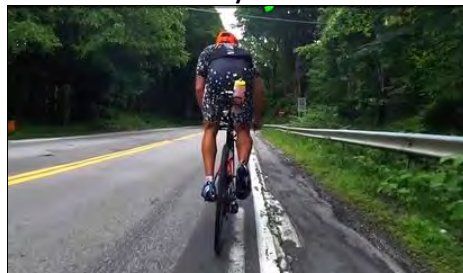
Vehicular Circulation



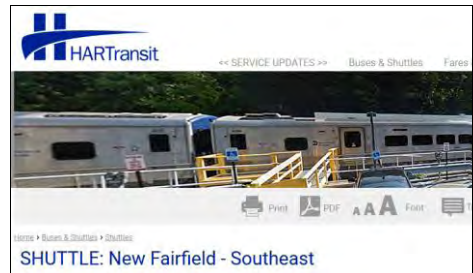
Pedestrians



Bicycle



Transit



GOAL	<i>Maintain and enhance an overall circulation system to serve the needs of current and future residents and businesses.</i>
LEAD AGENCY	Board of Selectmen

POLICIES & ON-GOING PROGRAMS	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Maintain and enhance traffic safety on local roadways.	Town	POL PW DOT
B. Maintain or enhance roadway funding to maintain pavement condition as cost-effectively as possible	BOS	BOF
C. Establish a sidewalk system in the Town Center to connect from the High / Middle School to the Town Center (and the Margerie Reservoir connection) and then east to Candlewood Corners	ZC	PC Town Town
D. Establish trails on open space throughout New Fairfield whenever opportunities present themselves.	Town	CVRLT P&R Town
E. Promote bicycle circulation through preparation of a concept plan for a system of bicycle routes.	Town	
F. Seek to address the increasing demand for dial-a-ride services in the future.	Town	HART
G. Seek opportunities to expand transit serving New Fairfield (fixed route, para-transit, etc.)	Town	HART

ACTION STEPS	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Consider establishing an Ad Hoc Bicycle / Pedestrian Advisory Committee to coordinate improvements to meet alternative transportation needs.	BOS	POL Town
2. Consider cost-effective ways to establish and maintain a pavement management system	BOS	PW
3. Adopt a “Complete Streets” policy or approach recognizing the needs of multiple users within the transportation system, especially roadways.	BOS	PW DOT

4.5 Promote Adequate Utility Infrastructure

New Fairfield’s piped, wired, and wireless infrastructure is very important to meeting the needs of residents and businesses and enhancing the overall quality of life in the community. Many utility services are provided by private companies and are outside direct municipal control. However, the Town wants to ensure that adequate capacity (and quality) is available to meet local needs.

- Sewage Collection / Treatment – The Town has been studying the extension of sewer service from Danbury to New Fairfield Center to address septic limitations in the Town Center area (although, if approved, it will also serve school facilities). The discussion of sewers may be found in the Town Center section (page 30) of the POCD.

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

- Water Supply – Water service in New Fairfield is obtained from private wells or, in some areas, provided by Aquarion Water Company. Aquarion is in the process of making upgrades to their systems and interconnecting a number of smaller systems to improve efficiency, water quality, and water quantity. There is projected to be adequate water supply for New Fairfield for the foreseeable future. Public water supply is recommended for all properties in the Town Center area.
- Storm Drainage – Storm drainage systems in New Fairfield are managed by the Town of New Fairfield, the State of Connecticut, or by private property owners. More frequent and severe storm events (due to climate change) are expected to increase flooding and create a need for drainage improvements as resources permit (stormwater design criteria in years past did not anticipate the magnitude of the impact from climate change). At the same time, New Fairfield is transitioning to a new drainage approach (called “LID”) where rainfall is infiltrated as close as possible to where the raindrop falls.
- Electricity – Electrical service in New Fairfield is delivered by Eversource and no major issues or concerns with reliability or capacity have been reported. Some individual properties have also installed solar panels for private use.

