

# Suffield

## 2022 – 2032 Plan of Conservation & Development



**Planning and Zoning Commission**

**Adopted December 19, 2022**

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# PREFACE

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## The Plan of Conservation and Development

The Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is an important part of how Suffield plans its future. The POCD is an advisory document intended to assess current trends, anticipate important issues, and provide Suffield with a framework for decision making regarding various aspects of planning for land use, infrastructure, and community facilities and services. The POCD represents a guide for the following:

- Promoting the image and identity of Suffield;
- Enhancing and sustaining the vitality of Suffield;
- Fortifying a good quality of life for Suffield residents.

By statute, every town in Connecticut is directed to update its POCD every ten years. This document represents the 2022 update of Suffield's POCD.



Guiding Growth and Change



Protecting Important Resources

## POCD Preparation & Use

**Planning** – At its most basic level, planning is a process for making informed decisions about the future.

Every so often, it makes sense for a community to evaluate the conditions and trends affecting the town to make informed decisions about how to approach the future.

Preparation for this plan began in 2018 with discussions at the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) level. The PZC then hosted three “listening sessions” in winter and spring of 2019. The three sessions focused on the major components of this plan, conservation issues, development issues, and infrastructure issues. These sessions were open to the public. Input was solicited from different boards and commissions, town staff, and from residents.

Much of the POCD was drafted during the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020-21 with periodic reviews by the PZC. The PZC has aligned the recommendations of the POCD in an attempt to provide a balanced approach to goals related to conservation, development, and infrastructure.

In the summer of 2022, multiple boards and commissions were engaged to review the POCD generally as well as specific chapters applicable to them. A public information meeting was held and an online survey was conducted in September 2022. Appropriate comments from the meeting and survey have been incorporated into the plan followed by the adoption process. A summary of the survey is provided as an appendix. In general, the survey results indicated there is public support for the strategies that follow in this plan.

The POCD is built around a set of goals and objectives that present a clear direction to guide future development consistent with state and regional land use plans. These goals and objectives reflect the community’s values and are meant to guide Suffield’s conservation and development activities over the next ten years.

This document is also intended to provide an easy to follow framework for consistent decision making by the Town of Suffield. All land-use boards should regularly refer to the POCD to make sure their decisions are consistent with its recommendations. However, all boards and commissions should refer to the POCD regularly.

# Important Values

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The Town's recently adopted Affordable Housing Plan has the following statement on the cover, "Come here, Live here, Work here, Grow here, Always your home."

With this in mind, it is important to note that this POCD has been drafted for all residents of Suffield both current and future.

During the process of preparing this POCD, certain important values rose to the top as the building blocks for this document. These values are as follows;

## **Conservation Issues** – What we want to protect:

Community Characteristics – For the POCD, the concept of community characteristics includes attributes that contribute to a positive perception and distinctive impression of Suffield and includes "physical" as well as "social & cultural" characteristics. Preserving and enhancing both of these characteristics is important to our residents.

Natural Resources – An important part of what makes Suffield attractive. Encouraging protection and preservation of natural resources while balancing the rights of property owners is encouraged.

Open Space – Suffield has long recognized the value of open space. Continuing to preserve open space is an important component of this plan.

Agriculture – The history of Suffield is rooted in agriculture and gives the town a sense of place. The town will strive to make sure farming remains an important part of our rural appeal, and economy.

## **Development Issues** – How we want to grow:

Residential Development – It is important that we 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 characteristics of Suffield and expand housing options and choices.

Economic Development – Commercial and industrial development is important to Suffield's future and quality of life. Ensuring business development happens in a way that enhances the community and maintains property values is an important concept of this plan.

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**Infrastructure Issues** – What we want or need:

Community Services & Facilities – The plan endeavors to provide necessary community facilities and services to meet the needs of residents to maintain and enhance the overall quality of life in Suffield.

Transportation – The plan recognizes transportation facilities and services must be adequate to serve the needs of the community across all modes of transportation including pedestrians and bicycles.

Utilities – The plan recognizes that providing adequate utilities to meet the community's current and future needs is important. These utilities include sewer, water, electric, and communications infrastructure.

# 1 – Introduction

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This is the 2022 – 2032 Plan of Conservation and Development for Suffield which was prepared by the Planning & Zoning Commission with input from other town boards, commissions, and the residents. The purpose of the plan is to guide local boards and commissions, direct future growth and change in the community, and comply with the requirements of Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS).

Change can be difficult and the challenge in planning is to allow for progress, yet balance the built environment while maintaining and enhancing the characteristics that make Suffield a desirable community to live and work in. 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 linked to its natural and manmade landscapes, rural and suburban neighborhoods, and historic and contemporary architecture. One of the defining characteristics of the town has been its ability to effectively balance residential growth while preserving the town’s agriculture, open space, and historic heritage.

The strategies contained in this plan will serve as a guide for conservation and development over the next 10 years. 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. Following the strategies in this plan will ensure that development proceeds in a way that maintains the town’s appeal and quality of life.

## **POCD Requirements**

State law requires that communities maintain a POCD in order to be eligible for certain discretionary state funding programs. The POCD must be examined at least once every ten years and the CGS sets requirements for what must be included in the POCD. Some POCD requirements are as follows:

- Be a statement of policies, goals, and standards for the physical and economic development of Suffield.
- Provide housing opportunities and promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing.

- Take into account the State Plan of Conservation and Development and note any inconsistencies with said plan.



Successful Projects



Improved Infrastructure

## Conditions and Trends

To understand the planning strategies and recommendations contained in this plan it is important to examine the conditions and trends affecting Suffield.

### Population Growth

The population of Suffield has grown steadily since 1950, which is likely due to the automobile and the trend of suburbanization of the time (See Table 1). However, the population growth of Suffield slowed considerably from 2010 to 2020. The 2020 U.S. Census shows Suffield's population at 15,752, which represents a 0.1 percent increase over the 2010 Census. It is important to note that this includes an institutionalized population of 2,061 people, which counts those at the MacDougal Walker Correctional Institute.

For comparison, the population growth for the State from 2010-2020 was 0.9 percent while Hartford County's growth rate was 0.6 percent. As mentioned, Suffield's population growth rate for the same period was 0.1 percent. Though the residential population continues to grow, the number of people living in group quarters (most of them being inmates at the State correctional institute) fluctuates for a number of reasons, which can present challenges in tracking this growth. In 2021, the State passed Public Act 21-13, which will count the prison population in their home community and not Suffield. The impact from this law on census data released so far

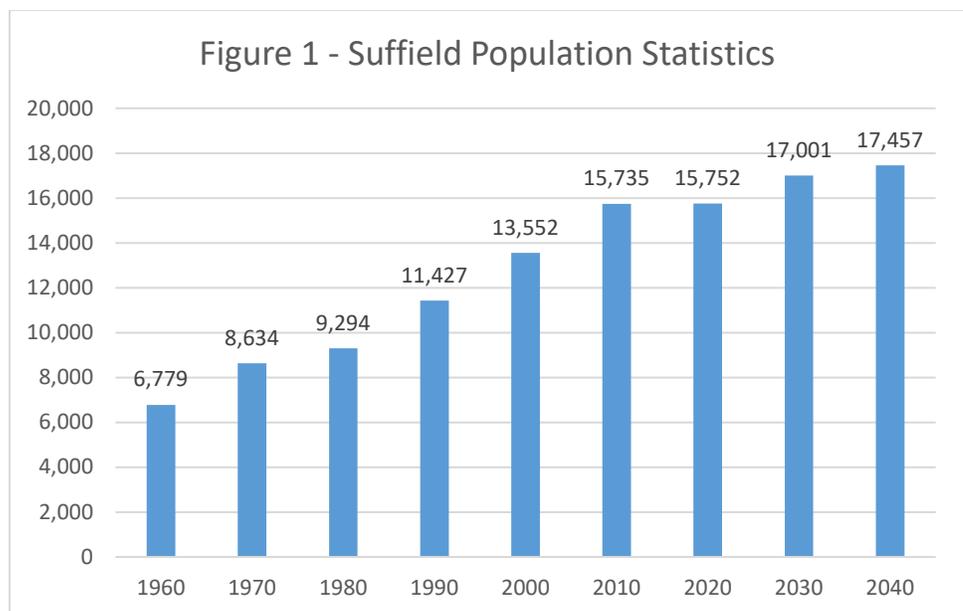
**Aging Population –**  
 People are living longer resulting in more people in the older age cohorts than previously. The “Baby Boomer” generation or people born between 1946 and 1964 are moving into older age cohorts contributing to this trend.

Given this trend, the housing needs and options, elderly programming, tax relief, medical care, and in-home services should be evaluated by the Town as time goes on.

has yet to be seen. In summary, there are many factors that contribute to population growth including the quality of life for its residents.

TABLE 1. Suffield Population Statistics					
Year	# of People	% Change	Year	# of People	% Change
1790	2,467	-	1920	4,070	5.6
1800	2,686	8.8	1930	4,346	6.4
1810	2,680	0	1940	4,475	2.9
1820	2,681	0	1950	4,895	8.6
1830	2,690	0	1960	6,779	27.8
1840	2,669	-0.8	1970	8,634	21.5
1850	2,962	9.9	1980	9,294	7.1
1860	3,260	9.1	1990	11,427	18.7
1870	3,277	0.5	2000	13,552	15.7
1880	3,225	-1.6	2010	15,735	13.9
1890	3,169	-1.8	2020	15,752	0.1
1900	3,521	8.4	2030	17,001	7.3
1910	3,841	8.3	2040	17,457	2.6
			*Prison population included in 2000 Census data and beyond		
Sources: U.S. Census, 1790–2020, CT State Data Center, 2030-2040					

The population is expected to increase through 2030 to 17,001 people based upon projections shown in Figure 1.



The population of school aged children (ages 5-19) increased from 2000-2010 consistent with the population according to Census data. According to an enrollment study completed by the Suffield Public Schools in 2021, total student enrollment has declined from 2,520 students in 2010 to 2,073 students in 2020. In addition, Suffield's population continues to age, which is not unique as this trend is reflected at the State and National levels. Studies have shown that Americans are living longer with the average life expectancy increasing from 68 years in 1950 to 77 years in 2020. The median age increased from 42.1 years in 2010 to 43.5 years in 2020 (2020 American Community Survey). The age change during the next 10 years and beyond may influence the housing choices and services Suffield residents will need. Over the last 10 years, Suffield has seen an increase in requests for in-law apartments or accessory dwelling units for family members, which is consistent with the trend of an aging population.

## **Existing Land Use**

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 Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), Suffield has approximately 9,328 acres of wetlands.

Overall, the pattern of land use has not changed drastically since 2010. A new zone for affordable housing called the "Housing Opportunity District" or HOD Zone was adopted in 2015. This regulation permits and regulates multi-family housing that is well-planned and financially accessible to moderate and low-income households.

The Town Center Village District zone (Mountain Road near the post office to the Main and Bridge Street intersection) remains as having 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 the Kent Memorial Library as well as some of the important older homes in the historic district.

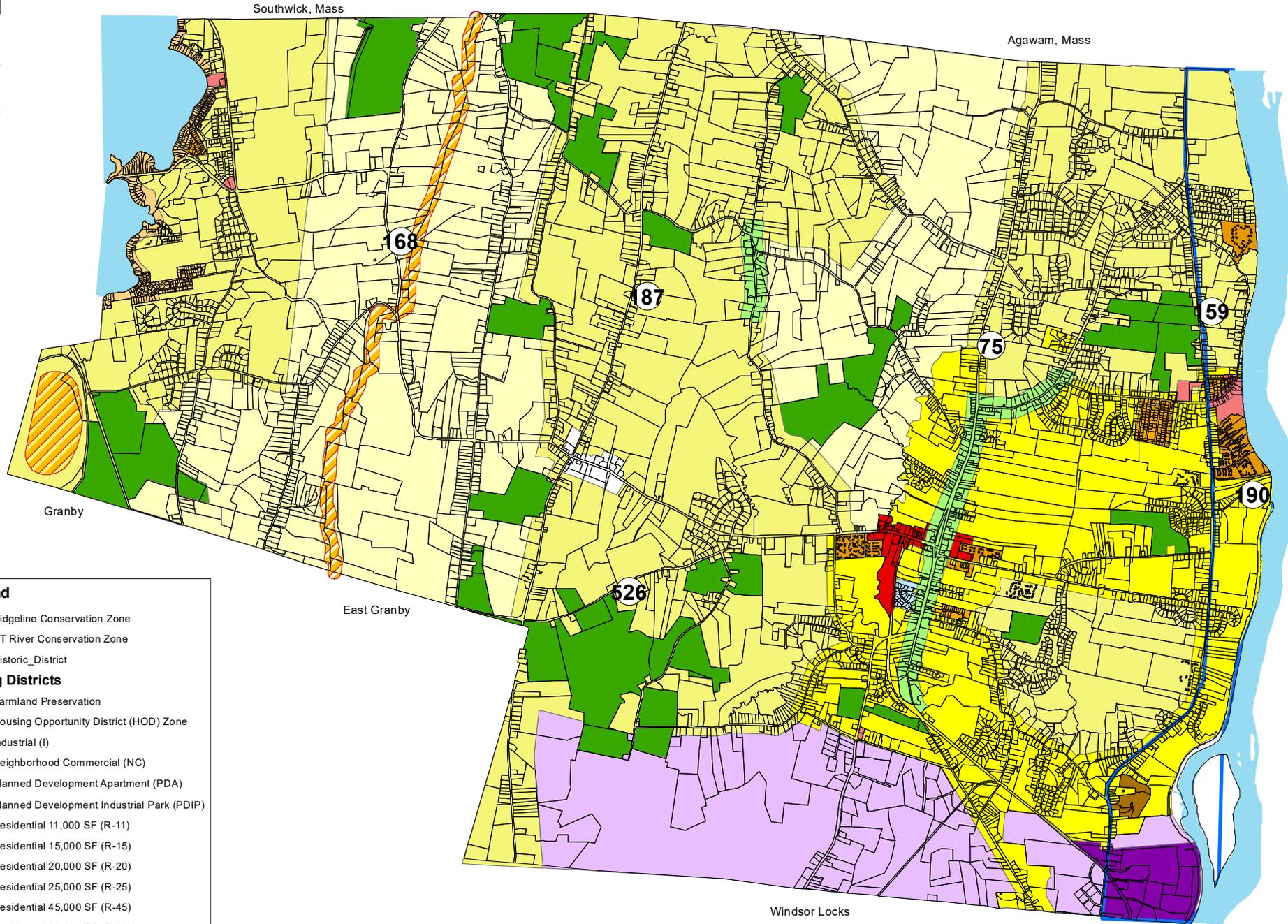
Of Suffield's roughly 27,000 acres, the highest portion, 46 percent, is located in the R-45 residential zone. (See *Table 2 and Zoning Map*) Residential Use Zones R-11 through R-90 means the minimum lot size is 11,000 square feet in R-11, and 90,000 square feet in R-90.

