

# Town of Wethersfield

PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
2025-2035



**WETHERSFIELD**  
Rich Past. Bright Future!

February 2026



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Mayor Ken Lesser, the Wethersfield Town Council, the Wethersfield Planning and Zoning Commission, the Advisory Committee (AC) members, members of various Town Boards and Commissions, Town Staff, local, regional, and state agencies and institutional partners, and the residents of Wethersfield who participated extensively in the planning process and helped shape the recommendations of this Plan.

## **Plan of Conservation and Development Advisory Committee**

Fred Presley, Town Manager  
Bruce Bockstael  
Ruthanne Calabrese  
Thomas Dean  
Tracy Gionfriddo  
Joseph Hammer  
Anthony Homicki  
Peter Leombruni  
Mark Trahan  
Chris Traczyk

*We extend our sincere thanks to the residents, business owners, community organizations, and local leaders of Wethersfield who participated in the Plan of Conservation and Development process. Your time, ideas, and feedback were invaluable in shaping a vision that reflects the community's priorities and aspirations for the future.*



# CONTENTS

- 1** Introduction and Plan Development

---
- 2** History of Wethersfield

---
- 3** Demographic Trends

---
- 4** Land Use and Zoning

---
- 5** Housing

---
- 6** Economic Development

---
- 7** Mobility and Infrastructure

---
- 8** Quality of Life

---
- 9** Open Space and Natural Resources

---
- 10** Cultural and Historic Resources

---



# 1 INTRODUCTION AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT



# About the Plan

Wethersfield Vision 2035 is Wethersfield's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) or Comprehensive Plan (Plan) for the years 2025 to 2035. The Plan documents current conditions in Town and provides a guide for its future over the next ten years. It delivers a vision for the community that is based in the realities of the resources and constraints that are present in Wethersfield today. It establishes a vision for Wethersfield's physical form, economic and social health, and quality of life. The Plan provides a foundation for policy and funding decisions that will protect the health, safety and welfare of the people of Wethersfield.

Wethersfield Vision 2035 was shaped by input from residents, businesses, stakeholders, elected officials, and Town staff. Community outreach was pivotal to the Plan's development and included pop-up events, a public workshop, stakeholder and focus group meetings, and an online survey.

The State of Connecticut requires that communities rewrite or update their plans of conservation and development at least every ten years to remain eligible for discretionary State funding (C.G.S Sec 8-23). Per this statute, the POCD for each municipality must:

1. be a statement of policies, goals and standards for the physical and economic development of the municipality;
2. provide for a system of principal thoroughfares, parkways, bridges, streets, sidewalks, multi-purpose trails and other public ways as appropriate;
3. be designed to promote, with the greatest efficiency and economy, the coordinated development of the municipality and the general welfare and prosperity of its people and identify areas where it is feasible and prudent;
4. recommend the most desirable use of land within the municipality for residential, recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation, agricultural and other purposes and include a map showing such proposed land uses;

5. recommend the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the municipality;
6. note any inconsistencies with the State's growth management principles;
7. make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multi-family dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning Region;
8. promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low- and moderate - income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified in the State's consolidated plan for housing and community development; and
9. consider allowing older adults and persons with a disability the ability to live in their homes and communities whenever possible.

Beyond meeting the State mandate, the POCD planning process provides Wethersfield an opportunity to:

- Measure progress that the Town has made towards the goals of the prior plan.
- Identify any important Town-wide trends or concerns or emerging land use issues.
- Establish a dialogue with residents and stakeholders.
- Effectively communicate the strategic work and diverse investments the Town has made over the last ten years.
- Provide a foundation for new initiatives.

This Plan meets the State of Connecticut General Statutes' plan of conservation and development updated requirements and is consistent with both the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the Capitol Region Council of Governments Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (2024).

## Plan Organization

During the Vision 2035 development process, a broad vision statement was created to reflect Wethersfield’s community aspirations and guide municipal leaders. This vision is supported by seven goals, each aligned with a specific chapter of the Plan. Strategies are the methods by which the goals will be achieved and actions are the specific steps that comprise a strategy.

### Vision

Describes what the people of Wethersfield value and what the town will strive towards over the next ten years.

### Goals

Commitments towards achieving the vision which are consistent with the guiding principles.

### Strategies

The methods by which the goals will be achieved. They describe the interim outcomes that can lead to achieving each of the goals.

### Actions

Specific steps taken to implement strategies so as to accomplish the stated goals. They are the first steps to be taken towards achieving Wethersfield's vision as expressed in this plan.

## Wethersfield Vision Statement

*Wethersfield is a safe, welcoming community that honors its rich history and diverse culture. With a focus on community, inclusivity, and connection, Wethersfield provides essential services, varied housing options, and opportunities for all generations. Committed to protecting its natural and historic resources, supporting local businesses, and creating a sustainable future, the Town offers exceptional access and opportunities and serves as a vibrant hub for the region.*



Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Plan Goals

Each section of the plan has a stated goal for that topic area as stated below:



### Land Use

Encourage balanced growth and development that supports a livable and inclusive community, strengthens economic vitality, and promotes healthy lifestyles, all while preserving Wethersfield's small-town charm and protecting its natural resources.



### Housing

Continue to offer diverse housing options that meet the needs of current and future residents at every stage of life, while preserving the identity of existing neighborhoods and fostering a strong sense of community.



### Economic Development

Promote a thriving economic climate by attracting and supporting businesses of all sizes. Encourage the flexible redevelopment and infill of existing commercial areas to expand economic opportunities and reduce tax burden on residents.



### Mobility and Infrastructure

Expand transportation options and infrastructure to enhance mobility and accessibility for all residents. Prioritize updates to transportation, utilities, and public facilities to ensure a resilient and sustainable community that is prepared for current and future needs.



### Quality of Life

Provide high-quality, fiscally responsible, community services and facilities that are adaptable to the changing needs of residents, supporting individuals and families at all stages of life.



### Open Space and Natural Resources

Conserve, protect, and enhance open space, natural areas, and recreational resources, while promoting responsible and sustainable growth that balances development with environmental stewardship and community resilience.



### Cultural & Historic Resources

Safeguard, promote, and celebrate Wethersfield's cultural and historic resources for future generations, by encouraging the stewardship of historic landmarks and properties and supporting growth of the arts within the community.

## Plan Development & Engagement

The Wethersfield Vision 2035 plan development process was initiated in May of 2024. It was led by the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) and supported by an Advisory Committee (AC) consisting of various board members, commission representatives, and department heads. The planning team was comprised of Town Planning and Development staff and FHI Studio.

A cornerstone of Wethersfield Vision 2035 is broad community engagement, ensuring that residents from all parts of the Town have the opportunity to participate in shaping its future. The Plan's update process employed the following strategies:

- Regular meetings with Town staff to discuss the Plan content, process, and schedule.
- Targeted community engagement, including pop-up events, a project website, and an online survey.

- Public Workshop: A public workshop was conducted in October of 2024. The workshop was conducted in person at the Wethersfield Community Center.
- Focus Group Meetings: Six focus group meetings were conducted based on different topics pertaining to the Plan in the fall of 2024
- Interviews: Six stakeholder interviews were conducted, engaging over 25 stakeholders.
- Drafting the Plan: The project team worked together in the preparation and drafting of Wethersfield Vision 2035. It was an iterative process that included multiple rounds of review.
- Review: The public, Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROCG), and Town Council reviewed the Plan.
- Planning and Zoning Commission action - Adopted on February 18th, 2026.



## Pop-Up Events

In fall 2024, the project team engaged approximately 200 residents at Porchfest and Cornfest to raise awareness of the Plan update, encourage participation in the online survey, and promote the upcoming public workshop. Attendees identified their locations on a Wethersfield map, provided input on the town's strengths and areas for improvement, and contributed ideas for future development. Feedback was documented on post-it notes and displayed, facilitating community dialogue and shared reflection. Key themes from the pop-up events are presented below:

- Quality of life is great, people love Wethersfield
- Repairs and renovations are needed on most school buildings
- Improvements are needed on the Silas Deane Highway. Improve the walkability and fill vacant storefronts
- Traffic calming and mobility improvements are needed throughout Town, more bike and pedestrian connectivity is needed
- Proximity to Hartford is a benefit for workers
- Affordability in general is challenging; housing costs are high and taxes are high



*Engaging with the Community at Porchfest*

## Online Survey

An online survey was launched to gather input from Wethersfield residents and business owners on key topics and issues addressed in the Plan. Designed for accessibility across computers, phones, and tablets, hardcopy versions were also available at Town Hall, the Library, and the Community Center. To maximize participation, the survey was promoted through community events, advertisements, meetings, and the Town's television channel. Open for three months, it received 858 responses, providing valuable data to inform the Plan and capture community priorities and concerns. Key highlights from the survey are provided below:

- Who Responded: 95% are Wethersfield residents; half have children in public schools.
- Why They Live Here: Safety, location, family ties, and strong community.
- Future Plans: Over half plan to stay for 10+ years.
- Growth Outlook: ~50% support gradual growth; 30% favor significant change.
- What They Value Most: Neighborhoods, parks, open space, and community culture.
- Top Priorities: Schools, economic development, trails, parks, and natural resource protection.
- Less Support For: Affordable housing and expanding municipal buildings.
- Biggest Concerns: Property taxes and school conditions.
- Town Facility Expansion: 62% support buying state-owned properties if available.

## Public Workshop

In October 2024, a public workshop was conducted to introduce the Wethersfield community to the Plan update and gathered input on key topics. The event featured a brief presentation on key trends, an overview of the Plan, and facilitator-led breakout sessions. These sessions focused on the Plan's core topics: Housing, Economic Development, Quality of Life, Cultural and Historic Resources, Open Space and Natural Resources, and Mobility and Infrastructure, with findings shared at the end. Key themes discussed for each of the topics are summarized below:

### Housing

Wethersfield faces housing challenges like limited available land for additional housing, high property taxes, and a lack of options for downsizing, especially for seniors. There's a need for more 1- and 2-bedroom units, two-family homes, and housing options for those aged 55 and older. Ideas to address these include rezoning areas, promoting mixed-use developments, allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and supporting higher-density developments near transit.

### Economic Development

The Town needs improvements in parking regulations and signage, especially in Old Wethersfield. There are concerns about the Silas Deane Highway's pedestrian experience and numerous curb cuts. Participants advocated for mixed-use development, flexible zoning, and commercial density, and encouraged collaboration for community planning, including redeveloping state-owned properties like the DMV.

### Quality of Life

The workshop highlighted the need for more support for seniors, social programs, and sports, as well as addressing residential blight and environmental issues. Suggestions included expanding early childhood education, promoting free family activities, and improving community information. The DMV property was considered for town services, and there were calls for more focus on Wethersfield's history and neighborhood schools.

### Cultural and Historic Resources

Wethersfield's rich cultural and historical assets are valued, with calls to enhance the arts scene, including spaces for arts and performances. Participants also wanted better parking in Old Wethersfield, the creation of a Town shuttle, and expanded community events. Strengthening the Town's communication through its website and improving event management were also emphasized.

### Open Space and Natural Resources

Key priorities include improving open spaces, sustainability, and accessibility, such as better access to the reservoir, more playgrounds, and enhanced trails. Protecting Millwood Farms Park and addressing climate change concerns, including updating flood maps, were key topics. Other suggestions included promoting solar and geothermal energy, better utilizing local farms, and improving connectivity between open spaces.

### Mobility and Infrastructure

Participants raised concerns about poor sidewalk conditions, speeding, and inadequate biking infrastructure. They also highlighted issues like light pollution, drainage, and traffic congestion. Suggestions included improving transit services, adding parking in Old Wethersfield, and upgrading recreational spaces like Wethersfield Cove, along with long-term infrastructure planning.



*Participants during workshop*

## Focus Group Meetings

The Project Team held six focus group meetings, each focusing on a key Plan topic: Housing, Economic Development, Quality of Life, Cultural and Historic Resources, Open Space and Natural Resources, and Mobility and Infrastructure. Participants, selected for their expertise, discussed progress since the last Plan, identified key factors behind achievements, and outlined evolving goals. These insights helped to shape the vision and metrics for Vision 2035.

## Stakeholder Interviews

The Project Team conducted interviews with key stakeholders, including department heads, state agencies, and local representatives, to better understand Wethersfield's needs and concerns. These discussions provided valuable insights to guide the development of the Plan, ensuring it addresses the community's priorities and challenges. Stakeholders interviewed included the Housing Authority, Physical Services Department, Police Department, Social Services, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).



Participants during the Focus Group Meetings

## Role of Wethersfield Vision 2035

Wethersfield Vision 2035 is a long-term guide for the Town's future actions, shaping decisions on public and private development, funding allocation, and key issues like housing affordability. The Plan will influence decision-making for the next decade and beyond. Guiding principles developed during the process ensure that Wethersfield Vision 2035:

- Ensures continuity over time, offering a common framework for addressing land use and municipal issues across administrations.
- Balances competing land use demands with development patterns that benefit both individuals and the community.
- Identifies and recommends strategies for protecting environmental resources like wetlands, waterbodies, and open spaces.
- Promotes economic development, supporting policy and zoning decisions in response to changing economic conditions.
- Provides an objective basis for zoning decisions.
- Reflects a community-driven vision developed through public engagement.
- Guides Town departments and divisions in decision-making and annual capital improvement plans.
- Assists boards and commissions in guiding their activities.

*Just a note.... The 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development was completed before the COVID-19 pandemic and does not account for the significant social and economic shifts that followed. The pandemic reshaped how people live, work, and use public spaces, with trends such as remote work, increased demand for outdoor recreation, and a renewed focus on local resilience. These post-pandemic realities have influenced the priorities and strategies in Wethersfield Vision 2035.*

## State and Regional Plans

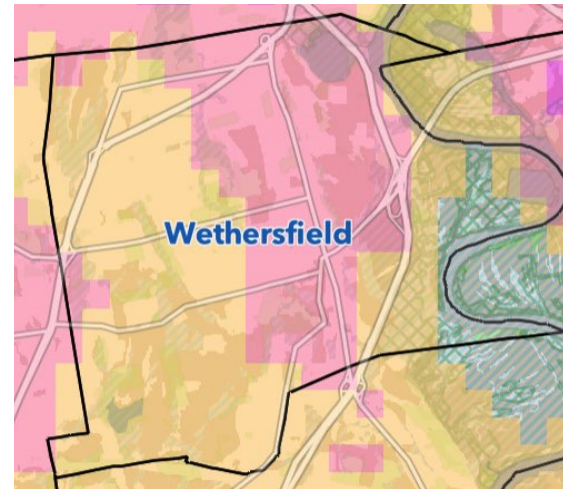
The State Conservation and Development Policies Plan (Draft 2025-2030) identifies four guiding principles, which are common themes in Vision 2035. These include: Sustainable, Equitable and Just, Vibrant, and Resilient. The State Plan is organized around a vision for Connecticut's future that includes: A Thriving Economy, Housing for Current and Future Residents, Stewardship of Resources, Healthy People and Places, Connected and Inclusive Communities. These topic areas and the vision statements and targets identified for each are entirely consistent with the recommendations of Wethersfield Vision 2035.

Similarly, the Capitol Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (November 2024) establishes a vision with the following themes:

1. Cultivate a Green and Resilient Future
2. Develop a Competitive and Inclusive Regional Economy
3. Reform Outdated "Steady Habits" in Our Institutions and Governance
4. Invest in Transportation Options for Every Journey
5. Expand and Diversify the Region's Housing Stock

The state and regional plans identify preferred land use across Connecticut, with Wethersfield designated for a mix of residential, commercial, and mixed-use development. These designations reflect Wethersfield's role as a well-connected suburban community with a strong local economy and access to major transportation routes. The goal is to support strategic investment that enhances economic growth and quality of life.

Wethersfield Vision 2035 planning efforts align with the regional vision set by the Capitol Region Plan, ensuring balanced growth, improved infrastructure, and a thriving community within the Greater Hartford area.



### Activity Zones

#### Activity Level

- Major
- Regional
- Local
- Suburban
- Rural

The State plan locational guide map (above) identifies the Silas Deane Highway corridor as a "local activity" area (shown in pink), which means that these areas have high commercial uses and moderate civic and cultural assets. Areas shown in yellow are "suburban activity" areas that include commercial, civic, and transportation related uses.



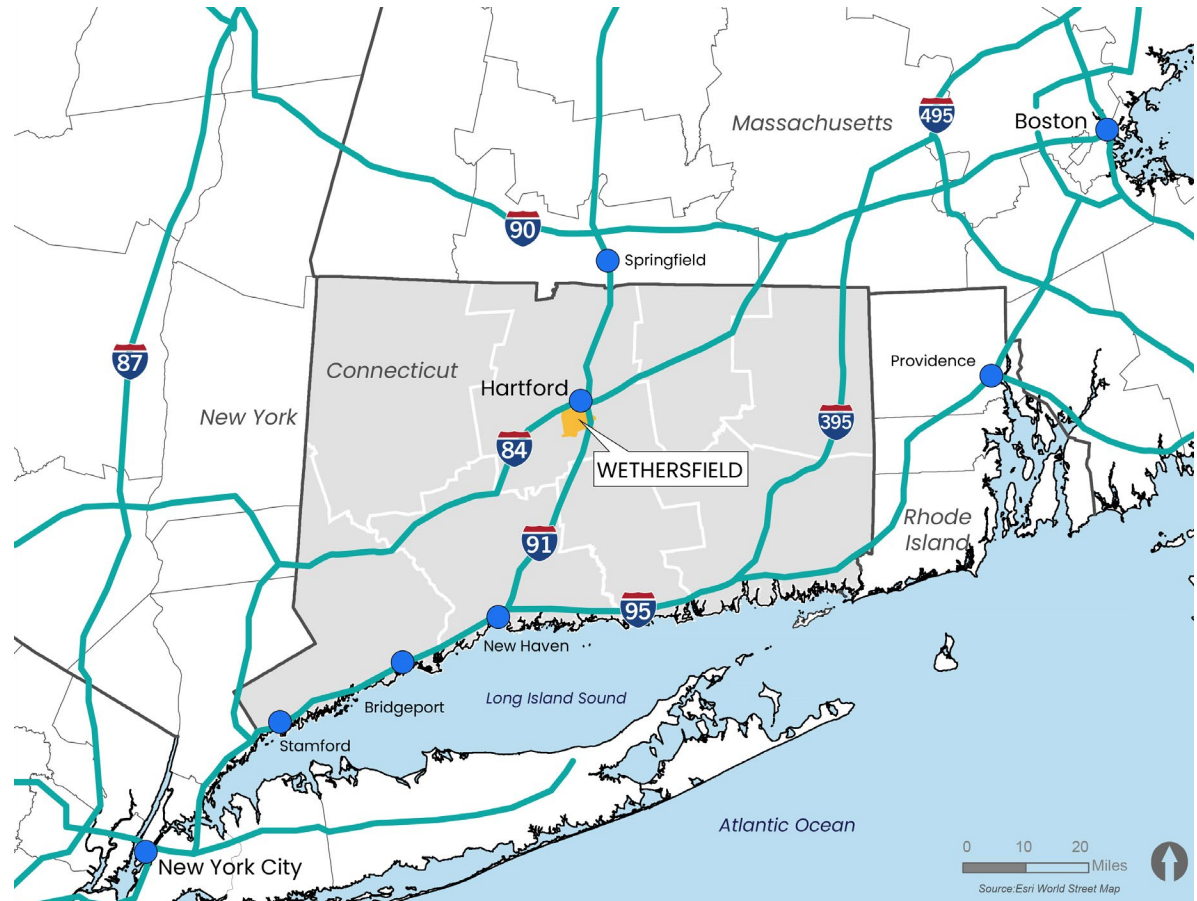
CRCOG's Conservation and Development Policy Map identifies areas suitable for growth and development and areas that warrant preservation. Much of Wethersfield is categorized as suitable for development, with pockets of conservation throughout.

Conservation  
Priority

Development  
Suitability

# 1 Regional Context

The Town of Wethersfield is located in central Connecticut, along the Connecticut River. Covering approximately 13 square miles, Wethersfield is situated just south of Hartford and is part of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), which includes 38 municipalities in the Greater Hartford area. Major cities such as New Haven, Springfield, and Providence are within a 60-mile radius of Wethersfield. The town is well-connected by major transportation routes, including Interstate 91 (I-91) and Route 3. Public transit services, including CTtransit bus routes, provide connections to Hartford and surrounding communities.



Source: Esri World Street Map

# 2 HISTORY OF WETHERSFIELD



# History of Wethersfield

Wethersfield, founded in 1634, is one of Connecticut's oldest towns. Settlers from Massachusetts established it along the Connecticut River, drawn by its fertile land and trade opportunities. The town played a role in the Pequot War and later became part of the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, one of the first written constitutions in the colonies.

In the 18th century, Wethersfield thrived as an agricultural and trade center, known for its onion exports, which earned it the nickname "Onion Capital of the World." During the American Revolution, it hosted a key meeting between George Washington and French General Rochambeau at the Joseph Webb House, helping shape the war's outcome.

The town remained largely agricultural through the 19th century, though small-scale manufacturing and brickmaking emerged. Wethersfield was also home to Connecticut's first state prison, which operated from 1827 to 1963. The arrival of the railroad improved trade and transportation.

By the 20th century, Wethersfield transitioned into a suburban community, influenced by its proximity to Hartford. Roads like the Berlin Turnpike and Interstate 91 made commuting easier, attracting new residents. The town adopted zoning regulations in 1926 and later established the Wethersfield Historic District to preserve its colonial character.

Today, Wethersfield is known for its well-preserved historic sites, strong schools, and quality of life. Landmarks like Wethersfield Cove, the Webb Deane Stevens Museum, and Old Wethersfield highlight its rich past, while modern planning efforts focus on balanced growth and infrastructure improvements.



Historic Sketch of Wethersfield in the 1800's  
Source: Wethersfield 2013 POCD



View along Main Street  
Source: Town of Wethersfield



Mixed Use Development along the Silas Deane Hwy  
Source: FHI Studio

## Planning Initiatives

Wethersfield has a history of planning efforts designed to guide the town's growth and meet the needs of its residents. Over the years, various plans and studies have focused on land use, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, and quality of life. These planning documents have helped balance new development with the preservation of open spaces and existing resources.

A review of past plans and studies shows how the town has worked to promote smart growth that aligns with community priorities. Key documents like the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), zoning regulations, and transportation studies have shaped where and how development occurs, while also addressing the preservation of historic areas and natural spaces.

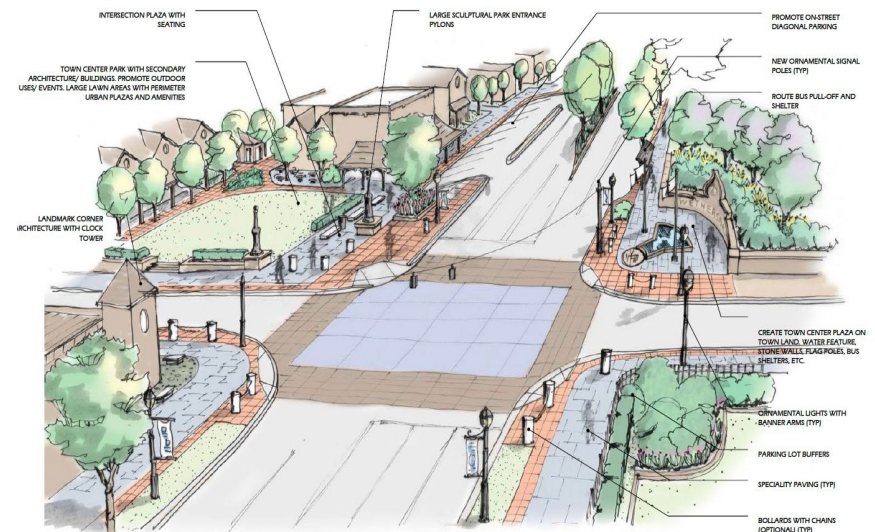
These planning efforts have focused on improving transportation, enhancing community services, and fostering economic development. Reviewing these past initiatives helps understand the town's progress and identify areas where further action is needed to address future challenges and opportunities.

## 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development

The 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development emphasizes balancing growth with the preservation of the town's historical character and residential charm. It outlines strategies to enhance the town's infrastructure, promote economic development, and improve the quality of life for residents. The plan highlights the need for better connectivity, sustainable development, and maintaining the town's identity while accommodating future growth. It also stresses the importance of preserving open spaces, improving transportation networks, and enhancing community services and recreational opportunities to support a vibrant and thriving community.

## Implementation Master Plan & Design Guidelines for the Silas Deane Highway- 2006

This plan identifies strategies to transform the highway corridor in Wethersfield and Rocky Hill into a vibrant, mixed-use area. The plan focuses on promoting diverse land uses, including residential, commercial, and recreational spaces, while improving transportation and pedestrian accessibility. It includes enhancing streetscapes, creating public spaces, and encouraging economic growth through zoning changes and design guidelines that ensure new developments align with the community's vision. The plan also emphasizes public-private partnerships and phased implementation to gradually achieve these goals, improving the overall quality of life for residents and visitors.



*Conceptual Sketch of a Town Center Plaza along the Silas Deane Highway*  
 Source: Implementation Master Plan & Design Guidelines for the Silas Deane Highway- 2006, Source: Town of Wethersfield and Fuss & O'Neill

## **A Study of Revitalization Opportunities in Old Wethersfield - 2013**

The 2013 Study of Revitalization Opportunities in Old Wethersfield builds on the 2008 Old Wethersfield Master Plan, following up on its recommendations for enhancing the historic district. The study focuses on preserving the district's historic features while promoting sustainable development and economic growth through support for local businesses and attracting new enterprises. It outlines strategies such as modifying zoning regulations, upgrading infrastructure, and improving public amenities. The plan also emphasizes community engagement and marketing efforts to attract visitors and investors. Funded by a grant from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, the study aims to create a vibrant, sustainable community that reflects the needs and desires of local residents.

## **Wethersfield Connecticut Strategic Plan 2023 - 2033**

The Wethersfield Strategic Plan 2023–2033 outlines the town's vision and priorities for the next decade, focusing on sustainable growth, community engagement, and enhanced quality of life. The plan emphasizes the importance of preserving Wethersfield's historical and cultural assets while accommodating new development. Key objectives include promoting economic development, improving infrastructure, enhancing public services, and fostering community engagement. The plan also highlights the need for environmental sustainability and resilience, aiming to create a balanced and thriving community for current and future residents.

## **Greater Hartford Mobility Study (GHMS)**

This study focuses on improving transportation infrastructure and connectivity in the region, with key projects aimed at enhancing safety, accessibility, and economic growth. These include projects like CityLink West, CityLink East, River Gateway, and Founders Gateway, which aim to reduce congestion, improve pedestrian and transit options, and create opportunities for new development and green space.

For Wethersfield, the implications of the GHMS are significant. While the town is not directly within the core study area, the proposed improvements to regional transportation networks could greatly benefit Wethersfield residents by providing better access to neighboring areas like Hartford and East Hartford. Improved connectivity could make commuting easier, open up new economic opportunities, and enhance access to services and amenities across the region. Additionally, the transportation upgrades could attract new businesses to the region, potentially boosting local economic activity and job opportunities in Wethersfield. During construction of the viaduct, it is anticipated that Wethersfield's local road network will be impacted by detours and other construction related activities.

The study's focus on sustainability and minimizing environmental impacts also aligns with Wethersfield's goals for responsible growth and environmental stewardship. By improving regional infrastructure, the GHMS could help Wethersfield manage future development in a way that preserves its character and natural resources. Engaging with the study's progress and ensuring that Wethersfield's priorities are considered during the planning and implementation phases will be crucial for maximizing the benefits of these regional transportation improvements.

## 2013 Plan of Conservation and Development Successes

Wethersfield's previous Plan was adopted in 2013. Since that time, a number of recommendations included in the Plan have been completed. These include:

- Wethersfield Awarded Bronze-Level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclist in February of 2025.
- In December 2024, Wethersfield adopted a Tree Management Plan. For nearly 30 years, the Town of Wethersfield has been recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation as a "Tree City".
- The Towns of Wethersfield and Rocky Hill received a federal grant of over \$624,000 in 2024 to enhance safety along the Silas Deane Highway.
- Wethersfield became a Certified Local Government through the National Park Service in November of 2023.
- Wethersfield was certified as a Sustainable CT Silver Community in October 2020.
- Wethersfield adopted a Complete Streets Policy in 2020.
- The Town of Wethersfield purchased Kycia Farm in August 2019.
- In 2018, the Town of Wethersfield was awarded \$393,300 through the Community Connectivity Grant Program to fund eleven projects aimed at improving pedestrian and bicycle safety in Old Wethersfield.



*Kycia Barn*

Source: Mary Breton

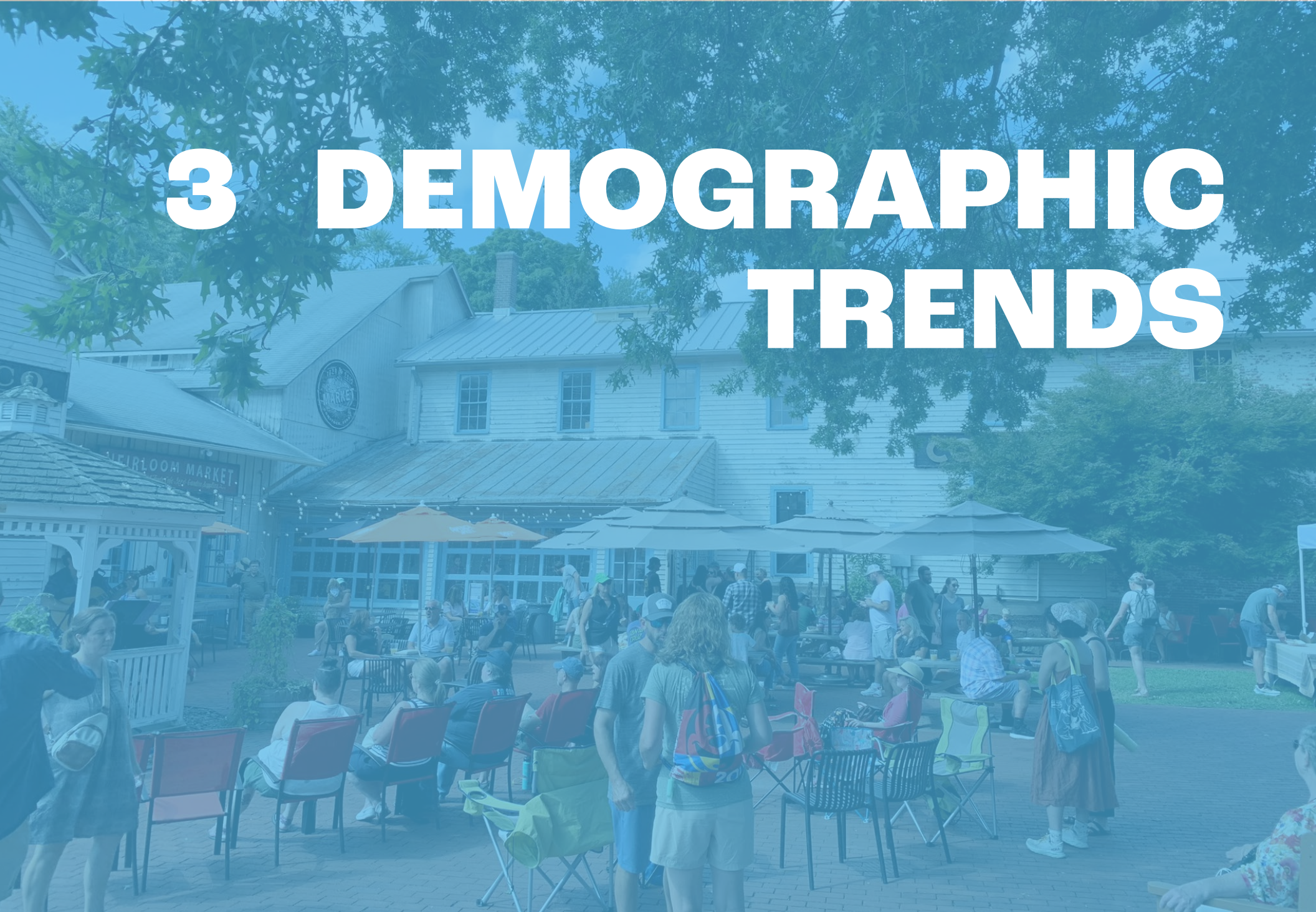


*Wethersfield entrance to the Putnam Bridge Trail*

Source: CT Insider



# 3 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS



## Demographic Trends

The following section provides a high level overview of key demographics in Wethersfield that have helped to shape the goals and strategies within this Plan. By understanding these trends, Wethersfield can establish policies that continue to foster a livable, vibrant, and sustainable community.

### Population

Wethersfield has a population of approximately 27,192 residents and a population density of approximately 2,100 residents per square mile. Wethersfield’s population declined between 1970 and 1990, but since 1990 it has been steadily growing. Wethersfield’s population growth lagged behind both the State’s and the County’s growth between 1970 and 1990, but it has outpaced their growth since 2010. According to population projections conducted in 2016 by the CT State Data Center, Wethersfield’s population is expected to increase by 3% through 2040.

Over the past decade, Wethersfield has seen more young families moving in, with increases in residents under 18, as well as those aged 25 to 44. The 65+ population also grew by 7.7%, adding 410 residents. Meanwhile, the 18 to 24, 45 to 54, and 55 to 64 age groups declined, with about 500 fewer young adults. This suggests younger families are settling in, while some middle-aged residents and empty nesters are moving elsewhere, highlighting the need for a mix of housing and services for all ages.

Figure 3.1 Population Change (1970 - 2022)

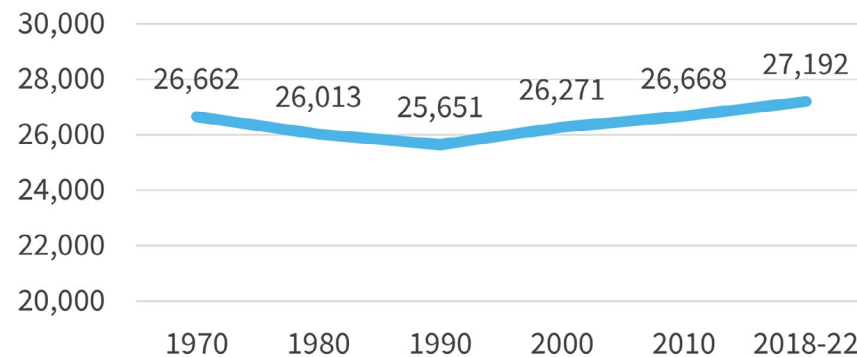
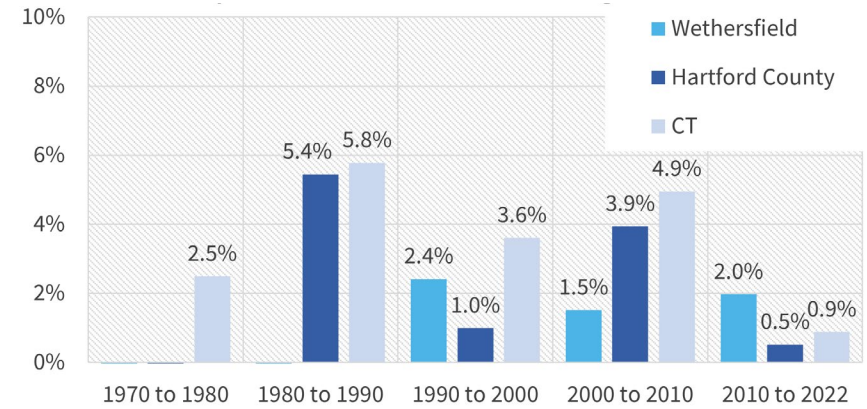
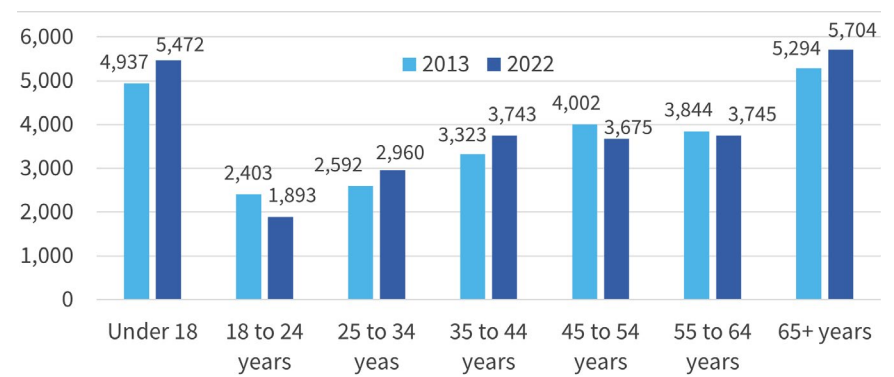


Figure 3.2 Population Growth vs. County and State



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2022, Decennial Census

Figure 3.3 Population by Age, 2013 - 2022



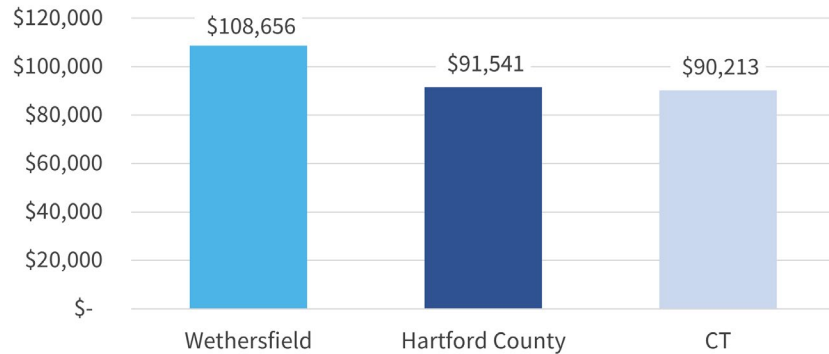
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2022

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2022, Decennial Census

## Household Income

The median household income in Wethersfield was over \$100,000 in 2022, an increase of over \$35,000 since 2012. This is over \$18,000 above the State’s median household income and is more than \$17,000 above the median household income of Hartford County. Wethersfield has a higher share of households in income brackets between \$75,000 to \$200,000 than both Hartford County and the State. The Town also has a lower share of households in income brackets below \$25,000.

Figure 3.4 Median Household Income

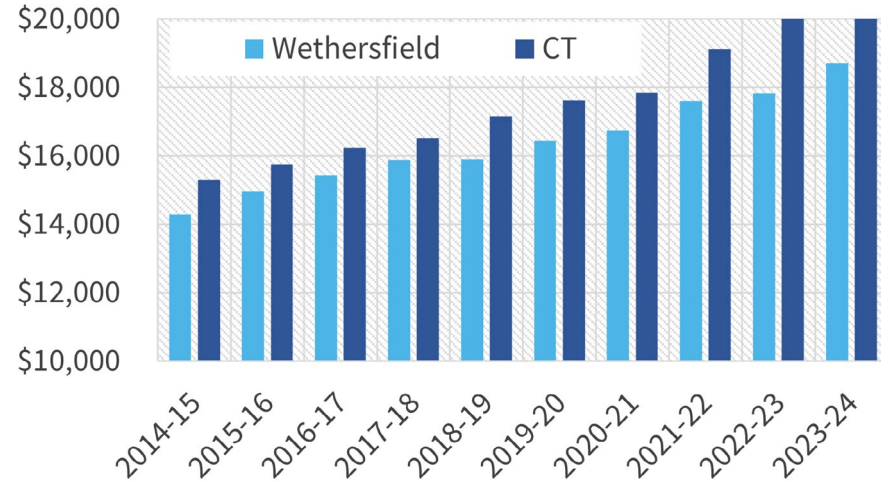


Source: American Community Survey – 2022

## Education

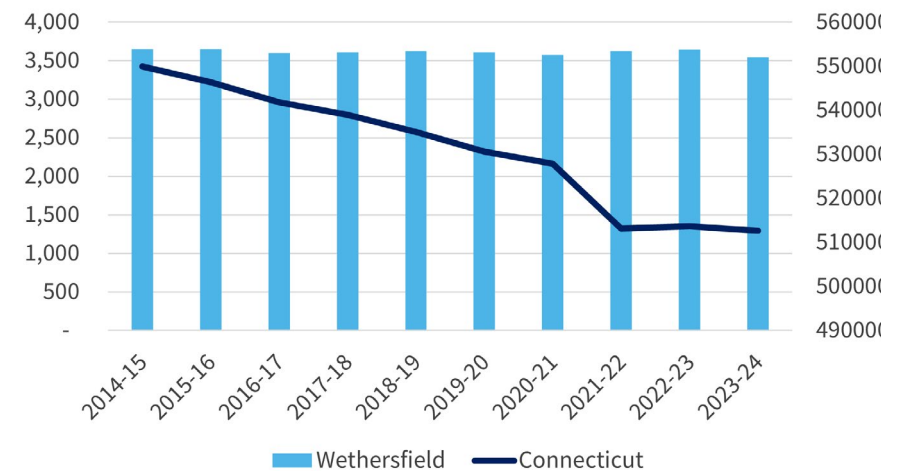
Wethersfield’s public school enrollment has remained stable over the past ten years. Since the 2014-15 school year, Wethersfield has seen over a 2.7% decline in public school enrollment, while the State experienced a 7.6% decline during the same time-frame. With population projections anticipating growth in Wethersfield’s school age children, it is reasonable to expect that the school’s enrollment numbers will stabilize or potentially increase. Over the past decade spanning fiscal years 2014/2015 to 2023/2024, Wethersfield has consistently spent less per pupil than the state average. Per pupil expenditures for fiscal year 2023-2024 were \$18,723.

Figure 3.5 Per Pupil Expenditures



Source: CT Department of Education, Wethersfield Public Schools

Figure 3.6 Public School Enrollment K-12

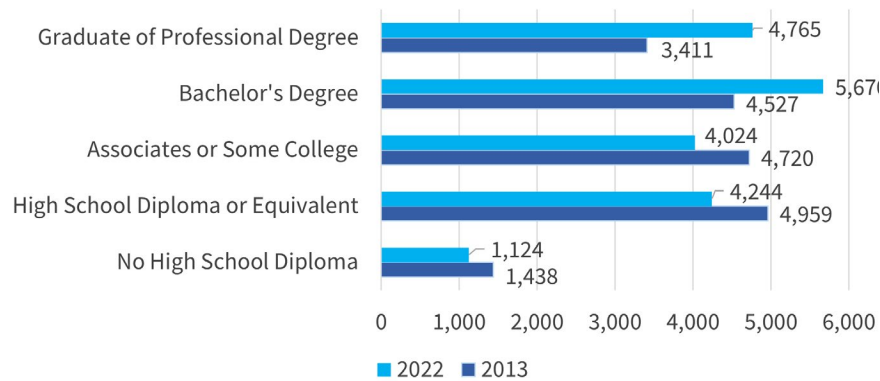


Source: CT Department of Education, Wethersfield Public Schools

### Educational Level

In 2022, the number of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher increased by approximately 2,500, marking a 31.5% rise since 2013. As a result, around 53% of residents aged 25 and older now hold a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree. Meanwhile, there were declines in the number of residents without a diploma, those with only a high school diploma, and those with some college education but no degree.

