

# Town of Suffield



## 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development

Adopted September 20, 2010

Revised through September 17, 2012

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## ***Executive Summary***

The State of Connecticut mandates that every town update its Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) every 10 years. Suffield's POCD was last updated in 1999.

The Suffield Zoning and Planning Commission (ZPC) reviewed the town's 1999 POCD, revised many of the sections and sought input from boards, commissions and residents while preparing the 2010 Plan. Questions were posed regarding the future of Suffield:

- What is the vision for Suffield in 10, 20 or 30 years?
- How will the town keep its agricultural and other identities we deem important?
- How can we manage our future?

This Plan reflects a consensus about the direction that is recommended for Suffield and its residents during the next 10 years and beyond. Thirty goals were identified in the areas of:

- community character
- natural, agricultural, historic and scenic resources
- open space
- residential, industrial and commercial development
- transportation and utilities
- the Town Center Village District and the commercial areas of the West Suffield Village District, Ebb's Corner and Thompsonville Road.

The main priorities of the plan involve:

- Maintaining Suffield's community character while allowing for appropriate growth.
- Preserving open space and farmland to keep the town's community character unharmed, a theme carried throughout the plan.
- Protecting our natural resources to benefit plants and animals and protect the drinking water supply for Suffield as well as surrounding areas.
- Providing diverse housing choices as alternatives to the high-cost, single family home.

The goals, policies and objectives presented in this plan will serve as focal points for the Town's efforts to provide for well-balanced residential, commercial and industrial development. If regularly referenced and conscientiously implemented by Town officials and residents, this plan can help protect important resources, guide appropriate development, address community needs, maintain community character, and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents. The Town needs to commit resources to accomplishing this plan.

## ***I. Planning: A Continuous Process***

A ***Plan of Conservation and Development*** is a tool for guiding the future of a community. The challenge in planning is to allow for progress, yet balance the built environment while maintaining a town's origins, connecting past accomplishments to future needs, and integrating the community's vision of what it wants its town to be.

Most of the tension regarding development occurs when people feel there is a conflict between growth and quality of life. Suffield's quality of life is intimately linked to its natural and manmade landscapes, rural and suburban neighborhoods, and historic and contemporary architecture. One of the defining characteristics of the Town of Suffield has been its ability to effectively balance residential growth while preserving the town's agricultural and historic heritage.

The growth of Suffield is unavoidable and necessary. Recognizing that growth and change can be either positive or negative, it is incumbent upon town residents and government officials to plan and promote positive change.

As our 1999 POCD states,

***"...It is not possible, nor in the best interests of the Town, to attempt to halt various categories of development, but rather to adhere to control measures which promote sound land-use practices that preserve the Town's rural quality, provide a diversified tax base and allow for logical extensions of public facilities and services."***

This statement still rings true. Planning is a process that will allow Suffield to become a more vibrant, sustainable community for generations to come. Regulations can be adopted to assist our decision makers with ensuring the plan's vision is realized. Proposed accountability by boards, commissions and staff for implementation of the plan is prudent and contained in the section on implementation.

In preparing this plan, the Zoning and Planning Commission solicited input from various town boards and commissions, and conducted public hearings to seek input from residents. (*See Appendix A.*) The Zoning and Planning Commission has aligned the recommendations in an attempt to strike a balance between the often-competing goals of conservation, development and infrastructure.

***Planning*** is a continuous process that guides a community's growth, development and preservation with a set of pre-established goals.

## ***How Should This Plan Be Used?***

This plan is intended to provide a framework for consistent decision making by the Town of Suffield in the future. All land-use boards should refer regularly to the plan to ensure that their decisions are consistent with its recommendations.

This plan recommends strategies and action items that the Town can implement over the next 10 years in order to ensure that development proceeds in a way that maintains the town's character and quality of life. The challenge for the Zoning and Planning Commission (ZPC) will be to keep the plan up-to-date and implementation on course in the face of changes in community priorities.

This plan is also meant to be an active and changing document. It should be revisited continuously to address new issues and refine strategies. While the primary responsibility for preparing and adopting the plan belongs to the ZPC, it should be the responsibility of both the ZPC and the Board of Selectmen to monitor implementation of the recommendations, goals, policies and objectives contained in this plan.

- A ***goal*** is defined as the result or achievement toward which effort is directed.
- A ***policy*** is a course of action selected among alternatives in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions.
- An ***objective*** is defined as a general rule for action focused on a specific issue derived from more general goals, which implies clear commitment but is not mandatory.

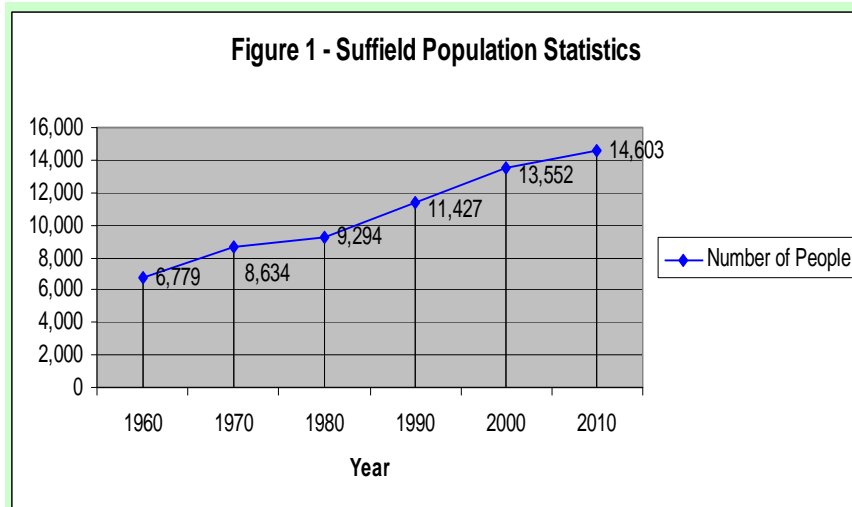
The Town and the community are to use this Plan to guide conservation and development within Suffield; however, the impacts of development pressures from abutting communities; the cities of Springfield, Mass., and Hartford, Conn.; and Bradley International Airport cannot be ignored.



## II. Examining Suffield's Vital Signs

### Population Growth

Since 1900, the population of Suffield has grown steadily. (See Fig. 1.) According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Suffield's population in 2000 was 13,552. The Connecticut State Data Center projects Suffield's 2010 population to be 14,603, which includes approximately 2,125 from the group quarters of MacDougall Walker Correctional Institution, Suffield Academy dormitories, and nursing homes. This projected increase of 7.8 percent shows the population increasing, but at a declining rate, when compared to the 18.6 percent population growth rate for 1990-2000. (See Table 1.)



Sources: U.S. Census, 1790–2000, CT State Data Center, 2010-2030

The projected population growth for the state from 2000-2010 is 3.6 percent; Hartford County's projected growth rate is 1.02 percent, while Suffield's projected population growth rate from 2000-2010 is 7.8 percent. The 2010 Census will provide a better indication of the current growth rates for the town, state and county.

TABLE 1. Suffield Population Statistics					
Year	# of People	% Change	Year	# of People	% Change
1790	2,467	-	1920	4,070	6.0
1800	2,686	8.8	1930	4,346	6.8
1810	2,680	.0	1940	4,475	3.0
1820	2,681	.0	1950	4,895	9.4
1830	2,690	.0	1960	6,779	47.0
1840	2,669	-.01	1970	8,634	27.4
1850	2,962	11.0	1980	9,294	7.7
1860	3,260	22.1	1990	11,427	23.0
1870	3,277	.0	2000*	13,552	18.6
1880	3,225	-.02	2010	14,603	7.8
1890	3,169	-.02	2020	15,224	4.3
1900	3,521	11.1	2030	15,967	4.9
1910	3,841	9.0	*Prison population included 2000 and beyond; avg. is 2000		

Sources: U.S. Census, 1790–2000, CT State Data Center, 2010-2030



Suffield's population of 15,735 in 2010 equates to approximately 372 people per square mile. However, when the 2010 group quarters population of 2,271 is subtracted from the overall population of Suffield, the population density falls to approximately 319 people per square mile. **Population density** (number of people per square mile) is a measure of the urbanization of a community. Because the area of the town is constant, population density increases as the population increases.

The **median age** (the age at which half the population is older and half is younger) is expected to increase from 41.8 years in 2000 to 43.8 in 2010. The age change in the population during the next 10 years and beyond will impact the housing choices and services the residents of Suffield will need. This implication was also recognized in the 1999 Plan of Conservation and Development.

## Existing Land Use

According to the *2009 Register and Manual of the State of Connecticut*, Suffield's total land area is 42.2 square miles, or approximately 27,008 acres. The terrain rises from an elevation of about 22 feet above sea level at the Connecticut River in the southeast corner of town, to its highest point of 691 feet above sea level on West Suffield Mountain. Mostly gentle slopes characterize the land, with ridges running generally north to south. Between these ridges are areas of wetlands. According to the wetlands map provided to the town by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Suffield has approximately 9,328 acres of wetlands.

Overall, the pattern of land use has not changed drastically since 1999. New zoning regulations were adopted in 2004. Changes that were instituted included new Flexible Residential Development regulations, also known as "Open Space Subdivisions," a Town

Center Village District Zone (TCVD) and West Suffield Village District (WSVD).

The Town Center Village District zone (Main Street area at the Mountain Road and Bridge Street intersection) contains the greatest concentration of commercial uses, which are balanced by substantial public and semi-public uses in that same area. The area near the intersection of Mountain Road and Main Street has remained largely untouched, aside from careful preservation and restoration of some of the important older homes in the historic district and construction of the office building at 1 Mountain Road in 2004. A streetscape project was also completed in 2004 that enhanced the sidewalks and curbing, added decorative traffic calming islands and provided some on-street parking along Mountain Road.

Residential development patterns have not changed much during the past 10 years. The 1999 POCD stated that the central and eastern sections of Suffield had the greatest variety and most development in recent years. This statement is still true today.

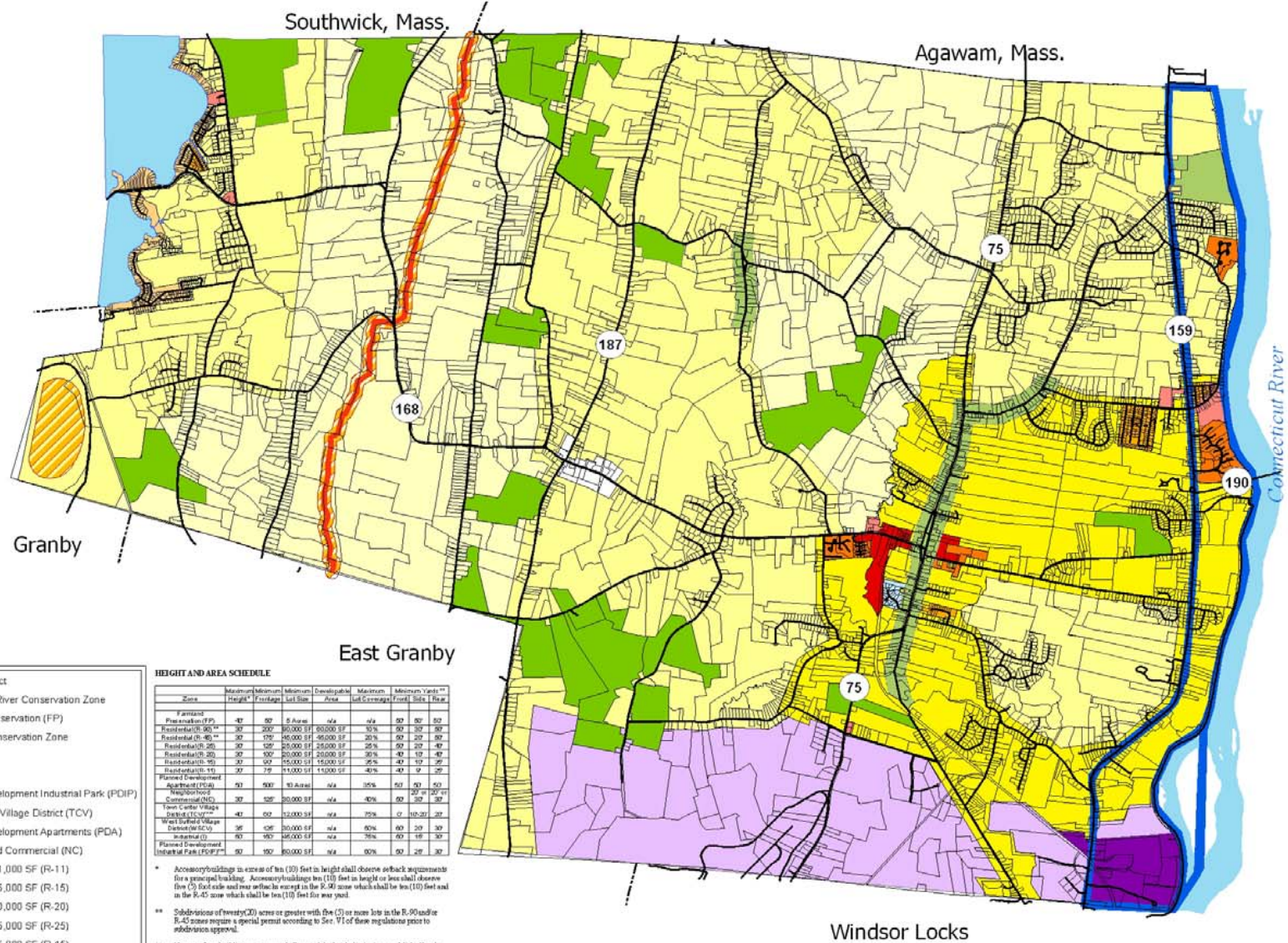
The western portion of town is almost completely residential, agricultural or open space. During the last 10 years, there has been only one subdivision of note in this portion– the 50-lot Stratton Farms subdivision located off Copperhill Road, which was approved in 2004. It is important to point out that this subdivision is located in an area that the 1999 POCD designated as an *agricultural greenbelt* – an area considered to have existing or desirable agricultural or open space parcels.

Suffield has roughly 26,708 acres with 46 percent, the highest portion, located in residential R-45 zones. (See Table 2 and Map 1.) Residential Use zones R-11 through R-90 means the minimum lot size is 11,000 square feet in R-11, and 90,000 square feet in R-90.

- The *Planned Development Industrial Park* (PDIP) is considered Suffield’s light industrial zoning district while the industrial zone allows for heavy industrial uses.
- The *Neighborhood Commercial* (NC) zone allows for neighborhood-oriented, commercial or service needs.
- The *Planned Development Apartment* (PDA) zone allows for multi-family apartment or condominium developments.
- The *Town Center Village District* (TCVD) and *West Suffield Village District* (WSVD) allow for mixed-use residential, shopping and service needs.

TABLE 2. Acreage By Zone		
Zone	Acres	% of Total
<b>Residential Use</b>		
R-11	81	0.3
R-15	21	0.1
R-20	169	0.6
R-25	4,109	15.2
R-45	12,285	46.0
R-90	7,170	26.8
<b>PDIP &amp; Industrial Use</b>		
PDIP	2,322	8.6
Industrial	240	0.9
<b>Commercial Use</b>		
NC	53	0.2
<b>Planned Development Apartment Use</b>		
PDA	134	0.5
<b>Village Districts</b>		
TCVD	80	0.2
WSVD	44	0.2
<b>Total Acreage*</b>	<b>26,708</b>	<b>100.0</b>
*Total acreage is approximate due to rounding. Source: Suffield GIS system and Assessor maps		

Map 1. Town of Suffield Zoning Map



	Historic District
	Connecticut River Conservation Zone
	Farmland Preservation (FP)
	Ridgeline Conservation Zone
<b>Zoning</b>	
	Industrial (I)
	Planned Development Industrial Park (PDIP)
	Town Center Village District (TCV)
	Planned Development Apartments (PDA)
	Neighborhood Commercial (NC)
	Residential 11,000 SF (R-11)
	Residential 15,000 SF (R-15)
	Residential 20,000 SF (R-20)
	Residential 25,000 SF (R-25)
	Residential 45,000 SF (R-45)
	Residential 90,000 SF (R-90)
	West Suffield Center Village District (WSCV)

HEIGHT AND AREA SCHEDULE

Zone	Maximum Height <sup>1</sup>	Minimum Height <sup>2</sup>	Minimum Lot Size	Developmental Area	Maximum Lot Coverage <sup>3</sup>	Minimum Yard <sup>4</sup>
Farmland Preservation (FP)	40'	8'	5 Acres	n/a	10%	50'
Residential (R-90)	30'	20'	35,000 SF	20,000 SF	10%	50'
Residential (R-45)	30'	15'	15,000 SF	10,000 SF	20%	30'
Residential (R-25)	30'	12'	25,000 SF	20,000 SF	25%	30'
Residential (R-20)	30'	10'	20,000 SF	20,000 SF	30%	30'
Residential (R-15)	30'	10'	15,000 SF	15,000 SF	30%	30'
Residential (R-11)	30'	10'	11,000 SF	11,000 SF	40%	30'
Planned Development Apartments (PDA)	50'	10'	10 Acres	n/a	15%	50'
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	30'	10'	10,000 SF	n/a	40%	30'
Town Center Village District (TCV)	40'	10'	12,000 SF	n/a	75%	10'-20'
West Suffield Village District (WSCV)	30'	10'	20,000 SF	n/a	60%	30'
Industrial (I)	60'	10'	45,000 SF	n/a	75%	30'
Planned Development Industrial Park (PDIP)	50'	10'	80,000 SF	n/a	60%	30'

\* Accessory buildings in excess of ten (10) feet in height shall observe setback requirements for a principal building. Accessory buildings ten (10) feet in height or less shall observe five (5) feet side and rear setbacks except in the R-90 zone which shall be ten (10) feet and in the R-45 zone which shall be ten (10) feet for rear yard.

\*\* Subdivisions of twenty (20) acres or greater with five (5) or more lots in the R-20 and R-45 zones require a special permit according to Sec. VI of these regulations prior to subdivision approval.

\*\*\* No part of any building or structure shall exceed the height limitations established by this FGA.

\*\*\*\* Maximum side yard setback shall be an aggregate of thirty (30) feet with a twenty (20) foot wide fire lane on one side. (7-5-07)



## Residential Zones

Residentially zoned land accounts for approximately 89 percent of the town with a total of 23,835 acres, which include vacant, agricultural, and forested lands. Suffield has six residential zones that range in minimum lot size from 11,000 square feet (R-11) to 90,000 square feet (R-90). These zones deal primarily with single-family use.

Residential housing continues to grow in Suffield and most of the residentially zoned land contains single-family units. There are approximately 587 condominium units, which greatly outnumber apartments. Most of the condominiums are located off East Street North (Route 159) near the Connecticut River in the development known as Suffield Meadows.

The past five years have seen an increase in Active Adult Housing. **Active Adult Housing** is defined as a housing development where 100 percent of all dwelling units fully comply with provisions of the United States Fair Housing Act as amended, as it pertains to “housing for older persons” (age 55 and older).

Condominiums and apartments are special permit uses that are allowed in the Planned Development Apartment (PDA) floating zone. This zone allows a density of up to five units per acre or seven units per acre if they are restricted to those aged 55 or older.

## Planned Development Industrial Park (PDIP) & Industrial Zones

Planned Development Industrial Park (PDIP) and Industrial-zoned land account for approximately 2,562 acres covering 9.5 percent of Suffield. The majority of this land is zoned PDIP; industrial land totals only 240 acres. The main differences between the two zones are the uses that are permitted within them. The PDIP zone is the more restrictive of the two.

The majority of industrial development in Suffield has taken place within the Mach One Industrial Park. Recent developments include:

- Windsor Marketing Group expanded to 90,000 square feet of warehouse space located at the corner of South Street and Austin Street.
- The Town built a new industrial roadway (Marketing Drive) in 2008 in the hopes it will stimulate development by providing access to land ready for development.
- Designs for Health, a vitamin and supplement company, built a 20,000 square foot office and warehousing distribution center at the corner of Marketing Drive and South Streets.

Village districts and commercial zones are discussed in Section IV on Development.



### **III. Conservation: Protecting Suffield's Assets**

#### **Community Character**

Community character is almost always cited as one of the reasons the residents of Suffield enjoy living in town. The land-use decisions that Suffield has made during the last 10 years have been some of the largest contributors to quality of life enjoyed in Suffield. Guiding development to appropriate areas will help ensure that the character of Suffield remains intact for future generations.

