



**The Planning Commission**  
Town of New Fairfield  
New Fairfield, Connecticut 06812

**Special Meeting Minutes**

September 9, 2024 @ 7:00 pm  
Community Room @ 33 Route 37  
Main Firehouse  
302 Ball Pond Road  
New Fairfield CT

**Commissioners:** Ms. Cynthia Ross-Zweig, Chair  
Mr. Cory Neumann, Vice Chair/Secretary  
Mr. Ernie Lehman  
Mr. Keith Landa

**Alternates:** Ms. Christina McCartney  
Mr. Michael Oliva  
Mr. Dylan White (absent)

**Call to Order:** 7:00 pm  
**Pledge of Allegiance**

**New Business**

**Presentation and public input/feedback on Revised 2024 POCD**

Glenn Chalder introduced the Draft of the POCD and shared a Draft POCD Presentation (see enclosure). Bob Jano, 18 Rte 7, stated that the town does not have a Main Street they are all state highways so for sidewalks it would have to involve the state. He stated that the only way to get sewers would be blasting and the repercussion will be horrible. He said that the New Fairfield needs to be careful with the limited amount of property that it has. He said that the lack of restaurants was known before people moved here. He has a concern of the changes and the effects by Mother Nature. Patrick Callahan, 41 Sunset Trail, state representative, thanked the commission and Glenn for all that has been done. He agrees that New Fairfield has great recreational opportunity with the trails and water around town. He questioned the studies of other towns that have implemented their POCD's. Glenn Chalder stated he has worked in dozens of communities around the state. He stated that it is key to have the follow thru which would include a plan implementation committee. The Planning Commission of New Fairfield has decided that the Planning Commission should be responsible for this role. He does not have a town that has implemented all of the changes in their POCD but have implemented a portion of the changes. The examples that he gave are Ridgefield, Wilton, New Canaan, Darien, Brookfield, New Milford, as well as the state. Khris Hall, 6 Coves End, congratulated the Commission and Planimetrics on a really good draft. She stated that the draft is a useful document, by understanding the priorities, integrating priorities, highlighting priorities, and making it a readable document. She likes the action item suggestions. She is pleased that the plan endorses the Marjorie trail, diversity of housing stock, and the sewer. The Town of NF would be better off if the recommendations are followed. Thora Perkins, 6 Field Ave, see enclosure for statement. Jennifer Pappas, 18 Charcoal Ridge Rd East, stated that New Fairfield is one of the few small towns that are left that have been trying and fighting to keep the sewers out of town. She stated

concerns that if the drainage system in town is fine then there is not a need to come in, rip up parts of the town. She stated that she is against Marjorie Trail, ripping up around the reservoirs, has a concern about the infrastructure, stated a concern about the trail being near homes, a concern about the cost of putting septic in, a concern for land that is at stake, and shared a concern about the max of how high a building can go if the sewers are installed. Glenn Chalder stated that every zone in New Fairfield has a height limit. Cynthia Ross-Zweig that in the survey a big concern was to keep New Fairfield rural and to keep that balance when moving forward. Lisa Lisi, 50 Ball Pond Rd E, stated that NF is a small town that she chose to move to, loves the sense of community, loves the sense of community and togetherness in the town. She stated a concern about the strategies and goals in the POCD, what additional support is there for the Planning Commission to get thru the process, and which priority is number one. Glenn Chalder stated that the Planning Commission has talked about the concept of a prioritization exercise with the Planning Commission and other boards in town to get a list, tackle top five items, and then move on to the next items. These changes should be a priority for the whole town to make a difference for all to enjoy. This is an advisory document for the community to decide. The changes will not be overnight and will take time and will take consensus as the POCD is an advisory document. Lisa Lisi stated that each strategy involves multiple departments and will touch a variety of committees and is concerned about the process. Glenn Chalder stated it may look massive but we are looking at ten-year time frame, there is not anything in the POCD that is meant to overwhelm, and if it is too much the commission will not take it on. Tom Perkins, 6 Field Ave, stated that this is an advisory document and not a mandate, things will happen as they can. He referred an article regarding subsidence, which means ground water is pumped out and does not get replaced, by sending water out of a town by a sewer system or something like that, it can take 100's of years to replace. New Fairfield was shown in the subsidence map. He also stated that people moved here due to the small-town character and slower pace and in the same survey asked for more development and this seemed like a paradox. He stated that some of the buildings need updates, inquired how the Town of New Fairfield is going to pay for these changes, stated a concern regarding the median income townspeople and keeping them in mind, and stated a concern about sidewalks and getting easements. Kathleen Ditullo, 11 Alpine Rd, likes the village district idea for the small-town feeling, growing the downtown in a thoughtful way, stated that people want more amenities such as higher end restaurants, stated a concern regarding the sewers and the town sitting on an aquifer, that there is only so much that can be done, and suggested waiting for the sewer study to be completed before making final decisions. Peter Hearn, 236 Rt 39, see enclosure for statement. Wes March, 6 Meadowbrook Rd, see enclosure for statement. John McCartney, 6 Coves End, stated a plan is not necessarily what is going to happen, it is just pointing in a direction as we do not know what is going to happen in future years. This is just a plan to help the town make decisions and move forward. He gave thanks to the board and to Glenn Chalder, loved that it was less than 100 pages, stated that the best decision was hiring Glenn Chalder to help the board and help the town. He asked for everyone to think about the POCD as it is just a plan, just an idea. He also stated that New Fairfield has not been rural for decades. He stated that any town that has trails it is an improvement to the town, property values go up, business activity has goes up, stated a concern for housing diversity for the young as well as the old, and would like to see housing built for younger families that would include duplexes and/or apartments, stated that people are afraid of economic development, stated that the town does not have the infrastructure for skyscrapers, stated that sewer is key to the business district to get businesses into the structures that are already in place. Faline Schneiderman, 1B Meadowbrook Rd, stated that she worked on the development of the Candlewood District and keeping the historical buildings. She applauded the idea of the village district to make the town better, changing of regulations to allow for business growth, encourages the Planning Commission to work with the Zoning Commission, likes the idea that the commissions can work together, the number one thing that needs done was to look at the POCD to use as a guiding document, encouraged by the inclusion of trails and sidewalks in the POCD, stated that the with the installation of the now existing sidewalks there are now