With the anticipated growth of electric vehicles in the future, New Fairfield should make provision for enabling electric vehicle (EV) charging stations on private properties and installing EV charging stations on public property.

Utility Infrastructure Map

New Fairfield, CT

All areas outside of the Proposed Sewer Service Area are considered sewer avoidance areas.

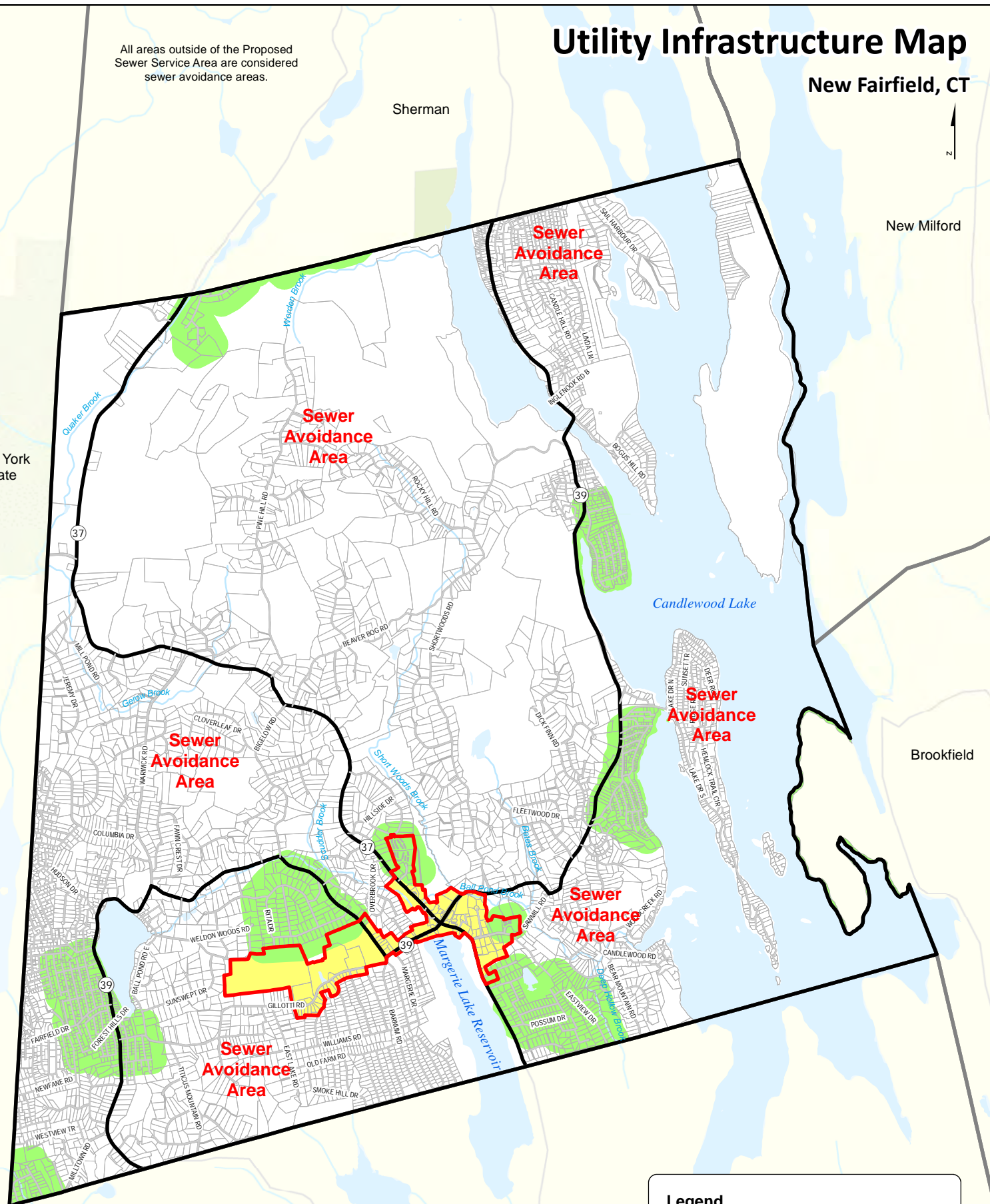
Sherman

New Milford




New York State

Brookfield

Danbury



Legend

-  Proposed sewer service area
-  Areas with existing public water service
-  Areas where public water service desired

