



# **Tolland Plan of Conservation and Development**

Adopted: Sept. 23, 2019

Effective: October 12, 2019





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*Cover photo of Crandall Park by Sandra Costello.*

# Introduction

It is easy to assume that little has changed in Tolland since the last Plan of Conservation and Development was adopted in 2009. In fact, little new development has occurred in the past decade, population growth has been stagnant, as has job growth. However, change is not always visible nor noticeable on the landscape or through data that we typically analyze to measure change.

Surprisingly, much has changed in the past decade, including changes driven by technology and its influence on how we live and work. The gig-economy, the adaptation of smart-phones into daily life, and artificial intelligence, and others, have and continue to change the way we live, work, and recreate.

The perspective of planning, land use, property markets, and community is impacted by these changes. We have become less tethered to the places of home, work, and recreation, even though we have become more connected than ever before. This changes how we live, where and how we work, where and how we shop, and how we engage in other activities.

While land use still plays an important component in this Plan, today, our approach is more focused on and aimed at managing change, adapting to the new world we live in and the unknown, but anticipated changes we face in the future. This Plan aims to blend our vision of retaining our unique mix of rural and suburban qualities with not falling behind of societal and technological changes.

## About Plans of Conservation and Development

A Plan of Conservation and Development (called POCD or “Plan” in this document) is a tool for guiding and managing growth and change. It provides a vision for Tolland’s future, and goals and strategies to move us toward that vision. It is advisory and should be consulted when making land use and budgetary decisions over the next decade. While the Planning and Zoning Commission is the primary user of the Plan, other town decision-makers can find guidance when setting their own priorities and budgets.

## POCD Requirements

State law (Connecticut General Statutes or “CGS”) requires that communities maintain a POCD in order to be eligible for certain state funding programs. The Plan must be examined at least once every ten years. State law also sets requirements for what must be included in a POCD. Among other requirements, a POCD shall:

- Be a statement of policies, goals and standards for physical and economic development.
- Recommend the most desirable use of land for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation and other purposes and provide a map of proposed land uses.
- Make provision for the development of housing opportunities and promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing.

Since Tolland adopted its last POCD in 2009, the state legislature set additional requirements. New requirements include that the

POCD shall consider: sea level change scenarios (as presented in a federal report on the matter); the need for technology infrastructure; and allowing older adults and persons with a disability to live in their homes and communities whenever possible. In addition, municipalities must create a housing plan.



## How This POCD Was Created

This Plan was intended to be a strategic “update” of the 2009 POCD, with a specific focus on economic development and meeting the new housing plan requirements. The Commission felt that much of the substance in the 2009 Plan is relevant today and focused on updating strategies for each issue area rather than re-writing a lengthy narrative. Readers will find that some topics addressed in the 2009 are not included in this update. That does not mean that they are not important and should not be considered as town boards, commissions and staff carry out their responsibilities. Rather this plan attempts to focus on new or changed conditions since the last plan.

The Commission engaged the services of Goman + York to run three public workshops and a focus group. Goman + York guided the Commission in formulating a vision statement and goals and strategies, provided detailed content and narrative for economic development and housing, and provided many of the strategies for infrastructure and other topics. Staff formatted the Plan, prepared maps, integrated the consultant’s work and wrote some sections. Along the way, town boards and commissions provided input on those areas within their expertise. In addition to the public workshops, residents were surveyed twice. Staff conducted a preliminary survey (with 800 respondents) and GreatBlue Research conducted a statistically-valid telephone and on-line survey, with approximately 400 people participating in each. Lastly, Planimetrics, Inc. conducted a detailed demographic analysis with a focus on migration and population projections.

All supporting materials including the survey results and demographic analyses are in a separate reference document.

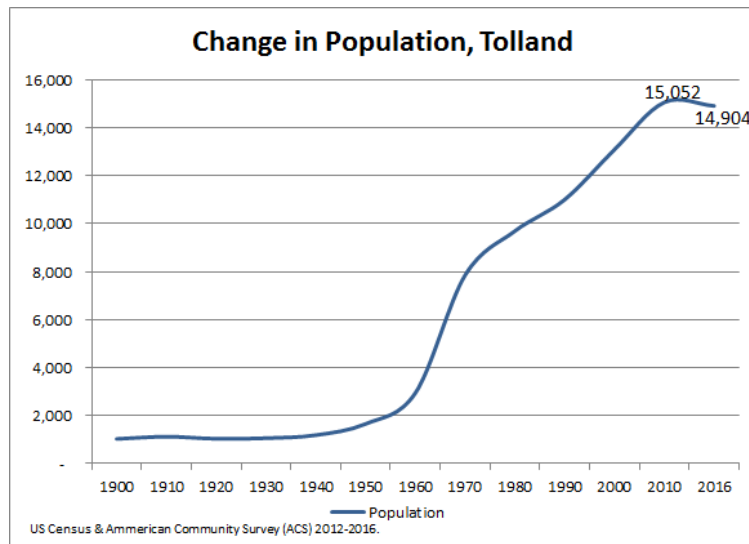


# Conditions and Trends

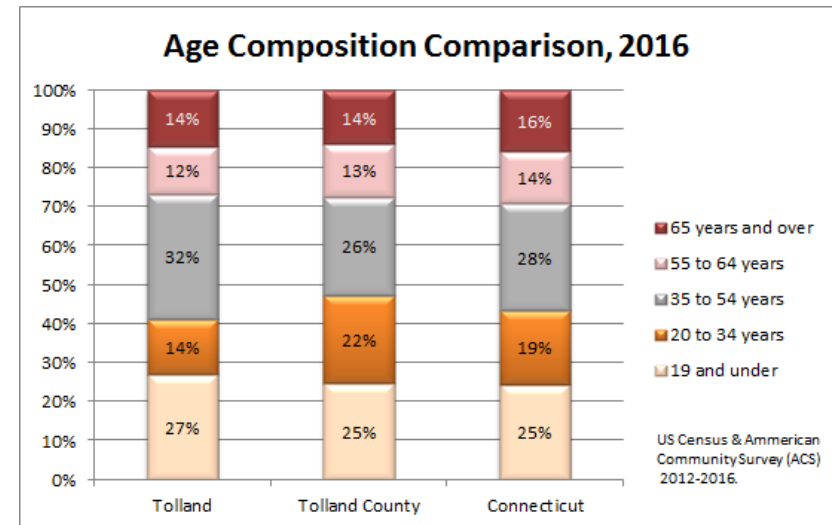
## Highlights

Please refer to the companion document for full reports and analyses of Tolland's demographic, socioeconomic, housing and economic factors. The housing section also includes a detailed housing analysis. This section includes key highlights.

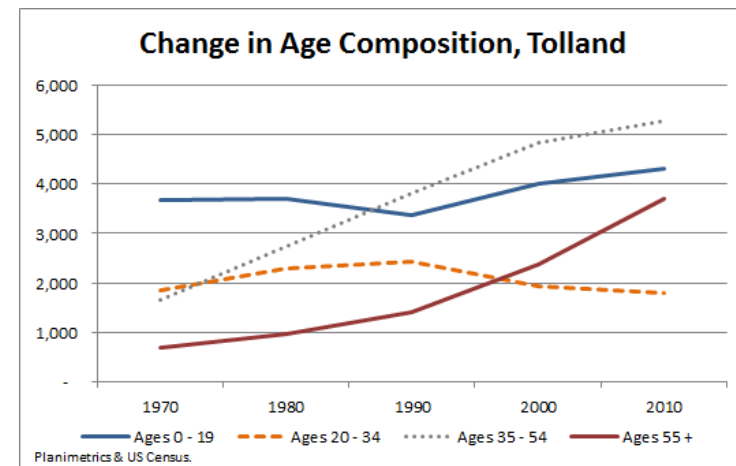
After decades of rapid growth, Tolland's population growth has stabilized and even decreased slightly, to an estimated population of 14,904 in 2016.



Compared to the County and State, Tolland has a greater percentage of those ages 35 to 54 and smaller percentage of young adults.



Tolland has seen a steep increase in its age 55 and over population.

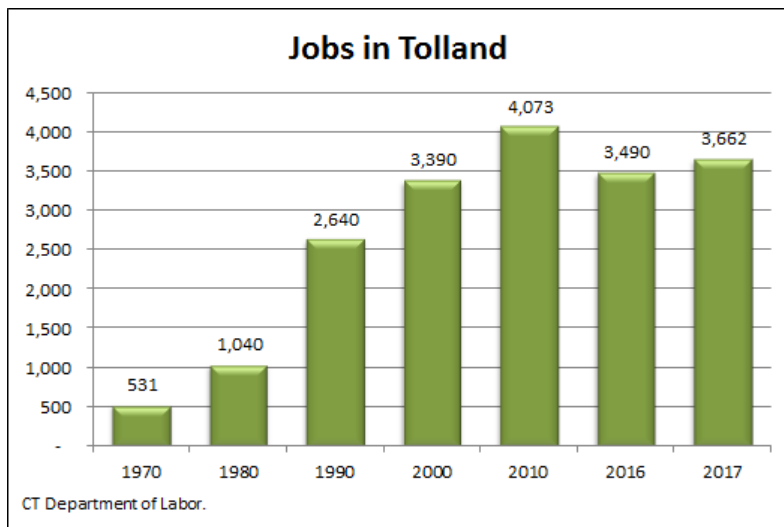


After a slight decrease from 2011 to 2013, Tolland's labor force grew to 8,699 in 2017. "Labor force" includes Tolland residents who are employed or want to be employed.

Even during the recent recession, Tolland's unemployment rate consistently remained lower than that of the State and the Hartford Labor Market.

The top four work places for Tolland residents are Tolland, Hartford, Vernon and Manchester.

Jobs located in Tolland peaked at 4,073 in 2010. Since then there has been a slight decline, but the number has started increasing again. Most of these jobs are filled by Tolland residents.



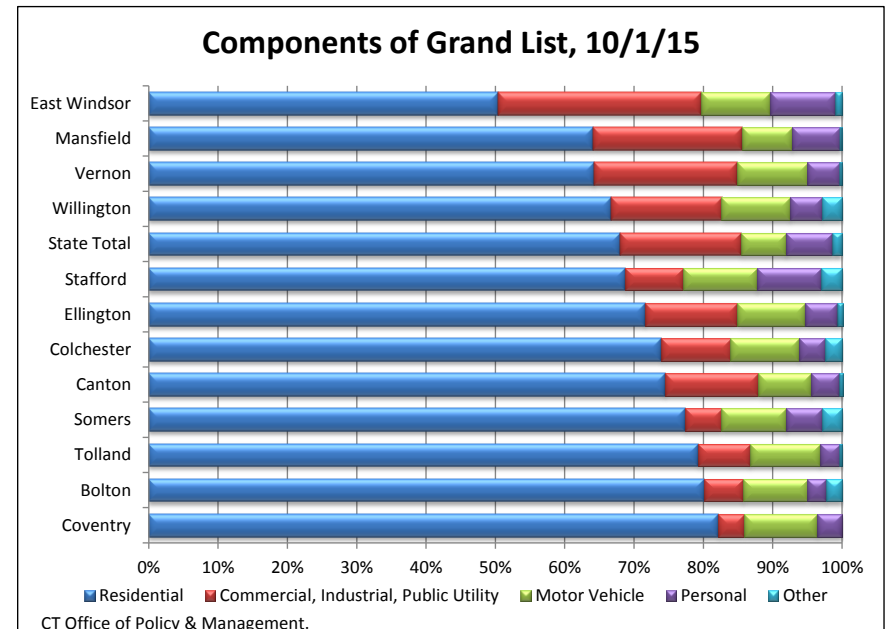
Compared to the state, Tolland has a greater share of jobs in "Healthcare & Social Assistance" and "Wholesale Trade." While the average annual wages for jobs in Tolland lag behind that of the State overall, it is higher than most nearby communities.

Lease rates for office and industrial space in Tolland are on the lower end when compared to rates for the greater Hartford market (Table I). This may be due to the fact that Tolland's commercial and industrial buildings tend to be older.

**Table I. Lease Rates**

Asset Class	Region/Sq. Ft.	Tolland/Sq. Ft.
Multi-Family Residential	\$1.00 - \$2.70	\$1.04 - \$1.62
Commercial Office	\$10.00 - \$35.00	\$10.00 - \$18.00
Commercial Retail	\$7.00 - \$45.00	\$7.50 - \$17.00
Industrial	\$4.00 - \$7.50	\$4.25 - \$5.75

Like most rural and suburban communities in Connecticut, Tolland predominantly relies on property taxes for revenue, with residential properties comprising most (roughly 80%) of the grand list. Ten percent of the Town's grand list is exempt from property taxes.





## Land Use

Tolland is primarily a residential community, with residential land uses comprising just under half of the land in town and commercial and industrial uses comprising just under three percent of the land. Parks and open space comprise almost a quarter of Tolland.

**Table 2. 2019 Land Use**

Land Use	Acres	% of Tolland
<b>Residential</b>	<b>12,317</b>	<b>47.7%</b>
Single Family Residential	8,391	
Residential with Additional Development Potential	3,686	
2 to 4 Family Residential	114	
Multi-Family Residential	126	
<b>Commercial / Industrial</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
Commercial and Industrial	499	
Quarry	123	
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<b>5,076</b>	<b>19.6%</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>4.6%</b>
<b>Town Land / Institutional</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>1.8%</b>
Town Land and Institutional	406	
Utility and Transportation	55	
<b>Other</b>	<b>1,696</b>	<b>6.6%</b>
Rights of Way	1,334	
Water	361	
<b>Vacant</b>	<b>4,494</b>	<b>17.4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,848</b>	

Source: Town records, as of February 2019

## Zoning

The majority of land in Tolland is zoned for residential use, with 4% zoned for business uses. Since the 2009 POCD, two new business zones were created—the Tolland Village Area and the Technology Campus Zone—and the Neighborhood Commercial Zone was split into two variations.

**Table 3. 2019 Zoning**

Land Use	Acres	% of Tolland*
<b>Residential</b>	<b>24,441</b>	<b>95%</b>
Residential Design District	24,260	
Village Center Zone	180	
<b>Commercial / Industrial</b>	<b>1,009</b>	<b>4%</b>
Gateway Design District	247	
Tolland Village Area	91	
Community Commercial Zone	110	
Neighborhood Commercial Zone G	17	
Neighborhood Commercial Zone T	8	
Commercial / Industrial Zone A	240	
Commercial / Industrial Zone B	51	
Technology Campus Zone	146	
Tolland Business Park	99	
<b>Total Land Area</b>	<b>25,848</b>	

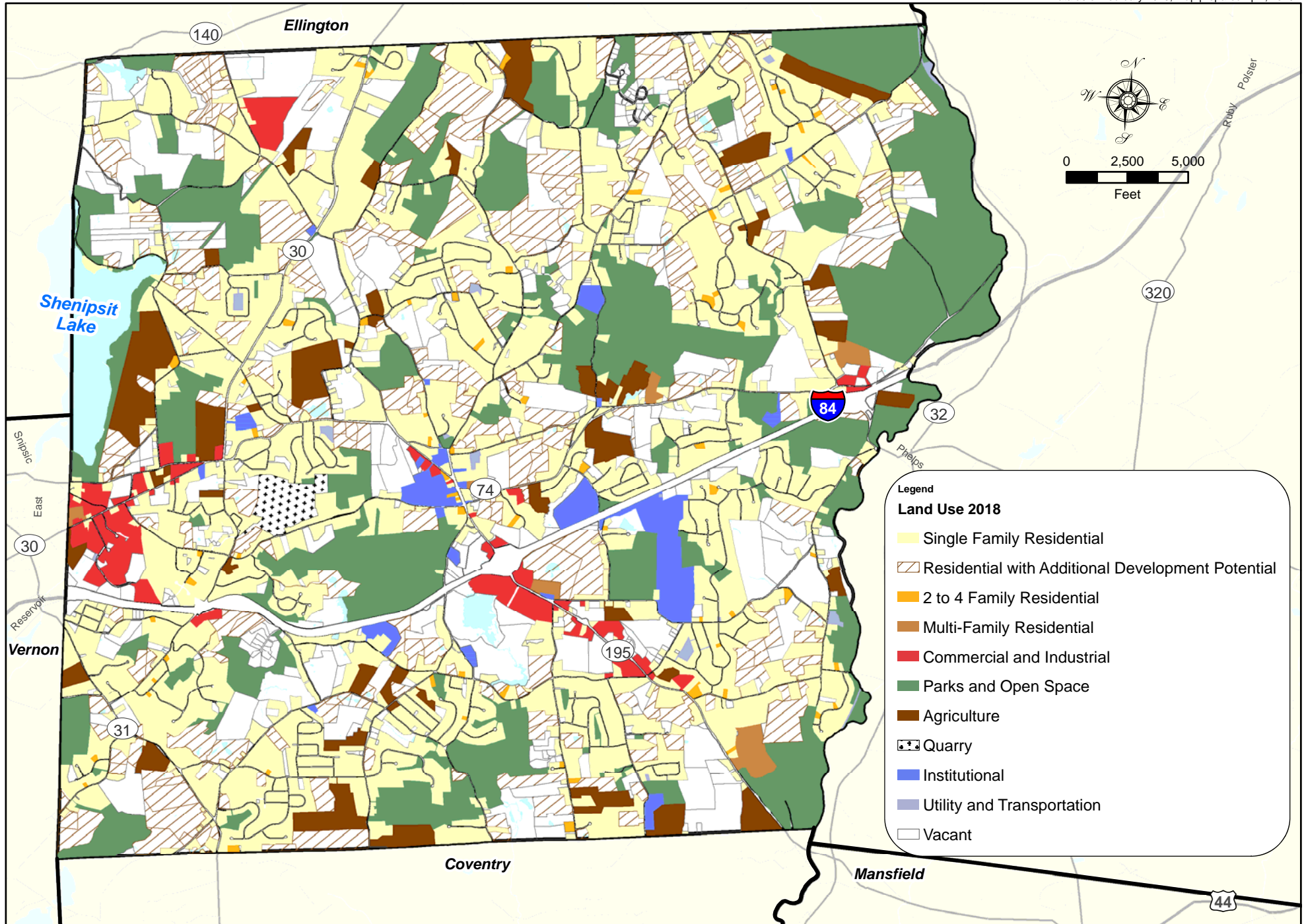
\*% does not total 100% because not all land is within a zoning district (e.g., roads).

Source: Town records, as of March 2019

# Existing Land Use Map

## Tolland, CT

Data as of February 2019, Map prepared April, 2019

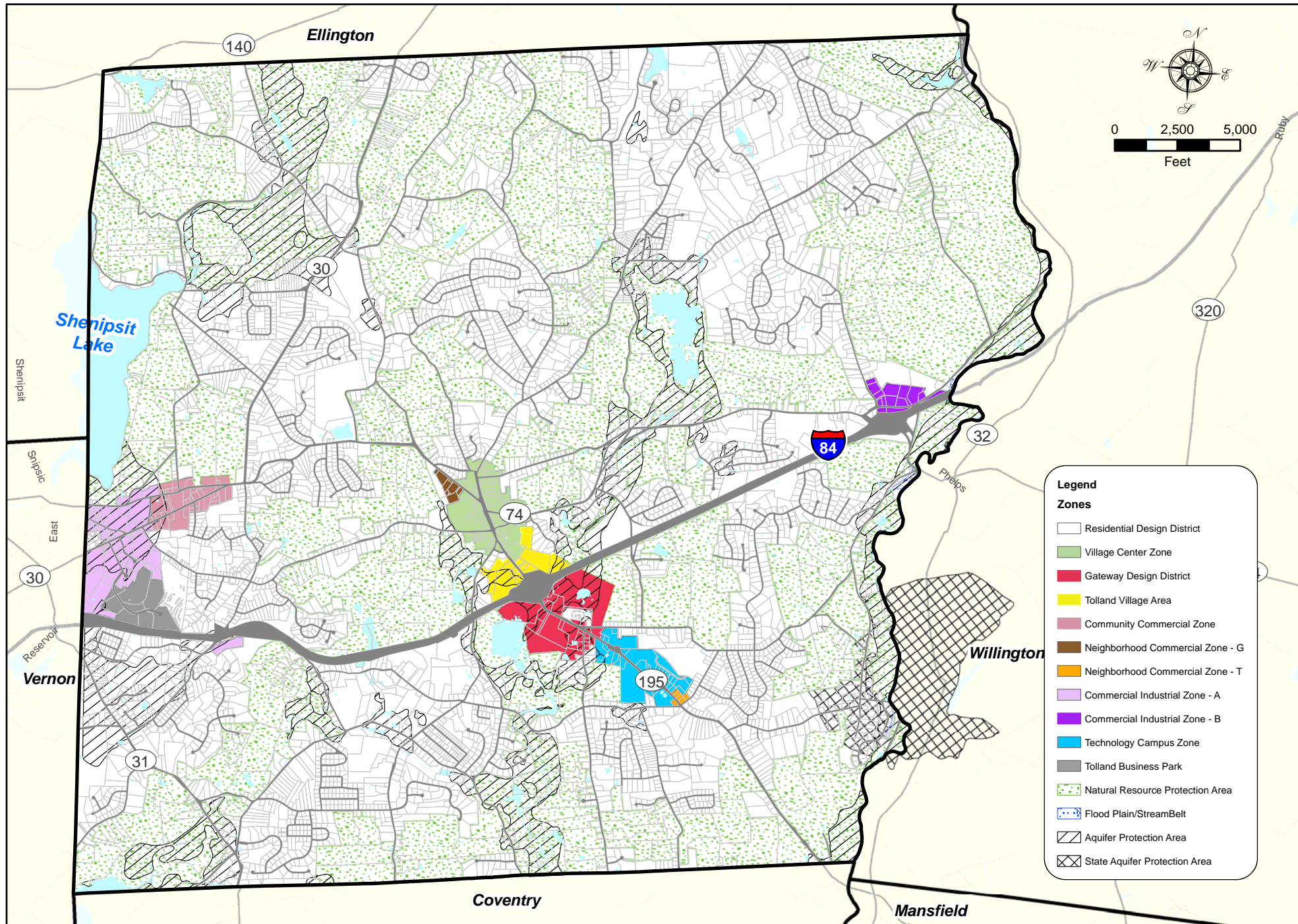




# Existing Zoning Map

Tolland, CT

Zoning as of December 1, 2017, Map prepared October, 2019



## Key Factors for This Update

Many factors affect the recommendations contained in this plan. Factors derived from experiences and changes over the last ten years and input from the public during the plan update process. Key factors and findings include:

- Residents differ in their view of whether Tolland is “rural” or “suburban” and in many cases, these views affect their opinions about growth and change.
- There is a greater emphasis on the creation of spaces with “social value”. From libraries to coffee shops to shopping centers, people use and interact with public and commercial spaces much differently than just a few decades ago.
- Population growth and economic growth have been stagnant. We hear the most discussion about real and perceived lack of progress in business zones. In fairness to the Town, there was a recession since the last Plan and Connecticut overall has lagged in economic growth.
- The over-reliance on one type of housing (single-family) makes us less resilient. There appears to be greater recognition that providing more housing choices would benefit the Town.
- A large segment of the community mobilized when faced with a development proposed for the Tolland Village Area (TVA) deemed as veering too far from the “village” concept envisioned for that area. While the process was at times contentious, it forced the community to hone in on what types of new development might be acceptable and to start

identifying non-negotiables. Many lessons were learned and influence this POCD.