walkers on these trails and sidewalks, stated that she is for the development of downtown with an emphasis on the preservation of the historical houses/buildings, likes that the POCD refers to preserving New Fairfield, likes the targeting of trail systems to link the town to the preserves and different areas/towns, and that she feels that the plan is clear, identified cooperating organizations, and easily readable. Kelly Lindquist, 18 Great Meadow Rd, advocated for working with the land and working on the land, state that the trail sounds lovely but has a concern for the eagles that are on the trail, stated that the sidewalks will bring other concerns, stated that people with money will bring in buildings that are 3 stories, and to keep in mind the small businesses in other towns that made these changes went under due to the construction around them. Jennifer Pappas, 18 Charcoal Ridge East, stated that she had went to a Parks and Rec commission meeting gave numbers from the passes, stated a concern for storing equipment, and stated a concern for septic system installation if a new one is needed, stated a concern about the sewers and the estimated flow that has to be negotiated with Danbury, a concern for housing, and stated that she has documentation regarding Marjorie Trail and why it has been voted against in the past. Anita Brown, 5 Autumn Ridge Road, stated that the POCD process taken was very thoughtful for and is now a friendly document, she feel that this document is very readable, friendly, and would like to get the word out as to what the POCD is, she stated that this is a guide that will inform the town in the future, would like the POCD to be communicated to different clubs, committees, organizations, seniors, and to all in New Fairfield, stated that this bodes well for implementation, suggested giving deadlines or markers when doing the prioritization to coordinate action on the items with the different boards and commissions in town, and stated that the process can be messy but that is how things can be done. Ernie Lehman stated that when the process began the framework was where are we now, where do we want to, and how do we get there. All items in the POCD are important to someone the community. If not mentioned in the POCD then grant money may not be available and that is why items are broader. Cynthia Ross-Zweig stated that in doing the plan was to be mindful of all board and commission in town. The goal was to protect New Fairfield and guide on improvements that will make New Fairfield better and preserving the small-town aspect that everyone loves while trying to take everything into consideration from all boards and commissions. The Planning Commission really made an effort to try and hear from everybody. When talking about trails, the reference was to all trails not just one trail. Development was looked at open space, subdivisions, re-subdivisions, open space, and where it would happen to link it together so that it can be used in the future to enjoy the beauty of New Fairfield. The goal is to update as changes happen to make it easier in 10 years. The Planning Commission will be mindful of the feedback from the community and moving in forward in the best interest of the town. There will be a meeting on September 23 and everyone is invited to attend, it is a public meeting. Glenn Chalder stated that the next steps are getting to adoption. Based on the input tonight, edits, changes, and modification will be done as needed. A public hearing on adoption, an official hearing on adoption. State statues require a 65 day wait period. The plan could be adopted by the end of the calendar year.