Areas with existing public water service from Connecticut Department of Public Health GIS database

4,000

Feet

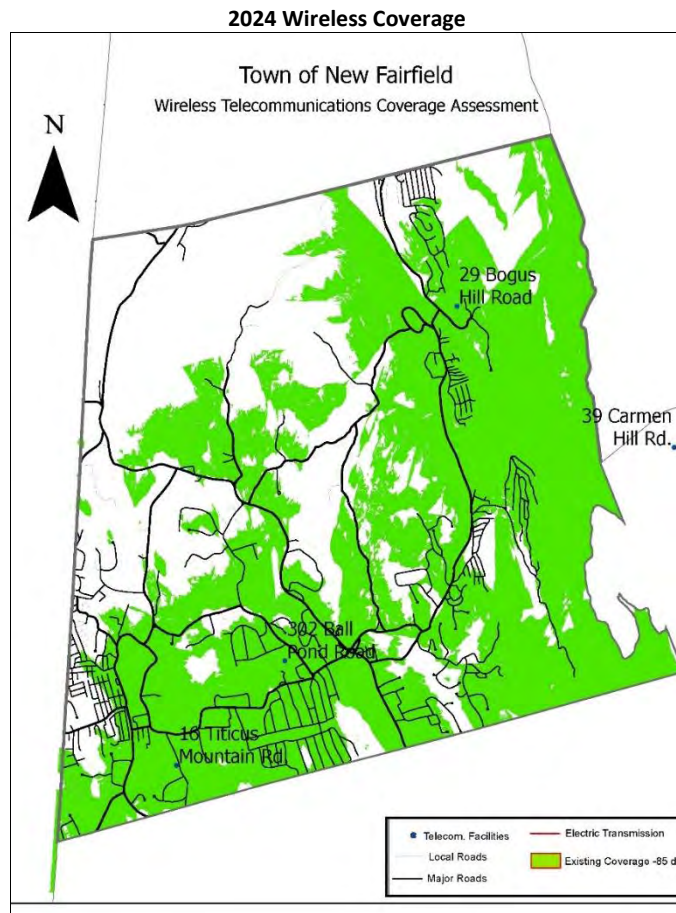
Broadband Feasibility Study

In 2023, WestCOG (with assistance of a consultant) prepared a broadband feasibility study regarding the Town establishing and maintaining a municipally owned fiber network.

Such a system might cost \$15-20 million (2023 dollars) but could save resident users money each month.

While such a system may make financial sense, it may be deferred due to other local spending priorities in the interim.

- **Wired Communications Capacity** – Wired communication services are generally provided by Spectrum, Frontier, Xfinity, Optimum, and/or other companies. There is growing demand from both residential and business users for internet speed / capacity. Cable providers have been upgrading their systems in response to competition. As the world becomes more technologically advanced, the lack of speed / capacity is a hindrance and affects the overall quality of life. The POCD supports upgrades in speed and capacity of wired communications services.
- **Wireless Service / Capacity** – There is growing use of “smart phones” and other wireless technologies and some households in New Fairfield no longer use “land lines” and rely on cell phones. As shown in the map below, some areas of New Fairfield may be somewhat lacking in wireless service. As a result, New Fairfield should work with the Connecticut Siting Council and service providers to expand cellular service (coverage and capacity) in ways that best preserve the ambience of the community while meeting the needs of the community and improving wireless service in the Town Center area. Large and/or non-camouflaged towers in visible areas or along roadsides would not generally be compatible with New Fairfield’s desired ambience.