- 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 Center Village District* (WSCVD) allow for mixed-use residential, shopping and service needs.

<b>TABLE 2. Acreage By Zone</b>		
<b>Zone</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Residential Use</b>		
R-11	81	0.30
R-15	21	0.08
R-20	169	0.63
R-25	3,923	14.69
R-45	11,103	41.57
R-90	6,346	23.76
HOD	30	0.11
FP	2,160	8.09
<b>PDIP &amp; Industrial Use</b>		
PDIP	2,322	8.69
Industrial	240	0.90
<b>Commercial Use</b>		
NC	53	0.20
<b>Planned Development Apartment Use</b>		
PDA	134	0.50
<b>Village Districts</b>		
TCVD	80	0.30
WSCVD	46	0.17
<b>Total Acreage*</b>	<b>26,708</b>	<b>100</b>
*Total acreage is approximate due to rounding. <i>Source: Suffield GIS system and Assessor maps</i>		

Residentially zoned land accounts for 89 percent of the town.

# Town of Suffield Zoning - 2022



**Legend**

- Ridgeline Conservation Zone
- CT River Conservation Zone
- Historic\_District

**Zoning Districts**

- Farmland Preservation
- Housing Opportunity District (HOD) Zone
- Industrial (I)
- Neighborhood Commercial (NC)
- Planned Development Apartment (PDA)
- Planned Development Industrial Park (PDIP)
- 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)
- Town Center Village District (TCVD)
- West Suffield Center Village District (WSCV)

1 inch = 5,000 feet

# 2 – Community Characteristics

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Suffield is proud of its agricultural heritage. Through careful planning, Suffield maintains a delicate balance between its farming roots and today's modern lifestyle. Suffield is rich in contrasts from sweeping fields, forested hills, a picturesque Main Street, shopping areas, Congamond Lakes, and the Connecticut River. Regardless of how these characteristics are perceived, all of them are important and can mean different things to different people. In addition, results from the on-line survey ranked community character (ambience, reputation, appearance, feeling, neighborhood, etc.) as the most important factor in deciding to live in Suffield.

Suffield has a strong sense of community with a robust history of volunteerism and events that bring the residents together. Events such as "Suffield on the Green" and the "Suffield Summer Fair" are two examples of special events that bring the community together. This POCD encourages events and traditions that build a sense of community.

## Strategies

### A. Maintain and Enhance Overall Community Characteristics

1. Preserve and encourage those features that contribute to Suffield's community characteristics.
  - a. Natural Resources, Open Space, Scenic Resources
  - b. Architecture/Building Design
  - c. Community Events/Organizations

### B. Continue to Protect Historic Resources

1. Encourage efforts to identify and preserve historic resources.
2. Consider incentives such as historic tax credits to encourage preservation of privately owned historic buildings.
3. Support the establishment of historic districts, provided a majority of the residents of the affected properties champions the district.

For the Plan of Conservation and Development, the concept of "community characteristics" includes attributes that contribute to a positive perception and distinctive impression of Suffield. This includes "physical" characteristics as well as "social/cultural" characteristics.

## C. Maintain and Enhance Scenic Resources

1. Preserve the scenic qualities of ridgelines, natural vegetation, agricultural resources, trails, streams, lakes, and the CT River corridor.
  - a. Seek to provide for public access to these resources where appropriate.
2. Maintain the appeal of designated scenic roads and pursue the designation of other scenic roads in the future.
3. Work with utility companies to seek a balance between pruning for reliability and scenic tree canopies.



# 3 – Natural Resources

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As pointed out in the 2010 POCD, Suffield has large tracts of environmentally sensitive land. Roughly, 35 percent of the town is considered wetland soils. In addition, there are a number of brooks, streams, vernal pools, as well as the Congamond Lakes and Connecticut River among various other land features. These resources are an important part of what makes Suffield a desirable place to live and play. Protecting these resources needs to be balanced with the rights of property owners to have a reasonable use of their land.

Protecting natural resources helps preserve community character, creates recreational and economic value, and provides important environmental benefits. 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.

It is a goal of this POCD to manage development in ways that avoid alterations to natural resource areas that are sensitive to the pressures development brings. These areas include wetlands, water bodies, streams, steep slopes, floodplain, and areas with unique habitats. There is increasing evidence that climate change is occurring and affecting Suffield and other towns including warming temperatures and increased occurrence of more frequent and intense storms. Climate change has the potential to negatively impact the environment and rural characteristics of Suffield – especially as the pace of climate change accelerates. The Town should actively participate in addressing this situation.

## Strategies

### A. Protect Important Natural Resources

1. Define wildlife corridors and seek ways to preserve them.
2. Continue efforts to protect watercourses, wetlands, blocks of forested habitat, and other environmentally sensitive areas from development impacts.
3. Continue to protect natural resources within Suffield through open space dedications.

Low Impact Development or LID  
– An approach to land development that promotes increased infiltration, evapotranspiration, and groundwater recharge and lowers surface runoff volumes.

LID practices include bioretention facilities, rain gardens, vegetated rooftops, rain barrels and permeable pavements.

The DEEP’s Natural Diversity Database shows locations approximate locations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species and important natural communities in Connecticut. See “Natural Resources” map following this section.

Sustainable CT Certification – In November 2021, Suffield achieved Bronze status certification from the Sustainable CT program. To become certified, the town had to complete a number of sustainability actions.

According to the program’s mission, the sustainability actions are designed to build local economies, support equity, and respect the finite capacity of the environment.

4. Utilize the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection’s (DEEP) natural diversity database to identify and protect animals, plants, and their habitats.
5. Continue to monitor and address the impacts of climate change.
6. If archeological resources are found on a development site, steps should be taken to protect areas with help from the Connecticut Archeologist’s office.

## B. Protect Water-Related Resources

1. Maintain, improve, and protect surface water and groundwater quality.
2. Minimize pollutants in storm water runoff and implement management strategies including low impact development techniques, where appropriate.
3. Consider adopting a low impact development ordinance.
4. Reduce the amount of impervious coverage as opportunities arise.
5. Continue efforts to preserve wetland areas and to provide vegetated buffers along watercourses.
6. Continue to preserve floodplains and to control activities in these areas.

## C. Minimize impacts from natural hazards.

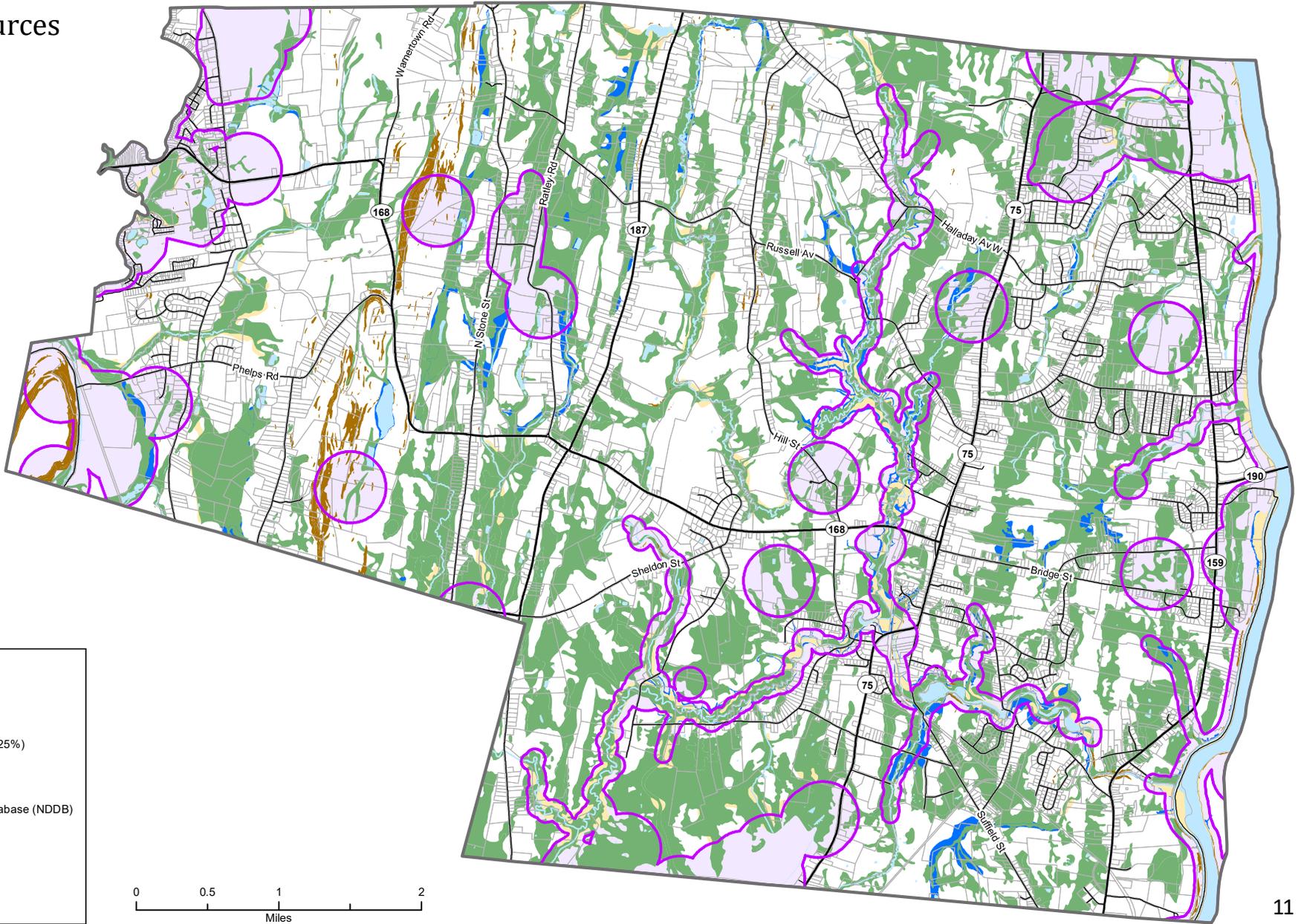
1. Implement the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, as amended.
2. Continue efforts to identify, avoid, reduce, and recover from impactful events.
3. Encourage development away from sensitive environmental areas and promote development patterns that take into account natural resources and features.



Congamond Lakes

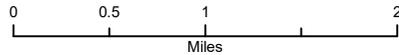
# Natural Resources

Town of Suffield, CT



## Legend

-  Watercourse
  -  USGS Steep Slope (25%)
  -  Wetland Area
  -  Natural Diversity Database (NDDB)
- Flood Zones**
-  100-year Flood Plain
  -  500-year Flood Plain



# 4 – Open Space & Agriculture

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The Town of Suffield has taken great pride in open space preservation. Since the 1999 POCD, there has been a goal to preserve a minimum of 55 percent of the residentially zoned land in town. If wetland soils are counted as being preserved, then the town has exceeded this goal. Purchasing development rights to farmland and open space have been the preferred method of protecting the town’s natural, historic, cultural, agricultural, and scenic resources.

From a cost of community services perspective, open space and agriculture require much less in services than the taxes they produce. This is an important economic benefit that preserving land brings to the residents. During the listening sessions for this plan, it was communicated that the town should consider all types of open space and not just focus on farmland.

With help from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), and the United States Department of Natural Resources Conservation Service, Suffield has been able to permanently preserve approximately 2,200 acres of farmland and open space. Table 3 below shows how much open space is in Suffield by type.

Public support remains high for acquiring development rights to open space and farmland. The survey results rated open space and agriculture as one of the most strongly supported strategies in this plan. As a result, this POCD places high value on open space and its benefits. To that end, the strategies in this section were developed based upon the expectation that support for open space and farmland preservation will continue.

## **Open Space Designation for Property Tax Use Value**

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 forestland classification. In addition, the PA 490 classification

Since the 2010 POCD, Suffield has preserved approximately 600 acres of farmland and open space.

These properties include two farms owned by Bielonko Farms on East Street and Quarry Brook Farm on Phelps Road. These farms were preserved through the Department of Agriculture’s Farmland Preservation Program.

Also preserved during this time were the Olson Farm on North Grand Street and the Lefcheck Farm on Wisteria Lane/Boston Neck Road. Both of these properties were preserved through the DEEP’s open space grant program.

Importance of Pollinators -

Bees, butterflies, birds, and other pollinators play a crucial role in supporting food availability and sustaining the environment. This POCD is supportive of agriculture and therefore, supportive of efforts to protect, preserve, and create pollinator friendly habitats in Suffield.

for open space is an option for municipalities to adopt which Suffield has done. The farmland and forest land classification are mandatory on all towns statewide. PA 490 is the preferred method for temporary preservation of undeveloped land.

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.

<b>Table 3 - Open Space Types</b>	
Type	Acreage
Subdivision Open Space	713
Private Open Space (Audubon, Nature Conservancy, Preserved Land)	170
Suffield Land Conservancy	575
Town Owned	547
State Property (Not Industrial Zoned)	279
Preserved Farmland & Open Space	2,376
Protected and/or Regulated Open Space (Wetlands, Steep Slopes, Watercourses)	9,011
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,671</b>

## Strategies

### A. Preserve open space.

1. Continue cooperation with individuals, land trusts, state, and federal programs to preserve open space and farmland.
2. Seek to preserve land that contributes to an open space corridor where possible as shown on the Open Space Map following this section.
3. Continue to acquire open space in order to protect natural, historical, scenic, agricultural, habitat, and recreational resources as well as community characteristics.

### B. Enhance Open Space Preservation

1. Maintain and improve land use regulations related to open space preservation.
2. Seek to improve open space planning and management.
  - a. Maintain an inventory of open space properties that is easy to use to increase public awareness of protected land in the community.
  - b. Define permitted uses on town-owned open space, develop a management program for all town owned land, and ensure proper implementation.
3. Continue to seek funding for open space acquisition through the annual Town budget process.