### **Adjournment**

Ernie Lehman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 pm. Cory Neumann seconded the motion.  
**All in favor. Motion Passed.**

*Respectfully submitted*  
*Dana Ulibarri, clerk*

### **Enclosure**

PPT for 090924 Public Meeting  
Thora Perkins  
Peter Hearn  
Wes Marsh



September 9, 2024

# Community Discussion

## DRAFT Plan of Conservation & Development

Planning Commission  
Town of New Fairfield









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# Overview

State statutes require a municipality to prepare a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) at least once every 10 years

***New Fairfield has done this before!***

### Gallery Of Previous Town Plans For New Fairfield

<p><b>1976 Plan</b></p> 	<p><b>1988 Plan</b></p> 
<p><b>1992 Plan</b></p> 	<p><b>2003 POCD</b></p> 
<p><b>2014 POCD</b></p> 	<p><b>2024 POCD</b></p> 

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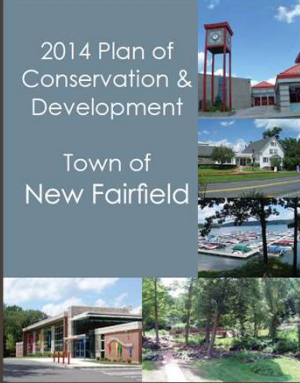
# Overview

The Planning Commission (PZC) has been updating the 2014 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for the past year or so

- Research / investigation
- On-line survey / Listening sessions
- Working sessions / discussions


**The purpose of tonight's meeting is:**

- to present the draft POCD and
- Get community feedback and comments



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# POCD OVERVIEW



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# What Is A POCD?

A Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is:

- an **aspirational** document that identifies community needs and desires
- an **action-oriented** document that identifies policies and action steps

It is an advisory document which does not dictate what any organization or entity must do.

Locally adopted, state approved



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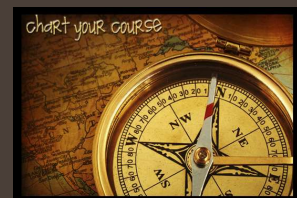
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# What Is A POCD?


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# Main POCD Elements





- Introduction
- POCD Framework
- Main Strategies
- Other Strategies
- Conclusion


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## Main POCD Elements

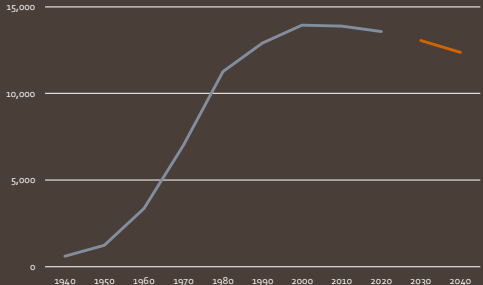
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## Demographics

Population decrease since 2000



Changing age composition

- Median age has increased from about 28 years of age in 1970 to about 46 years in 2020
- New Fairfield has the **2<sup>nd</sup> oldest median age** of surrounding communities
- People over age 55 has increased from 1 in 6 people in 1980 to one in 3 people in 2020

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## Housing

- **High values**
  - Have a high median house value
- **Limited housing diversity**
  - Few opportunities for empty-nesters to downsize
  - Few opportunities for moderate income households
  - About 1 in 4 households spend more than 30% of their income on housing
- **Strong recreational influence**
  - About 1 in 8 houses are kept for seasonal or occasional use

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## Economy

- **Employment**
  - Most residents work elsewhere
  - Median income is strong
- **Goods / Services**
  - Residents shop elsewhere and on-line
- **Tax Base**
  - Business activities comprise about 2% of the Grand List


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Survey Findings

- **What Attracted**
  - Housing type / value
  - Education system
  - Community appearance / ambience
  - Outdoor / water amenities
- **"Prouds"**
  - Character / ambience
  - Sense of community
  - School system
  - Community facilities and services
- **"Sorries"**
  - Town Center / Lack of business activity
  - Lack of some activities / services
  - Condition of some facilities / services


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Survey Findings

- **Top "Conservation" Strategy**
  - Water resources (50%)
  - Overall ambience / sense of place (34%)
- **Top "Development" Strategy**
  - Town center (49%)
  - Business / economic development (31%)
- **Top "Infrastructure" Strategy**
  - Community facilities / services (63%)
  - Utility infrastructure (19%)

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## Main POCD Elements

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## POCD Framework

### Focus On Implementation

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



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 POCD Framework


### Focus On Implementation








**Action Steps**  
Specific tasks (*generally active*) which can / should be taken to implement the POCD.

**Policies**  
Statements (*generally passive*) which are used to evaluate proposed activities or initiatives for consistency with the POCD.