- Yet there were a number of residents who supported the project. How does a community and its decision-makers account for divergent viewpoints? The notion of handling “change” became an important issue throughout this Plan.
- Between the recession and reduced State funding, Tolland has perhaps fewer resources since the last POCD.
- In part due to the controversy around the proposed TVA development, a number of residents became engaged in planning for the first time. Many have since run for elected positions or have volunteered to serve on boards and commissions. These highly interested and engaged residents are a tremendous asset and can play an important role in helping to implement this Plan.

Recognizing these factors, this POCD shifts its focus from changes in land use due to development pressure to adapting to and managing change. Therefore, this POCD recommends fewer changes to land use and more recommendations to enhance Tolland’s existing land use pattern, forms, and functions.

This Plan outlines strategies around typical topics addressed in a POCD—housing, natural resources, transportation, etc. Given these key factors, the Plan concludes with a framework for addressing “change”.



# Vision

Tolland is close-knit New England community that offers a unique balance of suburban amenities and lifestyle with a rural aesthetic and tranquility. As a community we seek to maintain the historic and small-town charm that we know, love, and enjoy. While our identity rests in our past and present charm, we embrace our future. A future that is framed by our continued and strategic investment in what we are fortunate to already have and nurturing who we are as a community and place.

Moving forward, Tolland will continue to invest in our history and rural charm—the basis of our character and who we are—as we embrace the inevitability of change. We will do this thoughtfully with an eye toward incremental growth that maintains our unique balance of a rural-suburban aesthetic and lifestyle with our core community values into the future.

To accomplish this vision and our future trajectory, we seek to nurture our sense of place through continuous improvement that builds community confidence, fosters community pride, and creates a predictable, vibrant, and prosperous Tolland.

# Natural Resources

Tolland's natural features—forests, hills, rivers and ponds, and rock outcroppings—all contribute to the natural beauty, relative quietness, and seclusion that residents appreciate. Protecting these resources preserves these benefits and helps to support a healthy and thriving ecosystem, and, in many cases, also protects human health and well-being.

Some resources are so important to environmental quality, public health or character that alterations should be avoided to the extent feasible. These include the 100-year floodplain, steep slopes (>20%), and watercourses including riparian buffers (vegetated area along stream or river) and wetlands. Other resources have important functions that might be able to be maintained while compatible activities take place, if such activities occur in an environmentally-sensitive way. These are resources to conserve and they include the 500-year floodplain, areas of high ground water availability, identified aquifers and recharge areas and unique or special habitat areas such as areas in the State's Natural Diversity Database (NDDB).

The following outlines key considerations for this POCD update.

## Water Quality Protection

The importance of protecting water resources cannot be overstated. Tolland's water resources provide drinking water for residents and businesses in Tolland and the larger region. Protecting the quality of Shenipsit Lake, the Tolland Aquifer, and other ground and surface water resources is an important public health issue.

The Town should continue to strive to improve water quality of its water bodies, including the Skungamaug River, Gages Brook, Crandall Pond and others. The 2009 "Tankerhoosen River Watershed Management Plan" provides specific recommendations to improve the health of waterbodies within that watershed, which encompasses portions of Tolland, Vernon, Bolton and Manchester. The study includes recommendations for Gages Brook, located in Tolland's Business Park. The Town should review the study's recommendations and determine an implementation plan for key recommendations.

The revised state-mandated stormwater standards (called "MS4") are a key change since the 2009 POCD. The standards impose greater water quality and water quantity requirements when development occurs. They require inventories of existing drainage infrastructure and the adoption of regulations requiring either off-site improvements or payments-in-lieu-of if a site cannot address all stormwater requirements. While Tolland was one of the first communities in Connecticut to adopt more progressive standards a decade ago, the regulations must be upgraded to meet these new requirements. These measures will help to reduce the amount of pollutants leaving developed properties and help alleviate drainage issues, but will likely increase the cost of development.

## Sustainable CT

*In 2018, the Tolland Town Council opted to participate in a new program called Sustainable Connecticut. The program awards participating communities points for various types of initiatives taken to be more "sustainable". This term is used comprehensively to cover not only environmental sustainability, but cultural, economic and socioeconomic sustainability. Many of the actions recommended by Sustainable CT are included here and in other sections.*



As a community that is primarily reliant on septic systems and private wells, Tolland must remain alert to any potential septic failure issues. In 2017, Tolland's Water Pollution Control Authority adopted a "Plan for Addressing Wastewater in Tolland" which outlines actions to proactively minimize the potential failure of on-site septic systems, among other items. That plan is incorporated by reference into this POCD.

The Town should identify candidate areas for restoration projects (e.g., restore a streambank, area along a lake, etc.). Priority areas might include along the Skungamaug River, Tolland Marsh, Gages Brook and Shenipsit Lake.

## **Drainage and Flooding**

According to the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation, over the last 50+ years, the State has been seeing an increased frequency of greater magnitude rainstorms. In Tolland, people have reported drainage issues in areas that had not experienced issues before. While we cannot know for certain that this increase in greater magnitude storms is the cause, if this trend continues we can expect to see more drainage issues. The MS4 requirements, as noted above, might help address some drainage issues.

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) is updating flood maps. Tolland has requested studies for Gages Brook and the Willimantic River. The Town should use the updated mapping to address areas with drainage issues.

## **Development in Sensitive Areas**

Only four percent of Tolland is zoned for business development and little vacant land is available for development within business zones. Much of that vacant land contains or is proximate to sensitive natural resources. Tolland has adopted regulations to help minimize impacts when development does occur and the State's stringent drainage requirements will also help reduce impacts. When development does occur in conservation areas, it is important to ensure that proper site planning and construction practices reduce impacts to the extent possible. Specific efforts might include:

- Hosting workshops to review stormwater requirements with local developers and contractors.
- Exploring more effective erosion and sediment control measures and diligently enforcing requirements.
- Undertaking additional efforts to inform property owners who have wetlands when a permit is required.
- Providing educational programs for businesses and residents. It is particularly important to help people understand how actions on their individual properties can affect the natural environment, especially water quality.

## **Climate Change**

A POCD is required to consider sea level change scenarios published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Technical Report OAR CPO-I. The report presents scenarios that result in a range of sea level rise from 0.2 meters to two meters. Given Tolland's distance to the coast, it is anticipated that

sea level rise alone will not greatly impact Tolland. Other impacts related to climate change could impact Tolland and should be monitored. These include likely negative impacts to agriculture and habitat and flooding due to higher intensity storms.

The Town has taken steps to reduce impacts from town facilities including the installation of geothermal heating and cooling systems at the Town Hall, Tolland Intermediate School and Tolland Middle School. The Town also partnered with a solar company to build a 1.3 megawatt solar array. The Town also should investigate additional opportunities for solar, geothermal and other sustainable energy systems at town buildings and land. When considering new town solar projects, farmland generally should be avoided to minimize the loss of soils suitable for farming.

Residents also seem to embrace alternative energy sources. In just a four year period from 2014 to 2018, the Town issued 156 permits for residential solar projects. The Town should continue keeping it simple to apply for and install solar panels. Zoning regulations might need to be updated to address some minor issues identified by solar installers, such as how height is determined.

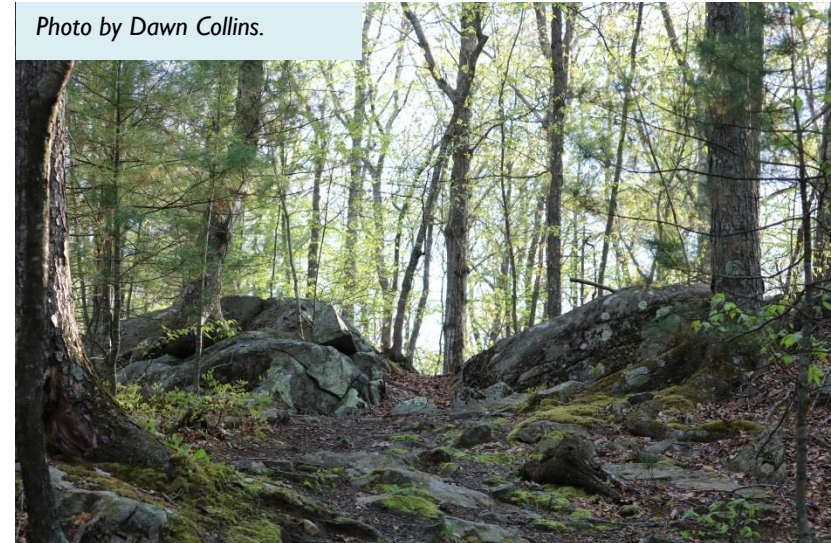
## Natural Hazards

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) has prepared a 2019–2024 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan for the region and it includes a section on Tolland. Tolland is impacted by localized flooding issues due to intense storms and / or poor drainage. The plan identifies specific areas of concern. With vast open space and forested areas, brush fires are of concern. The plan also notes that extreme snow fall has also been a challenge. Recommended actions in that plan related to planning, zoning and development are incorporated into this POCD.

Photo by Frank James.



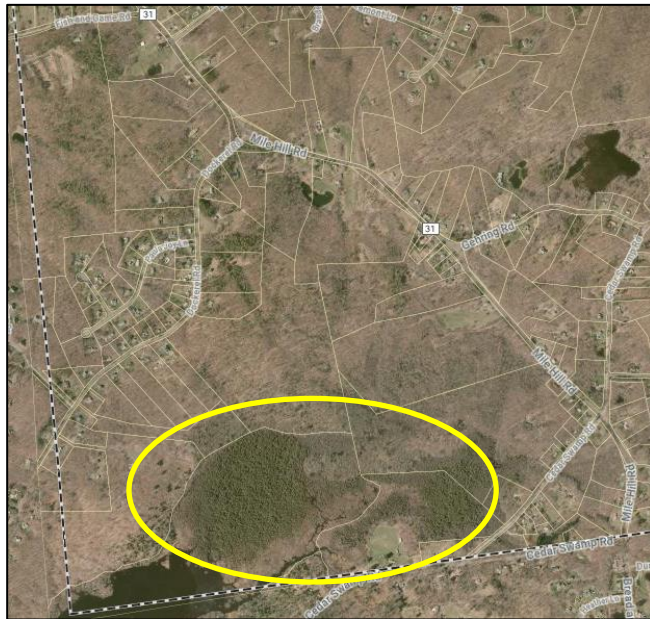
Photo by Dawn Collins.



# Atlantic White Cedar Forest

Since the last POCD, greater awareness has arisen about a large, rare Atlantic White Cedar forest near Bolton Lakes. According to a 2014 Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team report, Atlantic White Cedar forests are “one of the thirteen most imperiled ecosystems in Connecticut.” The report further points out that land use changes upland can stress the forest.

## Atlantic White Cedar Forest



Tolland should stay apprised of on-going research into this forest and develop actions it can take to help protect this unique forest.

## Invasive Species

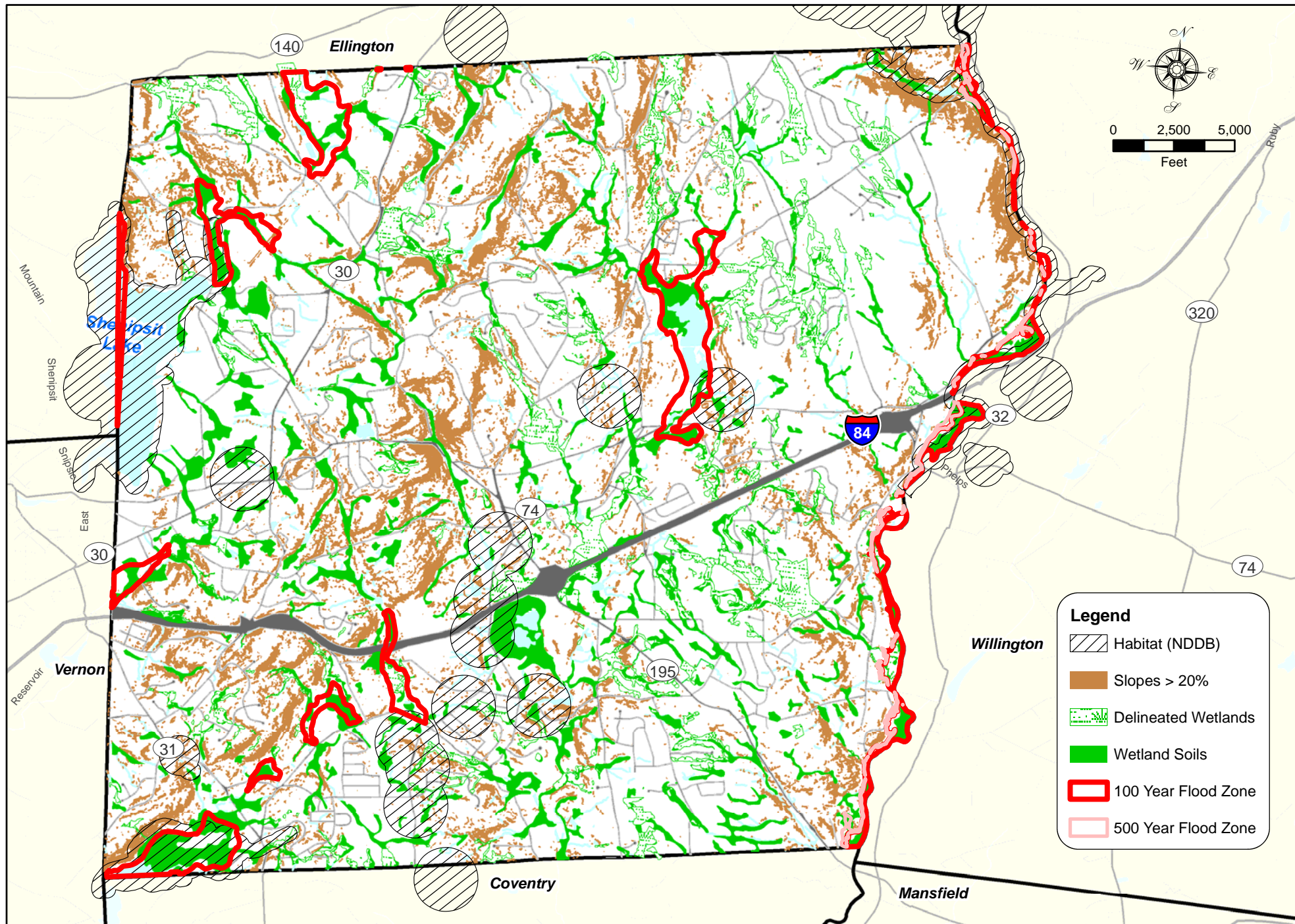
Invasive vegetation continues to threaten properties and habitat in Tolland including town-owned properties. Volunteers and staff who maintain properties should receive training on how to identify the most prevalent invasive species and eradication methods. Any training should include the stewardship program for town conservation areas.



# Natural Resources Map

Tolland, CT

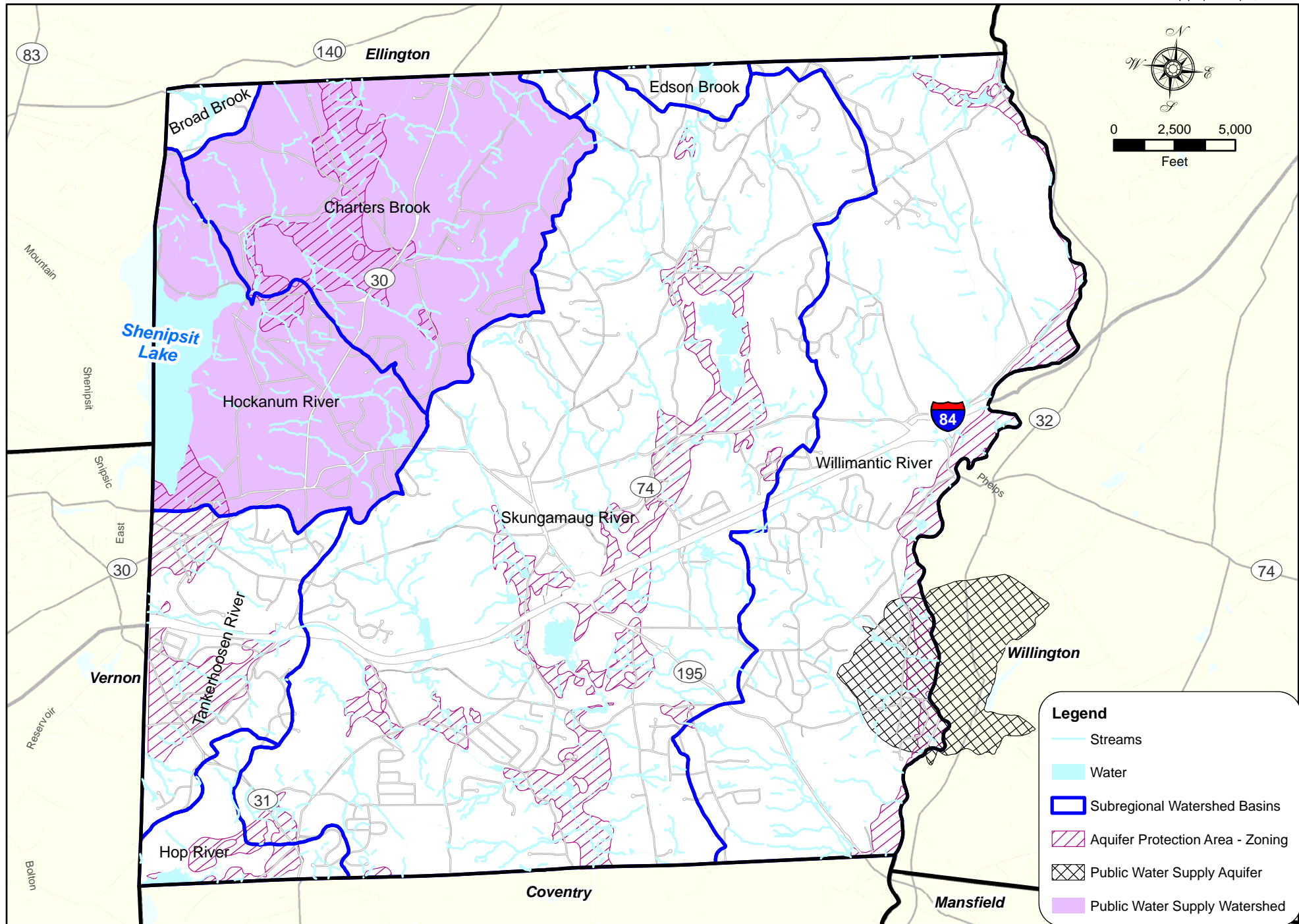
Data as of December 2018, Map prepared April, 2019



# Water Resources Map

Tolland, CT

Map prepared April, 2019





# Open Space

Tolland has done an exceptional job at permanently preserving valuable natural areas and stewarding its conservation areas. Approximately 20% of land is open space or parkland with 17% of land permanently protected. Open space preservation contributes to at least two quality-of-life attributes identified by residents: natural beauty and outdoor recreation.

Public support remains high for the continued purchase of undeveloped land in order to preserve it for open space (77% according to the POCD survey). Two-fifths of those who support acquisition indicated they would pay more in taxes for acquisitions.

Those entities that play a role in evaluating potential acquisitions are mindful of the cost to preserve land, especially during recent difficult budget years. They recognize that acquisitions must be meaningful and advance a purpose and not be acquired simply because it was for sale. The Town should continue with this approach for evaluating possible acquisitions. There is no standard percentage of how much land should be preserved, although Connecticut has a state-wide goal of 20%.

Evaluation criteria when reviewing potential future acquisitions might include whether the land is adjacent to other preserved open space, if the parcel contain sensitive natural resources that warrant protection, and whether the parcel will provide opportunities for passive activities (e.g., hiking). The current open space plan is 13 years old. It might be time to update it to reflect recent acquisitions and reexamine acquisition criteria.

**Table 4. Tolland's Parks and Open Space, 2019**

Type of Open Space	Acreage	% of Land in Tolland	% of Parks & Open Space
<b>Passive Open Space:</b> <i>Managed by Conservation Commission as conservation areas; used for passive activity (e.g., hiking). Permanently protected through deed restrictions or town intentions.</i>	1,164	5%	22%
<b>Subdivision Open Space:</b> <i>Dedicated through subdivision process. Generally permanently protected (requires Planning &amp; Zoning Commission resubdivision approval to remove designation).</i>	444	2%	8%
<b>State Property:</b> <i>Only that State land dedicated for open space. Generally well-protected but State has developed such land in past.</i>	1,673	6%	32%
<b>Land Trust:</b> <i>Permanently protected by a Land Trust through ownership or easement.</i>	315	1%	6%
<b>Conservation Easement*:</b> <i>Privately owned but with a deed restriction.</i>	208	1%	4%
<b>Private Open Space:</b> <i>Land that acts like open space but could be developed (e.g., Fish &amp; Game Club).</i>	842	3%	16%
<b>Recreation – Municipal:</b> <i>Town land under control of Parks &amp; Recreation Department. Used for active &amp; passive recreation.</i>	440	2%	8%
<b>Preserved Farmland:</b> <i>Deed-restricted for farm use only.</i>	182	1%	3%
<b>Total**</b>	<b>5,266</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Permanently Protected:</b> <i>All of the above minus private open space.</i>	4,425	17%	

\*There are many more conservation easements not included in these totals.

\*\*Slightly greater than percentage in Table 1 since this calculation includes some easements.

Source: Town Records as of February 2019.



Tolland may wish to take more creative approaches when acquiring open space. Some communities and land trusts will sell a portion of an acquired property (e.g., for housing) to help fund preservation of the larger parcel. The Town is fortunate to have many potential partners when considering acquisitions. Two land trusts have holdings in Tolland and there are other state-wide preservation entities that might be able to assist. Tolland has been able to secure grant funding for a number of its open space acquisitions and should continue to seek funding when opportunities arise.

Tolland has used easements to preserve land and, for the most part, it has worked. Easements keep the land under private ownership but places a deed restriction to limit the right to build within the easement area. Going forward, acquiring a conservation easement over portions of a property is no longer a preferred preservation technique. Easements are difficult to track in the land records and, after many years, impossible to identify in the field. The Town does not have the resources to monitor the restrictions to ensure that the property owner is complying with restrictions.

The Town has acquired parcels of land that have not been designated for any specific purpose. Some of these might present opportunities to become conservations areas. The Conservation Commission should review the properties and make suggestions to the Town Council.

The Town Council and Conservation Commission have developed an effective system for managing conservation areas. The Conservation Commission develops and adopts a management plan for each conservation area outlining features, appropriate uses and any maintenance considerations. The Town Council then approves each plan.

The Tolland Conservation Corps is comprised of volunteers who perform maintenance and upkeep activities and each property is assigned a lead volunteer steward. The Town should continue to invest in this management and stewardship system.