Figure 3.7 Educational Attainment

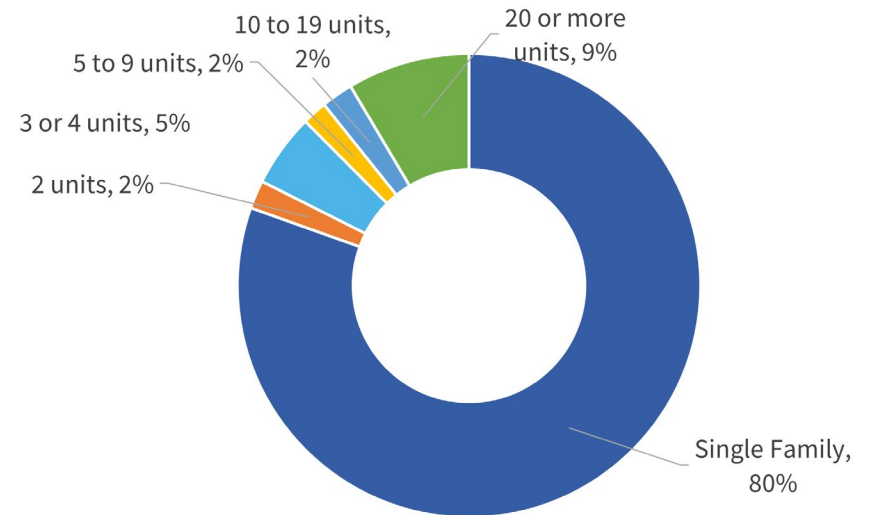


Source: American Community Survey – 2013 - 2022

### Housing Trends

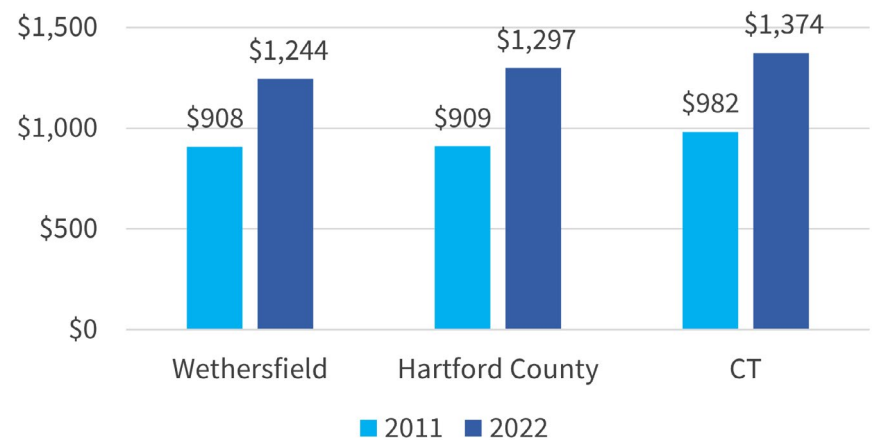
Most of Wethersfield's housing supply (80%) is single-family housing. Duplexes (homes with two units) account for 2% of the town's multi-family housing. Units with 3-4 units make up 5% of the town's housing stock. Nearly 2% of housing is in multi-family buildings with between 5-9 units. Nearly 9% of the Town's housing is in buildings with 20 or more units. Between 2011 and 2022, median gross rent in Wethersfield increased by 37%, reaching \$1,244. Despite this rise, it remains below the median rent for both Hartford County and the state. A significant share of rental households (nearly 52%) spend more than 30% of their household income on rent, which is considered housing cost burdened.

Figure 3.8 Housing Type



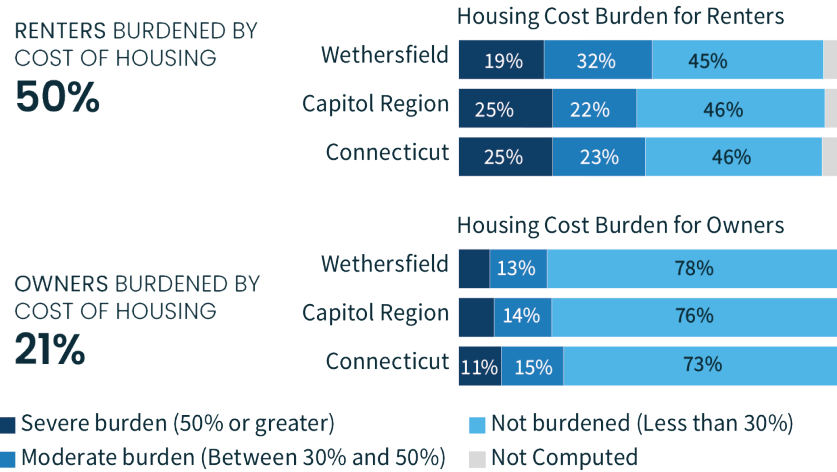
Source: American Community Survey – 2022

Figure 3.9 Median Gross Rent 2011 vs 2022



Source: American Community Survey – 2022

Figure 3.10 Housing Cost Burden



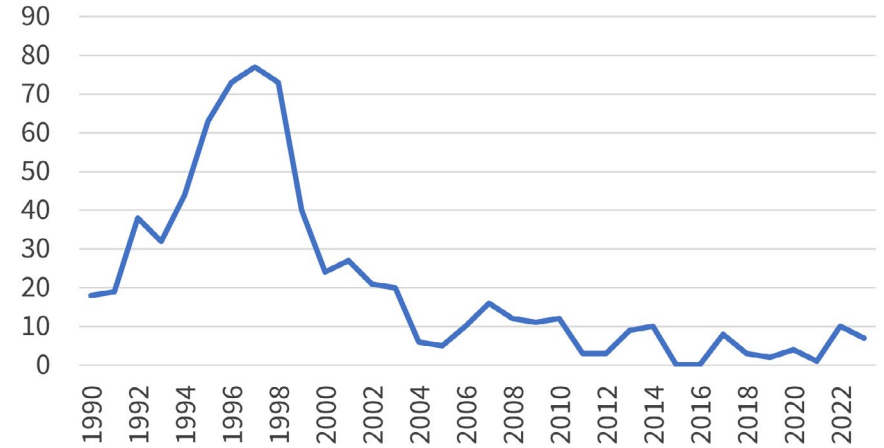
Source: CT Housing Data Profile, 2024

### Housing Construction

Growth is slow in the state, which has seen a 7% decrease in building permits between 1990 and 2023. In Wethersfield, there were 18 building permits issued in 1990, compared to 7 issued in 2023, representing a 61% decrease.

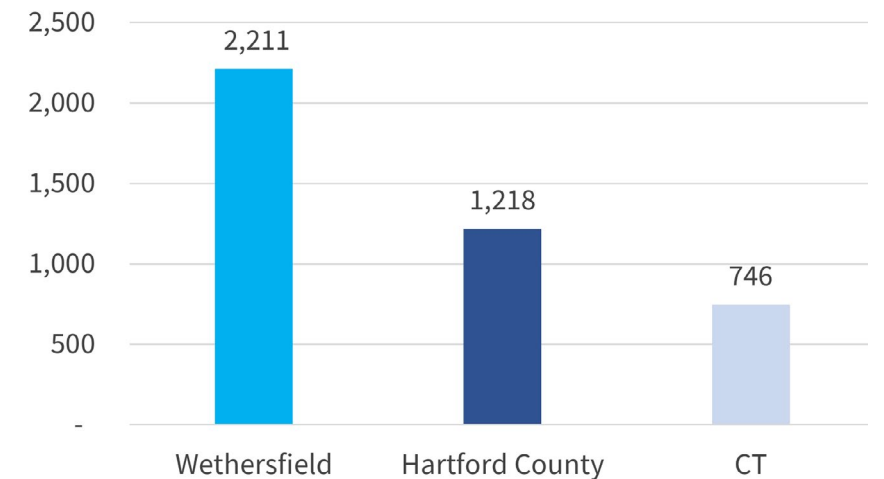
The slowdown in housing construction may be attributed to Wethersfield being largely built out. With a population density of 2,211 residents per square mile, the town is more densely populated than both Hartford County, which has 1,218 residents per square mile, and the state overall, with a density of 746 residents per square mile.

Figure 3.11 Housing Permits by Year



Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development 1990 - 2023

Figure 3.12 Population Density - Residents Per Square Mile



Source: American Community Survey - 2022

## Employment and Industry Trends

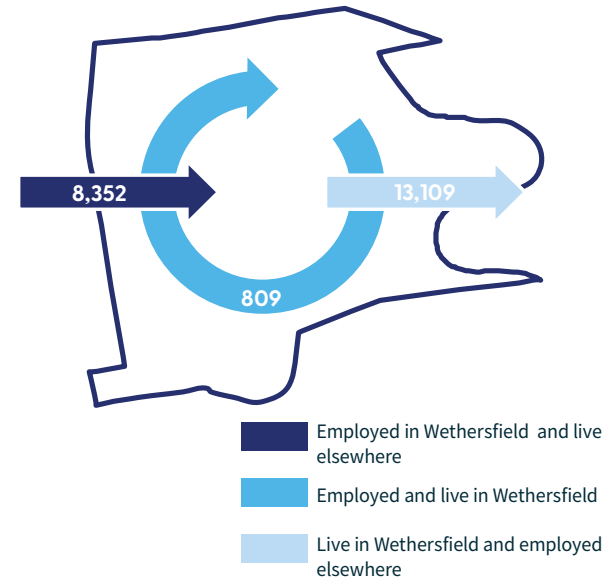
Wethersfield had a total of 9,161 full and part-time jobs in 2022. Of those jobs, approximately 809 (9%) were held by Town residents. A greater number of resident workers commute out of the Town for employment than the number of employees who travel to Wethersfield for work. Over 13,100 Wethersfield residents commute to other towns and cities for work daily. The average commute for Wethersfield’s residents is 21 minutes. The top five work destinations for Wethersfield’s residents (listed in order of frequency) include:

- Hartford
- Wethersfield
- West Hartford
- East Hartford
- Newington

Wethersfield's top industry, employing over 2,396 workers, is Health Care and Social Assistance. The next top industry is Retail Trade, which has just over 1,262 employees. Accommodation and Food Services made the list of Wethersfield’s top industries in 2023, according to Lightcast data, which is a collection of labor market information that includes job postings, compensation, skills, and other metrics.

The Connecticut Department of Labor is Wethersfield's top employer.

Figure 3.13 Commuting Patterns 2022



Source: US Census Bureau Longitudinal 2022 Employer-Household Dynamics Origin Destination Employment Statistics

Figure 3.14 Top Industries 2025

Lightcast, 2023 (2 and 3 digit NAICS)	Jobs
1 Health Care and Social Assistance <i>Ambulatory Health Care Services</i>	2,396
2 Retail Trade <i>Food and Beverage Stores</i>	1,262
3 Accommodation and Food Services <i>Food Services and Drinking Places</i>	1,110
4 Government <i>Local Government</i>	1,036
5 Professional, Scientific, and Tech Svc <i>Professional, Scientific, and Tech Svc</i>	642
<b>Total Jobs, All Industries</b>	<b>9,663</b>

Source: CT Data Collaborative Town Profile 2025, utilizing Lightcast 2023 data

# 4 LAND USE AND ZONING

A green-tinted photograph of a residential street. In the foreground, a person is riding a bicycle on the road. To the right, a paved sidewalk is populated with several pedestrians. The street is lined with mature trees and houses, including a prominent brick house on the left. An American flag is visible on a pole in the middle ground. The overall scene depicts a vibrant, walkable neighborhood.

# Baseline Conditions - Zoning

Wethersfield's Zoning Regulations are a vital tool for guiding land use and shaping the character of development throughout the community. They regulate the type, density, and visual appearance of new construction and redevelopment to ensure that growth aligns with the Town's planning goals and historic context.

Much of Wethersfield was developed prior to the initial adoption of zoning regulations in 1926. Since then, the Town has consistently updated its regulations to reflect changing community needs, with a comprehensive revision adopted in 2004. The most recent amendments occurred in 2023 and included an updated definition of "Office Services," new provisions regulating Cannabis Use Establishments, and added specifications for print and marketing services. Zoning Regulations define a range of development standards, including:

- Permitted land uses by zoning district
- Minimum lot sizes
- Required front, side, and rear setbacks for principal and accessory structures
- Maximum building height
- Limits on building and lot coverage

In certain areas, the regulations also influence architectural design and construction materials to maintain consistency with Wethersfield's built environment.

The Town is divided into a series of Zoning Districts that group compatible land uses and apply uniform bulk and development standards. These districts are intended to promote orderly development while minimizing potential conflicts between incompatible uses.

To support high-quality, context-sensitive development, the Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) was established in 2004. DRAC advises the Planning and Zoning Commission on the design aspects of development proposals, ensuring compatibility with the Town's

community character, structure, and goals as outlined in the current Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Design review considerations include building architecture, site layout, landscaping, pedestrian connectivity, and how proposed development fits within its neighborhood context.

## Residential Zones

Wethersfield's residential zoning framework is intended to guide the development and preservation of the town's neighborhoods in a way that reflects both the environmental characteristics of the land and the established character of each area. These zoning districts help ensure that residential growth is compatible with community values, protects property values, and supports a high quality of life for residents.

The residential districts are structured to provide a range of housing options across different lot sizes and densities. This allows for a mix of neighborhood types, from larger-lot, low-density areas that offer a more suburban or rural feel, to compact, walkable neighborhoods with smaller lots that reflect Wethersfield's historic village patterns. The zoning regulations are designed to promote housing diversity while maintaining the integrity of each neighborhood.

Several core residential districts are established for single-family homes, which make up the majority of Wethersfield's residential land. These districts differ primarily in minimum lot size and dimensional requirements, offering a variety of development forms suited to different areas of town. In addition, residential zoning accommodates certain non-residential uses—such as schools, religious institutions, and parks—when they are designed to be compatible with the surrounding residential character.

Wethersfield also includes specialized residential zoning tools such as Open Space Residential Developments and Special Residential Developments. These options allow for flexibility in site design and housing type, enabling developments that preserve open space or provide alternative housing formats, such as age-restricted or

multi-family communities. These districts are only established through a formal review process and are intended to meet specific community needs without compromising environmental or neighborhood quality.

Overall, Wethersfield's residential zoning supports a balanced approach to growth—preserving established neighborhoods, allowing for new housing opportunities, and ensuring that development respects the Town's character and planning goals.

## Conservation Zones

Wethersfield's Conservation Zones include the AG Agricultural Zone and the Flood Zone, both essential for preserving the town's natural environment and supporting sustainable development.

The AG Zone is designed to protect agricultural lands and ensure that farming remains viable in Wethersfield. This zone limits residential and commercial development to maintain open space, preserve the rural character, and safeguard agricultural operations. Low-density development may be allowed, but it is carefully regulated to prevent conflicts with farming and protect scenic and environmental resources.

The Flood Zone covers areas identified as flood-prone by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These areas are at risk of flooding, which can cause property damage, health and safety hazards, and loss of life. As a result, development is strictly limited in the floodplain to protect both people and property. The Floodplain Regulations require that new construction and alterations within these areas comply with FEMA standards for flood protection, such as elevating structures and floodproofing. These regulations are designed to minimize flood damage and ensure that developments in flood-prone areas are safe, with compliance required by both local and federal guidelines.

Together, Wethersfield's AG Zone and Flood Zone help protect the town's natural resources, preserve agricultural land, and reduce the risks associated with flooding, ensuring safer and more sustainable development.

## Business Zones

Wethersfield's business zones are designed to support the town's economic growth by meeting needs for goods, services, and employment. These zones vary in character to reflect the surrounding environment, transportation access, and infrastructure.

The Village Business and Town Center Districts encourage mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly areas, with the Town Center focusing on a vibrant community hub along the Silas Deane Highway. The Office District promotes lower-intensity office uses, while the General Business District caters to businesses along major roadways like the Silas Deane Highway. The Regional Commercial District allows for large-scale development to serve both local and regional needs, and the Business Park District is dedicated to fostering economic growth through business parks that provide employment and contribute to the tax base.

These zones ensure that development aligns with the community's character and infrastructure while promoting a diverse range of business opportunities.



*View of the Silas Deane Highway*  
Source: Google Earth

### The Intersection of Land Use, Zoning, and Economic Development

Understanding the distinction between land use and zoning is essential to planning for smart growth and sustainable economic development. Land use is guided by the town’s Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), which sets forth a long-term vision for how land should be used to support housing, commercial activity, open space, historic preservation, and community well-being. These policies reflect Wethersfield’s goals for livability, environmental stewardship, and economic resilience.

Zoning is the set of legal tools that translates the land use vision into enforceable regulations. Wethersfield’s zoning ordinance outlines what types of development are permitted in different parts of town, such as residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors like the Silas Deane Highway, or industrial zones near the Berlin Turnpike, and sets standards for density, design, and land use compatibility.

This distinction between land use and zoning plays a critical role in shaping Wethersfield’s economic development potential. For instance, areas identified in the POCD as priority growth corridors or redevelopment zones must have corresponding zoning that allows for flexible, market-responsive uses. Without zoning that supports mixed-use development, modern commercial formats, or adaptive reuse of underutilized properties, Wethersfield risks missing out on opportunities to attract investment and diversify its local economy.

Coordinating land use planning and zoning with economic development strategies is especially important as Wethersfield seeks to enhance its commercial tax base, support small businesses, and make strategic use of key parcels such as the Berlin Turnpike corridor, vacant properties along the Silas Deane Highway, or the redevelopment of legacy industrial sites. Modernizing zoning regulations to reflect current economic conditions and community needs can help unlock the potential of these areas.

Aligning zoning with infrastructure capacity such as access to transit, utilities, and roadways can create development-ready sites that appeal to employers and developers. By proactively linking land use planning, zoning, and economic development, Wethersfield can position itself to grow in a way that is both economically vibrant and true to its historic character.



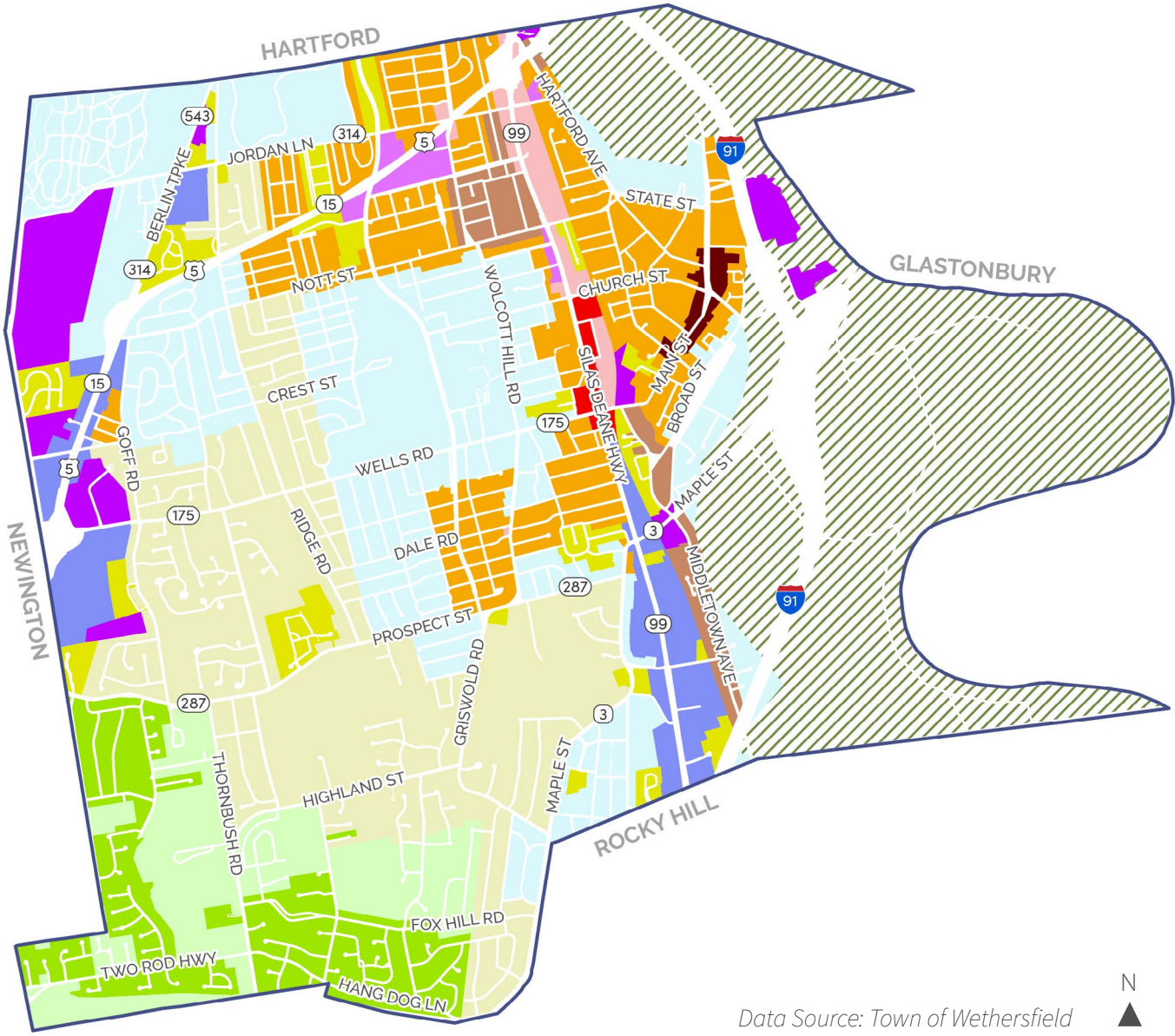
*View of the Silas Deane Highway*  
Source: Google Earth



*Shopping Center Parking Area*  
Source: FHI Studio

Figure 4.1 Zoning Districts

- A - Single Family Residence
- A-1 - Single Family Residence
- AA - Single Family Residence
- B - Single Family Residence
- C - Single Family Residence
- SRD - Special Residential Development
- Agriculture
- Open Space Development
- General Business
- Village Business
- Town Center Business
- Business Park
- Office
- Regional Commercial



Data Source: Town of Wethersfield



# Existing Land Use

Wethersfield's land use consists of a mix of single-family residential neighborhoods, open space, commercial corridors, institutional uses, and some light industrial areas. As one of Connecticut's oldest communities, Wethersfield features a blend of historic development patterns and more contemporary suburban layouts. The town has several densely developed areas, particularly in the central and eastern sections, where residential and mixed-use development is concentrated near key transportation routes such as the Berlin Turnpike (Route 5/15), Silas Deane Highway (Route 99), and Interstate 91.

The western portion of Wethersfield, particularly west of I-91 and near the Rocky Hill and Newington borders, tends to be less densely developed, with a combination of open space, larger-lot residential properties, and institutional uses. While the town's residential development is primarily comprised of single-family homes, there are also areas of multi-family housing, including apartment complexes, townhomes, and senior housing developments, particularly in proximity to commercial corridors and transit access.

Residential properties make up approximately 50% of Wethersfield's land area. These neighborhoods vary in density, with smaller-lot homes closer to the town center and along the Silas Deane Highway, and larger-lot homes in outlying areas. In addition to residential development, Wethersfield supports a variety of other land uses, including commercial (approximately 10% of land area), public and institutional uses (schools, town facilities), and dedicated open space.

Open space and recreational land accounts for roughly 20% of the town's total area. Notable open space and recreation areas include Mill Woods Park, Wintergreen Woods, Wilkus Farm, and Portland Street Meadows, as well as land adjacent to the Connecticut River, which provides scenic and ecological value. These areas serve both recreational and conservation purposes and are integral to the town's environmental and community health.

Wethersfield is approximately 96% developed, meaning that only a small fraction of the town remains undeveloped or available for new growth. As such, the focus of future land use planning will be less about expanding into undeveloped areas and more about redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and strategic infill. This includes revitalizing underutilized properties, encouraging mixed-use development in appropriate areas, and ensuring land use decisions reinforce the town's character, infrastructure capacity, and community values.

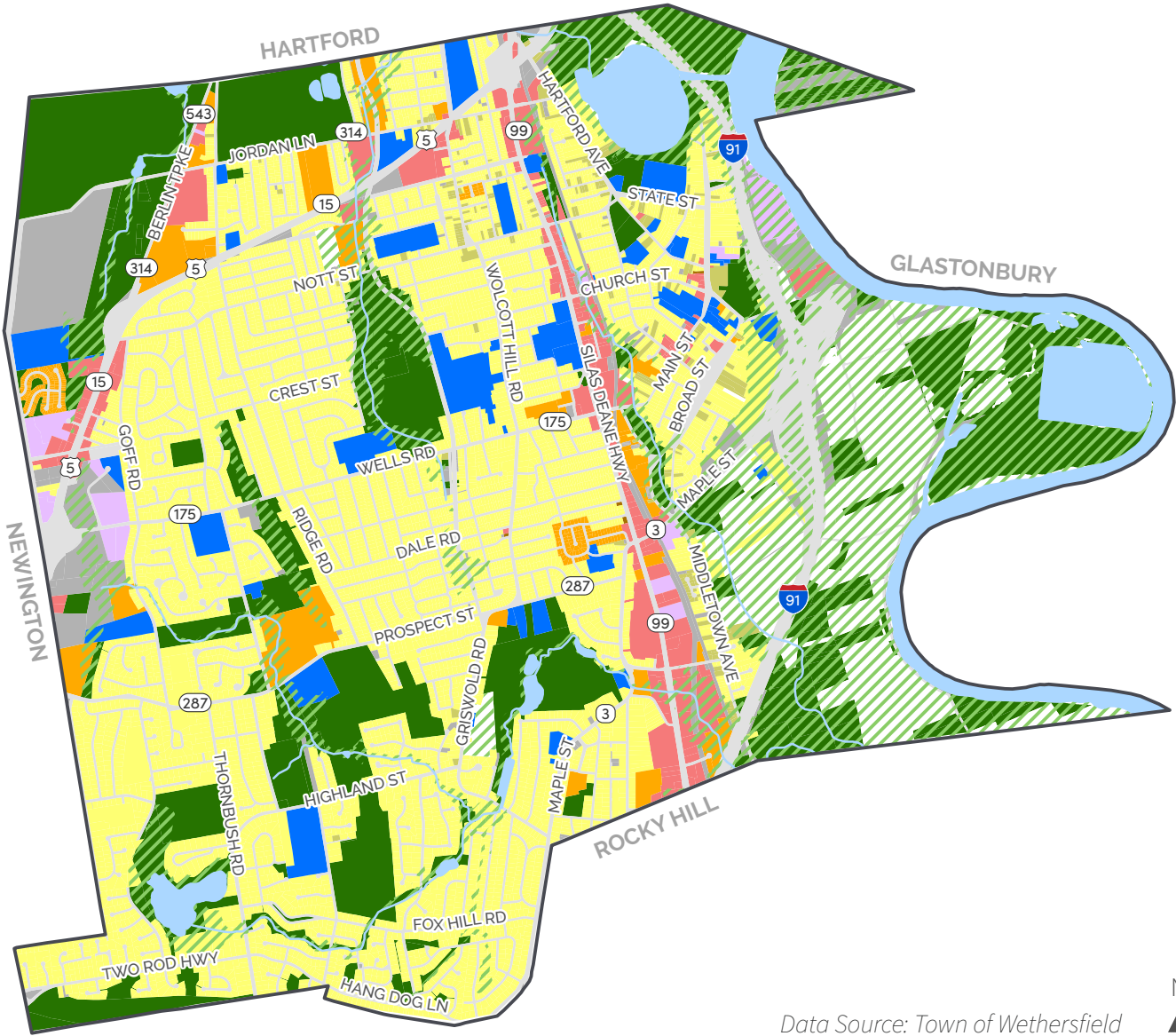
One of the key priorities of Wethersfield's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is to maintain and enhance the town's balance of land uses as properties are developed, redeveloped, or rezoned. Ensuring that new development complements the town's existing character and physical layout is essential to supporting long-term sustainability and quality of life.



*View of businesses on Main Street  
Source: FHI Studio*

Figure 4.2 Existing Land Use

- Open Space**
  - Existing Open Space
  - Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Residential**
  - Single Family Residential
  - 2, 3, and 4 Family Residential
  - Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial/Industrial**
  - Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Mixed-Use
- Other Areas**
  - Community Facilities/Institutional
  - Vacant/Utility
  - Right of Way



*\*Please note: While shown as open space on this map, the Wethersfield Country Club is privately owned and its use or ownership could change.*

Data Source: Town of Wethersfield 

## Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map is a key element of this Plan, presenting a unified vision for Wethersfield’s physical development by integrating goals, strategies, and actions related to housing, economic development, infrastructure, natural resources, and community character. As required by state statute, it reflects the Planning and Zoning Commission’s

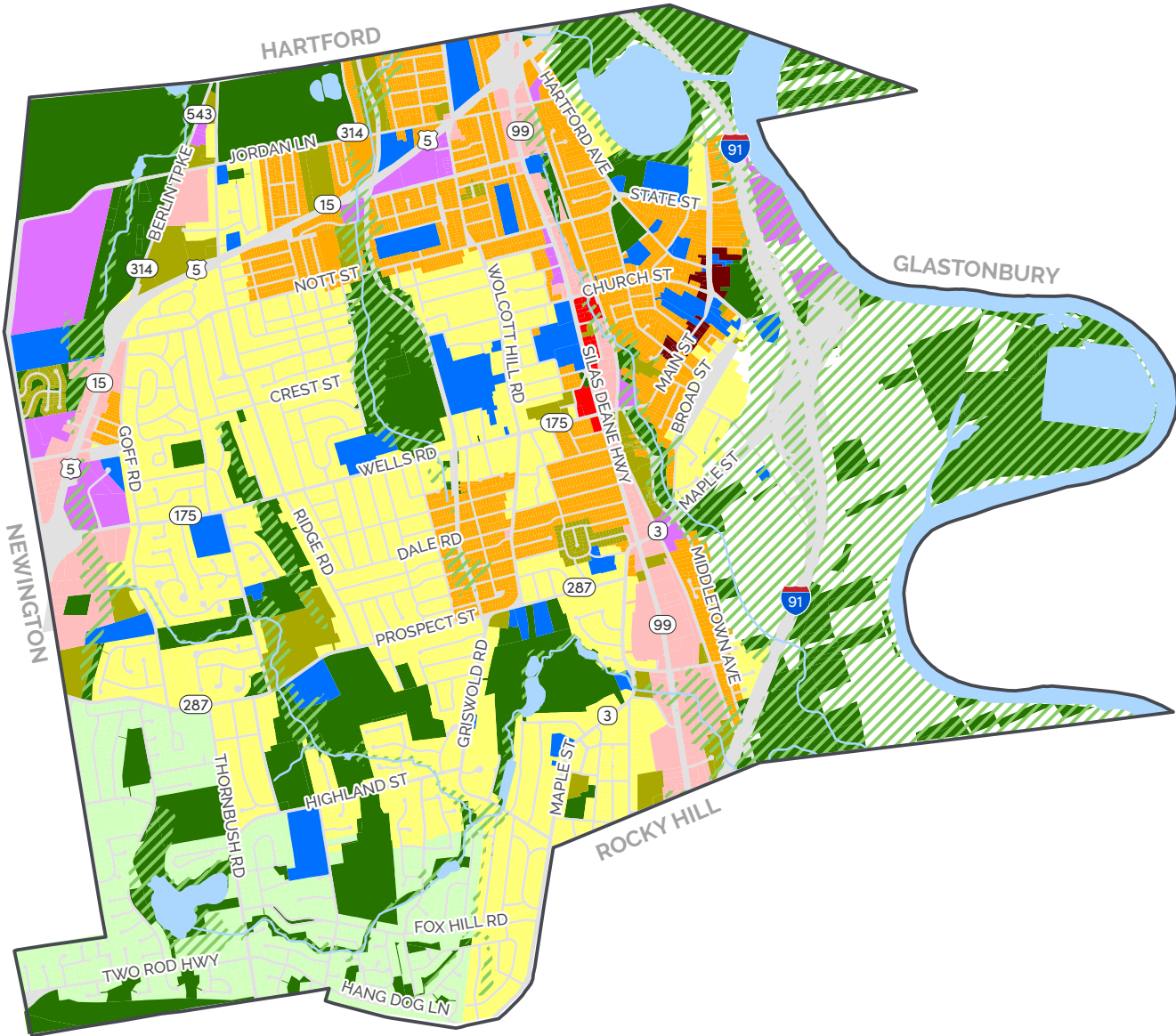
recommendations for the most desirable land uses and development densities across the town. Given that Wethersfield is approximately 96 percent developed, the map closely mirrors current land use and zoning patterns but emphasizes strategic opportunities for redevelopment, preservation, and targeted growth that align with the town’s values, infrastructure, and long-term sustainability goals. The following land use categories are shown in [Figure 4.4](#).

Figure 4.3 Future Land Use Category Descriptions

Open Space		Business	
<b>Existing Open Space</b>	Areas that are currently preserved or used for open space purposes.	<b>Town Center</b>	The area on the Silas Deane Highway (between Church Street and Wells Road ) generally intended to be redeveloped as more of a mixed use, pedestrian-friendly place.
<b>Natural Resources</b>	Wetland, watercourse, steep slope, and floodplain areas which are high priorities for conservation.	<b>Business</b>	Areas that have developed or are intended to develop with business facilities (or possible redevelopment with mixed uses and or residential developments).
Residential		<b>Village Business</b>	The area of Old Wethersfield that is intended for business facilities (or with mixed uses under certain circumstances).
<b>Low Density Residential*</b>	Areas with residential development at densities generally less than two units per acre.	<b>Office/Business Park</b>	Areas that have developed or are intended to develop with office or business park uses.
<b>Medium Density Residential</b>	Areas with residential development at densities generally less than four units per acre.	Other Uses	
<b>Higher Density Residential</b>	Areas with residential development at densities generally less than six units per acre.	<b>Community Facility/ Institutional Uses</b>	Areas containing existing community facilities. And/or institutional uses.
<b>Multi-Family / Other Residential</b>	Areas with residential development in multifamily buildings or on common land (densities vary).	* Wethersfield opted in to Public Act 21-29, and as a result, these density descriptions recognize that Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are permitted on single-family lots and may become more common in the coming years.	

Figure 4.4 Future Land Use

- Open Space**
  - Existing Open Space
  - Natural Resources
- Residential**
  - Low Density Residential
  - Moderate Density Residential
  - Higher Density Residential
  - Multi-Family Residential
- Business**
  - Town Center
  - Business
  - Village Business
  - Office/Business Park
- Other Areas**
  - Community Facilities/Institutional
  - Agriculture Zone
  - Right of Way



*\*Please note: While shown as open space on this map, the Wethersfield Country Club is privately owned and its use or ownership could change.*

Data Source: Town of Wethersfield ▲

## What We Heard

Community members recognize that Wethersfield is primarily a fully developed, residential town with limited available land for expansion. As a result, there is growing support for infill development and the revitalization of existing shopping centers and plazas. The goal is to create developments that blend seamlessly with the surrounding neighborhoods, ensuring that new projects are compatible in terms of scale, design, and character. Future land use should prioritize enhancing the quality of life for residents by focusing on sustainable growth, improving public amenities, and fostering vibrant, mixed-use spaces. Development efforts should aim to provide more housing options, local services, and green spaces while maintaining the town's suburban charm and strengthening community connections.

4



Discussion during the public workshop  
Source: FHI Studio

I would NOT support rezoning areas of residential neighborhoods in order to build higher density apartment/condo buildings outside of the Silas Dean corridor.

I believe the Town needs to grow in a thoughtful manner, encouraging more small businesses in order to continue meeting the demands/needs of residents.

Should maintain open spaces, parks and zoning as it is now.

Wethersfield has a small town feel and a rural atmosphere.

I think Wethersfield should strive to maintain its character and charm.

I love how walkable Wethersfield is, it has great amenities!

Wethersfield needs to beautify the Silas Deane Highway and Berlin Turnpike and attract new businesses to vacant properties.

# Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan on the following pages organizes this chapter’s goals, strategies, and actions into a table that can also serve as a stand-alone reference. Actions are classified as Short-Term, Medium-Term, Long-Term, or Continuous to provide guidance on when it will occur and the level of urgency. The table also identifies the entity responsible for advancing each action, ranging from Town departments and boards to commissions and outside organizations. While this Implementation Plan is designed to guide progress toward the Plan’s goals, achieving those goals may also require additional measures beyond the recommendations presented here.

## How to Use the Tables

Goal specific to the topic area. There is one overriding goal for each topic area of the Plan.

The "When" is identified as:

- Short-Term
- Medium-Term
- Long-Term
- Continuous

<b>Goal: Encourage balanced growth and development that supports a livable and inclusive community, strengthens economic vitality, and promotes healthy lifestyles, all while preserving Wethersfield's small-town charm and protecting its natural resources.</b>		
<b>Strategies and Action Steps</b>		
<b>Strategy #1. Simplify the zoning and subdivision regulations to increase its usefulness and understandability and meet the needs of changing socio-economic conditions.</b>		
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Update the Town of Wethersfield zoning regulations to reflect the Future Land Use Plan that will provide for increased development opportunities in appropriate areas, protect the unique attributes of neighborhoods, minimize impacts to Town infrastructure, and maintain the Town's important waterfront and open spaces.	PZC	Mid-Term
2. Update the Town of Wethersfield zoning regulations to reduce impervious surface coverage and provide additional tree planting guidelines to reduce the heat island effect.	PZC, IWCC	Short-Term
3. Revise the current subdivision regulations to align with zoning updates and Town construction standards, as needed.	PZC	Short-Term

Actions directly comprise the multiple elements of each strategy that can be advanced.

The "Who" identifies those best positioned to collaborate, initiate the action, and manage progress toward its completion.

## Responsible Entities

The offices, departments, divisions, boards, commissions, and agencies listed in the implementation tables are responsible for leading and supporting the recommendations of this Plan. The following abbreviations are used:

4

Code	Description
All	All boards, commissions, agencies, departments and residents
BOE	Board of Education
CCHD	Central Connecticut Health District
COC	Chamber of Commerce
CRCOG	Capital Regional Council of Governments
CTDOT	CT Department of Transportation
DRAC	Design Review Advisory Committee
EDIC	Economic Development and Improvement Commission
FD	Fire Department
HA	Housing Authority
HDC	Historic District Commission
IWCC	Inland Wetlands Conservation Commission
PZC	Planning And Zoning Commission
Res.	Wethersfield Residents
P&R	Park and Recreation
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SYSS	Social, Youth, Senior Services
TC	Town Council
TCC	Tourism & Cultural Commission
WSCAC	Wethersfield Senior Citizens Advisory Committee
Other	Other Boards, Agencies, or Persons

**Goal:** Encourage balanced growth and development that supports a livable and inclusive community, strengthens economic vitality, and promotes healthy lifestyles, all while preserving Wethersfield's small-town charm and protecting its natural resources.

Strategies and Action Steps

**Strategy #1. Simplify the zoning and subdivision regulations to increase its usefulness and understandability and meet the needs of changing socio-economic conditions.**

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
<p>1. Update the Town of Wethersfield zoning regulations to reflect the Future Land Use Plan that will provide for increased development opportunities in appropriate areas, protect the unique attributes of neighborhoods, minimize impacts to Town infrastructure, and maintain the Town's important waterfront and open spaces.</p>	<p>PZC</p>	<p>Mid-Term</p>
<p>2. Update the Town of Wethersfield zoning regulations to reduce impervious surface coverage and provide additional tree planting guidelines to reduce the heat island effect.</p>	<p>PZC, IWCC</p>	<p>Short-Term</p>
<p>3. Revise the current subdivision regulations to align with zoning updates and Town construction standards, as needed.</p>	<p>PZC</p>	<p>Short-Term</p>

<b>Strategies and Action Steps</b>		
<b>Strategy #2. Encourage a mix of land uses that promote sustainable land use practices and walkable neighborhoods.</b>		
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
<b>1.</b> Promote higher density developments in areas adequately served by transit and community services.	PZC	Short-Term
<b>2.</b> Evaluate the zoning ordinances and zoning map with focus on modernization to ensure equitable, innovative, sustainable techniques that are used in accordance with the goals and strategies of this Plan.	PZC	Long-Term
<b>3.</b> Consider incorporating standards for bike parking and electrical vehicle charging stations into zoning regulations.	PZC	Short-Term
<b>4.</b> Inventory Town owned vacant land and consider the future best uses for the properties.	PZC	Mid-Term
<b>5.</b> Require repair of existing, unsafe sidewalks and installation of new concrete sidewalks along the frontages of properties being developed and redeveloped where needed to improve pedestrian travel, close gaps in the sidewalk network and increase walkability.	PZC, TC	Continuous

Strategies and Action Steps		
Strategy #3. Streamline the development approval process to ensure that developments that are consistent with the Town's development regulations are approved in an efficient and prudent fashion.		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to review development proposals with respect to their consistency with the POCD vision, Town construction standards and other community initiatives.	ALL	Continuous
2. Maintain clear and consistent application requirements for various types of development.	PZC	Continuous
3. Continue to meet with applicants early on and at all stages of the permitting and development process.	PZC	Continuous
4. Assist applicants and prospective applicants to identify resources that will be needed for their projects and provide information about grant opportunities.	HDC, PZC, IWCC	Continuous



# 5 HOUSING



## Baseline Conditions

Wethersfield is primarily a residential community, with housing spread across the town’s distinct neighborhoods, including Old Wethersfield, Griswoldville, and newer residential developments on the outskirts of town. The town’s land use is predominantly residential, with homes occupying a large portion of the land area. Wethersfield has approximately 11,863 housing units, with around 80% of these being single-family homes. This residential focus provides a suburban feel, while also supplying a variety of housing options in different neighborhoods across the town.

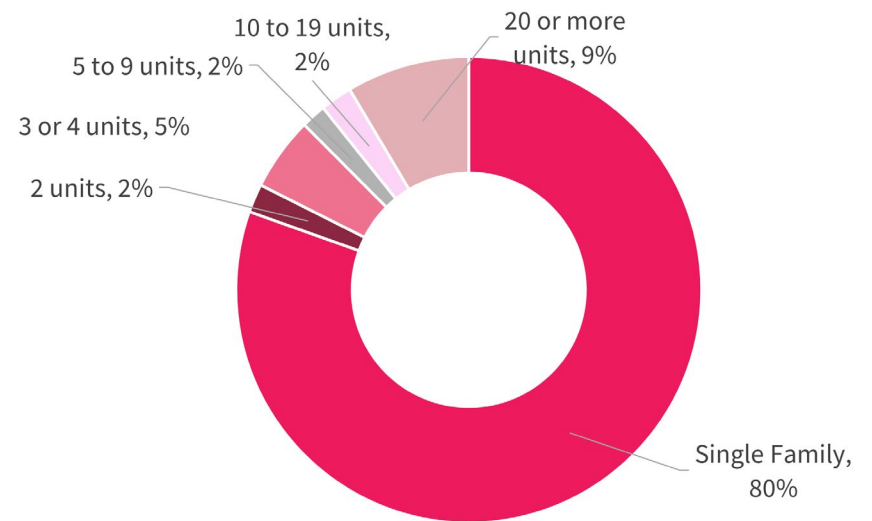
While most of Wethersfield’s housing is concentrated in established single-family neighborhoods, recent residential development has been focused on multi-family complexes and new housing projects. These developments have primarily occurred along major transportation corridors, such as Route 99 (Silas Deane Highway), making these locations easily accessible for commuting and services.

Homeownership is highly valued in Wethersfield, and many residents have called the town home for generations. Ownership provides a sense of stability for families, protects against rising rental costs, and offers an opportunity to build equity and financial security. Homeownership also contributes to neighborhood stability, encouraging reinvestment and minimizing turnover, which strengthens the local school system and community. Wethersfield’s desirable location, strong community amenities, access to employment opportunities, and overall quality of life make it a sought-after place for homeownership. To maintain this desirability, continued public and private investment in housing and neighborhoods is essential. Striking a balance between owner-occupied and rental properties is crucial for Wethersfield's stability, ensuring that there are appealing housing options for both long-time residents and newcomers.

## Housing Type

While the majority of Wethersfield’s land area is occupied by single-family residences, there are also clusters of multi-family housing units throughout the town. Approximately 20% of the town’s housing stock consists of multi-family housing, which includes townhouses, two-family to four-family homes, apartment buildings, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes. Housing with 20 or more units account for 9% of Wethersfield's housing stock. These multi-family housing options are distributed in areas with convenient access to transportation, services, and amenities, offering a diverse range of housing choices for different lifestyles.