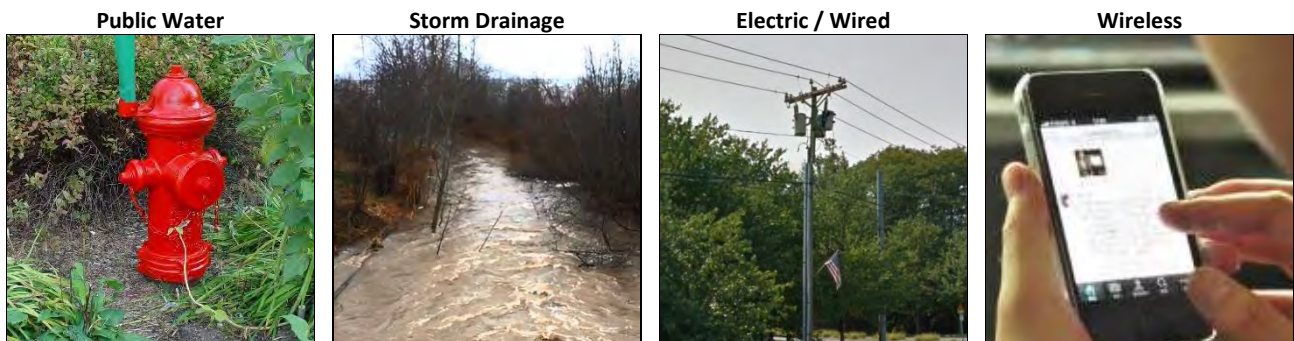


Data obtained from the Connecticut Siting Council

GOAL	<i>Support the provision of adequate utility infrastructure to meet community needs.</i>
LEAD AGENCY	WPCA / Aquarion / Board of Selectmen

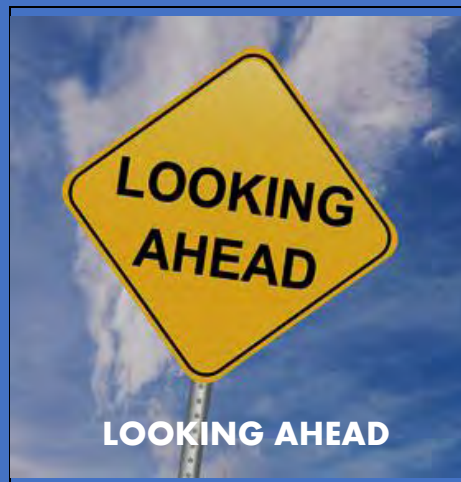
POLICIES & ON-GOING PROGRAMS	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Seek to provide for a limited sewage disposal system in the Town Center area.	WPCA	EDC Town HD
B. Limit sewer service to the general area identified in the POCD and as further designated and delineated by the Water Pollution Control Authority.	WPCA	PC ZC
C. Support provision of a public water supply in the Town Center area to support desired development and minimize any water quality concerns.	PC	ZC HD FIRE
D. Continue to upgrade stormwater management approaches in accordance with LID “best management practices”, federal MS4 permits, and state guidelines.	TE	ZC PC
E. Continue to work with wired utility companies to enhance their service (capacity and reliability) in New Fairfield, especially broadband capacity.	Town	EDC
F. Promote improvement of wireless communications in ways compatible with community character.	Town	
G. Continue to consider ways to enhance fire protection at the time of development through the use of fire ponds and underground cisterns.	FIRE	PC ZC

ACTION STEPS	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Finalize the sewer feasibility study / design and the interlocal agreement with Danbury for the sewer allocation at their water pollution control facility.	WPCA	TE
2. Seek voter approval for construction of the sewer system.	BOS	WPCA
3. Seek State and/or Federal funding assistance for construction of the sewer system.	Town	WPCA



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5.0 CONCLUSION



5.1 Implementation

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

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

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

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

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

Groundbreaking When We Start



Ribbon Cutting When We Finish



5.2 Key Implementation Actions

Establish A Formal Plan Implementation Process

Having a formal process to implement the POCD will help ensure it is influential in guiding future actions of the town.