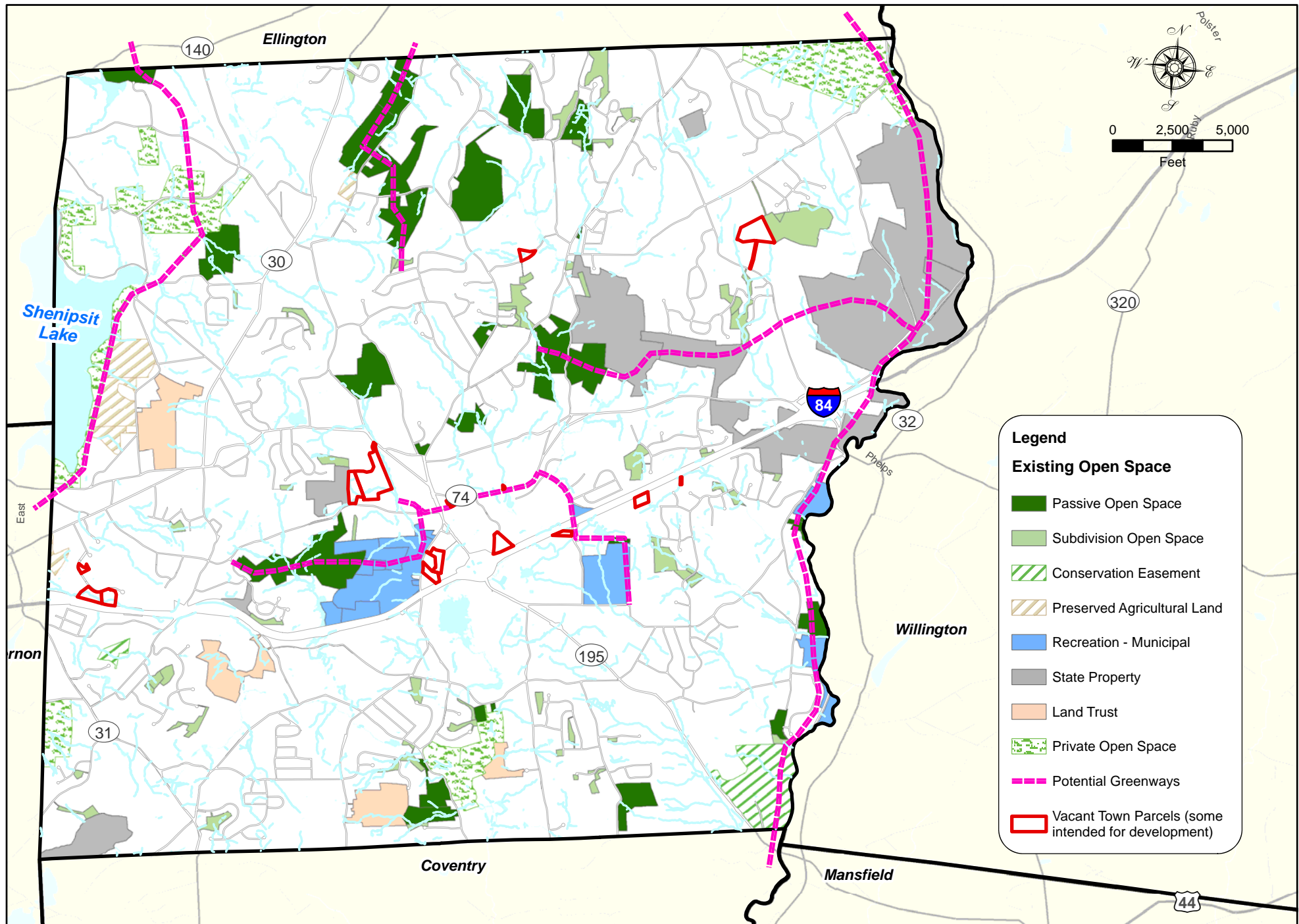
Lastly, the Town should do more to convey and celebrate its “outdoor” personality and its conservation areas. Conservation areas and outdoor recreation can be part of economic development. The Conservation Commission currently holds events, including moonlight hikes and “Walktober” events. Additional celebrations and activities should be encouraged.



# Open Space Map

Tolland, CT

Data as of February 2018, Map prepared April, 2019



# Community Character

Community character is one of the most commonly used phrases in planning. Ironically, it is also one of the most ambiguous and least defined phrases, due at least in part to character being a unique quality and a personal feeling or experience of the individual residents of a given community at a specific moment in time. It is a complex and adaptive quality of place, an organic and self-organizing quality—a quality that cannot be created through top-down efforts. It often involves the core values and aesthetics of a community.

The core values of a community remain mostly constant over time. However, they shift and move in intensity and importance. The aesthetics of community are often framed by an idealized or nostalgic image of place. That image tends to lag in that it changes more slowly than the actual changes occurring. This lag—or slow adoption and acceptance of change—creates an often-intense feeling of threat to community character as the community is continually reshaped by many forces (social, economic, design, technological, etc.).

The core values that provide the foundation to Tolland's community character are small-town, historic, charm, community, and suburban convenience. The aesthetics that frame the image of Tolland's community character are the New England Village, the Town Green, rural tranquility, abundant space, and natural scenery (especially forests, trees, and farmland).

Collectively, these values and aesthetics are further enhanced by individual needs, wants, and experiences that coalesce through a consensus of the community into Tolland's community character.

Community character is continually reinforced through dialogue and learning, processes that further produce, reproduce, and strengthen the core values and aesthetics.

Understanding the complexity of community character and the specific qualities of Tolland's community character inform this Plan and the Planning and Zoning Commission (and other town agencies) as to what is most important to the residents of Tolland. This understanding further informs the Plan and Commission as to the strengths and qualities of Tolland that not only need to be preserved and protected, but also need to be promoted, enhanced, and strengthened. Community character cannot be produced from top down actions, but it can be enhanced and reinforced.

All chapters in this Plan impact community character. There are a few elements that are so intrinsically linked to character that they are included in this section rather than elsewhere. These include historic resources, scenic resources, and farms and farmland.

## Historic and Archeological Resources

The center of town, Tolland Green, is designated as both a local and national historic district. Preserving the historic integrity, cultural value, and scenic attributes of the Green remains a priority.

To gain the national designation, Tolland's volunteers created an extensive inventory of the buildings around the Green. A second town-wide inventory of older houses was also created by the Town Historian in 1996, with grant funding. Tolland should modernize these inventories through digital mapping and making this information available on-line. Sustainable CT recommends tactics to promote local historic and cultural assets; the Town should implement appropriate measures.



The 2009 POCD included recommendations to consider property tax incentives for preserving historic buildings, consider adopting a demolition delay ordinance for historic buildings (which does not prevent demolition but gives the Town and preservation advocates time to explore alternatives to demolition), and continue to support the active use of historic buildings. Those recommendations remain relevant today.

A number of Tolland's historic buildings are owned by the Town or by non-profits. Finding funding for basic upkeep can be a challenge. The Town, in cooperation with the owners of these historic buildings, should explore grants and creative ways to help maintain and restore the buildings.

Tolland should remain cognizant of how development can affect historic resources. Preserving the Town's heritage and new development are not mutually exclusive. New development can be compatible and even complement existing historic buildings and landscapes. Careful attention to building architecture and site layout can help minimize impacts and also help create new places to cherish.

Tolland's cemeteries also are of historic importance, with some graves dating back hundreds of years. The gravestones themselves help tell Tolland's history. The Town should continue to protect and, when needed, restore or repair these historic gravestones.

Lastly, when development is proposed to occur in areas that are likely to contain archeological artifacts, plans are referred to the State Archeologist. This practice has worked well and should continue.

*Daniel Benton Homestead*



## Cultural Resources

Many of Tolland's cultural resources are tied to its history or located in historic buildings, such as the Daniel Benton Homestead Museum and the Arts Center of Tolland.

The Sustainable CT Program includes a number of strategies to help create “vibrant and creative cultural ecosystems”. One recommended tactic entails mapping and promoting tourism and cultural assets.

The Town can also promote its living cultural assets—artists, writers, musicians and other local talent. For example, the Conservation Commission's annual photograph contest recognizes talented residents while showcasing the Town's natural beauty. The Tolland Library also helps support the arts. The Town should

identify additional ways to promote local talent and incorporate it into town projects. Possible programs might include:

- Promoting local art and artists when undertaking municipal projects (e.g., students painting a mural on a wall of a town building, small art installations within buildings or at conservation areas, etc.).
- Landowners with vacancies in retail-type plazas could be encouraged to post student art in the windows while the space remains vacant. This turns a visual impact into visual interest.

## Scenic Resources

With its waterbodies, forests, farmland and sometimes dramatic topography, many roads in Tolland exhibit great scenic value. The Tolland Historic District Commission recently successfully petitioned the State Department of Transportation to designate as a scenic road much of Route 74 and a part of Route 195 from the Town Green west. The Town also adopted a local scenic road ordinance, but has yet to designate any road as scenic. The Town should be mindful of scenic features when undertaking road improvement projects, and as discussed in the transportation section, encourage the State Department of Transportation to do the same for state routes.

Like most communities with an agricultural heritage, stone walls are a part of Tolland's landscape. The Town should preserve stone walls on its own properties, including along roads, and encourage preservation on private property when reviewing applications for development.

Settlers Rock



## Tolland Green and Village Center Zone

Many residents are passionate about the character of the Town Green and have a strong desire to preserve and protect the Green. Tolland also wants a village center—a functional, vibrant, and prosperous focal point for the community and a place where the community can gather, socialize, and celebrate Tolland. Unfortunately, there is a disconnect between the passion for the town green and the want of a village center. The strong desire to preserve and protect the Green has shut down discussion or consideration of the Green fulfilling the want of a village center.

Change is inevitable. Resistance to change can, in fact, be more detrimental than change itself—resistance can result in stagnation and decline. That said, change should not imply loss or transformation, but can be viewed as adaptation. While many in Tolland believe the Green (and Village Center Zone) to be a homogenous residential area, from the perspective of land use it is already a heterogeneous mix of residential, institutional, and commercial uses.

The Town Green and Village Center Zone have potential and possibly provide the opportunity to fulfill the want of a vibrant and interesting village center. Tolland must have a discussion—transparent and honest—about the Town Green and Village Center Zone. The Planning and Zoning Commission should lead and facilitate such a discussion with no preconceived notions of where the discussion will go.

## Gateways

The key entry points, or gateways, into Tolland provide opportunities to help visitors, especially first-time visitors, form an image of the Town—to make a first and lasting impression. Gateways should be treated as showcase locations that provide the public face of the community. Perhaps the busiest and most known gateway to Tolland is Exit 68 off Interstate 84 and the Route 195 corridor which leads to UConn. This and other gateway locations should present the best image of Tolland, which can be accomplished through enhanced signage and landscaping, high standards for property design, and continued maintenance of both public and private property.

The gateways and their status as showcase locations should create a heightened sense of awareness and attention for the community. For example, the gateways are locations where the community should focus on beautification (i.e., the current adopt-a-spot program). For land use applications, the gateways should signal the need for greater attention to detail, high quality design and materials, elevated expectations for site design, and the overall aesthetics of development.



## Farming and Farmland

Since the 2009 POCD, two key events have occurred to help better promote farming in Tolland: the Town Council formed an Agriculture Commission and, as discussed below, adopted a Right-to-Farm ordinance.

While strategies related to agriculture are contained here in the Character Section, farming is also a component of economic development. Farms are local businesses that provide jobs and products. It is also important to distinguish between working agricultural lands and scenic vistas often characteristic of farms. While the preservation of scenic agricultural landscapes is encouraged, this Plan recognizes that a working farm does not always look “scenic” and can generate noise and odor. The Right-to-Farm ordinance, which mirrors the State’s policy, conveys the Town’s support for working farms.

The Town does not have a full inventory of farms, but has begun to map known farms and lands that appear to be used for farming activity. The Town should continue to update the inventory.

Tolland currently leases two portions of Campbell Farm to farmers. The Town previously purchased the development rights to a large swath of farmland along Shenipsit Lake, thereby restricting it to only farming use. The Town should continue to seek additional opportunities to preserve land for agricultural use and continue to improve upon its farm leasing program.

The Town has tried to balance the encouragement of farming activities with potential impacts on neighbors, particularly for smaller-scale farming activities (e.g., homeowners that keep chickens or other small livestock). While the regulations are very permissive

for some small-scale farming activities, others can still entail a cumbersome process that costs a few hundred dollars and carries a risk of denial. The Agriculture Commission should review the zoning regulations and advise the Planning and Zoning Commission on additional measures to make Tolland more farm-friendly for both these smaller-scale farming activities and for larger agricultural operations.

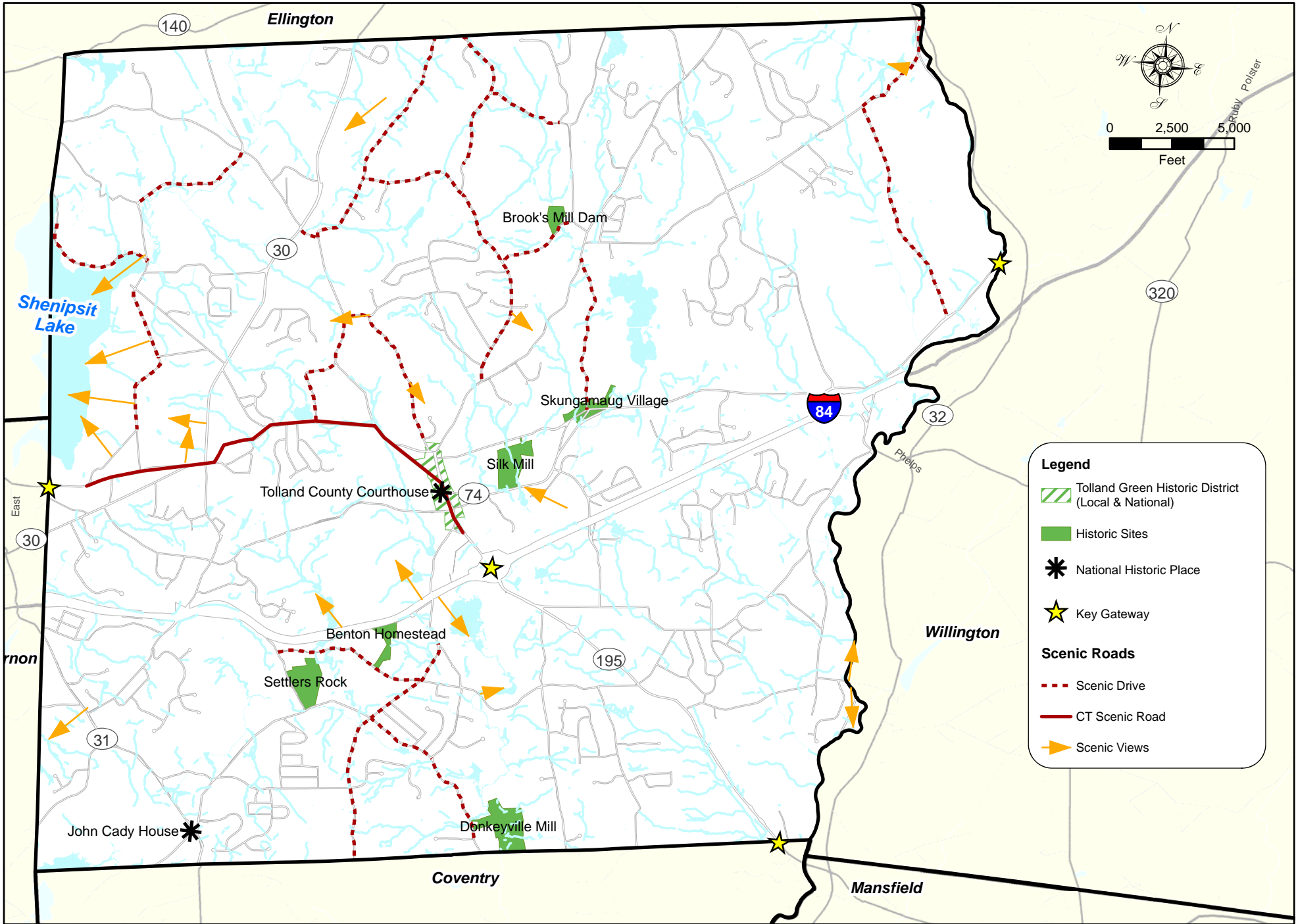
The growing popularity of “agri-tourism” presents an economic development opportunity for Tolland’s farms. Running a successful farm can be challenging so allowing accessory, revenue-generating activities on farms might help preserve existing farms and encourage new operations. The location and intensity of such endeavors should be balanced with the setting of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.



# Cultural Resources Map

Tolland, CT

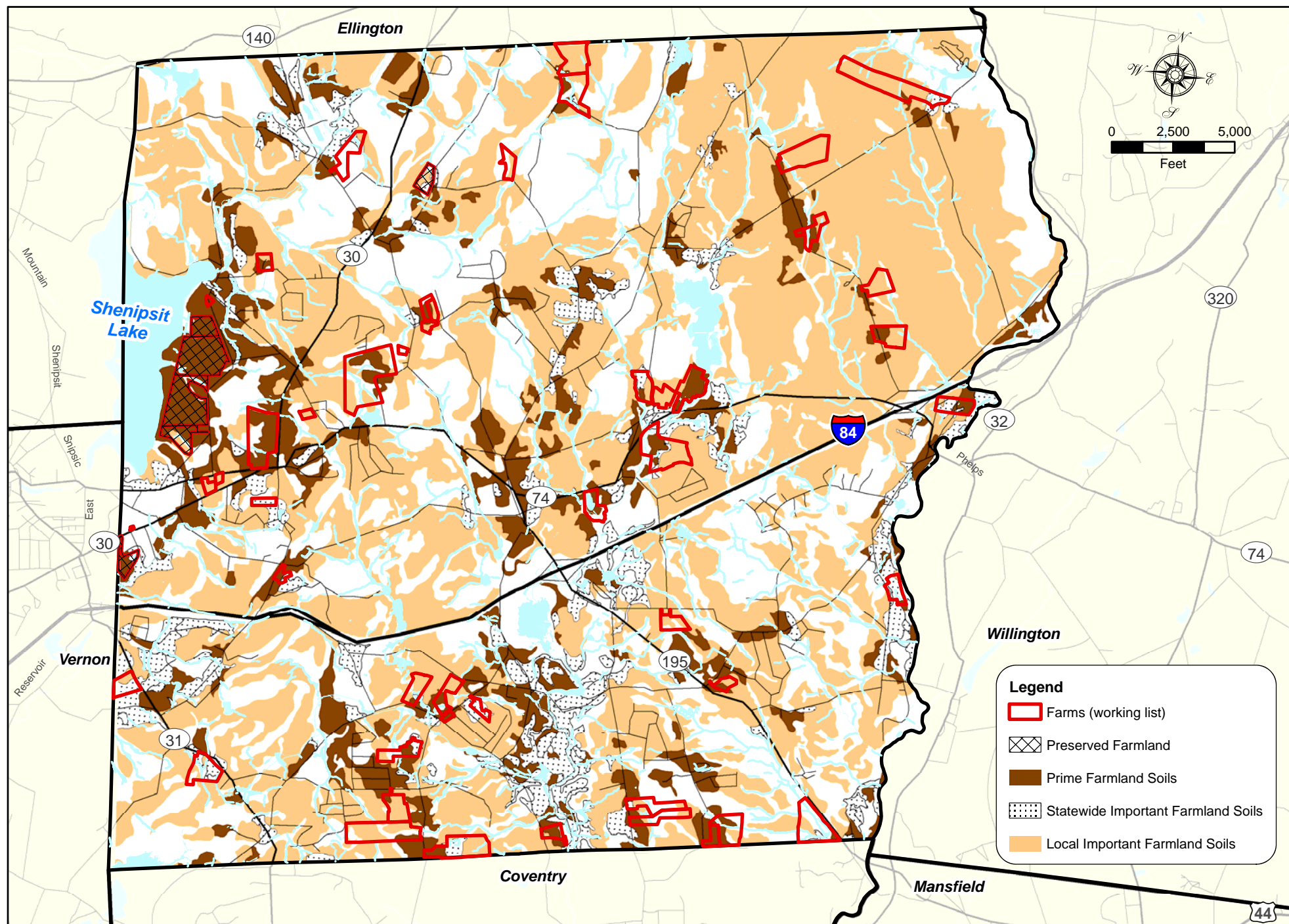
Map prepared April, 2019



# Agricultural Resources

Tolland, CT

Map prepared April, 2019





# Economic & Commercial Development

Commercial and industrial development are important sources of economic development. It provides jobs for Tolland residents, provide goods, services, and the amenities of “place”, and provides real property and personal property tax revenues. Commercial and industrial development also contributes to the overall character of the community. Communities are at times known for their local businesses and commercial areas are often the gateways to the community, providing first and lasting impressions.

Since the 2009 Plan, the Planning and Zoning Commission implemented key recommendations to create the Tolland Village Area (TVA) and the Technology Campus Zone (TCZ). While there has not yet been movement to develop within the TCZ, a large-scale development was proposed in the TVA. There was controversy around the development proposal and the statistically-valid survey conducted as part of this Plan verifies a split in opinions over the previously-proposed development. The overall process raised more questions for the Commission to try to answer in this plan update, including if there is a need to re-adapt expectations and aspirations for these areas based on community sentiment, market conditions, and developer expectations. The companion document to this plan, which contains background information, provides more insight into the discussions around this topic.

This section accounts for these experiences over the last decade and focuses on these key areas and the overall need and strategies to create an environment conducive to economic development.

## The Route 195 Corridor

While each of Tolland’s commercial areas play unique roles in Tolland’s development, the largest, most predominant, and most visible area is the Route 195 corridor from the Tolland Village Area to Baxter Street. This corridor includes the TVA and TCZ along with the highly visible Gateway Design District and a smaller Neighborhood Commercial Zone.

With UConn located seven miles south of Exit 68, the Route 195 corridor is Tolland’s major commercial arterial and has the greatest potential for development. As important, this corridor is the primary gateway to Tolland for visitors and provides the first, and for some the only, impression of Tolland. Tolland should focus its economic development attention in this area and such attention should include high expectations of quality site design and aesthetically pleasing architectural design and development.

While some of the corridor may be constrained by wetlands or steep slopes, the area provides substantial areas for economic development. With moderate traffic counts, which should increase over time, the availability of public water and sewer in much of the corridor, and a meaningful concentration of existing commercial development, the Route 195 corridor is the logical and most likely location of future commercial and multi-family development.

The Town should modify / re-adapt its approaches to the TVA and TCZ based on the experiences of the last decade and input during the update of this Plan. Given the need for and market for multi-

family housing, the Town should determine if the TCZ might be ripe for mixed uses. For this zone, the Commission could update regulations to allow a flexible Master Plan approach to commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development. Such modification should focus on creating flexibility for development and quality of site design and architecture.