Figure 5.1 Housing Type



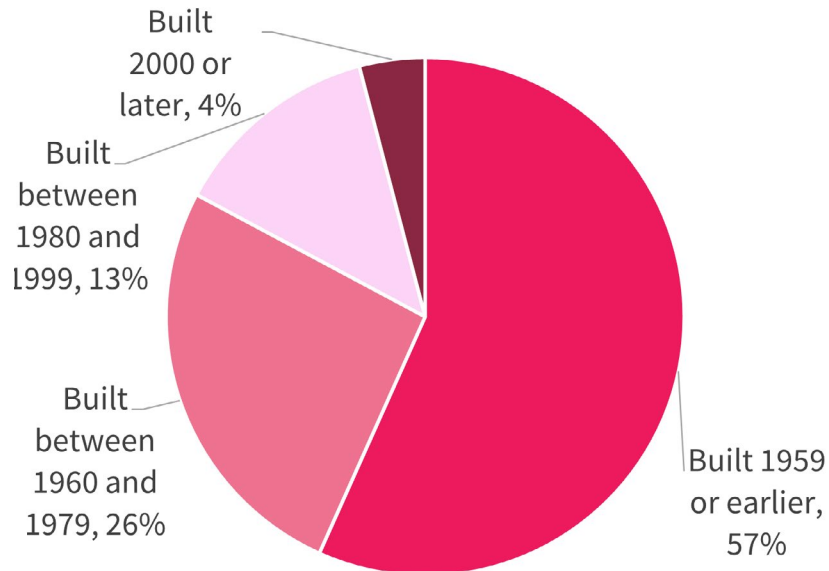
Source: American Community Survey – 2022

## Housing Stock

A substantial share of Wethersfield’s housing stock is aging, with approximately 83% of units built before 1980. In contrast, only about 4% of the town’s housing has been built since 2000. Older homes generally require more frequent maintenance, tend to be less energy efficient, and may pose environmental concerns such as lead paint. These factors can increase the cost and complexity of homeownership, especially for first-time buyers or those on fixed incomes.

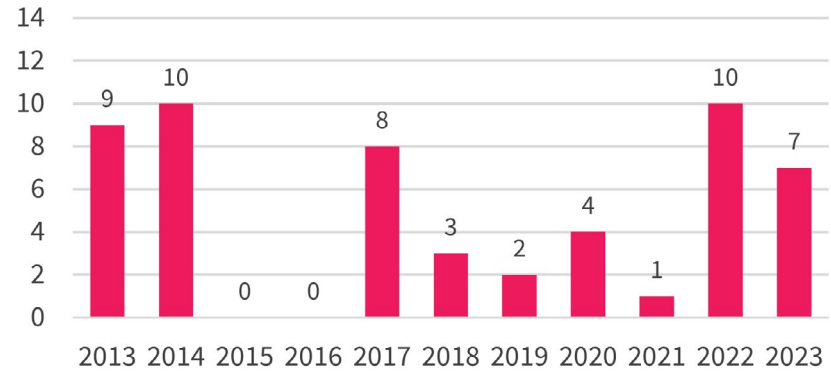
Growth has been slow across Connecticut, which experienced a 7% decline in building permits issued between 1990 and 2023. In Wethersfield, this trend is more pronounced: the Town issued 18 building permits in 1990, compared to just 7 in 2023, a 61% decrease. This decline reflects broader challenges related to housing development, construction costs, and limited available land for new construction.

Figure 5.2 Housing by Year Built



Source: American Community Survey – 2022

Figure 5.3 Single-family Housing Permit Activity



Source: Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development



Single-Family neighborhood in Wethersfield

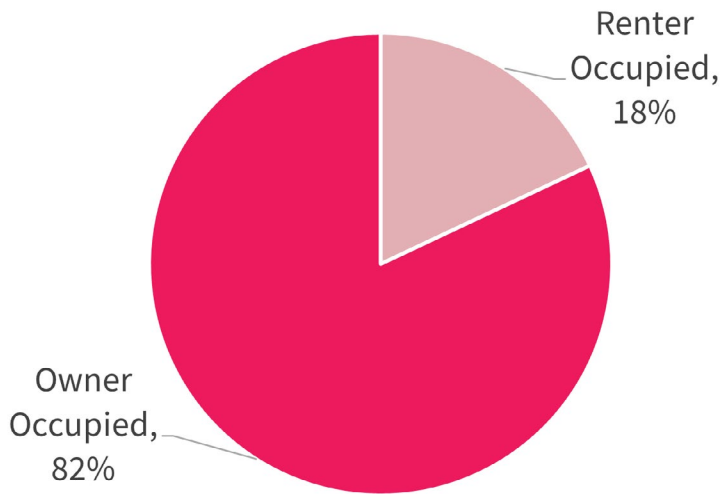
Source: FHI Studio

### Home Ownership and Tenure

Owner-occupied homes make up approximately 82% of Wethersfield’s housing stock, with the remaining 18% being renter-occupied. This homeownership rate is higher than both the regional and state averages, largely due to the town’s predominance of single-family detached housing, which tends to correlate with higher ownership levels compared to multi-family housing.

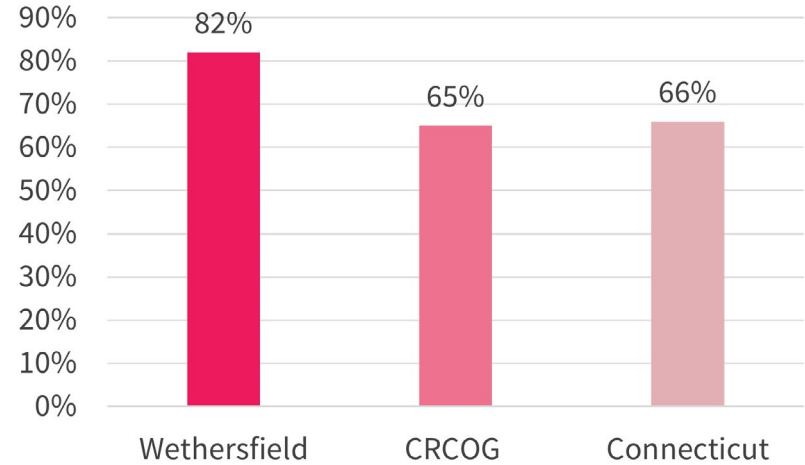
Approximately 49% of Wethersfield’s households have moved into town since 2010, reflecting a steady level of recent in-migration. In contrast, nearly 16% of households have lived in Wethersfield since before 1990, highlighting a long-standing base of residents with deep roots in the community. This mix of newer and long-term residents contributes to the town’s stability and evolving housing needs.

Figure 5.4 Owned vs. Rental Occupancy



Source: American Community Survey – 2023

Figure 5.5 Home Ownership Rate



Source: American Community Survey – 2023



Two-Family Home in Wethersfield

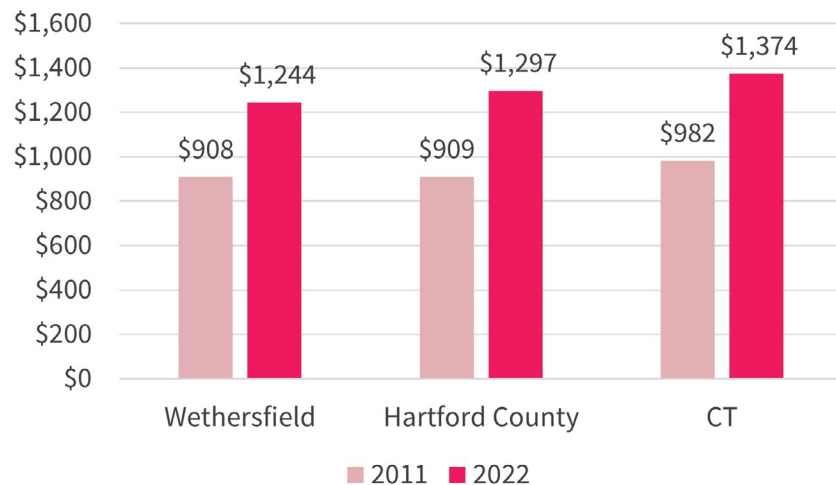
Source: FHI Studio

## Housing Cost

Between 2011 and 2022, median gross rent in Wethersfield rose by 37%, reaching \$1,244. Despite this increase, it remains lower than the median rents in both Hartford County and the state overall. The proportion of rental units priced at \$1,500 or more has grown significantly, from 19.8% to 30.9%, indicating a shift toward higher-end rental housing. This trend may be driven in part by the growing number of higher-income renter households in the town over the past decade, which is likely contributing to rising rental demand and prices.

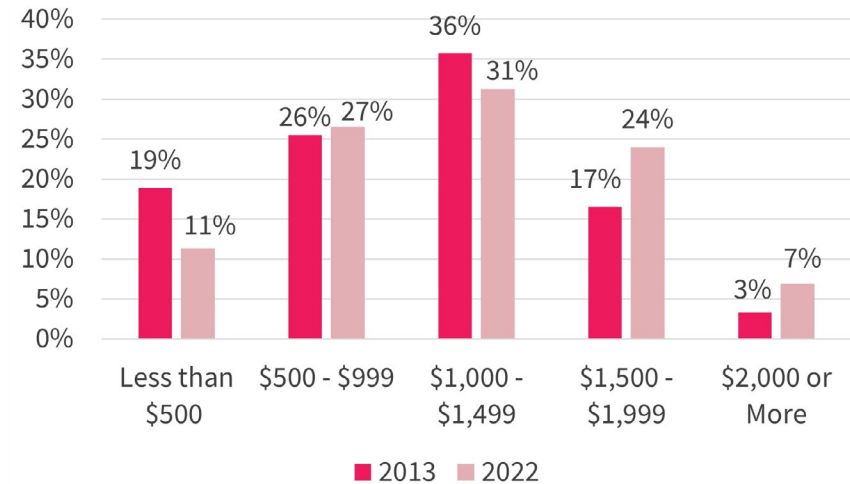
As of the most recent data available on Zillow, the average home value in Wethersfield is \$390,757, representing a 4.1% increase over the past year. Homes typically go under contract in about five days, reflecting a competitive market. Median sale prices in Wethersfield are above local home value averages and surpass those in the CROG area, though they remain below statewide median sale prices.

Figure 5.6 Median Gross Rent 2011 vs 2022



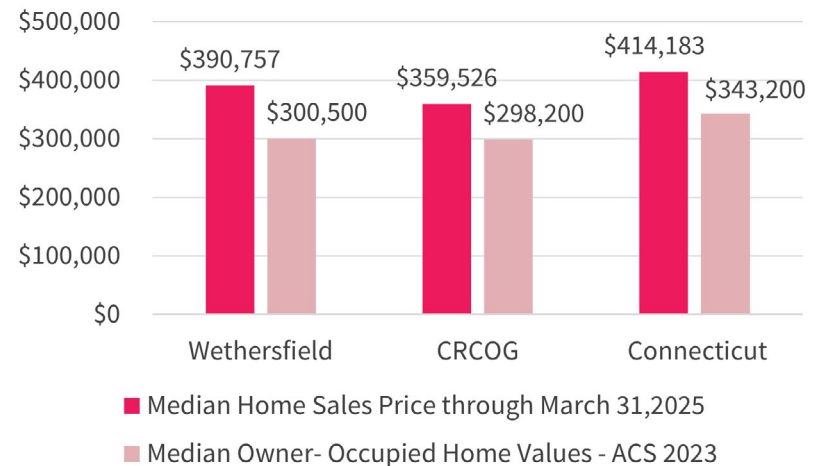
Source: American Community Survey – 2022

Figure 5.7 Change in Gross Rent Distribution



Source: American Community Survey – 2022

Figure 5.8 Median Home Sales Price and Value



Source: American Community Survey – 2023, Policy Map  
Zillow Home Values 2025

## Housing Affordability

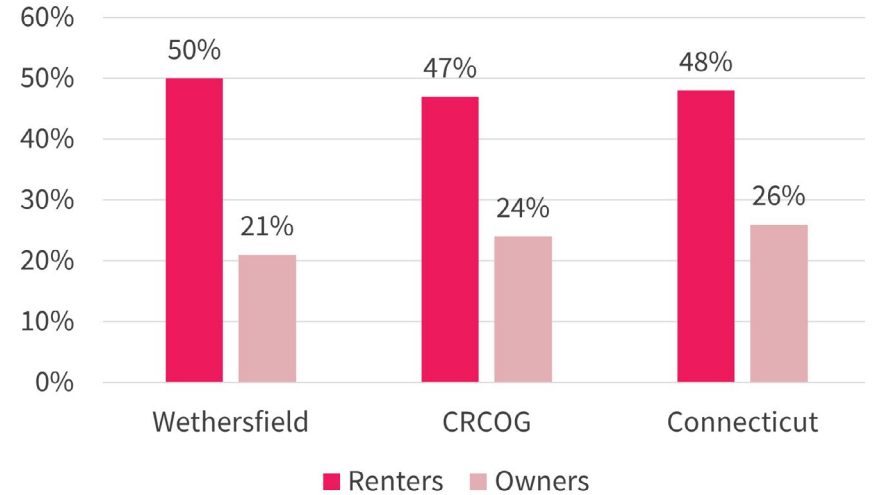
In 2022, the median household income in Wethersfield surpassed \$100,000, marking an increase of over \$35,000 since 2012. This is more than \$18,000 higher than the state median and over \$17,000 above the median for Hartford County. However, despite relatively high household incomes, housing affordability remains a challenge for many residents, particularly renters.

Housing cost-burden occurs when households spend more than 30% of their income on housing. In Wethersfield, approximately 50% of renters are considered to be cost-burdened, compared to 21% of homeowners. The share of cost-burdened renters is higher in Wethersfield than in both the CROCOG Region and the State, while the share of cost-burdened homeowners is lower than those same benchmarks.

As of 2024, 9.57% of Wethersfield’s housing stock qualifies as affordable under Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-30g. This includes government-assisted units, households with tenant rental assistance, CHFA/USDA-financed homes, and deed-restricted properties, totaling 1,130 units. While the percentage has remained relatively stable in recent years, it has increased since 2014.

Wethersfield remains committed to expanding its supply of affordable and workforce housing and reaching the State’s 10% affordability threshold. The Town’s current share of affordable housing is higher than that of most neighboring municipalities, with the exceptions of Hartford, East Hartford, and Newington. Continued efforts are focused on maintaining and increasing affordability to support a diverse and inclusive community.

Figure 5.9 Housing Cost-burdened Households



Source: Partnership for Strong Communities 2024 Housing Data Profile Wethersfield

Figure 5.10 Percentage of Affordable Housing - 2024

Municipality	% Affordable
Wethersfield	9.57%
East Hartford	16.41%
Glastonbury	5.37%
Hartford	42%
Newington	9.73
Rocky Hill	4.76%
West Hartford	8.04

Source: Connecticut State Department of Housing, 2024

## Residential Zoning

Wethersfield's residential zoning districts are intended to manage housing development and maintain the character of existing neighborhoods. These districts define what types of housing are allowed, such as single family, two family, or multi-family dwellings, as well as standards for lot size, building height, and setbacks. Residential zoning helps organize how land is used for housing and ensures that new construction fits the surrounding area. The town has several residential zoning categories that reflect different densities and housing types. Below is a summary of the residential zoning districts in Wethersfield.

### Single Family Residential - A

The A zone allows for single-family residential development with slightly smaller lot sizes than the AA zone. It maintains a suburban character while accommodating a moderate density of single-family homes. This zone supports residential areas that are compatible with existing neighborhoods and infrastructure.

### Single Family Residential - A1

The A-1 zone is designated for low-density residential development, typically characterized by larger lot sizes and single-family detached homes. This zoning aims to maintain a suburban atmosphere with ample open space between properties. It is located in areas where the Town seeks to preserve residential character and limit higher-density development.

### Single Family Residential - AA

The AA zone is intended for low-density single-family residential development. It typically requires larger lot sizes compared to other residential zones, promoting spacious properties and a suburban character. This zone provides a quiet, low-traffic environment suitable for single-family homes.



*Residential Neighborhood in the B Residential District*  
Source: Google Earth



*Preserved open space on Old Common Road in the AA OS District*  
Source: Google Earth

## Open Space Development - AA OS

The Open Space Development zone encourages residential development that preserves natural features and open spaces. It allows for flexible lot sizes and layouts to minimize environmental impact while maintaining the overall density of the area. This approach aims to integrate housing with conservation areas, providing recreational opportunities and protecting wildlife habitats. Developers are required to dedicate a portion of the land as open space, subject to approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

## Single Family Residential - B

The B zone permits single-family residential development with smaller lot sizes than the A zone. It allows for higher density single-family housing while still preserving the residential character of the area. This zone is often used in areas where infrastructure supports increased density without reducing quality of life.

## Single Family Residential - C

The C zone is designed for higher-density single-family residential development. It allows for the smallest lot sizes among the single-family zones, supporting more compact housing. This zone is typically used in areas with adequate infrastructure and access to services.

## Special Residential Development - SRD

The SRD zone allows for flexible and innovative residential development. It enables proposals that may not follow standard zoning rules but still meet criteria set by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The zone supports creative housing solutions aligned with community goals.

\*Single-family dwellings are allowed in the Village Business and Office Districts with Zoning Permit approval. Mixed-use developments that combine residential and commercial uses are permitted in the Village Business, Town Center, General Business, and Regional Commercial zones, subject to Special Permit approval.

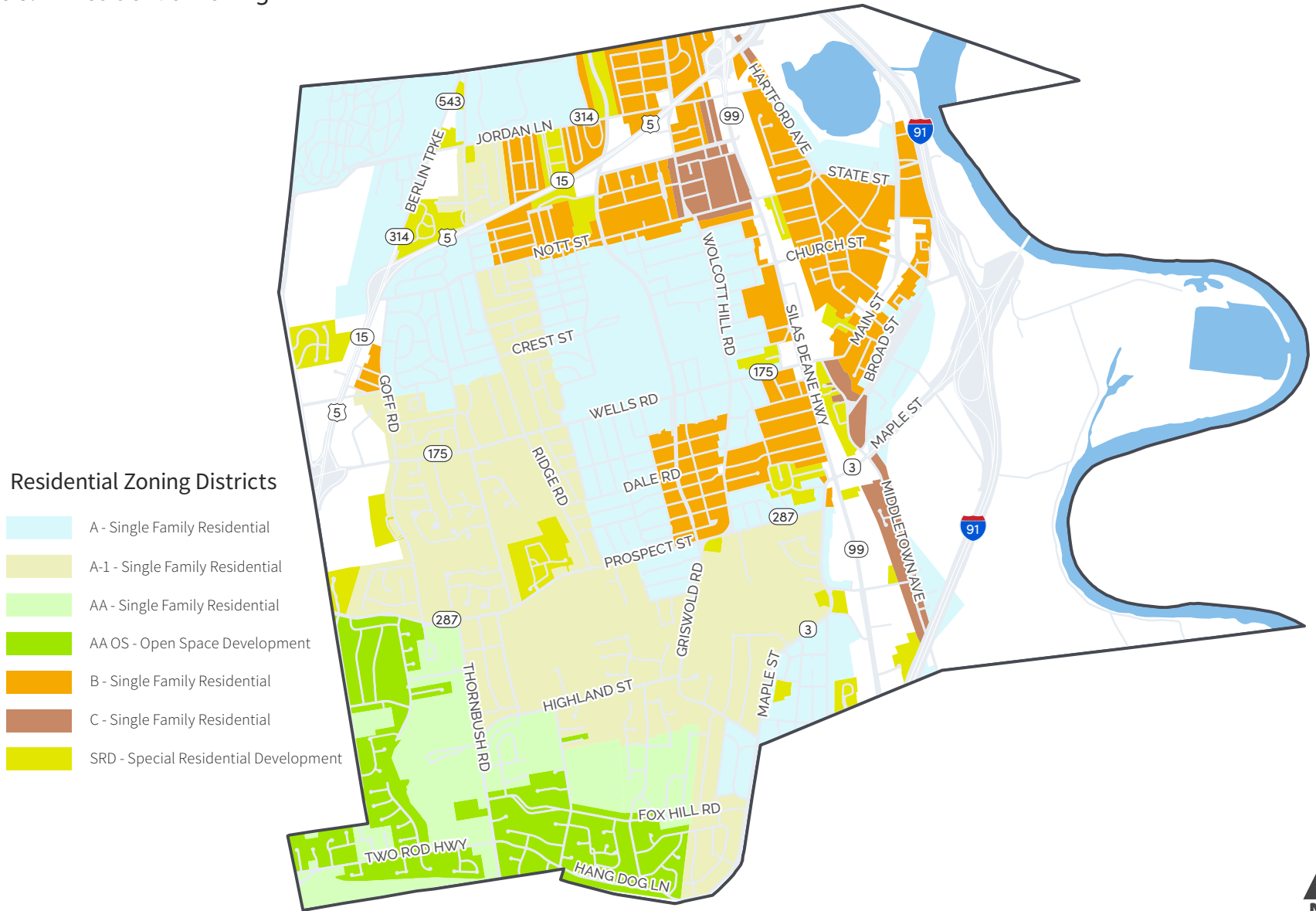


*The Borden Mixed-Use Development in the Regional Commercial Zone was approved by Special Permit  
Source: FHI Studio*



*Town House Lane Homes in the Special Residential Development District  
Source: KP Management*

Figure 5.11 Residential Zoning



Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Town Departments and Commissions

Wethersfield actively supports housing development and neighborhood revitalization through local efforts. The Town has established initiatives that focus on expanding housing options, maintaining the quality of existing neighborhoods, and meeting the needs of current and future residents. These efforts aim to encourage a mix of housing types, support affordability, and ensure that residential growth aligns with the community's long-term vision.

### Wethersfield Housing Authority

The Wethersfield Housing Authority is responsible for providing and managing affordable housing options for low- and moderate-income individuals and families in Wethersfield. Its focus includes housing for elderly and disabled residents, as well as moderate rental units, all aimed at meeting the community's long-term housing needs.

The Authority manages three subsidized properties with a total of 272 units, including 112 designated for elderly and disabled residents. These units have low turnover, contributing to a long waitlist, with most applicants specifically seeking housing in Wethersfield. The Authority also oversees moderate rental housing, including two-bedroom units that are not age restricted. Some tenants may transition to age-restricted units as space becomes available.

The Town and the Housing Authority coordinate regularly and are actively looking for ways to improve collaboration, especially around planning, redevelopment, and property management. The Authority plays a role in housing-related decisions and seeks continued opportunities to acquire or re-purpose land, such as a nearby parcel at Maple Street and Treat Road which could support future expansion. Currently zoned for 18 units per acre, the Housing Authority is reviewing options for lot line revisions and maximizing use of underutilized land at the site. Additional potential redevelopment sites include the Westfield Heights Community and the

property at 31 Butler Street near the Authority's offices.

The Authority is also working to diversify its housing options by adding one-bedroom units, intergenerational housing, workforce housing, and downsizing opportunities to better serve Wethersfield's evolving needs

### Social, Youth, and Senior Services

The Wethersfield Social, Youth, and Senior Services Department plays a vital role in supporting residents across age groups, with a strong focus on housing stability, basic needs, and quality of life. While the Department does not manage housing properties directly, it supports residents living in privately operated subsidized housing sites for seniors and individuals with disabilities: Executive Square, AHEPA, and 117 Wells Village, among others.

Through its Social Services Division, the Department provides a wide range of housing-related support, including renter rebate applications, energy assistance, emergency housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and referrals for mental health and substance use services. It also administers food security programs such as the local food bank, a weekend meal program, and a summer meals program for children.

The Department is often a first point of contact for residents in housing crisis, including those experiencing homelessness in hotels or motels, and works to connect individuals to available resources. With rising costs and inflation, many families are under increasing financial stress, making affordable housing a growing priority.

Senior Services offers additional housing support through services that help older adults remain in their homes, such as transportation to medical appointments and grocery stores, low-cost meal options, and programs at the Senior Center that promote social engagement and wellness.

The Youth Services Division provides after-school programming and partners with families and schools to support the well-being of young residents. Stable housing is a key part of that support.

Recognizing the community's diversity, the Department also works to address language barriers and ensure the accessibility of services for residents who speak different languages. Despite limited staffing and space, the Department continues to advocate for more state funding, pursues grants, and maintains strong connections with regional agencies to share information and respond to emerging needs.



*Wethersfield Housing Authority Main Office located on Lancaster Road  
Source: The Great Elm*



*Executive Square Apartments  
Source: Apartment Guide*

## Housing Initiatives

Wethersfield has been actively engaged in various housing initiatives aimed at improving affordability and accessibility for residents.

### Accessory Dwelling Units

Wethersfield opted into the provisions of Public Act 21-29, which mandates that municipalities allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) "as of right" on single-family residential lots. This means that homeowners in Wethersfield can construct ADUs, either attached to or separate from the primary home, without needing special permits, public hearings, or variances, as long as the units meet existing lot coverage and setback requirements. ADUs offer several benefits, including providing more affordable housing options, enabling multi-generational living, and allowing homeowners to generate rental income.

### Affordable Housing Plan

In spring 2025, Wethersfield completed its first Affordable Housing Plan, as required by state statute §8-30j. The plan outlines strategies to increase access to affordable housing, including encouraging the development of ADUs and promoting the rehabilitation of existing housing. It also addresses housing accessibility for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The plan was shaped with input from local residents and stakeholders.

### Small Cities Community Development Block Grant

Wethersfield secured \$2 million in federal funding through the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Allocation Plan, which, pending approval by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), will be used to renovate the Harvey Fuller Senior Housing complex. These renovations include replacing original 1970s windows, installing new flooring, updating roofs, enhancing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, and adding electric vehicle charging stations, thereby ensuring the property meets modern standards for senior residents.

## What We Heard

Community members shared several housing-related challenges in Wethersfield, including limited land for new development, high property taxes, and a lack of downsizing options for older residents. There is a clear need for more diverse housing types, especially for those aged 55 and older, and increased availability of 1- and 2-bedroom units and two-family homes. Concerns were also raised about the community's vulnerability to climate change and flooding, highlighting the need for infrastructure upgrades to protect existing homes.

To address these issues, residents suggested ideas such as rezoning targeted areas, promoting mixed-use development with retail on the ground floor, and permitting accessory dwelling units. There was also support for higher-density housing near transit and amenities, as well as redefining the concept of a “starter home” to better reflect current needs. These strategies were seen as ways to expand housing options, improve affordability, and accommodate a wider range of residents.



Housing discussion during the public workshop  
Source: FHI Studio

We are looking to purchase a home in Wethersfield, but the market is very competitive and its been challenging to find housing.

Wethersfield needs more 55 and over housing and condos. I would love to downsize and stay in the community.

Re-purpose existing buildings on the Deane for housing.

We need housing to be affordable in alignment with average salaries.

We need affordable multi-family apartments and mixed use buildings.

I would love to be able to stay in my current home but taxes are preventing that.

It would be nice to see the older nursing home on Jordan Lane put to new use as a nursing home or assisted living facility.

**Goal:** Continue to offer diverse housing options that meet the needs of current and future residents at every stage of life, while preserving the identity of existing neighborhoods and fostering a strong sense of community.

Strategies and Action Steps

**Strategy #1. Support the Housing Authority in its efforts to expand housing availability for elderly and disabled residents.**

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to foster open lines of communication and coordination between the Town of Wethersfield and the Housing Authority.	HA, TC	Continuous
2. Conduct a review of Town owned land to analyze the feasibility of transferring Town owned land to the Housing Authority for the expansion of existing facilities or the development of new facilities. Continue to notify them when Town owned land becomes available.	PZC, HA	Mid-Term
3. Where appropriate , provide the Housing Authority with opportunities to expand existing facilities or develop new facilities.	HA	Continuous
4. Support Housing Authority efforts to increase the number of elderly/disabled units.	HA, TC	Continuous
5. Consider modifying the Zoning Regulations to allow more density/height/coverage for Housing Authority redevelopment projects on the sites they currently occupy.	PZC	Short-Term
6. Support Housing Authority efforts to increase the number of 2 and 3 bedroom units.	HA, PZC	Continuous

<b>Strategies and Action Steps</b>		
<b>Strategy #2. Provide a diversity of housing choices.</b>		
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Encourage a variety of housing for residents of different age and income groups.	HA, PZC	Continuous
2. Seek to provide housing for an aging population. Explore opportunities for assisted living facilities and life care facilities in appropriate locations.	HA, PZC	Continuous
3. Consider ways to provide housing opportunities for Wethersfield’s younger residents, families, and workforce.	HA, PZC	Short-Term

<b>Strategy #3. Support “aging in place” for older residents.</b>		
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Continue to provide social services and other support services for people that choose to remain in their homes as they age.	SYSS, WSCAC	Continuous
2. Provide increased outreach with social workers, visiting nurses, and other resources to address social isolation and enhance older adult living experience.	SYSS, WSCAC	Mid-Term
3. Explore free or low cost community resources to provide home services.	SYSS, WSCAC	Long-Term
4. Encourage livability improvements such as universal accessibility standards. Work with local lenders to establish a low interest loan program for home accessibility improvements and develop a list of qualified local contractors who can conduct the improvements.	CRCOG	Continuous

Strategy #4. Guide residential development.		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Ensure that the Town’s zoning regulations continue to encourage housing in areas where infrastructure exists to support it, including public water, public sewer, road capacity, and or bus transit is available.	PZC	Continuous
2. Identify locations where higher density residential development should be considered.	PZC	Short-Term
3. Work with the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) to conduct a capacity analysis for the sewer and water systems to ensure there is capacity for additional housing.	CRCOG	Short-Term





# 6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Baseline Conditions

Wethersfield has focused in recent years on economic development efforts aimed at revitalizing commercial areas, supporting local businesses, and attracting new investment. Located near Hartford with access to major highways, the Town is working to balance growth with the needs of the community and existing infrastructure.

### Industry

Wethersfield’s strategic location, excellent infrastructure system (roads and utilities), substantial existing business base, and progressive regulations are significant assets in terms of retaining and attracting economic development. Wethersfield’s top industry is health care and social assistance, which in 2023 employed 2,396 workers. This is well above the number of employees who are employed in the second highest industry, which is retail trade, which employs 1,262 workers. See Figure 6.1 for a list of Wethersfield’s top five industries. Key employers in Wethersfield include:

1. CT Department of Labor
2. CT Department of Corrections
3. Connecticut Business Systems
4. National Health Care
5. Home Goods

*Source: CT Data Collaborative, 2025 Wethersfield Town Profile utilizing Data from Municipalities, 2025*

Business growth in Wethersfield has been steady, with new business registrations rising over the past five years. According to the CT Data Collaborative’s 2025 Town Profile, there are currently 2,042 active businesses operating in the town.

Figure 6.1 Top Industries - 2025

Lightcast, 2023 (2 and 3 digit NAICS)		Jobs
<b>1</b>	Health Care and Social Assistance <i>Ambulatory Health Care Services</i>	2,396
<b>2</b>	Retail Trade <i>Food and Beverage Stores</i>	1,262
<b>3</b>	Accommodation and Food Services <i>Food Services and Drinking Places</i>	1,110
<b>4</b>	Government <i>Local Government</i>	1,036
<b>5</b>	Professional, Scientific, and Tech Svc <i>Professional, Scientific, and Tech Svc</i>	642
<b>Total Jobs, All Industries</b>		<b>9,663</b>

*Source: CT Data Collaborative Town Profile 2025, utilizing Lightcast 2023 data*

Figure 6.2 New Business Registrations

Total Active Businesses - 2,042					
New Business Registrations by Year					
Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total	197	264	255	292	275

*Source: CT Data Collaborative, 2025 Wethersfield Town Profile utilizing Secretary of the State, March 2025 data*

When compared to the Capitol Region (CRCOG) and the State with respect to its composition of business across industry sectors, Wethersfield has a much greater percentage of public administration jobs. This can be attributed to the large share of state jobs located within the town. Wethersfield also has a higher percentage of accommodation and food services, health care, and retail trade jobs.

Wethersfield ranks behind the region and state most notably in its share of educational, finance and insurance, transportation and warehousing, manufacturing, and construction jobs.

Of Wethersfield’s employed population 16 years and over, approximately 57% of workers are employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations. Over 11% are employed in service occupations, more than 19% are employed in sales and office occupations. About 9% are employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupations. About 4% are employed in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.

Figure 6.4 Occupations - 2023

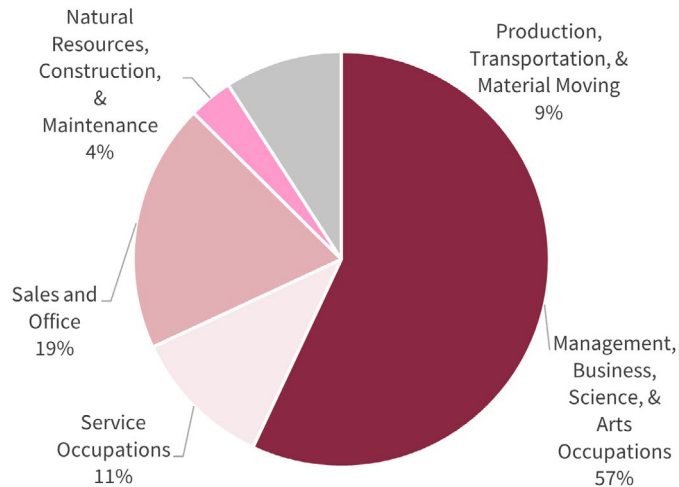
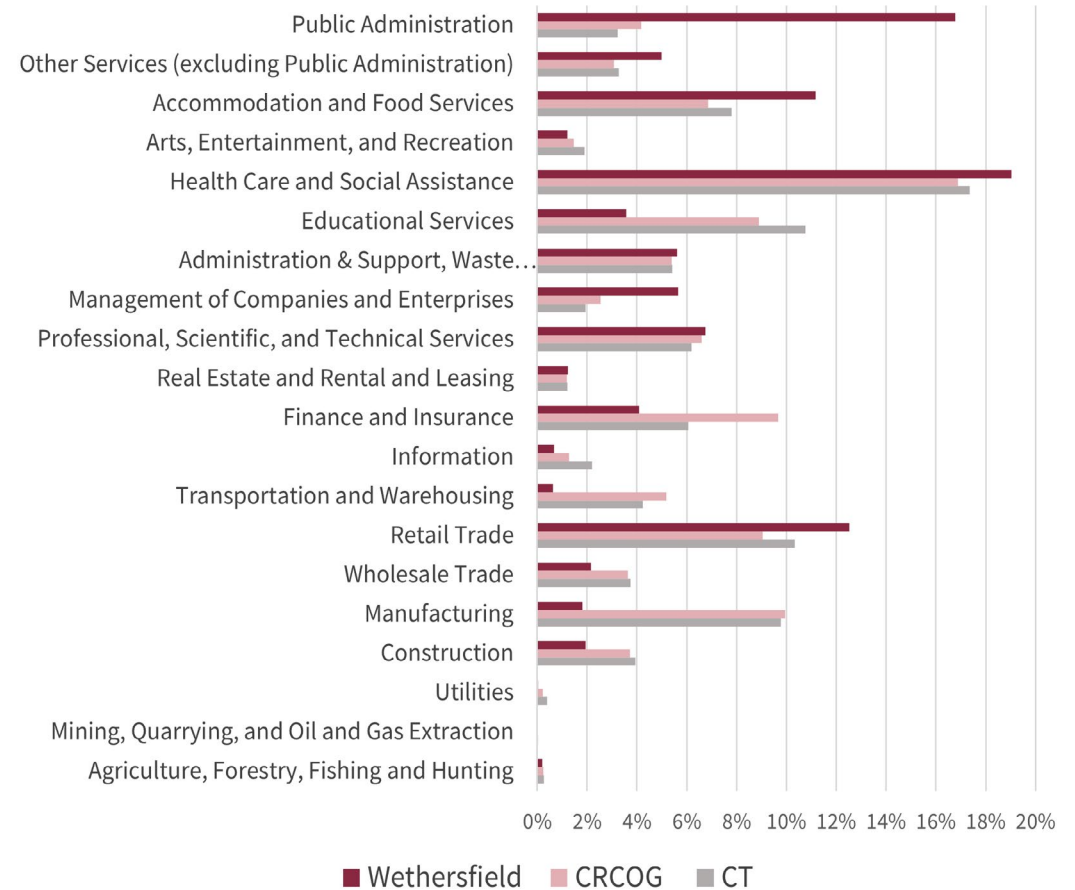


Figure 6.3 Share of Jobs by Industry - 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2022

Source: American Community Survey – 2023, Policy Map

## Labor Force

Wethersfield’s labor market remains relatively strong, with an unemployment rate of 3% compared to the statewide rate of 4%. The town has 13,546 employed residents and 435 unemployed. However, Wethersfield’s labor force has declined by about 500 workers since 2016, a trend also seen across the state. This contraction suggests that a portion of the population may no longer be counted in unemployment statistics, as they are not actively seeking work. Factors likely contributing to this shift include early retirement, ongoing concerns related to COVID-19, increased childcare responsibilities, and a population aging out of the workforce. Wethersfield’s unemployment rate has declined from 4.9% in 2016 to 3% in 2024, reflecting an overall improvement in local employment conditions over the past several years.

Compared to neighboring communities, Wethersfield has fewer jobs per capita, with 0.36 jobs for every resident. While this is lower than Rocky Hill’s 0.96 jobs per resident, it highlights Wethersfield’s role as a primarily residential community with potential opportunities to expand its local employment base.

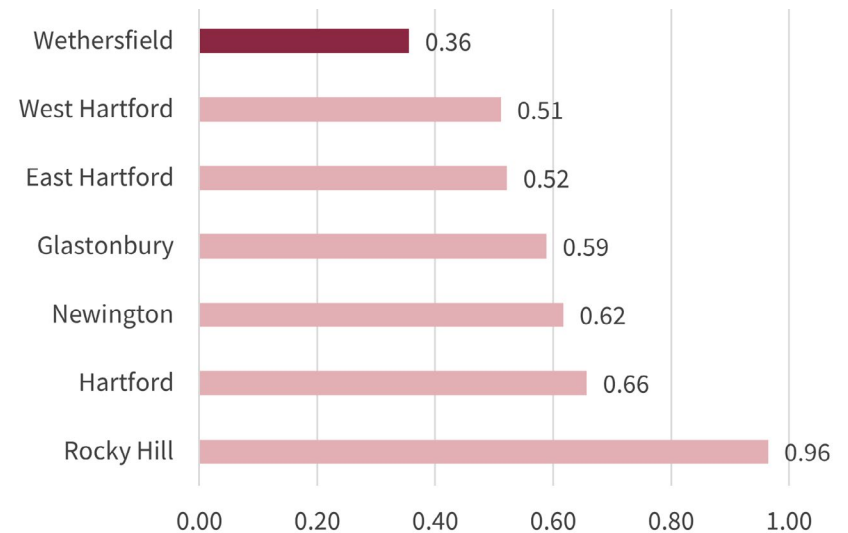
6

**Figure 6.5** Labor Force and Unemployment Rate - 2024



Source: CT Department of Labor, 2024

**Figure 6.6** Jobs Per Capita - 2023



Source: CT Data Collaborative Town Profile 2025, utilizing Lightcast 2023 data

### Job Locations and Commuting Trends

As expected, Wethersfield’s jobs are concentrated along its primary commercial corridors, including the Silas Deane Highway and Berlin Turnpike. These areas are zoned for Commercial, Business Park, and Regional Commercial uses, making them key employment centers within the town. They are home to a wide range of businesses, retail establishments, and professional services, as well as several of Wethersfield’s major employers. See Figure 6.7.

A substantially higher number of Wethersfield residents commute out of town for work, with more than 13,100 traveling daily to other municipalities for employment. The average commute time for these residents is approximately 21 minutes. The top five work destinations for Wethersfield residents, listed in order of frequency, are:

- Hartford
- Wethersfield
- West Hartford
- East Hartford
- Newington

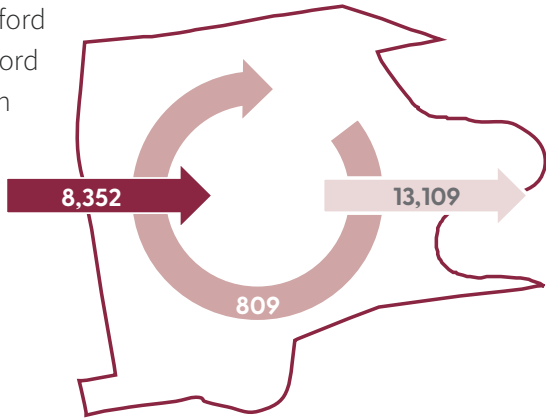
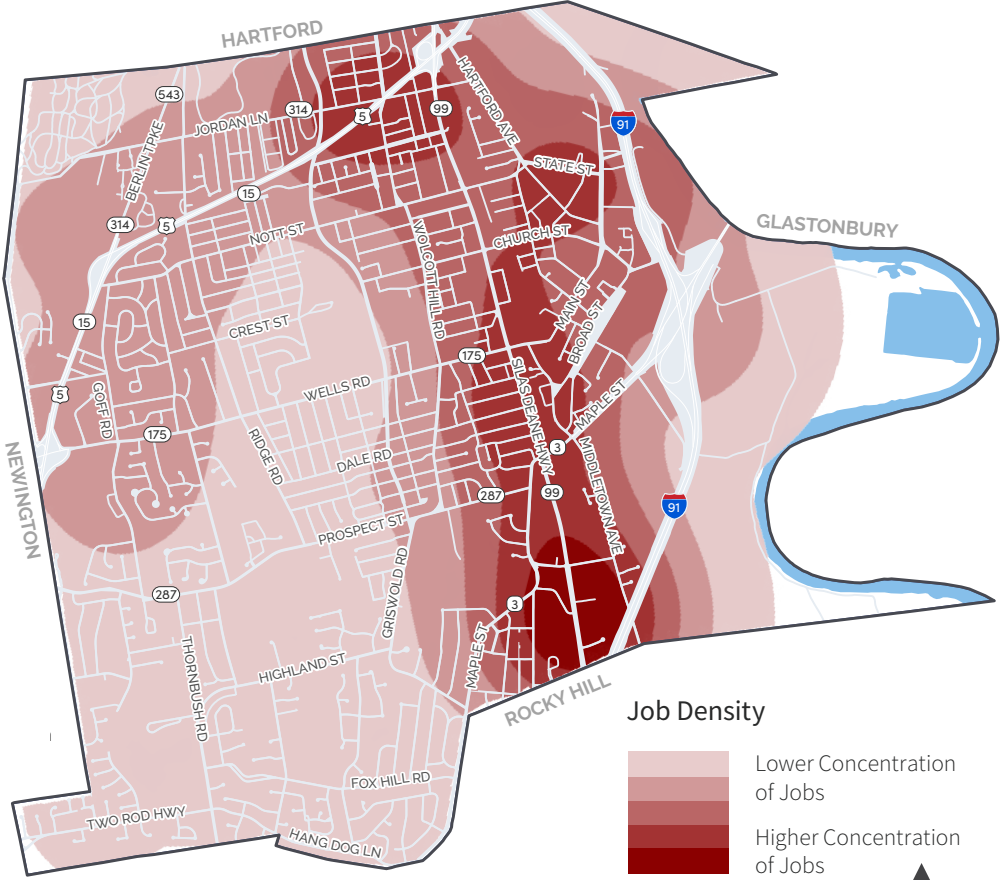


Figure 6.7 Concentration of Jobs - 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2022

- Employed in Wethersfield and live elsewhere
- Employed and live in Wethersfield
- Live in Wethersfield and employed elsewhere

**Job Density**

- Lower Concentration of Jobs
- Higher Concentration of Jobs

N

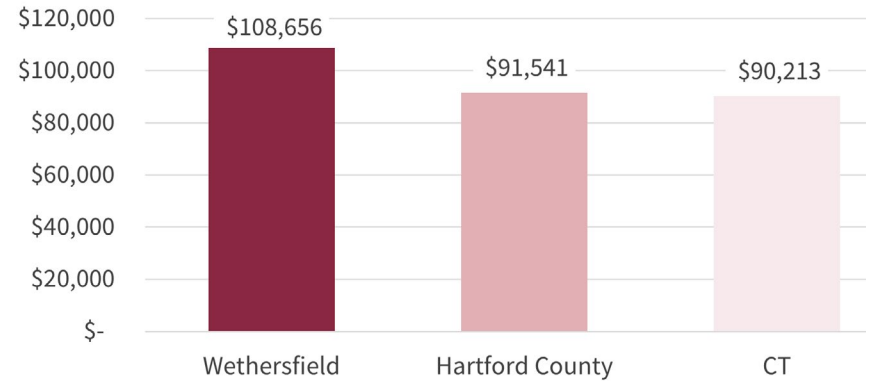
## Income

In 2022, Wethersfield’s median household income exceeded \$100,000, marking an increase of over \$35,000 since 2012. This figure is more than \$18,000 higher than the state median and over \$17,000 above the median for Hartford County. Wethersfield also has a greater proportion of households earning between \$75,000 and \$200,000 compared to both Hartford County and the state, along with a smaller share of households earning less than \$25,000. These trends suggest a relatively strong and stable local income profile.