The 1999 POCD asked the following question regarding Suffield's character,

*One of the real problems to be seen in Suffield over the next decade will be how to preserve the "rural" and "open space" character, which a great majority of people in Town seem to desire.*

Suffield has done an admirable job in preserving prime agricultural land as open space during the past 10 years. The overwhelming support for farmland preservation from attendees at town meetings seems to indicate that residents hold the community's rural character in high regard. The ongoing imperative to maintain that character is clear.

#### **Scenic Resources**

Suffield has an abundance of scenic resources that should be protected for future generations to enjoy. While driving through Suffield, one can capture great views of the Connecticut River, acres of open farmland, and rolling hills from the top of Hill Street. It is these scenic resources that also give Suffield its rural character and sense of place.

The 1999 POCD listed preserving the scenic resources of Suffield as a goal in the open space plan.



A. COMMUNITY CHARACTER		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
1. Maintain and protect Suffield's community character.	1. Protect open space, ridgelines, waterways, and other resources that contribute to the town's character.	A. Support the Open Space Subcommittee's recommendations for open space and farmland preservation
	2. Continue to include the Design Review Board and the Historic District Commission in land-use issues within the Town Center Village District and historic districts.	A. Keep the character of Main Street intact while accommodating new or changing interests of the town.
		B. Work with local business and/or land owners in the Town Center Village District to keep them informed of the design guidelines and processes associated with the Zoning Regulations.

B. SCENIC RESOURCES		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
2. Preserve scenic resources.	1. Maintain and enhance scenic resources.	A. Preserve the scenic qualities of ridgelines and ridge tops.
		B. Support preservation of natural vegetation and agricultural areas for their scenic value.
		C. Maintain the character of Main Street and its sidewalks, Hill Street, and other scenic roads.
		D. Pursue the designation of scenic roads and look to expand scenic corridors along these roads, where appropriate.

## Natural Resources

Suffield has large tracts of environmentally sensitive land. The town is bordered by two important natural resources— the Connecticut River to the east and Congamond Lakes to the west. In addition to these bodies of water, Suffield has an abundance of DEP designated biodiversity areas, streams, brooks, vernal pools and wetland soils.

From an environmental planning perspective, natural resource information is vital to have for land-use planning. The Farmington River Watershed Association conducted a biodiversity study in 2004 of seven contiguous towns in the Farmington River Valley, including Suffield. This study provided valuable information regarding conservation areas that should be protected (*See Table 3*) and locations of important habitats, species, and vernal pools. (*See Map 2.*) Having the information from the biodiversity study allows Suffield's land-use commissions to encourage environmentally sensitive development.



Protecting our natural resources provides many benefits to both the town and region. Healthy ecosystems provide a variety of functions that are necessary for maintaining diverse and healthy flora and fauna, as well as the filtration of ground and surface water. This has important implications for the residents of Suffield and surrounding towns that have private wells for water consumption.

Identifying natural resource areas has impacted development patterns over the years and continues to do so, especially in the southeastern corner of town in the Planned Development Industrial Park (PDIP) zone. Identification has become increasingly easier with the help of the town's GIS system.

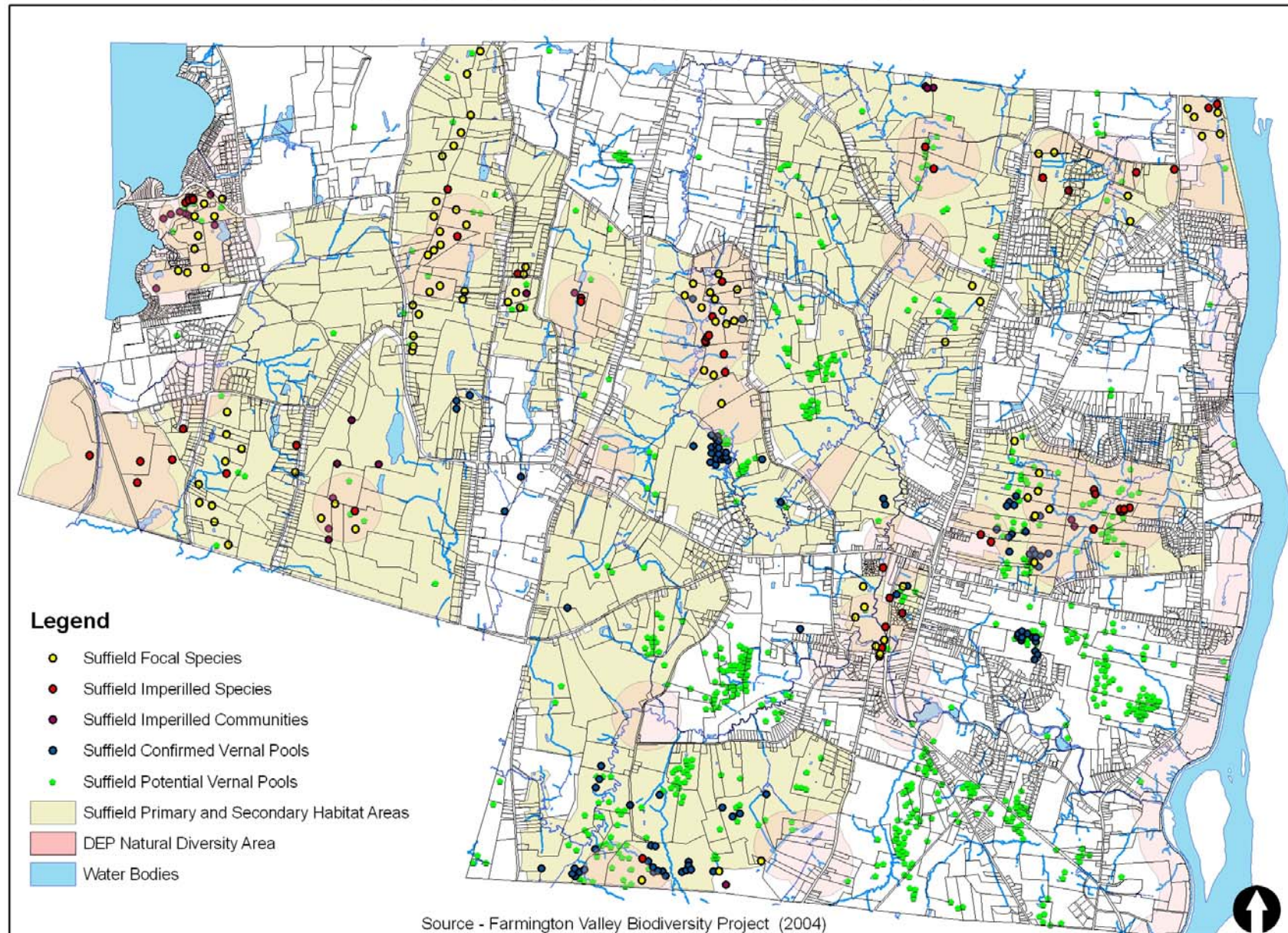
Suffield has approximately 9,328 acres of wetlands, roughly 35 percent of the town's land. (*See Map 3.*) The Conservation Commission regulates activity near inland wetlands and watercourses as development applications are reviewed. **Low Impact Development** (LID), an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage storm water as close to its source as possible, is helpful for protecting watercourses as well as controlling erosion.

The Zoning and Planning Commission encourages all developers to come to a pre-application review meeting. Using information gathered from the biodiversity study, the pre-application review allows both the commission members and the applicant to identify critical areas of environmental concern early in the application process. The ultimate goal of the review is to produce an environmentally friendly development, likely resulting in a savings of time and money for the applicant.

Table 3. Farmington Valley Biodiversity Study: Conservation Areas			
Primary Conservation Areas		Secondary Conservation Areas	
Area Designation	Ecoregion	Area Designation	Ecoregion
Peak Mountain	Traprock Ridge	Newgate Swamp	Corridor
West Suffield Mountain	Traprock Ridge	Mountain Brook Swamp	Corridor
Manitook Mt. North	Traprock Ridge	Spaulding School	Corridor
Beaverdam Marsh	Grassland/Wetland	Buck Hill	Corridor
Congamond Lake	Bog	Philo Brook	Corridor
Bradley Airport	Grassland/Sandplain	Stockwell Swamp	Corridor
Rocky Gutter Brook	Wetland	Onion Brook	Corridor
Rattlesnake Swamp	Wetland	Source: Farmington Valley Biodiversity Project (2004)	
Muddy Brook	Glacial Lake Plain/Wetland		
Stony Brook	Glacial Lake Plain/Wetland		
Rawlins Brook	Glacial Lake Plain/Wetland		
Four Mile Brook	Grassland		
Connecticut River	Grassland/River Upland		



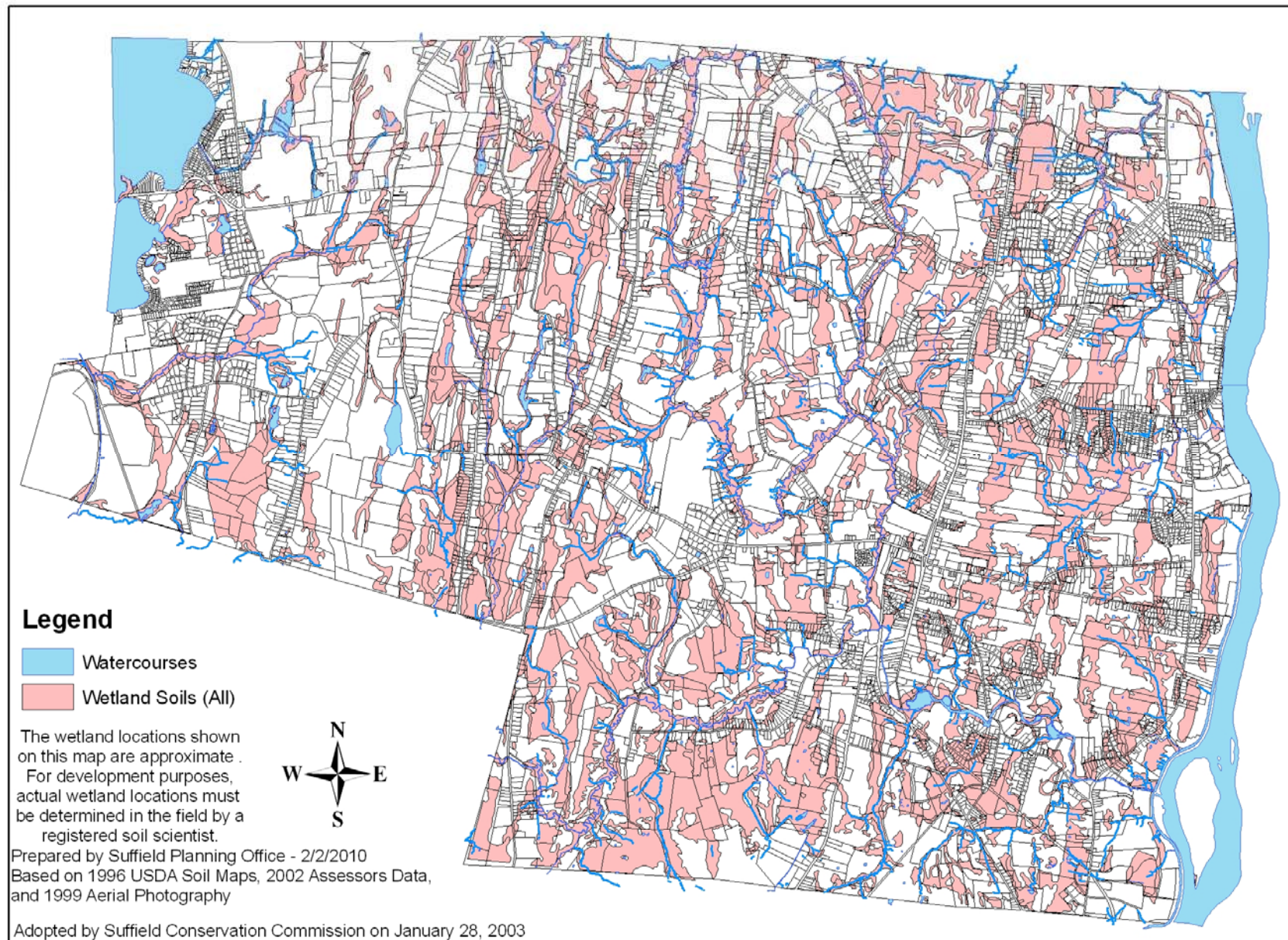
Map 2. Suffield Natural Resources and Biodiversity





**Map 3. Suffield Wetland Soils & Watercourses**

1 inch equals 4,750 feet



### C. NATURAL RESOURCES

Goals	Policies	Objectives
3. Maintain habitat quality as well as the landscape or ecological connectivity among parcels.	1. Avoid alterations to areas and resources that are sensitive to development pressures such as, inland wetlands, water bodies, stream belts, steep slopes, 100-year floodplain, and areas that contain unique habitats.	A. Protect natural diversity areas designated by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. <i>(See Map 2.)</i>
		B. Utilize the Farmington Valley Biodiversity project and DEP's Natural Resource database to identify and protect rare and endangered species of plants and animals and their natural communities and habitats in and around Suffield.
		C. Protect the Metacomet Trail on West Suffield Mountain, trap rock ridges and steep slopes (more than 20 percent grade) from development.
		D. Maintain continuous wildlife corridors along trap rock ridges and seek to preserve parcels that would add to and enhance the quality of the corridor.
		E. Ensure that the Zoning and Planning Commission enforces the use restrictions associated with the Floodplain Zone, as shown on the updated "Flood Insurance Rate Map," which were adopted in September 2008.
4. Protect the ecological and environmental benefits of clean air, water and groundwater; and healthy flora and fauna.	1. Encourage development away from sensitive environmental areas and promote development patterns that take into account natural resources and features.	A. Require developers to preserve natural land features, including but not limited to farmland, wetlands, scenic vistas, stream belts, woodlands, and other natural resources.
		B. Continue to require open space subdivisions as a way to achieve Objective A above.
		C. Where site conditions are favorable, encourage the use of Low Impact Development (LID) practices to create a hydrologic landscape functionally equivalent to predevelopment conditions.
		D. If development is proposed in areas identified for conservation, or containing natural resources or species identified by the DEP or Farmington River Biodiversity Study, studies should be done to identify the areas of concern and propose ways to mitigate the impact to these areas.
		E. Encourage a pre-application review process for developments within conservation areas to allow the Zoning and Planning Commission and applicant to discuss the project and provide guidance to the applicant.
		F. Encourage preservation of sensitive sites through the use of conservation easements, purchase of development rights or outright purchase.
		G. Ensure potential vernal pools are investigated further if development is to take place nearby. <i>(See Map 3, previous.)</i>
	2. Protect surface and groundwater quality. Protection of these water resources is very important to the health of the Farmington River and Connecticut River Watershed.	A. Look to preserve land along streams, rivers, ponds, and lakes to promote healthy waterways.
		B. Minimize adverse environmental effects to surface and groundwater as a result of development.
		C. Encourage applicants to perform a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of potentially contaminated sites, especially if they abut a waterway (i.e. land that has been or is currently being farmed).

## Open Space

Land conservation cannot be completely regarded as an expense, but rather an investment that pays many dividends, including economic ones. (*Economic Benefits of Land Conservation 2007*, The Trust for Public Land). Open space enhances quality of life and property values, and creates minimal demand for services that housing subdivisions require.

The open space plan in the 1999 Plan of Conservation and Development states,

*“The Town of Suffield is truly blessed with Connecticut’s best farmland, scenic vistas, unique wildlife habitats and botanical sites, unique recreational opportunities, historic preservation sites, and other places that are special to the residents.”*

Suffield has been very successful in protecting these resources during the past 10 years. Acquisition of development rights and outright purchase of open space have been the preferred methods of protecting the town’s natural, historic, cultural, agricultural, and scenic resources— all of which are vital to Suffield’s sense of place.

One goal for open space in the 1999 POCD *was to permanently preserve enough land so that 55 percent of the residentially zoned land in town would be protected.* With the help of the State Department of Agriculture, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, Suffield has been able to permanently preserve almost 1,840 acres of farmland.

*The Open Space Subcommittee* of the Heritage Committee is charged with ranking farmland based upon a set of criteria it created. The highest-ranking farms are those that the Town endeavors to preserve first.

During the first public workshop for this plan, attendees were asked to rank 12 different topics based upon the issues that were most important to them. Open space was ranked highest, clearly reflecting the importance that these individuals give to protecting it. The Town of Suffield has supported preserving open space over the years and the goals set forth in this section are based on the expectation that this support will continue.

Fifty-five percent of residentially zoned land in town equates to approximately 13,445 acres. We have protected from development approximately 12,400 acres, which includes wetlands and steep slopes. *Therefore, the Town needs to protect another 1,045 acres to achieve the goal of permanently preserving 55 percent of Suffield’s residentially zoned land as we are about 92 percent of the way there.*





### ***Flexible Residential Development***

When the town's zoning regulations were rewritten in 2004, a new section called ***Flexible Residential Development*** (FRD) was included. This regulation requires developers to set aside 50 percent of the land to be subdivided as open space. This requirement is different from a traditional subdivision, which requires that only 20 percent of the land be subdivided as open space.

Since 2004, approximately 200 acres of open space have been preserved using the FRD regulation. Ownership of this open space varies in each case and is decided by the developer and the Zoning and Planning Commission. In most cases, the open space is managed by the Town, Suffield Land Conservancy or a Homeowner's Association. (*See Map 4.*)

### **Open Space Designation for Property Tax Use Value** (9/17/12)

The Public Act (PA) 490 open space classification provides landowners with an option to protect their undeveloped land. This classification does not permanently protect the property but it is a valuable tool to help reduce the tax burden on open space parcels that do not meet the PA 490 farmland or forest land classification. Also, the PA 490 classification for open space is an option for municipalities to adopt. The farmland and forest land classification are mandatory on all towns statewide. PA 490 is the preferred method for temporary preservation of open space property.

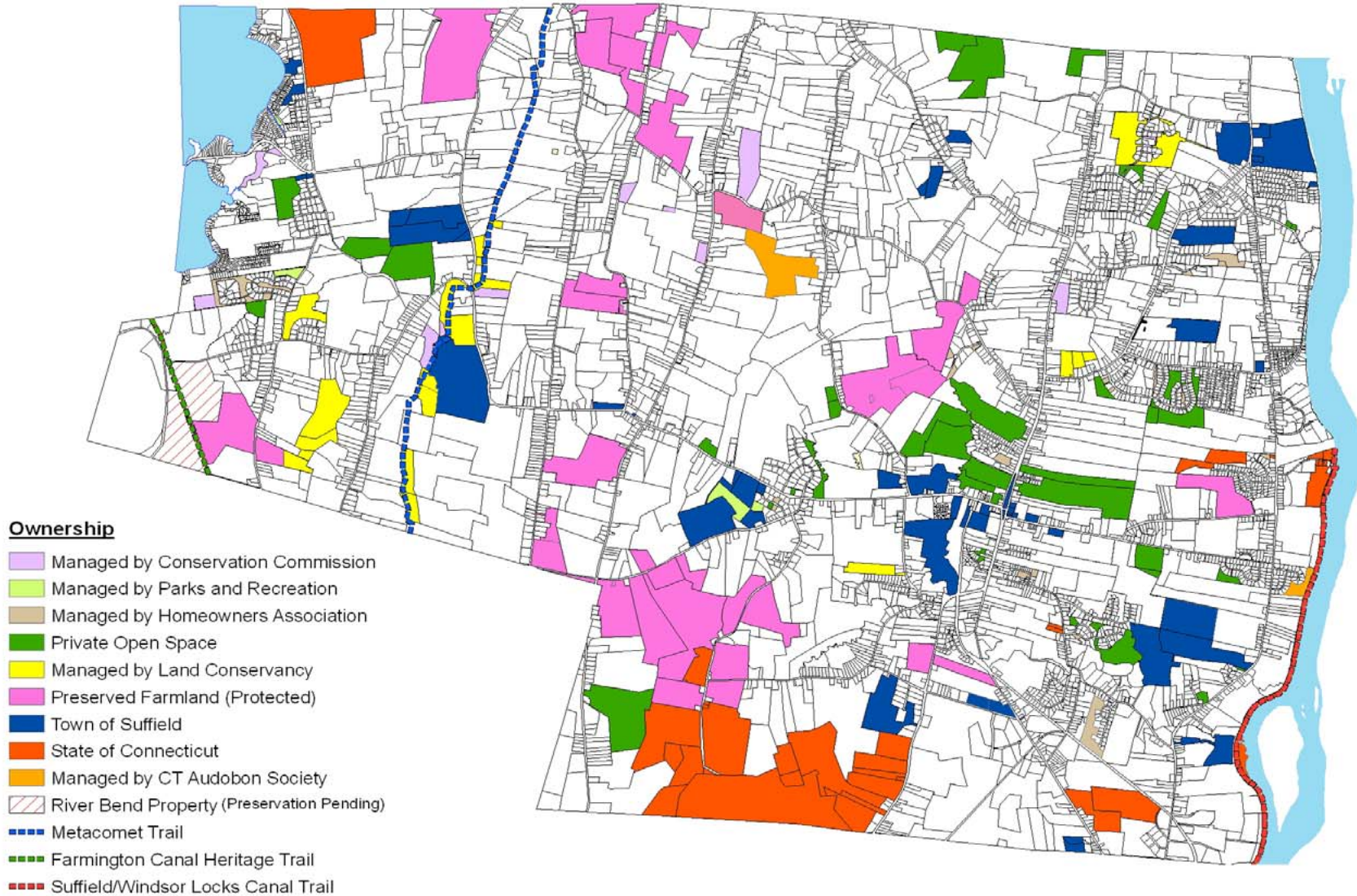
Pursuant to Section 12-107e of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended, this plan recommends the following language in order for land to be designated as open space per PA 490;

“Any site or area of undeveloped land indicated as open space on an approved subdivision map. For individual property owners seeking PA 490 classification, open space shall be any site or area of undeveloped land equal to 15 acres or more. Undeveloped land means land without buildings, roads, driveways, or other permanent structures or active mineral extraction activities. When determining the acreage of a parcel of open space, the assessor will not include the minimal spatial requirements, or lot size required by the zone.”