### C. Continue to Preserve and Support Farming & Farmland

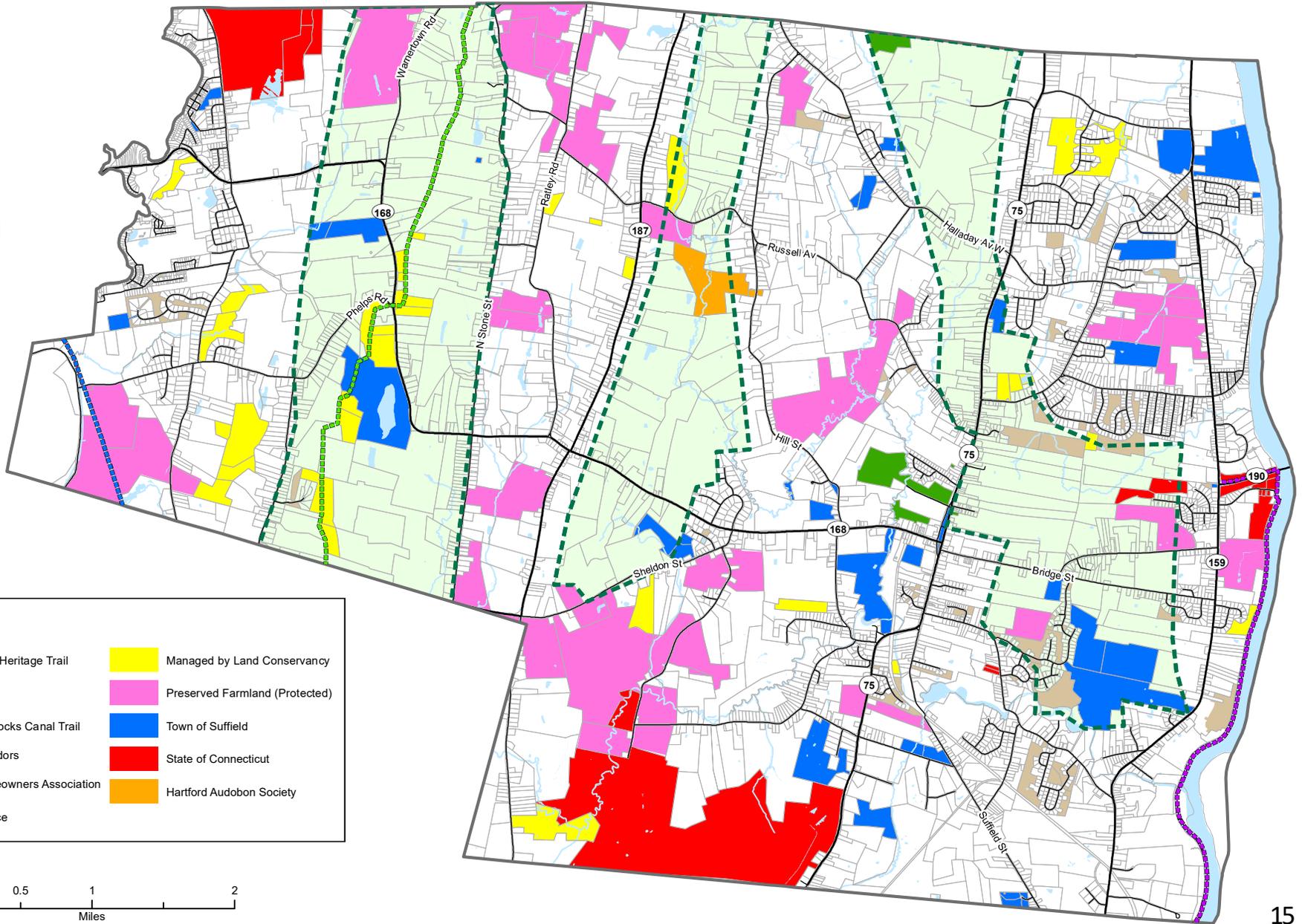
1. Encourage agri-tourism as a way to help preserve existing farms.
2. Consider ways to promote and provide marketing support for local farm businesses.
3. Continue the Farm Assessment Program (PA 490) in order to assist farmers.
4. Continue to participate in the farmland preservation program for qualifying parcels.

Agri-tourism – The intersection of tourism and agriculture that links agricultural production with tourism to bring visitors to a farm for entertainment or educational purposes generating income for the owner.

Agri-tourism has become more prevalent in Suffield prompting the Planning & Zoning Commission to adopt regulations permitting weddings and other private functions on farm properties of 25 acres or more.

# Open Space

Town of Suffield, CT



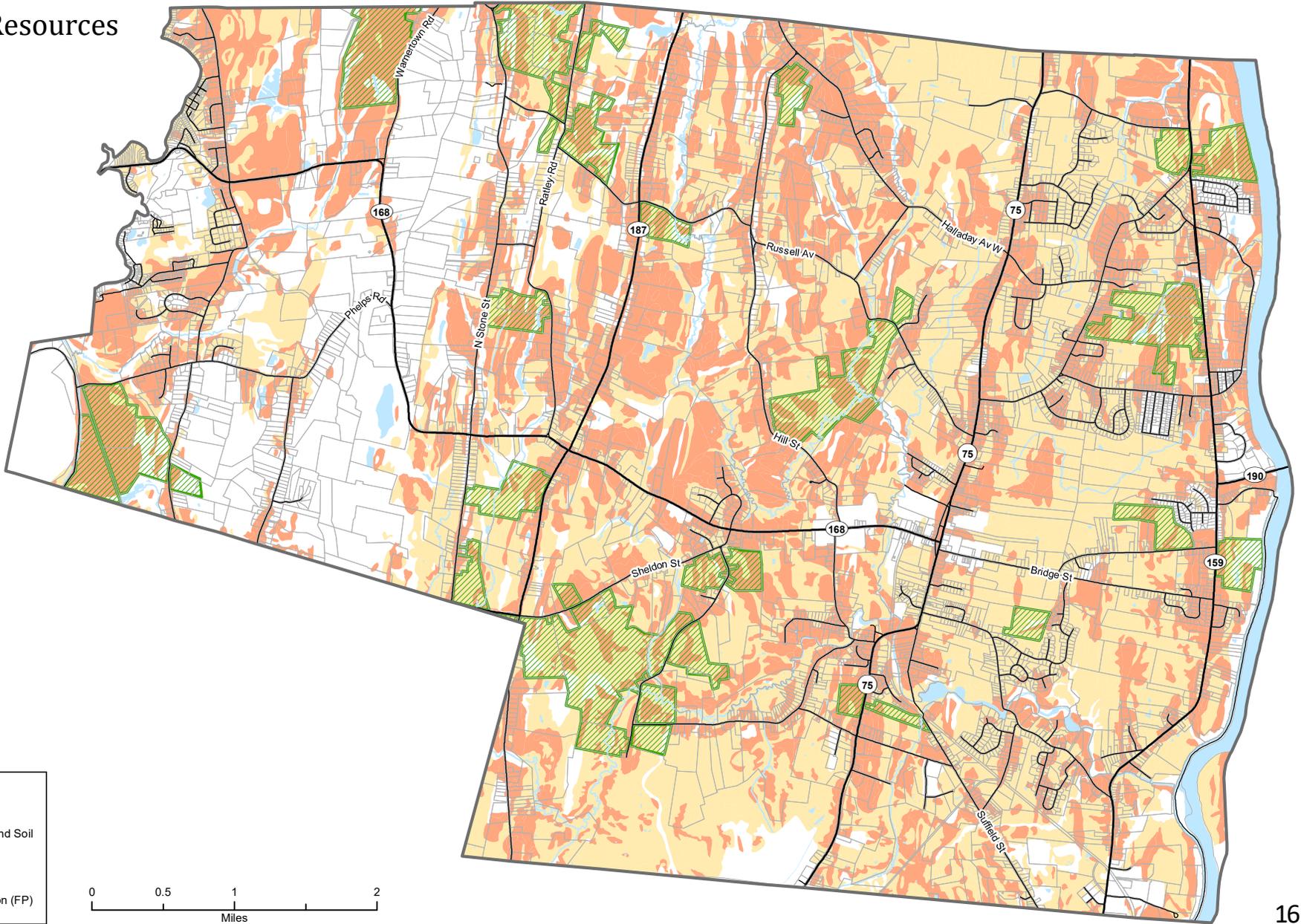
## Legend

- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail
- Metacomet Trail
- Suffield/Windsor Locks Canal Trail
- Open Space Corridors
- Managed by Homeowners Association
- Private Open Space
- Managed by Land Conservancy
- Preserved Farmland (Protected)
- Town of Suffield
- State of Connecticut
- Hartford Audobon Society



# Agricultural Resources

Town of Suffield, CT



## Legend

-  CT Important Farmland Soil
-  Prime Farmland Soil
-  Farmland Preservation (FP)



# 5 – Residential Development

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On May 4, 2022 the Board of Selectman adopted the town's first affordable housing plan as required by CT General Statutes Section 8-30j. The plan is for a five-year period through 2027.

The plan has a number of strategies intended to increase the amount of affordable housing in the town.

The overall goal of the plan is to seek to provide for a variety of housing choices in Suffield for people and households of all ages, incomes, and characteristics.

Suffield is predominantly residentially zoned containing mostly single-family, owner occupied homes. Approximately 88% of the town's land area is zoned for single-family development. The 2010 POCD recognized the need to encourage a more diverse housing stock including housing for all ages and economic circumstances. In recognition of this goal, the town created accessory dwelling unit (ADU) regulations in 2014 with certain restrictions. However, Public Act 21-29 was passed in 2021 by the State legislature and requires towns to permit one ADU as of right on every single-family lot unless the municipality opts out. Suffield did opt out of these requirements. Therefore, ADU's are permitted on all properties that have a single-family home.

This plan recognizes that Suffield's rural-suburban residential development patterns, housing type, form, and density is likely continue as it is today. However, the goal to create a diverse housing stock from the 2010 POCD carries over and the town should take strides toward creating housing for all ages, incomes, and characteristics.

## Housing That Is Affordable

The States affordable housing statute, Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-30g considers housing affordable if persons or families spend 30 percent or less of their income on housing and related costs where such income is less than or equal to 80 percent of the area median income. Over the last decade, Suffield has seen an increase in the number of affordable units in the community.

Effective December 11, 2019, the town received a certificate of affordable housing completion from the Department of Housing. This is also known as a moratorium that exempts the Town from the requirements of Connecticut General Statutes 8-30g. The moratorium is effective through December 10, 2023. Having the moratorium in place will allow the town four years to study the impacts, if any, from the "Brook Hill Village" affordable housing development located off East Street South. The moratorium will also provide Suffield the opportunity to study affordable housing and better plan for its development in Suffield.

Guiding appropriate residential development is important because it is imperative that Suffield maintain and enhance the quality of existing neighborhoods while allowing for new growth. The balance will be providing for ways to encourage more affordable workforce housing at a scale that is compatible with existing land use patterns.

## Housing

As mentioned above, the majority of Suffield's land area is single family residential. As a result, 91% of occupied homes are single-family and 9% are multifamily which is defined as two or more units in a structure. In addition, renters live in 80% of Suffield's 424 multifamily homes, and owners occupy 93% of the towns 4,246 single-family homes (American Community Survey).

It is important that Suffield maintain the existing neighborhoods that make it a great place to live. It is equally important to create new neighborhoods that enhance the appeal of town through proper design. Several subdivisions were approved in the last 10 years through use of the flexible residential development regulations. These regulations require at least half of the development site to be set aside as open space while allowing more flexibility with lot sizes and building setbacks. In a town with a strong desire to preserve open space and farmland, these regulations have provided an effective means of guiding residential development that maintains the rural characteristics that many find appealing.

However, there is a need for more affordable starter homes and housing for elderly residents looking to downsize from their large single-family homes. This type of housing may take the form of condominiums, apartments, or other multi-family housing.

## Strategies

### A. Guide/Manage Residential Development

1. Guide the scale and pattern of future residential growth in ways that will provide compatible uses of land.
2. Continue to use the flexible residential development regulations to cluster residential development.
3. Carefully manage non-residential uses in residential zones including special permit uses.

4. Continue to guide development in relation to infrastructure capacity.
5. Continue to update land use regulations as needed to address housing needs and allow for appropriate housing options.

## B. Provide for a variety of housing types while retaining the overall character of Suffield

1. Review the Planned Development Apartment multifamily zoning regulations to determine if revisions are appropriate.
2. Consider creating transition zones that would encourage multifamily development as land uses transition from commercial to single family residential.
3. Consider revisions to the regulations for converting a single-family house into a multi-family house.

## C. Provide for housing that is affordable

1. Work to implement the strategies in the 2022-2027 Housing Plan for Suffield.
2. Consider ways to address housing needs for the growing elderly population and for housing that is more affordable for local workers and first-time homebuyers.
3. Carefully evaluate inclusionary zoning provisions that would require a percentage of housing in any development to be affordable under the requirements of CGS 8-30g.
4. Consider revisions to Section V.C. Affordable Housing of the Zoning Regulations to make them more pragmatic.

Transition Zone –  
An area that acts as a buffer between land uses of different types or intensity.

For example –  
Creating a zone for apartments or condominiums next to the Town Center Village and West Suffield Village Districts, and Neighborhood Commercial Zones.