## Education Level

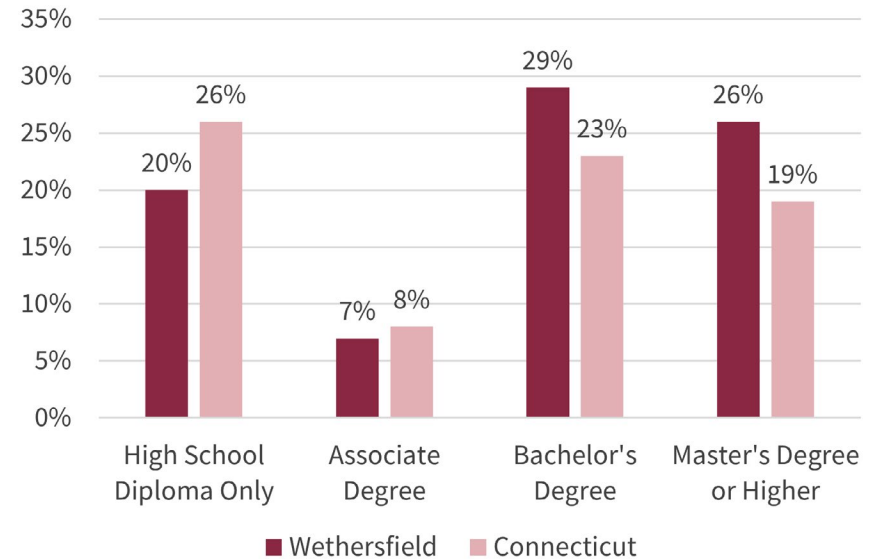
Wethersfield has a highly educated population, with 29% of residents holding a bachelor’s degree and 26% having a master’s degree or higher, both well above the state averages. This higher level of educational attainment contributes to a skilled workforce, positioning the town for continued economic growth and development.

Figure 6.8 Household Income - 2022



Source: American Community Survey – 2022

Figure 6.9 Educational Attainment



Source: American Community Survey, 2019 - 2023 5-Year Estimates

## Business and Commercial Zoning

Wethersfield has a variety of zoning districts designed to support economic development, promote mixed-use areas, and preserve the town's unique character. These zones regulate the types of uses, building forms, and development intensities allowed in different parts of town. From small-scale village businesses to large-scale regional commercial areas, each district plays a distinct role in shaping Wethersfield's land use and business environment. Below is a summary of the primary business, commercial, and office zoning districts in Wethersfield. A map of the Town's business and commercial zoning districts is shown in Figure 6.10.

### Regional Commercial - RC

This zoning district is intended for large-scale commercial developments that serve a regional customer base. Common uses include big-box retail stores, shopping centers, and high-traffic service establishments. In Wethersfield, these areas are primarily located along the Berlin Turnpike and the southern end of the Silas Deane Highway, where high visibility and access to major transportation routes support regional commerce.

### Town Center Business - TC

Located near the Wethersfield Library and Town Hall along the Silas Deane Highway, the Town Center Business district is centered around civic, governmental, and community-oriented uses. It also supports commercial and office uses that complement the area's role as a focal point for public services and municipal activity in Wethersfield.

### General Business - GB

The General Business district allows a wide variety of commercial uses, including retail stores, restaurants, personal services, and automotive-related businesses. Located along the Silas Deane Highway, this district is designed to serve both local residents and regional customers, supporting a dynamic mix of businesses that contribute to Wethersfield's economic growth.



*Wethersfield Shopping Center in the Regional Commercial District*  
Source: Neiditz Real Estate and Leasing



*Price Rite Marketplace in the General Business District*  
Source: Google Earth

## Village Business - VB

The Village Business district is located in Old Wethersfield and supports small-scale commercial uses that blend with the area's historic character. This district accommodates businesses such as retail shops, cafes, and personal services, all designed to meet the needs of local residents while preserving the charm of the town's historic district.

## Business Park - BP

The Business Park district is located in areas of Wethersfield with easy access to major transportation routes, including Interstate 91 and the Berlin Turnpike. This district is designed for light industrial, office, and research-based businesses, promoting a professional environment that complements surrounding areas. It offers space for companies focused on innovation, technology, and light manufacturing, while encouraging high-quality development.

## Office - O

The Office district is primarily located near the Wilbur Cross Highway (Route 5/15), providing convenient access for professional and administrative office uses, such as medical offices, financial services, and business-related services. In addition, there are some pockets of Office zoning along the Silas Deane Highway. These areas are typically situated near residential neighborhoods, offering a quieter environment while serving as a buffer between more intensive commercial zones and residential areas.

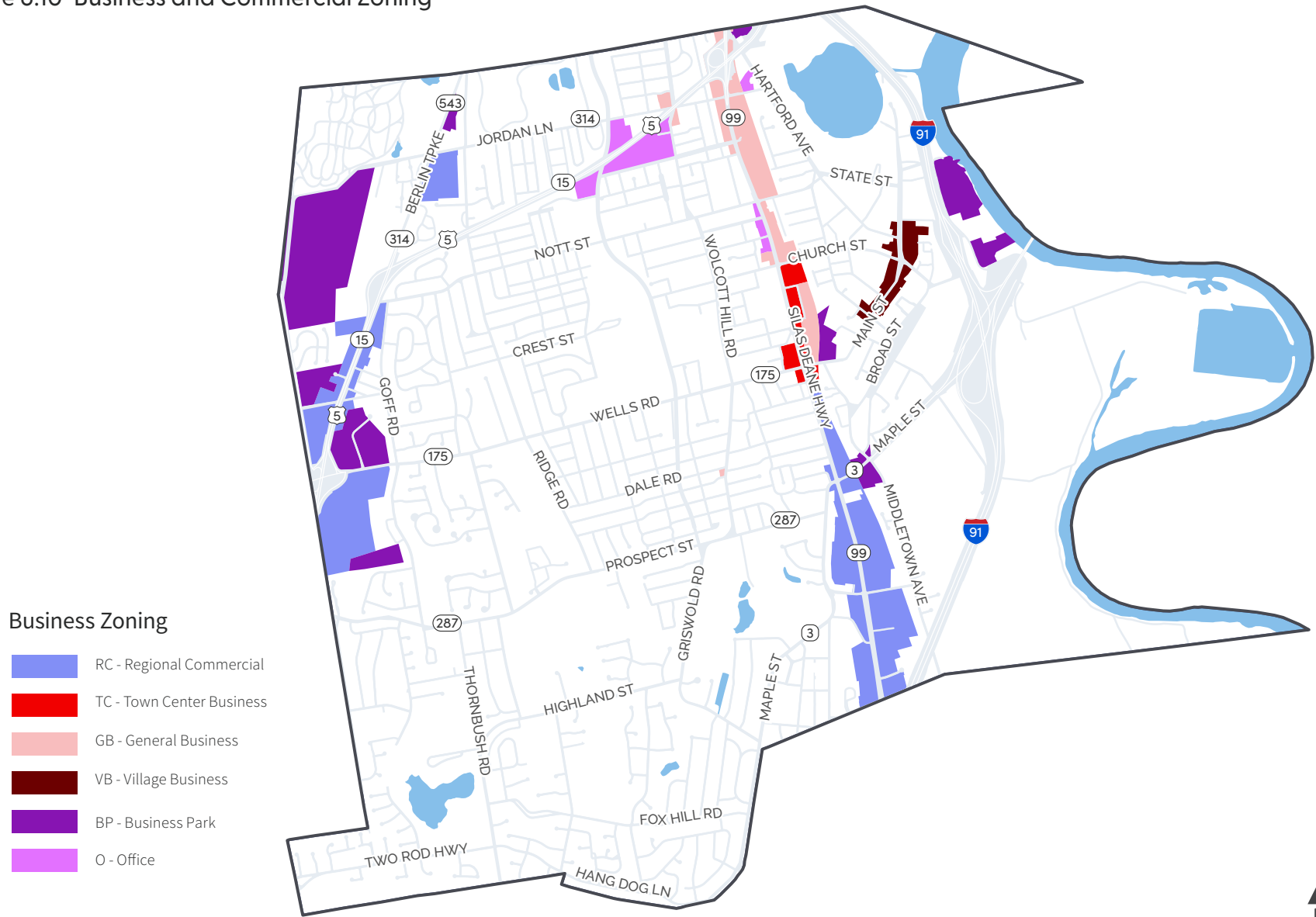


*Village Businesses in Old Wethersfield*  
Source: FHI Studio



*Putnam Park Office Center in the Business Park District*  
Source: LoopNet.com

Figure 6.10 Business and Commercial Zoning



Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Town Departments and Commissions

Wethersfield actively supports economic growth and community revitalization through dedicated local efforts. The Town has established commissions focused on economic development, working to attract new businesses, support existing ones, and enhance overall economic vitality.

6

### Economic Development Department

The Wethersfield Economic Development Department works to strengthen the Town's economy by supporting local businesses, promoting cultural and historic assets, and guiding responsible development. It serves as a resource for businesses, residents, and developers, offering information, connections, and support throughout the planning and permitting process.

The Department plays an active role in business retention and expansion, attracting new investment, and encouraging redevelopment of underutilized properties. It provides direct guidance to potential developers by helping them navigate local regulations, identifying suitable sites, coordinating with relevant boards and commissions, and aligning proposals with Town priorities and zoning policies.

In addition to these efforts, the Department provides staff support to the Economic Development & Improvement Commission (EDIC), the Redevelopment Agency (RDA), and the Tourism and Cultural Commission. These partnerships help advance local economic goals, enhance tourism, and support the arts and cultural experiences that contribute to Wethersfield's unique identity.

### Economic Development and Improvement Commission

The Economic Development & Improvement Commission (EDIC) is an advisory body that works with Town staff and other local agencies to support economic development and redevelopment efforts. The Commission advises on policies related to business attraction, retention, and the reuse of underutilized properties, often collaborating with groups like the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Redevelopment Agency.

In addition to its advisory role, the EDIC helps manage and promote programs aimed at improving the appearance and competitiveness of Wethersfield's commercial areas. These efforts include façade improvement grants, small business loan assistance, and local tax incentive programs. The Commission also engages directly with local business owners through regular outreach, aiming to understand their needs and promote a more supportive environment for entrepreneurship. Through these combined efforts, the EDIC contributes to coordinated, practical strategies that guide Wethersfield's economic planning.

### Redevelopment Agency

The Wethersfield Redevelopment Agency focuses on promoting the revitalization of the Town's limited commercial properties and underutilized spaces. It works in partnership with property owners, tenants, developers, and government agencies at the local, state, and federal levels to support redevelopment projects. The Agency aims to encourage private investment, boost property values, support quality development, and create opportunities for entrepreneurship and employment within the community.

### Design Review Advisory Committee

The Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) provides guidance on the design aspects of new development and redevelopment projects. While not a regulatory body, the committee provides recommendations on building design, signage, landscaping, and site planning. Its goal is to ensure that new projects align with the town’s character and visual appeal, which can help attract businesses, enhance property values, and support long-term economic growth. The DRAC also advises on public projects and integrates design considerations into broader redevelopment efforts, playing a role in shaping a cohesive environment that supports the town’s economic development goals.

### Tourism and Cultural Commission

The Wethersfield Tourism and Cultural Commission focuses on promoting the town’s cultural and historical assets to enhance the visitor experience and attract tourism. By organizing events, supporting local arts and cultural initiatives, and highlighting historical landmarks, the Commission works to increase foot traffic to local businesses and bolster the town’s appeal as a destination. Its efforts contribute to economic development by encouraging tourism-related spending, supporting local entrepreneurs, and fostering a vibrant cultural scene that enriches the community.

*Did you know.... The Great Elm website serves as an information hub for local events, businesses, and community resources. It features a calendar of town events, a business directory, and updates on economic development programs. The site also includes links to cultural and historical attractions, making it a useful tool for residents, visitors, and business owners alike.*

**WHY WETHERSFIELD?**

- BUSINESS FRIENDLY
- COMMUNITY ORIENTED
- CENTRALLY LOCATED
- RICH IN HISTORY
- EMBRACING THE FUTURE

**CONTACT US**  
 Dept. of Planning & Economic Development  
 505 Silas Deane Highway  
 Wethersfield, CT 06109  
 860.721.2837  
 planning@wethersfieldct.gov  
 WethersfieldCT.com  
 TheGreatElm.com

**Wethersfield Connecticut**  
 "Ye Most Ancient Town"

---

**Our History**  
 Located along the banks of the CT River, Wethersfield is a living & working community that also happens to be deeply devoted to preserving its authentic New England heritage with the largest historic district in CT, nearly 390 years in the making.

**DISCOVER THE PLACE WHERE HISTORY LIVES.**

**Why Wethersfield?**

26,100+ POPULATION	46% BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER
\$255K+ MEDIAN HOME VALUE	79% OWNER OCCUPIED
\$86K+ MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	88% INTERNET ACCESS 100mbps+

**CREATING CONNECTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES**

- Facade Improvement Program
- Pre-application Review
- Permit Assistance
- Chamber of Commerce
- Tax Incentive Program
- Grand Opening Assistance
- Salute to Business Event

**WHS Nationally Recognized SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE**

**CENTRALLY LOCATED**  
 CONVENIENT TO MAJOR HIGHWAYS & ROUTES

BRADLEY INTL AIRPORT (BDL)	- 17 MILES
UNION STATION HARTFORD	- 5 MILES
UNION STATION NEW HAVEN	- 35 MILES

Why Wethersfield Informational Flyer  
 Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Economic Development Partners

In addition to its Town Departments and Commissions, Wethersfield works with a range of community partners to support economic development. These include organizations like the Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce, the Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association, and various regional and state agencies that collaborate on business outreach, tourism, and redevelopment initiatives.

### 6 Chamber of Commerce

The Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit organization that supports local businesses through networking, advocacy, and community events. It organizes programs such as the Spring Car Show, Holidays on Main, and the State of the Town Breakfast, which help connect businesses with residents and encourage local economic activity. The Chamber also offers scholarships and other community-focused initiatives, contributing to broader economic and civic engagement in Wethersfield.

### Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association

The Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association (OWSA) is a nonprofit organization comprising local businesses dedicated to preserving and promoting the character of Old Wethersfield. Established in 1975, the association organizes community events such as Scarecrows Along Main Street, Bicycles on Main, and PorchFest, which aim to foster community engagement and support local commerce. These initiatives contribute to the town's economic development by attracting visitors and encouraging local spending.

## Economic Development Initiatives

Wethersfield has implemented a variety of initiatives that enhance the town's economic vitality, tourism, and community engagement. The Great Elm website, developed by the EDIC, serves as a central resource for local events, including the Salute to Business. This annual gathering honors local businesses and organizations for their contributions to the town's economic growth.

The Town's Cultural District showcases its historical and cultural assets, including notable sites like the Webb Deane Stevens Museum and the Wethersfield Academy for the Arts. The District hosts a range of events, such as concerts and educational programs, that attract visitors and support local businesses. Additionally, Historic Wethersfield offers walking tours, seasonal events, and educational programs that highlight the town's colonial past, reinforcing its significance as a cultural and economic asset. In February of 2025, Wethersfield was awarded with the Bronze-Level Bicycle Friendly Community designation by the League of American Bicyclist.

Other community-focused efforts include the Wethersfield Farmers' Market, held from May through October, and seasonal events like the Spring Tree Walk. These initiatives help draw visitors, support local vendors, and contribute to the Town's broader economic development goals.



*Scarecrows Along Main Street*  
Source: The Great Elm

# What We Heard

During community engagement, participants shared a range of ideas and concerns aimed at strengthening Wethersfield’s commercial areas. A recurring theme was the need to improve parking regulations and public parking signage, particularly in Old Wethersfield, to better guide both residents and visitors. The Silas Deane Highway was described as a stressful and uninviting corridor due to numerous curb cuts and a poor pedestrian environment. The future of State-owned properties, especially the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) site, was a major topic of interest, with many viewing mixed-use development as a desirable long-term use. Concerns were also raised about absentee landlords, blighted properties, and underutilized commercial spaces, prompting calls for a stronger focus on infill development and revitalization of aging plazas. Participants recommended revisiting zoning regulations to allow greater flexibility, increased density, and more diverse retail options, particularly along the Silas Deane Highway.



Participants providing feedback during CornFest  
Source: FHI Studio

I like the mix of small businesses and larger chain retail that is found in Wethersfield - we have it all!

I'm concerned that bringing in more businesses will increase the traffic in town, particularly on the Silas Deane Highway.

There is a great variety of businesses in Wethersfield.

There are some blighted commercial areas that need TLC.

Wethersfield is a business-friendly community and works with small business owners.

Wethersfield is becoming a restaurant haven, the options are great!

Parking is so challenging in Old Wethersfield, especially during community events or on the weekends.

**Goal:** Foster a thriving economic climate by attracting and supporting businesses of all sizes and types to offer a diversity of goods and services. Encourage the flexible redevelopment and infill of existing commercial areas to expand economic opportunities and reduce the tax burden on residents.

Strategies and Action Steps

**Strategy #1. Encourage appropriate business development.**

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Help existing businesses stay and grow in Town and expand the tax base by creating synergies through the recruitment of compatible businesses and industries.	EDIC, TCC	Continuous
2. Continue to work with existing organizations (such as the Chamber of Commerce) to foster a business friendly environment.	EDIC	Continuous
3. Review regulations regarding home-based businesses in order to maintain an appropriate balance in residential areas and provide clear guidance for business owners.	EDIC, PZC	Short-Term
4. Adopt access management standards for the Town’s commercial corridors and encourage consolidated development with shared access, parking, and circulation.	PZC	Long-Term
5. Continue to provide permitting guidance for developers, businesses, building owners, and first-time business owners.	EDIC, PZC	Continuous
6. Encourage business growth that serves the community through the use of tax incentives, and other mechanisms.	PZC, EDIC	Continuous

Strategies and Action Steps

**Strategy #2. Encourage redevelopment of existing commercial areas, businesses, and blighted properties.**

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue using a variety of financial incentive tools.	EDIC, PZC, TC	Continuous
2. Enforce the Town’s blight regulations. Review and update the blight regulations as needed.	PZC, TC	Continuous
3. Continue to implement streetscape improvements and wayfinding to better connect Wethersfield’s commercial areas.	EDIC, PZC, HDC, TCC	Continuous
4. Review and update current parking standards to increase the development potential of underutilized sites.	PZC	Short-Term

**Strategy #3. Encourage redevelopment of the Silas Deane Highway.**

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to partner with adjoining municipalities, CROCOG and CTDOT to improve safety and connectivity along the Silas Deane Highway through the use of traffic calming measures and streetscape improvements.	CROCOG	Continuous
2. Support and implement recommendations from the Safe Streets 4 All (SS4A) Grant study.	TC	Mid-Term
3. Review and update Wethersfield’s zoning regulations to ensure they support appropriate development and/or redevelopment.	EDIC, PZC	Short-Term
4. Review and evaluate the effectiveness of the Town Center Zoning District.	PZC	Short-Term

## CHAPTER 6 Economic Development

5. Consider ways to promote additional development desired by residents such as restaurants, retail, entertainment, and “destination” uses in a more walkable environment.	EDIC	Continuous
6. Review parking requirements and consider adjustments as appropriate to remove potential impediments to redevelopment.	PZC	Short-Term
7. Continue efforts to rename the Silas Deane Highway as the Silas Deane Boulevard.	TCC	Continuous

6

### Strategy #4. Encourage redevelopment of the Berlin Turnpike.

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to partner with adjoining municipalities, CRCOG and CTDOT to improve safety and connectivity along the Berlin Turnpike through the use of traffic calming measures and streetscape improvements.	CRCOG	Continuous
2. Support and implement recommendations from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant study.	CRCOG	Long-Term
3. Consider ways to promote additional development desired by residents such as restaurants, retail, entertainment, , and “destination” uses in a walkable environment.	EDIC	Mid-Term
4. Review parking requirements and consider adjustments as appropriate to remove potential impediments to redevelopment.	PZC	Short-Term

Strategy #5. Continue to promote Wethersfield’s history and culture as a tourism draw.		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Support the continued development of arts and entertainment in Wethersfield.	TCC, EDIC	Continuous
2. Continue to pursue the promotional and funding opportunities associated with Wethersfield’s designation as a Cultural District .	TCC	Continuous
3. Continue to work with the Historic District Commission to balance historic preservation and economic development in Old Wethersfield.	HDC, TCC	Continuous
4. Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities throughout residential zones, commercial districts, historic areas and other Town amenities to facilitate connectivity.	PZC	Long-Term



# 7 MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Source: CT Insider

## Baseline Conditions - Mobility

Wethersfield’s transportation network consists of a system of Town, State, and Federal roadways, and sidewalks. The Town is located near key regional destinations and has strong connections to nearby employment centers such as Hartford and New Haven. Wethersfield has a freight rail line and Hartford Line and Amtrak passenger rail service is available nearby in Berlin and Hartford. While the Town has sidewalks along major corridors, gaps in pedestrian infrastructure remain and the community has few roadways with dedicated bicycle facilities.

7

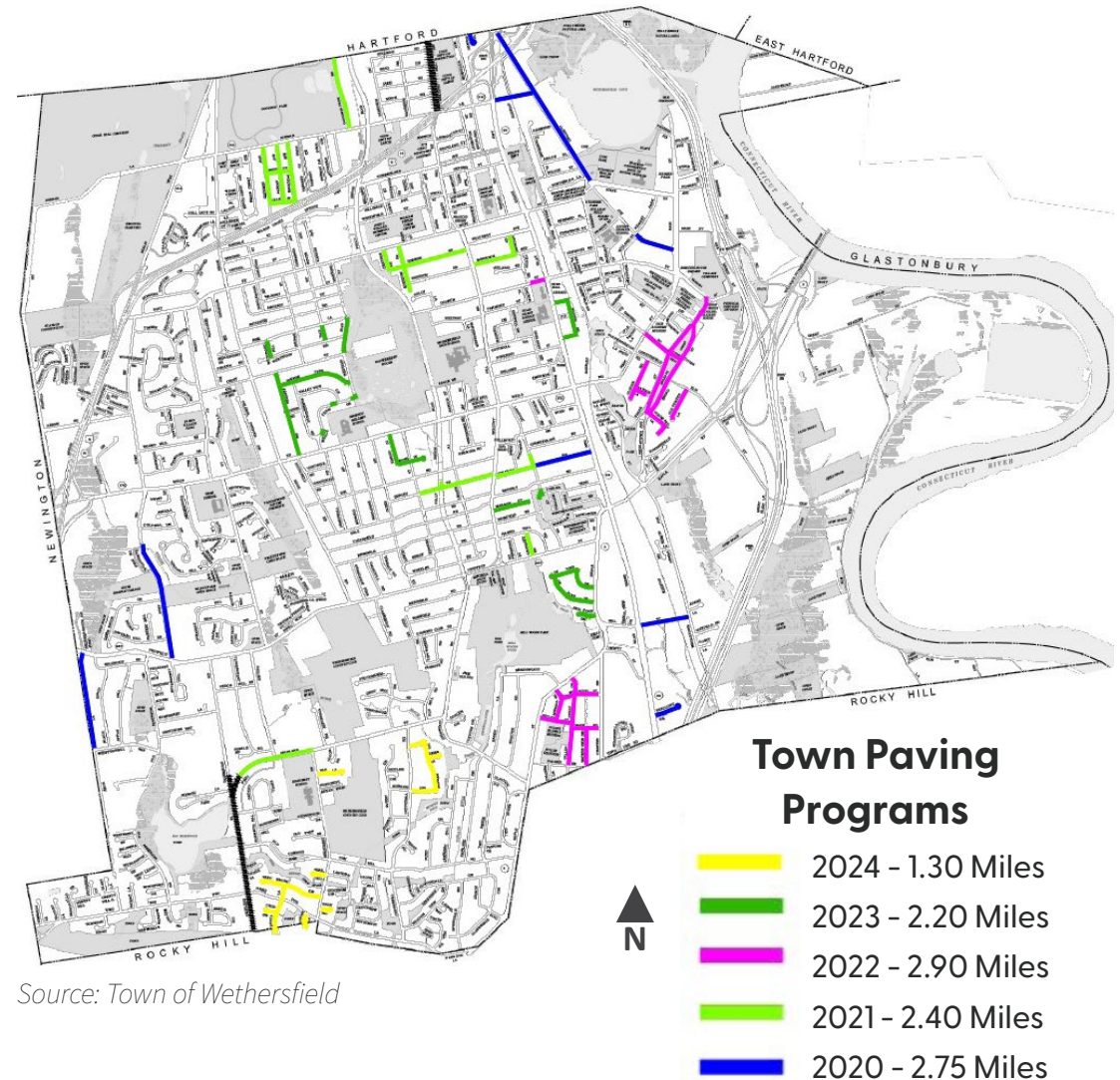
### Street Network

There are 137 miles of Town and State roads in Wethersfield, the majority of which (78% or 108 miles) are local roads maintained by the Town. These roadways include 113 miles of sidewalk infrastructure and 6 (there are 2 additional railroad crossings that are at State roads) railroad crossings. In the past 5 years, Wethersfield has completed 12.6 miles of local road paving, carried out by the Town and utilities, shown in Figure 7.1.

In addition to local roadways maintained by the Town, Wethersfield is traversed by nearly 30 miles of roadways and highways maintained by the State. These include:

- Interstate 91
- US Route 5
- US Route 15
- CT Route 3
- CT Route 99
- CT Route 175
- CT Route 287
- CT Route 314

Figure 7.1 Roadway Paving



Source: Town of Wethersfield

Wethersfield's roadways, both State and local, are classified by the State Department of Transportation (CT DOT) under the Federal Functional Classification System, which classifies roadways as interstates, principal arterials, minor arterials, collector, or local roadways. The State functional classification map, shown in Figure 7.2, is the official classification, which is used in the selection of design standards and in State funding considerations.

Traffic volumes in Wethersfield are highest along major corridors, particularly the state routes such as Route 3, Route 99 (Silas Deane Highway), and Route 287. These roadways serve as primary connectors within the region, carrying the bulk of local and commuter traffic and playing a critical role in the town's overall transportation network.

Wethersfield has a long-standing tradition of valuing trees as a vital part of its streetscape, dating back to the 1928 Plan, which emphasized preserving trees through thoughtful street widths and cross sections. As the Town considers roadway changes or widening projects today, it's important to continue honoring that legacy by recognizing the impact such changes can have on existing trees and ensuring future designs make space for healthy, sustainable tree growth.

## Transit

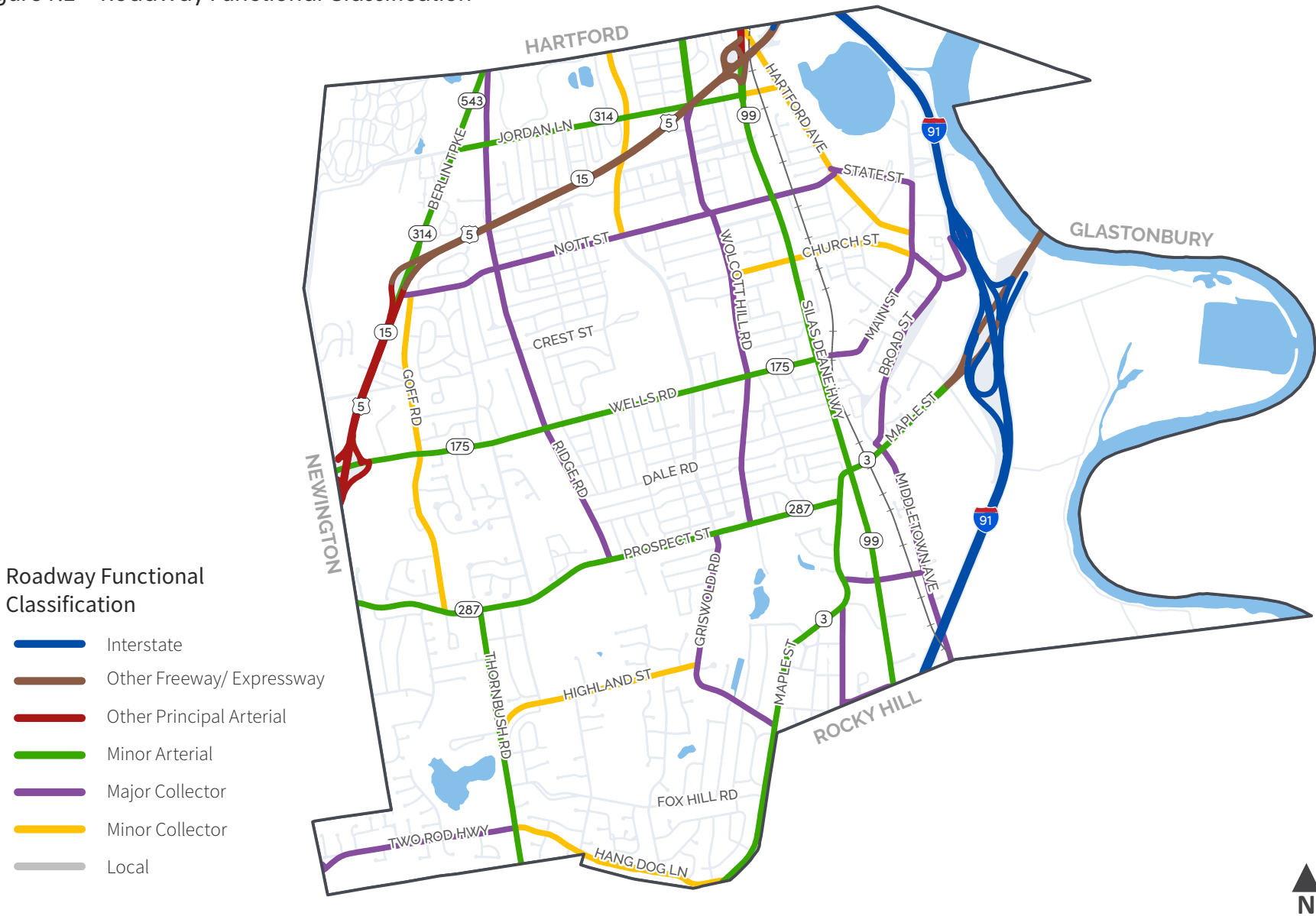
CTtransit provides transit service to Wethersfield with several local bus routes, primarily along state roadways, stopping at regional shopping destinations and employment centers. These routes include the 47, 53, 55, 61, and 91, providing connections to Hartford and surrounding areas (Figure 7.3). Additionally, the Town of Wethersfield's Senior and Social Services Department provides transportation services for elderly and disabled residents, in collaboration with LogistiCare and the Greater Hartford Transit District. These transportation services provide rides to seniors and those with disabilities to areas served by CTtransit.

Union Station in Hartford is the nearest rail station to Wethersfield. Historically, the town was connected to Hartford by streetcar and passenger service on the Valley Railroad. Although passenger service no longer operates, the railroad tracks are still used for occasional freight trains traveling between Hartford and Old Saybrook.



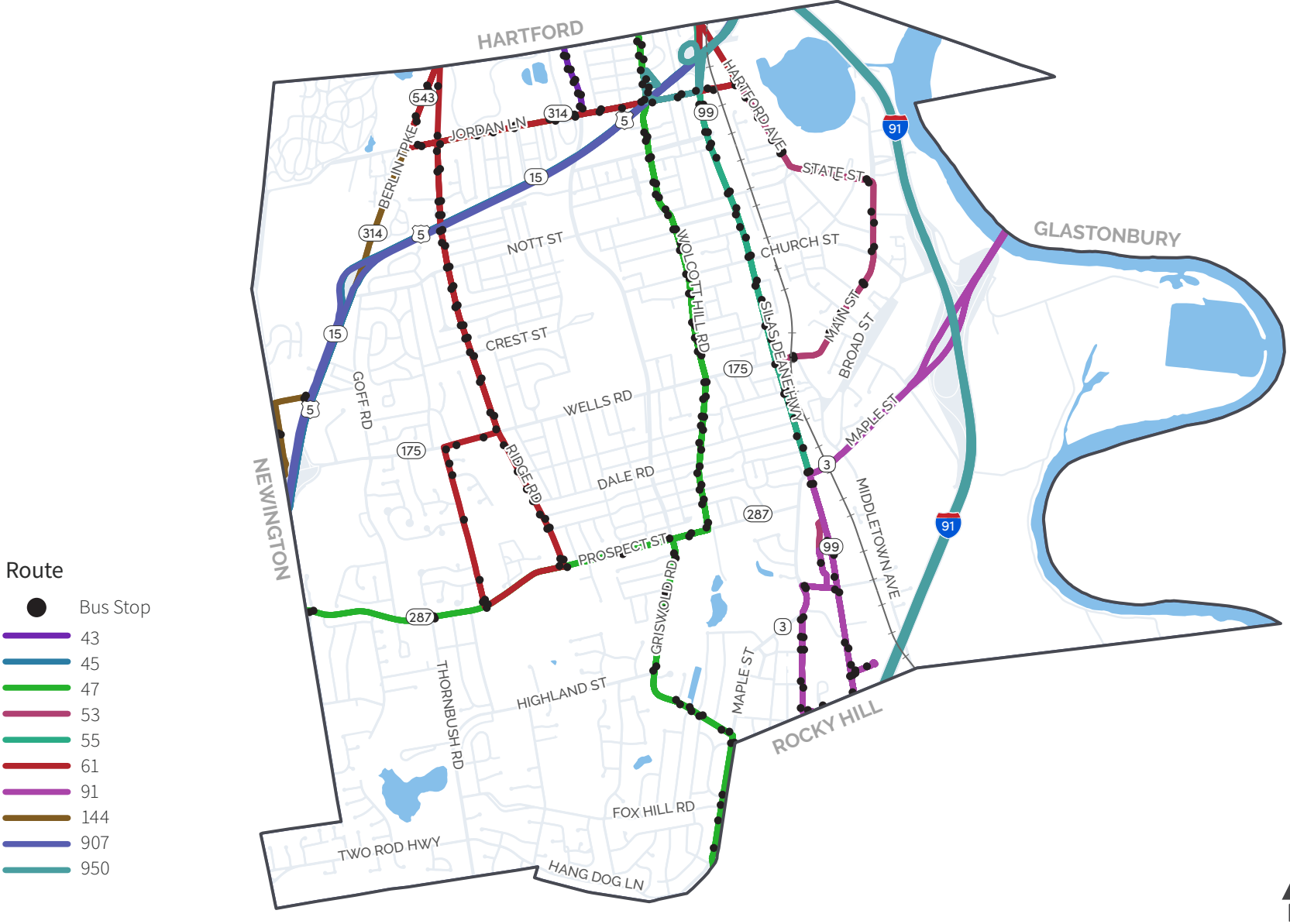
*CTtransit Bus on Jordan Lane  
Source: Google Maps*

Figure 7.2 Roadway Functional Classification



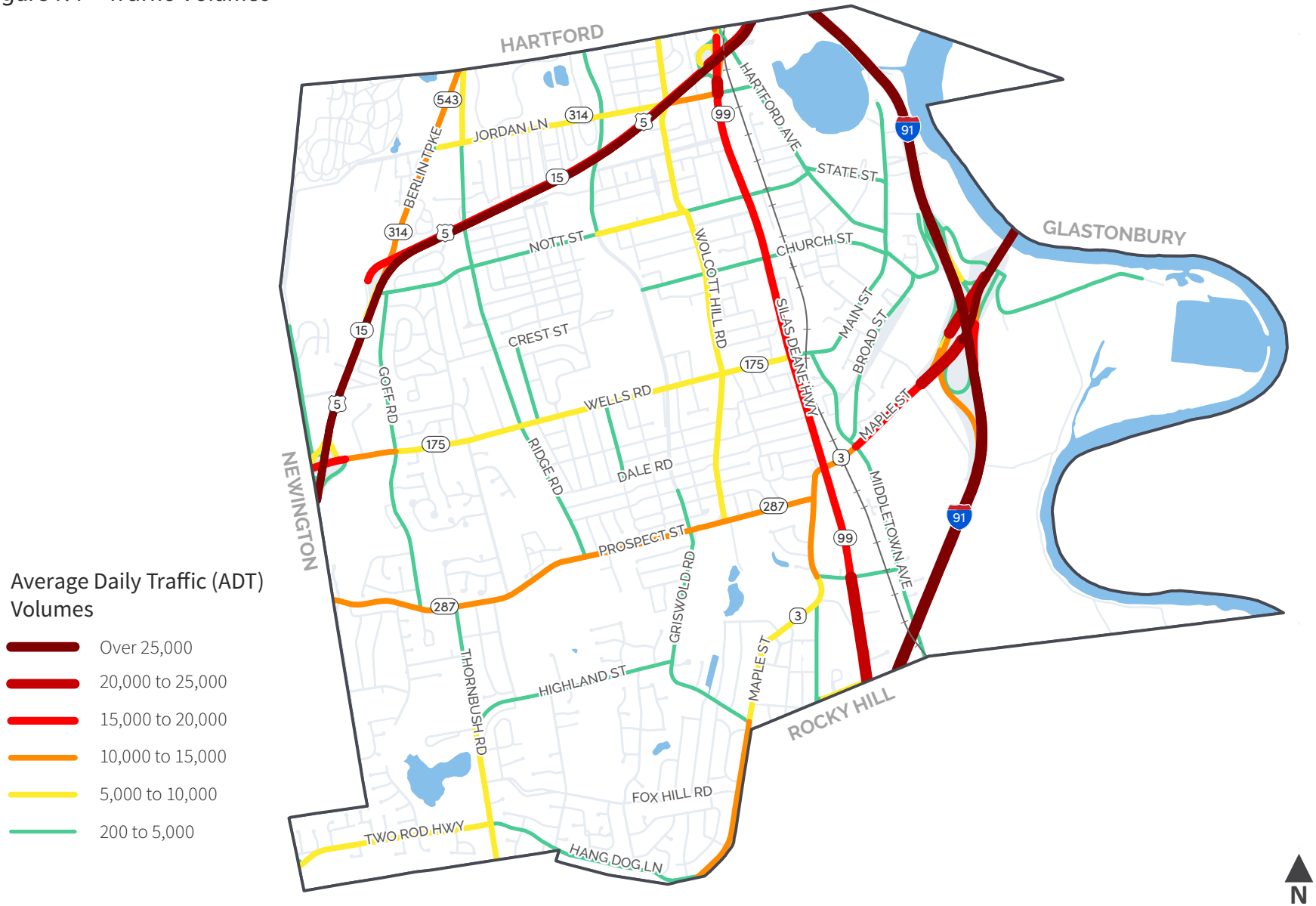
Source: Town of Wethersfield, CT DOT

Figure 7.3 Transit Network



Source: Town of Wethersfield, CT DOT

Figure 7.4 Traffic Volumes



Source: CT DOT

## Pedestrian Facilities

Wethersfield has 113 miles of sidewalk infrastructure located within the Town and State right-of-way, all of which is maintained by the Town. The sidewalk network is most continuous along major roadways such as the Silas Deane Highway, Wells Road, Prospect Street, and Wolcott Hill Road. Many of the town's residential neighborhoods also include sidewalks, but gaps in the network exist, and ADA compliant ramps are lacking on many of the town's older sidewalks. Residents engaged through the community engagement process expressed the desire for additional sidewalks, particularly along Wethersfield's residential streets and connecting to the town's shopping destinations and recreational resources.

Wethersfield's zoning and subdivision regulations require sidewalks in new developments, particularly within high-density and medium-density zones. Sidewalks must be constructed of concrete and meet the specifications established by the Town's Engineering Division. Additionally, maintenance and repair of sidewalks are the responsibility of the adjacent property owners. If sidewalks are found to be defective, the Public Works Director has the authority to mandate repairs. The Town Council has allocated funds to help Wethersfield residential property owners who need financial assistance to repair unsafe sidewalks, specifically those that are uneven or broken and pose trip hazards.



Signage for Bike Route and Heritage Way Trail  
Source: FHI Studio

## Bicycle Facilities

Progress is being made in Wethersfield toward building a safer, more connected network for bicyclists. A key improvement is the completion of the CT DOT's Putnam Bridge multi-use trail project, which provides a critical link across the Connecticut River between Wethersfield and Glastonbury, improving regional access for people walking and biking.

The Town is also developing its first complete Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which will lay the foundation for a more complete active transportation network. The plan aims to connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, and commercial areas through a mix of bike lanes, shared routes, and multi-use paths. This effort reflects a growing recognition that safe and convenient infrastructure for biking and walking is essential to both community mobility and quality of life.

## Advancing Active Transportation

Wethersfield's existing active transportation routes include the Heritage Way Bike Path, a multi-use trail that stretches approximately 9 miles through town. It connects various open spaces and civic areas, including a popular loop through Old Wethersfield and around Cove Park. These routes offer scenic and recreational value but also function as practical links within the town's bike network. While Wethersfield has some bicycle routes, there are gaps in the network and a lack of bicycle infrastructure in many areas of the town. Addressing these areas will be critical for making biking a safe, everyday option for more residents.

Wethersfield will benefit from conducting a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan to identify areas of need for bicyclists and pedestrians from both a connectivity and safety perspective. Conducting such a plan will enable the Town to prioritize improvements and better position them to secure state and federal grants for improvements.

In 2020, the Town of Wethersfield adopted a Complete Streets policy, which underscores the commitment to designing streets that are safe and accessible for all users—pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and transit riders alike. This policy provides a foundation for the development of

## CHAPTER 7 Mobility and Infrastructure

infrastructure that not only supports biking and walking but also creates safer, more inviting spaces for everyone in the community.

Wethersfield is also collaborating with Riverfront Recapture to connect trails coming from Hartford into Wethersfield. A plan is underway to create a recreational and commuting route that links the city with the town, enhancing the regional trail network. This connection would offer a convenient route for commuters and strengthen the broader transportation network, tying into existing trails like the Heritage Way Bike Path and the potential Rail with Trail project.

People who walk or bike often spend more over time at local businesses than drivers do. By improving sidewalks, trails, and paths, Wethersfield can make commercial areas safer and more welcoming while easing traffic. With limited undeveloped land but many underused sites, the town is well suited for small-scale, walkable development that brings in more tax revenue without adding much congestion. Rethinking parking rules could also help make better use of available space.

7



*Marked bike and pedestrian lane signage on Hart Street*  
Source: FHI Studio



*Well utilized bike parking in Wethersfield*  
Source: FHI Studio

Figure 7.5 Sidewalk Network



Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Pedestrian and Bicycle Activity

Pedestrian activity is spread throughout the town’s residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and park spaces. High foot traffic is most common in areas such as Cove Park, Old Wethersfield, and near the town’s schools and public buildings. These areas, along with nearby recreational spaces, draw significant pedestrian activity, particularly in the town center and near community hubs.

Bicycle activity is low along the Silas Deane Highway but is higher along other major corridors such as Main Street, Nott Street, Ridge Road, and across the Putnam Bridge. Cyclists also frequent scenic routes near the Connecticut River and the town’s historic district. These routes are popular with recreational cyclists. See Figure 7.6 and Figure 7.7.