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

The process will:

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

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

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

Implementation Committee

A number of communities have found that a Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) made up of representatives of various Town boards and commissions can be the most effective way to coordinate implementation of the POCD. In this way, the key decision players will be “in the room” as decisions are made about how to implement POCD recommendations and to coordinate efforts.

If established, the PIC meetings should occur regularly (2-4 times per year) to review the implementation tables in the POCD and refine priorities based on local issues, funding opportunities, and/or other criteria. The PIC would have a staff person to assist with the implementation process, including liaison and coordination with other Town departments and agencies.

Plan Implementation Committee Meeting



Plan Implementation Workshop



Use The Implementation Tables

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

Prioritizing Policies and Action Steps

Since it is difficult to implement all strategies at the same time, a prioritization exercise could be conducted to aid in implementation. This prioritization exercise should involve a variety of local boards, commissions, and agencies.

Since policies and action steps are used differently, they should be prioritized independently of each other. Prioritization will draw more attention to the policies and action steps which will have the greatest impact and provide some guidance when multiple policies may be applicable.

Example Of Prioritization Exercise Results

TOP 20 POLICIES				
Policies (listed by score)	POCD Part	Topic	Average Score	Total Points
1. Continue efforts to maintain and improve the quality of groundwater and surface water.	64	Protect Natural Resources	2.57	18
2. Seek grants and technical assistance to help Westbrook address coastal resiliency issues.	24	Coastal Resiliency Framework	2.43	17
3. Promote ... that can help property owners redevelop and revitalize their property.	31	Strengthen The Town Center	2.43	17
4. Continue efforts to maintain a safe and adequate water supply.	68	Improve Utility Infrastructure	2.43	17
5. Continue to partner with other open space organizations ...	68	Preserve Open Space	2.29	16
6. Support continued periodic maintenance dredging of the river channels and the harbor areas.	74	Maximize Coastal Resiliency	2.29	16
7. Continue to address safety and capacity issues on local roads and State highways ...	88	Address Transportation	2.29	16
8. Ensure Westbrook receives disaster relief funding in the event of a major storm.	24	Coastal Resiliency Framework	2.14	15
9. Continue to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan every 5 years.	46	Align Resilient Community	2.14	15
10. Continue to support appropriate ... economic development ... in the Flat Rock Place area.	52	Guide Business In Target Areas	2.14	15
11. Continue to monitor the impacts from new construction on coastal neighborhoods ...	68	Guide Residential Development	2.14	15
12. Continue to require septic tank pump-out / inspection every 5 years ...	64	Protect Natural Resources	2.14	15
13. Continue efforts to create an overall system of open space / greenways / trails.	64	Preserve Open Space	2.14	15
14. Continue to ... balance natural coastal processes and protecting beach areas from erosion.	73	Maximize Coastal Resiliency	2.14	15
15. Continue to seek grants for sidewalk construction.	88	Address Transportation	2.14	15
16. Continue to monitor septic performance in shoreline areas.	94	Improve Utility Infrastructure	2.14	15
11 policies tied at 2.00 / 14 points				
17. Enhance funding in the Open Space Preservation Fund	48	Preserve Open Space	2.00	14
18. Maintain the integrity of Westbrook's "green infrastructure" system ...	64	Protect Natural Resources	2.00	14
19. Work with other entities ... to address issues related to sea level rise and coastal resiliency ...	24	Coastal Resiliency Framework	2.00	14