As in the farmland and forestland classification programs, the open space land must remain as open space for a period of ten years. If the use changes in within that ten year period, a tax penalty applies.

The above open space designation will need to be approved by a majority vote at a town meeting. Thereafter, any owner of land so designated can apply to the assessor for the land use assessment under PA 490.

**Map 4. Current Open Space by Management & Town Owned Land**



D. OPEN SPACE		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
5. Conserve enough land so that 55 percent of residentially zoned land will be permanently protected open space.	1. Continue current practices to encourage and implement acquisition of open space and easements to increase the quality and quantity of open space.	A. Develop a comprehensive open space management program and ensure it is implemented appropriately.
		B. Retain the 50 percent open space requirement in the Flexible Residential Development regulation to continue to acquire land for passive and active recreation.
		C. Work with landowners of parcels considered desirable to acquire for open space purposes for a right of first refusal when they are thinking about selling.
		D. Support the Open Space Subcommittee (of the Heritage Committee) in identifying, ranking, and recommending acquisition of prime open space.
6. Protect important natural, historical, scenic, agricultural, habitat and recreational resources.	1. Focus on areas of high open space resource value due to the presence of lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, the watershed of the Farmington and Connecticut Rivers, ridgelines, and steep slopes.	A. Work with the director of Parks and Recreation to identify potential opportunities for present or future public recreational uses, i.e. playing fields, playgrounds, picnic grounds.
		B. Identify properties that contain cultural, historic, archeological and scenic sites and evaluate their preservation potential.
		C. Consult the DEP's Natural Diversity Database to identify parcels that may contain general areas of concern with regard to state and federally listed Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern species as well as significant natural communities.
		D. Utilize the town's Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify areas adjacent to protected open space resources.
7. Continue to promote land preservation and provide a process for the Town of Suffield to work with individuals, land trusts, state and federal programs to preserve open space.	1. Continue strong relationships with the Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program as well as other State agencies and work with them to purchase conservation easements with participating landowners.	A. Continue to seek funds through the Advisory Commission on Capital Expenditures (ACCE) budgetary process to annually replenish the Open Space Fund.
		B. Hold workshops explaining the process and benefits of preserving land to qualifying landowners in Suffield. A qualified landowner under the Farmland Preservation Program actively farms 30 acres or more.
		C. Work with Open Space Subcommittee to annually review and update the list of landowners that have expressed interest in preserving their land.

## Agricultural Resources

The history of Suffield is rooted in agriculture. Farming activities and associated farmland continue to give Suffield its sense of place. This is evident to anyone who drives around town especially in West Suffield. The 1999 POCD set the stage for farmland preservation and the desire to protect our rich agricultural heritage and rural character still persists today.

In addition to maintaining the town's rural character and quality of life, farmland preservation has a documented economic benefit. Studies in municipalities similar to Suffield have shown that development sometimes requires governmental services that cost significantly more than the taxes they produce.



Based on information gathered at the November 2009 public workshop, it is clear that people in Suffield are committed to a farming presence in our town. Suffield has done a great job of supporting local agriculture and should continue to do so in the future. Through the purchase of development rights, the Town has successfully preserved approximately 1,840 acres of prime and important farmland soils. (*See Maps 5 and 6.*)

Suffield High School has one of the 17 Regional Agriscience Programs in the state. This curriculum offers local students the opportunity to prepare for a career in diverse areas of traditional and contemporary agriculture.

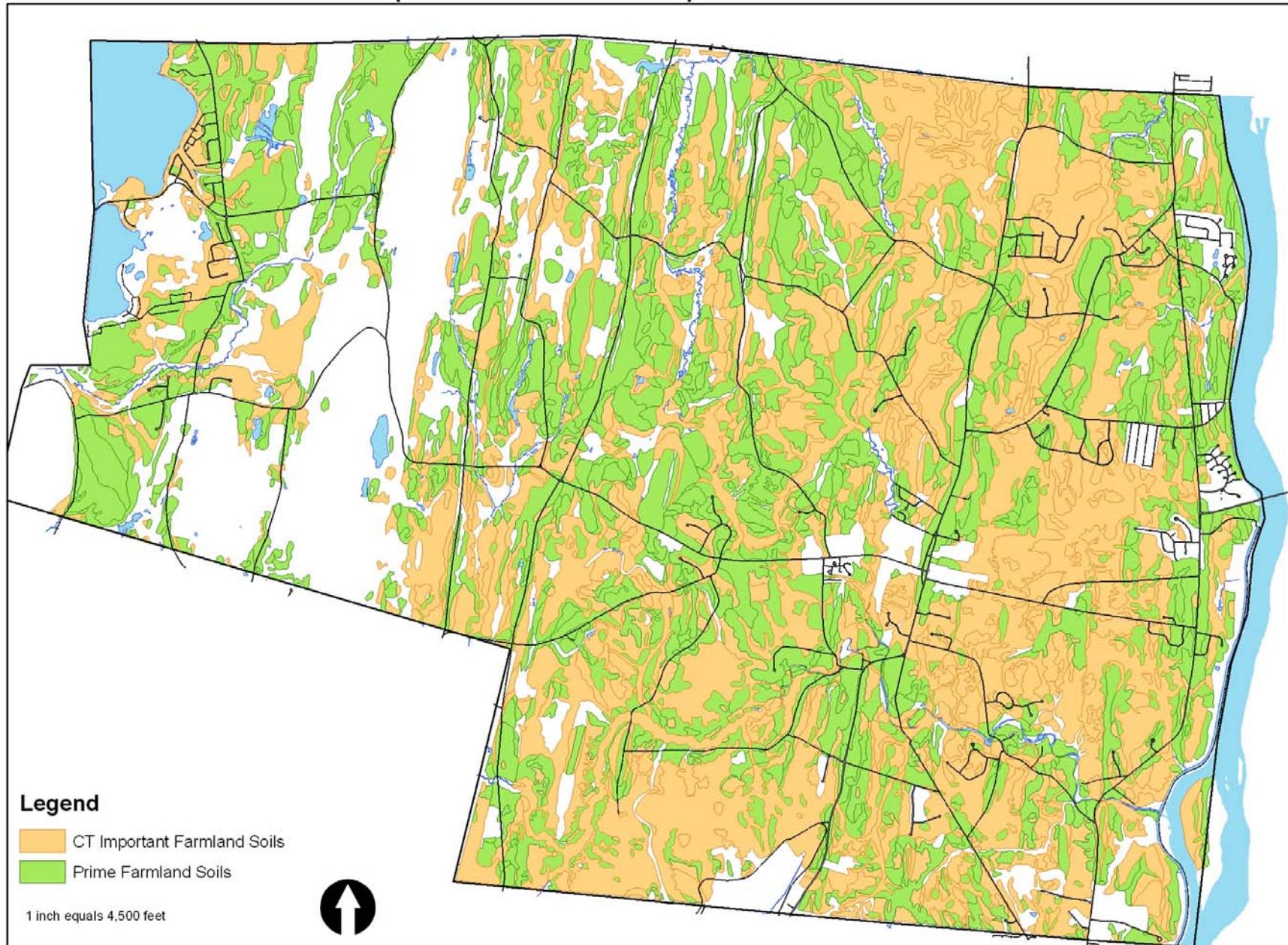
The 1999 POCD had two goals and several objectives for the agricultural use of land in town:

1. ***To encourage and preserve Suffield's agricultural base*** by reviewing the zoning regulations with respect to modern agricultural techniques and to consider the establishment of an agricultural open space designation.
2. ***To promote continued agricultural use of open space parcels.*** The two objectives under the second goal included examining the question of agricultural buffers, and encouraging cluster development and land preservation options. These objectives have been incorporated into both the Subdivision and Zoning Regulations allowing for their ongoing review and consideration.

The 1999 POCD goals and objectives remain important and have been incorporated into the 2010 POCD.

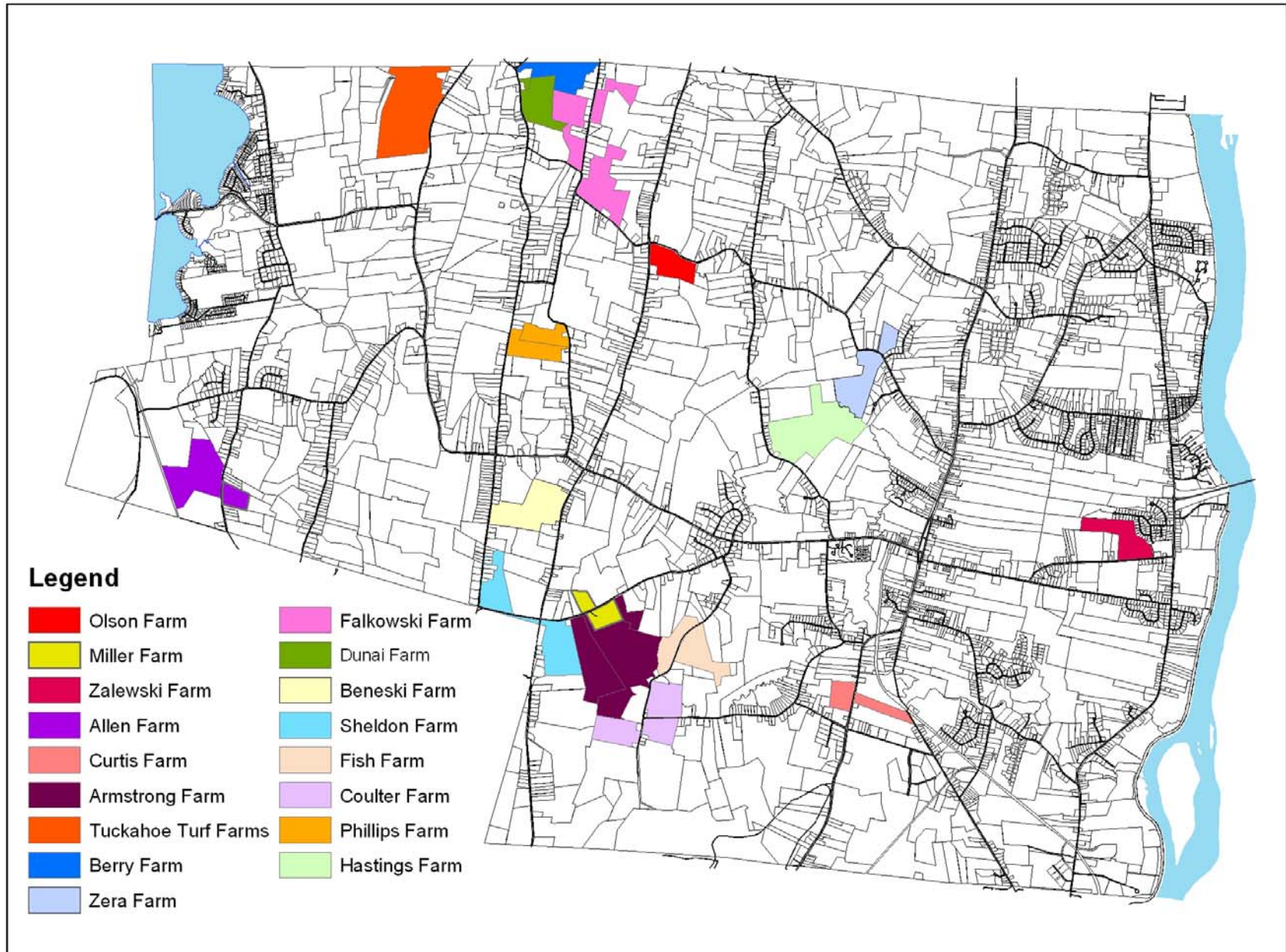


Map 5. Suffield Prime and Important Farmland Soils





Map 6. Preserved Farms



E. AGRICULTURE		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
8. Preserve Suffield's remaining productive farmland.	1. Retain the town's rural character.	A. Continue to support the Open Space Subcommittee's recommendations for farmland preservation when they are in concert with all other town goals.
		B. Continue to support the Farmers Market to provide a local outlet for produce raised by local farmers.
		C. When reviewing the open space requirement for a proposed subdivision, consider acquiring prime and important agricultural land that could be utilized for commercial farming.
		D. Continue to lease town-owned farmland to local farmers to support the local agricultural community.
		E. Support agricultural tourism in Suffield (Open Farms Day, Hilltop Farm, etc.)
		F. Continue the Farm Assessment Program (PA 490) in order to assist farmers with maintenance of agricultural uses.
	2. Continue to invest in and encourage the preservation of farmland and open spaces in collaboration with public and semi-public agencies including Suffield Land Conservancy.	A. Encourage municipal and private groups to acquire and protect open space.
	3. Continue to work toward farm-friendly regulations.	A. Develop a policy statement that stresses agricultural viability in addition to farmland preservation.

## Historic Resources

In addition to valuing its admirable stretches of open space, access to a major river, and some limited features of interesting terrain, Suffield has for years been proud of its historic resources. What planners sometimes call the “built landscape” still offers considerable testimony to our significant past. Some of that testimony remains clearly evident. Many homes of colonial citizens who held prominent roles in local, state, and national affairs still stand proudly along the roads of Suffield. Some of them helped justify the designation of North and South Main Street and North Street as a State Scenic Highway. All of them speak for the past.

Other parts of the built landscape are visibly decaying or being compromised in some fashion. Two significant nineteenth-century mansions no longer demonstrate their former glory, and several notable old homes are abandoned and deteriorating. The town’s creamery remains, but quite anonymously. Equally anonymous are several of the remaining tobacco warehouses.

Much has disappeared. The extravagant early-twentieth-century mansion at Hilltop Farm, home to the founder of the original Indian Motorcycle Co., is gone. Washington Elm Hotel that once graced the southwest corner of Mountain Road and High Street is long gone. No recognizable cigar factory—the first of which in the country was in West Suffield—remains, nor the mills that built the boxes for those cigars, ground the farmers’ grain, sawed the timber, processed the textiles, produced the paper, and turned the wooden bowls. Only one major dam still stands to suggest Suffield’s industrial past.

Within the limitations of our society’s strong regard for personal freedom, it behooves us to preserve what can be preserved.

## *Historic Homes & Districts*

Suffield retains a large number of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, many of them in attractive condition. Several projects have endeavored to list these assets, with various results. (*See Appendix B.*) More than 350 homes and other structures have been considered worth tabulating, and many are well known to historians and tour directors. Fortunately, many of these old buildings are located within the limits of two of our town’s three official historic districts and are subject to a limited degree of control by the Historic District Commission. A town meeting in May 1963 established the Commission, whose function is to “preserve what remains of the early New England character of these historic districts.”



The ***Suffield Historic District*** extends from Suffield Street at Stony Brook through South and North Main Streets and along Mapleton Avenue to the beginning of Thompsonville Road, encompassing about 170 buildings plus the Old Center Cemetery and Veterans Park. Included are three churches, two museums, Suffield Academy, and part of the Town's Village Center Zone, plus two small outlying, "grandfathered" commercial buildings. Twenty-one buildings in the district pre-date 1800, and 69 more are identified as from the 1800s.

***Hastings Hill Historic District*** extends along Hill Street, one-half mile south of Spruce Street. With only 16 buildings, it is much smaller than the Main Street and Mapleton Avenue district, but it includes several fine old homes as well as the pioneering First Baptist Church. The Zion's Hill Cemetery is included as well. Three of the buildings in this district are identified as predating 1800; six more are from the 1800s.

***Hilltop Farm Historic District*** was recognized in 2005. Located in the northeast corner of town and bordering Massachusetts, it includes just 200 of the original 500 acres of the farm, as well as 34 buildings, one of which is an almost 20,000-square-foot Colonial Revival dairy barn built in 1914 for a herd of 100 cattle. The Town and private individuals separately own the district's land and buildings.

Suffield's three historic districts are by no means the only historic assets in town. There are many old homes, farm barns, tobacco sheds and other buildings. Whether clustered in districts or scattered widely, these are the most personal evidence of the past.

### ***Other Historic Sites***

In addition to homes and other structures, Suffield's 340-year history has left other evidence of notable activities. Of the two canals in town, one is mostly intact; the other exists mostly as remnants but is quite discernable. One large dam and a number of dam sites remain evident on Stony Brook and several smaller streams. In some locations, the derelict remains of Suffield's early industries are clearly evident.

Two popular hiking trails, while servicing a contemporary function, bring the hiker close to unchanged landscapes. Cemeteries and historic monuments and markers also evoke the past. Even a highway bridge over Stony Brook has been deemed historic enough to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Certainly Suffield's farm fields and pastures are historic.

Monuments and markers tell their stories. Two large war memorials, a bronze tablet on a boulder in the center green, the informative sign next to the Kent Memorial Library, even the gravestone inscriptions in our ancient cemeteries, all add to the testimony.

And finally, there are the sites where no trace of the past remains, but the location itself is part of the story, part of understanding where we came from, where key events transpired and forgotten industries were carried on. These sites, too, contribute to our community's historic resources.

F. HISTORIC RESOURCES		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
9. Protect Main Street.	1. Maintain the historic character of Main Street while allowing for appropriate development proposals.	A. Carefully evaluate the impacts of increased traffic for new developments as they may compromise the character of Main Street.
10. Preserve our historical ambience.	1. Remain sensitive to the historic value and architectural evolution of places and structures throughout the development process.	B. Consider new or extended historic districts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend Main St. H.D. further up Mapleton Avenue.</li> <li>• A small district at Rising's Corner.</li> <li>• The <i>Old Bridge Neighborhood</i> in East Suffield</li> <li>• The small neighborhood surrounding the Boston Neck Bridge.</li> </ul>
11. Identify our historic assets.	1. Encourage the development of a new historical survey.	A. Support the creation of a new historical survey that lists homes, select barns, sheds, warehouses, and other structures.
		B. Encourage property owners to correct or install house markers.
		C. Create a historical layer for Suffield's Geographic Information System.
		D. Support the nomination of additional listings to the National Register of Historic Places and applications for preservation grants for those properties listed.
12. Encourage and reward preservation	1. Support non-governmental organizations presently involved in the preservation and promotion of local history.	A. Recognize efforts in historic preservation.
		B. Institute tax abatements for historic preservation.

## ***IV. Development: Guiding Appropriate Progress***

### **Residential Development**

Suffield is primarily residentially zoned, mostly containing single family, owner-occupied homes. While this has been important for the farming community character, the 1999 POCD had a goal *to encourage the development of diverse housing stock*, which includes affordable housing, i.e. workforce housing, a variety of housing options for the elderly, and multifamily housing. Having diverse housing stock needs to be balanced with remaining a rural residential community— another goal of the 1999 POCD.

In 2004 Suffield enacted an open space subdivision, or *Flexible Residential Development* (FRD), regulation that requires developers to retain 50 percent of the subdivision as open space. This cluster development regulation was recommended in the 1999 POCD. The open space provided by subdivisions using the FRD regulation has been utilized for several purposes, including but not limited to leased farmland, playing fields and natural landscaping. Developments designed under this regulation are provided with incentives such as decreased frontage and lot area requirements.