*Strava data was used to assess bicycle and pedestrian activity in the town. Strava is a web-based platform that uses mobile applications to allow users to track their cycling and running routes worldwide.*

*The platform aggregates recorded trips and makes this data publicly accessible through an online map viewer. Strava provides data and mapping of where people walk and bike and how many trips are made along those routes over any give period of time. However, it’s important to note that not all trips are captured, as users must voluntarily log their activities. Consequently, individuals who do not use the Strava app are not included in the data.*

Figure 7.6 Pedestrian Activity January - April 2025

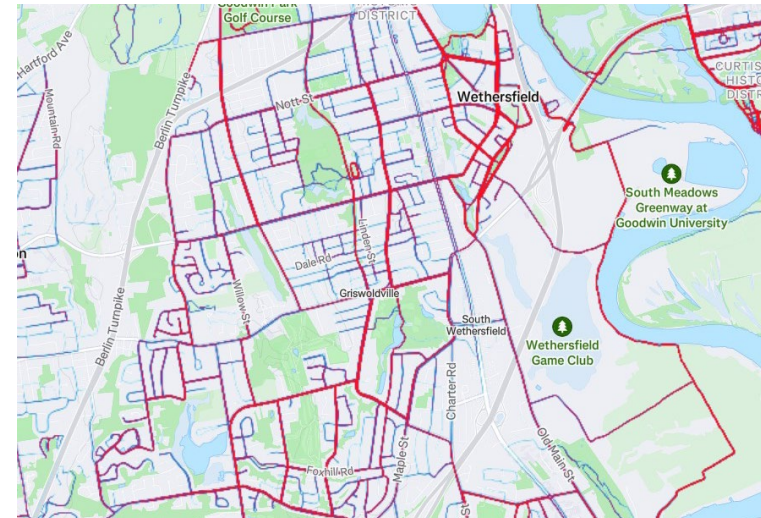
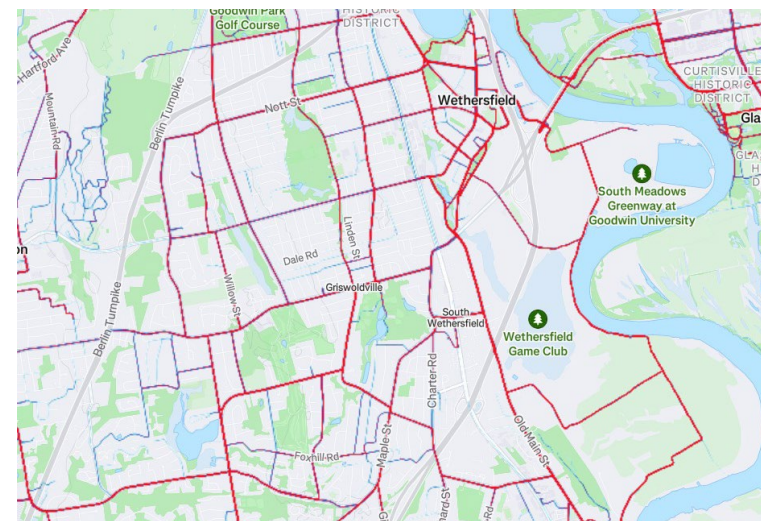


Figure 7.7 Bicycle Activity January - April 2025



Source: Strava  
Heatmap, 2025

Activity Level



### Commuting Patterns

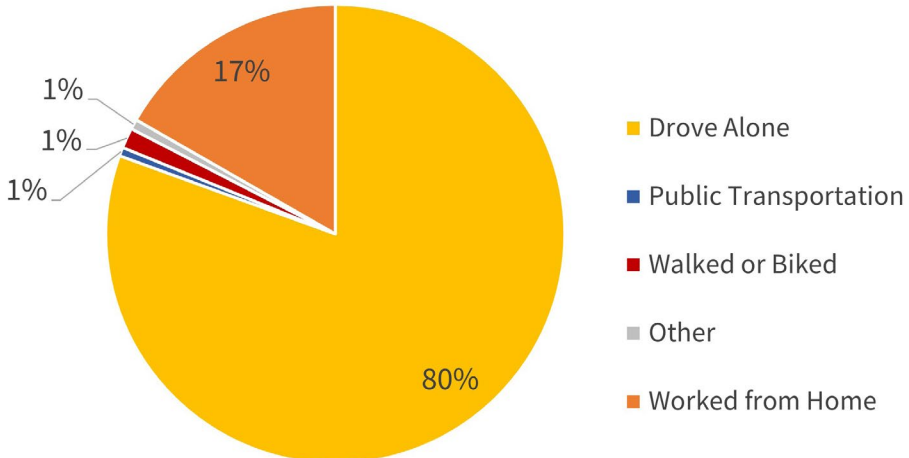
Most of Wethersfield’s workers (80.3%) commute to work by driving alone or carpooling. The remaining workers either use public transportation (0.6%), walk or bike (1.4%), or take a taxi or ride service or other (0.7%) to commute to work. As of 2023, over 17% of Wethersfield’s workers worked from home, an increase of nearly 12% above numbers for those working from home in 2019, which is likely attributed to the pandemic. The share of workers driving alone to their place of employment is above that of Hartford County's and the State's and results in a heavy demand on Wethersfield’s roadway network and local highways such as Interstates 91 and Routes 99 and 5.

The average commute time for Wethersfield’s workers is about 21 minutes, which is shorter than the average commute statewide (27 minutes). Hartford, Wethersfield, and East Hartford are the primary commuting destinations for Wethersfield’s workers. Over 13,100 workers commute to locations outside of Wethersfield while over 8,350 people who live elsewhere commute into the town for work each day.

### Traffic Safety

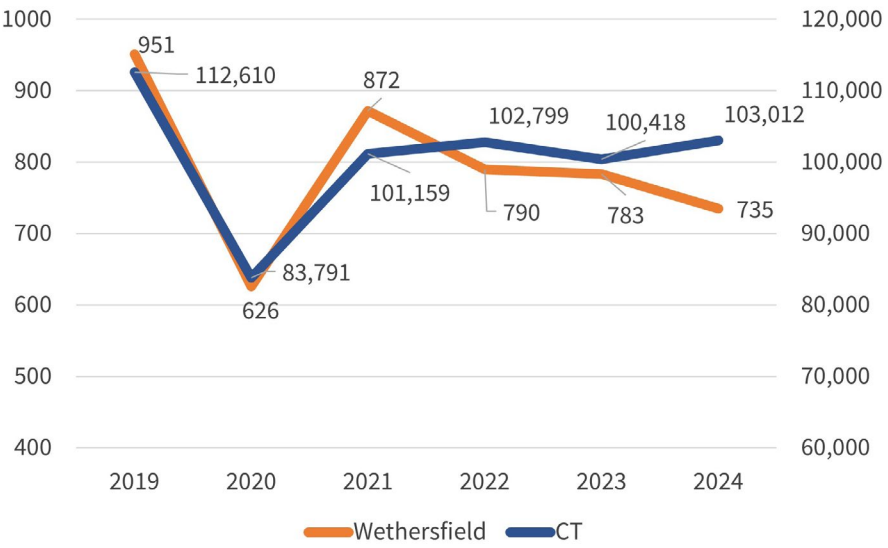
The number of vehicle crashes in Wethersfield has decreased in the past six years. In 2019, Wethersfield saw a high of 951 crashes. Crashes dropped dramatically in 2020 and remained suppressed in 2021, likely as a result of less travel due to the pandemic. During this six-year time period there were 18 fatal crashes and 38 serious injury crashes. In 2024, there were 735 crashes in Wethersfield— a reduction of nearly 23% from 2019. These trends very closely mirror trends across the State, although the State saw an increase in crashes in 2024. See Figure 7.9.

Figure 7.8 Means of Transportation to Work



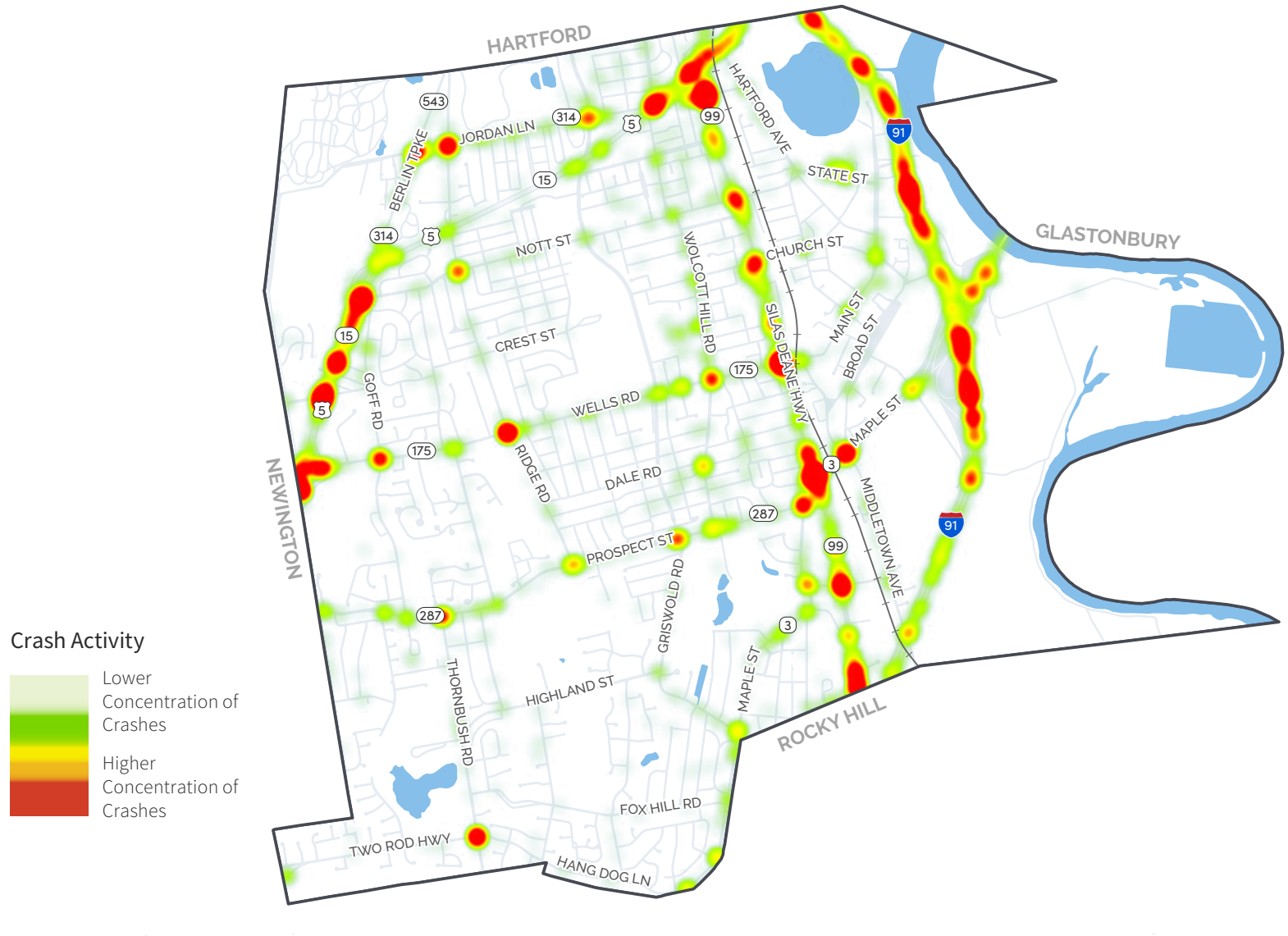
Source: American Community Survey, 2023

Figure 7.9 Crash Activity Compared to State Totals



Source: Connecticut Crash Data Repository, 2019 - 2024

Figure 7.10 Crash Activity 2019 - 2024

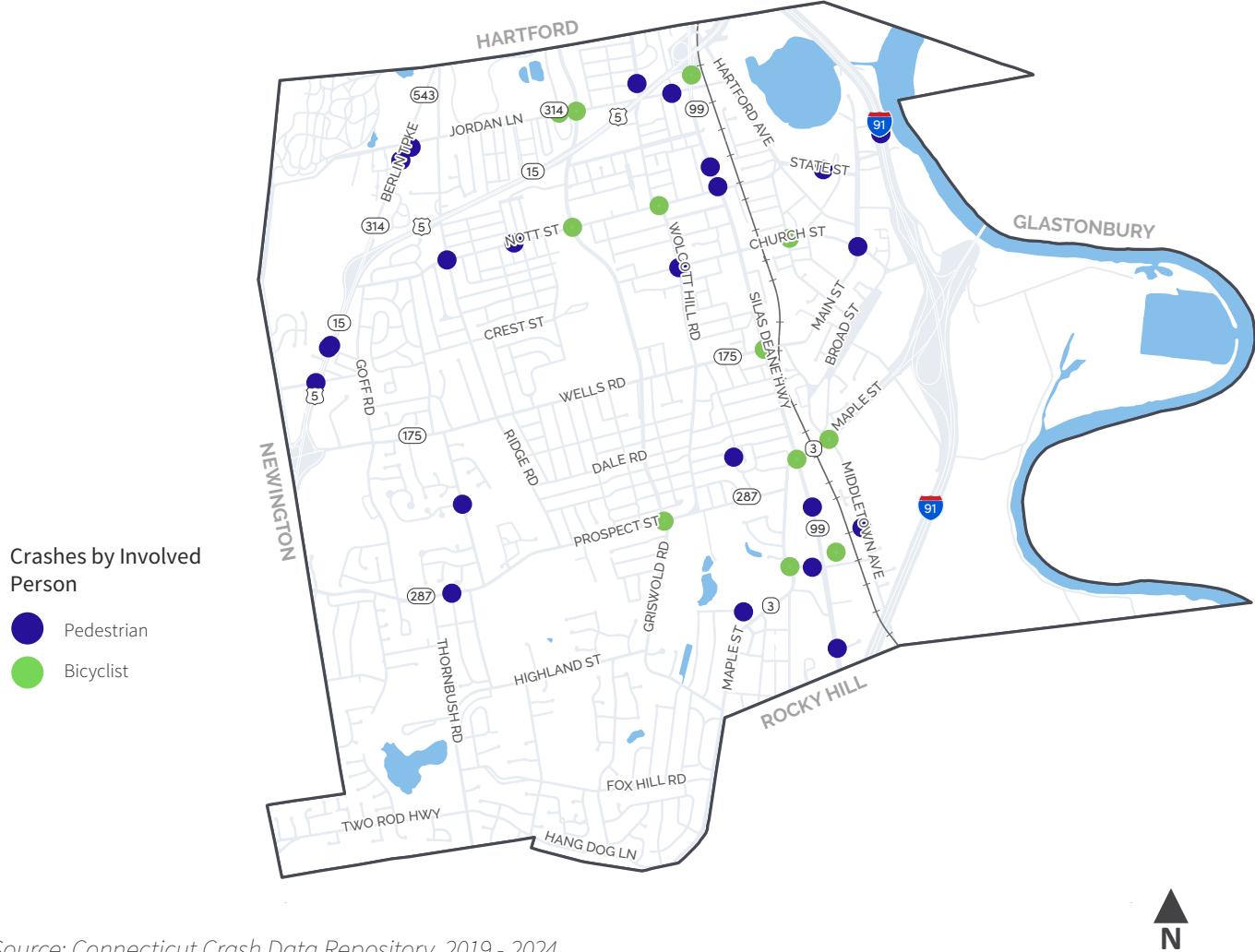


Source: Connecticut Crash Data Repository, 2019 -2024

Wethersfield’s vehicular crashes are strongly associated with areas and corridors that have the highest traffic volumes and the greatest density of intersections. These areas include the Silas Deane Highway (Route 99), the Berlin Turnpike (Route 5 and Route 15), and Jordan Lane (Route 314), as well as along Interstate 95 (I-95) as displayed in Figure 7.10.

During this six-year period, there were 14 crashes involving bicyclists and 32 crashes involving pedestrians as shown in Figure 7.11. These crashes are concentrated in locations with large numbers of intersections and driveway curb cuts.

Figure 7.11 Crashes Involving Bicyclists or Pedestrians

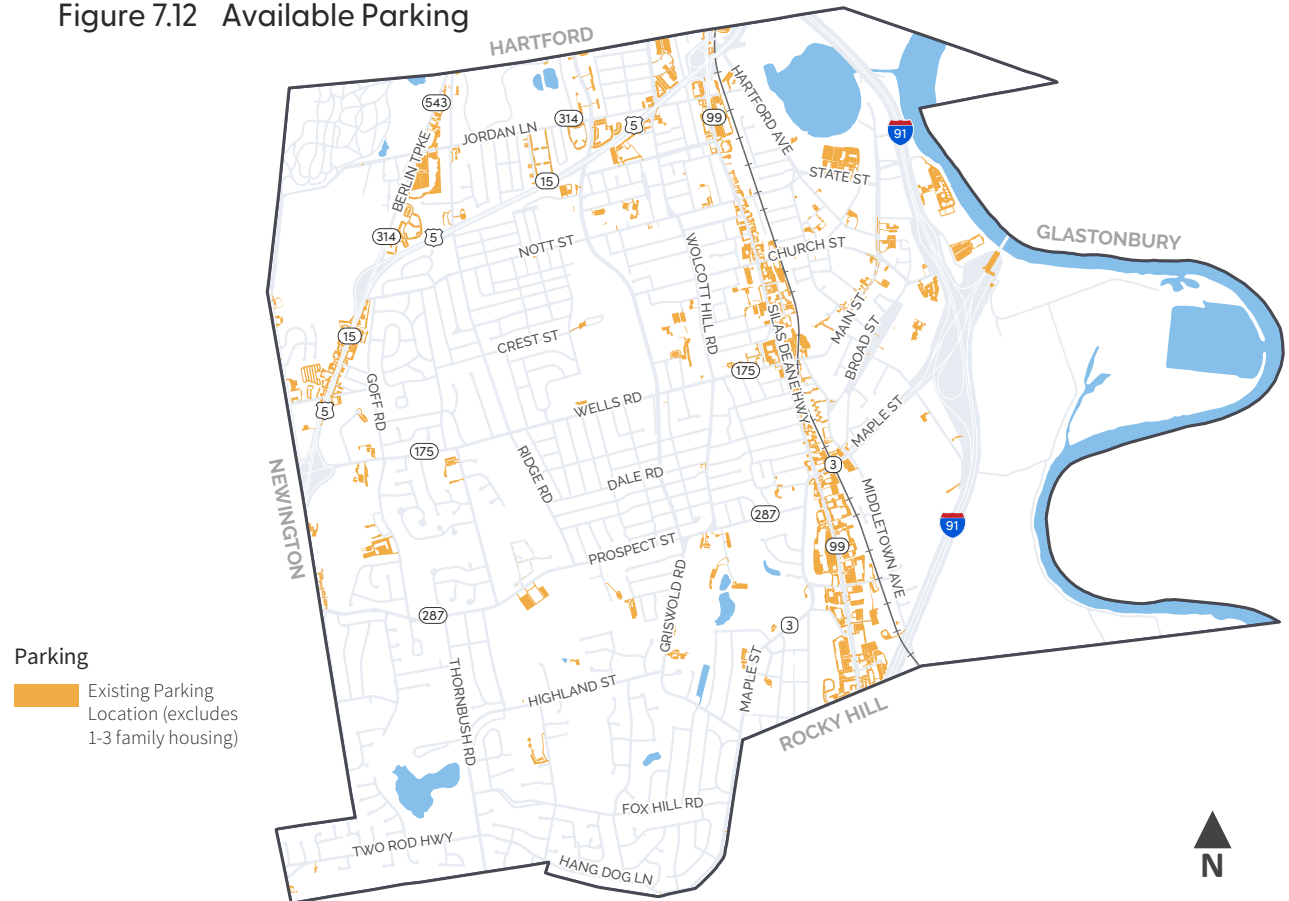


Source: Connecticut Crash Data Repository, 2019 - 2024

## Parking

Wethersfield zoning regulations require that all forms of development, including residential, commercial, and industrial, provide adequate off-street parking. All required parking must be located on the same lot as the principal use or on an approved adjacent lot. The number, layout, and dimensions of parking spaces are determined based on the specific use and intensity of development, as outlined in the zoning regulation, to ensure sufficient capacity for residents, customers, and employees while mitigating traffic congestion and preserving site functionality. Public parking is provided in areas such as behind the shops along Main Street in Old Wethersfield, at the Keeney Memorial Cultural Center, at the Wethersfield Plaza, and in parking lots near the Wethersfield Library. On-street parking is allowed in some residential areas and along Main Street, but it can be limited, particularly in Old Wethersfield, where narrow streets often create parking shortages. Overnight on-street parking is not allowed. On-street parking is prohibited on the Silas Deane Highway, though parking can be found in adjacent lots on streets like Spring and Maple. While the town's parking infrastructure accommodates many areas, balancing parking demand and supply with new development remains a challenge, especially in high-demand areas like Old Wethersfield.

Figure 7.12 Available Parking



Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Mobility Initiatives

Wethersfield has been working to improve mobility by expanding pedestrian and bike infrastructure and making transportation connections more efficient. These efforts aim to address local transportation needs and improve quality of life. A bike repair station was installed outside of the Town Hall in 2021. The station provides cyclists with tools for quick repairs. There is an additional repair station located at Wethersfield Cove. The following summarizes key mobility initiatives the Town has been advancing.

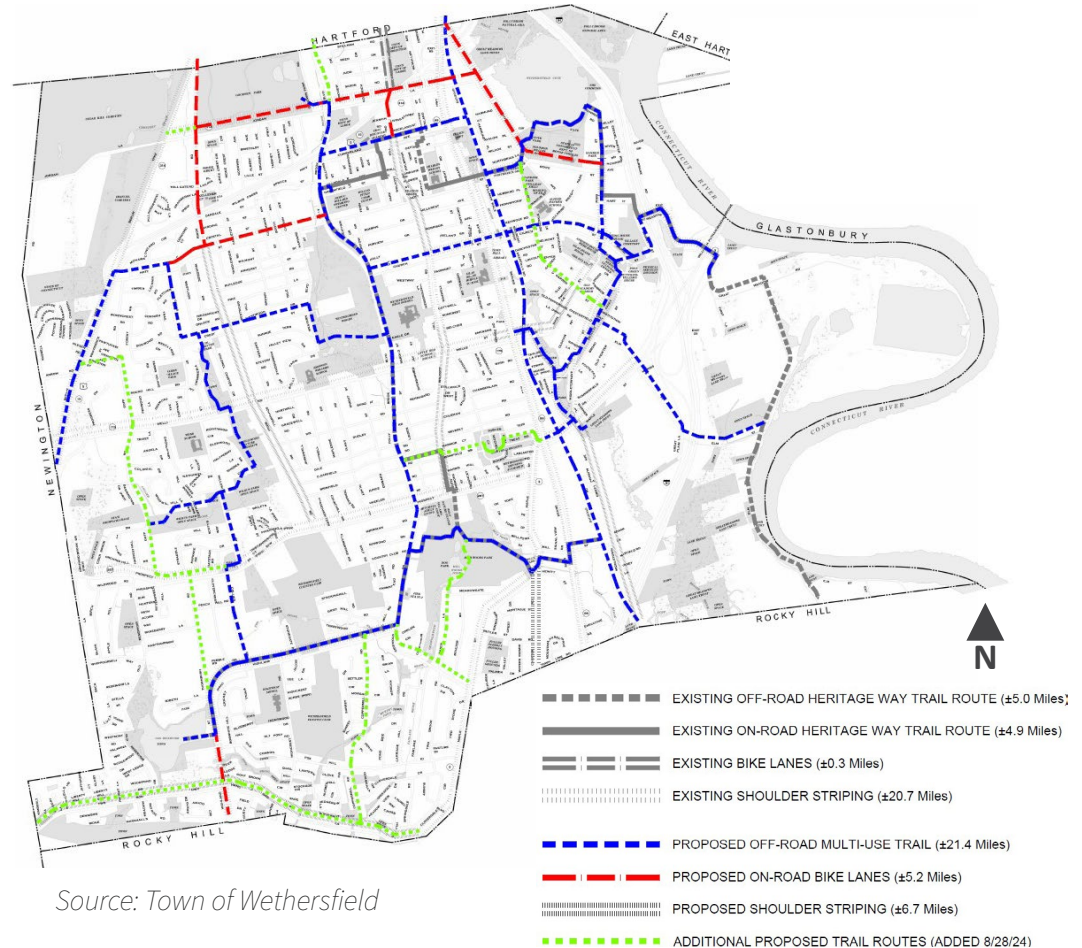
### Draft Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Wethersfield's Bicycle and Pedestrian Stakeholders Advisory Committee (discussed on page 7.18), has been actively working to develop the Town's first comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The Plan aims to improve connectivity and safety for cyclists and pedestrians by expanding and enhancing infrastructure such as bike lanes and sidewalks. A component of the plan is a draft Proposed Trail Routes Map that incorporates on-road and off-road facilities such as bike lanes, multi-use trails, and connections to existing facilities such as the Heritage Way Trail.

### Railroad Right-of-Way Trail Concept Plan

The Town is developing concepts for a multi-use trail along the state railroad right-of-way, which runs parallel to the Silas Deane Highway in certain areas. The trail has been designed to maximize distance from the railroad tracks while maintaining separation from private property lines. The plan identifies the general alignment but does not yet account for topography or grading challenges. This project aims to improve north-south connectivity, providing a safer and more accessible route for biking, walking, and other uses, enhancing both recreational opportunities and transportation options in the area.

Figure 7.13 Preliminary Proposed Trail Route Map - 2024



Source: Town of Wethersfield

## **Silas Deane Highway Safety Improvements Grant**

The Towns of Wethersfield and Rocky Hill jointly secured a federal grant to enhance safety along the Silas Deane Highway. This funding is designated for planning and surveying improvements such as upgraded crosswalks and lighting to better protect drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.

## **Putnam Bridge Trail Project**

The Putnam Bridge Trail, which opened in spring 2024, provides a multi-use path connecting Wethersfield and Glastonbury, enhancing regional bike and pedestrian mobility. Funded by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) and federal transportation grants, the project includes new trail connections on both sides of the bridge, linking existing pedestrian and cycling networks. These improvements offer a safer and more accessible route for non-motorized travel between the two towns, strengthening regional connectivity and expanding alternative transportation options.

## **Community Connectivity Grants**

In 2018, the Town of Wethersfield was awarded nearly \$400,000 through the Community Connectivity Grant Program to fund eleven projects aimed at improving pedestrian and bicycle safety in Old Wethersfield. These projects were completed and included pavement markings for the Heritage Way Bike Path on Main Street, intersection improvements at Main Street and Church Street, and the addition of sidewalks connecting the Hanmer Road Heritage Way Bike Path to the Cove Warehouse.

## **Greater Hartford Mobility Study (GHMS)**

As discussed in Chapter 2, the GHMS aims to improve regional transportation and connectivity. While Wethersfield is outside the core study area, the planned upgrades will enhance commuting and economic access, though construction is expected to impact the Town's roadway network with detours and disruptions.



*Approach to the Putnam Bridge Trail  
Source: Hartford Courant*

## Heritage Way Trail Improvements Along Great Meadow Road and Marsh Street

The Town was successful in securing (Local Transportation Capitol Improvement Program (LOTICIP) funding for improvements to the Heritage Way Trail along Great Meadows Road and Marsh Street. Currently in the design phase, the project will enhance trail connectivity, improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and provide better access to Wethersfield’s scenic and historic areas. These improvements tie into the Putnam Bridge Trail, connecting Wethersfield and Glastonbury.

## Main Street Reconstruction

In 2023, Wethersfield was successful in securing LOTICIP funding for the initial phases of the Main Street Reconstruction project that will provide streetscape improvements such as decorative lighting, decorative crosswalks with curb bump-outs, and a multi-use trail along Main Street.

## Cove Park Trail Concept Plan

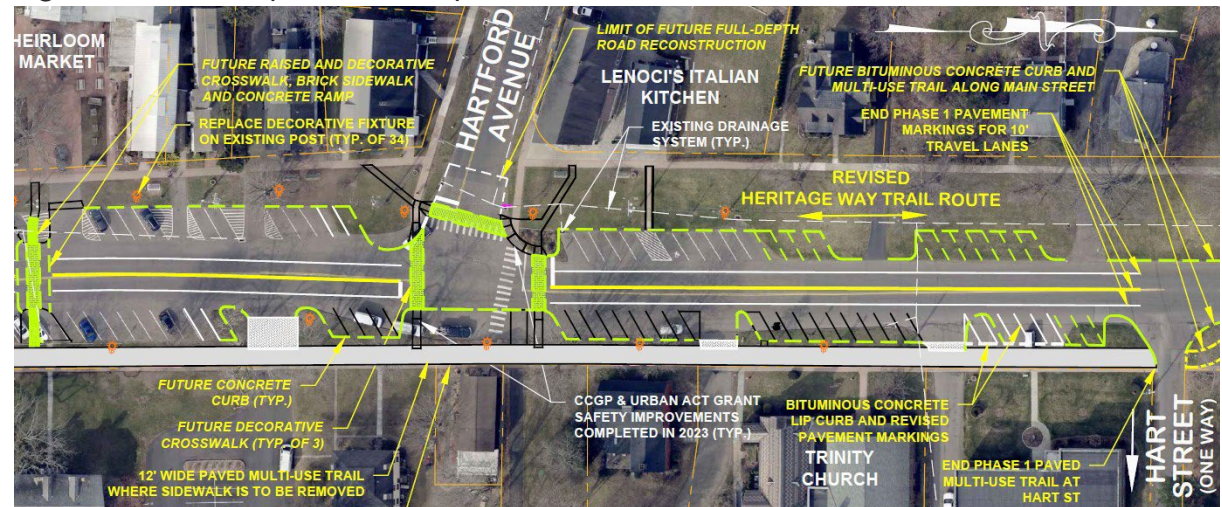
The Town is currently developing a concept plan for the Cove Park Trail, partially funded by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) Recreational Trails Grant. Currently in design, the project aims to improve trail connectivity, enhance public access to the waterfront, and create a safer, more accessible route for pedestrians and cyclists.



*Pedestrians walking along Great Meadow Road before re-striping of the roadway occurred*

*Source: Google Earth Streetview*

**Figure 7.14 Concept Plan for Improvements on Main Street**



*Source: Town of Wethersfield*

## Previous Plans and Studies

Recommendations from previous plans and studies have directly shaped the transportation goals and strategies in this Plan. Below is a summary of key transportation-related plans and studies completed by the Town.

### Putnam Bridge Multimodal Trail Connections Feasibility Study - 2014

This Study evaluated the potential for a multi-use trail across the Putnam Bridge to connect Wethersfield and Glastonbury. The study assessed factors such as traffic, environmental impact, and infrastructure needs. Its findings paved the way for several infrastructure improvements along the Putnam Bridge, many of which have been completed or are currently under construction, supporting better regional connectivity and non-motorized transportation options. The study successfully led to the construction of the Putnam Bridge Trail which opened in 2024.

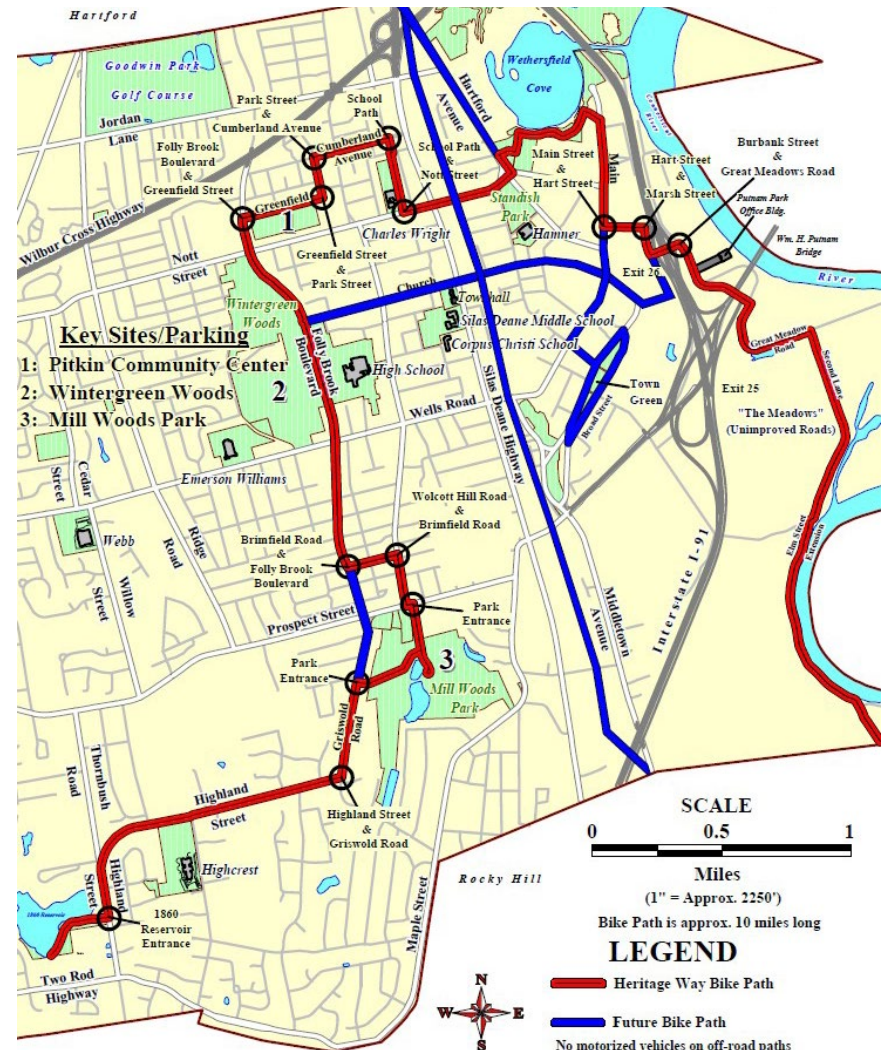
### Heritage Way Bikeway Plan - 2013

Wethersfield's Heritage Way Bikeway is a multi-use path designed to connect key areas of the town, including residential neighborhoods, parks, and commercial spaces, promoting safe and convenient travel for cyclists and pedestrians. Developed in 2013, the bikeway is part of the Town's efforts to improve transportation options and encourage active commuting while enhancing overall connectivity and access to local destinations. Many phases of the Bikeway Plan have been constructed or are in the design phase.

### Implementation Master Plan & Design Guidelines for the Silas Deane Highway-2006 - Also discussed in Chapter 2

This plan outlines strategies to transform the Silas Deane Highway corridor in Wethersfield and Rocky Hill into a mixed-use area with residential, commercial, and recreational spaces. It focuses on enhancing transportation, pedestrian access, streetscapes, and economic growth through zoning changes and design guidelines. Public-private partnerships and phased implementation are identified to achieve these goals.

Figure 7.15 Wethersfield Heritage Way Bikeway Path



Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Town Departments and Commissions

Town Departments and commissions dedicated to mobility and transportation safety play a key role in enhancing connectivity, reducing environmental impact, and promoting sustainable development. These groups focus on improving walkability, expanding public transit options, and ensuring safe, accessible infrastructure for all modes of transportation.

### Engineering Department

The Engineering Department delivers expert engineering and surveying services for the Town. It oversees municipal construction projects, manages sidewalk maintenance, pavement marking, road preservation, and paving programs, and reviews development plans for local boards and commissions. The Department also provides technical support to committees, handles contractor licensing and permitting for public right-of-way improvements, and administers the town's Geographic Information System (GIS). The Engineering Department plays a vital role in enhancing mobility for all by securing state and federal grants, developing trail concept plans, and advancing the Town's Complete Streets initiatives. Overall, it ensures that all engineering and surveying efforts align with the best interests of town residents.

### Physical Services Department

The Physical Services Department is responsible for maintaining the Town's infrastructure and public facilities. This includes overseeing road maintenance, snow removal, park upkeep, and the management of public buildings. The Department ensures that streets are safe and accessible, public spaces are well-maintained, and Town facilities operate efficiently to serve the community's needs.

### Planning Department

The Wethersfield Planning Department, officially known as the Economic and Community Development Department, plays a role in enhancing the Town's mobility and infrastructure. The Department collaborates with various boards and commissions to ensure that development proposals align with the Town's strategic objectives, including the enhancement of infrastructure to support increased accessibility and connectivity. This integrated approach not only boosts the local economy but also leads to the development of comprehensive mobility solutions, such as improved roadways, pedestrian pathways, and public transit options, thereby elevating the overall quality of life for residents.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Stakeholders Advisory Committee

The Wethersfield Bicycle and Pedestrian Stakeholders Advisory Committee is focused on improving non-motorized transportation options within the town. In collaboration with Bike/Walk Wethersfield and other community partners, the Committee developed the Town's first Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (in draft form) and Complete Streets Policy (adopted in 2020). These initiatives aim to create a network of preferred bicycle and pedestrian routes, including trails, bike lanes, shared lanes, multi-use pathways, and sidewalks, to enhance safety and connectivity. The committee's work is designed to foster greater mobility for pedestrians and cyclists, improving access between neighborhoods, local destinations, and neighboring communities, while encouraging a more active, sustainable lifestyle.

## Mobility Partners

Wethersfield has a robust network of mobility partners, who share a common goal of improving transportation options and ensuring accessibility while balancing the town's development needs. The roles of these partners are described in further detail below.

### Bike Walk Wethersfield

Bike Walk Wethersfield is a community organization focused on promoting safe and healthy cycling and walking in the town. The organization engages with the community by hosting events, advocating for better policies, and collaborating with local government agencies. Bike Walk Wethersfield is dedicated to creating a safer, more connected environment for cyclists and pedestrians, enhancing the overall quality of life in the community.

### Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT)

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) works with communities like Wethersfield to maintain state roads, fund upgrades, and improve multi-modal transportation options. CTDOT helps maintain key routes like Route 99 (Silas Deane Highway) and the Berlin Turnpike, ensuring they are safe and efficient. The Department also provides grants for projects that enhance bike lanes, sidewalks, and public transit. These efforts improve connectivity, making it easier for residents to travel and access surrounding areas.

### Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROG)

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROG) works with local municipalities to improve transportation in the region. Their initiatives include multi-modal planning, which looks at various transportation options like buses, rail, and bike paths, and managing the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which prioritizes projects for roads, bridges, and public transit. CROG also administers funding programs to support local transportation projects and develops long-term plans to guide future transportation investments. These efforts help enhance mobility and transportation infrastructure across the region.



*Bike Walk Wethersfield and the Great Meadows Conservation Trust sponsored a bike ride for CT Trails Day in June, 2024  
Source: theGreatElm.com*

## Baseline Conditions - Infrastructure

Wethersfield has a well-developed infrastructure system that serves the needs of both residents and businesses. This includes a network of roads, sidewalks, stormwater management systems, public utilities, and community facilities, all overseen by municipal departments. The Town is committed to ongoing infrastructure improvements to enhance residents' quality of life and foster sustainable growth.

### Stormwater Infrastructure

The stormwater infrastructure in Wethersfield includes an extensive network of pipes, catch basins, and outfalls that discharge to local watercourses and ultimately into the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. Wethersfield is a member town of the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), which provides regional water and sewer services. While the MDC is responsible for managing the sanitary sewer system, the Town is responsible for stormwater infrastructure and compliance with state and federal water quality standards.

As a regulated community under the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) General Permit for the Discharge of Stormwater from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4), Wethersfield is required to develop, implement, and enforce a stormwater management program focused on improving water quality. This includes adopting best management practices (BMPs) to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff, conducting public education and outreach to raise awareness about pollution prevention, and operating a program to detect and eliminate illicit discharges.

Wethersfield must also monitor and address stormwater discharges into impaired waters, including those affected by nitrogen, phosphorus, bacteria, or mercury, and where Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) have been established under Section 303 of the Clean Water Act. Together with the MDC's infrastructure support and the Town's ongoing efforts, these initiatives help protect the health of local waterways and contribute to regional water quality improvements. Wethersfield's stormwater infrastructure is shown in Figure 7.16.

## Public Water Supply

Wethersfield's public water supply is provided by the MDC, which serves several towns in the Greater Hartford area. Nearly all homes and businesses in the town are connected to the public water system, which delivers treated drinking water sourced from reservoirs in the region. The MDC maintains and operates the water infrastructure, including water mains and hydrants, and is responsible for ensuring water quality and reliability. Residents in Wethersfield benefit from a consistent and well-regulated supply of drinking water, with service managed regionally but delivered locally through the town's extensive network of water lines.

In addition to the public water system provided by the MDC, there are a small number of properties in Wethersfield that rely on private wells, particularly in areas that may not be connected to the public water infrastructure. These wells draw groundwater for household use and are typically maintained by individual property owners. The Town does not operate any municipal wells, and most of Wethersfield's development is served by the public water system. Any new development or redevelopment projects generally connect to MDC service, though existing wells may remain in use in some fringe or historically developed areas. Wethersfield's public water supply area is shown in Figure 7.17.

## Electric and Natural Gas

Wethersfield residents receive electrical, telephone, and cable services through wired utilities, with some areas of Town having these utilities installed underground. Eversource is the primary electric utility provider for Wethersfield and the surrounding region. Broadband internet access is widely available across the community, with providers such as Comcast and Frontier offering high-speed internet services.

Natural gas is also provided by CNG, an operating company within Avangrid. Many of Wethersfield's residential and commercial areas are connected to natural gas service.

Figure 7.16 Sanitary Sewer and Stormwater Infrastructure

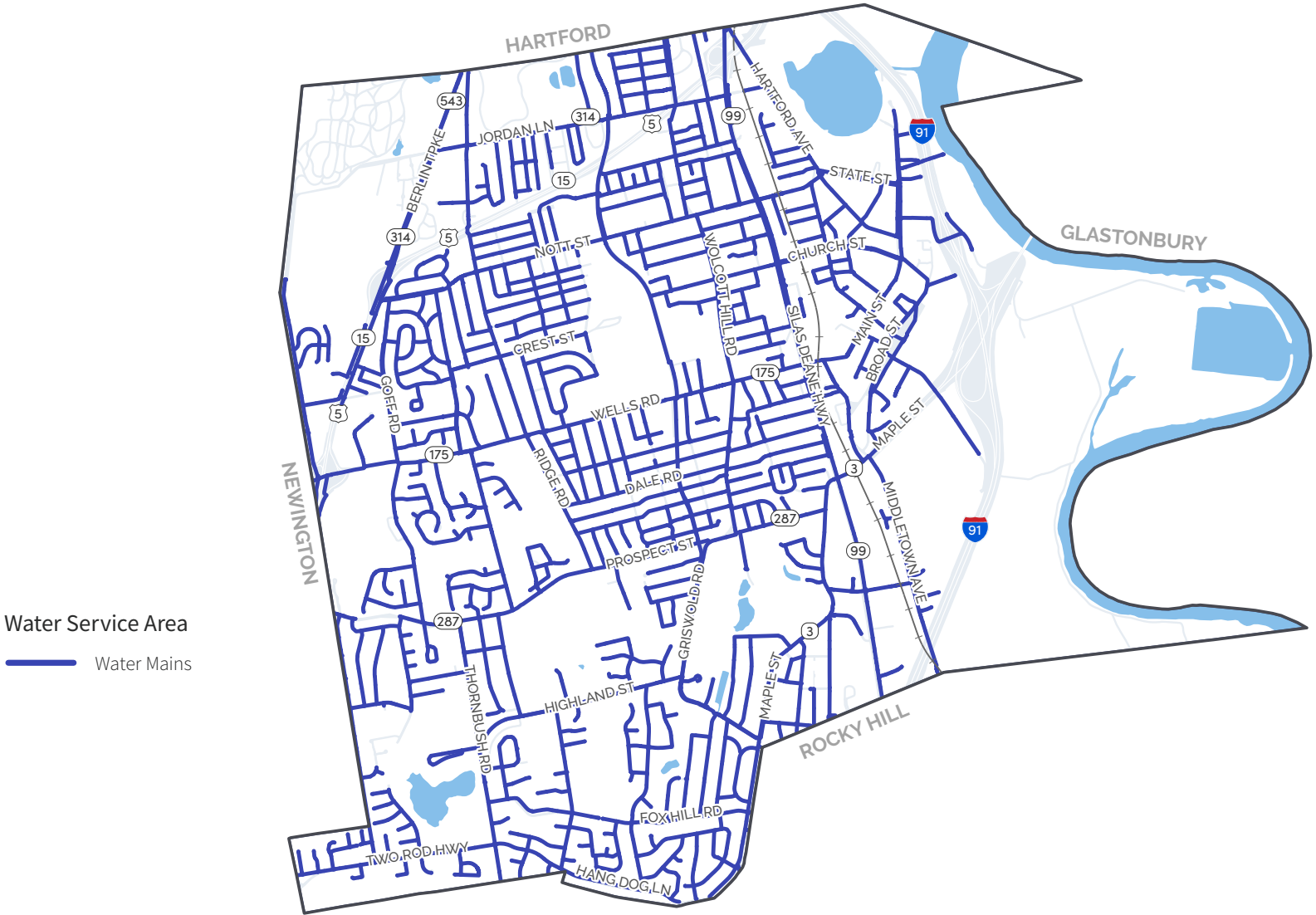


Sanitary Sewer and Stormwater Infrastructure

- Sanitary Sewer Mains
- Stormwater Piping

Source: Town of Wethersfield

Figure 7.17 Water Service



Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Solid Waste Management and Recycling

Wethersfield manages solid waste and recycling through a combination of curbside collection and services offered at the municipal Transfer Station. Weekly curbside trash pickup and biweekly single-stream recycling are provided by Paine's, Inc., with bulky waste collection available by appointment. The Transfer Station, located on Marsh Street, is open to residents with a valid permit and accepts a wide range of materials including household trash, recyclables, appliances, scrap metal, and yard waste, though some items may incur a fee.

