



# TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

June 2014

BFJ Planning



# TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

**Prepared on behalf of:**

The Town of East Hartford  
740 Main Street  
East Hartford, CT 06108



**Prepared by:**

**BFJ Planning**

in cooperation with Urbanomics  
115 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 353-7474  
[www.bfjplanning.com](http://www.bfjplanning.com)

*This Plan of Conservation and Development is dedicated to the memory of Anthony Kayser, who served on the Town of East Hartford Planning and Zoning Commission for 44 years, including 28 years as Chairman.*

Adopted June 25, 2014





## **Acknowledgements**

### **Mayor**

Marcia Leclerc

### **Town Council**

Richard F. Kehoe, Chairman

William P. Horan, Jr., Vice Chairman

Barbara-Ann Rossi, Majority Leader

Esther B. Clarke, Minority Leader

Ram Aberasturia

Patricia Harmon

Anita D. Morrison

Linda A. Russo

Marc I. Weinberg

### **Planning and Zoning Commission**

Peter Bonzani, Chair

Thomas Fitzgerald

Valentine Povinelli, Jr.

Paul Roczynski

Kathleen Salemi

Travis Simpson

Mary Whaples

Crystal Hernandez, Alternate

John Ryan, Alternate

Amy Sawyer, Alternate

### **Development/Planning Department**

Eileen C. Buckheit, Development Director

Michael J. Dayton, Town Planner

Ellyn Laramie, Economic Development Services Coordinator

### **Consultant Team**

#### **BFJ Planning**

Frank Fish, FAICP, Principal

Susan Favate, AICP, PP, Senior Associate, Project Manager

Jonathan Martin, Ph.D., AICP, Senior Associate

Noah Levine, AICP, Project Planner

#### **Urbanomics - Economic and Demographic Forecasting**

Tina C. Lund, AICP, Associate Principal

Peter Furst, Planner



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1.	The Planning Process and the Plan of Conservation and Development	1
1.2.	East Hartford's History	3
1.3.	Regional and State Planning Context	4
<b>2.</b>	<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1.	Population	13
2.2.	Age	14
2.3.	Mutually Exclusive Race/Ethnicity	15
2.4.	Household Size	16
2.5.	Household Income	16
2.6.	Labor Force Characteristics	18
2.7.	Commutation	18
2.8.	Population Projections	19
<b>3.</b>	<b>LAND USE AND ZONING</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1.	Introduction	21
3.2.	Land Use Patterns	22
3.3.	Zoning	25
3.4.	Issues and Opportunities	28
<b>4.</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1.	Introduction	33
4.2.	Rivers and Floodplains	33
4.3.	Watersheds	36
4.4.	Soils	38
4.5.	Groundwater and Aquifer Protection	41
4.6.	Sustainability	43
4.7.	Issues and Opportunities	47
<b>5.</b>	<b>PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION</b>	<b>49</b>
5.1.	Introduction	49
5.2.	Existing Parks and Open Space	50
5.3.	Active Recreation Facility Overview	54
5.4.	Passive Recreation Facility Overview	55
5.5.	Future Open Space System	56
5.6.	Issues and Opportunities	60
<b>6.</b>	<b>COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>	<b>63</b>
6.1.	Introduction	63
6.2.	Existing Conditions	63
6.3.	Issues and Opportunities	75
<b>7.</b>	<b>HISTORIC RESOURCES</b>	<b>77</b>
7.1.	Introduction	77
7.2.	Historic Districts and Sites	77
<b>8.</b>	<b>HOUSING</b>	<b>81</b>
8.1.	Introduction	81
8.2.	Existing Conditions	81
8.3.	Existing Housing Stock	83



8.4.	Housing Development Activity	84
8.5.	Residential Development Potential	85
8.6.	Affordability of Housing	86
8.7.	Elderly and Multifamily Housing	90
8.8.	Housing Sales Activity	93
8.9.	Housing Issues/Gaps	94
<b>9.</b>	<b>TRANSPORTATION &amp; CIRCULATION</b>	<b>95</b>
9.1.	Introduction	95
9.2.	Existing Conditions	95
9.3.	Pedestrian Circulation and Bikeways	103
9.4.	Roadway Maintenance	106
9.5.	Future Roadway Needs	109
9.6.	Issues and Opportunities	112
<b>10.</b>	<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>113</b>
10.1.	Introduction	113
10.2.	Local and Regional Trends	113
10.3.	Issues and Opportunities	128
<b>11.</b>	<b>SPECIAL STUDY AREAS</b>	<b>131</b>
11.1.	Founders Waterfront District	131
11.2.	South Main Street/College District	150
11.3.	Rentschler Field/Silver Lane	156
<b>12.</b>	<b>FUTURE LAND USE PLAN</b>	<b>167</b>
12.1.	What is the Future Land Use Plan?	167
12.2.	What is the Relationship Between the Future Land Use Plan and Zoning?	167
12.3.	Major Plan Goals	168
12.4.	East Hartford's Future Land Use Plan	168
12.5.	Relationship to the State Plan	173
<b>13.</b>	<b>ACTION AGENDA</b>	<b>175</b>





## List of Figures

Figure 1: Regional Context.....	5
Figure 2: CRCOG Region .....	6
Figure 3: State Locational Guide Map .....	10
Figure 4: Existing Land Use .....	23
Figure 5: Zoning Map.....	26
Figure 6: Rivers and Watersheds .....	34
Figure 7: FEMA Floodplains .....	35
Figure 8: Wetland Soils.....	40
Figure 9: Ground Water Quality Classifications.....	42
Figure 10: Existing and Proposed Parks and Open Space .....	51
Figure 11: Community Facilities .....	65
Figure 12: MDC Water System Map .....	66
Figure 13: MDC Sanitary Sewer System Map .....	67
Figure 14: Historic Districts .....	79
Figure 15: Land Zoned for Residential Use .....	82
Figure 16: Roadway Classification Map .....	96
Figure 17: Major Traffic Generators .....	98
Figure 18: Average Daily Traffic.....	99
Figure 19: Accident Analysis .....	101
Figure 20: Pedestrian Accident Analysis .....	102
Figure 21: CT Transit Bus Routes.....	104
Figure 22: Roadway Improvements, 2004-2014 .....	107
Figure 23: Roadway Condition (2009).....	108
Figure 24: Roadway Recommendations .....	111
Figure 25: Hartford Labor Market Area .....	114
Figure 26: Unemployment Rates in the Region .....	116
Figure 27: Shopping Centers in the Region .....	127
Figure 28: Founders Waterfront District – Aerial.....	132
Figure 29: Founders Waterfront District - Buildings.....	133
Figure 30: Founders Waterfront District Core Area – Property Lines and Parcel Characteristics .....	135
Figure 31: Founders Waterfront District Core Area - Parking Utilization.....	136
Figure 32: Founders Waterfront District Core Area - Existing Pedestrian Network .....	137
Figure 33: Founders Waterfront District Core Area - Vehicular Access .....	139
Figure 34: Founders Waterfront District Core Area - Issues & Opportunities Diagram .....	142
Figure 35: Founders Waterfront District Core Area - Design Concept.....	143
Figure 36: Founders Waterfront District Core Area Design Concept – Connectivity Diagram.....	144
Figure 37: Founders Waterfront District Core Area – Scale Comparison .....	145
Figure 38: Founders Waterfront District Gateway Improvements .....	147
Figure 39: Main Street and Connecticut Boulevard Gateway.....	148
Figure 40: Main Street and Pitkin Street Gateway .....	149
Figure 41: Goodwin College Land Ownership .....	152
Figure 42: Goodwin College Area Issues and Opportunities .....	155
Figure 43: Rentschler Field - Aerial.....	157
Figure 44: Rentschler Field Master Plan .....	158
Figure 45: Silver Lane Land Use.....	161
Figure 46: Silver Lane Zoning .....	163
Figure 47: Silver Lane Issues and Opportunities .....	165
Figure 48: Future Land Use Plan .....	174



## List of Tables

Table 1: East Hartford Population, 1900-2010 .....	13
Table 2: East Hartford and Environs: Household Size Characteristics, 1990-2010 .....	17
Table 3: East Hartford Labor Force Characteristics, 1990-2010 .....	18
Table 4: East Hartford Resident Most Common Places of Work: 2002, 2006, 2010 .....	19
Table 5: East Hartford Population Projections** .....	20
Table 6: Summary of Existing Zoning.....	25
Table 7: Parks and Open Space Inventory, 2013 .....	53
Table 8: East Hartford Outdoor Public Pool Attendance, 2010-2013* .....	60
Table 9: Summary of East Hartford Public Schools.....	72
Table 10: Cemeteries in East Hartford.....	75
Table 11: East Hartford Housing Units by Year Constructed.....	84
Table 12: Authorized Residential Building Permits.....	85
Table 13: Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford MSA 2013 Median Income Limits for Section 8 and the Federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program .....	87
Table 14: 2011 East Hartford Households by Income.....	87
Table 15: 2011 East Hartford Households Spending 30% or More on Housing by Tenure .....	88
Table 16: East Hartford Public Housing Authority Units by Program Type.....	89
Table 17: 2011 East Hartford Householders 65 and Older by Tenure and Structure Type .....	90
Table 18: 2011 East Hartford Households in Poverty by Age and Household Type.....	92
Table 19: Summary of East Hartford Accidents, 2009-2011 .....	100
Table 20: CT Transit Bus Routes .....	103
Table 21: Labor Force Status, East Hartford, Annual Average 2005-2012 .....	114
Table 22: East Hartford Employed Labor Force by Industry, 2002 and 2011 .....	117
Table 23: East Hartford Resident Earnings, 2002 to 2011 .....	118
Table 24: East Hartford Employed Residents by Top 10 Places of Work, 2002-2011 .....	119
Table 25: Employment in East Hartford and Vicinity, 2002-2011 .....	120
Table 26: Top 15 Employers in East Hartford 2011: Jobs and Rankings, 2012, 2002 .....	122
Table 27: Age Distribution of Selected Area Workers, 2011 .....	124
Table 28: Earnings Distribution of Selected Area Workers, 2011 .....	125
Table 29: Origins of East Hartford Workers, 2011 .....	126
Table 30: Summary of Founders Waterfront District Core Study Area Parcels.....	134

## List of Charts

Chart 1: East Hartford, Hartford, Hartford County and Connecticut Percent Change in Population by Decade 1970-2010.....	14
Chart 2: East Hartford and Hartford: Age Distribution 2000 and 2010 .....	15
Chart 3: East Hartford, Hartford, Hartford County and Connecticut: Mutually Exclusive Racial/Ethnic Distribution 2010 .....	16
Chart 4: East Hartford and Surrounding Municipalities: Income Distribution 2010 .....	17
Chart 5: East Hartford Population Projections.....	20
Chart 6: East Hartford Housing by Type.....	83
Chart 7: 2011 East Hartford Households Spending 30%+ on Housing by Income & Tenure.....	88
Chart 8: Elderly Share of Total Households by Income: Hartford County, East Hartford, Hartford, 2011 .....	91
Chart 9: Multi-Family Housing Units as a Share of Total: Connecticut, Hartford County and Select Hartford County Municipalities, 2011 .....	93
Chart 10: East Hartford Home Sales and Median Price, 2007-2010, 2012** .....	94
Chart 11: Average Annual Unemployment Rates: Hartford LMA, East Hartford and Other Selected Municipalities, 2002-2012.....	115
Chart 12: Distribution of East Hartford Employed by Top Ten Places of Work, 2002-2011 .....	120
Chart 13: Annual Change in Employment, East Hartford and Vicinity, 2002-2011 .....	121
Chart 14: Earnings Distribution of East Hartford Workers, 2002-2011 .....	125



## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1. The Planning Process and the Plan of Conservation and Development**

The foundation of a planning process is the ability of a municipality to reflect upon its past, to appraise its present and to formulate plans for the future. The process itself results in a comprehensive planning document that serves as a long-range guide to future development of the town. Of crucial importance to the planning process are review and modification as needed, and an assurance that the plan continues to be representative of the community. Methods and designs for its implementation are essential components of the total plan.

The Town of East Hartford last updated its Plan of Conservation and Development in 2003, in conformance with Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), Title B, Chapter 126, Section 8-23, which requires each municipality to review its plan every 10 years. Plans of Conservation and Development are commonly described as cookbooks, toolboxes and blueprints, all providing guidance and strategies for the municipal future. The plan-writing process is itself a critical part of the plan update. The process involves research and assessment tasks, reviews of past plans and their recommendations, analyses of current conditions, identification of strengths and weaknesses and a clear summary of the actions needed to most effectively address issues and build on assets.

Although plans of conservation and development set forth recommendations for a town's future, they are not in themselves laws or regulations. Recommendations are implemented through zoning laws and other land-use regulations, capital expenditures and ongoing planning. In addition, the plan enables the town to influence decisions by State agencies (such as ConnDOT, the state Department of Transportation) and the regional planners at CRCOG (Capitol Region Council of Governments), to strengthen the town's ability to attract state dollars for projects that support the plan.

In late 2012, the Town of East Hartford began the process of reviewing and updating its 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development ("POCD" or "Plan"). In embarking on this update, the Town sought to build on the 2003 Plan, retaining its basic structure and preserving those goals and objectives that were still relevant. However, this 2013 Plan endeavors to reflect East Hartford's place within shifting regional and national trends that could have significant implications for planning efforts, focusing on key priorities such as population and housing diversity, commercial corridors, jobs, sustainability strategies and quality of life. To that end, the updated 2013 POCD includes an additional chapter to provide in-depth analysis of several specific study areas that present major development potential: the riverfront area, the Silver Lane commercial corridor and the Goodwin College/South Main Street area (south of the Charter Oak Bridge and north of Brewer Street).

The year-long POCD update process was closely coordinated with Town staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission, and included two public workshops to gain consensus on Plan goals and objectives, review draft chapters and gather input on and test ideas for the new content of

the Plan. In addition, upon completion of various draft elements of the Plan, pertinent documents and graphics were posted on the Town's website for citizen review and comment.

A number of relevant Town studies and plans were reviewed and incorporated into the updated Plan. These included 2010 amendments to the 2003 POCD, the Burnside Avenue Corridor Conceptual Development Plan and Implementation Strategy (1997), the Strategic Economic Development Plan (2000), the Park Avenue and Tolland Street Corridor Analysis Report and the Silver Lane Corridor Analysis Report (both in 2002), the Housing for Economic Growth Study (2010) and the Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development: 2010-2014. In addition, several publications of the CRCOG were reviewed: *Livable Communities Toolkit: A Best Practices Manual for Metropolitan Regions* (2002), *Trends Shaping Our Region: A Census Data Profile of Connecticut's Capitol Region* (2003), *Freight Movement in the Hartford Metropolitan Area: A Regional Freight Market Overview* (2005), the Regional Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2008), the Capitol Region Pre-Disaster Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2008), the Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (2009), the Buckland Area Transportation Study (2009), the Regional Transportation Plan (2011) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (2012).

## **Plan Goals and Objectives**

The overarching goals of this Plan are as follows:

- Preserve the Town's sound housing stock and stable neighborhoods.
- Regulate infill development in keeping with the character and scale of surrounding neighborhoods and development,
- Preserve and enhance the Town's open space and recreation areas.
- Create linkages among open space, community facilities and residential neighborhoods.
- Revitalize and rejuvenate the Central Business District.
- Implement improvements to the Town's commercial corridors.
- Connect redevelopment areas such as Rentschler Field, Founders' Plaza and the Goodwin College areas with the Central Business District and with each other.
- Promote economic development to attract and retain business.
- Promote future development efforts which provide new housing, recreation, business and employment opportunities.
- Support quality-of-life improvements.

The development of an updated Plan of Conservation and Development and its accompanying Generalized Land Use Plan serves to guide the Town's future development as an advisory or policy-setting document. Key to successful future development is the creation of Zoning and Subdivision regulations, design guidelines and implementation techniques which explicitly outline and effectively enforce the Plan's vision: *To promote a development strategy that balances targeted redevelopment for economic revitalization, enhancement of the tax base and job creation, with preservation and stabilization of residential neighborhoods to protect quality of life.*



## **1.2. East Hartford's History**

Occupying part of the lands once inhabited by the Podunk Indians, the Town saw its first permanent colonists in 1635, when Thomas Hooker and his followers came from Cambridge, Massachusetts to found Hartford. The east side of the Connecticut River was at that time part of Hartford, and was initially settled about 1640, with early settlers including William Goodwin, Thomas Burnham and William Pitkin. The first petition by residents to establish a separate town was rejected by the General Assembly in 1726. Several more petitions were submitted until 1783, when the Assembly ultimately gave its approval to the incorporation of East Hartford. The Town then received its Charter from the state on the land area taken from the City of Hartford.

During its early years as a Township, East Hartford's meetings were held in the basement of the First Congregational Church in the center of town at Main Street and Connecticut Boulevard. The Town would receive its first meeting hall through a bequest by Jonathan Wells in 1885, on a site slightly north of the town center, and the Town's first public library would be constructed in 1888-1889 by the Raymond family to the south.

By 1936, the Town was providing police and fire protection, had established a public school system and built its first high school and adopted its first Plan of Development in 1927, followed by its first building and zoning codes in 1929. The Town administration had outgrown Wells Hall and built a new Town Hall at its present location. A picture postcard around that time of the Town's center looking to the north of the new Town Hall depicted a Main Street lined with elms, grand old homes and several blocks of storefronts.

The town center at Main Street would be left behind with the 1929 arrival and subsequent growth of Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. Tobacco fields in this area made way for housing, as the company grew to employ 40,000 during the war years. Construction of the I-84/Route 2 "mixmaster" interchange in the 1950s created a highway barrier, cutting East Hartford in two. The 1960s saw a proliferation of fairly homogenous subdivisions which today house many town residents.

The Town has continued to plan for its future throughout the past decades. Plans of Development were prepared in 1960, 1980, 1990 and 2003, while an interim plan titled *East Hartford at the Crossroads* was prepared in 1970. Population in East Hartford reached its peak in 1970 at 57,583, declining in each subsequent census period until 2010, when it recovered to a pre-1990 level. Reduced employment at Pratt & Whitney, out-migration to surrounding suburbs and rural areas and ongoing out-of-state migration all contributed to this population decrease.

Recent years have presented new directions for East Hartford. The waterfront, which at one time was overlooked, is now a driving force for the town's future; the Central Business District and key commercial corridors have undergone revitalization planning and been given new focus; and the reuse of Rentschler Field has provided the town with significant new development potential.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the 1990 and 2003 Plans of Conservation and Development and "About East Hartford," by Municipal Historian Raymond Johnson, available at <http://easthartfordct.gov>.