The Zoning and Planning Commission has discussed the FRD regulation recently and may make changes to the threshold at which developments would be required to utilize it or whether a fee-in-lieu of open space should be accepted for smaller developments.



G. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
13. Guide the scale and pattern of future residential growth in ways that will provide compatible uses of land to maintain and enhance rural residential character.	1. Encourage the location and design of housing that maintains the character of Suffield.	A. Implement pre-application site review with the Town Planner, Town Engineer, Zoning Enforcement Officer, and Wetlands Agent, as well as the Fire Chief, Public Works Director, Police Chief and First Selectmen on an as needed basis to produce an environmentally friendly development, likely resulting in a savings of time and money for the applicant.
		B. Explore and determine whether or not the Flexible Residential Development regulation is appropriate in all situations.
		C. Carefully review the impact of proposed zoning and/or subdivision regulation text amendments and how they will affect existing residential neighborhoods.
		D. Ensure the scale of a proposed development is compatible with its surroundings.
		E. Encourage green residential development to promote sustainable development practices.
		F. Explore the implementation of low impact development regulations.
		G. Encourage the appropriate use of the adaptive reuse regulation to provide multi-family housing options.
14. Continue to guide development in relation to infrastructure capacity.	1. Encourage development that is compatible with existing water supply and sewage disposal capacities, and is consistent with adjacent open space, rural character or conservation areas.	A. Continue to encourage low-density development in rural areas of town to be consistent with the natural ability of the land to provide the systems necessary to support growth.
		B. Continue the density bonus for the construction of affordable (workforce) housing in appropriate areas.
		C. Conduct a build-out analysis and focus on the PDIP and Industrial zones.
		D. Direct appropriate development to village districts or neighborhood commercial centers.
15. Coordinate with goals in the State and Regional Plans of Conservation and Development.	1. Support state and regional planning initiatives.	A. Consider recommendations contained in the state and the Capitol Region Council of Governments Regional land-use plans when guiding residential development.
		B. Continue to work with regional and state agencies regarding land-use plans and policies.



## Economic Development

Commercial and industrial development is important for the town's local economy and tax base because these uses typically contribute more tax revenue than the cost of municipal services provided. In addition to tax revenue, these uses provide jobs in the community as well as goods and services. Suffield must endeavor to have a balanced tax structure to help ease the property tax burden on its residents.

The Economic Development Commission (EDC) plans for business development within the community. Its perspective on industrial and commercial growth is important and has been incorporated into the content of this section. The Zoning and Planning Commission considers the EDC's recommendations when reviewing special permit applications. Based upon information gathered at the November 2009 workshop, residents are strongly united behind the concept of business development to strengthen the tax base— but less united about what type or form of development is compatible with Suffield.

### *Industrial & Light Industrial Development*

Suffield's industrial development has been kept within the areas already designated as industrial near the southern part of town along Routes 159 and 75 near the Windsor Locks border. These areas fall under two different zoning classifications: the **Industrial zone**, and **Planned Development Industrial Park** (PDIP) zone which can be considered a light industrial zone. Given the close proximity to Bradley International Airport, it makes sense that this area of Suffield is dedicated to industrial and PDIP development and the Town needs to take advantage of this.

The **industrial** zone encompasses approximately +/-240 acres and located in the southeast corner of Suffield along Route 159 near Windsor Locks. The PDIP zone is substantially larger encompassing approximately +/-2,322 acres of land representing approximately 8.6 percent of the town's land. The PDIP zone covers a significant portion of the Suffield/Windsor Locks border along both sides of Route 75 as you travel south past the Austin Street intersection. There is also some PDIP zoned land located near the Industrial Zone off Route 159. (*See Map 1.*)

The principal areas of **PDIP, or light industrial**, development include Kenny Roberts Memorial Drive, and the Route 75 corridor. The Route 75 corridor can be described as the 1.15 miles of Route 75 from Austin/Spencer Street intersection south to the Windsor Locks line. (*See Map 7.*) All land to the east and west of the Route 75 corridor is zoned PDIP, as is Kenny Roberts Memorial Drive. The sewer follows a gravity flow to the south of Kenny Roberts and crosses Route 75 approximately 1,500 feet south of the Austin/Spencer Street intersection where it loops back to the north to Austin Street. Extending the water and sewer service toward the Windsor Locks line will make the Route 75 corridor more attractive to potential businesses. (*See Maps 8 & 9.*) For more information, see the July 2009 Water and Sewer Extension Feasibility Study available from the office of Economic and Community Development in town hall.

Suffield's PDIP-zoned land has some physical factors that can make it challenging for development to take place. These factors include wetlands, soils, watercourses, and vernal pools. The Town completed a new road with utilities on Marketing Drive in the PDIP zone during the spring of 2009 to open up more land for development. (*See Map 10.*)

## ***Commercial Development***

The 1999 POCD pointed out the following with regard to commercial development:

***The trend of commercial development in Suffield, in contrast to Windsor Locks and Enfield, has been towards small, low-key facilities geared primarily to the Suffield resident with no high-visibility regional shopping areas.***

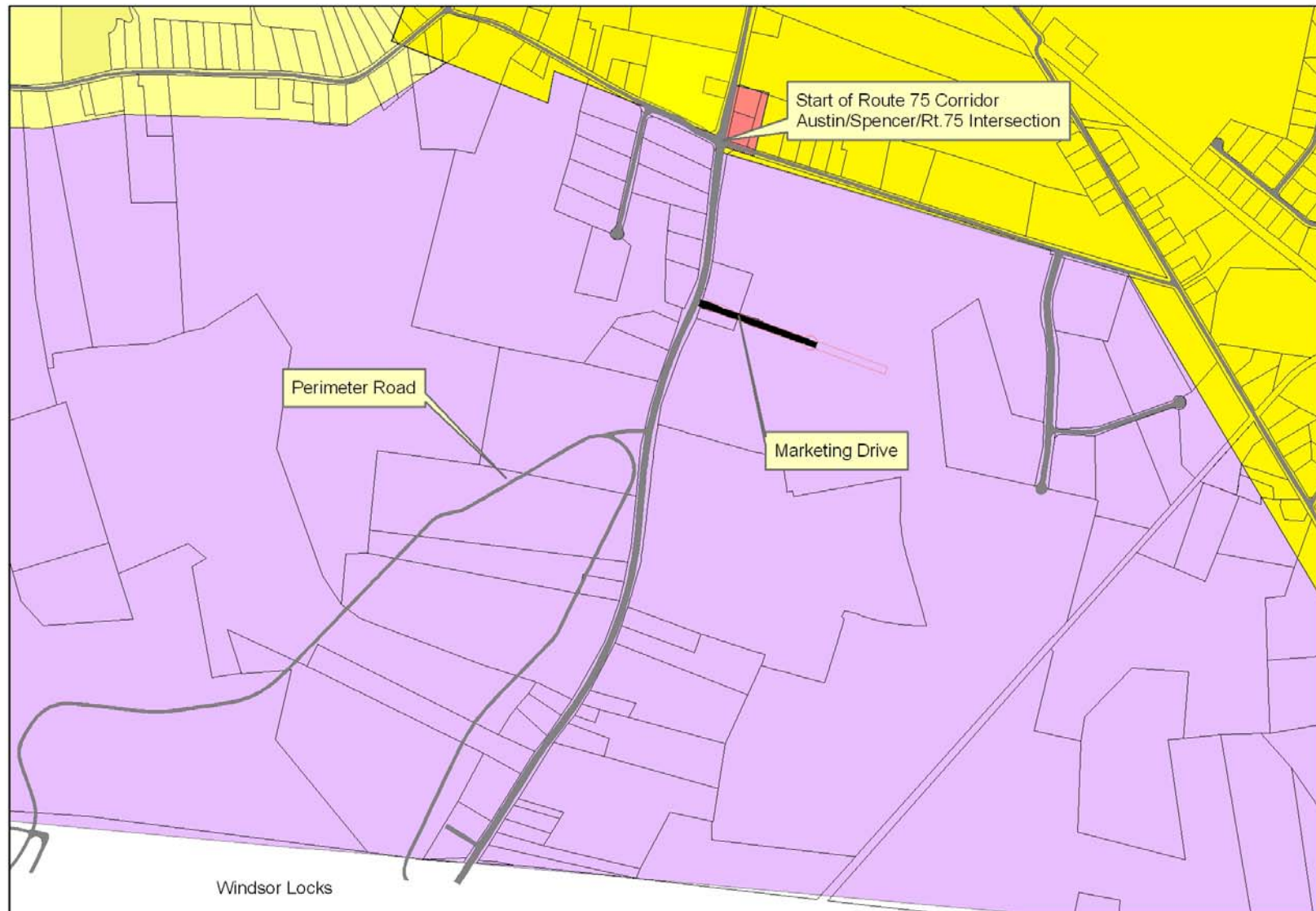
This has not changed much in the past 10 years and still holds true with only two main commercial centers in town—Suffield Village and the Mountain Road Shopping Center. There are a few Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zones located throughout Suffield that contain businesses. The area at the corner of Thompsonville Road and East Street, and Ebb's Corner in West Suffield are the two largest NC zones in town. Some other areas of NC include Babb's Beach and roller skating rink, and the old school house on the northeast corner of South and Austin Streets.

An overhaul of the zoning regulations in 2004 lead to the creation of the Town Center Village District (TCVD) and the West Suffield Village District (WSVD). These areas are described in more detail in their respective sections of this plan.

The community's support for industrial and commercial development will greatly depend on how the residents perceive the consequences this growth will have on their quality of life. There is a very difficult balancing act between diversifying the tax base by bringing in more commercial and industrial development and keeping the rural residential feel of Suffield.



Map 7. Route 75 Corridor 1 inch equals 1,000 feet



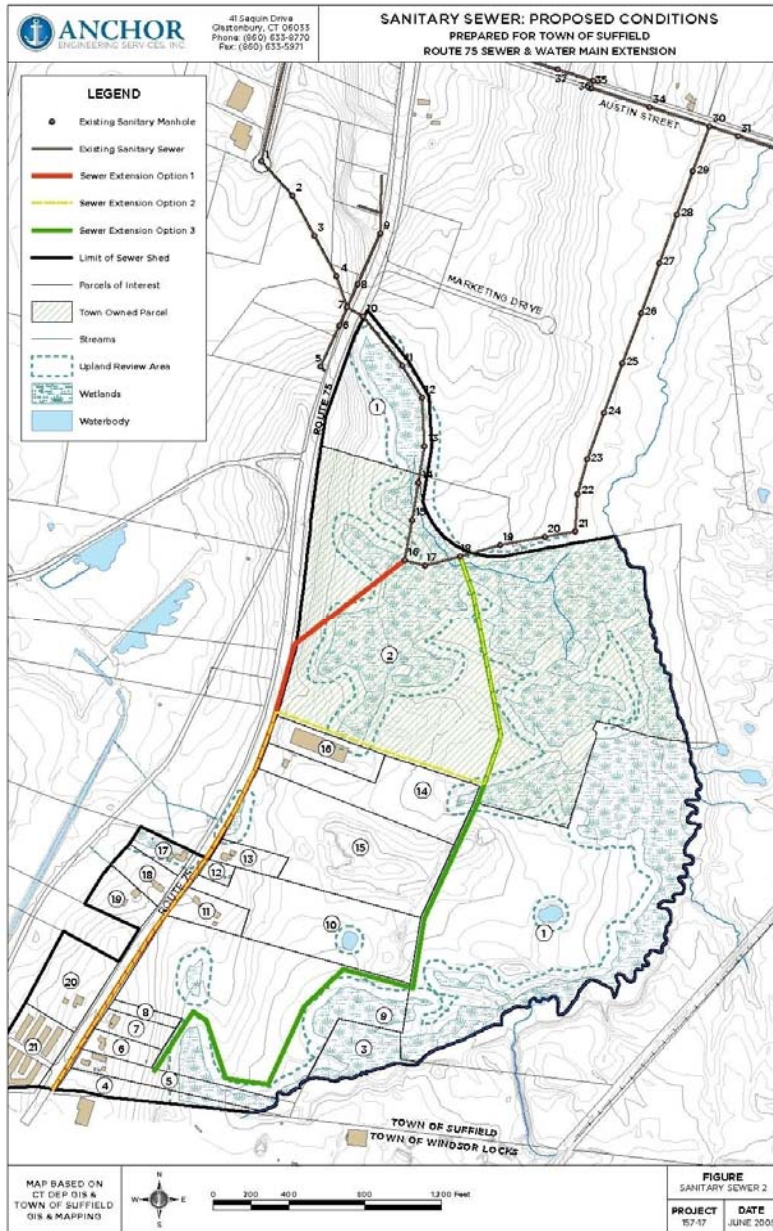
**Legend**

Yellow R-25 Zone    Light Yellow R-45 Zone    Purple PDIP Zone    Red Neighborhood Commercial Zone

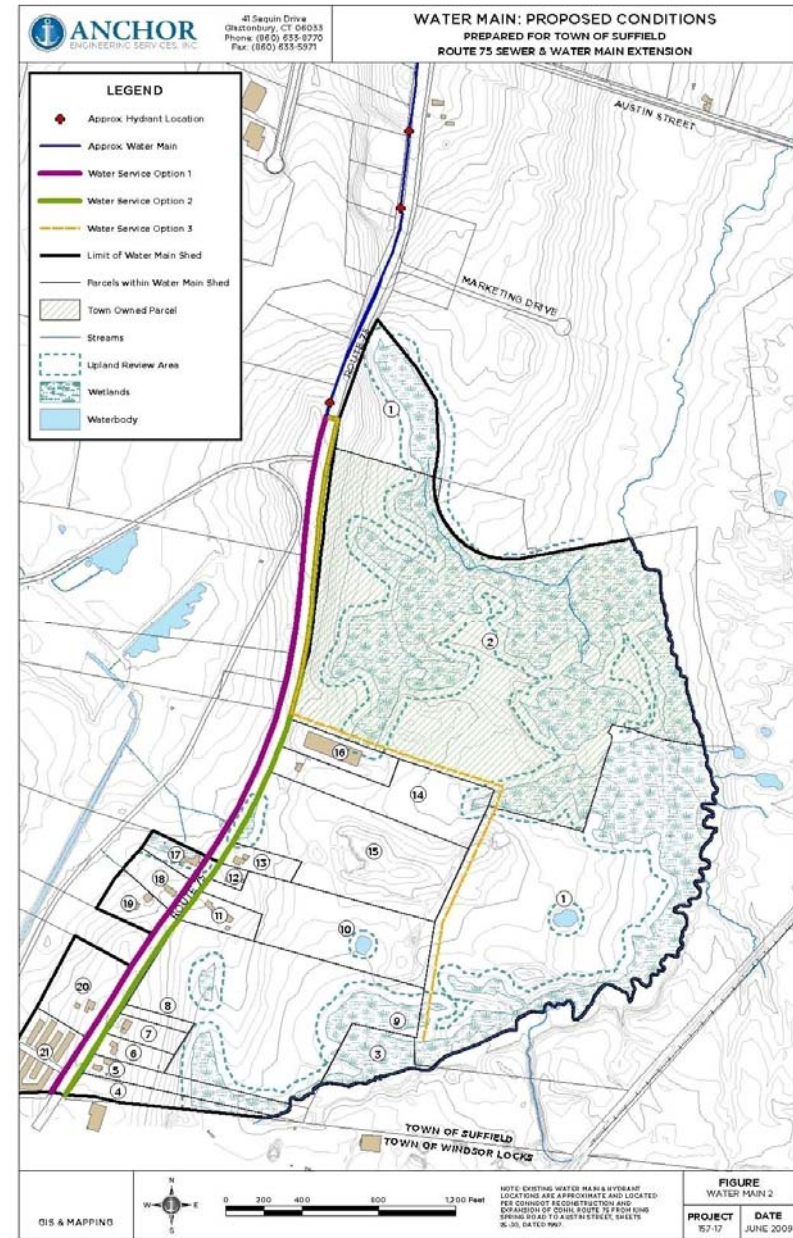




Map 8. Sanitary Sewer: Proposed Conditions

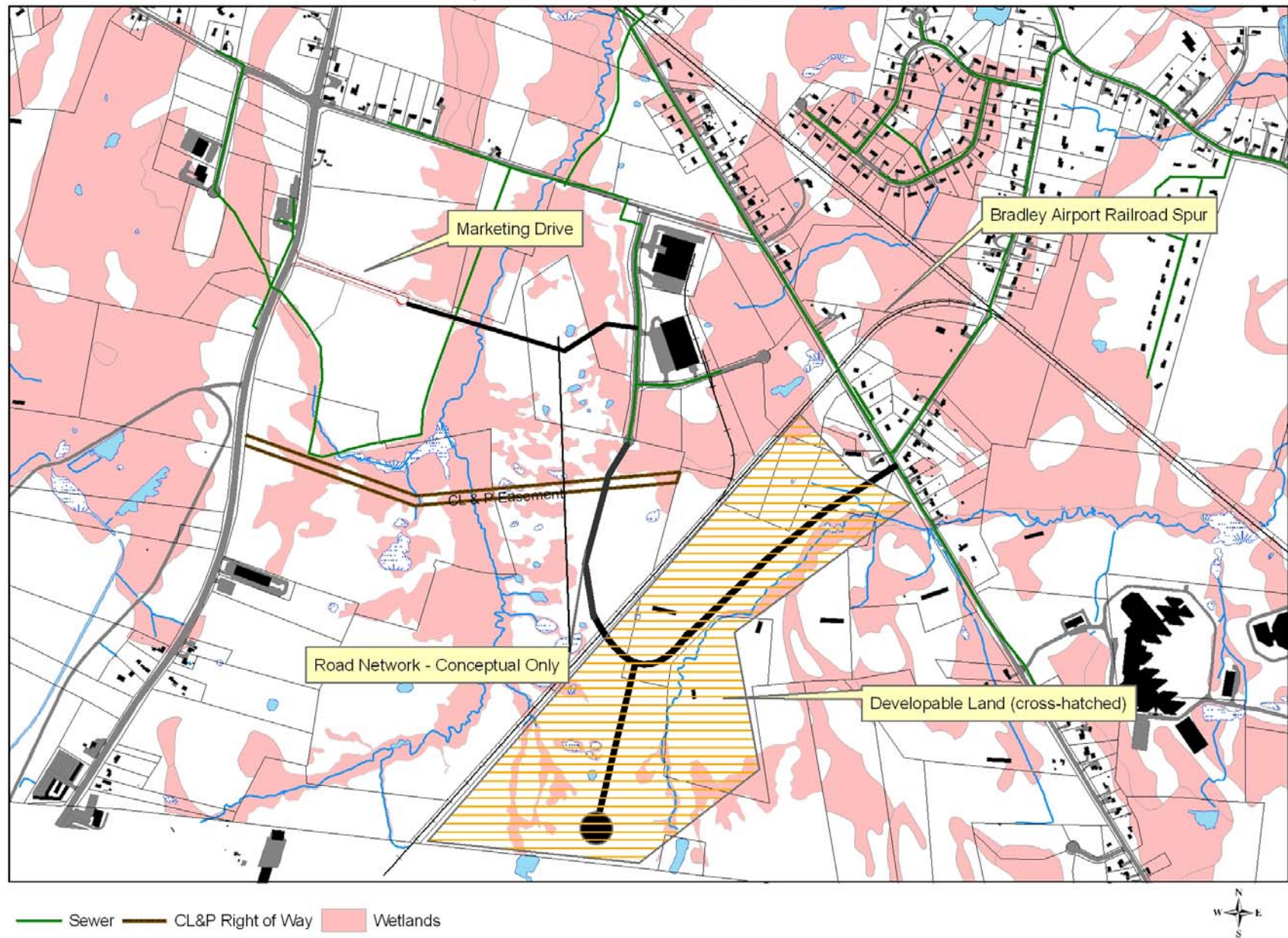


Map 9. Water Main: Proposed Conditions





Map 10. Available PDIP Land off Route 75



## H. INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Goals	Policies	Objectives
16. Maintain our existing commercial and industrial base while encouraging expansion, rehabilitation, and revitalization where appropriate.	1. Prepare shovel-ready sites by supporting additional infrastructure on Route 159 and the Route 75 corridor industrial zones such as roadways and utilities (gas, water, sewer, electric, and fiber optics).	A. Support maintenance of existing infrastructure such as Harvey Lane, Bennett Road, Firestone Drive, Winter Drive, and Marketing Drive.
		B. Support the relocation of Perimeter Road by Bradley International Airport, which will open up additional light industrial zoned land for development.
	2. Support the recommendations from the EDC regarding industrial and commercial development.	A. Explore building design standards for industrial buildings.
		B. Promote an enhanced image of Suffield as being an important, successful, and enjoyable place for economic activity.
17. Review, maintain, and revise existing commercial, industrial, and PDIP area boundaries.	1. Avoid intrusions on residential or environmentally sensitive areas.	A. Carefully consider rezoning areas of the PDIP to Industrial by capitalizing on rail access.
		B. Investigate extending cul-de-sac lengths for industrial areas beyond the 1,200-linear-foot rule.
		C. Establish a plan to gain access to developable acreage on the south east side of the Bradley Airport railroad spur. ( <i>See Map 10.</i> )
		D. Investigate ways to encourage alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind power, through appropriate zoning.
18. Enhance the development review and decision-making processes.	1. Institute one-stop streamlined reviews.	A. Choose one day per month to hold a comprehensive staff review of each application coordinated by the Planning Office to include the Town Planner, ZEO, Building Official, Economic Development Director, Fire Marshall, Town Engineer, Wetlands Agent, Fire Chief (as needed), Public Works Director (as needed) Police Chief (as needed) and First Selectmen (as needed).