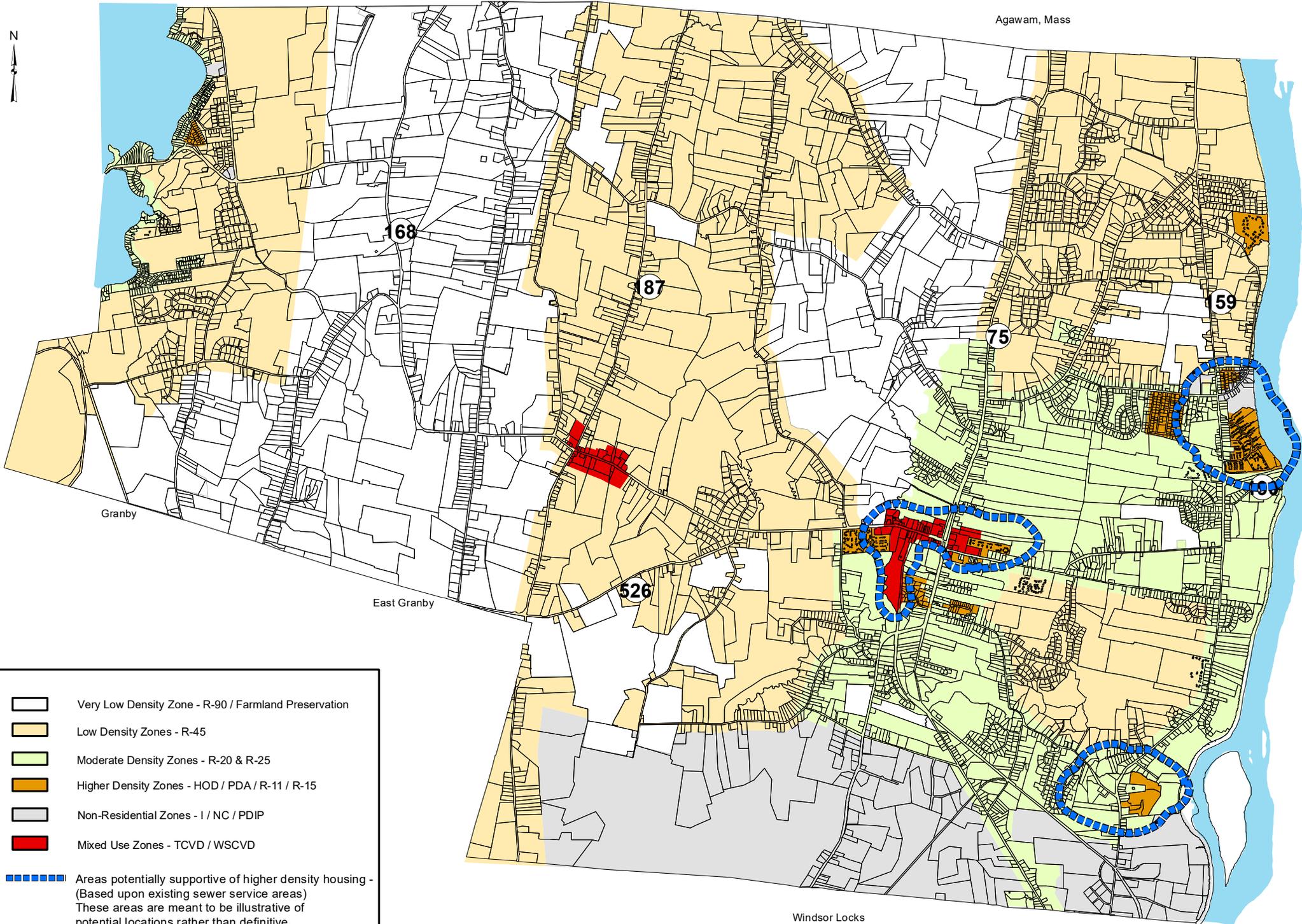


Brook Hill Village Apartments



New home construction

# Residential Zones



 Very Low Density Zone - R-90 / Farmland Preservation  
 Low Density Zones - R-45  
 Moderate Density Zones - R-20 & R-25  
 Higher Density Zones - HOD / PDA / R-11 / R-15  
 Non-Residential Zones - I / NC / PDIP  
 Mixed Use Zones - TCVD / WSCVD  
 Areas potentially supportive of higher density housing -  
 (Based upon existing sewer service areas)  
 These areas are meant to be illustrative of  
 potential locations rather than definitive.  
 Detailed site investigations would be required  
 for specific proposals.

4,400 Feet

# 6 – Economic Development

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Economic Development does not *only* include commercial or industrial development. Other uses such as age-restricted housing can also be economic development. Tax revenue from these developments typically exceeds the cost of services provided to these developments.

Commercial and industrial development is important for the town’s local economy and tax base. Economic development can be considered development that provides jobs, goods and services, and/or net tax revenue to Suffield. Encouraging economic development is one of the basic visions of this plan and the town should adopt land use policies that support economic development efforts.

Suffield’s proximity to Bradley International Airport is an attractive asset for economic development purposes. Since the 2010 POCD, the town has subdivided a 62-acre property on South Street in the light industrial zone for economic development purposes. One of the lots was sold and a new business now occupies the site. The town continues to market the rest of the available properties for economic development purposes.

Many building sites in Suffield are not ideal due to the presence of wetland soils. As a result, efforts to retain existing businesses while helping them thrive and grow are focal points of this section. Suffield needs to continually work towards improving economic development. The Economic Development Commission helps with this by planning for business development within the community.

## Industrial & Light Industrial Development

The 2010 POCD references the Route 75 corridor, which extends from the Austin/Spencer Street intersection to the Windsor Locks town line. This corridor offers the greatest potential for new light industrial economic development in Suffield. The town extended public water and sewer into this area in 2016. Further extending these utilities to the town line should be explored.

Industrial zoned land encompasses approximately 240 acres in the southeast corner of town. This area is home to some of the town’s largest taxpayers including HP Hood, and Linde, Inc. (Formerly Praxair). The town’s major industrial road, Harvey Lane, was repaved in 2021 with funding provided by a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant.

## Commercial Development

Commercial development in Suffield consists of smaller facilities geared toward the residents with no high-visibility regional shopping areas. The largest concentration of commercial businesses is in the Town Center Village District (TCVD) area, which is home to the Mountain Road Marketplace, Suffield Village, along with all of the other businesses in the Mountain Road, Main Street, Bridge Street area. This area is a mixed-use zone allowing for residential and commercial uses on one property. However, the residential use is required to be an accessory use to commercial use on the property. In 2019, the TCVD regulations were amended to allow up to 45 multi-family units as the primary use of a property that meets certain requirements.

Since the 2010 POCD, there has been a large shift in retail from the traditional brick and mortar stores to electronic commerce or online shopping. This trend is likely to have contributed to the former CVS location in the Mountain Road Marketplace remaining empty since 2015. Suffield is not unique in this situation and looking ahead it would make sense to consider ways to help commercial landowners find appropriate uses for their vacant storefronts.

Economic development is a balancing act because there are strong opinions on diversifying the tax base by bringing in more commercial and industrial development and keeping the rural residential atmosphere of Suffield intact. Some view these as competing factors in the decision making process.

### Strategies

#### A. Support Overall Economic Development

1. Maintain the existing commercial and industrial base while encouraging expansion, rehabilitation, and revitalization where appropriate.
2. Consider removing the special permit requirement for permitted uses in the industrial and commercial zones.
3. Continue to encourage greater density within the TCVD while maintaining the appeal of Suffield.
4. Investigate ways to create incentives to support existing and new economic development.
5. Carefully consider expanding commercial zones.
6. Support local businesses and their efforts to succeed and grow in Suffield.

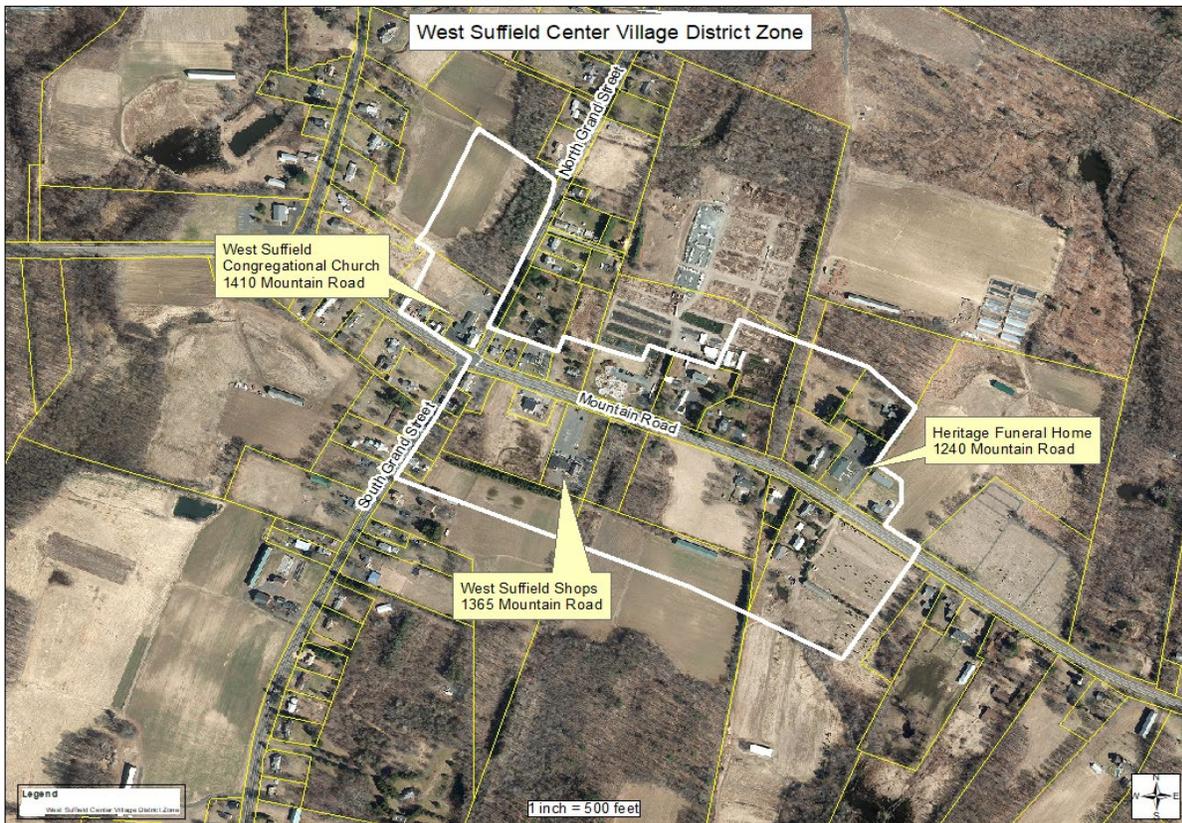
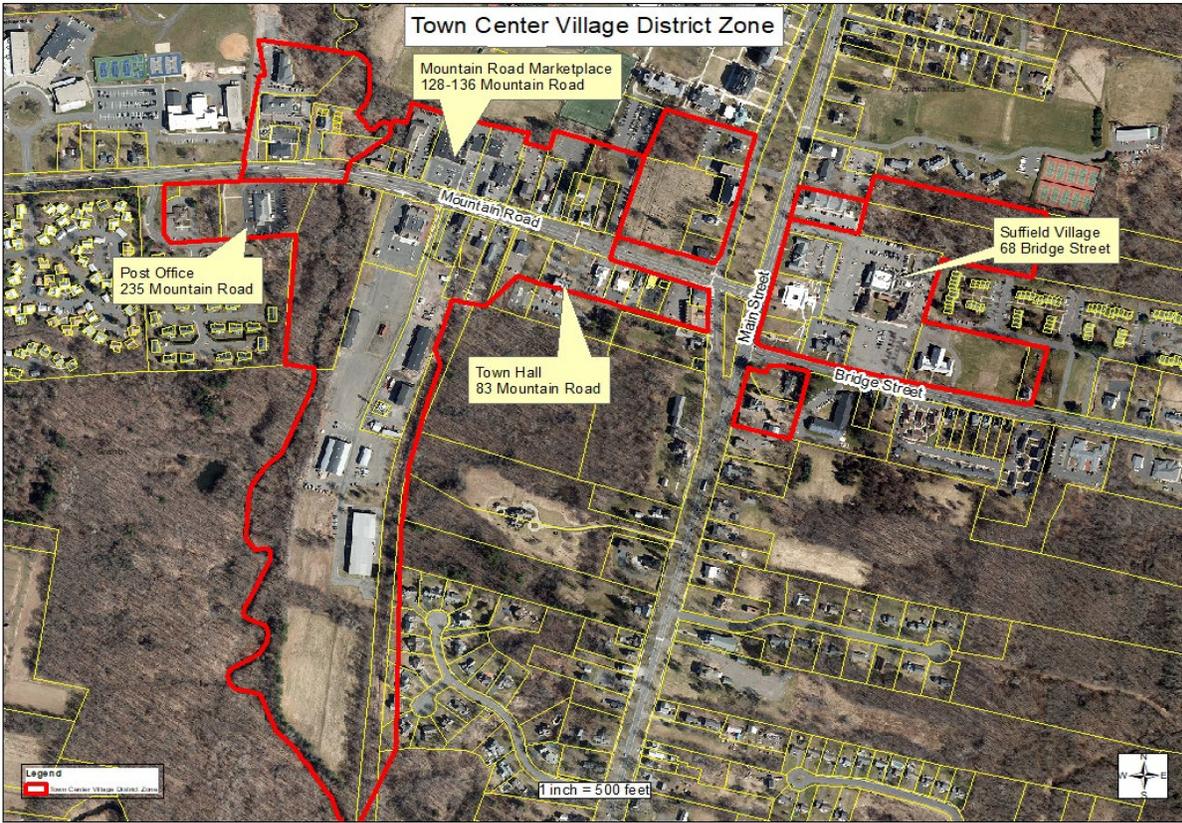
Cannabis legalization was signed into law on June 22, 2021. Known as Public Act 21-1 “An Act Concerning Responsible and Equitable Regulation of Adult-Use Cannabis”.

The Town of Suffield viewed cannabis legalization as an economic development opportunity and created Zoning Regulations permitting these establishments in the industrial zones.