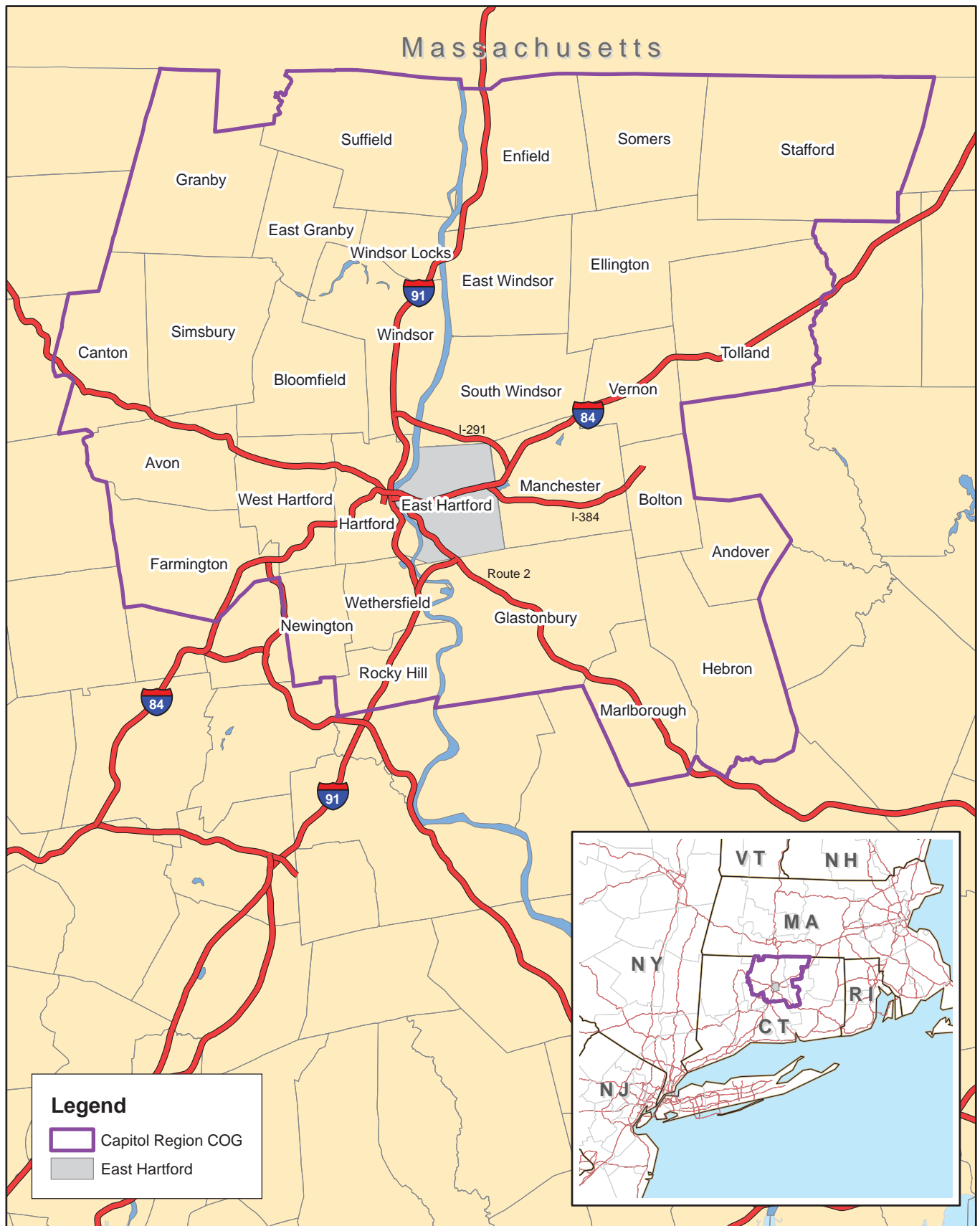
### 1.3. Regional and State Planning Context

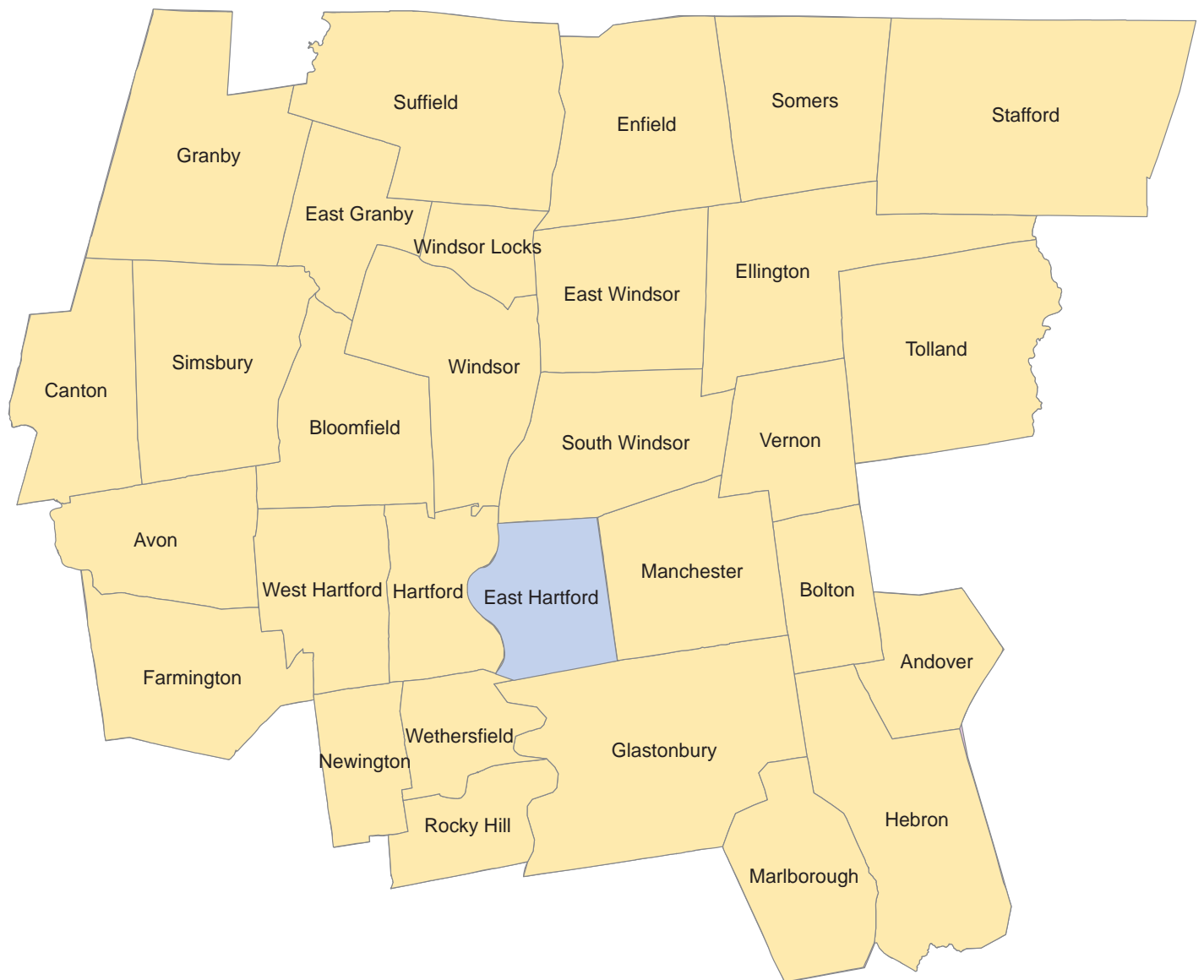
The Capitol Region encompasses some 800 square miles surrounding the urban center of Hartford. The region is predominantly suburban in character, but nearly a third of the towns in the region can be characterized as rural. The Regional Context Map in Figure 1 shows East Hartford's location at the center of the regional transportation network, with I-84 and Route 2 converging at the "mixmaster" interchange. Though largely suburban in nature, East Hartford, with a 2010 population of 51,252, is somewhat more urban – with a range of land uses, a fully developed infrastructure and connections to the regional mass transit system – than its neighboring communities of Glastonbury, Manchester and South Windsor. This can be attributed to East Hartford's proximity to the region's financial center and state capital at Hartford; accessibility from three bridge crossings at the Connecticut River; and the boom in growth of the manufacturing sector in the post-World War II years, led by Pratt & Whitney. A closer look at the town's development from a land-use perspective is provided in Chapter 3 of this Plan. The following section discusses East Hartford's role within the regional and state planning context.

#### 1.3.1. Capitol Region Council of Governments

East Hartford is one of 30 member municipalities comprising the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) planning region (see Figure 2). The region's 2010 population was about 770,000, with some 125,000, or 16%, of its residents living in Hartford. As the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the CRCOG conducts long-term transportation planning for the Capitol Region. The CRCOG's most recent region-wide plan, *Achieving the Balance: A Plan of Conservation and Development for the Capitol Region* (2009), is an overall planning guide for the greater Hartford area, guided by six key themes:

- Focus new regional development in areas in which existing and planned infrastructure can support that development.
- Support efforts to strengthen and revitalize Hartford, the Capitol Region's central city, and also support the revitalization of older, urbanized areas throughout the region.
- Develop in a manner that respects and preserves community character and key natural resources.
- Implement open space and natural resources protection plans that acknowledge and support the multi-town nature of natural systems.
- Support the creation of new employment and housing opportunities, and transportation choices, to meet the diverse needs of the region's citizens.
- Encourage regional cooperation in the protection of natural resources, the revitalization of urban areas and economic development.





The CRCOG has completed a number of studies and reports in recent years (specific issues and recommendations from these publications are discussed in the appropriate chapters of this Plan):

- Regional Housing Policy (1998)
- Livable Communities Toolkit: A Best Practices Manual for Metropolitan Regions (2002)
- Trends Shaping Our Region: A Census Data Profile of Connecticut's Capitol Region (2003)
- Regional Strategy to Address Long-Term Homelessness (2004)
- Transportation Monitoring and Management Report, Metropolitan Hartford Area: 2005 (2007)
- Regional Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2008)
- Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development (2009)
- Together We Can Grow Better: Smart Growth for a Sustainable Connecticut Capitol Region (2009)
- Bike/Pedestrian Count Project (2009 and 2012)
- Capitol Region Transportation Plan (2011)
- Transportation Improvement Program, FY 2012-2015 (2012)

### **1.3.2. State Planning Efforts**

As with the region, the Connecticut state government makes large-scale plans that have local significance. The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (OPM) prepares a statewide plan every five years for adoption by the General Assembly. The current *Conservation and Development Policies Plan* (C&D Plan) covers 2013-2018. The plan is comprised of two components: the Plan text and the Locational Guide Map. Both components include policies that guide the planning and decision-making processes of state government according to a set of six Growth Management Principles:

1. Redevelop and revitalize regional centers and areas with existing or currently planned physical infrastructure;
2. Expand housing opportunities and design choices to accommodate a variety of household types and needs;
3. Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors to support the viability of transportation options;
4. Conserve and restore the natural environment, cultural and historical resources and traditional rural lands;
5. Protect and ensure the integrity of environmental assets critical to public health and safety; and
6. Promote integrated planning across all levels of government to address issues on a statewide, regional and local basis.

Connecticut's municipalities and regional planning organizations (RPOs) are expected, per Connecticut General Statutes 8-23 and 8-35a, to note any inconsistencies with the state's Growth Management Principles when they update their respective plans of conservation and development. The significance of these principles and the Locational Guide Map for East Hartford rests in state funding. If the Town seeks state funding for local projects, OPM will review those projects for conformance to the state plan's principles and map. Generally speaking, a municipal capital project is more likely to be awarded state funds if East Hartford's plan and the state plan conform to each other. Thus, it is in the Town's best interest to make this Plan of Conservation and Development consistent with the state plan. Where that is not possible, East Hartford should work closely with the state on the next five-year plan to align the Locational Guide Map with the municipal plan.

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

According to the OPM, the Locational Guide Map (LGM) "spatially interprets the Growth Management Principles contained in the Plan, with respect to each area's potential to fulfill and to balance the conservation and development priorities of the state." The LGM is intended to serve three purposes: 1) it reinforces the policies contained in the text of the State C&D Plan as the primary determinant of consistency for a proposed action; 2) it ensures that any LGM reference is a secondary consideration only after a proposed growth-related project has been deemed consistent with the policies of the State C&D Plan; and 3) it allows state agencies to operate with sufficient discretion and transparency.

The LGM divides the state into two key classifications to guide development: priority funding areas and conservation areas. These classifications are intended to help state agencies comply with the following administrative requirements of Connecticut General Statutes Section 16a-35d:

- (a) *No state agency, department or institution shall provide funding for a growth-related project unless such project is located in a priority funding area;*
- (b) *Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, the head of a state department, agency or institution, with the approval of the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, may provide funding for a growth-related project that is not located in a priority funding area upon determination that such project is consistent with the plan of conservation and development, adopted under section 8-23, of the municipality in which such project is located and that such project:*
  - (1) *Enhances other activities targeted by state agencies, departments and institutions to a municipality within the priority funding area;*
  - (2) *Is located in a distressed municipality, targeted investment community or public investment community [as defined in the Connecticut General Statutes – East Hartford falls into each of these categories];*
  - (3) *Supports existing neighborhoods or communities;*
  - (4) *Promotes the use of mass transit;*



- (5) Provides for compact, transit-accessible, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development patterns and land reuse and promotes such development patterns and land reuse;*
- (6) Creates an extreme inequity, hardship or disadvantage that clearly outweighs the benefits of locating the project in a priority funding area if such project were not funded;*
- (7) Has no reasonable alternative for the project in a priority funding area in another location;*
- (8) Must be located away from other developments due to its operation or physical characteristics;  
or*
- (9) Is for the reuse or redevelopment of an existing site.*

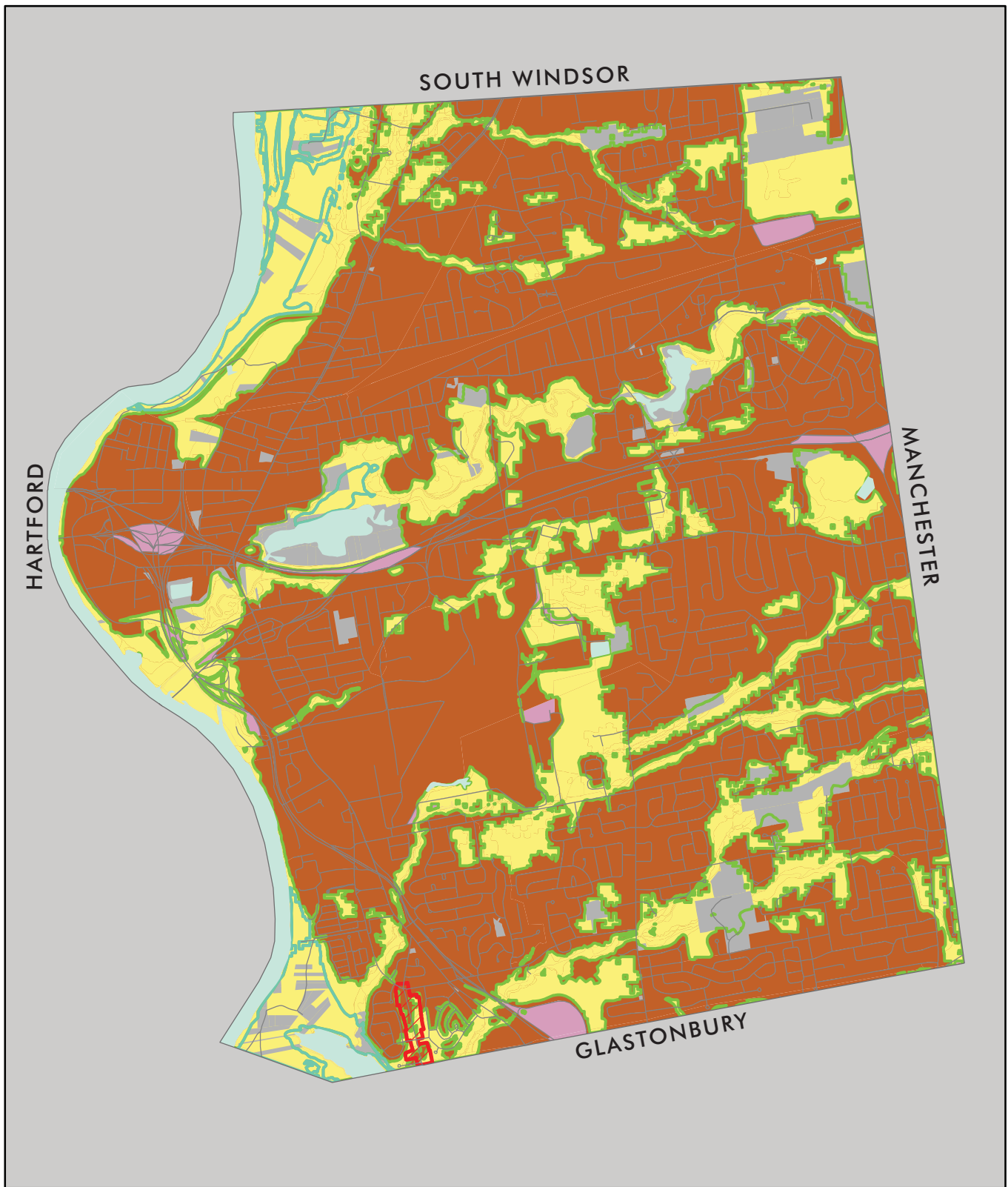
The LGM classifications for East Hartford are shown on Figure 3 and described below:

**Priority Funding Areas:**


1. Designation as an Urban Area or Urban Cluster in the 2010 Census
2. Boundaries that intersect a half-mile buffer surrounding existing/planned mass-transit stations
3. Existing or planned sewer service from an adopted Wastewater Facility Plan
4. Existing or planned water service from an adopted Public Drinking Water Supply Plan
5. Local bus service provided seven days a week

**Conservation Areas:**

1. Core forest areas greater than 250 acres based on the 2006 Land Cover Dataset
2. Existing or potential drinking water supply watersheds
3. Aquifer protection areas
4. Wetland soils greater than 25 acres
5. Undeveloped prime, statewide important and locally important agricultural soils over 25 acres
6. Category 1, 2 or 3 hurricane inundation zones
7. 100-year flood zones
8. Critical habitats (depicts the classification and distribution of 25 rare and specialized wildlife habitats in the state)
9. Locally important conservation areas (based on data authorized/submitted by municipalities)




### Legend

 Local Historic District

 Protected Lands


 Balanced Priority Funding Areas


### Conservation Areas

 1-3 Conservation Factors

 4 Conservation Factors

### Priority Funding Areas

 1-2 Criteria

 3-4 Criteria

**Balanced Priority Funding Areas:** These areas meet the criteria of both Priority Funding Areas and Conservation Areas. State agencies that propose certain actions in these areas must provide balanced consideration of all factors in determining the extent to which it is consistent with the policies of the State C&D Plan.

**Protected Lands:** Areas that have some sort of restriction on development, such as permanently protected open space or property in which the development rights have been acquired.

**Local Historic Districts:** Local Historic Districts are established and administered by the community itself to help ensure that the distinctive and significant characteristics of each district are protected, by having local preservation commissions review architectural changes for compatibility.

**Regional Centers:** The following municipalities are classified as Regional Centers: Ansonia, Bridgeport, Bristol, Danbury, East Hartford, Enfield, Groton, Hartford, Killingly, Manchester, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Stamford, Torrington, Vernon, Waterbury, West Hartford, West Haven and Windham.

As shown in Figure 3, the vast majority of East Hartford is classified as a Priority Funding Area. This fact – as well as the town’s designation by the state as a distressed municipality, a targeted investment community and a public investment community – means that the OPM has granted significant flexibility in development in East Hartford.



## 2. DEMOGRAPHICS

The purpose of any plan of conservation and development is to meet the current and future needs of a population. Thus, it is imperative to have an understanding of the characteristics of the people who live and work in East Hartford.

### DEMOGRAPHICS GOAL:

*Ensure that East Hartford can accommodate a population encompassing a range of ages, ethnicities and income levels.*

#### 2.1. Population

East Hartford has epitomized the urban/rural expansion trends of the past century. Between 1900 and 1930, the town expanded almost exponentially. After a lull during the Second World War, the population expanded even further each decade until it peaked in 1970 at 57,583 residents.