## **Town Center Village District (TCVD)**

The TCVD can be described as the area along Mountain Road, Ffyer Place, and Main Street. (*See Map 11.*) Included in this district is the Suffield Village commercial center. The TCVD contains the town government, town green meeting and concert areas, and commercial center. A picturesque Main Street leads into the TCVD from both the north and south and the people of Suffield take great pride in the vitality and appearance of this area of town.

People need a reason to come to the TCVD and great strides have been taken over the past several years to make the district more pedestrian- and bicyclist-friendly. The Heritage Committee spearheaded regulations for the TCVD that were adopted specifically with the hope of increasing both commercial and residential density.

The TCVD is a focal point in the community. Great care has been taken to allow more density and varied uses in the center with provisions in place to ensure that the look and feel residents enjoy is not compromised.

All proposals for the TCVD must be reviewed by the Design Review Board, which makes recommendations to the Zoning and Planning Commission. The Design Review board ensures that the architectural design for signs and structures, site layout, landscaping, and pedestrian access enhances the character of the TCVD.



## **West Suffield Village District (WSVD)**

### **Ebb's Corner (EC)**

### **Thompsonville Road (TR)**

The West Suffield Village District (WSVD) is located at and around the Mountain Road–Route 187 intersection. The purpose of the WSVD is to allow for the creation of commercial development that meets the shopping and service needs of the community while preserving the rural character of the district. Similar to the TCVD, the WSVD has a Design Review Board to make recommendations to the Zoning and Planning Commission when a development application is submitted.

Ebb's Corner is located in a Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zone at the corner of Mountain and Babb's Road. Similarly, the area at the corner of Thompsonville Road and East Street is zoned NC. These areas have some neighborhood-oriented commercial services situated to meet the daily needs of the local residents.



I. TOWN CENTER VILLAGE DISTRICT		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
19. Maintain and enhance the economic viability of the village center retail stores and services.	1. Encourage and support revitalization within the TCVD.	A. Support the recommendations of the Design Review Board, Historic District Commission, Economic Development Commission, and Heritage Committee regarding the TCVD.
		B. Support and encourage compatible new development and redevelopment within the TCVD.
		C. Explore ways to accommodate the redevelopment of Ffyller Place. Concerted efforts should be made to move the town's Highway Garage to aid in this redevelopment.
		D. Explore ways to connect Stony Brook Park to the Town Center Village District and Main Street.
		E. Support efforts to make the TCVD even more pedestrian friendly.
20. Encourage greater density within the TCVD while maintaining the character of Suffield.	1. Strive for a balance of commercial, civic, and residential uses.	A. Encourage mixed-use developments to bring more residents to the TCVD.
		B. Encourage shared parking where it is possible among abutting properties within the district.
		C. Encourage the use of permeable pavement systems for overflow parking, where appropriate.

J. WEST SUFFIELD VILLAGE DISTRICT, EBB'S CORNER, THOMPSONVILLE ROAD		
Goal	Policies	Objectives
21. Maintain and enhance the viability of the West Suffield Village District, Ebb's Corner, and Thompsonville Road areas.	1. Encourage and support revitalization in these areas.	A. Support the recommendations of the WSVD Design Review Board.
		B. Carefully consider extending the Thompsonville Road NC zone.



Map 11. Town Center Village District



1 inch equals 500 feet



## **V. *Addressing Community Needs***

### **Housing**

Suffield housing is predominately single-family owner-occupied homes. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, since 1990 the number of dwellings has increased 9.6 percent to 4,853. However, this number does not specify what units, if any, are affordable housing. The 1999 POCD encouraged development of diverse housing stock and this is still an important goal today.

A common perception of affordable housing is that it will produce low-income, high density, subsidized housing developments. The truth is that affordable housing will produce workforce housing for all ages and economic circumstances, including the elderly, first-time homebuyers, and many others that may not be able to afford homes in town.

Suffield has only one apartment complex—Suffield West Apartments located off Remington Street. This complex has 84 units— 48 with one bedroom and 36 with two bedrooms. There needs to be a concerted effort to encourage the construction of additional apartments in Suffield. There are 587 condominium units and 173 approved active adult condominium units. However, per the standards set forth in the Connecticut General Statutes §8-30g, less than 10 units are considered affordable. Suffield's Zoning Regulations, Section V.C., addresses affordable housing and provides for a zone change to allow higher density provided that certain criteria are met.

New dwelling unit construction fluctuates from year to year and has slowed down considerably over the past several years based upon the number of building permits issued since 2005.

In 2005, there were 85 building permits issued for single-family homes. In 2006, 2007, and 2008, there were respectively 65, 36 and 28 building permits issued. In 2009, there were only 24 building permits issued. There has not been one multi-family building permit issued during this same period. Suffield needs more affordable housing to encourage a more diverse population.

K. HOUSING		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
22. Encourage the development of a diverse housing stock.	1. Provide alternatives to the high-cost, single-family house while maintaining the quality of existing residential neighborhoods.	A. Procure grant funds to produce an affordable housing study.
		B. Encourage a variety of housing options for the elderly.
		C. Identify areas with existing infrastructure where affordable housing projects would work well.
		D. Encourage the construction of apartments where appropriate.

## **Community Facilities & Services**

The Town owns 22 buildings with a value in excess of \$100 million. The buildings consist of four schools, four fire stations and 14 buildings for the remaining town functions. In 2008, a detailed maintenance plan was developed for all non-school town buildings. The Board of Education is currently drafting a similar maintenance plan for the schools.

Community facilities and services provide important functions for the daily operations of the town and influence the quality of life for Suffield residents. Facilities, which are primarily town owned, and services include public safety, education, recreation, library, senior center, administrative buildings, public works, transportation and utilities.

### ***Public Safety***

#### ***Ambulance***

*Suffield Volunteer Ambulance Association* (SVAA), located at 205 Bridge Street, provides ambulance service for the town. Its 8,900-square-foot building was completed in April 2007, and provides state-of-the-art training facilities, offices, medical storage, crew rest areas and a four-bay garage. Equipment includes three ambulances, a paramedic support van, three trailers with support equipment, and a chief's car.

SVAA has two full-time staff, 10 part-time staff, and 95 volunteers consisting of 13 paramedics, 17 emergency management technicians

(EMT's), 17 intermediate EMT's (EMTI), 55 EMT Basic, eight CPR technicians and 13 medical response technicians (MRT). During 2008, SVAA responded to more than 1,400 calls for assistance. The Association has mutual aid agreements with Enfield, Windsor Locks, East Windsor and East Granby.

#### ***Fire***

Fire protection is provided by eight full-time and 50 volunteer firefighters. Fire stations are located adjacent to Town Hall (main facility), Thompsonville Road near East Street, Ebb's Corner (Mountain and Copper Hill Roads), and in West Suffield (9 Ratley Road). All locations provide adequate service radii for initial response.

#### ***Police***

The Police Department (911 Mountain Road) currently employs 20 full-time and six part-time officers that are supported by four full-time and three part-time dispatchers, an administrative assistant and two part-time animal control officers. The police-to-population ratio has been improved from 1:672 in 1999 to 1:618 in 2009.

The Town maintains a fleet of nine police vehicles. The large land area in town and the increasing volume of traffic commuting to and from Bradley Airport through Suffield necessitate careful distribution of resources for maximum effect.



## ***Education***

School facilities have changed significantly since the 1999 POCD.

- 2002 The current high school opened.
- 2003 The former high school reopened as the middle school.
- 2004 The former middle school reopened as the intermediate school.
- 2005 The elementary school reopened as an early childhood education facility (grades pre-K – 3) and the remaining elementary school was closed.

The current facilities have an enrollment capacity of 3070. (*See Table 4.*)

The school enrollment of any town is directly related to factors such as the number of births, the net migration of the population (in-migration minus out-migration), the number of new and used home sales, and the percent of resident students attending non-public schools. Historically, there has been little that local government does or can do about these factors. Growth rates also are affected interest rates and the state of the economy.

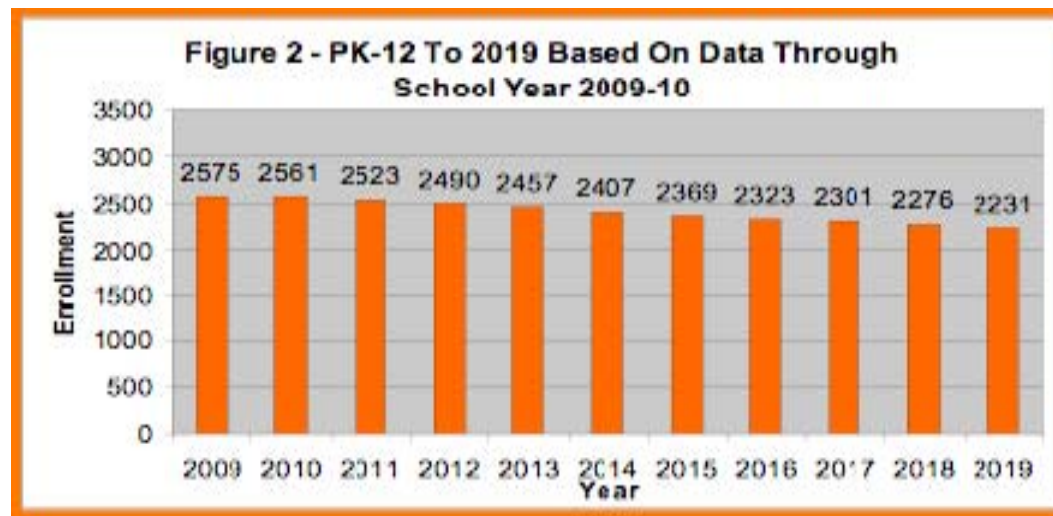
The Zoning and Planning Commission has some influence on in-migration through zoning regulations as they relate to density, and size, etc. New residential development is likely to increase public school enrollment as it attracts new people to town, including families with school-aged children.

The two factors that will have the greatest effect upon future Suffield enrollments are: a decline in the number of births to Suffield residents and the eventual resumption of in-migration (*New England School Development Council 2009-10 Enrollment Projections* (NESDEC), Suffield).

NESDEC projects continued declining enrollment figures for Suffield annually through 2019. (*See Figure 2.*) When these estimates are taken into account with the design capacity of the schools, it appears that there won't be a need for a new school or an addition to an existing school for the next decade. (Bridge Street School is not included in these calculations.)



TABLE 4. Suffield Schools				
School	Size (SF)	Year Built	Student Capacity	Additions
Suffield High School (9-12)	181,000	2002	900	N/A
Suffield Middle School (6-8)	128,233	1965	835	1971, 1975
McAlister Intermediate (4-5)	71,925	1939	600	1956, 1988
Spaulding Elementary (PreK-3)	71,720	1953	735	1962, 1985, 1988
Bridge Street School	14,847	1924	132	N/A
<b>Total Capacity</b> (excluding Bridge Street School)			<b>3070</b>	



*New England School Development Council 2009-10 Enrollment Projections (NESDEC), Suffield*

### *Bridge Street School*

Bridge Street School (95 Bridge Street), which was used for students in grades 1-2 that lived east of Main Street, was closed and turned over to the town in 2005 by the Board of Education. Built in 1924, the school is located on a 3.5-acre parcel. It contains 12,300 square feet on the first floor plus 2,200 useable square feet in the basement. Since 2005 the building has been minimally heated during winter months, and repairs have been made as needed. The boiler needs replacing and is itemized on the capital expenditure planning list.

The Board of Selectmen established the Bridge Street School Committee in fall 2008 to evaluate the building and make recommendations regarding its disposal or use. The Committee concluded that the building should be preserved and is looking into possible future uses.



## ***Recreation***

### ***Babb's Beach***

Nelson Babb donated this property to the town in 2004. The property consists of seven acres of land with 400 feet of waterfront beach on Congamond Lake, and three buildings— a roller rink and two storage buildings. The roller rink is leased to Citizens Restoring Congamond (CRC), a volunteer group restoring the roller rink to its original condition and making it compliant with current code requirements.

The beachfront property has not been used for swimming or swimming lessons for several years due to the lack of Parks and Recreation Department funding.



### ***Sunrise Park***

Sunrise Park is located at 2075 Mountain Road on 134 acres. The property consists of White's Pond, the superintendent's house and barn, a pavilion and four seasonal buildings. The pavilion roof was replaced in 2005. The superintendent's house was renovated and made building code compliant in 2006. The superintendent and his family are allowed to live in the house in exchange for 20 hours of labor per week to maintain the park, including mowing the lawns.

### ***Parks & Recreation Department***

The mission statement of the Parks and Recreation Department reads,

***To enhance the quality of life by providing a variety of affordable programs, quality parks, facilities and services to meet the needs of both passive and active recreation for Suffield's growing community.***

Suffield has 23 public recreation and open space locations available for active and passive recreation. (See Table 5 and Map 12.) However, the 1999 Plan of Conservation and Development noted that the area of town east of Main Street was not well served by public recreational facilities.

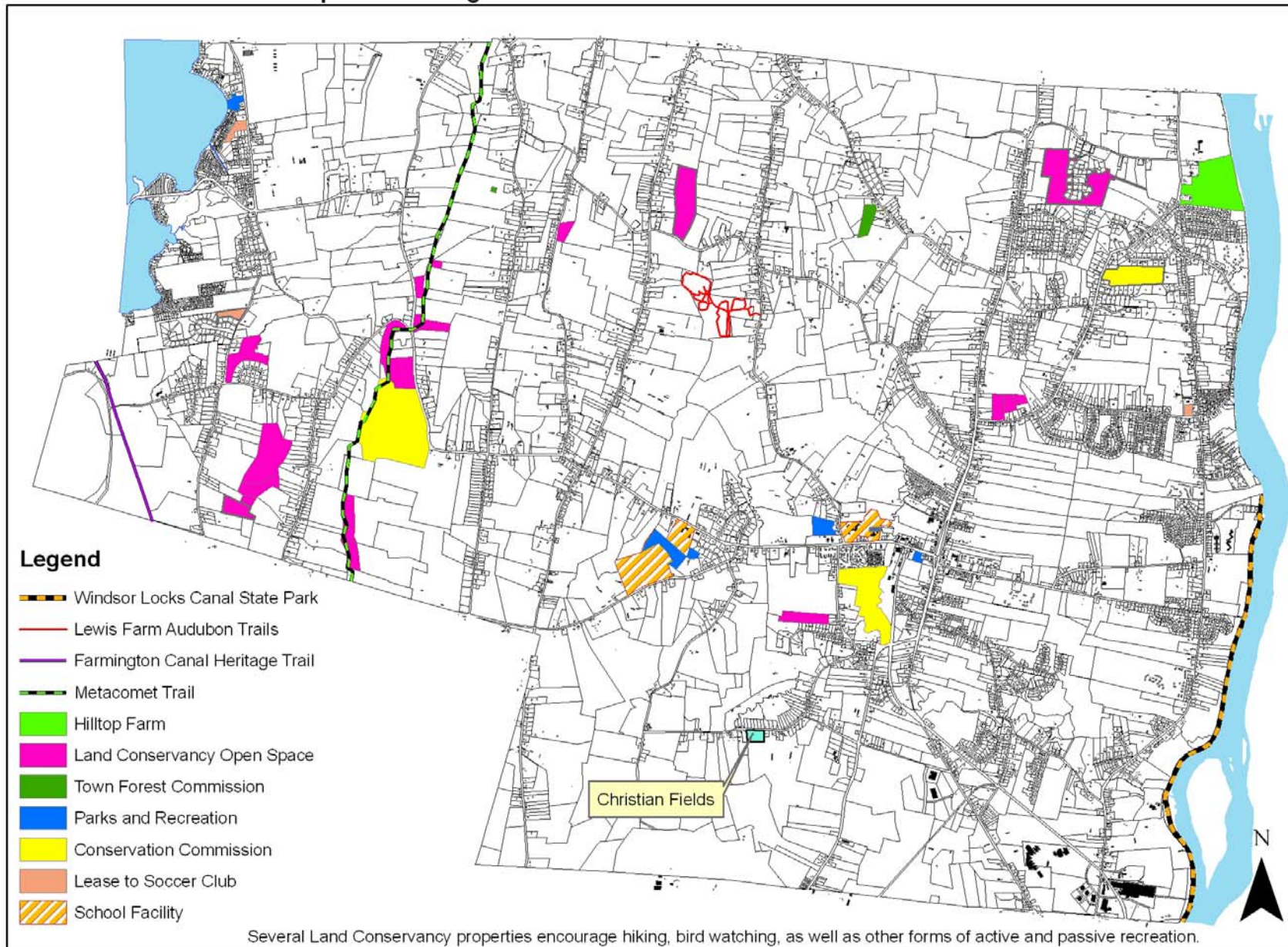
Recognizing that both active and passive recreational opportunities and facilities contribute to the overall quality of life for all Suffield residents, Parks and Recreation has established goals to expand recreational facilities in town.



**TABLE 5. Public Recreation & Open Space Resources**

Managed by Parks & Recreation	School Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Babb's Skating Rink &amp; Fields</i> (under development) – There is a lease agreement with Citizens Restoring Congamond (CRC).</li> <li>• <i>Babb's Beach</i></li> <li>• <i>Bazin Bruce Memorial Park</i> (27 acres) – baseball, softball, soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, hiking trail, pavilion &amp; picnic area</li> <li>• <i>Sullivan Athletic Field</i> – soccer, lacrosse</li> <li>• <i>Skateboard Park</i></li> <li>• <i>Suffield Family Recreation Complex</i> – lighted tennis &amp; basketball courts, sand volleyball</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Suffield High School</i> – tennis, track, softball, baseball, synthetic turf field used for soccer, lacrosse, field hockey</li> <li>• <i>Suffield Middle School</i> – soccer, tennis, track</li> <li>• <i>McAlister School</i> – softball, field hockey, playscape</li> <li>• <i>Spaulding School</i> – softball, soccer, playscape</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Managed by Town Forest Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Jesse F. Smith Memorial Forest</i> (15 acres) – picnic area, trails</li> </ul>
Town-owned property/fields leased to Suffield Soccer Club	Other Recreation Areas in Town
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>East Street Field</i> – soccer</li> <li>• <i>Babb's Field</i> – soccer</li> <li>• <i>Stratton Farms Field</i>, aka Mark Cervione Fields – soccer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Suffield Land Conservancy</i> – open space, hiking</li> <li>• <i>Metacomet Trail</i> – hiking, trails</li> <li>• <i>Lewis Farm Wildlife Sanctuary</i> – hiking, trails, nature study</li> <li>• <i>Windsor Locks Canal State Park Trail</i> – hiking, trails, nature study</li> <li>• <i>Farmington Canal Heritage Trail</i> (Suffield section recently completed)</li> </ul>
Managed by Conservation Commission	Property Leased by the Town from Christian Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Stony Brook Park</i> (70 acres) – hiking, fishing, picnic area, trails</li> <li>• <i>Sunrise Park</i> (139 acres) – swimming, boating, camping, hiking, fishing, playground</li> <li>• <i>McKinnon Property</i> on Mapleton Avenue (39 acres) – hiking trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Christian Field</i> (Little League)</li> </ul>

**Map 12. Existing Facilities for Passive and/or Active Recreation**



L. PARKS AND RECREATION		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
23. Provide diverse and centrally located facilities	1. Develop and maintain adequate recreational facilities for Suffield's growing population.	A. Build a community center with indoor and outdoor amenities that meet residents' current and future needs.
		B. Create an athletic park complex with additional baseball, softball, and multi-purpose athletic fields.
24. Serve the current and future recreational needs of the community.	1. Ensure adequate facilities for residents of all ages.	A. Develop a program for the acquisition and development of facilities.
		B. Coordinate plans with open space acquisitions.
		C. Explore ways to have all trails in town mapped and documented using GPS.
25. Create and implement a property management plan for all town-owned facilities.	1. Keep facilities and trails in good repair for the ongoing use and enjoyment by residents.	A. Ensure the necessary resources are in place to maintain these facilities.