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 Main Strategies

-  Introduction
-  POCD Framework
-  Main Strategies
-  Other Strategies
-  Conclusion

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## Community Facilities


### Address Community Facilities and Services

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.

- Town Hall
- Public works
- Parks & Recreation (inc. community center)
- Library
- Emergency response (volunteers, radio systems, etc.)

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## Community Facilities

### Address Community Facilities and Services

#### 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.

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## Town Center

### Enhance Town Center / Enhance Economic Development


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


### Enhance Town Center

**Extension Of Sewers To The Town Center Area**

For the past several decad Fairfield explore / install a years, the Town Center ha and/or a lack of water sup

Then, as a result of the CO created the American Res local communities to invest Fairfield residents decided received by the Town) into process of being complete

The basic plan is for a limit and a sewer capacity alloc



The POCD supports the m throughout the proposed.

While the sewer will undo addition to state and fede Center will pay dividends f

**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

**Examples of Town Center Studies**

A number of municipalities around studies and New Fairfield could and While a Town Center Beautification assistance of IVCCO, the recomm development opportunities in order


- Walkable pedestrian-friend
- Active uses / engaging enviro
- Mixture of uses (retail, rest, civic, etc.), and
- Supporting amenities.



**Possible Design Guidelines**

<b>Appropriate Scale</b>	Designed for people (not automobiles) with streets, buildings, and spaces (including the ratio of street width to building height) proportional to human users.
<b>Pedestrian-Friendly Network</b>	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.
<b>Building Design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings that are close to and face the street to present a continuous facade for pedestrians</li> <li>• Buildings with inviting entrances, windows, and sidewalk activities (such as dining areas)</li> <li>• Building materials appropriate for village setting (such as brick and clapboard siding).</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Mass of Uses</b>	There must be an amount and intensity of use (a critical mass) in the village that creates a focal point.
<b>Variety / Mix of Uses</b>	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.
<b>Appropriate Parking</b>	Amply 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.
<b>Traffic Volumes</b>	A village should have moderate traffic volumes with vehicles traveling at appropriate speeds.
<b>Transit Linkages</b>	Bus, rail, and other forms of transit, where present, should be integrated into the village core.
<b>Appropriate Infrastructure</b>	Utility services (sewage, water, electricity, etc.) should be available and of adequate capacity to serve local needs.





## Housing Diversity

### Diversify Our Housing Portfolio

**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 for older adults.
4. Increase awareness about the housing opportunity that can create.
5. Continue to raise awareness about housing needs and so
6. Make sure the strategies in the Affordable Housing Plan


It is envisioned that the 2024 Affordable Housing Plan (and future reference documents) and that both documents (A/H Plan and housing strategies).



**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 Type	Too Many	About The Right Amount	Not Enough
Housing that is more affordable	~10%	~40%	51%
Assisted living facilities	~10%	~30%	49%
Age-restricted housing (seniors)	~10%	~30%	46%
Condominiums or townhomes	~10%	~15%	33%
Apartments (5+ units)	~10%	~15%	30%
Smaller single-family homes	~10%	~10%	27%
Multi-family homes (2-4 units)	~10%	~10%	23%
Larger single-family homes	~10%	~10%	8%

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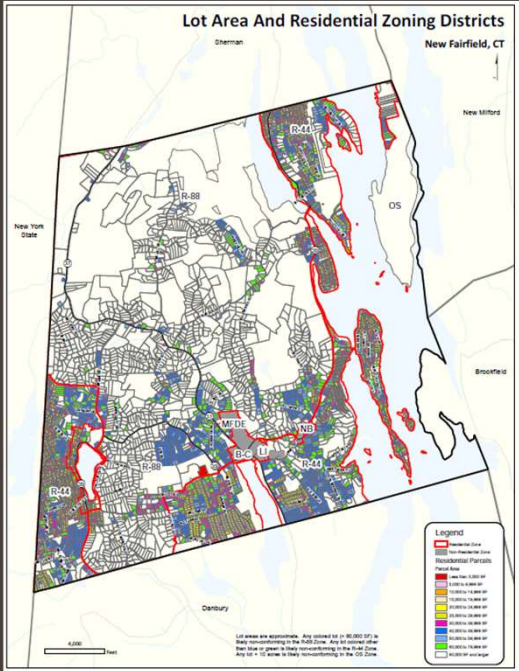
## Housing Diversity