**Table 1: East Hartford Population, 1900-2010**

	Population	Change from Previous Decade	% Change from Previous Decade
1900	6,406		
1910	8,138	1,722	27.0%
1920	11,648	3,510	43.1%
1930	17,125	5,477	47.0%
1940	18,615	1,490	8.7%
1950	29,933	11,318	60.8%
1960	43,977	14,044	46.9%
1970	57,583	13,606	30.9%
1980	52,563	-5,020	-8.7%
1990	50,452	-2,111	-4.0%
2000	49,575	-877	-1.7%
2010	51,252	1,677	3.4%

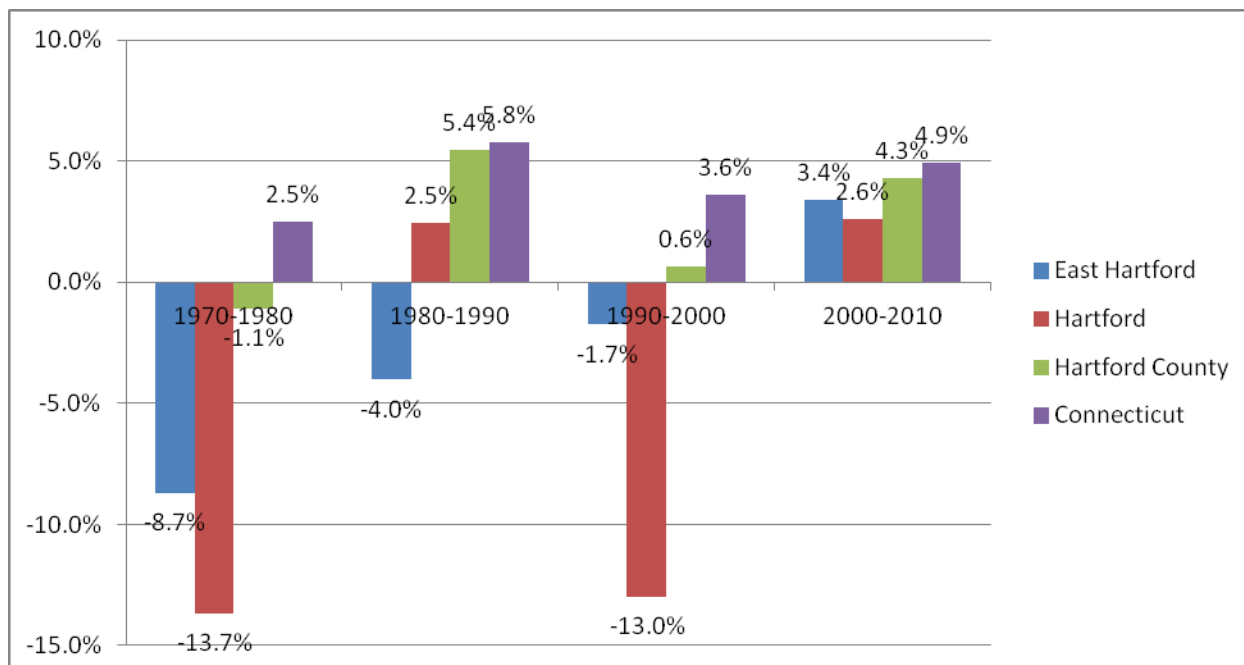
Source: US. Decennial Census 1990-2010

Between 1970 and 1980, East Hartford followed the regional and national trend of sharp population decreases in urban areas, losing 5,000 residents, or 8.7% of total population. The town's population continued to decrease over the next two decades, dropping to 49,575 in 2000, 14% less than the peak of 1970. However, in 2010, the population expanded by 3.4% to return to 51,252.

In Chart 1, below, the change in East Hartford's population is compared with the change in population of the City of Hartford, Hartford County and Connecticut as a whole. It is interesting

to note that the state's population has continued to grow since 1970, reflecting the capture from the shift from central cities to more suburban areas as well as overall regional population growth. Since 1980, Hartford County has experienced growth as well, and while East Hartford has lagged the larger areas in terms of repopulation, it has experienced a smoother stabilization compared with the City of Hartford.

**Chart 1: East Hartford, Hartford, Hartford County and Connecticut Percent Change in Population by Decade 1970-2010**



Source: US. Decennial Census 1970-2010

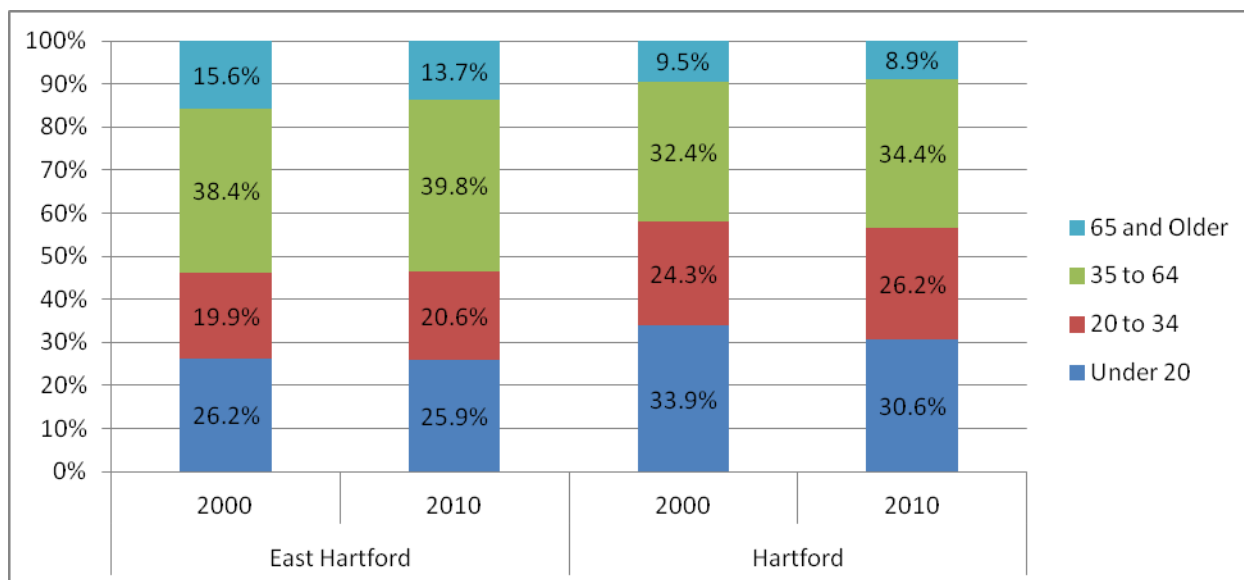
## 2.2. Age

The median age in East Hartford has increased in the past decade (like the rest of the region), from 37.4 to 37.8. Chart 2 compares the age distribution of East Hartford residents in 2000 and 2010 with that of Hartford in those same years. In both instances, the share of residents in the young adults (20 to 34) and prime working ages (35 to 64) have increased; in the case of East Hartford from 19.9% to 20.6% and 38.4% to 39.8%, respectively.

It is interesting to note that the share of children (those under the age of 20) and the elderly (those 65 and older) both decreased, from 26.2% to 25.9% and 15.6% to 13.7%, respectively, of total population. However, while children as a percentage of overall population declined, their actual number increased from 12,972 in 2000 to 13,292 in 2010, growth of 2.5%. Meanwhile, the number of persons 65 and older has decreased by 8.9%, from 7,733 to 7,045.



**Chart 2: East Hartford and Hartford: Age Distribution 2000 and 2010**



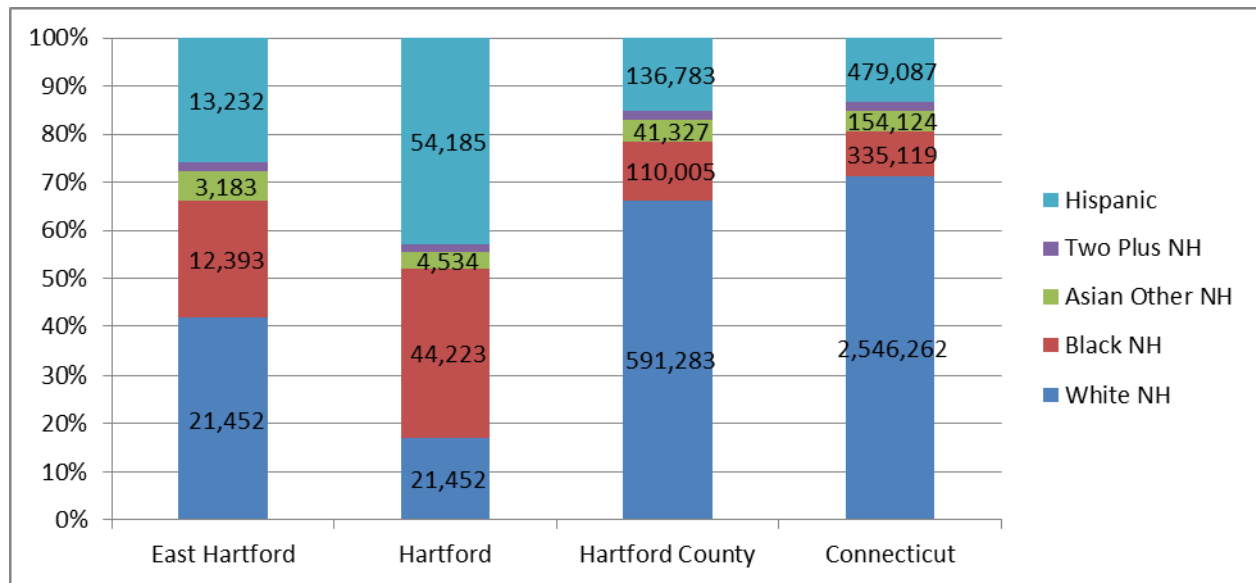
Source: US. Decennial Census 1990-2010

### 2.3. Mutually Exclusive Race/Ethnicity

As of 2010, East Hartford is more diverse (58.1% minority) than Hartford County (33.9%) or Connecticut overall (28.8%), but less diverse than the City of Hartford (83%). The largest mutually exclusive racial/ethnic group remains non-Hispanic single-race whites, at 41.9% of the population, followed by Hispanics (of any race) at 25.8%, single-race black non-Hispanics at 24.2%, single-race Asian/other non-Hispanics at 6.2%, and non-Hispanics of two or more races at 1.9%.

Between 2000 and 2010, both single-race non-Hispanic whites and non-Hispanics of two or more races decreased in number, while the numbers of Hispanics (of any race), single-race black non-Hispanics, single-race Asian/other non-Hispanics all increased (see Chart 3, below).

**Chart 3: East Hartford, Hartford, Hartford County and Connecticut: Mutually Exclusive Racial/Ethnic Distribution 2010**



Source: US. Decennial Census 2010

## 2.4. Household Size

After declining between 1990 and 2000, the average household size in East Hartford increased to 2.5 persons per household in 2010. This is lower than each of the surrounding areas (except Manchester) including both the county and state as a whole, as seen in Table 2. Although this increase in household size is counter to nationwide trends, it appears that the size of East Hartford's households is becoming more similar to other towns in the region. In 1990, the Town's average household size was lower than nearby areas – in some cases, considerably so – as well as the state of Connecticut. By 2010, East Hartford's household size was still at the low end, but much more comparable to these other towns.

The East Hartford increase in household size is a factor in both the 3.4% increase in total population and in the 0.1% decrease in the total number of households, as larger households offset fewer households, leading to an overall population increase.

## 2.5. Household Income

Of the surrounding municipalities, East Hartford has the second-lowest median household income in 2010, at \$48,887. Hartford's median household income is lower at \$28,069, while Manchester, South Windsor and Glastonbury, as expected in suburbs of that nature, have greater medians at \$61,731, \$88,768 and \$103,532, respectively.

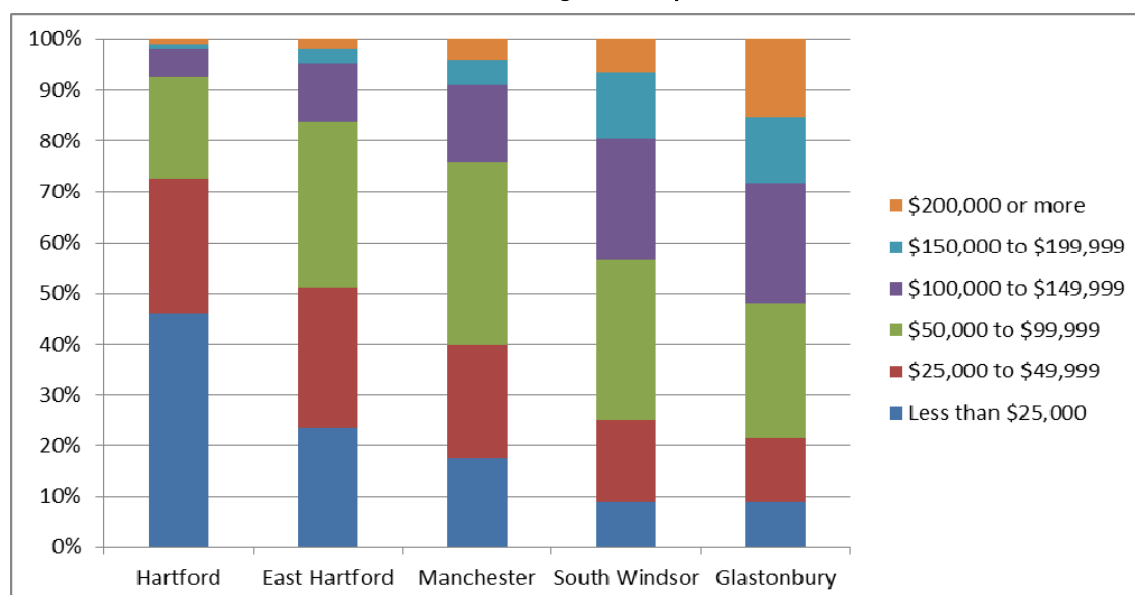
Chart 4, below, shows income distribution in 2010 for each of the five municipalities. The largest share of East Hartford households (32.8%) has incomes between \$50,000 and \$99,999. This is the largest income cohort for each of the municipalities except the City of Hartford. More than 50% of East Hartford households have incomes in the two cohorts less than \$50,000, compared with 40% of Manchester, 25% of South Windsor and only 20% of Glastonbury.

**Table 2: East Hartford and Environs: Household Size Characteristics, 1990-2010**

	1990			2000			2010		
	Pop in Households	Households	Average Household Size	Pop in Households	Households	Average Household Size	Pop in Households	Households	Average Household Size
East Hartford	49,439	20,343	2.43	48,865	20,206	2.42	50,512	20,195	2.50
Glastonbury	27,687	10,553	2.62	31,546	12,257	2.57	34,070	13,135	2.59
Hartford	131,419	51,464	2.55	116,223	44,986	2.58	115,824	45,124	2.57
Manchester	50,701	20,745	2.44	53,702	23,197	2.32	57,381	24,689	2.32
South Windsor	21,963	7,850	2.80	24,211	8,905	2.72	25,597	9,918	2.58
Hartford County	827,887	324,691	2.55	857,183	335,098	2.56	894,014	350,854	2.55
Connecticut	3,185,946	1,230,479	2.59	3,297,626	1,301,670	2.53	3,455,945	1,371,087	2.52

Source: US. Decennial Census 1990-2010

**Chart 4: East Hartford and Surrounding Municipalities: Income Distribution 2010**



Source: American Community Survey 2010 3-Year, Economic Profile

## 2.6. Labor Force Characteristics

The labor force participation rate (those persons 16 or older who are currently employed or looking for a job) had, by 2010, almost returned to 1990 levels of 69.8%, after dropping to 64.1% in 2000.

**Table 3: East Hartford Labor Force Characteristics, 1990-2010**

	1990	2000	2010
Population 16 and Older	41,682	38,811	40,271
Persons in Labor Force	29,110	24,886	28,089
Civilian Labor Force	29,052	24,874	28,008
Employed	27,515	23,601	24,584
Unemployed	1,537	1,273	3,424
Persons not in Labor Force	12,572	13,925	12,182
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	5.1%	12.2%
Labor Force Participation Rate	69.8%	64.1%	69.7%

Source: US. Decennial Census 1990-2010

Unemployment however, has more than doubled, reaching 3,424 persons (12.2%) at the time of the 2010 Census. But, according to the Connecticut Department of Labor, the annual average unemployment rate in East Hartford was better at 10.6% in 2012.

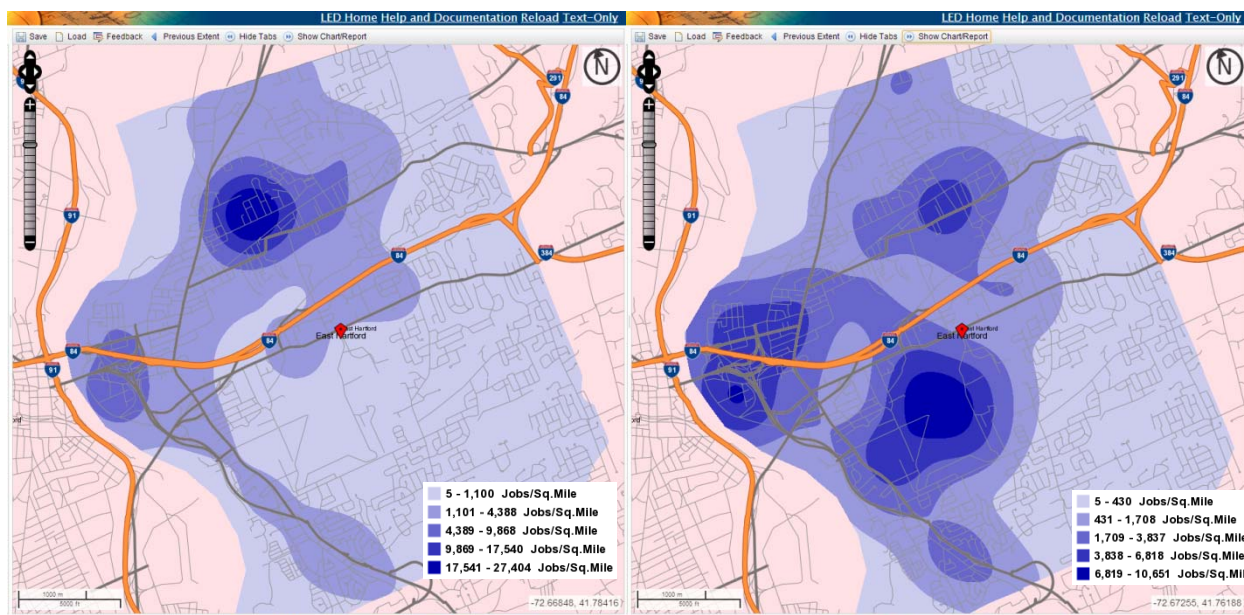
## 2.7. Commutation

Where East Hartford residents work and East Hartford workers live are of key import to the Plan, especially insofar as potential housing development and infrastructure are concerned. The following images show thermals of jobs per square mile in 2002 and 2010, according to the Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Database. The scales of the maps are different; however what is of note is the dispersal of jobs in 2010 that did not exist in the much more concentrated pattern of 2002. Of particular importance is the number of new jobs in the riverfront area as well as the number of new jobs near Rentschler Field. This shift reflects a variety of factors, including development of a hotel and continued strength at Founder's Plaza, the opening of the UConn stadium and Cabela's store at Rentschler Field, job growth at Pratt & Whitney, the development of Goodwin College and a small contraction in employment along the Burnside Avenue corridor. The maps suggest that jobs in East Hartford have become somewhat more geographically dispersed.

As shown in Table 4, the most common places of work have not changed significantly between 2002 and 2010. The most common is across the river in Hartford (1 in 5 residents), followed by East Hartford and West Hartford. However, it is notable that the share of employed residents that both live and work in East Hartford has declined by four percentage points, or more than 1,000 workers between 2002 and 2010.

## East Hartford Jobs per Square Mile 2002

## East Hartford Jobs per Square Mile 2010



Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

**Table 4: East Hartford Resident Most Common Places of Work: 2002, 2006, 2010**

	2002		2006		2010	
	Count	Share	Count	Share	Count	Share
Hartford city, CT	5,168	20.6%	5,167	20.1%	4,998	20.8%
East Hartford CDP, CT	4,263	17.0%	3,706	14.4%	3,139	13.0%
West Hartford CDP, CT	1,012	4.0%	1,034	4.0%	915	3.8%
Manchester CDP, CT	607	2.4%	589	2.3%	665	2.8%
Glastonbury Center CDP, CT	599	2.4%	622	2.4%	605	2.5%
Newington CDP, CT	515	2.0%	577	2.2%	499	2.1%

Source: OnTheMap.com Census CES LEHD

## 2.8. Population Projections

The previous Plan of Conservation and Development used the CONNDOT projections from 2001. These projections, as do those from 2011, forecasted very little population growth in East Hartford (0.2% by 2030 vs. 0.4% by 2040) as shown in the table below. However, it should be noted that the enumerated 2010 population (51,252) is much higher (3.2%) than the 2001 forecast of 49,660.