The Commission recognizes that the TVA regulations, as currently written, are not resulting in the development initially envisioned. And with the current regulations and current and foreseeable economy, that is not likely to change. Consideration should be given to reverting this area to its previous zoning designation (Gateway Design District) or a similar designation, while keeping open the opportunity for a mixture of residential and business uses in the form of a revised / simplified version of the TVA allowing a hotel, residential, and mixed uses. In today's development market, most of what is being developed is multi-family residential with smaller scale mixed-use restaurant and retail.

The TVA area is well-suited for a mix of small-scale retail/restaurant along the frontage and hotel, community scale office, and residential on the interior of the sites. The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider the Gateway Design District (GDD) along with TVA in the form a flexible Master Plan floating zone. This means property owners could develop under the GDD rules or choose to “land” the floating Master Plan zone onto their property, opening up greater opportunities but with higher development standards.

## **Site Design Standards**

Site design is not simply about parking, stormwater management, landscaping, and lighting. It also encompasses the aesthetic qualities and visual appeal of development and contributes to community character and the image of a community. Quality site design conveys a message of community pride, confidence, and investment. It tells local residents, visitors, and investors that this community is a place where individuals and businesses are willing to invest their time, energy, and money.

Tolland should update the site development and design provisions in the Zoning Regulations to provide modern site design standards that follow best practices. The Commission should seek to provide flexibility in standards that allows for better design, rather than simple compliance with standards and requirements. Such updated provisions should focus on sustainable practices such a low impact design, shared parking, energy efficient lighting, consolidated parcels, access management, and high-quality landscaping. The Commission should seek to raise the standards and expectations for the quality of design—both site design and architectural design—and insist that land use applications incorporate higher quality designs and materials. However, the Commission should be mindful that requirements are not unreasonable or too costly.

## **Reinvestment in Older Buildings**

Residential and commercial buildings are built at specific moments in time to serve the specific consumer needs and wants of that moment. Most developments and buildings become obsolete the moment the next development or building is constructed—because of new materials, technologies, designs, and changing consumer

preferences. This naturally occurring process of improvement creates challenges for older developments and buildings. This is particularly critical in Tolland in that much of its commercial development is now decades old. Updates and renovations will be necessary to ensure that properties remain competitive and can attract owners, tenants, and investors.

While land use planning and land use regulations tend to focus on new development, Tolland should not lose focus on existing properties and should be intentional in efforts to encourage and promote the continued investment in these properties. Continued investment—maintenance, upgrades, and at times substantial renovations and redevelopment—is required for properties to remain economically viable and competitive in an ever-changing market places. Unfortunately, the land use regulatory and permitting process has historically been overly restrictive when it comes to improving existing properties. Redevelopment is often treated like new development without recognizing that most of the concerns and issues were dealt with at the time the property initially was developed. Yet most improvements and renovations to existing properties have little or no potential for new or excessive substantive impacts. Therefore, improvements and renovations to existing properties should not be treated like new development and subject to same high-cost and high-standards of review.

The following recommendations can reduce unnecessary or unintentional permitting roadblocks for building updates and renovations and help provide resources to building owners.

- Changes in use at existing properties should be allowed by staff approval (zoning permits). Some are currently allowed

via staff approval, but the existing provisions are ambiguous and should be updated.

- Changes in use should be exempt from parking requirements including having to meet the parking requirements for the new use (unless the new use entails a substantial increase in traffic).
- Site Plan requirements and applications should be limited to expansions of the building footprint and new construction.
- Site Plan requirements should be limited to or focused on the portion of the site being improved, not the entire site. It is recognized that the State's relatively new stormwater ("MS4") requirements impose a burden on redevelopment once implemented, however.
- For developments that were granted a Special Permit when first approved, the regulations should provide a provision for the Commission to make a determination as to the potential impact of the proposed changes to the original Special Permit (criteria and conditions) and waive the requirement of a Special Permit when it finds no potential impact to the original approval.
- The Town should consider tax abatements for improvements and renovations that include substantial updates to the building façade. Some property owners might delay making improvements in order to avoid a higher assessment.



- The Town should explore a low- or no-interest loan program for façade improvements. Communities including Manchester and Wethersfield have implemented programs.

## Modernize Allowable Businesses

The way we live and the way we work have changed and will continue to change. Today we shop and work from home. We receive regular deliveries of merchandise and groceries. More employers allow employees to work from home or rely on remote workers. We no longer have definable and distinct spaces of home, work, and shopping. Yet the zoning regulations overall still make this distinction.

Home occupations are more common-place yet often invisible and unknown to neighbors and the Town. Land use regulations and the permitting process need to accommodate and adjust to these changes, recognizing that the place of home is no longer a space of domesticity, but now includes activities of commerce. The Planning and Zoning Commission should review and update the regulatory definitions and provisions related to home occupations.

In doing so, the Commission should consider definable use categories for the regulation of home occupations. The following are provided as examples, not as recommendations, as to how home occupations can be categorized into uses of different intensities:

- **Work-at-Home and Self-Employed Occupations:** No employees, few, if any, visitors, and no outdoor storage of business-related vehicles or outdoor storage. (No permit required.)

- **Home Based Business:** No employees, few but regular visitors, and no business-related vehicles or outdoor storage. (Zoning Permit Required.)
- **Small Home-Based Business:** No more than two employees, few but regular visitors, one business-related vehicle, and limited outdoor storage out of public view. (Special Permit by Commission.)

Workspaces are changing in other ways also, with new types of commerce and new types of work spaces (e.g., co-working spaces). The Commission should stay on top of emerging uses and update the zoning regulations regularly.

## Economic Development

The work of economic development is the process and practice of creating wealth and attracting investment to a community. In fact, creating wealth and attracting investment is not only the work of economic development, it is the work of community development, community planning, and place-making.

Wealth can be created, and investment can be attracted in many ways and forms that are not simply about providing jobs, marketable goods, and services. For example, wealth can be created through property improvement, infrastructure investment, and increasing homeownership—especially when investments are strategically aimed at increasing property value.

In this regard, attracting investment in housing can ensure that a community's housing stock (also a marketable good) remains competitive. Therefore, the work of economic development is about creating a culture of investment by managing the processes of

governance and nurturing the economic-ecosystem of the community. What is most important in the work of economic development is that a community embraces economic development. A community must want and be committed to economic development and work toward constant improvement.

The key to economic development for a smaller community is to raise the level of public awareness around economic development. The community should embrace and continuously work towards improving economic development. There are many small, inexpensive, and incremental steps Tolland can take to build upon existing practices and grow its economic development capacity.

The following recommendations are organized into short- and long-term strategies to improve economic development efforts. The short-term recommendations are low-cost and easy-to-implement practices that elevate the work and importance of economic development. The long-term recommendations are more formal and more costly practices that will build upon the short-term recommendations and build greater capacity (resiliency) to create wealth and investment.

These recommendations are not all-inclusive lists; more could be done to further engage in the work and practice of economic development. They are a starting point for creating an economic-ecosystem, continuous improvement, and building economic development capacity.

### **Short-Term Economic Development Approaches**

Economic Development Training: Economic development is everyone's job and starts with customer service. Good customer service at town hall helps potential investors feel confident in their

decision to bring business to Tolland. Tolland should implement a training program for all town hall staff, boards, and commissions on their role in economic development.

Encourage What Tolland Most Wants: Investment flows to the location of least resistance. If Tolland wants certain kinds of economic development and investment, it should encourage such uses and investments. This can be accomplished by conducting a comprehensive review of the permitted and special permitted uses in the Zoning Regulations. The review can build upon the initial review the Commission conducted as part of this Plan update. This review was done with the aim of allowing the economic development activities and uses the Town most wants by staff approvals and Commission Site Plan, not the more subjective, time consuming, and costly Special Permit process.

Business Outreach and Engagement: Too often local governments spend very little effort cultivating relationships with the business community. Tolland should proactively work to engage the business community. Some simple and time effective ways to do this are to host quarterly meet-and-greet sessions at town hall with specific businesses sectors, conduct monthly business visitations (even just one business a month), and work with the Chamber of Commerce to host business after-hours networking events.

Existing Businesses: Building on the outreach and engagement efforts, Tolland should work to support the business community and individual businesses. This means proactively working to understand their needs and concerns and providing support. For example, it is not uncommon for small businesses to struggle with the basics of running a business. Providing training, mentoring, or

even coaching services would go a long way to creating more resilient local businesses and improving their potential for success.

**Celebrate Tolland Businesses:** The Economic Development Commission, in collaboration with the Town Council, should seek to celebrate Tolland businesses and their investment in Tolland. While Tolland currently provides “New Business” plaques, some additional simple approaches include ‘ribbon cutting’ programs for new businesses and existing business expansions and a yearly ‘Business Investment’ award program. Award categories could include things like Business Expansion, New Business, and Property Maintenance.

**Community Information Packet:** Many small and some large businesses do not have access to good demographic and socio-economic data—data that can be important to their business planning activities and investment decisions. Providing information is a simple way to assist and inform businesses—to help educate them about the community. Tolland should create and maintain a Community Information Packet that can be made available on the Town’s website as a downloadable PDF. The Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) Town Profile is a good starting point for demographic, socio-economic, and other community-based information. The Town Profile can be supplemented with detailed and robust community data, real estate market information, and other data.

**Crumbling Foundations:** Currently there are no programs to help businesses with crumbling foundations. The Town should encourage the State and other potential partners to find ways to help businesses repair foundations.

## **Long-Term Economic Development Approaches**

**Create Capacity:** Economic development does not happen on its own. To succeed at economic development Tolland must be willing to invest in economic development. Unfortunately, Tolland does not have the capacity with existing staff to engage meaningfully in economic development. The Town should explore opportunities to expand its capacity to engage in economic development. This includes on-going efforts to work with neighboring communities, hiring a part- or full-time economic development position, or contracting for economic development services.

**Comprehensive Economic Development Study and Economic Development Strategy:** This should include a focus on Tolland’s image, community brand, and marketing. The soon-to-begin four-town economic development action plan is expected to start to address the branding and identity issue. The Town should embrace the study and incorporate it into its economic development work.

**Strategic Community Investment:** When developing budgets, especially the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), Tolland should conceptualize government budgets and projects as an opportunity and means of making strategic investments in economic development—investing in Tolland’s future. CIP investments aimed at place-making and quality of life, such as walking trails, sidewalks (where suitable), bike lanes and trails, public/community space can go a long way to creating the economic development ecosystem that businesses and residents seek—providing quality amenities.

**Intentional Development:** Most communities are reactive to development, allowing the market to propose developments that are then reviewed, debated, and approved or denied. Being intentional about the development Tolland wants is about investing



(time, energy, and money) in planning for development. Tolland may want to consider creating conceptual designs for future development in the areas where it wants development and then market those designs to the development community. This could also be done in association with an expedited permitting process—if a developer strives to develop the community’s conceptualized plan, then a simplified approval process (Site Plan) is provided to the developer.

# Housing

This section of the POCD is more extensive than other sections since it is intended to meet new housing plan requirements enacted by the State Legislature. It includes a comprehensive housing needs assessment to determine the need for affordable housing in Tolland. This assessment is designed to comply with the requirements of Public Act 17-170 that towns create a housing plan aimed at housing affordability and with the Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-23 recommendation that towns plan for housing, including affordable housing.

Residential development and housing play important roles in community, community character, and the community planning process. Housing is where jobs go at night and where households and families live their lives. Housing density, style, and tenure contribute to community character. Home ownership and housing equity have been a primary driver of wealth creation. Also, residential uses are the most predominant land use in a community and residential zoning typically dominates the land area of a town. Residential development patterns often frame the overall development patterns of a community.

As a community that is rural-suburban in character, approximately 95% of Tolland's land area is zoned residential, the overwhelming majority of which is zoned for single-family residential housing. Single-family residential zoning dominates Tolland's land area and allowable uses. Tolland's housing stock is made up of only 93.8% single-family detached residential housing units and 1.5% single-family attached housing. Therefore, less than five percent of

Tolland's housing stock is multi-family housing. In terms of resiliency—specifically, diversity—Tolland's housing stock is not diverse and can be viewed as being overly susceptible to disturbances in the market.

Two challenges that face Tolland regarding residential land uses and housing are the crumbling foundations and housing affordability. Approximately 140 crumbling foundations have been identified—that is approximately 2.5% of Tolland's housing stock—at this time. However, it is reasonable to assume that the number may increase.

Housing affordability and the lack of affordable housing is perhaps the greatest housing issue facing Tolland. This lack of affordable housing is directly related to the lack of housing diversity and results in limited housing options for young persons, the elderly, and other non-family households.



## Overall Residential Patterns

As a rural-suburban community with substantial preserved open space, it is reasonable to anticipate that Tolland will continue to maintain its rural-suburban community character throughout most of the community—a predominance of low-density single-family residential land uses. This pattern contributes to the “rural” side of Tolland’s character and generally is attractive to current and potential future residents. The zoning regulations for these lower density areas were designed to reduce overall density, ensure that new housing blends in with the Town’s character, and to protect natural resources. Limited public sewer and water reinforces these patterns.

This Plan recognizes and accepts that Tolland’s rural-suburban residential development patterns, housing type, form, and density will continue, mostly as it is today.

That said, Tolland is missing multi-family and mixed-use developments that provide greater diversity in housing options and other features or amenities such as public spaces and walkable communities. As discussed in the next section on housing needs and in the economic development section, there are appropriate locations for much-needed housing opportunities beyond low-density single-family units, particularly within the Route 195 corridor. With careful consideration of location, design and density, Tolland can maintain its overall low density pattern while providing greater opportunities for all income levels.

Therefore, this Plan does not recommend any specific changes to the single-family residential zoning, but that the Planning and Zoning Commission continues to monitor market trends and demand to ensure that the zoning is in sync with consumer needs and wants.

## What Does “Affordable” Mean?

This assessment primarily utilized U.S. Census data (2017) on the characteristics of housing, household income, and housing purchase and rent values in Tolland. Household income was compared to the availability of housing types at corresponding sales values and rents to determine affordability and needs.

Housing affordability is a complex concept and challenging problem. One of the challenges is that it can be defined in several ways. The Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), Chapter 126a Affordable Housing Land Use Appeals, Section 8-30g narrowly defines housing affordability as:

- Assisted Housing: housing which is receiving or will receive financial assistance under any governmental program for the construction or substantial rehabilitation of low- and moderate-income housing, and any housing occupied by persons receiving rental assistance under chapter 319uu or Section 1437f of Title 42 of the United States Code;
- Set-aside Development: a development in which not less than 30% of the dwelling units will be conveyed by deeds containing covenants or restrictions which shall require that, for at least 40 years after the initial occupation of the proposed development, such dwelling units shall be sold or rented at or below prices which will preserve the units as housing for which persons and families pay 30% or less of their annual income, where such income is less than or equal to 80% of the median income. In a set-aside development, of the dwelling units conveyed by deeds containing covenants or restrictions, a number of dwelling



units equal to not less than 15% of all dwelling units in the development shall be sold or rented to persons and families whose income is less than or equal to 60% of the median income and the remainder of the dwelling units conveyed by deeds containing covenants or restrictions shall be sold or rented to persons and families whose income is less than or equal to 80% of the median income.

The CGS 8-30g definition of housing affordability is narrow because it only includes housing units and households receiving government assistance through specified programs or housing units that are specifically deed-restricted as affordable through set-aside developments. For example, in 2018, 177 housing units or 3.25% of Tolland's housing stock qualifies as affordable housing as defined by 8-30g (this also includes mortgage programs).

There are other types of units in Tolland that could be considered affordable, but do not meet the criteria of CGS 8-30g. For example, since the early 1990s Tolland has permitted 83 accessory dwelling units (apartments) within single-family homes. These units provide housing diversity and opportunities, most of which likely rent at affordable rates, but do not count toward Tolland's count of affordable units.

The Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) defines affordability based on a percentage of area median family-income and the number of persons in the family/household. CHFA uses the Hartford Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which Tolland is in, and the median family income at \$96,600. For example, moderate income would be 80% of median family income (\$77,280). The Hartford MSA median household income is \$72,559, which is

approximately \$40,000 less than Tolland's local median household income of \$112,740.

Another way to define housing affordability is based on how much a household can spend to purchase housing or the percentage of household income spent on housing whether for purchase or rent. This approach will be used to calculate housing affordability and need in Tolland to answer the question of whether housing in Tolland is affordable when compared to household income.

The first step is to calculate the maximum purchase price for a house that a household can afford. The commonly agreed-upon metric is that a household can afford a housing unit valued between 2.6 to 3.0 times the gross household income (with the lower limits of affordability being 2.6 and the maximum limit of affordability being 3.0). For example, a household earning \$75,000 can afford to purchase a housing unit up to a value between \$195,000 (2.6 x income) and \$225,000 (3.0 x income). For this analysis and Plan, we split the difference and use 2.8 as the affordability multiplier on home purchases/ownership.

The second method is based on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) threshold of 30% of household income. If a household pays more than 30% of income for housing, then housing is deemed to not be affordable. For example, if the same household earning \$75,000 per year is spending more than \$22,500 (30%) per year or \$1,875 (30%) per month on housing, then such housing is deemed to be unaffordable for that household. This 30% of household income threshold can be applied to both rental and ownership housing but will be used for rental housing in this analysis.

While these measures or thresholds provide a means for calculating the affordability of housing and will be utilized in the assessment of housing need, it is important to note that there are limits as to how these measures inform us about personal circumstances, housing need, and housing costs. While the Census data provides the statistics on households spending above and below 30% of income on housing, it does not differentiate between those households who spend a high portion because of a lack of affordable housing (housing need) and those who spend 30% or more for reasons of personal choice—status, house size, access to education, etc. While the former households are burdened by lower incomes and high-cost housing, the latter households may not suffer from the same burden or hardship. While these measures provide a metric to measure housing affordability, they fall short of informing us about the personal circumstances, choices, needs, and wants that are captured or assumed in the calculations and that affect housing affordability.

When discussing affordable housing, it is also important to address the phrase “workforce housing.” HUD, CHFA, and the Connecticut General Statutes use the phrase affordable housing to define housing that is affordable to households earning up to 80% AMI (Area Median Income). Housing advocates typically distinguish between affordable housing and workforce housing—affordable housing being up to 60% AMI and workforce housing being 60% to 120% AMI. Workforce housing is often defined as housing for service workers, such as police officers, teachers, nurses, etc. This differentiation is important in the context of Tolland and the Hartford region. For example, in the Hartford MSA with a median family income of \$96,600, a family household at 60% AMI would be earning \$57,960—by no means is this a low-income household—and a family household at 80% AMI would be earning \$77,280.

## Tolland’s Housing Stock Characteristics

The characteristics of Tolland’s housing stock provide context to understanding housing value, housing costs, and housing affordability. They also inform us about demand and how demand is organized around housing products and location. Understanding the housing characteristics and their influence on demand, market strength, and housing affordability provides insight into housing need and the strategies to address housing need.

According to the U.S. Census (2017 estimates), Tolland has 5,405 housing units, 94.2% (5,092) of which are occupied and 5.8% of which are vacant (Table 5).

Vacancy rates of less than 10% typically indicate strong demand and often signal the need for additional supply, especially in the rental housing market. Vacancy rates of less than five percent in both the rental and homeownership markets indicate a very strong market and that the vacancies are most likely the result of naturally occurring turnover. A rental vacancy rate of zero percent indicates strong demand or limited supply in the rental housing market.

**Table 5. Housing Occupancy, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>5,405</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Occupied housing units</i>	<i>5,092</i>	<i>94.1%</i>
<i>Vacant housing units</i>	<i>313</i>	<i>5.8%</i>
<i>Homeowner vacancy rate</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>---</i>
<i>Rental vacancy rate</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>---</i>

As noted, Tolland’s housing stock is dominated by single-unit detached housing—commonly known as single-family housing.

Including single-unit attached housing, 95.3% of Tolland's housing stock is considered single-family housing—a housing stock that is most favorable to homeownership (Table 6). The remaining 4.7% of the housing stock is in various forms of multi-family housing that include 3 to 20 or more units per building. Overall, Tolland's housing stock lacks diversity in housing types and tenure.

**Table 6. Housing Units in Structure, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>5,405</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>1-unit detached</i>	<i>5,072</i>	<i>93.8%</i>
<i>1-unit attached</i>	<i>81</i>	<i>1.5%</i>
<i>2 units</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0.0%</i>
<i>3 or 4 units</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>1.4%</i>
<i>5 to 9 units</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>2.4%</i>
<i>10 to 19 units</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>0.6%</i>
<i>20 or more units</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>0.3%</i>
<i>Mobile home</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0.0%</i>
<i>Boat, RV, van, etc.</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0.0%</i>

The percentage of single-unit housing nearly mirrors the percentage of home ownership (Table 7). The average household size of owner-occupied units is 2.92 persons per unit compared to 2.40 persons per rental unit. This difference is likely driven by the number of bedrooms available—single-unit owner-occupied housing typically has three or more bedrooms per unit, while rental housing typically has one and two bedrooms per unit. As a result, single-unit housing and owner-occupied housing typically attract more families and school-age children than multi-family and rental housing.

**Table 7. Housing Tenure, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	<b>5,092</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Owner-occupied</i>	<i>4,726</i>	<i>92.8%</i>
<i>Renter-occupied</i>	<i>366</i>	<i>7.2%</i>
<i>Average household size of owner-occupied unit</i>	<i>2.92</i>	<i>—</i>
<i>Average household size of renter-occupied unit</i>	<i>2.40</i>	<i>—</i>

The median number of rooms per housing unit is seven with 54.4% of Tolland's housing stock having six rooms or more (Table 8). More rooms typically indicates larger homes and more bedrooms per housing unit. Table 9 shows that 82.6% of Tolland's housing stock has three or more bedrooms and 36.7% of the housing stock has four or more bedrooms.

**Table 8. Rooms Per Housing Unit, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>5,405</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>1 room</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0.0%</i>
<i>2 rooms</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>0.5%</i>
<i>3 rooms</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>2.3%</i>
<i>4 rooms</i>	<i>310</i>	<i>5.7%</i>
<i>5 rooms</i>	<i>671</i>	<i>12.4%</i>
<i>6 rooms</i>	<i>1,114</i>	<i>20.6%</i>
<i>7 rooms</i>	<i>962</i>	<i>17.8%</i>
<i>8 rooms</i>	<i>1,122</i>	<i>20.8%</i>
<i>9 rooms or more</i>	<i>1,075</i>	<i>19.9%</i>
<i>Median rooms</i>	<i>7.0</i>	<i>—</i>



**Table 9. Bedrooms, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>5,405</b>	<b>100%</b>
No bedroom	0	0.0%
1 bedroom	206	3.8%
2 bedrooms	733	13.6%
3 bedrooms	2,481	45.9%
4 bedrooms	1,745	32.3%
5 or more bedrooms	240	4.4%

Tolland's housing stock is relatively young, with 51.2% of units built since 1980 and 14.1% built since 2000 (Table 10). A young housing stock indicates that the housing product available has modern amenities that most likely make the housing product competitive in the overall market place. This may help to explain, at least in part, the low vacancy and strong occupancy rates.