TOP 20 ACTION STEPS				
Action Step (listed by score)	POCD Part	Topic	Average Score	Total Points
1. Evaluate whether to finalize the septic protection area near McKeough Road (adjacent to ...)	64	Natural Resources	2.43	17
2. Prepare a Coastal Resiliency Plan for addressing coastal resiliency issues.	24	Coastal Resiliency Framework	2.29	16
3. Implement groundwater management approaches ... that will allow appropriate development ... in the Town Center.	36	Strengthen The Town Center	2.29	16
4. Explore ways to enhance the development ... options for the Flat Rock Place area.	52	Development In Target Areas	2.29	16
5. Prepare an inventory of conservation and open space easements.	68	Preserve Open Space	2.29	16
6. Undertake a comprehensive community facility inventory and assessment ...	66	Community Facility Services	2.29	16
7. Identify a staff person to assist the Plan Implementation Committee ...	100	Implement The POCD	2.29	16
8. Establish a coastal resiliency working group.	24	Coastal Resiliency Framework	2.14	15
9. Evaluate ... stricter rules on development in coastal floodplains areas ...	24	Coastal Resiliency Framework	2.14	15
10. Investigate ways to monitor groundwater quality over time, especially in shoreline areas.	64	Natural Resources	2.14	15
11. Assess the need for paid daytime emergency response personnel.	66	Community Facility Services	2.14	15
12. Investigate a community septic system ... to support development of the Town Center.	66	Improve Utility Infrastructure	2.14	15
13. Establish a Plan Implementation Committee to ... coordinate the POCD implementation process.	100	Implement The POCD	2.14	15
14. Prepare detailed maps showing areas subject to potential inundation in the future.	24	Coastal Resiliency Framework	1.86	13
15. Consider hosting a quarterly meeting to bring tourism-type ... organizations together ...	58	Approach to Tourism	1.86	13
16. Develop ... material to educate property owners about septic system maintenance.	64	Natural Resources	1.86	13
17. Through another land issue, replenish the Open Space Fund ...	68	Preserve Open Space	1.86	13

Implement The POCD Through The Budget

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

Capital Budget – Capital projects tend to be long-term investments in the future of a community. When these capital projects help accomplish recommendations in the POCD, the community benefits in a number of ways. New Fairfield should strive to consider POCD recommendations in the preparation of the capital budget and prioritization of projects. The Community Facilities section of the POCD (pages 18-25) strongly recommends the preparation of a long-term capital plan – primarily as a visible and transparent guide to capital needs rather than a strict schedule which ignores real-time situations which may arise.

Use POCD As A Basic For Land Use Decisions

Activities proposed in the Town of New Fairfield can and should be reviewed for consistency with the major recommendations of the Plan. In particular, the Plan of Conservation and Development should be used as a basis for land use decisions by the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission.

Applicants should also be encouraged to address how their proposal is consistent with the Plan’s recommendations.

Have Appropriate Assistance

While there is much that local boards and commissions can do, there are also resources which can help the Town with POCD implementation:

- Consider addition of a grant writer to identify and seek funding to support local initiatives.
- Encouraging regional efforts (with WestCOG and surrounding municipalities)

Review / Refresh The POCD Often

Ideally, there should be a regular process to review the POCD and update it if necessary (rather than wait 10 years to update):

- Quarterly = Plan Implementation Committee?
- Annual = meeting evaluating Town on POCD implementation?
- Every 3-4 years = POCD refresh?

Maintaining The Plan

A Plan of Conservation and Development should be a dynamic document that is used, reevaluated, and amended as necessary. When a Plan is considered strictly a reference document rather than a working document, its effectiveness in guiding the community can diminish over time.