**Table 5: East Hartford Population Projections\*\***

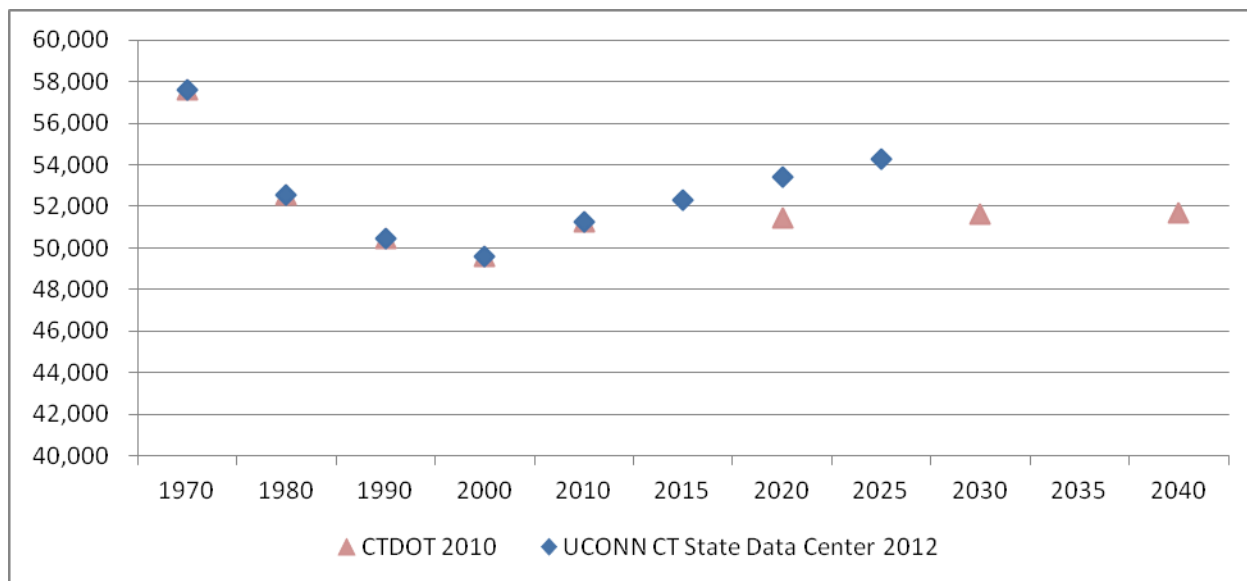
	CONN DOT 2001	CONN DOT 2010	UConn CT State Data Center 2012
Actual 2000	49,575		49,575
2010	49,660	51,252	51,252
2015			52,303
2020	49,760	51,471	53,384
2025			54,299
2030	49,810	51,608	
2035			
2040		51,704	

Sources: CONN DOT 2001, CONN DOT 2011, UConn State Data Center 2012

\*\*It should be noted that different organizations prepare projections for different year cohorts. Years for which projections are not available are greyed out.

The Connecticut Data Center projections on the other hand, show much more robust growth in East Hartford – likely modeled on the increase in population between 2000 and 2010 – with the town’s population predicted to regain mid-1970s levels (54,299) by 2025.

**Chart 5: East Hartford Population Projections**



Source: CONN DOT and UConn CT State Data Center

The reality will likely fall between the two projections; however, given that the total number of people is within a range of 3,000 and that neither set of projections shows population surpassing East Hartford’s peak, the population implications for the term of this Plan of Conservation and development are not significant.

### **3. LAND USE AND ZONING**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

East Hartford is predominantly a residential community consisting of a variety of subdivisions containing either exclusively single-family homes and/or two-family homes. Several pockets of apartment complexes and publicly assisted housing developments are located in East Hartford, which add density and housing choice within an overall suburban setting.

“Old East Hartford” encompasses the area around Main Street, the Central Business District, and the industrial corridors along the rail lines on Park and Tolland Avenues, including the northeast spur toward Burnham Street. Glimpses of “Rural East Hartford” include North Main Street and King Street as well as Hills Street, headed toward Manchester. “Suburban East Hartford” includes the post-war bungalows and single-family homes located to the southeast of the Central Business District. This area is interspersed with neighborhood schools and playgrounds; shopping plazas along Silver Lane, south end of Main Street, north end of Ellington Road, and east end of Burnside Avenue; as well as Prestige Industrial Park.

Many of the land use patterns that were described in the 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development endure in the fabric of the town today. The residential neighborhoods that comprise the majority of the town’s land area have remained intact, with some infill housing occurring in vacant or underutilized areas. The land use changes that have occurred in East Hartford over the past 10 years have primarily been redevelopment projects along the major transportation corridors (i.e. Silver Lane and Main Street). The most significant of these is the redevelopment of Rentschler Field, which has begun to transform the approximately 1,000-acre former United Technologies Corporation (UTC) airfield into a significant regional commercial and entertainment destination. Today, the site is occupied by the headquarters of UTC’s Pratt & Whitney and United Technologies Research Center, as well as the 40,000-seat University of Connecticut Rentschler Field Stadium, and the 186,000-square-foot Cabela’s outdoor recreation retailer. The completion of the planned redevelopment of the entire site has the significant economic development potential, but should be guided in a way that ensures maximum benefit to residents and businesses in East Hartford by providing for a true mix of uses that generates jobs and tax revenue.

Another key change in land use since the 2003 Plan is the growth of Goodwin College along the southern riverfront of the town. Founded in 1999 out of the former Data Institute in East Hartford, Goodwin College has grown to a total enrollment of more than 3,200 students. In late 2008, the college opened its present campus along Riverside Drive and has pursued an extensive program of new construction and redevelopment that has changed the pattern of development throughout the south Main Street area. The college’s expansion creates substantial possibilities for positive economic effects townwide, but it must be managed to balance the Town’s desire to maximize tax benefits and the need to create and maintain public riverfront access. See Chapter 11 for further discussion on Rentschler Field and Goodwin College.

## LAND USE AND ZONING GOALS:

*Promote balanced use of land to enhance fiscal benefit and protect quality of life.*

*Ensure that zoning regulations support the desired use of land and appropriately control development while allowing for creativity and flexibility to achieve planning objectives.*

### 3.2. Land Use Patterns

The land use pattern of East Hartford generally reflects the suburban residential character of the community. Figure 4 depicts the Town's land distribution by land use and category.

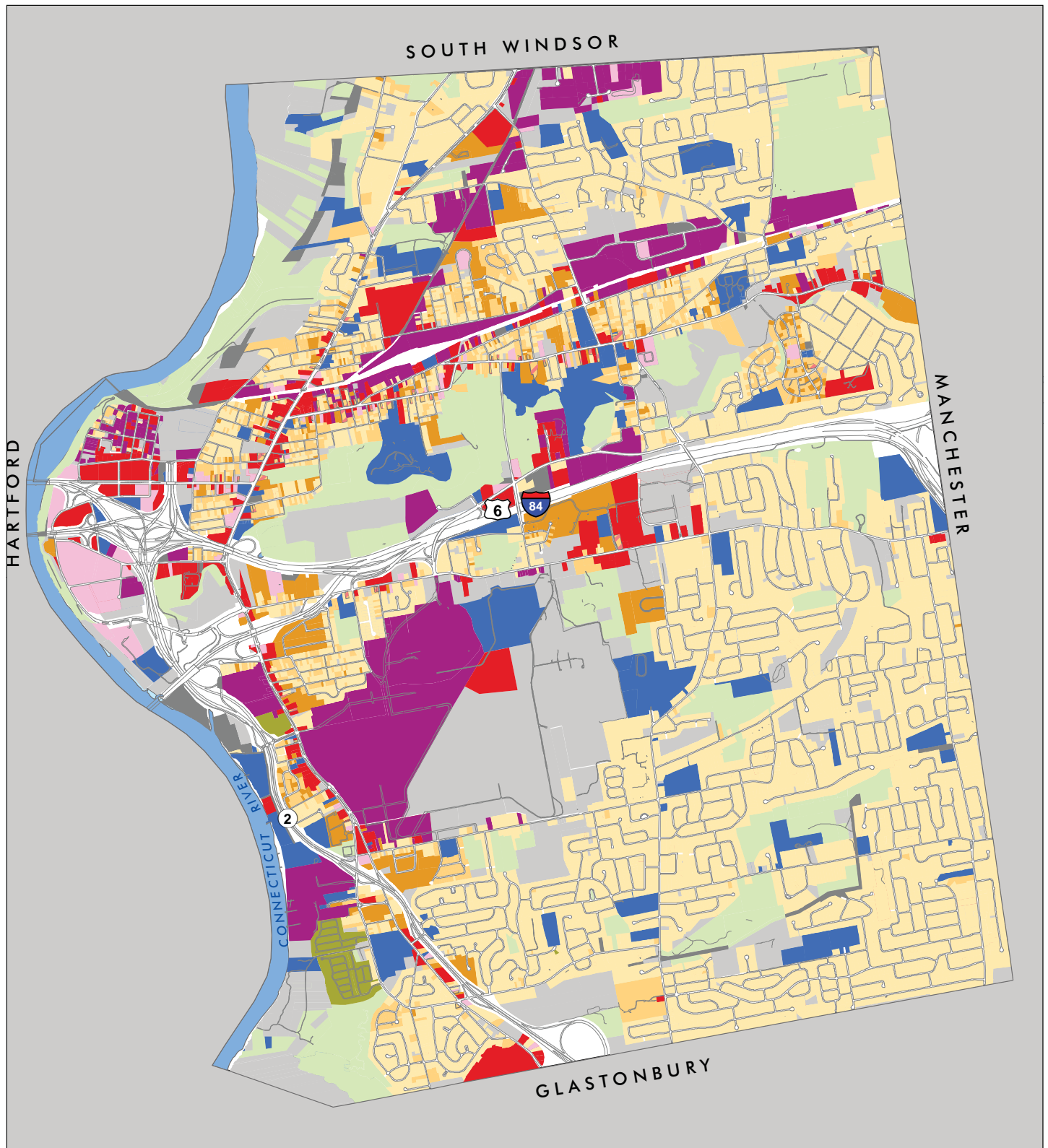
As shown, single-family homes comprise the greatest percentage of the town's land use. In fact, of the town's total land area of almost 12,000 acres (18.8 square miles), about 30% is developed as detached single-family homes, with an additional 7% developed in other residential uses, bringing the total land in East Hartford dedicated to residential use to nearly 38%.

East Hartford's next-largest land-use category is open space, which represents roughly 15% of land area, and is comprised of dedicated open space, cemeteries and agriculture. This land use has increased slightly since the 2003 POCD was developed, as increases in dedicated open space have offset a decline in agricultural uses.

Vacant land is another significant land use for the town; however, because East Hartford is largely built out, this use represents a substantially smaller portion of total land area than may be found in other suburban communities in the region. With only 12% of total land area remaining vacant, very little development can be expected to occur on raw, undeveloped land. Furthermore, this acreage figure does not take into consideration the physical development constraints found on remaining vacant properties, such as wetlands, floodplains or steep slopes. If these potential constraints are accounted for in the calculation of vacant land, it is estimated that about one-half of the vacant land would be developable, accounting for just 6% of the town's total land area.

As observed in prior plans, the declining amount of vacant land in the Town indicates that future growth will likely involve either infill development projects that close the gaps in the existing land use pattern, or redevelopment projects on key parcels. By far the largest infill development project is Rentschler Field, which is discussed further in Chapter 12 (see Figure 44). Continued redevelopment projects may be expected along Main Street (especially in the Goodwin College area along Main Street south of the Charter Oak Bridge and north of Brewer Street), Silver Lane, Burnside Avenue, Park Avenue and Tolland Street.





### Legend

Single Family	Mobile Home	Office/Medical	Open Space/Agriculture/Cemetery
2-3 Family	Mixed Use	Industrial	Vacant
4+ Family	Commercial	Institutional	Transportation/ROW/Utility

Note: Information shown on this map is intended for planning purposes only and not as a substitute for a parcel-by-parcel land use survey.

In assessing current land use, three other important factors are evident. The first is the comparatively small proportion of East Hartford's land area that is devoted to commercial or office/medical. Commercial uses are primarily concentrated in the town's central business district (Main Street between I-84 and the railroad), as well as along the rest of Main Street, Burnside Avenue, Silver Lane between Rentschler Field and I-84 and Founders' Plaza. Office uses are scattered throughout the central business district, the riverfront area south of I-84 and along areas bordering Manchester and Glastonbury.

The major retail shopping in the Greater Hartford region now tends to be anchored in the west by West Farms Mall in West Hartford, to the north by Evergreen Walk in South Windsor and to the east by Buckland Commons in Manchester. The large number of stores at Buckland Commons means that East Hartford's residents are traveling elsewhere for their shopping and dining needs, and that the town is therefore losing significant economic activity.

A second factor is the lack of mixed uses (buildings combining both residential and commercial/office uses) in the town. Less than 1% of East Hartford's total area is comprised of mixed uses, and they are largely isolated, not found along the town's principal corridors. In general, a mix of residential, retail, office and other commercial uses is recommended in commercial nodes to create more activity and strengthen the viability of local businesses.

Finally, institutional (public or semi-public) uses have increased as a percentage of East Hartford's land area, and now surpass industrial land area. Much of this growth is due to the expansion of Goodwin College's riverfront campus since the completion of the 2003 POCD, as well as that of other institutional uses. The college's growth has clear economic benefits for the town through revenue provided by Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOTs) and other fees, has leveraged other redevelopment in the town and also has positive impacts on the overall image of East Hartford. However, as discussed later in this plan, its continued growth must be balanced against any fiscal impacts resulting from increases in tax-exempt uses and demand on municipal services.

### 3.3. Zoning

Zoning powers are the primary control for development and redevelopment of land. Table 6 summarizes the basic zoning requirements for the Town, while Figure 5 depicts the various zoning districts found in East Hartford.

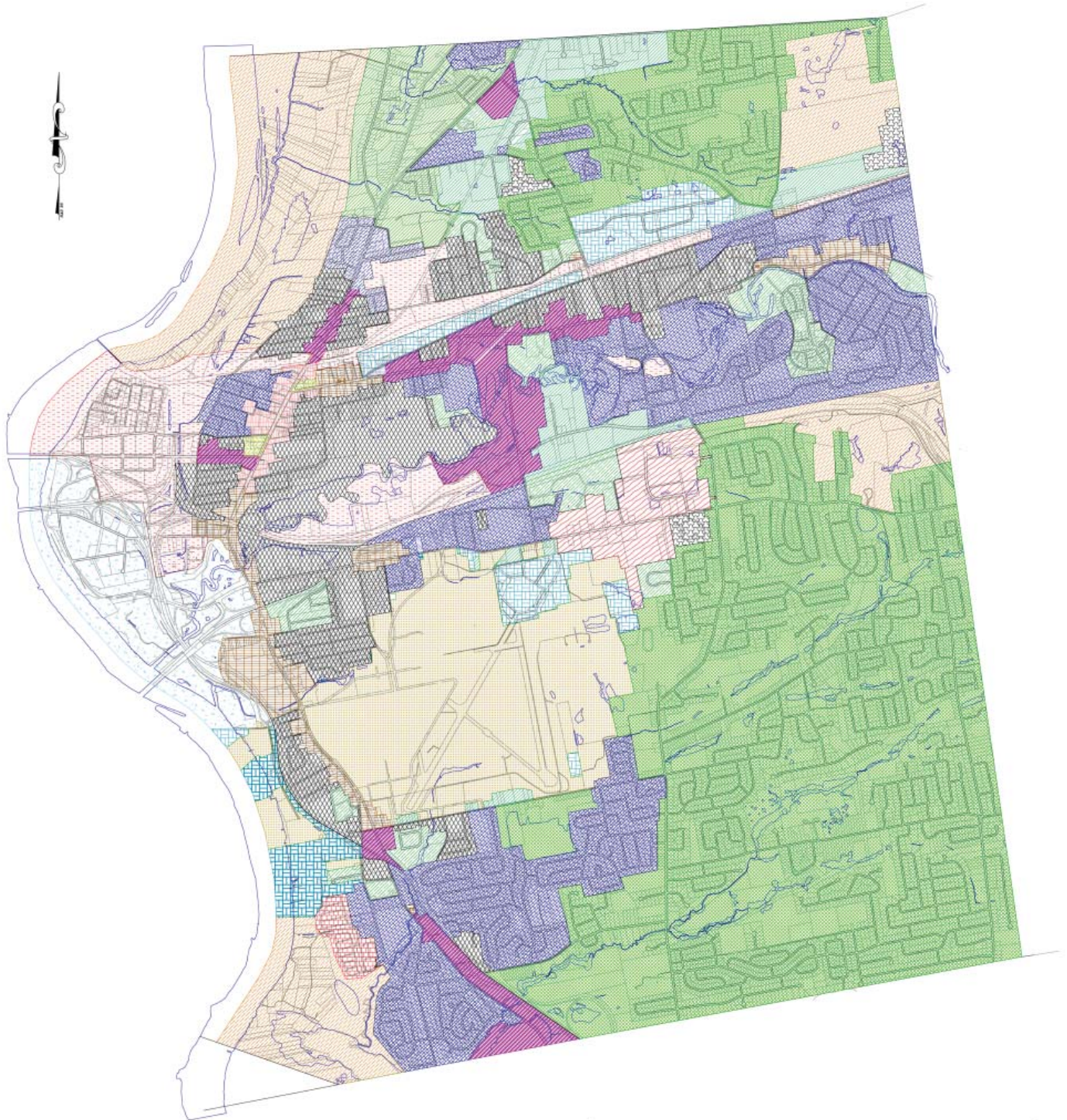
**Table 6: Summary of Existing Zoning**

Zone	Major Permitted Uses*	Minimum Lot Size	Yard Setbacks			Bldg. Coverage	Max. Height
			Front	Side (combined)	Rear		
R-1	1-family	30,000 sf	50 ft	30 ft	50 ft	15%	35 ft
R-2	1-family	15,000	40 ft	25 ft	40 ft	25%	35 ft
R-3	1-family	10,000	25 ft	20 ft	25 ft	35%	35 ft
R-4	1-, 2- and 3-family	7,600 sf	25 ft	20 ft	25 ft	35%	35 ft
R-5	1, 2- and 3-family, multifamily by special permit	7,600 sf	25 ft	20 ft	25 ft	35%	35 ft
R-6	1-family, mobile home by special permit	10,000 sf	25 ft	20 ft	25 ft	35%	35 ft
B-1	Retail; restaurants; offices; 1, 2- and 3-family; services; small-scale manufacturing; multifamily by special permit	5,000 sf	15-50 ft	15 ft	25 ft	75%	100 ft
B-2	Retail; restaurants; offices; manufacturing; marinas; 1-, 2- and 3-family; multifamily by special permit	7,500 sf	15-50 ft	15 ft	25 ft	75%	100 ft
B-3	Retail, restaurants, offices, manufacturing, marinas	10,000 sf	15-50 ft	15 ft	25 ft	75%	50 ft
B-4	Retail, restaurants, offices, services, marinas, mixed-use development by special permit	10,000 sf	25 ft	25 ft	20 ft	75%	210 ft
B-5	Retail, restaurants, offices, services, commercial recreation, work/live units by special permit	10,000 sf	None, consistent with existing buildings	25 ft	20 ft	75%	40 ft
B-6	Retail, convalescent homes, services, offices, manufacturing	20,000 sf	40 ft	25 ft/each side	40 ft	25%	50 ft
I-1	Restaurants, office/research by special permit	1 acre	50 ft	25 ft	50 ft	50%	50 ft
I-2	Office/research, manufacturing, restaurants, storage	20,000 sf	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	75%	50 ft
I-3	All uses except residential, schools, churches or hospitals. Adult uses permitted with restrictions	40,000 sf	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	75%	100 ft

Source: Town of East Hartford

\*See the Town of East Hartford Zoning Regulations for a complete list of permitted principal and accessory uses.