**Table 10. Year Structure Built, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>5,405</b>	<b>100%</b>
Built 2014 or later	0	0.0%
Built 2010 to 2013	52	1.0%
Built 2000 to 2009	706	13.1%
Built 1990 to 1999	1,190	22.0%
Built 1980 to 1989	815	15.1%
Built 1970 to 1979	908	14.9%
Built 1960 to 1969	997	18.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	563	10.4%
Built 1940 to 1949	73	1.4%
Built 1939 or earlier	201	3.7%

Tolland's householders are mostly new to the community. A total of 88.4% of the householders moved into their housing unit since 1980 and 53.5% have moved in since 2000 (Table 11). This is generally consistent with the age of the housing stock and overall movement patterns of householders.

**Table 11. Year Householder Moved into Unit, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	<b>5,092</b>	<b>100%</b>
Moved in 2015 or later	345	6.8%
Moved in 2010 to 2014	707	13.9%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	1,670	32.8%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	1,115	21.9%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	665	13.1%
Moved in 1979 and earlier	590	11.6%

## Tolland's Housing Stock Cost Characteristics

This section reviews housing value and costs for owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing. Table 12 presents the value of owner-occupied housing, which can be assumed to be mostly single-family housing. Tolland's median value of housing is \$286,600 with 82% of owner-occupied housing valued above \$200,000. In addition, 46.1%, or nearly half, of the owner-occupied housing is valued above \$300,000.

To afford the median owner-occupied home at \$286,600 in Tolland, a household would need an income of \$80,248 ( $\$286,600 \times 0.28$ ). This income is well below Tolland's median household income of \$112,740 but well above the Hartford MSA median household income of \$72,559. Of the 4,726 owner-occupied housing units, 72.4% have a mortgage (Table 13).

**Table 12. Value, Owner-Occupied Housing, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Owner-occupied units</b>	<b>4,726</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Less than \$50,000</i>	<i>119</i>	<i>2.5%</i>
<i>\$50,000 to \$99,999</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>1.5%</i>
<i>\$100,000 to \$149,999</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>1.9%</i>
<i>\$150,000 to \$199,999</i>	<i>568</i>	<i>12.0%</i>
<i>\$200,000 to \$299,999</i>	<i>1,698</i>	<i>35.9%</i>
<i>\$300,000 to \$499,999</i>	<i>1,905</i>	<i>40.3%</i>
<i>\$500,000 to \$999,999</i>	<i>255</i>	<i>5.4%</i>
<i>\$1,000,000 or more</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>0.4%</i>
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$286,600</b>	<b>---</b>

**Table 13. Mortgage Status, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Owner-occupied units</b>	<b>4,726</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Housing units with a mortgage</i>	<i>3,421</i>	<i>72.4%</i>
<i>Housing units without a mortgage</i>	<i>1,305</i>	<i>27.6%</i>

Tables 14 and 15 respectively provide the Selected Monthly Owner Costs (SMOC) for housing units with and without a mortgage. The SMOC, as explained by the U.S. Census, “are calculated from the sum of payment for mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities, fuels, mobile home costs, and condominium fees.” They provide a good estimate of the cost of buying and owning a home. The median SMOC for housing units with a mortgage is \$2,149 and \$792 for housing units without a mortgage.

**Table 14. Selected Monthly Owner Costs (SMOC) – With Mortgage, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Housing units with a mortgage</b>	<b>3,421</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Less than \$500</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0.0%</i>
<i>\$500 to \$999</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>1.8%</i>
<i>\$1,000 to \$1,499</i>	<i>446</i>	<i>13.0%</i>
<i>\$1,500 to \$1,999</i>	<i>922</i>	<i>27.0%</i>
<i>\$2,000 to \$2,499</i>	<i>946</i>	<i>27.7%</i>
<i>\$2,500 to \$2,999</i>	<i>509</i>	<i>14.9%</i>
<i>\$3,000 or more</i>	<i>538</i>	<i>15.7%</i>
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$2,149</b>	<b>---</b>

**Table 15. Selected Monthly Owner Costs (SMOC) – Without Mortgage, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Housing units without a mortgage</b>	<b>1,305</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Less than \$250</i>	<i>62</i>	<i>4.8%</i>
<i>\$250 to \$399</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>2.6%</i>
<i>\$400 to \$599</i>	<i>233</i>	<i>17.9%</i>
<i>\$600 to \$799</i>	<i>339</i>	<i>26.0%</i>
<i>\$800 to \$999</i>	<i>323</i>	<i>24.8%</i>
<i>\$1,000 or more</i>	<i>314</i>	<i>24.1%</i>
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$792</b>	<b>---</b>

Table 16 provides the Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (SMOCAPI). The U.S. Census explains, the SMOCAPI “is used to measure housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. For example, many government agencies define excessive as costs that exceed 30 percent of household income.” Based on the SMOCAPI, 20.4% of Tolland’s households with a mortgage and 11.7% of households without a mortgage are paying 30% or more of their household income on

housing costs. Based on this SMOCAPI, approximately 32.1% (or 1,513) of Tolland's owner-occupied housing is unaffordable. However, these calculations do not inform us whether the cost of housing in excess of 30% of household income is the result of need (and a burden on income) or want (a personal choice).

**Table 16. Selected Monthly Owner Costs as Percentage of Household Income (SMOCAPI), Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Housing units with a mortgage</b>	<b>3,421</b>	<b>100%</b>
Less than 20.0 percent	1,674	48.9%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	643	18.8%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	405	11.8%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	219	6.4%
35.0 percent or more	480	14.0%
<b>Housing unit without a mortgage</b>	<b>1,292</b>	<b>100%</b>
Less than 10.0 percent	627	48.5%
10.0 to 14.9 percent	178	13.8%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	183	14.2%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	103	8.0%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	49	3.8%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	56	4.3%
35.0 percent or more	96	7.4%
<b>Not computed</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>---</b>

Table 17 presents the Gross Rent paid for occupied rental units and Table 18 provides the Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income (GRAPI). The median gross rent is \$1,571 and 58.3% of the households pay more than \$1,500 per month for rent. However, 203 (or 61.3%) of the rental households are spending 30% or more of their household income on rent—the unaffordable housing threshold set by government standards. As noted above, what these

calculations do not inform us about is if the cost of housing in excess of 30% of household income is the result of need (and a burden on income) or want (a personal choice).

**Table 17. Gross Rent, Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Occupied units paying rent</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100%</b>
Less than \$500	15	4.5%
\$500 to \$999	12	3.6%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	111	33.5%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	193	58.3%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	0	0.0%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	0	0.0%
\$3,000 or more	0	0.0%
<b>Median (dollars)</b>	<b>\$1,571</b>	<b>---</b>
<b>No rent paid</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>---</b>

**Table 18. Gross Rent as Percentage of Household Income (GRAPI), Tolland**

	Estimate	%
<b>Occupied units paying rent (excluding units where GRAPI cannot be computed)</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>2,211</b>
Less than 15.0 percent	13	3.9%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	0	0.0%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	57	17.2%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	58	17.5%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	18	5.4%
35.0 percent or more	185	55.9%
<b>Not computed</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>---</b>

Based on owner- and renter-occupied housing costs and percentage of household income being spent on housing costs, 1,716 (34.0%) of occupied housing units have households spending 30% or more on



housing. This illustrates Tolland's housing affordability challenge. However, this does not inform us about housing needs. To determine housing need, we need to do further analysis.

## Tolland's Household Income

This analysis will generally determine which segments of the housing market are most challenged by housing affordability by indicating at which incomes and price point housing is most needed. Household income, housing value, rent values, and types of household are analyzed to determine which segments of the housing market are underserved by Tolland's housing stock.

Table 19 presents households and household incomes by Total Households, Family Households, Married-Couple Family Households, and Non-Family Households. The Census defines each of these household categories as follows:

- Household [Total]: all of the people who occupy a housing unit.
- Family Household: contains at least one person related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.
- Married-Couple Family: a husband and wife enumerated as members of the same household. The married couple may or may not have children living with them. The expression "married-couple" before the term "family" indicates that the household or family is maintained by a husband and wife.
- Nonfamily Household: a householder living alone (a one-person household) or where the householder shares the

home exclusively with people to whom he/she is not related.

**Table 19. Income by Household, Tolland**

	All Households	Families	Married-Couple Families	Nonfamily
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,092</b>	<b>4,152</b>	<b>3,685</b>	<b>940</b>
<i>Less than \$14,999</i>	2.2%	0.3%	0.4%	10.4%
<i>\$15,000 to \$24,999</i>	3.2%	1.3%	1.2%	11.6%
<i>\$25,000 to \$34,999</i>	5.1%	2.7%	1.1%	15.6%
<i>\$35,000 to \$49,999</i>	5.0%	4.7%	4.8%	6.4%
<i>\$50,000 to \$74,999</i>	10.6%	12.1%	8.3%	12.0%
<i>\$75,000 to \$99,999</i>	16.5%	13.1%	12.5%	23.4%
<i>\$100,000 to \$149,999</i>	23.9%	26.4%	28.3%	18.8%
<i>\$150,000 to \$199,999</i>	17.0%	19.5%	21.9%	1.7%
<i>\$200,000 or more</i>	16.5%	20.0%	21.4%	0.0%
<b>Median income</b>	<b>\$112,740</b>	<b>\$130,345</b>	<b>\$139,038</b>	<b>\$60,391</b>

The breakdown of income by household categories reveals meaningful differences. While the median household income in Tolland for all households is \$112,740, family median income is \$130,345, married-couple family median income is \$139,038, and non-family median income is \$60,391. For sake of comparison, households, families, and non-family households will be used. Married-couple families, since they are a sub-set with the families category, will not be used. However, we should keep in mind that married-couple families—as part of family-households—have the highest median household income.

Family households account for 81.5% of households and non-family households account for 18.5%. Of the family households, 65.9% earn at least \$100,000 (the minimum income cohort nearest the median

household income of \$112,740) per year. Conversely, 79.5% of non-family households earn less than \$100,000 per year. This indicates that non-family households are more likely to experience housing affordability challenges than family households. However, it should not be assumed that non-family households are of lesser socio-economic status since 18.5% of Tolland's households (17.8% of owner-occupied and 26.5% of renter-occupied housing) are one-person (i.e., one income) households).

This difference in family and non-family income is dramatic, but not surprising based on the number of one-person households and the characteristics of Tolland's housing stock. As noted earlier, 93.8% (or 5,072 units) of Tolland's housing stock is single-unit detached housing—approximately 20% more than the 4,152 family households. Single-family detached housing is commonly occupied by families. Tolland's housing market, historically and today, has been priced for two-income households.

At this point, based on family and married-couple family median incomes (\$130,345 and \$139,038, respectively) it is fair to assume that most but not all family households can secure housing in Tolland that is affordable, even though some family households may be paying more than 30% of their household income on housing. It is possible that some or all the family-households paying more than 30% of their household income are doing so by choice rather than need. It is also fair to assume that non-family households, based on a relatively lower median household income of \$60,391, face the greatest housing affordability challenges in Tolland. It also is possible that some or many non-family households paying more than 30% of their household income are doing so out of need, not by choice. However, at this point, these assumptions are simply reasonable

speculations based on what we know so far about housing costs and household incomes.

## Assessing Tolland's Housing Need

This next assessment is to determine housing need by analyzing household income by household type and comparing it to Tolland's existing housing stock by tenure. The method employed presents the Household Income (Table 16) data in eight cohorts ranging from less than \$15,000 per year to \$150,000 or more per year. Then, based on the higher end of each household income cohort, the affordable housing value is calculated at 2.8 times household income for owner-occupied housing and the affordable rent value is calculated at 30% of household income.

Census data (Table 19) on the percentage (converted to a raw number) of household by income was utilized to determine the number of households in each income cohort. In addition, the Census data (Table 12) was used to determine the number of housing units in the eight housing value cohorts ranging from less than \$50,000 to \$1,000,000 or more for owner-occupied housing. The number of housing units valued within the household income cohort was then assumed to represent the number of households within that income cohort being served by those housing units. The same approach was used for rental housing, gross rents, and the number of units in each gross rent cohort as household (Table 17).

To calculate housing need, the number of households with incomes adequate to afford the estimated affordable home value (or rent value) were subtracted from the existing housing units at the approximate value or rent. The result of the calculation is the 'Units Available Vs Adequate Income' line in the tables. A negative value indicates fewer units available at the given price point than

**Table 20-A. Households by Income Compared to Existing Owner-Occupied Housing Stock by Value**

Household Income	<\$15,000	\$15,000-\$24,999	\$25,000-\$34,999	\$35,000-\$49,999	\$50,000-\$74,999	\$75,000-\$99,999	\$100,000-\$149,999	\$150,000-\$199,999
Households @ Income	112	163	260	254	540	840	1,217	1,700
Est. affordable home Value (HH Income x 2.8) (rounded)	\$42,000	\$70,000	\$98,000	\$140,000	\$210,000	\$280,000	\$420,000	\$560,000
Existing Housing (Household Units)	119 (2.5%)	70 (1.5%)	90 (1.9%)	568 (12.0%)	1,698 (35.9%)	1,905 (40.3%)	255 (5.4%)	21 (0.4%)
Households w/Adequate Income	112 (2.4%)	163 (3.4%)	260 (5.5%)	254 (5.4%)	540 (11.4%)	840 (17.8%)	1,217 (25.7%)	1,700 (36.0%)
<b>Units Available Vs Adequate Income</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-93</b>	<b>-170</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>1,065</b>	<b>-962</b>	<b>-1,679</b>
Total Households	5,092	5,092	5,092	5,092	5,092	5,092	5,092	5,092

households with the income to afford them. A positive value indicates more units available than households with the income to afford them. The negative values indicated housing need—regarding affordability—at that price point and housing income segment of the housing market.

This method is not perfect. Census household income cohorts do not perfectly match housing and rent value cohorts. Calculating home value affordability or rent value affordability at a specific income does not capture the affordability of the entire income cohort. That said, the calculations provide a general understanding of the relationship between income and housing value/rent and distribution of household income and housing value/rent. It provides insight into which segments of the housing market are and are not being served by housing affordability.

Tables 20-A & B present calculations for all households and housing units in Tolland. Table 20-A presents owner-occupied housing and Table 20-B presents rental housing.

Tables 21-A & B present calculations for family-households in Tolland. Table 21-A presents owner-occupied housing and Table 21-B presents rental housing.

Tables 22-A & B present calculations for non-family-households in Tolland. Table 22-A presents owner-occupied housing and Table 22-B presents rental housing.

Table 20-A compares household income to the value of owner-occupied housing in Tolland. The table shows that there are more housing units available than there are households with incomes between \$35,000 and \$99,999. This indicates that there is no housing affordability issue or housing need for owner-occupied housing valued between approximately \$140,000 and \$300,000. For household incomes above \$100,000 and housing valued over \$300,000 there are fewer housing units available than there are households. Therefore, at the higher-end of the Tolland's housing market, there are ample households with high income to afford the available housing stock.



The housing need is the greatest for lower-income cohorts with household incomes below \$35,000, which is approximately 31% of local median household income. There are 256 fewer ownership housing units available than the total number of households in this segment of the market which can only afford housing valued below \$100,000. Most concerning, the households at incomes below \$25,000 (approximately 22% of local median household income) total 86 more households than available ownership housing units. Overall, this signifies that the greatest need for affordable housing is at and below 30% local median household income or ownership housing valued below \$100,000. This may, in part, help to explain why 20.4% of Tolland's households with a mortgage and 11.7% of households without a mortgage are paying 30% or more of their household income on housing costs (Table 16). Approximately 11.3% of Tolland's households, in the lower-income cohorts, cannot afford owner-occupied housing in Tolland.

It is important to note that Table 20-A focuses on ownership housing (primarily single-family housing) compared to all households in Tolland. This means that some of those 11.3% of lower-income households who cannot afford owner-occupied housing might be able to afford rental housing.

Table 20-B provides the same comparisons and calculations for rental housing. The greatest housing affordability issue and need for rental housing is at incomes below \$50,000. There are fewer rental housing units available than there are households at incomes below \$50,000 (there are 457 more households at incomes below \$50,000 than there are rental housing units available). In addition, at 30% of household income, the maximum affordable rent is \$1,250 per month, yet 58.3% of the rental housing available in Tolland is priced at or above \$1,500 per month. Furthermore, only approximately

25% of the rental housing in Tolland is affordable to households with incomes less than \$50,000.

The issue and need for affordable housing are more evident when we recognize that 92.8% of Tolland's housing stock is owner-occupied and only 7.2% (or 366 units) is rental housing. This raises further concerns when we consider the make-up of Tolland's households and the median household income. As discussed above, Tolland's median household income is \$112,740, family median income is \$130,345, married-couple family median income is \$139,038, and non-family median income is \$60,391. Family households total 81.5% of households and married-couple households total 72.3%. Family and married-couple households with higher median household incomes than Tolland's median household income are least likely to be challenged by a lack of affordable housing. Therefore, it is the non-family households whose median household income is \$60,391 or 54% of Tolland's median household income, who are most likely to be burdened by the lack of affordable housing. There are 940 non-family households and approximately only 969 housing units that are affordable to a household earning \$60,000 per year. Of those 940 non-family households 730 are living alone and 366 of those living alone are householders over the age of 65 (Table 21).

Tolland's housing is not affordable to many of its residents and to many residents in the greater regional housing market. Tolland has a need for more affordable housing at certain price points or incomes at or below \$70,000. While the \$70,000 median household income is 62% of Tolland's median household income, it is 72% of the Hartford MSA median household income. The point being, a median household income of \$70,000 is by no means low-income.

**Table 20-B. Households by Income Compared to Existing (Rental) Housing Stock by Value**

Household Income	<\$15,000	\$15,000- \$24,999	\$25,000- \$34,999	\$35,000- \$49,999	\$50,000- \$74,999	\$75,000- \$99,999	\$100,000- \$149,999	\$150,000+
Households @ Income	112	163	260	254	540	840	1,217	1,700
Est. affordable monthly rent Value (HH Income x 0.30)	\$375	\$625	\$875	\$1,250	\$1,875	\$2,500	\$3,750	\$3,750+
Existing Housing (Household) Units	15 (4.5%)	12 (3.6%)	111 (33.5%)	193 (58.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Households w/Adequate Income	112 (2.4%)	163 (3.4%)	260 (5.5%)	254 (5.4%)	540 (11.4%)	840 (17.8%)	1,217 (25.7%)	1,700 (36.0%)
<b>Units Available Vs Adequate Income</b>	<b>-97</b>	<b>-151</b>	<b>-149</b>	<b>-61</b>	<b>-540</b>	<b>-840</b>	<b>-1,217</b>	<b>-1,700</b>
Total Households	5,092	5,092	5,092	5,092	5,092	5,092	5,092	5,092

**Table 21. Household Size, Type, and Children**

Household Type	Occupied Units	Occupied %	Owner Units	Owner %	Rental Units	Rental %
<b>Occupied Housing Units</b>	<b>5,092</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,726</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100%</b>
1 – Person Household	730	14.3%	652	13.8%	78	16.2%
2 – Person Household	1,854	36.4%	1,687	35.7%	167	20.8%
3 – Person Household	997	19.6%	914	19.3%	83	22.7%
4-or-more– Person Household	1,511	29.7%	1,473	31.2%	38	10.4%
<b>Family Households</b>	<b>4,152</b>	<b>81.5%</b>	<b>3,883</b>	<b>82.2%</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>73.5%</b>
Married-Couple Family	3,682	72.3%	3,567	75.5%	115	31.4%
Household 65+	684	13.4%	665	14.1%	19	5.2%
Other Family	470	9.2%	316	6.7%	154	42.1%
<b>Non-Family Households</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>26.5%</b>
Household Living Alone	730	14.3%	652	13.8%	78	21.3%
Householder 65+	366	7.2%	333	7.0%	33	9.0%
Householder Not Living Alone	210	4.1%	191	4.0%	19	5.2%
Householder 65+	66	1.3%	66	1.4%	0	0.0%

## Understand Housing Need Versus Housing Demand

Need and demand are not the same. Just because there is a need for affordable housing at certain price points does not mean there is actual demand for the construction of new housing at such price points. Housing demand is driven by job growth, population growth, and ultimately, household formations—new households being formed from growth in jobs, growth in population, or splits of existing households into two or more households (e.g. divorce, adult children moving out of their parent’s house, etc.). Connecticut and the Hartford Metropolitan Region have experienced stagnant job and population growth over the past 30 years. Housing demand-drivers overall are weak and demand for new housing has been driven mostly by household formations, functional obsolescence of existing housing units, and the replacement of demolished housing units.

To understand demand in Tolland, specifically the absorption of new housing into the Tolland housing market, housing permit data for a 21-year period from 1997 to 2017 was reviewed (data is from the Department of Economic and Community Development). During this period, 1,230 new housing units were constructed. Of these, 1,174 (95%) were single-family dwellings, four were 2-unit dwellings, and 52 were multi-family (5+) unit dwellings. A total of 12 units were demolished, resulting in a net gain of 1,218 housing units. This results in an absorption rate of 58 units per year over the 21-year period. The greatest activity occurred in 2000 with 153 units constructed and the slowest year was 2016 with seven units constructed. This 21-year history, which includes periods of economic growth, stagnation, decline, and recovery, should provide moderate confidence in projecting approximately 58 units of

housing construction/growth per year over the next 10 years—the effective period of the POCD. However, recovery since the housing market crash in 2008 and recession in 2009 has been slow and new housing construction in Tolland and the region has been well below these historical trends. Therefore, it is likely the 58 units per year will not be achieved in the near term.

**Table 24. Housing Permits by Year, Tolland**

Year	Number of Permits					Demo	Net Gain
	Total Units	1 Unit	2 Unit	3 & 4 Units	5 Units or More		
2017	13	13	0	0	0	0	13
2016	7	7	0	0	0	2	5
2015	7	7	0	0	0	1	6
2014	17	13	4	0	0	3	14
2013	10	10	0	0	0	0	10
2012	8	8	0	0	0	0	8
2011	8	8	0	0	0	0	8
2010	10	10	0	0	0	0	10
2009	10	10	0	0	0	0	10
2008	18	18	0	0	0	0	18
2007	55	39	0	0	16	0	55
2006	57	57	0	0	0	0	57
2005	95	59	0	0	36	1	94
2004	87	87	0	0	0	1	86
2003	95	95	0	0	0	1	94
2002	98	98	0	0	0	0	98
2001	92	92	0	0	0	0	92
2000	153	153	0	0	0	1	152
1999	149	149	0	0	0	1	148
1998	137	137	0	0	0	0	137
1997	104	104	0	0	0	1	103
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1,218</b>



In analyzing Tolland's capacity to increase its affordable housing percentage, the first objective is to ensure that enough affordable housing is created each year so as to not decrease the current percentage (3.25%) of qualified affordable housing units in accordance with 8-30g. The second objective is to work toward meeting the 10% threshold of qualified affordable housing units in accordance with 8-30g.