New Fairfield should consider keeping this Plan current and not waiting to update it every ten years. The simplest way to maintain the Plan might be to review major sections of the Plan every year by:

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

GOAL	<i>Implement the POCD</i>
LEAD AGENCY	Planning Commission

POLICIES & ON-GOING PROGRAMS	Leader	Partner(s)
A. Use the implementation tables in the POCD to implement the policies and action steps and guide municipal actions.	PC	Town
B. Continue to identify and undertake new action steps to help implement the Plan.	PC	Town
C. Commit adequate budgetary resources to accomplish the goals of the Plan and to continue overall planning for New Fairfield.	BOS	BOF PC
D. Coordinate with other municipalities and state and regional agencies in accomplishing POCD recommendations.	BOS	BOF PC Town WCOG
E. Consider the recommendations of the POCD when reviewing Special Permit applications as well as text change applications and zone change applications.	ZC	
F. Maintain the Plan in small incremental steps rather than in one major initiative.	PC	Town

ACTION STEPS	Leader	Partner(s)
1. Establish a plan implementation process to oversee and coordinate POCD implementation.	PC	BOS
2. To aid in POCD implementation, undertake prioritization exercises that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize policies separate and action steps independently of each other. • Involve a variety of boards, commissions, and agencies involved in land use related issues (including, but not limited to, the Board of Selectmen, Planning Commission, Zoning Commission, etc.). 	PC	Town
3. Schedule a meeting each year to receive and discuss a report on POCD implementation and inform other agencies of progress and next steps.	PC	Town
4. Amend land use regulations as necessary to incorporate POCD recommendations.	ZC	PC

Plan Comparison

Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes requires comparison of New Fairfield’s Plan of Conservation and Development with:

- The Locational Guide Map in the Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan, and
- The Regional Plan of Conservation and Development prepared by the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG).

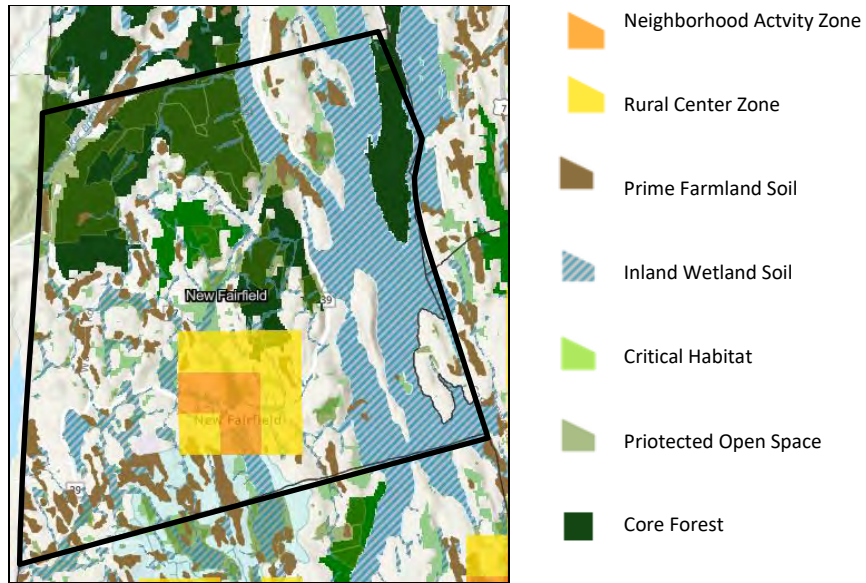
In order to increase potential funding opportunities in the village areas, the Town will request that New Fairfield Center, Tariffville and Weatogue Center be designated as “Village Priority Funding Areas” in order to promote their continued improvement and enhancement as “centers and areas of mixed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