7

In addition to traditional waste management, Wethersfield promotes composting as a sustainable practice. The Town offers backyard compost bins for purchase at a reduced cost through periodic sales or environmental programs. These bins are designed to encourage residents to divert food scraps and yard trimmings from the waste stream, helping reduce landfill use and produce nutrient-rich compost for gardens. Educational materials on home composting practices are also available to support residents in adopting more sustainable waste habits.

## Roadway Infrastructure

The Engineering and Physical Services Departments in Wethersfield are responsible for maintaining the Town-owned public road system. Their duties cover the upkeep of pavement, curbing, directional signage, guardrails, pavement markings, streetlights, sidewalks, and road drainage systems. They also manage snow and ice removal from public roads and sidewalks and handle mowing and tree care along the rights-of-way.

The Town owns and maintains 2,825 streetlights along local and state roads.



*Physical Services Department assisting during PorchFest 2024  
Source: FHI Studio*

## Infrastructure Initiatives

Wethersfield is investing in essential infrastructure upgrades, including dam improvements and enhanced stormwater management. These efforts aim to increase public safety, environmental resilience, and overall quality of life for residents.

## Physical Services Initiatives

Wethersfield is considering replacing its administrative fleet with electric vehicles, although the higher cost of EVs is a challenge. The Town is also focusing on improving waterway management to prevent flooding and protect infrastructure. Additionally, Wethersfield is collaborating with CROCOG on composting initiatives and exploring the potential relocation of its transfer station to create new revenue opportunities.

## Dam Improvement Projects

Wethersfield is working on dam improvement projects to enhance safety and environmental quality. Notably, the Town recently upgraded the Pond Park and Swimming Pond dams in Mill Woods Park. This included reinforcing embankments and repairing infrastructure. A 2016 inspection highlighted the need for repairs at the Spring Street Pond Dam, which the Town is addressing. Additionally, the 2025 Capital Improvement Budget includes funding for Bell Pond Dam maintenance. These efforts aim to ensure the safety and functionality of Wethersfield's dams.



*Bell Pond Dam*  
*Source: Town of Wethersfield*

## What We Heard

During community engagement discussions, residents raised concerns about aging infrastructure, including poor sidewalks and the challenges older residents face in maintaining walkways. Traffic and safety issues were frequently noted, with complaints about speeding on the Silas Deane Highway, increased traffic on state roads like Prospect Street, and unsafe conditions for bicyclists. Other concerns included drainage, flooding, light pollution, and limited pedestrian-scale lighting. Parking shortages and unclear signage in Old Wethersfield were also mentioned. Residents emphasized the need for protected bike lanes, better pedestrian infrastructure, expanded transit service, and enhanced bus stops. Suggestions included roundabouts, reviewing freight rail plans, and exploring transit options like River Valley Transit. They also prioritized more recreational spaces for children, a facilities assessment for schools, upgrades to Wethersfield Cove, and praised the Engineering Department's success in securing grants for infrastructure improvements.



Participants providing feedback during PorchFest  
Source: FHI Studio

There needs to be better pedestrian connections between Old Wethersfield and the Silas Deane Highway commercial area.

Streetscape improvements such as lighting and benches are needed, especially along Wethersfield's commercial areas.

Biking over the Putnam Bridge is awesome!

I love that I can walk throughout my neighborhood!

I'm concerned about light pollution in our community.

Parking, especially in Old Wethersfield can be challenging.

The bus hub at the intersection of Jordan Lane and the Silas Deane Highway needs improvements.

**Goal:** Expand transportation options and infrastructure to enhance mobility and accessibility for all residents. Prioritize updates to transportation, utilities, and public facilities to ensure a resilient and sustainable community that is prepared for current and future needs.

Strategies and Action Steps

**Strategy #1. Encourage transportation infrastructure improvements that improve the accessibility and safety for all users and enhance transportation sustainability.**

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Develop a comprehensive plan to evaluate the pedestrian network throughout the Town, and complete repairs, construct segments of missing sidewalks and install new sidewalk ramps for improved accessibility.	PZC	Mid-Term
2. Provide improvements to pedestrian crossings as needed including installation of sidewalk ramps, crosswalk markings, signage, signal improvements, and lighting enhancements.	CRCOG, PZC	
3. Implement traffic calming measures and continue enforcement to reduce speeding.	CRCOG, PZC	Long-Term
4. Provide appropriate bicycle facilities (shared roadway, bicycle lanes, etc.), as feasible, when road improvements (such as resurfacing) are undertaken.	CRCOG, PZC	Mid-Term
5. Set aside funds for the establishment of bicycle routes, where appropriate, that include off road trails, and pavement markings and signage as needed.	CRCOG, PZC	Long-Term
6. Ensure that sidewalks and pedestrian crossings are ADA accessible and remove any barriers to accessibility through ongoing construction, repairs and maintenance.	CRCOG, PZC	Mid-Term
7. Continue to foster strong partnerships with CTDOT, DECD, CRCOG, and other local and regional partners to implement a well-balanced and sustainable multimodal transportation system.	CRCOG, TC	Continuous
8. Continue to implement the Complete Streets Policy and consider developing a Complete Streets Plan to guide transportation improvements.	TC, PZC	Continuous

## CHAPTER 7 Mobility and Infrastructure

7

<b>Strategy #1. Encourage transportation infrastructure improvements that improve the accessibility and safety for all users and enhance transportation sustainability. Continued</b>		
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
9. Continue to expand, improve and promote walking routes for older adults and students in Wethersfield.	TC, PZC	Continuous
10. Update parking regulations in the zoning ordinance to promote the right balance of automobile and bicycle parking based on development type and include standards and requirements for electric vehicle charging.	PZC	Short-Term
11. Continue to partner with regional partners including Goodwin University, Riverfront Recapture, and others to connect trails between Hartford, Wethersfield, Glastonbury, Rocky Hill and areas further south.	CRCOG	Mid-Term
12. Continue to construct improvements along the Heritage Way Bike Trail route.	TC	Continuous
13. Finish developing the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and seek funding to improve the proposed trail routes.	PZC, CRCOG	Mid-Term
14. Further develop and implement the Rails with Trails route concept along the Railroad Right-of-Way.. Work with CTDOT and CRCOG to identify potential funding sources.	CRCOG	Long-Term
15. Consider traffic calming initiatives in commercial corridors, near local schools, and at frequent crash locations in the town.	CRCOG, TC	Short-Term
16. Continue to pursue funding opportunities to enhance access management through the implementation of roundabouts and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, and minimize curb cuts, where appropriate.	TC, CRCOG	Continuous
17. Continue to invest in streetscape and placemaking projects in commercial areas to increase bicycle and foot traffic to various commercial and retail establishments in these areas.	TCC	Continuous
18. Expand Wethersfield's inventory of bike racks. Identity locations where bike racks are needed and install accordingly.	TC, PZC, CRCOG	Short-Term
19. Continue to pursue the installation of red-light enforcement cameras to reduce speeding and red-light running.	TC	Continuous

<b>Strategy #2. Support the expansion and improvement of transit services across Wethersfield and the region.</b>		
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Work with CTtransit to identify improvements to increase accessibility and service on intra- and inter-town transit routes.	CRCOG	Long-Term
2. Upgrade bus shelters through bus stop enhancement programs.	CRCOG	Long-Term
3. Coordinate with CTtransit to maintain and expand transit and paratransit services and access, particularly to older adults and disabled population in the town.	CRCOG	Mid-Term
4. Prioritize improvements to the “bus hub” located at the intersection of Jordan Lane and the Silas Deane Highway.	CRCOG	Long-Term
5. Pursue opportunities for micro-transit and continue to support the provision of on-demand transportation services for Wethersfield’s aging population.	CRCOG	Mid-Term
6. Encourage CTDOT to install coordinated traffic signal systems throughout major corridors to efficiently move vehicular traffic.	CRCOG, TC	Long-Term

<b>Strategy #3. Reduce dependency on fossil fuels in transportation and support sustainable forms of transportation.</b>		
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Continue to transition the municipal fleet to electric vehicles.	TC	Continuous
2. Continue to pursue funding opportunities for installing electric vehicle charging stations and related infrastructure improvements on municipal sites.	TC	Continuous
3. Work with major employers in the Town to minimize the use of single occupancy vehicles through carpooling, ride sharing, biking/walking to work, and using transit service.	TC, EDIC	Mid-Term

<b>Strategy #4. Maintain and Enhance Utility Infrastructure</b>		
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Continue to work with the Metropolitan District Commission to improve and expand public water supply and public sewer service to residents and businesses.	MDC, CRCOG, TC	Continuous
2. Explore potential for placement of powerlines underground when opportunities present themselves.	TC	Long-Term
3. Work with Eversource to increase the availability of 3-phase power along Main Street	TC	Mid-Term
4. Extend decorative lighting along Main Street. Pursue funding as available.	HDC, EDIC, TCC	Short-Term

<b>Strategy #5. Reduce flooding along the Town’s major roadways and in residential neighborhoods and commercial areas.</b>		
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Continue ongoing maintenance and cleaning of municipal drainage systems.	TC	Continuous
2. Continue to inspect the condition of municipal dams in accordance with CT DEEP requirements.	TC, CRCOG, IWCC	Continuous
3. Continue to seek funding to construct drainage infrastructure improvements required to reduce flooding and the potential for associated loss of life, property damage, and health risks.	TC, CRCOG, IWCC	Continuous
4. Perform engineering studies to identify improvements required to protect critical infrastructure and property that is subject to extreme flooding, and seek funding to implement the recommendations.	CRCOG, TC	Mid-Term
5. Implement the Best Management Practices of the Town’s Stormwater Management Plan.	TC	Mid-Term

<b>Strategy #6. Address the parking needs of Old Wethersfield and other locations in Town.</b>		
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Consider the use of loop shuttles during large special events.	TCC	Short-Term
2. Consider providing incentives to businesses that allow public parking on their properties.	EDIC	Mid-Term
3. Pursue opportunities for shared parking agreements that optimize parking utilization by coordinating usage between peak and off-peak times, such as allowing restaurants to use church parking during non-service hours.	PZC	Mid-Term
4. Seek funding to reconstruct and expand municipal parking areas.	TC, CRCOG	Long-Term
5. Improve signage and wayfinding to municipal parking areas.	TCC, HDC	Mid-Term



# 8 QUALITY OF LIFE



Source: FHI Studio

## Baseline Conditions

The Town of Wethersfield provides a wide range of services to its residents, property owners, and visitors. These services are designed to support a high quality of life while preserving the town's rich history and welcoming atmosphere.

## Public Facilities

Wethersfield maintains a variety of public facilities to support Town services and community use. These include municipal buildings such as Town Hall and the Police Department, public schools, the Wethersfield Library, the Community Center and Senior Center, and multiple parks and recreational sites. These facilities help provide space for local government operations, education, public safety, recreation, and community programs. Wethersfield's public facilities are shown in Figure 8.1.

### Town Hall

Wethersfield Town Hall serves as the central hub for local government operations. Located at 505 Silas Deane Highway, it houses key municipal offices including the Town Manager, Town Clerk, Assessor, and Engineering Department, among others. Residents can visit Town Hall to access services such as permitting, tax payments, land records, and voter registration. The building also hosts public meetings and serves as a point of contact for community members seeking information or assistance with Town services. The Wethersfield Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is located at the Town Hall and coordinates the Town's response during emergencies such as severe weather or public safety threats. Directed by the Town Manager, it brings together local departments and outside agencies under a unified command. The EOC manages emergency resources, public communication, and operates shelters when needed. The Town Hall is reaching the end of its useful life and has been recommended for a Space Utilization Analysis and Feasibility report.

A review of the Town's fiscal operating budgets from 2015 through 2025 indicates a local government that has proactively managed and improved Town operations amidst a challenging economic environment. The Town has focused on strategic capital expenditures, aiming to support long-term growth and development. Efforts have been made to identify cost-saving measures, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are utilized efficiently while maintaining essential services and infrastructure. This approach reflects a commitment to fiscal responsibility and planning for the future.

Wethersfield's adopted operating budget for the fiscal year 2025 was approximately \$127,647,788. Over the past decade, the Town has experienced steady growth in its budget, reflecting a commitment to providing high-quality public services to its residents. Like many municipalities in Connecticut, the largest share of Wethersfield's budget (52%) is allocated to education, with a focus on maintaining strong public schools. The Town recognizes that a robust education system is essential to its overall quality of life, particularly as the school-age population is expected to grow over the coming decades. This investment in education reflects Wethersfield's dedication to supporting its students, families, and community at large.



Wethersfield Town Hall  
Source: FHI Studio

## Wethersfield Public Library

The Wethersfield Library, located adjacent to the Town Hall, offers a variety of services, including access to print and digital collections, public computers, and space for study and meetings. The library provides programs for all ages, such as storytimes, summer reading initiatives, book clubs, and technology help sessions. Materials available for checkout include books, DVDs, audiobooks, and digital resources such as eBooks and streaming services. The library also supports research and learning through databases, interlibrary loan, and staff assistance. Regular programming and access to diverse materials make it a valuable community resource for information and enrichment.

## William J. Pitkin Community Center

The William J. Pitkin Community Center serves as a central location for a variety of public services and community programs in Wethersfield. It houses the Parks and Recreation Department, Social and Youth Services, and the Senior Center, and includes meeting rooms and activity spaces available for public use. The facility supports recreational activities, senior programming, community events, and public meetings, making it an important resource for residents of all ages.

## Division of Physical Services

The Wethersfield Division of Physical Services, located at 100 Marsh Street, houses the Town's Transfer Station and Town Garage, serving as a central hub for municipal waste and fleet services. The Transfer Station provides residents with a location to dispose of municipal solid waste, yard debris, and recyclables including paper, metals, plastics, electronics, and leaves at no cost. It also accepts bulky items, tires, and appliances. Residents must obtain a permit to use most services, with exceptions for leaf drop-off and mulch pickup. The Town Garage on-site maintains the municipal fleet, including snowplows, garbage trucks, and other service vehicles essential to public works operations. This facility is located within the Flood Zone and is susceptible to flooding. The Town is exploring opportunities to relocate this facility.

**Wethersfield Senior Center News**  
**APRIL 2025**  
[www.wethersfieldct.gov/senior-center](http://www.wethersfieldct.gov/senior-center)  
 30 Greenfield Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109  
 860-721-2770 [senior.center@wethersfieldct.gov](mailto:senior.center@wethersfieldct.gov)

**Wethersfield Senior Center**  
**SPRING FLING**  
**MONDAY, APRIL 14**  
 12PM LUNCH/1PM ENTERTAINMENT  
**BLAISE SINGS THE AMERICAN SONGBOOK**  
 ENTERTAINMENT & LUNCH: M \$10/ NM \$13  
 MUSIC ONLY: M \$5 / NM \$8  
 PAY AT THE DOOR  
 Orachiette Primavera, Penne ala Vodka, Caesar Salad & Cucumber & Tomato Salad Roll, Dessert. Catered by D&D Market  
**LUNCH: RSVP BY APRIL 8**

**LUNCH & LEARN**  
 Thursday  
**April 10 at 12:30 PM**  
 Turkey Sandwich, chips, cookie, bottle of water  
**STOP SENIOR BULLYING**  
 Take a moment to picture a bully. Do you picture a young kid or adolescent bullying a smaller child? What happens when an adult becomes the victim of bullying?  
 Bullying among seniors has been making news in recent years. Join us for a discussion on the realities of bullying amongst seniors and the impact it has on everyone.  
 Co-Sponsor: **MapleView**  
 RSVP: 860.721.2770 or [senior.center@wethersfieldct.gov](mailto:senior.center@wethersfieldct.gov)

**April Highlights**

- Wednesday, April 2 at 10am Coffee Talk with Social Services
- Thursday, April 10 at 12:30pm Lunch and Learn: Senior Bullying
- Monday, April 14; 12pm/1pm Spring Fling Lunch & Music
- Tuesday, April 15; 4pm-6pm Party "Tulips by Moonlight" Paint
- Thursday, April 17; 9am-1pm AARP Safe Drive Course
- Friday, April 18: CLOSED HOLIDAY
- Tuesday, April 22 at 1pm Flower Arranging Workshop Vet-
- Tuesday, April 22 at 9am

**Wethersfield Social & Youth/Elderly Services**  
 Coffee, pastries & information on:  
 • Dial-a-Ride  
 • Renters Rebate  
 • Tax Abatement  
 • Energy Assistance  
 • SNAP vouchers

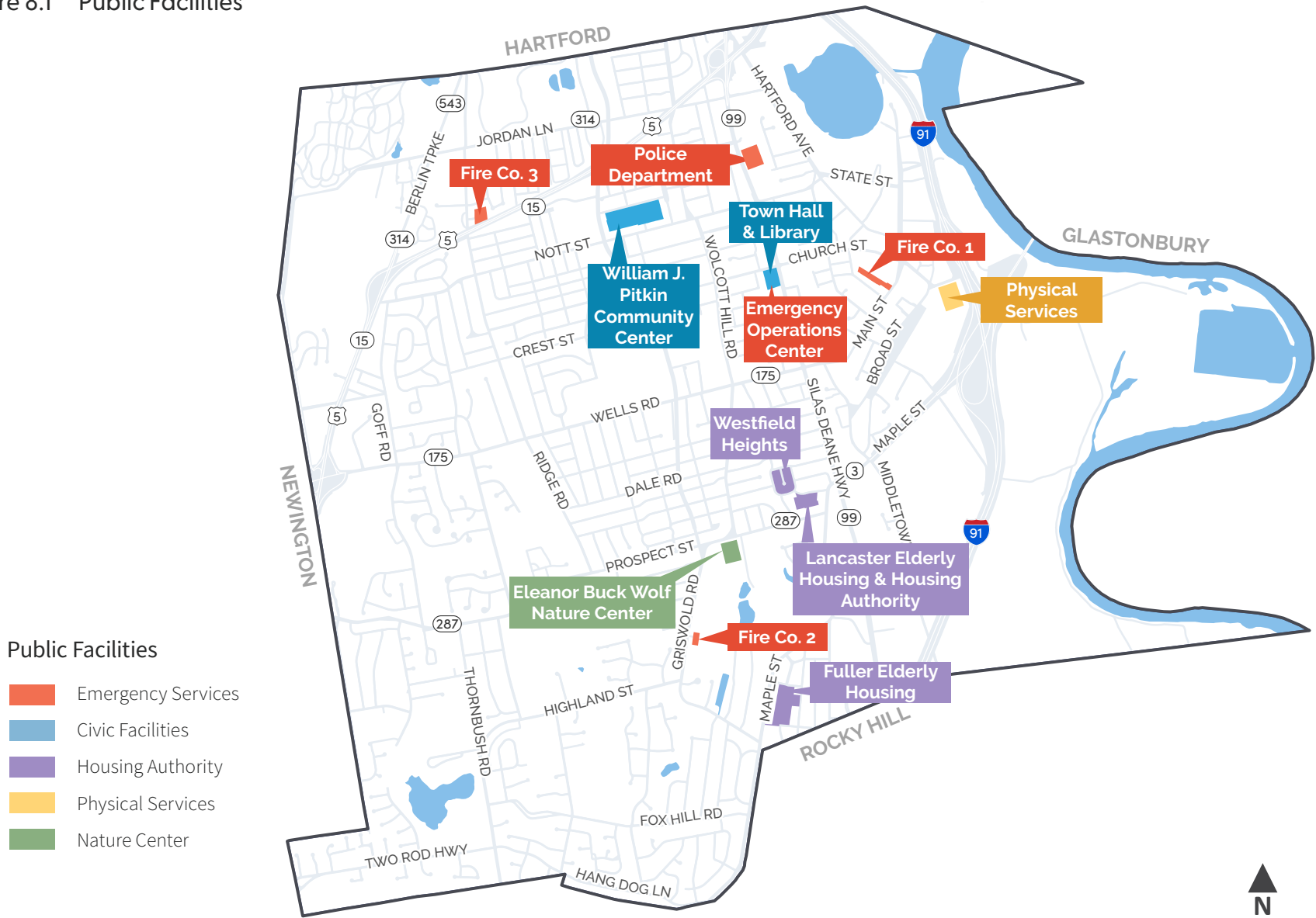
**Coffee & Conversation**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2 AT 10:30AM**  
 Questions: Contact the Senior Center at 860.721.2770 or email

Senior Center Newsletter, Spring 2025

Source: Town of Wethersfield

Did you know.... the William J. Pitkin Community Center provides a wide variety of programs and activities for all ages and interests. You can play a game of pickleball, join a yoga or fitness class, take part in arts and craft workshops, or sign your kids up for summer camps and after-school programs. The Center also hosts community theater auditions, public meetings, and seasonal events that bring residents together.

Figure 8.1 Public Facilities



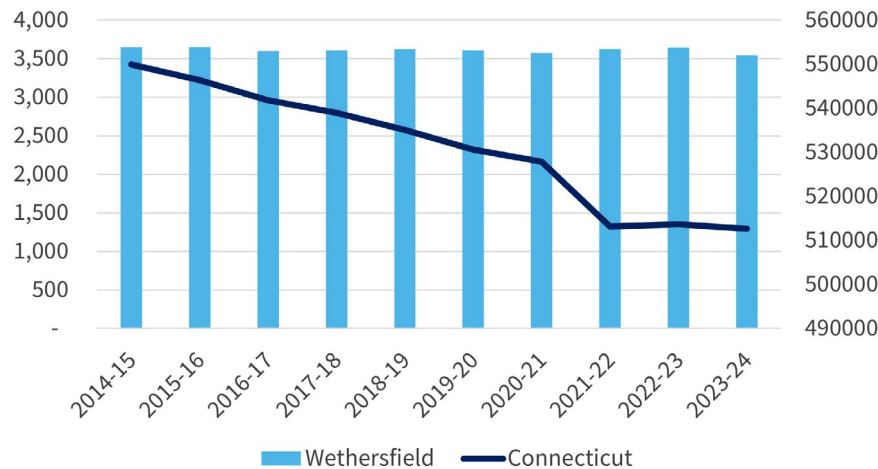
Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Wethersfield Public Schools

Wethersfield is home to a large public school system that includes five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school, shown in Figure 8.3. The Wethersfield School District has an enrollment of approximately 3,300 students and employs around 400 full-time equivalent staff.

Wethersfield’s public school enrollment has been relatively stable over the past decade. Since the 2014–15 school year, enrollment has declined by about 2.7%, compared to a 7.6% decline statewide during the same period. Looking ahead, projections suggest an increase in the town’s school-age population, which could lead to enrollment stabilizing or even growing. From fiscal year 2014/2015 through 2023/2024, Wethersfield has consistently spent less per pupil than the state average. In fiscal year 2023–2024, per pupil spending was \$18,723.

Figure 8.2 Public School Enrollment K-12



Source: CT Department of Education, Wethersfield Public Schools

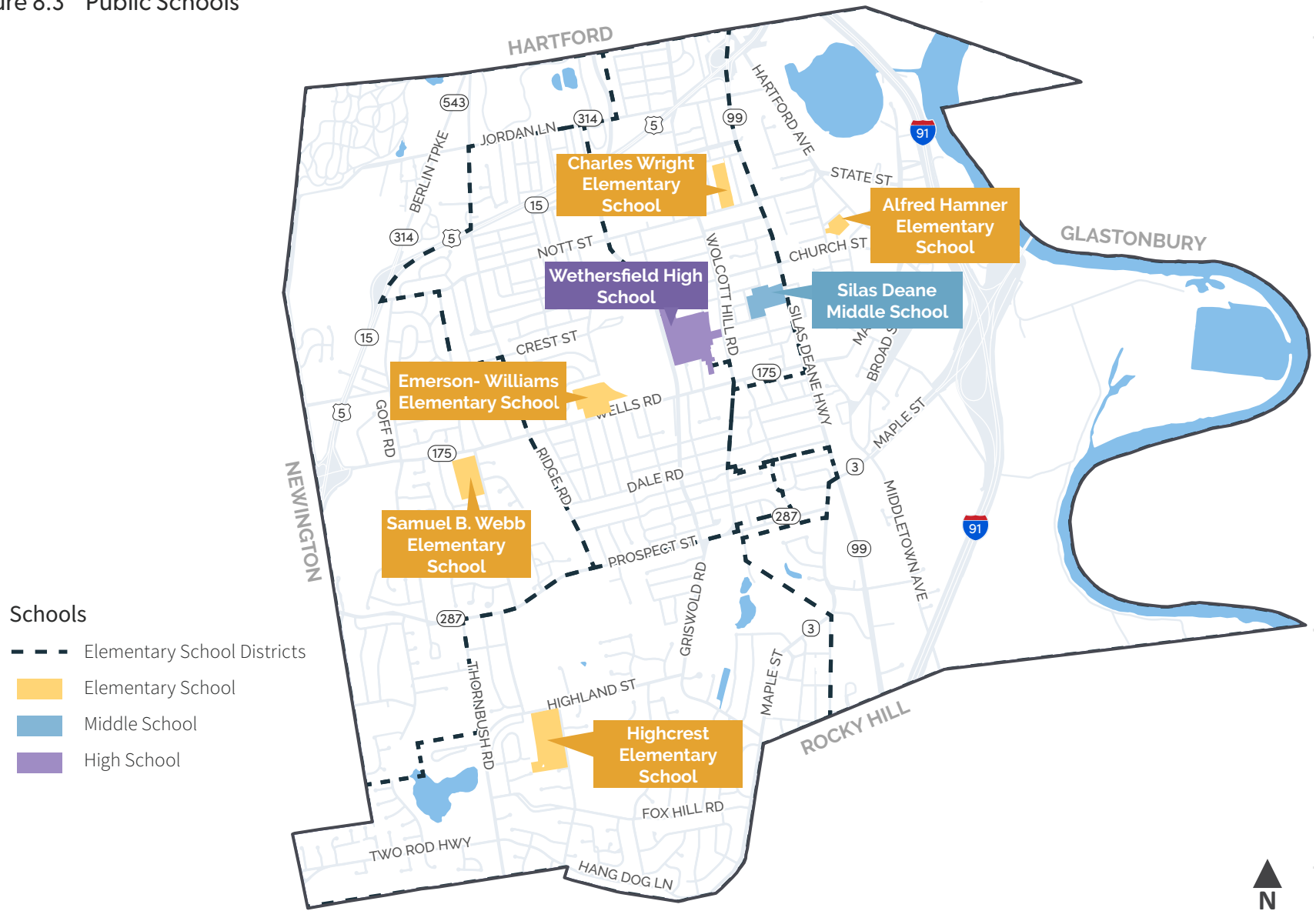
## Wethersfield Board of Education

The Wethersfield Board of Education oversees the Town’s public school system, setting policies, approving budgets, and working with school administrators to manage district operations. The Board focuses on supporting educational outcomes and maintaining a stable, effective school environment for students and staff. Its mission is to "develop lifelong learners who will be prepared to contribute to a global society and embrace learning as a life-long process".



Wethersfield High School Students  
Source: Wethersfield Public Schools

Figure 8.3 Public Schools



Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Municipal Services

Wethersfield provides a comprehensive range of municipal services to support the well-being and quality of life of its residents. These services encompass waste management, road maintenance, emergency medical services, social services and recreational programs, all coordinated by various town departments.

### Social and Youth Services Department

The Wethersfield Social and Youth Services Department provides a range of programs and resources to support residents, particularly youth, seniors, and individuals with special needs. Services include food and clothing assistance, energy support, crisis intervention, and transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities through the Dial-A-Ride program. A daily nutritional lunch program is also available for seniors.

The Department offers youth development programs such as the After School Achievement Program and Friday Night Hangout, which provide enrichment activities like cooking, robotics, and team-building. It also runs a Juvenile Diversion Program for youth involved in minor offenses and offers recognition through the ABCD Awards and the YAB IT! Scholarship.

For residents with disabilities, the Department provides case management, referrals, and a guide to local resources to help support independent living. While the Department does not directly provide immigration or legal services, it collaborates with organizations like the Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants (CIRI) to connect residents with legal assistance, refugee resettlement support, and immigration services. These organizations offer services such as family reunification, asylum applications, deportation defense, and citizenship assistance.

Additionally, the Department assists residents facing housing instability by connecting them with emergency housing resources. Based on this assessment, individuals may be prioritized for housing services,

which could include emergency shelter, financial assistance, and case management support. The Department serves as a key resource for community members in need of assistance.

### Wethersfield Senior Center

The Wethersfield Senior Center offers a range of programs and services for adults aged 55 and older. These include social, educational, and wellness activities such as fitness classes, art workshops, social events, and day trips. The Center also provides health services like blood pressure screenings and foot care. Additionally, seniors can enjoy a nutritional lunch program at the Community Café on select days. The Center fosters an active, engaged community with various opportunities for learning, socializing, and maintaining health.

### Parks and Recreation Department

The Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the management and operation of community recreational programs and facilities. It offers a variety of programs related to aquatics, fitness, sports, arts, and environmental education, designed to serve residents across different age groups. These programs include activities such as swim lessons, karate, and afterschool enrichment.

The Department manages approximately 644 acres of parkland, including properties like Mill Woods Park and Cove Park, which feature amenities such as walking trails, sports fields, and recreational areas for swimming and fishing. Additionally, the Department oversees the operation of the William J. Pitkin Community Center, which includes the Senior Center and various sports facilities, as well as the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center, which provides environmental education programs. The Department is also responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Town's parks and facilities.

## Police Department

The Wethersfield Police Department is a state and nationally accredited agency committed to modern, community-focused policing. In fiscal year 2023–24, the Department responded to over 35,800 service calls, an increase of over 4,500 from the previous year, reflecting both population needs and broader public safety challenges. With 47 sworn officers, three short of the Department’s ideal staffing level of 50, the agency remains a sought-after employer, having turned away more than 100 lateral applicants in 2024.

Efforts to modernize include implementing technology-based updates, expanding the use of drones, deploying StarChase vehicle tracking, and adding new cruisers and equipment. The Department is also undergoing organizational and policy reviews to align with evolving best practices and improve service delivery. Investments in Critical Incident Training and increased engagement with mental health, addiction, and housing-related issues, especially concerning local hotels, reflect the Department’s response to complex, real-world public safety demands.

Wethersfield continues to maintain the lowest crime rate among Hartford suburbs and ranks 7th out of 27 towns in the Capitol Region for overall crime, with Hartford ranked highest at 27th. The Department has taken deliberate steps to build stronger community relationships and address concerns related to past racial profiling, focusing on transparency, accountability, and ongoing professional development. Strong relationships with the police union, a growing School Resource Officer program, and a focus on youth engagement support a community-based approach. Plans for 2025 include implementing a DARE program in fifth grade classrooms, expanding the Police Activities League (PAL), and assigning a full-time DARE officer to support these outreach efforts.

Figure 8.4 Hartford Suburb Crime Rates - 2023

Rank	Municipality	Crime Rate
1	Wethersfield	26.7
2	South Windsor	31.0
3	Glastonbury	35.7
4	Windsor	40.1
5	Bloomfield	49.5
6	East Hartford	56.0
7	West Hartford	56.7
8	Newington	56.7

Source: Connecticut State Police Annual Crime Report - 2023, published in October 2024

### Wethersfield Police Department 2024-2025 Goals and Objectives:

1. Enhance the Sense of Safety for Residents and Visitors
2. Develop and Enhance Personnel Skills
3. Increase Efficiencies in Operations

## Fire Department

The Wethersfield Fire Department is a volunteer-based organization that provides fire protection and emergency response services to the Town of Wethersfield. Established in 1803, it is the first formally chartered fire department in Connecticut and one of the oldest continuously operating volunteer departments in the country. The Department operates out of three stations located in Old Wethersfield, the Griswoldville area, and the northern section of town.

Staffed by volunteer fire-fighters, the Department responds to fires, medical incidents, and rescue situations using modern equipment, including fire engines and ladder trucks. In addition to emergency response, the Department participates in public education and fire prevention activities in coordination with the Fire Marshal's office. These efforts include safety presentations at schools, senior housing, and community events, along with the use of a fire safety trailer to teach fire prevention practices.

## Emergency Management

The Office of Emergency Management and Operations in Wethersfield is responsible for coordinating the Town's response to emergencies and ensuring the safety and well-being of its residents during a crisis. This Department oversees the development and implementation of emergency plans, conducts training and exercises, and ensures that the community is prepared for a wide range of potential disasters, including natural events, public health emergencies, and man-made incidents. The Town's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) serves as the command hub during emergencies, allowing for coordination between local, state, and federal agencies. Additionally, the Department works to maintain and update critical infrastructure, such as communication systems, and ensures that resources are readily available to respond quickly and effectively in the event of an emergency.



*Touch a Truck Event at PorchFest 2024*  
Source: FHI Studio



*Wethersfield Police Staff A Cruiser Charity Event, 2024*  
Source: Wethersfield Police Department

## Physical Services Department

Physical Services plays a key role in maintaining the Town's infrastructure, facilities, and public spaces. Its responsibilities include servicing the municipal vehicle fleet, maintaining Town and school buildings, managing roads, snow removal, and drainage systems, as well as overseeing parks and other exterior Town properties. The Department includes skilled trades staff, road and tree crews, and mechanics, all contributing to essential Town services.

The Parks group, part of Public Works rather than Parks and Recreation, is responsible for the upkeep of outdoor spaces and athletic fields, which support a wide range of recreational activities. Custodial and maintenance teams handle the care and operation of school buildings, and the Department also addresses natural waterway management to help mitigate flooding and infrastructure concerns.

The Department is actively involved in the Wethersfield Elementary School Project, a long-term initiative to renovate and modernize the Town's elementary school facilities. A building committee is currently developing a proposal aimed at addressing aging infrastructure and adapting schools to current and future needs, with a referendum planned for spring 2025.

Like many municipal departments, Physical Services faces several operational challenges. Aging equipment and the absence of a regular replacement schedule have made it difficult to keep pace with preventive maintenance needs. Some essential items, such as janitorial equipment, are underfunded, and expanding responsibilities often outpace available resources. Additionally, shifting to electric vehicles presents cost and infrastructure hurdles. Despite these challenges, the Department continues to prioritize core services and long-term planning to support the community's needs.

## Public Health

The Central Connecticut Health District (CCHD) is a regional public health agency that serves Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill, and Wethersfield. Established in 1996, it provides essential public health services like disease surveillance, environmental inspections, and emergency preparedness. In Wethersfield, CCHD inspects local establishments, investigates communicable diseases, and offers health services including flu and COVID-19 vaccinations, senior health programs, asthma education, and lead poisoning prevention. These efforts help address local health needs while aligning with regional public health practices.

## Sustainability

Wethersfield has worked to incorporate sustainability into its community planning and operations, earning Silver Certification through the Sustainable CT program. This certification recognizes the Town's efforts in environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

Key initiatives include improving energy efficiency in municipal buildings, supporting green infrastructure projects, and implementing sustainable land use practices. The Town also focuses on managing stormwater to reduce flooding, promoting recycling programs, and encouraging environmentally conscious transportation options. These efforts aim to reduce environmental impacts, enhance resource management, and improve the overall quality of life for residents.

Wethersfield participates in the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program, which provides financing for energy efficiency and clean energy upgrades to commercial, industrial, nonprofit, and multi-family properties. This program helps property owners in the town access affordable financing for improvements such as solar panels, HVAC systems, and energy-efficient lighting, supporting Wethersfield's sustainability goals.

## Community Events

Wethersfield hosts a variety of community events throughout the year that foster local pride and enhance residents' quality of life. These gatherings provide opportunities for social connection, cultural enrichment, and support for local businesses. Some of the major events include Holidays on Main, which features tree lighting and local vendors, PorchFest, a music festival held on Main Street, and the Old Wethersfield Arts & Crafts Fair, which showcases local artisans. Other events such as Cornfest and Scarecrows Along Main bring the community together for fun and creativity. While these are some of the key events, Wethersfield offers many more that contribute to the vibrant sense of community.

- Wethersfield Farmers' Market: A weekly market featuring local produce, crafts, and entertainment.
- Bicycles on Main: A community bike ride through historic Wethersfield.
- Annual Golf Tournament: Fundraiser supporting local initiatives.
- Heritage Weekend: Celebrates Wethersfield's history with tours and reenactments.
- Memorial Day Parade: A traditional parade honoring veterans and community members.
- Spring Festival: A family-friendly event with games, food, and entertainment.
- Revolutionary War Encampment: Historical re-enactments from the American Revolution.
- Keeney Kooler Concert Series: Free outdoor concerts featuring local bands.
- PorchFest: A music festival where local musicians perform on neighborhood porches.
- CornFest: A celebration of local corn, with food, games, and entertainment for all ages.

- Old Wethersfield 5k & 10k: A community run/walk promoting fitness and engagement.
- Scarecrows Along Main: A month-long display of decorated scarecrows along Main Street.
- Annual Arts & Crafts Fair: A showcase of local artisans and craftspeople.
- Holidays on Main: A festive evening with tree lighting, carriage rides, and shopping.
- Heirloom Poetry Society Open Mic: An open mic night for poets and spoken word artists.



*Wethersfield was bustling during PorchFest 2024  
Source: FHI Studio*

## What We Heard

During community engagement discussions, residents emphasized the importance of enhancing Wethersfield's quality of life by addressing local needs. Key priorities included expanding mental health services, combating food insecurity, and supporting free school meal programs. Many community members also called for more after-school activities, gathering spaces, and programs for all ages, with the Community Center renovations seen as a step in the right direction. There is growing interest in increasing sports opportunities and upgrading athletic facilities. Transportation challenges were highlighted, with suggestions for improved infrastructure and enhanced bike safety initiatives. Sustainability efforts, such as recycling programs and tree inventories, are underway. Additionally, if state buildings are decommissioned, they may offer new opportunities for development. Overall, residents are committed to preserving Wethersfield's historic character while meeting the community's evolving needs.

8



Participants providing feedback during PorchFest  
Source: FHI Studio

Seniors need their own space that is separate from the Community Center.

Wethersfield is missing "third spaces", especially for kids and teenagers.

The town has small town appeal without being too small.

Wethersfield offers more services than most towns.

The Police Department's PAL program is amazing, kick-ball was so fun.

We need fields for lacrosse and field hockey. Not enough gym space either.

Wethersfield has so many amazing events! There is always something going on!

**Goal: Provide high-quality, fiscally responsible, community services and facilities that are adaptable to the changing needs of residents, supporting individuals and families at all stages of life.**

**Strategies and Action Steps**

**Strategy #1. Ensure that Wethersfield continues to adequately serve its residents, property owners, and businesses with community services.**

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to monitor the evolving needs of the community and seek input on desired services that could benefit Wethersfield’s residents.	TCC	Continuous
2. Develop a plan to address the emerging needs of an aging population (i.e. housing, adult daycare and additional services for older adults).	CRCOG, HA	Mid-Term
3. Continue to support the Wethersfield Fire Department and Wethersfield Police Department and Youth Services through prevention and positive youth development programs.	TC	Continuous
4. Address accessibility needs of the population in accessing and utilizing Town and transit facilities and services.	TC, CRCOG	Mid-Term
5. Regularly evaluate and prioritize community facility and infrastructure needs in order to address them in an efficient and economical way.	TC, PZC	Continuous
6. Develop and implement a maintenance schedule to assure that all Town buildings and properties undergo regular repairs and maintenance to minimize the dramatically high costs brought on by years of postponed repairs.	TC	Mid-Term
7. Collaborate with neighboring and regional municipalities and organizations to consolidate duplicate services where feasible.	CRCOG	Continuous
8. Reassess the Town’s sidewalk repair policy to determine if it would be more appropriate for the Town to assume the responsibility of repairing sidewalks.	TC	Short-Term

Strategies and Action Steps		
Strategy #2. Promote events and activities that contribute to community pride and spirit.		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to promote community events throughout all of Wethersfield to support community cohesion and vibrancy across the Town.	TCC, EDIC	Continuous
2. Continue to update the Town’s website and utilize social media and other resources to ensure that residents have access to community information.	EDIC, TCC	Continuous
3. Promote and encourage volunteerism.	All	Continuous
4. Continue to develop and support partnerships for sponsoring community events.	All	Continuous
Strategy #3. Prioritize improvements to the Town’s facilities to meet diverse program needs.		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to conduct Town facilities assessments to assess current and future needs, find ways to improve energy efficiency, and explore options for consolidating and reusing facilities.	TCC	Long-Term
2. Address accessibility needs of the physically disabled population in utilizing Town facilities and services.	CCHD	Long-Term
3. Increase the capital budget funding to meet the maintenance needs of the Town’s facilities.	TC	Short-Term

Strategy #4. Prioritize improvements to the Town's school facilities to meet program needs.		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Recommend that the Board of Education complete an enrollment and space utilization study of all schools to determine current and projected facility needs.	BOE	Mid-Term
2. Improve school facilities to ensure that high quality, modern, and fully accessible facilities are available to Wethersfield's students.	BOE	Continuous
3. Continue to invest in the education system to ensure that Wethersfield remains a desirable place to live.	BOE, TC	Continuous

Strategy #5. Promote Sustainability and Resiliency		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to make improvements and conduct activities as recommended in the Town's Stormwater Management Plan.	PZC, IWCC	Continuous
2. Promote the adoption of best management practices (such as rain barrels, green roofs, etc.), and the use of green infrastructure (such as bio-swales and rain gardens) as a means of reducing the impacts from stormwater runoff.	PZC, IWCC	Mid-Term
3. Continue to encourage use of Low Impact Development (LID) strategies within the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations, and Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission regulations.	PZC, IWCC	Mid-Term
4. Continue to participate in the Sustainable CT program through the voluntary implementation of various actions aimed at sustainability.	CRCOG	Continuous
5. Partner in regional and state-wide initiatives to address borderless climate change issues.	CRCOG	Continuous
6. Update the Town's zoning regulations to encourage sustainable development that supports density, walkability, and conservation.	PZC	Short-Term





# 9 OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

*Source: Town of Wethersfield*

## Baseline Conditions

Wethersfield's commitment to sustainability requires balancing growth with the protection of vital environmental resources. The town's diverse open spaces, including Cove Park, Mill Woods Park, Kycia Farm, and Great Meadows Conservation Trust properties, are essential for preserving its character and enhancing quality of life. In total, Wethersfield has about 1,817 acres of public open space and an additional 295 acres of private open land, providing recreational opportunities, wildlife habitats, and natural beauty. To protect these assets, it is crucial for the Town to prioritize open space acquisition, management, and preservation, ensuring that these lands are not lost to development and can continue benefiting future generations.