Today, the 3.25% of qualified affordable housing (units that count towards Tolland's 10%) equals 177 housing units. Many of these are actually income qualified mortgages. This means the unit is not preserved as affordable but rather the current owner has a type of mortgage that counts towards Tolland's total. If that household moves, that unit no longer counts towards Tolland's percentage. Also note that this percentage and the following calculation do not include the 37 affordable senior housing units at Parker Place that are scheduled to be available later this year.

To reach 10%, based on the existing 5,405 total housing units, Tolland would need 541 qualified housing unit, or 364 more qualified units than exist today. However, keeping in mind that the numerator and denominator are moving targets, Tolland would need to create approximately 60 affordable qualified housing units per year over the next 10 years (or 598 total units), if 580 total housing units were built over that period. Adding 60 units of affordable-qualified housing per year or 598 such units over 10-years, exceeds the total historical and anticipated absorption rate and therefore is unreasonable to expect.

Instead, Tolland should set a target or aspirational goal that 20% to 25% of new housing constructed will be affordable. This would require approximately 11 to 15 affordable qualified units per year—

if the historical rate of new housing construction and absorption were achieved. These targets would produce between 110 and 150 affordable qualified units over the next 10 years and would go a long way towards increasing Tolland's affordable housing supply. Regardless of the total units constructed per year, Tolland should remain focused on the percentage of affordable units constructed per year. Most important, the qualified affordable housing should target household incomes at or below \$70,000 (approximately 60% and below) of Tolland's median household income.

## Addressing Housing Need

Affordable housing is about more than just housing price. Income along with regional or macro scale markets and local (micro) scale sub-markets, all play roles. Affordable housing problems cannot be solved simply at the local level or by any individual community. This does not absolve individual communities from their role or responsibility to address affordable housing needs but rather provides context to the challenge of doing so.

Since the local housing market does not have the capacity to provide the needed affordable housing units, the focus shifts away from trying to solve the problem of affordable housing to making a good-faith effort to provide much-needed affordable housing over the next ten years. Tolland can encourage affordable housing for those members of the community and region who are most challenged by the expense of housing. Tolland must be intentional and strategic in its efforts or interventions. Being intentional means that Tolland must want to address housing needs and provide affordable housing by having the political will to embrace and help the most vulnerable households. Being strategic means that Tolland must adopt strategies (policies and programs) aimed specifically at

the outcome of improving housing affordability or providing affordable housing.

### **Overall or Macro-Scale Considerations**

Affordable Housing Need: Focus on housing need more than tenure (owner vs renter) or type (single vs multi-family). The desired outcome is to provide affordable housing and not worry about what form it comes in. While this plan contains recommendations for some specific types, overall Tolland should encourage and promote affordable housing opportunities in all forms.

The Town should continue to partner with non-profit housing providers to create affordable units. Most recently the Town successfully worked with a non-profit to convert a former school to elderly housing.

Multi-Family Housing: Tolland lacks housing diversity and is over-reliant on single-family detached housing. The Town should encourage and seek to increase its multi-family housing stock to somewhere between 10% to 15% of total housing. Multi-family housing provides the greatest opportunity to increase the percentage of affordable housing units.

Tolland should seek diversity within its mix of multi-family units. Decreases in household size and increases in single- and two-person households are creating the need for more one- and two-bedroom units. As a general guideline, the Town should seek to provide the following mix of units in multi-family housing developments:

- 30% to 40% 1-bedroom
- 40% to 50% 2-bedroom

- 5% to 15% 3-bedroom units

While the market and developers will drive the proposed mix of units, developers should be cognizant of this desired mix, and the Planning and Zoning Commission should question applicants to explain deviations from this mix. This mix should be reviewed on a regular basis and adapted accordingly.

### **Zoning Considerations**

The following zoning strategies are designed to intentionally intervene in housing affordability and housing need by encouraging and providing more affordable housing.

Inclusionary Zoning: Update and expand upon inclusionary zoning provisions so that five percent of housing in any housing development of five or more units is required and it must meet the requirements of affordable housing under 8-30g. At the very least, this would encourage and provide affordable housing, while ensuring that the percentage of qualified affordable units does not further decline.

Affordable Housing Provisions: Review, revise, and consolidate the Affordable Housing provisions contained in Sections 5.5 (Flexible Residential Development), 7.6 (Workforce Housing Required), and 9.6 (Multi-Family Developments). Such a provision should include:

- Affordable housing regulations that apply to all residential development, including single-family subdivisions of five or more lots.
- Affordable housing requirements of five percent to 15% of units depending of the size, character, location, and availability of sewer and water.

- Density bonuses for percentage of affordable units, including additional bonuses for units in excess of 15%.
- Requirements for Housing Affordability Plans that are submitted by developers in accordance with 8-30g and other applicable State Statutes.
- The elimination of provisions that may be barriers to the inclusion or construction of affordable units (e.g., large minimum lot sizes, number of parking spaces, etc.).

Elderly Housing: Allow private market elderly housing and require 15% to 25% to be affordable and compliant with 8-30g. There is need for elderly housing in Tolland and the greater regional market. The Town can help satisfy that need and provide affordable housing for a population that needs options.

8-30g Application: Create a 'friendly' 8-30g zoning regulation that allows for and establishes a process for 8-30g development applications. Ideally this should be created as a floating zone, where the underlying zoning remains, but a developer can choose to use the provisions in the floating zone. The intent is to be proactive rather than having an 8-30g application forced upon the community. This enables an 8-30g-compliant development to be designed by the Town, not the developer.

Mixed-Use Development: Based on changes in consumer housing preferences, market demand for higher density rental housing, walkable neighborhoods, and mixed-use commercial districts, mixed-use developments and the associated housing can provide Tolland with opportunities to achieve housing, affordable housing, and economic development goals. Mixed-use development can provide economic development through the development of

commercial properties, while providing multi-family and affordable housing options. Site design for mixed-use developments could include requirements for public space, walking and biking trails, and other community amenities.

Affordable housing units should be required in mixed-use developments. Housing in mixed-use developments appeals mostly to non-family households. Such housing provides a good opportunity to provide affordable options.

The location of mixed-use developments should be confined to areas served by sewers or capable of being served by sewer, particularly within the Route 195 corridor. To encourage and facilitate such developments, the Planning and Zoning Commission should consider the creation of a 'Mixed-Use Master Plan Overlay Zone' that provides flexible standards for the development of housing as part of the mixed-use development. While further study is required and recommended, the following provides a starting point for consideration and a framework for thinking about mixed-use housing provisions that could be beneficial to the creation of such developments:

- Residential Density: Allow multi-family residential density by right of eight to 10 units per acre.
  - Allow density bonuses of an additional two to four units per acre (12 to 14 unit per acre total).
  - Allow a mix of housing unit types: single-family detached and attached, two-family, three-family, townhouse, and apartments buildings with up to 60 units per building.

- **Commercial Density:** Require a minimum of 1,000 square feet commercial space per 10 units of housing, excluding the density bonuses.
- **Site Design:** Allow flexibility in site design requirements aimed at favoring ‘good’ design over rigid standards and requirements. However, such provisions could:
  - Require commercial development/uses be placed nearest to or along the Route 195 frontage.
  - Require that 50% of ground floor commercial square feet have residential housing on second floors or above.
  - Require common public spaces and walking/biking trails with connections to neighboring properties and existing or future trail networks.
  - Provide parking space reductions for shared parking.
- For mixed-use housing, specifically those units above first floor commercial use, allow smaller unit sizes such as 500 square foot studios, 650 square foot one-bedroom units, and 900 square foot two-bedroom units. If possible, three-bedroom units should be avoided in mixed-use developments.
- Consider a target range of 10% to 15% affordable housing units in such developments.

Accessory Dwelling Units: Tolland recently overhauled its accessory dwelling unit regulations to allow more opportunities including

detached ‘tiny houses’. The Town should continue to allow and encourage accessory dwellings. This plan does not recommend attempting to address the 10% required affordable housing threshold set by 8-30g with accessory dwelling units. Such requirements and restrictions could become barriers to accessory dwelling units and would create enforcement obstacles. Tolland will never solve the affordable housing problem through such units.

These units provide housing opportunity, diversity, and market-rate affordability, helping those who need options and more affordable housing. Despite not counting towards Tolland’s affordable housing percentage, they provide affordable housing alternatives.

### **Permitting and Taxes**

Permitting Fees: Consider reducing permit fees for affordable housing units. This could include land use applications, zoning, and building permits. Entitlements and permitting create real costs for housing development. The entitlement processes often run between three and six percent of the total development cost. While this percentage may seem low, it is meaningful when the return-on-investment with high risk runs between 12% and 15%. Reducing fees can be a viable means of incentivizing affordable housing.

Tax Incentives: Consider providing tax incentives for affordable units in multi-family and mixed-use developments. One barrier to providing affordable units is the reduced return-on-investment. The cost to construct such units, if they are to be the same or similar standard of market units, can be as much as the market units. Reduced sales value or rents can and do undermine the financial feasibility of affordable units and possibly the whole development project.



Tax incentives, along with reduced permitting fees, can provide a real incentive for constructing affordable housing units. Tax incentives could range from 10% to 100%, from one to 10 years, and could be for the affordable units only or the whole development. Tax incentives have become common for multi-family residential development.

A possible incentive structure could be 100% of post-occupancy real property taxes for the first two years, 75% for year three, 50% in year four, and 25% in year five (or years five through seven).

## Accessible Housing

While the legal requirements of housing accessibility are directed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the State Building Code, legal requirements and minimums often address the populations with greatest needs but fall short of addressing those who do not meet the legally-defined need. The fact is, a greater percentage of the population suffers from challenges of physical limitation and mobility than those populations served by accessibility laws.

Tolland has an aging population as evidenced by a median age 42.2 years, higher than the national and state median age. Approximately 20% of Tolland's population and 22% of Tolland's households are 65 years of age or older. They are more likely to have physical and mobility limitation or more likely will in the future.

Recognizing that the percentage of over-65 population will increase over the next ten years, Tolland should strive to encourage and even require housing that is accessible. The following are some examples of considerations and policies that Tolland may want to encourage:

- At or near grade entrances to housing units—as few steps as possible.
- Wider doors for entrances, bedrooms, and bathrooms.
- First floor master bedroom suites in single family housing.
- Shower stalls in place of bathtubs and/or walk-in bathtubs.
- Handrails in baths and showers and near toilets.

While strict percentage requirements for accessible units are not needed, the Planning and Zoning Commission could encourage or strive for 20% to 25% of all new units to be accessible based on the percentage of over-65 populations.



## Crumbling Foundations

Over a dozen communities in eastern Connecticut have experienced the issue of cracking and crumbling foundations. The cause of this issue has been traced to a specific quarry and the existence of a mineral called pyrrhotite in the stone aggregate that was used to mix concrete.

Since the discovery of this issue, many public agencies led by the State have been evaluating the issue and exploring how to best address the issue. This has included Federal and State funding, Federal tax abatements, and other options. While it may take years for the overall issue to be resolved and for affected property owners to receive satisfactory relief, the financial implications for affected property owners are real and considerable. There are also financial implications for Tolland's tax base as affected property owners request reduced assessments. The re-assessment of property values will shift the tax burden to other property owners—all tax payers. Another possible concern or threat to property values and tax base are the impacts that the foundation issue is having on the overall housing market—sales value and the ability of property owners to sell their properties.

While there is little that this Plan can do to alleviate or resolve this kind of situation, the Town can do some simple things to help manage this unfortunate situation and alleviate the challenges and cost to affected property owners. These include:

- Continue to waive the local portion of building permit fees for affected properties requesting permits for reconstruction and/or relocation.
- Modify the Zoning Regulations to allow 'variation' or waivers to the yard setbacks (for affected buildings to be relocated to a new foundation on the property) without the need to demonstrate zoning hardship.
- Continue to allow a 'reasonable accommodation' to the zoning requirements by staff review and the approval process (e.g., temporary housing trailers on site, etc.).
- Continue to allow temporary housing and/or temporary storage trailers on a site during reconstruction.
- Continue to support efforts at the regional, State, and Federal level to address the foundation issues—including the need for State and Federal funding to assist property owners.
- Consider adopting a property tax abatement program that reduces the property taxes of properties with replaced or repaired foundations by 10% for up to 10 years to off-set some of the cost of repairs or replacement.
- Continue to monitor the crumbling foundation issue so that additional strategies can be implemented as appropriate.

# Infrastructure, Transportation & Community Facilities

Infrastructure and transportation comprise the Town's "skeleton"—they are the systems that the community is built on, providing access to land and supporting the use of land. Community facilities, like infrastructure and transportation, support the social and physical needs of community. Traditionally, infrastructure, transportation, and community facilities have been conceptualized and managed as simply physical infrastructure to be built and maintained. Today, we recognize they also contribute to the material culture of the community.

Recognizing this deeper importance, Tolland should shift how it views and supports such infrastructure and facilities. For example, the conditions of roads, the design and maintenance of public buildings and landscaping, and the availability of sewers, water, and even sidewalks, all contribute to the image of the community and the value of real property. Maintenance and new construction of infrastructure and facilities are not simply an expenditure or expense but also investment in the community which contribute to Tolland's image, property values, and quality of life. Just as homeowners need to continually maintain and invest in their homes to realize their full value potential, Tolland must continually provide, maintain, and invest in the infrastructure, transportation, and community facilities for Tolland to realize its full value potential.

## Infrastructure

Tolland's public water and sewer systems mostly serve the same areas of the community. While the areas served make up a small portion of Tolland, the systems play an important role in Tolland's development pattern and will continue to play a critical role in the future development of Tolland. Specifically, these systems support and serve the commercial and industrial zones and the Route 195 corridor—the area of Tolland best suited for development. These systems are critical to supporting economic development.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health's Water Utility Coordinating Committee recently completed a process to assign future water service rights in Tolland. Those rights were divided between the two water companies that currently provide water service (the Tolland Water System and Connecticut Water Company).

The Town should continue to monitor and proactively upgrade, repair, maintain and secure town water and sewer infrastructure. Sewer expansions should be limited to within the sewer service area approved by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). There are still a number of commercial and industrial properties within the sewer service area that cannot connect to sewer without system expansions. The Town should explore funding options for expanding sewer within this area.

In cases of failing septic systems immediately adjacent to the approved sewer service area, the Town should seek to include these properties within the sewer service area. Overall, the sewer service area should be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as needs and circumstances change.

The Town should increase the number of properties serviced by the sewer system. The DEEP-approved Wastewater Action Plan recommends revising the sewer regulations to more explicitly require properties in the service to connect to the sewer system. Where feasible, Town properties should also connect to the sewer system.

Tolland should consider establishing a sewer allocation program. Because Tolland's wastewater goes to a treatment plant in Vernon, the Town is allocated a set amount of wastewater it can send to Vernon. An allocation plan can help ensure that capacity is reserved for desirable land uses.

As noted in the Natural Resources section, the Town should work to implement the Wastewater Action Plan.

To the degree practicable, the Town should extend its water service to meet the needs of commercial, industrial, multi-family, and mixed-use development and encourage the Connecticut Water Company to do the same.

Other infrastructure includes electricity, communications, and fuel sources. Generally, these are privately held and publicly regulated utilities that Tolland has little control over. However, Tolland should continually monitor to ensure that adequate services are provided. The Town has implemented its own fiber optic network to serve public buildings. The Town should stay apprised of evolving and emerging communication technologies and support or encourage the implementation of technologies that help the Town function more efficiently and that might aid in economic development.

Issues related to drainage were addressed in the Natural Resources Section, including the requirement to inventory existing infrastructure. The Town should continue to maintain current drainage infrastructure and implement low impact development measures, in compliance with MS4 requirements.

## **Transportation**

Historically, transportation planning focused mostly on commuting and circulation. How we move between home and work and how our transportation networks (primarily roads) provide for circulation within the community. Today, transportation planning recognizes the need to focus more on mobility. As a rural-suburban community, Tolland has evolved around the automobile and we expect going forward the automobile will remain the primary means of movement here. Tolland must continue to maintain and improve its road network and ensure that adequate parking facilities are provided to accommodate automobiles.

However, Tolland recognizes that other means (or modes) of transportation have a role and that residents now want more alternatives for moving around town, including the ability to walk or bike.

### **Roads**

The classification of roads is important to matching the design and utilization of roads to their location, adjacent land uses, and functions. Roads in Tolland are classified based on their:

- Function (through traffic versus access)
- Major land use (commercial versus residential)



- Traffic volumes (capacity)
- Location (spatial context)

Tolland's road network is classified into five categories: Interstate, Arterial, Collector, Residential and Neighborhood, and Private.

The Interstate classification is I-84 and recognizes that much of the traffic on I-84 simply passes through Tolland. However, I-84 also provides the primary means of access to and from Tolland for commuters and visitors.

Arterial roads primarily carry regional and local traffic and serve major activity centers—especially commercial and higher-density residential development. This is especially the case with the Route 195 corridor. Direct access to arterials should be limited through access management techniques and similar measures to reduce curb cuts and maximize the movement of through traffic. Acceleration, deceleration, and turning lanes should be required, whenever feasible, at access points to facilitate the efficient flow of traffic. Ultimately the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) has jurisdiction over any required improvements to state-owned roads, such as Route 195.

Collector roads are intended to distribute traffic between arterial roads and neighborhoods. Collector roads can provide both direct and indirect access to adjacent land uses, so access management measures should be encouraged in commercial and industrial areas adjacent to collectors. Residential and neighborhood roads are intended to provide direct access to residential properties and should be designed for low traffic volumes. The same is true of private roads.

The Town should continue to promote and require access management measures. This is particularly important in the Tolland Village Area, Gateway Design District and Technology Campus Zone where there is greater opportunity for landowners to work together to share driveways and access points.

Surveys conducted as part of this POCD update process show that residents care greatly about road conditions in Tolland. As a geographically large community with low density development, Tolland has a large number of road miles to maintain. The Town invested in a pavement management system which helps prioritize road maintenance in a more efficient manner. Use of this system should continue. The Town has bonded for maintenance and should continue this practice. When bond interest rates are low, the Town should be more aggressive in its resurfacing program.

Tolland's roads are one of the most prominent contributors to overall character. Road "improvements" can have a negative impact. The Town should continue to encourage DOT to ensure improvements to state roads respect Tolland's community character and overall community goals, and are consistent with this Plan.

## **Parking**

Parking, which is a critical component of the Town's transportation system, is mostly privately owned. Although parking provides a necessary piece of the transportation system, parking facilities often have a negative aesthetic impact on community character. Furthermore, parking lots usually entail large expanses of pavement, therefore impacting stormwater management and water quality. Parking infrastructure can be planned and managed to meet its intended purpose while minimizing impacts.

The Zoning Regulations have been and continue to be the best tool to plan for, address, and manage parking. Parking standards ensure each property and use (or uses) has enough parking to meet its own needs without impairing traffic, public safety, or the use of adjacent land. Zoning requirements also address potential impacts of parking lots through landscaping and stormwater requirements. This approach to parking through zoning has mostly worked well and should continue. However, changes in lifestyle have impacted and reduced peak-demand for parking, often resulting in the need for fewer parking spaces for commercial and industrial uses. Tolland should continuously monitor, assess, and adjust parking requirements.

### **Mobility and Alternative Modes of Transportation**

How we think about transportation and mobility has shifted in recent years, with greater focus on alternatives to the automobile. Tolland is aware of this shift and recognizes the importance of promoting, supporting, and providing alternative modes of transportation, when feasible and practical. Such modes include walking, biking, public transit, and para-transit. These modes also offer opportunities for those who cannot drive or prefer not to drive.

Walking and biking should be considered viable modes of transportation. Tolland should ensure that road improvements, upgrades, and expansions consider the needs of all users including bicyclists and pedestrians. Sometimes it can be as simple as striping a shoulder when repaving a road. In other cases, improvements might entail adding sidewalks, crosswalks, and other measures to make it easier to bike and walk. The Town should evaluate and aim to coordinate the design of trails and pathways with existing and

future sidewalks to create a more integrated network. Target areas for investment might include the triangle formed from the Town Green, down Route 74 to the schools on Old Cathole, down Rhodes Road to the Route 195 corridor and back up Route 195. Even the addition of small segments helps to improve the network.

Proposed developments should be required to consider the pedestrian and bicycle goals in this Plan. The Planning and Zoning Commission should ensure that the site layout of new commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use development incorporates pedestrian-friendly designs into their plans. Existing businesses and government facilities should be encouraged to provide bicycle infrastructure, such as bike racks.

Tolland now has bus service connecting the Town to UConn. The Town should continue to support this service and help promote it to residents. Development proposals in the Route 195 corridor should demonstrate synergies between the development and the Hartford-Tolland-UConn bus service and how the development will enhance the bus service (e.g., how the development plan or business plan considers, incorporates, or leverages the bus service). Generally private shuttles that serve only one particular development and that compete with public transit should be discouraged.

Tolland should continue to support and promote alternative modes of transportation—including paratransit—that meet the needs of seniors and those populations whose mobility needs are challenged or underserved. Paratransit provides door to door rides, such as “Dial-a-Ride.” In the last ten years, some additional destinations have been added for Tolland seniors. The Town should continue to

work with seniors and paratransit providers to fill gaps in desirable and needed destinations.

With the advent and expansion of ride-sharing services, we can expect greater opportunities for getting around without owning a car. These may offer a great opportunity in addressing the mobility needs of seniors and other populations with mobility challenges. Tolland should monitor these new technologies and services and identify opportunities.

The recently adopted Eastern Gateways Study encourages additional transit options when events are held at UConn. The Town should work regionally to encourage such services. It also recommended the formation of a regional task force to address issues related to traffic-generating events.

### **Electric Vehicle Charging Stations**

Electric vehicles are increasing in numbers and will continue to grow in share of the total automobile market. For example, market share for total U.S. automobile sales for electric vehicles grew from 0.9% in 2016 to 1.75% in 2018. This means that there is and will continue to be a growing need for charging stations. Tolland should encourage the installation of charging stations as part of new development, as additions to existing developments, and as part of renovations to town facilities. The more charging stations available, the more feasible the electric automobile will become.

## **Community Facilities**

Community facilities are those facilities provided and maintained by local government to facilitate the delivery of public services to the community. Some community facilities function more as infrastructure that support the community and land uses, such as public works facilities. Other community facilities, such as parks, trails, schools, libraries, and the senior center function as much as amenities of place that contribute directly to Tolland's quality of life (and property values), as they do as infrastructure that support the delivery of town services. In both regards, community facilities are critical to the community and to the implementation of this Plan.

While this Plan considers the community facilities in the context of the community vision and the needs and wants of the community, there are limits to the capacity and role of this Plan to plan for specifics of each community facility. For example, the Board of Education has a better understanding of its facilities and needs. The same is true of Public Works or the Fire Department. However, the Planning and Zoning Commission, in the context of this Plan, has an understanding of the role that community facilities play in supporting land uses, the patterns of development, and how these facilities play a role with economic development. Therefore, the context and recommendations for community facilities in this Plan are at the macro-scale with an eye toward and expectation of further micro-scale planning by individual agencies and the Town Council.

The terms “invest” and “investment” are used throughout this section. These terms mean time, energy, and / or money and does not necessarily equate to spending more money.