### Address Non-Conforming Lots

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)





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# Open Space / Trails

## Preserve Open Space / Extend Trails

### Margerie Reservoir Trail

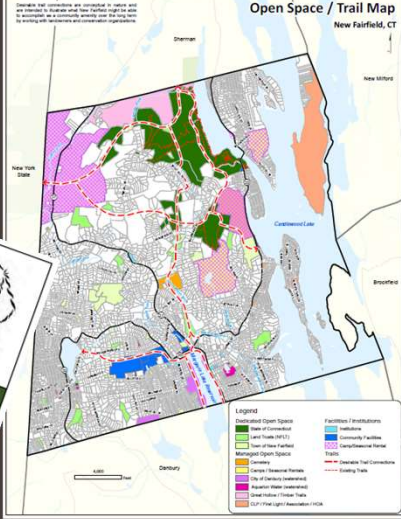
For a number of years, New Fairfield and Danbury (in conjunction with the Western Connecticut Council of Governments) have been planning for a trail system at Margerie Reservoir. The State of Connecticut awarded a \$2.28 million grant to support this effort.


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



### Open Space / Trail Map

New Fairfield, CT











# NF

  
 Trail System

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## Main POCD Elements

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POCD Framework
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Main Strategies
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Other Strategies
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Conclusion

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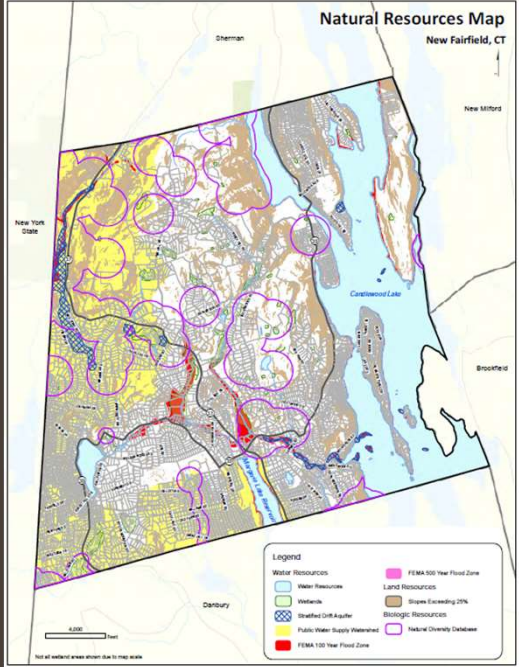





## Natural Resources

### Protect Natural Resources

- Watercourses, waterbodies, wetlands, and floodplains
- Water quality (lakes, ponds, aquifers, supply watersheds, etc.)
- Unique or special habitat areas
- Steep slopes

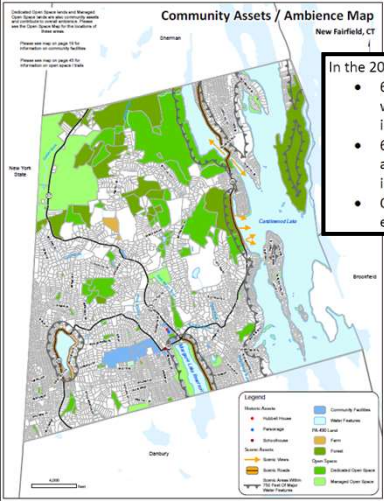


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## Assets / Ambience

### Maintain / Enhance Assets & Ambience



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

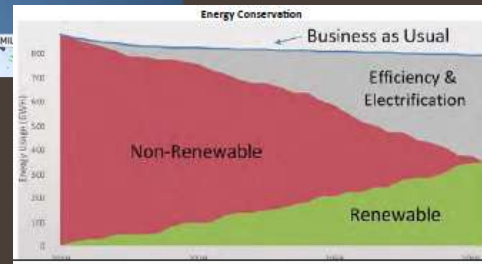
- 65% of participants indicated that community appearance/ambience was very important to their decision to come to New Fairfield (or to stay in New Fairfield),
- 69% of participants indicated that maintaining / enhancing visual appearance and characteristics was extremely important or very important 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.