## B. Attract New Economic Development

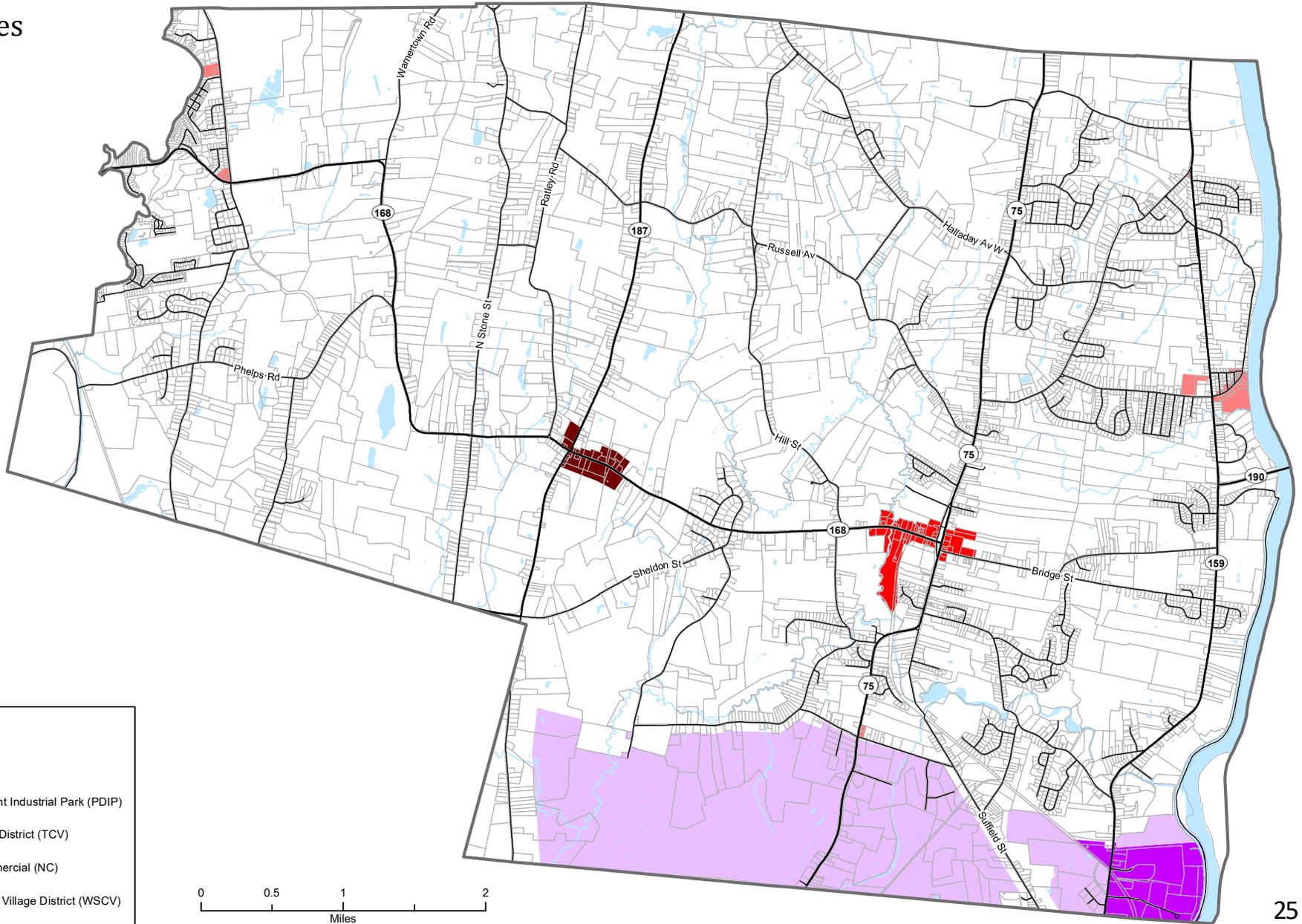
1. Promote an enhanced image of Suffield as being an important, successful, and enjoyable place for economic activity.
  - a. Seek to attract aerospace manufacturing, financial & insurance, and technology clusters as recommended by the target industry analysis completed for the Bradley Development League in 2018.
2. Continue to assist appropriate new economic development opportunities.
3. Expand marketing efforts for town-owned land available for economic development.
4. Continue to work with state, regional, and local organizations to promote appropriate economic development.
5. Consider creating new Tax Increment Financing Districts where appropriate.
6. Continue to explore ways to accommodate the redevelopment of Ffyer Place including making the road a public way.





# Business Zones

Town of Suffield, CT



## Legend

-  Industrial (I)
-  Planned Development Industrial Park (PDIP)
-  Town Center Village District (TCV)
-  Neighborhood Commercial (NC)
-  West Suffield Center Village District (WSCV)



# 7 – Community Facilities & Services

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Kent Memorial Library – This facility reopened to the public in 2019 after closure due to renovation work, which unearthed the presence of PCB's (polychlorinated biphenyls) in in the building.

Babb's Beach Skating Rink Building – Public water was brought to the building and put in service in January 2020. While an end use for the building has yet to be determined, the public water was an important step in getting the building back to productive use.

Community services provide important functions for the daily operations of the town and influence the quality of life for residents. This POCD looks at local facilities in terms of how they will meet the needs of the residents for the next 10 years and beyond. Keeping facilities current and maintained is important to ensuring Suffield is a desirable place to live and work. As the town grows in population, there will likely be increased demand for services that can create further demand on public facilities.

The Town owns 22 buildings including four schools, four fire stations, and 14 other buildings for remaining town functions. These buildings are important to Suffield as they provide for community interests and needs. Well-maintained and operated buildings show residents that the town is committed to the future because having quality community facilities and services can be a measuring stick for the town when compared to neighboring communities. For example, Town Hall received a much needed renovation including office space for the land use departments that were located in an office building at 230 C Mountain Road from 2007 to 2021, and a new vault for the Town Clerk.

Long-term facility needs are important for a town to understand and plan for, as proper maintenance of existing facilities should be a key priority. School enrollment projections are expected to decrease over the next several years according to a comprehensive school enrollment study completed for the schools in 2021. The school system tracks enrollment numbers on a monthly basis throughout the school years. These records indicate a decline in enrollment across the entire school system of 76 students from October 2018 to June 2022. Given this trend it appears total capacity of the school system is adequate for the near future.

In an effort to more effectively plan for facility needs and maintenance the Town started the process of drafting a facilities master plan with the help of a consultant in January 2021. The purpose of the plan is the assess the use and condition of all school facilities and select municipal facilities to establish a priority, schedule, and budget for the most effective use; modernization, replacement, or expansion of the buildings that will create

a framework for the town's capital plan for the next ten years. This study will result in the first comprehensive facility master plan for the town.

Recreational assets are also important community facilities that need to be properly maintained and managed. The town recognizes that both active and passive recreational opportunities and facilities contribute to the overall quality of life for Suffield residents and that resources should be in place to maintain these facilities.

## **Strategies**

### **A. Address Overall Community Facility Needs**

1. Continue long-range planning for capital projects.
2. Maintain and manage community facilities and services to meet current and future community needs.
3. Review the recommendations from the Facilities Master Plan and implement them as appropriate.

### **B. Address Near to Medium-Term Needs**

1. Address the space needs of the Fire Department in an efficient and cost-effective way.
2. Address the space needs of the Police Department in an efficient and cost-effective way.

### **C. Address Long-Term Needs**

1. Continue to monitor school enrollments in order to anticipate future trends well in advance.
2. When and where appropriate, if they become available, acquire properties adjacent to existing facilities in order to allow for future expansion and/or renovation of existing facilities rather than having to develop entirely new sites.

### **D. Address Parks and Recreation Needs**

1. Develop a property maintenance plan for playing fields and recreational open space parcels.
2. Explore ways to create more centrally located recreational facilities.
3. Continue to take steps to bring the Babb's Beach Skating Rink building back into productive use.



Mountain Road multi-use trail construction.



Sunrise Park



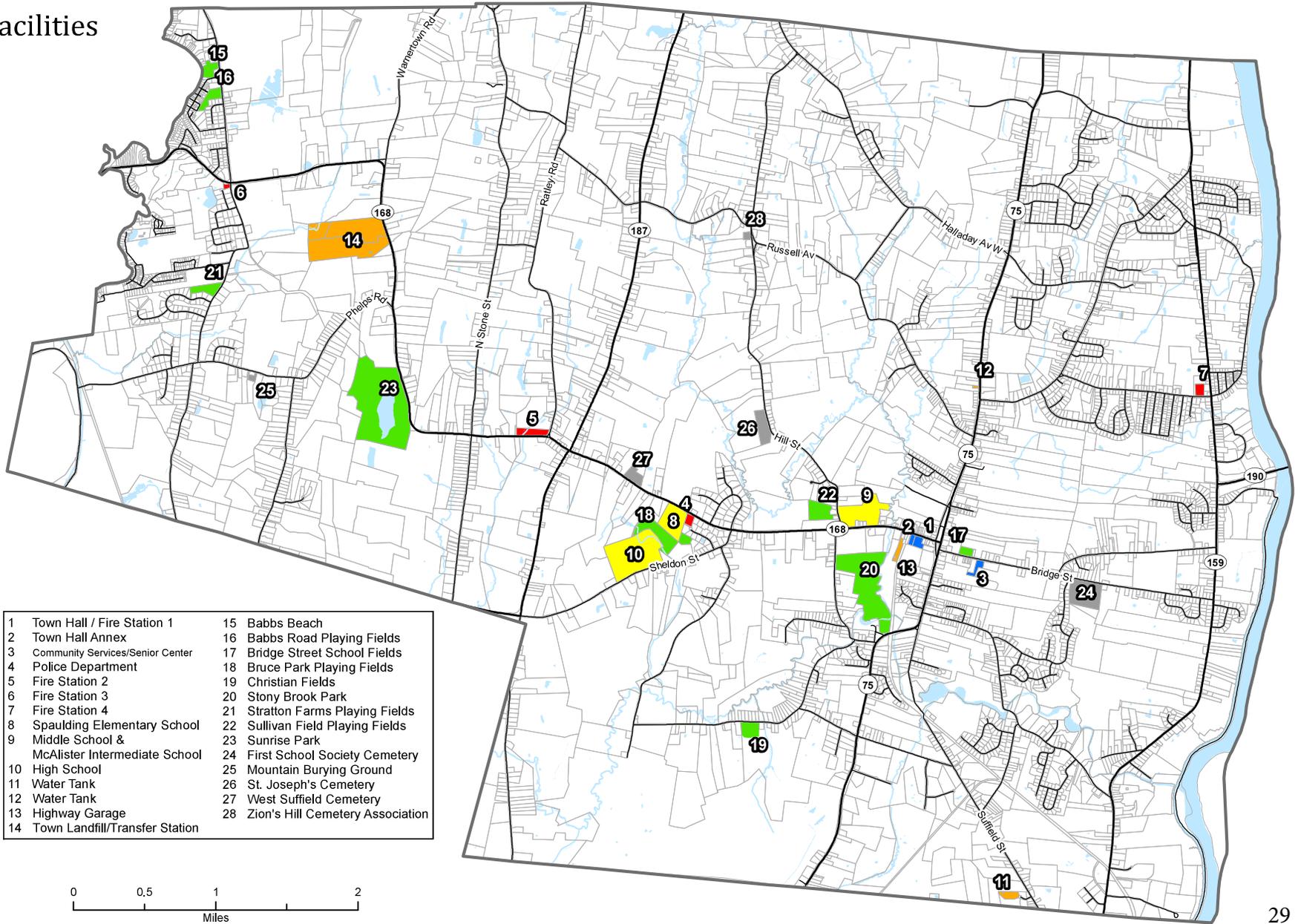
Town Hall Renovation



Town Hall Meeting Room

# Community Facilities

Town of Suffield, CT



## Legend

### Facility Type

- Government
- Education
- Public Safety
- Recreation
- Public Works
- Cemetery

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Town Hall / Fire Station 1                    | 15 Babbs Beach                      |
| 2 Town Hall Annex                               | 16 Babbs Road Playing Fields        |
| 3 Community Services/Senior Center              | 17 Bridge Street School Fields      |
| 4 Police Department                             | 18 Bruce Park Playing Fields        |
| 5 Fire Station 2                                | 19 Christian Fields                 |
| 6 Fire Station 3                                | 20 Stony Brook Park                 |
| 7 Fire Station 4                                | 21 Stratton Farms Playing Fields    |
| 8 Spaulding Elementary School                   | 22 Sullivan Field Playing Fields    |
| 9 Middle School & McAlister Intermediate School | 23 Sunrise Park                     |
| 10 High School                                  | 24 First School Society Cemetery    |
| 11 Water Tank                                   | 25 Mountain Burying Ground          |
| 12 Water Tank                                   | 26 St. Joseph's Cemetery            |
| 13 Highway Garage                               | 27 West Suffield Cemetery           |
| 14 Town Landfill/Transfer Station               | 28 Zion's Hill Cemetery Association |



# 8 – Transportation

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Suffield has a total of 119.57 miles of road, which includes 79.33 miles of Town roads, 7.37 miles of private roads, and 32.87 miles of State owned roads. The road system in Suffield is important for the daily life of the community. In addition, there are no public transportation options available to residents. As a result, most people rely almost exclusively on the personal automobile for local transportation. Maintaining road infrastructure has been a large expense for the town as approximately \$22M has been spent on roads since 2011.

Private roads in Suffield have been an important topic over the past few years. The town has accepted a portion of Lake and Griffin Roads as public town roads in 2018 and 2020 respectively. It is important to note that once private roads become public roads it gives property owners with frontage on these roads the ability to subdivide their property into residential building lots.

It is essential that transportation facilities and services are developed to best serve the community. To aid in this effort, the Planning & Zoning Commission evaluates the impacts that new subdivision roads will have on surrounding areas and makes recommendations for design or layout improvements. In addition, in the Spring of 2021, the town began working with a consultant to develop a town-wide traffic and pedestrian safety study. The goal of the study is to develop a prioritized plan of action to address traffic concerns including projects on town roads and was completed in May 2022. The study will also recommend initiatives to the Connecticut DOT for projects on state roads and is [available on the town website](#).

Suffield should endeavor to consider multiple modes of travel when working on bridge replacement and road repaving projects and include lanes for bicycles where appropriate. The abandoned rail line that used to serve the former lumberyard on Ffyer Place has deteriorated after years of non-use. The town investigated using a portion of the rail line for a multi-use recreational trail. However, without a redevelopment plan in place for the developable property on Ffyer Place, it is unlikely the rail line will have a meaningful use in the near future. Nonetheless, the rail line

Bradley International Airport – Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, airport travel has decreased significantly.

However, when the airport is back to operating at normal capacity they have plans to increase the number of flights over the next 20 years. The airport is a key influence on traffic and transportation in Suffield.

Complete Streets – Streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users such as bicyclists, pedestrians, public transportation, and the personal automobile.

provides an asset that may work well for the redevelopment of Ffyer Place and the town should remain open to its reuse.

Mass transit including bus and rail service continue to elude Suffield. With Windsor Locks and Enfield about to build new train stations it would make sense for Suffield to consider providing public transportation connections to these stations for its residents. For the POCD and planning purposes, the town should remain open to the possibility of these services becoming desired by residents.