Overall, the Town should continue to proactively plan for and coordinate community facility needs. A town-wide community facility plan should be developed that inventories and assesses all facilities with the aim of planning for future maintenance and capacity needs. Such a plan should identify additional sustainability measures and techniques for town facilities. It can also help make the connection between community facilities and “amenities of place”—those facilities and infrastructure that contribute to quality of life, sense of place, and Tolland’s community character. If the State moves forward with promoting or possibly requiring regionalization of some municipal functions, a community facilities plan should examine possibilities and scenarios.

Over the years, the Town has acquired parcels of vacant land. Some parcels have been slated for permanent conservation while a handful have not been designated for any specific purpose. Either as part of a community facilities plan or as a separate process, the Town should determine the best uses for these remaining parcels.

Regarding town educational facilities, careful monitoring of enrollment remains critical. As a predominantly single-family community, improvements to the Tolland Public Schools should be viewed as investments in the community and as means of supporting the value of housing.

The Capital Budget includes improvements at some of the fire stations and Station 140 is impacted by a crumbling foundation which will need to be addressed. Since the last plan, the resident troopers have been moved to town hall and a study on long-term policing needs was conducted. Any community facilities plan should evaluate the space needs of public safety—fire, police, emergency response, animal control, and emergency operations.

As noted, many community facilities function as community amenities and enhance Tolland’s community character and quality of life. Investment in these facilities should continue, including the library, the senior center and walking and biking trails. With the expected increase in the senior population, the Town should continue to assess and plan for their needs.

Based on the survey, there seems to be community support for additional recreation opportunities. With many groups interested in using town fields, additional types of sports emerging, and longer sports seasons, the Town should continue to identify opportunities for meeting demand. The Town has also been examining opportunities to improve accessibility to its recreation areas for handicapped persons. Efforts should be made to implement measures to improve accessibility over time.

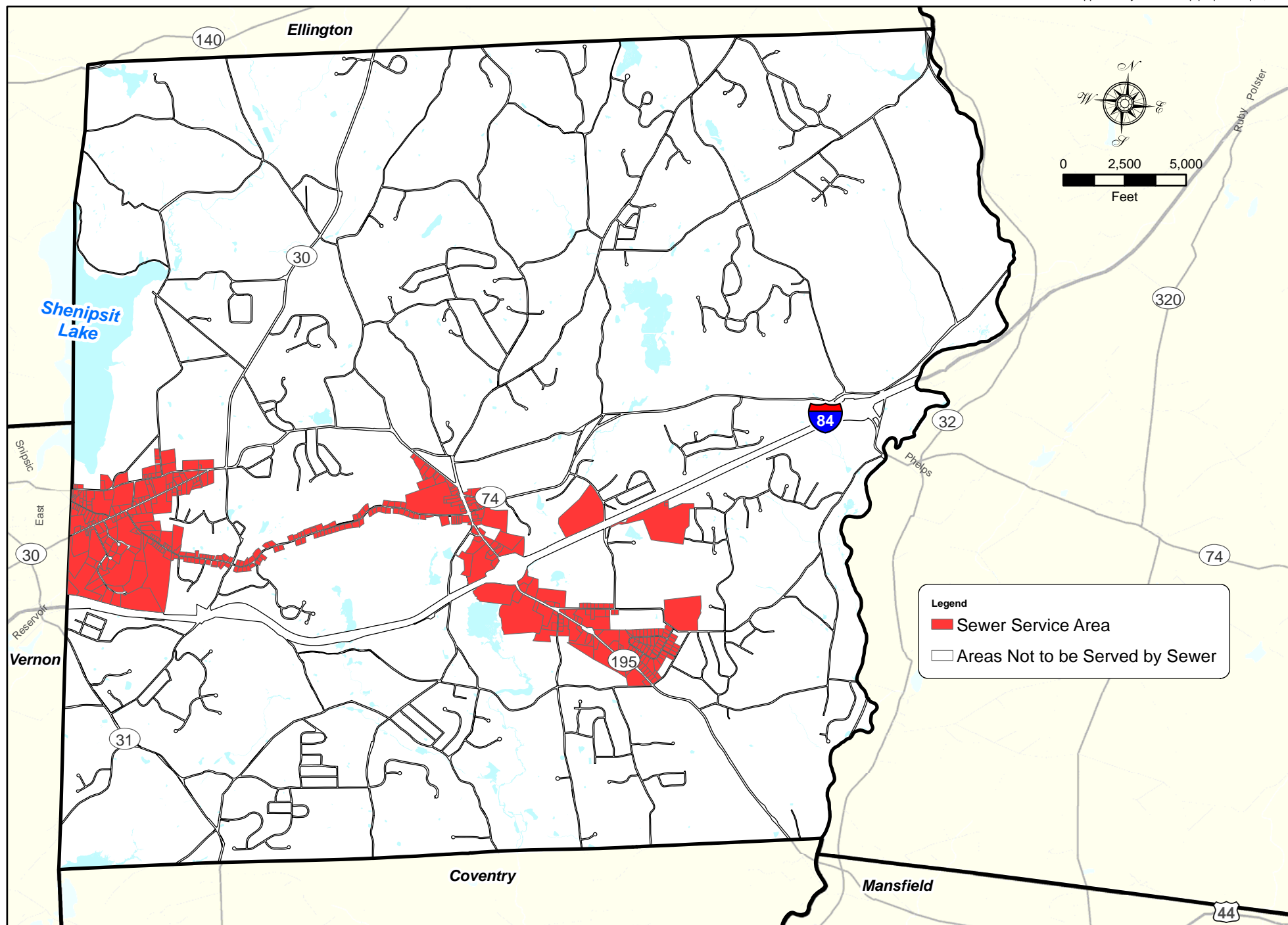




# Sewer Service Plan

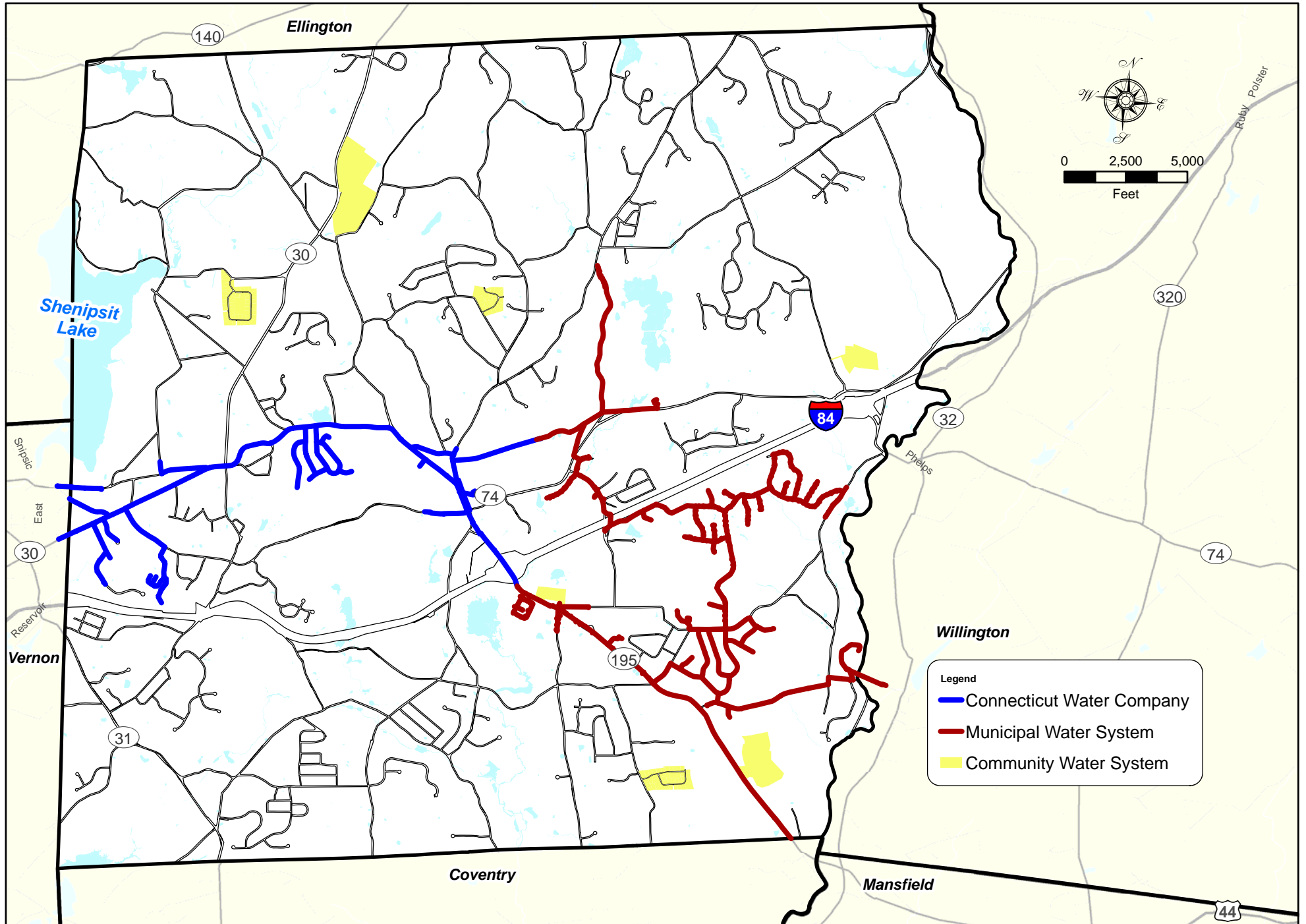
Tolland, CT

Sewer Service Area approved by DEEP. Map prepared April, 2019



# Water Systems Map

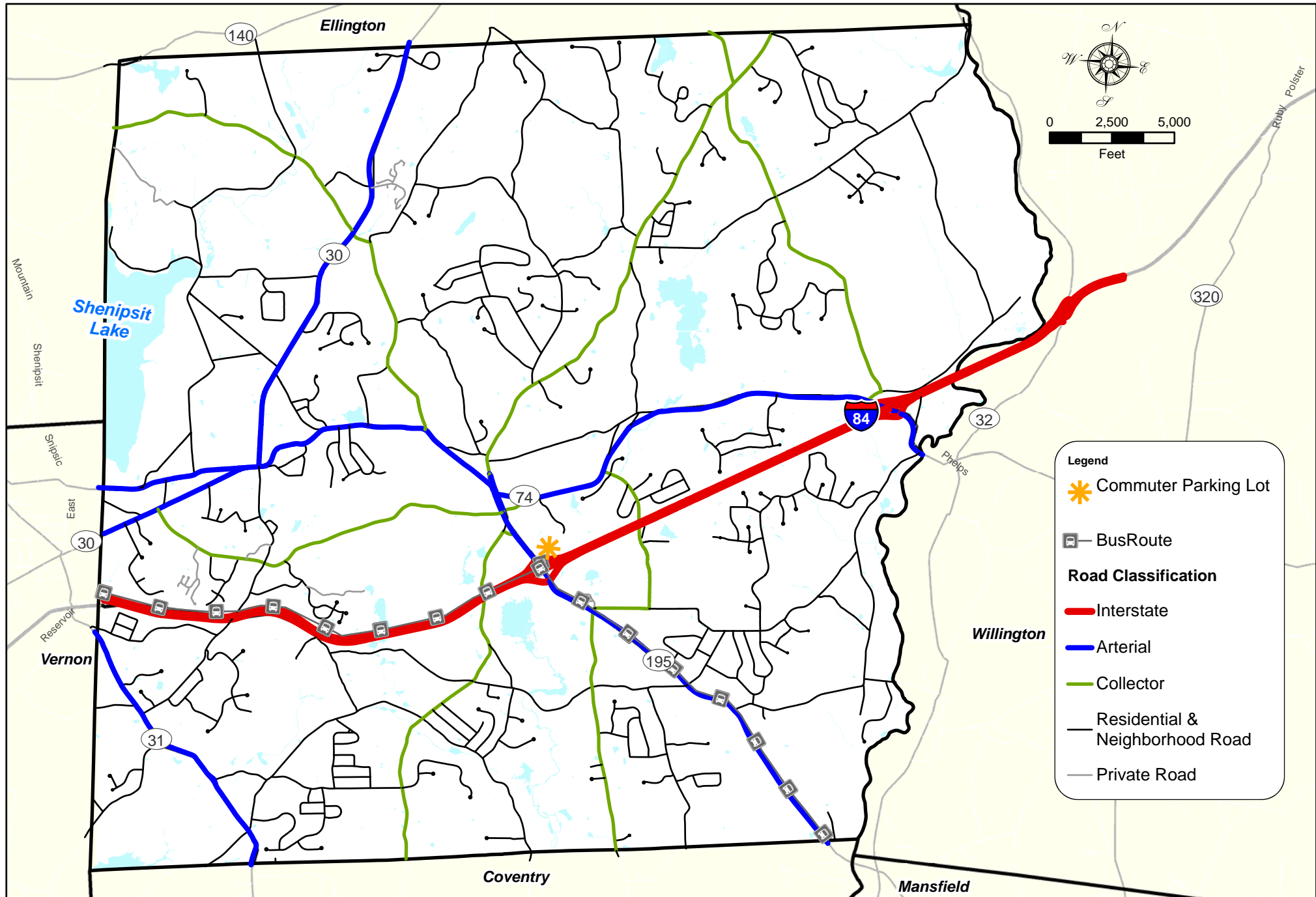
Tolland, CT  
Map prepared April, 2019



# Transportation Plan - Driving

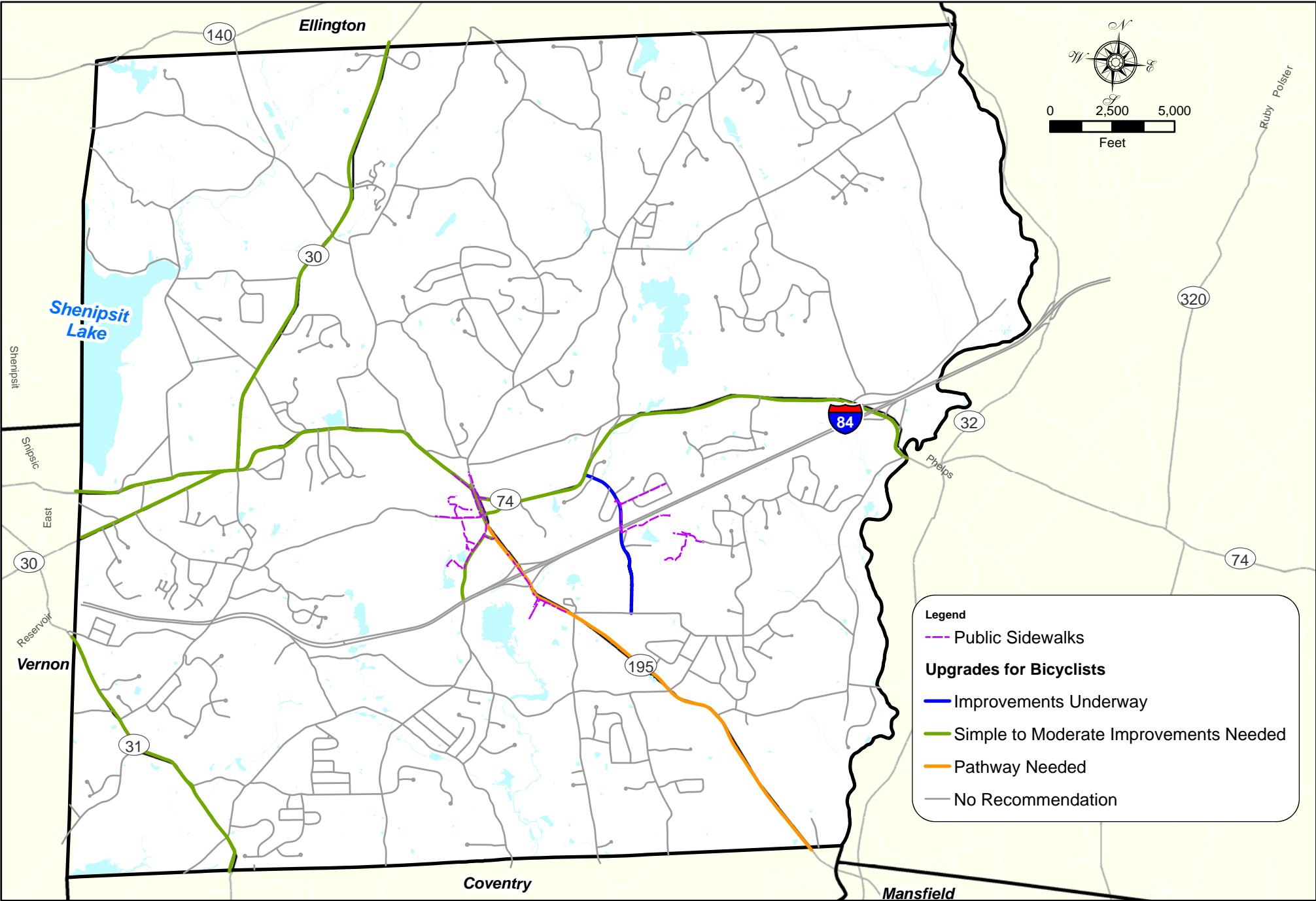
Tolland, CT

Map prepared April, 2019



# Bicyclist & Pedestrian Map

Tolland, CT  
Map prepared April, 2019

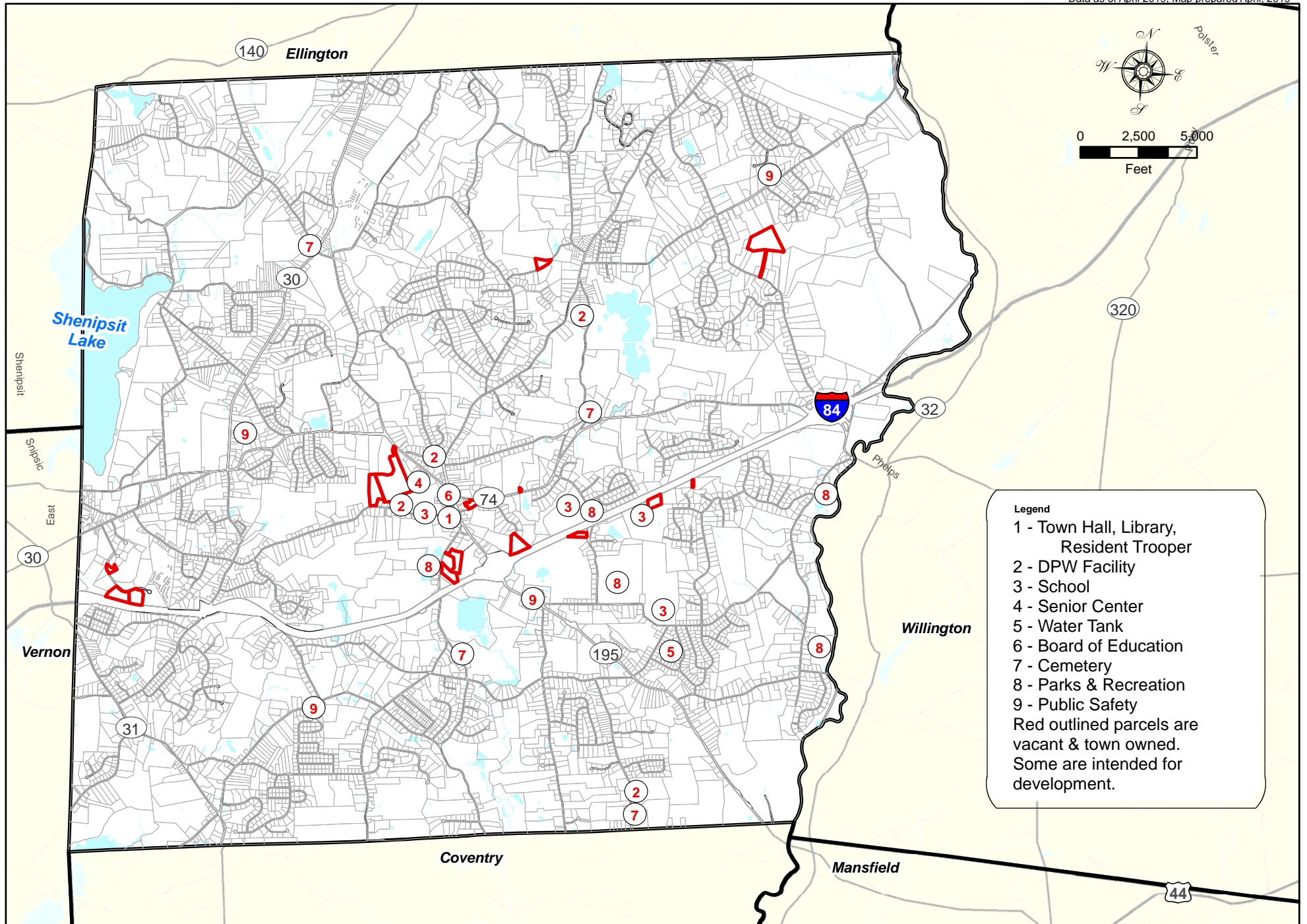




# Community Facilities Map

Tolland, CT

Data as of April 2019, Map prepared April, 2019



# Change

Planning is a process of problem solving, a means of correcting problems of the past, a way to prepare for the future, a vision for what a community strives to achieve, and a continuous process of learning and adjustment. We plan for the future, yet the future is unknown and unknowable. This uncertainty creates limits to planning and confronts us with the risk of being wrong. With risk and the risk of being wrong there is also the threat of shock and disturbance—unforeseen events that catch us off guard and test our capacity cope and deal with the unknown.

To plan for the unknown, we must accept change, build capacity, and have the capability to manage. Planning is about managing. Being prepared is not about predicting what the future will be or working to resist change. Being prepared is about having the capacity and capabilities to manage and deal with change. How can the Town (the residents, elected and appointed officials, staff, businesses and others) move ahead in a positive direction when faced with change—whether that change is viewed as desirable or undesirable? This Section puts forth a few simple rules to remember and use as a guide:

- Embrace the simple notion that things change.
- Recognize that communities are always shifting and changing.
- Understand that change is not continuous and gradual, but episodic.

- Don't presume sufficient knowledge, but recognize when we need to learn more. Yet don't be paralyzed when we don't have all of the answers.
- Keep options open, while embracing rather than trying to resist or constrain change.
- Don't assume that future events are expected, but that they will be unexpected.
- Embrace diversity—diversity in land use, housing, economic development, etc. Diversity makes us more resilient to change.
- Pay close attention to slow variables of change. Sometimes the most important change is change we do not notice because it moves slowly.
- Embrace and encourage redundancies and overlapping responsibilities, and incorporate both top-down and bottom-up structures.
- Recognize the regional context and scale actions to fit the community.
- Don't focus on trying to predict or preordain the future, but to build capacity to absorb and accommodate future events in whatever unexpected form they may take.

As a community we can better manage change with these principles in focus and move away from our common response to new ideas and proposals as yes or no answers. If we can delay our answer and simply ask, 'how can we make this work' or 'can we make this work', we can then explore the opportunity, learn of the possibilities and impossibilities, and make an informed decision.