## Open Space Resources

Wethersfield offers a variety of open space resources that provide recreational opportunities and support environmental conservation. The parks and open spaces described at right and on the following pages are Wethersfield's largest and most frequented park and open space resources. These spaces contribute to Wethersfield's natural beauty and offer areas for outdoor activities, community engagement, and wildlife corridors. Additional information about the Town's other municipal facilities can be found in Chapter 8, Quality of Life.

*Did you know.... Wethersfield's Land Acquisition Fund is a dedicated fund established to support the Town's efforts in preserving open space and acquiring land for conservation purposes. It is designed to provide financial resources for purchasing property that contributes to the preservation of natural areas, agricultural land, and recreational spaces. The fund is used to acquire properties that align with the Town's conservation goals, such as protecting key wildlife habitats, preserving agricultural lands, and ensuring public access to open space.*

## 1860 Reservoir

The 1860 Reservoir is a historic water source that once played a vital role in the town's water supply system. Located near Highland Street, the reservoir is surrounded by natural landscapes and open spaces, making it a popular spot for outdoor activities such as hiking and fishing. Non motorized water craft such as kayaks are also allowed. The reservoir area is also part of the Wethersfield Greenway, a designated trail that connects key natural and recreational areas in town.

## Beaverbrook Linear Park

Beaver Brook Linear Park is a scenic green space that follows the path of Beaver Brook, providing a peaceful setting for outdoor activities. The park features open spaces and natural habitats that support local wildlife. It offers residents opportunities for walking, jogging, and enjoying nature, with shaded paths and views of the brook. Spring Street Pond is located within the park, which provides fishing access and is available for ice skating. The park also plays an important role in stormwater management, helping to control runoff and reduce flooding in the area.



Spring Street Pond  
Source: Danielle Bruce

## Mill Woods Park

Mill Woods Park is a local recreation area that includes walking trails, sports fields, picnic areas, and a playground. It features Mill Woods Pond, which is used for swimming and fishing. The park also includes a dog park, skate park, bocce, tennis, and basketball courts, providing various options for outdoor activities.

## Standish Park

Standish Park is a public park with open green space, Laura's Garden, and Mikey's Place, which is a playground designed to be accessible for children of all abilities. Standish Park also has basketball, tennis and pickle-ball courts, shuffleboard, baseball, and soccer fields. Located near the historic district, the park offers a space for walking, relaxation, and community gatherings.

## Tanglewood Nature Preserve

Tanglewood Nature Preserve is a natural area with woodlands, wetlands, and meadows. It has a network of trails for hiking and wildlife observation, offering a variety of habitats to explore.



Entrance to Mikey's Place in Standish Park  
Source: The Great Elm



Campers at the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center  
Source: Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center, Patrick F. Telman

## Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center

The Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center (EBW) is an ecology education and community center devoted to helping Connecticut residents explore and understand the natural world. Named in memory of Wethersfield resident Eleanor Buck Wolf, who was an environmentalist, artist and author, the Nature Center operates under the Wethersfield Parks and Recreation Department with member support from the Friends of the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center.

The EBW Nature Center is home to numerous mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, and provides year round summer and vacation camps and early childhood programs. The EBW Nature Center also hosts birthday parties, special events and outreach programs.

## Cove Park

Cove Park is a public park located along the Connecticut River, offering scenic views and access to the waterfront. The park features walking paths, picnic areas, and open green space, providing a space for relaxation and outdoor activities. It is a popular spot for fishing, birdwatching, and enjoying the riverfront environment. Cove Park is also home to the Wethersfield Cove Marina, which offers mooring and tender cleat rentals as well as seasonal and daily launch passes. Cove Park also plays a role in preserving the natural landscape along the river, contributing to the town's recreational and environmental resources.

## Wintergreen Woods

Wintergreen Woods is a wooded area with a network of trails for walking and nature observation. The area is primarily forested, providing habitat for local wildlife and contributing to regional wildlife corridors that connect different natural spaces. These corridors support wildlife movement and biodiversity by linking larger ecosystems, which is important for maintaining healthy populations of various species. The woods offer a quiet setting for outdoor activities while also playing a role in preserving the natural environment. In 2025, the Wethersfield Library began conducting Story Walks along the loop trail within Wintergreen Woods.

## Heritage Way Bike Trail

The Heritage Way Bike Trail is a multi-use trail that provides a dedicated path for biking, walking, and other recreational activities. The trail connects several points of interest and offers a safe route for outdoor enthusiasts to travel through scenic areas. It is part of the broader effort to improve connectivity between natural spaces and communities, offering a sustainable transportation option while promoting active recreation. The trail also helps enhance access to local parks and other open space areas.



*Stream crossing in Wintergreen Woods*

Source: CTMQ.com



*Wooded section of the Heritage Way Bike Trail*

Source: Realhartford.org

## Wilkus Farm

For much of the last century, the late Wilkus brothers worked the prime agricultural soil on their farm, which included a dairy operation and hayfields. Keeping the historic land free from development and retaining its character was a top priority of the town, which rallied to secure funding for the 81-acre property in a series of moves that included a 2006 conservation bond measure and a 2009 referendum to approve the farm's purchase. The town owns and manages the land for farming and low-impact recreation, including hiking.

The June 2010 acquisition protects an important stream flowing into the Connecticut River and preserves the farm's valuable hayfields and much-needed public access to the town's reservoir.

## Kycia Farm

Kycia Farm is a 32-acre property that was purchased by the town in 2019, following over 20 years of efforts by the Conservation Commission to preserve it. The farm, which was for sale in the spring of 2018, was a top priority for preservation. The property features excellent agricultural soils, and has a historically significant barn, which was designated as such in 2024.

In 2021, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection designated the first Greenway in Wethersfield, which passes through the Kycia property between parcels north and south of Highland Street. This greenway, which begins at the 1860 reservoir and passes farmland, presents opportunities for trails, signage, and funding.

In 2022, Wethersfield received a \$10,000 grant from the Department of Agriculture for a land use study and master plan concept for the Kycia property. Since 2020, the Town, Friends of Kycia Farm, and the nonprofit Kycia Farm Inc. have secured additional funding through various grants from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Agriculture, the American Savings Foundation, as well as numerous individual and group donations. This support further strengthens the preservation and development of the farm for future community use.

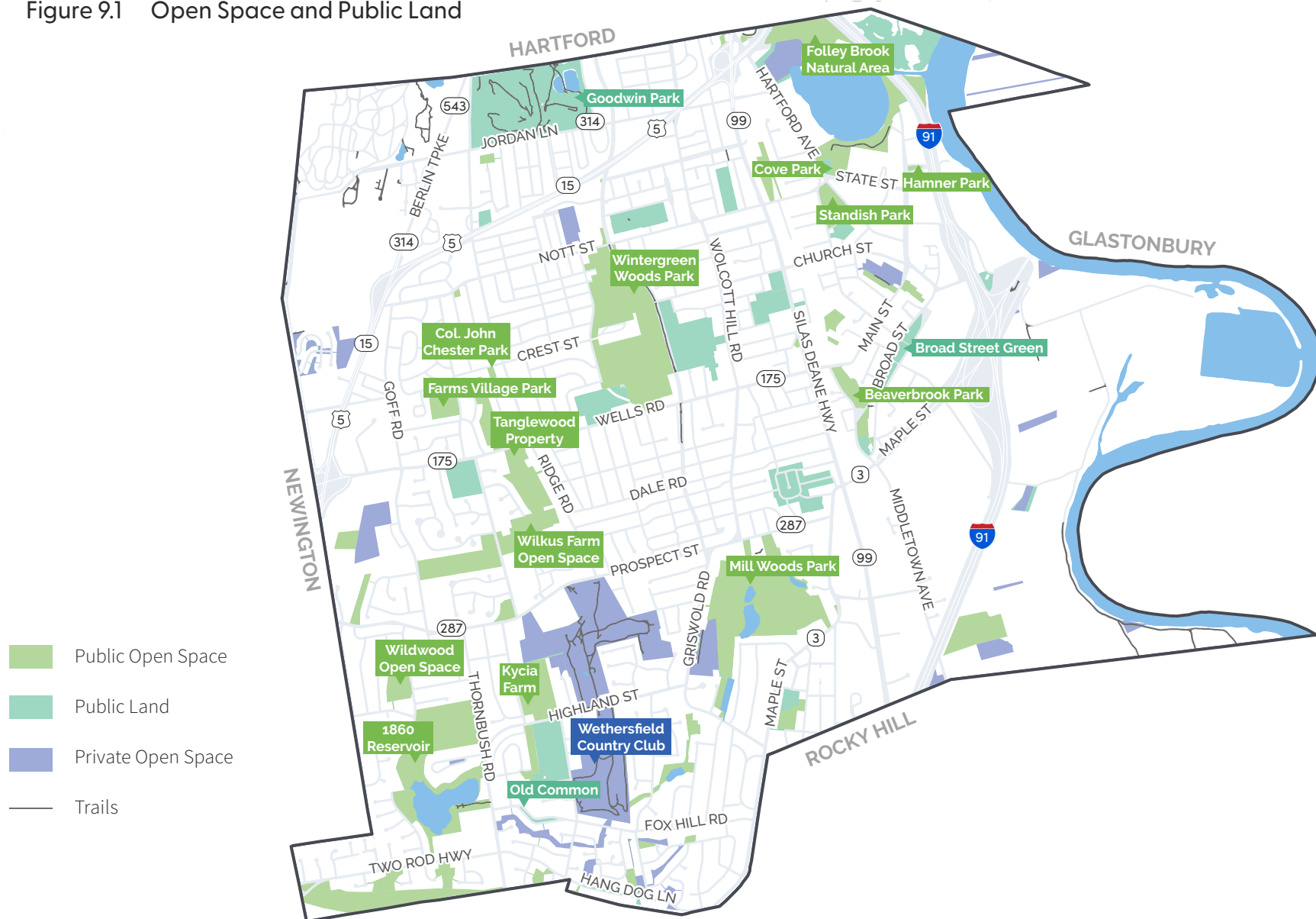


*Kycia Summer Music Series*

*Source: Friends of Kycia Farm, Inc. Town of Wethersfield*

*Did you know.... Kycia Farm hosts various community activities, including seasonal events like pumpkin patches, pop-up events, and outdoor festivals. The farm also offers educational programs on farming, gardening, and conservation. Residents can enjoy hiking, birdwatching, and picnicking on the property, with plans for expanded trails and signage along the Wethersfield Greenway to improve public access. Partnerships and grants have supported these efforts, making Kycia Farm a valued community space.*

Figure 9.1 Open Space and Public Land



Source: Town of Wethersfield, CT DEEP

Figure 9.2 Wethersfield Parks and Open Space Resources\*

Name	Acres	Location	Amenities
1860 Reservoir	67.7	Thornbush Road	Pond for fishing and open space
Beaverbrook Linear Park	14.3	Spring Street	Open space and Spring Street Pond
Broad Street Green	13.4	Broad Street	Little League field
Col. John Chester Park	0.9	Crest Street	Basketball court
Cove Park	110.6	Main Street	Wethersfield Cove, boat launch, access to CT River, park grounds, picnic area, more
Farms Village Park	8.0	Cedar Street	Basketball court, playscape, sledding hill
Hamner Park	0.7	Main Street	Mini basketball court
Mill Woods Park	122.1	Prospect Street	Walking trails, fishing pond, dog park, sports fields, swimming pond, and more
Savage Park	0.4	Silas Deane Highway	Passive open space
Standish Park	10.6	Hartford Avenue	Mikey's Place, accessible playscapes, sports fields
Wintergreen Woods	110.0	Folly Brook Boulevard	Open space and nature trails
Community Gardens	2.1	Main Street	Community garden plots
Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center		Prospect Street	Educational facility for environmental learning
Heritage Way Bike Trail	10	Begins at the Reservoir	Bike path connecting parks, schools, and open space
Tanglewood Nature Preserve	21.8	Wells Road	Passive open Space
Wethersfield Dog Park		Prospect Street	Dog Park located within Mill Woods Park

\*This is not a comprehensive list of all the facilities in Wethersfield. Information about other public facilities is provided in the Quality of Life Chapter 8.  
 Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Water Resources

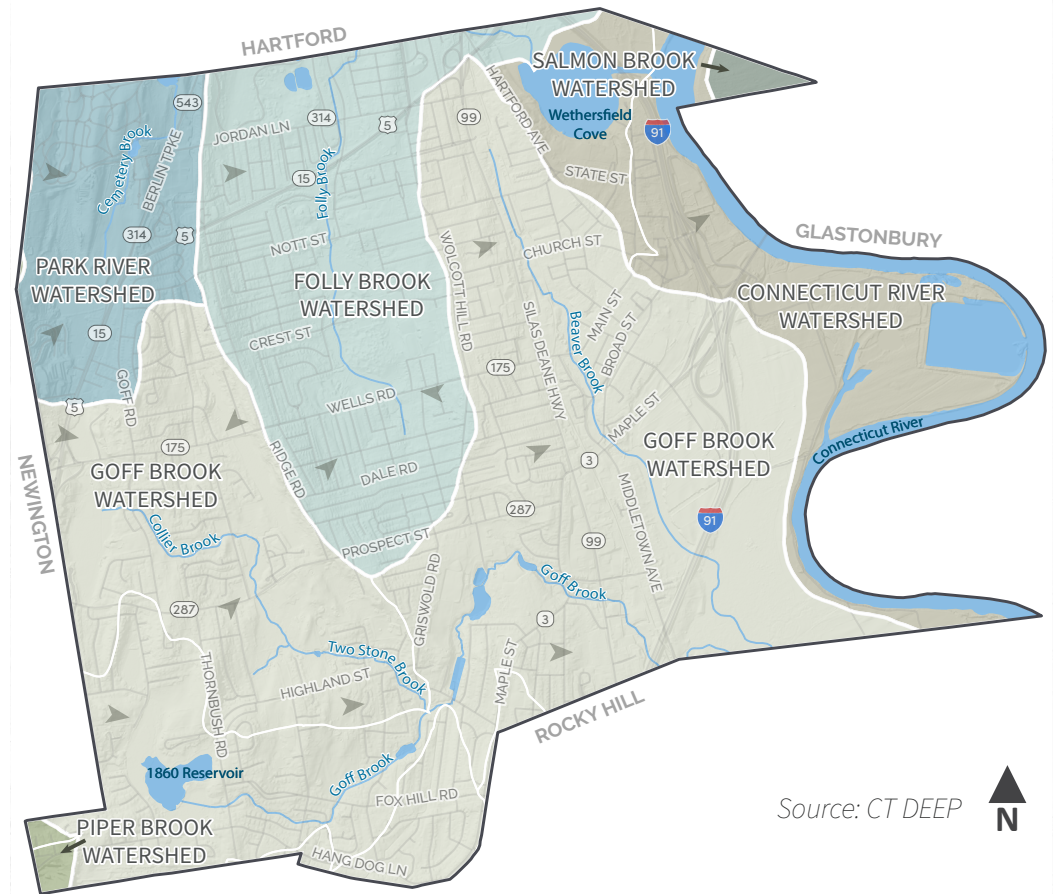
Wethersfield is located within two major watersheds: the Connecticut River Watershed and the Hockanum River Watershed. The Connecticut River Watershed runs along the town's western side, flowing directly into the Connecticut River and ultimately into Long Island Sound. The Hockanum River Watershed lies to the northeast, connecting Wethersfield's waterways to this important regional system.

Several subregional watersheds flow through the town, contributing to its diverse network of streams and watercourses. Major water features in Wethersfield include the Connecticut River, Folly Brook, Goff Brook, Beaver Brook, and various smaller tributaries that support local ecosystems.

Protecting the riparian corridors along these waterways is crucial for maintaining water quality and preserving habitats for aquatic life. Wethersfield's land use agencies play a key role in implementing strategies that align with watershed management plans, ensuring the long-term health of these natural resources.

The Connecticut River in Wethersfield is classified by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) as Class SB waters. This designation supports uses such as marine fish and wildlife habitat, recreational activities, and commercial navigation. While most of Wethersfield's waterways are of good quality, some segments may face challenges due to sources of impairment, including bacteria or stormwater runoff.

Figure 9.3 Watersheds



The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) Water Pollution Control Facility, located just north of Wethersfield in Hartford, plays a key role in treating wastewater and protecting the Connecticut River. Ongoing upgrades aim to reduce pollutants like nitrogen and phosphorus and prevent sewage overflows. These improvements are part of the Hartford Clean Water Project, which seeks to modernize sewer infrastructure, reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs), and improve water quality downstream. These efforts are vital to preserving Wethersfield's environmental health and enhancing residents' quality of life.

## Wetlands

Inland wetlands and watercourses have been a regulated natural resource in the Town of Wethersfield since the 1974 adoption of the Town of Wethersfield Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations. The Wethersfield Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission (IWCC) is authorized to regulate activities affecting wetlands and watercourses and is responsible for enforcing all provisions of the Town of Wethersfield Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations.

Wetland soils are defined by the Connecticut General Statutes as poorly drained, very poorly drained, or floodplain soils. Wetland soils in Wethersfield are primarily concentrated in the town's eastern section, near the Connecticut River. Additional wetland areas are located along Beaver Brook, Folly Brook, and west of the Berlin Turnpike near Cemetery Brook. These wetland locations are illustrated in Figure 9.9. The protection of wetland soils and watercourses are important for a variety of reasons including:

- Wetlands provide habitat that is critical to a variety of plant and animal species, including threatened and endangered species;
- Wetlands often function like natural sponges, storing water (floodwater or surface water) and slowly releasing it to groundwater and surface waters, thereby reducing the likelihood of flooding and flood damage to personal property;
- Wetlands help improve water quality by intercepting surface runoff and removing or retaining its nutrients, and processing organic wastes and reducing sediment before it reaches open water;
- Wetlands provide outdoor recreational opportunities;
- Wetlands are essential to an adequate and safe supply of surface and groundwater.

## Rivers and Streams

Wethersfield is home to many waterways that play an important role in the town's natural environment. The Connecticut River is the most prominent, forming the town's eastern boundary. This river provides scenic views, recreational opportunities such as boating and fishing, and contributes to the local ecosystem. It is a significant waterway for wildlife, supporting various species of fish, birds, and other animals. Rivers and streams are shown in Figure 9.7.

Additionally, smaller streams and tributaries flow through Wethersfield, including the Wethersfield Cove, which is an inlet of the Connecticut River. Beaver Brook, Folly Brook, and Cemetery Brook are vital to shaping Wethersfield's wetlands, floodplains, and ecological systems. These waterways play a crucial role in local water management, flood control, and sustaining the town's natural habitats. They also provide critical wildlife corridors and contribute to the town's ecological health.



*Sunset on Wethersfield Cove*  
Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Groundwater

The majority of Wethersfield has GA-rated groundwater, meaning it is suitable for human consumption without treatment. However, some areas may have GB-rated groundwater, which is considered unsuitable for drinking due to potential contamination from urban and industrial sources. While Wethersfield doesn't have designated Aquifer Protection Areas, regulations exist to protect recharge zones. These include zoning restrictions, stormwater management rules, state well construction regulations, and environmental reviews for certain developments. Public drinking water in Wethersfield is supplied by the MDC, which sources water from reservoirs outside the town. MDC serves nearly all of the community with public water and sewer services.

## Natural Resources

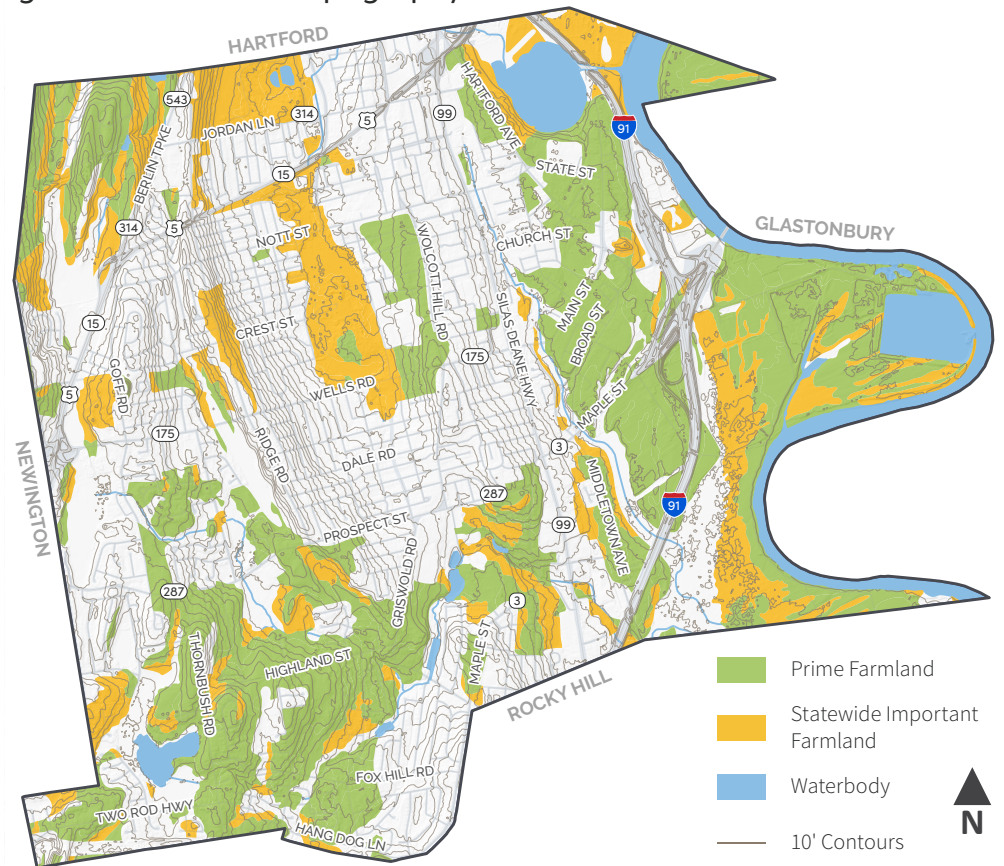
Wethersfield has a variety of soil types, with the majority being classified as Cheshire-Urban land complex and Udorthents-Urban land complex. These soils are typically rocky, stony, or gravelly, and they have a high drainage capacity, making them well-drained and suitable for many types of land use. Over 70% of the soils in Wethersfield are considered well-drained, which is beneficial for both residential and agricultural purposes.

Wethersfield is home to prime farmland soils, particularly along areas near the Connecticut River, which are essential for maintaining the town's agricultural heritage. The town is dedicated to preserving these lands, with a focus on Agricultural Preservation Areas. The Agricultural Zone is designed to protect farmland, promote farming activities, and maintain open space and natural resources. It allows for agricultural use and limited low-impact residential development while preventing urban sprawl. This zoning

supports local food production and helps preserve the town's rural character.

The town's elevation increases gradually from east to west, and areas with steep slopes (greater than 25%) are found in areas near Ridge Road, Crest Road, and Prospect Street. Although largely built out, these areas pose challenges for future development due to the risk of erosion and sedimentation, which could lead to drainage and flooding issues. As such, development in these steep slope areas is discouraged through local zoning and subdivision regulations.

Figure 9.4 Soils and Topography

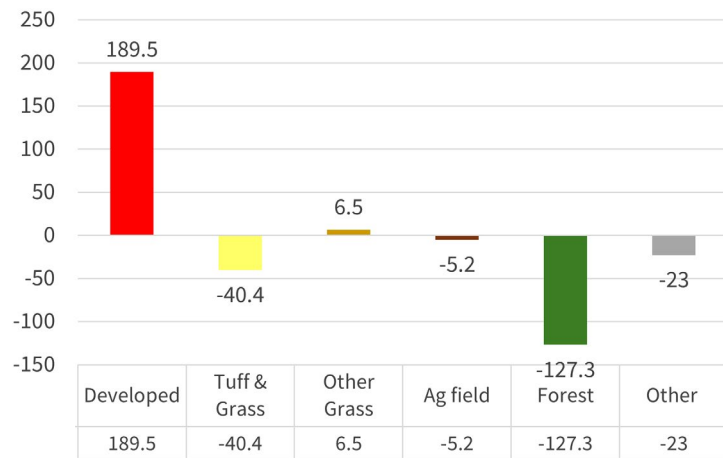


Source: CT DEEP, Natural Resource Conservation Council

## Land Cover

Between 1985 and 2015, Wethersfield experienced a decline in forest cover, losing 1.5% of its forests, primarily due to development. This loss is comparatively lower than the state-wide trend, where Connecticut lost 4% of its forest cover during the same period, according to a study by UConn’s Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR).

Figure 9.5 1985 - 2015 Land Cover Change



Source: UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research, CLEAR, 2015 (latest available year)

Tree canopy coverage is crucial for both the environment and public health. Trees and forests in Wethersfield help improve air and water quality, support mental and physical health, and help mitigate climate change. Expanding the tree canopy can also reduce the urban heat island effect, contributing to better health outcomes for residents.

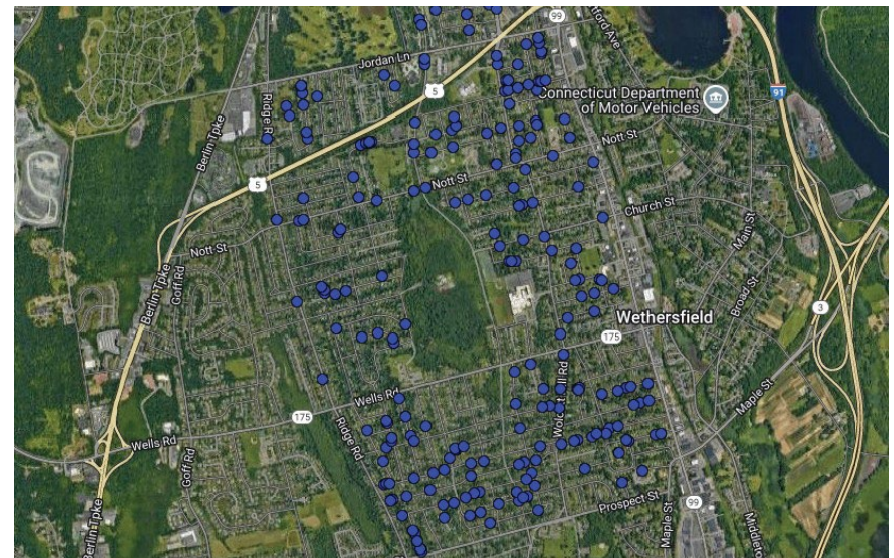
Wethersfield has a tree equity score of 88 out of 100, which is above the target score of 75. However, one of the town's census block groups has a score below 75. The tree equity score helps evaluate how evenly tree canopy is distributed across urban areas, using data on tree cover, climate, and socio-economic factors. To improve tree coverage in

areas with lower scores, public greening projects such as tree planting, maintenance, and care are recommended.

In 2023, Wethersfield completed a tree inventory to track and manage the town's trees, focusing on replacing aging or damaged trees with native species. Native trees are prioritized for their environmental benefits and adaptability to the local climate. While the inventory has helped guide tree replacement efforts, the program faces budget limitations, and additional funding is needed to continue expanding the town's tree canopy.

In December 2024, Wethersfield completed a comprehensive Tree Management Plan that assessed the condition of the town’s urban forest, presented findings from a detailed tree inventory, and outlined recommended maintenance strategies along with proposed planting sites. Notably, the plan highlights a high concentration of new planting locations around Nott Street, Jordan Lane, and Wells Road, reflecting a targeted effort to enhance urban greening in these key areas.

Figure 9.6 Proposed New Planting Locations



Source: Town of Wethersfield Tree Management Plan, December 2024

## Plants and Wildlife

The Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB), maintained by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), documents information from over 100 years of biological inventories conducted by the Connecticut Geological and Natural History Survey. The database compiles and stores data on rare plant and animal species, as well as significant natural communities, making this information available for conservation and planning purposes. This database is continually updated with information derived from ongoing field research, universities, biologists, naturalists, and conservation groups. Critical habitats identify specific areas “that contain the physical or biological features that are essential to the conservation of endangered and threatened species and that may need special management or protection” (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service).

Wethersfield has several areas included in the National Diversity Database, as well as approximately 709 acres of critical habitat areas. Based on the most recent NDDB maps (December 2024), the majority of the town’s NDDB, critical habitat, and wetlands are along the Connecticut River. See Figure 9.7.

## Air Quality

Air quality in Connecticut continues to be a concern due to increasing greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants from automobiles, which are the predominant mode of transportation in the state and the town. Transportation, electricity, and residential thermal sectors account for nearly three quarters of Connecticut’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Poor air quality has significant impacts on public health such as increasing asthma rates, respiratory illnesses, and lung cancer in the general population. The Annual Air Quality Report released by American Lung Association in 2024 rated Hartford County as a C (scale of A to F) due to air ozone levels.

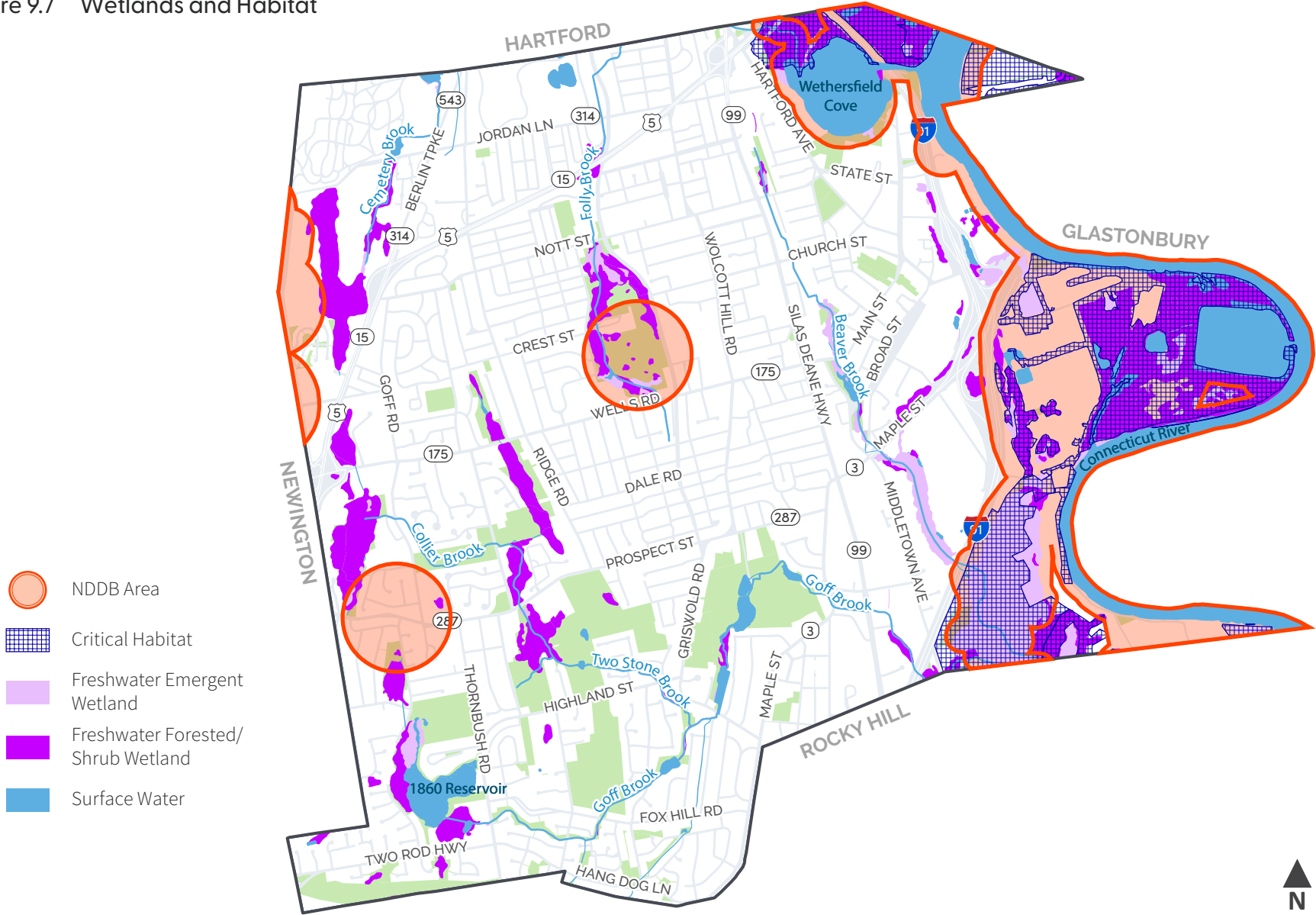
Forests and other open space resources are crucial natural systems that contribute positively to air quality by reducing pollutants and maintaining a healthier balance in the atmosphere. Conserving and protecting these ecosystems are essential for preserving and improving overall air quality.



*Juvenile Eagles in Wethersfield Cove*  
Source: Town of Wethersfield

*Did you know.... Wethersfield's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, adopted in 2006, aims to reduce light pollution and its impact on the environment. Based on guidelines from the International Dark-Sky Association, the ordinance sets rules for shielding lights, limiting brightness, and restricting lighting use at certain times. These measures are intended to reduce unnecessary nighttime light, protect wildlife, and preserve the night sky.*

Figure 9.7 Wetlands and Habitat



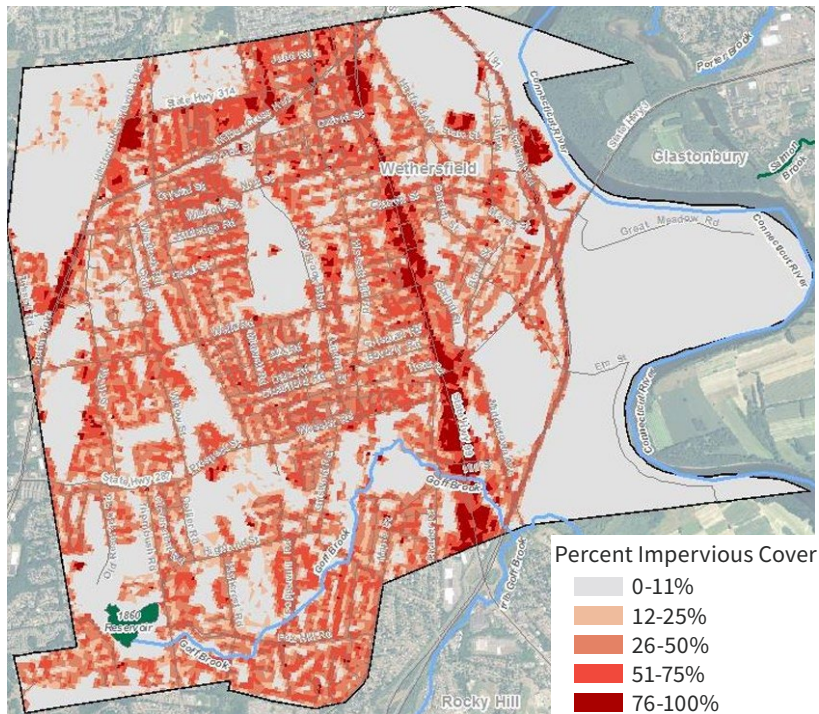
Source: CT DEEP NDDB 2024, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2024

## Stormwater Management

The amount of impervious cover (IC) in the Town affects surface water quality. Impervious cover includes buildings, roads, sidewalks, and other paved surfaces such as parking lots. Impervious coverage is the prominent factor contributing to stormwater runoff and water quality of receiving streams and waterbodies. See Figure 9.8.

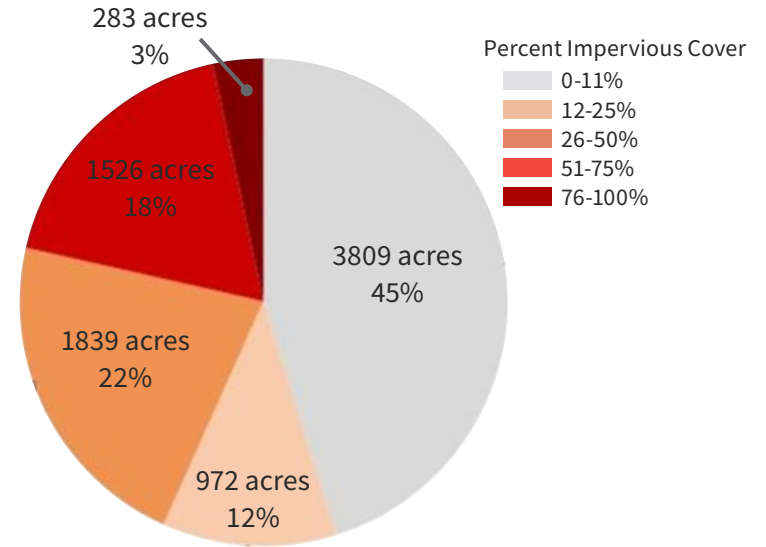
In general, the higher the percentage of IC in a watershed, the poorer the surface water quality. Research in Connecticut strongly suggests that aquatic life will be harmed when the IC within a watershed exceeds 12%. Stormwater pollution from IC is a likely cause of impairment. Approximately 55% of Wethersfield's land area has impervious cover that exceeds the 12% threshold.

Figure 9.8 Impervious Coverage



Source: CT DEEP Water Quality and Stormwater Summary

Figure 9.9 Town Area (Acres) by % Impervious Cover



Source: CT DEEP Water Quality and Stormwater Summary

Stormwater runoff is a significant contributor to water quality issues, as it collects contaminants from surfaces such as driveways, parking lots, rooftops, and fertilized lawns, which then pollute local waterways. In response, Wethersfield adopted a Stormwater Management Plan (SMP) in 2017 to meet the requirements of its MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) permit. The plan outlines steps to reduce stormwater pollutants, improve water quality, and protect the town's rivers, streams, Connecticut River, and Long Island Sound. It includes best practices for public education, community involvement, pollution prevention, and managing stormwater at construction sites and municipal operations. A key component of the SMP is the promotion of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques, which focus on using natural systems to manage stormwater and reduce its impact on the environment. This approach encourages practices like rain gardens, permeable pavements, and green roofs to absorb and filter stormwater where it falls, rather than directing it into traditional drainage systems. Wethersfield submits an annual report on these efforts to the state, as required by the MS4 permit.

## Flooding and Resiliency

Different areas of town face varying levels of exposure to storms, floods, and climate-related events such as heat waves. Heavy rains can lead to riverine flooding, while severe coastal storms may cause coastal flooding. FEMA flood zones identify areas at risk from these events, including the 1% annual chance flood zone (commonly known as the 100-year flood event), the 0.2% annual chance flood zone (500-year flood event), and the floodway. See Figure 9.10. The floodway is a highly regulated area that encompasses the water channel and surrounding land needed to manage flood discharges.

Research from UConn's Connecticut Physical Climate Science Assessment Report indicates high confidence in projected climate changes through 2050. Future temperature and precipitation patterns, especially after mid-century, will depend on mitigation efforts at both local and global levels.

Key findings from the report include:

- A significant increase in average annual temperatures, with largest increase expected in summer and in fall.
- An increase in heat waves - currently warm spells occur 4 times a year - in 2050, they will occur 8 times a year.
- Fewer frost days - 124 days presently will decrease 39 days by 2050.
- Growing season expected to increase approximately 35 days by 2050.
- An increase of annual precipitation with the largest increase expected in winter and spring. Results in fall and summer are inconclusive.
- The number of heavy rain days is projected to increase, increasing flood risk.
- A decrease in summer water availability (with greater evapotranspiration), which is expected to increase drought risk<sup>1</sup>.

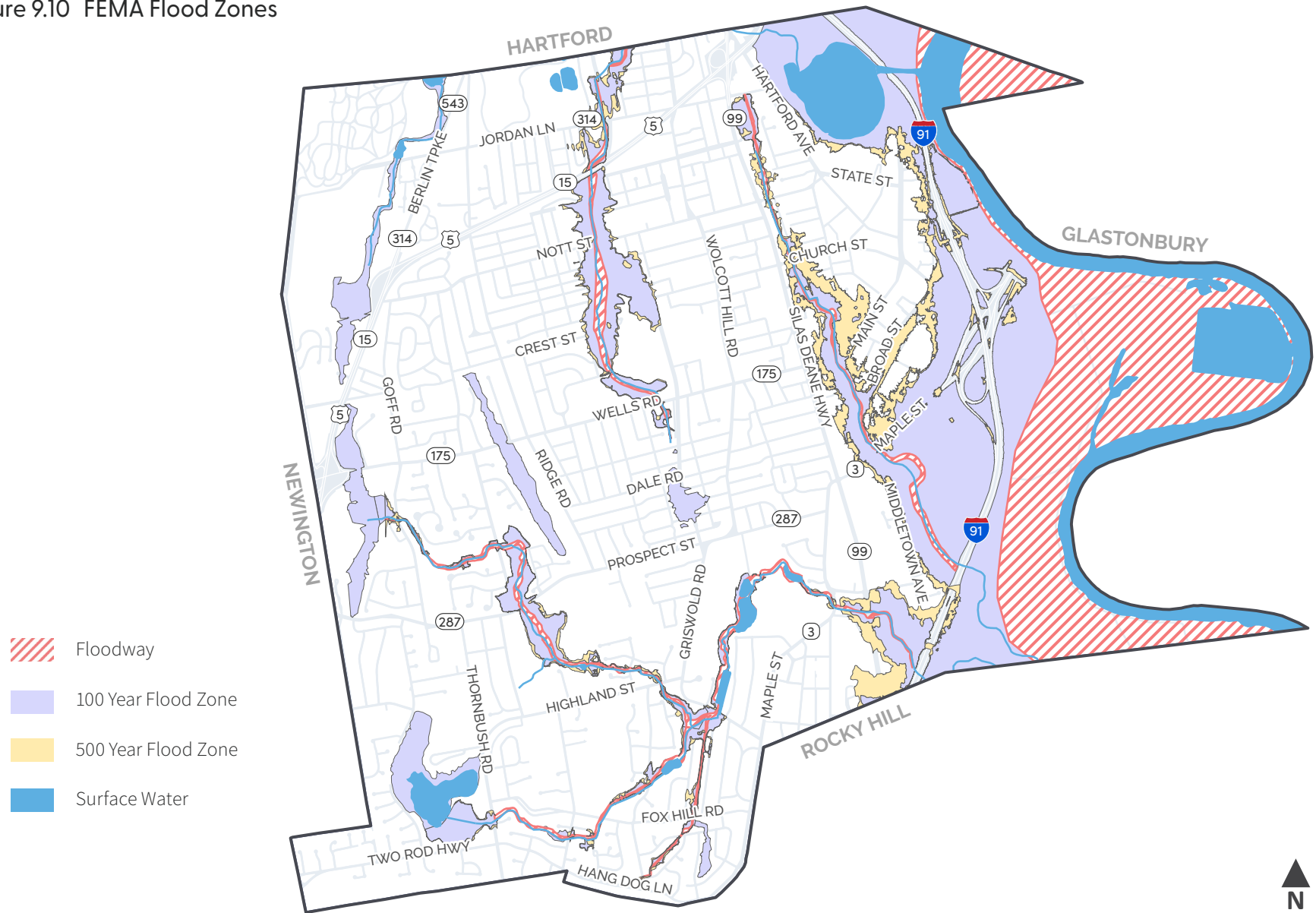
<sup>1</sup> *Connecticut Physical Climate Science Assessment Report (PCSAR), August 2019*

The town and region is expected to face more frequent heavy rain events, with longer dry spells in between, as climate patterns shift. Rising global temperatures are also likely to bring record heat and more frequent heat waves. Addressing extreme heat requires both minimizing heat exposure and ensuring access to relief. In recent years, the Town has operated cooling centers at the Pitkin Community Center and Library and may need to continue or expand this service to meet future needs.