### ***Library***

Kent Memorial Library (50 North Main Street) built in 1972, is a 14,000-square-foot modern building. The library provides reference resources, computer equipment, children's services, subscriptions to more than 100 periodicals, and outstanding community programs.

The State of Connecticut Library Standards suggests 3.5 volumes per capita for a population between 10,000 and 35,000. With 60,811 total volumes, Suffield easily exceeds the standard with 5.06 volumes per capita. The library has a total of 78,152 items consisting of books, periodicals, videos, tapes and other learning tools.

The library's infrastructure is not well suited to modern electronic needs. The building is costly to operate and maintain. Suitable space for multi-use programming is an issue. During 2008, a plan to replace the existing library with a new 33,000-square-foot facility was rejected by the voters at a town meeting. The Town will begin to look at addressing the roof and other structural issues of the current building. An architect appointed to study the condition of the roof provided an estimate in July 2010 of \$500,000 in repair costs.

### ***Senior Center***

The newly opened Suffield Senior Center (145 Bridge Street) is located in the former Calvary Episcopal Church. The center is 11,700 square feet in size, up from 5,000 square feet at its former location in Suffield Village. Major funding for this project, including purchase of the property, was provided by state and federal grants. The center is staffed by a full-time director, a part-time assistant and 30 volunteers.

### ***Town Administration & Services***

The town's administrative functions are housed in three buildings:

- ***Town Hall*** (83 Mountain Road) is a 12,000 square foot building housing 11 full-time employees and seven part-time employees. The offices of First Selectman, Economic Development, Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology, Tax Collector, Assessor, Town Clerk, Probate Court, Emergency Management and Registrar are all located in the building.
- ***Town Hall Annex*** (97 Mountain Road) is a 3,000- square-foot building housing the Mini-Bus office, Youth Services and the Inmate Coordinator/Animal Control Officer. Four people work in this building, which also provides storage for three mini-buses, and tools and equipment for the inmate program.
- ***Town Hall Annex 2*** (230 C Mountain Road) houses the remaining town functions. These include Public Works, Conservation, Building, Engineering, Zoning and Planning, and Parks and Recreation. Eleven full-time employees, three part-time employees and the wetlands consultant work here. This basement provides 5,000 square feet of office space and 2,500 square feet of storage space.



## ***Public Works***

### ***Highway Department***

The Highway Garage Complex consists of four buildings on a 3.5-acre site:

- The ***sand/salt shed***, built in 2001, provides for 3,000 cubic yards of storage.
- The ***main garage building***, built in 1972, is an 11-bay facility that houses the majority of the department's equipment. The building contains offices, a break room, parts storage, and two hydraulic lifts in the shop area.
- ***Two original highway garages*** have been identified as requiring replacement. The 2005 Space Needs Study recommended that both buildings be replaced with a 4,500-square-foot cold storage structure. The replacement has been put on hold pending identification of other options for the entire property.
- The ***dog pound*** houses an office and 10 animal runs. The pound is staffed by one person who also has responsibilities for inmate work-team coordination, and a part-time assistant. The Town is in the process of hiring a second part-time person.

The Highway Department is staffed by a foreman, assistant foreman, and nine highwaymen.

### ***Landfill***

The Landfill (2715 Mountain Road) is comprised of three parcels totaling 92.6 acres. A transfer station operates at the site along with a recycling facility that handles cardboard, plastic, glass, metals and certain hazardous wastes. In addition, bulky waste disposal is available for demolition debris, construction, stumps and yard waste. The transfer station handles approximately 10 percent of the town's waste; a private contractor handles the other 90 percent. Two full-time personnel staff the landfill.

The ***bulky waste disposal site*** is scheduled to close in 2013. During 2008, discussions were held with the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) about reopening the ***solid waste site***, which was closed in 1995, and using that area for the disposal of bulky waste material. With assistance from Anchor Engineering, the Town proposed three alternatives to the DEP for expanding the bulky waste disposal area:

1. Expand the existing bulky waste site to the west.
2. Begin a new site on the property.
3. Reopen the closed solid waste cell allowing the bulky waste to cover the existing solid waste area.

At the current fill rate, this area could be used for the next 40 years. As of 2010, the town is awaiting feedback from the DEP.

## ***Transportation***

### ***Roads***

There are a total of 108.84 miles of streets and highways in Suffield, of which 32.87 are state highways (*see Map 13*) and 75.97 miles are town roads. Additionally, there are 6.37 miles of private roads, most of which are located near the Congamond Lakes. There are also some partially constructed new subdivision roads totaling 1.99 miles that have not been accepted by the Town.

Almost all roads in Suffield are paved, with the exception of a few short streets in the west end of town that have traditionally served seasonal cottages around the Congamond Lakes. However, more and more of these cottages have been winterized for year-round habitation, creating more traffic on these mostly private, unpaved roads.

The 1999 POCD states that Suffield's local road system seems to serve the local residents fairly well and this statement is still accurate. The Mountain Road and Bridge Street corridor remains the primary east-west town artery. Additionally, East, North and South Streets carry the majority of traffic from abutting towns into the center of Suffield.

The Zoning and Planning Commission evaluates the impacts that new subdivision roads will have on the surrounding area and makes recommendations for design or layout improvements.

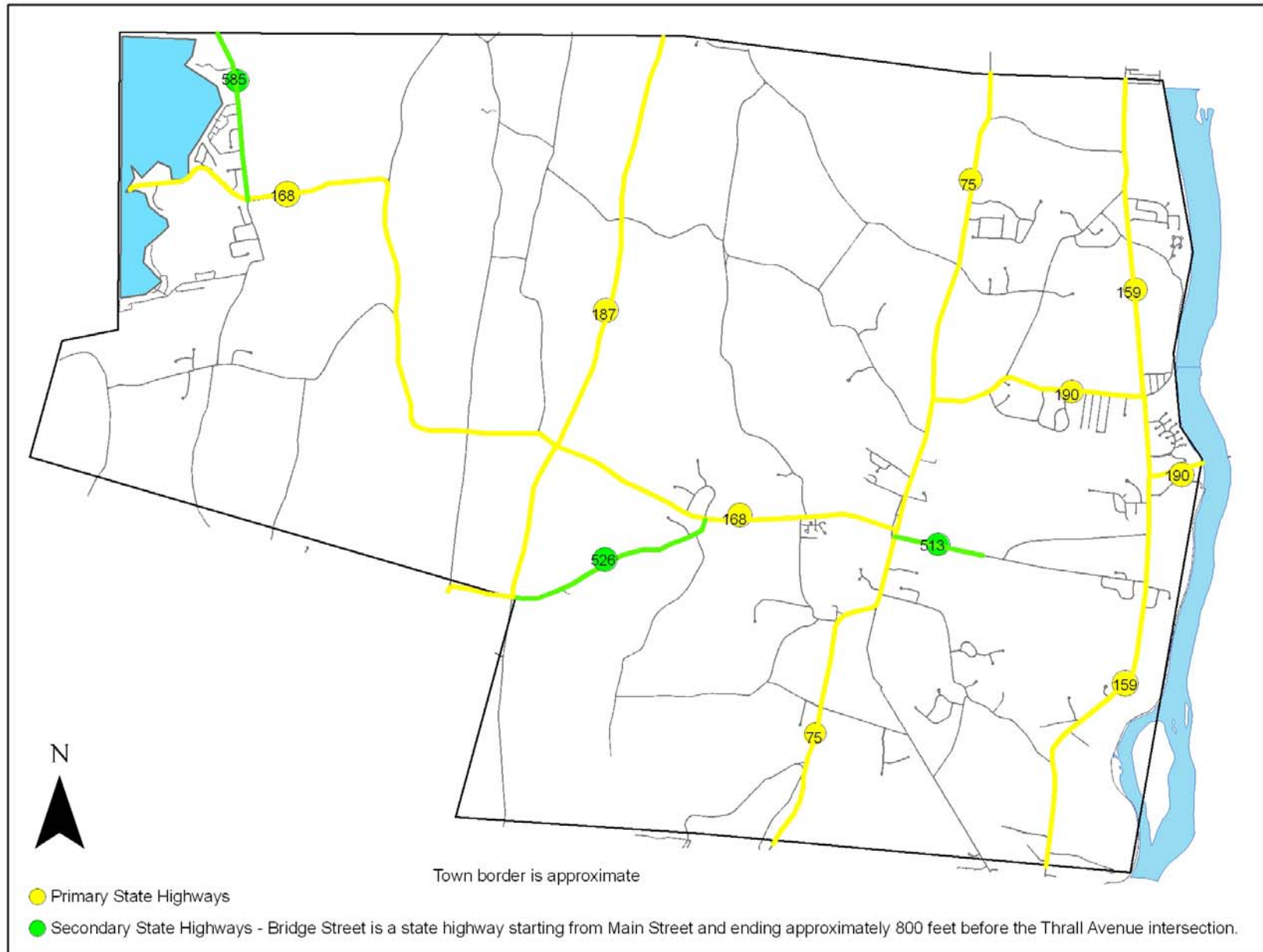
The Town has recently completed a ***Pavement Management Study*** to take a look at the condition of all roads. This study will allow the Town to determine which roads are in most need of repair. A copy of this report can be viewed in the Town Engineer's office.

The area of town from Route 75 eastward has had most of the new road construction during the past 10 years. This is not surprising as this part of town has the infrastructure to handle increased density, and is close in proximity to the interstate highway system. Future land-use planning indicates that much of this area of town is predicted to support moderate density, which is defined as having 1-2 units per acre.

### ***Rail***

Suffield also has a transportation asset that ends right in the Town Center Village District. Unfortunately, the railroad line that used to service the lumberyard at Ffyer Place hasn't been fully utilized for several years. While there are no plans for redevelopment of Ffyer Place at this stage, the Town should keep an open mind when it comes to potential new uses and the benefits of incorporating the rail line into any proposed projects.

Map 13. Suffield State Highways



### *Vehicles*

As was the case in 1999, residents today rely almost exclusively on the personal automobile for local transportation. The Town provides a mini-bus for elderly and handicapped residents. Aside from that, there are virtually no public transportation options for the citizens of Suffield. Recently, Connecticut Transit has offered bus service to C&S Wholesale Grocers on East Street South via Windsor Locks. The route is primarily utilized by C&S employees.

Also pointed out in 1999 was impact on growth trends in Suffield due to the town's location relative to Interstate 91. Subdivision approvals during the past 10 years have been mostly on the eastern side of town where access to Interstate 91 is closest. The largest condominium development in town, Suffield Meadows, is also located close to major transit routes. It is also no surprise that these areas are served by public water and sewer to accommodate such growth. As Suffield continues to grow, pressure to develop land with easy access to Interstate 91 will grow.

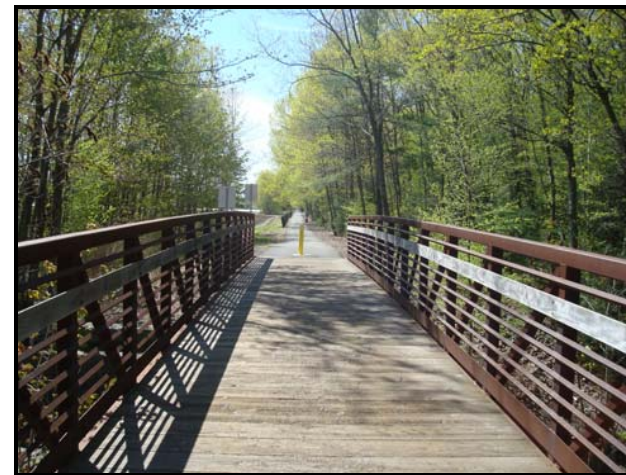
As in 1999, Bradley International Airport on the town's southern border continues to be a key influence on traffic and transportation in Suffield. Thousands of cars daily traverse the main arteries in town going to and from the airport, particularly from the north. This impact will likely increase as Bradley accommodates new carriers and airline expansions.

### *Sidewalks and Bike Trails*

Offering people alternatives to the personal automobile is an important element of this updated plan. One way we are doing this is by promoting connectivity among sidewalks throughout town to encourage a walkable and bicycle-friendly community. Less dependence on automobiles reduces air pollution, promotes physical activity and wellness, and provides a more balanced transportation system, particularly for those who don't drive.

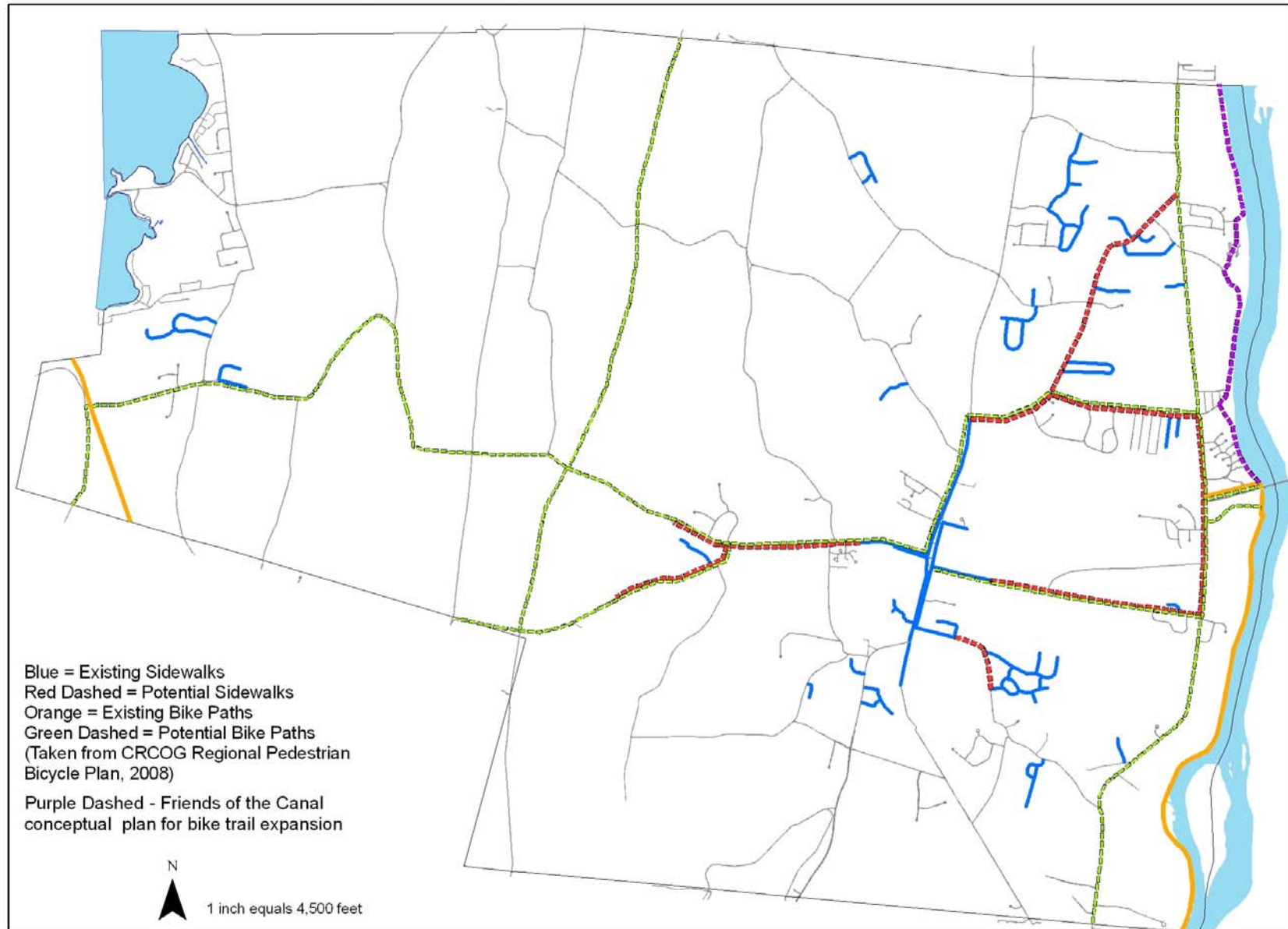
These goals are important to the region as well as the town. In 2008, the Capitol Region Council of Governments developed a regional pedestrian and bicycle plan. This plan has several recommendations and justifications for implementing multi-use paths throughout the Hartford region.

The Town has mapped the locations of existing sidewalks and bike trails, and identified areas for new sidewalks and possible extensions of bike trails. (*See Map 14.*) Suffield's sidewalk and bike trail expansion plan adapts many of the region's transportation goals to the local level.





Map 14. Existing and Potential Sidewalks and Bike Trails



M. TRANSPORTATION		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
26. Enhance the safety and efficiency of the transportation of people, goods, and services through Suffield.	1. Follow recommendations set forth in the 2009 Pavement Management Study to keep the town's road system in good repair.	A. Encourage the networking of existing and proposed subdivisions to minimize cul-de-sacs and increase connectivity.
		B. Promote sidewalk connectivity throughout town.
		C. Promote and encourage the preservation of scenic roads.
		D. Provide for the improved movement of vehicles and pedestrians through the Town Center Village District.
		E. Explore providing connectivity between the Town Center and Stony Brook Park (pedestrian bridge over brook).
		F. Encourage bike lanes and multi-use trails where appropriate.
27. Coordinate with state and regional transportation goals where appropriate.	1. Support state and regional planning initiatives.	A. Encourage the preservation and re-use of the rail line that leads into Ffyer Place for commuter transportation, the delivery of goods and services to residents of Suffield, or any other appropriate use within the scope of the goals of this plan.

## Utility Services

### Water

Two water companies service the town: Connecticut Water, and West Service Corporation. (*See Map 15.*) Connecticut Water serves the eastern portion of Suffield and closely follows the sewer lines. West Service Corporation located in West Suffield serves a much smaller geographic area near the Congamond Lakes. West Service Corporation maintains approximately five miles of water main and serves a population of 760 residents through 208 service connections. (2008 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report, West Service Corporation)

It's important to point out that Connecticut DEP does not consider the aquifer from which West Service Corporation draws water a state aquifer protection area. However, Massachusetts DEP mapping designates the area around the Congamond Lakes a "Zone II" wellhead protection area because it contributes drinking water to the supply wells for the Town of Southwick. The State of Connecticut did not confer aquifer protection status to the area because the groundwater supply resources do not meet the specific criteria of the program—specifically, stratified drift wells of water companies that serve 1,000 people. Although this is the case, Suffield should take an active role in applying local aquifer protection measures to protect water quality.