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# Sustainability / Resiliency

## Promote Sustainability & Resiliency

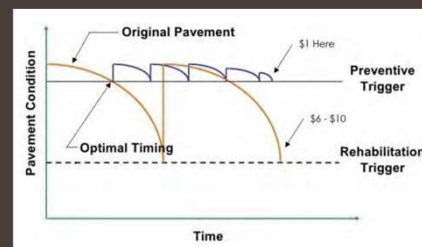


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# Transportation

## Manage Transportation



Plus Margerie Reservoir Trail!

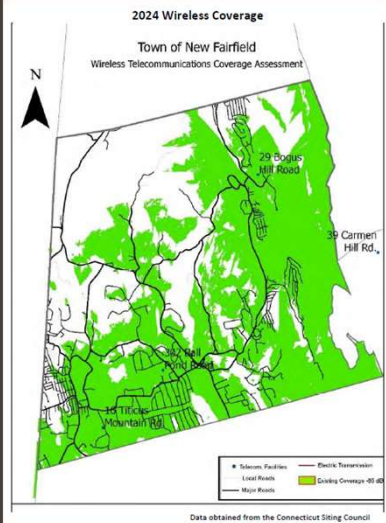
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## Utility Infrastructure

### Utility Infrastructure


- Sewage Disposal
- Water Supply
- **Storm Drainage**
- Electricity
- Wired Communication
- **Wireless Communication**





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## Main POCD Elements


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## Looking Ahead

### Focus On Implementation

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

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## Looking Ahead

### Implementation

- What
  - Policies
  - Action Steps
- Who
  - Leaders
  - Partners
- Possibilities
  - Prioritization
  - Formal Implementation Process

GOAL	Support the provision of adequate utility infrastructure to meet community needs.	
LEAD AGENCY	WPCA / Aquarion / Board of Selectmen	
<b>POLICIES &amp; ON-GOING PROGRAMS</b>		
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
<b>ACTION STEPS</b>		
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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## What Is A POCD?

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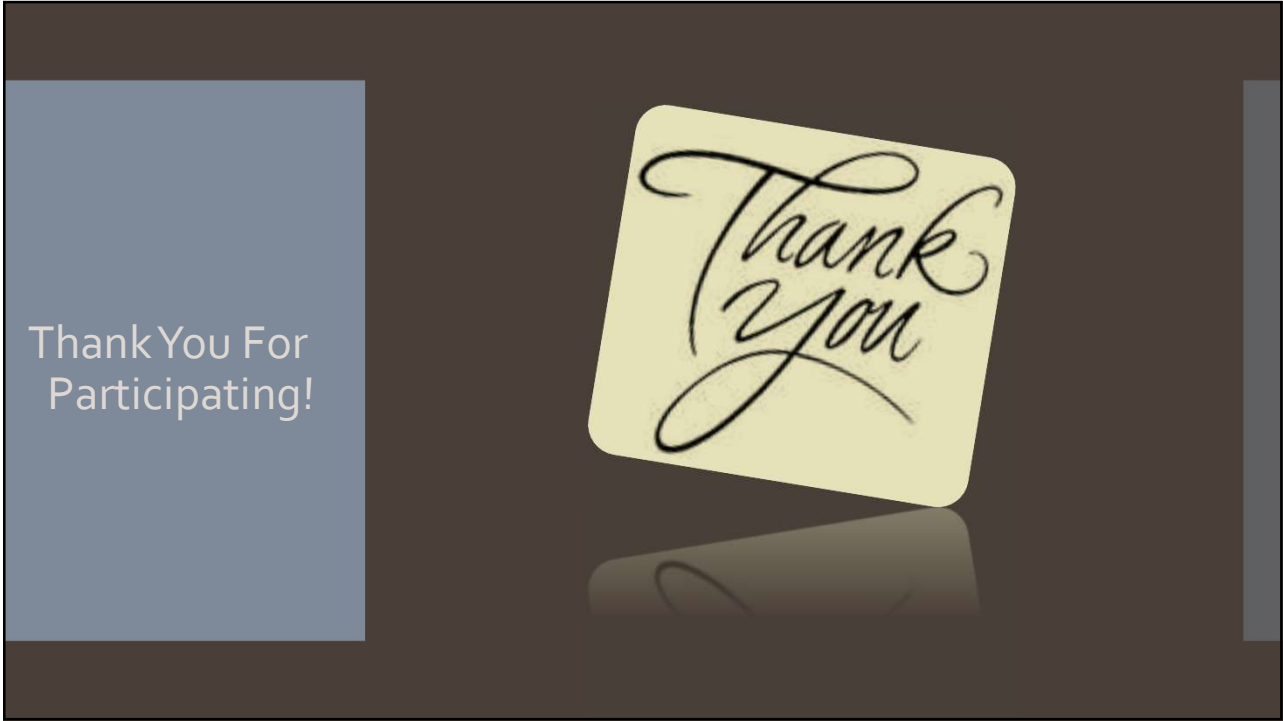
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## Community Input