**LEGEND:**

<b>RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS</b>	<b>INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS</b>
R-1 SINGLE FAMILY	I-1 INDUSTRIAL
R-2 SINGLE FAMILY	I-2 INDUSTRIAL
R-3 SINGLE FAMILY	I-3 INDUSTRIAL
R-4 ONE, TWO & THREE FAMILY	<b>SPECIAL DISTRICTS</b>
R-5 MULTI-FAMILY	CDR-COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATION ZONE
R-6 MOBILE HOMES	DD1-DESIGN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT I
<b>BUSINESS DISTRICTS</b>	DD2-DESIGN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT II (AGE RESTRICTED RESIDENTIAL)
B-1 BUSINESS	IZ-INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT ZONE
B-2 BUSINESS	
B-3 BUSINESS	
B-4 BUSINESS	
B-5 BUSINESS	
B-6 BUSINESS	

ZONING SUMMARY TABLE									
ZONING DISTRICT	LOT SIZE	LOT COVERAGE	IMPERVIOUS COVERAGE	FRONTAGE	FRONT	REAR	SIDE	HEIGHT	
R-1 SINGLE FAMILY	30,000 SF	15%	N/A	100'	50'	50'	30' / 12'	35'	
R-2 SINGLE FAMILY	15,000 SF	25%	N/A	10'	40'	40'	25' / 10'	35'	
R-3 SINGLE FAMILY	10,000 SF	30%	N/A	80'	25'	25'	20' / 8'	35'	
R-4 ONE, TWO & THREE FAMILY	7,500 SF	35%	N/A	50'	25'	25'	20' / 8'	35'	
R-5 MULTI-FAMILY	7,500 SF	35%	N/A	50'	25'	25'	20' / 8'	35'	
R-6 MOBILE HOMES	10 ACRES	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10'	N/A	
B-1 BUSINESS	5,000 SF	75%	85%	40'	15'	25'	15' / 10'	100'	
B-2 BUSINESS	7,500 SF	75%	85%	50'	15'	25'	15' / 10'	100'	
B-3 BUSINESS	10,000 SF	75%	85%	60'	15'	25'	15' / 10'	50'	
B-4 BUSINESS	10,000 SF	75%	85%	60'	25'	25'	15' / 10'	310'	
B-5 BUSINESS	10,000 SF	75%	N/A	15'	25'	25'	10'	40'	
B-6 BUSINESS	20,000 SF	25%	75%	70'	40'	25'	25'	90'	
I-1 INDUSTRIAL	1 ACRE	50%	60%	120'	50'	50'	25' / 35'	50'	
I-2 INDUSTRIAL	20,000 SF	75%	85%	70'	25'	25'	25' / 10'	50'	
I-3 INDUSTRIAL	40,000 SF	75%	85%	N/A	25'	25'	25' / 10'	100'	
CDR-COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATION ZONE	40,000 SF	P2C	P2C	50'	P2C	P2C	P2C	50'	
DD1-DESIGN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT I	30 ACRES	P2C	P2C	P2C	P2C	P2C	P2C	P2C	
DD2-DESIGN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT II (AGE RESTRICTED RESIDENTIAL)	10 ACRES	P2C	40%	150'	50'	45'	45'	35'	
IZ-INCENTIVE DEVELOPMENT ZONE	10,000 SF	P2C	75%	75'	P2C	P2C	P2C	P2C	

\* P2C = PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION TO DETERMINE STANDARD

\* N/A = NOT APPLICABLE

In addition to the above, there are four floating zones intended to promote development goals:

- The **Comprehensive Downtown Rehabilitation (CDR) Zone** is designed to provide greater flexibility for commercial and residential uses for lots within the existing B-5 zone with frontage on Main Street, Connecticut Boulevard and Burnside Avenue. The zone requires a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet, but other area, bulk and parking standards may be set by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The CDR zone also includes additional landscaping and architectural standards. To date, this zone has been mapped on two sites along northern Main Street.
- The **Design Development District I (DDD-1) Zone** is intended to provide flexibility for large-scale development sites within the underlying I-3, I-2, B-4 or B-6 districts. The zone requires a minimum lot size of 20 acres. Development standards are subject to a site Master Plan approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and shall meet open space and buffer requirements. This zone has been mapped on Rentschler Field and several parcels along the southern riverfront area, corresponding to Goodwin College.
- The **Design Development District II (DDD-2) Zone** is meant to facilitate clustered housing aimed at residents aged 55 and older, within any district allowing residential uses. The zone has a minimum lot size of 10 acres, and parcels designated as DDD-2 must have frontage on a State highway or a Town-designated arterial or collector road. Development standards are subject to a site Master Plan approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and shall meet density, bedroom mix, open space, building location, landscaping and parking standards. This zone has been mapped on two parcels in north-central portion of the town.
- The **Incentive Development Zone** is designed to encourage reinvestment in selected commercial areas that are primarily built-out. The zone may be applied to any area identified in the 2003 POCD as a commercial node, or a designated redevelopment area or plan. The zone has a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, and parcels designated for the Incentive Development Zone must have frontage on a State highway or a Town-designated arterial or collector road. Permitted uses are those in the B-1 zone, but the Planning and Zoning Commission may modify area, bulk and parking standards. This zone has been mapped in two locations, on Burnside Avenue and Silver Lane.

### **3.4. Issues and Opportunities**

Based on the above discussion of existing land use and zoning regulations, this section recommends several items to be addressed in the Future Land Use Plan or through further study.

#### **3.4.1. Strengthen Main Street as the primary commercial corridor**

To promote Main Street in the central business district as East Hartford's traditional commercial hub, the Town should consider limiting the front 50% of floor area on the ground floor of buildings located within the B-5 zone on Main Street to restaurants, retail and personal-service uses.<sup>2</sup> Any other use allowed in this zone that is proposed for the front 50% of the ground-floor space of buildings fronting on Main Street would be a special permit use. A limit on ground-floor uses is not recommended for the entire length of Main Street, as there is not likely demand for retail/service, restaurant and entertainment uses along the whole corridor. In some locations, office, educational, institutional and residential uses may be appropriate.

In addition, recent development along southern Main Street has seen an increase in office and educational uses related to Goodwin College. It is recommended that the Town consider adopting incentives within the B-5 zone along Main Street, and the B-2 zone along Main Street between Willow Street and Brewer Street to promote ground-level restaurants, retail and personal-service uses. Such incentives would recognize that there may be economic disincentives in this area for this type of development, including higher revenue yield from office space than retail use and the difficulty in providing sufficient off-site parking for retail, restaurant and personal service uses.

To help guide development in the area around Goodwin College, the Town may consider creation of a "Campus Focus Area" overlay zone, encompassing the college, adjacent residential neighborhood to the east and the former Willgoos site to the south. This district could serve to ensure coordinated development that preserves the contextual neighborhood character and commercial uses along Main Street, while supporting the college's expansion.

#### **3.4.2. Promote mixed uses to enhance economic vitality**

As discussed above, East Hartford has very little land area devoted to mixed uses. A robust mix of commercial, office and residential uses can increase street activity and strengthen local businesses by creating a market for goods and services, while combining these uses in buildings or on parcels can improve land-use efficiency through shared parking and other mutually beneficial factors. Although residential uses are allowed in most of the business zones, it does not appear that the special permit provisions governing their inclusion in the business zones are promoting a true mix of uses. For example, the B-5 zone (corresponding to East Hartford's CBD) only permits residential uses in work/studio dwellings, while the per-unit lot area, yard and coverage provisions for multifamily uses in the B-1 and B-2 zones effectively limit multifamily to

---

<sup>2</sup> This is not currently a defined use in the Town's regulations, but generally includes uses such as hair/nail salons, dry cleaners, pet grooming establishments, etc. The Town may consider creating a definition to encompass such desired uses

single-use parcels, rather than in combination with other uses (i.e., apartments above stores). The special permit requirements for residential uses in business zones should be thoroughly reviewed to facilitate a better mix of uses, especially in the central business district and along key commercial corridors.

#### **3.4.3. Reassess the I-3 zone**

East Hartford's I-3 district has been designed to be the heavy manufacturing zone of the town. It allows all uses except for residential uses, schools, houses of worship or hospitals, and places additional restrictions on certain industrial activities, largely related to the potential creation of nuisances or to hazardous materials concerns. This zone is also the only location in town where adult-oriented uses are allowed. Yet the zone also allows accessory on-site day-care facilities and restaurants (including accessory outdoor dining), which would appear to be in potential conflict with many of the permitted heavy-duty industrial uses. Given that both day-care facilities and restaurants are allowed in various other zones in East Hartford – and that restaurants, in particular, are more desired in business zones – it is recommended to eliminate these uses as special permit uses in the I-3 zone. To provide greater clarity, the Town may also consider revising the I-3 regulations to indicate what uses are permitted, rather than what uses are not.

#### **3.4.4. Review restaurant and hotel provisions to ensure attractive, viable uses**

Throughout the Town's zoning regulations, restaurants and hotels are treated differently if they sell alcoholic beverages or not. In some cases, the differences are simply related to the requirement of a liquor license or the adequate separation of the portions of the restaurant serving alcohol. However, in other cases, the differences are more substantive. For example, in the B-1, B-2, B-3 and B-4 zones, hotels and motels are allowed by special permit, but if they serve alcoholic beverages, they are subject to an additional minimum room requirement. These requirements may have been adopted to address nuisance issues and the potential proliferation of bars. However, the restrictions may be outdated and should be reviewed to ensure that they are not acting to deter the establishment of local businesses.

Similarly, it may be time to review the regulations on outdoor dining, which were adopted in 2003, to determine whether all distinctions between temporary and permanent seasonal outdoor dining uses, and between restaurants serving alcoholic beverages, are still necessary. Streamlining the outdoor dining regulations could provide greater predictability and simplicity for restaurants seeking to provide that amenity, with resultant benefits to street-level vitality and economic activity. However, outdoor dining should still be subject to a special permit, thus ensuring an appropriate level of control.

#### **3.4.5. Review parking regulations to achieve more attractive, efficient and environmentally friendly site designs**

In general, most of East Hartford's parking regulations appear to be functioning well. However, the Town should consider reviewing the requirements for certain uses, to ensure that parking needs are adequately addressed but that excessive surface parking areas are not required. Adjusting parking ratios to conform to modern standards can result in greater flexibility in



building placement, the potential for more landscaping and reduction in impervious surfaces. To further this goal, the Town should conduct a thorough review of its parking ratios to assure that they are in keeping with current best practices and are taking advantage of opportunities for shared parking and, where appropriate, bike racks.

Two ratios that stand out in particular are multifamily and manufacturing uses. Multifamily uses currently require 2 spaces per unit, or 2.5 spaces per unit for three- or four-bedroom units, plus an additional 20% of the total spaces for visitor parking. Current best practices do not require parking for visitors, and generally suggest minimum required parking spaces as follows:

- Studio: 1 space
- One-bedroom: 1.25 spaces
- Two-bedroom: 1.75 spaces
- Three-bedroom or more: 2 spaces

It should be noted that these parking ratios relate to minimum parking requirements. The Planning & Zoning Commission, in its site plan review authority, may determine that additional parking is needed based on particular characteristics of the project, including demographics of the anticipated residents. Review of proposed parking facilities should carefully consider these factors, along with potential impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, to ensure that parking is adequate to serve the on-site population.

In addition, the Town's current parking requirement for manufacturing uses is 1 space per 300 square feet of floor area, excluding area used for storage. Based on Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) standards, a requirement of approximately 1 space per 800 square feet of floor area would be more appropriate to modern standards.

The Town may also consider addressing shared parking, land-banking and in-lieu fees within the parking regulations found in Section 209 of the zoning code. Shared parking (a reduction in the total number of required parking spaces based on a provision of complementary uses with different peak parking demands) is currently addressed in the regulations for several of the individual zones, but placing it in the overall parking regulations would highlight its potential use to development applicants. The Town should also consider allowing for shared parking lots across property lines, subject to special permit, which could facilitate greater efficiency in site planning and fewer curb cuts along major roadways. Land-banking allows applicants to demonstrate that they have sufficient area to provide all their desired parking, but allows the portion of that area devoted to spaces in excess of the minimum requirements to be left unpaved, unless and until it is subsequently determined to be needed based on actual demand. This practice has been shown to reduce excessive paved parking areas, allowing for more landscaping and reduction of impervious surfaces, while still provided all required parking spaces. Finally, fees in-lieu of parking allow applicants who cannot provide required parking on-site due to the particular characteristics of the property to pay a specified fee into a fund dedicated by the Town solely for public parking needs, including the acquisition of land.



#### **3.4.6. Update zoning regulations to facilitate desired development**

The Town zoning regulations contain a number of inconsistencies, as some terms are undefined and some language may be outdated or confusing. The code should be updated, clarified and streamlined to ensure that it can be administered effectively and interpreted by the public and applicants appearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission. In addition, the zoning map should be reviewed to determine whether all the zoning districts are necessary. For example, the I-1 zone is not currently mapped in East Hartford, and it is presumed that the uses it is designed to promote (office and research laboratories) could be accommodated in the I-2 zone.



## 4. ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

### 4.1. Introduction

The quality of life in a community is largely determined by the quality, quantity and distribution of its cultural and natural resources. East Hartford's rivers and streams, particularly the Hockanum and Connecticut rivers, exemplify this by providing the necessary drainage for the town, and also defining the natural landscape and providing a multitude of recreational opportunities. To guide future conservation and development efforts, it is important to understand the distribution of significant natural resource features that form the town's physical setting and in turn contribute to its character and quality of life. The following narrative briefly describes the significant natural resource features that comprise East Hartford's natural landscape.

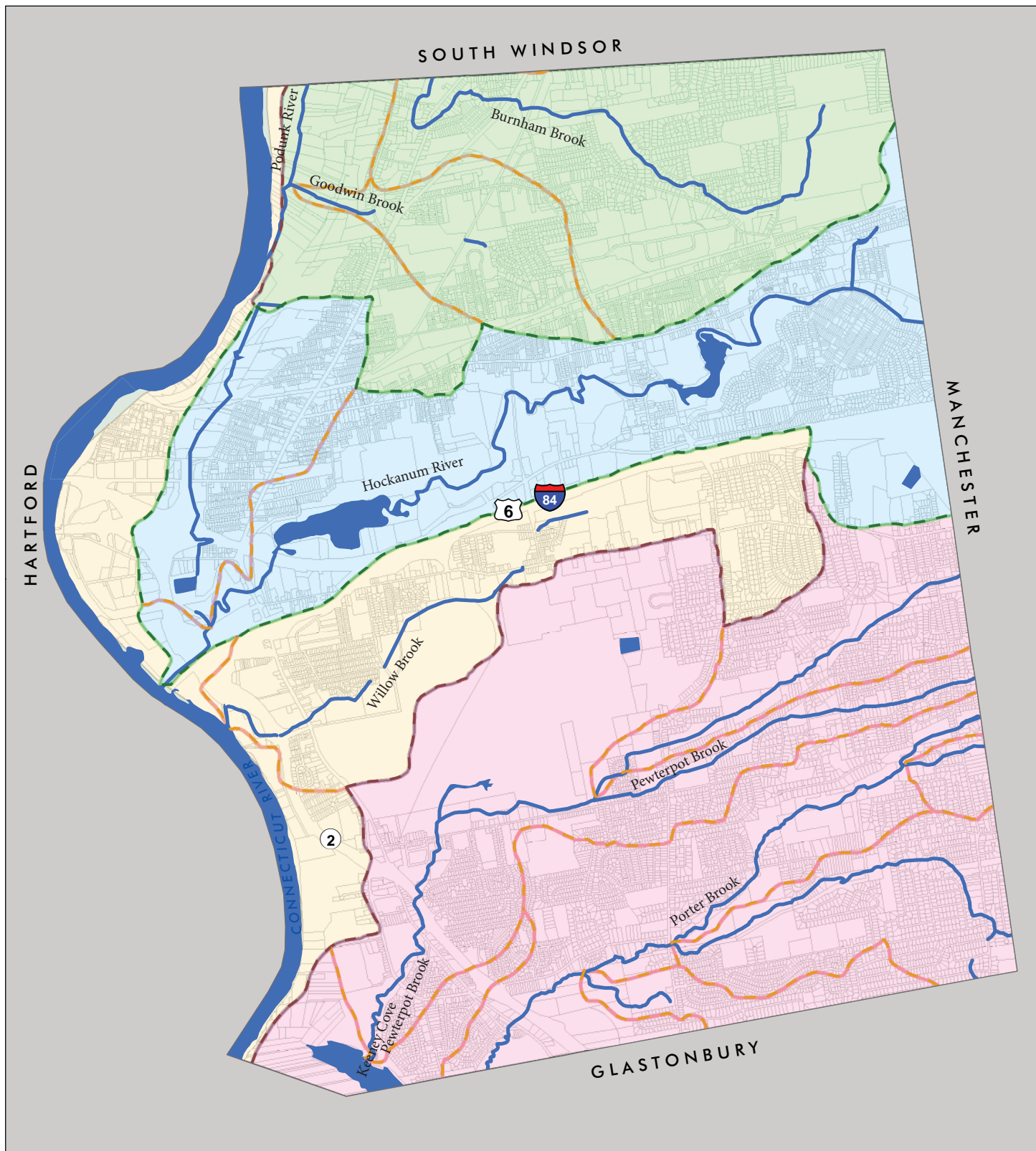
### ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES GOAL:

*Promote the conservation and preservation of natural resources as part of future development activity.*

### 4.2. Rivers and Floodplains

The Town of East Hartford encompasses approximately 18.8 square miles in total land area. As illustrated Figure 6, the town is located on the banks of the Connecticut River, bisected by its tributary, the Hockanum River. Due to the relatively flat landscape, East Hartford's drainage capacity is less than optimal. In fact, history has proven that flooding is a major concern among many of the Town's watercourses. Along the Connecticut River, flooding has been so severe that after the great floods of 1936 and 1939, which destroyed many of the buildings in the oldest parts of Town, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers developed the flood protection system that is in place today. The construction of the flood walls (completed in 1941) and man-made drainage systems, such as storm sewers and pumping stations, have played a major role in the successful redevelopment of the riverfront area from the Bulkeley to the Charter Oak Bridges. However, the remainder of East Hartford is dependent on the network of natural drainage patterns, which are primarily brooks that feed into streams and eventually into the Connecticut River.