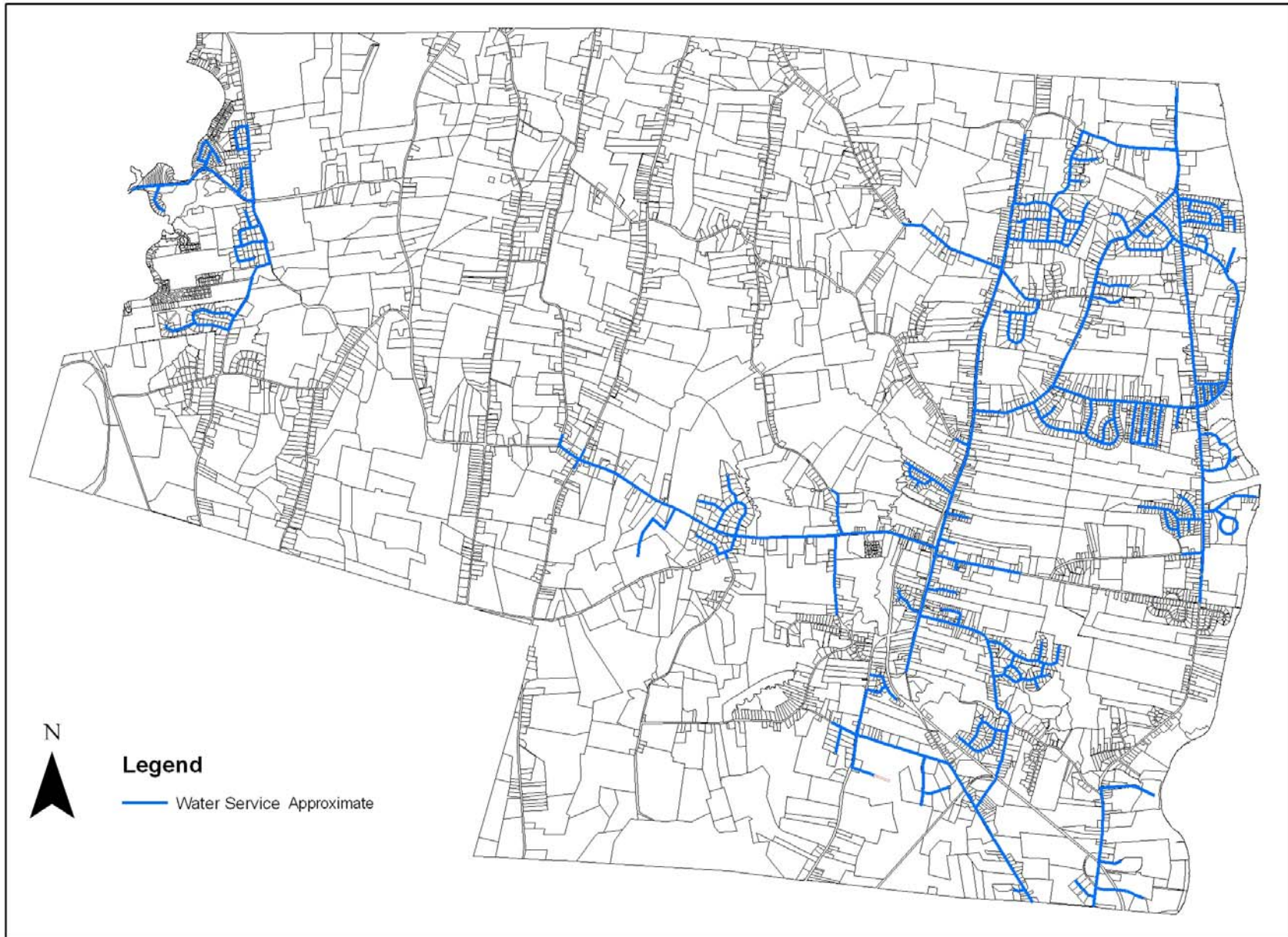
### Sewer

The Suffield Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) provides sewer service, which covers the majority of the east side of town. (*See Map 16.*) A forced main line does proceed further to the west along Mountain Road to serve the high school but for the most part, the western portion of town does not have sewers.

The 1999 POCD refer to a Sewer Service Area, which delineates the portion of town to be served by sewers. The Sewer Service Area was established based upon an evaluation of the existing need and zoning, as well as accessibility to the existing sanitary sewer system. The service area boundary is roughly parallel to the west of Route 75 following existing zoning boundaries. Some areas west of Route 75 have been added to the service zone since it was established, including Wendover Drive, Kenny Roberts Memorial Drive, and the sewer line that serves the high school. Most land east of Route 75 would be capable of being served by the municipal sewer system.

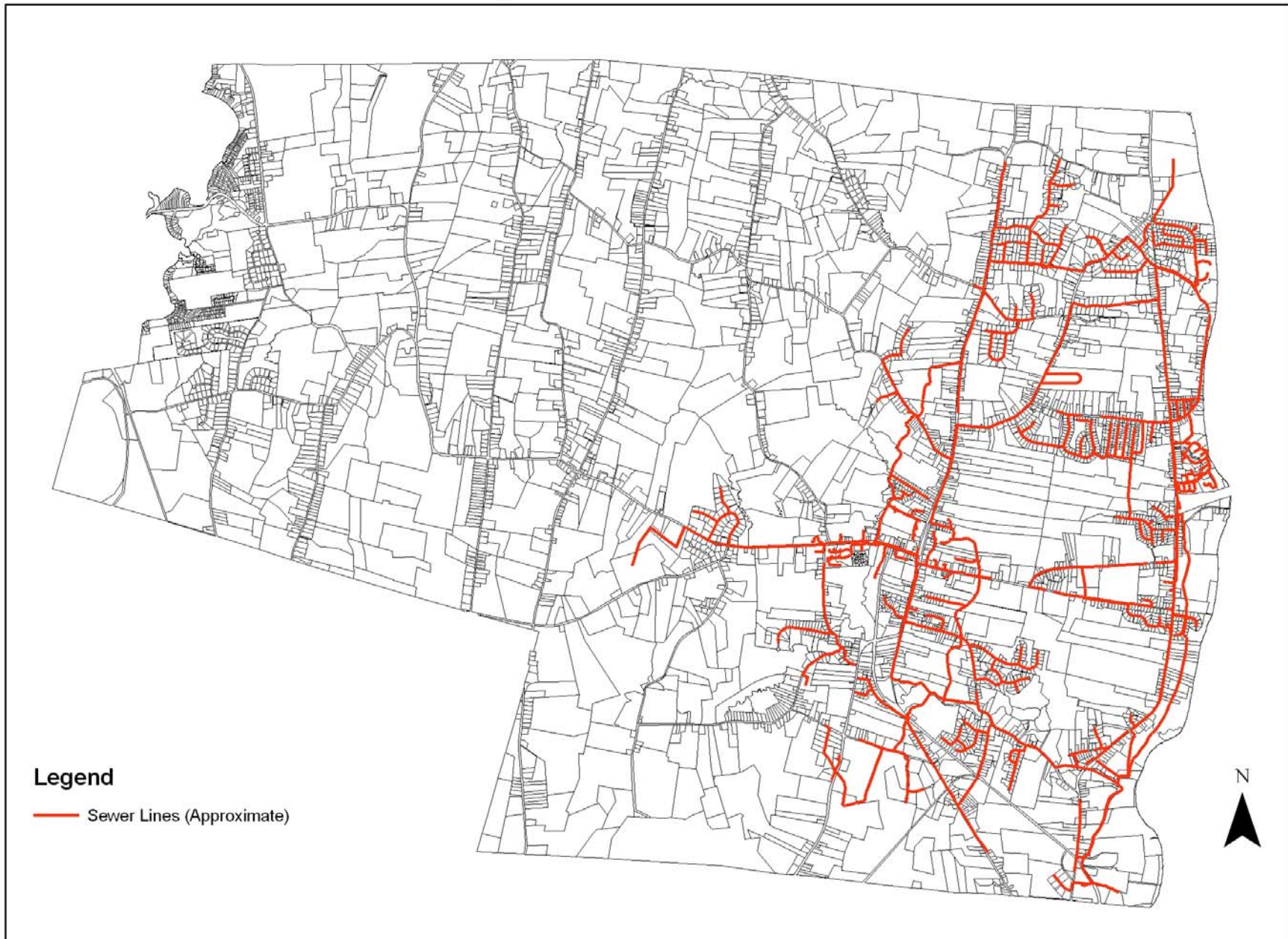
Suffield's sewage treatment plant has been rated as the best municipal plant in Connecticut in terms of nitrogen removal. According to a report by The Water Planet Company located in New London, Conn., the implementation of new monitoring equipment and process improvements at the plant have significantly reduced nitrogen discharge to the Connecticut River and, ultimately, Long Island Sound.

Map 15. Water Service





Map 16. Suffield Sewer Lines



### *Other Utilities*

Various companies supply natural gas, telecommunications, wireless fiber optics or high-speed data transfer to the town. Suffield has three wireless telecommunication towers as well as two water towers holding wireless telecommunication antennae.

The three towers are located on town-owned property at the landfill off Mountain Road in West Suffield, Ffyer Place in the town center, and the WPCA off East Street on the east side of town. The water towers holding antennae are located on North Street just north of the Mapleton Avenue intersection, and on Betty Lane in the southeast corner of town.

Yankee Gas Company provides residential natural gas. There is also a high-pressure gas line that travels through Suffield from Granby, Conn., to Agawam, Mass.; however, this line is not for residential use.

### *Alternative Energy Projects*

Due to the rising cost of energy, people are looking for alternative energy sources to power vehicles, heat homes, and on a larger scale, produce electricity. It is incumbent upon the Town of Suffield to consider the impact that these alternative energy projects could have upon the natural resources and landscape of town.

Commercial and/or industrial alternative energy projects offer a number of ways to produce power utilizing solar, water and wind energy. On a residential level, however, it is much more common to see permits being issued for a wood burning furnace or a series of solar panels in the backyard.

Zoning regulations prohibit wind farms but are silent upon other forms of alternative energy production. Planning for these types of projects in the future will enhance the Town's ability to make informed decisions that won't compromise the 10-year vision for Suffield.

N. UTILITIES		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
28. Plan for and maintain Town utility infrastructure including public water, sewer, natural gas, wireless communications, and high-speed data transfer.	1. Ensure that adequate and safe drinking water is provided to current and future users.	A. Protect the public drinking water supply of the West Service Corporation and Connecticut Water through appropriate land-use controls.
		B. Extend public water mains to areas with service needs.
	2. Utilize existing sewer lines effectively.	A. Recommend that sewers not be extended to R-90 and R-45 zones that are not within the 2000 Sewer Service Area Map or to areas inconsistent with the State Plan of Conservation and Development.
		B. Work with the WPCA and their discharge standards when considering the density of new developments that will utilize the sewer system.
	3. Where possible, work with public service utility companies and other providers to ensure our communication infrastructure is maintained and enhanced.	A. Encourage and promote the extension of high-speed data communication.
		B. Encourage and promote the extension of natural gas lines.
29. Develop long-range planning goals to address different forms of alternative energy projects for both residential and commercial purposes.	1. Remain sensitive to the need to maintain the character of the town.	C. Encourage the burying of wired utilities where possible.
		A. Explore the development of regulations to address alternative energy projects.

O. COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES		
Goals	Policies	Objectives
30. Develop a strategic plan for town facilities.	1. Be proactive to anticipate future facility needs and manage growth more effectively.	A. Identify and prioritize the town's facilities needs
		B. Identify sources of funds to implement the plan that will not overburden taxpayers.
		C. Identify suitable geographic locations for future town facilities.



## **VI. Implementation: Ensuring Goals Are Realized**

The 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development contains many goals and objectives related to the management and facilitation of Suffield's future growth. The extent to which we attain the goals will determine the effectiveness of the Plan. But all too often, we have a tendency to put plans like this on a shelf and forget about them. This section outlines the accountability by boards and commissions to ensure the recommendations in the plan are being followed and progress is being made toward the goals. (See Table 5.)

### **Observations & Requirements**

- Some recommendations can be carried out in a short period of time while others may take years to implement.
- The town needs adequate staff and budgetary resources to aid in the implementation process.
- The Zoning and Planning Commission can implement the majority of the recommendations by taking appropriate action during the application review and approval process.
- Zoning and Planning should review subdivision regulations to be certain they are in harmony with this Plan.
- Town agencies such as the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Conservation Commission will need to collaborate on non-zoning related recommendations.
- Residents, developers and business owners should use the Plan as a guide for their proposed projects.

Everyone should consider this Plan a dynamic document, not simply one that is updated every 10 years. New trends, policies and issues may arise that should be incorporated into the plan. Reviewing the Plan every 1-2 years will extend the 10-year requirement until the Town of Suffield undertakes a comprehensive update.



## Plan Goals & Accountability

TABLE 6. Plan Goals & Accountability		
<b>Advisory Commission on Capital Expenditures (ACCE)</b> Goal 5, 23		<b>Historic District Commission (HDC)</b> Goals 2, 9-13,19
<b>Board of Finance (BOF)</b> Goal 5, 8		<b>Land-Use Staff (LS)</b> Goals 1, 2, 4-11, 14, 16, 18-30
<b>Board of Selectmen (BOS)</b> Goals 1, 5, 6, 12, 13, 17, 25, 30		<b>Open Space Subcommittee (OS)</b> (Heritage Committee) Goals 3-8, 13
<b>Conservation Commission (CC)</b> Goals 1-6, 14, 18, 22, 24, 29		<b>Parks &amp; Recreation Department (PR)</b> Goal 6, 23-25
<b>Design Review Board (DRB)</b> Goals 9, 10, 13, 19		<b>Public Works (PW)</b> Goals 18, 26-28
<b>Economic Development Commission (EDC)</b> Goals 15-21, 28		<b>Water Companies (WC)</b> Goals 15, 18
<b>Fire Department (FD)</b> Goal 18		<b>Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA)</b> Goals 15, 18, 28
<b>Heritage Committee (HC)</b> Goals 2, 5, 9, 10, 19-22		<b>Zoning and Planning Commission (ZP)</b> Goals 1-10, 13-30
<b>A. Community Character</b>	<b>Goal 1</b> Maintain and protect Suffield's community character.	BOS, CC, LS, ZP
<b>B. Scenic Resources</b>	<b>Goal 2</b> Preserve Suffield's scenic resources.	CC, HC, HDC, LS, ZP
<b>C. Natural Resources</b>	<b>Goal 3</b> Maintain habitat quality as well as landscape and ecological connectivity among parcels.	CC, OS, ZP
	<b>Goal 4</b> Protect the ecological and environmental benefits of clean air, water and groundwater, healthy flora and fauna.	CC, LS, OS, ZP

<b>D. Open Space</b>	<b>Goal 5</b> Conserve enough land so that 55 percent of the residentially zoned land in town will be permanently protected open space.	ACCE, BOF, BOS, CC, HC, LS, OS, ZP
	<b>Goal 6</b> Protect Suffield's important natural, historical, scenic, agricultural, recreational and habitat resources.	BOS, CC, LS, OS, PR, ZP
	<b>Goal 7</b> Continue to promote land preservation and provide a process for the Town of Suffield to work with individuals, land trusts, state and federal programs to preserve open space.	CC, LS, OS, ZP
<b>E. Agricultural Resources</b>	<b>Goal 8</b> Preserve Suffield's remaining productive farmland.	BOF, LS, OS, ZP
<b>F. Historic Resources</b>	<b>Goal 9</b> Protect and preserve the structures and character of Main Street.	DRB, HC, HDC, LS, ZP
	<b>Goal 10</b> Preserve Suffield's historical ambience.	DRB, HC, HDC, LS, ZP
	<b>Goal 11</b> Identify Suffield's historic assets.	HDC, LS
	<b>Goal 12</b> Encourage and reward preservation.	BOS, HDC
<b>G. Residential Development</b>	<b>Goal 13</b> Guide the scale and pattern of future residential growth in ways that will provide compatible uses of land to maintain and enhance the rural residential character of Suffield.	BOS, DRB, HDC, OS, ZP
	<b>Goal 14</b> Continue to guide development in the town in relation to infrastructure capacity.	CC, LS, ZP
	<b>Goal 15</b> Coordinate State and Regional Plans with Suffield's Plan of Conservation and Development.	EDC, WC, WPCA, ZP

<b>H. Industrial &amp; Commercial Development</b>	<b>Goal 16</b> Maintain our existing commercial and industrial base while encouraging expansion, rehabilitation, and revitalization where appropriate.	EDC, LS, ZP
	<b>Goal 17</b> Periodically review, maintain, and revise existing commercial, industrial, and PDIP area boundaries.	BOS, EDC, ZP
	<b>Goal 18</b> Enhance the development review and decision-making processes.	CC, EDC, FD, LS, PW, WC, WPCA, ZP
<b>I. Town Center Village District</b>	<b>Goal 19</b> Maintain and enhance the economic viability of the village center retail stores and services.	DRB, EDC, HC, HDC, LS, ZP
	<b>Goal 20</b> Encourage greater density within the TCVD while maintaining the character of Suffield.	EDC, HC, LS, ZP
<b>J. West Suffield Village District Ebb's Corner Thompsonville Road</b>	<b>Goal 21</b> Maintain and enhance the viability of the West Suffield Village District, Ebb's Corner and Thompsonville Road areas.	EDC, HC, LS, ZP
<b>K. Housing</b>	<b>Goal 22</b> Encourage the development of a diverse housing stock.	CC, HC, LS, ZP
<b>L. Parks &amp; Recreation</b>	<b>Goal 23</b> Provide diverse and centrally located facilities.	ACCE, BOS, LS, PR, ZP
	<b>Goal 24</b> Serve the current and future recreational needs of the community.	CC, LS, PR, ZP
	<b>Goal 25</b> Create and implement a property management plan for all town-owned facilities.	BOS, LS, PR, ZP



<b>M. Transportation</b>	<b>Goal 26</b> Enhance the safety and efficiency of the transportation of people, goods, and services through Suffield.	LS, PW, ZP
	<b>Goal 27</b> Coordinate with state and regional transportation goals where appropriate.	LS, PW, ZP
<b>N. Utilities</b>	<b>Goal 28</b> Plan for and maintain town utility infrastructure including public water, sewer, natural gas, wireless communications, and high-speed data transfer.	EDC, LS, PW, WC, WPCA, ZP
	<b>Goal 29</b> Develop long-range planning goals to address different forms of alternative energy projects for both residential and commercial purposes	CC, LS, ZP
<b>O. Community Facilities &amp; Services</b>	<b>Goal 30</b> Develop a strategic plan for town facilities.	BOS, LS, PW, ZP

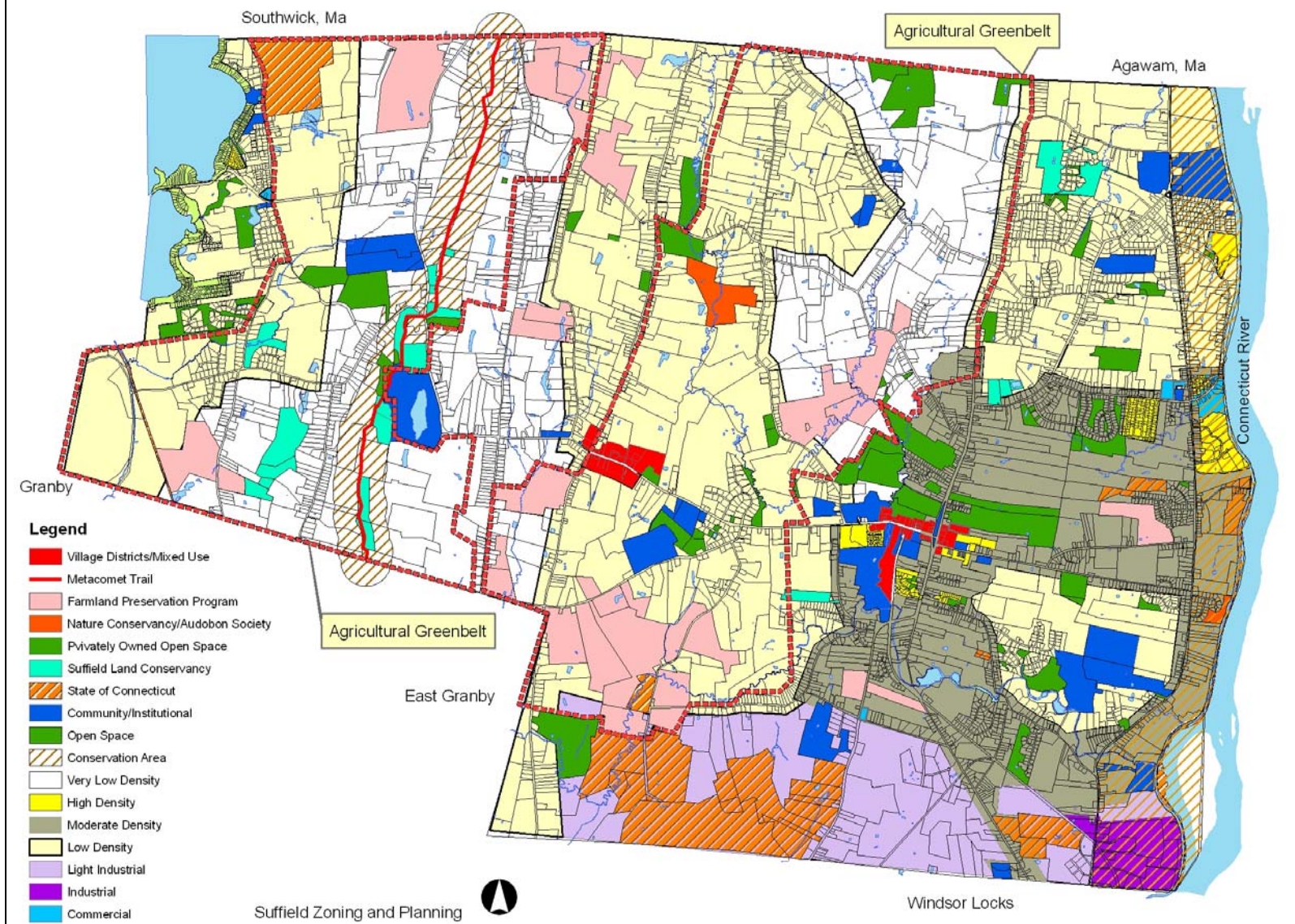
## Future Land-use Plan

A Future Land-use Map for Suffield was created using a culmination of the goals and recommendations in this plan. (*See Map 17.*) This map is not a zoning map; it merely portrays areas of Suffield where densities and uses are recommended.