- Your comments and feedback are welcomed! Thanks!
- Please summarize thoughts in 3 minutes or so
- Commission can circle back once others have had a chance to comment and there is something new to add

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## Typed input to Draft POCD from meeting 9 9 2024

Thora Perkins <thperkins@newfairfieldct.gov>

Tue 9/10/2024 2:38 PM

To: Planning Commission <pc@newfairfieldct.gov>

Cc: Thora Perkins <thperkins@newfairfieldct.gov>

Internal (thperkins@newfairfieldct.gov)

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To the Town of New Fairfield Planning Commission

From Thora Perkins, N.F. Resident 6 Field Avenue 06812

The following information is my present input into the POCD Draft as presented in a public meeting 9/9/2024. I am very, very impressed with this document; and think it is a wonderful revision of our present Plan. I thank the Chair, and All of the members of the Planning Commission for this terrific work. I also thank the Planning Consultant, Glen, for his excellent work.

What I particularly "loved" within the document:

- The idea of forming a Village District using Zoning regs
- The idea of forming a "Waterfront Development District using Zoning regs
- This needs to be a living document, continually updated with revisions, additions, deletions
- "Loved" all the info on having a process to choose and evaluate capital priorities within the Town
- I think a Town Planner is needed and grant writing can be done with 1099 contractors

Some items that may need to be re-considered by the Planning Commission:

- More emphasis on creating a Town Beach similar in quality to others on Lake Candlewood; inquiring why our beach is not being widely used?
- Years ago, the Town Beach had Lifeguard training, Swim lessons, Swim Teams, Coaches, Competitions; Can Park and Rec make this a priority?
- Within the POCD, and with having the present PBC building report, can the Planning Commission make a few concrete suggestions as to what Capital projects may have to be Priorities beside the Middle School. Also, we now know that every two years we will be replacing sports fields.
- I think that there are too many Committees or Commissions recommended to handle certain plans or issues. In a small Town it is difficult now to get persons to really be able to do the work entailed. Also, having this many Committees or Commissions recommended seemed confusing or possibly just an easy idea within the document.

My 3 Questions are as follows:

- If this is a living document, can a particular capital project be listed in this document later?
- How can this document be updated as needed without incurring tremendous expense?
- Can a Town Financial Section be added at this time so that readers of the document realize present and possibly future constraints to carrying out parts of this document?



**PETER B. HEARN**

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Comments on the New Fairfield Plan of Conservation and Development for 2024

The draft of the New Fairfield Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) for 2024 clearly lays out goals for design and development in the town. Especially useful in the POCD are its informational sidebars that elaborate on concepts and facts to support its recommendations.

In these comments I wish to focus on the section of the POCD which deals with "trails", since that is the topic that I spoke to at the public information meeting for the 2014 draft POCD.

I am pleased to see that "Preserve Open Space / Extend Trails" is identified as one of the POCD's "main strategies". The benefits of regular physical activity are well known<sup>1</sup> yet New Fairfield remains deficient in easily accessible outlets for walking or hiking near its town center.

In addition to the physical health benefits that wooded trails offer, there are psychological benefits<sup>2</sup> as well as economic benefits, which are identified in the POCD. Among the economic benefits is the fact that proximity to recreational space and to water bodies has been identified by innumerable studies as additive to property values.<sup>3</sup>

New Fairfield has benefited from state grants and the current study of a possible trail at the Margerie Reservoir is an example. For more trails to become a reality, as recommended in the POCD, New Fairfield should prioritize securing additional state funds. The Department of Transportation (DOT) has been funding projects, like the Margerie Reservoir Trail, that provide connectivity within and between municipalities for safe walking, and biking. Additionally, Public Act 05-228, also known as the Community Investment Act (CIA), funds municipal conservation projects through a state-wide \$40 charge on property transfers. The Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) annually receives and disperses those funds.