## **Strategies**

### **A. Provide a safe and efficient transportation network for Suffield.**

1. Continue to implement pavement management recommendations to reduce long-term maintenance costs.
2. Investigate traffic-calming measures as recommended by the town-wide traffic and pedestrian safety study.
3. Coordinate with state and regional transportation goals where appropriate.
4. Seek opportunities to extend public transportation options to Suffield especially as it relates to the Windsor Locks and Enfield train stations.

### **B. Address issues on Town Roadways**

1. Find ways to address identified safety and capacity issues on Town roads as indicated in the town-wide traffic study.
2. Provide for improved movement of vehicles and pedestrians through the Town Center Village District.
3. Continue to work with CT DOT, CRCOG, and the Airport Authority in identifying and addressing traffic issues along state and local roads.
4. Address maintenance and ownership of private roads in Suffield including emergency vehicle access considerations.

### **C. Support pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and other forms of transportation.**

1. Promote sidewalk connectivity throughout town and seek to connect open space parcels where possible.
2. Encourage bike lanes and multi-use trails where appropriate and work with the CT DOT on State roadways to provide room for these facilities per their 2014 Complete Streets policy.

3. Continue to participate in regional bicycle planning efforts.
4. Seek ways to enhance bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Windsor Locks and Enfield train stations when they are open.
5. Support regional transit initiatives as appropriate.

## Connecticut's Complete Streets Policy

In 2014, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT-DOT) adopted an executive policy promoting “complete streets” and incorporating the following:

- Providing training on “complete streets” best practices.
- Using a “complete streets” checklist on applicable projects.
- Considering “complete streets” when state or federal funding is used.
- Amending design, construction and maintenance guidelines to reflect the routine accommodation of all users.
- Increasing flexibility for the funding of “complete streets” projects.
- Collecting data (to the extent possible) as part of traffic counts.
- Establish and annually report “complete streets” performance measures.

## Travel Lane Widths

One of the most significant changes made by CT-DOT was to restripe State roadways when opportunities arise (such as paving or painting projects) with eleven-foot travel lanes in order to expand the space available for non-motorized transportation users at the road shoulder. While the reduced travel lane is almost imperceptible to the motorist, it can make a significant difference for a cyclist or pedestrian.

A similar approach may open up new opportunities in Suffield.



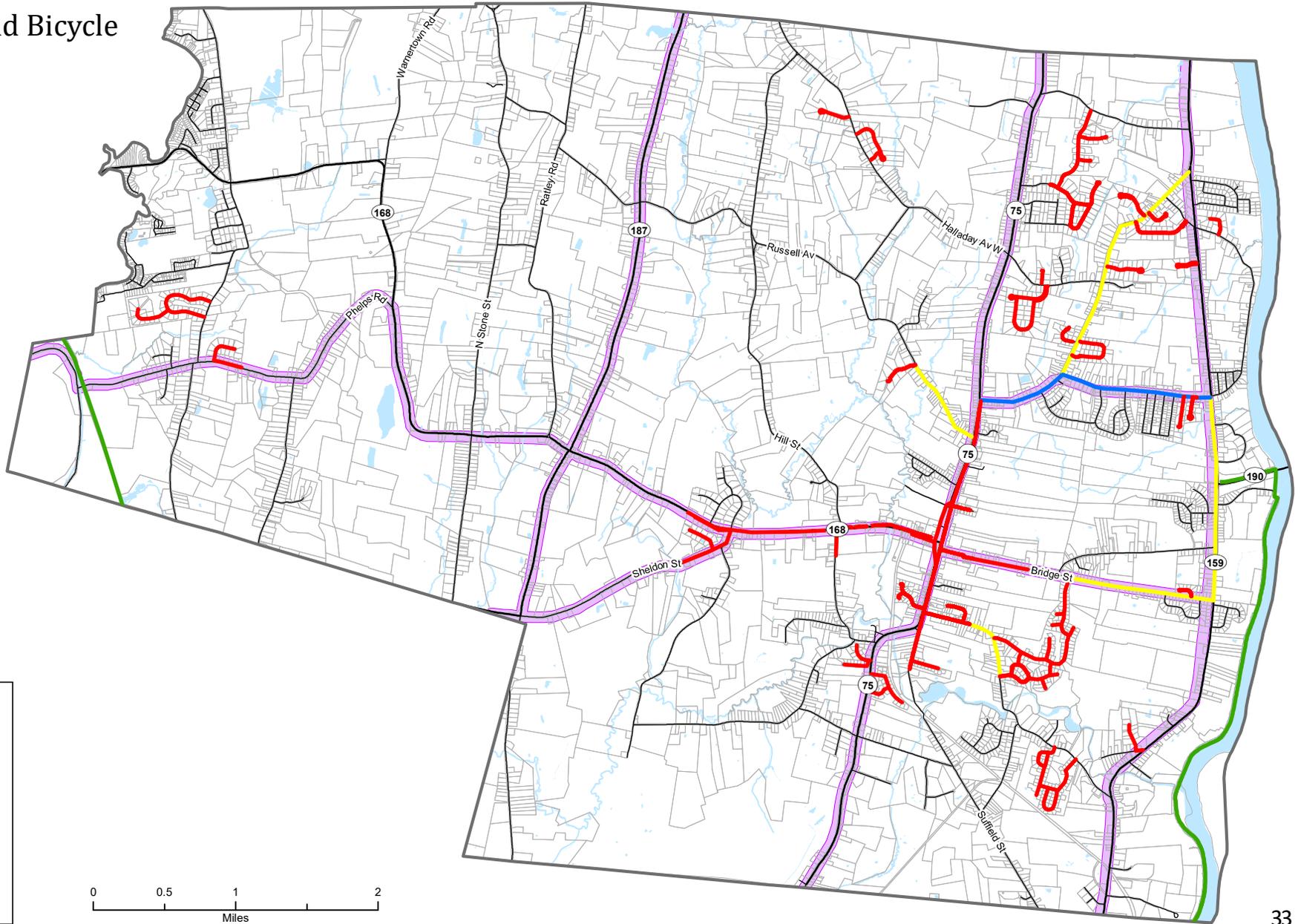
Before Narrowing Lane Width



After Narrowing Lane Width

# Pedestrian and Bicycle Paths

Town of Suffield, CT



## Legend

 Completed Bike Trail

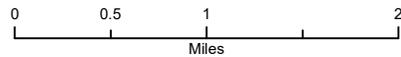
 On-Road Bike Route

### Sidewalk Status

 Existing

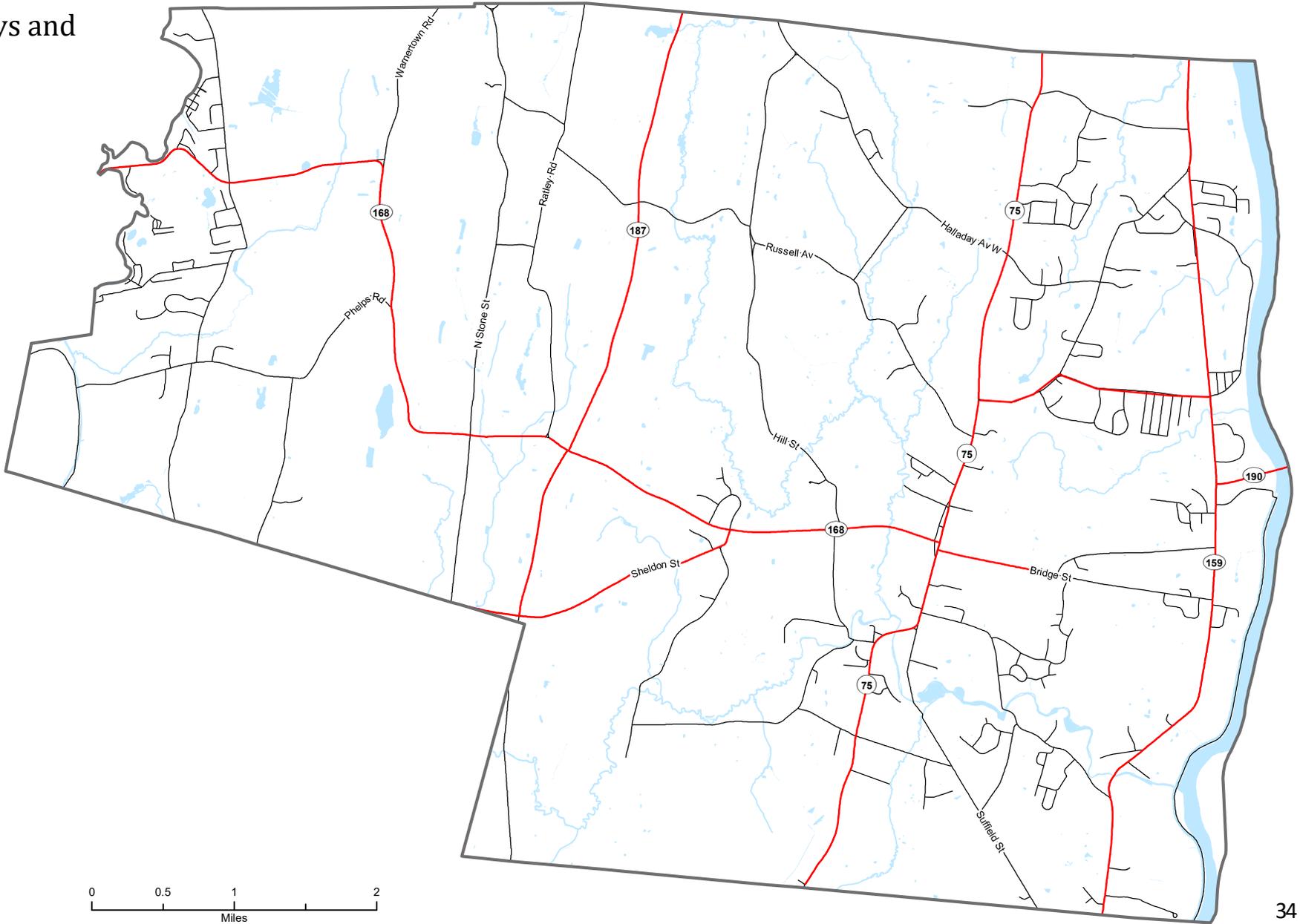
 Pending

 Potential



# State Highways and Local Roads

Town of Suffield, CT



## Legend

-  Local Road
-  State Highway



# 9 – Utilities

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In 2020, Suffield purchased the existing streetlights and converted the light fixtures to the more efficient light emitting diode (LED).

Over time, it is projected that purchasing the streetlights and converting them to LED fixtures will save the town money.

Drinking water, wastewater treatment, storm drainage, and natural gas are all piped utilities in the town. There are also wired utilities such as telephone, electric, and cable utilities and wireless services. It is important that these utilities serve the current and future needs of Suffield. This section is intended to ensure the capacity of these utilities serves the needs of the community and the desired community structure.

Two companies, Connecticut Water Company, and Aquarian Water Company supply public water. Connecticut Water serves the majority of residents that have public water, which is mostly in the eastern part of Suffield. Aquarian Water Company operates a much smaller system serving around 600 residents in West Suffield near the Congamond Lakes. Both providers are expected to have adequate supply to meet the needs in their service areas over the next ten years.

The Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) provides sewer service in the town. The sewer service boundary generally follows Route 75 and to the east with a few limited exceptions including the high school. If current development trends continue, the sewer plant has the capacity to handle anticipated flows over the next ten years. Failing septic systems near the Congamond Lakes continue to be monitored to determine if connecting to the sewer system in Southwick, MA or an alternative method of waste disposal is necessary.

Other piped infrastructure such as natural gas service is provided by Eversource. Natural gas is largely available along East Street, Bridge Street, Mountain Road to Sheldon Street, and in the light industrial area on Route 75. Adequate natural gas supplies are expected to be available to meet future demands. New service connections can be accommodated if they are in close proximity to existing lines. However, appreciable expansion of the existing service areas are not expected.

How the town handles storm drainage is becoming increasingly important. It appears that more intense storms are overwhelming older drainage systems more frequently which can be a negative impact on the built environment as a result of climate change. Low impact development (LID) techniques have been used more often over the last ten years as a way to keep stormwater runoff as close to its' source as possible.

This plan was drafted during the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic where wired and wireless utility services have proven to be more important than ever. With the shift of many people working from home, conducting meetings virtually rather than in-person, as well as shopping for groceries and other items, the internet has proven to be extremely valuable. Providing for reliable wired and wireless utilities is an important strategy of this POCD.

Alternative energy projects should remain a focal point for the town over the next ten years and beyond. Solar energy projects have grown in Suffield over the past ten years with dozens of homes installing solar. In addition, a large-scale solar array was installed on a property located off North Street. The town should remain open to alternative energy projects while giving careful consideration to the impact they can have on the natural resources of the town.

Alternative Energy Projects – Solar has been the fastest growing form of alternative energy producing projects in Suffield over the last ten years. Other forms of alternative energy include wind, water, geothermal, and bioenergy. Planning for these types of projects will enhance the town's ability to make informed decisions that will not compromise the 10-year vision for Suffield.

## **Strategies**

### **A. Plan for and maintain existing utility infrastructure**

1. Utilize existing utility infrastructure to help guide development consistent with the goals of the POCD.
2. Continue to work with utility companies to ensure communication infrastructure is maintained and enhanced.
3. Develop long-range planning goals to address different forms of alternative energy projects for residential and commercial purposes including decommissioning plans.

### **B. Address Piped Utility Services**

1. Maintain adequate sewer service to meet town needs within the generalized sewer service area.
2. Work with the North Central District Health Department to continue to monitor the areas near the Congamond Lakes in order to address future public health issues.
3. Ensure adequate and safe drinking water is provided to current and future users.

4. Consider conducting a town-wide drainage study to better understand what issues may exist within drainage basins.
5. Encourage and promote the extension of natural gas lines where appropriate.