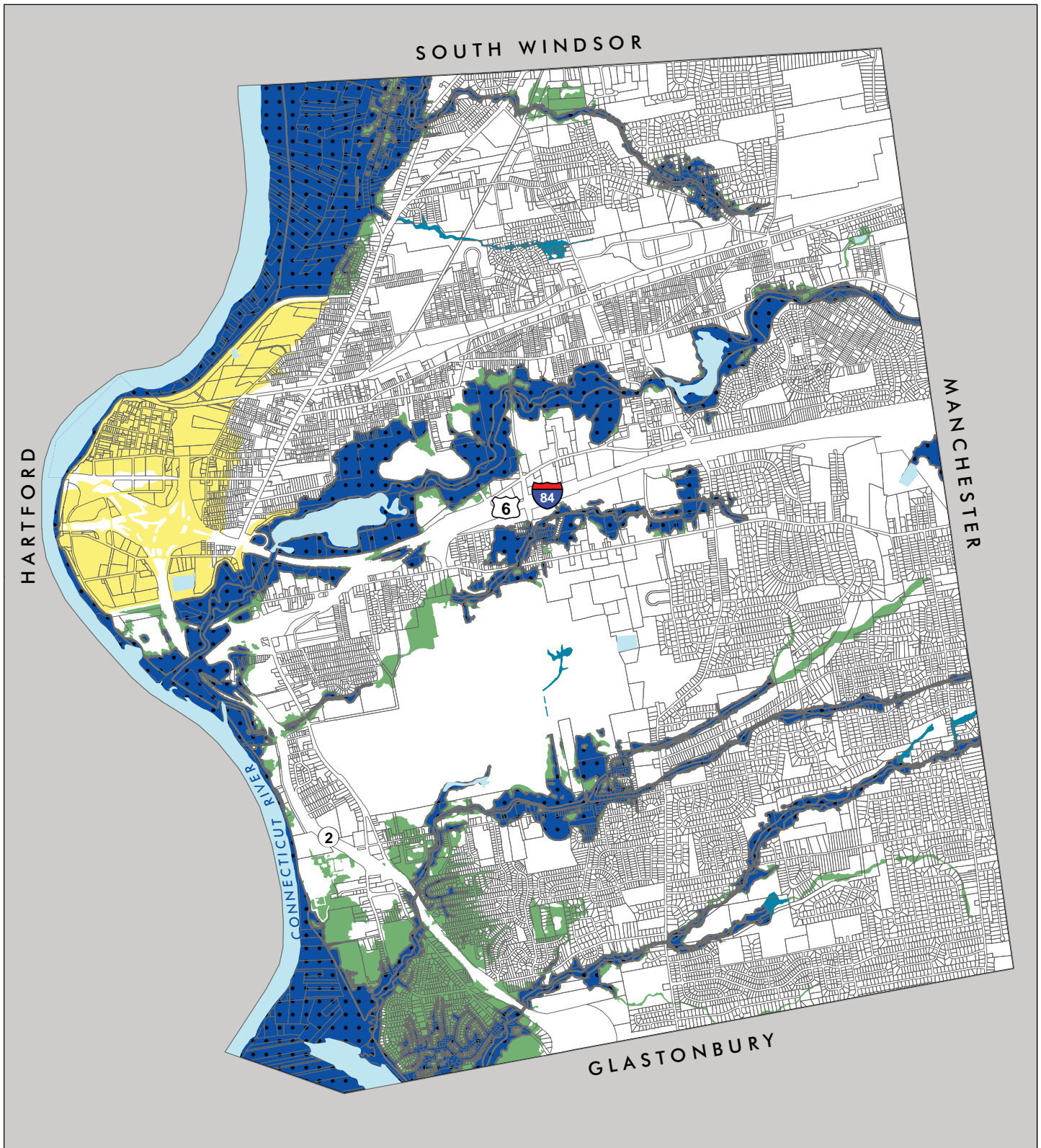
The 100-year floodplains of the Connecticut and Hockanum Rivers were studied and mapped for the Federal Flood Insurance Program by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The general area of the 100-year floodplain is shown in Figure 7. Areas protected by the embankment are also indicated. A large portion of the flood-prone areas along the river not included in the flood protection system remain as natural refuges within a suburbanized town. Although located adjacent to the river, the Goodwin College campus along Riverside Drive is sited at a higher elevation than the 100-year floodplain.



#### Legend

<b>Drainage Basin Boundary</b>	Connecticut River
Local	Hockanum River
Regional	Podunk River
Subregional	Salmon Brook





#### Legend

- A Zone - Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFAs) Subject to inundation by the 1% Annual Chance Flood (100-Year Flood), No Base Flood Elevation Determined
- AE Zone - Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFAs) Subject to inundation by the 1% Annual Chance Flood (100-Year Flood), Base Flood Elevation Determined
- Areas of .2% Annual Chance Flood (500-Year Flood)
- X Zone - Areas Protected by Levees from 1% Annual Chance Flood (100-Year Flood)

According to the most recent data provided by FEMA, it is estimated that approximately 2,350 acres of land which represents about 20% of the entire Town, is designated as an area with 1% annual chance of flooding (100-year floodplain). In order to protect the floodprone areas which were not artificially protected by the flood protection system, the Town incorporated floodplain zoning in its Zoning Regulations. Section 610 of the Ordinance regulates all land within the 100-year floodplain areas mapped by FEMA and requires a development permit for any new construction, alteration, conversion or enlargement of existing structures within the designated 100-year Flood Hazard Zone.

### **4.3. Watersheds**

East Hartford is comprised of four subregional watersheds, containing seven primary watercourses, which define the natural drainage system in the town. The rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands and floodplains are components of watersheds that have the physical attributes necessary to support a variety of plant and animal life, attenuate flood conditions and provide residents with recreational opportunities. Even though nearly all the residents of East Hartford are currently on public water supply provided by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC), protecting water quality is an important issue for the ecology of the region as well as for ensuring potential future development of public water supply wells if the need arises. Managing these watersheds in a sustainable manner is critical to ensure that the attributes they contain and the benefits they provide will be available for years to come. The following provides a general description of each of the Town's four subregional watersheds.

#### ***Connecticut River Watershed***

Like the other three subregional watersheds in East Hartford, the Connecticut River watershed is a component of the much larger *regional* Connecticut River Mainstem watershed, which extends roughly through the middle of the state from Massachusetts to Long Island Sound. The subregional Connecticut River watershed drains approximately 19% of the Town's total land area. The watershed not only includes the Connecticut River, but also Willow Brook, another primary watercourse in town.

Development within this watershed is very dense in the lower reaches of the Willow Brook and directly along the banks of the Connecticut River between the railroad bridge and the Charter Oak Bridge. Development of the density found along the river just north of Connecticut Boulevard would not have been possible had it not been for the construction of the East Hartford embankment in the early 1940s to hold back the river during the spring runoff. While the embankment has had a positive effect on the amount of development in the watershed, such development has its consequences. One is that, as the density of development increases, the percentage of land covered by impervious surfaces (i.e. roadways, driveways, roof tops, etc.) also grows. This increase in the total amount of impervious surface in a watershed can have detrimental effects on water quality due to polluted runoff reaching the rivers and streams. In fact, numerous studies document these water quality impacts with evidence of stream impairment

when total watershed imperviousness reaches between 10% and 25%.<sup>3</sup> The Town has addressed this issue by incorporating maximum impervious surface requirements in its Zoning Regulations.

Since the last Plan of Conservation and Development, there has been substantial development along the Connecticut River and Riverside Drive, largely associated with the expansion of Goodwin College. As a result, this portion of the riverfront has experienced an increased amount of impervious surfaces, which has required proper stormwater management measures to ensure no adverse impacts on water quality. Goodwin College's approved master plan has provided for an open space system, and the college has utilized stormwater management techniques in its individual site plans.

Due to the relatively level topography within the watershed, 100-year floodplain areas are mapped along the majority of the Connecticut River in East Hartford, as well as the entire length of the Willow Brook, including the perennial portions between Applegate Lane and Westview Drive.

### ***Podunk River Watershed***

The Podunk River, originating in South Windsor, flows in a general southerly direction through the floodplains and wetlands of northwest East Hartford. While the actual length of the river in East Hartford is rather small, less than 1 mile of the approximately 13 miles of river, the Podunk River watershed drains approximately 20% of the Town's land area. Other primary watercourses that flow in this watershed include Goodwin Brook, which originates just west of the School Street and Prestige Park intersection, and Burnham Brook, which originates just north of the East Hartford cross-country ski and jogging trails off Long Hill Street.

The development patterns are the densest in the southwest portion of this watershed along Tolland Street. The remainder of the watershed primarily contains residential development and agricultural land uses, particularly in the northwest portion of the watershed along Main Street. FEMA has designated approximately 10% of the watershed's total area, as 100-year floodplain. One significant floodplain area is found in direct proximity to the Connecticut River. This northwest section of the watershed is an undeveloped part of town that contains an extensive wetland complex, productive farmlands and significant wildlife habitat. It provides an undeveloped respite from the urban landscape found in the Hartford/East Hartford portion of the Connecticut River. Additional floodplain areas within the watershed are narrowly defined along the Podunk River and the Burnham and Goodwin Brooks.

---

<sup>3</sup> University of Connecticut, Cooperative Extension System, Non-point Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO); Siver, P.A., A.M. Lott, E. Cash, J. Moss and L.J. Marsicano. 1999. Century changes in Connecticut, U.S.A., lakes as inferred from siliceous algal remains and their relationship to land use changes. *Limnology and Oceanography* 44: 1928-1935.

### ***Hockanum River Watershed***

The Hockanum River, originating in the town of Vernon, bisects East Hartford in an east-west direction and joins the Connecticut River just north of the Charter Oak Bridge. The Hockanum River is the town's largest tributary to the Connecticut River and drains approximately 22% of East Hartford's land area. The river is a very popular regional recreational resource, having a designated linear trail through much of the town.

The development patterns in the Hockanum River watershed are most dense in the area along Main Street north of I-84. The remainder of the watershed is a mix of industrial, commercial and residential land uses including some open space areas. The density of development and the associated concentration of impervious surfaces has the potential to compromise water quality in the Hockanum River due to contaminated surface water runoff entering the watercourse.

Like the Podunk River Watershed, FEMA has identified a large portion of the watershed as 100-year floodplain. In fact, according to FEMA mapping, over 25% of the watershed's total area is considered floodplain.

### ***Salmon Brook Watershed***

The Salmon Brook originates in Manchester and flows just to the south of East Hartford through the Town of Glastonbury. While the Salmon Brook never actually flows into East Hartford, the Pewterpot and Porter Brooks contribute to its watershed and meet the Salmon Brook south of Keeney Cove before joining the Connecticut River. The Pewterpot and Porter Brooks are considered by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) as part of the Salmon Brook watershed and receive almost 40% of East Hartford's natural runoff, more than any other watershed in town. The watershed also hosts Keeney Cove and its surrounding wetland complex, which is regionally known for its diversity of wildlife, particularly bird species.

The development patterns in the East Hartford portion of the Salmon Brook Watershed are generally less dense than other areas of town and consist primarily of suburban residential development and open space land. However, agricultural and other non-residential uses such as commercial development and a portion of Rentschler Field are also found within the watershed.

The FEMA 100-year floodplains are broadly defined in the Salmon Brook Watershed as illustrated on Figure 7. The total area occupied by the 100-year floodplain totals approximately 5% of the watershed area. This area encompasses Keeney Cove and is located along the entire length of the Pewterpot and Porter Brooks.

## **4.4. Soils**

The soil types in East Hartford are a complex matrix of varying slope, depth, texture, permeability and fertility. According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Department of Agriculture, Soil Survey Hartford County, CT, the soil in East Hartford is comprised of 45 different



soil classifications. While each individual classification has unique characteristics, there are particular attributes of certain soil types that are of particular interest due to their environmental sensitivity. These include wetland soil types, which are described briefly below. Steep slopes are not a prevalent feature of the town.

### **Wetland Soils**

Wetlands in Connecticut are defined by soil type. Those soils that are classified by the NRCS as Poorly Drained, Very Poorly Drained, Alluvial/Floodplain or any combination of these classifications are by definition considered wetland soils and protected under the Town's inland wetland regulations. The area classified by the NRCS Detailed Soil Survey as wetland soil types are illustrated in Figure 8. It should be noted that this figure is intended to be illustrative only, and is not a substitute for actual wetland delineation or the Town's official inventory of inland wetlands and buffer zones.

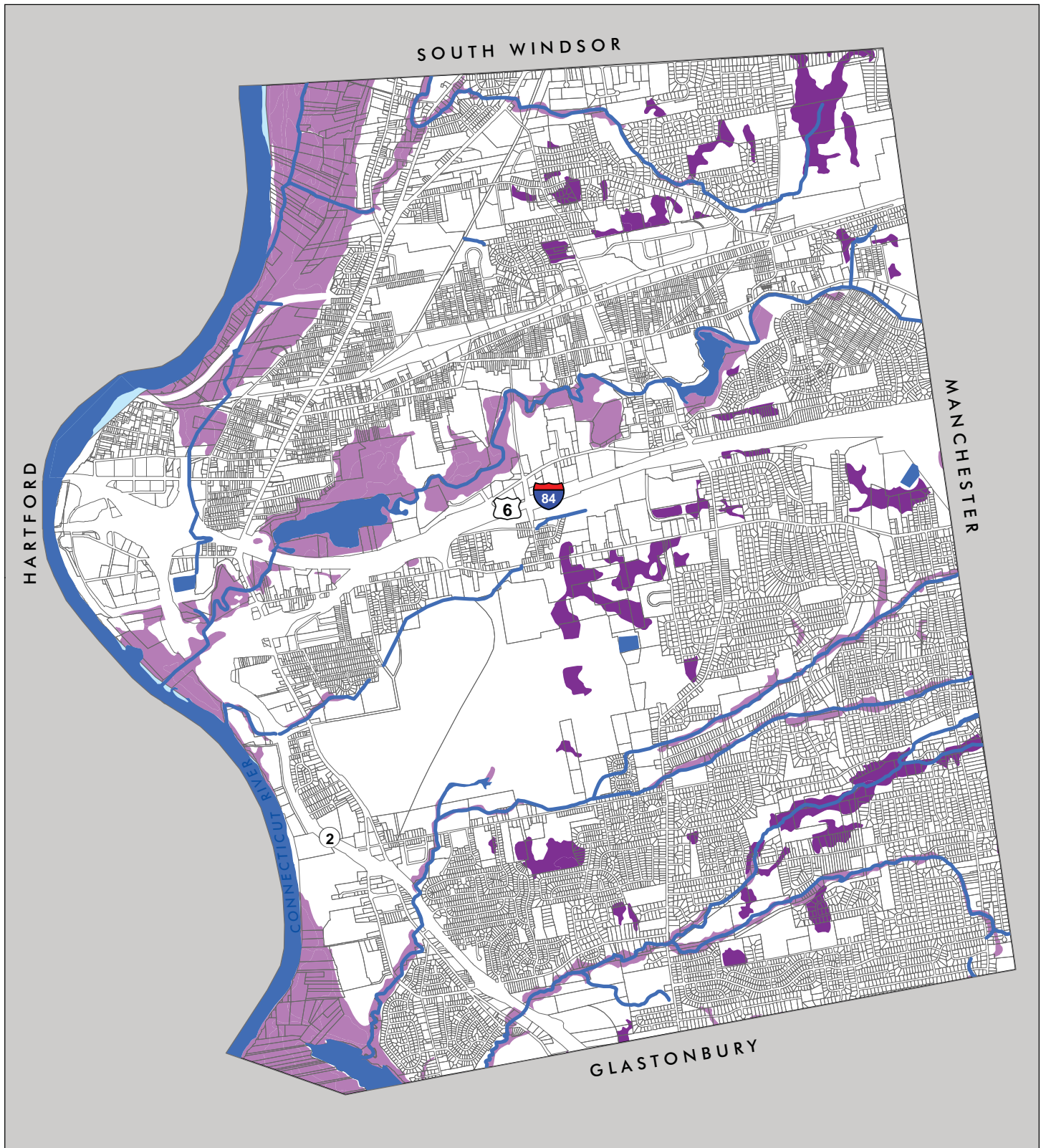
Wetlands are important for a variety of reasons including:

- Wetlands are among the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world;
- 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 thus reducing the likelihood of flood damage to personal property or agriculture by controlling the rate and volume of runoff;
- Wetlands help improve water quality by intercepting surface runoff and removing or retaining its nutrients, processing organic wastes and reducing sediment before it reaches open water;
- Wetlands provide outdoor recreational opportunities (i.e. wildlife viewing/photography, nature study).

There are several areas along the Connecticut River that have been identified in the past as having "significant wildlife and/or ecological value."<sup>4</sup> Most of these are along the major wetland areas adjacent to the Connecticut River in the North Meadows (north and west of the embankment). This ecosystem is highly productive, diverse and relatively free of human interference. In addition, there are three sub-areas which have distinguishing characteristics: a waterfowl area adjacent to the Knights of Columbus property on North Main Street; a shrub wetland north of Brook and west of King Streets listed as a good wildlife habitat; and Keeney Cove along the Glastonbury border, noted as a good bird and fish habitat.

---

<sup>4</sup> Existing and Future Land Use Plans for (the) Connecticut River Floodplain, Organization and Management of Resources and the Environment, 1979



**Legend**

- Poorly Drained and Very Poorly Drained Soils
- Alluvial and Floodplain Soils

These areas have remained relatively stable due to the regulated wetlands preventing development from encroaching on the area. In East Hartford, the Inland Wetlands Commission regulates wetlands through permits similar to those issued in the Flood Hazard Areas. The Commission also regulates activities within 100 feet of any wetland and within 200 feet of any watercourse. Official mapping used in the actual determination of the regulated areas is available in the East Hartford Engineering Department.

#### **4.5. Groundwater and Aquifer Protection**

The Town of East Hartford's public water supply system is provided by the Metropolitan District Commission, a nonprofit municipal corporation chartered to provide potable water and sewerage services on a regional basis. While this source of drinking water precludes the need for most residents to develop private wells for potable drinking water, conservation of groundwater resources is important for the protection of any potential future drinking water supplies as well as for the protection of the region's natural surface and ground water ecosystems.

The town lies upon a sizeable aquifer capable of yielding moderate to large amounts of water. The aquifer is described as being relatively shallow and therefore susceptible to contamination by infiltration of pollutants from the surface. While East Hartford's extensive sanitary sewer system helps protect against this type of contamination, groundwater contamination can still occur from non-point sources such as road contaminants and lawn fertilizers. A major source of non-point source pollution is the surface water runoff generated from impervious surfaces such as roadways and parking areas, where auto-related contaminants concentrate. Polluted runoff from these surfaces has the potential of infiltrating the water table and compromising ground water quality.

According to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Ground Water Quality Classification System, there are areas in Town where groundwater quality is presumed to be degraded. These areas, shown in Figure 9, are designated as class GB groundwater, indicating that this water is presumed not suitable for human consumption without treatment. The remainder of Town contains GA classified groundwater, indicating a quality that, at a minimum, is presumed suitable for drinking or other domestic uses without treatment. The 2003 Plan of Conservation and Development recommended that a provision be incorporated into the zoning regulations that calls for aquifer protection in order to protect the water supply in East Hartford in case it were ever needed over the long term to meet the drinking water supplies of the region. This recommendation has not yet been fulfilled, and therefore is recommended again in this Plan update.





#### Legend

- Ground water within a historically high urbanized area or an area of intense industrial activity. Such ground water may not be suitable for human consumption without treatment (Class (GB))

#### 4.6. Sustainability

As defined by the American Planning Association, sustainable development “maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend.” Achieving a sustainable future by balancing conservation and development is a central idea of this POCD. The Town of East Hartford supports sustainable development through an integrated approach to planning for land use, transportation, the environment, housing, economic development and infrastructure.

##### ***Sustainable Design/Green Building Practices***

Many communities are pursuing measures to encourage, and in some cases mandate, green or sustainable building measures, or the practice of creating healthier and more resource-efficient models of construction, renovation, operation, maintenance, and demolition. Research and experience increasingly demonstrate that when buildings are designed and operated with their lifecycle impacts in mind, they can provide great environmental, economic and social benefits.

Elements of green building include:

- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Water Stewardship
- Environmentally Preferable Building Materials and Specifications
- Waste Reduction
- Elimination of Toxics
- Indoor Environment
- Smart Growth and Sustainable Development

In Connecticut, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2009 to develop *Smart Growth Guidelines for Sustainable Design and Development*. The report provides smart-growth strategies related to low-impact development, community development, green buildings, resource preservation, energy conservation, transportation, groundwater protection, recycling and waste management. A companion document, *Together We Can Grow Better: Smart Growth for a Sustainable Region*, provides examples of development challenges and opportunities through representative examples, several of which are specifically relevant to opportunities present in East Hartford:

- Infill redevelopment in an existing residential neighborhood
- Grayfield redevelopment of a vacant shopping center in a retail corridor
- Infill development in a functioning but underused shopping center

The report is intended for individuals and entities that are involved in the planning, design, financing, development and regulatory decisions about their town centers, neighborhoods and regions. East Hartford should utilize the report, especially when considering regulatory frameworks and strategies that promote sustainable development.