The inclusion of trails in the regional and town's planning documents will be very important if the town is to be successful in obtaining future funds for trail development from the DOT, DEEP or private sources. As an example, nearly eight percent (7.8%) of the possible 192 points in the scoring criteria for the DEEP's 2018 Connecticut Recreational Trails Program was based on explicit inclusion in a regional plan. An additional twenty-three percent (23%) of the criteria were based on whether the trail in question would link to other existing trails, as is recommended in the POCD.

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<sup>1</sup> Step it UP, U.S. Surgeon General's report on physical activity, nutrition and walking. <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/physical-activity-nutrition/walking-executive-summary/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> American Psychological Association article "Nurtured by nature" in the April / May 2020 "Monitor on Psychology", <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/nurtured-nature>

<sup>3</sup> National Recreation and Parks Association, March 26, 2020 article by Dr. John L. Compton, Ph.D, a survey of 33 parks and associated property values. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2020/april/how-much-impact-do-parks-have-on-property-values>.



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The POCD correctly identified that the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WESTCOG) is, and has been, a supporter of a trail at the Margerie Reservoir. Because this reality has been denied by some who spoke at public meetings, I have attached to these comments a letter that documents this fact.

Town trails, like the proposed Margerie Reservoir Trail, meet the public's need for access to scenic and recreational amenities and are an important inclusion in the POCD. The POCD's focus on this as an important aspect of town improvement is a welcome component of the plan.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Peter Hearn,  
September 9, 2024

# Western Connecticut COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



December 15, 2016

Laurie Giannotti  
Trails & Greenway Program Coordinator  
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Dear Ms. Giannotti,

On behalf of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG), I would like to express support for the Town of New Fairfield's grant application of Connecticut's DEEP Recreational Trails Grant Program for The Margerie Trail planning project.

The 1.8-mile path along the eastern side of a 270 acre reservoir would provide a flat paved path in a location where there is currently no safe pedestrian access. The Margerie Trail project is supported by WestCOG's (previously HVCEO's) Regional POCD (2009).

The project would provide a host of benefits for New Fairfield and the region such as:

- Enhancing safety for pedestrians and bicyclists,
- Offering recreational opportunities for populations without prior walking access to recreation trails
- Connecting existing trails and destinations.

Please contact us if we may be of additional assistance to your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

Francis Pickering

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Francis Pickering". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## POCD 2024 Comments - Wes Marsh - 09/09/2024

1. **Table of Contents** - numbering is out of sequence for Chapters 3.0 and 4.0

3.0 - is 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5 - possibly should be 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4.

4.0 - is 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 - possibly should be 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5

2. **Lead Agency name of TOWN** - please do not use this name, it is confusing on who would really be in charge with not only the Action Steps but also the main Policies & On-going Programs . The four Action Steps that are now assigned to it could be re-assigned to other Leads. For example, Undertake a comprehensive town center study could be assigned to the **PC**; Undertake an energy audit could be assigned to the **PBC**; Create a town web page could be assigned to the **BOS**; and Seek funding to establish greening trails could be assigned to **CVRLT**.

3. **Sewer** - on page 20 in Chapter 3.1 under SCHOOLS - where it states - Update / replace septic systems (sewer extension to the Town Center, which will also serve school buildings, is discussed on page 30) - consider changing it to “replace septic systems with sewer extension from the town center”.

FYI - the sewer study, totally funded with ARPA funds, is restricted to sewer in town center and school district which includes the anticipated flow to Danbury.

4. **Number of Action Steps in RED reduced to 33 from previous POCD** - Yahoo!! - I recommend a summary table to be included in Chapter 5.0 Conclusion that lists the 33 Action Steps by Lead Agency. This would give the 7 Lead Agencies a quick look at all the **RED** Action Steps they are responsible for. For example, here’s a table that could be expanded to include all 33 Action Steps in the Action Step column. (2 X 33 table)

Lead Agency	Action Step
Zoning Commission	Adopt new zoning regulations to allow .....
Zoning Commission	Explore instituting a Waterfront Development .....
Board of Finance	Initiate and maintain a long-term capital plan ...
PBC	Undertake a comprehensive study facility ...
WPCA	Complete the investigation of installing water ...
BOS	Consider establishing a Sustainability Committee

5. **Prioritization Exercise Results** - the table on Page 72 Chapter 5.2 has columns that are not defined in the document - ‘Average Score’ and ‘Total Points’. It would be helpful to define these. This table or a derivative of another would be helpful for the Plan Implementation Committee to use as an example to create a priority on policies and action steps.