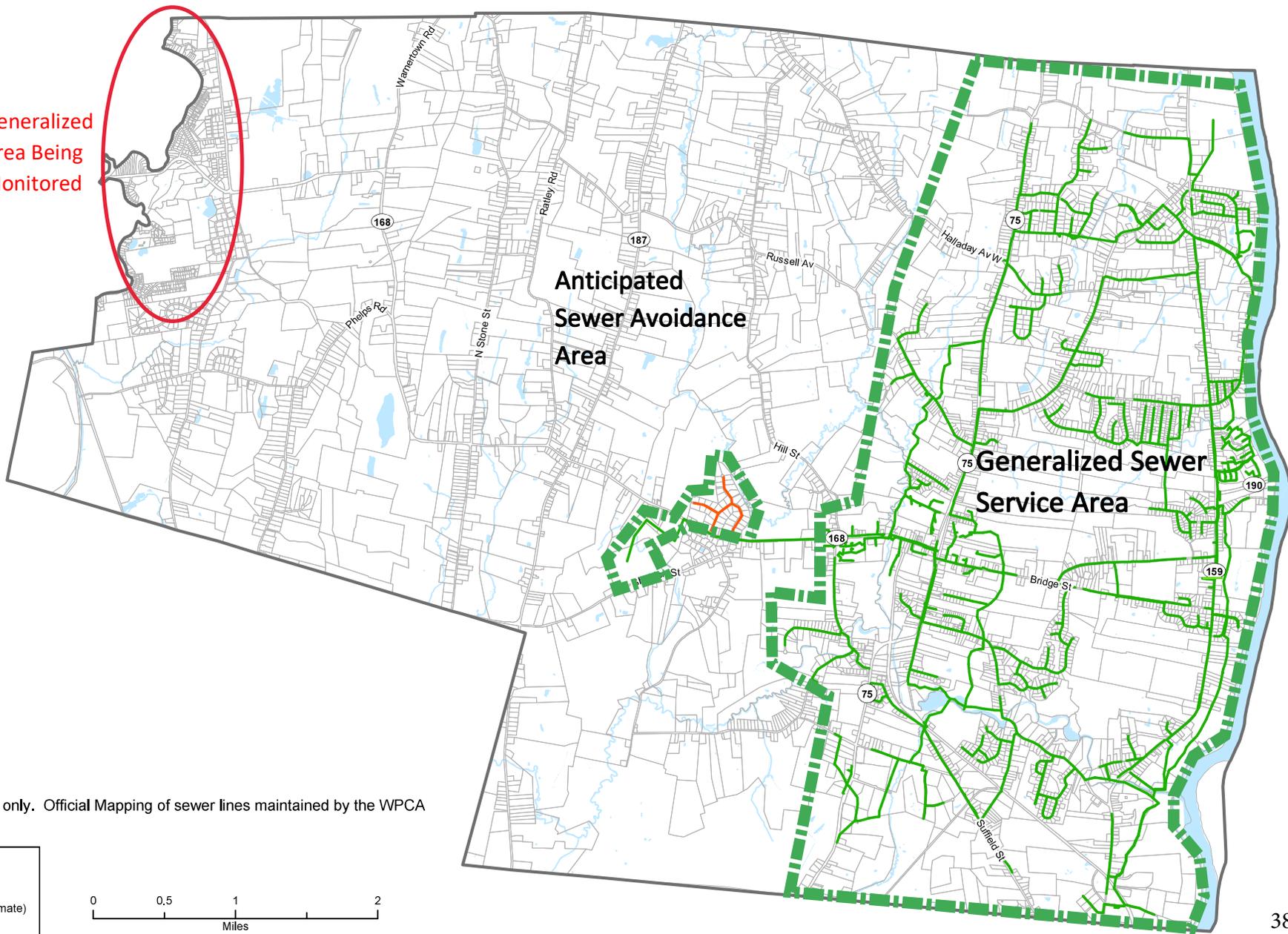
### **C. Address Wired & Wireless Utility Services**

1. Continue to require underground utilities in new developments and consider options to relocate existing utilities underground where possible.
2. Continue to work with Eversource to ensure electric service and reliability in Suffield is adequate and seek a balance between pruning for reliability and keeping tree cover.
3. Encourage adequate wired and wireless communication service including phone, internet, and cable to meet the needs of the community and improve speed and access, as appropriate.

# Sewer Lines

Town of Suffield, CT

Generalized  
Area Being  
Monitored



For information purposes only. Official Mapping of sewer lines maintained by the WPCA

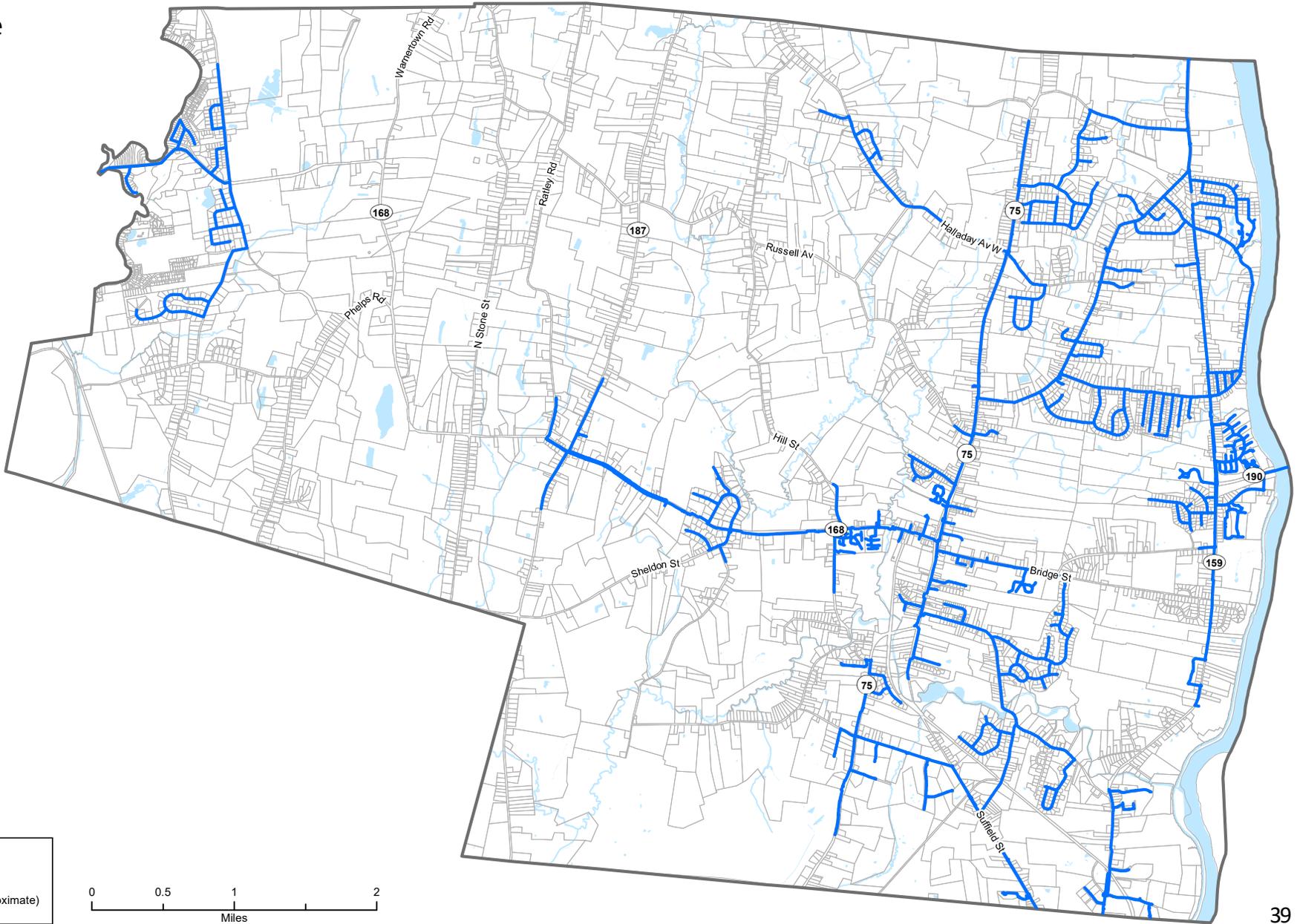
## Legend

-  Sewer Line (Approximate)
-  Kent Farms System



# Water Service

Town of Suffield, CT



# 10 – Future Land Use

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The strategies and recommendations in this plan can be combined to present an overall future land use plan for Suffield. The corresponding map was created using a culmination of the strategies in this plan. The future land use map is not a zoning map but portrays areas of Suffield where densities are recommended and is derived from existing uses and zone boundaries. The map indicates the Planning and Zoning Commission's (PZC) recommendation for the most desirable use of land within Suffield for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, and other purposes.

The PZC should use the map as a guide when it considers making changes to the zoning map. Land-use categories are defined as follows;

**Residential Uses** - Areas used or intended to be used for very low, low, moderate, or high density.

*Very Low Density* – Less than or equal to 0.5 dwelling units per acre.

*Low Density* – Less than or equal to 1 dwelling unit per acre.

*Moderate Density* – 1-2 dwelling units per acre.

*High Density* – Greater than 2 dwelling units per acre.

**Economic Development** – Areas used or intended to be used for development of business or industrial uses.

*Commercial* – Areas used or intended to be used for retail, office, and service uses.

*Industrial* - Areas used or intended to be used for industrial facilities.

*Light Industrial* – Areas used or intended to be used for light industrial facilities.

**Village Centers** – Focal points in town that offer mixed-use, pedestrian friendly development that are typically located on major traffic corridors.

**Open Space Corridors** – Areas with existing or desirable agricultural or open space parcels.

**Conservation Areas** – Areas with existing or desirable trails, natural resources, wetlands, or ridgelines that should be preserved.

**Community & Institutional Uses** – Areas with existing governmental, community or institutional facilities.

## **State and Regional Plan Consistency**

In accordance with CGS Section 8-23, this POCD was compared to the 2013-2023 State Conservation & Development Policies Plan and found to be generally consistent with that plan and its Locational Guide Map.

### ***Growth Management Principle 1***

*Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure.*

Suffield's 2022 POCD does not contain a regional center; however, the strategies in this plan encourage revitalization of the Village Districts with mixed-use developments. Both village districts contain a commercial base upon which more residential and business uses would be well suited. The Town Center Village District has infrastructure available to meet the demands of increased density and the Zoning Regulations for this zone were amended in 2019 to permit residential uses as a primary use under certain conditions. Prior to the 2019 amendment to the regulations, residential uses were permitted in the Village District as an accessory use only.

### ***Growth Management Principle 2***

*Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs.*

Suffield's 2022 POCD recognizes the need for more affordable housing and offers strategies to encourage planning for a variety of housing options. Providing housing choices is a strategy that carries over from the 2010 POCD. While progress has been made with 84 new affordable units built in 2018-19 there is more work to do. The town received a moratorium from the requirements of the State's affordable housing regulations, which is in effect until December 2023. Therefore, the time is ripe to study and plan for more affordable housing. Accordingly, the town has adopted its' first Affordable Housing Plan in May 2022. The plan contains strategies that will increase the number of affordable units in Suffield, if implemented.

### ***Growth Management Principle 3***

*Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options.*

Suffield's 2022 POCD recommends mixed-use, increased density in the Village Districts that are located along major transportation corridors in Suffield. There is no commuter rail or public bus routes in town leaving limited transportation options but the plan recognizes the train stations to be built in neighboring Enfield and Windsor Locks. Providing public transportation connections to these stations is a strategy of this POCD as well as encouraging pedestrian and bicycle paths to increase connectivity among the schools and residential areas where appropriate.

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

*Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources, and traditional rural lands.*

Suffield's 2022 POCD recognizes the importance of conserving the natural environment along with cultural and historical resources as well as traditional rural lands. Chapters 3 & 4 offer several strategies to protect natural resources, open space, and farmland. Open space and farmland are important features of the town that contribute to its quality of life for the residents. This plan continues to promote conservation and preservation activities to ensure the towns historic and natural resources, open space, and farmland are protected.

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

*Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety.*

Suffield's 2022 POCD recognizes the importance of protecting environmental assets that are critical to public health and safety. There are strategies to maintain, improve, and protect surface water and groundwater quality. Other objectives of the plan are to protect environmentally sensitive areas such as the Connecticut River and Congamond Lakes as both of these water bodies supply drinking water for numerous residents in Suffield and neighboring communities.

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

*Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional, and local basis.*

Suffield's 2022 POCD recognizes the need for integrated planning across all levels of government. The town understands its place in the region and values partnerships with neighboring communities. This is especially true with regard to regional economic development through active participation in the Bradley Development League. Several strategies in the plan recommend ways to coordinate planning efforts with adjacent communities as well as regional and state agencies.

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

Suffield's Future Land-Use Map is greatly consistent with the State's Locational Guide Map in terms of both priority funding and conservation areas. The Village Priority Funding Area's on the map are consistent with the town's village district zones. Other priority funding areas on the map are consistent with the town's Future Land Use map and sewer service area.