5.3 Consistency With Other Plans & Policies

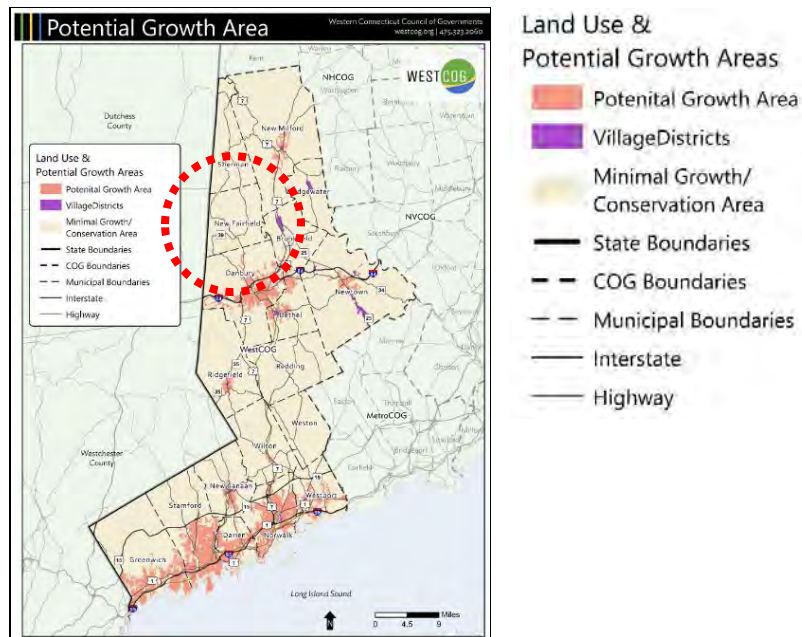
Consistency With State And Regional Plans

New Fairfield’s POCD was found to be consistent with State and regional plans in terms of identifying areas for conservation and development.

State Conservation and Development Policies Plan (2025-30 Draft)



Regional Plan of Conservation and Development



Consistency With State Growth Management Principles

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

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

5.4 Looking Ahead

Planning is an ongoing process that should never stop. For New Fairfield, this 2024 Plan of Conservation and Development is a part of that journey.

This POCD is intended to be a dynamic document that will be updated and maintained so that it incorporates strategies that are deemed to advance the Town’s long-range best interests. Even while the Plan is in its early years of implementation, the Planning Commission should seek to encourage Town-wide discussion of the Plan recommendations and will seek suggestions of ways to make the Plan even better.

In the quest to achieve what is best for New Fairfield, it is also important to know how we are doing. The Planning Commission intends that there be an annual evaluation of progress made in implementing the POCD. With the support and participation of Town officials, civic organizations, and residents, the Planning Commission (with the Plan Implementation Committee, once established) should evaluate and report on progress in implementing the Plan’s recommendations.

Looking ahead, the Planning Commission intends to establish a plan implementation process which will:

- Seek input for POCD reviews and updates, and
- Evaluate implementation of the POCD (i.e., determine how effectively the Plan’s recommendations are being implemented).

By paying attention to POCD implementation and keeping a close eye on Plan strategies, the Commission is convinced that New Fairfield’s special qualities will be preserved and enhanced.

Legend Of Leaders And Partners

Code	Description
BOE	Board of Education
BOF	Board of Finance
BOS	Board of Selectmen
CLA	Candlewood Lake Authority
COA	Commission on the Aging
CVRLT	Candlewood Valley Regional Land Trust
CWC	Conservation-Inlands/Wetlands
DEEP	CT Dept. Of Energy / Env. Protection
DOH	CT Department of Housing
DOT	CT Department of Transportation
EDC	Economic Development Commission
FIRE	Fire Department
FLPR	First Light Power Resources
FS	Selectmen's Office
HART	Housatonic Area Rapid Transit
HD	Health Department
HPC	Historic Properties Commission
HS	Historical Society

Code	Description
LIB	Library Board / Department
MRTAC	Margerie Reservoir Trail Advisory Committee
PBC	Permanent Building Committee
PC	Planning Commission
PNF	Preserve New Fairfield
POL	Police
P&R	Parks and Recreation Commission / Dept.
PW	Public Works Department
SC	Senior Center
SS	Social Services
TA	Traffic Authority
TE	Town Engineer
Town	Town Boards, Agencies, and Staff
WCOG	Western CT Council of Governments
WPCA	Water Pollution Control Authority
ZBA	Zoning Board of Appeals
ZC	Zoning Commission / Department

Assistance in preparation of the 2024 New Fairfield POCD provided by Planimetrics