Resilience is the ability to withstand and recover from events like floods, storms, and extreme heat. It involves four key components: preparation, withstanding impacts, recovery, and adaptation. Preparation includes educating the community, planning for emergencies, and ensuring necessary supplies are available. Withstanding events relies on durable infrastructure and informed residents. Recovery involves effective emergency response, rebuilding efforts, and community support. Adaptation requires adjusting strategies and infrastructure to reduce future risks, such as elevating homes to mitigate flood damage or modifying response plans as climate conditions change.

Wethersfield has worked with the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROG) on hazard mitigation planning to strengthen the Town's resilience to natural disasters and climate risks. This collaboration has included assessing local vulnerabilities, identifying priority projects, and updating the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Efforts have focused on improving drainage systems, upgrading critical infrastructure, and enhancing emergency response capabilities. The Town has also engaged in public outreach to educate residents about preparedness and has pursued grants to support resilience initiatives. These combined efforts aim to reduce risks, protect property, and improve the community's ability to recover from extreme weather events.

Figure 9.10 FEMA Flood Zones



Source: FEMA

## Town Boards and Commissions

Town boards and commissions dedicated to conservation play a key role in protecting natural resources and promoting sustainable development. These groups focus on preserving open space, managing environmental risks, and ensuring the responsible use of land and water resources.

### Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission

The Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission (IWCC) is responsible for protecting Wethersfield's wetlands, watercourses, and 100-year floodplains from harmful impacts caused by construction. Before any construction can take place in these regulated areas, applicants must obtain approval from the IWCC.

In addition to reviewing construction proposals, the IWCC certifies the adequacy of Erosion and Sediment Control Plans for projects that disturb more than half an acre of land. All activities are conducted in accordance with the Wethersfield Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission regulations and Connecticut General Statutes 22a-36 through 22a-45.

The IWCC also fulfills the duties of a municipal Conservation Commission by:

- Maintaining a survey of natural resources.
- Reviewing land use proposals.
- Advising other boards and agencies on natural resource protection and open space preservation.

Through these efforts, the IWCC plays a vital role in safeguarding Wethersfield's environment and natural resources.

## Flood and Erosion Control Board

The Wethersfield Flood and Erosion Control Board is responsible for overseeing measures that protect the town from flood risks and soil erosion. The Board works to manage and maintain flood control systems, such as drainage infrastructure, embankments, and retention areas, to reduce the potential for property damage and ensure public safety.

In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Sections 25-84 through 25-94, the Board is authorized to plan, construct, and maintain flood and erosion control projects. This includes collaborating with state and federal agencies, securing funding for improvements, and advising other town boards on strategies to mitigate flood hazards.

By promoting proactive flood prevention and erosion control efforts, the Board helps protect Wethersfield's homes, businesses, and natural resources from the impacts of severe weather and environmental changes.

## Harbor Management Commission

The Wethersfield Harbor Management Commission plays a key role in overseeing and preserving the Wethersfield Cove, a historic and environmentally significant waterway. The Commission is responsible for managing activities within the Cove to ensure its ecological health, public access, and safe recreational use. Key responsibilities of the Commission include:

- Developing and implementing the Wethersfield Harbor Management Plan to guide the protection and sustainable use of the Cove.
- Reviewing proposals for activities such as dock installations, dredging, or other waterfront developments to ensure they align with conservation goals.
- Working to prevent erosion, maintain water quality, and support habitat protection within the Cove and surrounding shoreline.
- Collaborating with state and local agencies to address environmental concerns, improve public access, and promote safe boating practices.

## Shade Tree Commission

The Wethersfield Shade Tree Commission is responsible for the care and management of public trees within the town. The Commission's primary role is to protect, preserve, and enhance the town's tree canopy, ensuring that the community's trees are healthy, safe, and properly maintained. This includes overseeing the planting, pruning, and removal of trees in public spaces, such as streets, parks, and other municipal properties.

The Commission also works to educate residents about the importance of trees, tree planting, and tree care, and it advocates for environmentally sustainable practices. Additionally, the Shade Tree Commission is involved in community outreach efforts, such as organizing tree planting events and promoting the benefits of trees, including their impact on air quality, stormwater management, and overall quality of life.

## Conservation Partners

Wethersfield is fortunate to have a robust network of conservation partners, who share a common goal of protecting the town's environmental resources while also balancing future development needs. The roles of these partners are described in further detail below.

## Great Meadows Conservation Trust

The Great Meadows Conservation Trust (GMCT) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the floodplain lands of the Connecticut River in the towns of Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, and Glastonbury. Established in 1968, the Trust works to protect these ecologically rich and historically significant meadows through land acquisition, stewardship, and public education. GMCT actively maintains walking trails, organizes guided hikes, and collaborates with local landowners to promote conservation practices. By safeguarding these natural spaces, the Trust helps protect wildlife habitats, improve water quality, and preserve the agricultural heritage of the Connecticut River Valley.

## Goodwin University

Goodwin University has worked with Wethersfield and the Great Meadows Conservation Trust on initiatives focused on the protection and management of local natural resources, particularly wetlands and open space. One of their key projects includes supporting conservation efforts in areas such as the Great Meadows area, where they have worked to preserve critical habitats and protect local wildlife corridors. Goodwin University has also contributed to environmental education and awareness, engaging with community stakeholders to promote sustainable land use practices. Their involvement has included providing expertise in land conservation, habitat restoration, and supporting the long-term ecological health of the region.



*Great Meadows Conservation Trust Land*  
Source: Great Meadows Conservation Trust

## What We Heard

During the community engagement process, several key themes emerged from the Wethersfield community, reflecting a strong desire to enhance the town's open spaces and environmental sustainability. Residents emphasized the need for improved access to the reservoir, more playgrounds for toddlers, and expanded trail systems. Protecting Millwood Farms Park was a significant concern, as was addressing climate change and flooding, leading to calls for updated flood maps and flood control plans. There were also discussions on promoting sustainability in new construction, including the use of solar and geothermal energy and exploring alternatives to astro-turf fields. Enhancing the use of Kycia and Wilkus Farms, introducing a residential composting program, and expanding community gardens were also proposed. Additionally, there was support for reducing light pollution, preserving wildlife corridors, and managing vacant wooded areas in neighborhoods that are currently neglected. Improving connectivity between open space resources and creating a centralized information hub were also identified as important steps forward.



View of the 1860 Reservoir  
Source: Town of Wethersfield

I think more information (pamphlet) showing open space and recreational opportunities for residents should be available.

We need to promote sustainability in new construction, need to be thinking about solar and geothermal!

Boating and rowing in the Cove and River is great!

I would like to see a residential composting program.

The Community Garden is a great asset!

We need to preserve Wethersfield's farms and agricultural lands

Wethersfield is largely built out. The priority should be on preserving the open space and natural resources that the town does have.

**CHAPTER 9** Open Space and Natural Resources

**Goal: Conserve, protect, and enhance open space, natural resource areas, and recreational opportunities, while promoting environmentally responsible and sustainable community growth.**

**Strategies and Action Steps**

**Strategy #1. Protect Wethersfield's natural resources.**

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Further strengthen protections for wetlands, floodplains, and critical habitats to support biodiversity and climate resilience.	IWCC, PZC	Continuous
2. Partner with local conservation organizations to manage the land by controlling invasive (non-native) and protected species, protecting threatened habitats, fostering native biodiversity and critical habitats.	IWCC	Continuous
3. Establish a tree planting program to encourage the planting of street trees and consider starting a tree nursery.	IWCC, PZC	Mid-Term
4. Encourage creation of pollinator pathways and use of native plants to nurture local ecosystems.	IWCC, PZC, TC	Long-Term
5. Provide education to residents on the importance of protecting natural resources and their critical role in building a sustainable future.	IWCC, BOE	Continuous
6. Enhance Coordination of natural resources conservation efforts with neighboring towns and other organizations.	CRCOG	Continuous
7. Provide balance that protects and maintains natural habitats and wildlife corridors with development priorities. Build upon the conservation, recreation, education, and economic benefits associated with designating the Connecticut River as a "National Blueway."	TCC, IWCC, CR-COG	Continuous
8. Continue to implement and advance Low Impact Development (LID) strategies whenever possible and amend zoning, subdivision and other regulations, and Town construction standards as needed to require the integration of these techniques.	IWCC, PZC	Continuous
9. Continue to implement the Harbor Management Plan for Wethersfield Cove.	P&R	Continuous
10. Coordinate with CT DEEP and US Army Corps of Engineers to dredge Wethersfield Cove and the channel as needed to maintain navigation while minimizing ecological disruption.	P&R, TC	Long-Term

Strategy #2. Provide resources to continue to maintain and expand parks and open space in the Town.		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to pursue funding to promote the acquisition and management of open space properties.	RDA, EDIC, TCC, PZC	Continuous
2. Enhance the capacity of the Town’s boards and commissions to act strategically about/on conservation issues.	IWCC, PZC	Continuous
3. Create additional passive recreational areas using available acquisition tools, such as the Connecticut Outdoor Recreation Fund, to acquire land and/or easements to establish a comprehensive and connected open space and trail system.	P&R, TC	Continuous
4. Maintain the Land Acquisition Fund in the Town’s annual budget for maintenance of existing open space properties and acquisition of additional properties.	EDIC, RDA, IWCC, P&R, TC	Continuous
5. Continue to seek funding for trail maintenance and expansion, as well as the acquisition of parcels that are adjacent to open space areas in order to create a larger, contiguous forest network. Devote special attention to increasing open space connectivity.	P&R, IWCC	Continuous
6. Take advantage of potential opportunities to advance the Town’s open space network as a way to promote residents’ health and well-being.	CCHD	Continuous
7. Support land preservation efforts of other organizations (e.g. Great Meadows Land Trust, Connecticut Land Conservation Council, etc.) through fundraising and available grants.	TC, IWCC, TCC	Continuous

**Strategy #3. Ensure that Town and regional assets, and critical facilities are resilient.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Explore options for the development of new or expanded critical facilities to ensure that they are accessible and usable before, during, and after emergencies such as extreme storms, floods, or extended heat waves.	CRCOG, CCHD, TC	Continuous
2. Continue to partner with CRCOG in hazard mitigation efforts.	CRCOG, CCHD, TC	Continuous
3. Support Emergency Services, Department of Public Works, Fire Department, and the Police Department in their roles as first responders during storm events and other emergencies.	TC	Short-Term
4. Develop a long-range plan for expansion of the Public Works facility and relocation outside of the flood zone.	PZC, IWCC	Mid-Term

**Strategy #4. Proactively enhance community resilience by reducing flooding and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Develop capital plans and seek funding to improve drainage infrastructure to reduce flooding and the potential for associated loss of life, property damage, and health risks.	CRCOG, CTDOT, TC	Continuous
2. Identify critical drainage infrastructure improvements required to ensure that state-owned and other major roads remain passable for the traveling public and emergency responders during and after extreme storms and flood events.	CRCOG	Mid-Term
3. Issue flood and storm related early warnings and related information to all Town residents via the Reverse 911 system, social media, email and other means, particularly to residents located within flood zones.	CRCOG, FD, PD	Continuous
4. Educate property owners on effective floodproofing measures and resilient construction practices for structures and available resources.	TC, PZC	Continuous

Strategy #5. Protect water quality in the Town.		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to protect water quality and water resources within all watersheds in Town by implementing watershed-based management practices, enforcing regulations pertaining to water quality such as those listed in the Inland Wetlands and Conservation Commission regulations.	IWCC, PZC, CCHD	Continuous
2. Develop comprehensive educational programs informing residents about home activities and impacts that can adversely impact surface water, ground water and other environmentally sensitive areas.	IWCC, CCHD	Continuous
3. Continue to look for opportunities to provide waterfront access for the public while balancing the need for riparian buffers.	IWCC, PZC	Long-Term
4. Pursue funding opportunities to purchase open space, conservation or recreational lands with a priority on properties with wetlands, watercourses and floodplain areas or those that provide connections between environmental resources.	IWCC, PZC	Continuous
5. Discourage the use of fertilizers and other chemicals that can adversely affect water quality and water resources and encourage the use of environmentally friendly alternatives .	IWCC	Continuous
6. Continue to encourage Low Impact Development (LID) in accordance with the Town’s MS4 Stormwater Permit requirements.	IWCC, PZC	Continuous
7. Continue training Town employees on issues surrounding water quality in Town.	CCHD	Continuous

**Strategy #6. Support local farms, farmers, and farmland preservation.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Preserve and extend the agricultural zone where possible. Review the agricultural zone regulations and other regulations related to farms and farming to ensure that they are enabling agricultural uses.	PZC	Short-Term
2. Preserve identified farmlands and seek to acquire development rights for farms aiding in preservation. Continue to be proactive about attaining agricultural properties.	RDA, EDIC	Long-Term
3. Maintain and enhance the Farmers Market.	TCC	Short-Term
4. Capitalize on Wethersfield’s farming heritage to pursue funding for farmland preservation efforts.	TCC	TCC
5. Support continued community uses of farmland for the benefit of the Wethersfield community.	IWCC, TCC	Continuous



# 10 CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

*Source: Town of Wethersfield*

## Baseline Conditions

Wethersfield, settled in 1634, is one of Connecticut's oldest towns, with its history closely tied to the Connecticut River. Originally called "Pyquag" by the Pequot tribe, the town became an important agricultural and trade hub. By the 18th century, Wethersfield was a key port for maritime trade. Its connection to the river continued with the arrival of steamboats in the 19th century. The town also has a legacy in industrial innovation, including the former General Electric (GE) plant. Today, Wethersfield's waterfront remains a hub for recreation, offering opportunities for boating, fishing, and public enjoyment, continuing its historical connection to the river. See Figure 10.1.

## National Register of Historic Places and Districts

Wethersfield is home to many historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service. The National Register is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects deemed significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Wethersfield's historic resources include individual homes, properties, and districts made up of multiple sites that contribute to the town's historic significance. Listing on the National Register is a prestigious recognition, but it does not restrict property owners' rights to use their property as they wish. The following tools are available to support the protection and preservation of historic and cultural resources:

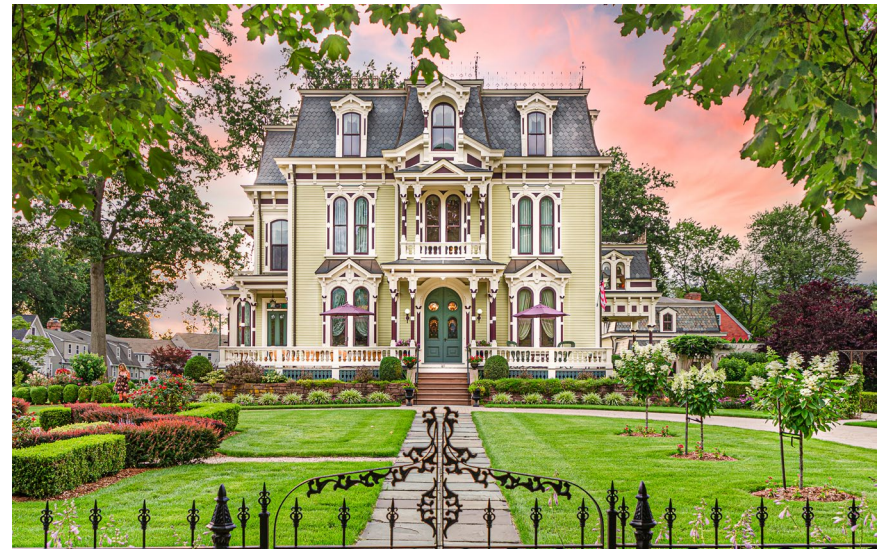
- Provide for review of federally funded, licensed or sponsored projects which may affect listed historic properties.
- Make owners of historic properties eligible to apply for federal grants-in-aid (when available) for preservation activities.
- Encourage the rehabilitation, through tax incentives, of income-producing historic properties that meet preservation standards.

- Provide protection from unreasonable destruction of historic/cultural resources through use of the environmental protection provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Wethersfield's properties, sites and districts currently listed on the National Register are shown on the Historic Resources map (Figure 10.1) and summarized on the following pages.

## Old Wethersfield National Register Historic District

The Old Wethersfield National Register Historic District is the largest historic district in Connecticut. It covers over 1,300 acres and includes the town's historic core, centered around Main Street, Wethersfield Cove, and the Wethersfield Green. It includes 1,226 historic buildings. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 and is renowned for its well-preserved examples of Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, and Victorian architecture. The district reflects the deep historical roots of Wethersfield.



*Silas Robbins house located in both the National Register and Local District  
Source: Town of Wethersfield, Kelley Kamay*

Figure 10.1 Historic Resources



Source: Town of Wethersfield, State Historic Preservation Office, National Park Service, CT Trust for Historic Preservation

## National Historic Landmarks

Wethersfield is home to several National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), which are designated by the Secretary of the Interior as sites of exceptional national significance in American history and culture, see Figure 10.2. Among Wethersfield's NHLs are the Joseph Webb House, the Silas Deane House, and the Buttolph-Williams House, all of which reflect the town's rich colonial and Revolutionary War heritage.

- Joseph Webb House (1752): This historic home is renowned as the site where General George Washington and French General Rochambeau met in 1781 to plan the military strategy that ultimately led to victory at the Battle of Yorktown, a pivotal moment in the American Revolution.
- Silas Deane House (1766): The home of Silas Deane, one of America's first diplomats, who played a critical role in securing French support for the American cause during the Revolutionary War.
- Buttolph-Williams House (1711): One of the oldest surviving examples of early colonial architecture in Connecticut, this house provides valuable insight into 17th-century life and was famously featured in the children's novel *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare.

These landmarks are part of the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum and contribute to Wethersfield's national prominence as a historic destination. Their NHL designation highlights their importance not just to Connecticut's history, but to the broader story of America's founding and colonial past.

Figure 10.2 National Historic Landmarks



Source: National Park Service



Silas Deane House  
Source: Webb Deane Stevens Museum

## State Register of Historic Places

A listing on the State Register of Historic Places provides honorary recognition and helps highlight the historic significance of a site or structure. This listing encourages consideration of the impact of land use decisions on these properties. State Register-listed buildings may also receive special consideration under the State Building Code. All sites listed on the National Register are also recognized on the State Register. Currently, Wethersfield has 4 properties listed on the State Register, with many located near the town center and within historic districts such as the Wethersfield Historic District. The State Register listing process is typically quicker than the National Register process, making it a valuable interim recognition while National Register designation is being pursued.

## Local Historic Districts

Local historic designation carries legal authority in regulating the exterior appearance of sites and structures as viewed from public streets and spaces. In Wethersfield the Wethersfield Historic District Commission, reviews projects to ensure that changes within the district align with its historic character. The purpose of local historic designation is to protect and preserve the distinctive architectural and historical features of buildings, streetscapes, and places of significance.

## Old Wethersfield Local Historic District

The Old Wethersfield Historic District was established as a local historic district in 1962 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. It includes 43 structures built before 1850, reflecting Wethersfield’s colonial past. Preservation efforts have helped maintain much of the district’s historical character despite modern development. Updating the historic district survey could help ensure that records remain accurate and relevant for future planning.

The Old Wethersfield Local Historic District covers a smaller, tightly focused area around the historic village center, like Main Street and Broad Street Green. It has strict rules to protect the historic look of buildings, with any visible changes needing approval from the town’s Historic District Commission.

The Old Wethersfield National Register District is much bigger, including not just the village center but also surrounding homes, farms, and historic sites. It’s mostly honorary, giving national recognition and potential tax benefits, but it doesn’t restrict what you can do to your property unless public funds are involved.

Figure 10.3 Historic Districts and Resources

Name	Type	Resources
Old Wethersfield Historic District	National Register District	1,226 Properties
Joseph Webb House	National Historic Landmark	Home and Barn
Silas Dean House	National Historic Landmark	Home and Barn
Buttolph-Williams House	National Historic Landmark	Home and Barn
State Register Properties	State Register of Historic Places	4 Properties
Old Wethersfield Historic District	Local Historic District	43 Structures

Source: DECD, CT State Historic Preservation Office

## Certified Local Government

Wethersfield became a Certified Local Government (CLG) on November 30, 2023, earning recognition from the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for its dedication to preserving historic resources. The CLG program is a partnership between federal, state, and local governments that provides critical support and resources for local preservation efforts.

This designation enables Wethersfield to access various tools that will help protect and promote the historic character of its neighborhoods, including Old Wethersfield. The CLG status enhances the town's ability to maintain its rich historical heritage while fostering community involvement in preservation activities. Benefits of the CLG Designation include:

- Access to Preservation Grants: CLGs are eligible for federal and state funding for projects such as historic surveys, preservation planning, and restoration of historic structures.
- Technical Assistance and Training: Wethersfield's Historic District Commission (HDC) will receive expert guidance, training, and support from state and federal preservation professionals to improve local preservation efforts.
- Increased Influence in Preservation Policies: CLGs have a stronger voice in statewide and national preservation discussions, helping to shape policy and improve preservation practices.
- Enhanced Public Engagement: The CLG program encourages greater community participation, making it easier for residents to get involved in preservation activities and decisions.
- Opportunities for Collaboration: Wethersfield can collaborate with other municipalities, organizations, and preservation agencies to strengthen its local preservation efforts.

*Did you know.... Wethersfield was designated as a Cultural District by the Connecticut Office of the Arts in 2018, recognizing the town's rich cultural and historical significance. This designation highlights Wethersfield's vibrant arts scene and fosters collaboration among local artists, cultural organizations, and the community. It enhances public engagement through events like art shows, theater performances, and cultural festivals, while also attracting tourists and supporting the local economy. The designation provides access to state resources and funding, helping to strengthen Wethersfield's identity as a cultural hub and promote the preservation of its heritage.*



*Bikes on Main Street Community Event  
Source: Town of Wethersfield, Jenna Scisco*

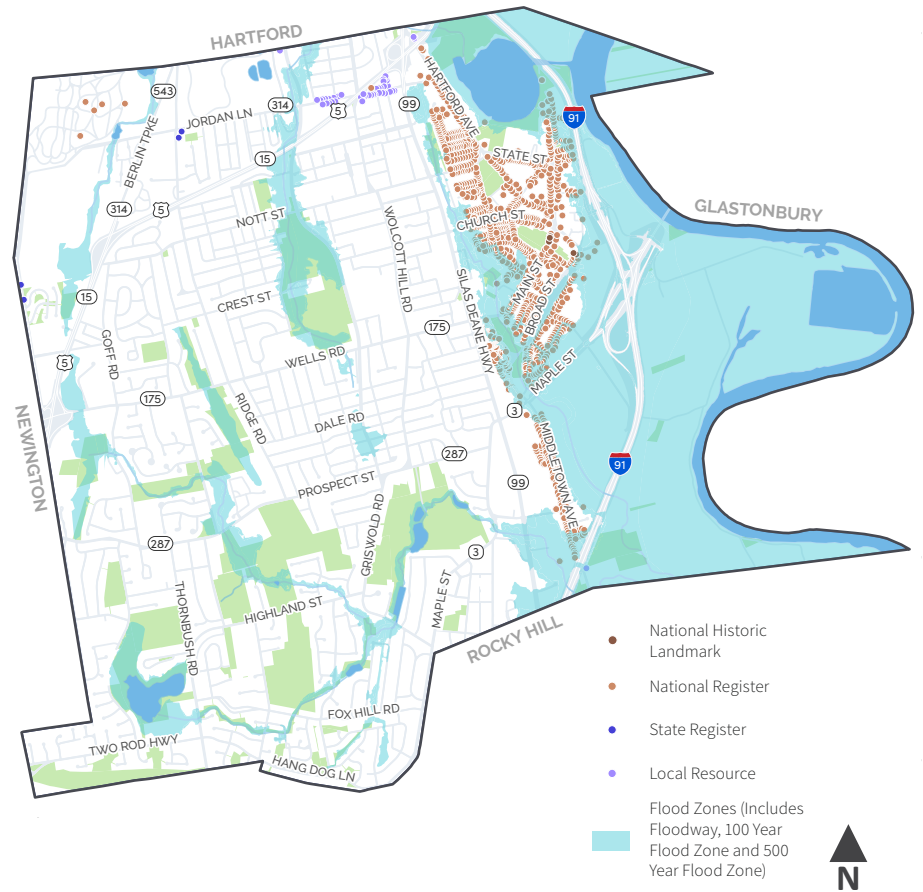
## Resiliency Planning for Historic Resources

Over the past decade climate change and associated sea level rise have emerged as serious and immediate threats to the preservation of historic properties. As the science of climate change has advanced, patterns of projected change have become clear, and threats to historic resources are now a focus of public, private, and professional concern. Three distinct, but related, major categories of impacts to historic properties can be extrapolated from these findings:

- Storm events have become more frequent and severe, posing risks to historic properties. Resiliency and recovery plans that don't consider historic resources can unintentionally harm them. Programs like the National Flood Insurance Program may discourage preservation. FEMA encourages proactive planning for historic properties through Hazard Mitigation Plans, but there may be differences in how historic resources are defined and preserved at the federal and state levels. In Connecticut, efforts after Hurricane Sandy focused on documenting and protecting historic resources, with resources available through SHPO.
- Sea level rise threatens many historic properties in Connecticut, with risks like flooding, storm surge, and infrastructure loss. To protect these resources, adaptations such as elevating buildings and weatherproofing are recommended, with decisions managed by SHPO.
- Environmental changes, such as rising temperatures, altered seasonal cycles, and increased invasive species, pose threats to historic resources by accelerating deterioration. These challenges require more intervention, but resources are available to help owners of historic buildings maintain and rehabilitate them while using sustainable practices.

Of the 1,278 historic structures documented in Wethersfield, 265 structures are located within FEMA flood zones as shown in Figure 10.4.

Figure 10.4 Historic Resources and Flood Zones



Source: Town of Wethersfield, State Historic Preservation Office, National Park Service, CT Trust for Historic Preservation, FEMA

## Town Boards and Commissions

Wethersfield is home to several boards and commissions dedicated to preserving and promoting the town's history and culture. These groups play a vital role in safeguarding historic properties, supporting cultural initiatives, and fostering community engagement. Through their work, they help maintain the town's unique heritage while encouraging artistic expression, cultural events, and public participation in preservation efforts.

### Historic District Commission

The Wethersfield Historic District Commission (HDC) is responsible for preserving the town's historic properties within the Wethersfield Historic District. The Commission reviews applications for building permits to ensure that alterations, demolitions, or new construction are in line with historical standards and maintain the integrity of the district.

The HDC also provides guidance to property owners on maintaining and preserving historic buildings. By offering recommendations and reviewing proposals, the Commission helps protect Wethersfield's history while allowing for responsible development. The HDC plays a crucial role in safeguarding the town's historic resources for future generations.

### Design Review Advisory Committee

The Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) helps ensure that new developments and changes to properties fit with the town's aesthetic and historical goals. The Committee provides advice on the design of new buildings, renovations, and landscaping, focusing on how these changes affect the town's visual identity. While it doesn't have regulatory authority like the Historic District Commission, the DRAC's recommendations help maintain a consistent and high-quality appearance for the town's developments.

## Economic Development and Improvement Commission

The Economic Development and Improvement Commission (EDIC) works to enhance Wethersfield's economic growth by collaborating with local businesses, shopkeepers, the Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations to identify opportunities for revitalization and growth. The Commission supports efforts to attract new businesses, improve commercial areas, and address community needs. Their work involves strategic planning to foster a thriving economy that benefits both businesses and residents. More details on their efforts and projects is discussed in the Economic Development Chapter 6.

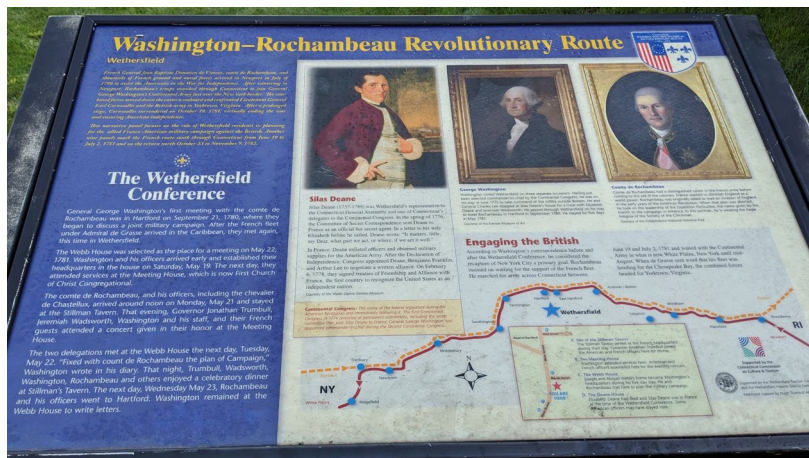


Members of the Community Enjoying PorchFest 2024  
Source: FHI Studio

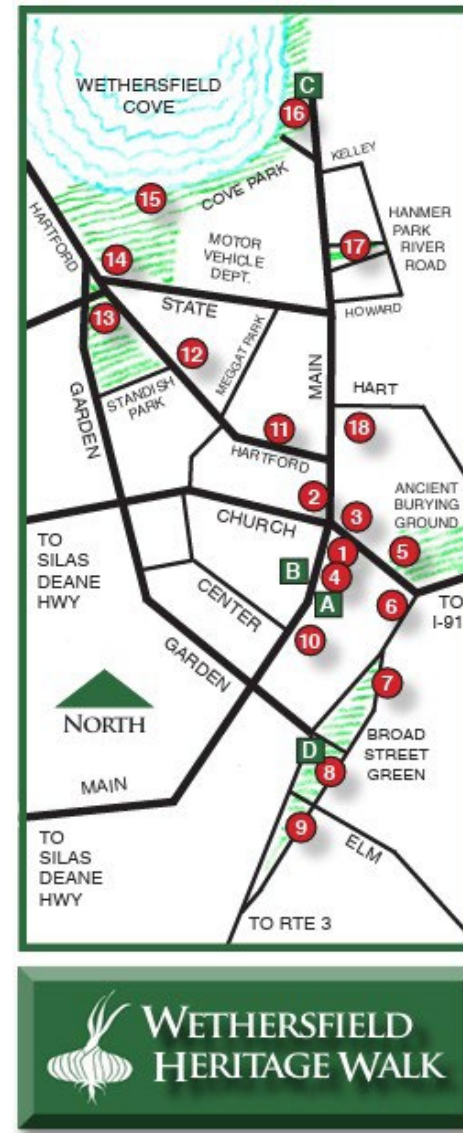
## Tourism and Culture Commission

The Tourism and Culture Commission is focused on promoting the town as a destination for visitors while celebrating its rich cultural heritage. The Commission works to highlight Wethersfield's historical sites, cultural attractions, events, and arts programs to attract tourists and engage the local community. It collaborates with local organizations, businesses, and the Historical Society to organize events, festivals, and programs that showcase Wethersfield's history and culture.

In addition to promoting tourism, the Commission also supports efforts to enhance the town's cultural offerings, such as art exhibitions, performances, and educational activities. The commission works closely with the Historical Society, the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, the Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association and other organizations interested in promoting the town to potential visitors. The commission maintains a web site that can be viewed at [historicwethersfield.org](http://historicwethersfield.org). Through its initiatives, the Tourism and Culture Commission helps increase awareness of Wethersfield's unique assets and contributes to the town's economic growth by drawing visitors and supporting local businesses.



Informational Kiosk that is part of the Heritage Walk  
Source: Town of Wethersfield



Wethersfield Heritage Walk Route that displays informational kiosks  
Source: Town of Wethersfield

What's with the onion?

The Wethersfield Onion logo is a symbol that represents the town's deep agricultural history, specifically its once-thriving onion farming industry. Wethersfield was known for its high-quality onions, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and the onion became a local icon. The logo often features a stylized onion, highlighting this important part of the town's heritage and its connection to agriculture. It serves as a reminder of Wethersfield's roots and is used in various town branding efforts.



## Partner Organizations

Wethersfield's partner organizations, including local businesses, cultural institutions, and event organizers, play a crucial role in supporting the town's cultural and tourism initiatives. These groups collaborate to promote Wethersfield's history, heritage, and events, helping to attract visitors and engage the community in preserving and celebrating the town's unique cultural assets.

### Wethersfield Historical Society

The Wethersfield Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and sharing the town's rich history. It manages several historic properties, including the Isaac Stevens House and the Wethersfield Museum and Visitor Center, where it offers exhibits, educational programs, and events that highlight the town's past. The Society engages the public through research, collections, and public outreach, fostering an understanding of Wethersfield's heritage. It also operates the Keeney Cultural Center, hosting cultural events and activities. In collaboration with local organizations, the Society helps host tours and events that celebrate Wethersfield's history, ensuring that the town's cultural and historical resources are preserved for future generations.

### Webb Deane Stevens Museum

The Webb Deane Stevens Museum is dedicated to preserving and interpreting Wethersfield's colonial history. Its mission is to educate the public about the town's historical significance, particularly during the American Revolution, through its collection of three historic homes: the Webb House, the Deane House, and the Stevens House. The museum offers tours, educational programs, and events to engage the community and visitors in learning about the lives of the families who lived there and the history of Wethersfield. By preserving these historic sites, the museum contributes to the community's understanding of its heritage and fosters a connection to the past.

### Wethersfield Art League

The Wethersfield Art League (WAL) is a community group that supports local artists in town. It offers events like art shows, workshops, and classes for artists of all skill levels. WAL also holds monthly meetings with guest speakers and demonstrations. Their annual art show features works from members and allows the public to view and purchase art. The League encourages creativity and art education in the community. It's a great place for anyone interested in art to connect and learn.

### Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association

The Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association (OWSA) is a group of business owners in the historic Old Wethersfield district. They help to organize events like PorchFest and Scarecrows on Main to bring people to the area and support local businesses. The association helps create a sense of community among shop owners and works to preserve the charm of the district.



*Annual Taste of Wethersfield hosted by the Wethersfield Historical Society at the Keeney Memorial Center*

*Source: Wethersfield Historical Society, Ben Jordan*

## State Historic Preservation Office

The Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), part of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), works to identify, protect, and preserve the state's historic and cultural resources. SHPO offers technical assistance, funding, and guidance, managing programs like the National Register of Historic Places, Historic Preservation Tax Credits, and the State Historic Preservation Fund. It also reviews projects for historic impacts and advocates for preserving Connecticut's cultural heritage.

SHPO recommends Wethersfield extend its demolition delay ordinance from 90 to 180 days to allow more time for exploring preservation alternatives, adaptive reuse, community input, and potential grant opportunities. This change aims to protect the town's architectural heritage and prevent the loss of historic buildings.

## Preservation Connecticut

Preservation Connecticut is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the state's historic places and promoting a better understanding of its cultural heritage. The organization provides resources, education, and advocacy to help communities, property owners, and organizations protect historic buildings and sites. Through grants, technical assistance, and public programs, Preservation Connecticut works to ensure that the state's historic resources are preserved for future generations, while also fostering sustainable development and revitalization in Connecticut's historic communities.

*Did you know.... Over the years, archaeological surveys in Wethersfield have explored sites of historical significance, revealing artifacts and information about the town's early colonial and Native American past. These investigations have uncovered remnants of 17th-century homes, tools, ceramics, and other materials that shed light on settlement patterns, trade, and daily life. The findings enhance understanding of Wethersfield's historical development and contribute to ongoing efforts to document and preserve the town's rich archaeological heritage for future generations.*



Col. John Chester Fife and Drum Corps  
Source: Town of Wethersfield

## Cultural Landscapes

Wethersfield is home to many cultural landscapes that reflect the town's history, values, and traditions. These areas, such as historic sites, farms, and neighborhoods, have been shaped by human activity over time. They play a key role in preserving the town's story and maintaining a connection to the past, while also contributing to Wethersfield's unique identity.

### Wethersfield Cove and Warehouse

Wethersfield Cove, originally part of the Connecticut River, was home to Thomas Deming's shipyard, where the Tryall, Connecticut's first ship, was launched in 1649. Once a busy trade center, the area's warehouse now hosts a maritime exhibit by the Wethersfield Historical Society. From 1650 to 1830, merchants traded goods like lumber, grain, and onions for Caribbean items such as salt, sugar, and rum.

### The Connecticut River

The Connecticut River has been important to Wethersfield's history, helping the town grow through trade and shipbuilding. Its location along the river allowed the town to transport goods like lumber, grain, and onions. Today, the river offers scenic views and recreational opportunities, serving as a reminder of Wethersfield's historical connection to the waterway.

### Barns

Wethersfield is home to several historic barns that reflect the town's agricultural past. Notable examples include the Kycia barn, Anderson Farm barn, and the barn at Wethersfield Heritage Farm. These barns, built with sturdy craftsmanship, were once essential for farming activities such as raising livestock and storing crops. While some of these barns continue to serve agricultural purposes, others are preserved as important landmarks, offering a glimpse into Wethersfield's rural heritage.

## Agricultural Heritage

Wethersfield has a long agricultural heritage that dates back to the 17th century, when Native Americans recognized the area's rich, fertile soil. In the 1850s, local seed companies began selling packets of garden seeds to homesteaders moving west with the railroad expansion. Today, companies like Hart Seed, McCue Gardens, and Comstock Ferre, continue this farming tradition, offering a variety of seeds, plants, and garden supplies. Wethersfield's alluvial soil remains some of the best in the state, supporting local farm stands like Anderson Farm, which offers native-grown fruits and vegetables from June through October. The town's agricultural roots continue to thrive, contributing to its identity and community.



*Wethersfield Cove and Warehouse*  
Source: Town of Wethersfield, Osvaldo Ferrari

## Ancient Burying Ground

The Ancient Burying Ground is a historic cemetery where the headstones feature quaint, often poetic inscriptions that tell heartfelt stories of the lives and losses of early residents. The cemetery showcases the work of over a dozen skilled stone carvers from the Connecticut Valley, with the earliest gravestone, Leonard Chester's table stone, dating back to 1648. These stones not only mark the resting places of Wethersfield's early settlers but also provide a glimpse into the town's history and the artistry of the time.

## Broad Street Green

The Broad Street Green is a historic area that was once used by early settlers for grazing livestock. Surrounded by old homes, it is now home to a variety of large trees, including elms, oaks, sycamores, and an 1836 copper beech. Today, the Green serves as a peaceful public space, often used for community events, gatherings, and casual recreation, while also offering a glimpse into the town's past.

## Places of Worship

Wethersfield celebrates its diversity through a range of historically and architecturally significant houses of worship. These include Temple Beth Torah, Sacred Heart, Trinity Episcopal, and The First Church of Christ in Wethersfield, each contributing to the town's rich cultural and religious heritage.

## Gardens

Colonial-era gardeners were primarily focused on practicality, with little emphasis on beauty. Over time, however, interest in horticultural aesthetics grew. Today, Wethersfield homeowners tend gardens for a variety of reasons, including food, profit, and pleasure. Notable gardens in the town include the Webb House Colonial Revival Garden, designed by Amy Cogswell in 1921, as well as the Heritage Herb Garden and the Weston Rose Garden at Town Hall.



*Ancient Burying Ground*  
Source: Town of Wethersfield



*Webb House Colonial Revival Garden*  
Source: FHI Studio

## What We Heard

During the community engagement process, several key themes emerged from the Wethersfield community. Suggestions for enhancing the town include establishing a facility for arts or makerspaces, introducing a town shuttle or trolley, and continuing community events that attract visitors. There is also a desire for more community events, improved marketing of existing events, and hosting activities in different areas of town to engage a broader audience. Recommendations include improving the façade program, particularly along Silas Deane Highway, and providing more information on the town's website. Additionally, increasing understanding of the roles of the Historic District Commission and the Historical Society would help clarify their distinct contributions. Marketing historic properties more effectively and developing a performing arts space on Silas Deane Highway would further enhance community engagement and growth.

10



Talking to the community at CornFest  
Source: FHI Studio

The Historical Society is a great resource in our town. I love that the displays and exhibits are always changing and updated.

Wethersfield needs more funding for cultural and historic education of our youth, the museums here are great!

Wethersfield has the best events- we should do more!

Everything is done in Old Wethersfield, spread out!

Parking in Old Wethersfield is a challenge- need better signage too!

The Town's website could use some improvements to better advertise events.

It is like there are two Wethersfields, some people never travel into Downtown and feel under-served.

**Goal:** Safeguard, promote, and celebrate Wethersfield’s cultural and historic resources for future generations, by encouraging the stewardship of historic landmarks and properties and supporting growth of cultural assets within the community.

Strategies and Action Steps

**Strategy #1. Promote the preservation of Wethersfield’s historically and architecturally significant resources.**

ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Support the Historic District Commission in performing its duties to protect the locally designated historic district and properties.	HDC, PZC, TC	Continuous
2. Ensure publicly owned properties (sites, artifacts, structures and buildings) of historical and architectural significance are protected and preserved.	HDC, PZC, RDA	Continuous
3. Assess risks and vulnerabilities of historic properties located within floodplains and work with CT DEEP and SHPO to reduce those risks while preserving the property's historic character.	IWCC, HDC, PZC	Long-Term
4. Continue to update and maintain a list of the Town’s historic properties, including national and state register properties and historic resources inventory (survey of the state), which can be easily accessed and updated on Wethersfield’s town website.	HDC	Continuous
5. Consider adopting a Demolition Delay Ordinance to protect historic structures that are located outside of the Local Historic District and that are not currently protected by State mandated demolition delay periods associated with local historic districts.	HDC, RDA	Mid-Term
6. Encourage adaptive re-use of existing historic sites, buildings, and structures.	HDC, PZC, RDA, TC	Continuous
7. Complete updates to the Wethersfield Local Historic District survey as it is the oldest District in the State – 1962.	HDC, TC	Mid-Term
8. Examine best practices and innovative zoning ordinances that encourage adaptive re-use of former residential and industrial properties for new commercial, business or multiple uses, especially in transitional areas.	PZC, RDA	Long-Term

**CHAPTER 10** Cultural and Historic Resources

**Strategy #2. Continue to promote Wethersfield’s historic and cultural resources as tourism destinations.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
1. Continue to market Wethersfield’s history and celebrate its heritage through community events.	TCC, P&R	Continuous
2. Continue to work with the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to leverage Wethersfield’s status as a Cultural District to market its arts, cultural assets, and promote tourism.	TCC, EDIC	Continuous
3. Pursue opportunities to expand arts and cultural resources throughout all of Wethersfield, not only in Old Wethersfield.	TCC, EDIC	Continuous
4. Conduct community events in locations across the entire community.	TCC	Continuous
5. Improve wayfinding signage to clearly identify public parking in Old Wethersfield to aid visitors and residents alike.	EDIC, HDC, PZC	Mid-Term
6. Consider expanding use of shuttles during community events to transport visitors and the community between designated parking areas and events.	TCC	Continuous
7. Complete updates to the Wethersfield Local Historic District survey as it is the oldest District in the State – 1962."	HDC	Mid-Term
8. Examine best practices and innovative zoning ordinances that encourage adaptive re-use of former residential and industrial properties for new commercial, business or multiple uses, especially in transitional areas."	PZC, EDIC	Continuous

Strategy #3. Continue to educate residents and visitors about Wethersfield’s importance as a historic community.		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Encourage and support owners of historical properties to properly steward them.	HDC	Continuous
2. Provide educational programs on historic preservation and local historic resources.	HDC	Continuous
3. Provide education and training opportunities for commissioners and homeowners such as that provided through Preservation Connecticut’s Local Historic District Training.	HDC	Continuous
4. Continue to provide information to new residents who purchase homes in the Historic District.	HDC	Continuous

Strategy #4. Support and promote arts, entertainment, and cultural organizations.		
ACTIONS	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to work with the Webb Deane Stevens Museum and Wethersfield Historical Society and other organizations that promote historic preservation.	TCC, HDC	Continuous
2. Continue to ensure that arts and cultural events are well advertised through the Town’s websites and social media channels.	TCC	Continuous
3. Continue to work with local schools and community organizations to ensure that Wethersfield’s youth have access to arts, cultural, and entertainment programs.	TCC, BOE	Continuous