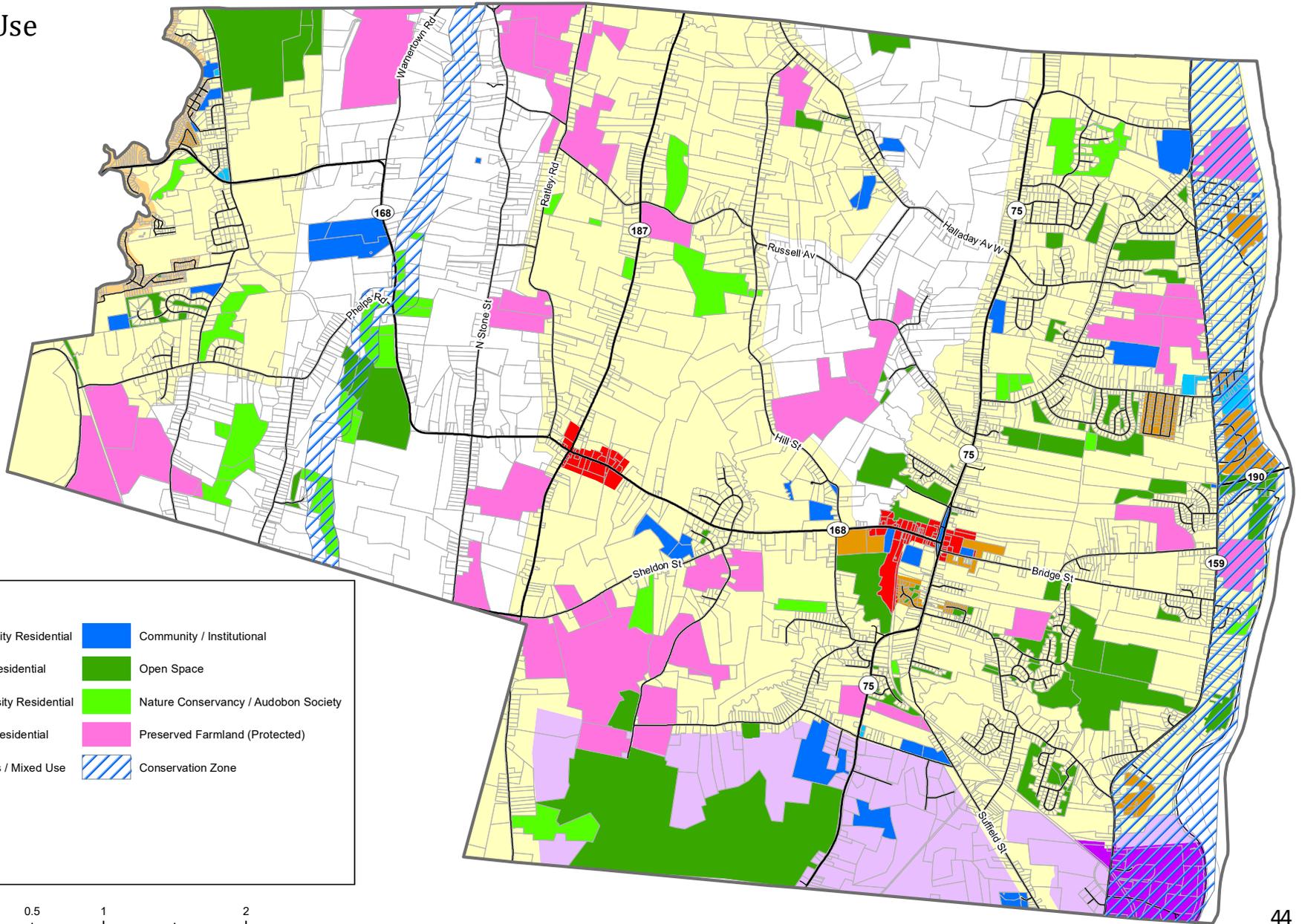
### **Regional Plan of Conservation and Development**

Suffield's 2022 POCD contains development and conservation strategies that are generally consistent with the goals and policy recommendations in the 2014-2024 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development.

- 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 the town's light and heavy industrial zoned land as well as the Town Center Village District as a focus area for development.
- Both plans recognize the need for a variety of housing choices for all income levels.

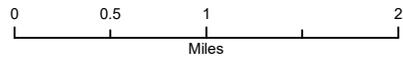
# Future Land Use

Town of Suffield, CT



## Legend

	Very Low Density Residential		Community / Institutional
	Low Density Residential		Open Space
	Moderate Density Residential		Nature Conservancy / Audobon Society
	High Density Residential		Preserved Farmland (Protected)
	Village Districts / Mixed Use		Conservation Zone
	Commercial		
	Industrial		
	Light Industrial		



# 11 – Next Steps

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Implementation – The Planning & Zoning Commission has the primary responsibility to implement the strategies contained in this plan.

However, all town agencies, boards, commissions, residents, developers, and business owners should use this plan as a guide regarding the decisions they make regarding the conservation and development of Suffield.

As the 2010 POCD points out, planning for Suffield’s future is a dynamic process that requires constant vigilance. The 2022 POCD should guide town officials, commission members, and the public to make decisions that are in the best long-term interest of the town. While this plan is an advisory document, deviations from its strategies should only occur if the long-term impacts are determined to be in the best interest of the town.

Overall, the vision of Suffield’s future largely remain the same from year to year. During the three public listening sessions held in preparation for drafting this plan, the trends and issues affecting the community were discussed using the 2010 POCD as a basis. In addition, meetings were held with key town employees to review sections of the 2010 POCD. All of the suggestions and comments from these meetings, public information meeting, and online survey were captured, reviewed and incorporated into this POCD as appropriate.

Planning is an on-going process that does not stop. Issues or topics may arise that were not evident when the 2022 update occurred. As a result, revising sections of the plan to reflect new information is advisable when it is proper to do so.

The 2022 POCD contains many strategies related to the effective management and facilitation of Suffield’s future growth. However, the extent to which we complete the strategies will determine the effectiveness of the plan.

## **Implementation**

The POCD should be a dynamic document that is reviewed periodically as new trends, policies, and issues arise that might be incorporated into the text. Some recommendations can be carried out in a short period of time while others may take years to implement. The Planning & Zoning Commission can implement a majority of the strategies by taking appropriate action during the application review and approval process. The towns land use regulations should also be periodically reviewed to be certain they are in harmony with this plan.

Implementation will only occur through the efforts of residents, businesses, developers, applicants, owners, and officials of Suffield. Other town agencies such as the Boards of Selectmen and Finance, and Conservation Commission will need to collaborate on non-zoning related recommendations. To this end, creating a plan implementation committee may be appropriate.

The implementation committee would be established by the Board of Selectmen and could comprise of members of the Planning & Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission, Boards of Selectmen & Finance, Economic Development Commission, town staff, and others. Such a committee could meet a couple times a year to establish priorities and guide implementation of the Plan’s recommendations. The committee could also assess the status of certain recommendations and perhaps suggest new implementation techniques or make other adjustments if needed. The first task of the committee could be to create an implementation table to indicate who is responsible for each strategy in the POCD. Below is a picture of what an accountability table can look like taken from the 2010 POCD.

**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

# Appendix

## Community Survey Results

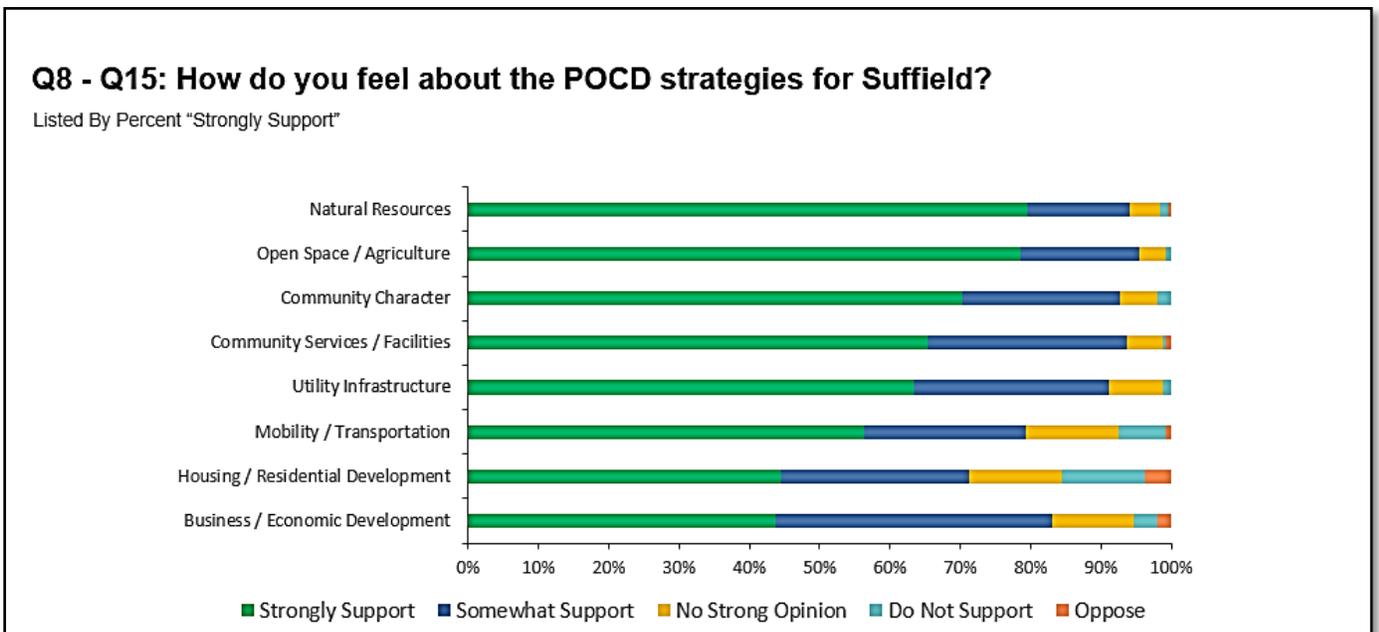
As part of the process of preparing this POCD, an on-line survey was conducted to obtain community input with regard to possible strategies for the future. The survey was open for about four weeks and 252 responses were received. The survey was open for about four weeks in September 2022.

### Overview Of Participants

1. Residents from all parts of Suffield participated in the survey.
2. About 76% of participants rated the overall quality of life as very good or excellent.
3. About 82% of participants thought they would still be living in Suffield in 10 years.
4. Participants identified the education system, housing (type, value, etc.), location, and community amenities as the top attributes which attracted them to Suffield.
5. About 60% of participants had lived in Suffield for 20+ years.
6. About 40% of participants were 35 to 54 years old and 30% were 65 to 79 years old.
7. About 55% of participants were female.
8. About 65% of participants had no children living at home

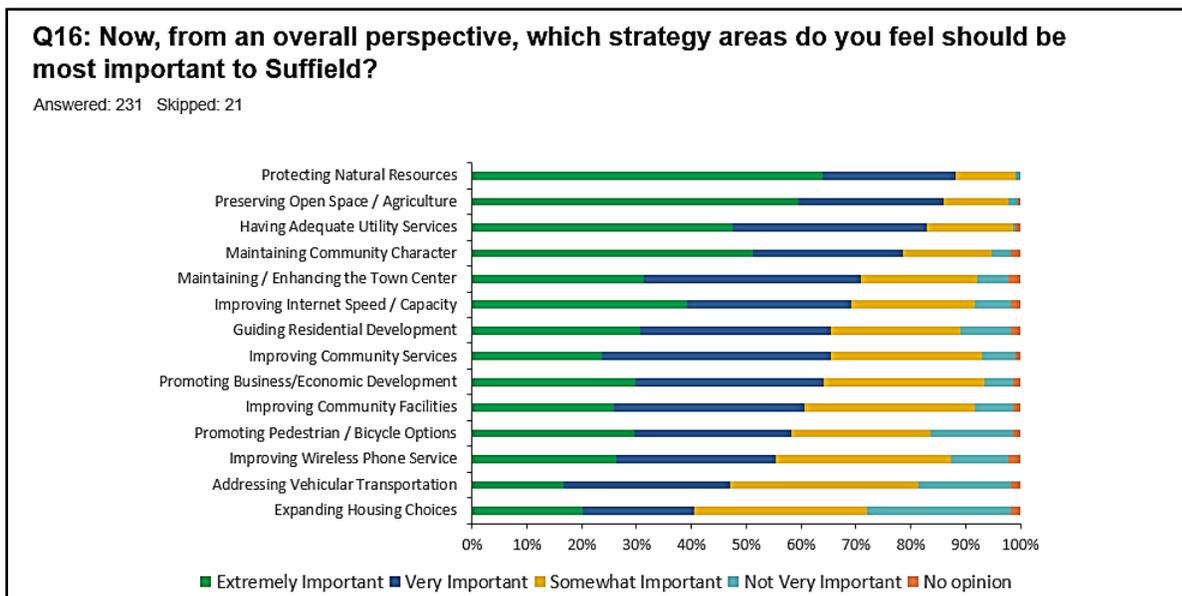
### Support For POCD Strategies

There was strong support for POCD strategies, both in terms of “strongly support” and “somewhat support”.



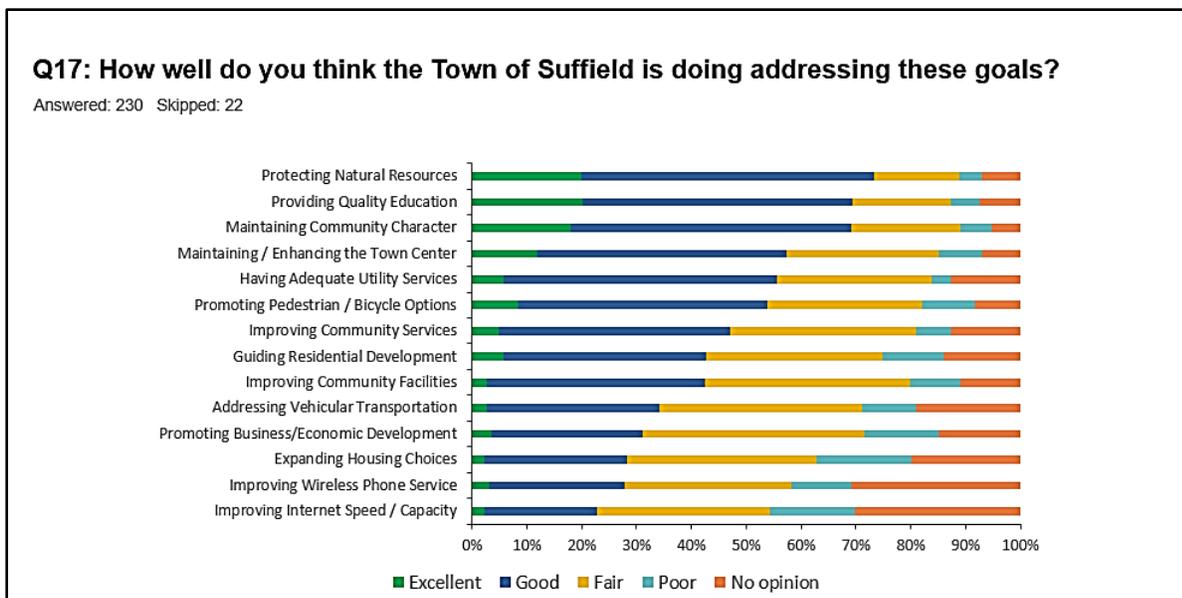
## Most Important Strategy Areas

Many participants felt conservation-related strategies (protecting natural resources, preserving open space / agriculture) were most important for Suffield.



## Best Performance Strategy Areas

Participants felt that the Town was doing a good job in terms of protecting natural resources and providing quality education. Participants felt that more could be done with regard to wireless services and internet speed / capacity.



# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

## **Planning & Zoning Commission**

Mark Winne, Chairman  
Erin Golembiewski, Vice Chair  
Ginny Bromage, Secretary  
Tracy Hespelt  
Leon Litvak  
Christine Sinopoli  
Jeff Girard, Alternate  
Ross Wilcox, Alternate  
Jacob Byrnes, Alternate

## **Major Contributors**

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Karen Isherwood, PE - Town Engineer

### **Consultant**

Glenn Chalder, AICP – Planimetrics  
*(Public Information Meeting, Online Survey, and Adoption Process)*