The Zoning and Planning Commission should use the map as a guide when it considers making changes to the zoning map. Land-use categories are defined as follows:

<b>Residential Uses</b>	Areas used or intended to be used for very low, low, moderate, or high density.	<i>Very Low Density:</i> less than or equal to ½ dwelling unit per acre. <i>Low Density:</i> less than or equal to 1 dwelling unit per acre. <i>Moderate Density:</i> 1-2 dwelling units per acre. <i>High Density:</i> greater than 2 dwelling units per acre.
<b>Economic Development</b>	Areas used or intended to be used for development of business, or industrial uses.	<i>Commercial:</i> Areas used or intended to be used for retail, office and service uses. <i>Industrial:</i> Areas used or intended to be used for industrial facilities. <i>Light Industrial:</i> Areas used or intended to be used for light industrial facilities.
<b>Village Centers</b>	Focal points in town that offer mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development that are typically located on major traffic corridors.	
<b>Agricultural Greenbelts</b>	Areas with existing or desirable agricultural or open space parcels.	
<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Areas with existing or desirable trails (i.e., Metacomet Trail), natural resources (i.e., Connecticut River), wetlands or ridgelines that should be preserved.	
<b>Community &amp; Institutional Uses</b>	Areas with existing governmental, community or institutional facilities.	

Map 17. Future Land Use - Town of Suffield



## Consistency with State and Regional Plans

Per the requirements in Connecticut General Statutes, Section 8-23, Suffield's 2010 POCD was compared with the *Growth Management Principles* and the *Locational Guide Map for Suffield*, which are in the 2005-2010 Connecticut Plan of Conservation and Development.

### Connecticut Plan of Conservation & Development

#### *Growth Management Principle 1*

Redevelop and Revitalize Regional Centers and Areas with Existing or Currently Planned Physical Infrastructure.

*Suffield's 2010 POCD* does not contain a regional center, however, many of the goals and objectives in this plan encourage revitalization of the Village Districts with mixed-use developments. Each Village District contains a commercial base upon which pedestrian-friendly areas with retail or service businesses at street level with residential units above on another story would be ideal. The Town Center Village District has infrastructure available to meet the demands of an increased density and is well suited to do so. Revitalizing these village districts is a large component of this plan.

The Thompsonville Road commercial area is also identified by this plan as having suitable infrastructure that can support increased density. This part of town is identified on the Suffield Locational Map in the state plan as a Neighborhood Conservation Area, which reflects a stable, developed neighborhood.

#### *Growth Management Principle 2*

Expand Housing Opportunities & Design Choices to Accommodate a Variety of Household Types and Needs.

*Suffield's 2010 POCD* promotes the following policies:

Encourage the development of a diverse housing stock to provide alternatives to the high-cost single-family house.

Procure grant funds to produce an affordable housing study.

Identify areas with existing infrastructure where affordable housing projects would work well.

Providing a variety of housing options is a goal that this Plan encourages. The Town recently adopted an Adaptive Reuse regulation that allows for non-residential buildings that have demonstrated an inability to be developed under current zoning to be converted to multi-family use. The Zoning and Planning Commission recognizes the lack of a variety of housing options and encourages their development where infrastructure can support it.

#### *Growth Management Principle 3*

Concentrate Development Around Transportation Nodes and Along Major Transportation Corridors to Support the Viability of Transportation Options.

*Suffield's 2010 POCD* recommends mixed-use, increased density in the Village Districts, which are located along major transportation corridors in Suffield (Routes 75 & 187).

Suffield has only one bus route and it is limited in that it only serves C&S Wholesale Grocers. Also, there is no commuter rail in town, which means there are very limited transportation options. However,



the POCD recommends concentrating higher densities in areas where public transportation may become available.

#### ***Growth Management Principle 4***

Conserve and Restore the Natural Environment, Cultural and Historical Resources, and Traditional Rural Lands.

*Suffield's 2010 POCD* recognizes the importance of conserving the natural environment along with cultural and historic resources as well as traditional rural lands. The section entitled, "Conservation: Protecting Suffield's Assets" clearly demonstrates the community's desire to maintain these features as part of the character of the town. The strategies in that section address the desire and the imperative to protect natural resources and preserve open space as well as to:

- Protect important natural, historical, scenic, agricultural, habitat and recreational resources.
- Preserve remaining productive farmland to retain the rural character of Suffield.
- Maintain and enhance the scenic resources.
- Protect open space, ridgelines, waterways, and other resources that contribute to the town's character.

#### ***Growth Management Principle 5***

Protect and Ensure the Integrity of Environmental Assets Critical to Public Health and Safety.

*Suffield's 2010 POCD* contains several goals and policies to protect the environmental assets that are critical to public health and safety. The section on utilities specifically mentions protecting the water supply for all residents regardless of the water supplier. Other objectives of the plan are to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as the Connecticut River and Congamond Lakes. Both of these natural resources supply drinking water for numerous residents not only in Suffield but also in neighboring communities and beyond.

#### ***Growth Management Principle 6***

Promote Integrated Planning Across all Levels of Government to Address Issues on a Statewide, Regional and Local Basis.

*Suffield's 2010 POCD* recognizes the need for integrated planning across all levels of government. Several goals and policies within the plan recommend ways to coordinate planning efforts with adjacent communities, and regional and state agencies.

#### ***Locational Guide Map***

*Suffield's Future Land-Use Map* (see Map 17) is highly consistent with the state's Locational Guide Map (see Map 18) in terms of both growth and rural areas.

*Other areas consistent with the State Plan:*

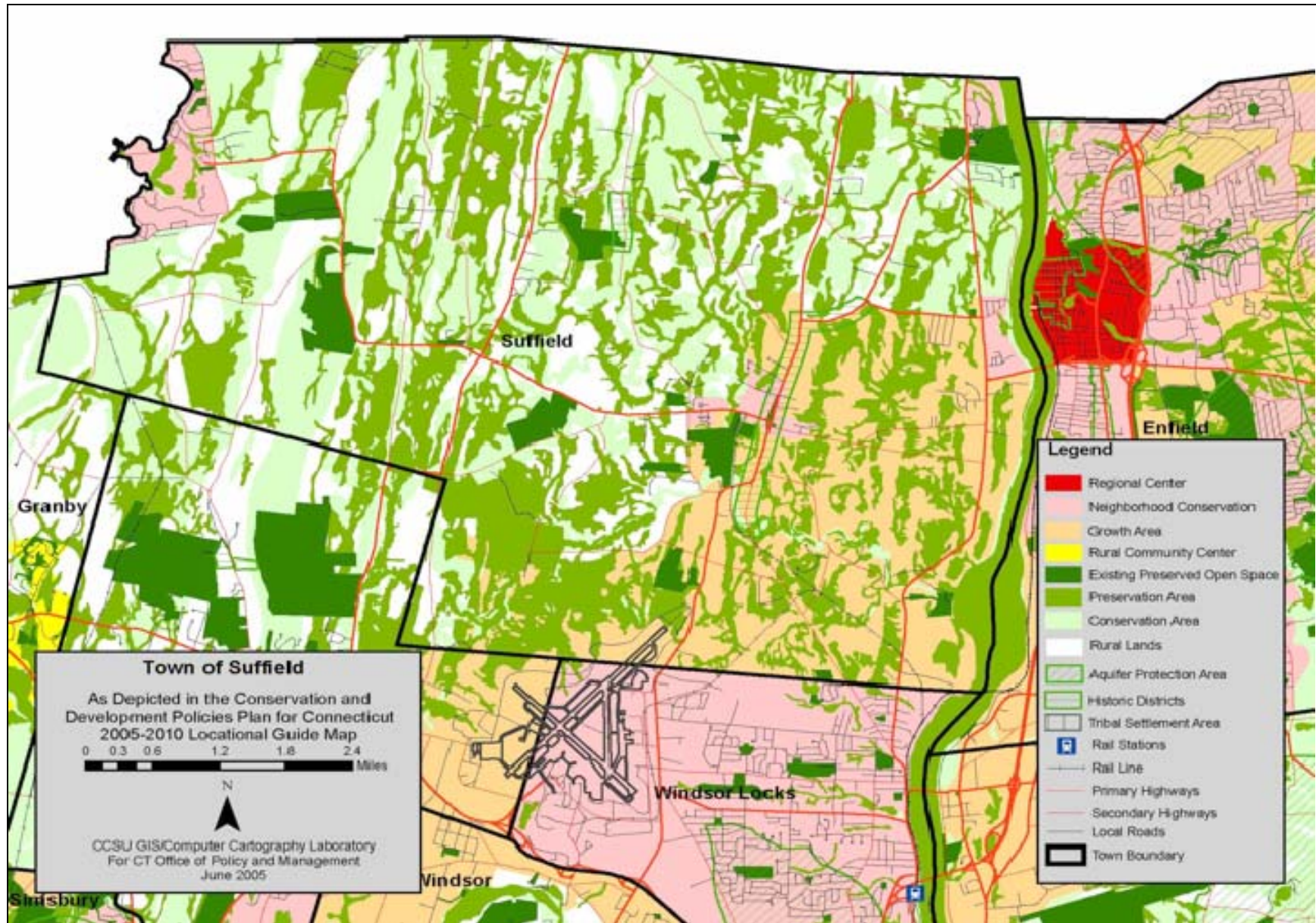
- Both Plans recognize the Town Center Village District and Thompsonville Road commercial areas as having potential for expansion. These Neighborhood Conservation areas promote infill development and redevelopment in areas that are at least 80 percent improved with water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure to support such development.
- Growth areas in the state plan are in line with the town's sewer service area.

## **Regional Plan of Conservation and Development**

*Suffield's 2010 POCD* contains conservation and development goals that are consistent with those in the *2003 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development* developed by the Capitol Region Council of Governments.

- Both plans recognize the need to protect natural resources and to grow and develop in harmony with these natural resources.
- Both plans promote guiding growth to areas with infrastructure capacity.
- The regional plan recognizes established growth patterns in the town's PDIP and Industrially zoned land in the southeast corner.
- Both plans recognize the need for a variety of housing choices for all levels of income.
- The regional plan shows two "Conservation Corridors" for Suffield on its Conservation Focus Area map. These same areas have been identified as being conservation areas and/or agricultural greenbelts in the Suffield's Future Land-Use Map. (*See Map 17.*)

Map 18. Suffield Locational Guide Map



## ***VII. Summary: Planning for Suffield's Future by Looking Ahead***

Planning for Suffield's future is a dynamic process and one requiring constant vigilance. The 2010 POCD is meant to guide town officials, members of the ZPC and other boards and commissions, as well as the public to make decisions in the best long-term interest of the town. Deviations from the recommendations in this plan should not occur unless the long-term effects are determined and whether or not these effects are in the best interests of the town.

The 2010 Suffield Plan of Conservation and Development is a working document that can and should be reviewed and updated more than once every 10 years. Issues or topics may arise that were not evident when the 2010 update occurred. Therefore, revising sections of the Plan to reflect new information is advisable when appropriate.

Looking ahead, Suffield's Zoning and Planning Commission is confident that if the guidelines of this plan are followed to the fullest extent possible, the qualities that make Suffield a desirable community will be maintained or even enhanced.

## ***APPENDICES***

### **APPENDIX A. Methodology for Drafting the 2010 Plan of Conservation & Development**

This updated Plan of Conservation and Development for the Town of Suffield is the culmination of more than 18 months of research and monthly updates between the Zoning and Planning staff and Commission. During this time, staff also collaborated with key town employees, boards and commissions. They also conferred with residents for guidance in areas of critical interest to them.

During the winter and spring of 2009, Zoning and Planning staff attended meetings of various boards and commissions to discuss the update process and what some of the boards' and commissions' goals and objectives are for the next 10 years. The input received from this process was valuable in getting the ball rolling, updating sections of the 1999 plan and organizing all of the information in one place.

The Town hired Planimetrics, a professional land-use planning consulting firm, to help Z&P staff run two public workshops. The first workshop held on November 19, 2009, was attended by approximately 60 people. The consultant's report of the findings from the workshop provided town staff with important information on public perceptions of significant factors to consider during the next ten years as the town grows. All of the suggestions and comments were captured, reviewed and incorporated into the update as appropriate.

The second workshop was a public informational meeting held on May 4, 2010, to present the goals of the draft update and receive public input. Approximately 30 people attended this meeting. The comments and questions from the attendees were captured and reviewed by the Zoning and Planning Commission and its staff.

After all appropriate public comment was incorporated into the updated draft plan, it was sent to the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROCG) for review as required by state statute. CROCG found no apparent conflicts with the regional plan's policies or the concerns of neighboring towns. During this time, the draft plan was sent to a third party editor for review.

The public hearing on adoption of the 2010 POCD scheduled to be held by the Zoning and Planning Commission on September 20, 2010.



## APPENDIX B. Historic Resources: Inventories of Historic Places in Suffield

### Capitol Region Council of Governments Survey – 363 Listings

In 1979, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) sent to Suffield the results of a “windshield survey,” performed that year by a CRCOG employee. This “Survey of Historic and Architectural Resources for the Town of Suffield” is the most comprehensive list of all. It contains entries for 363 structures. A copy of the survey results resides in the Suffield Town Clerk’s files.

This material starts with a history of Suffield, followed a summary table of the places included, ordered by site number and by street location. There are comments, photos, and sometimes copies of pages from the Colonial Dames Survey, the WPA Survey, or the Historic American Buildings Survey. The descriptive text is well informed with useful comments on architectural style, but otherwise cursory and sometimes inaccurate. The dates are estimates or read from markers.

### Colonial Dames Series – 29 Listings

As part of the “Colonial Revival” encouraged by the country’s Centennial Exposition in 1876, the Colonial Dames of America set out to inventory old houses in all the states. The effort began in 1902, and by the time the work slowed to a crawl mid-century, almost 1000 houses had been recorded in Connecticut, 29 of them in Suffield, all pre-1800.

Each house has a binder containing researchers’ typescript and manuscript notes, floor plans, photographs, and sometimes a drawing of paneling. There is often a full history of ownership with comments on notable residents. No Suffield houses have been added since 1942, but some files contain notes inserted in later years. The

Colonial Dames collection is held at the Connecticut State Library with carefully controlled access.

### Historic American Buildings Survey – 7 Listings

HABS was active in the 1930s with WPA support and is ongoing. The entries are comprehensive, with a substantial amount of data on the structures, including photos and measured drawings. HABS material is in the Library of Congress and also available on the Internet.

- *Harvey Bissell House*, 82 North Main Street, a private home within the Suffield Town Center Village District Zone
- *Burbank-Hatheway House*, 55 South Main Street, now the Phelps-Hatheway House, a Connecticut Landmarks property.
- *Burbank-Hatheway Barns & Carriage House*
- *Burbank-Hatheway Summer, or Wells, House*
- *Rev. Ebenezer Gay Manse*, 142 North Main Street, a faculty residence at Suffield Academy
- *Lt. William King Place*, aka King’s Field House, 827 North Street, now the Kingsfield Bed & Breakfast
- *Capt. Jonathon Sheldon House*, 1321 Sheldon Street, a private home

### National Historic Landmarks – 0 Listings

Designation as a National Historic Landmark requires a higher standard of significance than for those properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There are only 59 such landmarks in Connecticut, none of which are in Suffield.

### **National Register of Historic Places – 13 Listings**

This is an ongoing project by the National Parks Service of the United States Department of the Interior. Thirteen Suffield “places” are listed in the Register. When including the three historic districts, almost 200 buildings are so honored. The complete file of National Register listings in Connecticut is held by the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism in Hartford and is also available on the Internet.

- ***Babb’s Beach*** (2006) – Town owned; roller skating rink leased to Citizens Restoring Congamond and currently under renovation.
- ***Enfield Canal*** (1976) – *aka* Enfield Falls Canal but more commonly known as the Windsor Locks-Suffield Canal. The canal is still mostly intact. It is included with the Register’s Windsor Locks listings although most of its length is in Suffield.
- ***Farmington Canal*** (1985) – Now exists only in remnants. A short segment of the Suffield portion of the canal runs alongside the Farmington Valley Greenway multi-use trail.
- ***John Fuller House*** (1982) – 463 Halladay Avenue West. Now a private home, this house was once part of the town’s Poor Farm.
- ***Gothic Cottage*** (1982) – 1425 Mapleton Avenue, a private home.
- ***Hatheway House*** (1975) – 55 South Main Street, now the Phelps-Hatheway House, a Connecticut Landmarks property.
- ***Alexander King House*** (1976) – 232 South Main Street, now the King House Museum of the Suffield Historical Society.
- ***King’s Field House*** (1982) – 827 North Street, now called Kingsfield Bed & Breakfast.
- ***Lewis-Zukowski House*** (1990) – 1095 South Grand Street, a private home.
- ***State Bridge No. 455 (2004)*** – Carries East Street (Route 159) over Stony Brook. Completed in 1929, the bridge was listed because of its engineering significance and its role in the early improvement of the state’s trunk line highway system.
- ***Hastings Hill Historic District*** (1979)

- ***Hilltop Farm Historic District*** (2005) – *aka* Hilltop Farm, includes the notable dairy barn maintained by the The Friends of the Farm at Hilltop.
- ***Suffield Historic District*** (1979)

### **State Survey – 16 Listings**

In 1966, the Connecticut Historical Commission (now part of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism) made a statewide survey of historical buildings. All of the buildings listed were placed on the State Register of Historic Places. The file created from this effort includes 16 buildings in Suffield, extending in age from the 1720 Anthony Austin House on East Street South to the original 1900 Kent Memorial Library, which is now the S. Kent Legare Memorial Library at Suffield Academy. The research for this inventory has been described as a “windshield survey,” implying a somewhat cursory nature. The file resides at the Dodd Research Center at the University of Connecticut.

### **Suffield Historical Society 1996 Survey – 167 Listings**

At the request of the Suffield Historical Society in 1996, member and town historian Hawley Rising assembled a list of 167 significant homes, including several past the mid-19th century, however with some notable Victorian homes omitted. The list is based on a “windshield survey” with notes on owners, where available, and dates from house markers and other sources.

### **Suffield Quarter Millennial List – 101 Listings**

A 15-person Historical Committee established during preparations for the 1920 celebration of Suffield’s 250th Anniversary identified “a full list of old houses and sites” and marked the old houses with signs. This list organized by streets and printed in the 1921 book that was published to record the three-day celebration. “The names of the present owners are followed by the names of builders and the dates so far as available.” A total of 101 houses are listed. Of the dates, only 26 are in the 1800s, the most recent being 1824. The book also includes photos of 16 homes, nine churches, two banks, the original Kent Memorial Library, a hotel,

a shade tobacco plantation, and three buildings at what was then called Suffield School (now Suffield Academy). Rough notes of the creators of the list, (Samuel R. Spencer and a Mrs. Phelps of Andover, Conn.) are held in the historical collection of the Kent Memorial Library.

### **Suffield Tercentenary List – 307 Listings**

An undated 17-page list entitled “Some Information and Dates on Old Houses and Historic Sites in Suffield” was assembled by Robert Gunshanan from a 1970 card file developed in connection with the Suffield Tercentenary celebration that year; 263 houses are listed.

The list also includes 44 sites of significant houses or enterprises no longer in existence. These include such historic features as the Austin Tavern on South Main Street, Lancelot Granger House on North Main Street, Washington Elm Hotel on High Street South, and Brewster and Chapman Detonating Cap Co., on East Street North.

### **WPA Survey – 60 Listings**

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) Survey was completed by the Federal Writers Project in 1934 and 1935. This inventory includes 60 buildings in Suffield with typescript notes and a photograph. The descriptions are cursory, and the dates often simply read from house markers. The dates for houses extend a bit into the 1800s; the First and Second Baptist Churches extend into mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The file is held at the Connecticut State Library; it is being made available on the Internet and is now alphabetically complete through East Granby.

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## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

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