# Summary of Strategies & Future Land Use Plan

The following summarizes strategies contained in this Plan and those strategies carried forward from the 2009 Plan. For details behind each item, refer back to the appropriate section of this POCD. For those items carried forward from the 2009 Plan (marked with an \*), refer to the 2009 Plan for more details about the strategy.

## A. Natural Resources

1. Consider shifting new development away from preservation areas and to areas more suitable for development.\*
2. Carefully balance natural resource protection, fiscal viability & character protection during land use application review & regulation updates.\*
3. Review, revise and update land use regulations to ensure the principles outlined herein are reinforced. Special attention shall be given to water quality, greenways and land use density in sensitive areas.\*
4. Strive to improve water quality of water bodies.
5. Review the recommendations in the “Tankerhoosen River Watershed Management Plan” and determine an implementation plan.
6. Adopt stormwater measures required under the “MS4” program.
7. Reduce the land clearing threshold for when a zoning permit / drainage review is required.\*
8. Encourage or require new development to reduce impervious surfaces.\*
9. Examine regulations to minimize the need for impervious surfaces.\*
10. Provide information on pervious surface alternatives.\*
11. Ensure that municipal projects, including road work, meet LID standards.\*
12. Minimize land clearing by regulating the building envelope.\*
13. Continue to implement the “Plan for Addressing Wastewater in Tolland.”
14. Identify areas for restoration projects (e.g., streambanks).
15. Use soon-to-be-updated FEMA data to examine areas with drainage issues.
16. Ensure site planning and construction minimize impacts to natural resources.
17. Explore zoning options to protect hill tops and steep slopes.\*
18. Promote water conservation.\*
19. Host workshops to review stormwater requirements with local developers and contractors.

20. Explore more effective erosion and sediment control measures and diligently enforce requirements.
21. Undertake additional efforts to inform property owners who have wetlands when a permit is required.
22. Remain aware and alert of potential impacts from climate change.
23. Investigate additional opportunities for solar, geothermal and other sustainable energy systems for town buildings and land.
24. For new town solar projects, avoid farmland.
25. Maintain a simple permitting process for solar panels.
26. Update solar provisions in the Zoning Regulations.
27. Encourage new development to incorporate LEED (“green building”) standards.\*
28. Encourage all new municipal buildings and substantial upgrades to be LEED eligible.\*
29. Implement actions contained in the 2019–2024 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.
30. Stay apprised of on-going research into the Atlantic White Cedar Forest.
31. Develop actions to help protect the Atlantic White Cedar Forest.

32. Train property maintenance volunteers and staff on invasive species eradication techniques.
33. Provide environmental educational programs for businesses and residents.
34. Encourage the creation of backyard habitat and recognize efforts.\*
35. Reduce the use of pesticides on all municipal properties or utilize Integrated Pest Management programs.\*
36. Encourage the inclusion of sustainability into school curriculum.\*

## **B. Open Space**

1. Continue to acquire land to preserve as open space, with a focus on ensuring acquisitions are meaningful and advance a specific purpose.
2. Update the Open Space Plan.
3. Explore creative approaches to preserve open space.
4. Continue to seek grants to preserve open space.
5. Generally avoid using easements to protect land.
6. Review town-owned properties not slated for a specific purpose and determine if they are appropriate to be conservation areas.
7. Continue to support the volunteer-based land stewardship program.



8. Hold additional events and programs to celebrate and publicize Tolland's conservation areas.
9. Finish updating trail maps and create a town-wide trail map.\*
10. Preserve a greenway connection from the businesses on Hartford Turnpike / Tolland Stage Road to Shenipsit Lake.\*

## C. Community Character

1. Preserve the historic integrity, cultural value, and scenic attributes of Tolland Green.
2. Ensure that community events continue on the Town Green.\*
3. Modernize the inventory of historic buildings, making it available on-line.
4. Promote Tolland's historic and cultural assets.
5. Consider property tax incentives for preserving historic buildings.
6. Consider adopting a demolition delay ordinance for historic buildings.
7. Continue to support the active use of historic buildings.
8. Explore grants and creative ways to help maintain and restore historic buildings.
9. Continue to protect and, when needed, restore or repair historic gravestones.
10. Continue to refer plans to the State Archaeologist when development is proposed in archaeologically sensitive areas.
11. Promote Tolland's living cultural assets (artists, writers, musicians, etc.) and determine ways to incorporate them into town projects.
12. Establish the first local Scenic Road with a public education and media campaign to build support for future designations.\*
13. Be mindful of scenic features when undertaking road improvement projects.
14. Preserve trees along roads, provided they do not cause a potential hazard to utility lines.\*
15. Encourage the State Department of Transportation to be mindful of scenic features when undertaking road projects.
16. Preserve stone walls on town properties.
17. Encourage preservation of stone walls on private property when reviewing applications for development.
18. Reduce light pollution - encourage property owners and the Town to retrofit outdoor lighting.\*
19. Improve the appearance of gateway areas through maintenance and with high design standards for development.
20. Complete and regularly update an inventory of Tolland farms.

21. Maintain open communication with farm owners.\*
22. Continue to seek additional opportunities to preserve land for agricultural use.
23. Continue to improve upon Tolland's farm leasing program.
24. Update the Zoning Regulations to be more farm-friendly.
25. Encourage agri-tourism.
26. Minimize potential conflicts when new housing is built near a farm.\*
27. Continue to publicize local farms, products, and events.\*
28. Help expand the market for locally-grown products (e.g., school lunch, senior center).\*

## **D. Economic and Commercial Development**

1. Modify or re-adapt the approaches to the TVA and TCZ.
2. Encourage the build out of parcels in business zones.\*
3. Update the site development and design provisions in the Zoning Regulations.
4. Encourage owners of older commercial and industrial buildings to maintain and update their properties and provide resources.
5. Reduce unnecessary or unintentional permitting roadblocks for building updates and renovations.
6. Update home occupation regulations.

7. Stay apprised of emerging work space trends.
8. Train Town Hall staff, boards and commissions on their roles in economic development.
9. Update Zoning Regulations to better encourage those business uses the Town wishes to see in Tolland.
10. Regularly engage with the local business community.
11. Proactively work to understand the needs and concerns of existing businesses and provide support.
12. Celebrate Tolland businesses.
13. Create and maintain a community information packet.
14. Encourage the State and other potential partners to address crumbling foundations in commercial and industrial buildings.
15. Expand the Town's capacity to do economic development.
16. Market Tolland's image and community brand.
17. Implement the soon-to-be created four-town economic development action plan.
18. Conceptualize town budgets and projects as an opportunity and means of making strategic investments in economic development.
19. Be more intentional with development, rather than reactive.

## E. Housing

1. Maintain Tolland's overall rural-suburban development patterns, form, and density, while providing greater opportunities for all income levels.
2. Monitor market trends and demand to ensure that the zoning is in sync with consumer needs and wants.
3. Guide higher density housing and multi-family development to areas that can best support it.\*
4. Encourage and promote affordable housing opportunities in all forms.
5. Continue to partner with non-profit housing providers to create affordable units.
6. Encourage and seek to increase the multi-family housing stock to between 10% to 15% of total housing.
7. Set a target or aspirational goal that 20% to 25% of new housing constructed will be affordable.
8. Require five percent of units in any development of five or more units be affordable per 8-30g.
9. Encourage diversity in number of bedrooms in multi-family units per the guidelines in this Plan.
10. Review, revise, and consolidate the affordable housing provisions in the Zoning Regulations, per the recommendations in this Plan.
11. Amend the Zoning Regulations to allow private market elderly housing, with 15% to 25% units affordable and compliant with 8-30g.
12. Create a "friendly" 8-30g zoning provision.
13. Create a zoning provision for mixed use development which, among other requirements, requires affordable housing.
14. Continue to allow and encourage accessory dwelling units.
15. Consider reducing permit fees for affordable housing units.
16. Consider providing tax incentives for affordable units in multi-family and mixed-use developments.
17. Inventory state and town owned surplus properties to determine potential use for housing.\*
18. Determine the location for additional income- and asset-restricted senior units and seek funding.\*
19. Continue to utilize tools to ensure that existing housing units are maintained and updated to meet needs, particularly for seniors.\*
20. Continue zero interest rehabilitation loans and look for ways to increase funds for loans.\*
21. Investigate tools to convert existing housing units into affordable units.\*
22. Continue tax programs for income-qualified seniors.\*

23. Share the Town's strategies for meeting housing needs with entities that help to create affordable housing.\*
24. Encourage home-builders to create accessible units, striving for 20% to 25% of all new units to be accessible.
25. Continue to alleviate the challenges and costs associated with crumbling foundations.

## **F. Infrastructure, Transportation & Community Facilities**

1. Continue to monitor and proactively upgrade, repair, maintain, and secure town water and sewer infrastructure.
2. Limit sewer expansions to within the sewer service area approved by DEEP.
3. Review the sewer service area on a regular basis to determine if changes are warranted.
4. Explore funding options to expand sewers within the sewer service area.
5. Implement the Town's "Wastewater Action Plan."
6. Consider a sewer allocation program.
7. Extend water service to meet the needs of commercial, industrial, multi-family, and mixed-use development and encourage the Connecticut Water Company to do the same.
8. Monitor availability of private utilities (e.g., electrical, communications, etc.) to ensure adequate services are provided.
9. Stay apprised of evolving and emerging communication technologies.
10. Encourage the implementation of technologies that help the Town function more efficiently and that might aid in economic development.
11. Continue to promote and require access management measures.
12. Require acceleration, deceleration, and turning lanes on arterials at access points, when feasible.
13. Continue to use the Town's pavement management system to prioritize road work.
14. Continue to bond for road maintenance, with a more aggressive resurfacing program when bond interest rates are low.
15. Continue to encourage DOT to ensure improvements to state roads respect Tolland's community character and overall community goals, and are consistent with this Plan.
16. Continuously monitor, assess, and adjust parking requirements in the Zoning Regulations.
17. Promote, support, and provide alternative modes of transportation, when feasible and practical.



18. Ensure that road improvements, upgrades, and expansions consider the needs of all users including bicyclists and pedestrians.
19. Evaluate and aim to coordinate the design of trails and pathways with existing and future sidewalks.
20. Require proposed developments to consider the pedestrian and bicycle goals in this Plan.
21. Ensure that the site layout of new commercial, multi-family, and mixed-use development incorporates pedestrian-friendly designs into their plans.
22. Encourage existing businesses and government facilities to provide bicycle infrastructure.
23. Continue to support and promote bus service to UConn.
24. When reviewing development proposals in the I-95 corridor, ensure applications leverage or enhance bus service.
25. Continue to work with seniors and paratransit providers to fill gaps in desirable and needed destinations.
26. Monitor ride-sharing technologies and services and identify opportunities.
27. Work regionally to encourage additional transit options when events are held at UConn.
28. Encourage the installation of charging stations as part of new development, as additions to existing developments, and as part of renovations to town facilities.

29. Develop a town-wide community facilities plan.
30. Determine the best uses of those town-owned parcels not designated for a particular use.
31. Continue to carefully monitor school enrollment.
32. Identify opportunities to meet recreational demand.
33. Improve handicap accessibility of recreation areas.
34. Explore providing a “swap” and composting.\*

## Summary of Zoning Districts

Unless noted otherwise, this POCD supports the continuance of most of today's zoning districts.

### Residential Design District

This zone maintains the overall rural-suburban residential development pattern, with the Natural Resource & Wildlife Protection overlay reducing density further in certain areas.

### Village Center Zone

This zone is intended to protect the traditional New England atmosphere of the existing residential, municipal, cultural and religious uses on and near Tolland Green. This POCD suggests having future discussions about whether additional, compatible uses might be appropriate (see page 22).

### Tolland Village Area

This zone is intended to expand economic opportunities, promote mixed use development in a style and layout that complements the Tolland Green Historic District, and create walkable neighborhoods, among other goals. This POCD recommends re-examining this zone (see pages 26-27).

### Neighborhood Commercial Zones

Zone G, just north of Tolland Green, promotes smaller-scale commercial, government, and community uses. Development should complement the appearance of buildings on Tolland Green and provide pedestrian connections between uses and to the Tolland Green and government buildings. Zone T, located further down

Route 195, is intended to provide a transition between the TCZ and residential areas by allowing for smaller-scale and less intense commercial uses.

### Community Commercial Zone

This zone promotes small-scale neighborhood businesses that are designed to create a sense of place, provide pedestrian connections to nearby neighborhoods, and preserve a greenway connection to Shenipsit Lake. Some housing is encouraged to provide for a mixture of uses within the zone.

### Gateway Design District

This commercial zone is intended to create an attractive entrance to Tolland, though high design standards. This POCD suggests updating the design standards.

### Technology Campus Zone

This zone was created to capitalize on economic activities anticipated at the UConn Technology Park. It was intended to promote coordinated, campus style development, with pedestrian connections, among other goals. This POCD recommends reexamining this zone (see page 26).

### Commercial / Industrial Zone

This zone is intended to provide for larger-scale and more intense commercial and light industrial uses.

### Tolland Business Park

The Business Park is intended to provide for light industry, offices and other uses, with a greater emphasis on aesthetics than the CIZ.

### **Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone**

This zone applies to areas identified as being coarse-grained stratified drift with an intent of protecting drinking water supplies. The long-term need for this zone is questioned, since today's stormwater regulations address many of the concerns this overlay zone was intended to address and public water sources have other protection measures.

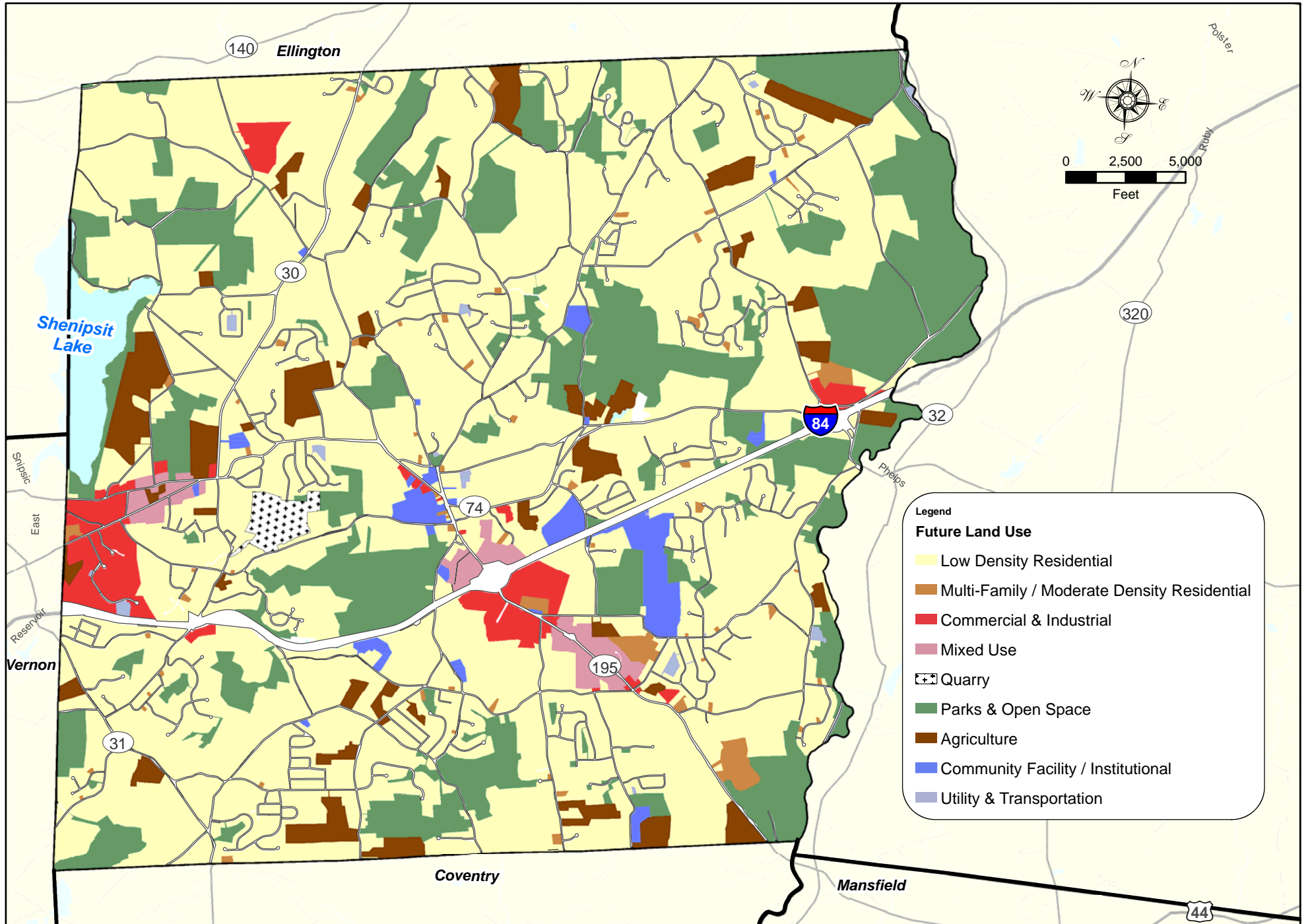
### **Flood Plain / Stream Belt**

This overlay protects public welfare and safety by restricting development within the 100 year flood plain.

# Future Land Use Plan

Tolland, CT

Data as of April 2019, Map prepared April, 2019





# State & Regional Plan Consistency

The Planning and Zoning Commission firmly believes that this Plan is consistent with State policies and the 2014 Capitol Region Plan of Conservation and Development, as outlined below.

## Consistency with the State Plan of Conservation and Development, 2013-2018

This Plan is consistent with the State Plan of Conservation and Development 2013-2018. *(Note: At the time of this review a new State Plan is being drafted but not yet acted upon by the State Legislature).*

The State Plan establishes six growth management principles. A more detailed explanation of the Plan and map may be found at [www.ct.gov/OPM](http://www.ct.gov/OPM). The following is a review of how Tolland's Plan of Conservation and Development is consistent with each of the growth management principles.

Principle #1: Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical. The Tolland Plan focuses on redevelopment and new development opportunities within the Route 195 corridor. This area, with existing commercial development that is mostly served by public water and sewer, is the area most likely to develop and is best suited for development. The Plan recommends multi-family residential, mixed-use commercial and residential, and further commercial and industrial development. These recommendations for future development are supported by

the existing infrastructure and public transit (Hartford/UConn bus line) within the corridor.

Principle #2: Extend housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs. This POCD includes a comprehensive housing needs assessment and plan in accordance with the requirements of Public Act 17-170. The assessment and plan comply with CGS 8-23 recommendations that towns plan for housing, including affordable housing. The housing needs assessment identified that Tolland is over reliant on single-family detached housing and owner-occupied housing and identified a need for affordable housing. Most important, the assessment and recommendations promote an aggressive program to address needs.

Principle #3: Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options. As discussed above, the Tolland Plan focuses new development and redevelopment activity in the Route 195 corridor. The Route 195 corridor is the most suitable location for development and further development in this corridor will support and improve the viability of additional transit options within the corridor.

Principle #4: Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historic resources, and traditional rural lands. Tolland is a low density rural-suburban community with substantial natural, cultural, and historic resources. This Plan continues to promote conservation and preservation activities and continues robust efforts to preserve and protect Tolland's natural and cultural resources. Strategies in the Plan address water quality, drainage and

flooding, the Atlantic White Cedar Forest, climate change, natural hazards, historic preservation and sustainability.

Principle #5: Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety. This Plan, as discussed above, contains a number of recommendations that are consistent with this policy to preserve and conserve the integrity of environmental assets critical to protecting public health and safety. These strategies include stormwater management to protect water quality, preservation of the Atlantic White Cedar forest, and efforts aimed at making Tolland a more sustainable community.

Growth Management Principle #6: Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional, and local basis. Tolland remains committed to integrating its planning efforts with the local government agencies and with regional and state efforts. This is evident in Tolland's support of public transit, its efforts to work with neighboring towns on economic development, its participation in CRCOG plans and studies, and cross-agency coordination among local departments, boards and commissions.

## **Consistency with the Capitol Region Plan of Conservation and Development, 2014-2024**

This Tolland POCD advances many of the same policies contained in the Capitol Region Plan of Conservation and Development: 2014-2024 and is consistent with the goals established in this region-wide plan.

The Tolland Plan is committed to the concept of sustainability and places a priority on integrating social, economic, and environmental principles of sustainability. Sustainable initiatives include

recommendations to create more affordable housing for those with the greatest need for affordable housing, the continued preservation of passive and active open space and integrating open space preservation with economic development efforts, and continued efforts to implement low impact development methods for the handling of stormwater and protecting water quality.

This Plan recommends concentrating multi-family housing, mixed-use development, and commercial and industrial development into the Route 195 corridor. In addition, development within this corridor helps support transit opportunities and CRCOG's commitment to the Hartford-UConn bus line. This will further strengthen the opportunities for the residents of Tolland to commute via public transit to UConn, Manchester, and Hartford.

The Plan provides several important priorities for natural resource protection and preservation consistent with the Regional Plan. These include low impact development methods and comprehensive stormwater management aimed at implementing the objectives and requirements of the MS4 program. The Plan promotes continued protection of open space, the development of management strategies for all town-owned parcels, and recommendations to protect and preserve the Atlantic White Cedar Forest. This Plan recognizes the historical and cultural value and significance of the Tolland Green as community asset and how the Green is linked to the community's formation of community character.

Through the creation of this Plan, Tolland is addressing the need for affordable housing. Recognizing that Tolland is over reliant on single-family detached housing, this Plan embraces multi-family and mixed-use housing. The Plan recognizes and embraces the need for greater housing diversity.

In accordance with State Law, this Plan was submitted to the Capitol Region Council of Governments and the Tolland Town Council on July 15, 2019. The Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Plan on September 23, 2019. The Commission did not receive comments from the Town Council. The Capitol Region Council of Governments did submit comments on September 20, 2019. The comments stated:

*The staff of the Regional Planning Commission of the Capitol Region Council of Governments has reviewed this referral and finds no apparent conflicts with regional plans and policies, the growth management principles of the State Plan of Conservation and Development, plans of conservation and development of other municipalities in the region, or the concerns of neighboring towns. We commend the Town of Tolland on proposing a Plan of Conservation and Development which strives to protect and strengthen its community character including efforts to support and encourage agriculture, restore and promote historically significant resources, and protect natural resources while encouraging development appropriate to each distinct area of town. We also commend the Town for its proposals to implement low impact development and energy-efficiency strategies, to create additional opportunities for safe pedestrian and bicycle transportation and for integrating natural hazard mitigation issues into the POCD. Lastly we also commend the Town on incorporating a robust, thoughtful, and realistic discussion on providing increased affordable housing options. The Town might find useful the CRCOG/EPA Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development (2009) as a resource on implementation of sustainable practices. These guidelines can be found at [www.crcog.org/community\\_dev/sustainabledev.html](http://www.crcog.org/community_dev/sustainabledev.html).*

# Acknowledgements

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Kurt Schenher, Member

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Jesse Gannelli, Alternate (through May 2019)

Joe Matteis, Alternate (May 2019 – present)

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## Special Thanks

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