Nationwide, buildings are responsible for nearly 40% of all carbon dioxide emissions. In order to address this important issue, many municipalities across the country are encouraging green building practices through development standards and site plan review practices. A national standard for sustainable or green building design has been developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). This standard, referred to as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), promotes the design and construction of buildings that conserve energy, save water, reduce carbon emissions, improve outdoor environmental quality and encourage stewardship of environmental resources. LEED is a voluntary program that provides a common standard of measurement for green buildings, recognize environmental leadership in the building industry, stimulate green competition and raise consumer awareness about the benefits of green buildings.



While LEED has historically applied to commercial buildings, recently the USGBC created the LEED for Homes Certification program, which promotes high-performance, green single and multifamily homes. The USGBC also offers a Green Home Guide that provides guidance on increasing the energy-efficiency of existing homes. It provides resources aimed at helping homeowners save energy (and money) through a variety of measures such as insulating attics and windows, planting shade trees, and replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).



Through Connecticut's Green Buildings Tax Credit Program, building owners and developers are eligible for tax credits if they construct, renovate or rehabilitate commercial properties to LEED's Gold Standard. East Hartford currently has no provision or incentive for green buildings using LEED-type certifications within the Town Ordinance. The Town should update its ordinance to encourage sustainable design practices. One option might be a rebate on building permit fees based on the level of LEED-type compliance.

### ***Energy Conservation***

Another aspect of sustainable building practices is the use of energy-efficient products and practices that conserve energy and thus avoid greenhouse gas emissions. The Town can lead by example by working to retrofit existing municipal facilities to make them more sustainable and energy-efficient. East Hartford has already taken a large step in this direction by completing a \$12.3 million energy retrofitting project for its public facilities. This project, discussed further in Chapter 6, included lighting retrofits, energy management systems, HVAC and burner replacements, pool covers and solar panels. Additional actions the Town should consider to improve its energy efficiency include, where possible, upgrading equipment to meet higher environmental standards. This might include smaller items such as office equipment, and larger items such as the acquisition of hybrid electric cars for the Town's departmental fleets.

In addition, the Town should support existing and create new innovative programs to conserve energy. EnergyStar, a joint project of the EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy, is a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products. A number of communities have passed legislation mandating that certain types of uses purchase EnergyStar-labeled products or requiring some types of residential buildings to conform to EnergyStar Homes criteria.

Connecticut Light and Power's Plan-It Wise energy pilot program recently demonstrated that customers will use significantly less energy during peak times of electric usage when rates for peak period use are higher than those for off-peak use. The Town should work with CL&P to encourage participation in such programs. East Hartford may also consider exploring a "green homes program" through which it could encourage homeowners to make energy-saving improvements to their homes. One model that East Hartford could explore is found in the Town of Babylon, New York, which has created an innovative green homes program that lets homeowners pay for energy-saving home improvements with benefit assessment financing. That town offers assistance for home improvements up to \$12,000, which the homeowner then repays with money saved on utility bills every month.

### ***Land-Use Regulations and Site Plan Approval***

An important way in which East Hartford can enhance the sustainability of its built environment is through its land-use regulations. Zoning, site plan, subdivision and inland wetland regulations are the primary tools through which the Town controls land use. These regulations should be reviewed and updated to promote green, low-impact development and environmental conservation. East Hartford should establish green goals to guide this effort. *Together We Can Grow Better: Smart Growth for a Sustainable Region* provides a variety of policies and land use regulations that should be considered. Examples of green land-use regulations that should be explored are listed below:

- Reducing parking requirements, where appropriate, and implementing innovative parking solutions such as shared parking.
- Encourage features that promote bicycling and walking (i.e. bulb-outs, bike racks, crosswalks, benches, continuous sidewalks, buildings oriented toward the street)
- Encouraging green building practices including the use of pervious pavements, green roofs, rain gardens, and bioswales.
- Requiring on-site stormwater retention to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with best management practices.
- Establishing regulations for buffers and setbacks as appropriate along the Connecticut River and along large and/or high functioning wetland areas.

Protecting groundwater and minimizing potential sources of contamination should be an important aspect of East Hartford's sustainability strategy. The Town should work to promote sustainable landscape design as part of its site plan review process. Landscaping should break up continuous pavement of interior parking areas. This will provide aesthetic improvements and

improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow. It will also help to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces, thus reducing the amount of runoff entering surface waters and groundwater. At present, the Town requires perimeter landscaping for parking areas of at least 20 spaces, and additional interior landscaping for areas of at least 50 spaces. Lowering the threshold for the provision of interior landscaping may be considered, perhaps to 30-40 spaces, to allow for further reduction of paved expanses. Semi-pervious surface products such as permeable pavers should be used instead of asphalt or concrete pavement within low traffic areas, such as parking areas. In general, East Hartford should encourage the use of pervious paving materials to the maximum extent practicable and minimize impervious surfaces in recreation and open space areas.

Natural landscape elements should also be preserved to the maximum degree possible, with re-grading of land kept to a minimum. Landscaping can buffer residential neighborhoods from commercial uses. Lots abutting residentially-zoned land should include densely planted strips of deciduous trees and shrubs, landscaped berms and fencing to preserve the residential character of the neighborhood. Where a building façade cannot be used to frame the sidewalk edge, landscaping such as hedges, shrubs or low walls and fences should be used. Regularly spaced street trees should be planted between roadway and sidewalk in order to provide a sense of protection for pedestrians. Rows of trees can also help to visually unify parking lots and buildings that line commercial roadways. Tree plantings can provide an effective screen to parking lots located adjacent to major roads.

The Town should examine existing regulations for groundwater and surface water protection to determine whether or not they adequately address current groundwater issues and concerns. East Hartford may wish to consider encouraging and/or requiring additional measures to enhance local recharge, including installation of roof-drain dry wells and in-garden recharge areas, disconnection of drainage conveyances that pass over porous soils and replacement of paved areas (impervious surfaces) with porous surfaces. In addition, the Town should work to educate landowners about ways to conserve water and properly dispose of household chemicals. It should also discourage the use of chemical lawn treatments and pesticides. Standards for retrofitting existing commercial properties adjacent to wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas should be considered. Within subdivisions, open areas should be designed to serve as filters, buffers, swales, wet and dry ponds and detention and retention areas. Public open areas such as parks and playgrounds should be designed to filter polluted runoff from adjacent impervious areas. As discussed above, reducing impervious surface area will help the Town achieve its groundwater protection goals.



## **4.7. Issues and Opportunities**

This section recommends several items to be addressed through Town action or further study.

### **4.7.1. Take steps to further protect water quality.**

East Hartford has a strong history of protecting the various watercourses running through the town, including the preservation of significant areas of open space along rivers and streams, to reduce water quality impacts from stormwater runoff and other impacts of development. The Town should continue that tradition by implementing a recommendation of past plans: incorporating a provision into the zoning regulations that calls for aquifer protection in order to protect the water supply in East Hartford should it be needed in the future to supply drinking water to the region as a whole. While there is no indication that this water source is required in the immediate future, planning for its potential need would be a prudent step as part of a long-term strategy to protect critical environmental resources.

### **4.7.2. Implement measures to promote sustainability and “green” building.**

This chapter outlines a number of specific actions that East Hartford can implement to enhance overall sustainability, some of which are also discussed elsewhere in this Plan including:

- Review regulations for opportunities to tighten controls of impervious coverage.
- Adding a provision or incentive in the Town Ordinance for green buildings using LEED-type certifications (e.g. a rebate on building permit fees based on compliance).
- Reducing parking requirements, where appropriate, and implementing innovative parking solutions such as shared parking.
- Encourage features that promote bicycling and walking (i.e. bulb-outs, bike racks, crosswalks, benches, continuous sidewalks, buildings oriented toward the street)
- Encouraging green building practices including the use of pervious pavements, green roofs, rain gardens, and bioswales.
- Requiring on-site stormwater retention to the greatest extent practicable, consistent with best management practices.
- Establishing regulations for buffers and setbacks as appropriate along the Connecticut River and along large and/or designated high functioning wetland areas.
- Upgrading municipal equipment to meet higher environmental standards.
- Supporting programs to conserve energy, such as promoting the use of EnergyStar products and exploring a “green homes program.”

- Considering lowering the threshold for the provision of interior landscaping in parking areas, perhaps to 30-40 spaces, to allow for further reduction of paved areas and reduce the “heat island effect.
- Examining existing regulations for groundwater and surface water protection to determine whether or not they adequately address current groundwater issues and concerns. For example, the Town may wish to consider encouraging and/or requiring additional measures to enhance local recharge, including installation of roof-drain dry wells and in-garden recharge areas, disconnection of drainage conveyances that pass over porous soils and replacement of paved areas (impervious surfaces) with porous surfaces.

## **5. PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The quality, quantity and variety of parks and open spaces are important attributes that help define the character of a community. The strength of East Hartford's community character lies in its stable residential neighborhoods and the abundance of parks and recreational facilities that serve them. In addition, natural passive open spaces have been protected, providing a respite from the urbanized landscape and adding to the Town's character. The benefits of parks and open space are varied, in that they provide opportunities for social interaction and healthful activity; help preserve natural features and environmentally sensitive areas; and enhance community character, improving property values and the marketability of neighborhoods.

Recreation activity in East Hartford has evolved over the years to the point where organized sports and formal recreation programs are the focus of adolescent active recreation. The increasingly high participation and longer length and variety of sport seasons require dedicated facilities, an important consideration when creating capital improvement plans for the community. However, providing opportunities for informal recreation activities (i.e. walking, jogging, skating, bicycling) is also important to meet the growing needs of the community. Greenways or linear trails, such as the Hockanum River Greenway, help provide this opportunity. When properly planned, greenways can link existing parks and open space areas with neighborhoods and community facilities (i.e. schools, libraries), increasing their accessibility from residential areas.

As described in the East Hartford Strategic Economic Development Plan<sup>5</sup>, the Town's open space network is a key amenity for economic development. The Town's current assets – natural land and developed recreation space – also represent future opportunities for enhancement or expansion, which can link with the Town's potential.

Open space and recreation development contributes to economic development by:

- Encouraging new business and helping to keep existing businesses
- Representing a symbol of the community's quality of life
- Providing an attractive town design and environment
- Forming part of the infrastructure for new development sites

Conversely, economic development can also contribute to open space and recreation development by:

- Creating linkages to the open space framework
- Encouraging developers to set aside open space within their parcels

---

<sup>5</sup> Town of East Hartford, Strategic Economic Development Plan & Land Use Recommendations, Clough, Harbor & Associates LLP; The Williams Group Real Estate Advisor, LLC & Hutton Associates, Inc. May 2000.

- Providing increased tax revenues for park and recreation development and operations, as well as for open space acquisition.

The park and open space resources found in East Hartford are, in general, geographically distributed throughout the Town and are accessible to most of the population. They can be considered one of the Town's signature assets, as they provide green space that helps break up the suburban development patterns and provide recreational opportunities to the surrounding neighborhoods. The challenge is to continue to maintain and enhance these critical spaces so that they meet the changing needs of the community, while recognizing the Town's responsibility for managing its limited resources.

### **PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS:**

*Provide a system of linked public and private open space that offers both passive and active recreation opportunities and that protects environmentally sensitive areas.*

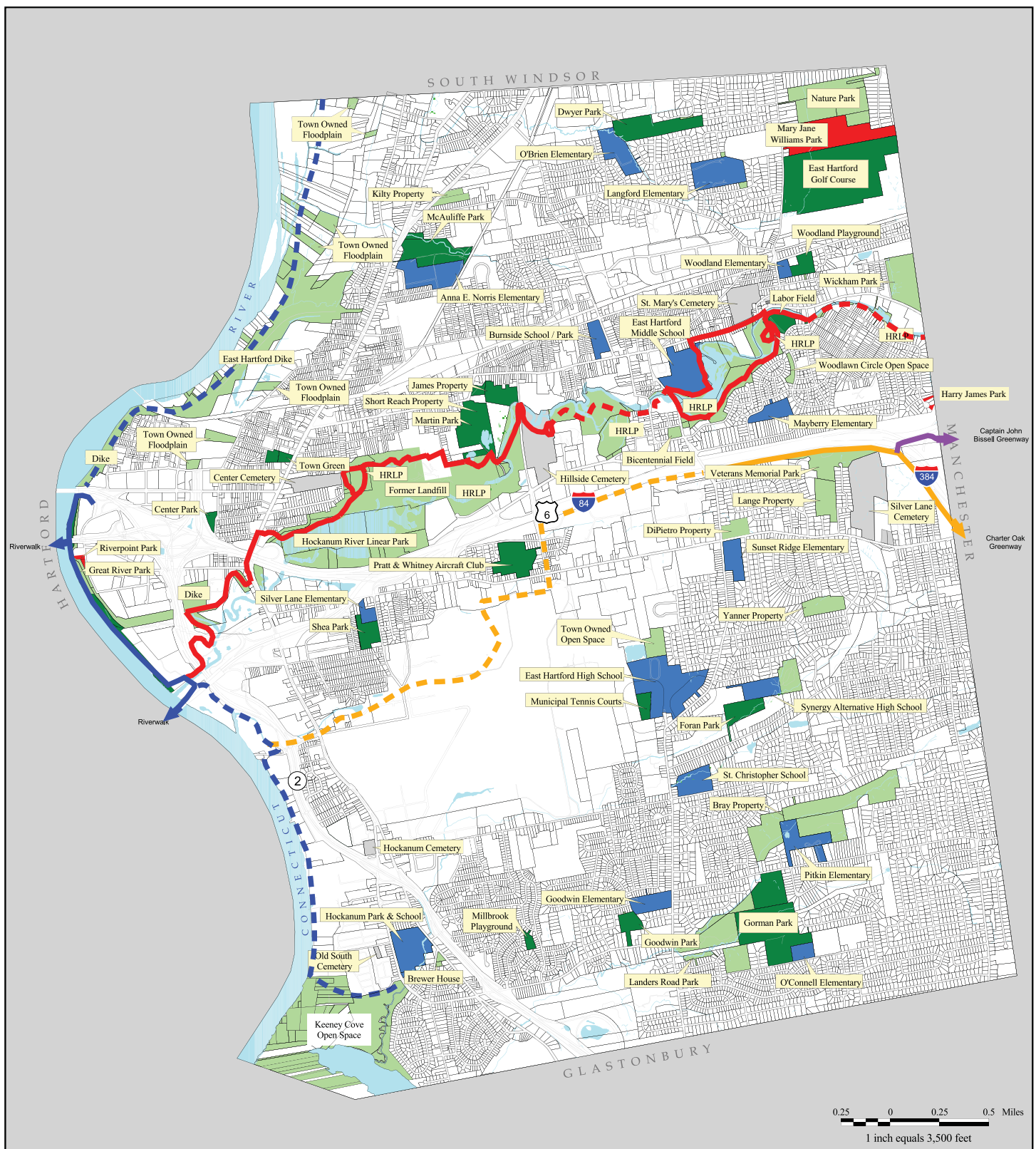
*Maximize access to and utilization of parks and recreation facilities for all residents.*

*Promote the conservation and preservation of open space and natural resources as part of future development activity.*

*Improve and protect the quality of life in the Town by encouraging the improved use, maintenance and rehabilitation of the park and open space system to ensure they are adequate in extent, strategic in location and equitable in distribution in order to meet the unique active and passive needs of the Town's population.*

### **5.2. Existing Parks and Open Space**

Lands in East Hartford considered parks and open space have been inventoried and categorized based on public or private ownership. Figure 10 illustrates the existing publicly and privately owned active and passive recreation and open space areas, as well as proposed expansions to those facilities. The active recreation facilities consist of parks, playgrounds, ballfields and schoolyards, while passive areas include greenways, Town-owned floodplains and flood control properties and open space areas. Cemeteries are also included in the inventory as passive open space areas.



## Legend

- Passive Recreation Areas
- Active Recreation Areas
- Cemeteries
- Land Trust
- Schools

**Trail** Dashed lines represent proposed extension

- Hocknum River Linear Park
- Riverwalk
- Charter Oak Greenway
- Captain John Bissell Greenway

**FIGURE 10: EXISTING AND PROPOSED  
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT

TOWN OF EAST HARTFORD

Source: Metropolitan District Commission, updated by BFJ Planning, 2013



In addition to Town-owned property, Figure 10 shows lands held for conservation by the Manchester Land Conservation Trust and private recreation and open space areas such as Wickham Park and the Pratt & Whitney (Aircraft Club) fields. Given the missions of their owners, these lands are likely to remain in open space use and continue to support the recreation, conservation and preservation objectives of this plan.

The network of waterways found within the Town, particularly the Connecticut and Hockanum Rivers, have provided a baseline for successful greenway implementation. An example of these efforts includes Riverfront Recapture, which has turned the Connecticut River waterfront in both Hartford and East Hartford into a major regional cultural and recreational asset. East Hartford's Great River Park offers walking and biking trails, boat launch areas, an amphitheater and nature study areas. Great River Park is part of the overall Riverwalk network, which includes Hartford's Riverside Park, Riverfront Plaza and Charter Oak Landing, connected to East Hartford by walking paths over the Founders Bridge and the Charter Oak Bridge.

Other successful greenway projects in East Hartford include the Hockanum River Linear Park, which extends almost the entire length of the Hockanum River in East Hartford and stretches through the Town of Manchester into the Town of Vernon; the Charter Oak Greenway, a multi-use trail that runs parallel to I-84 from Forbes Street to Route 83 in Manchester; and the Captain John Bissell Greenway, which connects the Charter Oak Greenway in East Hartford to the Bissell Bridge in South Windsor. Expansion of the greenway system by adding connections to neighborhoods, community facilities and parks will improve accessibility to the system and enhance the quality of life in the Town.

The current inventory of recreation and open space totals approximately 1,471 acres<sup>6</sup>. The land included in the inventory is summarized in Table 7 and is categorized based on whether it is primarily used for active or passive recreation. Active recreational facilities are defined as areas that accommodate organized sporting activities such as baseball, basketball, soccer or tennis. These facilities may also provide playscapes for younger children. For the purposes of this inventory, active recreational facilities have been further categorized by whether they are associated with a school facility. Passive recreational facilities are areas that provide low-impact recreation such as hiking or picnicking with minimal development or improvements. Improvements to passive recreation facilities typically include little more than park benches or picnic areas. Some areas included in this inventory function as natural conservation areas (i.e. floodplain) and are generally left as natural, undeveloped open space.

The University of Connecticut football stadium at Rentschler Field is an active recreational facility of statewide significance. While the stadium can be seen as contributing to East Hartford's recreation opportunities, because of its fairly limited use for that purpose, it has not been included in the inventory of Town parks and open spaces.

---

<sup>6</sup> Total excludes the three East Hartford linear parks: Charter Oak Greenway, Hockanum River Linear Park and Captain John Bissell Greenway, as these parks are measured in linear miles rather than acreage.

**Table 7: Parks and Open Space Inventory, 2013**

Active Open Space		Passive Open Space	
<u>Public Parks</u>	Acres	<u>Public Ownership<sup>3</sup></u>	Acres
Alumni Field/Town Green	4.4	Bicentennial Square	2.3
Dwyer Park	23.8	Bray Property	69.7
Foran Park	11.5	Brewer House/Gardens	1.4
Goodwin Park	7.3	Center Park	2.2
Gorman Park	63.3	DiPietro Park <sup>2</sup>	7.0
Labor Field	11.6	East Hartford Nature Park	41.7
McAuliffe Park/Norris Elementary <sup>1</sup>	45.5	Great River Park	21.8
Martin Park	26.5	James Property	12.0
Millbrook Playground	2.0	Keeney Cove	101.7
Shea Park	9.0	Kilty Property <sup>2</sup>	7.9
East Hartford Golf Course	102.1	Landers Road Park	2.6
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>307 acres</i>	Lange Property	12.9
		Short Reach Property <sup>2</sup>	5.3
<u>Public School<sup>1</sup></u>		Town-Owned Flood Control Embankment	148.9
East Hartford Middle School	18.5	Town-Owned Floodplain	34.5
East Hartford High School	35.7	Unnamed Open Space (near high school)	8.6
Goodwin Elementary	6.4	Unnamed Open Space (Main Street)	3.3
Hockanum Elementary/Park	16.0	Unnamed Open Space (next to Synergy HS)	10.4
Langford Elementary	19.0	Veterans Memorial Park	18.2
Mayberry Elementary	7.3	Woodlawn Circle Open Space	2.6
O'Brien Elementary	13.1	Yanner Property	10.8
O'Connell Elementary	3.3	Former Landfill	97.9
Pitkin Elementary	14.3	Former Elks Property	32.0
Silver Lane Elementary	2.7	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>655.7 acres</i>
Sunset Ridge Elementary	6.0		
Synergy High School	19.5	<u>Private Ownership</u>	
Woodland Elementary	2.5	East Hartford Patrolmen & Firemen	6.9
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>164.3 acres</i>	Goodwin College <sup>2</sup>	153.5
		Harry James Park <sup>2, 4</sup>	0.7
<u>Private Ownership</u>		Mary Jane Williams Park <sup>4</sup>	40.2
Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Club	19.3 acres	Riverpoint Park <sup>2, 4</sup>	1.0
		Wickham Park	22.5
		<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>224.8 acres</i>
		<u>Cemeteries</u>	
		Center Cemetery	11.4
		Hillside Cemetery	31.4
		Hockanum Cemetery	2.7
		Silver Lane Cemetery	37.9
		Old South Cemetery (Private)	0.9
		Saint Mary's Cemetery (Private)	15.5
		<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>99.8 acres</i>
<b>Active Total</b>	<b>490.6 acres</b>	<b>Passive Total</b>	<b>980.3</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL: 1,470.9 ACRES</b>			

(1) Acreage represents area used for recreational purposes only

(2) New acquisition since 2003

(3) Does not include linear parks: (Charter Oak Greenway, Hockanum River Linear Park and Captain John Bissell Greenway)

(4) Indicates land held by the Manchester Land Trust

Sources: East Hartford Department of Parks and Recreation; Goodwin College; Manchester Land Trust; 2003 POCD

### **5.3. Active Recreation Facility Overview**

East Hartford's diverse array of active recreational facilities is a tremendous asset to the Town and its residents. The 27 parks, school facilities and open spaces included in the inventory represent a broad spectrum of active uses, ranging from walking, jogging and biking trails to baseball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts and playscapes. These active spaces in total comprise over 500 acres of recreational area.

The Town has three parks that are the showpieces of its parks and open space system. The McAuliffe Park/Norris Elementary School complex in the northern end of East Hartford includes an outstanding baseball facility, a swimming pool, softball and Little League baseball fields, basketball courts and play areas for children. Since the 2003 POCD, the Town has completed a lighting project for the park's softball field and upgraded dugouts at its Trassio Field. Renovations to the tennis courts are needed. The complex is also tied in with another community asset, the North End Senior Center, adjacent to McAuliffe Park along Remington Road, which provides recreational opportunities for residents of all ages in the northern and central areas of East Hartford (see Chapter 6 for more information on the senior center).

Martin Park, located off Burnside Avenue, is another prime recreational facility for East Hartford. Its baseball, football and softball field, popular skateboard park, swimming facility and play areas are important assets in the central part of the town. The park's connection with the Hockanum River Linear Park via an attractive pedestrian bridge enables neighborhood access to a regional open space network of parks and trails. Martin Park has seen a number of upgrades since the 2003 POCD, including renovations to its football field, pool deck and picnic pavilions.

Finally, Gorman Park, located in the southern end of town, is East Hartford's largest multipurpose park and has the potential to become the Town's flagship park. The park contains the Lord Pool, a renovated pavilion picnic area, two basketball courts, four baseball fields and a soccer field. Much of the park's area, including the pond in the central portion, is unused and represents an opportunity to significant enhancement to the Town's recreational network.

Other important active recreational assets include the East Hartford Golf Course, a public 18-hole course in the northeastern section of town, and East Hartford's five outdoor pools: Gold Star Pool in Goodwin Park, Lord Pool in Gorman Park, Terry Pool in Hockanum Park, Drennan Pool in McAuliffe Park and the Martin Park Pool. Several of the pools are in need of renovation or replacement given their age, especially Drennan Pool (built in 1964) and Martin Park Pool. Because of their condition and generally low public attendance at the public pools, the Town should consider replacing one or more of the pools with a splash pad complex, which are ideal for younger children and can be less expensive to operate given the limited need for lifeguards.

Perhaps most importantly, East Hartford's parks system has at its foundation a network of small neighborhood and school-associated recreational facilities. These facilities provide an infusion of needed recreational space into residential neighborhoods, while also serving as important links in the overall parks and open space system and connecting the schools to the neighborhoods.



Enhancing this existing solid foundation, in cooperation with the East Hartford Board of Education based on individual school needs, should receive top priority. If proper attention is not paid to the local foundation of the parks system, not only will individual neighborhoods lack sufficient recreational resources, but the entire town-wide open space network will be weakened.

Several key privately held facilities also exist within the town boundaries. Although the Town exercises no direct control over the use of these facilities, the properties are important parts of the overall recreation and open space network in East Hartford.

#### **5.4. Passive Recreation Facility Overview**

Passive recreational facilities tend to be largely unimproved areas that provide low-impact recreation including hiking, birdwatching and picnicking. Often, these areas serve as landscaped buffers between non-compatible and sensitive land uses, such as transportation corridors and fragile wetland environments. Passive recreational lands can serve ecological purposes by protecting significant environmental areas (e.g. floodplains and mature forests) or by playing a role in stormwater management. However, these minimally developed areas should be properly maintained to ensure that they are safe and free of litter or dumping.

East Hartford's most significant passive open space assets are its dedicated trails, which help to knit together the Town's overall open space network, and to link it to neighboring communities.

- **Riverwalk:** A portion of the Connecticut River waterfront north of the Charter Oak Bridge and south of the Bulkeley Bridge is devoted to a paved trail, providing access to Great River Park and the Hockanum River Linear Park Trail, as well as pedestrian access to Hartford via Founders Bridge and the Charter Oak Bridge. The Riverwalk is planned to extend northward to the South Windsor town line and southward to Hockanum School on South Main Street. In addition the trail could ultimately provide a linkage to the Route 3/Putnam Bridge and planned trails in Glastonbury and Wethersfield, through utilization of open space lands owned by the Town and Goodwin College in the vicinity of Keeney Cove.
- **Hockanum River Linear Park Trail:** This 3.5-mile boardwalk and stone dust trail extending roughly from the Charter Oak Bridge east-northeast to the Manchester town line. The trail, which will ultimately run 4.6 miles, connects a number of key Town assets, including the riverfront, Town Hall, dedicated parks and open space areas and schools. Parking facilities are located at Hillside Street, Martin park, Elm Street and Town Hall. Phase 3 of the Hockanum River trail is planned to continue to connect gaps. This phase which will extend the greenway by approximately 3,700 feet, from Hillside Street along the Hockanum River eastward toward the historic mill at the end of Cottage Street before connecting back to Old Robert Street.
- **Charter Oak Greenway:** This 9.8-mile paved bike trail runs from East Hartford, through Manchester, to Bolton. The trail originates at Forbes Street and Ridgewood Road in East Hartford, running eastward along I-84 and I-384, and is part of the East Coast Greenway. It is planned to continue along Silver Lane and through Rentschler Field, eventually connecting with anticipated waterfront access along the Connecticut River.

- **Captain John Bissell Greenway:** This is a short spur of the Charter Oak Greenway that runs under I-84 to connect with segments of the East Coast Greenway in Manchester.

Other important passive recreational assets include the 22-acre Great River Park along East River Drive, which has picnic areas, boat launch facilities, an amphitheater and a riverwalk; the 42-acre Nature Park in the northeast portion of town, with hiking trails; and the 18-acre Veterans Memorial Park which has a clubhouse available for rental. In addition, large areas of undeveloped open space are found throughout East Hartford, including at Keeney Cove and on floodplain areas north of the Bulkeley Bridge.

Cemeteries, while not typically considered to serve a recreational function, nonetheless have an important role to play in the distribution of open space, as they can provide a much-needed respite of green space from their urbanized surroundings. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, East Hartford has six cemeteries, four of which are Town-owned, totaling approximately 100 acres of land.

Finally, the Town's Department of Parks and Recreation offers several special-purpose facilities for use or rental by East Hartford residents. These include the Veteran's Memorial Clubhouse between Silver Lane and I-84, the Community Cultural Center across from the Town Green and the Selden Brewer House on the southern end of Main Street.

## **5.5. Future Open Space System**

East Hartford is fortunate to have an existing park and open space system that is in relatively good condition, well distributed geographically and diverse in the types of uses accommodated. In looking to the future, it will be important to maintain parks and open spaces that are adequate in extent, strategic in location and equitable in distribution in order to meet the unique active and passive needs of the Town's population. The future of existing parks and open space will depend in part on the efficient use of the existing facilities as well as the maintenance and rehabilitation of facilities requiring improvements.

### **5.5.1. National Recreation and Park Association Standards**

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has developed a set of standards based on the various types and functions of parks within communities. These standards are meant to be applied with an individualized community planning approach, with communities planning and programming their facilities based on identified local need. In general, NRPA suggests that a park system, at a minimum, be composed of a "core" system of parklands, with a total of 6.26 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population.<sup>7</sup> Applying this standard to East Hartford's 2010 population of 51,252, this suggests a range of 320.3 acres to 538.1 acres. As indicated in Table 7, the sum of existing active recreational space along is approximately 500

---

<sup>7</sup> *Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*, National Recreation and Park Association, 1996.

acres, suggesting that, when including various passive recreational areas that are fully developed, the Town's total open space network would satisfy the NRPA's suggested minimums.

### **5.5.2. Criteria for Future Open Space Acquisition**

In selecting areas to focus future open space acquisitions, it is helpful to develop criteria from which to identify priority open space parcels. This Plan focuses primarily on protecting land that provides the following benefits:

- Provides new neighborhood parks or community gardens, based on identified need
- Links existing parks and open spaces together to form interconnected greenways
- Links existing parks and open space to neighborhoods and the downtown area
- Preserves agricultural land
- Preserves natural drainage areas including waterways and surrounding wetlands and floodplains

Based on East Hartford's current recreational patterns and budgetary constraints, this Plan suggests that new neighborhood parks are not a high-priority need at this point. Well-utilized neighborhood parks such as Dwyer Park, Goodwin Park, Shea Park and Foran Park are geographically dispersed throughout the town to serve residents, and recreational facilities at schools provide another important mechanism to serve individual neighborhoods. Given the recent location of several magnet and charter schools in East Hartford, the Town may consider working with the operators of these schools to ensure that public recreational space can be located on those campuses to serve the immediate vicinity.

The remaining criteria listed above are equally as important today and should be maintained to judge the benefits of acquiring future open space as land is made available to the Town. However, the benefits of acquiring such open space should be carefully balanced against the cost of long-term maintenance and loss of taxable land. Prioritizing areas for open space protection is an important component of this Plan because it helps focus resources on property that has the highest open space value, rather than acquiring open space just because it becomes available.

### **5.5.3. Open Space Protection Focus Areas**

The criteria defined above are helpful in identifying areas of town to focus open space protection efforts, as summarized below.

#### ***Urban Farming and Community Gardens***

The preservation of some of the remaining farmland in East Hartford would help retain a sense of the Town's former rural origins. The State Farmland Preservation Program has expressed little interest in acquiring farmland in East Hartford. Therefore, in order for farmland preservation to be successful in East Hartford it will have to be part of a locally led effort. The Town has an opportunity to take the lead in preserving farmland in East Hartford and establishing a municipal farmland preservation program that identifies and protects farms that benefit overall community character. To aid in this effort, the Town should explore available resources, such as the

American Farmland Trust, which has a field office in Connecticut and is providing technical assistance to a number of municipalities in the state to implement strategies such as initiating an Agriculture Commission, reviewing farm tax reduction options, encouraging buy-local opportunities and developing right-to-farm ordinances. Other tools that may be considered include transfer of development rights, land banking, agricultural zoning and the use of conservation subdivisions.

In addition to seeking to preserve agricultural uses, the Town should also promote the re-use of passive open spaces for new agricultural uses, including community gardens. Such re-use would be consistent with the Town's historic agricultural character and facilitate productive economic use of these lands, while retaining them as open space and providing community benefits.

### ***River and Floodplain Protection and Stormwater Management***

As discussed in Chapter 4, East Hartford's relatively flat landscape creates a less than optimal drainage capacity. This is evidenced by the large expanse of floodplain along the town's major watercourses. Protection of East Hartford's remaining undeveloped floodplains (particularly along the Connecticut River) and the land that directly abuts watercourses is critical to ensure that natural drainage patterns are retained and that storm water runoff can be controlled. River and floodplain protection should be focused on all of the town's major watercourses.

### ***Rentschler Field***

Redevelopment of Rentschler Field has the potential to expand the Town's open space network. The Capitol Region Council of Governments has identified this potential and has initiated an extension of the Charter Oak Greenway, to cross Rentschler Field and connect to the existing Riverwalk located along the Connecticut River. This expansion would link two popular greenways and provide a walking path that bisects the entire town in an east-west direction. In addition, the proposed roadways within the Rentschler Field development should make provisions for both pedestrian and bikeway paths.

The parcels that make up Rentschler Field contain wetland areas and include sections of the Pewterpot Brook that are prone to drainage problems. Preservation of these areas as part of any development proposals would help retain the natural drainage patterns in this area.

### ***State and Utility Owned Property***

Surplus property owned by electric utilities or surplus state property should also be considered if these lands become available. The Town should evaluate these properties based on the criteria in Section 5.5.2 for purchase or donation into the town's open space network.

### ***Linkage and Expansion of Existing Open Space (Greenways)***

The network of waterways found within the Town, particularly the Connecticut and Hockanum Rivers, have provided a focus for successful greenway implementation. The Hockanum River Linear Park, Charter Oak Greenway and the Riverwalk are all prime examples of successful greenway projects. The primary open space goal over the next decade should be to build on these successful linear trails and attempt to create a network of linkages between existing open spaces. The Capitol Region Council of Governments has taken the first step in this effort by initiating the extension of the existing Charter Oak Greenway to connect with the Riverwalk trail network. This would create another east-west linkage that somewhat parallels the Hockanum Greenway, albeit on the south side of I-84. The real challenge in greenway planning for the Town is in establishing north to south linkages to connect existing open spaces. Possible north to south connections include pedestrian and bikeway paths in Rentschler Field; expanding the Charter Oak Greenway southward toward the High School; taking advantage of property on the east side of Rentschler Field; and expanding the Riverwalk trail along the banks of the Connecticut River south to Keeney Cove and north toward South Windsor.

### ***Implementation Tools and Techniques***

Because it is difficult to predict when property will become available for incorporation into the open space inventory, the Town must be prepared to respond quickly. In order to achieve the objectives outlined in their open space plans, many municipalities designate an open space task force or a land trust made up of community volunteers and/or staff with a particular interest or expertise in open space planning. One of the responsibilities of an open space task force is to develop a strategy to help fund open space acquisitions and maintenance. Such a strategy identifies potential grant and fundraising opportunities.

Implementation tools commonly used to encourage open space can be divided into two general categories: regulatory and non-regulatory. Regulatory tools use the development process to implement controls to protect natural features or to establish open space, such as the following:

- **Site Planning Regulations**
- **Inland Wetland Regulations**
- **Zoning Regulations** i.e. Preservation overlay zones (special district zoning)
- **Subdivision Regulations** – Open space dedication requirements and/or In Lieu Fees

Non-regulatory tools used to protect open space usually involve some type of ownership status. The following are examples of some of the more common techniques:

- **Fee Simple Purchase** – Involves the outright purchase of land
- **Easement** – A partial interest in property conveyed by the landowner to the Town or a non-profit such as a land trust with specific restrictions on land development or access privileges.
- **Land Trust** – Private, non-profit organizations that acquire land for recreation or conservation. The establishment of an East Hartford Land Trust, or greater coordination with the existing Manchester Land Trust, should be explored.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program provides financial assistance to municipalities or non-profit land conservation organizations to acquire land for open space. This grant program provides matching grants to communities like East Hartford for up to 65% of the property's fair market value. The Town has a unique opportunity to leverage its status as a DEP-designated "Targeted Investment Community" in its application to this grant program to acquire open space.

## **5.6. Issues and Opportunities**

Based on the above discussion of existing conditions, this section recommends several items to be addressed in the Future Land Use Plan or through further study.

### **5.6.1. Focus on Maintenance and Improvement of Existing Parks**

East Hartford has a significant network of active and passive open spaces, which contributes greatly to its community character and vital neighborhoods. The challenge now is to ensure that these open spaces are adequate and appropriate to serve their surrounding communities. To that end, the Town should closely follow the criteria listed above for acquisition of new open space, and acquire such lands only if those criteria or another compelling public purpose are met. Acquiring open spaces without such strict adherence can result in properties that have little practical function and are costly to maintain.

Rather, the Town should focus its resources on upkeep and renovations at its existing parks. One area that has been identified for enhancement involves East Hartford's public pools. Some of these facilities are quite old and can be costly to operate, due to the need for lifeguards and other seasonal staff. The Town should evaluate whether five public pools are still needed based on its changing demographics and fiscal realities. One or more of the pools could be considered for replacement with splash pad facilities, which are geared toward younger children and do not require a significant lifeguard presence. Such replacement should be based on the current and anticipated usage at each pool, as well as current conditions and the cost to rehabilitate each pool to modern standards. As shown in Table 8, regular outdoor pool attendance has varied significantly in recent years. At Goldstar pool, attendance declined from 2010 to 2013, while Drennan saw a reversal of prior decreases in 2013 and Martin, Terry and Lord pools continue to experience fairly strong demand. Attendance is one factor – although not the only one – that should be considered in the potential to close a pool.

**Table 8: East Hartford Outdoor Public Pool Attendance, 2010-2013\***

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Goldstar	3,707	Closed	3,143	2,972
Drennan	3,719	3,088	1,573	3,243
Martin	2,467	3,391	3,788	4,158
Terry	2,645	5,178	4,662	3,884
Lord	Closed	4,978	3,546	4,786

Source: East Hartford Parks and Recreation Department

\*Attendance totals exclude summer camps, swim lessons or other special programs.

Another area for the Town to evaluate is the future of Gorman Park. The 2003 POCD identified this facility as one of great potential, but much of it remains undeveloped. East Hartford should undertake a master plan for this park, to determine what uses would be most appropriate given overall open space and recreational needs in the town.

Finally, the Town should continue its efforts to make connections among existing parks and greenways. The redevelopment of Rentschler Field and other key sites offers an opportunity to gain meaningful public open space through the planning and approvals process. For example, Goodwin College has recently acquired substantial property along the Connecticut River, and has expressed a desire to provide public access to the riverfront, eventually as far south as the Putnam Bridge connecting Glastonbury and Wethersfield. Such an extension of the existing Riverwalk pathway would create a significant open space asset, not just for East Hartford, but for residents of the region. The Town should work with the college and other private land owners along the waterfront and adjacent to other greenways to implement these connections.

#### **5.6.2. Consider Options for Underused Passive Recreational Spaces**

Presently, East Hartford has several large open spaces that are not developed for a particular recreational use. Some of these spaces abut existing parks or are in close proximity to greenways, and thus present future opportunities for creating linkages, through strategic acquisition of connecting properties. Others are relatively isolated, and their primary role may be acting as vegetative buffers to neighborhoods. The Town should explore alternatives to reduce its cost of open space maintenance. One option may be to explore transferring one or more open spaces to a land trust or other nonprofit organization, to be responsible for ongoing upkeep of the space, which would continue to be preserved. The Town should also consider establishing public-private partnerships for development of underutilized open spaces into usable recreational assets. There may be opportunities for uses that generate user fees and revenue generation opportunities, such as additional facility rentals, concession agreements, etc. These arrangements have the potential to create funding for enhancements to East Hartford's treasured parks and open spaces, without substantially diminishing their overall quality.

